

I: Introduction

Historicizing the background of India and America respectively in *Midnight's Children* and *Ragtime*

Midnight's Children “a masterpiece, brilliantly written, widely unpredictable, hilarious and heart breaking in equal measure” (Wilber) is a novel which deals with the political history and general social state of India, particularly after the partition of 1947. So, it clearly focuses on the issues like hybridity, crisis of identity and political instability etc. which emerged after decolonization. *Midnight's Children* is set in India. It is a comic allegory of Indian history and revolves around the lives of the narrator Saleem Sinai and the 1001 children born in the hour of midnight, 15 August, 1947. It is the moment India was formally granted independence from Britain.

Sinai, dying in a pickle factory near Bombay, tells his tragic story with special interest on its comical sides. By virtue of their propitious birth, each of the children possesses a distinct magical power, whose force is greater if the child's birth occurs closer to the stroke of twelve. The most powerful among them turn out to be Saleem and his rival Shiva. The latter has bulbous knees and the former has the power of telepathy. In the plight of his physical degeneration, Saleem decides to write his life story, and incidentally that of India's too. So, throughout the novel, Saleem carries his life story in a parallel relation to that of nation – from Jallianwalla Bagh incident in 1919 to the emergency of 1975. The presentation of the events shows the Indian leaders as failing to fulfill the expectation of society, and exposes the country as deeply divided and underdeveloped.

The novel has been read and interpreted from various perspectives. However the approach of the present study is to look at Rushdie's attitude towards history and fiction . Rushdie writes at the moment when new theories of history undermine

recorded historical facts as the construction of individual subjectivity. The need for a new way of looking at older historical forms makes *Midnight's Children* a prime example that explores new views of history. Rushdie believes that proclamation of universal truth in history can no longer sustain. He strongly questions and challenges the traditional ideas of viewing history as a coherent, objective and continuous unity through the narrator of the novel, Saleem Sinai who claims to be a historian. He tries to present Indian history in a parallel relation to the history of his own family, but he undermines his own claim to tell the "truth" about the past and renders his narration as merely a human artifact. In other words he doubts whether the complex reality can be objectively represented in the history.

For Rushdie, history is no longer a set of fixed, objective facts. The facts do not exist unless they are interpreted. So, history, like literature needs to be interpreted and reinterpreted. Historian interprets the events of history, presents them coherently, and makes the history intelligible to us. Historians are the ones who give pattern to history using their imagination. Thus, the historians play a vital role in the making of history, and, in this sense, history is, like fiction, a subjective phenomenon.

Since, history is a subjective phenomenon, there can be many versions of history. For Rushdie, history is no longer a homogeneous and final version. It has heterogeneous and multiple meaning like literature. By history, we generally understand the official version of history because it is the only version of history available to us. However, Rushdie interrogates the validity of the official history by providing an alternative version of Indian history, through the novel *Midnight's Children*.

He views the official historical discourse as one of the many version of history and it is not necessarily absolute and final versions of history. It is rather

artifact which is affected by a vast web of economic, social and political factors of that era. Moreover, Rushdie views it as an ideological product and which, in turn, always supports that ideology. Thus, the approach of the present study is to show how the historiographic metafiction resists the official history and reveals the real nature of history.

Rushdie, through *Midnight's Children* provides an alternative version to the official Indian history. And by doing so, Rushdie puts the official historical records to question. To put it differently, he undermines the claims of absolute truth in the official version of history. Inserting the fictional characters, family like Saleem's in the historical events of India, Rushdie is able to draw the real state of modern India after independence different from the historical narratives. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* has received host of criticisms. Since its publication various critics have tried to analyze the novel from different perspectives like, stylistic, postcolonial and postmodern.

One of the critics, Marc C. Conner sees *Midnight's Children* as a heteroglossic novel. According to him, the novel contains a large number of diverse characters of very different social origins and affiliations who speak diverse languages. He writes:

Midnight's Children most clearly resembles Bakhtin's category of the novel in its heteroglossic, multilinguistic nature. Language proliferates in the book, at all levels: socially, from upper-class [. . .] to the lower class [. . .] nationally, from the many languages of India to those of Kashmir and Pakistan. Internationally, from the colonial English [. . .] to the Americanisms [. . .]. (65)

Similarly, Linda Hutcheon views *Midnight's Children* as a postmodern novel, for it questions the totalizing impulse in any writing of past. She claims that *Midnight's*

Children interrogates the historians objectively and their efforts to present the past in totality. She argues that it is a post modern novel in which "the stress is on the act of denaturalizing documents in both historical and fictional writing" (83). Hutcheon says that the novel talks about "how the document can no longer pretend to be a transparent means to reveal past events" (83). The novel states that historians never seize events directly and entirely but rather incompletely and only through texts like novel itself.

Ragtime, E.L. Doctorow's breakthrough book, establishes him as one of the leading American writers of the generation that came of age in the midst of the Cold War. It undertakes to fashion a cultural history of the first two decades of the twentieth century, by interweaving the fates of three fictional families with actual personalities and events. It presents a picture of a United States plagued by racism, poverty and violence.

One of the three fictional families is the white New Rochelle family, its member – Father, Mother, Mother's Younger Brother, Grandfather and a Young Boy – the narrator. Second family consists of Jewish immigrants Tateh, Mameh and a little girl struggling for survival. The third family consists of an African-American origin, a couple named Coalhouse Walker and Sarah. The white family exemplifies the historiography of this era in an American culture. Indeed, it is fair to say that most of the accounts of what historian denominated as the Progressive Era centers on the activities and concern of just such people.

This was not the case with the social groupings represented by the other two families, which were largely invisible to historians during the first two – thirds of the twentieth century. In the novel's very first page its narrator startlingly remarks, there were no Negroes. There were no immigrants, and this is meant to suggest the limited prospect of the New Rochelle family, it describes the selective vision that has

characterized American historical narratives. E.L. Doctorow reveals it out by the use of fictional creation with the history though America had declared equal rights for Negroes after Civil War and the historians write it as the truth, but in the history of America there was still inequality done to Coalhouse Walker, Sarah; the blacks. This is the reality of racism. The Jewish immigrants' poverty and difficulties to live in New York are the cause behind Tateh to become a film maker. Mameh becomes a prostitute and this happens because of political and social instability, crisis which all are parts of American racial history. Coalhouse was shot dead, declaring him to be a violent, is also the cause of racism which is still alive in America. Doctorow challenges such linear, pretentive, coherent, authoritative historical narratives by writing *Ragtime*, using the technique of historiographic metafiction.

Virtually none of the phenomena emphasized in this standard interpretation of this era is found in reality today, but it finds a place in Doctorow's novel. Instead of consensus, he emphasizes conflict between blacks and whites, capitalists and labor, men and women, haves and have nots, and it is these conflicts, which hold the key to the meaning of American history. Instead of a stately and rational unfolding of reform that makes the society more equitable and democratic, he portrays a society in which financiers like J.P. Morgan aggrandize power that outstrips any governments'. Moreover, the most articulate spokespersons who oppose these developments are not middle – class reformers, who are virtually absent from the novel, but outsiders and dissidents like Goldman and Walker.

In place of the historians basic optimism about American progress, Doctorow substitutes an ironic skepticism about whether any such progress is possible, at least not without a fundamental reordering of social, economic and political power. This mordant view is underscored by the fates of the novel's most of principled characters:

Coalhouse Walker is assassinated and his followers scattered. Emma Goldman, an anarchist is deported and Tateh abjures his political principles and recreates himself as antithesis, as an emigre aristocrat. Ragtime furnishes a crucial model for the blending of fact and fiction and supplies a mine of historical particulars that enrich the panorama of Doctorow's created world.

John G Parks says Doctorow seeks a fiction that is both politically relevant and aesthetically complex and interesting. Doctorow's fictions seeks to disclose and challenge the hegemony of enshrined or institutionalized discursive practices by blurring the distinctions between fact and fiction. Parks says:

. . . [T]he task of narrative is to disrupt or dismantle the prevailing "regimes of truth", including their repressive effects. Doctorow's ultimate political enterprise is to prevent the power of the ragtime from monopolizing the compositions of truth, from establishing a monological control over culture. A monologic culture is authoritarian and absolutistic and denies the existence and validity of the "other", of "difference". . . In Doctorow, dialogue or polyphonic fiction in both disruptive or even subversive of regimes of power, and restorative of neglected or forgotten or unheard voices in the culture. It is this twin aim of disruption and restoration that characterizes Doctorow's own polyphonic fiction(454-455)

Likewise, traditional history or official history is monologic, authoritarian, absolutistic and denies the existence of validity of "other" (455). So Doctorow by opposing the traditional historical narrative restores or redempt the neglected, forgotten or unheard facts of America in *Ragtime*.

William Matheson has found *Ragtime's* title itself a pun that conveys the multiple meanings related with major events in American history. He explicates:

In addition to being the time of Ragtime music, 'Ragtime' as a period (1902 to the first world war) was the time of old rags and poverty, a time of great social inequality. [. . .] the most obvious theme of the novel is social injustice, a theme exemplified in many ways primarily in the Coalhouse Walker story (a classic case of injustice) which dominates the last half of the novel and in the pronouncement of the anarchist Emma Goldman on social, political and economic inequalities. (21)

Thus, it received lot of criticism, which shows the richness of the novel itself. A novel can have multiple interpretations. However the present study aims to analyze how Doctorow mixes facts with fictions to show the politics behind the official history of America.

This present work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief historical background of India and America which are presented in *Midnight's children* and *Ragtime*. The second chapter discusses the theories which are applied in this research. It consists the debate on history and fiction, the debate between Hutcheon and Jameson and new historicism, post colonialism and Foucault's power to prove historiographic metafiction as political and historical. The third chapter is the analysis of the both texts with the application of the theories which leads the research work to the conclusion; fourth chapter which proves *Midnight's children* and *Ragtime* full of historical references.

II: The Debate on Historiographic Metafiction: Blurring the Boundaries between History and Fiction

Literature is a complex phenomenon, so is history and all the literary genres. Since these all are the human artifacts, they certainly share some common features of each other. They exist through the narrative, a way of storytelling, or through the way of writing. So, the historiographic metafiction is also a narrative technique to give existence to literary genres, which intermixes facts with fictions or public with private. Since the time of Plato, the first major figure of Western Metaphysics, the debate about the nature of literature and its relation to other types of discourses was there.

