

Fictionalization of History in Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels*

This research project focuses on Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels*, a novel that discusses about American Civil War, mainly the battle of Gettysburg. Shaara, in the introductory letter to the reader, states that he has used primary sources and documents and to those materials he did not consciously change any facts. His main intention and purpose to write this novel was to give life to American History's Civil War. Throughout, fictionalization the Civil War, Shaara tries to show both sides of the Civil War: Union and Confederacy sides, and explain why the soldiers were really fighting. Harrison the narrator of the novel who is intelligent, thoughtful, and philosophical person, argues upon the fixity/truth of history, through the vast references.

The narrator also discusses about the pre-established legal and formal general principles, which are thought to be the causes behind any human condition such as death, marriage, separation etc. The narrator has vast reading of official history, as he states in the novel, but quite discontent with it due to its falsity and analyzes the generalizations about history and human conditions. He memorizes and examines various incidents occurred during American Civil War but of which he himself cannot speak for sure because of lack of evidence. He applies pre-established general principles about the Battle of Gettysburg in the American troops of both the Union and the Confederacy. But these principles also fail to find out the factual incidents. So, the narrator generalizes incidents of American Civil War. The present research aims, thus, to prove the notion of generalizations about history and human conditions inside the text.

Moreover, the purpose of the research is to investigate how historical generalizations/claims become unable to carry fixity and truth behind any

occurrence. At the same time, the study's focus is on how a predetermined principle behind various human conditions fails to be applied in each individual condition thoroughly. Since antiquity, some rationalists, historians and politicians have created the fixed knowledge, ideologies, truths and principles but such canonical boundaries are being questioned and demolished in the course of time. So, this research aims to create radical thought and action to question and break such monolithic and canonical boundaries Harrison does throughout the novel. *The Killer Angels* ends the existence of the contemporary grand narrative inside the story of Harrison, which enables the hypothesizing that once created generalization about history and human condition are unable to be fixed and to be applied in each and every cases due to changeability of time and its power to mould truth, various ideological characteristics, incomprehensible nature of human phenomena, impossibility of certainty and legalization and changeable nature of memories.

The novel projects the logic of historical truth and generalizations of principles about human condition. Harrison, narrates that The Battle of Gettysburg was the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. On the Union side there were about 23,000 casualties; the Confederates suffered about 28,000 casualties. He narrates that war was won by Union side in the strong leadership of Colonel Chamberlin but without any proper incidents. He asserts:

I don't know who me father was and I don't give a damn. There's only one aristocracy, and that's right here - "he tapped his white skull with a thick finger - "and YOU, Colonel laddie, are a member of it and don't even know it. You are damned good at everything I've seen you do, a lovely soldier, an honest man, and you got a good heart on you

too, which is rare in clever men. Strange thing. I'm not a clever man meself, but I know it when I run across it.(34)

He memorizes and examines the time and events such as war, bloodshed, bravery, betrayal, slavery and patricism and makes his own history but without any proofs. He finds no historical fixity and true general principles behind the human history. He finally comes to question and deconstruct the notion of historicity and certain principles behind the phenomena of human life. Such issues in the novel examines the problem in historicity and generalization on human conditions and raises the issue of Deconstruction of both of historicism and new historicism and authoritative general principle about human life. How do the so-called rationalists, historians and authoritative institutions create false history? How are fix canonical boundaries created by the certain person in the power? Why historical truth cannot be created? How generalizations about history and human conditions fail to speak the truths? Why and how such canonical boundaries are questioned and demolished in the course of time? How pre-determined fix general knowledge and principles cannot be applied in each time and each particular case? These are some of the questions, this research raises to solve.

While *The Killer Angels* shows us the tactics and the strategy of the Battle of Gettysburg and gives us special insight into Civil War. What was the Civil War all about? What were the causes behind it? Was Civil war due to issues of slavery? These questions are raised in the novel. However, this novel is written from the perspective of Union. It fictionalizes historical incidents and fail to capture the truth. Many critics have given different criticisms in this novel. A critic named Donald Cromwell puts:

In addressing these questions, Shaara's voice is potently enigmatic when objective details are purposely left out. He spares on physical

details as if to shy away from the hard facts that memory can't provide. The only physical detail we get about any of Harrison's statement is the way they wear their hair. Dialogue and gossip instead form the basis of what Harrison remembers, which makes nearly every conversation doubly interpreted. As Harrison says later in life, All my 'conclusions' are reversible.(21)

Here's a particularly troublesome scene: in the novel, Harrison narrates why Union had fought deadly battle. He responds, "I don't have to answer your questions anymore"(45). Yet Harrison miscalculates the historical reality and presents it as the demand of time. For Michael Wilson "Harrison's memories of steamy sensual fumbling that took place while they were mostly clothed...if this isn't grand a word" (4). Wilson questions the legacy of Harrison's memory as a narrator to reveal truth.

