

Tribhuvan University  
Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences  
Central Department of English

Reconstructed Past: Postmodern Historicism in the Novels *Waterland*, *Flaubert's  
Parrot and Hawksmoor*

A Dissertation Submitted to the Central Department of English in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy in English

By  
Kul Bahadur Chouhan

April 2014

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Letter of Recommendation

Kul Bahadur Chouhan has completed his dissertation entitled “Reconstructed Past: Postmodern Historicism in the Novels *Waterland*, *Flaubert's Parrot* and *Hawksmoor*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from March 2013 to April 2014. I hereby recommend that his dissertation be submitted for viva voce.

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Prof. Dr. Beerendra Pandey  
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Approval Letter

This dissertation entitled “Reconstructed Past: Postmodern Historicism in the Novels *Waterland*, *Flaubert's Parrot* and *Hawksmoor*”, submitted by Kul Bahadur Chouhan to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Kul Bahadur Chouhan

## **Abstract**

The British writers Graham Swift, Peter Ackroyd and Julian Barnes have attempted to create an alternative history in their fictions which counter the mainstream/ official history. Their fictions subvert the objectivity of history, provides fictional representation of past, and also blurs the boundary between fiction and history. To offer alternative constructions in history writing, these writers use historiographic metafiction technique that problematizes mainstream history and replaces it with alternative discourses. Historiographic metafiction is fiction which uses metafictional techniques to remind us that history is a construction, not something natural that equates to the past. History is not the past, but a narrative based on documents and other material created in the past.

Postmodern writers do not see much difference between history and fiction. This genre has failed to represent reality of the past/history in its actual form. With an analytical survey of discourses on this genre, the dissertation provides ground for discourses on the place of history in postmodern fiction. The focus is on how these British writers treat the past/history in order to argue that their fictional works are more representative than any other official/mainstream histories.

These three British fictions that tend to access the truth through the both ways objectivity of history and subjectivity of fiction by fictionalization of Flaubert's biography, recounting the histories of the French Revolution and of the Fens region in eastern England and combining the two different stories of the eighteenth-century architect, Nicholas Dyer and of the twentieth-century detective, Nicholas Hawksmoor.

## Table of Contents

	Page No.
Letter of Recommendation	
Approval Letter	
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Chapter One : Introduction: Historicism in Postmodern British Metafiction	1-13
Chapter Two : Historiographic Metafiction and New Historicism	14-34
Chapter Three : Reconstruction of the History in the Three British novels: <i>Waterland, Flaubert's Parrot and Hawksmoor</i>	35-75
Chapter Four : Conclusion: Exposing the Constructedness of History in Postmodern British Metafiction	76-78
Works Cited	

## Chapter One

**Introduction: Historicism in Postmodern British Metafiction**

The main argument of this dissertation is how the British writers Graham Swift, Peter Ackroyd and Julian Barnes represent, interpret and treat the concept of past in their fictions. The proposition thus is that these writers portray the different concept of history. These three writers use the method of historiographic metafiction a postmodern technique for fiction writing or what Linda Hutcheon calls it historiographic metafiction in all their fictions for offering multiple perspectives and alternative constructions in history writing. They thus problematize the mainstream history. And, their fictions challenge the pre-occupied notion of history and history writing.

Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*, Graham Swift's *Waterland* and Peter Ackroyd *Hawksmoor* can be the examples to discuss how these fiction writers problematize mainstream/ official histories and replace it by reconstructing alternative fictional discourses. Such fictions subvert the dominance of pre-established notions of history by offering non-linear and personal histories. For this, the writers use the historiographic metafiction technique to establish an alternative version of history.

*Flaubert's Parrot* is a novel by Julian Barnes that was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1984 and won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize the following year. *Flaubert's Parrot* is a metahistorical text as it looks beyond what was officially narrated about Flaubert. Barnes makes a blending of subjective and objective facts about Flaubert and even indirectly ironizes the reality about him in relation with his main character, Jeffrey Braithwaite. Braithwaite, as life-long admirer of Flaubert, sets out to unveil the real parrot out of several stuffed parrots, but finally fails to do so.



Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* portrays a reality in which meaning is not out there to be discovered but created. It is believed that truths are just the creations of human beings with the implication of discourses. Truths cannot be absolute as there will involve circulation of discourses in order to gain the power, and the due to the power, the discourse ultimately gets transformed into truth. Living in the postmodern era, such truth is hardly a matter of belief as absolute and authentic truth. Such monolithic and arbitrary truth has been discarded by new historicist reading of the past today.

Barnes's fiction not only simply narrates Flaubert's biography and Braithwaite for the real parrot, but also unveils all possible realities about him Braithwaite's obsession of Flaubert's life makes it possible to involve in the deepest exploration of Flaubert both in his psychological as well as his biological level. Braithwaite's revelation of the intention to justify his own life through this fictionalization of Flaubert's biography leads this novel to the postmodern historical fiction.

In *Flaubert's Parrot*, Julian Barnes reads history against the grain, reading in a way that is not as the author intended or going against general belief and narratives. He declines to accept the historical truth about Flaubert and breaks the pre-established boundaries and hierarchies among different genres. He even deliberately dismantles the general form of writing a fiction and gives completely a new perspective in the understanding of fiction. Fiction tends to move towards history while history tends to move towards fiction. History is observed from outsider's perspective declining the grand narratives rather than participating in it.

In this research, it is explored that how Barnes reinterprets Flaubert's life and unfolds the difficulty of finding the past reality and the truth about him in his novel *Flaubert's Parrot*. This book is an exploration of truth created through history and the reality about Gustave Flaubert's life. For Barnes, truth is a kind of creation and is

determined by some particular historical tenets, personal psychology and the characters involved in its narration. Historiography tries to fix truth creating certain discourses out of collected data. But the truth about the past is never possible as it contains just a series of grand narratives. There is a great role of power politics to form such discourses about truth. Flaubert's biography of life-sketch was written with such history that overlooked many facts and relied only on some fixed dates and created one sided truth about him. Barnes explains about what Flaubert was in reality as "Gustave imagined he was a wild beast-he loved to think of himself as a polar bear, distant, savage and solitary. I went along with this, I even called him a wild buffalo of the American prairie; but perhaps he was really just a parrot" (151). While he brings out every details of Flaubert's life that are best supportive in better understanding about his life. And he also proves that past cannot be accessed and represented as it was. Therefore, this research is more concerned with close observation of the reality of Flaubert's life which is best attempted by Julian Barnes by his reinterpretation of Flaubert's life and history in his book *Flaubert's Parrot*.

Julian Barnes' *Flaubert's Parrot* shows the difficulties of interpreting the past and questions the authenticity of the established truth as according to Barnes truth of the past is inaccessible and therefore it is never recorded in any written history. In Flaubert's historical biography too, there are so many incomplete stories which make us difficult to go into a conclusion. But the established historians claim to have truth out of their collected series of information. And it is what Julian Barnes attempts to disqualify by giving a new light to the life of Flaubert and ending history with open-endedness, possibilities, self-reflexivity and interconnectedness.

Barnes's novel is widely known as a postmodern text in terms of its content and style of presenting history. This feature has been talked a lot by most of the

literary critics. And so it is an undeniable fact that there are lots of such elements that confirm this novel to be a postmodern text. The notable thing he did in this book is he makes an experiment with totally new style for realist representation of past by subverting the traditional realist style. Barnes has attracted his fair share of critical acclaim for his fiction; this is partly in recognition of his skills at steadily extending the genre's innovative reconstruction of the past. Most of his novels provide evidence of his interest in the postmodern view of history, with the narrative emphasis of contingency in historical representation through an undermining of causal evidence in personal and biographical history; a reconfiguration of a series of historical events, linked haphazardly and a play on simulation and the representation of national history.

The novel *Waterland* written by Graham Swift was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, is a valediction to the British Empire and the Grand Narratives that supported it: both Christianity and Enlightenment Progress. Tom Crick, the novel's narrator, is a history teacher at a London comprehensive, where, ostensibly owing to budget cuts, he has been offered early retirement. In fact, the more pressing reason for his dismissal is that Tom's wife, Mary, has been caught kidnapping a child from a pram at a Safeways in Lewisham. She believes that God has told her that she will miraculously have a child, a parody of the annunciation that trumpets not the incarnation but her admission into an insane asylum. Lewis Scott, the school's head teacher, fears the repercussions that such a scandal will have upon the school. But Scott hopes not only to retire Crick but to merge history with General Studies- literally putting an end to history and to replace their curricula with a curriculum based pragmatic on technical, utilitarian knowledge, rather than "a rag-bag of pointless information" (17).

Further, *Waterland* reconstitutes the subject of history through an opening up of what can be considered historical. The cycling, anti-linear, disjointed process of narrative in this book challenges an unquestioning privileging of more conventional history. The intense, metafiction focuses on the historical leads to a rich diffusion of histories in the novel without one becoming dominant. Swift may seem to be betraying history, at key points, and his protagonist certainly expresses fears of this activity, yet what emerges through Swift's technique is the dispersal of historical signification into other, less traditionally recognized historical registers.

Graham Swift's novel *Waterland* explores origins and ends, questions of identity, and the textual nature of the self. However, what constitutes the most acute source of anguish for the characters is the realization that we may be at the end of history. Jean-Francois Lyotard has famously proposed that what characterizes the postmodern condition is "an incredulity toward metanarratives" (xxiv) or Grand Narratives-universal and totalizing stories that give direction to the historical process and legitimize statements of truth. Such narratives provided the comfort, even with the violence and apparent chaos of the world around us, that we were moving toward some definable and beneficial goal, that history was teleological and that the future, ultimately, was predictable.

. Most of Graham Swift's novels are frequently used as an illustration of what Linda Hutcheon has called 'historiographic metafiction'. In her view, postmodern fiction does not reject or ignore history but actively engages with history, setting its characters within specific historical settings while at the same time, and paradoxically, subverting the objectivity of historical narratives. For this, the novel *Waterland* can be the best example since it illustrates the mode of narration favored by historiographic metafiction. One way of outlining some of these parallel concerns

would be to look at a historiographic metafiction that directly addresses the intersection of the debates about representation in both the novel and history: Graham Swift's *Waterland*, a didactic fictive lesson or mediation on history-or both. No historical characters populate this book, but it is a profoundly historical work none the less, in both form and content.

British novelists Graham Swift and Julian Barnes share a fascination with troubled histories. At one point in Swift's novel *Waterland*, a character asserts that "the only important thing about history . . . is that it's got to the point where it's probably about to end" (7). Although within the book this particular character's fear of nuclear annihilation is not realized, the concern displayed towards history at this moment of postmodernity may be considered emblematic of a more widespread anxiety with history as a subject within literary representation in the late twentieth century. In the conditions of today's world, the place of history and its role in searching for meaning and facts seems uncertain to many. Compounding this, among those theorists who perceive an approaching end of history, opinions are even split as to whether this would be a negative thing: at least one theorist, Francis Fukuyama doubts history's relevance in the face of the triumph of capitalism, welcoming an end of history as a sign of class victory.

Swift and Barnes' writing reveal the constant remaking of the past to fit into concerns of the present as problematic. It is clear that Swift and Barnes have been particularly attentive to concerns with postmodern discourse, and that they have reformulated and extended the parameters of that which constitutes history in their novels. Swift's career as a lecturer and researcher of literature and Barnes' own academic focus on French writing and culture place them inside the contemporary debates about literary and historical theory that are bound to influence their own

writing. Characteristically postmodern theorist Tony Bennett opines that "their texts represent not only the influence of literary theory on historical representation but also of historical theory on literature" (46-7).

A literature influenced by postmodern poetics engages with history by making the writerly or constructed qualities of history more obvious: in this practice, questions of ideological construction or perspective become apparent. As Keith Jenkins suggests, "some of our previous assumptions about history, and the forms it has been expressed as, are no longer so readily acceptable" (6). Similarly another theorist, Robert Young theorizes that, as a trait within recent historiography, "postmodernism can best be defined as European culture's awareness that it is no longer the unquestioned and dominant centre of the world" (75-6). As a reflection of this, a postmodern historiography would represent the discourse of history as opened up: that is, no longer singular or subservient to a particular cultural perspective. The cause of this distrust of the relatively stable previous view is what Fredric Jameson defines as "postmodernity: a condition brought about by the radical break in cultural forms and systems in the 1950s and 1960s, with the wane of political, social and philosophical models of modernity" (267). Jameson suggests that the old certainties, aims and ideals of modernity are now insecure and debatable, and this is expressed in postmodern cultural forms as diverse as architecture, film, advertising and literature.

Jean-Francois Lyotard further articulates this view, expressing his distrust of metanarrative or grand narratives. Lyotard feels that traditional sciences and academic disciplines are often legitimated through their recourse to such irrational metanarratives traits as "the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth"; his response to these traits , then, is to "define postmodern as incredulity towards

metanarrative" (36). Modernity's conception of history prescribes the significance of events into an understandable order. In contrast, instead of this metanarrative prescriptiveness, postmodern narrative is more disjunctive, inhabited by the stories of those excluded by previous historical accounts told. This creates and an awareness of the way that history can be found in a wider range of types of sources. Such awareness acknowledges the contingency of historical fact and meaning.

Robert Scholes puts his views as "the metafictional qualities of historiography, the self-awareness and acknowledgement of its writing, re-emphasising its constructedness, are further instrumental in blurring the distinctions between the disciplines of literature and history" (114). Linda Hutcheon formulates this movement towards recognition of history as just one of the modes of discourse available:

What the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past. In other words, the meaning and shape are not in the events, but in the systems which make those past events into present historical facts. (89)

History is then just another genre of discourse or narrative which imposes order on events through writing, and its peculiar claim to produce facts that illuminate the past is questionable. References to history in literature, or to historiography proper, are equally unable to claim a privileged association with the reality of events: the very reporting and ordering of events reconstitutes them, with the act of writing or representation replacing the event as the subject of history. Literature and history are parallel forms of writing, and their differences are matters of style rather than content. Postmodern literature plays with a wide range of documents and literary styles,

treating the wealth of different stories and ways of telling them as an important consolation to the loss of the illusion of historical certitude. As artists aware of these conditions and able to acutely comment upon them, Swift's and Barnes' postmodernist concerns shape both the subjects they write about and also their writing itself, leading to an opening up for historical examination of concerns like feats of memory, family stories, oral traditions, simulacra and mythologizing.