Plato treats poetry as a product of poet's divinely inspired frenzy, hence, it lacks the truth. It is twice removed from the reality which leads men away from truth. So, Plato considers a poet dangerous to society. He suggests to banish poets from his Republic, or limit them by strict censorship. In his Book X of *Republic*, Plato sees a poet merely as an imitator who publishes the passions by using unreal, futile imagination. But, paradoxically, Plato puts his own philosophy across by every kind of poetic device - metaphor, symbol, fiction etc.

Aristotle, in his "Poetics" strongly attacks Plato's view on poetry as imitation of imitation. Aristotle says that poet does not simply imitate or represent particular events or situation which he happens to have noted. He brings out their universal character through his artistic handling. Aristotle is the first great figure to make a discussion about the relation between history and literature. He differentiates the work of poet from a historicist. History relates to what has happened and literature relates to what may happen. This is to say the historians must stick to what has happened and can not arrange facts by using his genius. But, a poet uses his creative potentiality to

present the things in probable manner. So, he takes poetry as a "more philosophical and higher thing than history" and "Poetry as universal and history the particular" (55). Thus, Aristotle, created a hierarchy between literature and history.

In late 16th century, Sydney reaffirmed in his "An Apology for Poetry," the hierarchy of literature and history on moral grounds. According to him, historians always stick to what happened, often show the wicked and rightness of suffering. Hence, history lacks poetic justice. History is unable to teach people to be good. He claims, poetry is a moral teacher to philosophy and philosophy is too abstract to teach virtue. History tries to teach by concrete example drawn from history but that do not suit most for his purpose of teaching. So, Sydney places poetry midway between philosophy and history claiming history also is a "less fruitful doctrine" (148). Poetry combines the abstract proportion and concrete example. But unlike history its examples are not tied to past and never claims to be true. So, it is the appropriate genre to teach people.

The tendency to associate literary work with the imagination is found in the different periods of literary history. Shakespeare saw the poet as a man of profound imagination. In the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he notes:

The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact. (5.1.9-10)

Thus, Shakespeare, viewed poetry as a product of imaginative mind away from reality. After a long time, Dryden, in his satirical poem "Absalom and Achitopel", repeats the same notion of poetry as pure inspiration, when he writes, "Great wits are sure to madness near allied" (462).

However, the historical critics, in the 19th century viewed literature and history as related to each other. They treated literature in terms of the period it was produced.

The historical critics believed that literature is also a recreation of the past. So, they say history facilitates to interpret the work in the light of the past. The literary works belonged to the time it was created. So, for them, literature is the product of history. Thus, history becomes essential for them, for the interpretation of a literary work. To interpret a work of a writer they need the time period or the historical background of the writer. So, history and the literature became a related phenomenon. Hence, these historicists urge to read a literary work in relation to the historical background.

The historical study mainly flourished during the 19th century. In the middle of the 19th century, Hippolyte Taine, generally recognized as the father of the historical method, published *History of English Literature*, in which he treated literature as documents for the analysis of an age and people. Taine said the job of the historical critics was to "retrace, from the monuments of literature, the style of man's feelings and thoughts for centuries back" (609). He views literature as a product of social and natural factors - race, environment, and epoch. So, he treats literature merely as a document which helps historians to understand whole people and their moral condition.

On the other hand, Taine views literature as superior to history, for him "a great poem, a fine novel, the confessions of a superior man, are more instructive than a heap of historians with their histories" (619). He justifies his claim of superiority of literature while saying it offers "the psychology of a soul, frequently of an age, now and then of a race" (619). Certainly, the question like how literature can be more valuable than history if its purpose is to serve documents for historians might arise. After all, Taine created hierarchy between literature and history sometimes making history superior to literature and vice versa.

In the mid-twentieth century, there was the dominance of American New Criticism. This theoretical movement challenged the historical view of literature put forward by Hippolyte Taine. New critics treated the literary text as an object essentially independent of its author and historical context. They focused on the textuality of the text, presenting the literary text as an autonomous, self-sufficient entity. On the other hand, structuralist critics empower text by viewing it as a set of Saussurean signs in which signifier and signified are governed by a single, complex system of relationship. Therefore, literary meaning should be analyzed in its own terms as a semantic composition, not as a reflection of the external factors.

Structuralist critics take language as a self-sufficient system and believe that meaning is produced by the relationships of elements that govern the linguistic system as a whole. We come to know their emphasis on textuality from Derrida's assertion that there is nothing outside the text. This is to say that the text has no relation with the outer world, socio-economic and political forces but with signifying processes. As structuralist critics and new critics, the deconstructionists alienated the text from the external reality.

However, Michel Foucault, a major post structuralist critics, viewed that the world is more than galaxy of words. The text cannot be free from the social and political sphere of an era. So, Foucault makes a link between the texts and the external world. Foucault opened up a new way in the post-deconstruction literary theories by reaching beyond the traditional hierarchy of history over literature. Following Nietzsche, Derrida denies history as an objective phenomenon. Nietzsche claims no form of writing can present truth as they are presented through "a mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphism". He adds further, "Truths are illusions of which has forgotten that they are illusions" (Nietzsche 636). In this sense, history and

literature are not two extremes-as if one presenting the truth and other falsity. But all discourses, including history, are produced within a real world of power struggle according to Foucault.

Foucault developed a theory of discourse in relation to the power structure operating in societies. According to Nietzsche the world runs with the individuals having "a will to power". The only thing that all man want, for Nietzsche "is power, and whatever is wanted, is wanted for the sake of power" (511). Foucault is indebted to this approach of Nietzsche, for according to Foucault, every discourse is meant to obtain power. The discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political powers operate through discourse.

Discourse is the ordering force that governs every institutions. The discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political power operates through discourse. The discourse is inseparable form of power. It is a means of defusing power in to the different relation of social institutions. Discourses, according to Foucault, are produced in which concepts of madness, criminality, sexual abnormality and so on are defined in relation to sanity, justice and sexual morality. Such discursive formations determine and constrain the forms of knowledge and types of normality of a particular period. Every society has its own regime of truth. So, the power diffuses itself in the system of authority. Foucault sees the truth as a product of relations of power and it changes as system changes. But the discourses themselves are neither true nor false. Both history and literature are the form of discourses which defuse power into the society and work as normal truth.

As an effort to construct a bridge between literature and history dismantled by New critics, structuralists and deconstructionists, Foucault's notion of power and discourse become formative to develop new historicism in 1970s and early 1980s.

Unlike old historicists, new historicists claim that all the interpretations are subjectively filtered through one's own set of historically conditioned view points. Hence, there is no objective history. But old historicists saw a pattern in history, viewed history as a set of fixed, objective facts, claimed history superior to literature. But new historicists find literature as a constructive part of history in the making of history itself by examining how literature reflected, shaped and represented history.

They view literature and history as inseparable. For them the production of literary texts is a cultural practice. We can not make an absolute distinction between literary texts and other cultural practices. According to Greenblatt, "The circulation of Social Energy," art "does not simply exist in all cultures; it is made up along with other products, practices, discourses of a given culture" (504). Greenblatt, thus, states that all types of art, including literature, are embedded within the social, and economic circumstances in which they are produced and consumed. But these circumstances are not stable in themselves. So, literary texts are considered as part of a larger circulation of social energies. In the word of Greenblatt, there can be "no art without social energy" (503).

Literary works for them, are product of a particular culture and at the same time they influence that culture. The existing power work within the culture which operate through the medium of textual representations. These representations or literature participates in forming the dominant ideological assumptions of particular time. Literature in this sense has a deep relationship with the mission of colonialism, gender oppressions, slavery, criminality or insanity.

New historicists argue that any knowledge of the past is necessarily mediated by the texts. To put it differently, history is in many respects textual. It means there can be no knowledge of the past without interpretation. Just as literary texts need to be

read; so do the facts of history. So, history and literature both must be viewed subjectively. Just as old historicists saw unity, homogeneity and totality in history, new historicists see contradiction, heterogeneity and fragmentation in history. There is no master narrative, single history but rather multiple narratives and histories. Our "own voice", claims Greenblatt is the "Voice of the dead". The voices of the dead are "heard in the voices of living" through the textual traces (490).

Hence, we can never have a disinterested and objective interpretation, evaluation or creation of a text. Different people interpret in different ways to the same event or past. The new historicist critic, Eagleton treats history as:

a form of narration conditioned by the narrator's own prejudices and preoccupation, and so itself a kind of rhetoric or fiction. There was no single determinable truth to any particular narrative or event, just a conflict of interpretations whose outcome was finally determined by power rather than truth. (197)

History, therefore, is like literature, a product of subjective mind which does not have a set of fixed and objective facts. The narrator can not be a trans-historical figure. His own historicity, prejudices and preoccupation get involved in his narrative.

So, there can not be a single history rather many versions of history. Historiography literally means the art of writing history it is the history of history or the history of historical writing. It includes the ideas and techniques associated with the writing of history; and the changing attitudes towards the nature of history itself. All the knowledge and understanding of the past exists only in the realm of narratives. Peter brooks says, "We live immersed in narrative, recounting and hearing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating

ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed" (qtd. in Hutcheon, 48). Here, narrative representation-story telling is a historical and a political act.

The past is mediated by the text. Literary texts in this sense work as a vehicle for the representation of history. "Nothing seems more natural and universal to human beings than telling stories" (Miller 66). So, narrative is an art of story telling. Only because of the narrative it is possible to know the past at present and in future too. Narrative under postmodernism predominantly takes the form of what Linda Hutcheon has called "historiographic metafiction" which has become a debatable issue (34).

Linda Hutcheon, as D'haen writes, plays a major role in the debate since she published her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism Theory, History, Fiction* in 1988. The Postmodern narrative technique of historiographic metafiction is a technique which intermixes facts with fiction or public with private. Hutcheon resists the received history and redeems the real history. She says it reveals the real nature of historical referents or the politics behind the received histories. So, the techniques are resistance and redemptive, while intermixing the fictions with facts, Hutcheon's purpose is to make a reader aware of the particular nature of the historical representation.

