# A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION IN MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S *RUNNING IN THE FAMILY* AND JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE PASSION*

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**ABDULLAH EMİN YAZICI**

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN**

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**Abdullah Emin YAZICI**

**T.C**

**Karabuk University**

**Institute of Graduate Programs**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**Prepared as**

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**Asst. Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN**

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# THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Abdullah Emin YAZICI titled "A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION IN MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S *RUNNING IN THE FAMILY*, AND JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE PASSION*" is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of M.A.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN .....

Thesis Advisor, Department of English Literature

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| Examining Committee Members (Institutions) | Signature |
|---|---|
| Advisor : Asst. Prof. Dr. Samet GÜVEN (KBU) | ..... |
| Member : Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ismael Harith TURKİ (KBU) | ..... |
| Member : Assoc. Prof. Dr. Timuçin Buğra EDMAN (DU) | ..... |

The degree of M.A by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

Prof. Dr. Hasan SOLMAZ .....

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# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

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**Name Surname: Abdullah Emin YAZICI**

**Signature :**

# FOREWORD

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my sons.

# ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to scrutinize the use of historiographic metafiction in Michael Ondaatje and Jeanette Winterson's novels. The theory questions the role of a historiographer, and how history is generated. Historiographic metafiction draws attention to the fact that history like literature, is a human construct, and it cannot exclude itself from the subjective or ideological manners of a historiographer. Along with the related notions of postmodern scholars, this study is based on a close reading of the novels in the sense of Linda Hutcheon's ideas upon postmodern historiography. The selected novels point out to the existence of alternative histories and intertextuality that all signify the impossibility of reaching absolute truth.



**Keywords:** Postmodernism, historiographic metafiction, Michael Ondaatje, Jeanette Winterson.

# ÖZ (ABSTRACT IN TURKISH)

Bu tez Michael Ondaatje ve Jeanette Winterson'a ait olan romanlarda tarihsel üstkurmacanın kullanımını ayrıntılı ele almaktadır. Bu teori, tarihçinin rolünü ve tarihi nasıl oluşturduğunu sorgulamaktadır. Tarihsel üstkurmaca, tarihin aynen edebiyatta olduğu gibi, bir insan kurgusu olduğunu ve kendisini yazarın öznelliğinden yada ideolojilerinden ayrı tutamayacağına dikkat çekmektedir. Bu çalışma postmodern düşünürlerin tarih yazımı konusundaki savlarıyla birlikte, Linda Hutcheon' ın düşünceleri doğrultusunda seçili romanların ayrıntılı çalışılmasını temel almıştır. Her iki romanda alternatif tarihlerin ve metinlerarasılığının varlığına işaret ederek, mutlak doğruya ulaşmanın imkansız olduğu vurgulanmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler (Keywords in Turkish):** Postmodernism, tarihsel üstkurmaca, Michael Ondaatje, Jeanette Winterson.

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## SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis mainly focuses on a postmodern premise towards historiography. In the light of Linda Hutcheon's theory called *Historiographic Metafiction*, Michael Ondaatje's autobiographical novel *Running in the Family* (1982) and Jeanette Winterson's novel *The Passion* (1987) are scrutinized.

## PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this thesis is to find out historiographic metafictional elements in Michael Ondaatje and Jeanette Winterson's novels. This study also aims to compare the two novels and display their similarities and differences in the sense of postmodern historiography.

## METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The conventional and postmodern historiographies along with the main notions of postmodernism are defined. In this regard, the selected novels are analyzed by giving essential examples from the well-known scholars of the studied era.

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM

This dissertation discusses the term of historiography in consideration of the following questions; Is it possible to generate objective history, and to what extend a historiographer is reliable? The study is also based on an interrogation of the credibility of intertexts and the role of memory during the process of history writing.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES

The selected two novels in this study exemplify the postmodern premises of history writing. However, as the historiography is a broad term, it is not feasible to analyze the concept in every aspect.

## CHAPTER ONE

Postmodernism revises the term of historiography, and it questions the clear-cut distinction of history and fiction since the movement maintains a notion that history is constructed by human beings just like literature. According to postmodern scholars, historiography is no longer seen as "accessible, as pure fact, independent of individual perception, ideology, or the process of selection necessitated simply by creating a written narrative" (Lee, 1990, 29). Furthermore, Friedrich Nietzsche sets three methods of historiography: the monumental, which is generally employed by political historians to influence or encourage people; the antiquarian, coded with the intend of keeping past and protect it; and the critical one that needs to be applied together with the previous two methods. The last one aims to "drag the past before the court of justice, investigate it meticulously, and finally condemn it" (2007, 21). Nietzsche rejects any absolute truth, and he states the necessity of interrogation before accepting.

Likewise, Linda Hutcheon's theory of *Historiographic Metafiction* both acknowledges and rejects the past. Novels, which carry the traces of this theory, are set in a recognizable time in the past with verifiable incidents and characters, but the authors also include fictitious elements to blur the fact and fiction. Postmodern authors, who deal with history in their works, seek to destabilize conventional premises of the past. While traditional historians intend to generate objective reality, historiographic metafiction is doubtful of any certainty. The theory offers a self-conscious narrating of past events that are inevitably subjective. Historians do not have full or direct access to the past because they work with fragmentary texts but "the problem of how to read and interpret them should be considered vital for" them (LaCapra, 1992, 431). Therefore, the outcome of their works may only be limited or imaginative. It can be inferred that historians, just like novelists, produce their own meanings. In addition, it is very probable that their interpretations may vary or they may be erroneous.

The loss of faith in past has caused diversified focal points in history. The focus of historiography has shifted to the marginal and the excluded along with the fictional elements, which are not possible to be seen in conventional history writing. The premise that history cannot produce a universal, objective or all-encompassing account of the past has displaced the traditional ways of historiography, which is based on a scientific search of objective truth. Mark Currie claims that "the combination of history

and fiction that takes place in 'historiographic metafiction'" can be considered as one of the determining characteristics of postmodern novels (2013, 93). This leads the conclusion that there can never be a whole comprehension of the past as there is no single reality but an altered one.

Postmodern scholars also distrust historical documents or any evidence since they can only be available if a historian can unearth them. Their problematic nature still exists even if they are found, yet. Richard J. Evans, for instance, draws an analogy between searching for any evidence and solving a jigsaw puzzle. He states that;

> Doing historical research is rather like doing a jigsaw puzzle where the pieces are scattered all over the house in several boxes, some of which have been destroyed, and where once it is put together, a significant number of the pieces are still missing. The nature of the resulting picture will depend partly on how many boxes still survive and have been tracked down, and this depends partly on having some idea of where to look; but the picture's contours can still be filled in, even when not all the pieces have been located. We *imagine* the contours in this situation and have to speculate on quite a bit of detail. (1997, 89).

From the statements above, it can be inferred that any attempts of history writing with evidence, have an interpretative side. Historian's adequacy and unity of the evidence are also crucial factors that affect his reliability. Moreover, it is the historian who attributes meanings to past incidents with his subjective manners. If he fails to define any event, his imagination intervenes, and it becomes a crucial act that jeopardizes the reliability of his work. Evans also draws attention to the conservation of evidence as their disappearance is also a very probable issue.

The role of memory and its relation to the past have faced a profound change in recent years, too. According to Pierre Nora, this alteration takes different forms such as interrogation of official histories, the recovery of the silenced or ignored ones, the discovery of neglected or forgotten past, and general interest in origins. This change encapsulates the world, and people embark on their "recovery of memory", which leads to "a global settling of scores with the past". (2001,1). He offers some reasons for a desire to turn back to the past. Initially, as people have no longer have a vision of hope for the future, they feel obligated to remember the past with a fear of losing it. Moreover, the silenced or "those denied the right of History", attempt to unearth their past (2002, 21). As a result, memory, in regard to historiography, has become an ideological tool. On the other hand, Paul Ricoeur draws attention to the fallibility of

memory. He states that forgetting plays an important role in history. Memory is selective, and it is more active in some occasions like "public rituals, anniversaries or celebrations" (2004, 11). The specific aspects of the past are recalled while others are neglected. Therefore, it can be stated that the reliability of memory is also under scrutiny due to its ideological and subjective features.

In the sense of readers, postmodern historiography offers more liberty to its interpreters. The premise of 'death of author' by Roland Barthes is adopted. Barthes accepts the existence of the author, but when the text is finished, the writer's role is also done. He states that "literature is that neutral, that composite, that oblique into which every subject escapes, the trap where all is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes" (1977, 142). As soon as the author finishes his text, it becomes the reader's duty to interpret it with his background or imagination, and the interpretations probably differ from one reader to another.

Self-reflexivity and intertextuality are other crucial features of postmodernism. While self-reflexivity deals with the inner mechanisms of the text to produce meaning, intertextuality refers to the idea that texts do not exist on their own. It can be stated that postmodernist texts are the outcome of a mixture and a blending of various interpretations. Therefore, readers' role should not be ignored due to the wealth of meanings that co-exist in a text. The multiplicity of perspectives may lead readers to feel bewildered, and they are forced to come up with the aims of these confusions, which requires their own interpretations to reach the intended meanings. In the light of the arguments above, this study aims to identify strategies for understanding the discourse of history by tracing the themes of the selected novels.

This thesis scrutinizes Michael Ondaatje's autobiographical novel *Running in the Family* and Jeanette Winterson's novel *The Passion* in terms of historiographic metafictional elements respectively. Both of the novels include the indications of a postmodern sensitivity towards history. They go beyond the traditional norms as they reflect novelties in the field of historiography. Ondaatje presents his readers with some visuals and historical documents along with the fantastic elements in his novel. In this respect, he problematizes the history of both his ancestors and his hometown by his self-reflexive attitudes upon his narration. Winterson also uses fantasy in her novel and further, she rejects generally accepted truths of conventional historiography via creating unfamiliar protagonists and a setting in the novel. The two novels reconstruct

and rewrite the past not only by adopting a subjective narration but also by implementing a postmodern premise of breaking the borders.

The first chapter of the thesis will analyze the term of historiography briefly within the scope of its evolution till the postmodern movement. In this sense, the notion of history writing has been shifted from a scientific-based study to a self-reflexive approach of historiographers, and interrogative demeanour has substituted the absolute truth. The historical and socio-cultural background of postmodernism and its main arguments along with the theory of historiographic metafiction will be depicted in the same chapter.

The second chapter will provide an analysis of Ondaatje's autobiographical novel from the perspective of postmodern historiography. The author, after waking up from a nightmare, decides to go back to his hometown and learn more about the past of his family members and his birthplace. However, when he is not able to reach the facts, he mainly presents readers with his desired past or fictitious elements rather than the realities. He also abuses historical documents by selecting among them. The author's subjectivity directs readers' perceptions, and it shatters their conventional moral and aesthetic expectations, too.

In the third chapter, Winterson's novel will be scrutinized in the framework of history, historiographic metafiction and fantasy. The concept of reversed gender roles and the existence of silenced figures will also be dealt with. The author aims to depict the history of the ignored rather than the universal or famous historical figures. Winterson's point of view upon history and her worldview about the patriarchal and traditional community will be elaborated, too.

In the last chapter, a conclusion section of the study will be offered in terms of the theory of historiographic metafiction. The similarities and the differences of each novel will be conveyed in the light of the concepts that have been investigated.

### 1.1- Historical and Socio-cultural Backgrounds of the Study

The Second World War disenchanted the western and Asian people much more than the previous one because an atom bomb was used. As the bomb eradicated a whole city, it resulted in a tremendous shock among people. They lost their belief in life, and it was an era of disillusionment. People replaced their faiths with their perspectives, which challenged any truths or traditional norms. Therefore, the notion

of forming their reality or usefulness of views came into prominence instead of the constructed and absolute truths. Ian Gregson clarifies the origin of postmodernism as in the following:

> There were historical and social changes which caused radical shifts in cultural perceptions and therefore caused the break away from modernism: the end of empire; the rise of the women's movement, black power and gay pride; the hugely increasing importance of popular culture; the enormous expansion of secondary and further education. Key economic and social changes are associated with postmodernism which have been identified with 'late capitalism', especially the shift from economic structures based on heavy industry to those based on technology. The impact of the technological media, especially television, on social experience and cultural perception is also a crucial postmodern phenomenon (2004; 1-2).

Gregson's statements lead the conclusion that the effects of globalization through industry and media have blurred the traditional and cultural boundaries. The disappearance of any certainties like gender roles, racial, and social differences, the expansion of human rights, the improvements in the field of education and financial issues lead people to seek more liberty. Further, objectivity has lost its reputation, and this has given a rise to a multiplicity of truths. The universality of facts has replaced with individual's own reality. The more people have become free, the more perspectives have made ground. Moreover, with the development of technology, people have been imposed the screens and saw the so-called realities, but they did not experience them, and their lives have become “an aesthetic hallucination of reality” (Featherstone, 1991, 85). Media has become the authority on human beings, and it has shaped people’s attitudes by what it presents to them. Hence, reality has turned into something impossible to reach. In other words, simulation has replaced actual reality. Significant alterations in lifestyles and living standards of people have also been apparent thanks to the developments in the field of industry.

The concepts of freedom and fairness have become very significant, too. The previous form of strict society substituted by a more tolerated, liberal and heterogeneous one. In other saying, a rigid society left its place to a more permissive one. Furthermore, Karl Marx’s premise of capitalism had a great impact on postmodernism. With the appearance of different opportunities for consumerism; such as shopping centres, markets or credit cards, postmodern society was regarded as a

consumer community. These kinds of lifestyles dominated the lives of human beings and shaped the ways of their worldviews. Endless facilities led people to search more, and the ones who could not reach them faced a sense of disillusionment.

The sense of disappointment and the loss of faith have caused a different worldview among people. According to Fredric Jameson, one of the most significant themes of postmodernism is "namely the disappearance of a sense of history, the way in which our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and a perpetual change" (1992; 179). As the concept of reality has shifted, and the premise of absolute truth has replaced with an interrogative attitude, subjectivity and allowance of multiplicity have become the main essence of postmodernism. New lifestyles, rejection of previous beliefs and traditions have dominated the views of people. The universality of truth has been regarded as useless because of the belief that truth may vary from person to person or from community to community.

To comprehend the term historiography, the study requires a short analysis of the concept regarding the approaches that have affected it. To start with traditional historiography, it can be stated that conventional historians have adopted history as a sort of science, and their task is just to “chart particular facts and events without drawing more general conclusions about their meanings and connections” (Malpas, 2005, 81). On the other hand, the existence of silent voices, those never have been recorded but still, an undeniable part of history has inspired many postmodern writers. The objectivity of history has been called into question by various scholars who claimed that as historiography and fiction are narratives, they are similar in regard to their discursive nature. Moreover, historiography is an outcome of interpretations that are provided by historians. Hence, subjectivity becomes an inevitable issue. Alun Munslow puts forth that;

> What we as historians can know about the past is what it tells us through the available evidence of our senses without passion or self-interest, without imposition or question-begging. The past is, therefore, a “given” and historians discover its meanings through the priority of sense over intellect, content before form. (1997, 81)

Munslow summarizes the reasons for subjectivity in the field of historiography. From his statements, it can be inferred that any historian is far from being objective as he is created with senses and feelings. His emotional aspect, unavoidably, affects his judge

or priorities. Accordingly, it becomes very probable that during the process of history writing, he can interpret any evidence or omit and add some parts. Moreover, Muslow warns readers about the reliability of any facts and about the necessity of being sceptical towards any historical documents.

In a traditional sense, historiography can be defined as something that seeks and narrates real incidents. However, when the word 'real' is taken into consideration from a postmodernist angle, it calls into question that whether one can talk about facts due to the interpretive characteristic of history writing. The postmodernist notion of rejection of any universal truth features subjectivity along with the appreciation of multiple voices. In this respect, E. H. Carr highlights the importance of interpretation as he claims that "it is used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context (1990, 11-12). In other words, facts gain value with a historian, and it is he who determines what can be defined as reality. Conventional historiographers allow footnotes, quotations and bibliography in order to provide objectivity. However, postmodern historiographers regard their aim as ideological because they "conceal its ideological structure behind a scholarly façade of footnotes and 'facts'". (Himmelfarb, 1999, 75). Hence, postmodernism rejects the possibility of reaching a certain truth due to its interpretive side.

### 1.2. Theoratical Background of the study

Postmodernism has emerged from or just after modernism thus, referring to the previous era, undoubtedly, contributes to the comprehension of its successor. As well as having apparent differences, both eras share some common features. Each literary movement favours relativity and scepticism. They welcome self-reflexivity and reject any standardized literary norms. On the other hand, the modernist idea of presenting humans and history subjectively alleges that they are something that is needed to be lamented or mourned. In contrast, postmodernism supports the notion that life is meaningless and there is no necessity for grief. Postmodern authors do not have any claims about enlightening or developing the backgrounds of readers, and postmodernism is a struggle for finding novelties in life instead of living a constructed one.