Daniel Hartman has analyzed the novel from the perspective of the memory. Memory, individual rather than collective, accounts for who we are and what we have become. In addition, early memory is particularly valuable, though it can be misconstrued. Its influence can persist throughout adult life, though what is cause and what effect may be difficult to judge. In this short but compelling novel Michael Shaara tracks the origin of one particular memory through a long and apparently uneventful life towards an explanation that leaves traces of unease that are difficult to dismiss. In this connection he puts:

The facts are quite simple. Three soldiers, of whom the narrator, Harrison, is one, are joined by a fourth, Bufford, who is much cleverer than any of them. Nor can he understand why Harrison's mother should leave her a small legacy and the news that she

possesses... Harrison's diary, which was the virtual gallery of incidents of her own life. (52)

These facts throw the light that his memory is the discomfort he felt on that weekend, a discomfort he cannot explain even at an advanced age. The clue might lie in the diary, but attempts to get hold of it are unavailing. She is up against an initial misalliance to which others are being added, containing the same characters but no further explanation. Another critic Barry Lewis observes this novel from the light of dilemma. He asserts:

What strikes me about this book is the lasting impression it's left on me. I read it last summer and still find myself thinking about it and talking about it a year later. I recently finished another book and my wife asked me to compare it to any two others as a point of reference. Better than one book we'd both read, I said, but not as good as *The Killer Angels*. For contemporary fiction, this one sticks with you. (13)

Here, Kermit talks about technical aspects of this novel. Although all these critics have raised different issues in this novel, the issue of fictionalization of history is totally absent in their reviews and consistent commentaries. This present thesis efforts to excavate twisting realities and facts in the novel.

The proposed thesis is library based research. It will use a close, discursive argumentative style which will draw on concept of critiquing and deconstructing the notion of Historicism, New Historicism along with pre-established legal and formal principles behind any specific human conditions as the novel is question upon such agenda. Authentic citations, guidance from the lectures and professors will be supportive tools for research. Stephen Greenblatt's ideas of New Historicism are applied to make the thesis prove the hypothesis. Different extracts from novel related

to the notion of inadequacy of history and principles on human condition will be brought to prove inadequacy of generalization about history and human life. Foucault, Derrida and Louis Montrose are some of the leading thinkers to challenge the hitherto grand narrative whose insights are brought to prove the fictionalization of history in the novel *The Killer Angels*.

New Historicism and Marxism, especially Cultural Materialism have some similarities. They both literary theory are paying attention in the recovery of the lost histories and at the same times, they both are exploring mechanisms of suppression. There are not only some shareable similarities exist between New Historicism and Cultural Materialism but some major differences has been also existing among them.

Major difference between New Historicists and Cultural Materialists is that New Historicists have a tendency to concentrate at the top of social hierarchy, for example, the church, the monarchy, and the elite. Quite opposite to New Historicists, Cultural Materialists have a tendency to concentrate at the bottom of the social hierarchy, for example, the working class, Poor, women, and other marginalized peoples. Though New Historicists and Cultural Materialists practice different kinds of history, New Historicists pay more attention on political science and anthropology. They pay their attention in governments, institutions and culture. But Cultural Materialists more rely on economics and sociology. They pay their attention in class, economics, and commodification. New Historicists are also like the Cultural Materialists because they also are interested to question of circulation, negotiation, profit and exchange, for example, how activities that claim to be above the market are learned by the market value. New Historicists take further position claiming that all cultural activities may be considered as equally important text for historical analysis. Contemporary pathway of bisexual role may inform a Shakespeare play as much

as, Shakespeare's literary ushers. Specifically, New Historicists are more concerned with the questions of power and culture.

Michael Foucault as an influential critic is keenly interested in the issues of power, epistemology, subjectivity, and ideology. His interest in the issues of power, epistemology, subjectivity and ideology have been influenced not only on literary studies and critics but also equally influenced to political science, history, and anthropology. His enthusiasm to analyze and discuss different disciplines as well as his questioning of the very principle of disciplinarity and specialization have been encouraged a mass of following critics to explore interdisciplinary connections between the areas that had seldom been examined together. Foucault also had the ability to pick up common terms and give them quite new meaning and definition. Thus critics have been addressed such enveloping issues as "power," "discourse," "discipline," "subjectivity," "sexuality," and "government" in the different changing way.