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

Hayden White, a post modernist philosopher and historian has consistently favoured a structuralist approach emphasizing the primacy of secondary signification in historical writing. Highlighting the insertion of fiction White writes "There is something in a historical master piece that can not be negated, and this nonnegatable element is its form which is its fiction" (401). In this essay "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" he views historical narratives as verbal fictions with invented contests. Histories gain their explanatory power by processing data into stories. Those stories take their shape from what White calls "emplotment the process through which the facts contained in chronicles are enclosed as components of plots are not immanent in events themselves but exists in the minds of tragic or ironic" (397). It can only be presented as such from a particular historian's narrative point of view. The event emerged as a plotted story which takes on meaning when it is combined with other elements in the limited number of generic structures by which a series of events can be constituted.

Hutcheon's interest in historiographic metafiction was partly triggered by the repeated charges of historicism by Marxists and traditionalists, primarily by Frederic Jameson. In his highly influential 1984 essay "Postmodernism or the cultural logic of Late Capitalism" Jameson "bewails the disappearance of the historical referent in postmodern literature" (205). The historiographic metafiction can be long set out to represent the historical past, but it can only represent our ideas and stereotypes about the past, where we are "condemned to seek history by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach" (D'haen 205). Jameson blames the postmodern fiction forecloses the telos of history as a record of the real struggle of classes in society. D'haen further heightens the debate between Hutcheon and Jameson while he writes:

. . . the ahistoricism Jameson objects to in 'post-modernism', is predicated second-hand upon a very particular and particularly limited, body of American fiction . . . it also serves as accomplice by failing to return its reader to any kind of reader to any kind of 'real' referential base . . . in defense, Hutcheon reverses Jameson's negative evaluation of postmodernism's representational antirepresentationism. For Hutcheon 'Postmodernism' is a consciousness raising machine, exposing rather than abetting society's power discourse mechanisms. (208)

Hence, Hutcheon is exceptional in "the emphasis she places on the role played by history in postmodernism" while defending Jameson's argument that the post modern literature "enmeshes the reader in the simulacra universe of late capitalism" (208).

What postmodern theory and practices suggest is that everything always was cultural and is mediated by representations. Postmodern historiographic metafiction simply puts the distinction between illusion and reality, between fact and fiction between symbol and what is represented, asking questions how we represent, how we construct - our view of reality and of ourselves. It denaturalizes the realism's transparency and modernism's reflexive response, while retaining the historically attested power of both. This is the ambivalent politics of postmodern. According to Hutcheon, with problematizing and de-doxifying of both realist reference and modernist autonomy, postmodern representation opens up other possible relations between art and the world.

On the contrary, Jameson argues postmodern historiographical metafiction is ahistorical because it causes the disappearance of historical reference. It is apolitical and pastiche in narrative. For Jameson, "Video is the hegemonic cultural form today

and is rigorously conterminous with postmodernism itself as a historical period" (113). Video art is postmodern because the viewer is immersed in the continuous production of images and memory plays no role in it. So it lacks the sense of history. What is foregrounded in contemporary video art and video installations is the machine and technology rather than an underlying hidden message. So, postmodern video has nothing more than outward decoration.

"Parody-often called ironic quotation, pastiche, appropriate, or intertextuality is usually considered central to postmodernism, both by its detractors and its defenders" (Hutcheon 89). Jameson calls "postmodern ironic citation 'pastiche' or 'empty parody', assuming that only unique styles can be parodied and that such novelty and individuality are impossible today" (90). With parody - as with any form of reproduction - the notion of the original as rare, single and valuable is called into question. But Hutcheon argues, it does not mean that art has lost its meaning and purpose, but that will inevitably have a new and different significance. This is to say, parody works to foreground the politics of representation. "Postmodernist parody is a value-problematizing, denaturalizing form of acknowledging the history of representations" (90). Postmodernist parody does not disregard the context of the past representation it cites, but uses irony to acknowledge the fact that we are separated from that past today. So, it is a kind of contesting revision or rereading of the past that confirms and subverts the power of the representations of history. It is fundamentally ironic and critical. To cast more light on the discussion of historiographic metafiction, it's essential to talk about post colonialism.

Obviously during the western colonization period, colonizers exercised all the power pervasively. They exercised the empirical power or domination through the consent of the colonized too whatever the colonizers created as truth, that was the

truth for all. There was the superiority of colonizer to colonized. So, the study of the ideological and cultural impact of western colonization and in particular its aftermath is called post colonialism. Many people see the continuation of western colonization in different forms (new-colonialism). At the same time there is the emergence of newly articulated independent national and individual identities. Thus, this study relates itself to hybridity, syncretism, diaspora, migrancy, boundaries, double identity etc. These points are particularly convergent in the question of identity and therefore to the conceptualization of culture, race and ethnicity.

Colonialism affects the culture. The migration, exile and migrancy result in mixed or contradictory identities. In post colonial or cultural theory, such conditions are called hybridity. It is the situation of mixed or hyphenated identities of persons or ethnic communities or of texts which express and explore this condition, sometimes themselves employing mixed written or visual discourses. Hybridity is the situation of double identity which leads to cultural dislocation, problem of identity and alienation. They finally turn out to be odd and suspended between two statuses: colonizers and colonized. In the process of mimicry they lose their nationalism. Their personality changes externally in a superficial. Then they do not recognize themselves as turn among many experiences. There is a certain attitude of attraction that makes colonized idealise the colonizer but at the same time there is a hatred and resentment towards the colonizers. Finally, they become alienated. V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, Kenzaburo Oe's *A Personal Matter*, Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* are the good examples of post colonial novels.

Hence, post colonialism also shared many common features with postmodernism. Such as: identification of difference, notion of identity as anti-essential and cultural meaning, critique of the cultural hierarchies, universalism and

Eurocentrism of western modernity and the post prefix suggests a common attempt to describe the process of changes.

Therefore, questioning the master narratives, resisting the public history as discursive formation and redeeming the real history from the politics of historicism, postmodern historiographic metafiction has become able to give us the real nature of history as Linda Hutcheon says. It is not ahistorical, apolitical and pastiche in narratives as it is to Jameson, but rather it is a historical, political and purposive act.

Linda Hutcheon rejects the negative evaluation of Fredrick Jameson on the disappearance of historical reference in the post modern narratives. My thesis will explain the reason behind her rejection and will illustrate that historical reference which is very much present in narratives. Historiographic metafiction mixes fact with fiction, and this departs from the traditional narrative techniques. So, this makes it a postmodern narrative technique.

Certainly, history is available to us through the textual traces, so, it can't be transparent. The traditional ideas of viewing history as a group of facts which exists extra-textually and which can be represented as it really was, has been questioned. The postmodern critics view that historians while interpreting the past, associate his own prejudices and preoccupations, so, it becomes subjective phenomenon. Hayden White, insists on the impossibility of narrating the past events on a chronological order and in an objective way. So, history is like fiction, a product of imaginative mind. The pattern, chronology, unity in history is created by historian's subjective as well as imaginative mind. It is shaped by the ideology or political power of the era in which it is created. So, the official historical discourse is not the authentic and final history but rather there are many versions of histories. The rupture of traditional history, historical narrative technique does not mean the post modern narrative lacks

the historical references as Jameson bewails. Instead it is the new way, new idea, new technique to reveal the politics behind the official history making the readers aware of the particular nature of history, as Hutcheon believes.

Whatsoever history - so-called, received, public history, there is about India and America, Salman Rushdie and Doctorow reveal the politics hidden behind the history of both respectively in *Midnight's Children* and *Ragtime*, by the application of historiographic metafiction as a narrative technique. They don't believe in traditional master narratives for they believe them to be discursive formation. This analysis tries to analyze the issues of resistive and redemptive historical metafiction in both novels.

III: Debate On Historiographic Metafiction: Reading *Midnight's Children* and *Ragtime*

Historical Reference of India in *Midnight's Children*

Salman Rushdie views the official historical discourse as a kind of writing affected by the ideology of an era. So, he provides an alternative version of Indian history, through the novel *Midnight's Children* giving entry to a fictional character Saleem Sinai, the narrator as well as the protagonist of the novel. Saleem draws modern India's factual history in a parallel relation to the fictional history of his own family. The most important events that took place in India are coincided with equally important moments in the history of Saleem's family.

In the novel, the history of India is given a meaning, through the telling of individual experiences. Saleem, born at the moment of India's independence is inextricably linked with the political, national, and religious events of that time. He says:

I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947 [. . .]. On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of act. [. . .] at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence. I tumbled forth into the world [. . .] I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. [. . .] soothsayers had prophesied me, newspapers celebrated my arrivals, politics ratified my authenticity. (3)

In this sense, Saleem's birth has connected him to the nation. He was prophesized as a historicist who is destined to witness the fate of his country.

Through this novel, the narrator, Saleem Senai recapitulates the major political events of India from 1919 to the emergency of 1975 which parallel to his family history. The history which Saleem narrates is in a sense, his own story. In 1918 "On the day the World War ended, Naseem [Saleem's grandfather] developed the longed for-headache" (24). Likewise, Saleem's grandparents got married in 1919. This year also mattered in Indian history, for it was when the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh took place in India according to Saleem's version of history. Jallianwala Bagh is a compound where a crowd of people had gathered to protest against British government. Brigadier R.E. Dyer with his fifty troops, fired upon that crowd which had gathered on that compound. Similarly, the atom bomb was dropped in Nagasaki on the day of 9 August 1945, Mumtaz (Saleem's mother) was "discovered to be virgin" on the same day (65). The silence of Mumtaz after her three years married life was finally blown away. Her virginity led her to divorce with her husband Nadir Khan. And their married life ended and the possibility of second marriage opened or the cause of Saleem's birth opened. Mumtaz got married with Ahmad Sinai.

Saleem, while drawing parallel relation between the historical events and his own story, also believes on being involved himself in them, when he claims "[he] became a public property from the moment of [his] conception" (86). During the Hindu Muslim riot in India in 1946, his mother in order to save a peepshow man, Lifafa Das, who had fallen down beside her from Muslim's attack, made a public announcement that she was pregnant for some month. His arrival was announced to the assembled masses of the people, before his father heard about that. His mother made him public property, so that he didn't turn out to be her own son. Furthermore, the independence of his nation or the birth of new India parallels his own birth when

the prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru delivered a speech to the Assembly at the midnight on 15 August 1947. " . . . [A]t the stroke of midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India awakens to life and freedom. . . " (134). And at the same time "there are two more yells, cries, bellows, the howls of children arriving in the world' (134).

