I. General Introduction to Julian Barnes and *Flaubert's Parrot*

This present research attempts to explore the basic nature of historiographic metafiction. It will be beneficial to see the nature of the narrator and the nature of the narrative in Barnes's historiographic metafictional parody *Flaubert's Parrot*. It is difficult to know the truth. In some sense truth is unreliable. The communication of 'truth' is always affected by the character, needs, and psychology of the person communicating it, and eventually the medium becomes the subject of the reader's interest. The combination of factual and fictitious events in must of the postmodern historiographic metafictions such as *Flaubert's Parrot*, and the technique of writing old

Facts and fictions in postmodern version is the main objective of the present research. Barnes's technique of making parody of the past life experiences of the nineteenth century realist writer Gustav Flaubert and characters of his novel in order to point out the self-reflexivity, open-endedness, inter-textuality and how these elements juxtapose narrator's (Braithwaite) self-critical stance and confession is also the main objective of my research.

Flaubert's Parrot deftly deconstructs itself into various types of competing documents like the chronology, biography, autobiography, bestiary, philosophical dialogue, critical essay, manifesto, appendix, dictionary, examination paper, pure story and train-spotter's guide. The present dissertation will be helpful to point out the postmodern technique of combining aforementioned things under the single umbrella term. This research will be helpful to analyze the tenets of postmodern metafiction, 'Intertextuality', 'interconnectedness', 'irony', 'parody', 'self-confession', 'self-opinion', 'randomness' will be more focused while developing the present research. Reality and truth are illusions. Truth is slippery, baffling and hard to discover. Reality is plural,

fragmentary and distorted. To represent such reality, grand narrative is unable and insufficient. The way postmodern novels questions the nature of truth, referntality, origin and favours small narratives is the main concern of this research. The present dissertation attempts to explore an extra-ordinarily artful mix of literary tomfoolery and politics of postmodern narrative in Barnes's historiographic metafiction *Flaubert's Parrot.*

Julian Barnes has served as a journalist and columnist for several British newspapers and magazines. He has also published numerous essays and book reviews. He is one of the British writers born after the World War II, who gravitated towards the London and its literary scene. Reacting to the certainties and assumptions of the previous generation, they have often resorted to irony and comedy in viewing the contemporary world. Barnes's early novels were chronological in approach, but his third text *Flaubert's Parrot,* combines fact and fiction, novel and history, and biography and literary criticism. For this work he was nominated for Great Britain's most prestigious literary award, the Booker Prize, and was awarded the Geoffery Faber memorial prize. He has also won literary prizes in Italy and France, and he received the E.M. Forster award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Born in English Midlands city of Leicester just after the World War II to parents who were French teachers, Barnes was also influenced by the French writer Gustav Flaubert, particularly his concern for form, style and objectivity. Barnes's novels continued to exhibit his fascination with language and literary experiments, in contrast with the more traditional narrative approach and narrow subject matter of many twentieth century English novelists. Under the pseudonym Dan Kavanagh, Barnes also published a number of detective novels.

Barnes read French at Oxford University and has held such establishment literary posts as lexicographer for the *Oxford English Dictionary Supplement* (1969-1972) and deputy literary editor of the *London Sunday Times* (since 1979). His previous novels, *Metorland* (1980) and *Before She Met Me* (1982), share with *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), the overriding theme of obsession. In *Metroland*, a bookish schoolboy is caught up in the French classics of passion to participate in the Parisian student riots of 1968 or seize the amatory opportunities offered him. In *Before She Meet Me a* man is crazed by suspicions of his wife's adulteries.

In all the three works, Barnes's tone is urbane, wry, and winningly worldly. Like Johh Fowel, Barnes combines erudition with emotion, and elegance with warmth. The obvious counterpart to *Flaubert's Parrot* is Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962), both literary parodies, both tales of passion told with complex resonances by pedants who construct dense, many-layered rinds of lists and commentaries. On balance, however, this is a distinguished and original novel by a highly gifted writer Barnes who bridges the gap between the nineteenth century's sentimentality and the twentieth century's self-mockery.

Barnes became one of the Britain's leading literary figures during 1990's. His literary reviews appeared in many of the leading publications in both his own country and the United States. He also wrote brilliant journalistic pieces on various topics like political, social, and literary which were appearing in *The Newyorker.* Many of these essays were collected and published in *Letter from London* (1995). His long-standing fascination with France was revealed in his collection of short stores *Cross Channel* (1996), a series of tales about English men and women and their experiences of living and working in France.

In the mid 1990's Barnes accepted a one-year teaching position at the John's Hopkins University. In 1998 he published *England, England*, which was widely reviewed and was short-listed for the Booker Prize and Britain's Premier literary award.

Barnes's first novel, *Metroland,* is orthodox in technique and approach; it is divided into three parts. It is a variation on the coming – of age novel. In part 1, the narrator Christopher Lioyd and his close friend, Toni grow up in 1963 in a North London metropolitan rail line pursuing the perennial adolescent dream of rebellion against parents, school, the middle class and the establishment in general. In part 2, five years later, finds Christopher a student in Paris, the epitome of artistic bohemianism, particularly when compared to Metroland. It is 1968, and French students are demonstrating and rioting in the streets for social and political causes. Nine years later, in part 3, set in 1977, Christopher is back in Metroland, married to Marion. Questioning and irony are continuing themes in all Barnes's novels, as is the absence of significant character development except for the leading figure.

Before She Met Me is also a story of an individual's attempt to relate to and understand his personal world. Graham Hendrick, a fourty year’s old professor of history, has recently remarried. Now beginning a new life and outwardly contented, both personally and professionally, it is the story of downward spiral of an individual who can no longer distinguish fantasy from reality. Barnes poses the question, not only for Hendrick, but also for reader: what is reality and can one discover the truth? Like *Metroland,* this novel has many comic and witty moments but ultimately ends tragically.

Barnes's third novel *Flaubert's Parrot* received considerable praise as a significant writer of fiction less parochial in form and technique than most English novelist of his time. *Flaubert's Parrot* was the recipient of numerous prizes, which first

was published in United Sates in 1984. It is a novel of questions and obsessions, which unite the past and present. Yet in its collage of literary techniques, it is not a traditional narrative novel, including as it does fiction, biography, history and literary criticism. As in his earlier works, here Barnes focuses upon a single individual, Geoffery Braithwaite, an English medical doctor in his sixties, a widower, with a longstanding interest in the French writer Gustave Flaubert. Barnes also has been a student of French and admirer of Flaubert.

Told in the first person, *Flaubert's Parrot* examines Braithwaite's attempt to discover which of two different stuffed parrots on exhibit in competing Flaubert museums is the one that sat on Flaubert's desk when he wrote his short story *Un Coeur Simple* (A Simple Heart). Yet the work is not concerned only with Braithwaite's interest in Flaubert's past and the two stuffed parrots. As the doctor pursues Flaubert and his parrot, he also begins to reveal his own history. As Braithwaite explores the relationship between Flaubert and his fiction, seeking to know which is the real parrot, he also attempts to understand the realities of his own life and his connection with the fictional Charles Bovary. He becomes obsessive about discovering the truth of the parrots, but he is also obsessive about discovering his own truth. The difficulty, however is that truth and reality are always elusive, and the discovery of a number of small realities does not result in the illumination of absolute truth. This novel, too, is seen as a symbol of this dichotomy of fact and fiction. Thus, Braithwaite's has been one of many quests with no resolutions, questions without final answers.

Staring at the Sun, Barnes's fourth novel, exhibits a stronger narrative line than *Flaubert's Parrot*, but as in the story of Braithwaite narrative here is not the primary concern of the author; questions remain paramount. The novel begins in 1941, with a

prologue set during the World War II. Sergeant - Pilot is flying back across the channel to his English base from France, just before dawn. The sun rises from the waves on the eastern horizon, captivating Pilot's attention. This novel revolves around his own life events and experiences.

In *A History of the World in 10*$\frac{1}{2}$ *Chapters,* Barnes continued his experimentation in form and style. Unlike his earlier novels, this one has no central character. Instead, the reader is presented with a number of chapters or stories, ostensibly historical which are loosely connected by several common themes. The first tale or fable is a revisionist account of the story of Noah and the ark. Narrated by a Woodwarm, the story portrays Noah as a drunk, humanity as badly flawed and god and his plan as leaving much to be desired. In this novel Barnes raises the question of how one turns disaster into art, or how one turns life into art. In a half chapter, he discusses history and love. Barnes connects love to Truth, but truth, objective truth, can never be found. Stories of this novel are not related to one another, and the tone at time fails to achieve the ironic brilliance of *Flaubert's Parrot*.

Taking It Over is superficially a less ambitious novel than *A History of the World in 10*$\frac{1}{2}$ *Chapters*. The novel features three characters: Stuart, a decent dull bankers; his wife, Gillian; and Stuart's old friend, Oliver, a flashy cultured language instructor who falls in love with Gillian, who eventually leaves Stuart for Oliver. Barnes's technique reveals the same events narrated by three characters, who speak directly in monologues to the reader.

England, England is also Barnes's full-length novel that appeared in 1998. In the interim he had written a novella, *The Porcupine*, set in an eastern European country in the

aftermath of the fall of communism. In it Barnes notes how difficult it is to escape from the past, from history, and from its illusions and delusions, and he asks what one will escape to - to what new illusions and imaginings. *England, England* is also a meditation on history. It is a serious novel with a comedic and satirical core.

Julian Barnes is one of the leading postmodern novelists. In all his novels we can find postmodern elements and styles. He experiments with traditional realist notions with new styles which exhibit postmodern techniques by subverting traditional realist styles. In all of his works Barnes has pursued several ideas: Human beings question, even though there can be no absolute answers; humanity pursues its obsessions, often resulting in failure. Yet his novels have at the same time evolved in form and approach the earliest are more traditional and conventional, the latter more experimental.

Barnes's wit and irony, his use of history, literary criticism, myth, and fable, his mixing of imagination and intellect, and his continuing risk in exploring new forms and methods make him one of the most significant English novelists of his generation.

Flaubert's Parrot is a tantalizingly elusive work of fiction, exhibiting elements of biography, autobiography, literary monograph, parody, novel and anthology of maxims and epigrams. It is narrated by Dr. Geoffery Braithwaite, a retired British general practitioner in his sixties, widowed from a wife whom he never understood, who becomes obsessed with seeking to understand the essential nature of Gustav Flaubert.

Braithwaite begins and finally ends his quest by attempting to identify the particular green stuffed Amazonian parrot which Flaubert borrowed for a model while writing "Un Coeur Simple". In that tale, a simple, sacrificial Norman domestic, felicite, devote her life to serving a largely ungrateful family. The last object of her love is parrot, Loulou, whom she comes to regard as the incarnation of the Holy Ghost. Braithwaite

discovers a green stuffed parrot in Rouen, perched above our inscription certifying that Flaubert had been lent by the city's museum and had kept in on his desk for three weeks while writing "Un Coeur Simple".

Flaubert's Parrot is a Proustian exercise in searching for, recovering, and analyzing the past of Flaubert or Braithwaite or everyone. In the final chapter, the narrator meets the oldest surviving member of Croisset's “societe des Amis” de Flaubert. This man recalls that the Curator of Flaubert's croisset museum applied in 1905 at Rouen's museum of Natural History for the parrot which had served Flaubert as the model for Lulu. Having a neatly nuanced sense of irony, Braithwaite gracefully accepts the failure of his chase after the authentic Flaubertian parrot. Being both intelligent and sensible, he recognizes that the joke is on him and on the reader. Behind every parrot is another 'parrot'; behind every truth is another truth. The past with a capital 'P' remains elusive; Truth with a capital 'T' is a chimera.

Since the publication in 1984 *Flaubert's Parrot* invites multiple interpretations from different critics and reviewers. Malcolm Bradbury praises the book for this feature calling it:

> To date [1993] his best book, it is half critical text, half a human narratives, all based around the life and artistic impulse of the great nineteenth century French realist, who also opened the door to fictional Modernism […] ‘the text itself takes multiple forms’ it is a research, a meditation, an examination paper, a playful latter-day commentary, on Flaubert's own ambiguous realism, and on the strange stimuli of art. It busily plays with notions of the real and fictional, makes its own rules, and

> breaks up its own discourse, level behind its own ambiguities: a postmodern 'text' indeed. (437)

In these lines Bradbury opines that *Flaubert's Parrot* is a novel with exhibiting elements of postmodern text.