Stephen Greenblatt also is another an influential critic and theorist in the field of literary theory. His brilliant and critical studies of the Renaissance have been established him as an important figure that is associated with New Historicism. Indeed, he is an influence critic because his new concept regarding New Historicism first gained popularity among Renaissance scholars. Greenblatt's ideas and subjective approach is taken as the source of direct inspiration to those many Renaissance scholars. This attraction with history and the tiny details of culture soon caught on among scholars working in other historical periods, leading to the mounting popularity of culturally- and historically-minded studies. This general tendency is often associated to Cultural Studies.

The Killer Angels is about the elusiveness of identity and the treachery of memory, regret and the hope of redemption. Though its atmosphere is dreamlike, it actually is hyper-realistic, portraying with enigmatic precision of a very high order “real” life as each of us actually experiences it. Thus, the novel is the first person accounts about American Civil War. Harrison, the narrator wants to account the historical truth and personal truth as real eyewitness. However, his all efforts topple down like the house of cards.

Michel Foucault’s concept of discursive analysis of Power relation, greatly influenced New Historicists, which gives another strategy of political reading of the texts. The power relations are reflected through discourses, which do not find overt manifestations but implicitly expressed in the text. Harrison the narrator of the novel is spy of Confederate side in his occupation. Harrison is Jew intellectual educated in Western philosophy. Harrison is the Confederate explorer, or spy, sent by Longstreet a lieutenant of Confederacy side to report on the position of the Union army several days before the battle of Gettysburg. He locates two Union Corps and rides to Confederate headquarters to convey the information. Throughout the novel he meditates on the human condition, past, present, and future. He accounts about Civil War. Harrison sees the world through the knowledgeable elderly eyes, his mind, and his heart. He filters the world through his intellect. And yet, the truths he knows are intuitive, and he realizes that value in life is found through making and acknowledging the human connection and bond, and living up to the spiritual and moral truths of the "human contract" (43). Finally he himself tells that there is not demarcation between fiction and facts.

Shaara’s *The Killer Angels* depicts the narrative of Civil War from the perspective of Harrison. Shaara saw the battlefield and learned about the battle and its

significance. Most historical novels use fictional characters in historical settings, but Shaara chose to write about the real-life participants in the battle, such as Robert E. Lee, a Confederacy leader and Joshua L. Chamberlain, a leader of Union. This unusual diction gives the novel a much more epic tone, but it also causes problems with historical accuracy. Because it uses real rather than invented characters, *The Killer Angels* is in many ways. The Battle of Gettysburg, which the novel describes, was the bloodiest battle of the American Civil War, with over 50,000 casualties in the span of three days. Many historians have called it the high-water mark of the Confederacy, when General Robert E. Lee, Commanding general of Confederacy hurled the entire strength of his army at the Union forces in an attempt to end the war by destroying his enemy. Lee had invaded the enemy territory of Pennsylvania for the second time. The first invasion culminated in the Battle of Maryland, the previous year. By invading, Lee put himself in a position to move toward Washington, D.C. and take the capital. If he succeeded, the Confederate States of America would likely win the war and gain the right to declare themselves an independent country. However, due to a series of problems, the Confederates were forced to move back from Gettysburg with terrible losses and never again would move into Union territory. Yet the strange humor of these stories takes place strictly in the unconsciousness of Harrison himself. Whatever Harrison narrates in the novel seems to be false and discursive only because Harrison does not reveal the real causes behind the conquer of Confederacy.

The concept of new historicism was developed from the concept of genealogy developed by Friedrich Nietzsche. Later Michael Foucault developed the concept of new historicism questioning the old archeological model of history. Historicists, greatly influenced by Michel Foucault's concept of discursive analysis of Power relation, come to give another strategy of political reading of the texts. The power

relations get reflected through discourses which do not find overt manifestations but implicitly expressed in the text. Foucault further focused upon the intricately structured power relations in a given culture at a given time to demonstrate, how that society controls its member through constructing and defining what appears to be universal. It implies that New Historicists “aspired to a politics of culture” which is covertly manifested in a text because power structure is administered by the state. “The state’s control of its citizenry was internal rather than external. The state subjected its people by creating them as subjects, devising fixed categories under which people could be described and thus controlled”. This was the conjunction Foucault evoked as “ Power Knowledge” (Foucault 86). Foucault observes History as the discourse between the social and the aesthetic circular. He further defines history as:

The final traits of history are its affirmation with knowledge as perspective. Historians take unusual pains to erase the element in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche’s version of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledge in its system of injustice.(90)

Foucault attempts to discover the system of particular discourse and relate it with the study of power and knowledge. He interprets it as essential historical discourse and textualization of history. He refuses history in terms of linearity and development. Rather he observes history in terms of power struggle. Historical continuity for Foucault is paradoxically discontinuity. Knowledge is not knowledge of self rather it is only perspective.