Those were the yells of Saleem and Shiva who were born at the stroke of midnight.

Thus, Saleem's birth is accompanied with the birth of new nation, independent India.

Saleem says,

Newspapers celebrated me, politicians ratified my position. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote "Dear Baby Saleem, my belated congratulations on the happy accident of your moment of birth. you are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention, it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own". (143)

In this way, he became a child of public interest or a public property and his life began to carry a genuine historical sense. Besides him, there were other one thousand children born during the first hour of 15 August 1947 in India. Saleem says, the midnight's children were "only partially the offspring of their parents—the children of midnight were also the children of the time: fathered [. . .] by history" (137). Thus, Saleem sees the history intertwined the lives of the midnight's children. So, he feels he is responsible to write his nations history. He feels his presence has an effect on history and causes changes on the people around him when he says,

Because the feeling had come upon me that I was somehow creating a world; that the thoughts I jumped inside were somehow making them happen. . . which is to say. I had entered into the illusion of the artist,

and thought of the multitudinous realities of the land a raw unshaped material of my gift. (207)

He believes that no events had taken place without his complicity. He has a belief that he has contributed to forward the Indian history. He has the illusion of responsibility which responsibility is one of power rather than guilt. When he says "Why should I assume that I alone have had the powers of secret knowledge ?" (351). His secret of telepathy has given him power which has made him to feel responsible but that has not created guilt in him. He thinks others also to have such power. The partition of Bombay coincides with the discovery of the Midnight's children and the death of Saleem's grandfather coincides with Jawaharlal Nehru's death. He thinks himself responsible for the death of Nehru.

If I hadn't wanted to be a hero, Mr. Zagallo would never have pulled out my hair. If my hair had remained intact, Glandy Keith and Fat Prece wouldn't have taunted me; Masha Miovic wouldn't have goaded me into losing my finger. And from my finger flowed blood which was neither-Alpha-nor-Omega, and sent me into exile; and in exile I was filled with the lust for revenge which led to the murder of Homi Catrack; and if Homi hadn't died, perhaps my uncle wouldn't have strolled off a roof into the sea – breezes; and then my grandfather wouldn't have gone to Kashmir and been broken by the effort of climbing the Sankara Acharya hill. And my grandfather was the founder of my family and my fate was linked by my birthday to that of the nation, and the father of the nation was Nehru. Nehru's death: Can I avoid the conclusion that that, too, was all my fault ? (334)

Saleem, relating his own history to nation's history, comes to conclusion that he is the cause of Nehru's death and he doesn't want to avoid this responsibility. Saleem, therefore, was a historical figure who was helping to forward the history — "literally", or may be "metaphorically" (285).

All India Congress won the election of 1957. This year relates to Saleem's life, for it was in this year when he formed a gang of midnight's children—Midnight Children's Conference—using his telepathic power. By the virtue of Saleem's telepathic power, all the magical children of midnight are assembled together in a MCC. Midnight's children's conference (MCC) comprised of the ethnic, religious and regional diversities of India. The socio-economic status and religious belief of each child represented the diverse ideas and prejudices spreading throughout India. So, in a way the Midnight's children, reflected "a mirror of nation" (306). All the members of MMC never meet each other but communicate through Saleem's mental transmission. His brain is like Lok Sabha of India as he says— ". . . the five hundred and eighty one children would assemble, for one hour between midnight and one a.m., in the Lok Sabha or parliament of my brain" (271). In attempt to relate national history with his personal history, He compares his love campaign to get favour of Evie Burns, a neighbouring girl with the election campaigning of early 1957 while he says, "everybody was busy pleading his own cause, I, however, found myself tongue-tied in the face of Evie Burns, and approached Sonny Ibrahim to ask him to plead on my behalf" (221).

Regarding his physical appearance, Saleem's face resembled the map of India after partition. He was a human map of India. He described himself "Fair skin curved across my features - but birthmarks disfigured it; a dark stains spread down my

western hairline, a dark patch coloured my eastern ear" (144). If the dark stains down his western hairline represented eastern Pakistan, the dark patch on his eastern ear represented Eastern Pakistan (to be Bangladesh later). Furthermore;

Baby snaps reveal that my large moon face was too large; too perfectly round. Something lacking in the region of the chin [. . .]. And my temples: too prominent: bulbous Byzantine domes [. . .]. Baby Saleem's nose it was monstrous; and it ran. (144)

Thus, the shape of his face including his narrow chin resembles the peninsula of India. His temples describe the Himalayan Mountains to the North while his nose associated with the Deccan plateau, a centrally located elevated area on the peninsula. Therefore, he was inextricably connected to India from the moment of his birth; or even more from the moment of his conception. He, thus, really is a geographical, social, political, cultural and historical mirror of his nation.

By means of this narrative technique, intermixing private fictional history with the public history in parallel way, Rushdie shows the inavoidable link between history and individual. He makes Saleem to connect each and every moment of his life history with the history of India. And Saleem, writing history as an autobiography is in a way connecting the individual with mainstream history. Saleem realises this and cuts pieces out of newspapers, glues them and prepares a note to teach his mother a lesson. By cutting the pieces out of newspapers, he was "cutting up history to suit [his] nefarious purposes" (311). By glueing his notes, Saleem glues the historical with fictional (particular) and carries out his "first attempt at rearranging history" (312). This subverts the traditional form of history. Saleem's form of narrative, way of arrangement and order of events also helps to undermine the linear or the

chronological official history. Saleem, subverts the chronology of official history by going back and forth in his own history and on the way collects the factual events of Indian official history, which were constructed under ideological and political motivations of the power holders of that era.

Rushdie has used memory as the suitable means to present the events. Just as a person's memory jumps from one event to the next, The events occurs here without chronological sequence. The narrative also leaps from one memory to the next often interrupting itself in order to make room for a central memory. The memory and oral narrative of this novel provide alternatives to the conventional forms of history. Saleem believes his memory as valid and as the official version of truth, rather than others version of truth. Saleem says,

Memory's truth, because memory has its own special kind . It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts some one else's version more than his own. (253)

So memory creates a reality based on perception. In this sense everyone's perception of the same event can not be same .The reality created by them also differ from each other, so the history is a construct of human subjectivity. History is an account of past events, then, the historian has to remember them in order to present them in the text. In his version of history, Saleem presents, them saying, "Facts, as remembered to the best of one's ability" (503).

Since history is a memory construct, the distortions are inevitable because a person remembers those events which are most meaningful to him and at the same

time it's impossible to avoid the errors and gaps in the writing of history because "a person must choose what he will see and what he will not" (454). Thus, the selection and narration of past events depends upon individual interest. So, Rushdie believes history is a subjective phenomena. As Rushdie uses memory as a tool to present the alternative version of Indian history. The novel is, thus, a history seen through the eyes of an individual. It is presented to counter the dominant official history. The individual nature of history that relies on memory, undermines the traditional form of history as a unity of facts. But, Rushdie intentionally brings error in the text to show the reality created out of a person's memory may or may not conform to recorded fact, yet is valid as the recorded facts for that person. Saleem says,

Re-reading my work, I have discovered an error in chronology. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi occurs, in these pages, on the wrong date. But I can not say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time. Does one error invalidate the entire fabric ? (198)

Saleem is aware of the mistakes he has made about the chronology of events in his writing. Saleem invokes his own memory of events like for instance he says Gandhi's death is true and a valid fact. In this sense he is pretending as if he does not know the actual sequence of events. He adds:

And then it occurs to me that I have made another error-that the election of 1957 took place before, and not after my 10th birthday; but although I have tracked my brains, my memory refuses, stubbornly, to alter the sequence of events. This is worrying. I don't know what's gone wrong. (265)

Thus, Saleem finds error in his writing, however he doesn't resolve to alter the sequence of events. He believes his memory to be a historical alternative, to recorded facts. This illustrates the importance of individual version of history as alternative to official history. Every person interprets the same facts according to their perception and there are the possibilities of many more versions of history. So, Rushdie does not believe in a single history, rather he believes in histories.

The historicity of each historian affects his/her historical writing. The history, thus is affected by the subjectivity of a person, because a person grasps those events which have particular meaning to that person. So, history, necessarily emphasizes certain aspects over others by the subjectivity of the historian. Rushdie dramatizes this point with the help of Saleem's personal ayah, Mary Pereira. Saleem says that "Mary heard all sort of rumours and tittle-tattle, which she relayed to me as matters of absolute fact" (293). The rumours that Mary conveys as fact illustrate the manner in which presentation of history and historical events receives emphasis and coloring from the person relating the information. History gives meaning because "What you were is forever who you are" (438). History gives identity to a person because without history nobody can recognize any person. Therefore, history must be communicated. But, because of communication, objectivity of history gets distorted. Rushdie believes like reality, "history is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perspectiveness and knowledge" (*Imaginary Homelands* 25). In this sense history is not merely a record of facts but rather closing of facts with individual opinion. But, it does not mean it lacks all the historical referents. So,

Saleem, toward the end of his narrative realizes that it is impossible to present the past events as the really occurred . He puts,

I fell victim to the temptation of every autobiographer, to the illusion that since the past exists only in one's memories and the words which strive vainly to encapsulate them, it is possible to create past events simply by saying they occurred. (529)

So, any type of autobiographical or historical writing gets colouring of personal feeling and it turns out to be subjective phenomenon since human subjectivity plays vital role in the preservation of past throughout the narrative.

Unlike the traditional historicists, Saleem does not try to be omniscient of the past events. He does not want to pretend to be an all knowing historian who explains each and every event of the past. He sometimes himself acknowledge his unreliability while he admits his lying. "To tell the truth, I lied about Shiva's death" (529).

Sometimes he gives up his narrative authority, leaving the things unexplained. Once when Padma asks what happened to Mary Pereira, Saleem shouts in anger, telling her to find out the truth herself:

"What happened to her ?" She says with red eyes.

"That Mary ?" I am seized by an irrational anger.

