

## I. Contextualizing Byatt and her Writings

This thesis is based on British novelist A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* published in 1990. The novel with the revisiting the lives and work of two mid-Victorian fictional poets Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel Lamotte by two young Harvard academicians Roland Michell, who later on is joined by Dr. Maud Bailey. In the course of their findings the academicians come across documents that lead them to a hidden story of the poets encouraging them to explore history, from post-modern perspective that would enable them to study history with the help of memory.

Post-modernism is a term originating in art, literature, philosophy, historiography, theology, architecture and culture in general before branching out into a wider range of topics. It literally means 'after the modern.' It has been used in critical theory to refer to a point of departure for works of literature, architecture, and design, as well as in marketing and business and the interpretation of history, law and culture in the late twentieth century. The term was originally a reaction to modernism. Largely influenced by the Western European disillusionment induced by World War II, postmodernism tends to refer to a cultural, intellectual, or artistic state lacking a clear central hierarchy or organizing principle and embodying extreme complexity, contradiction, ambiguity, diversity, interconnectedness or interreferentiality, in a way that is often indistinguishable from a parody of itself. It has given rise to charges of fraudulence.

One of the tools to explore history is memory. Post-modern memory is a relatively new term in literature, which emphasizes on the study of the past events based on ignored and issues of relatively lesser importance. According to Simon Blackburn in *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* memory is, "The power of the mind to think of a past that no longer exists, poses both empirical, psychological problems, and more abstract philosophical ones" (238). It is a representation and a direct form of acquaintance with the past. This might at least give us a justification of the

confidence we place in memory. But it is not the skeptical hypothesis proposed by Bertrand Russell that “the earth might have sprung into existence five minutes ago, with a population that ‘remembers’ a wholly unreal past, at least logically possible?” (*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* 238). However, if what Russell says is possible, the question of how we know that his is not what this happened is set to look intractable.

According to Andreas Huyssen the “West is obsessed with the issue of memory” (1). He further writes that “Memory study has gained ground at the close of the twentieth century” (1). Memory was given both prominence and visibility through the widespread popularity of the museum and resurgence of the monument and the memorial as aesthetic forms. Huyssen says that the urge in the west for taking and knowing memory studies as:

In particular, memory studies links resurgence to the development of new media technologies, which engender an accelerated form of temporality with their instant entertainment, frantic pace, and a reaction formation against such accelerated technical process – an attempt to slow down information processing and to anchor ourselves in more extended structures of temporality. (2)

The current preoccupation with memory is valuable to explore the less traveled and less told acts of the past, hence, is associated with the post-modern studies.

In the post-modern historical perspective, Byatt’s *Possession: A Romance* is the story of unearthing of history, altogether a different approach of viewing historical characters and their lifestyles. Though, Ash and LaMotte are two fictitious

famous poets in the novel, they are the voice of need to unearth the historical characters from altogether a different vision. This is the call of the post-modern revival of history. By doing this, there are possibilities that the learning of the history and its trend will altogether get a new facelift. For ages, history have been taught and read from perspectives of the ones who are resourceful and are in the political frame, but post-modern history is likely to change the scenario.

### **Literature Review**

The publication of *Possession* in 1990 and winning of Booker Prize in the same year has invited a wave of criticism within England and around the world. Byatt's notion of challenging the historical collection of heritages created a wave around the world. In this context, Christien Franken writes:

As an exciting horn of plenty *Possession* has given rise to a great numbers of interpretations. Reviewers focus on the sheet breadth of Byatt's erudition; her treatment of the past; her skill in balancing genres such as the Romance, the fairy tale, the campus-novel, the detective story, and the quest; her ideas about contemporary literary criticism and the evocation of 1700 lines of Victorian poetry. (86)

The novel is probably the most complete, though it raises numerable issues in relation to literary genres. However, the helm of issues, of course, remains the search for authentication of a sheet of letters claimed to be of a famous love-couples of the Victorian era.

Similarly, Michael Greaney in *Contemporary Fiction and Uses of Theory* sees the work as an outcome of notion of viewing the text from multiple angles. He writes:

Stories run parallel in the novel, from the historical sense to the day. In correspondence to the unearthing the love affairs of the historical couple, there runs a love story of the present researcher and narrators, Roland and Maud. Besides, Byatt's explicit identification of Victorian writing style of sonnets reaches a new height in the postmodern era.

(87)

There are numerous issues in the novel from Victorian to Modern day, and from poetry to sonnet; however, giving a perfect ending to the mystery re-discovered.

Similarly, Nick Bentley another of the many critics takes the text as a voice of black comedy. He writes, "The characters in the novel are lively, yet, a nuisance and unrealistic as they present the other side of life. It is a fact that all people do not get the due share in life, and are often led to abrupt end, so the unrealistic final is doubtful" (24). However, Bentley also is suspicious of the writing trend established by Byatt. He writes:

Some theorists, however, have been suspicious of the role this undermining of traditional history has taken in post-modernity. For examples, the weakening of historicity, both in our relationship to public history and in the new forms of our private temporality. There is fear of arising of certain guilt in this trend of dismantling of history.

(129)

Bentley's doubt may somehow be justified, as it may not be very fruitful in challenging the way of representing history, very often.

Byatt is the daughter of a judge and the sister of novelist Margaret Drabble. She was educated at the University of Cambridge, Bryn Mawr College, and the University of Oxford and then taught at University College, London, from 1972 to 1983, when she left to write full-time. Among her critical works are *Degrees of Freedom* (1965), the first full-length study of the British writer Iris Murdoch.

A S. Byatt is a native of Yorkshire, England, born Antonia Susan Drabble in 1936. She has had a distinguished career as a literary critic and an academic, teaching English and American literature at University College, London, and she has published a book on the nineteenth century, *Unruly Times: Wordsworth and Coleridge in Their Time*; a collection of essays and book reviews, *Passions of the Mind*; and two books on the novelist Iris Murdoch. Her other works of fiction include *The Virgin in the Garden*, *Still Life*, *Babel Tower*, and *Shadow of a Sun*, as well as two collections of stories, *Sugar and Other Stories* and *The Matisse Stories*. Although her interests are manifold, she has made Romantic and Victorian poetry her specialty. *Possession: A Romance* was awarded the 1990 Booker Prize and the Irish Times/Aer Lingus International Fiction Prize and has reached a large international readership. The double voice of postmodern fiction presents a challenge because it requires that we question the way we read and interpret not only postmodern literature but also literature as a whole.

This doubleness is particularly noticeable in works that openly display their affiliation with generic conventions or older works, such as J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986), which rewrites *Robinson Crusoe*, Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (1985), which is structured like a detective story, or A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* (1990), Lindsay Clarke's *The Chymical Wedding* (1989), John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), and Susan Sontag's *The Volcano Lover* (1992), which all build on romance conventions. Such doubleness resembles allegory, insofar as allegory defines the moment when one text is read through the lens of another. By thus allying themselves with previous texts in their genres and by fusing conventional and postmodern narrative strategies, these literary hybrids destabilize our interpretations of traditional works, and, at least in the case of the postmodern romances, manage both to reread their tradition and revitalize its twentieth-century appearance. Thus the multiple narrative voices, the open contradictions, and the consistent resistance to totalizing answers in a postmodern romance like *Possession: A Romance* can be seen as continuing the allegorical mode of the "high" romances of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as questioning the apparent uniformity of women's popular romances, and as restoring those complex and sophisticated qualities that formerly characterized the romance but seem to have disappeared from its twentieth-century manifestations.

Despite the publication of two novels *The Shadow of a Sun* (1964) and *The Game* (1967), Byatt continued to be considered mainly a scholar and a critic until the publication of her highly acclaimed *The Virgin in the Garden* (1978). The novel is a complex story set in 1953, at the time of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It was written as the first of a projected tetralogy that would chronicle the lives of three

members of one family from the coronation to 1980. The second volume of the series, *Still Life* (1985), concentrates on the art of painting, and it was followed by *Babel Tower* (1995).