The very beginning of *The Killer Angels* arouses feeble situation of the narrator. Real history of Civil War is conflicting with narrator's depiction. There were many great leaders in the battle of Gettysburg. One commander was Chamberlain from Union side. He was a man that cared about his men and was grateful of the men that served in his command. He had a lot of real emotions that his men could respect. Chamberlain led a fascinating life. He was a professor at Bowdoin College at the time of the war, left the college to fight, and distinguished himself as an excellent soldier by the end of the war. It was Chamberlain who accepted the surrender of the Confederate forces at Appomattox. The George Pickett major general of Confederacy wasn't a well strategic commander. He was a stubborn man that lead many men to their deaths. He had no battles in the civil war that could put him in the list of top commanders in history. Longstreet, lieutenant general of Confederacy is stating how the "civil war is a holy war"(36). However the war has more than moral belief. That this war is about what is their god given right. How no matter what you do killing people is not the answer. Likewise, Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate army, was fifty-seven years old at the time of the Battle of Gettysburg, and has less than a decade to live. His traditional ideas frequently conflict with the policies of Longstreet. However the narrator present Lee as "a man in control. He does not lose his temper nor his faith. He believes absolutely in God. He loves Virginia above all, the mystic dirt of home. He is the most beloved man in either army"(47). The narrator deliberately miscalculate the historical realities. His life seems sorted out, a chain of little victories and failures with no real unresolved past mysteries.

Harrison fails to capture the reality and lost in the maze-like experiences. He is blind on behalf of Confederacy. This incomplete biasness is captured in one of the novel's most memorable passages, when Harrison sees some illegible graffiti on a

vacant building: “Most scrawls could be ignored. These for some reason caught on with Mr. Harrison as significant. Eloquent. Of what? Of future nonbeing ... But also of the greatness of eternity which shall lift us from this present shallowness”(45).

The Killer Angels is loaded with the Harrison's past activities and his present responses. He looks back and tries to find truth about events which happened in the past not so much to his, but to people with whom he was once connected. He tries to find out what exactly happened and how he was personally involved in it. The novel is concerned almost exclusively with memories. For Harrison, there is no evidence to support or disprove truthfulness of his memories in the first part of the book, apart from his own reflections of their reliability. In addition, Harrison gives the reliability of his memories many thoughts. Through the whole novel, Harrison challenges the exactness of memory, either by his own thinking, or through his recollections of discussions between his friends. Harrison spent most of the interwar years as a spy from the side of Confederacy, revolving around with soldiers. In particular, he claims that he was good friend of James Longstreet, Lieutenant General of Confederacy, however, about this incident there is no objective record.

Harrison's constant questioning of truthfulness of his own memory makes the reader aware of his unreliability. Paradoxically, at the same time, it gives Harrison an aura of frankness and honesty. Harrison of course is an unreliable character, but his unreliability seems to result from fallibility of memory, not from a twisted personality and intentional lying. Harrison seems to try to be as honest with the reader just as he is with himself. This appears as the problem, however, because it is often hard for him to confess himself bad feelings or to recall unpleasant or shameful memories. This tendency can be observed:

The truth is, Colonel, that there's no divine spark, bless you. There's many a man alive no more value than a dead dog. Believe me, when you've seen them hang each other...Equality? Christ in Heaven. What I'm fighting for is the right to prove I'm a better man than many. Where have you seen this divine spark in operation, Colonel? Where have you noted this magnificent equality? The Great White Joker in the Sky dooms us all to stupidity or poverty from birth.(Shaara 102).

Problem in objective truth is accepted by Harrison himself. Truth is no more than representation. It is difficult to reach the pinpoint of objective truth. Though someone claims something is truth it might be only claim not the truth. It is clear that to reach truth is impossible rather it is possible that the reach near the truth.

Harrison sometimes turns to the reader in search of compassion or in an attempt to be definite. Indeed, for a man who survived the Civil War, Harrison seems very little interested in social and political questions. He is not an self-disciplined man. Whatever may have been the statement for Harrison about sexual intercourse he is not reliable in his account. His perception towards unnamed beautiful and promiscuous young woman whose sexuality is offensively ripe: "you confronted sensual womanhood without remission. You smelled it, too". That comment on sexual smell is not new for Harrison.