In the similar manner, Peter Ackroyd is representative of a new breed of British novelists. Further, he is a peculiar combination. He is of his time and outside it, representative of a newer kind of fictional British writing and yet unique, in rebellion against the mainstream English fictional tradition yet writing in an alternative British strain of his choosing. His book, *Hawksmoor* won him the Whitbread, Guardian Fiction and Goncourt awards, and made him a figure to be reckoned with on the literary scene, especially in Britain. The novel alternates between chapters set in early eighteenth-century London and those set in the twentieth century. The former concern the architect, Nicholas Dyer, who was charged by Parliament with building seven new churches, churches historically built by Nicholas Hawksmoor, the exemplar of English Baroque architecture. Dyer is a Manichean whose mystical belief in the pervasive power of evil stands opposed to the more established Sir Christopher Wren's subscription to the empirical, scientific, and rational ethos of the Royal Society. Dyer enacts his opposition to the spirit of the Enlightenment, his belief in the powers of darkness, by secretly sacrificing to the demonic powers a virgin boy in the foundations of each of his new churches. His modern counterpart, Nicholas Hawksmoor, is a Detective Chief Inspector who is investigating a series of strangulations of boys and childlike tramps that occur on the sites of Dyer's churches. Hawksmoor is Sir Christopher Wren's modern counterpart,



whose belief in the power of reason fails to solve the murders. His failure brings him close to insanity, but ultimately he is granted a kind of telepathic insight into the mysterious of Dyer's dark world.

Furthermore, Peter Ackroyd is well-known by the way he blends past and present, fact and fiction in his writing. *Hawksmoor* is written half in the language of the early 18th century, half in contemporary dialogue; it is "a pastiche of eighteenth century writing strangely connected to a modern detective story" (Smethurst 194). Before beginning *Hawksmoor*, Peter Ackroyd spent four months in the library of the British Museum, poring over tracts and treatises written 250 years ago, wanting to assimilate the voice of the time, to train himself so he could write in that style without self-consciousness. And he has succeeded marvelously. For the reader, the past in the novel is more real than the present. It is presented realistically and convincingly, through the use of eighteenth century dialect and writing style. In this context Smethurst Paul opines that "the use of the real Hawksmoor churches works particularly well because these churches are still present and still remarkable in their design" (183).

This also works on the level of ideas. Although the postmodern reader would be more familiar with a detective story than with an eighteenth century manuscript, Dyer's voice is far more powerful and convincing. The first person narrative technique, and the sense that Dyer occasionally, while discussing his ideas and plans, addresses the readers, adds to the persuasiveness of the historical reconstruction of the eighteenth century. This part of the novel becomes so real for the readers that the narrative set in the present seems detached and unreal. The luckless Detective Hawksmoor is not only unable to solve the mystery, but he also comes across as only a pawn in Dyer's plots. The twentieth century narrative with its events and characters

becomes to the readers only a part of a larger pattern set by Dyer himself.

The novel *Hawksmoor* challenges modern assumptions about linear time and history, and successfully, because at the ending the readers have to accept that the lines between past and present are becoming blurred and that the two characters may have been one identity, partly in the present and partly in the past.

Postmodernists have offered certain perspectives to look at the world and its people. As the world has entered into a new state, traditional values on truth and reality have also changed. The human knowledge of reality is always a construct, so are stories. They are never real in logocentric sense. They are always imposed upon past events. Truth is always relative. There is no ultimate or fixed reality. The past is not discovered or found. It is created and represented by historians as a text. As humans cannot objectively represent reality which is present to them, they cannot understand reality belonging to the past. On the basis of such ground, their fictions come out.

In postmodern fiction, there are no fundamental differences in the process of writing history and writing fiction. It defines the past to make a link of history with fiction. It ultimately subverts the mainstream practice of history writing.

In order to interpret how these writers treat the concept of past or history, the dissertation mainly uses theoretical perspective of Linda Hutcheon. This perspective helps to understand how fact and fiction are used to rewrite or construct the history. In their works, there is an easy mix up of fictional and real, world of spirit and world of humans, time sequence between past and present, and use of myths, beliefs and rumors along with historical facts and details. History is at the centre in almost all of their fictions. When history is written alongside imaginary events, the demarcation between history and fiction breaks down.

As reality is always displaced, and originally is in already linguistically constructed form, novels incorporate fact as fiction and fiction as fact. They reveal "the past as always ideologically and discursively constructed" (Woods 56) to problematise the making of fiction and history. As discussed above, postmodernism challenges both the concept of metanarratives, and the linear history.

This research focuses on the study of the postmodern technique- historiographic metafiction, to construct the new concept of history. A number of scholars- within a postmodern framework have treated fact and fiction of the past. Thus, there is an analytical survey of such constructed concept of history in Chapter II which gives the clear ground for subsequent discourses. Similarly, in the III chapter, there is an analysis on how the history is constructed and fact and fiction are blurred with the help of the textual references from *Hawksmoor* by Peter Ackward, *Waterland* by Graham Swift and *Flaubert's Parrot* by Julian Barnes. On the basis of these textual references, it is analyzed how historical events are differently treated in fictionalized history, and how history loses emotional truth captured by fictionalized historical accounts.

Furthermore, this research addresses recent postmodern debates in defining history and fiction. It provides an ample amount of discourses on fact and fiction representation, discourses on the validity of historical knowledge and truth, and multiple perspectives on the mainstream history. The postmodern notions of Jameson and White have been discussed in the discourses on fact and fiction. But this dissertation comprehensively deals with the postmodern notions of historiographic metafiction- a dominant trend in writing postmodern fiction to Hutcheon.

Their fictions subvert the objectivity of textbook or official history by blurring fact and fiction and then by fictionalizing history and historicizing fiction. This has

been shown in these three novels. For justifying the argument that fictional representation is more realistic than historical one, this research gives textual evidences. The postmodern theories have been used in the analysis wherever relevant. The dissertation is woven to answer how these writers treat the past in their fictions using historiographic metafictional technique.

## Chapter Two

### Historiographic Metafiction and New Historicism

The interest to reevaluate the past and thus, history and historical writings, reemerged in the 1970's in the form of New Historicism. Indeed, this interest in and the preoccupation with the question of what humanity has accepted as historical truth was not a new issue in literature. However, there are certain factors as to the reemergence of this issue, especially in the aforementioned decade. The 1970's especially marked an attitude towards the concept of originality and objectivity; the problem was, whether any work of literature, be this work a historical document or else, could genuinely be original or not. The idea that, all written works or texts contain subjectivity was widely believed by the critics and the writers at that time. Hutcheon states that, "What the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past" (89).

Taking history as a discourse then inevitably brings to the fore the idea that the writing of history is a subjective process, during which the historian relies on his creativity to fill in the missing aspects of the historical information he is depositing as truth. From this point of view, historiographic metafiction takes its stand as the postmodern mode of looking back at history and historical documents or texts and restyling them. In suggesting a definition for historiography, Pomeroy argues that the fusion of history and fiction takes place with possible variations on narration:

By questioning dominant discourse, modern historiography undermines the unconvincing claim of objective representation and enables the construction of alternative narratives. The indeterminacy which

alternative or multiple histories represent helps to  
 create the site upon which the cross-pollination  
 between history and fiction (historiographic  
 metafiction) occurs. (23)

As Linda Hutcheon argues, “What historiographic metafiction explicitly does, though is to cast doubt on the very possibility of any firm “guarantee of meaning” (55). Thus, this particular genre attempts to question grand or metanarratives, formed through certain signifying systems and discourses, while it should not be overlooked that fiction itself is also a signifying system. Amy J. Elias states that, “. . . this desire for History, for the “secular sacred” sublime—for awe, certainty, and belief in the absence of the Word— leads postmodern narrative fiction to new representations of the historical past” (18). Through historiographic metafiction, history is not denied, but presented in alternative ways. The fusion of history and fiction without any attempt to separate them as two different concepts and the idea that the representation of history does not present a new history is the starting point of historiographic metafiction genre. History is taken as mere “text” (Hutcheon 142) onto which fiction is built. One of the basic aims of postmodern writing is to present history to the present time and to avoid closure, thus enabling endless interpretations of the past to be possible. Therefore, there are two main concerns in historiographic metafiction, the first one being the attempt to bring to the fore “the truth and lies of the historical record” (Currie 81) and secondly “to give a feeling of verifiability” (Currie 81) through historical information, without the attempt to reach a conclusive decision about what the past was all about. As Wells states, historiographical metafiction “. . . concentrates on elements of the works that openly address the permeable boundary between the real, or historical, and fictional discourse” (2).

New Historicists argued that, texts produced within a given era are written under the influence of the cultural, social and political atmosphere and values of that particular time. Therefore, it is not possible for a text to be interpreted free from all these external factors and those historians cannot possibly be free from the influences of their time in writing historical documents. This suggestion leads to the understanding that, texts reveal the aspects and the discourses of the period of the time they are written in and do not produce a meaning by themselves alone. As Klaus Brax puts it, “In the philosophy of history the role of constructing a narrative out of empirical data currently occupies a central role. . . The new understanding of history as textual also gave rise to a particular literary theory, new historicism” (49). In terms of narration, historiographical metafiction “appear to privilege two modes of narration, both of which problematizes the entire notion of subjectivity, multiple points of view...or an overtly controlling narrator” (Hutcheon 117).

Historiographic metafiction or “revisionist historical novels” (Nunning 222) as they are sometimes referred to, aim to emphasize the other’s point of view and present history from a non-traditional perspective, which falls outside the borders of the strong element of the binary oppositions in metanarratives. Referring back to Hutcheon’s *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, the main point of concentration is fixed on “the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history” (114); thus, the subjective experiences of the characters in historiographical metafiction reflect history within the boundaries of their own point of view. As Ansgar Nunning comments, “Metahistorical novels do not portray the past as a self contained and complete world, but as liable to the distortions that subjective reconstructions and recollections entail” (224). The main issue in historiographical metafiction is, then, who is narrating history, from which perspective this narration is taking place and

what kind of a selection is being made by the narrator as to which points to include or exclude in the narration process. Julian Barnes, in his work, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, states that, “History isn’t what happened. History is just what historians tell us” (50). Thus, what has come to the present as historical documents have all been written down as the personal utterances of historians. One of the most acclaimed works written on the fictionality of historiography has been Hayden White’s “*Historical Text as Literary Artifact*.” White suggests that, “There is something in a historical masterpiece that cannot be negated, and this non- negatable element is its form, the form which is its fiction” (43). White continues his argument saying that:

Within a long and distinguished critical tradition that has sought to determine what is real and what is imagined in the novel, history has served as a kind of archetype of the realistic pole of representation [ . . . ] Nor is it unusual for literary theorists, when they are speaking about. The context of a literary work, to suppose that this context, the historical milieu, has a concreteness and accessibility that the work itself can never have, as if it were easier to perceive the reality of a past world put together from a thousand historical documents than it is to probe the depths of a single literary work that is present to the critic studying it. (89)

White encourages the reader by suggesting that histories may be subject to the same kind of imposition of fictive devices as literary texts. When historians try to bring past events in text of present time they only narrate those events which they keep in their mind as remembrance, what we call memory. The very memory has its own politics and finally restricted on authorial possession. No genre is, therefore, free from



subjective ideology. In this case, 'Historiographic Metafiction' is postmodernist narrative technique, applicable to give existence to literary genres, which intermixes fact with fiction.

In the text *Metahistory*, White rejects the notion that historians are able to write about the past or present as it actually happens. He defines archetypes of historians with specific characteristics. He strongly believes that history is poetic in the sense it is moralistic, aesthetic but not epistemological. For White, there is no proper history because historians always write from the perspectives of the centre and engage readers by inventing certain rhetorical devices. White describes metahistory as a critical enterprise where in the history addresses reflective question about the writing of history itself. Historical writing is always in the form of narration that depends on a "non-negatable item," (White 12). The narrative form itself creates a stories of history are understandable by virtue of their reliance on fictive forms. By using the materials like simple chronicle, a series of events, set of fact and provides the explanation, history can only be produced the story that can never reflect any fact as objective one but only produced those facts which is created.

New Historicism also rejected any notion of historical progress or teleology, and broke away from the literary historiography based on the study of genres and figures. In the same way, the culture in which New Historicism situated literary texts was itself regarded as a textual construct. Hence, new Historicism refused to accord any kind of unity or homogeneity to history or culture, viewing both as harboring networks of contradictory, competing, and unreconciled forces and interests. Thus, like fiction, history is textualized; therefore, it is a kind of human fabrication. The writer interprets the past, presents it in a written form and makes it intelligible to the readers. History therefore is always contaminated, oblique and subjective. The

assumptions such as neutrality of language and absence of domineering, ideologies narrating voice are contested by new historicism. Its view of history stresses on the impossibility of an all embracing and totalizing account of the past. The history cannot be represented in pure form, for it always romances with respect to the narrator's prejudices and preoccupations. So, the proclamation of universal truth in history can no longer sustain. What is available to us is only different version and perspective of interpretation of history. Different factors manipulate the representation of history.

According to new historicists, "the idea of a uniform and harmonious culture is a myth imposed on history and propagated by ruling classes in their own interests" (Selden 105). So, the new historicists focus not on history but on histories. New historicism, thus, is characterized by, as Louis Montrose says "a shift from history to histories" (411). This is to say that history is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events. New Historicists assert that the historians, like the authors of literary texts, possess a subjective view. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. So, they can no longer claim that their study of the past is detached and objective.

Keith Jenkins, a historical theorist provides the startlingly clear and thought-provoking idea to central debates in history and historiography. In his book *Rethinking History*, he views history as one series of discourse about the world which can not create the world itself. Jenkins puts his critical eyes on the relation between history and the past. He finds "Past and history not stitched into each other rather float free to each other in miles apart. Yet historians still trying to raise the specter of the real past, and objective past about which their accounts are accurate and even true" (Jenkins 12). While history refers to the past and reflects the past on their account the

factual account of past events could no longer access to the historians. And history remains only on the subjective dimension of historians account. So no account can recover the past as it was because the past was not an account but events, situation, etc. So for him, history is like other discipline in theory and theory is always ideological and ideology just is material interest. When he views objective claim of facts he finds all fact itself to be meaningful needed interpretation then how historians can claim that any past thing that historians bring are factually correct. When history becomes interpretation and history is historians' works then historiographic metafiction is a proper study of history then historiographic metafiction is as critical tools that referring here to the historian way of writing history.