*Possession: A Romance* is a part mystery and part romance. As a pair of young scholars researching the lives of two Victorian poets uncover their letters, journals and poems trace their movements from London to Yorkshire – and from spiritualist scenes to the fairy-haunted far west of Brittany—an extraordinary counterpoint of passions and ideas emerges. It is an exhilarating novel of wit and romance, an intellectual mystery, and a triumphant love story.

The novel develops two related stories side by side, one set in the nineteenth and other in the twentieth century. Thus, the parallel structure of the story makes it a brilliant example of postmodernist fiction, for which, it was a popular success and was awarded the Booker Prize for 1990. In addition to her novels, Byatt wrote several collections of short stories, including *Sugar and Other Stories* (1987), *The Matisse Stories* (1993), and *Elementals: Stories of Fire and Ice* (1998); *Passions of the Mind* (1991), a collection of essays; and *Angels and Insects* (1991; filmed 1995), a pair of novellas.

However, it was not until the publication of *Morpho Eugenia*, Byatt achieved the height of an emerging *littérateur* in England. In the work, Eugenia is compared to the butterfly that shares her name, the shimmering satiny-white *Morpho Eugenia*. The butterfly image is quite automatically understood as a rather common metaphor for feminine beauty and flightiness, but as Adamson Circle, prominent critic on the works of Byatt, points out:

It is the male butterflies who exhibit bright colors and whirl about in the sunlight, whereas the females are drab colored and timid. Obviously the butterfly metaphor in *Morpho Eugenia* cannot be read traditionally, and the title of the novella gives a clue: morpho is the Greek word for form, which suggests that the title could be read as the form of Eugenia. (47)

What is most significant about this work is the form of a butterfly that changes and undergoes metamorphosis, and this is indeed what Eugenia--and William's conception of her -- does.

As the story progresses, William, the protagonist realizes that Eugenia's whiteness is not a reflection of her purity and innocence but instead signals degeneration and the impurity of incest. *Morpho Eugenia* becomes a story about a fall from innocence to experience and knowledge, where William has to realize that things are not what they seem. Beneath the orderly surface of life at Bredely Hall, a major character in the novel is a dysfunctional family and a section of society--the country aristocracy--that has lost its sense of direction and purpose. William becomes like Psyche in the inset Psyche and Cupid story, where Psyche can keep her husband only if she promises never to try to see him. If William is allowed to see Eugenia and her world for what they are, his marriage, like Psyche's, will disintegrate the prominent feature of the coming of the generation.

*Morpho Eugenia*; however, is only a novella in Byatt's *Angels and Insects*. In contrast to *Possession: A Romance*, *Morpho Eugenia* is firmly set in the past, and there is no visible twentieth-century perspective in the telling. The story is mainly told by an omniscient narrator, and even though it is interspersed with fictional texts ostensibly written by the various characters in the novella, these do not represent different voices



and shifting perspectives to the extent they do in *Possession: A Romance*. The varieties of work presented and written by Byatt have amused the readers and critics. She, at times talks of the past and present, comparing them; and at other times, can deal entirely focused on past. She presents varying work from *The Shadow of the Sun* to her latest literary venture – *On Histories and Stories*.

Although, there is ample criticism and works on *Possession: A Romance*; however, there have been no serious efforts on analyzing the text from Postmodern-reading of history and memory studies, which the present researcher has undertaken. For the same, the first introductory chapter will be “Contextualizing Byatt and her Writings,” where attempt have been made to deal on post-modern history and memory studies, with brief information on Byatt’s other works and technique of writing.

Similarly, the second chapter – theoretical works deal on “Post-modernism and memory studies,” where attempts have been made to view memory studies as a part of the post-modern history. Besides, the research will also attempt to analyze the need of memory studies in post-modern era. The third chapter textual analysis – “Post-modern Recovery of History in *Possession: A Romance*,” which will seek to find clues on aforesaid issues. Finally, the last paragraph will conclude with a short “Conclusion,” of the researched work.

## II. Post-modernism and Memory Studies

History is a chronological study of interpretation and narration of past events. Traditionally, history was taken as an official step towards perfections, and written with historian's perspective. It only talks about glorification, believes on the singular subjectivity and has the tendency to see history as its continuity. History as cultural truth, knowledge, objective statement and morality these all are the traditional definition of history. In history the minor issues like memory which does not have any role to write history i.e. say history always suppresses the value of memory.

However, in post modern terms, it is a history of margin and garbage. In this approach, Simon Blackburn in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* writes post-modern history as, "it contradicts discontinuity, multiple subjectivity, human passion, human follies, history as a fall, history as plan less, without coherence and not reservoir of facts and truth just only narration" (294). Post-modern history is the culture, generally associated with a playful acceptance of surfaces and superficial style, self-conscious quotations and parody. In literature of James Joyce, post-modern history is seen "as a reaction against a naïve and earnest confidence in progress, and against confidence in objective or scientific truth" (*The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* 294). In philosophy, therefore, it implies a mistrust of the *grands recits* of modernity: the large-scale justifications of western society and confidence in its progress visible in Kant, Hegel or Marx or arising from utopian visions of perfection evolution, social achievement, education and deployment of science.

Similarly, memory is the mental faculty of recovering information about past events or knowledge, the act of an instance of remembering and recollection of the past experience. So in postmodern recovery of history, memory becomes one of the most effective tools to revisit the history. In traditional history the grand issues were

highlighted whereas in postmodern the marginalized, leftover's issues and hidden agendas are unmasked through the use of memory. Postmodern recovery of history challenges the fixity of reality, objectivity of meaning and so-called conventional ideas and its stability. As such, memory study becomes a tool to challenge the established notion of ideas and penetrate them to the level of today's reality.

Traditional history had certain assumptions such as the truth exists and is attainable through a process of trial and errors, objective reality casts out there: that we are part of objective reality and that history was part of it in the past and another assumption is that the study of history is objectified ontologically. In this way, different kinds of revolutions have marked the history of historical thought. From seventeenth century biblical to annals school and post annals which focuses on enhancing interest in culture, was more anthropological and contribution of this resolution is to strengthen interest in the study of the various aspects of collective consciousness.

The greater difference with regard to the problem of consciousness of memory in the past and the present is that we are aware of our thinking about consciousness although our predecessors were not. And hence the analogy with the problem of the historian's consciousness, today we are conscious of thinking about it: having lost our innocence, we are aware that when we deal with the past we unavoidably bring to bear our present consciousness of memory among its major components

In course of defining memory, Andreas Huyssen has recently pronounced that western culture is obsessed with the issue of memory in terms of prominence and visibility through the widespread popularity of museum and the resurgence of monument and the memorial aesthetic forms. Similarly, Charles Maier has argued that "the current obsession with memory is a sign of not of historical confidence but of a retreat from transformative politics" (37). For him memory goes against history, he aligns history with a search for a melancholic of emotion which represents an addition and is potentially neurasthenics and disabling.

In the same way, Ann Whitehead points out that in recent memory work to regard the current memory bloom as unique and unprecedented, and thereby to overlook a long history of engagement with memory in the west .To this extent, memory studies have proved remarkably forgetful of their own pre-history. Memory studies aims to act as a corrective to such an approach both by tracing the history of the term memory in western thought and by locating the current memory bloom as simply the latest if series of preoccupation with memory which have punctuated western culture. In this sense, as Susannah Radstone has succinctly observed, "memory means different things at different times" (8).

By the same token Mieke Bal, tracing the history of the term memory, has defined it as "a tracing concept that is to say it can travel between disciplines, between historical periods, between geographically dispersed academic communities" (34). The travel of memory across time demonstrates that memory has a history. Richard Terdiman posits: "Memory is historically conditioned it isn't simply

remembered its past and it is not simply handed down in timeless form from generation to generation, but bears the impress a stamp of its own time and culture" (4). The tracing of history of memory to map out the main points of historical transition that seems to be the most prominent in the western tradition; the classical, medieval, early modern periods; the reconceptualization of memory in enlightenment and Romantic thought; late modern memory crisis emerging out of the French Revolution and lasting to the present; and the engagement with notion of collective memory are the outputs to the twentieth century.