Pioneer figures of new historicism theory are Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt. The New Historicists have drawn upon Foucauldian tenet of discursive nature of literature which is a cultural construct; however, a complete harmony in society is illusory because constant but repressed struggles keep on running parallel between powerful and powerless in the society. In literature, the suppressive and marginalized voices against dominant power structure and stricture is heard

implicitly, meaning thereby, text does not display the dominant and overt history, however hidden history or histories are intertwined in literature.

Stephen Greenblatt allows the strategy of speaking with the dead, as an ethnographer and writer speak with the living being while alive, so the reader/critic and New Historicist can speak with the writer through his text, thus positioning the new historicist as a second interpreter. Thus a New Historicist tries to read the text of a past author who was present in his own time as an ethnographer. Seturaman remarks that this condition does not allow a New Historicist to be objective in his study of the work composed in remote past: “The New Historicism, while trying to understand history cannot be objective and we can never recover the past without our own present self modifying what used to be considered objective and stable” (574). Likewise, Jackson too speaks with the same canon as he writes:

Nevertheless, as readers of past literature, we are demonstrably decayed because we do not bring to it the experience that it required for its imaginative and intellectual realization in its own time; instead we bring the experience that is required for the realization of literature in our time, an experience in which only fragments of the earlier experience survive. The consequence is in several respects analogous to the antique statue’s loss of limbs. (38)

Just as an antique and broken image needs repair to come in its previous condition, similarly the text can be actualized by the reader with his present perception because through this he tries to reconstruct the past with his imaginative faculty, while at the same time maintaining a close nexus with the present too. The suggestion being that the New Historicists lay emphasis on the necessity of awareness of the critic while

analyzing a text because he belongs to present but has to read the text written in the past and has to reconstruct the past with two sorts of historicity working parallel.

The narrative of Harrison shows that how his memories which did not fit into his own perception have altered the incidents of the novel. He is “a man of deformity, and at leisure”(Shaara 45).He functions as spy from the side of Confederacy.Morning, Confederate camp west of Gettysburg. General Robert E. Lee rises. He is having some slight heart troubles and is taking things easy. He discusses the military situation with his aide, Harrison tells that nothing to be worried about Union army,they are far behind. Robert E. Lee finds Harrison, who has been an excellent until now.He notices Harrison as "with extraordinary elegance”(48). However the situation reverses and Union attacks them with vast number of soldiers. He has cornered on that man and is going through an old man's wallet. Mr. Harrison seen seeing was still in rapid currents with his heart, like an escaping creature racing away from him"(49). Harrison pulls the cord and gets off the battlefield. He dodges behind the stone. He fails to recognize and remember about the arrival of Union soldiers. He fails to report the exact incident to Robert Lee. It is Harrison, however, who always found it difficult to understand incident of Civil War and perceived it as an issue. Harrison also fears, that it will also kill to him, who will be “left with a lifetime of bitterness” - that is the reason, why he decided to suppress memories of that incident. Harrison’s present situation, concerning his present state of mind, it is ironic to see. What he narrates is no more than fabricated narration. Moreover, Harrison’s character falls rather in the category of the “social backdrop,” or “cartoonist’s doodle” (Smith 12).

The Killer Angels, is a frame story; a fact that readers learn late in the plot.

Part one, two, and three describes a fictional realistic universe, which is shattered in

the novel's epilogue where it is revealed that the novel's protagonist is Robert E. Lee. In the beginning, he explains how he has manipulated events to fit into his narrative intended to make amends for the damage of his life. The narrative, thus, entails a historical perspective, because it is self-consciously aware of its own status as fiction and automatically questions the relationship between fiction and reality. The novel questions what is considered the truth when fiction is presented as reality. Postmodern theory focuses on what history and literature share, rather than what separates them:

They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic construct, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally inter-textual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality (Hutcheon 105).

In postmodern theory, history is not considered obsolete, but is rethought as a human construct. In other words, history is a factual representation rather than a fact. It does not deny that the past existed, it only argues that history only will be accessible through text: "We cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts" (16). Historical facts will only be accessible through a representation, made available in textual form. Linda Hutcheon has coined novels that combine history with a historical perspective as 'historiographic fiction', because they implement a self-reflective perspective while claiming to portray historical events and personages. Hutcheon considers these novels not just metafictional, nor historical because they are both metafictionally self-reflexive while speaking about real historical realities (Hutcheon 5).