According to Bran Nicol postmodernism is an "empty practice of recycling previous artistic style". (2012, 1). It is hard to define postmodernism as a separate ideology from modernism due to the fact that the boundaries between the two eras are not definite. That is, postmodernism's emergence is not clear and additionally, there have been too many arguments that it connotes too many ideas from the modernist's philosophy. On the other hand, postmodernism has been seen as a rejection of modernism. Modernist ideas of treating a human being as a seperate entity, where individual rights reside, is rejected. It does not accept the ideology of liberal humanism, its culture and literature that privileges an individual. Literature, which is produced during this period, is ironic and disillusioned about its own nature. It recognizes that there is no need for the traditional ways of making sense of the world out of reality. The term postmodernism has been defined by many critics and scholars since its first emergence. Some of them have tried to define the term in the context of its predecessor, and others have treated it as a separate and new epoch. Therefore, the term is a kind of concept that includes both repetition and difference.

Postmodernism is a literary and cultural phenomenon that comprises a vast space in nearly every aspect of life. Many scholars have tried to define it since its appearance, but an accurate or generally accepted definition has not been given, yet. Jean-François Lyotard, for instance, asserts that "it is an incredulity towards metanarratives" (1989, 24). Postmodernism is a set of ideas that emerges almost in every branch of art and various disciplines such as politics, technology, sociology, economy and the movie industry. Linda Hutcheon, one of the most significant scholars of postmodern theory, states that,

> Postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges- be it in architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, painting, film, video, dance, TV, music, philosophy, aesthetic theory, psychoanalysis, linguistics, or historiography. (1988, 3)

Lyotard and Hutcheon's opinions seemingly manifest the dubious nature of postmodernism which covers a huge body of critical thinking that includes sociology, philosophy, literature, architecture or the movie industry. Another postmodernist critic, Christopher Butler argues that "a great deal of postmodernist theory depends on the maintenance of a sceptical attitude" (2014, 13).

Postmodernism is sceptical of any assertations that claim to be true or valid for all races, groups or traditions. Yet, it recognizes the relativity of each human being. Postmodernism sees reality as a kind of apprehension that may vary for every person. Moreover, it counts on concrete experience over abstract principles by acknowledging that the outcome of a man's background is fallible and relative, rather than universal or certain. It also denies its own conventions and treats them as questionable.

From the aforementioned definitions, it can be concluded that postmodernism is a literary and cultural movement that carries traces of modernism, and it also rejects and challenges the thoughts of the previous era. It is both a perpetuation and a break from modernism. It should be considered that none of the definitions above is more or less accurate than the others. The term has a pluralistic nature so any explanations that are given, need to be treated as additions and complementary of each other. However, it is also worth stating that, they are not facts but interpretations of the critics. Plurality in its meanings suggests that postmodernism resists any fixed notions and any ideas that affirm totalizing observations all over the world.

Postmodernism is sceptical of the modernist's values and assumptions of the world of a machine age and industrialization. Postmodern thinkers identify the era as a kind of space-age, which is surrounded by virtual reality. This kind of reality depends upon the interest of an individual. Thus, a person's interests determine what is right or what is wrong. The aesthetic forms of the period depend upon other texts. As a result, mixed style and genre are apparent thanks to the juxtaposition of low culture and high culture. In fact, Brian Mchale asserts that "postmodernism is characterized by the collapse of hierarchical distinction between high and low culture". (1987, 248). In addition, the language is used in a playful way in order to sustain ironic effects with the aim of rejecting the modernist's idea of veracity.

According to Brian McHale, the narrative structure of postmodernism is a consequence of "ontological" questioning. Unlike the dominant epistemological structure of modernist literature, postmodern literature follows the ontological view. That is, while the advocators of modernism deal with the questions of knowing, postmodernists seek answers for the questions about modernists "modes of being". In other words, during the shift from modernist to postmodernist writing, literature has

experienced a change from “epistemological uncertainty” to “ontological plurality or instability”. (1993, 10).

Furthermore, postmodernism proposes an idea of a new kind of religion by giving privilege to the individuals’ views of the earth. It abolishes the conventional ideas of religion about the universal truth. It also acknowledges realities as plural and subjective and traces the various possible interpretations of the truth. Hence, the postmodernist view of religion is shaped by the subjective ideas of the individuals or different perspectives of believing. Inevitably, different perspectives influence the social and cultural context and provide the grounds of power relations into the society like class and gender. Thanks to these perspectival shifts, new thinkers and writers who have begun to articulate the changes have emerged.

Postmodernism has lead the authors of the era to adopt new styles thanks to the appreciation of subjectivity and relativism. Besides, the view of plurality has resulted in the implementation of previous elements in their arts. Changing the nature of reality has encouraged them to include fictionalized elements more into their works. They do not have the aim of making readers believe or accept their notions. Therefore, they hold an ironic attitude towards serious issues. Also, they use and abuse the previous elements in a self-reflexive manner. The authors of the era have adopted multiple endings in their texts that are open to possibilities, interpretations and alterations. This multiplicity makes it possible for writers to jump into a fictional world.

Postmodern literary and stylistic devices may be seen as oppugnant to the typical assumptions of modernism. While simultaneously breaking sharply with other tenets, postmodernism sustains links to the previous aesthetic conventions of modernism. Just as avant-garde modernists, postmodernists disapprove of the conventions of realism, linear forms of representation and mimesis. However, unlike modernism, postmodernism refuses the boundaries between high and low cultural forms with the notions of pluralism and populism. Postmodernists rebel against the obsession with innovation, originality and authoritative authors, but they advocate traditions, reference to previous literary works, and participation of readers. They are less concerned with deep cogent meaning but more surface oriented.

Since postmodern texts are the construction of various other texts or different sources, they can be classified as multi-perspectival. Hence, subjectivity is closely related to their interpretation. In addition, benefiting from other sources implies that there are more than one author of a single text. Thus, readers' perspective gains import and their cultural, educational or social backgrounds become the determinant factors of meaning. Roland Barthes' concept of the 'death of the author' can be stated as one of the most apparent features of postmodern texts. This assumption manifests that the author is no longer an authority that is in charge of meaning. Readers are supposed to be more active and more creative during the process of interpretation. Consequently, a postmodern text has no closure, and it is never written in full. Moreover, previously mentioned incidents such as industrial and technological developments, globalism, wars and altered power relations not only affect the people of the era but also the literary texts they produce.

Rejection of traditional values, rules and styles has also led to fictionality. Postmodernist thinkers have adopted self-consciousness and self-reflexiveness. Therefore, the notion of reality has lost its significance. The term 'metafiction' has come into prominence among postmodernist writers. Patricia Waugh defines the element as;

> Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (1984, 2).

Waugh refers to the term metafiction as a piece of writing that makes readers grasp what they read is fiction, but not a reality. Metafiction misleads readers expectations for the novel to be real. Postmodernist authors blur the line between fact and fiction in order to show readers the fictional nature of their art. Accordingly, they refuse conventional styles and they not only benefit from unreal characters, but also they use real ones with imposing them fictional traits. The mixture of real and fiction is the main argument of the theory of 'Historiographic Metafiction' as its claimer, Linda Hutcheon, both acknowledges and distrusts historiography at the same time.

### 1.2.1 Historiographic Metafiction

Shifting in beliefs, social structure, and any attitudes towards to point of view about the world, inevitably, affect people and authors of the postmodern era. The literary texts are influenced by these notions as well. Plurality in meaning and self-reflexivity have become the most apparent elements in the literary texts of postmodernism and postmodern novels are no exceptions. The authors of postmodern historical novels include facts along with their own ideas or fantastic elements as "the deliberate departure from the limits of what is usually accepted as real and normal (Hume, 1984, xii). While historical novels of the previous eras deal with truth, postmodern authors of historical novels question it and adopt subjectivity. As Keith Jenkins claims, historiography is "inevitably a personal construct, a manifestation of the historian's perspective as a 'narrator'" (2003, 14). Unlike the traditional idea that regards historiographers as scientists, the postmodernist notion questions the reliability of any documents. In other words, traditional historians are expected to prove their assertations with evidence, however, they are never questioned. Contrary to this kind of traditional understanding of history, postmodern thinkers claim that reality cannot be known thoroughly and historians cannot be seen as authorities on historical events.

Interrogating and rejecting the imposed truths or sceptical approach towards any assumptions can be stated as the major notions for the very recent idea of postmodernism. Likewise, postmodern writers are engaged with, and they interpret history and historical fiction in new ways in the light of scepticism. Due to the sceptical attitude towards any beliefs or truths, they manipulate and re-imagine historical incidents that deviate from the historical records. Postmodern authors, who deal with history in their novels, tend to rewrite the past and subvert the genre of historical fiction. As their novels aim to deconstruct binaries, they are also aware of both fact and fiction yet, they problematize them. Gertrude Himmelfarb asserts that postmodern thinkers reject any realist idea of facts and treat "history (the past as well as the writing about past) as inevitably 'fictive'" (2002, 164). According to Himmelfarb, this notion leads historians to be both imaginative and inventive. Likewise, postmodern authors resist against the reliability of any truths by including inventions to established facts and they defamiliarize the readers' processing of historical knowledge. Novels that attempt to mirror history and create a sense of self-

awareness that interact with readers are defined by Canadian professor Linda Hutcheon as 'Historiographic Metafiction'. The theory consists of two contrasting terms; historiography, which can be defined as the science of history writing, and metafiction, which is a literary element that rejects to represent the real. The former implies something that is reliable, but the latter refutes it by indicating fictionality or, in other words, subjectivity. By juxtaposing these terms together while coining the theory, Hutcheon may point out the postmodern premise of not taking anything seriously.

The term is a literary, self-conscious combination of history and fiction. It raises the issue of what writing about history contains and questions the sense and various possible interpretations of the past. While claiming reference to the historical records, it doubts and plays with such a science. Historiographic metafiction interrogates the nature of history and problematizes the writing of it by underlining issues of subjectivity, intertextuality, reference and ideology. It focuses on the possibility of manipulation and misrepresentation of past reality in accordance with dominant discourses of the given period as well as on the multiplicity of truth. The term refers to postmodern attempts of history writing. The rise of the term has its roots within the changing views of history and fiction. Hutcheon claims that "both history and fiction are discourses" (1988, 89). Therefore, they are constructed, and they are far from being objective. To Hutcheon, it is useless to expect a single history from discourses. History is constructed by man via language both of which are fallible.

Hutcheon, who is one of the leading theorists in postmodern fiction, has remarkable contributions to postmodern historical novels. While stating the function of the term that she coined, she asserts that "what historiographic metafiction explicitly does, though is the cast doubt on the very possibility of any firm guarantee of meaning" (1988, 55). Additionally, to Hutcheon, the major aims of historiographic metafiction are to problematize historiography and to question history by refuting "the view that only history has a truth claim" (1988, 93). Historiographic metafiction aims to question the constructed nature of the past as history by using literature, history and theory. Therefore, historiographic metafiction explores the relationship between historiography and fiction.

To Hutcheon, any historical documents or facts are produced by the selection and narrative positioning of a historiographer. She states that “historians are now being urged to take the contexts of their own inevitably interpretative act into account” (1988, 97). It is implied in the words of Hutcheon that, even if an author bases his assertions on a historical document, he is in charge of including the information that he chooses. In other words, the author decides what to write among the present data that he finds necessary. Consequently, with his self-reflexive attitude, he determines what is important and ignores the other parts. Besides, a historiographer’s perception of any event may differ from another’s, so does their interpretation. Similar to the views of Hutcheon, E. H. Carr claims that "history consists of a corpus of ascertained facts" that are collected by a historian and he provides the gathered data "in whatever style appeals to him" (1990, 9). Thus, it can be inferred that the science of historiography is unable to present the past wholly. As a reaction against this conclusion, historiographic metafiction’s one of the most crucial features is its inclusion of silent voices in literary texts. That is to say, it aims to tell the untold. As a result, the main themes of historiographic metafictional novels may be irrelevant or unknown historical details and the ignored people in traditional historiography.

Historiographic metafiction acknowledges the unreliability of the author by putting him in the position of “overtly controlling” one. (Hutcheon, 1988, 117). The author’s self-reflexivity plays an important role within the sense of blurring fact and fiction. In fact, according to Beverley Southgate, history is an "act of self-creation" (2005; 2). He lays bare the existence of subjectivity. Moreover, protagonists in historiographic metafictional novels “are anything but proper types” (2005, 114). They implement the role of one that is responsible for the documentation of history. Unconventional acts of both authors and protagonists are crucial in the premise of historiographic metafiction as they lead readers to question the nature of truths in history.

One of the elements that are questioned in historiographic metafiction is the reference. As Hutcheon states, historiographic metafiction “both underlines its existence as discourse, and yet still posits a relation of reference (however problematic) to the historical world, both through its assertation of the social and institutional nature of all enunciative positions and through its grounding in the

representational" (1988, 141). Historiographic metafiction does not oppose that real past event exists, but it problematizes their representations of true facts within creating imitations of the original reference. Historiographic metafiction critically displays the process of making history while dealing with the historical details and their collection. The aim is not to create a sense of past reality, but to question the way that past reality is created.

In order to emphasize the textuality of history, historiographic metafiction benefits from the intertextual references as well. It can be stated that intertextuality is an inevitable aspect of historical novels as the term implies a relation of at least two texts. The first is the historical data or document from which the novelist produce his story, and the second is a literary text that he creates out of the previous one. Roland Barthes claims that "any text is a new tissue of past citations" (1981, 39). By making use of other texts, he indicates the impossibility of a single truth. Historiographic metafictional novels also use and abuse anything such as almanaks, newspapers and diaries as intertexts to question how the idea of truth is constructed and manipulated through the printed media, which is a device to record history. Hutcheon also clarifies the idea of power and discourse relation by stating, "both history and fiction are cultural sign systems, ideological constructions whose ideology includes their appearance of being autonomous and self-contained" (1988, 112). She implies the possibility of a man that has the power and may use it to alter history for his own benefits or for his ideological reasons.

In short, historiographic metafiction clearly depicts that naming and establishing past incidents into historical facts are done by selection and narrative positioning, and the source of knowledge for such events stems from discursive inscriptions. Hutcheon defines the term as the "most problematic art" (1988, 112). Its interrogative nature forces readers not to accept any historical document as a truth. Differing from the traditional historical novels, historiographic metafiction adopts the idea of reimagining and rewriting history. Self-reflexivity is a dominant premise of this theory, and it highlights the inevitability of subjectivity during the process of history writing.

## CHAPTER TWO: *RUNNING IN THE FAMILY*

Michael Ondaatje was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1943. He is a Canadian novelist, poet and movie maker. He published his autobiographical novel *Running in the Family* in 1982. The novel centres on the author's quest to understand his father, Mervyn Philip Ondaatje but in doing so, he also explores his ancestors and the country itself. The novel starts with a nightmare that the author has about his father. In the dream, his father is encircled by vicious dogs and after waking up, Ondaatje realizes that he does not know his father and his family history at all. This instinct forces him to make two journeys back to his hometown and to collect data about his ancestors and his country. In the second part, the author learns about his parents' early years. When his father, Mervyn Philip Ondaatje, is eighteen years old, his parents send him to the University of Cambridge for his education. However, Mervyn lies to them and spends all his money, which is sent for his education expenses, on drinks and parties. An unexpected visit of parents reveals the truth, and Mervyn distracts their attention by getting engaged with a woman on the same day. Two weeks later, he proposes Doris Gratiaen, mother of Michael Ondaatje.

The next chapter deals with the history of the author's hometown and, its flora and fauna. In the fourth chapter, Michael Ondaatje tells about his grandmother, Lalla and, the fifth chapter depicts his father's youth, his alcohol addiction and weird behaviour. The sixth chapter tells the reader about his parents again, especially about their marriage. The final chapter covers Mervyn's emotional and physical corruption and the author questions the reason why his father never lets him in his life. The summary of the novel gives an image of a confused narrator that tries to collect data and, the confusion is reinforced with the bare non-linearity of the novel. The present chapter aims to analyze the novel in terms of how history is problematized within the contexts of the national history of the author's birthplace, the past of his family members and the credibility of intertexts that Ondaatje offers to his readers respectively.

Even though the novel is based on a search for his ancestors, Ondaatje also explores the history of Sri Lanka. While narrating the past of his country, the author emphasizes the dominant and the silenced figures so as to demonstrate the impossibility of a historical narration that is free of any biases or ideological attitudes.