Regarding memory, Ann Whitehead presents the historical development of the concept of memory from its Platonic origins through to the late Renaissance period. This becomes evident that classical, medieval and early modern practices of remembrance were not particularly concerned with reviving past event, but rather with bringing back to mind knowledge that has been previously stored. While focusing on enlightenment and romantic concept of memory, the relationship between memory and the self can be seen that is to say memory is concerned with the personal and is inherently bound to identity. Similarly romantic writers used memory and the imagination to revive the past.

In the nineteenth century memory was taken as primarily subjective and concerned with the inner life as Raphael Samuel elaborates: "memory was subject, a play thing of the emotions" (7). In the same year through the work of Freud and Berguson the collective memory was originated in this context collective memory and individual memory both were placed in the position of rivalry. The collective memory is more closely tied to social groups or networks. And hence history of memory is also necessarily a history of forgetting as Edward Casey retorts: "both remembering and forgetting were intimately intertwined" (Memory 13).

Memory seems impossible to escape, during the closing decades of the twentieth century it emerged as a cultural obsession of monumental proportions across the globe, a trend that looks set to continue for the foreseeable future. Questions of historical memory have played a pivotal role in the rise of identity politics, most notably in the United States, and in fueling the tragic proliferation of civil and ethnic conflicts around the world. According to Casey, memory is about reconstruction, and many more, as:

They have been at the forefront of debates over transitional justice, post-conflict reconstruction, the legitimacy of political violence, the legacy of the holocaust and a plethora of other processes and practices. These social and political trends have been mirrored in academia where the study of memory has swept a number of disciplines, especially history, sociology, anthropology and cultural studies. Indeed memory bloom has echoed so widely that memory has emerged as a key organizing principle of scholarly and artistic work yet the analysis of international relations. (Memory Trauma and World Politics 1)

At very general level memory refers to the process or faculty whereby events or impressions from the past are recollected and preserved. Collective memory – or one of its many cognate terms, including social and cultural memory – refers, again in a general sense, to widely shared perceptions of the past.

Memory shapes the story that groups of people tell about themselves, linking past, present and future in simplified narrative. It is what keeps the past –or at least a highly selective image of it alive in the present. This does not, of course, have to be an accurate and verifiable account: memory is knowledge from the past. It is not necessarily knowledge of the past. The literature on memory subsumes several different practices that are analytically separable, although they frequently combine. The most common and controversial concerns the constitution of personal and collective identity, the way in which self and society are formed and reproduced.

Other modes include the use of historical analogical reasoning and the rhetorical employment of historical images and tropes in structuring arguments and motivating action .But even the last of these, which on the face of it appears to be a merely instrumental deployment of history ,presupposes as its condition of success the recognition and resonant impact of such usage in the target groups like many of the ways in which the past is marshaled in the name of identities, for otherwise it would be largely unintelligible, irrelevant to contemporary concerns and lacking in motivational power.

Although, memory is related integrally to history, most contributors to the debates over memory stress that it is also in some sense separable from it, even if the exact boundaries between the two are elusive. According to Edward Casey, for example, “The history of collection of memory, unlike history proper, is concerned not with the past as such but only with the past as it is remembered” (Memory 2). And it is memory, whereby the past is made present, rather history which simply

happened before, which is central to the construction of individual and collective identity, to the process of 'self – designation.' Much that is historical has no impact on the present; much that has impact is not historical and interpretations of the relationship between past and present not only shape contemporary identities, for in so doing they help to frame the horizon of the future.

In the context Jeffery Olick has observed that memory study cannot be defined within specific forms and nature. According to him, memory study is:

The study of memory forms a multi layered of forms, inter-disciplinary and is a center less enterprise. It works with various forms and kinds of nature historical study based on time and situation. It is also determined by the geographical and disciplinary context proceeding largely independently of work in such other contexts. (3)

Memory cannot be termed and confined within the limitations of historical and geographical boundaries, as it is above all these.

The contributors to memory theory also deal with trauma and world politics both reflect this diversity and seek to challenge the lack disciplinary cross fertilization. Indeed, one of the main ambitions of the book to show case the popularity of approaches available for the analyses of world politics. The authors focus on theoretical aspects of the relationship between memory, identity and political action, drawing on intellectual tradition in social and political theory, history, social psychology, psychoanalysis anthropology and philosophy. The focus echoes on the



traumatic past influences and contemporary political attitudes and identification and how these dynamic processes save prominent aspects of world politics.

Most of the literature on memory and politics focus on the construction and reproduction and contestation of national identities. It is not the only aspect of the multifaceted relationship between memory and politics, however, and this orientation has led to a relative lack of concern with the transnational and global features of memory practices or alternatively the impacts that communal memories play in shaping world politics. It also means that normative questions, so centered to mnemonic and traumatic politics, are often sidelined. Memory, trauma and world politics seeks to engage these issues from varieties of angles and in a numbers of different registers. It is viewed that issued those issues of memory and trauma through a world wide angle lens, exploring the origins and evolution of particular wage of conceiving the past. In the context Raphael Samuel argues:

In memory studies, remembering and forgetting have played a central role. In the very foundation of memory studies lay the subsequent stabilization of the modern spatially differentiated international system and that only through understanding the manner in which has occurred, one can interpret the essence of memory studies. (Memory 3)

Today, people are diverted amid the memories and forgetfulness of the past and the future. This has raised a concern on whether; the cosmopolitan culture is making them do so, or just a turn of events in the fast changing world scenario.

In the twentieth century, memory study has been both a vital source of inspiration and an important category of social analysis. In the issue, Duncan Bell in *Memory, Trauma and World Politics* opines:

The twentieth century has been a century of crisis and warfare, marked by the two great wars in the first half of the era. The two World Wars and Vietnam ingenerating interest in traumatic memory, as well as the particular forms that this interest has assumed. Memory and Trauma then have always intertwined with global politics. (4)

The historical origins of our contemporary fascination with trauma, suggesting that it, along with resentment are the twin result of the contradiction between certainty and randomness in modern life, 'aspects of single discursive universe.' They serve as our substitutes for traditional theodicy.

We should be less willing to condemn re-sentiment, they argue, for it is perhaps the only appropriate response to the post holocaust condition. In the same way, the nexus of memory, trauma and identity is probed through explorations of various dimensions of contemporary political life, including the construction of foreign policy perceptions, the shaping of national identities, ideas about transitional justice and visions of post conflict reconciliation.

Although, many critics and scholars employ a range of cases, including practices of ethnic mobilization in the former Yugoslavia and in post-communist states in general, and the functions of trauma in post - 9/11 America and Middle East, still remains. At the same time, others seek to provide theoretically innovative

account of the relationship between past and present, but their empirical focus is narrower and they provide more detailed specific analysis of the distortion of memory.

The connection between memories in post-modern time is associated with identity that has been drawn in various and often in a conflicting way. It is a firmly common assumption, however, that certain harrowing events, including genocide, war, terrorism, civil and ethnic strife and radical regime transitions, generate serious and often catastrophic challenges to communal self-understandings, and that the memory play a significant and determining role, at times. Sometimes, its role is elemental in shaping subsequent political perceptions, affiliations and action.

In post-modern time, identity is one of the concepts of the contemporary social sciences and humanities. It is usually understood in a constructivist manner to refer to the relatively stable – though not essentialist-sense of ‘self’ that either and either an individual or a group (or both) maintain over time. Identities are, to varying degrees, malleable, negotiable and open to challenge, although the extent of their fluidity and the mechanisms that shape and transform them differ according to the theoretical position adopted. Despite these differences, memory plays a central role and virtually all conceptions of identity. It is, according to Allan Young, “The proof as well as the record of the self’s existence, and the struggle over memory is the struggle over the self’s most valued possessions” (Memory, Trauma and the Politics of Identity 5).