James B. Scott says that Barnes explores how truth is illusory:

> Much of postmodern literary theory would be predicated on that very principle [that] reality and truth are the illusions produced when systems of discourse (especially artistic discourse) impinge on human consciousness. In practice, this had led postmodern novelists to strive to undermine hermeneutic responses to art by foregrounding the discourse that informs their artifact, thereby implying that not only is the final "meaning" of a work of art forever unknowable, but also any orthodox truth is actually a discourse generated fluke. (57)

Scott here describes that the truth and reality are anything other than linguistic constructs. He insists that *Flaubert's Parrot* gives the lesson that words are empty signifiers never touching the final signified and that the self is a creature of discursive forces.

Undoubtedly *Flaubert's Parrot* does train readers to be skeptical 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’ (38). In this regard Louise Colet critiques Flaubert's emotional inadequacies:

> We all know objective truth is not obtainable, that when some event occurs we shall have a multiplicity of subjective truths which was assess and then fabulate into history, into some God-eyed version of what

> "really" happened. The God eyed version is a fake […] but while we know this, we must still believe that objective truth is obtainable; or we must believe that it is 99 percent obtainable; or if we can't believe this we must believe that 43 percent objective truth is better than 41 percent […]. And so it with love, we may not obtain it, or we may obtain it and find it renders us unhappy, we must still believe in it. (243-44)

Here we can find the well to make meaning, the impulse for Barnes behind both love and creativity. Truth is not obtainable. There are multiple truths. Everything depends on our choice.

Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* uses intertextual analogies: a correspondence exists between the narrator (a doctor), his wife and her extramarital relationship, and the main characters of Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*. Since these analogically linked characters do not generally become spatially or temporally contiguous within the narrative world itself. Another critic Meritt Mosely quotes Braithwaite's narrative in this way:

> Three stories connected with me about Flaubert, one about Ellen (his wife), one about myself. My own is the simplest of the three. My wife is more complicated, and more urgent; yet I resist that too […] Books are not life, however much we might prefer it if they were. Ellen's is a true story; perhaps it is even the reason why I am telling you Flaubert's story instead. (586)

Mosely clarifies about Braithwaite's narrative. Here Braithwaite’s analyzes his own story and then thinks his wife's story is more complicated, which he compares with that of Madame Bovery.

Despite the numerous criticism and reviews done on this text, the issues about postmodern narrative have not been sufficiently explored yet. The issue about narrative and history helps this novel to be a historiographic metafictional parody. This research attempts to analyze the nature of multiple truths, parody of the past life, combination of facts and fictions and juxtaposition of factual and fictional elements of Flaubert with Braithwaite's life experiences. It tries to find out the intertextuality, self-reflexivity, open endedness in *Flaubert's Parrot* that satirizes not only the misogyny of Flaubert but also points out Braithwaite's own self-critical stance and confession. It also attempts to prove the ‘slippery nature of truth’.

The terms fiction and history are traditionally perceived as separate and individual concepts. In ancient Greece, Aristotle distinguished between the functions of fictions and history by declaring that the latter is concerned with universal truths. While the former deals with particular facts and this can be argued to constitute a common understanding of the difference between fiction and history. However, the relationship between fiction and history has been subject to debate in sphere of literary criticism in recent years. Historiographic metafiction is concerned with blurring the demarcation between history and fiction.

Historiographic metafiction described as fiction shares the characteristics associated with metafiction in general and takes history or part of history, as it creates its fictional universe, archived historical figures or events. The genre questions the separability of history and literature, arguing that the two modes of discourses have a lot in common and thereby it redefines the relationship between fictional writing and history. One of the issues treated in historiographic metafiction is history's claim to absolute truth,

it sometimes challenges the truth of historical records by deliberately altering the particulars of known historical details.

Linda Hutcheon contributed this above view in *The Poetics of Postmodernism* when she replaces the term 'postmodern fiction' with historiographic metafiction. The phrase geared towards scholars is growing interest in how so-called postmodern fictions engage, like much of so-called postmodern theories 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 of ontological and political consequences. It is poststructuralist critique of historical epistemology.

Parody often called ironic quotation, Pastiche, appropriation or intertextuality which is usually considered central to postmodernism, both by its detractors as well as by defenders so we can put *Flaubert's parrot* under good example of parody. This parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostalgic; it is always critical. It is also not a historical or de-historicizing; it does not wrest past art from its original historical context and reassemble it intro some sort of presentist spectacle. According to Hutcheon, postmodern parody does not disregard the context of the past representations it cities, but uses irony to acknowledge the fact that we are inevitably separated from that past today by time and by the subsequently history of those representations. Postmodern parody is a kind of contesting revision or rereading of the past that both conforms and subverts the power of representations of history. *Flaubert's Parrot* also makes the parody of the past events of Flaubert.

For Fredric Jameson postmodernism is a cultural logic of late capitalism. But for Lyotard, knowledge has lost its emancipatory power. Postmodernism should be described from the perspective of knowledge which has not emancipatory power.For Lyotard postmodernism refers to “incredulity towards metanarrative”. He questions the grand narrative and the questions for grand narrative generate the small narrative Lyotard is in favor of small narratives. There is not any single truth rather multiple truths are functioning.

Hayden White in "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" asserts that “[t] he postmodern is informed by a programmatic, if ironic, commitment to the return to narrative as one of its enabling presuppositions" (394-96). He further argues that all historical writings as narrative, depend on "non negotiable item", the forms of the narrative itself are understandable by virtue of their reliance on fictive forms (395).

In the succeeding chapter the present researcher is going to develop the methodology called postmodern historiographic metafiction by taking the ideas of Linda Hutcheon, Lyotard, Hayden White, Jameson and other postmodernist theorists. This dissertation is going to analyze the politics of postmodern narrative in textual analysis section. The last chapter will conclude the main points of the thesis.

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II. Postmodern Historiographic Metafiction

Postmodernism is a complicated term or set of ideas, one that only emerged as an area of academic study. It is hard to define because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communication, fashion and technology. It is difficult to locate it historically because it is not clear when postmodernism began but the agreed assumption is that it started after the second world-war fetching multiple meanings.

Jean Francois Lyotard believes that it is the period of slackening reality. The act of experimentation is the sprit of questioning. In the contemporary time knowledge has become the phenomenon related to TV games and petty narratives. Petty narratives are always local, specific and small. They go against the universalizing tendency of realism. Lyotard`s "The Postmodern Condition" (1979) attacks Habermas`s formulation of universal pragmatics of discourse as a means for realizing project. In his essay he states:

> The breakdown of the grand narratives of progress must give way to loss average little narratives that resist closure and totality and above all rules out or final authority that can speak for all human begins from a universal perspective without already invoking some dialogical formation. Thus, Comprehended postmodernism "is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state and this state is constraint". (212)

Here, Lyotard insists that postmodern should be described from the perspective of knowledge which has not emancipatory power. He questions the grand narrative and the questioning of grand narrative generates the small narratives. He is in favor of small narratives.

For the issue about postmodernism Lyotard should be studied in relation to Fredric Jameson. For Jameson postmodern is a cultural logic of late capitalism, one produces what consumer wants. Sell and finish is the essence of late capitalism. Beauty is lost. According to Jameson, objects lost emancipatory power. There is not any originality. Late capitalism focuses on consumerism.

According to Linda Hutcheon, postmodernism is a phenomenon whose mode is resolutely contradictory as well as unavoidably political. Postmodernism manifests itself in many fields of cultural endeavor: architecture, literature, photography, film, dance, music and elsewhere. In general terms, it takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, and self-undermining statement. It is rather like saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said. It is one which juxtaposes and gives equal value to self-reflexive and the historically grounded: to that which is inward-directed and belongs to world of art and real life. Hutcheon states, "The contradictory nature of postmodernism involves its offering of multiple, provisional alternative to traditional, fixed unitary concept in full knowledge of the continuing appeal of these very concepts" (122-24).

Linda Hutcheon’s view subverts the modernist’s concept of single and alienated otherness which is challenged by the postmodern questioning of binaries that conceal hierarchies. It is a complete rejection of meta-narratives, the presupposition that human history follows a particular line of development. In other words, it can be said that history has no pattern and can be interpreted from multiple perspectives. The notion of truth has no relevance and it is, at its best, only relative. By focusing on narrative, the postmodernists regard words as having no fixed meaning.

David Harvery insists that postmodernism is about fragmentation of reality or multiplicity. It is on the one hand, a continuation of modernism and on the other hand, it is departure from modernism. If modernism is related to the lamentation of losts, postmodernism is either celebration of loss or indifference to loss. E.P. Thompson insists that postmodern historiography is not merely textual, but wholly textual: though within that rubric there is a range of nuisance. As a whole, postmodern is related to what Lyotard calls 'slackening of reality'. For Lyotard, postmodernism is a condition characterized by a paradox.

Postmodern literature is essentially a rule breaking kind of art though people are still trying to keep the rules. There is no point in breaking postmodern literature. The term postmodern literature is used to describe certain tendencies in post-world war II literature. It is both a continuation of the experimentation championed by writers of the modernist period (relying heavily on fragmentation, paradox, and questionable narrators and so on) and a reaction against enlightenment ideas implicit in modernist literature. Postmodern fiction, like postmodernism as a whole, is hard to define and there is little agreement on the exact characteristics, scope, and importance of postmodern fiction. However, unifying features often coincide with J.F Lyotard's concept of the 'meta-narrative' and 'little narratives', Jacques Derrida's concept of 'play' and Jean Baudrillard's 'Simulacra'.

Interrupting the gap between the text and the world, between art and life, a gap which postmodernists writing characteristically tries to short-circuit in order to administer a shock to the reader. Instead of the modernist's quest for meaning in a chaotic world, the postmodern author eschews, often playfully, the possibility of meaning and the postmodern novel is often a parody of this quest. This distrust of totalizing mechanisms

extends even to the author; those postmodern writers often celebrate chance over craft and employ meta-fiction to undermine the author's "univocal" control.

The distinction between high and low culture is also attacked with the employment of pastiche which is the combination of multiple cultural elements including subjects and genres not previously deemed fit for literature. William Burroughs, Thomas Pinchon, J.M. Coetzee, E.L. Doctrow, Orhan Pamuk, Julian Barnes, and Kathey Acher are some prominent postmodern authors who radically subvert the conventional rhetoric strategies and contribute their career for the development of postmodern art and literature. They promote meta-fiction and pastiche while plotting different events and often use irony with parodic design.

Similarly Linda Hutcheon claims that postmodern fiction as a whole could be characterized by ironic code marks, that much of it can be taken as tongue-in-check. This irony along with black humor and general concept of "play" (related to Derrida's concept of the ideas advocated by Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text,* are among the most recognizable aspects of postmodernism. Though the idea of employing these are in literature did not start with the postmodernist (the modernists were often playful and ironic), they became central features in many postmodern works. Linda Hutcheon in her essay, “Decentering the Postmodern: The Ex-centric” argues about the nature of post modern novel:

> Like much contemporary literary theory, the postmodernist novel puts into question that entire series of interconnected concepts that have come to be associated with what we conveniently level as liberal humanism: autonomy, transcendence, certainty, teleology, closure, hierarchy, homogeneity, uniqueness, origin. As I have tried to argue, however, to put

> these concepts into question is not to deny them but only to interrogate their relation to experience. (qtd. In Linda Huntcheon, *Poetics* 57)

In her different essays, Linda Hutcheon tries to generalize the nature of postmodern fiction .It is common for postmodernists to treat serious subject in a playful and humorous why .For example, Vonnegut, and Pynchon address the events of the world war II . Similarly, in the stories of Donald Barthleme we can find postmodern irony and black humor. Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* is the irony of the now idiomatic "*Catch-22*"and the narrative is structured around a long series of similar ironies. Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* also parodies Gustav Flaubert's real and fictive life .This novel inornyzes the nature a signal "truth" by replacing it with multiple "truths".

David lodge describe the features of postmodern fiction by citing lots of postmodern writer and their works like Beckett's *Murphy*, watt's *The Kicks*, Barthelme`s *Snow white* Fowl's *French lieutenant's woman* and so on. Lodge says that all these are wholly illusory and confronting type of fictions .He states that "we can best define the formal character of postmodern writing by examining its efforts to deploy both metaphorical and metonymic devices in radically new ways"(76). Contradiction, permutation, discontinuity, randomness, and excess are the main features of postmodern fiction.