As Hutcheon states, it is not feasible for an author or a historiographer to deal with the past of a nation "without ideological and institutional analysis" (1988; 91), Ondaatje, in his novel, conveys his country's history from his perspective and viewpoints of islanders and foreigners. In this regard, he provides multiplicity and stresses the impossibility of reaching an accurate history of a nation.

The novel takes place in late 1970, in Sri Lanka, which was called Ceylon until 1972. Sri Lanka was colonized at various times by the Portuguese, Dutch and British and, it is a culturally rich country with a number of different ethnic groups. The largest one is called ‘Sinhalese, which covers about 75 per cent of the population and they are primarily Buddhists. The rest of the population consists of Tamil, primarily Hindu people and Moors that are from Arab coastal traders. Finally, Burghers, a privileged community and to which Michael Ondaatje belongs, consists of Dutch, Tamil and Sinhalese people. They have dominated the country by gaining the best positions in education and administration. After the country has gained its independence, they have lost their influence. The heterogeneity in origins of Ondaatjes can be interpreted as a plurality of perspectives, which leads to alternative histories. It also makes the author's task difficult to reach the poor facts about his family. It is very probable that the west has a crucial impact on the author’s point of view as he has spent most of his life in England and in Canada. He is aware of his duality of being both native and foreign as he states “I am the foreigner. I am the prodigal who hates the foreigner” (1982, 79). His narrative springs from his consciousness and partial identity. Thus, he conveys his country from a double perspective, which is probably dominated by the cities that he has grown in.

*Running in the Family* starts with two epigraphs that present two contrary and irrelevant ideas about Sri Lanka. The first one belongs to a friar that states “I saw in this island fowls as big as our country geese having two heads … and the other miraculous things which I will not here write of” (1982, 15). This epigraph indicates how the island is perceived by European visitors. The island is depicted as a kind of mythical paradise that has the potential of astonishing its guests. The other epigraph is from a journalist, named Douglas Amarasekara, who mentions the superiority of Americans and their language over the indigenous people. It is evident that the island is represented differently in each epigraph. The initial one features its fantastic side,

and the latter highlights the inferiority of islanders, which refers to subjectivity and alternative histories that exist within the same setting.

According to Hutcheon, postmodernism "establishes, differentiates, and then disperses stable narrative voices (and bodies) that use memory to try to make sense of the past. It both installs and then subverts traditional concepts of subjectivity" (1988, 118). Michael Ondaatje's principle discursive manner in constructing his past is collecting information about both histories of his hometown and that of his ancestors. When the facts are not sufficient enough to present the intended, the author benefits from myths to give explanations to fill in the gaps. According to the writer, deeper comprehension of Sri Lanka is possible first through relating to it by experiencing it directly and intensely. "My body must remember everything, the brief insect bite, smell of wet fruit, the slow snail light, rain and underneath the hint of colors" (1982, 202). The sounds, smell and colors are the memories from his childhood, and by establishing this kind of link, he internalizes the sensuous experience and the past becomes his. Yet, he does not limit himself only to sensuous experience, he listens and retells stories. Through the very act of retelling tales about his family and country, the narrator becomes a protagonist who participates in the cultural memory of the community. In this respect, he passes through three stages; memory, imagination, which implies imitation and alteration, and invention or a new creation from the old.

Ondaatje presents the island that "falls on a map and its outline is the shape of a tear" (1982, 65). Besides, it is the island that "seduced all of Europe… the wife of many marriages" (64). By drawing an analogy to the shape of the island with a tear, the author may imply the bad fate of his hometown, which has been under the colony of various invaders throughout its history and it is being a wife of many marriages is another sign that indicates the plurality of cultures within the island, and the heterogeneity of races that have lived there. Invasion of the Dutch, for instance, has resulted in a new origin that is called "Burghers". It is a very privileged society that descends from the Sinhalese and Dutch, and the author's ancestors belong to it. The Burghers are supported by the colonizers, and they get the most important positions in Ceylon's history. To exemplify, the author's father Mervyn Philip Ondaatje has a position in the Ceylon Light Infantry and he is a member of the Ceylon Cactus and Succulent Society. Many other relatives of the author, who are mostly priests and

lawyers, play important roles in the history of the island. Lyotard, for instance, asserts that "whoever is wealthiest has the best chance of being right" (1989, 45). The impact of ancestors on the history of Ceylon along with the colonizers contradicts the objectivity and reliability of the author because the majority of the history is a product of colonizers and wealthy people that does not reflect the whole society or population.

As a chain reaction of discoveries and the traces of colonialism, people and their culture face changes. The desire for independence leads people to reconstruct their country and their own identity. Besides, some of them leave their country for being in need of a better life and the others search for protection and refugee in the countries of their previous colonizers. As a result, a double perspective of home, which is not the same, and which does not belong to natives as it does in the past, occurs. The colonized people may confront the possibilities of adapting to new homes or getting used to living in the previous but altered ones. The novel covers the issue of returning back home, which is not the same anymore. Hutcheon questions the nature of truth by stating that "there are only truths in the plural, and never one Truth" (1988, 109). Hence, the plurality of truths forces the author to select among them. Along with the feelings of loss and alienation, the author tries to reconstruct his hometown's history with his childhood memories and from the scars that the colonizers have left behind them, so the outcome is a mixed, altered, and complicated data among which the author chooses and presents to his readers. On the other hand, readers are forced to accept the given data as facts because "there is rarely falseness" among them but "just others' truths" (1988, 109).

In some passages, the author presents the fantasized view of the island. In the chapter *The Karapothas*, for instance, he asserts that "captains would spill cinnamon onto the deck and invite passengers on board to smell Ceylon before the island even came onto view" (1982, 81). Besides, he presents the island from different sources such as; invaders, his family and the writers who have been to the island and also, he benefits from the fallible memory of his childhood. In some parts, he uses an ironic tone, but in others, he takes advantage of them, which let him blend the facts of his private story with myths. To illustrate, when he writes about the heat of the island, he states that it is more comfortable in the mornings before the sun rises. He draws an analogy with an animal that surrounds people like heat. This exaggeration manifests

fantastic views and the negative aspect of the island. Similarly, a line by Leonard Woolf that describes the forests of the island as evils, shows his contempt for the island. By quoting a line from a writer that describes his experience, the author aims to convey how western people belittle the island and the local people. It may also refer to a reconstruction of the history of the silenced.

The author states that "the island was a paradise to be sacked" (1982, 81) and the invaders plunder everything good that the island offers. As the main purpose of Europeans is the pursuit of wealth, the island is never considered as a home by them. However, it is not only the foreigners that report the island as a mysterious place but also one of the ancestors of the author named William Charles Ondaatje corroborates his view by stating "if this was a paradise, it had a darker side" (81). It can be inferred that all of the quotations mentioned above, create a false image of the island, which is either a heaven or a hell.

> The pendant (the island) stood still, it became a mirror. It pretended to reflect each European power till newer ships arrived and spilt their nationalities, some of whom stayed and intermarried -my own ancestor arriving in 1600, a doctor who cured the residing governor's daughter with a strange herb and was rewarded with a land, a foreign wife, and a new name which was a Dutch spelling of his own. Ondaatje. A parody of the ruling language (64).

The island has become a settlement for different invaders. They come to the island to plunder, to teach and to impose their own notions. The island seduces many colonizers, and they claim to power by force, religion or language. The author uses the image of a mirror to suggest that the island reflects each invader's views. In other words, the island mimics the series of invaders and mirror their behaviour. Thus, it becomes impossible to grasp the history of the island thoroughly as it has been in constant change. Colonialism makes Ceylon a wife of many marriages that pretend to reflect the multitude of invaders' cultures. Ondaatje refers to invaders "who stepped ashore and claimed everything with the power of their sword or bible or language" (64). The inevitable consequences of those invasions are the many names Ceylon has acquired that all of which reflect the power of newcomers. The same thing happens to people, too. As a result of intermarriage, they acquire new blood and new names. The name "Ondaatje" itself is a parody as it is a new one that is spelt in Dutch. By imposing their religion, the invaders also change the lifestyles and points of view of

the islanders. The usage of the word “pretend” may suggest not only impermanence in the history of Ceylon but also its resistance to each invader by means of mimicry. The author aims to assert that nothing is like what it seems but what it pretends to be. The Ceylonese pretend to be Portuguese, later they pretend to be English and then Dutch. The names of the places are changed, identities and ethnicities are intertwined, and historical events are replaced and rewritten.

The author also highlights the importance and the power of languages in the novel that affect the history of the island. It can be stated that language is one of the most powerful devices for domination but also a resistance against oppression, too. To illustrate, the newspaper called *Ceylon Sunday Times* insists that the Americans are able to put men on the moon because they know English. On the contrary, the Sinhalese and Tamils whose knowledge is poor think that the earth is not round. The author refers to the *1971 Insurgency*, which turns “the Vidyalonkara campus of the University of Ceylon into a prison camp” (1982, 84). When the university reopens for the return of the students, hundreds of poems on the walls, ceilings, and the other corners of the campus portray the violence of the struggle, the stories of the tortures and of lost friends. They reflect the same pattern of the old Ceylonese history. One nationality eradicates the other, one race replaces the other, and that results in heterogeneity. Ceylon’s ancient or recent history represents the voices that the narrator does not know fully. It becomes clear that memories can be sustained as well as erased by language.

The charm and natural beauty, which is described by some visitors, are discredited by others, and it is reinforced by the author when he describes the country’s heat by stating “which drove Englishmen crazy” (78). By selecting different thoughts from various people, he indicates the subjectivity of interpretation towards the island. Ondaatje’s family, which belongs to a privileged rank of the Ceylonese society, departs to live their ideal life outside the island in the hottest times of the year. They spend the boiling months in the mountains of the island. While talking about foreigners “who never grew ancient” (80) in the land, the author himself is aware of the fact that the foreigners actually do not know the island accurately, and the island is not a perfect habitat for them. It can be inferred that those negative features have the possibility of affecting the judge of the readers upon the island, too.

In the light of Hutcheon's claim, which highlights the premise of the ideological aspect within the process of history writing, it can be stated that historiography sorts out some events and omits others for ideological reasons. This fact leads to the hegemonic voices or their discourses dominate the less powerful societies. Hence, writing history is closely related to the representation of dominant ideologies. The island and people embody the dualism that is experienced by the colonizers and the colonized. Especially, the image of the island, which is created by foreigners and the islanders, is exotic and mysterious. They create fictions in order to stimulate the imagination of people. To illustrate, in the chapter *Tongue,* the author tells about an animal named thalagoya, which resembles an alligator, and if a child is given a tongue of it to eat, "he will become brilliantly articulate" (1982, 73). The author reinforces the appealing power of the myth by including the details of the eating process; one that wants the myth to come true should eat it in the right way. The tongue is needed to be sliced and eaten just after the animal is killed. It should also be swallowed in between two banana skins and should not be chewed. Even though myths are appealing and interesting, their reliability is always problematic. Ondaatje applies fantastic elements in his narration so as to blur the fact with fiction.

Each side of the country's history has a bright and dark side and the author aims to make the reader aware of that fact. By choosing among events, the author's main purpose is to make it clear that anything about the history of his country is based on multiple thoughts, gossips, myths and the traces that invaders have left behind them. Due to the multiplicity and lack of consensus about the history of the island, the author forces his readers to use their imaginations while constructing the island in their minds. As a result, accurate and satisfactory historiography becomes a subjective issue that is closely related to the interpretations of readers. Moreover, the author blends the history of the island with his emotions. His memories are triggered by the island's scents and by monsoons. The personal vision of Ondaatje affects his decisions about which detail to insert in his narration. The image of an ideal hometown in the author's mind sometimes falls into a contradiction with realities. While complaining about the invaders who plunder all the valuable possessions on the island, the author uses the term "a perfumed sea" (81). This expression refers to the spices that probably remind him about his childhood memories. However, as the colonizers transport them to their own countries, the writer gets disappointed when he is not able to smell the same

scents. Ondaatje depicts the chaos that is caused by monsoons in the chapter *Monsoons Notebook.* He tells about monsoons, which is an unusual but also an ordinary aspect of the South Asian climate, by stating "flood the streets for an hour and suddenly evaporate" (1982, 69). Most significantly, he connects this image of fluidity with historical pieces of information that are enclosed in an old newspaper, whose pages "come apart in your hands like wet sand" (69). It can be stated that while the author tries to collect data, he is incapable of reaching or gathering the real events which vanish like water evaporates.

The author claims that "we own the country we grow up in, or we are aliens or invaders" (81), not only foreigners but also the islanders are not aware of the Ceylonese culture thoroughly. The invaders loot the island in all possible ways without any concern about comprehending the island's history or even being a part of it. Similarly, the islanders do not consider the colonizers as a threat because the foreigners do not know the island wholly. Additionally, the islanders do not use the poisons against the invaders, which the author presents as "possible weapons" that only exist in Ceylon. The author implies that as there is nobody who knows the island fully, it is meaningless to expect credible data about its history.

The history of Sri Lanka is dominated by invaders, visitors, writers and a privileged family. The rest of the population remain in the background during the history of the island. As the author has a western side, he is also affected by the ideas of the majority. The island is presented as a multicultural nation that consists of various racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Hence, the author problematizes the notion of a pure and stable Sri Lankan identity. He assumes that colonizers' shifting forces eradicate the previous ones and their cultures, traditions and history as well. The author creates the history of his hometown with a migrant view. His personal recalling and selections among the incidents are the only ways of portraying Sri Lanka. He fills in the gaps of his lost experience with imagination, feelings and myths. His exoticism of Ceylon signifies a detached migrant that tries to gather data about his mythical hometown. As he is the only person who uncovers history, the information he presents is far from being objective.

Ondaatje problematizes the history of his birthplace by including various voices and fictional elements in his narration. He undermines the authority of

conventional historiographers by creating a context in which historical documents and narratives are revised. He reconstructs the records with his imagination and emotions. Within this context, he rejects the certainty of historical data and introduces alternative versions of history for his country. The novel proposes to analyze the circumstances in which the author reconstructs not only his family saga but also the history of his homeland by intertwining stories and history. Rumours, gossips, stories and the author's personal clash influence his imagination. As the writer has left his country at a very early age and lived most of his life in the west, the double perspective of being an outsider and insider is also a significant issue in the novel as the duality or in-betweenness may make the author's return to his country both physical and emotional. The techniques and the themes in the novel such as; memory, colonialism, cartography, photography, identity and history constitute an integral part of the narrative. The polyphonic structure of the novel, which is also contributed by many voices of people, make it hard to be treated as a reliable one. In her book "Poetics of Postmodernism", Linda Hutcheon states that;

> Historiographic metafiction refutes the natural or common-sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refutes the view that only history has a truth claim, both by questioning the ground of discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity (1988, 93).

With those statements above, Hutcheon signifies the notion of the postmodern challenge of historiography and, its consideration in literature. She highlights the inevitable existence of subjectivity due to the fact that history is a human construct. Historiographic metafiction challenges the idea of representing the past, however, it does not mean to eradicate or ignore it. In fact, Hutcheon avers that historiographic metafiction parodies it, which means "both to enshrine the past and to question it" (1988, 126). What Ondaatje does in the novel is to exercise the very same postmodern paradox. He questions the past and its reliability, at the same time, he tries to give voice to historical documents and myths, and by including them in his narration, he provides a basis for the emergence of new possible historical truths. The main character and the narrator of the novel, Michael Ondaatje, travels from one place to the next, he also moves from text to text, or map to photograph. The aim of his search for roots, family or national history involves tracing a genealogy of texts that are not only

literary but also historical. The novel is both a map of the journey and a map of reading; texts resemble geography and function as signposts since the protagonist reads historical and literary texts in order to learn where he comes and where he goes. The readers simultaneously travel to Sri Lanka with the author and the map with which the novel opens, help them to find their way through the complicated structure.

Historiographic metafiction is not against the idea of historical facts. The premise accepts their validity but, on the other hand, it argues that they become facts because it is the historiographer that gives them meaning. Hutcheon enunciates that "all past 'events' are potential historical 'facts', but the ones that become facts are those that are chosen to be narrated" (1988, 75). Historiographer or narrator selects among past events and excludes others. Consequently, the narrator's choices determine the facts. In the novel, Ondaatje reports the ideas of some European writers and visitors by selecting among them, too. While including several authors and guests into his narrative, whose points of view are different from each other, Ondaatje implies that the utterances of important or well-known people may also be deceiving. Moreover, as he presents other voices, he gives a broader approach to the text and does not restrict it to his own version of truths.