The Killer Angels is a historical novel because of its setting, which takes place in the past. It begins with the initiation of Civil War, and ends in contemporary time. Jie Han and Zhenli Wang argue that the novel is historical because of how “[...] the fates of individuals are intermingled with the verisimilitude of history and society. And history, fact and fiction are knitted into the narrative framework” (136). What makes *The Killer Angels* different from the classic understanding of a historical novel is that Shaara offers more information than the historian. Shaara combines historical facts with fiction, therefore, automatically blurring the lines between fact and fiction. The effect is that he creates a new version of the whole by narrating the past in anew manner. As a result of this, Shaara provides a number of possibilities that would have been ignored by the historian, as these are not part of the historical truth. However, Han and Wang argue that these possibilities are no less real than historical facts: “Those possibilities, whether they are a real history of the past or not, are no less real in his fictionalized world” (137). Shaara, especially, blurs the lines between fact and fiction in the scenes where he depicts Harrison’s presentation of Civil war. Here, he combines the historical event with his storytelling. In their article, Han and Wang count that many of Harrison’s depictions of war are influenced by his father’s experiences during the Civil War, which makes his methods similar to that of the historian. While the historical facts may not be depicted mimetically, they are still historical facts because “[...] in his fictional world, history becomes fictionalized. The writer’s design of plot and structure reflects his attitude towards history” (137). In that way, *The Killer Angels* becomes a historical novel with a postmodern perspective, because the intention is not to depict real life events mimetically, but to depict a representation, or a revision, rather, of the past in a new context.

The historical aspect that is added to the narrative in *The Killer Angels* creates a parallel between the storyline of Shaara's novel and the construction of his novel. In the construction of his novel, Shaara implements historical facts (particularly his aspect of Civil War) in order to underline the history of Civil War. Additionally, the historical aspect is added in the meta-fictional frame, because Shaara is using Harrison to make the reader aware of the choices he has made in the process of rewriting his own historical past. Harrison's presentation of Civil War will never be factual and will always be a reconstruction of a factual event from the perspective of the present. The constructed nature of the depiction of Civil War, therefore, serves as a parallel to Harrison's plot construction. Harrison can never factually represent his own historical past, but will again be a particular construction seeking to achieve a particular effect his relationship between history as an objective, external set of events and individual experience as subjective and fallible is an interesting tension. The historical novel use both the individual experience of the character with the historical context in order to create a multidimensional narrative as Rayan explains "The historical novelist is required to give not just the bare bones of history, but something richer, more complete. In a way you want him to put the flesh back on the skeleton that is history" (99). The individual experience is the breathing flesh whilst the history is the sturdy skeleton and both novelists bring this metaphor alive in their novels.

Foucault considers history in the model of discursive knowledge. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* rejects the traditional historian's tendency to read straightforward narratives of progress in the historical record: "For many years now," he writes, "historians have preferred to turn their attention to long periods, as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances, the irreversible processes,

the constant readjustments, the underlying tendencies that gather force, and are then suddenly reversed after centuries of continuity, the movements of accumulation and slow saturation, the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events" (3). Foucault, by contrast, argues that one should seek to reconstitute not large "periods" or "centuries" but "phenomena of rupture, of discontinuity" (4). The problem, he argues, "is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits" (5). Instead of presenting a monolithic version of a given period, Foucault argues that we must reveal how any given period reveals "several pasts, several forms of connection, several hierarchies of importance, several networks of determination, several teleologies, for one and the same science, as its present undergoes change: thus historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge, they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves" (5). Foucault adopts the term "archaeology" to designate his historical method and he articulates what he means by that term by specifying how his method differs from both traditional history and the traditional history of ideas.

In The novel, Harrison uses narrative in order to account the history, as an external set of events, to reshape it using his story. Throughout the novel, the third person narration gives the readers a false sense of reassurance where at the end of the novel, it is revealed that it is in fact Harrison's perspective. Barnes argues "How are we, as readers, to believe in the validity of the innermost thoughts and motivations of these characters when, as it turns out, they are told from the perspective of someone who has a clear interest in how we judge the story" (78). The diverse narrative perspective gives the reader a chance to experience history in different perspective based on the characters individual experience. However Harrison believed that unlike

objective sense of history, his stories was “under no obligation to the truth, he had promised no-one a chronicle” (280). He blurs the link between history and stories and it appears that neither is telling the truth but they both work together in order to create meaning. History is created because someone has to give their account what has happened, how else one would know about the suffering of soldiers in American Civil War or the French Revolution and it is the person’s individual experience is that account is from. The account of a America in the Civil War would be distinctly different but it is in literature that “the only place [Harrison] could be free” (280) to create what he wishes, whatever ending he wanted, it was a place he could reshape history. However, he discovers that “in later years, he regretted not being more factual, not providing himself with a store of raw material. I would have been useful to know what happened, what it looked like, who was there, what was said” (Shaara280). His memory, his individual experience of history does not compare to the objective and factual idea of history, it is that “raw material” (280).