Pastiche can be parody of past styles in most postmodernist literature. It can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic, or information- drenched aspects of postmodern society. It can be a combination of multiple genres to create a unique narrative or to comment on situations in postmodernity. For example, William S. Boroughs uses science fiction, detective fiction, Margaret Atwood used science fiction and fairy tales. Though, pastiche commonly refers to the mixing of genres, many other

elements are also include (metafiction and temporal distortion are common in the broader pastiche of the postmodern novel).

Interdependence of literary text based on the theory that a literary text is not an isolated phenomenon but is made up of a mosaic of quotation and that any text is the absorption and transformation of author. One literary text depends on some other literary work. Most of the postmodern fictions are meat-fictional in quality. Metafiction is essentially writing about writing or "foregrounding the apparatus; making the artificiality of art or the fictionality of fiction apparent to the reader and generally disregards the necessity for willful suspension of disbelief" (Hutcheon, *Politics*: 43). It is often employed to undermine the authority of the author, for unexpected narrative shifts to advance a story in a unique way, for emotional distance, or to the comment on the act of storytelling. Linda Hutcheon replaces metafiction with historiographic metafiction to refer to works that fictionalize actual historical events or figures; notable examples include *Ragtime* by E. L. Doctorow and *Flaubert's Parrot* by Julian Barnes. It is very separation of the literary art and the historical that is now being challenged in postmodern theory and art and recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what two modes of writing share then on how they differ. The pleasure of double awareness of both fictiveness and a basis in the "real"- as do readers of contemporary historiographic metafiction. In fact, Michael Coetzee's novel *Foe*, addresses precisely this question of the relation of "Story" and "history" writing to truth and exclusion in the practice of Defoe. There is direct link here to familiar assumptions of historiography: every history is a history of some entity which existed for a reasonable period of time, that the historian wishes to state what is literally true of it in a sense which distinguishes the historian from a teller of fictitious of mendacious story (M. White 4). *Foe* reveals that

story teller can certainly silence or exclude absent, certain past events and people but it also suggest that historians have done the same like past has done.

Historiography refers to the art of writing history in general and politics of writing history in specific. If we search the root of historiography, we have to go with Herodotus who introduced ancient historiography. After him, Aristotle introduced it and later Hegal and Ranke wrote historiography in their time. Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt mentioned it on their works. Now, in postmodern era, Hayden White, Linda Hutcheon, and La crape discuss and introduce historiography in metafiction mixing, representation and interpreting the postmodern Pastiches and Parodies on it. Historiography, according to Derrida, is always teleological. It imposes a meaning on the past and does so by postulating an end (or origin) so too does fiction. The difference in postmodern fiction is in its challenging self consciousness of that imposition that renders its Provisional nature. As Michael de Certeau has argued: history writing is a displacing operation upon the real past, limited attempt to understand the relations between a place, a discipline, and the construction of a text (55-64). Michael de Certeau here tries to connect the present with the past. To know any event or relations we should move to past history. Present is the byproduct of the past.

Hayden white feels that the dominant view of historians today has gradually come to be that the writing of history in the form of narrative representations of the past is a highly conventional and literary endeavor (which is not to say that they believe that event never occurred in the past). There have been three major foci recent theorizations of historiography: narrative, rhetoric, and argument (Struever, 261-64), and of these, it is narrative that most clearly overlaps with the concerns of postmodern fiction and theory.

Historiography has had its impact on literary studies, not just in new historicism but even in field such as semiotics, where history has once been formally banished. Historiographic metafiction is one kind of postmodern novel which rejects projecting present beliefs and standards to the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past events. It also suggests a distinction between events and facts that is one shared by many historians. Linda Hutcheon coins the term 'historiographic meta-fiction' to refer to works that fictionalize actual historical events or figures. The lesson here is that the past once existed, but that our historical knowledge of it is semiotically transmitted. Historiographic metafiction often points the fact by using the para-textual conventions of historiography to both inscribe and undermine the authority and objectivity of historical sources and explanations.

Postmodern historiographic metafiction shares the characteristics associated with the metafiction in general and takes history or part of history, as its topic and creates its fictional universe around historical figures and events. The genre represents not just a world of fiction, however self-consciously presented as a constructed one, but also a world of public experiences. It questions the separability of fiction and historiography, but does not in any way purport to be in possession of the final answer to the debate about the relationship between them. Its aim is to foreground the discussion and to draw attention to the matter of whose truth is told, as historiographic metafiction presents the view that are only 'truths' in plural and never one 'Truth' with capital 'T'.

According to Hutcheon, in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, works of historiographic metafiction are "those well-known and popular novella which are both intensively self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (116). Historiographic metafiction is quintessentially postmodern art form, with reliance upon

textual play, parody and historical re-conceptualization. Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie, and Julian Barnes are authors of historiographic metafiction.

It is this very separation of the literary and the historical that is not being challenged in postmodern theory and art and recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ. They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms; and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. This kind of novel asks to recall that history and fiction are themselves historical terms and that their definition and interrelations are historically determined and vary with time (Seemon, 212-16).

Historiographic metafiction suggests that truth and falsity may indeed not be the right term in which to discuss fiction, but not for the reasons offered above postmodern novels like *Flaubert's Parrot*, *Famous words* and *A Maggot* openly assert that there are only multiple truths. These novel questions the single truth and advocate for the plurality in truth and center.

Historiographic metafiction, like much contemporary theory of history, does not fall into either 'presentatism' or nostalgia in its relation to the past it presents. What it does is, it de-naturalizes that temporal relationship in both historiographic theory and postmodern fiction: there is an intense self-reflexivity (both theoretical and textual) above the act of narrating the certain event of the past above the conjunction of present action and the past absent object of that agency. In both historical and literary postmodern representation, the doubleness remains: there is no sense of either historian or novelist

reducing the strange past to very similar present. The narrating 'historian' of Salman Rushdie's *Shame* finds that he has trouble in keeping his present knowledge of events from contaminating his presentation of the past. The meta-fictional historiographer as a narrator of Rushdie's *Shame* announces:

> The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space. My story, my fictional country exists, like myself, at a slight angle of reality. I have found this off centric to be necessary: but its value is of course, open to debate. My view in that I am not writing only about Pakistan. (29)

The open mixing of the fictive with historical in the narrator's storytelling is made into part of very narrative. It is clear that he is trying to present the unpresentable.

Historiographic metafiction, like both historical fiction and narrative history, can not avoid dealing with the problem of the status of their 'facts' and of the nature of their evidence. It suggests s distinction between "events" and "facts" that is one shared by many historians. The premise of postmodern fiction is the same as that articulated by Hayden White regarding history: “[E]very representation of the past has specifiable ideological implications” (69).

HIstoriographic metafiction, of course, paradoxically fits both definitions: it installs totalizing order, only to congest it by its radical provisionality, intertextuality, and often fragmentation. In many ways, the nonfictional novel is another late modernist creation,in the sense that both its self-consciousness about its writing process and its stress on subjectivity recall Woolf and Joyce's experiments with limited depth vision in narrative writing of postmodern historiographic metafiction as Hutcheon states:

> If the past is only known to us today through its textualized traces (which, like texts are always open to interpretation), then the writing of the both history and historiographic metafiction becomes a form of complex inter-textual cross referencing that operates within (and does not deny) its own unavoidably discursive context. There can be little doubt of the impact of poststructuralist theory of textuality on this kind of writing, for this writing that raises basic questions about the possibilities and limits of meaning in the representation of the past. (Hutcheon, 1989:81)

Here, Hutcheon analyses the basic nature of historiographic metafiction with its tenets like inter-textuality, self-reflexivity, and parodic representation of the past history. To clarify this nature she gives the example of Rushdie's novel. In Rushdie's novel, a contemporary narrator Saleem Sinai, born at the moment of Pakistan's independence, tries to narrate his own life history at the same time, as narrating the history of Pakistan. The historical archive, however, constantly contradicts itself, and Saleem's subjective perspective mediates and colors his narration of historical events.

Historiographic metafiction studies the history by sharing the characteristics of metafiction in general and creates its fictional universe around historical figures or events. The genre questions the separability of fiction and history presenting view that there are only truths in plural, never singular truth and welcoming the public experiences. The act of narrating the events of the past in the present is the main issue of historiographic metafiction and this research on Julian Barnes's novel *Flaubert's Parrot* by taking the bold ideas of Linda Hutcheon, Hayden White and J.F. Lyotard are describe in the succeeding part of this chapter.

Hayden White (1928) is a historian in the literary criticism. White proposes a return to the historical text, which he thinks has been abandoned in favor of the study of other works in the philosophy of history.

He says that history is determined by tropes, in as much as the historiography of every period is defined by a specific trope. For White, metaphor is the most useful trope. He feels that the dominant view of historians today has gradually come to be that the writing of history in the form of narrative representations of the past is a highly conventional and indeed literary endeavor which is not to say that they believe that events never occurred in the past. White stresses on the use of tropes, relationship of events and sets, historical representation and stories of history in fictive forms in writing and reading historiographic metafiction is major concern of postmodern historiography.

Hutcheon argues that historiographic metafiction is the past time of the past time. In her book, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* she talks about postmodern novel that rejects projecting of present ideas onto the past suggesting a difference between events and facts which are shred by many historians or historical critics on the postmodern novel:

> Historiographic metafication is one kind of postmodern novel which rejects beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past events. It also suggests a distinction between ‘events’ and ‘facts’ that is one shared by many historians. Since the documents became signs of events, which the historian transmutes into facts, as in historiographic metafication, the lesson here is that the past once existed, but that our historical knowledge of it is semiotically transmitted. Finally, historiographic metafiction often points to the fact by using the paratextual conventions of historiography to both inscribe and

> undermine the authority and objectivity of historical source and explanation. (122-24)

Hutcheon's arguments in both *Poetics of Postmodernism* and *Politics of Postmodernism* are often developed in direct response to Jemeson. As a result, her discussion at times sounds like a polemic against modernism.

Hutcheon asserts that historiographic metafiction foregrounds the discursivity, constructed nature of reality "by stressing the contexts in which the fiction is being produced-by both writer and reader" (*Poetics 40*). She thinks that the dialogue of past and present, of old and new gives formal expression onto a belief in change within continuity. For Hutcheon, postmodern architecture and literature are very close to give the meaning of postmodernity:

> [b]ut in doubly parodic, double coding (that is, as parodic of both modernism and something else). Postmodernist architecture also allows for that which was rejected as uncontrollable and deceitfully by both modernism's Gesomtkinstler and "life condition" that is, ambiguity and irony. (30)

For Hutcheon, postmodernism cannot be used as synonym for the contemporary and it does not really describe international cultural phenomena, for it is primarily European and American Phenomena. She wants to call postmodernism as fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical and inescapably political. Its contradictions are those of late capitalist societies but, whatever the cause these contradictions are manifest in the important postmodern concept of the presence of the past. For Hutcheon, all forms of contemporary art and thought are examples of postmodernist contradiction.

Hutcheon takes parody as perfect postmodern form and opines that most of postmodernist texts are also specifically parodic in their intertextual relation to the traditions and conventions of the genres involved. In some sense, parody is a perfect postmodernist form, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies. She says that in the past history how often has been used in criticism of the novel as a kind of model of the realistic pole of representation. She thinks that historians like novelists are interested in recounting the facts. She thinks that the power of literary representation is as provisional as that of historiography. In this regard, Rao Bastos says:

> The reader will already have noted that, unlike ordinary texts, this one was read first and written later, instead of saying and writing something new, it merely faithfully copies what has already been said and composed by others […]. [T]he re-scripter declares, in the words of a contemporary author, that the history contained in these notes is reduced to the fact that the story should have been told in then has not been told. As a consequence, the characters and facts that figure in them have earned, through the fatality of the written language, the right of a factions of autonomous existence in the service of the no less factious and autonomous reader. (435)

It is obvious that narrative has become a human made structure, not as natural or given where it is in historical or fictional representation. The view of narrative that so much current theory challenges is not new, but it has been given a new designation. It is considered as a mode of totalizing representation. For example, the novel, *I the Supreme* is about history and oral tradition of storytelling society. It thematizes the postmodern

concern with the radically interminate unstable nature of textulity and subjectivity. This novel is full of remarks about representation in the narratives of both fiction and history.