This insight is generalized by those concerned with exploring the dynamics of human communities, and it is commonly argued that group identities require a relatively widely shared understanding of history and its meaning, the construction of a narrative tracing the linkages between past and present, locating self and society in time. It is this understanding that helps to generate affective bonds, a sense of belonging, and which engenders obligations and loyalty to the 'imagined community'. As Anthony Smith argues: "One might almost say: no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation" (35) from this argument Anthony emphasizes the value of memory. Communal memories act as subtle yet powerful mechanisms for generating and sustaining social solidarity. While such memories can act as a social adhesive they are always contestable, and it is in this realm of conflict, and the complex power relations that underpin and structure it, that the politics of memory is enacted.

The intellectual climate of our postmodern time is dominated as it is by currents of epistemological skepticism and Nietzschean denial of the possibility of objectivity. The prominent mood and in several respects the source of inspiration to several others – is poststructuralist, and deconstruction and postmodernism. Its main carriers are chiefly literary scholars who call themselves "New Historicist", while in fact undermining the assumption of an objective past reality. Actually if there were no objective reality in the past neither history nor historicism of any kind would have been conceivable without distorting the basic meaning of words. The very term historicism as used in this jargon is a clear example of obfuscation indicative of

particular feature of this approach, which consists in subverting the meaning of words as a means of undermining the legitimacy and the sense of the object of criticism.

It is posited that the writing of history is impossible; that language is indeterminate and, therefore, that historical events in the past cannot be narrated or analyzed; or, alternatively, that they can be narrated and analyzed in an infinite number of ways, none of which is more or less truthful than the others and all of which are of equal soundness. It follows that these diverse narratives have no other value but a literary and an aesthetic one. According to this view, history as happening is nothing but an arbitrary text whose meaning is determined by the "reader" that is, by everybody and anybody and consequently history as narrative is an arbitrary text, too. The component parts of the later are devoid of any meaningful link and of any meaning at all. Except for its learned and opaque jargon, is this quite pretentious view very different from Henry Ford's folksy opinion that "all history is more or less bunk"? (Michael Confino 34)

This approach is reminiscent of Dostoyevsky's hero's awesome finding that "if god is dead, then everything is permitted," for this view of history is in many ways the latest expression of intellectual and philosophical nihilism. That this attitude quite often goes hand in hand with political correctness should not surprise anyone. Everything is permitted usually engenders everything is forbidden, that is everything except what it is thought to be politically correct. Since everything except what it is thought to be politically correct.

Since everything melts into thin air like, words, texts, historical reconstruction, and since nothing has a well-established meaning, then what is left as history is a genre which would be labeled imaginary history. This is what Michael Confino calls “faction history” (35). A faction history is a mixture of fact and fiction claiming to be history, which has three main features: it is a pastiche; it has strong theatrical undertones; and it is unhampered by what old-fashioned reactionaries and other positivists call reality. The time and the space out there are not filled with realities but with what you choose to put in them. And since history, like nature, does not tolerate a vacuum, the moment you take reality from out there, the void is filled with virtual realities, imaginary reality, fiction, faction, docudrama or various mixes of fact and fiction like E.L. Doctorow’s *Ragtime*.

But, in memory studies, fact and fiction do not blend smoothly even in the slightest form. It is one of the foremost practitioners of the genre, and is not only ambivalent but literally torn between them. On the one hand, memory says that it is writing history, although not according to histories conventional barriers or the conventions by which histories establish coherence and persuasiveness. And on the other hand, he admits that his stories are not history. Though these stories, Confino writes:

At times appear to observe the discursive conventions of history they are in fact historical novellas. In other words, this is both fiction and history, while being neither of them: a nice way to eat your cake and have it. That is probably why the logic and epistemology that command

this new genre of “fictional history” are never explained, but the problem is not only theoretical and methodological. (36)

As such, memory study is both fictional and reality, the way on which the genre of study is focused upon by an individual reader or critic.

With all the literary merits and richness of this work, it contains more imagination than evidence, more speculation than hard facts and more impressionistic guess than rigorous interpretation (particularly in the treatment of “memory” -- social, tribal, national or otherwise. The passages of personal autobiography enliven the narrative - whether the author’s childhood in Essex, his memories of Hampstead Heath or his Jewish ancestors in Lithuania, hardworking lumberjacks floating logs to the sawmills of Grodno- and give an additional non-historical twist to the narrative.

In a like manner some critics interrogate if this fiction /faction genre is really so new as it seems to. The blending of fiction and history, and the temptation to do it, are almost as old as history itself, and those who indulge in it belong to one of the oldest professions. There is no need to present here the well-known cases of these perennial literary fellow-travelers who feed on history. Instead, it seems more interesting to note that there is a common denominator between the fictional history of the literary post modernists and the historical fiction of the “dead - certainties” historians. This common denominator is the explicit or implicit negation of reality, the main contemporary source of this epistemological stand is Michel Foucault’s theory of “General Relativity” (relativity generalize), which posits the historicization

of historical discourse and, as a consequence, of the reality which it refers; similarly, Foucault rejects history because it assumes "reality, identity, and truth" by the same token historical discourse and historical writing melt entirely and disappear (or do not exist at all except as figments of the imagination and representational fallacies), since historical discourse without a referent reality is nothing but fiction. Foucault formulated this sophism by starting from the otherwise correct (and not novel) idea that "historical discourse is also part of history," but he deduced from it the perverse and untenable proposition that this fact dissolves basic certainties and assumptions in historical writing such as reason, logic, power, social relationships, the human body and in fact, the human being.

There is no doubt that cultural influences shape our assumptions about the mind and the body, the universe and the past. These assumptions inform the questions we ask, the facts we seek, the interpretations we give to these facts and our reactions to the conclusions we reach. But this is neither history's problem nor a justification for the postmodernist nihilism, and today's historians, being aware of this inevitable culture-bound character of their thinking, have elaborated complex sets of checks and balances, of verifications and reviews, whose purpose is to limit or eliminate the biases that this culture-bound gravity may generate. The problem is that this anti historical trend of thought negates the very existence of assumptions at all; at bottom, if they were to follow their reasoning to its logical end, the literary postmodernists would have to negate the possibility of any kind of discourse, historical or otherwise. In this perspective, the quintessential "discourse" would be



the disorderly and disjointed mumbling of the lunatic; and the perfect text would be a gratuitous one written about nothing.

Gratuitous and disconnected utterances are not the kind of texts that the literary post-modernists want to write, but rather conventional articles on conventional topics, according to pre-postmodernist “obsolete” rules, with dates, names and footnotes, published in established learned journals in compliance with the old-fashioned and philistine rules of the “publish or perish” culture. Theoretically reality may not have existed in the past and may not exist in the present; but practically, today and in everyday life this is another matter. So, much the more most of this intellectual fad is located in literary departments in academe, where tenure is the goal of life and an endowed chair the ultimate desire.

To be more specific on post-modern history and memory study, it is Confino, who sums up it all these terms in meaning. He deals, “Meaning is the end of historical writing, provided that the latter has ever existed as such, which, curiously, is also argued against in that same article” (36). History has always existed in the shadow of literature, as part of it and as its poor cousin. This was so from its very beginning, as exemplified by Herodotus, who abandoned conscientious analysis without warning for totally fabricated speeches. History has traditionally told stories which mingled fact and fiction, thus making of it a bastard subgenre of literature. Only in the nineteenth century, under the influence of the Enlightenment, rationalism and the advance of science, things suddenly changed. It is as if history awakes in the early

twentieth century surprised and even horrified to see how closely it is coupled with memory.

The way out of this nightmare (in the form of Joyce's *Ulysses*) is the triumphal "return of literature" and history's repentant return to the fold of literature. A final conclusion is that history is dead or, to put it less dramatically, that this is the end of history. She is cheered by this finding which brings order to the disorder created by history's ill- advised whom to be an autonomous discipline, and it puts history where it properly belongs: in its modest niche as a subgenre of literature. Some observers, taking this message too seriously, may be saddened by its novelty and implications. They will be wrong on two counts: first, because the news of history's death isn't new; second, because Orr's attempts history are reminiscent of the fate of capital punishment in Imperial Russia.

