

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

William Somerset Maugham and *Christmas Holiday*

This research tries to analyze Maugham's critique of history and his attitude towards the relation between history and fiction. It will be viewed as the written history of the people, society and the politics of Europe who are solely responsible for encouraging totalitarian ideology that was leading Europe towards the impending disaster threatening its political stability. Maugham's concern with the state of Europe came out inferentially in *Christmas Holiday*, which was published in England in February 1939 and in the United States in October. *Christmas Holiday* begins when the young hero, Charley from a privileged European's home goes to Paris for a five-day holiday, the novel follows Charley and his days in Paris with his friend Simon, prostitute Lydia; her story with her husband, a murderer Robert Berger; concluding with his shattering experience that knocks the bottom out of his seemingly secure and elegantly mannered way of life.

In Paris, Charley meets Simon, who until a year or two before had been his friend and now is living there as a journalist and now has developed a lust for power and keeps the aspiration to be head of the secret police under the political regime established by communists which he foresees in England. Eventually Charley meets Lydia and gets to know about the world more with much matured view. With her, he also knows about the convict Robert Berger, Alexy and Evgenia. Maugham tells the story in a narrative form as being an omniscient narrator. The novel has an absorbing story, an agreeable style; a group of diversified characters are interesting in themselves. It is a short novel-brilliantly written and set in various locations of London and Paris. The significant conversations between the characters take place in

a location, which compliments the larger story. Maugham takes the readers to the historical consciousness of the age through different characters in the novel representing the age. Through the ideologies, beliefs and utterance, lifestyles of the presented characters, Maugham strongly tries to represent the age in his novel. Maugham gives the diversified characters capsized by compassions and confusions that engulfed a generation in the days between the wars. Maugham presents Simon as a manifestation of the jaunty fanatical revolutionary, a die-hard communist, Lydia as a Russian prostitute, Robert Berger as a happy murderer. After confronting with each of them, Charley as the embodiment of naive European returns to London irrevocably changed, with all his previous beliefs and assumptions shattered.

As a whole, in *Christmas Holiday*, Maugham has written an allegory of Europe's collapse. The researcher is going to research upon how Maugham has evaluated on the history. *Christmas Holiday* is the story of the characters with the insensible, harsh, intoxicated and critical nature representing the new leadership in Europe who give a sense of disaster knocking in the door in Europe. Their nature seems to be responsible for the epidemic.

The text is studied in terms of its historical context at the time when it was written - the characters, their beliefs, ideologies of the age and the society. The first chapter is an introduction to the present research, and it presents the synopsis of the novel, a general introduction to the author and the novel against the backdrop of different critic's commentaries on the novel, the historical background of the period when the novel was written. The second chapter elaborates the methodology employed to study the text. The principal theoretical tool employed in this study is new historicism. The third chapter presents a detailed textual analysis with textual citations so as to expose how the novel documents the historical consciousness of age

upon the characters living under it. The final chapter concludes the study with a brief recounting observation of the work asserting the hypothesis.

The novelist and the playwright William Somerset Maugham was born in the British Embassy in Paris, which ensured his British Citizenship. He passed his early life in France and at the age of ten, he came to England where he was educated at King's school, Canterbury, and Heidelberg University and worked as a doctor at St. Thomas' hospital, London. He began his writing career as a novelist and then turned to drama, from which he made enough money to allow him to devote himself entirely to literature. He also began his lifelong habit to travel. During the 1914-18 war, he served first with Red Cross and then intelligence service. He traveled widely in Europe and the Far East, and at the outbreak of the Second World War, he was living in France. The story of his life there and eventual escape to England was told in 'strictly personal' (1942).

Maugham's novel reveals him as a cynical cosmopolitan presenting life in an ironically detached manner, which does not flinch, in the face of the mean or sordid. A realist, with an intense interest in human nature, keenly aware of the contradictions and frustrations of life, he was a poised, finished artist, who wrote in a prose that was clear, precise and simple. His experiences in hospitals provided him with knowledge of London's poorer quarters, in which were set such early works of '*Liza and Lambeth*' (1897) and '*Mr. Craddock*' (1902). From his travels he drew the background of '*The Moon and the Sixpence*' (1919) and '*The Painted Veil*' (1925). His best novel was undoubtedly of '*Of Human Bondage*' (1915), a study in frustration, which had a strong autobiographical element. Among his other fiction, mention must be made of '*Cakes and Ale*' (1930) which deals with a genius involved with vulgarity that is full of happy life and with deadly pseudo intellectual society; and '*The Razor's Edge*' (1944),

concerning the moral and spiritual emptiness of affluent America. He was a prolific writer of short stories, many of them set on the East and the Pacific, with highly professional skill, Maugham depicted relationships between the sexes and the unhappiness, even cruelty resulting from them.

He had a big influence from French literature. In one of his play '*The Summing Up*', Maugham declared that it was the fiction of Guy de Maupassant that most influenced him, which he set about becoming a writer. Whereas his novel *Christmas Holiday* written in 1939 is slighter than the others, contains one of the best portraits of a happy murderer in fiction. It is all about the young hero on a five day holiday in Paris has a shattering experience that knocks the bottom out of his seemingly secure and elegantly mannered way of life.

Maugham's renowned novel, *Christmas Holiday* has drawn the attention of numerous critics since its publication in 1939. Different critics have interpreted the text differently and have opened many new ways of approach commenting on *Christmas Holiday*. After the study of novel, the foremost critic, Graham Greene remarks, "*Christmas Holiday* is cliché ridden and displayed the odd ignorance of human feelings."(36)

In the similar ways, the eminent writer, Richard A. Cordell, in *Saturday Review of Literature*, has said that *Christmas Holiday* is meant to one of the best novel of W. Somerset Maugham. He also comments about its structure. In this terms, he reviews, "*Christmas Holiday* is a first rate novel, almost the best of fifteen novels Somerset Maugham has written during the past forty-two years [...]. It lacks the intense sincerity, the sweep, the autobiographical power of *Of Human Bondage*, but is its superior in form and style."(331)

Regarding the accuracy, economy and control in *Christmas Holiday*, another critic Evelyn Waugh, in *The Technician*, opines, "For pure technical felicity it is the best new novel. It is the story of a Christmas Holiday in Paris of a well-to-do, well mannered, mildly cultured and quite exceptionally charming young Englishman" (328). He further writes, "One realizes immediately that one is dealing with the work of highly experienced writer, and one reads it with a feeling of increasing respect for his mastery of his trade [...] writing Mr. Maugham's accomplishment is yearly more exhilarating." (328-30)

Likewise, Frank Swinnerson, in the *Observers*, says, "It nearly a masterpiece with the beautiful simplicity of *Manon Lescaut*." (36)

Ted Morgan, in *Maugham Biography*, has commented about the reason why Maugham could have written the novel. He writes, "In December, Maugham went to Paris to attend the trial of Guy Albert Davin, who has been sentenced to life for murdering his rich American friend Richard Wall [...]. From the trial and a subsequent visit to French Guiana he fashioned his 1939 novel *Christmas Holiday*." (359)

David Mills, in the *New York Times*, writes, "Yes, he did have a good control of language, solid descriptive skills, and a definite talent for narrative, all evident in *Christmas Holiday* making it a book that rings true and remains with one afterward."(4)

At the same time Christopher Nelson, in *An Awakening in Paris*, writes, "Unlike Huxley has a playwright's acute sensibility to atmosphere, and is very comfortable describing and utilizing scenery: Charley's comfortable English home, Simon's Spartan studio." (39)

Thus, this novel has drawn attention many critics, who have interpreted the novel focusing on different themes such as murder, politics, its language, accuracy, narration, and mastery of writing technique. However, this research tries to evaluate the text from new historical perspective. So this research will critique on history of the text.

When *Christmas Holiday* was published in the year 1939, the period was almost completely overshadowed by the two world wars - the after effects of the first and the forebodings of the second. The interwar years were going on in the world, including largely Europe. After the treaty of Versailles attention in England was mainly concentrated on foreign affairs, the growing pains of new League of Nations and uncertainty in middle East 'The treaties of Locarno' (1925) diminished, at least temporally, anxieties in Europe, and home affairs began again to dominate English political thought. The General Strike of 1926 was major manifestation of post war slump, which culminated in the 'economic depression' and its problems of want and unemployment, which made the early thirties a great distress particularly for industrial areas. In 1933, the day after Roosevelt took office the German parliament voted Adolf Hitler, the national socialist (Nazi) leader the power; he heeded to begin a program of conquest in central and Eastern Europe. In Italy, dictator Benito Mussolini made similar plans to control the Mediterranean and to expand Italy's empire to Africa.