Discursive nature of truth can be further explored through Harrison’s character. Harrison is characterized as a deformed man, who cannot distinguish between the fictive world and real life, we must remember how that presentation of Harrison derives from himself. In other words, he has chosen to represent himself this way because it will give a particular effect. A critic Finnley characterizes Harrison as a man who lets art shape his life just as much as he shapes that life into his art: “His observation of life around him is conditioned by the fictive world that holds his in its grip” (78). He accounts about the death casualties at firs in the number of twenty thousand counting the flag in front of Longstreet. However he narrates the same casualties in the number of Hundred thousand in front of Robert E. Lee. He is not fixed about the factuality. He states:

The spy tucked himself behind a bulder and began counting flag. Must be twenty thousand men, visible all at once .Two whole Union corpse .He could make out the familiar black hats of the iron brigade, troops belonging to John Reynlod’s first corpse. . . They are coming in seven corpse. I figured at least eighty thousand men possibly as much as a hundred thousand. (Shaara 58)

Harrison perceives both the dream and reality in the same line. Harrison’s life is shaped around the books he reads and he only understands the world through familiar narratives. In the battle field, his first reaction is to understand the scene from a point of view he is already familiar with:

The true rain came in a monster wind, and the storm broke in blackness over the hills and the bloody valley; the sky opened along the ridge, and the vast water thundered down, drowning the fires, flooding the red creeks, washing the rocks and the grass and the white bones of the dead, cleansing the earth and soaking it.(65).

The misinterpretations of events that make Harrison looking “so huge and wild” (123) and his previous mention of him as “a maniac” (119) are indications that “Harrison is shaped by a melodramatic imagination that originates in the books he has read” (Finney 79). Harrison draws on literature in all shapes of his life, which makes him enable to disentangle his life from the things he reads in his books. Literature is intervened in every decision he makes and everything he perceives, causing his to misinterpret particular events.

The reader, however, does not have enough information to decide whether to believe Harrison and whether to stand on his side or not. For instance, Harrison did not say how and why exactly he did not narrate exact reality to Robert Lee. There is a

basic paradox in the way Shaara makes use of Harrison's voice. Even as Harrison disclaims the moral authority of the survivor, the logic of the novel depends on that very authority to sustain its deep criticisms of American society. Shaara elides the contradiction somewhat by making Harrison a very untypical narrator. We learn that he spent most of the interwar years as a spy in Confederacy, palling around with Soldiers: "who acts in several ways the novel's imaginative foil" (Finnley 22). He misinformed Robert Lee about the number of Union soldiers.

Indeed, for a man who survived the Civil War Harrison seems very little interested in social and political questions. The disaster he sees unfolding around him is spiritual, moral, and above all Harrison's view of his past is challenged only by his own thoughts about (un)reliability of memory. He does not have any other sources of information about his past than his memories - no tangible records, and with people who could remember the same events as him he is either no longer in contact, or they are dead. So he does not expect to find out much about his past anymore. Yet, with the strange inheritance, new questions arise. He does not deserve knowledge about Civil War in the exact sense at present. He does not know anything about the situational context in which it was written, he does not know what precedes and what follows. Yet he tries for its interpretation, especially of the last, unfinished sentence. At the point Harrison starts to think, whether his settling for a content, peaceable life was a good option. "Yes indeed if Harrison had seen more clearly, acted more decisively, held to truer moral values, settled less easily for a passive peaceableness which he first called happiness and later contentment. If Harrison hadn't been fearful, hadn't counted on the approval of others for his own self-approval..." (Barnes 80-81). As Harrison searches for tangible evidence of his past, his old feelings start to reappear and with them, long buried, suppressed memories. "Just when you think,

everything is a matter of decrease, of subtraction and division, your brain, your memory may surprise you. As if it's saying: Don't imagine you can rely on some comforting process of gradual decline – life's much more complicated than that" (Barnes 77). When his old feelings for his past renew, the old memories connected with it come up. All these memories are strongly connected with emotions, which he forgot thanks to his "instinct for self preservation"(Barnes 77).

Again, apart from political reading of the text, New Historicists also suggest that since literary text embodies numerous voices and is discursive in nature, hence, an innovative process of reading is but a quintessential methodology to be adopted and that best method is of dismantling the text which is the prominent feature of deconstruction.

