

Tribhuvan University

**Reconstruction of Textbook American History reading E. L. Doctorow's
*Ragtime.***

**A thesis submitted Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

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April 2007**

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Arun Gupto, Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for the existence of present dissertation work. It has been his highly scholar guidance, valuable suggestions and instructions that made this project a reality. I am deeply indebted to him. Any attempt to express my gratitude to him in words is bound to be inadequate.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of the Central Department of English, Kirtipur, for the approval of this dissertation in its present form. I am highly indebted to my respected teachers Prof. Dr. Abhi Narayan Subedi, Dr. Sanjeev Upreti, Mr. Nagendra Bhattarai, Dr. Beerendra Pandey and Saroj Ghimire for providing me constructive guidelines and invaluable suggestions. With out their suggestion and instructions, the project would not have been completed.

With due respect, I would like to express my gratitude to my family members for the continuous support and encouragements they provided to materialize this research work. My special thanks go to my friends Binod Paudel, Sadan Raj Adhikari, Pam Bahadur Gurung 'Prem', Nirmal Bhusal, Ramesh Kant Neupane, Hari Bro, Susma Regmi, Shyam Prasad Marasini, Deependra Bhandari, and Pradeep Maharjan. Whenever I needed, I found them by my side. I acknowledge them here with humble gratitude.

Last but not the least; I am very much indebted to Surya Adhikari, Students' Books, Kirtipur, for supporting my research work.

May 2007

Deepak Giri

Abstract

With the application of Foucauldian genealogy and revisionist theories (i.e. new historicism and historiography), this research study comes to the conclusion that Doctorow's fictional work *Ragtime* has reinterpreted the official American history of ragtime era with revision and reconstruction. The vertically constructed official history of America has been horizontally reconstructed by Doctorow that denies the objectivity of the history. The researcher undertakes an examination of the characterization and the events in *Ragtime*, concentrating on the personal histories of the characters and the events in the historical time frame to analyze and evaluate the omission and inclusion of the historical events in written official history by rewriting and reinterpreting it. For example, Coalhouse Walker, a black from the era, suffers the racial discrimination that edits the American official history and revises the American official history of the politics of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Bearing such issues in mind Doctorow intermingles fiction and history together thereby, deconstructing the borderline imposed as factual history and false fiction. This reconstructive history in the novel helps us view the American history from new perspective that reveals American official history as based on prejudices, preoccupations, discrimination and marginalization that parodizes the so-called multicultural democracy of American history.

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