Mussolini and Hitler followed a new political doctrine known as fascism, a form of government in which a dictator and supporters cooperate to seek more power for the nation, usually at the expense of rights for individuals. Each ruler established a totalitarian state- a nation that totally controls the life of its people. The fascist in Italy and the nazis in Germany set up all-powerful official parties. Both whipped up support with huge patriotic rallies, parades, music and appeals to national pride and

racial hatred, and both used to silence the opposition. Each dictator blamed his country's problems on undesirables in society; Mussolini accused Italy's communists of causing strikes and social unrest. The nazis blamed Germany's economic chaos on its Jewish population. They restricted Jews, boycotted Jewish owned stores, and destroyed synagogues. Both Hitler and Mussolini hinted that another war might be necessary to right the wrongs they felt had been done to their countries by the treaty of Versailles.

Thus, foreign problems again come fore with rise of power of nazis in Germany and Mussolini in Italy from 1934 until 1939, there was a mounting tension abroad and at England. Spirituality, the period saw the immediate post war mood of desperate gaiety, and determined frivolity, give away the doubt, uncertainty to aim, and a deeper self questioning on ethical, social and political problems until the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. In September 1st 1939, Germany force crossed into Poland with a brutal attack. This time Britain and France decided to fight and on September 3, they declared war on Germany and there was the outbreak of war again in Europe in 1939.

CHAPTER II

HISTORIES AND TEXTUALITY

The "New Historicism" is a kind of literary criticism that developed during the 1980s by west coast renaissance scholars in America. Stephen Greenblatt is an exponent of new historicism. This new historicism blends the study of literature with the study of culture and history. It blurs the boundaries between history and literature that was widened by new critics and structuralists. The new historicists like Louis Montrose, Kermode, Greenblatt, and so on argue that there is no clear cut boundaries between history and literature because history itself is literature and vice versa that one cannot know the texts in isolation of from their historical context. Literature or text is the product of the particular historical context and social situations. Foucault's notions of 'power' and 'discourse' were particularly responsible for the development of a critical approach to literature known as 'New Historicism.' He says that writer does not write without social situation and historical sense.

The new historicism also empowers literature, which helps construct a sense of reality for the reader. It does not simply reflect the historical fact but 'participates in historical processes'(Hoover 363). Significance of text rests on particular context. History is no more chronological but representative of society and the text is a historical production, a historical construct, a historical phase, and a process. Every history is constructed. New historicism relies on no single validity, no single meaning, no single interpretations, no valid or authentic issue, and no reliable and legitimate history. Validity verses with multiplicity, subject (truth) is in process, text is in process and authenticity is questionable. Born reliance is now blurring. No boundaries can be drawn while writing history or text. Every text has its context or historicity and

there is no objective history. Here for this purpose and interest on this research, the relation between history and fiction will be studied.

While inquiring over the relationship between a literary text and history, one finds various critics have produced their own views. New criticism or more generally formalism, especially in the middle decades of twentieth century concerns with literary texts as artifacts, which transcend the contingencies of any particular time or place and which resist what they see as a reduction of the aesthetic whole to a specific historical context.

The next are the 'Philological' or what we might call 'background critics'. Such critics are concerned to describe and analyze literary texts through a consideration of their historical background whether biographical, linguistic, cultural and political. For such critics, ignorance of a literary text, historical circumstance is likely to lead to a misreading or misunderstanding of that text.

So, the third tends to be associated more with traditional historical scholarship than with literary criticism. As, it assumes literary texts are in some respect subordinate to their historical context. It also tends to assume that literary texts provide undistorted reflections of that time. We might call it a 'Reflective Approach.' And the last critics are concerned with a new kind of concern with the historical dimensions of literary studies particularly since the early 1980s. These are new historicist critics in the United States and cultural materialists in Great Britain. This new interest in history has been refracted through the concerns of both Marxism and Post Structuralism to produce a complex model of the literary.

According to Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, in *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory*, state; "New historicist argues to ask about the

relationship between literature and history is the wrong question"(111). They further opine:

The form of the question presupposes that there is literature on the one side and history on the other. Despite their differences 'new critics,' 'background critics' and 'reflectionists' tend to rely on precisely such a polarity: they assume that the categories of 'literature' and 'history' are intrinsically separate. They distinguish, less explicitly, between the need for the interpretation of literary texts on the one hand, and transparency of history on the other. (111-12)

For old historicist critics, "History is not so much textual as more simply a series of empirically verifiable events"(112). It assumes that it is possible for our knowledge of both historical events and literary texts to be detached and objective outside the forces of history. New historicism may be understood as a reaction to such presuppositions; it may be defined as recognition of the extent to which history is textual and as a rejection of the autonomy of the literary text and of the objectivity of interpretation in general.

Citing Stephen Greenblatt, says, "Literary texts are embedded within the social and economic circumstances in which they are produced and consumed [...]. What is new about historicism in particular is its recognition that history is the 'history of the present,' that history is in the making that, rather than being monumental and closed, history is radically open to transformation and writing" (Royle 112). This is to say that literary texts are part of a larger circulation of social energies, both products of and influences on a particular culture or on a particular ideology.

The principles of the new historicism are strongly opposed to the view that the study of literature should be done independently of social and political contexts. Instead these historicists believe, "Literature is part of the historical process and should participate in the political management of reality" (Hoover 361).

Greenblatt distinguishes what he dubbed the 'new historicism' both from older reflectionist and positivist literary historical scholarship and from new criticism and formalism. He comments:

Renaissance literary works are no longer regarded either as a fixed set of texts that are set apart from all other forms of expression and that contain their own determinate meanings or as a stable set of reflections of historical facts beyond them [...] the contours of art and literature are socially and historically configured: distinctions between artistic production and other kinds of social production [...] are not intrinsic to texts; rather they are made up and constantly redrawn by artists, audiences and readers. (qtd. in *Redrawing the boundaries* 398)

We may now add that the very identities, expectations and practices associated with the positions termed artist, audience, and reader are themselves made up and constantly redrawn by discursive processes in which they are engaged and that condition their own engagement with texts.

There can be no knowledge of the past without interpretation. Knowledge of past is necessarily mediated by texts. Facts are not what we assume but it is a merely an interpretation. The foremost theorists, Hayden White suggests that our knowledge of the past is determined by particular narrative configuration; that in talking about the past we tell stories. She remarks:

Histories ought never to be read as unambiguous signs of the events they report, but rather as symbolic structures, extended metaphors, that 'liken' the events reported in them to some form with which we have already become familiar in our literary culture [...]. But the very constitution of a set of events in such a way as to make a comprehensible story out of them, the historian charges those events with the symbolic significance of a comprehensible plot structure. (qtd. in Royle 113)

Most of us to think about history, that it never depicted a pure or accurate vision. But a new historicist would read and raise the question precisely. It studies how a particular event is represented in newspaper, speeches, stories, documents and so on. what do these representations tell us about the cultural conditions and ideologies of the era.

Traditional historians are different from new historicists in the matter that these two approaches to history are based on very different views of what history is and how we can know it. For traditional historians, history is a series of events that have a linear, casual relationship: cycle event or chain event that causes rounding and so on. It means that they believe history is progressive, that the human species is improving over the course of time, advancing in its moral, cultural, and technological activities. New historicists, in contrast, do not believe in such a way of interpretation. And also it reveals that there is no such thing as a presentation of facts, there is only interpretation. For new historicist, they believe in reliable interpretations, which are reasonable and sound able.

Louis Tyson, in his *Critical Theory Today* argues, "New historicism deconstructs the traditional opposition between history, (factual) and literature (fiction)"(283). He further states:

For new historicism considers history a text that can be interpreted the same way literary critics interpret literary texts, and conversely, it considers literary texts cultural artifacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meaning, operating in the time and place in which those texts were written. (283)

By this mean, we know history only in its textual form like documents are written statistics, diaries, letters, speeches, news, articles and so on. We can say that bringing the marginalized groups such as women, people of color, the poor, the working class, and so on where new historicism tries to promote the development of and gain attention for the histories of marginalized peoples.

Historical analysis cannot be objective, cannot effectively demonstrate a particular spirit of time. It also cannot effectively demonstrate that history is linear, casual or progressive. So, we cannot understand a historical event, object, or person in isolation because we cannot understand it in isolation from the meanings, where it carries at that time. The more we isolate it, the more we will tend to view it through the meanings of our own time and place.