This validates that fact that after dismantling the texts the multiplicity of meaning be put forth "to present a number of independent and often conflicting voices. In the same way New Historicist contends that a work is not an autonomous body of fixed meanings, but represents a diversity of dissonant voices and unresolved conflicts in a specific culture" (Hartman 22-33). This is because "the textuality of the text leads to its textuality is closer to deconstructive method of studying the text through its 'polysemy' and expanding traces" (Finnley 223). Since text is the product of society and embodies it and hence contains multiple meanings as Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of 'dialogic' nature of text overlaps with this. Roger Webster says that language for Bakhtin has the potentiality of multiplicity because language "for Bakhtin is not in any sense fixed and stable but always in a state of flux; meaning is never singular and uncontested but rather plural and contested" (477). According to Bakhtin language is dialogic and the text displays 'many voiced' and 'heteroglossia.'

At the end of the novel Harrison leaves the notebook and vanishes. We come learn more about the circumstances of his own life through this note. For a time after Harrison returned from Civil war to long street, he becomes mentally deformed. He reveals through the note that the incidents of the Civil War which he depicts are related to his memory and his memory is betraying him time and again. Yet “once all the questions are answered, the reader is left in the same state that Harrison is in the book’s final pages—floored at life’s essential mysteries, and frustrated that they cannot be relived” (Hartman 12). Harrison’s searching for answers about his past caused reappearance of his repressed emotions and memories: it induced Harrison to revise his past actions and his way of thinking. It removed Harrison’s protective shield of self-deception and brought a strong feelings of remorse and unrest.

The theme of History in the novels discussed occurs on two levels – on the level of the narration and on the level of the plotline. In the narration the theme of memory is implemented by the unreliable narrator Harrison who tells story depending largely or exclusively on his subjective recollections of the past. Shaara essentially creates a plot with the purpose of presenting how narratives are constructed by plot structures. He does this by creating a character like Harrison, who is an ‘narrator’ himself. Harrison’s story is autobiographical, however, with his manipulations of events we learn that he has essentially created a plot structure, which has the purpose of achieving particular effects. Additionally, it is evident that he lets the plot actually produce events that never happened, again, emphasizing the constructed nature of his narrative. The different ontological levels of control in the story serve to understand how all narratives are plot structures, which has the purpose of creating particular effects. Shaara has, for example, chosen to let Harrison end up with mental deformity, which lets him have an ethical dimension to his narrative. As

readers, we are again confronted with the notion that what seemed like a realistic storyline is not at all realistic, because we never know whether Harrison has forgotten certain events.

Memory in the plot is covered by the interconnection with other themes and by the importance of the theme for the story. As Harrison searches for tangible evidence of his past, his old feelings start to reappear and with them, long buried, suppressed memories. “Just when you think, everything is a matter of decrease, of subtraction and division, your brain, your memory may surprise you. As if it’s saying: Don’t imagine you can rely on some comforting process of gradual decline – life’s much more complicated than that” (Shara 112). When his old feelings for holocaust, the old memories connected with it come up. All these memories are strongly connected with emotions, which he forgot thanks to it “instinct for self preservation”. Therefore, suddenly he remembers his narration about the arrival of Union soldiers with Robert E Lee and the numbers of Union soldiers:

I've been a soldier all my life. I've fought from the ranks on up, you know my service. But sir, I must tell you now, I believe this attack will fail. No 15,000 men ever made could take that ridge. It's a distance of more than a mile, over open ground. When the men come out of the trees, they will be under fire from Yankee artillery from all over the field.(108)

At the end of the novel Harrison leaves notebook. We learn more about the circumstances of Harrison’s mental deformity. Harrison’s searching for answers about his past caused reappearance of his repressed emotions and memories: it induced Harrison to revise his past actions and his way of thinking. It removed Harrison’s

protective shield of self-deception and brought a strong feelings of remorse and unrest.

In *The Killer Angels*, the retired narrator Harrison resumes his content and rather uninteresting life. He came to a point, when he accepted his life as it was, non-special and average, but as he says, peaceable, with no reason to feel regrets about his past. As a narrator, he tries to be honest, but he himself is aware of the unreliability of his memories and admits that he has no evidence to ground his story. For the reader, the clues for Harrison's unreliability are his unwillingness to recall unpleasant memories or his searching for the reader's compassion while recalling controversial matter. When a mysterious bequest from holocaust, and with it a corroboration of her past actions, appears on the scene, Harrison is induced to revise his notion of his past. His feelings and memories from the past which he deliberately forgot reappear. As his self-preserving shell breaks, Harrison is left with feeling of loneliness, remorse, and unrest at the end of the novel.

Thus, this research comes to the conclusion that to fictionalize the historical events of Gettysburg's fight during the American Civil war is the major contention of Shaara's novel *The Killer Angels*. The novelist has generalized the destructive nature of Civil War. The main narrator of the novel, Harrison himself is hovering one historical incident to another without providing sufficient evidence. Therefore, Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angle* has fictionalized the history of American Civil War blurring the boundary between history and fiction.

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