R.G Collingwood is also a postmodern thinker and philosopher, has questioning on the authority made by historians to claim their genre and factual and truth based. In his book *The Idea of History* he views history is not other than perception and opinion. Though the historians resemble themselves as science because both are based on reasoned and inferential but Collingwood views that science itself lives in a world of abstract universal than how the history becomes concrete in its reason. History, then not universal rather individual, not indifferent to space and time and its “criterion of historical truth can not be the fact that a statement is made by an authority” (237).

When the humanities underwent its historicist turn in the late 1980s, it took postmodern fiction along with it. Whether or not postmodern fiction was even available to historical readings may well have been cause for critical concern on the grounds that the history of the present is difficult to bring to mind. Still, the rise of the New Historicism, with its emphasis on synchronic time and discourse analysis, prompted many critics to regard current fictions as participants in the same discourses

as current theory, and to view historicist theory itself as postmodern fiction's primary discursive context. In 1988, Linda Hutcheon contributed to this view in *The Poetics of Postmodernism* when she replaced the term 'postmodern fiction' with "historiographic metafiction" (5). The phrase gestured towards scholars' growing interest in how so-called postmodern fictions engage, like much of so-called postmodern theory, with the field of historiography: how they refuse metanarratives; how they dissolve boundaries between fiction and history; how they present historical reality as always mediated; how they thus recast the epistemological and methodological challenges of knowing the past; and how they explore those challenges ontological and political consequences.

Though literature and history are treated as two different disciplines but they share same medium of expression, a narration. From the very beginning of western writing, history is regarded as objective and based on facts. The historians are compelled to choose narration as only a means through which they could write history. But, this narration as a means of expression is always subjective and unreliable to factual event. Narration is ultimately limited to human artifact so it is unable to carry the actual event, in any case. Narrative histories, or historical fictions, have not been readily accepted in the academy as a legitimate form of history. More than any other contemporary literary form, narrative history has struggled to find acceptance within professional frame works designated as either history or fiction. To accept narrative as a precise, learned method of historical representation, we would first have to overcome the demand that historical works must present clear, documented evidence to be taken as true, and challenge the assumption that all fictions are merely stories conjured in a writer's mind. Such works are often excluded from being seen as history, or as having something to offer an audience interested in

the past being represented in a manner that works both within and outside of what is designated as 'history'. But all distinctions are problematic. Drawing a distinction between what is historically factual and what is literally possible "ignores the role of actuality in the writing of literature- what could happen, what typically happens, what might have happened and what actually happened" (Strout 154). Fiction based on historical period and scholarly academic history may have more in common than one thinks.

At first, fact and fiction were treated as distinct genres but at present in postmodern era they are simply used to define history. It means the distance between them is narrowed down. However, there are several discourses on history and fiction over the years on the issue of representation. We find different opinions about their representation that which one is better. The scholars of this time do not find much difference between them. The various thoughts and literary campaigns affected literary criticism, political, philosophical and social thoughts and this resulted a new mood in historiographical understanding. A significant development in contemporary historiography is the shift from a discourse focused on formalizing the empirical condition of historical enquiry to one that pursues the contextual, ideological textual motivations of the author-historical. The taint of subjectivity that lingers in all historical enquiry, be it fictional, empirical, digital or otherwise, can no longer be the overwhelming, almost vain, preoccupation of historiography study. Contemporary scholars have inherited debate and conclusions and over understanding are enhanced by an awareness of that past's interpretation. And, such developments see historiographer, novelists and historians dealing "less with the historical facts than with the epistemological problems attached to the reconstruction of historical events and to the writing of history" (Nunning 226).

Contemporary historiography represents a stunning turning point in the way history as a social science is accessed, debated, and hypothesized. Historiography has emerged- or stepped forward-as a viable, innovative and progressive consideration, addressing problem of history, aesthetics and language, and of the validity of fiction as a historical voice-determining that history can no longer be the simple study and representation of empirical facts. Professor of Intellectual History Frank Ankersmith attests:

History is an empirical discipline in two respects. First, in the more trivial sense history is an empirical discipline in that it deals with the data the past has left us that can empirically be verified or falsified. But history is also an empirical discipline in the sense that it can be seen as a continuous experiment with language; an experiment in relating language to the world [...] Likewise, the history of historical writing can also be seen as a series of experiments with language [...] The questions of how to properly relate language to reality, how to put into words the way reality has been experienced by us, is essentially an aesthetic question. The history of historical writing is, in the final analysis, a chapter in the book of the history of aesthetics. (49-50)

A shift in the method or approach of understanding, such as embracing narrative or epistemology, did not and has not compromised the past; instead it has opened it to a greater perspective of what theorists find valuable in their past(s) and how they arrive at the conclusions they do.

Historiography literally means the art of writing history. It is the history of history, or the history of historical writings. Historiography tells us the story of the successive stages of the evolution or development of historical writings. It has come

to include the evolution of the ideas and techniques associated with the writing of history, and the changing attitudes towards the nature of history itself. Ultimately, it comprises the study of the development of man's sense for the past.

This is to say that all of our knowledge and understanding of the past exists only in the realm of narratives. Peter Brooks says, "We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed" (qtd. in Hutcheon 48). Here, narrative representation – storytelling is a historical and a political act. The past is mediated by the texts. Literary texts in this sense work as a vehicle for the representation of history. It reveals the processes and tensions by which knowing the past becomes a question of representing, i.e. of constructing and interpreting, not of objective recording.

Postmodernism has made a great impact on historiography. It has developed its own genre of historical writing with mere denunciation of conventional history. It rejects the master narratives as hegemonic stories told by those in power. Moreover, rejecting faith in reason and progress, postmodernist historiography has directed much of its attention towards the irrational, the odd and the magical in human life.

Postmodern historiography has, however, promoted good writing as a normal historical practice. "The study of history that cumbersome but precious bag of clues involves inquiry that attempts to uncover the mysterious of cause and effect, but most of all it teaches us to accept the burden of our need to ask why" (Hutcheon 54).

According to Graham Swift, "History is a lucky dip of meanings. Events elude meaning, but we look for meanings and we create them" (qtd. in Hutcheon 54).

Hutcheon thinks the postmodern fiction still historical. Here, we discuss about the concept and understanding of history in the postmodern fiction. Both history and

fiction retrieve the past by objective investigation of facts which is never possible. The restructuring exercise of the past is as much an act of imagination as it is of perception (Adhikari 44). The demarcating line between a historian and a fiction writer is indeterminate. That is why; history can not be fully objective whereas fiction also can not be completely subjective. Moreover, they both depend on incomplete evidences of the past and memory to recollect once visited evidences. As a result, in history fact dominates fiction and looks like an objective reality and similarly in fiction imagination dominates facts and looks like a subject reality. Ultimately, whatever they look like in terms of treating the past leads towards blending history and fiction together. Further, while reconstructing the past, they equally concentrate on past events. According to Sreedharan, "history is the historian's reconstruction of the past" (3). Fiction writers make inquiry of the past "by focusing on human predicaments, social responsibilities and the observance of human values" (Adhikari 46). Therefore, there may be moral responsibilities evident in fiction. Like historians and fiction writers, the postmodernists also have debate on the issue between history and fiction. Here, this is our main concern.

History is a signifier with several meanings (Lucy). "There are histories, but there is no single or stable history" (Joan viii). This same is the issue of debate for the postmodernists regarding the past. The postmodernists challenge the concept of objectivity, neutrality, impersonality and transparency of representations to the writing of history. Or, they regard official history simply a story told from subjective point of view. On this ground, it can be noted that postmodernists argue that there is no fundamental and poetic reinvention of it. Postmodernists read "history as an intellectual construction" (McCullah 453).



Postmodernists believe that historians do not normally use the exact copy of the evidence of the past. Rather, they use the evidences when they fit for their purpose or modify them until they gain their purpose. In this context, Richard J. Evans observes that history in the postmodern age has been a multifaceted discipline in which there is a total shift of priority areas and subject matter. Here, Evans opines:

History in the postmodern mode has become a multifaceted discipline in which the old priorities of the political, the economic, and the social no longer obtain. Historians now study a scattering variety of subjects, from love and hate to smell and taste, from health and sickness to madness and fear, from childhood to old age, from water to smoke, from crime and justice to sex and pleasure, from tiny village to great cities, from obscure individuals to huge collectivities, from seemingly irrational folk-beliefs to constructs of collective memory and forgetting. (*Encarta* 2008)

As mentioned above, history in the postmodern age has not been limited to certain priorities. Further, it has been a multifaceted discipline as Evan views or it has been an intellectual construct as McCullah claims.

Postmodern theory holds sources which reflect reality of the past written with a specific purpose. The historical sources are not fixed, they are changeable. Reading history is not reading the past but something constructed about the past. "The past in its pure form does not exist," writes Sreedharan," and what the historian recovers of it can never be its objective reality" (285). Therefore, history does not provide any objective knowledge of the past. Postmodernists provide alternative expressions explaining how "they can think differently from both their past and their present" (Hamilton 4). History is not limited these days to a singular narrative rather it deals

multiplicity of potential narratives which depend on how one narrativizes the given historical materials. Fictionalized history better represents reality than official history. In this line Madhumalati Adhikari writes, "It is fictionalized history that is perhaps the most effective tool with which the past can be understood and evaluated, for the distancing achieved by storytelling enables reader and writer alike to revisit history with a new and deeper awareness" (43). From this, it can be said that postmodernists believe that the fictionalized history is preferable to official history as an effective tool to revisit the past.

Regarding the relationship between history and fiction in postmodernism, two leading scholars put their views differently. For Jameson, postmodernism is ahistorical and then constructs a general theory of postmodernism as complicitous with late capitalist society where as for Hutcheon, the narrative under postmodernism predominantly takes the form of a 'historiographic metafiction'. For Jameson, history plays a central role in both reading and writing of literary texts. He takes history as a single collective narrative linking past and present. He defends that there is always some version of history in every text. Reading of a text needs to be oriented towards history. History is not just an accumulation of brute facts of historical records; it is a story and storytelling. "Postmodern narrative, for Jameson, is ahistorical, playing only with pastiche images and aesthetic forms" (Duvall 372). According to Jameson, parody has been replaced by pastiche in the postmodern age. Pastiche, rather than parody, is the appropriate mode of post-modernist culture. For Hutcheon, "Parody is one of the major forms of modern self-reflexivity; it is a form of inter-art-discourse" (*A Theory of Parody*2).

Fiction merely reproduces the past as nostalgia. In his book *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act*, Jameson insists, "There is nothing

that is not social and historical-needed, that everything is "in the last analysis "political" (20). All interpretation for Jameson is political. On the basis of these interpretations, Jameson and Hutcheon have seemed to clearly mark the opposite ends of the theoretical spectrum regarding past in postmodern fiction. Duvall tells "Jameson's postmodernism focuses on the consumer whereas Hutcheon originates with the artist as producer" (372). John N. Duvall further comments:

For Jameson, postmodern narrative is ahistorical (and hence politically dangerous), playing only with pastiche images and aesthetic forms that produce a degraded historicism; for Hutcheon, postmodern fiction remains historical; precisely because it problematizes history through parody, and thus retains its potential for cultural critique. (372)

In Duvall's reading these two postmodernists have justified the role of history in postmodern narratives choosing pastiche and parody respectively.

For Hutcheon, postmodern fiction is historiographic metafiction. *In A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon writes "historiographic metafiction both installs and blurs the line between fiction and history" (113). Historiographic metafiction is a term Linda Hutcheon defines such type of novel that flourished in postmodern era. They use the plot structure and characterization technique of popular fiction. They analyze to challenge those existing techniques from the text by using parody and irony. This type of postmodern fiction is marked by a concern with "whose truth gets told" in history and fictional narrative (Hutcheon 123). Writers of this narrative technique try to narrate the events and characters of story in such a way that it could make the reader conscious. They don't try to hide provisional and fictional quality of every narration that leads reader to singular version of truth. In this postmodern period fiction is regarded as a verbal magic [al] aim to deceive us. This deceptive quality

weighted consciously. Rather than deceive their reader by pretending to tell them what is true, these writers hope to make their readers aware of the truth and above the deception that is fiction. We call such writing about fiction in the form of fiction “metafiction”. So the fictional quality is inevitable to every narration. History also uses the same narrative tools to bring the past event in the present. So, All historical recorded by men becomes fictional. Thus, historiographic metafiction enables reader to decipher the fiction entity in historical fact.

Historiographic metafiction, which thematizes and undermines the border between historiography and fiction, addresses problems related to the writing of history. The mode of historiographic metafiction supplies a framework for an investigation of larger postmodernist concern such as the crisis of representation and the fragmentary nature of history. Historiographic metafiction refutes common methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refuses the view that history has truth claim and helps that both history and fiction are discourse, human constructs, signifying systems and both deserve their major claim to truth from that identity (Hutcheon 93).

For Hutcheon, history and fiction are discourses where the concept of past is constituted. She opines that historical and fictive personages appear within the postmodern fiction. Further, she views that while writing history and fiction, the postmodernism challenges certain implied assumptions through a contamination of historical with other elements. In her terms:

In the postmodern writing of history- and fiction [. . .] - there is a deliberate contamination of the historical with didactic and situational discursive elements, thereby challenging the implied assumptions of historical statements: objectivity, neutrality, impersonality, and

transparency of representation. (*Poetics* 92)

In postmodern fiction, she continues that the literary and the historical are always being brought together (*Poetics*101). "For Linda Hutcheon, postmodern fiction is interrogative and instructive rather than a reactionary cultural production" (Woods 45). She suggests that postmodern fiction parodically subverts but also inscribes the conventions of realism.