Talking about historiography and historical reality, Eelco Runia, in *History and Theory*, says:

The wonder of historical text is not- as implies- that it fails to bring us into contact with historical reality but that it despite of it's textuality, somehow, sometimes, does bring us into contact with historical reality. It is clear that this contact is not continuous, that it is not willfully and

intentionally brought about by undistorted mirror of the mind by the historian-as naive historicism had it- but this does not alter the fact that the past is present in the present, that the past does spring surprises on us, that though we may not be able to get in contact with the historical reality as intensively as we would like, historical reality is so to speak is very able to be in contact to us. (23)

Quoting Hayden White, Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh in *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*, argue that historians do not have to report their truth about the real world in narrative form. They may choose other, non-narrative, even anti-narrative modes of representation, such as the meditation, the anatomy, or the epitome. They further elaborate:

The most notable masters of modern historiography, refused narrative in certain of their historiographical works, presumably in the assumption that the meaning of the events with which they wished to deal did not lend itself to representation in the narrative mode [...] they did not impose upon the processes that interested them the form that we normally associate with storytelling. While they certainly narrated their accounts of the reality that they perceived, or thought they perceived, to exist within or behind the evidence they had examined, they did not narrativize that reality, did not impose upon it the form of a story. (265-66)

We have known a plenty of representations of historical reality that are non-narrative in form. They further write, "There are three basic kinds of historical representations, the annals, the chronicle, and the history proper which proves to be the imperfect 'historicality' is evidenced in their failure to attain to full narrativity of the events of

which they treat"(268). The first historical representation, the annals lack completely the narrative component, since it consists only of a list of events ordered in chronological sequence. And, another one historical representation, the chronicle seems to wish to tell a story, aspires to narrativity, but typically fails to achieve it. It also left things unresolved in story like way. The chronicle represents as if the real events appeared to human consciousness in the form of unfinished stories. However objective a historian might be in his reporting events, his account remains less than proper history if he has failed to give a real form of a story. Thus, historical narration without analysis is trivial while historical analysis without narration is incomplete.

Thus, Hayden White converges fiction and historiography as representations of reality of the sort embodied in historical discourse. It may be thought that narrativizing discourses serve the purpose of moralizing judgments. To think about a new historicism in literary texts, we should take some of the glimpses towards the understanding that writing of history is a matter of interpretations, not facts.

New historicism rejects both traditional historicism's marginalization of literature and new criticism's hall of fame of the literary text in a timeless dimension beyond history. For new historical critics, a literary text does not embody the author's intention as traditional literary historians asserted. But new critics believe in literary texts as self-sufficient art objects that transcend the time and place in which they are written. New historicists believe literary texts are cultural artifacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses. And also it tells about the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text is written. For New Historicism, the literary text and the historical situation from which it emerges and are equally important because text and context are mutually constitutive. For traditional

historical criticism, the historical accuracy (truth) of text must be judged by comparisons but for new historicism, historical accuracy is never a certainty.

Tyson, in *Critical Theory Today* views, "The focus is on how the literary text functions, itself, as a historical discourse interacting with other historical discourses: those circulating at the time and place in which the text is set, at the time the text was published, or at later points in the history of the text's reception" (292). And he further states:

For new historicism is concerned not with historical events as events but with the ways in which events are interpreted; with historical discourses, with ways of seeing the world and modes of meaning. Indeed historical events are viewed by new historicists not as facts to be documented but as 'texts' to be 'read' in order to help us speculate about how human cultures, at various historical 'moments,' have made sense of themselves and their world. We cannot really know exactly what happened at any given point in history, but we can know what the people involved believed happened—we can know from their own accounts the various ways in which they interpreted their experience—and we can interpret those interpretations. (292)

We have to think that not all new historical critics will interpret the same work in the same way even if they focus on the same theoretical concepts and have the same purpose. Our aim is to use new historicism to help enrich our reading of literature by helping us see how literary texts participate in the circulation of discourses or influences our interpretations of literary and non-literary texts.

Citing Laurence Lerner, Dennis Walder in his *Literature in the Modern World*, writes, "History is simply the result of the writing and (even more) ideology of the

historian" (437). This would mean that the past is unknowable, since what happened a moment ago belongs to the past, where extreme view is reasonable. And he further opines:

Enough of the past is lost, and looks in any case so different from different points of vantage, for history itself to be regarded as no more (and indeed, no less) than a present fiction which must be constructed obliquely or directly according to the often only half-apprehended order of contemporary needs and struggles. (437)

It means that it has become a commonplace to argue that history cannot give us direct access to objective facts. Since the ideology and verbal strategies of the historian will determine what he chooses to notice and how he describes it.

Collingwood says, "The world of fiction is not purely imaginary, but overlaps with the world of history"(qtd. in Walder 439). This would mean that in the case of realistic fiction, the overlap is especially large, and receivable. Also in the sense, literary texts work as a vehicle for the representation of history. His principal is that historical understanding depends on our capacity.

"New historicism might be defined as the history of stories and cultures tell about themselves. Or as a corrective to some traditional historical accounts, new historicism might be defined as the history of lies cultures tell themselves. Thus, there is no history, in the traditional sense of the term. There are only representations of history" (Tyson 285). This would mean that it tries to promote the development of and gain attention for the historicity of marginalized people. History is a text that is interpreted by different cultures to fit the ideological needs of their own power structures, which is a new historical concern. We know that history only in its textual

form-in the form of the documents, diaries, letters, speeches, news, articles and so on in a given time and place. He further states:

New historicism focuses on marginalized historical narratives as well as it involves what is called 'thick description', a term borrowed from anthropology. Thick description attempts [...] those meaning. Thick description is not a search for facts but a search for meanings; it focuses on the personal side of history, i.e. the history of family dynamics of leisure activities, of sexual practices, of childrearing customs as much as or more than on such traditional historical topics as military campaigns and the passage of laws. (285)

It marks that history is a matter of interpretations, not facts, and that interpretation always occurs within a framework of social conventions. New historicism brings issues concerned with private life into the foreground of historical enquiry.

Foucault's notions of 'power' and 'discourse' are particularly determining to develop a critical approach to literature known as 'New Historicism' in the early 1980s. These literary critics, new historicists like Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, Hayden White, Louis Tyson, Laurence Lerner, Collingwood and others are more interested in the relationship between history and literature. They try to take apart the nexus between literature and history extended by new critics and structuralists. As with old historicism, new historicists argue that we cannot know texts in isolation of from their historical context. But unlike old historicists, new historicists insist that an interpretation is subjectively filtered through one's own set of historically condition viewpoints. Hence, there is no 'objective' history.

Montrose views that literature and history as fully interdependent. He states 'New historicism' has been constituted as an academic site of ideological struggle between repression and subversion. He argues:

All texts are embedded in specific historical social and material context. Literary texts too are the material products of specific historical conditions. Literary texts, therefore, must be treated along with its historical context. Likewise, by the textuality of history he means that access to a full and authentic past is never possible.

(Redrawing the Boundaries 410)

The key concern of new historicist critic is the 'historicity of texts' and the 'textuality of history'. He explains on what he means by the historicity of text and textuality of history. He says that by historicity of texts, mean to suggest the historical specificity, the social and material embedding, of all modes of writing.

Montrose emphasizes that literary texts act out the concerns of ruling class by reproducing and renewing the powerful discourses, which sustain the system. According to Montrose; "We live in history and that the form and pressure of history are made manifest in our subjective thoughts and action, in our beliefs and desires."

(Redrawing the Boundaries 394)

New historicism focuses not in history but in histories. New historicism, thus, is illustrated by; as Louis Montrose says, "A shift from history to histories"(411). This is to say that history is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events. New historicists assert that the historians like the authors of literary texts, possess a subjective view. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. They can no longer claim that their studies of the past are detached and objective. So, historians must therefore reveal the ways in which they know they have

been positioned. They also know by their own cultural experience to interpret history and the writing of history is a matter of interpretations, not facts.

Furthermore, all historical accounts are narratives and can literary critics to analyze narratives use analyzed using many of the tools. History is a matter of interpretations not facts that the interpretation always occurs within a framework of social conventions. The literary text represents the dominant ideas of a particular time by representing alternatives as threatening through which the power circulates in culture through exchange as a key role.

The most important reason is that new historicists believe in the impossibility of objective analysis. They live in society as human beings do. Their views of both current and past events are influenced in various conscious and unconscious ways. Historian may believe they are being objective, but their own views of what is right and wrong, important and unimportant, will strongly influence the ways in which they interpret events. The traditional view that history is progressive is based on the belief held in the past. For new historicists, history cannot be understood simply as a linear progression of events. So, history has not got any particular destination or goal.

Metahistory

The term 'Metahistory' has a wide range of meanings related with history. It especially examines the nature and condition of history. Metahistory means something like history about history. Meta, it's a Greek word-element and it means beyond or above which also signify a discourse, theory or field of inquiry one level above its object. "The aim of the historian is to explain the past by 'finding', identifying' or 'uncovering' the 'stories' that lie buried in chronicles; and that the difference between 'history' and 'fiction' resides in the fact that the historian 'finds' his stories, whereas the fiction writer 'invents' his. This conception of the historian's task,

however, obscures the extent to which 'invention' also plays a part in the historian's operations" (Walder 445). Hayden White remarks, "Metahistory has blurred the distinctions between history and fiction." (qtd. in Walder 445)

In every way a historian must use the narrative tactics in the construction of his story in a number of ways and other narrative tactics might be found, identified in the chronicle.