But history was not dead and without hope; it survived content analysis and social science theory, life and the flashing neon lights of broad way; to illuminate the post-modern era, through its memory lane. Late on it was again proclaimed dead by academic literary critics and deconstructionists, which is rather remarkable for a defunct corpse. But if history is not dead, others say, at least it is coming now to an end. For another companion of the "death of history" syndrome is its twin, called the "end of History" theory. This too has been proclaimed more than once in the recent past, and these "enlist" utterances multiplied as we approached the end of the century and of the millennium and not only with regard to history but to almost

everything: Postmodernism was only a trifling foretaste of the bizarre and farfetched “enlist” wonders yet to come.

While presenting the post-modern notion of history, it can be praiseworthy to mention a careful reading of memory. The revival of history is possible only through the restructuring the notion from the memory perspective that has to do with identity of each individual. As Anthony Smith rightly points out, “One might almost say: no memory, no history; no history, no identity; no identity; no nation” (Some Random Thoughts 32). In the view, the resurfacing of the lost history of the two Victorian poets by Harvard academicians Roland and Maud is the journey of claiming their identity in the post-modern history through the memory lane.

### III. Post-modern Recovery of History in *Possession: A Romance*

Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* is the double voice of postmodern fiction; through the plot of the novel, that exposes the double layer of meaning. The novel presents a challenge, because it requires the way we read and interpret the text, and not only postmodern trend but, also literature as a whole. This doubleness and level of interpretation in the novel lays a particularly noticeable works that openly display their affiliation with generic conventions. Thus, by allying themselves with previous texts in their genres and by fusing conventional and postmodern narrative strategies, this literary hybrid destabilize our interpretations of traditional works, and, at least in the case of the postmodern romances, manage both to reread their tradition and revitalize its twentieth-century appearance.

*Possession: A Romance* is a novel of wit and romance, at once an intellectual mystery and a triumphant love story. Revolving around a pair of young scholars researching the lives of two Victorian poets, Byatt creates a haunting counterpoint of passion and ideas. The novel concerns the relationship between two fictional Victorian poets, Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, as revealed to present day academics Roland Mitchell and Maud Bailey. Following a trail of clues from various letters and journals, they attempt to uncover the truth about Ash and LaMotte's past before it is discovered by rival colleagues.

The multiple narrative voices, the open contradictions, and the consistent resistance to totalizing answers in a postmodern romance like *Possession: A Romance* can be seen as continuing the allegorical mode of the high romances of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as questioning the apparent uniformity of women's popular

romances, and as restoring those complex and sophisticated qualities that formerly characterized the romance but seem to have disappeared from its twentieth-century manifestations.

*Possession: A Romance* signals a hidden history through the lane of memory; a growing trend of presenting fictions, in the recent days. Through devices like fluctuating narrative perspectives, paradox, ambiguity, and self-reflexivity, the novel moves to the memory avenues explored by two Harvard academicians; Mitchell, the male character and Dr. Maud, the female lead. Roland, the poet, though accidentally comes across a bundle of papers neglected in one of the London Library which seems to have important information on a Victorian poet Randolph Henry Ash takes it as a personal invitation to explore the lost history and sneaks the paper out of the library. Roland is lured, as Ash is one of the prominent literary figures (fictional), in the literary scenario.

The papers have otherwise story of Ash's famously claimed married life. The book containing a bundle of papers, 'the Pandora's box' is described as:

The book was thick and black and covered with dust and almost in rags. Its boards were bowed and creaking; it had been maltreated in its own time. Its spine was missing, or rather protruded from amongst the leaves like a bulky marker. It was bandaged about and about with dirty white tape, tied in a neat bow. (1)

When Roland first got the book, he was in need of something special to carry out his research work. However, when he knew, what he accidentally possessed, things were neither in his control nor, his mind. First, Roland hardly knew what to of those

extraordinary writings, a bundle of letters corresponded between Ash, the Victorian poet and LaMotte, his contemporary.

The letter opened “Dear Madam” (6) and ended without a formal salutation. It was addressed to LaMotte, and when the reply came, similar was the trend, with no salutation. This discovery “profoundly shocked” (6) Roland and the feelings of the young academic were:

. . . then, in his scholarly capacity, thrilled. His mind was busied itself automatically with dating and placing this unachieved dialogue with an unidentified woman. There was no year on the letters, but they must necessarily come after the publication of Ash dramatic poems, *Gods, Men and Heroes*, which had appeared in 1856. (6)

This finding was going to change his life, for, the parallel structure of his feelings, longing for something to happen mysteriously were aroused by the letter.

He feels compelled to take away the documents secretly - an unprofessional act - and begins to investigate. The trail leads him to Christabel LaMotte, a minor poet and contemporary of Ash, and to Dr. Maud Bailey, a modern LaMotte scholar and distant relative of LaMotte's family, who is drawn into helping Roland with the unfolding mystery. They become obsessed with uncovering the truth and unearth more letters and evidence of an affair between the poets, and their own personal romantic lives - neither of which is happy or even satisfactory - develop and become entwined in an echo of Ash and LaMotte, whose story is told in parallel to theirs.

The news of this affair will make headlines and reputations in academia, and colleagues of Roland and Maud become competitors in the race to discover the truth, for all manner of motives. And the truth is this: Ash's marriage was barren and

unconsummated, although he loved and remained devoted to his wife. He and LaMotte had a short, passionate affair resulting in the suicide of LaMotte's lesbian lover and the secret birth of an illegitimate child, whose existence LaMotte sought to conceal from Ash, but whom he did once meet, unknown to her. As the Great Storm of 1987 strikes England, all the interested parties come together in a dramatic scene at Ash's grave, where documents buried with Ash by his wife, who was believed to hold the final key to the mystery. However, the recovery of history takes place, courtesy, Roland and Maud.

Initially, things do not occur the way, the scholars have wanted them to be. Reading the paper, Maud learns that rather than being related to LaMotte's sister, as she has always believed, she is in fact directly descended from LaMotte and Ash's illegitimate daughter, who was raised by LaMotte's sister and passed off as her own child, and she is therefore heir to their correspondence. Roland freed from obscurity and a dead-end relationship, manages to live down the potential professional suicide of the theft of the original documents, and sees an academic career open up before him. But, the documents might be lost not the similarity there occurs between Maud and her ancestors, as described:

The old woman trod softly along the dark corridors, and climbed the stairs, standing in uncertainty on various landings. From the back, we are going to see her clearly now – from the back and in the shadow, she might still have been any age. She wore a velvet dressing–gown, and soft embroidered slippers. She carried herself upright and without creaking. (446)

These mystic woman was the recent decent of the child born out of the relationship of Ash and Lamotte. And Maud, in return was her child that means Ash and Lamotte were her immediate ancestors.

However, unlike the Victorian lovers, Maud, who has spent her adult life confused, frigid and untouchable, finds her human side and sees possible future happiness with Roland. And the sad story of Ash and LaMotte, separated by the mores of the day and condemned to secrecy and separation, is resolved at last through Roland and Maud.

A characteristic of the late twentieth century, as well as of postmodern literature, is that certainties are continuously called into question, and thus allegory becomes a suitable form for expression. The model is certainly not alien to postmodernism on the contrary; history is a classic example of double discourse, as well as a textual mode that – like postmodern literature--avoids establishing a center within the text, because in allegory the unity of the work is provided by something that is not explicitly there. This last point is where postmodern memories differ from traditional ones; however, because most histories depend on the existence of a recognized and more or less universally accepted frame of reference outside the text.

The comparisons between, for instance, people and insects in Byatt's novella are quite explicit, so much so that one reviewer accuses Byatt of applying the message with a trowel, and another sighs that she follows the reader around with a cowhorn, instructing him in thought and reaction, rather than rendering an action and letting the reader enjoy the illusion of freedom in his engagement with the text. The description of the clash between an aristocratic society and a new, work-oriented one seems to invite a political reading, and the feminization of the insect metaphors suggests a reading in



terms of gender struggle. But the apparent transparency of the comparisons is illusory, and the meanings of the analogies remain unsteady. Byatt uses common, even trite, metaphors, but she uses the same metaphor in several different ways, which draws attention to language itself and means that readers will have to reevaluate their interpretation of the text over and over again. Both the figurative and the hackneyed--meanings and the literal meanings are present at the same time, and so metaphors and analogies become more than embellishments: they become tools for emphasizing the double voice that is an integral part of language.