Further, she views that postmodern fiction is a mode that problematizes the making of history and fiction and "reveals the past as always ideologically and discursively constructed" (Wood 56). She thinks that "there is a link between self-reflexivity and the inclusion of historical fact in late twentieth century fiction" (Bowers 79) and she terms, such kind of narratives as "historiographic metafiction," which "challenges hegemonic cultural discourses by recontextualizing them and offering alternative versions, thus foregrounding epistemological and ethical questions involved in writing history" (Nunning 360).

Postmodernism has made a great impact on historiographic. It focuses on its own genre of historical writing with mere denunciation of conventional history. It rejects the master narrative as hegemonic stories told by those in power. Moreover, rejecting faith in reason and progress, postmodernist historiography has directed much of its attention towards the irrational, the odd and the magical in human life.

Postmodern historiography has, however, promoted good writing as a normal historical practice.

Linda Hutcheon as postmodernist theorist has contributed a lot for the notion of historiographic metafiction. Hutcheon in her book, *Poetics of Postmodernism* challenged generic boundary between literary text and historical fact. She focuses on the two different mode of writing that is shared by both historicist and literary writers

and at the same time how they are different in that mode. Though, history like other genre identified as linguistic construction and depends on the same convention of writing, same narrative forms, claims that their construction is objective one and true in its recorded past events. Hutcheon in this regard implied the technique of historiographic metafiction that helps to reveal the true nature of every human artifact as noting like objective and factual rather represented in multiple versions. This makes historical claim for its factual records became its stubborn and regarded as subjective orthodox and literature regarded as more objective than history. As literature acknowledge the historiographic metafiction as inevitable quality of every genre and contributes for the true nature of every human artifact, it seems more objective than other discipline because it helps us to mark the inescapable flaws that every discourse carries within it and can never be an objective true in its representation. In *Poetics of Postmodernism* Hutcheon further highlights the postmodern quality of metafiction in both history and literature while she writes:

Historiographic metafiction suggests that truth and falsity may indeed not be the right terms in which to discuss fiction . . . Fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames which historiographic metafiction first establishes and then crosses, both the generic contracts of fiction and of history. The postmodern paradoxes here are complex. The interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both “authentic” representation and “inauthentic” copy alike, and the very meaning of artistic originality is as forcefully challenged as the transparency of historical referentially. (110)

Hence, Hutcheon is exception in “the emphasis she places on the role played by history in postmodernism” (208) while highlighting the role metafictional technique in term of the authenticity of every representation in postmodern scenario.

Postmodern questions the authenticity of history and makes problematic the entire notion of representing reality. It gets marked as "an aesthetic style, a cultural situation and a critical practice, an economic condition and a political attitude" (Pandey 123). This makes readers rethink history as a human construct and dissolves it into a species of literature. This supports the statement. “Fictional stories invested by writers and the narratives fashioned by historians do not differ from one another in any essential respect" (Zagorin 14). Hutcheon's new mode "emphasizes the way contemporary historical fiction contests, through irony and parody, the idea of the past as a transcendental signified; it stresses the way such fiction calls attention to the inherent instability of signification, and to the way discourse is always inscribed with ideology and power" ( Wilcox 338). Her postmodern theory thus helps to define the mode of historical fiction developed in the late twentieth century.

For Hutcheon, "postmodernism remains historical and political precisely through its parodic historical reference" (Duvall 379). Postmodernism in fiction helps to describe the more paradoxical and historically complex form which she calls "historiographic metafiction" (*Poetics* 40). Postmodern fiction and historiographic metafiction describe the same set of objects. John N. Duvall clarifies that for Hutcheon “only historiographic metafiction is postmodern fiction; all postmodern fiction is historiographic metafiction" (379). [. . . ]. According to Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction blends self-reflexivity of metafiction with an ironized sense of history and this mix foregrounds the distinction "between brute events of the

past and the historical facts we construct out of them" (*Politics* 57). Therefore, postmodern fiction for her is synonymous to the historiographic metafiction.

In postmodern fiction, history is used to present imagination and fiction is used to present reality. This makes history a fiction and fiction a history. Blurring or sometimes crossing the between history and fiction, historiographic metafiction problematizes the entire question of historical knowledge, and then questions the absolute knowability of the past. It also questions how we construct our view of reality by inscribing and undermining the authenticity and objectivity of historical sources and explanations. In this way, historiographic metafiction subverts the objectivity of official history.

Hutcheon brings both fictive and historical narrative representation under similar subversive scrutiny in the paradoxical postmodern form. "History has come under considerable scrutiny in the past few years and that it is history's link to fictional narrative" (Hutcheon: *Canadian Postmodern* 82). Furthermore, he has emphasized on the writing of history also as "involves a process of interpretation, for the facts must be given meaning in a particular context" (87). As history and fiction, according to Hutcheon, treat the past similarly, there are similar processes followed in their writing. About their approach and access to the past, Hutcheon mentions:

The issue of representation in both fiction and history has usually been dealt with in epistemological terms, in terms of how we know the past. The past is not something to be escaped, avoided or controlled. [ . . . ] confrontation involves an acknowledgement of limitation as well as power. We only have access to the past today through its traces-its documents, the testimony of witness, and other archival materials. (*Politics* 55)



In Hutcheon's reading, the past is inaccessible in its complete form. There, we find only the traces.

In this postmodern era history seems to lose its authority as it claims to be factual and reflectively truth then literature (other discipline). As the term 'historiographic metafiction' spreads in this era as effective theoretical tools that successively blur the boundary between subjective and objective dichotomy. This reveals the true nature of history as subjective and interpretative one that could no longer stick towards its factual claim of past events. The claim of pure historian is impossible to human cognition only superhuman can record past without distorting or omitting. But this superhuman is only exist in believe not in reality. On the one hand historicist claim of their history as true account of past event become notoriously dismissed and on the other hand literature seems more objective than history because it reveals its own fictional dimension as its narrative technique. Literature brings light on its inevitable fictional quality that makes every discipline away from its objective claim. This inaccessible claim of history is reveal because of the historiographic metafiction gets its essence through the literary analysis. Therefore, literature seems more objective in its quarry and more trustworthy in its revelation.

To sum up, history and fiction are treated almost similarly for representing reality in the postmodern era. The common treatment has brought the historians and the fiction writers closer. The free play of real and fictitious along with the postmodern technique helps to explore various aspects of the past. The techniques of historiographic metafiction is used to examine the notions of history and to set contrast between official versions and the own recollections of the past. The following chapter is about how the history is reconstructed in these three British novels:

*Waterland, Flaubert's Parrot and Hawksmoor.*

### Chapter Three

#### Reconstruction of the History in the three British novels: *Waterland*, *Flaubert's*

#### *Parrot and Hawksmoor*

The novel's *Waterland* by Graham Swift action opens in the fairy tale landscape of the fen country of England, a land so flat that it drives its inhabitants either to unquiet or to telling stories, especially to calm the fears of children. This is a land "both palpable and unreal" (6), an apt, self-reflexive setting for any fiction. The narrator, Tom Crick, comes from a family that has the "knack for telling stories' of all kinds: true or made up, believable or unbelievable stories which were neither one thing nor another" (1-2). This is a fitting description of *Waterland* itself.

However, the second chapter is called about the end of history. It is addressed to the second-person plural Children by Crick, their history teacher, who has spent his life trying to "unravel the mysteries of the past" (4), but who is now to be retired because of some personal embarrassment, though the official reason is that his school is cutting back on history. Crick's response is to defend his discipline-and his personal past: "Sack me, don't dismiss what I stand for. Don't banish my history" (18). But his students seem little interested in his subjects; for them "history is a fairy tale" (5) and they prefer to learn of the here and now of a world threatened by nuclear annihilation. From the opening pages of the novel, both history-telling and story-telling are thus linked to fear.

They are also connected to the marshy, reclaimed land of the fen country, primarily through the major historical metaphor of the novel: "Silt: which shapes and undermines continents; which demolishes as it builds; which is simultaneous accretion and erosion; neither progress nor decay" (7). A more perfect image of postmodern paradox would be hard to find. In terms of history, the allegorical, slow

process of human situation is contrasted with that of revolution and of grand metamorphoses. To Crick, reality is what the monotonous fens provide: reality is that nothing happens. Historiography's causality is only a construct: "How many of the events of history have occurred . . . for this or for that reason, but for no other reason, fundamentally, than the desire to make things happen? I present to you History, the fabrication, the diversion, and the reality-obscuring drama. History, and its near relative, Histrionics" (34). He would like to replace the heroes of history with the silenced crowds who do the "donkey-work of coping with reality" (34).

Nevertheless, Crick realizes that we all imitate the grand repertoire of history in miniature and endorse "its longing for presence, for feature, for purpose, for content" (34-5) in order to convince ourselves that reality means something. He himself attributes his becoming a history teacher to the tales his mother told him when he was afraid of the dark as a child. Later, when he wanted an explanation, he studied history as an academic discipline, only to "uncover in this dedicated search more mysteries, more fantasticalities, more wonders and grounds for astonishment" (53). In other words, as it had begun for him, history continues to be a yarn: "History itself, the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums, the dispeller of fears of the dark" (53).

The story Crick actually tells us and the Children is one that is overtly fictive history, and we get to watch the fictionalizing process at work. At one point we are told: "History does not record whether the day of Thomas's funeral was one of those dazzling mid-winter Fenland days" (70), but fourteen pages later, Thomas's funeral takes place under a definitely dazzling sky. Crick is aware of this creative, constructive process. At one point he stops: "Children, you are right. There are times when we have to disentangle history from fairy-tale. . . . History, being an accredited sub-science, only wants to know facts. History, if it is to keep on constructing its road

into the future, must do so on solid ground" (74) - something his slippery fen-country tale often seems to lack. Swift manages to raise the issue of narrative emplotment and its relation to both fictionality and historiography at the same time as he begins his problematization of the notion of historical knowledge. Crick tells his students: "When you asked, as all history classes ask, as all history classes should ask, what is the point of history? Why history? Why the past?" he feels he can reply: "Isn't this seeking of reasons itself inevitably an historical process, since it must always work backwards from what came after to what came before?" (92).

The study of history-that "cumbersome but precious bag of clues"-involves inquiry that attempts to "uncover the mysterious of cause and effect" (92), but most of all it teaches us "to accept the burden of our need to ask why" (93). That process of asking becomes more important than the details of historiography: "the attempt to give an account, with incomplete knowledge, of actions themselves undertaken with incomplete knowledge" (94). As he later says, "History: a lucky dip of meanings. Events elude meaning, but we look for meanings" (122) and we create them.

The critical moment comes when Price, Crick's rebellious student and the president of the Holocaust Club at Crick's school, interrupts his lesson on the French Revolution, saying: "The only important thing about history, I think, sir, is that it's got to the point where it's probably about to end" (5). Crick answers Price's criticism later over a drink, pointing out that Price's feelings and fears are not new. More immediately, Crick confesses his own loss of faith in the Grand Narrative of History:

So I shouldered my subject. So I began to look into history-not only the well thumbed history of the wide world but also, indeed with particular zeal, the history of my Fenland forebears. So I began to demand of history an Explanation. Only to uncover in this dedicated

search ... that history is a yarn. And can I deny that what I wanted all along was not some golden nugget that history would at last yield up, but history itself, the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums the dispeller of fears of the dark? (46-7)

Finding himself at the end of both a career and a marriage, and on the defensive with his student about the very relevance of his discipline, Crick deviates far from his syllabus to give them a history of his past in an attempt to explain how things turned out so badly.

The narrator, Tom Crick, has many of the traits characteristic of Swift's writing. According to Higdon, "Crick is absorbed in the past: retrospection, the art of looking backwards and reviewing past events has become a fixation for the history teacher" (Higdon 19). At a point of crisis in the present, when history itself is ending, Crick appears to be retreating into history from the anarchic here and now. The end of history is signaled by the challenges of his pupils, the closure of the history department, Crick's forced retirement and wife's committal to an asylum: his comfortable, middle-class world, a material existence based on history, has been "easily punctured by a knifeblade called Now" (27). In the 'Now' the media circus pitched around his wife's kidnapping of a baby from a supermarket has enabled the headmaster of Tom's school to make some changes. Lewis uses the leverage of the publicity not only to force Tom's resignation, but also to abolish the "rag-bag of pointless information that is history" (12). Under attack by an official warping of imagination, history is also assaulted by pupils anxiety-ridden view of the future. The pupils of Crick's class question the relevance of history, based on their fear of nuclear holocaust. What becomes apparent is that both the teacher and his pupils are at a point where "the symptoms of fear" (7) are overwhelming their existence. Price and his

fellow pupils live in a world of post-history, where the threat of nuclear annihilation inhabits their waking dreams.

In reaction to this, Crick tries to validate the worth of history for his pupils and himself. Yet in veering off the syllabus, he focuses on history as it relates to his personal past, warping his pedagogic expertise into a self-centered piece of detective work - one that reflects the heterogeneous or mixed-sourced content of a postmodern historiography. Crick's historical reclamation of the past is an "interminable and ambiguous process" (ix), open to interpretation where professional detachment is doomed by his very involvement within both the events and their telling.

First, Crick sets up a history of the fen country, both a geographical and geological depiction, but one which may suggest, fleetingly, the possibility of progress in the imaginary landscape of the narrator. As such, the Fens establish the evidentiary groundwork for the historical metanarrative of progress within the book. The Fens are charted and subjected to the structured enterprise of reclamation; with the arrival of Dutch engineers, those "practical and forward-looking people, human control becomes an influence on the landscape, and the pace of history alters, and progress" (11) seems to be achievable. Changes are made, cutting new courses of rivers to the sea, and draining land. Crick's ancestors "became land people" (13), engaged in what is still a "slow and arduous process, the interminable and ambiguous process . . . of land reclamation" (10). Later in the novel he suggests that his "humble model for progress is the reclamation of land. Which is repeatedly, never-endingly retrieving what is lost" (254).

Yet the resisting topography of *Waterland* is also the return of a natural narrative in contrast to that historic artificiality of progress constructed by humanity. Over the years, the waterways of the Fens are obstructed by the very silt that forms

the land, and intense flooding periodically wipes out humanity's attempts at control. Draining the land only emphasizes the instability of the area, with the "reclaimed land . . . shrinking and sinking" (12) below sea level, inviting disaster. Similarly, the flatness of the landscape also negates the presence of humanity and its rational history. Just as water is a "liquid form of Nothing, the Fens, are a landscape, of all landscape, most approximate to Nothing" (13). In this context, Cooper opines that "water takes on a mystic significance, an agent of dissolution, devolution, and loss that challenges history's search for something (Cooper 373).