Dennis Walder, in his *Literature in the Modern World*, writes, "The world does not consist of independently existing objects, whose concrete features can be perceived clearly and individually, and whose nature can be classified accordingly." (437) He further states:

In fact, every perceiver's method of perceiving can be shown to contain an inherent bias, which affects what is perceived to a significant degree. A wholly objective perception of individual entities is therefore not possible: any observer is bound to create something of what he observes. Accordingly, the relationship between observer and observed achieves a kind of primacy, It becomes the only thing that can be observed. (437)

After asserting the above-mentioned quotations mean to say that unmediated perception of objects is impossible. It also conveys that no perception of object is possible. If perception is not wholly objective, it also does not follow subjective. So, it means that it is an interaction between the external world and our method of perceiving.

To blur the demarcation between history and fiction, Laurence Lerner tries to explain the relation between text and context. He remarks, "Any text can be related to at least three contexts, its ideology, its strategies of writing, and social reality. To

eliminate any of these completely is a dogmatic over simplification, and a total rejection of positivism would be as naive- and as fanatical - as its total acceptance." (qtd. in Walder 438)

White charges, the discipline of history as it developed in nineteenth century were "based on dangerous misrepresentation, an untruth of projecting order, where none is found"(qtd. in Kansteiner 283). Therefore, he urges historians to recognize the sublimity of reality in order to induce a shift in emphasis on a factual basis of historiography to the conceptual and political implications of the structural format of representations.

White views, "History as a narrative constructions or stories"(qtd. in Tyson 284). He is also interested in the way in which historiography aspires to the condition of science by presenting a third person narrative. Historiography gathers its authority by seeming to dispense with authorial voice, by simulating scientific discourses. His essay sets out to show that real events never tell their own stories and that history is always process of desire through manipulation of voice and temporarily.

A key assumption that, according to White, has sustained historical inquiry is the belief that history and literature are two distinct, diametrically opposed, activities, a presupposition shared by practitioners in both disciplines. On the contrary, White argues that history is like a literature and is a verbal structure and the historian, first and foremost, is writers, the tools that served literary critics, the tools that compose the linguistic and rhetorical structures of a text, serve the historians as well.

Foucault and History

Michel Foucault, one of the major Poststructuralists, concerns with the present as a critical one. He wants to open up the possibility of changing the historical

systems and inventing new forms of thought and action. Foucault in Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn's *Redrawing the Boundaries*, remarks:

[p]ower's condition of possibility [...] must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate; it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. (403)

For Foucault, power is never monolithic; and power relations always involve multiple sites not only of power but also of resistance. He also says that forms of power do not passively shape us. Power always involves a relation of struggle, in which some try to direct the activities of others. He further elaborates:

The strictly relational character of power relationships [...] depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations [...]. Resistance can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. But this does not mean that they are only a reaction or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat [...]. The points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities [...]. It is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships. (403-04)

Foucault means to say that the texts cannot be free from its social and political sphere of the time. Thus Foucault tends to make a bridge between the text and the context.

The research explores how Foucault influences the new historicist's idea of textualization of history and historicization of text.

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche states that ultimately man finds in things nothing but what he himself has imported into them. All knowledge is an expression of the 'will to power'. This means that we cannot speak of any absolute truths or of objective knowledge.

Conceivably, the most direct action in which Michel Foucault influences new historicism was that his contextualizations were 'super structural'. Even the realm of economics like history itself, was seen as a discourse, as textual. The new historicist tends to view literature as one discourse among many cultural discourses. Nietzsche taught Foucault that one could write a genealogical history of unconventional topics such as madness, sexuality and the subject matters, which is located their emergence within sites of domination. Nietzsche demonstrates that the will to truth and knowledge is in dissociable from the will to power. Foucault develops these claims in his critique of liberal humanism, the human sciences, and in his later work on ethics. He does accept Nietzsche's claims that systematizing methods produce reductive social and historical analyses and that knowledge is perspectival in nature, requiring multiple viewpoints to interpret a heterogeneous reality.

Foucault takes a historian to be 'embedded' in the social practices. It is, by this logic, clear that history is also written from the perspective of the historian. Hazard Adams, in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, says, "Foucault's influence in a literary theory has been strong among revisionist literary historian known as 'New Historicists' who study the culmination of power through society and the literary texts that are part of

it" (1134). The position a historian occupies in the society determines the history. The way he goes inside the forms of power structures and social practices determine his description of history.

Foucault does not begin his career as philosopher with a philosophy of genealogy, but with that of archaeology. Quoting Foucault, Beerendra Pandey, in his *Intellectual History Reader: A Critical Introduction*, defines, "Archaeology as the science of the archive, refers to a type of historical analysis that eschews teleology and traditional assumptions associated with the humanist subject since Kant." (9) He further opines:

The word "archaeology," which first appeared in his complimentary thesis in the enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant, tries to discover the beginnings or roots of certain fundamental concepts of Western culture such as rationality, knowledge, and power, especially in terms of the way these ideas structure society and the perception of human relationships. (9)

Foucault says, "[d]evotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and unending discussions, and their spirit of competition-the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reasons"(qtd. in Pandey 83-84). In this view, Foucault has some similarity with Derrida because both of them say that a subject who considers may not know his own limitations.

In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault takes the concept of truth and power as described by Nietzsche in his idea of genealogy, has three modalities of history. First, he presents his arguments supporting his break with archaeology. Secondly, he enlarges the span of genealogy. And thirdly, he evaluates the role of the

historian. In arguments that support his break away from archaeology, Foucault describes genealogy as a diachronic method and unlike archaeology, which searches to discover the layer of civilization.

Genealogy analyzes literary, biological, religious and ethical bodies of knowledge and it does not seek to find a truth to history. It does not oppose itself to history as the superior and thoughtful look of the philosopher but it does search for 'origin'. Regarding his movement towards genealogy, Foucault states, "The search for descent is not the erecting of foundation: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself" (86). He further puts:

Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations - or conversely, the complete reversals - the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. This is undoubtedly why every origin of morality from the moment it stops being pious- and *Herkunft* can never be - has value as a critique. (86-87)

For Foucault, "The role of genealogy is to record its history: the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events on the stage of historical process" (91). So, the humanity

does not gradually progress from struggle, but it has own history to place. Humanity exists in a system of rules but it survives with the strong decision making of power.

He further states:

The nature of these rules allows violence to be inflicted on violence and the resurgence of new forces that are sufficiently strong to dominate those in power. Rules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalized; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they will make it function so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules. (91)

According to new historicists, power does not derive only from the top of the political and socio economic structure. According to French philosopher Michel Foucault says, "Whose ideas have strongly influenced the development of new historicism, power circulates in all directions, to and from all social levels, at all times" (280). He further puts:

The vehicle by which power circulates is a never - ending proliferation of exchange: the exchange of material goods through such practices as buying and selling, bartering, gambling, taxation, charity, and various forms of theft; the exchange of people through such institutions as marriage, adoption, kidnapping, and slavery; and the exchange of ideas through the various discourses a culture produces. (281)

Foucault uses up much of his time tracing the way of truth and power as they intermingle with the history of human experience. The overall capacity of power rises with each individual occupied in the play. The society is a massive web, and much of the power tends to be concentrated towards the especially group like capitalist or echelons. Foucault sees every action and every historical event as an exercise in the exchange of power. Power flows simultaneously in different directions and different volumes according to the various terms of power relations in the network of power exchange.

Concerning power and truth, Foucault states, Now I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientific truth and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effect of truths are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false (qtd. in Adams 1134). He further remarks:

In defining the effects of the power as repression, one adopts purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which says no power is taken above all as carrying the force of a prohibition [...] what makes power hold good, what makes it accepted is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. (1139)

According to Foucault, every discourse is concerned in power. Again, he views that discourses are embedded in social institutions and that social and political power run through discourse. Discourse is the ordering power that presides over every institution. Hence, the discourse is inseparable from power or it means of achieving power. For Foucault, truth is not outside power. It is rather a thing of this world,

which is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints in a society. So each society has its own regime of truth. Foucault argues, "Truth is linked in a circular relation with system of power which produces and sustains it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it"(qtd. in Adams 1145). Thus, Foucault sees truth as a product of relations of power and it changes as system changes. Both literature and history are narratives and they are in the form of discourses. They are intertwined in the power relations of their time. So, all the texts, including history and literature are simply the discourses, which search for the power of ruling class- the power to govern and control.