The author divides his autobiographical novel into seven parts and within each of those parts, there are forty-two short chapters some of which are as short as a page. As Hutcheon claims that "we cannot know the past except through its text; its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts", the author also uses several genres to tell his story like narratives, journals, dialogues, photographs, poetry, epigraphs and maps. (1982, 16) The author aims to construct the identity of his family by memory, assumptions, gossip and rumours, too. It is a story about the journey to the past and the author returns to his hometown to collect information about his family, especially about his father. The novel has a hybrid structure that all of which are indications of a multiplicity of interpretations. People's memory is the main source that the writer depends on to produce his narrative. However, the author admits the unreliability of those memories. In the acknowledgement part, the author clearly and frankly declares that "in Sri Lanka, a well-told lie is worth a thousand facts" (206). With this confession, he describes not only the Sri Lankan aptitude for invention but his own task as a storyteller. His aim is not to reproduce reality as it appears to the

objective eye, instead, he is the creator whose preferences dominate the account of his family, himself and the history of his country.

In historiographic metafictional novels, non-linear narratives, fragmentary structures with flashbacks and multiple narrators are very common techniques. Linda Hutcheon states that "historiographic metafictions appear to privilege two modes of narration, both of which problematize the entire notion of subjectivity: multiple points of view or overtly controlling narrator" (1982, 117). In this sense, the book is certainly engaged with memory and the construction of identity, as Ondaatje searches for stories, provides them multiple voices and struggles to grasp how they are linked to his own identity. He gathers literary and historical texts and tries to decipher and decode them. Besides, since he is both the author and the protagonist of the novel, he is in charge of commenting on the actual construction processes of texts. The author embarks on a quest and moves forward and backwards in times and he attempts to restore private as well as public history. As the developments in the author's personal and family history are paralleled by national changes in Sri Lanka, he reviews colonial history as well. The third person "he" acts as a character within the narrative and participates in past events; the first person "I", apparently the same person, writes in the present about the past. Tenses also shift from present to past. He also expresses his difficulties in "trying to get it straight" (105). "Wait a minute, wait a minute, when is this happening?" (107). The memories of the people that he interviews do not follow a linear pattern neither does the narrator's account of the past. For instance, after he relates to the death of his grandmother, Lalla and after several chapters, she appears again. The non-linear narration problematizes the past as it becomes the reader's duty to rearrange and put them in order with his own interpretation, and further, as its ordering process requires to assign the events a significance, the notion of subjectivity, which can be stated as the main argument of historiographic metafiction, becomes compulsory.

The inevitability of multiple voices in historiographic metafictional novels is also pointed out by Rosa Barber. In her article *the Role of Imagination in Writing and Reading Narrative,* she claims that "through fiction, we have a licence to construct alternative narratives, rethinking histories so widely assumed to be 'true'" (2010, 2). Ondaatje faces the dangers of displaying insufficient memoirs as facts and ideal

collections as evidence and, as he is strong-willed to see beyond what may be merely the appearance of reality, he decides to create mythical truths that may even surpass the more intense realities of the time and of his people. The truth value of Ondaatje's narrative is premised in oral history, perceptions and imaginary experience. Short and anecdotal stories abound in Ondaatje's narrative and they reinforce the impression of the novel as a notebook, in which information is jotted down, both verbal and visual snapshots and individual portraits. Lalla's impulsive and eccentric character, for instance, is depicted in various episodes, such as in the scenes of heavy drinking and partygoing woman or in the bus where another passenger harasses her. Information about Ondaatje's father, Mervyn is equally piecemeal and dispersed, which consists of interviews and fragments of memory. Even single events like the wedding of his parents are presented by different voices in different versions. Hutcheon claims that the premise of historiographic metafiction is to question the paradox of reality and its accessibility to the present. The narrator also evades fixity and definite characterization; yet, allows and provokes multiple narrations and perspectives.

The author also makes his readers aware of his unreliability and lays bare his uncertainty when he refers to "a man who may or may not have been in the cabinet" (1982, 124). It should come as no surprise that dreams and excessive drinking play an important role in the novel since they indicate the novel's productive, bizarre and fictional quality. The author presents absurd particulars or irrelevant details such as the number of footnotes when he quotes his ancestor or the fact that Francis de Saram removes his false teeth when he gets into a fight. Similarly, the story about thalagoya tongue indicates Sri Lanka's mythic heritage and the value attached to "verbal brilliance" reinforces the idea of the value that is given to the myths. Even on the syntactic level, sentences reveal the narrative's fragmentary and incomplete nature. To illustrate, "teenagers and uncle. Husband and lover. A lost father in his solace" (54). They all reflect the heterogeneity, discontinuity and juxtaposition of insignificant information. The narrator further emphasizes his sensuous perceptions in the novel, too. He minutely describes foods, dishes and tastes and even attempts to transmit Ceylon's characteristic cinnamon smell. All surrounding impressions are absorbed by him, including sun and electric light, oppressive heat, the noises of rain and fans, as well as the sounds of voices that cannot be rendered except in printed words. However,

the senses and feelings of the author may mislead his readers as they are not universal or objective.

According to Hutcheon "postmodern fiction suggests that to rewrite or represent the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological" (1988, 110). The majority of the novel is told orally. Titles such as *Asian Rumors, Tropical Gossip, Lunch Conversation* and *Dialogues* signify the novel's emphasis on oral story-telling right from the beginning. Talks and exchanges constitute a major part of the novel. The segment *Dialogues,* for instance, introduces eleven voices that report memories of Ondaatje's parents. However, it is not an easy task to localize these voices as they are merely introduced by quotation marks. Readers cannot define which person speaks but only deduce them from their relationships to the subject that they talk to. Even though the narrator names the voices in a later fragment *Final Days / Father Tongue,* he does not connect their utterances. Likewise, *Lunchtime Conversations* comprises the extended statements and different modes of thinking of the people involved. In the same way, the narrator does not assimilate or appropriate these voices on his part. Rather, he foregrounds multiple subjectivities and presents a textual version of collectivity and community.

Although the narrator sometimes appears to lose control over his narrative as multiple voices overwhelm him, he clearly exposes his manipulations when he uses a metafictional voice that comments on the actual process of narrating at the same time. In self-reflexive remarks, the author lays bare the mechanisms of organizing events and constructing a narrative out of them. An impersonal omniscient narrator, who relates all events of his narrative and forms a single coherent vision out of them, does not exist in the novel. He complicates the narrative point of view even further in one of the last fragments of the novel. As the narrator attempts to trace the workings of his father's mind before his death, he slips from the third person to the first person, thereby indicating his identification with the father "leaving the car door open like a white broken wing on the lawn, he moved towards to porch, a case of liqueur under his arm… The bottle top in my mouth as I sit on the bed like a lost ship on a white sea" (188). The author employs multiple points of view or an explicitly dominant narrator so that he can question the subjectivity of history writing. However, neither of them

provide an absolute reality as they are the outcome of the author's self-reflexivity which are blended with his emotions.

As Hutcheon states that the protagonists in historiographic metafictional novels are generally the ex-centric and silenced figures, it is also essential to mention characterization. The statement highlights the significance of narrators in contemporary literary texts and the notion of representation as well. Not only the history but also the one who tells it is closely related to the reliability of the information. When the protagonists take the position of a dominant one, they also acquire the power to convey history from their own perspectives. Their personal traits, backgrounds or social status affect all the data. Thus, the narrator's truth becomes a reality or at least, he has an influence on the history.

During his life in London, Ondaatje is ashamed of his family due to their weird lifestyles. He confesses that some of his friends who take part in a tennis tournament which is held in Ceylon, and he never returns to his calls as he thinks that his friends may find out "what a disgraceful family (he) had come from" (1982, 177). However, when he discovers his ancestors' names that are carved on church stones, his opinions about the members of the family shift.

> To kneel on the floor of a church and see your name chiselled in large letters so that it stretches from your fingertips to your elbow in some strange way removes vanity, eliminates the personal. It makes your own story a lyric. So the sound which comes immediately out of my mouth as I half-gasped and called my sister spoke all that excitement of smallness, of being overpowered by stone (1982, 65-66).

The names on the stone of a church convey the traces of some ancestors and the perpetuation of Ondaatjes' name. Coming across the names of Ondaatje in a church makes the author realize the importance of his family name. As the author further explores the documents in Colombo Church, he uncovers "the destruction caused by silverfish, scars among the immaculate recordings of local history and formal signatures" while "lifting the ancient pages and turning over skeletal leaves" (66). The history of his family is intertwined with three hundred years of local history as they face "droughts and invasions from other countries" (69). As a result, history becomes a process of discovery for the author. Ondaatje transcribes the data he finds; yet, what he

finds is affected by natural disasters or invaders so its reliability and accuracy are problematized.

Hutcheon avers that the hybridity and displacement within a nation, its people and its history should not be ignored. As mentioned before, the author belongs to a privileged family, which takes important roles in both administration and education throughout the history of Sri Lanka. They live a separate life from the rest of the local people. Especially, during the times of the hottest months, they move to higher parts of the country and spend their lives dancing, drinking and gambling. This indicates that the author's family is not only indigenous but also foreigners. They are not exactly English but they behave like them, and they are partial natives, but they do not live like them. It can be stated that they have a hybrid structure. By presenting their extravagant lifestyles, the author leads his readers to perceive that being in between makes their lives empty and miserable. As the family does not belong to one race and mimics the others, it results in unhappy lives. The most mentioned characters, for instance, in the novel are addicted to alcohol.

According to Alison Lee, postmodern fictions deliberately play with classical conventions when they write history. She avers that "while they use realist conventions, they simultaneously seek to subvert them" (1990; 36). Historiographic metafictions consciously question real characters. They aim to signify the indeterminacy of the past and challenge traditional history writing. Ondaatje implements both real and unreal traits to his characters in order to show their discursive constructs. In doing so, he emphasizes the uncertain nature of history. Furthermore, the characters appear in complex or ambiguous contexts, which leads readers to question their knowledge of history. The author's self-conscious attitude is also apparent within his character choices. He includes some of the family members in his narration but omits some others. He selects what to narrate or exclude about them. When Ondaatje portrays her character in unusual contexts and blends some of them with supernatural elements, he allows different perspectives in his narration. Fantastical themes are used when the writer fails to provide accurate data about his relatives.

The author's trips to Sri Lanka aim to show the life of his relatives since his grandparents' times. They live their lives in a very eccentric way. They dress and

speak like the English but they do not live among them. In the chapter *Historical Relations,* the author travels back to the twenties of his parents when they lead a prodigal life. The author's grandparents are able to afford a very expensive life as they are supported by the wealth that is provided by tea plantations. Dancing and drinking take most of their time. Besides, the author narrates the stories of his old generations that have love affairs and enjoy gambling. In the chapter *Kegalle (i),* the author goes back to the past to find out about his grandfather who is named Bampa. He depicts him as a person who "had weakness for pretending to be English" (1982, 56). Every two years "he would visit England, buy crystal and learn the latest dances" (56). The hybrid state, like many other Ondaatjes, represents a lack of identity and makes the author's task harder as a data collector. The grandfather's attempts to resemble the English, conceal his real personal traits, and he may not want to be among the ones that are silenced. Therefore, Ondaatje's aim for including that kind of character into his narration is to remind the postmodern premise that advocates the existence of the marginalized people in historical texts.

Another significant character in the novel is Lalla, the author's grandmother. The author presents her as whose "bloodline was considered eccentric" (113) and adds that there is no information about her youth. She is depicted as an unusual character who is very contrary to the accustemed woman figure of the family as "she was the first woman in Ceylon to have a mastectomy" (1982, 123). She is also presented as an Asian version of Robin Hood. She organizes parties for the rich people and hands out presents to poor people, especially to their children. When she becomes poor, she goes on distributing gifts, but this time she steals them from the local markets. Along with generosity, her controversial behaviour is also crucial. She is also presented as a heavy drinker and after her death, she donates "her body to six different hospitals" (123), which is considered as an excessive amount of generosity by the author. Furthermore, she "loved thunder, it spoke to her" (125) and it tells her when "someone is going to die" (127). The author turns his grandmother into a myth in a very ironic way. According to Rosemary Jackson "fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss" (1981, 3). By including fantastic elements while constructing the past of his grandmother, Ondaatje problematizes her grandmother's past. He depicts the ambivalent behaviour that ranges from generosity

to peculiar ones and presents her as a mythical image. However, the missing information clouds the author's account as he cannot include any information about her youth, and he compensates for inadequate data by including fictions in his narrative.

The author asserts that "truth disappears with history and gossip tells us in the end that nothing of personal relationships … nothing is said of the closeness between two people: how they grew up in the shade of each other's presence" (1982, 53-54). As the reports of the author depend on fragments of a fallible memory, they blur reality and truth becomes something that is not accessible. Thus, history turns into gossip that lasts and circles forever. The stories grow in the shade of each person. Hutcheon states that "storytellers can certainly silence, exclude, and absent certain past events-and people". (1988, 107). In his autobiographical novel, Ondaatje features those silenced voices, too. To illustrate, Lalla's myth is constructed after the death of Bampa. She gains her freedom and becomes a man-like image who drinks, works on a farm and gambles. She is also eager to experience the new advances of medicine as she has an unnecessary operation on her breast. The creation of a strong figure of a woman that resists the society may be seen as an attempt to challenge the idea of a colonized people and represent them as powerful. The author may convey his grandmother as a strong man-like figure in order to resist and refute the image of weak islanders towards colonizers. Thus, it can be inferred that the author makes use of history for his own benefit by selecting among the events and data.

The author also uses his own imagination to convey the past, too. In a matter of fact, when he narrates Lalla's death, which he depicts as a "last perfect journey" (1982, 122), the author draws readers into his fantasy world. He gives every detail about her death and also mentions her feelings while she is carried by a flood; "alcohol still in her- serene and relaxed" (123), and he does so as if a witness that sees every moment. What the author actually writes, in Hutcheon's definition, is an "imaginative reconstruction" of the data (92). Therefore, it is not an objective history as it is the author who uncovers it. Ondaatje's narrations are blended with his emotions or he conveys them in a way that he wants to remember. Each possibility decreases the credibility of the story and puts the author in a position who is in charge of decoding and presenting the information.

Michael Ondaatje is an immigrant writer that is haunted by the loss of his roots. Unclear issues from his past haunt his dreams and demand his attention. When he decides to go back, Ceylon is not Ceylon anymore, but it is Sri Lanka, an independent country. He belongs to two different worlds, he is at the same time an insider and outsider in Sri Lanka. His long absence leads him to see his past differently. His loss is highlighted by the fact that he "never spoke to him (his father) as an adult" (179). The main intention of the author is to rediscover his father and he sets off an imaginary journey with this impulse. The recurrent dream of his chaotic father, along with his parents' dramatic fights and his father's alcohol addiction leads to violent and uncontrollable behaviour that results in the construction of an image of a difficult father in the author's mind. Actually, his father is a product of a prodigal and futile family and society that leads him to be banished from his position at Ceylon railways.

It is clear that Mervyn Ondaatje is not an ideal father in the mind of Michael Ondaatje. From the very beginning of the novel, he depicts his father as a chaotic, troublemaker and dipsomaniac man. However, despite his notorious image, he is the most significant reason that urges the author to write this novel. The author decides to travel to Sri Lanka and learn more about the past after he wakes up from a nightmare in which his father is in a forest and surrounded by dangerous animals. No matter his father has a bad reputation, the author subconsciously loves and misses him as it is clear from the dream that leads Michael Ondaatje to go back to his hometown and compensate for his yearning.

The main focus of the novel is Mervyn Ondaatje and his eccentric character. In order to get his university education, Mervyn goes to England. However, it becomes clear that even he is not able to pass the entrance exam. When his parents come unannounced to England and face the realities about his education, Mervyn declares that he is engaged to Kate Roselap. This news makes the parents pleased and Mervyn safe for a while. After a couple of weeks, he falls in love and proposes to Dorris Gratiaen, who is an actress, a professional dancer and the mother of Michael Ondaatje. When he announces his relationship with Dorris, a heated argument erupts in the family, and Mervyn threatens them to commit suicide if they do not allow the marriage. Finally and compulsorily, the parents consent to his marriage with Dorris.

Michael presents his father as a man who creates problems and solves them by creating newer ones.

Thanks to the reputation of living in England, Mervyn is able to get a job in Ceylon Light Infantry. One of the most apparent weaknesses of the father is his alcohol addiction, which leads him to bigger troubles. For instance, he disrupts train services by hijacking passengers with a pistol when he drinks an excessive amount of alcohol. Dorris, as a tired woman of his husband's unusual acts, gets divorced and goes to London with her children. After divorcing, Mervyn becomes a more unstable man that he sells the land he owns part by part, which is inherited from Bampa, in order to afford his drinking expenses. He gets married again, and he has two daughters, named Susan and Jennifer, through the second marriage. When he becomes poorer day by day, he starts farming, however, he suffers from dipsomania every two months. His second wife Maureen attempts to prevent him from drinking, but Mervyn threatens to shoot her. Up to that point of information about Mervyn, it can be concluded that he is a problematic and addictive figure. The collected stories about him are crucial to the argument of this thesis in two points; the first one is his alcohol addiction which is highlighted by the author at every turn. It implies that the father has spent most of his life unconsciously, and what he does is mostly out of his control and far from his sober state, which makes it harder to see his real self. Secondly, the depiction of a dipsomaniac and troublemaker father figure by a son, who has lived separated for twenty-five years, is most probably blended with emotions of resentment and longing. Such emotions have the possibility of clouding the author's judge and diminish his reliability as well. As a result, all the data about his father may probably carry the traces of the author's self-reflexivity.