Double layer of plot runs through metaphors and indeed highly appropriate postmodern devices, because they are obvious vehicles for ambiguity. A living metaphor always carries dual meanings, the literal or sentence meaning and the conveyed or utterance meaning. The strain between the figurative and the literal meaning is constantly underscored, since ants and butterflies appear both as insects and as metaphors for human behavior. As, Byatt cleverly puts poems in the form of letter conversed between the two lovers. These letters are source of coming of fiction into reality that expresses the two layers of meaning in the novel. In one of these letters, Byatt writes:

Know you not that we Women have no Powers/In the cold world of  
objects Reason rules, Where all is measured and mechanical?/There we  
are chattels, baubles, property,/Flowers pent in vases with our roots  
sliced off,/ To shine a day and perish. But you see, /Here in this secret  
room, all curtained round/With flickerings and twinklings, where all  
shapes. (410)

These poetic lines have two layers of meaning, running parallel to each others. LaMotte, the beloved, dare to crush the traditional aspect of viewing woman and female, but, with no success. The second meaning is of the daring character of LaMotte, who despite being a female dares to challenge the traditional aspects of feminism of the day.

These concepts have helped to make the novel – an ideal platform for post-modernist readings of the history. These writing seek to foreground the ontological duality of metaphor, its participation in two frames of reference with different ontological statuses. This it accomplishes by aggravating metaphor's inherent ontological tensions, thereby slowing still further the already slow flicker between presence and absence. All metaphor hesitates between a literal function in a secondary frame of reference and a metaphorical function in a "real" frame of reference; postmodernist texts often prolong this hesitation as a means of foregrounding ontological structure.

The women have been relegated to the domestic sphere and as a result has been able to exert their power over household matters is no revolutionary insight. What give the observation new life are the analogies with bee and ant societies. One reviewer expresses his disaffection with the device thus: one “must endure the elaborate comparison of insect and human societies, an idea that I might not be alone in finding hackneyed” (61). This comment fails to acknowledge that in the novella, as in nature, ant and bee communities are predominantly female. Everything is run by and determined by females, down to the sex of the embryos. The male ants and the drones are sex objects, just like the male butterflies that flaunt their brilliant colors to attract the females, and fertilization of the females is the sole justification for their existence.

When Byatt describes such a male-dominated society as the nineteenth-century English aristocracy through resolutely gendered metaphors of bees, ants, and butterflies, one of the results is to challenge the conventional picture of this society.

An epigraph is used in *Possession: A Romance* to head several chapters, particularly those early on in the book. Byatt uses it as a structural device, primarily for a subtractive function, to outline the common themes which formulate in that particular chapter. Each epigraph serves to point the reader to important images or ideas that are going to be expanded upon throughout the chapter.

The prominence of comparisons, analogies, and metaphors places the novella in the tradition of allegorical writing, a quintessentially medieval or Renaissance genre. But allegory is also characteristic of postmodernism. A characteristic of the late twentieth century, as well as of postmodern literature, is that certainties are continuously called into question, and thus allegory becomes a suitable form for expression. The model is certainly not alien to postmodernism: on the contrary, allegory is a classic example of double discourse, as well as a textual mode that--like postmodern literature--avoids establishing a center within the text, because in allegory the unity of the work is provided by something that is not explicitly there.

This last point is where postmodern allegories differ from traditional ones, however, because most allegories depend on the existence of a recognized and more or less universally accepted frame of reference outside the text. But where, for example, a Protestant allegorist like John Bunyan could presuppose his reader's knowledge of the Bible, the postmodern allegorist can take no referent for granted. As a consequence, postmodern allegory is notoriously unstable, and a conventional allegorical

interpretation of a work like *Possession: A Romance* becomes impossible, because no single key can explain the meaning of the analogies.

There is one more concept in process of decoding the lost history. The question is: who is in charge of decoding the history? In contrast to symbols, which are generally taken to transcend the sign and express universal truths, allegories and metaphors divide the sign, exposing its arbitrariness. Thus the historical concept ends up in allegorical impulse, which in turn has its root in the memory study. In contemporary literature, there can be seen reflection of the postmodern emphasis on the reader as co-producer, since it invites the reader's active participation in meaning making. When, we learn about the venture of Roland and Maud, we (readers) are self engaged in the venture. But the manifestations of authorial power: led us to the desired place; that the ending of the novel, or the writer provides us. The relentless didactic works that resolutely direct the reader's interpretations is what comes out of memory, in which there are flavors of future in relation to that of the future.

One of the feature of the memory studies is they don not have a fixed trend in depicting the world around them, but are depended on what they take for. If, on the other hand, allegories serve to destabilize the relation between word and meaning, between form and essence, such texts become very suitable expressions of the postmodern distrust of accurate representation. In *Possession: A Romance*, we find readers can discover several meanings in dialogue with each other, and the hierarchical relation between a monologic message and the allegorical form that obscures it collapses. Monologue plays a vital role in the making of the history in memory studies. During the course of their investigation, Christabel finds the role of love and history associated with poetry:

that is not badly put .And having written it, I am now full of a kind aesthetic love of my countrymen as of our wind. I would go on, if I were a poet, to write the poem of its keening. Or if I were a novelist, I could go on to say that in sober truth its monotonous singing can drive you half mad for silence, in te long sinter days, like a man thirsting in a desert. (337)

Poetry is a recitation, largely based on memory. As such, this cork precisely becomes a postmodern trend of reading of history.

As such, the comparisons between, for instance, people and insects in Byatt's novella are quite explicit, so much so that one reviewer accuses Byatt of applying the message with a trowel and another sighs that she follows the reader around with a cowhorn, instructing him in thought and reaction, rather than rendering an action and letting the reader enjoy the illusion of freedom in his engagement with the text.

The description of the clash between an aristocratic society and a new, work-oriented one seems to invite a political reading, and the feminization of the insect metaphors suggests a reading in terms of gender struggle. But the apparent transparency of the comparisons is illusory, and the meanings of the analogies remain unsteady. Byatt uses common, even trite, metaphors, but she uses the same metaphor in several different ways, which draws attention to language itself and means that readers will have to reevaluate their interpretation of the text over and over again. Both the figurative or the hackneyed meanings and the literal meanings are present at the same time, and so metaphors and analogies become more than embellishments: they become tools for emphasizing the double voice that is an integral part of language.

History and Memory go in parallel as the story develops in the novel. History is indeed highly appropriate postmodern devices, because they are obvious vehicles for ambiguity. A living history is like the findings of Byatt in the novel. In an attempt to discover the lost history of the Victorian era lovers, when the present day lovers (or could be lovers) venture in an odyssey from the London Library to the country of English, they unearth various human sentiments. Sentiments flow from one to other, like, Maud notices Roland:

She was wholly aware of Roland, sitting behind her on the floor, wearing a white towelling dressing-gown, leaning up against the white sofa which he had slept during his first visit, and on which he slept now. She felt fuzz of his soft black hair, starting up above his brow, with imaginary fingers. She felt his frown between her eyes. He felt his occupation was gone; she felt his feeling. He felt he was lurking. (430)

Human sentiments are sufficiently fragile, but the wonder is, when it really turns fragile. For Maud, Roland was a mere University researcher, whom she disliked initially for his venture of unearthing the lost lovers' story. She was against the project, partly, poet Ash was of his ancestral clan and, also because, she did not liked Roland and his straightforward mannerism. But, now things were changing, at least for Maud. She was finding the very awkward and stupid Roland easy-going and loving. It is certainly post-modern ways of knowing and understanding each other.

The post-modern ways are as they are. Roland, the university researcher is a straight forward and easy going guy. But, as most would do in the situation, he walked away with the documents from the library, which is an illegal act. His act, according to him justifies as they open up possibilities for the research on unraveled

avenue. The text contains plenty of proofs and possibilities to endorse the hypothesis that history can be rewritten through the mode of memory.