In many western societies today, 'truth' is seen as the product of science or scientific methods. Foucault by challenging the status not of the truths generated by sciences but of the conditions necessary for their production. He is interested only in the truths generated by much less credible systems of knowledge. The systems of knowledge Foucault scrutinizes imply immediate and solid connections to social relations: economics, medicine, and the human sciences.

Foucault's idea of counter-history avoids primacy to the ideas of the individual and of subjectivity. Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, in *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and discourse*, observe, "Foucault thought of the human subject itself as an effect, to some extent, subjection. Subjection refers to particular, historically located disciplinary processes and the concepts, which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects and which constrain us from thinking otherwise." (3)

In traditional sense, 'discourse' is frequently taken to mean human conversation but empirical approaches to discourse in terms of knowledge. For Foucault, knowledge is much more a matter of social, historical, and political

conditions under which, for example, statements come to count as true or false.

Among critical theorist like Foucault, 'discourse' refers not to language or social interaction but relatively well bounded areas of social knowledge. For them discourse enables writing, speaking and thinking within such specific historical limits.

A discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place. It expresses a particular way of understanding human experience. From a new historical perspective, no discourse by itself can effectively explain the complex cultural dynamics of social power. There is no monolithic or universal explanation of history. There is only a dynamic interplay among discourses, where they are always in a state of flux, overlapping and competing with one another. In this manner, no discourse is permanent.

History is important because it helps people to know themselves. It tells them who they were and who they are. It is the collective memory of humanity that situates them in their time and place. It also provides newcomers with some understanding of the society in which they have chosen to live. Of course, the collective memory undergoes constant revision, restructuring, and rewriting, but whatever its form it reveals anew to each generation a common fund of knowledge, traditions, values, and ideas that help to explain our existence and the mistakes and successes. In this sense, new historicism may be looked upon as an extension of every critical faculty. So, this present research will forecast the light on Maugham's *Christmas Holiday* as a new historical text. This research will be moved forward with the help of new historicism because this long discussion on new historicism provides us a baseline to interpret *Christmas Holiday* as a new historical text.

CHAPTER III

Critique of History in *Christmas Holiday*

William Somerset Maugham's *Christmas Holiday* (1939) was published during the interwar period. Maugham's *Christmas Holiday* is a literary representation of historical consciousness of the contemporary interwar era between World War I and II. The production of the historical accounts is the discursive narrativization of events. The narrativization of history are structured or textured like what is called literature. In *Christmas Holiday*, the prose is beginning to bend into full-fledged historical fiction, history imagined into fiction. Thematically, *Christmas Holiday* can be said as socio-political novel. In this novel, central character, Simon represents the tyrannical leaders of the contemporary era. Maugham has given us Simon as a cold, ruthless fellow with anti-human and totalitarian ideology. He is the fictional manifestation of the dictator of the age.

Maugham, in *Christmas Holiday*, critiques the contemporary European society and politics for encouraging the totalitarian ideology that was leading Europe towards the impending disaster threatening its political stability. It presents the existing societal lifestyle of the people like Simon falling under the impression of the tyrannical ideology and negligence of the Europeans towards the knocking political disaster and economic depression at the door. The religions, politics, institutionalization of dogmas and beliefs, various ideologies like aggressive nationalism, the declining norms and values of the people, the brewing hostilities between the idealists themselves holding different ideologies like fascism, nazism, nationalism, socialism in the society are depicted in the novel that are responsible for the disastrous sociopolitical changes in Europe.

The new leadership upholding these tyrannical ideologies, insensible, critical, and aloof kind of traits and established principles represents the dictators of the age

who are dangerous to the society. Simon is portrayed as the ideological construct of these tyrannists who are responsible for bringing the misfortune in Europe. He utters: "Remember that a dictator can do all sort of things for the benefit of the people that democracy is prevented from doing because it has to be consider vested interests, jealousies, personal ambitions, and so he has got an unparallel opportunity to alleviate the lot of the masses." (264)

From the above expressions, we can easily know that he upholds nationalistic ideology, an anti liberal and anti conservative and anti rational fascist ideology. It proves that he favors the charismatic politics centered on the figure of leader.

As new historicist argues that any knowledge of the past is mediated by texts, literary texts in this sense, work as a vehicle for the representation of history. Thus history is in many respects textual. There can be no knowledge of the past without interpretations. The world of the fiction is not purely imaginary, but overlaps with the world of history. So, it is not possible to deal a text in isolation from its historical context, therefore we have to find the historical, cultural, social and political condition of its production, its meanings, and its effects and also of its critical interpretations and evaluations. Thus Maugham's novel *Christmas Holiday* helps to unravel those ideologies of the age, which represents it. History is like fiction where the writer or historian's imagination plays an important role. That means history is also imaginative like fiction. So, history and fiction are similar. In this sense, this novel *Christmas Holiday* is a work of fiction and at the same time a record of European history and somewhat it also interprets history of Russia. Thus, Maugham blended both history and fiction in *Christmas Holiday*.

As the key concern of new historicist critics is 'the historicity of the texts' and 'textuality of history.' All texts are embedded in specific, historical, social and

material contexts. Literary texts too are the materials products of specific historical conditions. Literary texts therefore must be treated along with its historical contexts. Likewise by the textuality of history, they mean that access to a full and authentic past is never possible. Thus the study of past is detached and objective. But the text cannot be free from social and political sphere of an era.

Maugham criticizes contemporary history of that era. One of the main characters, Simon is presented as a person who harbors a tyrannical ideology inside him. The more his friend Charley want to become friendly and kind to him, the more rude he becomes, in course of the five days holiday, Charley goes to spend in Paris. Simon exercises to make himself detached of the sentiments, of people, of love, of kindness, pity and all human feelings like those. He had nurtured a secular ideology too. He even does not sound like a communist or socialist of contemporary Europe. His thought takes him far beyond this limit. He entertains fascist like totalitarian ideology in his speeches and conduct. He smells like a dictator. In his appearance, he has a sort of a tortured beauty. He is a cold, ruthless, cynical, critical, aloof, indifferent, unscrupulous, and incapable of gratitude. In contrast, Charley is portrayed as a handsome dashing boy with a disposition of sweetness. Charley is the representation of wealthy Europeans who are unaware and careless of the things around them. They seem to be well satisfied and engaged in themselves. Maugham has narrated in the novel; Charley was not interested in politics. Though like his father of liberal views, with mildly socialistic tendencies so long as they were not carried beyond the limits of prudence, by which, though he did not know it, he meant so long as they did not interfere with his comfort and his income, he was quite prepared to leave the affairs of the country to those, whose business it was to deal with them.

(206)

The traits of Charley reflect the lifestyle of the unconcerned Europeans of that contemporary era about the society and politics. These English seems to be living a decent comfortable life, disinterested of social phenomenon, politics and society.

Simon represents the tyrannical leaders of the contemporary era, who are training themselves for the upcoming war, who are responsible for the disaster that was threatening the world. Simon is portrayed as a cold, ruthless fellow with anti-human, totalitarian ideology. He is completely in favour of dictatorship- he negates even communism, socialism. He thinks the promise of democracy; equality, freedom, and even communism are mere illusions. He instead wants to misuse these words, he says these are the words to control and dominate the people abused by the brainy, tricky and witty dictators. He advocates for a master, a ruler, and a dictator. He does not believe in democracy by people. He says that democracy is a mob- rule by the empty heads. He talks like a dictator. He talks about the illusion of equality, illusion of liberty an illusion of fraternity. He opines, "The dictators of our own day have made mistakes and we can learn by their errors. They have forgotten Machiavelli's dictum that you can enslave the people politically, if you leave their private lives free. I should give people the illusion of liberty by allowing them as much personal freedom as is compatible with the safety of the state [...]. And since they would all be brothers under one yoke they would even have the illusion of fraternity." (264)

Let's initiate by examining the ways in which *Christmas Holiday* reveals the major tenets of the discourse of the conditions of the world through the novel. In 1939, when this novel was published, the world had suffered a huge economic depression and Europe was on the threshold of World War II. In *Christmas Holiday*, he shows that he is aware of the nature of dictator or dictatorship and of threatening economic and social revolutions in the world. And thus he critiques the contemporary

European society and politics for encouraging the totalitarian ideology. The characters in the novel; Simon, Charley, Lydia, Robert Berger go through different circumstances and each of them succumbs particular ideology and thoughts of their own which represents the age. Simon develops a lust for power like a dictator; Charley Mason, encounter himself with Simon and Lydia, which happens to be an unhappy prelude to the good time he had promised himself. Lydia is a wife of the murderer Robert Berger, and she is working as a prostitute with the preposterous belief that she can expiate her husband's crime. Maugham has well portrayed the heterogeneity of mankind.