Postmodern fiction, for Hutcheon, stresses on the tensions created by the realization that can only know the past through the present. It emphasizes the actual event of the past and historian's act of processing them into facts. She says that what historiographic metafiction suggests is recognition of a central responsibility of the historian and the novelist alike, i.e. their responsibility as makers of meaning through representation.

Hutcheon introduces and uses parody in her writing which is called ironic quotation, pastiche, appropriation or intertextuality that is usually considered central to postmodernism. Parody also contests our humanist assumption about artistic originality and uniqueness and our capitalist notions of honourship and property. This parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostaligic; it is always critical. It is also not ahistorical or de-historicizing. It does not wrest past art from its original historical context. Parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference. This does not mean that art has long lost its meaning and purpose, but that it will inevitably have a new and different significant. In other words, parody works to foreground the politics of representation. Many critics, including Jameson, call postmodern ironic citation pastiche or empty parody, assuming that only unique styles can be parodied and that such novelty and individuality are almost impossible today.

Postmodern parody does not disregard the context of the past representation it cites, but uses irony to acknowledge the fact that we are inevitably separated from the past today by time and by the subsequent history of those representations. In *USA*

triology, Passos offers a relatively unproblematized view of historical continuity and the context or representation with a stable plot structure. But his very stability is called into question in Doctorow's postmodern ironic reworking of the same historical material in his historiographic metafiction *Ragtime*. Parodying Dos Passos's *USA triology* Doctorow both uses and abuses it. He counts on our knowledge that a historical Freud or Jung or Goldman existed in order to challenge our unexamined notion about what might constitute historical truth. Postmodern parody is a kind of contesting revision or rereading of the past that both conforms and subverts the power of the remoteness of the past and the need to dead with it in the present has been called the allegorical impulse of postmodernism.

'The politics of representation' and 'the representation of politics' frequently go hand in hand in parodic postmodern historiographic metafiction. Parody becomes way of ironically 'revisiting the past' of both art and history in novel like Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* with its double parodic intertexts. *Midnight's Children* translates all the German social cultural and historical details of Gunter Grass's novel, *The Tin Drum* into Indian terms. Hutcheon presents William Siska's article *Metacinema: A Modern Necessity*, to show the impact of historiographic fiction in the postmodern cinema forwarding the term 'metacinema', and a new kind of 'self reflexivity' that challenges the traditional Hollywood variety movie about movie making that retain the orthodox realist notion of the transparency of narrative structures and representation. She quotes, "The word 'irony' doesn't now mean only what it meant in earlier centuries. It doesn't mean in one country, all it may mean in another, nor in the street what it may mean in the study nor to one school what it may mean to another" (*Irony's Edge* 9).

This extract points out the inherent politics and historical context in historiographic metafiction, which is written in the ironic mode. Irony has been used to reinforce rather than to question established attitude, as the history or satire illustrates so well. This irony functions tactically in the service of wide range of political position. Hutcheon says, “Ironic meaning is inclusive and relational: the said and the unsaid coexist for the interpreter, and each has meaning in relation to the other because they literally interact” (*Irony’s Edge*, 12).

To create the real meaning of irony, there should be relation of said and unsaid. Irony happens in multiple things like class, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual preference and so are nationally neighborhood profession, religion and all the other micro-political complexities of our lives to which we may not even be able to give labels.

Hutcheon’s use of irony is to look at what might be called the scene of irony, i.e. to treat it not as an isolated trope to analyze by formalist means but as a political issue. Doctorow’s *Ragtime* and Barnes’s *Flaubert’s Parrot* are metafiction that uses irony which becomes political only when it consumes even the origin authority of the ironist.

Similarly, intertextuality is one of the most commonly used and misused terms in contemporary critical vocabulary. Intrtextuality, like modern literary and cultural theory itself, can be said to have its origin in twentieth century linguistics, particularly in the seminal works of Swiss linguist Ferdiand de Saussure. Then Mikhail Bakthin’s theories continually return to inform different theories of intertextuality. Julia Kristeva’s attempt to combine Saussure and Bakthinan theories of language and literature produced the first articulation of interxtual theory in the late 1960s.

Intertextuality, as a term, has not been restricted to discussion of the literary arts. It is found in discussion of cinema, painting, music, architecture, photography and in

virtually all cultural and artistic productions. As Hattens puts it,“Strategies, to the context they exceed complete formalization or simple predictability, assert a work’s individuality even as they rely on a style for intelligibility. Thus, a given work will typically be in and of style,while playing with or against it strategically” (qtd in Hatten, 1985:58).
In this study, we have observed the manner in which intertextuality is increasingly assimilated into literary theory and into theories of cultural, artistic and technological production and reproduction.

For Hutcheon, the postmodernism is contradictory and double coded, since it works within the very systems it attempts to subvert. Parody, in Hutcheon’s and other critic’s work on postmodernism is intimately connected to notions of intertextuality. In the index to her *The Politics of Postmodernism* (Hutcheon, 1989); the entry for intertextuality simply directs the reader to the entry for parody. At times substation of parody for intertextuallity can lead to unhelpful complications, and one occasion Hutcheon would fare by employing the term intertextually rather than continue to reshape and redirect notions of parody. Hutcheon pits such a view of postmodernism against alternative views which understood postmodernism as simply a playful registering of culture’s current, saturation of signs and sign-systems:

> Parody works to foreground the politics of representation. Needless to say this is not the accepted view of postmodernist parody. The prevailing interpretation is that postmodernism offers a value-free, decorative, and de-historicized of past forms and that this a most apt mode for culture like our own that is oversaturated with images. Instead, I would want to argue that postmodernist parody is a value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form

> of a acknowledging the history (and through irony, politics) of representations. (Hutcheon. 1989: 94)

Postmodern art is more complex and more problematic than extreme late modernist auto-representation might suggest, with its view that there is no presence, no external truth which verifies or unifies, that there is only self reference. Historiographic metafiction self-consciously suggests this, but then uses it to signal the discursive nature of all reference. Self-reflexivity can be used for intertextual and intercultural communication. In many works, the non-fictional novel is another late modernist creation in the sense that both its self consciousness about its writing process and its stress on subjectivity recall Woolf and Joyce's experiments with limited depth vision in narrative.

Self-reflexivity is also a tenet of historiographic metafiction. The word self-reflexivity is an ongoing conversation with one's whole self about what one is experiencing as one is experiencing it. To be self-reflexive is to engage in meta-level of feeling and thought while being in the moment. The metafictional self-reflexive novels pose that ontological join as a problem.

Postmodern literary work openly reflects upon its own process of artful composition. In Self-reflexive fiction, we find self-conscious narrator. It repeatedly refers to its own fictional status. It involves a significant degree of self-consciousness about itself as fiction; it involves apologetic address to the reader. It makes joke of its own digression. It interrupts the narrative to explain its procedures and offers the readers alternative ending. *The Armies of the Night* is subtitled history as a novel, and the novel as history. In each of the two parts of the book there is moment in which the narrator addresses the reader on the conversations and decision seems to be that historiography ultimately fails experience and "the instincts of the novelist" have to take over. This self-

reflexivity does not weaken, but on the contrary strengthens and points to the direct level of historical engagement and reference of the text.

An interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary is also the tenets of postmodern historiographic metafiction. It involves attacking a subject from various angles and methods eventually cutting across disciplines and forming a new method for understanding the subject. Common goals of understanding unite the various methods and acknowledge common or shared subject or problem, even if it spreads to other discipline. Postmodern historiographic metafictions are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. As history exist as a vast web of subjective texts, the new historical account being one more author's struggle to negotiate a way through intertextual network of previous forms and representation. As Hutcheon states inter-disciplinarity of Rushdie's text:

> Point for two directions at one, toward the events being represented in the narrative and towards the act of narration itself. This is precisely the same doubleness that characterizes all historical narrative. Neither form of representation can separate 'fact' from that act of interpretation and narration that constitute them, for 'facts' are created in and by those acts. (ibid 76)

This extract point out the inherent politics and historical context in historiographic metafication, which is written in ironic mode. Irony has been used to reinforce rather than to question established attitudes, as the history on satire illustrates so well. The irony functions tactically in the service of wide range of political positions.

For the research of any postmodern fiction Lyotard's concept is inevitable. He insists that the postmodern time is the time of kitch or low form of art. Language rejects

legitimation but believes in play. Postmodern art is hybrid and low form of art, Cathy Acker is the best example of postmodern art. Those who demand against the experimentation, they are the politician of reality. Modernist are the politician of reality. He says that the presence of photography and cinema increased the process of derealization, Lyotard disagress with the lamentation of modernists like Eliot.

Lyotard defines the postmodern from the perspective of “knowledge narrative” not “grand narrative”. It is the time of petty narrative. Truth for him is functional and methodological tool. He gives the example of James Joyce and Proust who are lamenting at the loss of truth and reality. He explains that postmodern does not search for the missing reality in the art but it celebrates the artistic techniques themselves which attempt to present the unpresentability of reality. Modern art was the art of the search for the best, where as postmodern art is the art of left over. In his essay “Answering the question: what is postmodernism?” he argues that:

> The postmodern condition is based on paradox: it marks a moment in the very constitution of modernity. In this context, its tense is the future perfect because, instead of depending on pre-existent roles, it favors strategies that “formulate the rules of what will have been done” and represents not a stage but a recurring moment in the rhythm of contemporary life. Thus, comprehended, postmodernism “is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state and this state is constant.” (12)

Here, Lyotard wants to express that modernism and postmodernism are not different. They are interconnected to each other in their rootlebel. For him postmodern should be describe from little narrative. He questions the grad narrative. For him there is not any

single “Truth” rather there are multiple “truths”. Postmodern fiction, for him, should be orientated towards petty narrative.

Most of the postmodern novels provide the option for the readers to choose the suitable ending. Open ending is also the basic tenet of postmodern historiographic metafiction. Fowel’s *The French Lieutenant's Women* provides multiple endings for the readers. Traditional and realist readers choose the nineteenth century Victorian ending, where as contemporary reader chooses postmodern version of ending. Julian Barnes also experiments with open ended conclusion in the most of his novel, i.e. *Flaubert’s Parrot.* In this novel by providing open ending Barnes tries to prove the slippery nature of truth. Most of the postmodern fiction writers favor open ending, multiple truths or realities in their novels.

Julian Barnes’s *Flaubert’s Parrot* has almost all the features of postmodern historiographic metafiction. It is a parody of past life and characters of Gustave Flaubert, a famous nineteenth century realist novelist with self-critical instance and confession of Barnes’s narrator Dr. Geoffery Braithwaite. Self-opinionated narrator and character of his novel Dr. Geoffery Braithwaite proves himself as a postmodern historiographer. He narrates the events and stories mixing the historical fact and fictive events related to the nineteenth century realist writer, Gustave Flaubert and becomes self critical by confessing his experiences. Julian Barnes tries to explore the multiple truths about Flaubert though his narrator Dr. Geoffery Braithwaite who makes the parody of the past life of Flaubert. By applying the theory callesd postmodern historiographic metafiction the present research will analyze the politics of Barnes’s *Flaubert’s Parrot*.

III. The Politics of Postmodern Narrative: Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* as a Postmodern Historiographic Metafiction

Flaubert's Parrot is a kind of postmodern meta-novel that mostly discusses the life, work, and critical reception of Gustav Flaubert who was the nineteenth century famous realist novelist. Ii is strange piece of metafiction, narrated by a retired doctor named Geoffery Braithwaite who considers himself to be an amateur scholar of Flaubert. The plot is ostensibly about Braithwaite's search for the authentic parrot which inspired Flaubert during his writing of “A Simple Heart”. But it is really a disconnected set of writing about Flaubert.

The book is a mix of historical fact and fiction and partly of literary criticism. Dr. Geoffery Braithwaite is a self-opinionated and fictitious narrator who narrates most of the chapters and some others use a third person perspective. It is composed of a range of genres, multi-voiced narratives including chronology, dictionary, essay, exam questions, bestiary, cross channel, train-spotter's guide, apocryphoa, Louise Colet's version and pure story. At the same time, the disparate modes are held together from the beginning by a deeper underlying drive, the uncovering of Flaubert's life and opinions operate as a function of Braithwaite's own unresolved issues with the death of his wife.