The once unknown and, initially, showing distaste towards each other, the two researchers happen to develop more fondness for poems, love letters and other secret personal documents of former lovers of Victorian period. The history as such has a claim that the lovers weren't lovers but poets as well as scholars. The researchers begin to develop more suspicious as to the surface historical truth so they begin to study the poems and letters that were written and exchanged between the so called Victorian poets the following lines cited from the text illustrate the growing curiosity of the researchers:

Proserpine was between pages 288 and 289. Under page 300 lay two folded complete sheets of writing paper Roland opened these delicately .they were both letters in Ash's flowing hand both headed with his Great Russell street address and dated ,June 21<sup>st</sup> .no year. Both began dear madam; and both were unsigned. One was considerably shorter than the other. (5)

Thus Roland accidentally discovers two letters from research in London library .His interest quickly shifts from professional to personal and historical records and research to collecting. Because of these personal writings in general but specifically dear madam and unsigned letter leads him towards the shifting in interest then automatically so many doubts arise. In the same way researcher entangles with full of dilemma and confusion of remembering and the forgetting state.

Post-modernist writing seeks to foreground the ontological duality of metaphor, its participation in two frames of reference with different ontological statuses. Thus, it accomplishes by aggravating metaphor's inherent ontological tensions, thereby slowing still further the already slow flicker between presence and absence. All metaphor hesitates between a literal function in a secondary frame of reference and a metaphorical function in a real frame of reference; postmodernist texts often prolong this hesitation as a means of foregrounding ontological structure.

Using analogy displays the metaphor's reference to the real world: the world of Roland and Maud. But, the question is, is theirs' world the real, real one? Or, is it the readers' world that is real? And, who can really claim that if this (readers) world is real in real sense. As a consequence, Byatt's technique of offering metaphorical descriptions in the form of analogies ensures that the post-modern vacillation between literal and figurative meanings is constantly present in form of real and illusion.

The metaphors are unstable not only because they hover between two frames of reference: their figurative meanings are also shaky. A metaphor induces comparison, but since the grounds of similarity are not forever given, metaphors serve to emphasize the freedom of the reader as opposed to the authority of the writer. Since the interplay between metaphorical and literal meaning destabilizes both the fiction and reality and the metaphors themselves, this is one of the clearest signs of its post-modernity. As is rightly said, in post-modern history, things are not what they seem.



Coming to history as a memory study, it is concerned with the personal issues of the past. The very historian's attention tilts towards the personal matter of the former lover's letter. In this way after reading this suspicious letter Roland knows this is the handwriting of Randolph Henry Ash then Roland remains in the position of duality between accepting the exiting reality and ignoring the new truth. Hence, in response to the Ash written letter he expresses his feeling:

What Roland liked was his knowledge of the movement of Ash's mind .stacked through the twists and clear in an unexpected epithet but these dead letters troubled him, physically even because they were only beginning. He didn't imagine Randolph Henry Ash ,his pen moving rapidly across the paper but he did have the thought of the pads of long covered sheets before preserving them in the book instead of jettisoning them, who? He must try to find out. (20-21)

With the feeling great shocked Roland can't imagine the so called poet has indulged this type of writing to addressing madam. After reading the letters Roland feels difficult to accept the fact that Randolph Henry Ash writes such shocked letter addressing to woman. Then it creates so many assumptions regarding the new truth and already created reality that is to say he sees the gap between the reality and history because history has taught him that Randolph is the great poet and scholar but after reading this letter he finds the contradictions in history and new truth.

Similarly the contradiction guides him to the researching mysteries upon the poet' correspondence. According to the letter Roland find the unknown woman,

whose name is Christabel Lamotte, who is also the renowned Victorian poet. After then Roland reads the article written by Crab Robinson and he gets some clue about the meeting between Christabel and Ash. Just as the Clues Roland find Maud Bailey who is expert on Christabel in the hope of finding Christabel and Maud' correspondence. They devout on the view point of resolving his contradiction they visit the St. Etheldrede churchyard where Christabel was buried which lies in Croysand le wold village. Two historians happen to see the inscription on the graveyard which is as:

Here lie the mortal remains of/Madeleine Lamotte/Elder daughter of  
Isidore Lamotte/Historian And of his beloved wife Arabel Lamotte/Only  
sister of Sophie, Lady Baily/Wife of sir george Bailey of Seal  
Court/Croysant le wold/Born January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1825/Laid to rest may 8<sup>th</sup>  
1890/After mortal trouble/Let me lie still/Where the wind drives and  
the clouds stream/Over the hill/Where grass's thousand thirsty  
mouth/Sup up their fill/Of the slow dew and the sharp rain/Of the  
mantling snow dissolv'd again/At the Heaven's sweet will. (70)

Through the reading of the inscription Roland and Maud Bailey get the information about Christabel's family members, relatives, birth date and death date. In one hand they can't get proper information from that inscription, on the other hand they memorize the family history of Christabel Via grave's inscription. In a way very collection of the past the act unknowingly leads them to revisit the history. Then they visit the above mentioned family members to avoid the doubts and queries.

By the same way historians try to see people and places according to inscription but they never get the complete expected information then again they have great confusions. When they visit Christabel's family they get so many letters about correspondence between Christabel and Randolph Henry Ash. In that letter they only write and exchange on the subjects matter of concerning to professional and formal topics. In response to the Randolph Henry Ash's letter Christabel writes, "I am a creature of pen, Ms Ash, my pen is the best of me, and I enclose a poem" (87). From this illustration historians come to the point that time and again they exchange the letter raising the issue of poetry. From that exchanged letter they are poets in the sense that they send their original poem of expecting the proper comment.

Roland and Maud become excited from the reading of the letters because of the initiation of private affair of poets but not in open way. Then they again read another letter where Ash writes:

And it is true, as you said, across the whole hearth that I too have a house which we have a wife. You asked me to speak of her and I was speechless. I know not how you constructed that I grant it was your absolute right to ask and yet I couldn't answer. I have a wife, and I love her not as I love you. I think your house did not love me, and I should not have come. (198)

Above mentioned lines illustrate that these writings are written in response to Cristabel' letter and this writing exposes the extra love affair between Christabel and Ash marriage. Ash has been involved in extra lover affair by hiding his own married condition. History is never concerned with bout the dark side of personal matter so

historians first get that sort of love affairs of the so called Victorian poets. Roland and Maud study that memoir from the postmodern perspective then it highlights the hidden truth, in a way the identity and reality change throughout the collected letter of the Victorian lovers. So memory studies suggests that identity and truth are contingent which keep on changing that is to say memory study challenges the notion of fixity and objective truth.

Similar to post-modern trend, Ash sometimes goes apart from his wife to enjoy with Christabel in time he writes letter to his wife Ellen but Historians shows their doubts:

[We] read exactly like the letters of solitary husband on holiday, taking on his wife of an empty evening .Unless it's significance that he never says what you were here or even I wish you could make of it apart from there obvious reference to drowned is which we knew about think about it if you were a man in the excited state of the writer of the Christabel letters. (210)

This given lines say that Randolph Henry Ash has just pretended as if husband remembering to his wife but as such he is not really doing so. On the contrary he is enjoying with another woman on the holiday that means they are in romance.

On the other hand, Roland and Maud are in still on process of reading correspondence with addressing, “‘My very dear’ Randolph writes. I don't wish to do irreparable damage to your life. I have so much rational understanding left to me, as to beg you- against my desire, my own hope, and my own true love. I send my love

now and always" (201). From that writing also Roland and Maud easily single out that they are lover and they are in love affair. Likewise memoir represents Victorian poets identity has shown in just in alternative way that means they are lover and beloved not merely poets.

As the two historians proceed on their work they happen to see the journal written by Sabine Lucrece Charlotte De Kerocoz which tells about the Christabel father's way of story telling and his behavior towards daughter as well as Christabel's walks of life in the Journal she express that "we have been looking for her Christabel for two days she went out yesterday morning to walk up to the Church as she has increasingly done over these last weeks .it turns out that the villagers have been her standing they say for long period" (374). From these lines both historian enter in the confusion why she is being out of contact for long time that's means it creates so many curiosities and only get the idea of out of contact but they can't acquire the supposed information.