The regression of empirical reclamation, the scientific accumulation of facts and evidence, reaches an even more personal level when Tom Crick envisages the failure of Victorian certainties, the fall of his mother's family, the Atkinsons, and their leveling union with the Cricks in the production of various emblems within his own personal experience and memory. The evidence of a bottle of Ernest Atkinson's ale and the potato-head brother Dick are essential clues in the detective work of his personal past of the early 1940s. The death of Freddie Parr, Mary Metcalf's abortion, and Dick's self drowning are all linked by a methodical observation of detail. Crick dispassionately records the sequence of events: the budding relationship of Mary and himself; the rivalry with Dick for Mary's sexual curiosity; the drowning of Freddie and subsequent inquiry; the discovery of the bottle linking Dick to murder; Mary's pregnancy and subsequent abortion; Tom's revelation of Dick's incestuous origin; and the witnessed fall of Dick. Yet despite his role as a historical scribe, Crick is still a participant in these events. There are clear implications in this inquiry of his culpability in this past crisis, implications that link his guilt to the repercussions of the present one. The past events have signalled a personal end of history that can only be observed, not retrieved. The crisis of the abortion and subsequent death of Dick, in

particular, are emblems for the dead-ends that Tom's inquiry has difficulty negotiating despite his efforts at empirical reclamation.

Though the narrator works very hard to dredge up plausible explanations, the pages of *Waterland* are saturated with elements that drift from the official, empirical history into other historically imaginative landscapes. The history of the Fens is in actuality a composite structure of narratives that challenge any claim to historical stability, with the evidence often coming from mythological sources. In his discussion of historical models, Crick consistently observes a cyclic symbolism, "which perpetually travels back to where it came from, erasing the possibility of the rational continuity, or Progress" (205). This imaginary model is applied to the French Revolution, the ultra-conservative return, and a nostalgia for a lost 'Golden Age': "we believe we are going forward, towards the oasis of Utopia. But how do we know-only some imaginary figure looking down from the sky can know-that we are not moving in a great circle?" (135).

Towards the end Crick tells his class: "What do you think all these stories are for . . . . It helps to drive out fear" (241). For in the end all that is tangible in the novel is the very process of telling and listening to stories. With appropriately circular logic, the point of the story becomes its narration.

Not only the discussed text *Waterland* but also his other texts like *Light of Day* (2003), *Last Orders* (1996) involved with the postmodern reclamation or reconstitution of history. In his works, there is a revelation a different control of historical perspective.

Julian Barnes novel *Flaubert's Parrot* consists of a series of meditations on Gustave Flaubert narrated by Geoffrey Braithwaite, a doctor whose wife's infidelities and subsequent death rendered the plot of his marriage an all-too faithful reenactment



of *Madame Bovary*. The novel's title refers not only to the fact that Braithwaite's life-story and rhetorical style mimic Flaubert's fictions but also to his quest to locate the stuffed parrot that Flaubert kept on his desk when writing *Un Coeur simple*. In the first chapter, Braithwaite discovers that two museums claim to own the parrot. He comes to conceive of his inability to determine which the real bird is as emblematic of the impossibility of recovering the past and accessing Flaubert's authentic voice. Indeed, the problem of historical knowledge lies at the forefront of his ramblings, which consistently blur the lines between history and fiction, life and art. As he anxiously observes, "We can study files for decades, but every so often we are tempted to throw up our hands and declare that history is merely another literary genre: the past is autobiographical fiction pretending to be a parliamentary report" (63).

On the basis of such ground it can be identified that *Flaubert's Parrot* as postmodern and on using it in turn to help define the postmodern. Hutcheon cited the novel in her *Poetics* as an envoy of the postmodern consciousness "that there are only truths in the plural and never one Truth "and later credited it with furthering "the now quite general reconsideration of the nature of documentary evidence" (80). The novel *Flaubert's Parrot* explodes the notion of an unmediated historical reality. Some of the critics on this text opines that it shows that "however obsessively we search for truth, all must be fictional" (Waugh 51); that it reveals that "the past can be known only obliquely" (Gasiorek 162); that it portrays historical knowledge's "necessary subjectivity" (Gitzen 50); that it records the "impossibility to summon up the presence of the past" (Fokkema 45); and "that it deconstructs the binaries of life/ art, past/present and originality/imitation" (Higdon 180). Generally critics limit their analysis to reiterating the novel's critique of historical knowledge and concomitant

exploration of that critique's impact on identity formation. They assimilate the novel, in other words, to a postmodern project concerned primarily with returning a sceptical answer to a strictly epistemological question: Can we know past?

Undoubtedly, *Flaubert's Parrot* does train readers to be sceptical about the idea of historical truth and the possibility of historical knowledge. Braithwaite likens historical enquiry to using a net, an object that is at once a "meshed instrument designed to catch and a collection of holes tied together with string" (21). The suggestion is that a thinker's hermeneutics for ordering and explaining the past inescapably bring the past into being just as much as they are brought to bear on the past, that tying together historical continuities is, as Foucault once put it, "the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject" (Foucault 12). At the same time, however, reading *Flaubert's Parrot* itself as just another meshed instrument and collection of holes rolled into one captures only part of the novel's complexity. Braithwaite rarely limits his analyses to epistemological enquiry. Indeed, the uncertainty of historical knowledge constitutes less the conclusion of his analysis than their premise: the question to which he returns three times in the novel is not whether we can know the past but "How do we seize the past?" (5, 63, 71). This interrogation, if it engages epistemology at all, does so only in relation to historical method and to historical subjectivity. Moreover, by making seizure and not knowledge of the past the site of his questioning, Braithwaite implicitly points to the body's presence in historical enquiry and subjectivity: his concern seems less with the possibility of historical knowledge than with the physicality of the pursuit and the having of it. In other words, while *Flaubert's Parrot* does challenge readers' ability to know the past.

Throughout *Flaubert's Parrot*, Braithwaite's historical pursuits gravitate to the

unknown, unrecognized and undecided spaces in a historically conceived world: he seeks "everything that got away from historical memory" (38). At the novel's start, he asks, "What makes us randy for relics?" (3), but he may just as well have asked what makes us crave cases, for, as his monologues unfold, the case emerges as the object par excellence of his pleasures. The epistemological form that demarcates a site of sublime promise- of explanatory failure and opportunity- the case constitutes a frustrating object of desire, a mystery that promises and yet withholds understanding's pleasures. Braithwaite's historical seizures thus come to resemble moments of arousal in the face of the cases that history presents to cognition, and, given his attraction to these sites of cognitive instability and ambivalence, he not surprisingly employs a rhetoric of the tease to describe his seizures upon them. The past seems "endlessly tantalizing to him" (13): Juliet Herbert is "a tantalizing governess" (40), not because she may have been sexually involved with Flaubert but because, for the historian, the evidence for that involvement is both suggestive and inconclusive; "the tone and vocabulary of Flaubert's manuscripts are teasing" (38); "the past makes him chase" (12). In fact, the more it seems that no case exists because the grounds for historical explanation seem too determinate or indeterminate, the greater is Braithwaite's "fierce glee if he can find one" (23). Thus, even Flaubert's unwritten books tantalize him because they can attain tangibility just by talking about them: "they can, to an extent, be filled out, ordered, reimagined" (88). Not simply the means to an end, this pleasure of the case, what Braithwaite calls the "pleasure of anticipation", may actually be, he says, "the most reliable form of pleasure" (4). Likening a fulfilled anticipation to a "desolate attic" (4), he proposes that fulfillment's deferrals offer longer lasting pleasures: even if exhausted or worked through, "Pleasure is found first in anticipation, later in memory" (122).

Such remarks about the pleasures of indeterminacy may seem to associate Braithwaite's case-oriented erotics with erotics of suspended subjectivity. Yet, for Braithwaite, the case's pleasures—indeed, his grounds for calling them reliable pleasures—seem to stem precisely from the fact that they do not jolt him out of subjectivity, that they prevent him from feeling desolate. This is not to say that they are pleasure of normativity. After all, the pleasures of anticipation that cases offer also require the potential for such jolts. Rather, when he characterizes the pleasures of cases as reliable, he seems to be saying that you can rely on them to incite the pleasures of the desire to know: reliable relationships with history lie in experiencing desires for historical knowledge themselves erotically, "a condition of erotic oscillation" (78) based on the opposing threats of understanding and of failing to understand the past. Exploring these threats is central to Braithwaite's meditations. As he puts it, pleasure-seekers divide into two groups: those who "abstain and observe fearing both disappointment and fulfillment" and those who "rush in, enjoy, and take the risks" (122). His self-classification in the former category implies that disappointment and fulfillment can both produce the kinds of wounding historical insights he fears. While rushing in and even attaining determinate knowledge can be more fulfilling and pleasurable in theory, he proposes that they harm the enquirer in practice.

For Braithwaite, this potential harm stems from the fact that explaining away a historical case or discovering a new one necessarily disrupts previously reified explanations, thus altering—perhaps uncomfortably so—his felt relationship to history and sense of identity. For example, when an acquaintance dupes him into believing that correspondence exists proving that Flaubert really was sexually involved with Herbert, Braithwaite, like a jilted lover, experiences the resolution and subsequent

abrupt return of uncertainty on this point as if "someone had lent him a fur overcoat and repeating watch for a few days, then cruelly snatched them back" (32). Likewise, when he discovers the second parrot, he characterizes it as a "squawking intruder" (10) because it disrupts his evidentiary relationship to the first bird. The discovery replaces the tangible case of Flaubert's voice, a particularly desirable object for him, with a Hardy Boys-like form of intrigue, "The Case of the Stuffed Parrot" (131). This danger of a potentially sublime encounter slipping into a pedestrian one, of one kind of case quickly becoming another, also strikes Braithwaite as he browses through Flaubert's house. He notes the threatening disorder of a museum where "trivial knick-knack [sits] beside solemn relic" (9), and when he bends down to inspect an artifact, he observes anxiously that he assumes not only the "posture of the devout, but also of the junk-shop treasure hunter" (10).

As such comments begin to reveal, Braithwaite's fear of desolation through historical enquiry constitutes a fear of humiliating exposure and epiphany: he consistently portrays the disappointment of unsuccessful and unexpected historical seizures as a species of humiliation. Critics who regard *Flaubert's Parrot* as dismissing the possibility of historical knowledge often point to Braithwaite's metaphorical comparison of history to an uncatchable, greased pig; yet, in context, this metaphor emphasizes the idea that attempts to seize the past carry the potential to humiliate the seizure:

When I was a medical student some pranksters at an end-of-term Dance released into the hall a piglet which had been smeared with grease. It squirmed between legs, evaded capture, squealed a lot. People fell over trying to grasp it, and were made to look ridiculous in the process. The past often seems to behave like that piglet. (5)

What makes people look ridiculous in the scene is not the mere presence of the pig but their inability to catch hold of it, the fact that their active attempts at control results in the loss of control over their bodies. For Braithwaite, this threat of personal and public humiliation inheres in historical case study, not only in attempts to seize cases but also in discoveries of new cases in spaces that were previously understood. He repeatedly emphasizes the potential humiliation both of seizing too actively: "The point at which you suspect too much is being read into a story is when you feel most vulnerable, isolated and perhaps stupid" (9) and of not seizing actively enough: the historian's authority remains vulnerable to "everything that got away" (22).

A prurient anecdote Braithwaite tells about Flaubert reveals the depths of his own fears on this point. Flaubert maintained contact with a lunatic in the Rouen asylum who would copulate with cadavers in exchange for cups of coffee. One day however, the lunatic was presented with a guillotined corpse, and could not be persuaded to perform. Significantly, Braithwaite attributes this refusal not to the absence of the head, but to a "need for a face, however dead" (64). A face is the visual surface that most immediately identifies a body, inserting it into viewers' taxonomies of race and gender, and as such, faces provide bodies with organized, signifying, subjective presences. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari put it, the 'black holes' and 'white walls' of the face constitute an intersection that "removes the head from the stratum of the organism, human or animal, and connects it to other strata, such as significance and subjectification" (167). When Braithwaite links the lunatic's refusal to a missing face, he implicitly invests a face, as do Deleuze and Guattari, with the ability to present a body: he suggests that a face's absence dissolves all traces of a body's presence as a site of desire. In fact, his further speculation that the lunatic maintained his refusal despite promises for more riches marks the face as the very

point of presence: it implicitly becomes possible for Braithwaite to imagine sexual desire for an object, however dead, so long as the barest trace of a presence-of a self-affirming recognition-remains. Braithwaite's subsequent interrogation of the sanity of the lunatic's refusal to perform, of whether the "need for a face" makes the lunatic "saner, or madder" (64), in turn reads as an expression of anxiety over Braithwaite's own relations with the dead. Shortly after relating the story, he compares seizing the past to catching one's face reflected in a train window in a tunnel:

You wait, and look, and catch a face against a shifting background of sooty walls, cables, and sudden brickwork. The transparent shape flickers and jumps, always a few feet away. You become accustomed to its existence, you move with its movements; and though you know its presence is conditional, you feel it to be permanent. Then there is a wail from ahead, a roar and a burst of light; the face is gone forever.

(96)

The suggestion is that when the historical enquirer encounters an absence or unexpected presence where something else, some kind of self-reflection, had been sensed, the encounter irreversibly transforms the enquirer. It forces acknowledgement of a knowledge that previously had been foreclosed. Braithwaite here frames the pursuit of history.

This novel goes beyond the traditional distinction among the literary genre and blurs every boundary so as to break the hierarchy and the canonicity of literary genres. The several genres like biography, history, dictionary, exam paper, letters and story come at a single place in Barnes's text and finally take a form of hybrid fiction which can be said as historiographic metafiction. This intertextuality makes Barnes's text a new historicist approach to interpret Flaubert's biography. It also suggests

writer's post-structuralist endeavor to impose the notion of multiple voices to genre of novel. As Barthes believes a novel is a kind of cacophony where multiple voices come together, Barnes seems to practice the notion at his best by bringing up several fragmented stories through different genres. And its metafictional achievement along with its multiplicity also cannot be overlooked. As a metafiction it encompasses the speakers' active participation and criticism of its own.