There are many reasons to admire this novel. It is funny as well as sad. It contains more information about Gustav Flaubert than most readers will know already, along with some deeply thoughtful speculation on the meaning and value of that information, the importance of authors lives, the possibility of that loving an author is the purest love of all, and much more. And Geoffery Briathwaite is an easily overlooked epigrammatist. Among his memorable observations about writing, he opines, "Mystification is simple;

clarity is the hardest thing of all" (102). He tells the reader about the past, "The past is distant, receding coastline, and we are all in the same boat" (101). He further adds, "Sometimes the past may be a greased pig; sometimes a bear in its den; and sometimes merely the flash of a parrot, two mocking eyes that spark at you from the forest" (112) and he says, "Books say: She did this because life says: She did this. Books are where things are explained to you; life is where things aren't" (168)

Despite its many virtues, there is no question that much of the continuing interest in the novel, at least among academic readers and critics, comes from the association of *Flaubert's Parrot* with the literature of postmodernism. This association demands some scrutiny, since some of the claims for the postmodernity of the novel are overstated. Malcolm Bradbury and Eric Metaxas agree to call this novel postmodern. For them, fragmentation of form and self-consciousness call attention to the works fictive status. Bradbury points out Barnes's postmodernist text mixes fiction and nonfiction; it takes multiple forms; and it "busily plays with notions of the real and fictional, makes its own rules, breaks up its own discourse, leaves behind its own ambiguities […]" (437). If this is the agreed-upon definition of the postmodern then obviously *Flaubert's Parrot* qualifies, thought it is much less insistent on breaking the frame or revealing its artificiality than many other comparable works.

This is a soft notion of postmodern fiction, and the harder-edged idea is much more concerned with epistemology, questions of what can be known and whether such concepts as truth and reality are any things other than linguistic constructs. The past is inaccessible, and "reality" and "truth" are no more than linguistic constructs, and that a seeker of knowledge can really make no claims to any knowledge at all, we can find these things embodied in *Flaubert's Parrot*. There are three major data from *Flaubert's*

Parrot that seem to support indecidability and the epistemological dead end. One of these is the statements made by Geoffery Braithwaite himself about the Past. He says that the "[p]ast is distant, receding coastline, and we are all in the same boat" (101); and, "I'm not sure what I believe about the past" (91). Strongest of all, he writes, in the context of a discussion of whether fat men were fatter in Flaubert's time than the present day. Regarding this issue he says:

> How can we know such trivial, crucial details? 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. (90)

Here narrator tries to question the traditional notion of history and gives his view about the fictionalization of past history in present era and this questioning of history is only what he is tempted to declare every so often - is the evidence provided by the structure of the novel.

Flaubert's Parrot shows us that "[l]anguage creates 'reality', and language is inescapably plural" and places the novel in Linda Hutcheon's category of "historiographic metafiction", which is irrevocably self-conscious, inter-textual, parodic, self-reflexivity, multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary, ironic and open-ended asserting through structure and conflicting information that the 'parrot' is a discursive construct (63). The plot of this novel does not follows linearity like a grand narrative novel rather the novel presents us fifteen chapters which are not related linearly and supports the pattern of petty narrative or small narrative. Surfacely this novel is like a postmodern pastiche and self-opinionated narrator Braithwaite makes the parody of the past life of Gustav Flaubert. All the chapters are scattered and the first chapter is directly linked with the last chapter.

Like many literary novels, *Flaubert's Parrot* provides the readers with an initial hint as to its purposes. It opens with an epigraph, taken from one of Flaubert's letters: "When you write the biography of a friend, you must do it as if you were taking revenge for him"(1). It means, if we are going to write something of our friend, we can do whatever we like to do. We can admire him/her and at the same time we can criticize his/her activities. (Though the novel is sprinkled with French words and phrases, those untranslatable, relishable bits of French that make the difficult to study about Flaubert) Barnes's epigraph implies that the book will turn into Flaubert's foes, living and dead. This epigraph in the beginning of the novel guides the readers to enter in the fictional and non fictional life of Flaubert. This novel, made up largely of biographical fragments, thus claims a Flaubertian rationale. It is not so much a portrait of the artist as a vindication of him, a work more partial than any conventional biography. Barnes has given his story to Geoffery Braithwaite, retired doctor, whose ‘love’ for the dead author is untainted by professional self-regard. He pursues the dead writer as a solace for his own disappointments; his literary obsession is, as the epigraph implies, a personal matter.

In chapter one Geoffery Braithwaite, the narrator, begins *Flaubert's Parrot* by describing Flaubert's statue. This statue is not the original one, which was taken away by the Germans in 1941. Then, the Mayor of Rouen found the original Plaster cast and made a second statue. The second chapter consists of a list of dates in Flaubert's life. There are three sections. In the first section , details of Flaubert's life and his successes are listed. In the second section, deaths and Flaubert's failures are listed. Finally, in the third section, Flaubert's thoughts are listed by date. In 1821, Flaubert was born and in 1825, his nurse Julie entered the household. In 1831, he enters the “college de Rouen” and does well in studies. He meets Elisa Schlesinger in 1836 and around the same time he has sex with

one of his mother's maids. His published work appears in 1837 and, in 1844 he is confined to the family home.

Similarly, chapter three "Finder's Keepers", contains lots of information and biographies of Flaubert. In chapter four, "The Flaubert Bestiary" Flaubert is compared with bear and Caroline, his sister, who is compared with the rat. They each refer to themselves as these animals and Flaubert compares himself with numbers of animals. In chapter five, "Snap" Geoffery does not like coincidences; he prefers to feel that life is chaotic. If Geoffery could control all of literary fiction, he would ban coincidences.

In chapter six, "Emma Bovary's Eyes", Geoffery hates critics. Geoffery thinks that at first, the irritation over something like this is not with the critic, but with the author. In chapter seven, "Cross Channel", Geoffery is on the ferry crossing the channel. He likes crossing during the off-seasons, the in-between times. He thinks that these months are without certainty, not quite summer or winter. Flaubert didn't believe in progress, instead he believed that democracy made people more stupid. Geoffery agrees with Flaubert. Geoffery has three stories to tell: one about Flaubert, one about his wife Ellen, and one about himself. His own story is the simplest but also the hardest to start. Chapter Eight, "train-spotter's Guide to Flaubert", includes Flaubert's different views and his personal properties.

In chapter nine, "Flaubert Apocrypha", Geoffery goes through the apocryphal bibliography, starting with autobiography. In chapter ten, "The Case Against", Geoffery wonders why we want to know the worst. He loved his wife but he wanted to know the worst about his wife. Similarly, in chapter eleven, "Louise Colet's Version", Colet tells her story related to Flaubert. She was thirty five, beautiful famous having affair with Flaubert. She describes the characteristics of Flaubert on how he treated the women.

Chapter twelve, "Braithwaite's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas" contains words and meanings of the people, places, and things that are connected to Flaubert.

Chapter Thirteen, "Pure Story" is about personal life of Geoffery Braithwaite with his wife Ellen. He remembers his wife and confesses his relation with his wife and compares his wife with Emma Bovary, who was an adulteress in Flaubert's novel Madame Bovary. Chapter fourteen presents a final examination about Flaubert. It includes questions on literary criticism, economics, geography, logic, biography, psychology, phonetics, history and many more. At last in chapter fifteen, "And The Parrot", Geoffery links the story with chapter one and reveals that it takes him almost two years to solve the mystery of the two parrots. At the end also he is not sure which one is the authentic parrot chosen by Flaubert while writing *un Coeur simple* (“A Simple Heart”).

This novel simply looks like a collage, criticism, biography, novel biography all combine. This is the novel that represents historical characters and events but at the same time keeps reflecting within the text on issues relating to the retrieval of the past. The narrator of this novel tries to fictionalize the biography of the nineteenth century realist writer Flaubert. So, we can keep this novel under the category of historiographic metafiction and we can clearly analyze its basic tenets.

Flaubert's Parrot is discontinuous novel, in which not just the disparate materials that create this effect but the arrangement of them. It mixes fact and fiction. Chapter 1 is about the statue of Flaubert. Chapter 2 has the three competing Flaubert chronologies; chapter 3 contains the story of Julie Herbert. So, this novel undeniably lacks unity. the question is. Why?

One reason has to do with its most fundamental mixture that between the biographical and critical commentary on and speculation about Flaubert and the reticently autobiographical story of Geoffery Braithwaite. There are also, roughly, the nonfictions and the fictions. This mixing of fiction and non fiction is the Barnes's politics while composing this novel by the real and fictitious history of the nineteenth century writer Gustave Flaubert into postmodern version. Barnes's another politics of narrative is clearly visible when narrator (Dr. Geoffery Braithwaite) narrates his own story and compares his own story with fictional Madame Bovary. While doing these activities, Barnes's narrator became self-reflexive and confessional. Barnes makes his narrator totally free in the whole novel. Narrator narrates the nineteenth century realist versions with twentieth century postmodern version. In this process sometimes narrator's tone is mockery, ironic and sometimes self-reflexive.

Reading unsympathetic notices of the novel one would hardly detect that all the biographical materials about Flaubert, even the bestiary and the examination paper, are not presented by Julian Barnes, but by his narrator and protagonist Braithwaite, which means that the miscellaneousness of the organization, the fussiness of the curiosity about minor details and essayistic quality of the book are phenomena attributable to the mind and concerns of Braithwaite rather than Barnes.

Geoffery Braithwaite is a self opinionated narrator. His self-abnegation is hardly complete, and he unleashes vigorous opinions, ranging from the bluntly emotional - "Let me tell you why I hate critics" (74) to the politico-philosophical. The greatest patriotism is to tell your country when it is behaving dishonorably, foolishly, viciously" (131) to the amusingly literary critical. In chapter 7, "Cross Channel", he announces the orders he would issue as literary dictator, ten of them, including a quota system on fiction set in

South America (98). Braithwaite needs opinions; he also needs great curiosity, patience, and freedom, to promote and permit his investigations. The novel actually grew out of his own pilgrimage to Flaubert's home and his discovery of multiple modern parrots asserted to be the original of the bird in *Un coeur simple.*

Geoffery Braithwaite is far more then a man who, while sharing some of Julian Barnes's interests, is more pedantic and obsessed and therefore, can make much out of the competing claims of two moldy parrots. He has his own story as well and the relationship between the story and the story of Flaubert's is crucial to the novel. The central fact about Braithwaite is that his wife Ellen was repeatedly unfaithful to him and killed herself. It takes quite a while to discover this though.

The first hint of their complex relations comes in chapter 6, "Emma Bovary's Eyes" : " I never thought my wife was perfect. I love her, but I never deceived myself. I remember […] But I'll keep that for another time. I'll remember instead another lecture I once attended […]". (76) That "instead" is a tantalizing hint. Later he examines the relation a bit more:

> Three stories connected with me one about Flaubert, one about Ellen, one about myself. Mine is the simplest of the three - it hardly amounts to more than a convincing proof of my existence and yet I find it the heardest to begin. My wife is more complicated, and more urgent; yet I resist that too. Keeping the best for last, as is was saying earlier? I don't thinks so; rather to opposite, if anything. But by the time I tell you her story I want you to be prepared: that's to say, I want you to have had enough of books, and parrots, and lost letters, and bears and […] Ellen's is a true story; perhaps it is even the reason why I am telling you Flaubert's story instead. (85-6)

Here, Braithwaite narrates his own personal life story. He tries to clarify us about his relation with Ellen. It finally comes out, as much of it as readers need, in "Pure story" (Chapter 13). Geoffery loved Ellen, she had lovers, he was unhappy but loved her still; eventually she killed herself. Apparently she was bored, and as he wryly notes, "[u]nlike me she didn't have some rash devotion to a dead foreigner to sustain her" (166).

In the novel Braithwaite's story is self-reflexive through which he confesses his personal life. Braithwaite does not want to express his personal relation to his wife directly. He presents his personal story indirectly comparing with the story of one Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*. Thus, Braithwaite's story is related to Flaubert in two ways. One is the parallel between Ellen Braithwaite and Emma Bovary. She was an adulterous wife; her husband, a doctor was complaisant. Charles Bovary, in the one rhetorical flourish of his life, assigns the blame for Emma's infidelity and suicide to fate. Braithwaite stops short of that, offering the statement that " I loved her: we were happy I miss her. She didn't love me; we were unhappy; I miss her"(162). He is clear on how she differed from Emma: "She was not corrupted: her spirit did not coarsen, she never ran up bills" (164).