I shout: "you ask her !" (337)

Saleem does not explain the events which had happened to Mary. He leaves the things unexplained or to be explained by the readers themselves. This kind of gaps and cracks inevitably occurs in his writing of history. But historians neglect such gaps to secure the authority of their interpretation of history to create their own stories according to their interest. Saleem claims the impossibility of the representation of

history as it was. He compares the method of history writing with the pickling process. As in the pickling process the raw materials need to be distorted, transformed to give "Shape and form - that is to say meaning", so the raw materials of history (550). His each Chapter of his autobiography represents a pickle-jar.

Every pickle jar [. . .] contains, therefore, the most exalted of possibilities, the feasibility of the Chutnification of history, the grand hope of the pickling of time ! I, however, have pickled chapters. Tonight, screwing the lid firmly on to jar bearing the legend special formula No. 30. 'abracadabra', I reach the end of my long-winded autobiography; in words and pickles, I have immortalized my memories, although distortions inevitable in both methods. (598)

Saleem admits the inevitability of coloring and spicing to the raw materials of history to give it immortality as to the raw materials of pickle-jar. Saleem realizes nothing can be presented in totality and in an objective way. Therefore, he insists, "we must live [. . .] with the shadows of imperfection" (598). He never claims his version of history as final and objective but rather says "the process of revision should be constant and endless" (549). He further adds admitting his version as pickles' version of history: ". . . yes, I should revise, improve and improve; but there is neither the time nor the energy" (549). Saleem's unreliability as a narrator, therefore, emphasizes the need to create our own version of history that functions as an alternative to official history. It makes readers to question in their own interpretation. Highlighting the ruptures and leakages in history-writing, Rushdie undermines the traditional acceptance of and adherence to the official history seen as a record of objective facts.

Thus, *Midnight's children* introduces a new view of history that accepts multiplicity of history as valid forms of history.

Saleem's narratee, Padma represents his typical audience, bringing to the surface the reader's thoughts and questions, while he writes, Padma sits beside him showing her emotional responses to his stories. Since the things are connected to each other, it is not possible to present occurrences in a linear manner. But Saleem says his narratee Padma is "at [his] elbow, bullying [him] back into the world of linear narrative, the universe of what happened next" (38). Saleem believes that the things have a way of leaking into each other. So, the historical events do not occur in cause and effect relationship, but occurs as "Interruptions, nothing but interruptions !" as some elements of Saleem's tale remind him of something else while telling the stories (224). At the same time many events can be affected by a cause and they can be interconnected. So, these all are impossible to present in order. But historians put them in order according to their interest. So, Saleem rejects the orderly historical chronology of events and Padma's "What happened next" too as linear narrative (60). New historicists believe that history does not move on linearity, similarly Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* does not follow the mode of linear narrative.

Accepting the impossibility of presentation of the pure history, Saleem answers Padma's doubt "Was it true ?" (61) as "Padma: If you're a little uncertain of my reliability, well, a little uncertainty is no bad thing" (254). Padma forces him to change his narrative style, she doubts his narrative. But still she has faith in his narrative delivered in a self-conscious manner. And he continues it:

I must interrupt myself. I wasn't going to today, because Padma has started getting irritated whenever my narration becomes self-conscious,

whenever, like an incompetent puppeteer, I reveal the hands holding the strings; but I simply must register a protest. (72)

Thus, even Saleem points to the errors, that mark the unreliability of his facts. Padma also has helped him to produce his narrative persuasive to the reader. Although she is illiterate, she is eager to know the rest of the story. When he says "In autobiography, as in literature, what actually happened is less important than what the author can manage to persuade his audience to believe" (325). This shows he is providing his version of reality in a way the readers believe him.

Since each and every event of past can not be explained or represented, Rushdie regards the role of the readers as inevitable in the creation of history. Rushdie invites the audience when he makes his narrator Saleem to expect "my audience to be capable of joining in; of imagining for themselves what I have been unable to re-imagine [. . .]" (352). So, by directly addressing the audience, Rushdie uses Saleem to implore the reader to accept an alternative and to create too. He prevents the readers from being caught up in a story within organic life; that progresses uninterrupted . Rushdie encourages the readers to participate in the creation of history saying we are always being shown "the hands holding strings" (72). Instead of being ushered to what happened next we are directed to the future or the past, the beginning or the end of the story. Presenting the idea of memory as creating new reality, Rushdie makes readers to form their own conclusions rather than to believe blindly the presented conclusions. The individual version may differ from the official version but still it remains valid because "no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version than his own (25). So, truth depends upon the perception of an individual.

Rushdie believes in the subjective history. Since history is subjective, there can be multiple truths or multiple histories, "there can be as many versions of India as many Indians" (323). He interrogates the traditional notion of history as single, meaningful, final truth and objective. So, Saleem does not claim his version is the final and absolute one but rather simply a version of Indian history.

For the old historicist, traditionalist history is the absolute, final truth and only one version. They believe in the linear history, authoritative, single history and history as a unified whole. Opposing this view Rushdie claims the multiplicity of history. "1001 the number of night, of magic, of alternative realities- a number beloved of poets and detested by politicians, for whom all alternative versions of the world are threats" (259). For the politicians, for the state the alternative version of history are the threats because they interrogate the notion of official history. The politician and state who have power in their hand, create their own version of reality to exercise their power upon others. They make everybody believe only their so called final history as only one single truth. Hiding the gaps and leakages they expose the realities in their favour, according to their interests. But Rushdie undermines their notion as the history to present as it is impossible.

The state controls over the media and ultimately controls the production and distribution of truth. So, Saleem insists there is always "Divorce between news and reality; newspapers quoted foreign economists - PAKISTAN A MODEL FOR EMERGING NATIONS - while peasants (unreported) cursed the so-called "green revolution" (399). Therefore, truth is always controlled by power. The truth is always affected by the existing power relation of the era in which it is created. The official version of history is always in favour of the rulers. It is controlled and manipulated by

the facts to suit their interest. Saleem claims that during the Indo-Pak war of 1965, the state - controlled Radios- All India Radio and voice of Pakistan - broadcasted false news. This is the very nature of history. In this regard Saleem interrogates, "who to believe?"(407). Truth is not what already exists or what is already there. It is rather vested or made up. It is controlled by different networks of power. Saleem further states that in the conflicting official radio accounts of the war, "Nothing was real; nothing certain" (406) The sincere and patriotic sacrifice was forged in "the fantasies of our rulers" (405). And the reality never appeared on the papers. Beside this the harshness brutality, weak sides of the war were concealed in the official history because of the state's obsession to win the war. But contrarily, Saleem exposes all those destructions and brutality of war in his version of history :

Soldiers entering women's hostels without knocking, women, dragged in to the street were also entered, and again nobody troubled to knock and newspaper offices, burning with the dirty yellow black smoke of cheap gutter newspaper, and the offices of trade unions, smashed to the ground, and roadside ditches filling up with were not merely asleep- bare chests were seen and the hollow pimples of bullet holes.

(426)

This post modern fiction, thus helps to reveal these parts of history which are neglected or concealed or hidden in official version. The traditional historians or the politicians take any alternative versions as a threat, for they may contradict with their version of truth, they may reveal their politics. Against the politicians practice of homogenizing the history, Rushdie created such a fiction. He intermixes facts with fiction to disclose the hidden truths that are not found in the official version of history.

This technique is what Linda Hutcheon calls historiographic metafiction. With this narrative technique only the fiction could resist the official version of Indian history creating fictional history and tampering the facts of official history and redempting the suppressed or hidden facts. So, historiographic metafiction is a resistive and redemptive tool.

On the other hand, Rushdie claims the politics of official history in the war over the Rann of Kutch, Pakistan. He states the real motives behind the war "didn't get into the papers: the pressure, of internal political troubles in Pakistan - Ayub's government was tottering, and a war works wonders at such times" (404). In this sense, the truth which has come out, available to us and known as the ultimate truth can never be true. There can be many motives behind an event but the real motive is never known: "If it happened, what were the motives ?" (409). The cause and effect pattern in official history is the creation of the historians themselves. And the truth-value is determined by the state ideology. The existing power relation in the state determines the truth.

Rushdie, through the historiographic metafiction *Midnight's Children* subverts Jameson's claim that the mixing of fiction with facts causes the disappearance of historical referents and this technique as ahistorical and apolitical of the postmodern narrative. Rushdie supports Hutcheon, and claims the impossibility of representing exact history. But giving the clues of historical referents, Rushdie's novel discloses the various hidden truths of Indian history in official version. It is officially said that there is no religious prejudice in India but Saleem believes that his uncle was the "Victim of anti-Muslim prejudice" (467). He states that Nehru's five year plan couldn't meet this goals: "Illiteracy survived unscathed; the population continued to

mushroom" (248). Beside this, the five year plan crushed the fate of many Indian businessmen and "perhaps my father was a late victim of a widespread, though generally unremarkable phenomenon" (212). Saleem criticizes Indira Gandhi's aspiration to be Devi, the mother-Goddess and is reflected in the phrase "*India is Indira and Indira is India*" (509). Saleem "Smelled the ghosts of ancient empires" (513), when the constitution was altered to give Indira absolute powers that turned the democratic government of India into a despotic rule. During Indira Gandhi's rule, Saleem reveals how corruption flourished in India. He says "the country's corrupt, 'black' economy had grown large as the official white variety" (417).

Furthermore, the railway Minister L.N. Misra, Saleem asserts, "Was also the officially-appointed minister for bribery, through whom the biggest deal in the black economy were cleared, and who arranged for pay-offs to appropriate ministers and officials" (417).

To reveal all the truths, historical facts which were hidden in official version of history are possible only through the Rushdie's postmodern historiographic metafiction as a narrative technique. As Jameson says, post modern fiction is not a mere imagination, pastiche in narrative, but it contains facts too, rather, it is historical and political as well. In Rushdie's words, fiction is "one way of denying the official politicians' version of truth" (*Imaginary Homelands* 14). Therefore, *Midnight's Children* is a version of history which contains the facts of India's history.