The author meets his father at the end of the novel again, in which he tells his father's miserable state. When the author depicts the atmosphere of the room that he and his father are in, he uses the term "stained mirror" which Mervyn tries to look at his reflection. The term lays the bare fact of Mervyn's state which is chaotic and ruined. The mirror that the author refers to shows a corrupted image of his father and it reflects his decay. "A whole battalion was carrying one page away from its source" (189). The author reinforces the idea of corruption with this statement, and it defines a state that the father surrenders to death. A mirror can be interpreted as an object that

the stains on it conceal something as its incapability of reflecting the whole picture. Besides, the ants that take the pages may infer the data that gets lost about his father or the information that Mervyn takes with him on the way to his last journey.

Finally, it is worth stating about Aunt Phyllis because the author defines her as "the minotaur of this long journey" (1982, 36). She is one of the main sources of the author during his data collection process. Most of the stories about the family and Sri Lanka are based on the oral narratives of her. When Michael comes to Sri Lanka, he pays a visit to his aunt first. As a data supplier and one of the closest people to Mervyn, Aunt Phyllis is a significant family member for Michael. However, the author also questions her reliability in the very first chapters. To illustrate, he conveys the moments that he catches his aunt looking at the ceiling "as if looking at the cue cards for stories" (36). He may imply the weakness of his aunt's memory or her possible illness of Alzheimer's. In fact, each possibility endangers the reliability of all the stories that she has narrated.

Even though the author uses real people and real names in the novel, he blurs the facts by including myths and irrelevant details that are blended with his emotions. Besides, he directs readers' perceptions by selecting among the data. In other words, he presents his readers with what he wants, which is another crucial act that diminishes his reliability. Apart from the unreliability of the data, its suppliers are also problematized. For instance, Aunt Phyllis's sudden stops during their conversations can be interpreted as the harbingers of amnesia or Alzheimer's disease. As she is the main source of the author, Phyllis and her state of mind are also significant to the believability of what she narrates.

Born in Sri Lanka and descending from The Dutch Burger ancestry, educated in London and becoming a citizen of Canada, Michael Ondaatje, with an irresistible sense of longing for his hometown, has a complex cultural background. Thus, different social or ideological, historical and geographical nations are allowed in the novel. High and popular culture, factual details and imaginative fictions or, in short, history and fiction fluctuate within the author's narrative. Hutcheon states that historiographic metafiction "tries to problematize and, thereby, to make us question. But it does not offer answers" (1988, 231). Likewise, these binary oppositions constantly reveal themselves in the novel and they are only negotiated but not resolved. The intertexts

are likened to archival collections, which have to be identified and decoded by the novel's readers.

Historiographic metafiction aims to depict that "history is not the transparent record of any sure truth and that it is inevitably textual" (Hutcheon, 1988, 129). In this regard, historiographic metafiction not only uses but also abuses anything like newspapers, maps, photographs as intertexts. Hutcheon further claims that postmodern intertextuality is a "formal manifestation and both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context" (1988, 118). According to Hutcheon, however, intertexts fail to show the truth due to their constructed or manipulated nature because they do not only add subjectivity to their authors but also provide multiple voices to the real text.

Insertion of intertexts into a novel is an effective way for the author that makes him the authority of his work. It enhances the meaning that he wants to convey and adds emotional power. It can also be useful for readers to establish a link among their personal memories and experiences with the author's. However, it does not change the fact that they are the interpretations of the narrator, as he is the one who picks and includes them in his narration. Likewise, visuals, such as photographs and maps, have the power of presenting concrete details, and they can act as a trigger that aids in remembering the past. Yet, they are incapable of conveying the whole picture, too. Their problematic nature comes from the fact that they are the product of a human and his personal experiences which are not universal and cannot be considered as ultimate truths.

Including texts in any literary work also means that the importance or the authority of an author decreases and the role of a reader increases. Intertextuality arouses curiosity and forces readers to understand the implied meaning and in the end, they may not fit with the author's own ideas. Hutcheon points out that, historiographic metafiction "does not pretend to reproduce events, but to direct us, instead, to facts, or to new directions in which to think about events" (1988, 154). Along with the reading routine is interrupted by intertexts, the reader has to pay attention to details and examine rather than accept them. He needs to be an explorer that has to find his way among the texts. Intertextuality also arouses a question that if a text refers to another, where the universe of it ends and reality begins.

The novel consists of photos, maps, poems, journal entries, visitor books and quotations from several authors, but they all include fictionality. The author does not follow a linear and logical sequence when he presents the images. To illustrate, he starts a chapter with a map and then tells about the same map again after a few chapters. Similarly, he uses family photographs throughout the novel with the aim of depicting their past. The novel is enriched by such visuals that are the outcomes of both the author's preferences and emotions. In her article "Postmodern Paratextuality and History", Linda Hutcheon uses the term "docufiction" (1987, 308) in order to tell about their problematic nature and adds that any intertext in the novels "is deliberately awkward, as a means of directing our attention to the very process by which we understand and interpret the past through textuality- in both history and fiction" (306). She further claims that "historians are readers of fragmentary documents" (307). They need to fill in the gaps of documents that are constructed from fragmented pieces.

Rosa Barber asserts that "as soon as artefacts or documents are used to create a narrative, a fictional element intrudes" (2010, 4). When the author is no longer able to create his own story, he includes documents, however, the insertion of any documents or intertexts make the literary work a fictitious and self-reflexive one because any "historians cannot strip themselves of their inherited prejudices and preconceptions" (1). The author's choices of the intertexts are the outcome of his own judgements and assumptions. The first type of intertext to be analyzed in the novel is a collection of texts that are inserted in the novel. In the introduction part, the author presents two epigraphs from a friar and a journalist. They represent the historical and political images of Sri Lanka. The first epigraph of a friar from the 14th century refers to his impressions of the island that states "I saw in this island fowls as big as our country geese having two heads… and other miraculous things which I will not here mention of" (1982, 15). With this epigraph, the author wants to convey the image of the island in the visions of Europeans that is exotic and fantastic. It also includes medieval perspectives with religious ideas about the dualities such as good and evil or human beings and monsters. The second epigraph is from a journalist that depicts the image of the island and represents how a dominant language empowers countries. Ironically, even though the journalist is a native, he accepts the misleading idea of Europeans has on his country.

In the chapter *The Babylon Stakes,* there is another epigraph. This anonymous epigraph is probably taken from the interviews that are given to the author. The epigraph mentions that "the Wall Street had a terrible effect on us. Many of the horses had to be taken over by the military" (48). It implies the outcomes of the Wall Street crash to the lives of privileged people. It gives the idea of the decadence of the burghers and their luxury lives. Yet, there is no explanation about the consequences of the crash for the island's economy or any other important points. When the reader sees the term "terrible effect", he may expect the worst thing but at the end, he faces complaints that are related to the futile lives of privileged people. The author presents dialogues in the chapter *Tropical Gossip*. These dialogues refer to betrayals and infidelities of a relative, and infidelity is presented as a normal practice as the author states "marriage was the greater infidelity" (53). It may be inferred that the author presents readers with his blurred vision of the past. Thanks to these inserted texts, he confronts the images of fact and fantasy that is created by others.

The author is aware of the problematic nature of historical documents and he realizes the gaps in records of the past and even those traces which have survived can be very fragile and misleading. Hutcheon highlights this fact by stating that, historiographic metafiction "plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record" (114). When Mervyn Ondaatje and Sammy Dias Bandaranaike, who is a close relative of the eventual Prime Minister of Ceylon, antagonize each other by their comments in a visitors' book, they cause the destruction of historical records; "pages continued to be torn out, ruining a good archival history of two semi-prominent Ceylon families" (1982, 152). Blended with emotions and subjective manners, their comments about each other are probably an outcome of resent and exaggerations, and their act of tearing some pages make it impossible to learn the whole story.

There are five poems in the novel. Two of them belongs to a native poet and the others are the author's poems and there is a stanza of another poem in the novel, too. The stanza of the poem "Don't Talk to me about Matisse" is written by a Ceylonese poet Lakdasa Wikksamasinha. The Ceylonese poet is resentful of the image of women and resists against the European style of depicting them. Another poem *Sweet Like a Crow* welcomes readers in a separate chapter and before it, there is an epigraph that introduces the poem by Paul Bowles. It refers to the incapability of the

Sinhalese people of singing. Paul asserts that “the Sinhalese are beyond a doubt one of the least musical people in the world” (76). The poem is a kind of reply to Bowles and seems that it reinforces the idea. The term “sweet like a crow” implies irony, and it creates an image of the sounds of Ceylon and Ceylonese people. It also refers to a personal vision of the author towards his hometown.

The next poem *High Flowers* may be interpreted as a response to the one written by Wikkramasinha. It suggests that two poets Wikkramasinha and Michael talk to each other via their texts, and their utterances link the past with the present. Michael’s poem gives a political and cultural message. He depicts the laborious women and their image of inferiority. They are the women that “my ancestors ignored” (87), which can be interpreted as the males’ superiority over females in the very idea of the author. Even though Michael conveys women, as mentioned in the previous chapters, as strong figures, their strength is appeared only after their husbands die, in other words, after they gain their freedom, they are able to flourish.

Another poem *To Colombo* describes the views that the author sees on the way to visit Sirigyia Hills. During his experiences of beautiful views, however, he comes across the realities when he states “on a bench behind sunlight/ the woman the coconut the knife” (91). It seems that the author goes back to realities that hide behind the beautiful scenery. Elisabeth Wesseling clarifies the issue as postmodern historical novels "turn to the past in order to look for unrealized possibilities that inhered in historical situations" (1982, 13). What the author and the reader expect is not confronted. The woman with a knife clouds the beauty of the landscape, and it is implied in the poem that realities may conceal other probabilities behind them.

The poem, which is entitled *The Cinnamon Peeler*, portrays a love for a woman. The husband declares his lust to his wife by stating “if I were a cinnamon peeler/ I would ride your bed” (167). He links his passion with the scent of cinnamon, a kind of spice that is typical to Sri Lanka. As previously mentioned, it is the spice that seduces the invaders, and it is highlighted again as a means of seduction of the wife as well. The author presents a typical spice of his hometown as a device that seduces people but does not talk about its shape or any benefits of it. This selectivity, which is probably the outcome of his memory and emotions, leads the author to represent his hometown inaccurately.

The author surprises readers in the chapter *Honeymoon*, too. He refers to daily news instead of telling about newly-married parents. He narrates a French president that is killed by a Russian and about a strike. He also tells about some movies that his parents like. He mixes national or international history with his private one, which supports the idea that "historiographic metafiction does not tell us how to think about a certain event; rather, it says: that is one way of looking at things, now here is another, and another, and another" (Marshall, 1992, 156). He may try to give the idea that behind any events there is another one. It becomes evident that some incidents are more important than others as the author selects among them, and it implies that priorities differ from one to another. It also signifies that expectations may mislead humans thus, it is not possible to talk about universal truths. What is important for someone may not be the same for another.

Ondaatje quotes from Shakespeare in the chapter “Blind Faith”. He depicts a scene in which Edgar talks to his father about his faith that, as he thinks, is the outcome of his father and reproaches about his inability to be a good parent. The author asserts that with his siblings, they are “terribly shaped by what went on before them” (1982, 179). He is of the same idea as Edgar that, he and his siblings are the victims of past generations. In other words, they are affected and shaped by their ancestors, and they are not able to reflect their real sides or live the desired life. This act of the author also forces his readers to speculate on the intention of Ondaatje's inclusion of such intertext into his narration which leads to more interpretation.

The writer uses maps as intertexts in his book as well. He starts the novel with a map of the island which shows the possible routes, and the places he intends to visit in Sri Lanka. In advance, the reader may suppose that the narrative is a personal one but later, after a few chapters, the author presents the real map of his hometown. The map, which is hung on the wall of his brother’s house, is just a “rumour of topography” (1982, 64). The term “rumour” implies that his narration mixes fact with fiction. Instead of showing the real map in his novel, the author presents it verbally. He uses the term “translations” of another when he compares the maps, which questions their reliability. He also implies that the map of the island is the outcome of the past of his country which is invaded by many colonizers and the traces they have left behind them. Each of the invaders changes its shape and as a result, each map depicts or

shows the ideal land but not the real one. The map of the author shows his ideal Ceylon and the real one presents combinations and interpretations of each colonizer, and the author problematizes both of the maps as historical documents.

It can be stated that photographs are one of the most credible historical documents. They present and keep the memory of any moment in the past. They can be treated as evidence of any past incident, too. However, in her article “Postmodern Paratextuality and History”, Linda Hutcheon claims that “photographs are still presences of absences: they both verify and void the past of its historicity” (312). Similarly, Roland Barthes asserts in his book 'Camera Lucida' that “a photograph is always invisible” (1982, 6). They both put the reliability of photographs into question. Each theorist claims that behind every photo, there is more than one can see. Any picture is unable to represent the whole memory as it is the outcome of a photographer, which is blended with his perspective, and it is not clear what has happened before and after the shooting, too.

The author presents six photos from his family album. He chooses several photographs out of many possible ones. Either he may attempt to remember the past or make his readers see what he wants, is not clear but no matter what his aim is, the author takes the power into his hands in both possibilities. It is a power that controls the way how his parents should look, and the way how his readers should see them. The photographs also give him an opportunity to reconstruct the past by presenting evidence but with his own interpretations. On the other hand, as readers, we need to be aware of the fact that, the author’s narration of his own history with those documents “might lead us to conclude that we have a responsibility to investigate possible alternative histories” (Barber, 2010, 2). The author’s self-reflexive narration makes it feasible or, at least, gives readers a chance to interpret the meaning that the author intends to convey.

Michael Ondaatje inserts a picture in the section *Asia Rumors* which shows an old photo of his hometown. In the photo, there is a cart and houses that are by the beach. The following chapter is *Asia,* in which the author gives details about the circumstances that lead him to go back to his hometown, and also he tells about the natural disasters in Sri Lanka. The old photograph which interacts with the image of hometown that the author keeps in his mind is replaced with a picture he presents. The

tranquillity of the picture does not match with the chapter that gives details about floods and droughts.

The photos of the author's parents are included in the section *A Fine Romance.* The photographs present them individually but not together. The author probably presents them as he remembers; separated. In the photo of his father, the author presents him as a well-dressed and handsome man. It does not evoke a chaotic, troublemaker father image. On the contrary, his mother's photo depicts a woman who is happy and extroverted which does not match the image that the author presents in the novel. *Running in the Family* does not include much information about the author's mother, but it is clear from the behaviour of his father that she is an introverted woman who cannot prevent her husband from drinking and acting shamefully. Another significance of the photos is the irony between the title of the chapter and the parents' separated pictures. Readers' expectations are not confronted again as romanticism is supposed to be within two lovers and side by side.

In the chapter *What We Think of Married Life,* there is another picture of parents and they are not separated this time. The picture shows them quite differently. They make funny faces like monkeys in the picture. However, the author depicts the picture on the previous page, in chapter *Photograph.* He presents a verbal narrative with the aim of making his readers set an expectation. He states that it is the photograph that he has "been waiting for all his life" (1982, 161) as it is the only one that his parents are together. Yet, the parents in the photo are far from being serious, and it raises the question that do they pretend to be funny or is it their real state. Besides, as the author sets an expectation on the previous page by stating that it is the perfect photo for him, he misleads his readers because instead of a funny picture, a more romantic one may be expected.

At the beginning of the chapter *The Ceylon and Succulent Society*, there is a photo of the author's family, in which he, his mother, and siblings are young, and they seem happy in their swimsuits. The picture conveys a joyful family that is contrary to the aforementioned one, however, his father is missing in the photograph. Whether he is the one who shoots the photograph or not, is not clear but on a happy day of a family, the father is absent or he may not want to take part in their joyful moments. It becomes the interpretation of the author as he is the one that chooses the photo and

presents it as a happy family memory. Its fictionality and irony come from the fact that the whole family does not exist in it. An old photo of Ceylon appears in the introduction of the section *Don't Talk to me about Matisse*. The photo shows people that are surrounded by a flood, a typical monsoon day. However, the people in the picture do not seem sad or scared or even surprised. It is probably bewildering for readers to see them in the middle of a flood who do not show any sign of surprise or fear.