Another link between Braithwaite and Flaubert, and perhaps more important, particularly since Braithwaite resists all temptation to discover further homologies between his story and the one Flaubert told in *Madam Bovary*, is that thinking about Flaubert has helped him to avoid thinking about Ellen, and telling the readers about Flaubert in a way of delaying in telling about Ellen. Braithwaite's unhappy marital history provides the etiology of the investigation, and then the transmission, of his findings and thoughts about Flaubert. Here Braithwaite's proves his self-critical stance and confesses about his personal life and personal relation with his wife Ellen. So, chapter 10 "The Case

Against" and chapter 13, "Pure Story" are self reflections of narrator Braithwaite where Braithwaite confesses his relation with Ellen which is related to the story of Charles Bovary and Madame Bovary. Chapter 11 "Louise Colet's Version" is also indirectly linked with Braithwaite's relation with Ellen. Here, Louise describes about Flaubert in terms that could certainly apply to what we find out about Ellen's relationship with Braithwaite. Louise suggests that chapter 11 is Braithwaite's indirect way of dealing with his unresolved grief and confession about his wife he never really knows.

Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* is also an inter-textual novel. There are different chapters and some chapter consist inter-textuality. For example, chapter 2 "Chronology" consists of three sections. Chapter 10, 11 and 13 are also inter-textual and chronological. There is a correspondence exists between the narrator (a doctor), his wife and her extramarital relationship, and the main characters of Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*. Repeated story patterns can also be part of these analogical links. Postmodernist coincidence creates network of relationships between characters across narrative time, but unlike the traditional coincidence plot, it does not do this by giving these characters a previous relationship in the form of spatial and temporal contiguity but by creating networks of uncanny correspondence between characters who are distributed across more than one anthological level.

In Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*, a form of recognitional process does take place on the character level. There is inter-connectedness between characters of Flaubert's novel and narrator’s wife and narrator. Braithwaite compares his wife and the fictional character Madame Bovary. The comparison does not actually constitute a recognition of the full constellational correspondences, but it may provoke recognition of the analogical

relationships in the reader. Postmodern coincidence helps to develop interconnection between characters, chapters and plot patterns.

In postmodernist coincidence the concept of relationship or link is therefore a completely different one: relationships are not constructed through the temporal linear, casual-progenerative, story -based links of human connections taken from the experience of real life (as in traditional coincidence) and cannot be traced back in a linear fashion to an originary relationship between the characters. In postmodern coincidence, therefore the recognition of correspondences by the reader generally takes the place of spatial inter section in the narrative world. Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* represents the zenith of the postmodernist coincidence plot, since it combines a complex and multifarious fabric of analogical coincidence with extensive narrative comments on coincidence. Analogical relationships exit between characters in the main narrative and fiction alones on an intertextual level: as the novel progresses, the readers gradually perceive that, like Emma Bovary, the narrator's wife had hidden life, was unfaithful to her husband, and eventually committed suicide. Furthermore, like Madame Bovary's husband, Geoffery Braithwaite is a doctor.

Flaubert's Parrot is an extraordinarily artful mix of literary tomfoolery and high seriousness. Barnes goes against the realist notion of writing and plays with political game of postmodern writing pattern. Contradiction; permutation; discontinuity; randomness; excess and short circuit makes this novel under postmodern pattern. Another politics of postmodern narrative is clearly visible while mixing factual and fictitious history of the nineteenth century realist writer Gustave Flaubert in postmodern version and narrator's self-confessional tone.

The text offers no-casual progenerative explanation for these correspondences; the reader is left to wonder Braithwaite's fascination with Flaubert because Madame Bovary reminds him of his own life, or whether Braithwaite is too obsessed with the literary to even pay enough attention to this personal life or to draw the submerged metafictional inference that Braithwaite's life must itself be a fictional game created by Julian Barnes. Braithwaite himself hardly acknowledges this primary analogical coincidence, but the text resounds with other correspondences, such as the parallel between Karl Marx's daughter Eleanor Marx (who was the publisher of first English translation of *Madame Bovary)* and Madame Bovary herself which are used to demonstrate the potential for distortion and selectivity in the construction of analogical relationships (Barnes, 176).

Inter-connectedness also involves in the novel's eponymous parrot : the orginal Flaubertian casual Progenarative parrot is indistinguishable from its less historic fellows. In France the narrator tries to identify the original stuffed parrot that served as the model for the parrot Loulou in Flaubert's *Un couer* Simple. This turns out to be an impossible endeavor because the original parrot cannot be distinguished from a whole collection of stuffed parrots, and identification is complicated by the fact that more than one cultural monument claims to possess the authentic parrot (184-90).

This conundrum underlines the novel's central historically metafictional thesis: the present is cultural zone incapable of reconstructing the distinct landscape of the past. For Braithwaite coincidence in any postmodern metafiction occur as an 'irony':

> One way of legitimizing coincidences, of converse, is to call them ironies. That's what smart people do. Irony is after all, the modern mode, a drinking companion for resonance and wit […] I wonder if the wittiest,

> most resonant irony isn't just a well brushed, well-educated coincidence. (67)

Braithwaite elaborates the thesis that irony is the coincidence of modernist age by narrating a complex anecdote concerning an "irony" in the life of Flaubert. For Braithwaite irony is like the pyramids.

Towards the end of the novel the narrator focuses on a different type of analogical irony the pitfalls of constructing correspondences between art and life. Here, the narrator becomes self-opinionated and says:

> Ellen my wife: Someone I feel I understand less well than a foreign writer dead for a hundred years […]. Books say: She did this because life says: she did this. Books are where things are explained to you; life is where things aren't. I'm not surprised some people refer books. Books make sense of life. The only problem is that the lives they make sense of core other people's lives, never your own. (168)

The fact that narrator does not even seem to perceive the analogical relationship between his own life situation and that in Madame Bovary is of course an additional irony, particularly as, since he and his wife "never talked about her secret life. He says that he has to "fictionalize" in order to "invent his way to the truth" (165). This more self-reflexive perspective reinforce the text's historically metafictional message of the casual networks constructed in narrative. Here, narrator reveals that he loves his wife butshe did not talk about her separate life with him. He believes her too much but she deceived him. He wants to know why she commit suicide so narrator explains clearly that to find out the truth about his wife Ellen, he has to fictionalize his real life history and has to compare with fictive Madame Bovary and Charles Bovary. But narrator’s effort to find out the real

cause of death and real truth about his wife is not solved in the novel because it is the Barnes's politics of narrative.

In the chapter entitled "Snap", the narrator indulges in a meta-narrative that focuses extensively on coincidence. Geoffery does not lie coincidences; he prefers to feel that life is chaotic. If he could control all of literary fictions, he would ban coincidence. He thinks that one way authors legitimize coincidences is to call them ironies. But Geoffery is not sure how Flaubert fells about coincidences. This coincidence is also the Barnes's postmodern politics to keep this novel under historiographic metafiction. Regarding this issue he says "I don't much care for coincidences. There is something spoky about them: You sense momentarily what it must be like to live in an ordered, god-run universe […]. I prefer to feel that things are chaotic, free-wheeling permanently as well as temporarily crazy" (66).

Braithwaite does not believe in coincidence. Coincidence is a major structuring principle of art. The novel's discourse therefore contradicts Braithwaite's own representation of coincidence as a "lazy stratagem" by suggesting that all art and all text are causally manipulated and arranged by the author (78).

Flaubert's Parrot includes irony which helps to parodize the past. Irony is the tentative feature of any historiographic metafiction. Chapter 6, "Snap!" is full of ironic elements. In December 1849, Du Camp and Flaubert climbed the Great Pyramid, after sleeping beside it the previous night, and rose at five to make sure of reaching the top. The narrator ironically states:

> It turns out from Flaubert's travel note, that the business card wasn't pinned in place by monsieur forever himself ; it was put there by the thoughtful Maxim du Camp, who had scampered ahead in the purple night

> and laid out his little mousetrap for his friend's sensibility […]. Du Camp becomes the wit, the dandy, the teaser of modernism before modernism has declared itself. (44)

Geoffery here ironizes every activities of Flaubert. He describes Flaubert's travelling of different places and ironically presents us every event that happened during that journey. Similarly, he tells us that in his private life Flaubert traveled in curtain cabs to avoid the lusty Louise Colet. The every device that allowed him to avoid sexual encounters, he would use to facilitate Madame Bovary's sexuality.

Every chapter of the novel is full of different ironies in 1st, 11th, 12th and 13th chapter narrator presents great irony upon himself. He ironically presents his private relation with his wife and says, "I loved her; we were happy I miss her. She didn't love me, we were unhappy, I miss her" (67). He further adds, "I blushed my wife two prowled where envious men told jokes about her? I didn't know" (167).

In the last chapter of the novel the narrator ironizes about the authenticity of anything including the parrot. He chooses one parrot which was supposed to be authentic among fifty Amazonian parrots from the museum. He says, "I agreed with the Gardienne that his parrot was clearly authentic, about that the Hotel - Dieu bird was definitely impostor" (105). In chapter titled "Snap" and "Louise Colet's Version", Barnes tries to evoke out the secret sexual life of the nineteenth century realist and so called moral Victorian writers or artists. So, Braithwaite ironically presents the secret sexual encounter of Flaubert in chapter called "Snap!" and Louise Colet narrates herself about sexual relation with Flaubert in chapter 11. In this chapter, Colet herself narrates her relation with Flaubert very ironically. In one paragraph she says:

> I was thirty five Gustav was twenty four instead of this age bar also he attracted by me. If you wish to examine the mental condition of the couple entering into such a liaison, then you do not need to look at mine. Examine Gustav's. Why? I will give you a pair of dates. I was born in 1810 […] and you accuse our sex of vain romance? (80)

In these lines, Louise Colet narrates her self about her relation with Gustav Flaubert. Despite their vast age difference also Gustave was attracted with her and they had love affair. They did romance but every tie Gustave tries to supress her. The vast age difference does not matter in their love.

In Flaubert's Parrot, Barnes wants detailed study about Flaubert. As from the epigraph of this novel, we can think that Barnes tries to explore past life of Flaubert. While narrating the past history, Barnes's narrator becomes self-confessional and self-reflexive. It is a trick of Barnes. By operating the nineteenth century writer's biography, Barnes also tries to explore their hidden life and immoral activities.

Barnes's narrator reveals the hidden sexual life of the nineteenth century so called moralist writers like Gustave Flaubert. Flaubert's longtime sexual partner, who according to Braithwaite, also spent years of her life "humiliating and suffering, humiliation at the hands of Flaubert" (141).

Regarding the issue about hidden love and sexuality, Louise Colet tells her story in 'Louis Colet's version'. This chapter is narrated by Louis Colet herself. She was the Flaubert's friend as well as separate mistress while writing *Madame Bovary.* Instead of their vast age difference also, Flaubert attracted with her. In this chapter, she narrates about the good and bad activities of Flaubert. According to her view, Flaubert tried to

suppress woman. He hated the woman. He was sentimental and suffering from mental disease ‘epilepsy’. About this issue, she states:

> Gustave used to humiliate me, of course, even from the beginning; I wasn’t allowed to write to him directly: I had to send my letters via Du Camp. I wasn’t allowed to visit him at Croisset. I was not allowed to meet his mother, even though I had in fact once been introduced to her on a street corner at Paris. I happened to know that Mme Flaubert thought her son treated me abominably.(143)

Here, Colet explains about the behaviors of Flaubert towards her and other women.

Flaubert's Parrot is a postmodern novel which rejects projecting present beliefs and standards to the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past events. It also suggests a distinction between events and facts that is one shared by many historians. This novel fictionalizes actual historical events and figures critically and makes own place in what Linda Hutcheon terms ‘historiographic metafiction’. The self-opinionated narrator of *Flaubert’s Parrot* teaches us the lesson here is that past once existed, but that our historical knowledge of it is semiotically transmitted. Present novel often points the fact by using para-textual convention of past life of Gustav Flaubert and makes parody of his real and fictive career.