The story begins when Charley Mason, a middle class college student from England is given a holiday in Paris by his father during Christmas time. There he looks up his philosophically engrossed childhood friend, Simon. Simon has been living a Spartan lifestyle, filling his head with Fascist political ideology. No matter how friendly Charley tries to be, Simon pushes him away in a misguided attempt to make himself hard. There are many interactions between them. In Paris, Charley undergoes a rite of passage common to the youth of earlier time. He visits to brothel where he meets Lydia, a Russian prostitute who has her own story. She confesses him in the brothel; she is actually expiating the sin of murder committed by her husband (Robert Berger) through selling her body to the despised and despising men. Lydia has her dramatic life-story, which captivates and eventually opens Charley's naive and sleepy eyes to the complexities of the world and especially women. Charley befriends her instead of using her for pleasure as Simon has intended, and Charley spend his vacation time getting to know her. Most of the characters in the novel seem so tragic. This novel was written in the late 1930's, thus portrays the tense build up to World War II, and the brewing hostility of zealous fascists. Maugham certainly came across

the people seduced by fascist ideology at that time, and Simon is the fictional incarnation of these uncompromising dogmatists.

Thus, Maugham's *Christmas Holiday* portrays the groups of diverse characters in such a way, that they give a sense of historical consciousness that represent the age. Maugham seems to be very successful in interpreting the characters and events in a lucid way, which represents the voice of age. Maugham rewrites the history of the interwar period through the multiple voices of diverse characters like Simon having a self-fascinated, insensible, harsh, intoxicated, cold, ruthless dictator like persona; Robert Berger, a criminal, smuggler and a thief; Lydia as the representation of the pathetic figure, a Russian; Charley, a carefree, innocent boy unaware of the environment around living in Europe. Through them, Maugham criticizes the contemporary history of that era. His novel analyzes the incidents and gives detailed analysis of twentieth century, Europe. Maugham presents the history of people, their lifestyle, ideology, and their problems during the contemporary period. His version of history is a genealogical one.

Maugham has presented Simon as the incarnation of the dictator of the age. Simon is completely in the favor of a dictator, and his philosophy sounds completely anti-democratic in these expressions, "A dictator can satisfy them by a stroke of the pen. Under present conditions a dictator with planes to drop bombs and armored cars to fire machine guns can quell any revolt." (263) He speaks like a dictator or it means that he bores very dangerous ideologies inside him. Simon thinks that he can make revolution in the country under the muzzle of gun, by exercising power. He fantasizes of such a dictator who possesses the power, by which he can act upon anybody. In this issue, Simon answers Charley, "Because he is stronger, because he has power, what

he says right is right and what he says is good is good." (263) Thus he talks of imposing power to gain control and take authority.

Simon fancies for a master, a leader, not by the people and for the people but for the one over whom he actually could rule for. A clear expression of nationalist ideology can be sensed as being represented in the novel when he answers Charley for a question, "And who, pray, is to choose his master?" (265) Then Simon replies:

Nobody. He is the eluctable product of circumstances. He rises to the top because he has the instinct to lead. He has the will to power. He has audacity and enthusiasm, ability, industry and energy. He fears nothing because to him danger is the salt of life [...]. A dictator must have a mystic appeal so that he excites his followers to a religious frenzy. He must have magnetism, which makes it a privilege for them to lay down their lives for him [...]. I could make people fear me; I could never make them love me. (265)

Simon shows a strong willingness for a master to rule the country, the people, and the authority. Simon imagines of the qualities that a dictator must possess.

In *Christmas Holiday*, Simon harbours a tyrannic and despotic idealism inside him. It seems that he nestles this type of ideology from the childhood, which had made him from a sardonic, aloof, unhappy child to a cold, despotic, insensitive adult. He nurtures, nourishes the coldest of the inhuman, totalitarian ideology in his mind. It has made him devoid of human emotions; sentiments and needs like love, sympathy, charity, fraternity, and kindness surround him. He rather has made his own ideology over these things. He calls Charley a sentimental fool when he hears from Charley about fraternity and democracy.

Simon denies the friendship of Charley too. He denies everything like that. He is making his own propaganda and indoctrination as thinking himself as a despot. It seems that Simon struggles to expel goodness. His love for Charley is one of the things he is seeking to turn out of his life. Simon says, "That's why one should only have acquaintances and never make friends"(259). The essence of man is egoism. .

As Fascist blames the Jews in Germany for the misfortune in the country, we can also see that he represents the Fascist who is also unsatisfied with his the people, with the world and blames the education, laws, news agencies and charitable organizations of the country. Simon thinks of institutionalizing these organizations. He seems to be fed up with the hypo critic and shameless nature of the man with the lies and hypocrisies they make in the society. He is pessimistic about the world around him, who runs after position, money, power and do everything, anything, hypocrisy, accept humiliation, do flattery and so on. He hates the people. It seems that he is unsatisfied with everything around him and to have his own ideological belief. He says, "I have spent in the news world. Vain, petty, unscrupulous, avaricious, double-faced and abject, they'll betray one another, not even for their own advantage, but from sheer malice. Men are vile. Cowards and hypocrites. I loathe them." (259-60)

Simon expresses his ideology deliberately in the issue on the common human sentiments and rights like pity, equality, charity, liberty, love and pleasure. He has a pathetic view about human sentiments like pity and needs like equality. He has got problem with these word. He has a very different ideology from a normal person. There are long dialogues between Charley and Simon in the novel, which speaks their own view about democracy, liberty, fraternity, pity, egoism, and communism. Simon dismisses ironical remark about democracy and he opines: Democracy is moonshine.

It is an unrealizable ideal, which the propagandist dangles before the masses as you dangle a carrot before a donkey [...]. Those great watchwords of the nineteenth century, liberty, equality, and fraternity are pure, hokum. (258)

He makes rather sarcastic remarks over liberty too. "Liberty? The masses of men don't need liberty? Do not know what to do with it when they got it [...] only liberty worth anything is the liberty to do right, and right is decided by might. Right is an idea occasioned by public opinion and prescribed by law, but public opinion is created by those who have power to enforce their point of view, and the only sanction of the law is the might behind it." (258)

Simon opinions about friendship, "You would be aghast if you did not realize that that was his nature and it was just as stupid to condemn him as to condemn the wolf because he ravens of the cobra because he strikes. For the essence of man is egoism. Egoism is at once his strength and his weakness." (259) He further opines:

Pity? Pity is womanish. Pity is what the beggar entreats of you because he hasn't the guts, the industry and the brains to make a decent living. Pity is the flattery the failure craves so that he may preserve his self-esteem. Pity is the cheap blackmail that the prosperous pay to the down and out so that they may enjoy their own prosperity with a better conscience. (260)

About equality Simon views, "Equality is the greatest nonsense that's ever muddled the intelligence of the human race [...]. Men are born unequal; different in character, in vitality, in brain; and no equality of opportunity can offset that [...]. And it's that natural inequality of man that knocks the bottom out of democracy." (259) He further puts:

What a stupid farce it is to govern a country by the counting of millions of empty heads. In the first place they do not know, what is good for them and in the second, they have not the capacity to get the good they want [...]. A democracy is ruled by words, and the orator seldom has brains, and if he has, he has not time to use them, since all his energy has to be given to cajoling the fools on whose votes he depends. Democracy has had a hundred years' trial: theoretically it was always absurd, and now we know that practically it is a wash out.

(260-61)

Simon's denial of anything like love, pleasure; presents his character adopting the satanic asceticism, physical and spiritually anti religious. His behavior shows him as if he is trying to expel goodness as it is inflicting him and giving him pain. He rejoices the hunger, celebrates unfriendliness. His love for Charley is one of the things he is seeking to turn out of his life. And these are the traits that the leaders used to bear in the contemporary period.