Any text, document or visuals that are used in the novel, undoubtedly, enrich the narrative. They enable new perspectives for both the author and the reader. Furthermore, it makes the author's task easier to present the intended meaning and for the reader that they may find them interesting. On the other hand, new perspectives that the intertexts present mean different interpretations for both the narrator and the reader. They create multiplicity, and the author's personal experiences and his memories along with the verbal explanations about the intertexts restrict readers, and they may not fit their expectations. Thus, they become the personal and subjective way of presenting and questioning realities and history. The author emphasizes the processes of the past and indicates the textuality and physicality of all past events, which can only be known if they are recorded or survive. Ondaatje marks himself as a historian who, in a scientific manner, bases his accounts on facts and on documents, but also he juxtaposes them with myths. He chooses some intertexts to support his ideas. Hutcheon states that "we name and constitute those events as historical facts by selection and narrative positioning" (1988, 97). Thus, it can be inferred that to select among the texts also means to ignore others. As a result, what the author tells becomes a self-reflexive story.

In conclusion, twenty-five year is a big gap that separates the author from the past. The accuracy of memory cannot be expected and the novel also includes the author's imagination of personal and national history. As the writer searches for the individuals that form the part of his family history with a diasporic state as well as his country's by including larger historical context which are mixed with fictions and myths and as there is a great distance in space and time, he makes the novel a historiographic metafiction. By juxtaposing written documents and oral stories, the author himself presents the accounts of the past which are emotional, empathetic and

communal. Since “the island hid its knowledge” (Ondaatje, 1982, 81), the author has to trace unconventional documents in order to restore his family’s and Sri Lanka’s past. His sensuous imagery is another factor that decreases the believability of the data he provides. By emphasizing native story-telling, the author further denotes possible gaps in records of the past. It cannot be known whether what is told orally really happened and what is written down is accurate. As Michael Ondaatje claims at the initial part of his novel by stating “truth disappears with history” (53) he questions the concept of factual, objective truth not only by refracting and multiplying the narrative of history but also by integrating mythical stories in his novel. He conveys a general sense of vagueness and uncertainty by including various intertexts throughout the book. Despite all his struggles, however, the issue of finding his family’s roots and hometown’s history is not resolved. He confesses that “the book again is incomplete” (193). Readers are left with unanswered questions or forced to find their own answers. To the author, historiography is an ongoing process and he asserts that any story is retold “with additions and this time a few judgements thrown in” (21). He highlights the circularity that any historian contributes to history with his background knowledge, which is blended with the data he gathers and, it becomes inevitable that there is a novelty in each historian’s narration. The fact that any historical narration includes the narrator’s interpretation makes historiography a vicious cycle. Any intertext such as photos or maps, do not go beyond to enrich the literary text, and they are just the outcome of the author's interpretation.

## CHAPTER THREE: *THE PASSION*

Jeanette Winterson was born in Manchester, UK, in 1959 and raised in a strict church environment. When she fell in love with a woman, she was rejected by her parents and the church community. Winterson's novels are generally considered among the works that have traces of historiographic metafiction. As Helena Grice and Tim Woods point out, Winterson is "a writer who self-consciously explores the equivocal status of objective reality. Her fiction frequently calls into question assumptions about narratorial identity, fictional artifice, and objective reality"(1998; 1). She problematizes history by conveying it from a subjective perspective. She also defies the traditional linearity of time and chronology. Besides, her novels elevate the marginalized characters, and she mixes myths with realities. She also uses parody in her novel in order to subvert and reconstruct generally accepted facts. The aforementioned features are all evident in her novel *The Passion*, too. She surprises her readers and falsifies their expectations by blending real historical records with unexpected characters and improbable incidents. Self-reflexivity, which can be presented as the main notion of historiographic metafiction, also exists in the novel.

*The Passion* was published in 1987, and it takes place in the Napoleonic era. One of the protagonists Henri falls in love with Villanelle, the other protagonist of the novel. Henri's admiration for Bonaparte vanishes as he witnesses his fellows' deaths in wars. Villanelle's husband maltreats her, and she is sold to the army. Then, the two main characters agree to escape to Venice together. Henri kills Villanelle's husband in order to prove his love, but Villanelle's refusal of Henri as a lover drives him mad. Eventually, Henri ends up in a mental care hospital. He spends the rest of his life there while Villanelle raises her and Henri's daughter, and she sometimes pays a visit to near the island that Henri is kept. It can be inferred from the summary that an important historical period is narrated by two minor characters. Their controversial passions and experiences overshadow the important incidents of the era. In other words, Winterson mingles a national history with the individuals'. She reflects past from both national and personal perspectives. She appreciates multiplicity by blending the histories of nations with ignored individuals. Winterson also narrates several well-known historical incidents and figures, but she draws attention to their unreliability by conveying them from a narrow perspective of marginalized people. The purpose of this

chapter is to analyze the novel in the sense of Winterson's approach towards historiography. Just like Michael Ondaatje, she includes the silenced voices, intertexts, and fantastical elements in her narrative to highlight the inevitable existence of subjectivity.

The theme of history is very dominant in the novel. It is narrated under subjective and limited angle. It is possible to see some historical facts in the book but the author presents them from a thoroughly new perspective. Readers come across a famous commander at first, however, the focus shifts on a minor character soon. Gender roles are reversed, and they challenge the traditional ones. Women are not presented as usual housewives and Henri's feminine traits are featured. Winterson challenges the official or traditional history as she attaches more importance to the experiences of individuals. She also introduces supernatural elements in the novel and they all function as a resistance to traditional historiography. Hayden White refers to traditional history and argues that writers, who are primarily male historians, record their historical chronicles. He draws attention to the historian's creative involvement in writing history. White summarizes the traditional distinction between a historian and a fiction writer by stating;

> It is sometimes said that the aim of the historian is to explain the past by 'finding', 'identifying', or 'uncovering' the 'stories' that lie buried in the chronicles; and that the difference between 'history' and 'fiction' resides in the fact that the historian 'finds' his stories, whereas the fiction writer 'invents' his (1975; 6).

In regard to White's definitions, Winterson's novel carries both a historian and fiction writer's traits. She challenges the premise that history has verifiable incidents, and she reconstructs them with her own perspective. *The Passion* depicts a Napoleonic France, which is a period of bloody conflicts and great successes. It is a significant era as it leads a revolution, and it has important impacts both on France and Europe. Normally, within such a historical novel, readers expect to see military themes like heroism, the courage of soldiers, and the successes or failures of Napoleon. Bonaparte's leadership and his political ambitions may be stated as probable themes, too. However, when readers start reading the very first pages, they are introduced to the protagonist who works as a cook for Napoleon and whose task is to prepare Bonaparte's favourite dish. Likewise, the emperor is introduced as a figure that loves chicken and horses instead

of his commander sides. One of the protagonists of the novel, Henri is a character that is far from the battlefields and even he is a soldier, he works in the kitchen. Besides, he is the most significant source of historical data of the related era, however, he records the important historical incidents in a diary. In other words, the Napolenoic era is depicted within a diary of Henri, which validates the existence of self-reflexivity in historiography.

Isabel C. Anievas Gamallo claims that the author's aim to write the novel is "to impress and reinforce dominant ideological discourses and to underline the fact that both language and memory inevitably reshape the past" (1998; 128). In this respect, she plays and abuses the truths. She rewrites or reconstructs a national history from the points of individuals and that makes the history inevitably subjective. The author is against to the absolute truths of traditional history as she directly challenges the dominant realities. The author questions the effect of time on one's memory. To illustrate, while Henri listens to her mother reminisce about her relatives, he avers that "time is a great deadener. People forget, grow old, get bored" (1987; 32). The author refers to time as an eraser of the experiences and highlights memories' desperation against it. She forces her readers to guess more, which means more and various interpretations. Winterson resists against the traditional premise that reality is directly accessible. She draws attention to the fact that meaning is plural and ambiguous. It cannot be mirrored explicitly in traditional historiography. Winterson gives voice to Henri to validate her argument;

> This morning I smell the oats and I see a little boy watching his reflection in a copper pot he's polished. His father comes in and laughs and offers him his shaving mirror instead. But in the shaving mirror, the boy can only see one face. In the pot, he can see all the distortions of his face. He sees many possible faces and so he sees what he might become. (26)

The author draws attention to the possibility of more than one truth and various faces of history and also the necessity of being sceptical towards any claims. For example, the priest, who is responsible for Henri's education, advises him that "if you have to work for anybody an absentee boss is best" (12). She also points out the fact that traditional conventions restrict readers' perceptions and prevents them to see the past thoroughly. In other words, Winterson refers to the postmodern rejection of traditional historiography that emphasizes scientific based documentation and excludes other

elements such as the potentiality of different interpretations on any historical incidents. The author's vision upon history reveals in a way that it appreciates multiplicity.

Winterson disrupts the credibility of history by inserting characters' feelings in her narration. Thanks to Henri, for instance, readers become aware of the impacts of war, and people's emotions that have lived and fought under the reign of Bonaparte. The author challenges the objectivity of history by retelling it via characters' feelings. Henri avers that,

> Nowadays people talk about the things he did as though they made sense. As though even his most disastrous mistakes were only the result of bad luck or hubris.
>
> It was a mess.
>
> Words like devastation, rape, slaughter, carnage, starvation are lock and key words to keep the pain at bay. Words about war that are easy on the eye. I'm telling you stories. Trust me. (1987, 5).

The writer renders the Napoleonic wars along with the feelings or experiences of the people who have lived in that period. Unlike traditional chronicles, Winterson relies on Henri's personal struggles, and she endeavours to retell the past from Henri's feelings and points of view. As the author emphasizes the feelings of her characters and blends them with the facts, she reinforces the postmodern approach towards the past, which rejects scientific-based historiography and appreciates subjectivity. Even though the novel covers a significant period, which leads to a new era, the characters' emotions and love affairs dominate it.

Henri is the narrator and one of the protagonists of the novel. Initially, he wants to become a drummer in the army, but he ends up as a cook because of his inability to perform the necessary acts of cracking a walnut between his fingers. Due to his admiration for Napoleon, he does not complain about his status in the army. In time, however, he realizes the harshness of wars, and his opinions about the emperor begin to change. The other protagonist of the novel is Villanelle. She also lives in the same historical period as Henri. Unlike Henri, she presents an imaginative version of the Napoleonic era. Winterson depicts Villanelle as a beautiful and divergent character. She dresses and acts like a man, and she works at a casino. She is also fond of gambling and her sexual preferences are contrary to conventional societies. Due to its multiple narratives, the novel illustrates the themes of history's openness to

reinterpretation. The author reinforces the idea of her subjectivity in the novel by including another protagonist in the narrative. Villanelle, who can be depicted as a subversion of traditional historical character, lives in the same time period as Henri. She dresses like a man, works at a casino and gambles. In fact, she defines herself as;

> I walked the streets, rowed circles around Venice, woke up in the middle of the night with my covers in impossible knots and my muscles rigid. I took to working double shifts at the Casino, dressing as a woman in the afternoon and a young man in the evenings. I ate when food was put in front of me and slept when my body was throbbing with exhaustion. (1987, 102)

Like Henri, the author emphasizes her reversed gender role. However, Villanelle forms a different history. To illustrate, when she tells about a celebration for Bonaparte's birthday, she states that "what we Venetians had to celebrate was not clear" (54). Henri's passion for Napoleon does not exist in Villanelle. She is in love with another woman, and she longs to live the present but not the past. The two main characters, who narrates the same period but from different angles, add multiplicity to the novel. Winterson provides the significant features of historiographic metafiction by presenting two divergent views about the same era. Paulina Palmer argues that;

> The interrogation of the division between history and literature, life and art, along with the foregrounding of the complex nature of the issue of 'character' and 'identity' in works of fiction, come together in a feature of the novel which typifies historiographic metafiction: the combination of a historical personage, in this case Napoleon, with characters such as Henri and Villanelle who are purely fictional. (1998; 109)

Contrary to the traditional data about Napoleon, the two fictional characters and their different perspectives on the same time period is offered. The author's depiction of the two characters especially by featuring their reversed feminine and masculine aspects is another crucial point that is needed to be mentioned. It can be interpreted that, Winterson rejects and fights against the traditional gender roles. She shows her readers the existence of multiplicity from the points of view of the silenced.

The setting of the novel has different effects upon the protagonists, which emphasizes subjectivity as well. Winterson also disrupts the traditional history when she presents a well-known city in an unfamiliar way. She, for instance, features Venice's fantastic side that has transformative nature. The city has supernatural

elements that make Henri feel confused whereas, Villanelle feels free and at ease in the same setting. By depicting the same city from different visions, the author draws attention to subjectivity and various interpretations. Furthermore, subjectivity appears between the two characters within their premises about males. Henri makes a clear cut distinction by stating “soldiers and women. That’s how the world is” (1987, 45). He manifests his views upon women and refers to their traditional gender roles in societies. On the other hand, Villanelle has a very different perspective on males. To illustrate, she describes her father as “a weak and foolish man” (50).

The dispute between Henri and Villanelle on a gender issue is a significant example of subjectivity. In the end, Villanelle's argument that men are violent, regardless of their nationality is more persuasive. Among Henri's and Villanelle's narratives, the violent cook is just one example that justifies Villanelle. The cook is unable to interact peacefully with those around him, and he makes his profit from wars. The novel ends with Henri going insane because he cannot accept alternative realities and control his desire for love and murder, while Villanelle becomes an independent and wealthy mother. Even though Villanelle is tempted again by the Queen of Spades, she manages to control her desire. She states "if I give into this passion, my real life, the most solid, the best known, will disappear and I will feed on shadows again like those sad spirits whom Orpheus fled" (146). Villanelle's female power succeeds, whereas Henri's male power cannot.

The existence of multiple views on gender validates the postmodern premise of self-reflexivity and the notion of inclusion of the silenced into history, too. Henri prefers staying in San Servelo not because it is a pleasant place, but he finds serenity and security there. Villanelle, on the other hand, would rather fight with the difficulties of life and raises their daughter on her own. In the novel, masculine desires are often expressed in relation to wars, but when the issue comes to survival, not all men are capable of succeeding, but it is women that are able to overcome the hardship of the world. Winterson attempts to reject all absolutes that have been maintained in traditional history by creating characters who directly challenge dominant truths.

The author grounds her novel on a historical period, but she does not provide an ordered listing of the incidents for that time. On the contrary, she intends to present the questionable objectivity of history by not only reconstructing the era but also by

problematizing the history with multiple voices and the use of parody. The novel's significance of gender issues leads up to a narration of histories of silent voices. It can be stated that the reason for this sort of characterization is to highlight "a postmodern ideology of plurality and recognition of difference" (Hutcheon, 1988, 114). In other words, the silenced voices represent the postmodern rejection of patriarchial or traditional historiography.

Henri comes from a religious family and desires to be a drummer in the military of Napoleon. He states "the recruiting officer gave me a walnut and asked if I could crack it between finger and thumb. I could not and he laughed and said a drummer must have strong hands" (1987, 7). His failure in cracking the walnut with fingers leads him to be a special cook of Bonaparte. Winterson chooses a leading character of her novel as a cook in the army, a silenced figure that constructs the history of the Napoleonic era. He is the one that reports and comments on the incidents instead of a more conventional character such as Napoleon himself. The novel does not tell the story of Napoleon or about his successes. Rather, it conveys the story of a man that does not have any contributions to the army's victories even though he is a soldier. Henri is depicted as a distant character from the field of war. At the very beginning of the novel, he doesn't seem to have any complaints despite his wish to become a drummer in the army is not fulfilled. On the other hand, the author presents Henri as a man that has great admiration for the emperor. When he faces the horrific outcomes of wars, his ideas shift to oppresiveness towards Bonaparte. It becomes evident that the story of Henri challenges the universally acknowledged version of historical events.

The author's main purpose to choose Henri as a reporter and provider of historical incidents is to highlight the problematic nature of history. Henri does not present his own version of the events. He claims that what he narrates is true, but he is also within a position of an eye-witness of the incidents. His narrations are evidenced by the inclusion of actual historical events like a camp at Boulogne or he tells the readers about the English Channel. However, as Frank R. Ankersmit points out that "evidence does not send us back to the past, but gives rise to the question what a historian here and now can or cannot do with it" (2002, 287). Evidence from any documents requires the present state of mind in order for a historian to reinterpret it. Hence, any evidence gains meaning with the mentality of the historian and a period he

lives in. Written documents are problematized in postmodern history as their interpretations may vary from time to time and person to person. Likewise, the author signifies the unreliability of the data that Henri provides by presenting him as an incapable man. He cannot provide, for instance, sufficient data about the drowned soldiers that try to pass the channel. Henri's insufficiency of presenting the past objectively results in parodic reflection of it. He cannot provide efficient data as he omits some parts and invents others.