Flaubert's Parrot shares the characteristics associated with the metafiction in general and takes a part of history (biography and fictive life), as a topic of discussion and creates fictional universe about Gustav Flaubert and notable events of his life. Barnes's narrator self-consciously narrates minute details about Gustav Flaubert. In the process of narrating every event of Gustav, sometimes he praises him, sometimes he criticizes him and sometimes ironizes him. This novel shares the idea of J.F. Lyotard and

presents the view that there are only "truths" in the plurals and never one "Truth" with capital ’T’. In other words, Barnes’s believes on local narratives but not on metanarratives.

The present novel shares the idea of J.F. Lystard and tries to prove that it is the period of slackening reality. There is not single or one 'Truth'. Knowledge has become the phenomena related to TV games and petty narratives. Whatever the narrator in any historiographic metafiction narrates these are petty narratives, small narratives and local narratives. Everything goes against the universalizing tendency of realism. Regarding, the issue about multiple truths and metafictional elements of the novel the narrator Geoffery Braithwaite asserts:

> After all if novelists truly wanted to simulate the delta of life's possibilities, this is what they'd do. At the back of the book would be or set of sealed enveloped in various colours. Each would be clearly marked on the outside: Traditional Happy Ending; Traditional unhappy Ending; Traditional Half-and -Half Ending; *Deus ex Machina*; Modernist Arbitrary Ending; End of the world Ending; cliffhanger Ending; Dream Ending; Opaque Ending; Surrealist Ending; and so on. You would be allowed only one, and would have to destroy the envelopes you didn't select. That's what I call offering the reader a choice of ending; but you may find me quite unreasonably literal-minded. (167)

The narrator of *Flaubert's Parrot* here wants to give the information about postmodern metafiction which offers us different type of endings but not single ending at all. In this novel narrator offers us open ending which is the basic tenets of postmodern historiographic metafiction.

The historical case, as we have seen, is consistently offered up to readers as a site of cognitive promise-something that appeals to their historical knowledge and understanding whether or not they are able to determine it, whether or not they are able or even try to reduce its potential for otherness into a recognizable genre or idom. This is the point on which Barnes's extraordinary novel most distinguishes itself from academic discourse on postmodernism, and on postmodern ethics in particular. *Flaubert's Parrot* seems to testify, requires recognizing this erotics of ethics that, among other things, determines and shapes how we seize the past. The narrator states:

> How do we seize the past? How do we seize the foreign past? We read, we learn, we ask, we remember, we are humble; and then a casual detail shifts everything. Flaubert was a giant; they all said so. He towered over everybody like a strapping Gallic chieftain. And yet he was only six feet tall: we have this on his own authority. Tall, but not gigantic; shorter than I am, in fact, and when I am France I never find myself towering over people like a Gallic chieftain. (75)

Here, the narrator becomes too much self-opinionated. For narrator, the past in autobiographical fiction pretending to be a parliamentary report. Geoffery tries to seize the past of Gustav in new technique. He analyzes good and bad aspects of Flaubert. Sometimes, he praises him, sometime criticizes him ironically.

In the whole analysis of this novel, everyone can easily find out that narrator Dr Geoffery Braithwaite is self-reflexive and self-opinionated. The narrator addresses himself by calling "I" and readers "you". Like every narrator of metafiction Braithwaite also invites readers many times in different activities. Sometime he asks us question like, “Do you know? Don’t get me wrong, Does life improve?, Is it splendid or stupid to take

life seriously?, I'll start again., This is a pure story. Whatever you may think, Do you like it or not? and so on".

Most of the chapters of this novel are narrated by first person narrator Braithwaite except chapter 11, which is narrated by Flaubert's mistress during the time of writing his novel *Un coeur* simple and her name is Louise Colet. Barnes has divided every chapter into different parts to create intertextuality and interconnectedness. For example, Chapter 2, "Chronology" is divided into three sections. In the first section, details of Flaubert's life are listed. In the second section, deaths and failures are listed. Finally in the third section, Flaubert's thoughts are listed with detailed date. For example, in 1821 Flaubert was born, in 1825 Julie enters in his household, in 1831, he enters in the college, in 1836 he meets Elsion and in 1837, his published works appear.

Chapter 4, "Flaubert Bestiary" is divided into different sections. Sometimes the narrator compares Flaubert and his sister Caroline with the bear in 'The Bear' section and sometimes he is compared with tiger. In this chapter, *The Bear*, *Dictionnaire des idees* recues, *Madame Bovary*, *The Camel*, *The Sheep*, *The Parrot*, *Dogs* and different dates with sub-division can be noticed. Chapter 5, "Snap!" is also divided into three sections. These sections provide us different types of ironies. Section first is DAWN AT THE PYRAMIDS, section second is DESERT ISLAND and the chapter third is THE SNAP COFFINS. Similarly, chapter 7 and 8 are also divided into different points and numbers. "The train-spotter's guide to Flaubert" is the 8th chapter which is divided into 11 parts where different views about Flaubert are narrated by Braithwaite.

Chapter 10, "The Case Against" is divided into 15 parts, where in each parts, the narrator narrates about the beliefs and characterizes Gustave Flaubert. For example, part 1 is about how he thinks about humanity, part 2 is about how he hated democracy, part 3

is about how he did not believe in progress, part 4 is about how he was not interested in politics, and part 5 is about how he did not believe that art has social purpose. Braithwaite uses inductive method while analyzing his ideas as well as all chapters and sub-divisions.

In chapter 12, the narrator narrates different words and their meanings which are created by Flaubert. There are different words and their meanings clearly narrated by Braithwaite. Similarly, Chapter 14 is about literary criticism, is divided into two sections and two parts. The narrator asks us different questions related to different fields like Economics, Geography, Logic, Psychology, Biography and so on.

Geoffery Braithwaite's criticism of the experiments of radical metafiction is symptomatic of the conceptual thrust of historiographic metafiction. Metafictional texts like *Flaubert's Parrot* that moved out of the self, referential narrative ghetto of radical experimentation toward a renewed historical and cultural engagement. Historiographic metafiction is concerned with the question of historigraphic referentiality and the question of historigoraphic referentiality and foregrounds the fact that, seen from the present, the past is "a distant receding coastline, and we are in the same boat" (101). As part of this agenda, some historigraphic metafictions seem multiple alternate historical narratives or counterfactual biographies of real - world historical figures within the text. The key themes of historiographic metrications embed multiple alternate historical narratives or counterfactual biographies of real world historical figures within the text. The key themes of historiographic metafiction – disbelief on authenticity, and assertion of forgery are also central in Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*. While the novel also contains representations of multiple alternate biographies, it is Geoffery Braithwaite's quest to identify the original parrot that inspired Flaubert to form the novel's ultimate game with versions, originals, and forgeries.

The authentic parrot, if it is text, cannot be distinguished from the number of stuffed parrots Braithwaite is shown on his visit to Rouen. The narrator of this novel suspects about the authenticity of parrot and says:

> After I got home the duplicate parrots continued to flutter in my mind […]. I wrote letters to various academics who might know if either of the parrots had been authenticated. I wrote to the French Embassy and to the editor of the Michelin guide – books. (Barnes, 22)

In *Flaubert's Parrot* trans-historical discontinuity sabotages the ability to construct a casual pro-generative narrative line; Braithwaite seeks the authoritative parrot but in vain. Collectively, the parrots become an indistinct blend that makes the recognition of individuality, cognitive differentiations, and the erection of world boundaries impossible. Braithwaite's quest to identify the authentic parrot of Flaubert's narrative documents the deep human desire for the cognitive security provided by a sense of authenticity created by a knowledge of organs and casual pro-generative narrative sequences but at the very same time it exposes the illusory nature of such a desire.

In *Flaubert's Parrot*, Barnes tries to prove the difficulty of knowing the truth. It is very difficult task to seize our past. In this novel, Barnes challenges the reader's ability to know the past. For Braithwaite, past seems endlessly 'tantalizing'. So in the present novel, novelist portraits his narrator who in the ending of the novel also is unable to find out the authentic Flaubert's parrot, and is also unable to find out the real nature of his wife and cause of her suicide. These all are the Barnes's politics while writing this novel. At the same time, by mixing the real and fictive life of Gustave Flaubert with various scholarly and entertaining elements Barnes creates this novel. He portraits his narrator Dr. Geoffery to narrate different things about Flaubert under a single novel. Barnes

creates fifteen chapters and in every chapter, Braithwaite narrates the biography of Flaubert. I this narration, sometime he praises and sometimes ironizes Flaubert to make his narrator self-reflexive is Barnes's politics of writing.

The questioning of the concept of the 'real' and the foregrounding of the fuzzy border between historical authenticity and forgery are shared by Barnes's novels as representative of the late twentieth century genre of historiographic metafiction. Question about narrative voice and textual authority are addressed in ways that remain intransigently monologic, not with standing the gestures that are constantly made in the direction of dialogue. The possible disjunction between public and private voices is made the subject of generic speculation that addresses directly the question of authorial presentity and its place in the work of art. He states:

> Poets seem to write more easily about love than prose writers. For a start, they own that flexible "I" (when I say "I" you will want to know within a paragraph or two whether I mean Julian Barnes or someone invented; a poet can shimmy between the two, getting credit for both deep feeling and objectivity). (225)

Despite poetry's appropriation of the flexible "I" Barnes manages to shimmy between prose discourses also, as he reconstitutes the tone of "deep feeling" and" objectivity " into a distinctive authorial rhetoric. Stylizing and parodying the conventions of biblical exegesis, legal case history, political and social journalism, biography, autobiography, dream, literature, vision and science fiction, Barnes molds them into a work whose structural integrity if it has one rests on three supports: the imagistic continuity provided by the flood-voyage motif with which the relationship between artist and artifact, contingency and form, and the narrative personality of Barnes himself.

Undoubtedly, the narrator does train readers to be skeptical about the idea of historical truth and the possibility of historical knowledge. The narrator 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' (38).

The suggestion is that a thinker's hermeneutics for ordering and explaining the past into being just as much as they are brought to bear on the past, that tying together historical continuities is, as Foucault in his essay “Geneology and History” puts it “the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject” (13). 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 analysis to epistomogical enquiry. Indeed, the uncertainty of historical knowledge constitutes less the conclusion of his analysis then 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?” (14, 90, 100).

The narrator does challenge readers’ ability to know the past. Throughout *Flaubert's Parrot*, narrator's historical pursuits gravitate to the unknown, unorganized and undecided spaces in a historically convinced world: he seeks everything that got away from historical memory (38), cases that are 'not recorded' in the archive (63, 64, 65), obsesses over the interpretive 'cases' that literary mistakes raise (77), and makes the 'case for' and the 'case against' various views of Flaubert (126). At the novel's start, the narrator asks, what makes us randy for relics?' (12), 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 this pleasure.

The past seems endlessly 'tantalizing' to him (23): Juliet Herbert is a 'tantalizing governess' (40) nor because she may have been sexually involved with Flaubert but because, for the historian the evidence for that involvement is both suggestive and exclusive, the tone and vocabulary of Flaubert's manuscripts are 'teasing' (46, 55) ; the past made him 'chase' (p. 12). 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 tempts to seize the past carry the potential to humiliate the seizer. The narrator states:

> 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 the piglet. (14)

Here, Braithwaite points out that 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 attempt 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 attempt to seize case but also in discoveries of new cases in spaces that were previously (mis)understood.

In some chapters of this novel Barnes writes about the sentimentality of the nineteenth century realist novelist. It is Barnes’s politics of revealing their hidden life in postmodern style. To do so he mixes up different events and activities and here these events play vital role to make them sadist. The narrator narrates the sadist life of Flaubert

in chapter 9 and chapter 10. In these chapters, the narrator narrates the sad events of Flaubert's life, which are the main causes to make him sentimental and suffering from 'epilepsy'. At twenty-four, his father and sister died, at twenty-five, he wanted to be a Brahmin: the mystic dancer, the face dripping with holy butter. At twenty-nine, he wants to go off and live in South America, at thirty, he muses. At thirty-two, he confesses to Louis the manner in which he has spent many hours of his life: imagining what he 'would do if he had an income of million Franks a year.