Having been confronted with many genres, Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* is successful to establish its own value as a distinct and perfect work of postmodern art. And it has successfully attracted the new historicist reading as it supports the new historicist multiple interview tendency as viewed by Louis Montrose:

New Historicism has been constituted as a terminological site of intense debate, of multiple appropriations and contestations, not only within Renaissance studies but in other areas of literary criticism, in history and anthropology, and within the cross-disciplinary space of cultural studies. (407)

Consequently, *Flaubert's Parrot* is a multi-generic novel that not only blurs the disciplinary boundary but also blends fact and fiction with the presentation of layers of story, history, biography and so on. In the layer of story about parrot can be seen in the paradigm of traditional detective story. But *Flaubert's Parrot* as a postmodern novel does not uncover the mystery like in detective fictions rather it leaves in possibilities.

Secondly, he brings biography of Gustave Flaubert that focuses mostly on his literary career and affairs. In the biography, he presents three chronologies where he mixes first person and third person narrative styles. The content of each biography is different. The first one is the heroic depiction of Flaubert and his literary career. This



positive picture of author is juxtaposed with the second chronology that is of failure, distress and losses. The last part of the novel is devoted to Braithwaite's personal story. It is a story that is kept differed in the narrative which reveals his relationship with his wife, wife's adultery and suicide. In the partial autobiography the narrator has an existential motivation to narrate through which he seeks some sort of salvation.

Likewise, along with this layer, 'Braithwaite's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas', 'Examination Paper' and 'Chronology' are other astonishingly experimented genres in the novel. It seems as if the writer has just collected some piece of paper having different field of knowledge and bound together. But his deliberate breaking of the conventions makes the writing worthwhile and having an active purpose behind it. The purpose is to blur the generic boundary among the subjective and objective, or fact and fiction.

Barnes revisits Flaubert going through the past of new historicism that he opens a wide area interpretation and representation. He explains Flaubert by all the dimensions of life. His ideas do not show a monotonous progression like in most stories; the variety of tension has been shown by eliminating the generic distinction and making the text as complex as life is in reality.

Julian Barnes fictionalizes the biography of Gustave Flaubert in *Flaubert's Parrot*. The question of how we seize the past problematizes the authenticity of history and personal biography. The whole novel centers on exploration of Flaubert's minute life information so as to have doubt on existing truth and unfold the hidden realities through the new historical perspective. New historicism problematizes established truth and questions history written in conventional way. According to this theory, historian always writes history from the perspective of people in power and the presence of subjectivity of the historiographer also cannot be denied. Thus, history

is nothing except what a historian finds it to be like, and what socio-political power tames it in their favour. Foucault opines power always holds "a discursive relation rather than something which a person or group wields or bears" (Foucault 21). He goes to the extremities of power more than official discourses that over-asserts in its authority. His concept of power appears less legitimate, less legal in character. He thinks "power installs itself and produces real material effects" (21) when the field of power is created out of discourses. To be more precise, power, for Foucault, is not just "the ruthless domination of the weaker by the stronger [. . .] Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere" (39). Foucault's concept of power is deeply linked with truth created through discourse or knowledge in a society. The discourses come and exist in both documented forms like history and literature and verbal forms.

Julian Barnes aims to present the history in such a way that fictionalizes every event and shows the skeptical view on the validity of real history. He makes parody of what was believed and written in history about Flaubert. He expresses his dissatisfaction with the objectivity of biography about writer; unlike other few writers, he likes to go beyond it and look into it with subjective inquiries:

Why aren't the books enough? Flaubert wanted them to be: few writers  
 Believed more in the objectivity of the written text and the  
 Insignificant of the writer's personality; yet still we disobediently  
 Pursue. The image, the face, the signature; the 93 percent copper statue  
 and the Nadar photograph; the scrap of clothing and the lock of hair.  
 What makes us randy for relics? Don't we believe the words enough?  
 Do we think the leavings of a life contain some ancillary truth? When  
 Robert Louis Stevenson died, his business-minded Scottish nanny

quietly began selling hair which she claimed to have cut from the writer's head forty years earlier. The believes, the seekers, the pursuers bought enough of it to stuff a sofa. (3)

Barnes is more serious to know about the personality of the writer rather than the mere objective description of who he is. It shows his restlessness to know about the reality and go beyond the words. The history relies only on words and takes it to be the truth. But Barnes thinks it insufficient for anyone because there is something else we always wish to know besides the facts in words. They are the personal feelings, passion for something and desires or subjectivity. Such things are deliberately avoided from history and so Barnes attempts to rewrite the history with a different tone and colour. He tries to represent the reality as best as possible by writing history with such mixtures and complications that goes similar with the life itself.

The form of history or biography has been violated and fictionalized in following three points: 1) Intertextuality, 2) Postmodern concept of originality and truth and 3) Trans-historical narration. For this, he takes Geoffrey Braithwaite, the protagonist of Barnes's most highly acclaimed novel to date, is an elderly doctor who introduces himself as a devoted admirer of Gustave Flaubert. Throughout the text he collects facts about the life and works of the French master, tells stories and anecdotes about him, quotes his novels, letters and diaries and defends him against the accusations that have been leveled at him by literary critics and historians. However, Braithwaite finds himself unsatisfied with the essential dryness of his knowledge about Flaubert.

At the very beginning of the novel he complains that "all that remains of [Flaubert] is parrot [:] ideas, phrases, metaphors, structured prose which turns into sound" (2). He desires to know him intimately, to gain a more profound insight into

his genius. What serves as this intimate link between Braithwaite and Flaubert is a stuffed parrot, which he discovers one day at the Hotel- Dieu in Roue. The parrot, named Loulou, is reputedly the one which Flaubert once borrowed from the museum to serve him as inspiration when he was working on his novella *UN Coeur Simple*. Braithwaite admits that at the sight of Loulou he feels "ardently in touch" with Flaubert and from then on imagines it to be "the emblem of the writer's voice" (9). The importance of the epiphany he experiences makes him want to establish whether the exhibition at the Hotel- Dieu is indeed the parrot that Flaubert had in front of him when writing *UN Coeur Simple* or the parrot on display in the near- by Croisset is the authentic one.

The novel, then, takes the form of a very loosely structured account of the quest for the genuine parrot intertwined with numerous digressions about Gustave Flaubert. As the novel unfolds, however, it becomes increasingly clear that Braithwaite's story about Flaubert and the parrot is to a large extent a mere pretext for telling the tragic story of the protagonist's late wife Ellen. The text is peppered with moments of sudden breaking off in speech, which take place whenever Braithwaite attempts to overcome his embarrassment and shyness and begin his own painful story: "I remember ... . But I'll keep that for another time" (82), "My wife. . . Not now, not now" (120). At one point, in the midst of his discussion of *Madame Bovary*, he suddenly confesses,

Three stories contend within me. One about Flaubert, one about Ellen, one about myself. My own is the simplest of three [. . .] and yet I find it the hardest to begin. My wife's is more complicated and more urgent; yet I resist that too [. . .] Ellen's is a true story; perhaps it is even the reason I am telling you Flaubert's story instead. (59)

Such quotes highlight the blurring of fiction and history, with the historical couple, Flaubert and Colet, being placed side by side with the fictitious couple, Geoffrey and Ellen Braithwaite, whose literary models, Charles and Emma Bovary, are also invented.

Flaubert's story becomes thus a story that is being told instead of a different, personal one, which the narrator feels unable to begin. Several questions seem to arise at this point. If the story about Gustave Flaubert is not being told for its own sake, what purpose does it serve? Why to tell a story at all? Does writing about Flaubert prepare Braithwaite for telling his own story? And ultimately: Why does he choose to write about Flaubert and not somebody else? As is usually the case with Barnes's novels, there is not one answer to any of the questions; there are only answers in plural, often contradictory ones. The reasons why Geoffrey Braithwaite chooses to tell Flaubert's story rather than his own are complex and equivocal. Braithwaite is afraid of confronting the pain of his personal tragic story and therefore defers it until he can work up the share it with the reader.

The purpose of this discussion of Geoffrey Braithwaite's attitude towards Gustave Flaubert is to textualize the whole biographical history of Gustave Flaubert. And the textuality is just the acknowledgement of inaccessible past. Louise Montrose characterizes such poststructuralist orientation to history as a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of histories:

By the Historicity of texts, I mean to suggest the historical specificity, The social and material embedding of all modes of reading. By textuality of histories, I mean to suggest, in the first place, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, to a material existence that is unmediated by the textual traces of the society in question. (410)

One of the key issues raised by *Flaubert's Parrot* is the possibility or otherwise of discovering the truth about the past. The novel repeatedly poses the question: "How do we seize the past?" (5, 63, 71). At an early stage of his quest, Geoffrey Braithwaite compares the pursuit of the past to a game of chasing a piglet smeared with grease; "It squirmed between legs, evaded capture, squealed a lot. People fell over trying to grapes it, and were made to look ridiculous in the process. The past often seems to behave like that piglet" (5). But why is the past beyond our grasp? Is it because there is no such thing as truth about the past? Does that mean that the past did not take place? Barnes's novel does not seem to go that far. What precludes the ultimate success of the search for truth is the lack of a reliable means to conduct it. There is no objective access to the past-memory is fallible; what remain are texts and various discourses, which are contingent, unreliable and partial. Braithwaite realizes this and declares that "all that remains of Flaubert is paper" (3).

Barnes mixes biographical and historical information, which is supposed to be fully objective, with subjective and writer's personal stories in order to counter the official biography of Gustave Flaubert. For this, he has presented the novel in a complex form that it includes not only the objective and subjective facts about Flaubert, but also includes the several least related disciplines like dictionary, exam papers, letters, and pure story of the writer himself. In the sense, Barnes seems to be mocking the so called fixed truth in biography and history and seems making his own best effort to give an alternative way to approach the truth.

The explicit purpose of Barnes to this novel lies in the breaking and blurring of the boundary between what is fact and what is fiction. Wesseling thinks it to be a postmodernist tendency of rewriting history as:

Both self-reflexivity and counterfactual conjecture relativize the

Distinction between fact and fiction, but they do so from different perspectives. Modernist writing demonstrates how diverging meanings can be attributed to the same fact, thereby bringing out the poly-interpretability of the *historical record*. Postmodernist counterfactual conjecture, quite differently, speculates about ways in which events might have taken an entirely different course, which foregrounds the *malleability of the historical reality*. (113)

Barnes's way of writing can be put under this Wesseling's claim that postmodernist counterfactual writings foreground the malleability of the historical reality, while modernist writings show the diverging meaning with the poly-interpretability in the historical record. It means, they counter the fact narrated in the history and tend to display the malleability of the historical reality. Likewise, Barnes's text, remaining within the same frame, counters the historical facts with the addition of fictionality in it. In other words, Flaubert's biography is intertwined with fictional elements like writer's self-reflexive stories and different genres. Barnes's protagonist of the novel, by showing the link between him and Flaubert, portrays his self-reflection to explore both Flaubert as well as himself. And in the latter part of the story, Flaubert's life has been presented as a metaphor to understand the narrator, which gives a new direction to his novel from mere a historical record.

Taking the help of Wesseling's terminology, Barnes's novel can be read as a counterfactual fiction that it differs from modernist self-reflexivity which retrieves the past and forms a subject of explicit reflection, rather it speculates about ways in which events might have taken an entirely different course.

Julian Barnes thematizes history and love in his most novels such as

*Parthenon, A History, A History of the World in 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  Chapters, and Flaubert's*

*Parrot*. In *Parenthesis* he tries to dismantle the credibility of traditional history; in the next novel, *A History of the World in 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  Chapters*, he addresses the political implications of historical research and narration with self-reflexivity. *Flaubert's Parrot* eventually alters canonized history with the use of counterfactual elements. It seems useful to quote few lines from his another novel, *Parenthesis* in order to have a clear view of Barnes's opinion about history:

History isn't what happened. History is just what historians tell us. There was a pattern, a plan, a movement, expansion, the march of democracy; it is a tapestry, a flow of events, a complex narrative, connected, explicable. One good story leads to another. First it was kings and archbishops [...], then it was the march of ideas and the movements of masses, then little local events which mean something bigger, but all the time it's connections, progress, meaning, this led to this, this happened because of this. And we, the readers of history, the sufferers from history, we scan the pattern for hopeful conclusions, for the way ahead. And we cling to history as a series of salon pictures, conversation pieces whose participants we can easily reimagine back into life, when all the time it's more like a multi-media collage, with paint applied by decorators' roller rather than camel-hair brush. (242)

This passage is about historiography. What people regard as history, it seems to say, is not the same as what really happened, it is what historians tell us. This specifically touches upon narrativity, which is one of the concerns of historiography in the making. Thus, the above quote seems to confirm the conclusion that the novel is concerned with self-reflexivity.

*Flaubert's Parrot* is no way far from the theme of history. It too narrates the



alternative story and tries to present an alternative historical record. Countering the traditional way of narrating history, Barnes poses his own version of history which is free from any power politics and one sided perspective. Unlike the history, this is not just mere the record of historical events in the fixed dates, but it's a subjective, self-reflexive way of approaching the reality both factual and psychological. The narratives have been proved full of biased details through new historical study. Questioning and countering such narratives, new historicism came as the voice of those forgotten and avoided. The historical trend of creating heroism by hiding all the dark sides is the major concern for Julian Barnes. Thus, he gives a different and multidimensional history in this novel.