Winterson prefers to present Henri as a sensitive man and she also emphasizes Henri's physical weakness. He is not able to achieve the dream of being a drummer in the army and Winterson reinforces his sensitiveness when she depicts a scene in which Henri feels outraged towards the soldiers that dehumanize the women in the brothel. Henri's homesickness and longing for his mother are other crucial aspects that are not normally expected from a soldier. His personal and physical traits do not correspond to military life and by presenting Henri as a fragile character, Winterson aims to give voice to a silenced character into her narration. She offers her readers the possibility of various aspects of history. The author questions Henri's reliability as he takes the role of a historiographer from an alternative and minor perspective. Henri grants primacy to some incidents and utilizes his memory, which is blended with his emotions while narrating the past. All these features can be shown as attempts to signify subjectivity beneath history.

The author reconstructs history via her main characters and she uses Henri's diary as an intertext to reflect the past. Christopher Pressler defines the diary "as a tool for redefining history, contains more than just minor's details of Henri's life or a standard record of battles (1997, 17). Pressler's statements clearly give readers an idea that what is written in the diary is far from being credible as it includes trivial details along with Henri's personal memories. Readers can only learn about the era thanks to that diary. Henri becomes a historian of the novel and his credibility is in constant questioning, too. In his diary, readers come across irrelevant data such as the emperor's appetite, his horses or Henri's homesickness. The novel also refers to the factual historical incidents and people, but it also lays bare the self-reflexivity with a diary that Henri keeps. The author reveals the unreliability of the records in Henri's diary at the beginning of the book. One of the friends of Henri in the army, who is

named Domino, questions Henri's notes by stating "what makes you think you can see anything clearly? What gives you the right to make a notebook and shake it at me in thirty years, if we're still alive, and you've got the truth?" (1987, 28). Domino's rejection of Henri as a historian can be stated as an exact postmodern attitude towards history and its believability since postmodernism advocates that history is a human construct and human is not a perfect but a fallible creature.

Henri discloses the fact about his role as a historian when he asserts that "I don't care about facts, Domino, I care about how I feel" (29). With these utterances, Henri confesses that what he writes is far from being objective. All the things that he keeps in his diary are prone to be fiction as he attaches more importance to his feelings than the facts. As Hayden White points "I am permitted to assert that different historians stress different aspects of the same historical field" (1975, 274), the facts are more likely to change in the proportion to Henri's emotions. It cannot be expected from that kind of historian to write the same things about the same event when he is cheerful or resentful, for instance. Henri also declares the trickiness of his diary when he admits that he is "trying not to make up too much" (1987, 103). His remarks on the history writing process unveil the fictitious nature of the data that he gathers in his diary. Henri frequently repeats an oxymoron that "I'm telling you stories. Trust me" (9). Along with juxtaposing two contradictory terms, the author equates history with story. Winterson refers to the constructed nature of the past and to the inevitability of subjectivity of historians. Indeed, she problematizes history by emphasizing the validity of history by blurring fact and fiction.

Henri's diary does not fit the standards of traditional historiography since he depicts Napoleon's fondness for chickens instead of representing his successes or defeats during his reign. The novel opens with the statement that narrates Bonaparte's food choice. "It was Napoleon who had such a passion for chickens that he kept his chefs working around the clock" (1987, 3). These utterances unearth the postmodern inclination of non-traditional history. What expected in an average history book is not present in Henri's diary. Unlike the traditional historians, Henri's diary adopts self-reflexivity. He states; "I invented Bonaparte as much as he invented me" (158). His confession validates the postmodern premise that fiction and history are inseparable concepts. Henri's fluctuant view on Bonaparte is also needed to be stressed as it

verifies the postmodernist idea that history cannot be far from subjective interpretations. Even though his dream of becoming a drummer is not fulfilled, Henri gets used to working in the kitchen and does not have any complaints at first. However, after seeing his comrades die or "watching them alive" in very hard living conditions, his views about Bonaparte shift. (82). Winterson draws attention to the subjectivity of history and its constructed nature via her disillusioned character. Moreover, the term invention can be equated with interpretations of Henri, in which his emotions are apparent. Henri's utterance that "how I feel will change" is the harbinger of his flexible attitude. His altered vision in time justifies the postmodern notion about the impossibility of universal truth.

As a historiographer, Henri announces his aim to convey the incidents as they "really happened" (103). In fact, he provides the exact dates and specific details of some historical events. He states, for instance, that "July 20, 1804. Two thousand men were drowned today" (24). On the other hand, Henri's subjective impressions of his feelings and sensitive manners dominate the novel, too. Likewise, his feminine traits have great impact on the selection of incidents. Instead of jotting down the expected data about usual army life, he narrates about abused women among soldiers. Henri's account of the past suggests Hutcheon's view of protagonists in historiographic metafiction, who are marginalized and silenced. Therefore, the author reconstructs the past via the memories of unimportant characters, and their experiences become more crucial than the historical facts. In other saying, Winterson reinterprets the past from different perspectives with characters' subjective stories.

Hayden White points out that "the death of the king may be a beginning, an ending, or simply a transitional event in three different stories" (1975, 7). It is the historian who arranges the incidents into a hierarchy, and it is he who chooses among them in terms of their importance. White's example justifies the fact that history is a human construct, and it cannot exclude itself from the self-reflexivity of a historian. Henri and his diary have a very significant role in the novel. Yet, he queries his own status as a historiographer. He admits that he has made up, ignored or omitted some historical events. To illustrate, in regard to the soldiers that are drowned in the river, he tells a lie to villagers and advocates himself by stating "why not? It made them happy. I didn't talk about the men who have married mermaids". (1987, 56). He clearly

manifests that, as a historiographer, he has a right to alter the history or selects among the events. He avers that he has brought a new breath to historiography contrary to what "the old men" do who has worked as scientists during the process of history-writing (28). The author picks Henri as a historian in order to undermine the claims of universal history.

The premise of real characters is questioned in historiographical metafictions in order to highlight the ambiguity of history. Characters are given fictitious traits by implementing both real and unreal characteristics. These elements appear in undetermined contexts intending to make readers interrogate the history. Thanks to the non-traditional characters, authors play with classical conventions of historiography. Winterson allows a multiplicity of meaning by depicting an emperor in an unusual content, too. She resists against a traditional assumption that reality is something that is directly accessible. Plurality in perspectives and self-conscious attitude of the author, who is in charge of giving value to eccentric characters, lead readers to see probable faces of history.

> The most pervasive representation of gendered space is the paradigm of the 'separate spheres', an oppositional and a hierarchical system consisting of a dominant public male realm of production (the city) and a subordinate private female one of reproduction (home). The origins of this ideology which divides city from home, public from private, production from reproduction, and men from women is both patriarchal and capitalist (Rendell, J. 2000, 103)

In line with the above utterances by Jane Rendell, it can be inferred that Winterson distorts the traditional norms and beliefs that are one of the main features of postmodernism. In the novel, the masculine traits are occupied by women. Contrary to the conventional societies, in which women are expected to deal with household chores and duties; whereas men are placed as breadwinner figures. Winterson forms reversed roles for genders. In this regard, she rejects the history of patriarchs by shifting the roles of men and women. The postmodern characteristic of acknowledging multiplicity is achieved via the women, and the author rewrites the history from their perspectives.

Henri and Villanelle's mothers are presented as self-confident and defensive figures that are also contrary to the patriarchal societies. Henri's mother, for instance, is forced to get married, but she escapes from home as she desires to be a nun. She is

depicted as a character that resists oppression. She gets married as she sees it as a social necessity, though. When Henri sets off for his military service, he narrates that "mother didn't cry. It was Claude who cried" (1987, 12). It is her husband that depicted as a weak character. In patriarchal societies, crying is generally expected from women, but the author aims to create an oppressive woman figure which is against the traditional one.

Villanelle's mother is also depicted as a breadwinner woman which is something to be done by men in traditional societies. It can be inferred that Winterson aims to include plurality in her narration by reversing the gender roles. Her female characters are stronger than the male characters in the novel. She presents the women in such a way that they do not need men in order to lead their lives. She creates a fantastic setting for the women with the aim of adding plurality and alternative stories in her narration. Thus, the author rejects the history that is written by traditional historiographers who do not include the stories of the silenced.

Inventor's wife is another example of reversed gender roles. She is the one who does her best to live on their life together with her husband. On the other hand, her husband's only aim is to make people happy with his inventions. Winterson depicts that woman as a poor figure that cannot get what she deserves; "like God, she was neglected" (28). After the woman's death, it becomes apparent that she is the only person that provides for family's needs. The author reverses the gender roles and she also rejects the constructed truths of traditional historiography. The untold stories of individuals beneath history highlights the author's self-reflexivity.

Henri avers that there is a clear distinction between the two genders. However, the author features Henri's feminine traits and other women's masculine aspects in order to undermine Henri's premise. Winterson's rejection of traditional gender stereotypes can be stated as one of the trademarks of postmodern disavowal of the universally accepted classification of sexes. The novel offers a revisionist perspective that alternative histories of the silenced are needed to be in the process of history writing. At the end of the novel, Henri goes insane due to his inability of controlling his desires, whereas Villanelle leads an independent and wealthy life. She manages to control her passion and rejects the woman that once she is in love. As a male character,

Henri cannot succeed but Villanelle can. Winterson's ambiguous gender perspective provides a basis to reconstruct the male-dominant history.

The author also plays with history by letting fantasy in her novel. In other words, she converts the past into a story with the use of myths and fantastical themes in her narration. Susana Onega asserts that "the combination of history with fantasy aligns *The Passion* with historiographic metafiction" (2006, 56). The novel consists of both real and fictional characters along with unreal incidents and settings. Winterson creates her past, and she presents it from her perspective, which refers to the novel as historiographic metafiction. The novel apparently rejects the realistic narration with an intend to signify the historical subjectivity, and the author reinforces the notion of reconstruction by including the elements of fantastic elements in the novel. Additionally, Winterson reflects the traces of historiographic metafiction by means of using parody on religious and social constructs. She reinforces the postmodern distrust of history by privileging fantastic elements over facts. For instance, Henri tells about their extraordinary trip, in which they can sail thanks to the webbed-feet of Villanelle. "We were moving. How? I raised my head fully, my knees still drawn up, and saw Villanelle, her back towards me, a rope over her shoulder, walking on the canal and dragging our boats. Her boots lay neatly one by the other" (1987, 129). The author provides her readers plurality as she includes fantasy in the novel. She lays bare her self-reflexivity and challenges the universality of history with the stories he has made up.

Villanelle's attitude offers a departure from the constraints of patriarchal society. She provides a different narrative mode of tales. She reinforces the fantastic nature of the tales by reconstructing them, too. To illustrate, webbed feet are associated with boatmen in the novel, but she is the one who possesses those supernatural features. "There never was a girl whose feet were webbed in the entire history of the boatmen" (1987, 51). In this respect, Villanelle represents a figure of rebel towards conventional tales. She problematizes the established norms through the creation of a fantastic realm.

Furthermore, Villanelle depicts her father's disappearance in a fantastic narration. "The boat was pilled up by a couple of priests on their way to Mass. The tourist was babbling incoherently and pulling at his toes with his fingers. There was no

boatman" (50). The fantastic nature of the incidents leads readers to a magical world. However, Winterson leaves readers with unanswered questions or let them "redefine reality as complex and many sided" (Antosa, 1985, 147). Readers do not have any clear ideas as the author does not provide a reason for the loss of Villanelle's father. Whether the tourists have any role or is it the father's own choice to escape is not clear. Therefore, it becomes the readers' task to interrogate the reason behind the appearance, which probably means multiple interpretations.

Henri tells about a priest who “supplemented his meagre income by betting and gambling”. He “learned every card game and a few tricks” from him (1987, 12). He presents a reverend as a gambler who teaches Henri how to play cards instead of religious issues. Hutcheon’s premise that “historiographic metafictions use parody” animates in the novel (129). The novel parodies a priest in terms of his controversial traits. A priest who is addicted to gambling is far from a generally accepted religious man figure. The author also challenges the commonly accepted beliefs of religions by constructing an extraordinary priest. Besides, she defies the rationalization of religious truths by a priest that has controversial habits, and she also criticizes the religious authorities.

Winterson diminishes the credibility of her narration by creating a character who has very strong eyesight. "The de-frocked priest with the eagle eye”, whose name is Patrick, works with Henri in the army of Napoleon (15). He is depicted as a storyteller and in one of their conversations with Henri, he claims that he has seen the goblins that live under hills, and they have converted his boots into a very small size. His spirit also visits Henri in prison. All those depictions of Patrick make readers feel insecure about the truth value of the incidents. Winterson resists the dogmas of religion, and she attempts to show the readers that even religious people may be misleading. She also draws attention towards to the inevitability of multiple interpretations. Additionally, he has a talent for seeing the very far without any device. He is recruited to the army and expected to act as binoculars. In other words, a soldier is implemented with an unusual trait, which lessens the reliability of his story. In this respect, Winterson creates alternative histories that are not possible to be seen in conventional historiography.

The writer locates the story of Villanelle in a magical place. She lives in Venice, an existing city. However, the author alters the reality with myths and fantastic themes. In fact, Villanelle depicts Venice as a “changeable city. It is not always the same size. Streets appear and disappear overnight” (1987, 97). Besides, “the boatmen here have webbed feet” (118). Venice is also presented within multiple perspectives, which are related to individuals' perceptions and emotions. While Henri feels confused in the city, Villanelle finds reassurance. The author chooses a real city, and she blends her narration with fantastic elements. In doing so, she implies that there is a possibility of other events beneath the traditional ones as she presents the city from two divergent views, and she leads her readers to question the truth.

Unlike Villanelle, who can easily move through the city, Henri is not able to find his way around, and he becomes obsessed with the city's transformative atmosphere. He observes from the window of his jail that "at midnight the bells ring out from every one of their churches and they have a hundred and seven at least. I have tried to count, but it is a living city and no one really knows what buildings are there from one day to the next" (158). Henri challenges readers to prove his tale wrong, whereas Villanelle feels comfortable with her hometown. For her, Venice is a city to be taken on faith. The co-existence of fantasy and reality in the setting, and the author's preference of creating an unfamiliar city may probably lead readers to interrogate the novel's reliability. It can be deduced that fantastic elements function as a refusal of historical objectivity, and Winterson forces readers to find their own way in both a real and unreal setting. Subjective manners of the protagonists are apparent within the depictions of the same setting, which undermines the traditional historiography's premise of seeking universal or certain truths.

The depiction of the casino's gala is another crucial point that is also in relation to the fantastic elements in the novel. It defies reality as the author portrays the atmosphere as "the gaming table. The fortune-tellers. The fabulous three-breasted woman. The singing ape. The double-speed dominos and the tarot" (1987, 60). Just like the city of Venice, the casino's depiction offers the exotic instead of familiar. Winterson's description of the casino does not fit the conventional premises of history, and it also does not meet the expectations of readers. She breaks away from traditional ideas and presents a place of multiple dimensions.

Winterson mingles fact and fantasy in a mysterious story of boatmen in Venice, who have webbed feet. She uses the appealing power of myth by presenting it as normal and heredity. The author elaborates the myth by narrating the details. A pregnant wife of a boatman has to conduct a ritual in a place where the dead bodies of people are buried. This ritual is performed in order to secure the webbed feet of a boy. However, Villanelle's mother fails to follow the steps of the ritual properly and gives birth to a webbed feet girl, instead. By this means, she gains the talent for walking on the water. Myths have an attractive power, but their reliability is under scrutiny throughout history.

Villanelle's beating heart out of his body is another fantastic element in the novel. It is stolen by a woman that Villanelle is in love with, and it is kept in a jar. Villanelle asks Henri to break into her lover's house and take it back. At first, Henri does not believe Villanelle and states "you'd be dead if you had no heart" (116). Yet, she is able to convince him of the possibility of living without it. This fantastic element is used to create a different setting in which multiplicity of interpretation is available. The writer also aims to give a voice to the silenced or neglected people in her narration by presenting a love affair between two women.

The author rewrites historical narratives with implementing fantasy to convert familiar into a peculiar. She creates a world that reflects the feelings and attitudes of her characters, which are against to standards of conventional society. Villanelle has an obligation of retrieving her heart before "being a prisoner" (121). If Henri cannot manage to get Villanelle's heart back, it will be sewn into a tapestry by her lover. The author uses fantasy as a tool to impose her own reality. In addition to this, she questions and withstands the truths of traditional history.