Maugham presents the story of Simon, an orphan child, and with his coldness of character, which grows in time, and he becomes a cold, unfriendly person with secularist ideology harrowing all the time in his mind. At first, Maugham presents him as a little boy, the best friend of Charley. Then he becomes a journalist. Simon has had a very unhappy upbringing. Charley was the sole being who had given him affection, and he had returned him fully. Now the perverse conditions of his childhood have reasserted their importance. Simon had developed a lust for power, which takes the secret police under the political regime, which he foresees in England- a regime to be established by communists, but in Simon's eyes bereft of all

features except power. Charley asks Simon, "And is that part you wish to play if ever revolution comes to England?"(268)

Simon had sowed inside him that of beastly instinct, instinct for power, for his mad ideology, that he nurtured, nourished and grown inside him that has made him a maniac, a persona like that of a dictator. He says, "To fulfill myself. To satisfy my creative instinct. To exercise the capacities that nature has endowed." (269)

Simon's speech truly manifests the sense of historical consciousness of the period when talks about Dzerjinsky, a tyrant of Russia, and imagines himself to follow Dzerjinsky's idea. Dzerjinsky wants nothing for himself, though he was a ruler and signed thousands of death warrants, during Russian revolution in the back of Lenin. Simon says about Dzerjinsky, "He applied for the past that gave him control of the polices, and organized by Cheka. He made it into an instrument of repression that acted with the precision of a perfect machine. He let neither love nor hate interfere with his duty." (267) Simon also fancies same ideology for himself. He is more crazy and more dangerous. He has his dangerous expressions for his dear friend Charley, "It is just possible that I would be doing the country a service if I strangled you here and now. I could, you know." (268)

There are many accounts in the novel, where Maugham has successfully represented the sense of the age. Maugham writes about the extraordinary life style of Simon, like working sixteen hours a day, the portrayal of the discomfort of his surrounding, his training to eat only one meal at a day as he is making himself independent of circumstances and as if he is preparing himself the role he expected one day to be called upon to play. Lydia says about Simon, "He knows that the man who is master of the police is the master of the country."(267)

One thing is certain. Simon has a concern about revolution, the war, politics, and all the time in his mind. He has curiosity and concern about the French and Russian revolution about Hungary, Italy, and Germany and about Bela Kun's revolution. He has a very cunning view for the proletariat too. He further remarks:

I have studied the French Revolution and the Commune. The Russians did too and they learnt a lot from them, but we have got the advantage now that we can profit by the lessons we have learnt from subsequent events. They made a bad mess of things in Hungary, but they made a pretty good job of it in Russia and they didn't do so badly either in Italy or in Germany. If we have got any sense we ought to be able to emulate their success, but avoid their mistakes. Bela Kun's revolution failed because people were hungry. (257)

By his speech, he seems totally tyrannical, he seems that he is not in favour of democracy either and opines, "That incidentally is why power, which the proletariat thought to seize by making the revolution, must always elude their grasp and fall into the hands of a small body of intelligent leaders. The people are incapable of governing themselves. The proletariats are slaves and slaves need master" (258).

Maugham is speaking the words of the tyrants of the contemporary period through the mouth of Simon. Charley says Simon; "You would hardly describe yourself any longer as a good democrat, and I take it." (258)

There is no doubt that defeat and economic distress that people suffered consequently after the war is reflected through this novel. Charley and Simon talk about economic depression, unemployment, and the consequences that led to the defeat in war. Simon does not believe in liberty and equality. He believes in leader, a political master who rules over the whole nation, not democracy. He remarks:

But the mob, which is the instrument of the revolutionary leaders, is a thing not of reason but of instinct, it is amenable to hypnotic suggestion and you can rouse it to frenzy by catchwords, it is an entity, and so is indifferent to the death in its ranks so such as fall; it knows neither pity and mercy. It rejoices in destruction because in destruction it becomes conscious of its own power. There is bound to destruction in a revolution and there is bound to be killing. (262)

For about this above- mentioned matter Simon's further says, "Democracy has attached an absurd importance to human life. Morally man is worthless and it is no less to suppress him. Biologically he is of no consequences, there's no more reason why it should shock you to kill a man than to swat a fly." (262-63)

Simon celebrates power. He does not belief in anything else. He has belief in one thing that is Power, wholly. He has made power, his religion, his ideology, his belief, his motif and his everything. He neither needs friendship nor pity, charity- nothing. What he needs solely is power. He is opinionated about giving interest to Robert Berger, the murderer and states, "I was interested in him because he killed, nor for any sordid motive, not for money, nor jealousy, but to prove himself and affirm his power" (263). By these crazy fanciful ideas, he sounds as though he is crazy, frantic, and insensible. He opines:

Communism? Who talked of communism? Every one knows now the communism is a wash out. It was the dream of impractical idealists who knew nothing of the realities of life [...]. Throughout the history of the world there have always been exploiters and exploited. There always will be. And it's right that it should be so because the great

masses of men are made by nature to be slaves; they are unfit to control themselves, and for their own good need masters. (263)

Lydia is opinionated about Simon and says, "He will either become a dangerous agitator or he will commit suicide." (271)

There are many anti- religious, or secular themes in this novel too in the dialogues of Simon and Lydia. Simon views about Christianity, "But Christianity was the religion of slaves" (48). He further opines:

It offered the weary and the heavy-laden heaven to compensate them in the future for their misery in this world and the opiate of love to enable them to bear it in the present. And like every drug it enervated and destroyed those who became subject to it. For two thousand years it suffocated us. It's weakened our wills and lessened our courage. In this modern world we live in we know that almost every thing is more important to us than love; we know that the only soft and the stupid allow it to affect their actions, and yet we pay it a foolish lip- service. (48-49)

Lydia also harbors anti- Christian beliefs, though her case is different. She has a secular belief, as a Russian. She is in dilemma. In one hand she believes in sin, suffering, expiations, atonement. In other hand she says, "God? What has God to do with it? Do you suppose I can look at the misery in which the vast majority of the people live in the world and believe in God? Do you suppose I believe in God who let the Bolsheviks kill my poor, simple father? Do you know what I think? I think God has been dead for millions upon millions of years" (148). It is not that she hasn't belief in God. But she is angry with God. As Charley opines, "Atonement, the sort of atonement you want to make, is meaningless if there's no God." (148) Maugham

portrays the secular characters because of the reason that he wants to show that because of the unfaith, fearless notion in people over God, the age gave birth to criminals like Berger, dictators, fascists and nazists. These people do not have fear of almighty God. Lydia has also expressed her indignation to the god and says, "I do not believe in the God of the Christians who gave his son in order to save mankind" (275). Lydia also believes in power not in God and she further opines:

I have an instinct that the power that rules us, human beings, animals and things, is a dark and cruel power and that everything has to be paid for, a power that demands an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and that though we may writhe and squirm we have to submit, for the power is ourselves. (275)

Those fearless kinds of traits in the characters have been also one of reason for pushing Europe towards the World War II. Maugham has very well sketched in the character, the heart of the age. Most of the characters in the novel rely over the things like on power, ideology, and tricks. As Patsy indignantly says, when she finds herself being tricked in the petty card game they play in the house. She says, "A trick? A trick? A trick can make all the difference in the world." (287)

In the novel, Maugham has talked a great deal about Russia, Russians, and the Revolution, the Bolsheviks revolution that speaks a lot about the age. There is an account in the novel where it is stated that Lydia, a Russian how she fled away from Russia with her parents to Finland, then London and finally to France in fear of Bolsheviks and Cheka and how his socialist cum professor father returned back to Russia and never comes back. Lydia struggles too much for existence. She undergoes many hardships. She tells about the identity crisis she faces and many other Russians after they come to France. She feels a very bitter nostalgia deep inside her. She

opines, "I am a Russian and all I know of Russia is what I have read. I yearn for the broad fields of golden corn and the forests of silver beech that I've read of in books and though I try and try, I cannot see them with my mind's eye [...]. I am just as much a foreigner to my own people as I am to English and French. I am a stranger. I have no country. I have no home. I have no language. I belong nowhere. I am outcast." (69)

Maugham states about the revolution in Russia and the circumstances that the Russians had to go through. They were homeless, jobless, always in fear of the Bolsheviks. Russians used to hide things, money and jewels, so that they might save them from Bolsheviks. Englishmen usually used Russians for their purpose. There is a long account of Lydia's husband, a murderer, Robert Berger. Robert Berger is presented as a sort of man who steals for pleasure and fun. He represents one of those insensible, irresponsible characters that represent the age. He marries Lydia for love, but deceives her by hiding his true identity as a thief or smuggler and finally he murders Teddie Jordan, not for any clear reason. Much of the novel is taken up about the love affair between Lydia and Robert Berger, overtly consuming story.

Maugham has mentioned about two other characters Alexy and Evegenia, who are Russians and sufferers of wartime. The war proves to be very fatal to all people including Russians. The artifact reveals how the innocent Lydia, fall into prostitution, how a professional lawyer like Alexy turns into a jobless drunkard and so on. They have their bitterness how they are treated in a foreign country. Lydia expresses her annoyance, "You see everyone's sick of the Russians, they are sick of Russian restaurants and Russian orchestras. Alexy has not had job for four years. He is grown bitter and quarrelsome and he drinks." (71)

Lydia herself is an exceptional sufferer. Lydia is a sole representative of all the Russians who suffered from war. Lydia represents the sentiments of all Russians and

Maugham has presented her as a sentimental woman, a touchy, a softie but with her strong ideology and genuine prudence which according to her that she will expiate the sin of her husband by indulging herself in the dudgeon of brutality, contempt, humiliation, in suffering as being in the profession of a prostitute. She thinks it is the only way to purgate Robert from sin and as she loves Robert with all her heart. She thinks she has an equal share of her in love as well as in sin too. Lydia says, "Though I love Robert with all my heart, with all my soul, I know that he sinned. I felt that the only way I could serve Robert now was by submitting to a degradation that was the most horrible I could think of." She further opines:

There was no chance there that I should feel anything but hatred and contempt for the beasts who bought my body. There my humiliation is like a festering wound that nothing can heal. The brutal indecency of the clothes I have to wear is a shame that no habit can dull. I welcome the suffering. I welcome the contempt these men have for the instrument of their lust. I welcome their brutality, I am in hell as Robert is in hell and my suffering joins with his, and it may be that my suffering makes it more easy for him to bear his. (147-48)

Lydia believes that suffering must pay sin. As she loves Robert Berger she opines, "I should be as vile as his crime was if I hesitated to share his suffering. I know that my suffering as well as his is necessary to expiate his sin" (148). Maugham presents Lydia as fanciful, stubborn, with her own belief, who has her own fanciful ideology about sin, about life, about God and she is determined about her ideas about it.