American Historical Reference in *Ragtime*

E.L. Doctorow, as a break from the traditional historical fiction, presents *Ragtime* which is full of great historical detail. Instead of treating historical personages as VIPs like traditional historical novel, the new historical novel

constantly makes the reader to discover the imaginative status of these characters and events—the status and character of the imaginative experience he is being offered. As the traditional master narrative, the narrator, the little boy of the novel, announces that "there were no Negroes. There were no immigrants" in the beginning of the novel (4). Right after a page later he himself comes to accept that "apparently there were Negroes. There were immigrants" (5). This shows the unreliability of official historical narratives which forces the reader to participate and find out the truth.

Ragtime is a version of history of America in ragtime era. The historians who had written about ragtime era have neglected the minorities and shown the truths according to the power discourses of that era. To unravel such hidden voices, concealed realities, Doctorow presents the novel *Ragtime*. Hence, it is full of the voices of dominated groups, like Jews, migrants, Negroes, women etc. Interlinking historical characters with fictional characters, Doctorow is able to resist the official history and to redempt the hidden facts as well.

According to official history, the ragtime era was progressive, peaceful and just era. But Doctorow claims it was full of poverty, exploitation, injustice etc. "Across America sex and death were barely distinguishable. Anyway women died in the rigors of ecstasy. Stories were hushed up and reporters paid off by rich families" (4). Thus the so-called gender equality claimed by official history has been mocked. The wicked sides of ragtime era are hidden by the power holders, money holders and truth is constructed according to their interest. Doctorow shows these realities by mixing facts with fictions.

The narrative of *Ragtime* starts with the historical reference of twentieth century period "in 1902 father built a house at the crest of Broad view Avenue hill in

New Rochelle, New York"(3). From the very beginning, Doctorow's intention of mixing facts and fictions to subvert the official history is explicit. Doctorow mentions the social trends of early 1900s in the very beginning. He mentions "Teddy Roosevelt was president"(3) to mix it with fictional events. Portraying three fictional families within historical references, it is Doctorow's purpose to reveal the hidden realities of American society in the era of ragtime.

The historiographic metafiction as narrative technique does a work here in *Ragtime* to make the readers aware of the particular history. The intermixing of fictional creations does not lead the historical reference towards disappearance but tries to give it the form of actuality which were hidden before. "Doctorow admirably exploits the dark areas of history, offering interpretation of the past which, although not denied by the historical records jar our assumption and undercut our trust in the official record" (Henry 32).

Thus Doctorow makes the documented American past open for discussion and interpretations in *Ragtime*. As John G. Parks writes:

By blurring the distinctions between fact and fiction Doctorow's fiction seeks to disclose and to challenge the hegemony of enshrined or institutionalized discursive practices. The narrative of fiction is thus the locus of battle as it were for freedom In Doctorow, dialogue or polyphonic fiction is both disruptive and subversive of regimes of power and restorative of neglected or forgotten or unheard voices in the culture. It is this twin aim of disruption and restoration that characterizes Doctorow's own polyphonic fiction as it seeks to engage

what he calls the "Progression of metaphores that constitute our civilization. (454)

Doctorow's fiction thus, shows a willingness to take risks to counter the tendency of a culture, to monopolize the composition of truth with polyphonic heteroglossic narrative. It is a blend of a number of oppositions and tensions, degeneration and regeneration, static forms and volatile images, repetition and change, history and fantasy, self and other, rich and poor white and black, WASP and immigrant, narcissism and self divestment, journeys outward and journeys inward departures and arrivals. These tensions are exhibited in the chance intermingling of three fictive families and various historical personages. The failed quests, father's quest for new explorations, Coalhouse Walker's quest for racial justice, Tateh's quest for economic justice shows the hidden social realities in the official narrative.

Basically three parts of the novel consists of the story of three families. There is an upper-middle class family composed of Father, Mother's younger brother, Little boy and Grandfather. The second family is an economically ruined family of Jewish migrants composed of Tateh, Mameh and their daughter and the third one is the tragic family composed of Coalhouse walker, a gentle black pianist, his wife Sarah and their child. Doctorow makes criss cross among these three families and tampers their lives and conditions with the historical events. By doing so, Doctorow manages to deal the issues of politics, issues of capitalism, exploitation, freedom, racism, migration, history etc.

Tateh's family, and his conditions are very miserable. Poverty and exploitation ruins their family. Poverty compels his wife, Mameh to turn into prostitute. She sells her body to her employer:

He counted out the money adding a dollar more than she deserved.

Thus he explained was because she was a good looking woman. He

smiled. He touched Mameh's breast. Mameh fled, taking the dollar [. .

.]. She became accustomed to the hands of her employer. One day with

two week's rent due she let the man have his way on a cutting table. He

kissed her and tasted the salt of her tears. (Doctorow 16)

Thus, her employer exploits her physically. Her beauty becomes the enemy of her

own life because of poverty. Poverty seizes her life. Poverty ruins her life. She

becomes victim in the hand of capitalist employer.

Tateh and his little daughter move from place to place in search of financial

security. He is a socialist, but he is compelled to leave his political life and turned out

to be a filmmaker. That shows the Tateh's family as the example of poverty on

ragtime era.

Jacob Rijs, a tireless newspaper reporter and a reformer, wrote about the need

of housing for the poor. There was no sanitation. Children died on the floor with mild

cold or slight rashes. All of them lived in a room, slept on beds made from two

kitchen chairs pushed together. "Many people believed that filth and starvation and

disease were what the immigrant got for his moral degeneracy" (17). "Pillows were

placed on the sidewalks. Families slept on stoops and in doorways" (18). There is

mentioned, these realities of American past are mockery to the so-called progression

of the era in official history.

Doctorow has questioned all so called objective truths that as American

official history claimed. Doctorow believes in the impossibility of objective truth,

history as it was. History is the imposition of power. It keeps on sliding according to

the power shifts. So, the pure history is ungettable, as Peary, the leader of North Pole Expedition Team, "couldn't find the exact place to say this spot, here, is the North pole" (80). But nevertheless they placed the flag over there as if North Pole was found by them. Nobody questioned whether that was the exact North Pole or not but they simply believed to Peary Expedition Team. Same thing happens with history too. Everybody believes what the historians wrote as truth. Doctorow has given an example of historical character Theodore Dreiser, who,

Raising his weight from the chair he lifted it with two hand and turned it to the right, to align it properly. For a moment he thought the chair was aligned, but then he decided it was not. He moved it another turn to the right. He tried sitting in the chair now but it still felt peculiar. He turned it again. Eventually he made a complete circle and still he could not find the proper alignment for the chair . . . Dreiser turned his chair in circles seeking the proper alignment for the chair. (26)

Hence, Dreiser could not get the proper alignment to fix his chair. So, is the history. It's natural the objectivity of history is ungettable. Doctorow believes, history is thus, same as Dreiser's direction of chair. It can't get the objectivity, fixity. Despite this still there is so called objectivity in the history claimed by historians and history writers which is the construction of power Doctorow undermines this in *Ragtime*.

There was injustices, exploitation and poverty instead of democracy, progression and peace. So, there was revolution too against those injustice, exploitation, poverty, gender inequality, racial injustice etc. Those who challenge the so called convention, tradition were directly labeled as anarchists, in a sense the terrorists.

Emma Goldman a female revolutionary, who advocates equality and freedom for women has been often stopped from speaking and putting her thought in front of the public. She is arrested time and again for advocating the freedom. So, there was not peace and democracy. She has been taken as a threat by the authority, whose thoughts were the thoughts of the marginalized and the suppressed people. She used to be arrested and connected in every case whether she was guilty or not because of her principle. Her thoughts were against the capitalist hegemony of the white American culture. Her opinion was: "There is only one struggle throughout the world, there is only the flame of freedom trying to light the hideous darkness of life on earth" (168). Not to let her to opine her thought freely, to arrest her time and again are not the way of democratic country. And Emma Goldman, the historical character is the product of such inequality and injustice. She is a great mockery to the so called democracy of America at that time.

Doctorow, throughout the novel, has made his fictional characters to interact with the historical characters in fictional situations. Many viewers as well noted the "admixture of fact and fiction" in Doctorow's novel (Foley 85). "*Ragtime* contains numerous sketches of historical personages e.g. Theodore Dreiser and Sigmund Freud..." (86). Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung "took a boat together through the tunnel of love" (38). Doctorow makes Freud speak from his mouth the truth that "America is a mistake, a gigantic mistake" seeing America's "careless commingling of great wealth and great poverty, the chaos of an entropic European civilization" (39). The description of historical personages gives the historical importance, historical meaning and the historical reality of ragtime era. Tateh, a fictional character invites the historical character Emma Goldman in one of the meeting presided by him "One

day Tateh invited her to a meeting of which the Socialist Artists Alliance of the Lower East Side was a part sponsor, along with several organizations" (51). Although Tateh was unalterably opposed to Goldman, she being an anarchist and he a socialist, he had great respect for her personal courage and integrity. He thought some sort of temporary accord between socialists and anarchists was acceptable. So he invited her. The Mother's Younger Brother, a fictional character follows the historical beauty, historical character Evelyn Nesbit, everywhere and close relationship grows between them. There is a close interaction, interrelation and intercourses between them. In this way, Doctorow several times has cunningly brought together a historical and fictional character and they blur the borderline between history and fiction. They create a new vision to undermine the officially recorded facts as ultimate truth.

Through the help of fictional characters Doctorow tries to give the information of historical moments too. Mother is the representation of the 1960s movement to lead the females to the liberation. In the peak of the season giving all responsibilities of business to Mother Father goes to the exploration of North Pole with Peary Expedition Team. This situation works as a challenge for a submissive, dominated housewife. It became a time for Mother to prove herself, without the help of a man. In the meantime, she finds a abandoned child in her kitchen garden and Sarah, the mother of that child. Sarah was a black women who gave birth to the child before marriage. Mother proves herself strong in that situation by deciding to give shelter to them and says, "I will take the responsibility" while the police wants to send the child to charity house and Sarah to the prison in the case of giving birth of child before marriage and abandoning the child as well (70). Here lies Doctorow's twin aims to show the mother a strong woman and the abandonment of the child by Sarah as the

result of poverty in ragtime era so the mother gives the information of 1960s historical movement, which was the feminist movement.