*The Passion* has two protagonists and they both narrate the same time period. The first part of the novel is told by Henri and the second part is narrated by Villanelle. At first sight, there seems to be linearity, but Henri disrupts it by including other people's stories. Similarly, the last two parts, which are narrated by both of the main characters, breaks the linear narrative when each reports others' story. Henri, for instance, narrates the army's movement to Moscow at the beginning of the third part, but Villanelle intervenes and mentions her relationship with another woman. It can be inferred that the author includes individuals' history along with the patriarchial ones

with the aim of signifying the premise that there is also the history of the marginalized and the silenced people. The ignored voices add depth to the novel, and they show the reader that there are different accounts of facts. Moreover, Winterson disrupts the linearity in order to demonstrate the notion that there is no unified meaning but multiple and probable histories.

The novel has two distinct protagonists that have a different point of views on the same incidents. Their personal experiences and emotions affect their narrations. Besides, the reversed gender roles of both are contrary issues on the behalf of traditional history writing. Winterson develops a new historical discourse for alternative feminine and masculine identities by disrupting conventional notions of history. She challenges the norms that are reiterated throughout traditional history. The novel offers readers plurality in meaning with the implementation of fantastical elements, too. Villanelle's beating heart out of her body, her webbed feet and Domino's permanently frozen chain are all apparent elements in the novel along with the city of Venice, which is in constant change. With those fantastic elements, Winterson challenges her readers' perceptions and she leads them to question what is real and what is not. Henri's diary is the most significant resource that sheds light on history, but it problematizes the past as it is written in an attitude that is blended with emotions. Villanelle, on the other hand, benefits from fairy tales or supernatural themes in her narration. They are not only uncertain but also open to multiple interpretations. In this sense, the author creates her own version of history.

It can be concluded that history exists in a state of ambiguity due to the plurality of self-hood. There is no singular self and there cannot be singular history. Through the individuals' experiences, Winterson validates the multiple interpretations. She uses plural narratives in order to reiterate the susceptibility of history towards human's forgetfulness and its inclination to various interpretations. The author experiments with history by the inclusion of fantastical elements and myths in the novel. Further, she reconstructs history to legitimize alternative identities and disrupts historical factuality. She challenges readers' trust by the repetition of the terms "story" and "trust". As the author redefines the genders in a subverted way and opens up spaces for alternative histories, she breaks the borders of the traditional historiography. Winterson's main argument in the novel covers the notion that all histories, whether it

is personal or national, are subjective. She exceeds the boundaries of traditional past by arguing that history is larger and more complex than the singularity of fact. She creates strong feminine figures in order to resist the repressive masculine version of history. She expands her novel and includes the ignored people in her narrative. Additionally, she achieves multiplicity and self-reflexivity by using fantasy in her novel.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to exemplify historiographic metafictional elements in Michael Ondaatje and Jeanette Winterson's novels respectively. The thesis has been based on Linda Hutcheon's theory that investigates historical texts in terms of their reliability. Hutcheon uses the term historiographic metafiction to signify recent metafictional texts' tendency to create an illusion of reality. The authors of that kind of narrative present real people, incidents, or places that readers are aware of their existence in a reconstructed way. The result is, therefore, both documented and fictional histories. Authors blend history with made-up stories, and they do not refuse the presence of the past. Instead, they deny its objectivity and absoluteness. Along with scepticism, history is questioned as it is written by human beings. It gains meaning via selection and the subjectivity of historians. As a matter of fact, it is argued that one cannot write a flawless or complete history.

The postmodern notion of history is mainly based on the fact that it is not possible to reach certain truths. It is the sceptical attitude that leads to rejecting any established facts, and historiography is not an exception. The self-reflexive narration of the past events makes it inevitable that subjective, ideological or emotional factors intervene in the product of any historian. Hence, historiography is equated with literature since it is the outcome of human beings. Furthermore, interpretations are very probable to be different on the same incident, or they may be inaccurate. The belief that history cannot provide a universal or objective account of the past, forces postmodern historiographers to rewrite it by including the ignored figures or events in traditional historiography. Missing documents or the ability of a historian to unearth them is another crucial aspect that puts the credibility of data in danger. Besides, fallibility and selectivity of memory along with language's inefficacy reinforce the postmodern rejection of conventional historiography.

The inclusion of intertexts in postmodern historical novels refers to the compulsion of comprehending and interpreting the past through textuality. It makes readers acknowledge the simultaneous fictionality and factuality of historiography. It also hinders any inclination to treat history as universal and eternal. Historiography is the outcome of a double rhetorical presence; the first one is the language of documents or evidence and the second is the language that a historian uses to narrate those data,

which requires subjectivity and interpretation. Besides, using intertexts also raises a question about the authority of writing and locating paratexts in a literary work. Historians' personal judgements and agendas affect the selection of incidents of the past, and they are in charge of converting them into historical facts. Furthermore, the historians' visions are shaped by the social and cultural backgrounds of the society that they have grown up. As human beings, they are taught by their own traditions and values so it becomes a necessity to expect subjectivity from them. Carr concludes that history is "a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past. (1990, 30). The realities of the past and their interpretations are in constant relationships, and they influence each other.

As postmodernism embraces a variety of ideas, scepticism towards any absolute truths and the approval of non-neutrality of language, the historiographic metafictional novels are influenced by diverse views, racial minorities, marginalized groups, ignored or oppressed people or trivial details. When the authors fail to fill the gaps, they use their imaginations. As a result, these kinds of novels force their readers to speculate on the intended meanings, which leads to multiple interpretations and the impossibility of absoluteness.

In the second chapter of the novel, Michael Ondaatje's autobiographical novel has been elaborated. In the novel, Ondaatje sets off a journey after a nightmare that renews his attachment to his father and hometown. He realizes the fact that he does not have enough information about his family members and birthplace. His curiosity leads him to go back to Sri Lanka twice and compensate for the deficient data with the help of rumours and intertexts that he can reach. When he arrives, he cannot find what he expects and eventually narrates what he desires. There is a great gap in time and space. Besides, the author's hybridity triggers his imagination that leads to selectivity and interpretation among the documents and data that he can find. His sensuous aptitude is also significant as it decreases the credibility. Therefore, the novel can be read both as personal and collective.

Ondaatje's long separation from his country probably affects his judgement and narration. Accurate data cannot be expected from the author as the long absence makes it hard to recall the past. The writer is also aware of this fact, and he offers his readers

various sources. He also blends the past with his imagination and myths. The oral stories jeopardize Ondaatje's credibility as one cannot be sure whether they have really happened. The inclusion of different points of view about the same issue is another evidence that leads to the postmodern premise of subjectivity. By providing his readers with various perspectives, he draws attention to the impossibility of reaching absolute truth.

*Running in the Family* consists of rich fragments such as journals, memoirs, gossips, poems and visuals. Especially, the radical usage of photographs and maps shows new possibilities of creating a narrative. They betray the readers' expectations as they do not provide the facts. Ondaatje, makes explanations before presenting them but, what he narrates and offers do not have harmony. To illustrate, a photo of his parents is depicted under the title of "Fine Romance" but the author presents separate photographs of his parents. In other words, he sets an expectation by offering some clarifications yet, he surprises the readers with an improbable visual. Photographs, which are generally supposed to provide objectivity, become fictions in the hands of the writer.

When Ondaatje deals with the history of his hometown, a series of false maps are presented. Some indicate the images of an exoticized island that are drawn by colonizers, and the author shows them as a "mirror", which reflects each invader. Ondaatje offers another map of Sri Lanka that is drawn by himself. It shows the possible routes and the places that he longs to visit. However, readers learn its fictionality when they see the real map of the island. Ondaatje uses and abuses the visuals in such a way that they deceive the readers, which supports the notion that any intertexts are the outcome of the historians' interpretations. In this respect, Ondaatje also problematizes the conventional historiography that mostly dwells on such visuals.

Sri Lanka is the hometown of Ondaatje, in which he feels like a foreigner after a separation of twenty-five years. This long absence makes the author's task hard that he cannot reach sufficient data. Hence, he is obliged to imagine more. The insufficiency of information eventually leads the author to apply myths and fantastic elements. Some of the historical documents he finds, for instance, are ruined, and they are inadequate to show the whole picture. Moreover, his hometown's state, which has

been in constant change due to the invasions, is also not easy to comprehend. Besides, the island's multicultural structure leads to plurality in cultures and perspectives.

The third chapter of the study has covered Jeanette Winterson's novel, in which she problematizes the past by reconstructing an official or national history from the two protagonists' perspectives. She rejects the notion of a fixed and single truth but appraises the story of others, who are neglected in conventional historiography. Winterson's imagination is also crucial in the sense that she experiments with narrative conventions. She includes myths and tales that change the traditions by subverting the roles of characters. Besides, she leaves her readers with unanswered questions and forces them to interpret more. The subversion of traditional gender roles is the author's other significant argument in the novel. She rejects the man-defined history, and she depicts women as one of the determining factors of the past.

In *The Passion*, the rewriting of history is carried out through questioning and rejecting conventional historiography. The story of Napoleon is conveyed by two protagonists, and their love affairs or emotions dominate the period, which is not very probable to be seen in traditional history books. Henri, who decides to become a soldier because of his passion for Bonaparte, narrates the events via his diary. However, the diary is in constant interrogation as it includes trivial details and Henri's personal views. On the other hand, Winterson offers a different vision with Villanelle, who is the victim of a patriarchal society that is ruled by Napoleon. She is depicted as a rebellious figure towards men-made history and achieves gaining her freedom, but Henri ends up in a mental care hospital as he cannot bear the harsh consequences of wars. As the author shifts the role of genders, she aims to reconstruct the history from the ignored and the silenced perspectives. She also intends to disapprove of the fixed or absolute truths of conventional history.

Winterson uses fantastic elements such as fairy tales and supernatural forces then, she reiterates "I'm telling you stories. Trust me" to make readers believe. In this respect, Winterson tries to present new meanings with her imagination, and it can be interpreted as an inevitable subjectivity of a historian. She wants to expand the border of facts that traditional historiography confines. Furthermore, the author rejects the archetypes of religions and love with a similar premise of refusing any limits. A priest who gambles, and Villanelle that is in love with another woman can be stated as

oppugnant examples that are contrary to familiar history She is against any idea that positions people to accept any certain truths or dogmas.

Although a postmodern sensitivity of history and narrative dominates the novels, their actual themes are ultimately different. Ondaatje tries to come to terms with his cultural identity by contracting his view to Sri Lanka's native heritage. By contrast, Winterson depicts a soldier's admiration of a commander, and how this affection influences his judge and changes the records of the past till he becomes disillusioned. Both novels of this thesis have traces of Hutchon's theory that not only accepts the past but also interrogates its credibility. The two postmodern authors, by reconstructing the past from their perspectives, aim to show their readers the other sides of history. They intend to convey to the readers that traditional history writing does not offer the whole picture of the incidents as it does not include the neglected people.

Each author appreciates multiplicity regarding the novels' narrative structures. Ondaatje's novel contains family members, friends and eyewitnesses from whom he benefits all. Likewise, Winterson's novel has two protagonists that convey the same period. Even though the former is richer in the sense of the plurality of characters, the two literary works aim to include more perspectives into their narrations. In this regard, the authors reject the restrictions of traditional historiography, in which it is not very probable to see a different point of view.

Additionally, Winterson's novel reconstructs the gender roles to refuse the conventional human roles. The female characters are depicted as stronger figures who can live freely without men. In the same sense, Ondaatje's mother and grandmother are conveyed as happier without their husbands. Similarly, male characters in the novels are presented as weak individuals. To illustrate, Henri has mental problems at the end of the novel, and Ondaatje's father's dipsomaniac state leads to her death. The reversed gender roles are paradoxical to patriarchal societies, and their histories in which men are the main subjects of the past as they are the ones that shape the history. The authors offer alternative histories within their narrations in order to undermine the men-made past.

Intertextuality is also apparent in each novel. Ondaatje makes use of newspaper clippings, visitor books, epigraphs, church records, poems, maps and photographs. Winterson, in the same manner, presents a diary to her readers, which is a product of a cook in the army. The diversity is much more in Ondaatje's novel, but all of the intertexts serve the same purpose, which is the postmodern premise that history can only be learned with the help of other texts, and they are selected by historians subjective aptitudes. Ondaatje takes the subjectivity a step forward, and he problematizes the generally accepted evidence such as maps and photographs.

When the facts remain incapable to convey the whole message, the two writers apply fantastic elements. Ondaatje presents a local animal to his readers whose tongue is beneficial for being a fluent speaker. Further, his grandmother's supernatural forces like interpreting a storm can be given as an example, which tells her when a person will die. However, it is ironic that the cause of her death is also a storm. Similarly, Villanelle's supernatural forces along with Patrick's strong eyesight are what Winterson offers to her readers. Thanks to a ritual that makes a boy born webbed-feet and the animal's tongue that leads its consumer to be a fluent speaker, the two authors antagonise the absolute truths of traditional historiography.

Both of the authors intend to present a nation's history in their novels. Ondaatje narrates his hometown, and Winterson depicts Venice. They all convey existing places that are known by readers. However, the authors' representation of recognised places contradicts the universally acknowledged facts. Ondaatje's birthplace is in constant change because every invader erases the traces of the formers'. Likewise, Winterson narrates Venice as in a perpetual change. Besides, the authors blur the facts with the usage of fantastic elements while conveying the settings. Ondaatje's principal discursive manner centres on an issue of being both an insider and an outsider of Sri Lanka. Similarly, Winterson achieves multiplicity by offering two divergent views for the same place. The process of narrating the settings matters more than the realities as the authors give more significance to plurality and fantasy in their depictions. The two authors shatter the readers' conventional expectations by their self-reflexive aptitudes. Their tendency to use multiplicity without clear delineations lead to partial truths rather than whole ones.

The problematization of history is carried out through the interrogation of conventional historiography. The authors add inventions to established facts and reconstruct the historical facts that are sometimes forgotten or obscure. They defamiliarize readers' processing of historical knowledge with the usage of fantasy. In terms of intertextuality, Ondaatje's novel contains more paratexts whereas Winterson only uses a diary as a recorder of the past. However, they all provide broader perspectives to their readers by undermining the traditional history writing along with the interrogation of memories and feelings of the characters in both novels.

Postmodernism appeals for a tolerance of many truths and maintains the premise that any perspective of totality needs to be replaced by a plurality of visions. The idea of historiography has also been subverted and pluralized, and unity or linearity is not possible to achieve. Historical accounts of the past are narrative discourses, and history can never be objective within the very premise of postmodernism. The past events' tendency to differ according to the historian's point of view, his cultural and social backgrounds appear as significant features that problematize the past.

Postmodern authors approach historiography and the past involves rewriting, reimagining, and reconstructing them. The theory of historiographic metafiction gathers narratives that engage with the past, and it self-consciously interrogates how history is recorded. In each novel that has been analysed in this study, there is a desire to alter and reassess history. Both of the authors offer their readers fantastic elements along with the ignored figures and irrelevant details. They aim to depict that there is another history beyond the traditional one. Ondaatje, in his attempt to rewrite history, problematizes the past of Sri Lanka by implementing plural ideas.

Likewise, Winterson provides two protagonists and two divergent views to her readers to undermine the conventional historiography's claim of objectivity. In the selected novels, the writers do not strive for definite answers or closure. They would rather uncertainties and differences instead. They are concerned with the deconstruction of myths and new versions of history. In some occasions, they attribute the resetting of national history; in other cases, they include marginal characters to reject conventional historiography that deals with the universally acknowledged people.

To sum up, postmodern novelists, who deal with history, revise the past in a doubtful manner. In this respect, they highlight the deficiency of any absolutes. Therefore, historical accounts have become a matter of absence and plenitude. There is an embrace of general scepticism and unrest among them. They intend to reimagine and reconstruct the past. Just like the premise of pseudohistory, they typically blend together historical events with myths or tales, and they do not have any attempt to provide certainty. Due to faulty human memory and deconstruction of written documents, they also depend on oral history which is subject to changing over time. Self-reflexivity and intertextuality are also very significant elements in the postmodern historiography as they cause multiplicity. The plurality leads to a confusion among readers, and they also try to comprehend the aimed meanings of the authors. The readers attempt to understand the implied message requires their interpretations that means a multitude of truths. Additionally, fantastic element is used as a kind of tool to rewrite the past within the hands of postmodern historiographers. They use fantasy to impose their own reality or desired truths. All of the arguments above validate the fact that history exists in a state of uncertainty due to the wealth of interpreters and interpretations.

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# CURRICULUM VITAE

Abdullah Emin YAZICI was born on 1 March 1984 in Trabzon. After finishing Safranbolu Anatolian High School, he was enrolled at the Faculty of English Language Teaching at Anadolu University in 2002. In 2006, he graduated from the department and started working as an English teacher at a state school in the same year. He started the Master of Arts in the Department of English Language and Literature in the Institute of Social Sciences at Karabük University in 2019. He is interested in cinema and literature. His studies have focused on postmodernism so far.