Barnes tries to reveal the pessimistic life of Flaubert by the help of his narrator. It is his politics. In chapter 10, the narrator narrates Flaubert's pessimism seriously through different points. He narrates that he hated humanity, he hated democracy, he was not interested in politics, he did not believe in progress, he was unpatriotic, he was pessimist, he teaches no positive virtues, he was sadist, he was beastly to women and so on. The narrator narrates about the mental disease 'epilepsy' of Flaubert after his father's and sister's death in the same year by pointing the sadist life of Flaubert, Barnes tries to ironize the nineteenth century realist and sentimental writers. This style of revealing secret life through his narrator, (Braithwaite) is the Barnes's postmodern politics of narrative.

The narrator's entry under 'Epilepsy' in the chapter of *Flaubert's Parrot* entitled 'Braithwaite's dictionary of accepted ideas' unmistakably mimics Sartre's thesis in *The Family Idiot* even as it simultaneously parodize the from and tone of Flaubert's own *Dictionary des ideas recoes*. The narrator presents:

> EPILESPY Stratagem enabling Flaubert the writer to sidestep a conventional career, and Flaubert the man to sidestep life. The question is merely at what psychological level the tactic was evolved were has

> symptoms intense psychosomatic phenomena? It would be too banal if the merely had epilepsy. (165)

Braithwaite tries to present the abnormal condition of Flaubert and Flaubert's sadistic behavior as Flaubert never understood the epilepsy attack as if it were anything other than disease.

This novel constantly moves to and fro between intimacy and distance, so that the reader sometimes feels involved in the fiction and sometimes feels distanced from it, but is undoubtedly him / her guides, his/ her judgments and controls his/ her reactions. The narrator of *Flaubert's Parrot* pretends to allow for different perspectives on Flaubert when he concedes 'admittedly we hear only Gustave's side of the story' (159) and decides to write 'Louise Colet's Version' as the eleventh chapter. He exploits his talents as a ventriloquist to give voice to a silenced woman. The narrator actually manages to defer his personal confession about his wife by devoting the largest part of the book to Flaubert’s mistress so that this novel reads like a vibrant and original homage with narrator's self critical instance.

Flaubertian inter-textuality is so extensive that narrator's voice sometimes tends to disappear beneath or behind that of Flaubert’s chapter such as: “The Flaubert Bestiary” and “Examination Paper” almost take the form of a collage of quotations from Flaubert's correspondence as that narrator's role seems limited to that of a complier, or a parrot, Flaubert's Parrot. Braithwaite’s “Dictionary of Accepted Ideas” reveals the scope of the narrator's ventriloquism as the chapter consists of a parody and stylistic pastiche of Flaubert’s “Dictionary of Accepted Ideas”. Narrator has so fully incarnated and impersonated Flaubert's voice that some passages could be seen as case of plagiarism, the narrator merely repeating or parroting the writer's words, without inverted comma.

The third chronology of Flaubert's life is a great achievement in confusion as some readers believed it was a pastiche of Flaubert's style, while it is entirely composed of quotations from Flaubert's correspondence in the form of metaphors and comparison, thus forming an original autobiography. In the novel the narrator tactfully and originally handles grief and emotion, culminating in the highly moving chapter called 'Pure Story'. He makes Louise Colet's unheard and unsung voice palpable. As Hayden White argues that dominant view of historians today has gradually come to be that the writing of history in the form of narrative representations of the past is highly conventional and literary endeavor. Literary tropes like metaphor, simply are finely developed and well related to twentieth century reality, while the style is precise, elegant, and has a specific Barnesian touch to it. *Flaubert's Parrot* thus oscillates between repetition and difference between the awareness of the past literature and a desire to go beyond and make something new and hybrid. Regarding this novel author Julian Barnes says:

> I though of *Flaubert's Parrot* when I started writing as obviously an unofficial and informal, non-conventional sort of novel-an upside – down novel. A novel in which there was an infrastructure of fictions and very strong elements of non-fiction, sometimes whole chapters which were nothing but arranged facts. (259)

If we generalize our view after reading this novel it is a kind of postmodern skeptical novel. This novel subverts the traditional notion of reading the history as well as fiction and tries to prove that there is not any authenticity. History is unreliable as an index of what ‘actually’ happened in ‘real life’, whatever that may be. The narrator of *Flaubert's Parrot* insists what he is tempted to believe it every so often. Given the painfulness of his past, the temptation is not surprising. So, in all the chapters he becomes self reflexive.

In the process of narrating different hidden sexual encounters of Flaubert, the narrator narrates about the Flaubert's first lover Elisa Schlesinger. He meets her in 1836 and around the same time, Flaubert had sex for the first time. Similarly, in chapter 5, the narrator narrates about Flaubert's sexual encounter with Louis Colet. In his private life, Flaubert traveled with curtained cabs to avoid the lusty Louis Colet. The very devices that allowed him to avoid sexual encounters, he would use to facilitate, Madame Bovary's sexuality. By revealing the hidden sexual life of the nineteenth century, realist and so called moralist writers, Barnes tries to ironize them, which is his politics of narrative. Not only that, Barnes here tried to explore the hidden sexual life of the nineteenth century realist, lusty, beautiful and fashionable women who were attracted with famous and rich men of that time. Louis Colet, Elsa Schlesinger are typical nineteenth century women who were attracted towards Flaubert.

Geoffery Braithwaite and Julian Barnes stop well short of radical skepticism about the past not mention the wider skepticism about reality and truth. The narrator Braithwaite doubts the possibility of finding out which is the 'real' *Flaubert's Parrot*, but this does not lead him to conclude that there was no real parrot; he disclaims the ability to explain his wife's life and suicide but never the reality of it.

This novel equates with what J.F. Lyotard calls small narratives or petty narratives. This novel questions the grand narrative, reality authenticity and objective truth and gives way to multiple truths. The narrator of *Flaubert's Parrot*s says, "Books are where things are explained to you; life is where things aren't" (168). For him truth is slippery; baffling, hard to discover; but there is still truth, as his correction of mistakes about the past, made by Flaubert. There is a difference between the past and an autobiographical novel, a difference between books and life.

Openendedness is also striking feature of this novel. In the last chapter "And the Parrot" the narrator states, “And the parrot? Well it took me almost two years to solve the case of the stuffed parrot. The letters I had written after first returning from Roven produced nothing useful; some of them weren’t even answered” (230).

Barnes makes us free to choose any parrot from the museum like any postmodern novel. This novel also does not have fixed ending. Braithwaite in the last line says, "Perhaps it has one of them"(283). So, there is not certain on which one is the Flaubert's real parrot. In the last paragraph of the novel the narrator explains:

> Everywhere I looked there were birds. Shelf after shelf of birds, each one covered in a sprinkling of white pesticide. I was directed to the third aisle. I pushed carefully between the shelves and then looked up at a slight angle. There standing in a line, were the Amazonian parrot of the original fifty only three remained. Any gaudiness in their coloring had been deemed by the dusting of pesticide which lay over them. They gazed at me like three quizzical, sharp eyed, dishonorable old man. They did look I had to admit it - a little cranky. I started at them for a minute or so, and then dodged always. Perhaps it was one of them. (282-83)

The narrator provides us freedom to choose any parrot of the museum. There is not any authenticity in anything. His message here is that" Truth is retort to falsehood"(250). This novel begins with elaborate details about the making of three statues of Flaubert’s and ends not with fixed or truthful ending rather this ending creates duality to readers and provides freedom to readers.

By mixing up different chapters under single novel, Barnes attempts to experiment with postmodern style of novel writing. Barnes takes real biography and adds some fictitious biography to make this novel historiographic metafiction. The narrator narrates the real history of Flaubert and changes that history into fictitious form which is the politics of postmodern narratives.

To sum up, *Flaubert's Parrot* is a novel which challenges any attempt at categorization, classification and genres taxonomy mixes fact and fiction and exploits and subverts the need for structure. The narrator narrates the life of Flaubert and fictionalizes it by using different literary tropes like criticism, chronology, metaphors, irony and creates inter- textuality, meta-textuality, hyper-textuality, self-reflexivity, interconnectedness and open-endedness. All these features make this novel a postmodern hiotorigoraphic metafiction and Braithwaite becomes a self-opinionated historiographer of Gustave Flaubert. This novel also subverts the single 'Truth' and grand narrative and replaces it with petty narratives and multiple truths with the help of self-reflexive and confessional narrator Dr. Geoffery Braithwaite.

IV. Conclusion

The objective of this research is to point out the postmodern politics of narrative in Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot.* While focusing on the postmodern politics present researcher has attempted to portray the narrator, Dr Geoffery Braithwaite as a self-opinionated, self-reflexive, self- critical and postmodern metafictional historiographer who narrates the biography, history and fictional events of the nineteenth century famous novelist of France whose original Name is Gustave Flaubert. The narrator mixes fiction and non- fiction, and simultaneously exploits and subverts the need for structure which is the postmodern politics of narrative of Julian Barnes.

Geoffery Braithwaite is the alter ego of the author Julian Barnes so he makes his narrator free while narrating the novel. Whatever the narrator narrates that is the voice of Barnes. In the real life, Barnes was interested to study about the nineteenth century writer Gustave Flaubert. So to study the real and fictitious history of Flaubert, Barnes has created his fictional character Geoffery Braithwaite, who represents Barnes himself and helps Barnes to study about Flaubert and become self-confessional while reading fictional and non-fictional biography of Gustave Flaubert. In the process of narrating about Flaubert the narrator becomes self-opinionated. So, sometimes he praises Flaubert and sometimes criticizes him and becomes self-critical. While doing so Barnes proves his narrator as a self-opinionated postmodern metafictional historiographer.

The narrator, Braithwaite reads the past history of the realist writer and fictionalizes that real history in the process of narrating this novel. Barnes mixes biography, auto-biography, examination question, pure story, events and makes the novel look like the collage and postmodern pastiche. In this novel Barnes blends fact, fiction, scholarly and entertaining elements. So the novel is alternating funny, sad and

encyclopedic. Long discussion of Flaubert's real life and literary connections are revealed by narrator's sad confession regarding his wife which places the narrator in his own self-critical instance. This is the trick of Barnes to present old history in the new version.

In *Flaubert's Parrot,* Braithwaite tries to create fictitious biography of the realist writer Gustave Flaubert which is equal to the postmodern historiographic metafiction. While creating ficticious biography of Flaubert, he happens to confess his own life events and creates his own autobiography.

Present novel questions the single ‘Truth’, ‘reality’ and advocates for the multiple truths and realities. So this novel supports Lyotard's concept that "the past is inaccessible, that reality and truths are no more than linguistic constructs. This novel is also questions the grand narrative and advocates for the small or petty narratives.

Flaubert's Parrot is a discontinuous novel in which it is not just the disparate materials that create this effect but the arrangement of them. This novel contains altogether fifteen chapters. Like many literary novels, this novel also provides the reader with an initial hint as it opens with an epigraph, taken from one of Flaubert's letters: "When you write the biography of a friend, you must do it as if you were taking revenge for him". Each chapter of the novel is divided into many sub chapters and intertexts.

The narrator's quest for authentic and real Amazonian parrot which was used by Flaubert while writing his novel *Un Coeur Simple* turns out to be vain because of unauthenticity and multiple truths. He narrates the last chapter ironically and invites the readers to choose any Flaubertian parrot from the museum. He himself becomes unaware about the authentic and real *Flaubert's Parrot* and says, "Perhaps it was one of them". Here, we can clearly see Barnes’s postmodernist stance.

Flaubert's Parrot is a postmodern novel which challenges any attempt for categorization, classification and genres taxonomy, mixed fact and fiction and exploits and subverts the need for structure. By ironizing and parodising the past history of Flaubert, the narrator creates postmodern version of fictional history and also happens to create his own real autobiography which proves his self-confession and self-critical instance. Narrator questions the single ‘Truth’. And while answering the question about truth, he opines that it is in plural forms, "there are truths".

Thus, the narrative representation, self-opinionated narrator, self-reflexive narration, parody of past history, intertextuality, inter connectedness, open-endedness and interpretation of the past events in present forms are dominant features of postmodern historiographic metafiction which are easily found in *Flaubert's Parrot* which is the politics of Barnes’s postmodern narrative.

The present research comes to the conclusion that the novel *Flaubert's Parrot* is a good example of postmodern metafictional historiography and the narrator of the novel becomes a self-opinionated postmodern metafictional historiographer. This presentation of different tenets of postmodern historiographic metafiction is Julian Barnes’s politics of postmodern narrative which questions the single ‘Truth’ and advocates for local and multiple truths.

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