*Flaubert's Parrot* is in the form of new historicism in full contrasts to the old historicism. New historicism appears as an alternative history to the old history for its inability to capture the truth. So this theoretical idea is best applied for the interpretation of Barnes's text. Barnes has given a different path for accessing history with this new historical perspective. The path has been created in realistic mode with the inclusion of multiplicity, diversity and subjectivity issues at a time which were aloof from the history. Barnes says in an interview with Patrick McGrath, "*Flaubert's Parrot* was a book that went off in all directions, and incidents, and stories, which, as the book continues, take on more depth and significance. At first, they are just odd stories, but by the end they become metaphors" (23). The books seem not merely a history; he deals with the issue of history in quite different way with personal views and that he finally concludes as "the desire to reach conclusions is a sign of human stupidity" (67). He means to say history is not an ultimate truth as it is impossible to imagine all records of every event. And it is always doubtful for its historiography and narrativity. One can hardly believe in such narrative which presents only good

thing having all the bad and subjective sides into darkness. Ultimately, there is least belief in the historical records. Therefore, in the beginning of the novel, Barnes says ironically "Flaubert's statue stares out over the city he despised, and which in turn has largely ignored him" (1). Despite the historical flattery over Flaubert, he seems to be hardly remembered by the city where he lived, Thus, Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* is an alternative history which contains more realistic subjective facts rather than the dry objectivity of old history.

This novel is based on historical facts about Flaubert in relation to his own work, his characters, relations and his interests. It is a plunge in to the writer's personal undergoing. Barnes finds the parrot as "a preserved routine yet mysterious fashion" (6). This makes him feel that he has known the writer already. He tries to capture the nature of Flaubert through his own characters. Barnes feels:

We can submit the bird to additional interpretation. For instance, there are submerged parallels between the life of the prematurely aged novelists and maturely aged Felicite, critics have sent in Ferrets. Both of them were solitary, both of them had lives stained with loss, both of them, though full of grief, were preserving. (7)

The animals like bear, camel, and sheep are other animals related to Flaubert, which Barnes includes in this novel for his psychological representations. He poses possible intentionality of Flaubert in keeping the animals in his mind. This type of extra approach makes this novel counters for the general history and establishes of a separate history.

In Julian Barnes's text, the truth established out of discourse is made unstable by offering several possibilities of reality. The task of finding the authentic parrot is the most difficult job he ever had. The truth appears to be guided by the subjective

judgments of individuals:

I mentioned the question of authenticity to the gardienne. She was, Understandably, on the side of her own parrot, and confidently Discounted the claims of the Hotel- Dieu. I wondered if somebody knew the answer. I wondered if it mattered to anyone except me, who had rashly invested significance in the first parrot. The writer's voice- what makes you think it can be located that easily? Such was the rebuke offered by the second parrot. As I stood looking at the possibly inauthentic Loulou, the sun lit up that corner of the room and turned his plumage more sharply yellow. I replaced the bird and thought: I am now older than Flaubert ever was. It seemed a presumptuous thing to be; sad and unmerited. (9)

Here, truth is a matter of personal subjective judgment. The writer thinks, except him, no one is interested in authenticity of a parrot but claiming themselves their own belief and satisfied with what they are having in the mind. The other characters seem to be living in a fake world of subjective belief, despite being known with the fact of existence of multiple subjective opinions for the single truth.

*Flaubert's Parrot* points out the facts and the loopholes over such unquestioned image of Flaubert's greatness in literary history. It claims that art cannot escape the authorial reality but represents the whole scenario of other's time and gives a clear panorama of the particular society and its idealism. One of the major objectives of Barnes's novel is to show the problem in Flaubert's concept of an author and his failure to fulfill the duty in a society as an author.

Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* portrays both the blind spots and strong images of Flaubert's character. He was actually not that great image which history

depicted him; behind the historiographical mask, he deserves more vices than the virtues. Barnes ironizes his personality by the help of various charges on him and by his own addition of Colet's version of story. The charges to him were: "that he hated humanity and democracy (73); that he was against the commune ; that he was unpatriotic (74); that he shot wild life in the desert; that he didn't involve himself in life; that he tried to live in an ivory tower (75); that he was a pessimist; that he teaches no positive virtues (76); that he was a sadist; that there are a lot of animals slaughtered in his books; that he was beastly to woman (76); that he believed in beauty; that he was obsessed with style; and that he didn't believe art had a social purpose" (79).

These charges are shown to be defended by a life-long admirer, Jeffrey Braithwaite, the old doctor who is obsessed with Flaubert. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* reveals the death and adultery of narrator's own wife which provides motive for his obsession with Flaubert and, quite unexpectedly, this culminates in a truly moving moment of emotional empathy. To project all the negative sides of a famous writer with the help of a Flaubert's admirer, is Barnes politics to expose the reality about how actually he lived his life in most critics' eyes. Braithwaite hates the critics for their inability to digest minor things about a writer, means he blindly admires Flaubert because his life had experienced the same accidents as Flaubert narrates in *Madame Bovary*.

Braithwaite's purpose to take Flaubert's favor seems his attempt to soothe his own guilt for the suicide of his own adulterous wife. By looking at the story, it can be concluded that Barnes is looking at Flaubert through both from the back and front or from the eyes of an admirer and from the eyes of critics to reach the truth and reality more closely.

Barnes's portrayal of Flaubert in both negative and positive way, praising and ironizing, is an attempt to represent the postmodern mind of indeterminacy and

undecidability, and more about the problem created due the inaccessible nature of past. In other words, it is to show the difficulty to know the past. The last section of the novel also clarifies Barnes's motive of making the stuffed parrot as the main issue to search about Flaubert that Braithwaite's search for the authentic parrot which turns in vain.

Julian Barnes employs himself in making his best effort to explore the truth and reality. *Flaubert's Parrot* is the ultimate form of Barnes life-long research on Gustave Flaubert's life, where Barnes concludes Flaubert's biography as a doubtful representation or like a net with holes tied together. He adds Flaubert's stubborn, proud to himself, lecherous, misanthropic and misogynist character in the biography.

Examining the novels of Graham Swift and Julian Barnes reveals an articulation of postmodern concerns and methodologies in the representation of history in their texts. Fiction, in its own way, is a historical record reflecting the changes in ideological concerns of the time of its production. This is particularly apparent when history itself is a prominent subject within fiction. These authors' use of referentiality and a greater diversity in considering what can be history, present in both historical material and historicized narratives, is combined to produce complementary effects of inclusiveness without conclusiveness. Swift's and Barnes' work constitutes an opening up of possibilities for finding meanings from the fictive pasts, yet one that resists the desire for stability in those meanings. As the continuing postmodern representation of history in literature demonstrates, history is not dead; it is just not the same as it was. Now plural, self-aware of its constructed status, and reliant on a larger range of mediums of recording, history resists the threat of closure.

The novel *Hawksmoor* by Peter Ackroyd rejects the understanding of linear time in both its plot structure and the narrative style. Novels that are written with a

linear structure portray events that follow each other, as there is a continuum in both plot and narration which are conventional. In *Hawksmoor*, however, this style is totally denied, as the narration shifts from Dyer in the 18th century to a third person narration in Hawksmoor's time. In the first chapter of the novel, Nicholas Dyer starts narrating his own version of history in the form of a diary. Going back to the notion of subjective history, Ackroyd through Dyer shows that, the way history is presented depends solely on who is narrating it. Like many other postmodernist writers, Ackroyd suggests that any writer of history is bound to exclude or include whatever he wishes. In this respect, history comes close to being fiction and there is no definite line to separate the two. Dyer says that:

If I were to now inscribe my own History with its unparalleled Sufferings and surprising Adventures . . . I know that the World would not believe the Passages there related, by reason of the strangeness of them, but I cannot help their Unbelief, and if the Reader considers them to be but dark Conceits, then let him bethink himself that Humane life is quite out of the Light and that we are all Creatures of Darknesse. (11)

At this point, Dyer simply states that it is of no concern to him whether the readers of his history find it plausible or not, because it is his own version of the past. In the same chapter, Dyer tells the reader that, while he is narrating his history, he will be doing it in the manner of true historians who have to support what they are stating as true history with certain "Causes as well as the Matter of Facts" (13). Therefore, he is aware of the fact that, in order for a historical writing to be plausible, it has to contain certain aspects, which the reader should be able to relate his/her own knowledge to. The fictive quality of the novel is emphasized more overtly towards

the end in the 18th century plot. Dyer talks about the completion of the building of seven churches, which he likens to the writing of a book. Dyer further comments that, “There is also a Narrative which is hidden so that none may see it, and in a retired Place have I put the effigy of Friar Bacon who made the brazen head that spake Time is” (205). Therefore, Dyer implies that in his book (the seven churches), there is a kind of story or design that is not obvious to the ordinary person. Through the seven churches – only one of them fictional- Dyer tries to achieve some kind of immortality by leaving behind works of art that would survive his death. Dyer reflects his thoughts on architecture saying that it “aims at Eternity and must contain the Eternal powers: not only our Altars and Sacrifices, but the forms of our Temples, must be mystical” (9).

*Hawksmoor* is structured according to a dualistic logic, reflected in the combination of two apparently different stories: one is that of the eighteenth-century architect, Nicholas Dyer, the other, that of the twentieth-century detective, Nicholas Hawksmoor, Nicholas Dyer narrates his own story in the odd-numbered chapters. He is Sir Christopher Wren's assistant architect and has been commissioned to design and build seven (instead of the historical six) churches in the City of London and Westminster that were destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. As a practicing black magician, Dyer consecrated the seven churches to Satan by murdering and burying in their foundations a little boy or a tramp.

An external narrator reports the investigation carried out by the twentieth-century detective, Nicholas Hawksmoor, to solve a series of mysterious murders recently committed near the churches built by Dyer. That is to say, the novel combines two parallel stories separated in time by a gap of two centuries but closely related in space, as both the eighteenth and the twentieth-century murders have taken

place in the vicinity of the seven churches rebuilt by Dyer: what is more, the eighteenth and the twentieth-century victims appear to be the same. The relationship is further enhanced at the textual level in that the closing words of every odd chapter are invariably repeated as the opening words of the following even chapter, so that instead of the novel consisting of twelve chapters, we have the feeling of having two six-chapter versions of the same story narrated alternately from the perspective of an internal and an external narrator.

In *Hawksmoor*, the author problematises the linear time perspective in two ways: by reversing the supposed direction of time, i.e. travelling backwards in time, and by using two historically discontinuous time frames. One narrative strand is set in early eighteenth century London, the time of the Enlightenment, when modern thought, and with it the new consciousness of time, replace the earlier beliefs and pre-modern concepts of time and space. The other strand, set in London in the 1970s, shows the decline of modern science and rational thinking. In this context, Smethurst Paul opines:

In other words, the novel as a whole seems to depend on pre-modern concepts of time and space for it to work. At the same time, the modern science available to the detective, Hawksmoor, is never going to solve the mystery. It is a trick then, because the postmodern reader's desire to bring the mystery to a conclusion, to close the text, is only to be satisfied by entertaining the non-linear time of a mysticism that was driven underground in the eighteenth century by modern science and rational thinking. (179)

The novel alternates between chapters set in early eighteenth century London and those set in the twentieth century. The former concerns the architect, Nicholas



Dyer, who was charged by Parliament with building seven new churches, churches historically built by Nicholas Hawksmoor, the exemplar of English Baroque architecture. These chapters, which make up half of the novel, are related by Dyer himself, in the years 1711-1715. In those years, London is in the process of being rebuilt after the Plague and the Great Fire of 1666. Sir Christopher Wren is the chief architect and the Surveyor to Her Majesty's Works, while Dyer is the Assistant Surveyor. Dyer is also "of that older Faith" (20), a faith which is a strange mixture of Old Testament, Druid and Satanist rituals. His mystical belief in the pervasive power of evil stands opposed to the more established Sir Christopher Wren's belief in the empirical, scientific and rational ethos of the Royal Society. From the very beginning Dyer declares his opposition to the spirit of the Enlightenment and his belief in the powers of darkness: "He who made the World is also author of Death, nor can we but by doing evil avoid the rage of evil Spirits" (20), by secretly sacrificing to the demonic powers a virgin boy in the foundations of each of his new churches.

The other half of the novel concerns Nicholas Hawksmoor, a Detective Chief Inspector investigating a strange series of strangulations of boys and child-like tramps that occur on the sites of Dyer's churches. Hawksmoor is Sir Christopher Wren's modern counterpart whose belief in the power of reason fails to solve the murders.

The two narratives are divided by three centuries of historical time, but they are skill-fully connected by repeating phrases, images and motifs. They share a common locale the same area of London: Dyer works in Her Majesty's Office of works in Scotland Yard, Hawksmoor's office is the New Scotland Yard; both live around Seven Dials; the murders are being committed on the sites of the same seven churches. Each chapter begins with the same phrase or image which the previous one ends with. A multitude of the same words, names, images, rhymes, songs appear in

both narratives, so the readers have a sense of two parallel worlds touching one another at times. Smethurst further views that "The reader is asked to find connections, partly for the pleasure of making a whole and partly to confront conflicting ideologies and concepts of space and time within and between the two worlds" (180).

The author uses a double time frame to present a conflict between different concepts of time and the ideologies that underlie these concepts. The conflict is also presented doubly: through the relationship of Dyer and Wren and Dyer and Hawksmoor.

*Hawksmoor* depicts an early eighteenth century London society constituting a form of time that would come to dominate other forms of time. The importance of the constitution of this particular social time cannot be underestimated because it underlies many of the major faiths of modern society and although *Hawksmoor* makes no direct reference to it as such, this form of time was a prerequisite for industrial capitalism. The presence of this new concept of time is evident in the new rational science of the Royal Society, of which Sir Christopher Wren is the leading figure. But the novel also portrays the resistance to rational science and attachment to the older faith and metaphysical thinking in the character of Nicholas Dyer.

In the older faith, the fallen world is essentially evil and people are full of sin, but in time man can redeem himself:

And thus we pray: What is Sorrow? The Nourishment of the World.

What is Man? An unchangeable Evil. What is the Body? The Web of Ignorance, the foundation of all Mischief, the bond of Corruption, the dark Coverture, the living Death, the Sepulture carried about with us.

What is Time? The Deliverance of Man. These are the ancient

Teachings and I will not Trouble my self with a multiplicity of Commentators upon this place, since it is now in my Churches that I will bring them once more into the Memory of this and future Ages. For when I became acquainted with Mirabilis and his Assembly I was uncovering the trew Musick of Time which, like the rowling of a Drum, can be heard from far off by those whose Ears are prickt.