Lydia's opinion about Simon is not good. She abhors him. She thinks him as cold, calculating and inhuman. Her opinion to him is never wrong, as he is an uncompromising idealist. He is hard and impervious who has filled his mind with

fascist political ideology. Simon is a repulsive man who consequently is exercising to expel love, friendship, comfort, and goodness from his life. He takes woman as an instrument not from his emotional motif. He makes a very horrible expression about woman, sex and pleasure and remarks:

When I find that my appetite is interfering with my work. I have a woman just as when I am constipated I take a purge. It may be an instinct that one cannot suppress, but the man's a pitiful fool who allows it to divert him from his chosen path. I am not afraid of it any more [...]. In a few years, I shall be entirely free from its temptation.

(46)

He is preventing himself from falling in love. He says in reply to his friend Charley about the opinion of falling in love. "I should tear it out of my heart, as I would wrench out of my mouth a rotten tooth." (47)

In *Christmas Holiday*, Maugham's description of the place where Simon live, his Spartan lifestyle indulging his food habit that he has made, his daily routine of his work time schedule portrays Simon's image as that of a soldier who is trained to get ready for the possible war ahead. Simon says Charley, "When you work from twelve to sixteen hours a day and sleep on an average six, when you content yourself with one meal a day, much as it may surprise you, your desires are much attenuated." (46)

We find a kind of satanic asceticism in Simon as representing the lifestyles of dictators in the way he lives. When Charley goes to Simon's house. Charley finds the house in which he lived was tall and dingy, the wood needed to be painted. There was a stink of fug, food and the human body. The staircase that led to Simon's floor was smelling of stale urine and the room when he entered was icy, with nothing inside but a stove in it, a working table with papers, an armchair with a brown spring where

Simon was sitting, the walls of the studio which terribly needed a painting they looked as though they had not been painted for years, a narrow iron bed, a second hand large dining table, a disk chair, some book shelves with books in them, two or three kitchen chairs piled up with books and a strip of worn carpet by the bed. There was not anything inside that gave even a sign of coziness and pleasure. He led an extraordinary life. The condition and discomfort of his surrounding is indescribable. The plainness, the starkness, the somberness of the environment reveals that as if he is absorbed in himself and is making himself strong for the challenge he is ready to face.

Simon remarks:

It is a matter of will. I have got to train myself so that I am indifferent to insult, neglect, and ridicule. I have got to acquire a spiritual aloofness so complete that if they put me in prison. I shall feel myself as free as a bird in the air. I have got to make myself so strong that when I make mistakes I am unshaken, but profit by them to act rightly. I have got to make myself so hard that not only I can resist the temptation to be pitiful, but also I do not even feel pity. I have got to wring out of my heart the possibility of love. (36)

In Vienna, as an exercise in self-denial, he lived for a month on bread and milk. It wasn't even a hardship for Simon. He has trained to do with one meal a day. It is obvious that he represents the tyrannist who is preparing himself for a big war. It is clear about his dangerous ideas that he is making in his mind by this statement, "Who can achieve mastery over others unless he first achieves mastery over himself?" (34) He is training himself to rule, to get control over everybody primarily, gaining control over himself.

His exercise of self-denial, his repulsion toward love, friendship, emotions, his doubtful reluctance towards the education of the state, his exceptional ideology proves him as a revolt. As a fascist idealist, who demands or wants to impose his own rules and his own tyranny over the whole world, Simon represents the tyrannist of the age. Thus, Maugham is trying to represent the voice of age, the ideology, the motif, the air of the age. "I am going to take myself as a trainer takes an athlete to make a champion of him."(34) Simon criticizes the conventional educational institutions, schools and universities and its values. He states:

I am going to spend them in acquiring the education I never got at the stupid school, we both went to or in that suburban cemetery they call the University of Cambridge. But it is not only knowledge of men and books that I want to acquire; that is only an instrument; I want to acquire something much harder to come by and more important will: an unconquerable will. (33)

Simon runs away from any type of emotional relationship as an extremist. He says to his dear friend Charley, "You are the only person I have ever cared for in the world, Charley. I shall not rest till I know in my bones that if it were necessary to put you against a wall and shoot you with my own hands. I could do it without a moment's hesitation and without a moment's regret."(36) He sounds too rude and pathetic when he says this to his friend Charley, who is too good for him, instead of his behaviour.

There is a small but important event in the novel mentioning of a watch as a birthday gift that Charley gives to Simon when they depart finally with each other during the five days stay at Paris in Christmas Holiday. This watch brings an acute sense of the similar account of history in our mind that the powerful tyrannist, Hitler used to carry with him, the watch with a ring, which hung on the_key chain of Hitler.

So, Maugham in his novel gives a pre- posturous sense of the great havoc that the age was yet to bring. Maugham has very well written the contemporary age in his novel, *Christmas Holiday*, the actors, the characters that represented the age from the tyrannist like Simon and the innocent Charley, with his naive and sleepy eyes to the complexities of the world. Maugham has portrayed every possible character that represents the age from Russian Lydia; murderer, a convict Robert Berger; the refugees (Russians) like Ewegenia and Alexy, the prisoners; the carefree Europeans like Charley and his parents to cold, plausible tyrannist Simon. The novel uproars that the interwar period and Europe as a whole. The comparison and contrast between the characters are beautifully portrayed in the novel to give clear cut ideology of the age. The type of ideology that shelters in the mind of the character like Simon is wholly the cause that was leading Europe towards the impending disaster threatening its political stability.

Christmas Holiday was Maugham's comment on the approaching end of the between the wars era. He sense that the established order in Europe are about to collapse. "The bottom was falling out of Europe." (289) Charley has represented the liberal middle class that had ruled Europe and now being outflanked by extremists. In the character of Simon, Charley's friend, Maugham drew the portrait of a revolutionary, and outsider who tries to detach himself from human needs and becomes a political fanatic. In the character of Robert Berger, the murderer, Maugham suggested that his real motive was a perversion of the creative instinct, an urge for self-fulfillment. Men such as this, failed artists, capable of anything, were responsible for the social upheavals in Europe and for the war that would break out in a matter of months.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

William Somerset Maugham's *Christmas Holiday* shows that there is not such clear-cut boundary between history and fiction. It is difficult to differentiate between history and fiction because they both are creation of human subjectivity, a human construct. The fiction is not purely imaginary but overlaps with the world of history. The fiction or text is directly concerned with its historical context. So the text is in everyway contextual. The text is related to its social, historical, and economic context. So history and literature are fully interdependent. We cannot know texts in isolation to its historical context. Hence, there is no objective history. Literary texts are material products of specific historical conditions. Literary texts therefore must be treated along with its historical context. Likewise, by textuality of history, it means that the access to full and the authentic past is never possible. Authors of literary texts possess subjective view. They live in history and the form and pressure of history are made manifest in their thoughts and actions. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. So they cannot claim their study of past is detached and objective. Literary texts in this sense, work as a vehicle for the representation of history. It reveals the processes by which knowing the past becomes the question of representing, i.e. of constructing and narrating, not of objective recording.

But knowledge of the past is not possible without interpretations and this knowledge of the past is mediated by the text as Maugham has represented the history in this novel through the ideologies of the characters that represent it. The historical consciousness is reflected in the various characters in the novel, which gives a sense of historicity of the text through his-own subjective view. The novel speaks

the tale of contemporary era i.e. the interwar era. The consciousness, psychology and ideology in the novel and the carelessness and confusions of the characters, the murders and thefts show the way of digression the contemporary age. These traits of characters and the conditions are responsible for the upcoming disaster that was knocking the door in Europe in the disguised mask of World War II and the totalitarian governance in Europe. Thus, by showing the ideologies like of nationalism prevailing in the characters, institutions, government, laws, the economic depression followed by the World War I, culture and society, Maugham critiques over the history in his text *Christmas Holiday*. He is representing the historical consciousness of the contemporary age, the voice of the period in his novel particularly in the fictional manifestation of the despot of the age as Simon, incarnation of insensible and ruthless murderer as Robert Berger and so on.

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