At the later half part of the novel, there appears a black pianist ragtime musician, well dressed and polite man named Coalhouse Walker. He comes to Father and Mother's house to meet Sarah, the black woman who was residing there with her child. But the woman refuses to meet him. Walker was the lover of Sarah. He impresses Mother and Younger brother with his manner, plays ragtime music in their house. He was a man of dignity and sensitive towards his identity and his position in the eyes of white people as a ragtime musician. His behaviour makes Father think that probably he was not a Negro. Father, though a liberal white man, is not completely free from the thought of White superiority over Black. Coalhouse Walker is the great victim of racism that helps to radicalize the tension of Doctorow to resist the official version of American history.

Coalhouse Walker had owned an expensive automobile, a model T-ford which was the symbol of black's equality to white in material prosperity. He drives his car to New York. "He was not unaware that in his dress and as the owner of a car he was a provocation to many white people. He had created himself in the teeth of such feelings" (174). At last the automobile becomes the cause of his death. On the way, to his working place from the house Sarah residing, was Fire House Lane; while passing the route his road is blocked abruptly by the volunteers of the Firehouse.

[As] the negro come along a team of three matching gray engine horse cantered out of the Firehouse into the road pulling behind them the big steam power [. . .]. They were immediately reined, causing Coalhouse Walker to brake his car abruptly. (175)

Thus, the Fire House volunteers broke his car. Claiming that was private toll the Fire House Volunteers asked him \$25 as fine or to prove him as a resident of that town. It was the superior feeling of whites over black and a method to remind Coalhouse Walker his place and position.

Coalhouse refused to pay since he had known that there was no any private toll. He could not run away because they already informed their chief and blocked his road from both sides. The chief of the company arrived there and ordered him whether to pay \$25 or to prove himself a resident of this town otherwise he would not pass. They behaved with Coalhouse as if he trespassed in other's land while passing in his own country road America, even more at the time of peace, harmony, prosperity, equality and democracy. He thought of available actions against them and keeping two Negro boys to guard his car he went to complain to the police. Listening to his complain the policeman said "These boys don't mean no harm I know them all. Go on back now, they're probably tired of the sport"(177). This was probably the maximum help he could expect from policeman. This shows the dominance of white power over government since they couldn't provide justice to the black victim. Then Coalhouse returned back to Firehouse Lane.

He found his car off the road in the field "spattered with mud", "six inch tear in the custom pantasote top" and "deposited in the back seat was a mound of fresh human excrement" (177). Coalhouse still a strong man demanded his car to be repaired which was damaged by them. The only answer he got from them was a roar of laughter from the chief and his volunteers. It was really an inhuman act, unjust act and cruelty done by white upon the black. The policeman came and asked them whether they were detaining his car forcefully. The chief blamed Coalhouse for

parking his car in the middle of the road in front of his Fire House. The police tried to persuade him to forget all things and go on his own way. But Coalhouse had belief in equality and was a man of dignity he repeated his demand. That was enough for the white police and grew angry. The police said,

[If] you do not take your automobile and get along out of here, he said loudly, I'm going to charge you with driving off the road drunkenness, and making an unsightly nuisance . . . I'm placing you under arrest. You will come with me in the wagon. (178)

Without mistake a black man was arrested. To seek justice became his crime in white society. In the police's eyes blacks were inferior than white and better to excuse the white whatever they did against blacks otherwise it would be more harmful to the blacks. Coalhouse was taken to custody. After his bail Coalhouse Walker seeks those two nigger boys whom he had kept to look after his car. He found out the parents of those two "boy only to [. . .] refusing [. . .] involved in the matter" (179). They were aware of the terror of standing against the white people being black. They wanted to live out of trouble. They had been accepting their inferiority and the superiority of whites all their lives.

To provide the historical reference of the civil right movements of 1960s, Doctorow enlivened the character, Coalhouse. So, Coalhouse still wants to go in peaceful and legal way to achieve his demand. He determined to see a case against the chief of Fire House, Willie Conklin. He searched black lawyers but there were none. He consulted with three attorneys as Father's recommendation but they refused to represent him instead advised him to forget the matter as if;

It seemed like such a foolish thing to have happened. It seemed to be his fault, somehow, because he was Negro and it was the kind of problem that would only adhere to a Negro. His monumental negritude sat in front of them like a center piece on the table. (186)

Nobody was there to help him because he was a black man. To be a Negro was seemed to be his crime. So there was no racial justice in ragtime, America.

Coalhouse consulted a black attorney in Harlem but the attorney of the Harlem didn't want to proceed, since he knew Willie Conklin, was the stepbrother of the Judge of the City Court and the nephew of a County Alderman in White Plains. That indicates that there would be no justice for blacks. These denials of the all Judges to proceed his case made Coalhouse hopeless towards the body of justice. He was ignored everywhere, that made Coalhouse to turn into a violent character. He raised to show the American society of ragtime era what he was seeking for in peaceful way before. He started murder, arson and bombing and promised his fiancée Sarah "he could not marry until he had been satisfied by the return of the Model-T in exactly the same condition as when the firehouse had been driven across his path" (186).

Coalhouse is the hero of the novel to foreground Doctorow's intention. Coalhouse's voice is one of the examples of voice in official history. Younger Brother, deceived by Evelyn Nesbit, influenced by Emma Goldman is also sympathetic to Coalhouse, while responding to Father's comment on Coalhouse as a man who has never been tested in his principles" (186).

Coalhouse became the subject matter to discuss in Father, Mother and Brother's house. That affected Sarah the most because he was her would be husband and her child's father. There was going to be held election in America that time and "a

candidate on the national republican ticket, Mr. Taft's vice-president, James Sherman was to be in New Rochelle" (189). Sarah thought that was the right time to make appeal for justice of Coalhouse Walker with him to secure her family. Her main important aim was to save Coalhouse from his upcoming tragedy where he was heading to. But she was a poor black, uneducated woman, who didn't have the idea of government. Sarah knew that Coalhouse never changes his decision. So, she made her way to the Tidewaters Hotel where James Sherman was going to speak, on her bare foot.

Sarah broke through the line and ran toward him calling, in her confusion, president ! president ! Her arm was extended and her black hand reached toward him. He shrank from the contact. Perhaps in the dark windy evening of impending storm it seemed to Sherman's guards that Sarah's black hand was a weapon. A Militiaman stepped forward and with the deadly officiousness of armed man who protect the famous, brought the butt of his spring field chest as hard as he could. She fell, A secret service man jumped on top of her. The vice-president disappeared into the hotel. In the confusion and shouting that followed, Sarah was put in a police wagon and driven away. (191)

Sarah, in this way, got a bitter blow. She wanted to request to the president to do a favour for Coalhouse. But nobody understood her innocence. For she was a black women. Black people were kept silent by force. The uncanny or unorthodox looking behaviour associated to blacks were taken as threat straight and was retaliated promptly as in the cause of Sarah.

Innocent Sarah in fear and pain could not speak a single word to answer the inquiry. Because of the hard blow on her chest, her condition weakened. That was the last tragic meeting of Sarah with Coalhouse Walker. They retreated in hospital bed. Coalhouse got a painful griever. "They heard the sepulchral sounds of a grown man's grief" (195). Sarah died at the end of that week. The white supremacy had charged her of attempted assassination and later reduced to disturbing the peace. That was the unbearable monopoly of white power, authority in America at ragtime.

The death of Sarah added fuel to the anger of Coalhouse Walker to be offensive violent towards the American Society. Then he first attacked the same Fire House from where his tragedy started. He wanted to kill the Willie Conklin but luckily he was out of the firehouse at the time of attack. There started to rise the questions of lives and properties, peace and security. The violence of Coalhouse Walker extended all over America." Nevertheless an editorial described the disaster as the work of lone Crazy killer. Citizens were called upon to lock their doors and maintain their vigilance, but to remain calm" (209). Thus, the white always attempted to hide the truth which could make them down. So, the arsonist was believed to be an unidentified Negro male even if he was known to them. It is the irony to the prosperous ragtime America. Coalhouse Walker within an hour of the explosion, left identical letters at the offices of local newspapers, where he had demanded the chief of Fire House Willie Conklin, for his justice and his car to be repaired otherwise he would go on killing the fire men and burning the Fire Houses and would destroy the whole city if needed. Knowing the probable insurrection of dominated groups because of the demand of black man, the letter was not allowed to be printed by the authority. For them "An isolated crazy killer was one problem. An insurrection was another"

(212). More than the former the latter was the main problem for them that made them to hide the reason behind the attack. This shows how conscious were the white authority about their superiority over black people. The availability of racism is so, everywhere. Willie Conklin instead of realizing his mistakes expresses his racial feelings "He wanted to go to the black neighborhood and clean all the niggers out once and for all" (218). That shows the ego of being superior of a white man.

Since the authority did not try to hear his demand, his problem, to give pressure and to make them to listen to him, Coalhouse, second time, attacked the "Municipal Fire Company No. 2" (220). "The city was truly in panic" and the "cries of outrage is directed against the city administration and against Willie Conklin" (221). Because after his second attack his letters which he left before the newspaper offices were published by the *World and Sun*. The authority still refused to accept their fault and misinterpreted Coalhouse's strength as "a gang of coloured men all armed and all presumably motivated by hard cash" (236). The authority didn't think about the injustice done by them created such strength in blacks but they saw the money matter. But that second attack and the letters started to attract the attention of New Rochelle, and began to win the consent of people, People knew the real problem. "Conklin brought of into police headquarters several unsigned letters delivered to his mail box all suggesting that if he did not pack up and leave new Rochelle they, the writers, would do Coalhouse Walker's job for him" (238). "Conklin felt martyred by what he called the nigger lover, even though there now seemed to constitute virtually the entire population of the city" (239). So, his family went into hiding in new York city.

The marginalized, suppressed and ill-treated people united to support Coalhouse Walker. Younger brother, who represents a revolutionary of the era also

joined their group because he was a justice lover. Coalhouse group finally, seized the immense library of Pierpont Morgan, a capitalist. The library consisting large number of histories was the symbol of history. The capture of library by Coalhouse is a symbolic act which shows Doctorow's intention to resist the official mainstream history. To defend the Morgan's library, different approaches were applied. Booker T Washington, the most famous Negro of the country was called to convince Coalhouse Walker to surrender. It is said his voice was strong and touchy to the blacks because he has accepted the white dominance. He tried to persuade Coalhouse saying:

For my entire life I have worked in patience and hope for a Christian brotherhood. I have had to persuade the white man that he need not fear us to murder us, because we wanted only to improve ourselves and peacefully join him in enjoyment of the fruit of American Democracy [...]. A Thousand honest industrious black men can not undo the harm of one like you. (281)

Booker T, thus, has the belief that the blacks should have patience and should persuade the white. If not, there will be fear and murder then democracy will vanish.