(21)

Dyer believes in a natural time which unites the past, present and future. Regarding the same concept about time Smeathurst suggests:

Enduring time must be inscribed in the design and fabric of his buildings, so that all time can be perceived, like the harmony of the spheres, echoing across a bounded cosmos in which all time is already completed and contained. .. From a postmodern perspective, it is in a sense true the universe does contain the traces of events from billions of years ago as they travel in light waves across the ether. And these waves are perceived as sounds picked up by radio telescopes, so we do indeed listen to the past as it travels across space. (185-6)

Dyer's plan is to use ancient patterns, such as pyramids, in the layout of his churches, to use materials, such as stone, with time already inscribed in them, and to follow the ancient rituals and ceremonies in the construction, such as making a human sacrifice and burying the body in the foundations:

This Mirabilis once describ'd to me, viz a Corn when it dies and rots in The Ground, it springs again and lives, so. Said he, when there are many Persons dead, only being buryed and laid in the Earth, there is an assembling of Powers. If I put my Ear to the Ground I hear them lie

promiscuously one with another, and their small Voices echo in my Church: they are my Pillars and my Foundations. (24)

At the very beginning, Dyer relates to his apprentice one of his principles:

"Architecture aims at Eternity and must contain the Eternal Powers: not only our Altars and Sacrifices, but the Forms of our Temples, must be mysticall." (9). But this is not the fashion of the Time: Sir Christopher Wren, Dyer's superior, believes that architecture should reflect 'Harmony' and 'Rationall Beauty' of the world. He is, as Dyer snidely comments, "all for Light and Easiness and will sink in dismay if ever Mortality or Darknesse shall touch his Edifices. It is not reasonable, he will say, it is not natural." (7). On the other hand, Dyer declares; "I am not a slave of Geometrical Beauty, I must build what is most Sollemn and Awefull" (7). Clearly, this is a conflict of old and new aesthetics, as well as of old and new concepts of space and time.

In the novel Wren is supposed to control and approve Dyer's work, but in most cases he just signs Dyer's designs without even looking them over. He is only interested in appearances, in the surfaces of things, in the phenomenal world. He believes only in the doctrine of Enlightenment, in reason and science, and despises the imagination and the irrational. Therefore, he fails to see who Dyer really is and what he does: even in their debate at the end of the novel, when Dyer reveals his most secret beliefs: "There is no Mathematically Beauty or Geometrical order here-nothing but Mortality and Contagion on this Ordure Earth. . . . There is a Hell, Sir, there are Gods and Daemons and Prodigies: your Reason is but a Toy. Your Fortitude downright madness against such Terroures" (147), Wren takes it as an expression of his melancholy temperament.

Wren's character in the novel represents the faith in the new rational science which comes to dominate eighteenth century thinking and which tries to destroy

earlier belief systems. But this faith is, through Wren, often proved wrong or exposed to ridicule, as in Dyer's common on the building of St. Paul's Cathedral:

He liked to destroy Antient things: sad and wretched Stuff, he called it, and he us'd to say that Men are weary of the Reliques of Antiquity. He spoke in their stead of Sensible Knowledge, of the Experimental Learning and of real Truths: but I look these for nothing but Fopperies. This is our Time, *said he*, and we must lay its Foundations with our own Hands; but when he used such Words I was seiz'd with this Reflection: and how do we conclude what Time is our own? [. . .] As it turned out, Sir Chris his own Perswasions were hurled against him, when it came to his Notice that he was building St Pauls Church upon an ancient Ruine. (55)

Wren and Dyer stand for beliefs that have fundamentally different concepts of time. The novel questions the society which is marking out its own time and trying to take charges of its own destiny in isolation from all the mysteries that surround it, so that in the end it becomes abstracted from the real world. "Our Age can... lay the Foundations: that is why we must study the principles of nature, for they are our best Draught." says Wren, but Dyer warns him: "You can not master or manage Nature. . . . The things of the Earth must be understood by the sentient Faculties, not by the Understanding" (144).

At the level of ideas, Dyer and Hawksmoor begin as opposed to each other's belief in the irrational and rationally respectively and are drawn together by the end of the book. Dyer's belief that his churches can reach across historical time is confirmed when it turns out that a series of sacrifices on the sites of the churches in the eighteenth century is connected with a series of murders in the twentieth century. The

victims bear the same names and are being murdered at exactly the same places as their precursors. It seems that we are faced with the simultaneity of experiences centuries apart, and we are instantly aware of the great difficulty for the detective assigned to the case: he does not know that the murders are being repeated.

The detective, Hawksmoor, is at first presented as a modern counterpart to Wren. He depends on the same time consciousness, linearity and faith in causality. He relies on modern scientific methodology, backed up by computers and other twentieth century technology, to reconstruct the crime scene. We first meet him when he arrives on the crime scene of the third murder, and we are immediately given a hint that the modern science and technology will not be able to solve the case. It is almost impossible, the pathologist says to Hawksmoor, to determine the time of death:

I don't know about the time. Even if I allow for a rise of temperature of six degrees at death and even if the rate of cooling was only two degrees an hour, His present body heat would mean that he was killed only six hours ago... And yet the extent of the lividity is such that the bruises were made at least twenty-four hours ago-normally they can take two or three days to come out like this. 'Hawksmoor said nothing, but started in the man's face. 'You say the timing is crucial, superintendent, but I have to say that in this case I don't understand the timing at all. ...And there's another thing. There are no impressions, no prints. A stranger's fingers pressed into the neck will leave a curved nail impression, but there are only bruises here. (113)

Hawksmoor's rational methodology is, like Wren's, exposed to ridicule. The evidence in the phenomenal world, the footprints and fingerprints he is trying to find, have long since disappeared.

On an occasion such as this, he liked to consider himself as a scientist, or even a scholar, since it was by close observation and rational deduction that he came to a proper understanding of each case; he prided himself on his acquaintance with chemistry, anatomy and even mathematics since it was these disciplines which helped him to resolve situations at which others trembled. For he knew that even during extreme events the laws of cause and effect still operated; he could fathom the mind of the murderer, for example, from a close study of the footprints which he left behind-not, it would seem, by any act of sympathy but rather from the principles of reason and method.

(152-3)

The irony is that Hawksmoor can only solve the mystery by some kind of sympathy or irrational psychic communication. Hawksmoor's rational methodology is undermined here because there appears to be no beginning from which to start plotting the events and so solve the mystery. Hawksmoor gradually breaks down as his investigations seem to lead nowhere, and more murders come to light ....

Occasionally, Hawksmoor articulates the problem; for example, when his assistant finds it difficult to know where to begin, Hawksmoor replies "perhaps there is no beginning, perhaps we can't look that far back" (126). There is an obvious irony here as this postmodern detective fails to see what the reader can see all along. By relying on science, modern technology, cause and effect, material evidence, Hawksmoor remains trapped in the present, unable to imagine the past or predict the future. Again

Smethurst puts his views: "He is presented as a parody of a modern detective, all method and reason, but no insight or intuition" (192).

However, gradually, Hawksmoor becomes aware, through a series of strange events, of something from the past reaching out for him. Further Smethurst gives his opinion:

[He] comes to the conclusion that there is a pattern too large for him to resolve. . . . As the pattern of events expands. . . Hawksmoor considers inventing, rather than constructing, the past: a shift from reason and method to imagination and fiction. . . . As a character in a postmodern novel, he is never far from admitting that he is himself an invention, being pulled this way and that by the author. But within the text, the detective also becomes conscious that something or someone from the past is manipulating him. (193)

As the story progresses, Hawksmoor gradually becomes Dyer's counterpart, his other half. The episode when Wren and Dyer visit Bedlam to see a Demoniack illustrates the connection of Dyer and Hawksmoor across centuries.

Dyer is building 'an everlasting Order' in the design and position of his seven churches which represent

. . .the seven Planets in the lower Orbs of Heaven, the seven Circles of the Heavens, the seven Starres in Ursa Minor and the seven Starres in the Pleiades. Little St. Hugh was flung in the Pitte with the seven Marks upon his Hands, Feet, Sides and Breast which thus exhibit the seven Demons. . . .(186)

Finally, in Little St. Hugh Dyer has hidden a plot that will eventually draw Hawksmoor into this church to discover his secret:



Nor shall I leave this Place once it is completed: Hermes Trismegistus built a Temple to the Sunne, and he knew how to conceal himself so that none could see him tho' he was still withinne it. This shall now suffice for a present Account, for my own History is a Patern which others may follow in the far Side of Time. And I hug my arms around my self and laugh, for as if in a vision I see some one from the dark Mazes of an unknown Futurity who enters Black Step Lane and discovers what is hidden in Silence and Secresy. (205)

Dyer has a vision of Hawksmoor coming to his church; then some time later he first meets his own apparition, his double, and then encounters "a species of such a Body as my own, but in a strange Habit cut like an Under-garment and the creature had no wig." (206). Hawksmoor also sees his double in a reflection in a shop window. It seems that the two worlds are becoming to merge.

At the conclusion of the novel a mystical transformation occurs as the spiritually exhausted Hawksmoor finally connects Dyer's pattern with the pattern of the present day murders. Here, in this context Smethurst opines that:

He imagines, or dreams, or actually does meet with Dyer in his church at Black Step Lane. Before the meeting, Hawksmoor has seen an image on a TV screen, an indistinct figure, like a shadow, speaking from within one of Dyer's churches. The trap begins to close, as Hawksmoor goes to the library and reads about the architect Dyer. He sense that the pattern is not yet complete, and he is impelled to go to the church at Black Step Lane where he meets with Hawksmoor, merges with the fictional Dyer to produce the real architect Hawksmoor. (194)

The novel *Hawksmoor* closes with the meeting of the eighteenth-century architect and the twentieth-century detective in the seventh church, Little St. Hugh. Throughout the novel, the repetition of crucial acts and the sharing of similar thoughts by both Hawksmoor and Dyer strongly suggest a shadow identity between criminal and detective. This hinted identity is consistent with Dyer's conception of this world as an ever-revolving wheel, where the linear time of history incessantly repeats itself in a vicious circle in which man is for ever caught in a round of endless reincarnations. When Dyer, at the end of the novel, manages to meet Hawksmoor at Little St. Hugh, he frees himself from the shackles of time, wipes out the memory of his fall into history and in a word situates himself in eternity.

The major issue discussed in this chapter is countering of the historical facts. The claim of history to carry out the historical facts and truth is minimized into just narratives manipulated certain groups in power. Thus, history and the truth about it remain doubtful and inaccessible.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion: Exposing the constructedness of History in Postmodern

#### British Metafiction

The novels *Flaubert's Parrot* by Julian Barnes, *Waterland* by Graham Swift and *Hawksmoor* by Peter Ackroyd substitute the foundational narratives of the mainstream history by offering multiple perspectives. They use plural competitive versions instead of a single centralized representation. The plural versions reinforce not only the postmodern questioning of historical knowledge and truth but also valorize fictional truth over the historical one. Furthermore, they inter-mix history and fictional literature to rupture the factual claim of absolute religion history and motives behind its narrative construction. These writers exploit the notion of historiographic metafiction by Linda Hutcheon, as a postmodern narrative technique.

Barnes, Swift and Ackward problematize history, contaminate it, and then treat it as a discourse similar to fiction. Treating history as a discourse similar to fiction, the common distinction between these two genres is blurred. To blur the genre boundary, they use postmodern technique-historiographic metafiction and skillfully handles the characteristics of postmodernism. This application does neither regard history closer to truth nor assumes it containing objectivity, impersonality, neutrality and transparency in terms of representation. They favour multiple historical perspectives instead of a centralized official version. It is concluded, "There is not one truth about the past, only a series of versions which are dependent on and constructed by the observer rather than retrieved from the past" (Nunning 369). They assume that knowing the truth of history is beyond human capacity. The use of complex narrative structures, and multiple and incompatible perspectives in the fiction support their assumption.

There is no such thing as complete accuracy. The purpose of history is to narrate events as actually as one can. But there are variations in each other's narration. Therefore, writing history is one way of connecting the individual component of society or an individual with the collective stream of history. That is why; history is always a guide to other alternative histories. In practice, history is told by anyone who has the power to be heard. Truth is nothing more than a cultural acceptance. The culture which has the military, economic and political power constructs the history, and spreads its claimed truth most effectively. As postmodern writers, they use fictions to interpret the past differently and more realistically than historians of all times. They open the way for alternative solutions by deconstructing the grand narratives of history. Further, they offer a revisionist realm where the novelists can rewrite history and create alternative histories.

The dissertation significantly contributes in re-visiting the past of any texts (British Fictions) which are produced either in line with the postmodern perspective or any official version which adopts the style for using foundational metanarratives that favour a single mode of representation. Historiographic metafiction can be one good technique to re-visit the past. By blurring the real and the magical, the technique subverts the conventional mode of representation, and creates space for re-visiting the past. The discussed British fiction writers use such technique or producing alternative histories. This technique can be applied to the British fictions writers who have used history on fictional narratives. Remaining on the border between fact and fiction, and historiography and literature, the technique called historiographic metafiction "shows a profound tendency to cross boundaries and blur genre distinctions" (Nunning 361). This technique though sounds like another master narrative of postmodern is one best narrative among several competing narratives.

As Linda Hutcheon claims the postmodern literature tries to rewrite or represent the past in history and in fiction so that it can open it to the present, Barnes, Swift and Ackward do the same thing in *Flaubert's Parrot*, *Waterland* and *Hawksmoor*. All the ideological formation, imaginative indulgence and narrative focalization exposed and expressed well throughout the novels. Novels, once again proved literature as creative genre; strip out all the motives behind the existing artifact that other genre still hide. Every artifact has its own ideological centrality so history and literature both try to fulfill its own motives. So, novels by intermixing fact with fiction and blurring the boundary between history and fiction reconstruct the past/history as Historiographic Metafiction termed by Linda Hutcheon and finally challenges the pre-established notions of history.

The dissertation has sought to provide a new way of carrying an intellectual discourse on history and literature for their proper representation in general and a need for re-interpretation of our knowledge and understanding of the past in particular. These fiction writers break the pre-established boundaries and hierarchies among different genres. They dismantle the general form of writing a fiction and give completely a new perspective in the understanding of fiction. Fiction tends to move towards history while history tends to move towards fiction. History is observed from outsider's perspective declining the grand narratives rather participating in it.

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