In this way, Roland and Maud both stand as in the position of getting the unfolding the new Truth but in time they aren't able to do so. In this context memory studies gives the fluid truth and through the memoirs historians gain the continuous changing fact but they don't get the objective truth. In that process they collect the letter written by Ariane Le Minier to Maud Bailey, where they read:

I was certainly under the Impression that students of LaMotte believe her to have lived a secluded life, in happy lesbian relationship wit Blanche Glover, you know of any lover a possible lover who might have

been the father of this child? The question imposes itself the suicide of Blanche connected to the history related in the text? Perhaps you can enlighten man? (379-380)

After investigating with lines from the letter they come to know Christabel has lesbian relationship with Blanche Glover. Hence different kinds of guess are progressing in their mind when they read Blanche Glover suicide. In the Victorian time, a poet of such fame getting involve, in such a lesbian relationship is not believable in the begging but the chain of information can lead them to the acceptance. The history as such has a claim that the lesbian relationship was not identified in the Victorian era; hence that was not the matter of gender issue. Thus so called history always hides the seamy side of the period and the ugly aspect the reality therefore memory studies represents that marginalized issues with the extra emphasis

Despite the so many attempts of collecting the letters and visiting the relatives they can't way out from the contradiction between new reality and already existed reality. So far as the concerned of the authenticity of the findings the historians and leading experts make a decision of excavating the grave of Ash. The following cited lines exemplify the leading experts dig up grave:

Went on digging, Hilderbrand began to crawl closely around the rim of Cropper's excavation, the very bases of the yew and the cader began to shift to move laterally and to complain .Cropper pushed at the box with useless finger chipped at a corner with a wife, took envelope ,slipped

hid knife under the seal, and opened it. Inside were letter and a photograph. (498)

After digging up the grave of the Randolph Henry Ash, the excavated box containing letter dwells upon the possibilities of unfolding of the hidden truth. What they attempt was the only one last option so they have applied it. Then they get the series of the information in the single letter which is written by Christabel in the last moment of their relationship in view point of exposing the hidden fact but unfortunately Randolph's wife doesn't let to know that letter. Instead of handover this letter Ellen buries the letter in the grave of Randolph Henry Ash so that it remains secret for long time.

By the same token they take letter which is written at the last moment of their relationship, however the letter is single and that gives detail answer of the mystery and that letter contains information about their illegitimate daughter as well her photograph. In that letter Christabel writes:

You have daughter, who is well, and married and the mother of a beautiful boy. I send her picture and they tell me you are ill – and so our daughter was born in Brittany, in the convent and carries to England where Sophie took her and brought her up as her own, as we had agreed and I will say that Sophie has and cherished her as well as anyone not her time mother might do. (500)

After reading this letter historians find that Victorian poets who indulge in the extra marital affair, illegitimate child birth and adultery which were taken as crime in

Victorian period, such issues were in the margin. That much marginalized issues are ventriloquized in the post modern recovery of the history by the virtue of the memory studies. The things which the history takes asocial these issues are brought out as social in memory studies.

Regarding the letter written by Christabel, historians Roland and Maud see Christabel's daughter Maia' wedding photograph in that situation they express their feelings as:

She looks like Christabel,' said Maud 'you can see it. She looks like you, ' said Roland .He added, ' she looks like Randolph Henry Ash ,too the width of the brow ,the width of the mouth the end of the eyes brows these so like Randolph Henry Ash . She said, ' I have seen this we have one .she was my great – Great grand mother. (504-5)

They imagine the similarity between the ancestors of Maia and Maud from that already snapped photograph. They come to the point that Christabel is grandmother of Maud too from these findings. Maud is indirectly searching her roots through deferent kinds of the collection and she revisits her family history too. From the persisting research tells that before this research Maud herself did not know her own family roots.

In course of reading the letter Roland and Maud further keep on knowing the hidden facts via the long letter which was written after knowing Randolph Henry Ash is ill .Christabel updates their long gaps through this letter:



Randolph I send you my blessing, and I ask yours and your forgiveness, if it may be. For I know and must have known that you have a generous heart and would have cared for us me and Maia but I had truth best ,now is it not? – I was afraid ,you see that would wish to take her ,you and your wife ,for your very own and she was mine ,I bore her – I couldn't let her go and so I hid her from you and you from her ; for she would have loved you ; there is a space in her life forever ,which is yours. (500)

As the process of recreating the past through the collection they get the proper reason of Christabel writing this detail letter. In the letter Christabel mentions her obligation of taking this issue in secret. In the letter she says Randolph had already wife so she does not want to break the family relationship that is to say she time and again expresses her love in every moment. On the other hand the Victorian society was not so liberal to accept these types of issues in way she has to depart from her lover due to social rule and order.

The investigation and analysis into the Victorian era yielded to the finding of the lost history of the famous Victorian hence finally the historians decide to dig the grave of former lovers. While digging the grave they happened to find a letter which clarified every confusion and mystery pertaining to the former lovers. In the letter it was mentioned that the love, that had developed, had gone beyond the normal level of emotional attraction. Their affair had flourished in the establishment of physical relationship and eventually in the birth a child. The letter, that was found in the

grave, represents the confessional attitude of lovers having understood the crucial necessity and colorful history of the former lovers, the historians develop different viewpoint on the subject of the role romance in romanticizing life thus the researcher concludes and investigating of memory yielded in the reconstruction of the history of the role of romance in romanticizing the arid lives of the analysts and historians.

Thus, the odyssey of the present day couple; Roland and Maud end up digging up the past; but the question remains, what they have achieved in the process. And, the simple answer is that they have understood each other well; despite their initial dislike to each other. One of the features of living in post-modern time is amid differences, in a parallel structure; like the two levels of meaning presented by *Possession: A Romance*. Byatt presents her double layered of ideas through memory, as a tool to recapture the Victorian era of love and life, supposed to be illegal in those days; however, similar trends in the post-modern time are fast being socially acceptable way of living.

#### IV. Conclusion

After a thorough analysis of Byatt's *Possession: A Romance*, the present researcher has come to a conclusion that post-modern history is associated with unearthing the forgotten past. The post-modern history depends upon the use of memory as tool. In literature, memory and history go together, which eventually leads to the findings of buried secrets and mysteries; a typical post-modern ending of the novel; however, all through the use of memory as a tool.

*Possession: A Romance* is a two facet story; one that takes place in the latter part of the twentieth century, and other in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It narrates the attempts, ups and downs in the relationship of two academics, who are in a venture of unearthing the history of two Victorians poets love story. Roland Michell and Dr. Maud Bailey, the central characters of the story start their journey from a library in London, from the hints Roland gets from a sheet of old papers wrapped in an old book in the library. He is later joined in by Maud, and together, they start their venture on unearthing the lost history of two Victorian poet's love story.

A Victorian poet Randolph Henry Ash is a married man of dignity and status in the contemporary society. The researchers delve deeper into the turbulent lives of

the two poets through their letters, journals and poems. They trace the Victorian poets' secret from London to north Yorkshire coast, from spiritualist situations to the fairy haunted far west-Brittany. However, his secret aspect is, he is in relationship with LaMotte, a poet of his time. They establish their relationship through code letters they send to each other, untitled, unnamed and without a proper salutation. In doing so, their relationship goes as far as sexual and, a child is born to them. But, the interesting part of the novel is the present day, researcher Dr. Maud's cousin sister is the living descendant of Ash and LaMotte's relationship. This love relationship was not known until; Roland unearths them from the grave, by unearthing its' remains.

Thus, despite the conflicting relationship between the present day couple; of Roland and Maud, the novel gives a happy ending to the Victorian era lovers. It is likely that the present day lovers will find solace in their relationship amid their dislikes; a feature of the post-modern love story. Thus, the essence of the novel, revisiting of history in post-modern time by blending history to memory study comes to an ending. Memory study, a prominent feature of post-modern literature is adding flavor to the revisiting of history from an entirely different perspective. Thus, *Possession: A Romance* is a journey into the post-modern ways of examining and judging past events through memory, as a tool to explore the ignored lines of historical events.

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