Booker T was famous in white dominated society, it was because he never went against them and accepted their dominance silently "He was not a Negro but a white in blackface" (280). Coalhouse was enemy for white people because he didn't accept the white dominance. He was a freedom and equality lover. The contradiction between them also shows the resistance of Doctorow to the single traditional history. The question of rightness arises here. The acceptance of white supremacy is came into question.

Many dialogues were held between Coalhouse and the authority and finally their negotiation came to the conclusion that his Model T would be repaired in front of public and Coalhouse would surrender. Coalhouse surrendered but on the way to police he got shot of several bullets and his physical existence ended forever, tragically. That was the very climax of the racial injustice to shoot a person who was surrendering. It is clear that the government, the police force also acted according to the whites' wish and order. It seems Morgan is in upper position than the government. The so called, progression, prosperity, equality and the democracy were the myth of power constructed mainstream official history.

Along with this racism, poverty is widespread all over America and Tateh family is the prey of it the most. Tateh, a socialist was compelled to leave his wife Mameh who has already become prostitute because of poverty. With his small daughter he suffered place to place in search of economic betterment. He couldn't get the economic justice. There was lack of opportunities and was the problem of unemployment. More than this there was extreme exploitation of workers in America at ragtime era. They were paid low. They were given less than they deserved. Naturally, so, there was dissatisfaction, tension and revolutions. Mainly, the immigrants suffered from exploitation.

Everyone from Europe was there – the Italians, the poles, the Belgians, the Russians Jews One day the biggest of the mills, American Wollen Company, gave out envelopes with short pay and a trenor went through the workers in the plant. Several Italian workers left their machines. They ran through the mill calling for a strike. They pulled out wires and threw lumps of coal through the windows, others

followed them. The anger spread throughout the city people left their machines In three days every textile mill in Lawrence was virtually shut down Tateh was overjoyed. We were going to starve to death of freeze to death, he told his daughter.(121)

Hence, the people were overpowered by anger, the situation were suffocating at that harmonious, peaceful and prosperous ragtime era because of low paid. They started strike and many mills were shot down. Tateh also was excited to join the strike.

But the militia police were employed to break the strike by the capitalists. It was really difficult to carry on the strike for the workers because they have to look after their family too. The people who were observing the situation paid interest to help the workers and offer to give shelter to the children of the workers to carry on their strike until the factory owners would increase their salaries. But the capitalists employed police force to stop the children from going out of the city. Police started to appear everywhere. Terrible screams were heard because the police started to separate the mothers from their children by dragging and kicking the mothers. Tateh who was willing to send his daughter away so that he could participate in the strike freely was also attacked badly. "The police cracked him as his shoulder and the head with his stick. . . . He was followed and beaten. He stumbled away from the crowd and was still beaten Finally he fell"(127). Hence, he could not do as his wish but with the help of two conductors he could catch a train to Philadelphia and he found his daughter there. How much the capitalism victimized and gave pain to Tateh, we came to know in that democratic America. Because of these, Tateh could not continue his political career instead became a film maker to live in that capitalistic society.

Finally the Mother and Tateh got married and made up a family with their three children. The marriage between Mother and Tateh and the assimilation of three children from three different background Mother's son, from Christian background (white), Tateh's daughter from Jewish immigrance and Sarah's son from Black background make us to startle and think once back to the American historical as well as cultural trend. The very admixture fulfilled the intention of Doctorow to question the mainstream history, to redempt the hidden truths from the imposition of master narrative to create new version of American ragtime history. The suppressed reality of exploitation, injustice racism, poverty, capitalism, thus got the way to be expressed through Doctorow's narrative technique, intermixing fact with fiction.

Doctorow has written *Ragtime* with the personal histories of the characters from the marginalized such as blacks, Jews, immigrants and women that subverts the notion of objectivity of history and presents different version of the ragtime period. As William Matheson claims that Doctorow's title for his novel is a pun. "In addition to being the time of ragtime music, "ragtime" as a period (ca. 1902 to the first world war) was the time of old rags and poverty, a time of great social inequality" (21). *Ragtime* is a kind of music. In so many places in the novel the 'rag' and 'ragtime' refer to music. Besides this it has it's nonmusical meaning too that is poverty. As a member of the explorer Peary's Artic expedition the character called Father leaving New York, sees a ship bringing the poor immigrants to America: it is "a rag ship with a million dark eyes staring at him" (13). At the fashionable poverty balls given in the mansions of the rich, "guests came dressed in rags and ate from plates and drank from chipped mugs" (40). The jewish immigrant Tateh, newly arrived in Philadelphia from Lawrence, Massachusetts has decided he will not go back and "His belongings his

ragged, he would leave to the landlord" (149). At a New York Giants baseball game Father is appalled because "every ragging course could be heard by his son" (263). After younger brother goes to Mexico, we learn that the childlike peasant revolutionaries supporting Emiliano Zapata "wore rags" (305). On the last Page of the novel, we read, "a society of ragamuffins, like all of us, a gang getting into trouble and getting out again"(319). So, it is proved the title to be a pun. The latter theme of poverty is associated with great social injustice primarily exemplified by Coalhouse story and anarchist Emma Goldman. That proves America as a land of inequality and injustice.

Resisting the recorded history, Doctorow has opened the possibilities of many versions of histories by revealing the closed and concealed historical facts before.

IV: Conclusion

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Doctorow's *Ragtime* intermix the facts and fiction to accomplish their purpose of resisting the recorded received history and revealing the politically silenced facts of India and America respectively. Rushdie and Doctorow both exploit the notion of historiographic metafiction by Linda Hutcheon, a postmodern narrative technique and Jameson's interrogative notion of blaming postmodern literature as ahistorical which is falsified by these both novelists. As "for Hutcheon postmodern is a consciousness raising machine, exposing rather than abetting (as Jameson would have it) society's power discourse mechanisms, Rushdie and Doctorow's *Midnight's Children* and *Ragtime* accomplished it. They are successful to give us the historical references of India and America raising our consciousness towards their history. While doing so they falsify the claim of Jameson that postmodern literature leads history out of reach. The blending of historical characters with fictional characters liberate the caged unheard facts of history.

Rushdie and Doctorow both view history and fiction as human construct. Fiction is as important as history is. No objective history is possible to write since the historian's prejudices and preoccupations are unavoidable, inseparable. As White said "historical texts are literary artifacts" (395). While interpreting the historical facts by the historians they have to make it intelligible to others and it can't remain as objective impartial and unbiased, but relative and subjective as other literary genres. Rushdie and Doctorow attack the claim of traditional history that the official history is final, absolute, single and objective fact. Postmodernist does not believe in absolute single truth. Neil Campbell and Alasdeir Kean have also said in their *American Cultural Studies* that "Histories are written by historians who themselves are located

in a specific social context and whose observations, interpretations and judgements are partly shaped by conceptual categories they bring to their task" (7). They have said Native Americans and African Americans have been silenced because they were not admitted into the dominant culture.

The post modernists believe history is the story of winners. As Foucault, they question the official history as power construct. The power holders wrote the historical events in their way, according to their interests and to fulfill their political benefits; perpetuating their supremacy over marginals. So, the history is in favour of them who was in power. They always try to homogenize the history. Defying that Rushdie in *Midnight's Children* opens the possibilities of multiple histories. Drawing Saleem's fictional family history parallel to national history Rushdie exposes the many more children truths, distorted truth and leakages. In many places the narrator Saleem leaves the questions unanswered, sometimes he gives the same event in two different dates that called the readers to participate themselves to find out the truths.

Doctorow also in his novel *Ragtime* does the same thing. He mixes the historical characters with fictional characters and makes them to interact that tampers with the facts of received history and reveals the hidden fact too. The events which does not give importance to the authority have been excluded in official history. But Doctorow writes here new version of American history including the events which the so-called official history excluded to ignore. The radical revolution of the main fictional character Coalhouse Walker shows the racism of the early twentieth century in America. His capture to the library of historical personality, Morgan which preserves the linear and homogeneous history symbolizes the resistance against official history. The love making between the historical beauty Evelyn Nesbit and

Younger Brother, the Persuasion of historical character Booker T Washington to Walker when he seizes the library shows the interaction between history and fiction. The socialist Tateh chairs a program addressed by historical character, Emma Goldman. These events of interacting, interlinking and intermixing historical character with fictional character clarifies that the fiction is as important as history that helps Doctorow to draw another version of American history.

In *Midnight's children*, Rushdie makes Saleem emphasize the subjective nature of history by making him to believe in memory and not to correct his errors while committing many errors. Moreover Saleem says that the truth regarding the cause of the Indo-Pak War never appeared in the papers, and the harshness of war was never described in the official history. The official history never goes beyond the ideology in which it is written or produced. Saleem clarifies that when he says that the state-controlled media of India and Pakistan exaggerated the truth and broadcasted the contrasting news at the time of Indo-Pak war. So, the official history is authoritarian. As contrary to Jameson's claim that postmodern fiction is ahistorical and apolitical, Rushdie's novel becomes a historical as well as political novel. In a sense, it is a version of Indian history around independence era. By mixing facts with fictions Rushdie takes out such a historical referents which was never exposed before. So, *Midnight's Children* is a version of Indian history.

In *Ragtime* also Doctorow's every fictional character tampers with the historical character and events making us aware of the particular nature of the historical referent instead making it disappear. Giving each and every detail about ragtime era, Doctorow creates a new ragtime history questioning the authoritarian official history and revealing the suppressed realities. Of course, *Ragtime* becomes a

version of American ragtime history by making us aware of the politics of official historians.

As Linda Hutcheon's claim, the post modern historiographic metafiction *Midnight's Children* and *Ragtime* give us ample historical references of India and America. All the politically suppressed, unheard, concealed realities and voices got the way to be expressed and exposed as well throughout these novels. Though the final absolute, objective history is never possible, *Midnight's Children* and *Ragtime* are the versions of Indian and American history respectively, more inclusive than the official history.

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