



**HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION IN E.L  
DOCTOROW'S RAGTIME AND A.S BYATT'S  
POSSESSION**

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## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Omar ZORGANE titled “HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION IN E.L DOCTOROW’S RAGTIME AND A.S BYATT’S POSSESSION” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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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.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

**Name Surname:** Omar ZORGANE

**Signature:**

## **FOREWORD**

“Then you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. Certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)”. (Al-Quran 3:159)

## **ABSTRACT**

Because it was the last approach to a new millennium, the 20<sup>th</sup> century began with both enormous promise and some trepidation. For many, a new age of human history was beginning. Many movements, philosophies and ideologies emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some were left behind and others marked that era and are still very much respected in current days. Historiographic metafiction is a genre that had existed for years, but was given the name by Linda Hutcheon in the late 1980's. History and fiction are two completely different things, but they are often found together in many literary works. Both E.L Doctorow and A.S Byatt were pillars of this genre before it even had a name, their novels *Ragtime* and *Possession* are clear examples of that, challenging history and inserting many unique elements in it. This dissertation will aim to delve into the definition and importance of history and historiography as well as analyzing E.L Doctorow and A.S Byatt's novels on a scale of Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction. The study showcases how *Ragtime* violates expectations for historical writing and implores readers to question the accuracy of historiographical portrayal in the way that Doctorow casts doubt on literature's capacity to accurately depict history by using an anonymous narrator. The study also focuses on how *Possession* achieves the same goal by using a self-conscious narrative as well as false documents instead of relying on historiography. Lastly, the dissertation aims to accurately compare and contrast both novels.

**Keywords:** Byatt, Doctorow, History, Fiction, Postmodernism, Metafiction, American History, English History.



## ÖZ

Yeni bir milenyıla son yaklaşım olduğu için 20. yüzyıl hem büyük umutlarla hem de biraz endişeyle başladı. Birçokları için insanlık tarihinde yeni bir çağ başlıyordu. 20. yüzyılda pek çok akım, felsefe ve ideoloji ortaya çıktı, bazıları geride kaldı, bazıları ise o döneme damgasını vurdu ve günümüzde hala büyük saygı görüyor. Tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca yıllardır var olan bir türdür ancak adı 1980'lerin sonunda Linda Hutcheon tarafından verilmiştir. Tarih ve kurgu tamamen farklı iki şeydir, ancak birçok edebi eserde sıklıkla bir arada bulunurlar. Hem E.L Doctorow hem de A.S Byatt, daha bir isme bile sahip olmadan bu türün temel direkleri; onların Ragtime ve Possession adlı romanları bunun açık örnekleridir; tarihe meydan okur ve ona pek çok benzersiz öge katar. Bu tez, E.L Doctorow ve A.S Byatt'ın romanlarını Linda Hutcheon'un tarih yazımı üstkurmacası ölçeğinde analiz etmenin yanı sıra tarih ve tarih yazımının tanımını ve önemini derinlemesine incelemeyi amaçlayacaktır. Çalışma, Ragtime'ın tarih yazımı konusundaki beklentileri nasıl ihlal ettiğini ortaya koyuyor ve Doctorow'un edebiyatın anonim bir anlatıcı kullanarak tarihi doğru bir şekilde tasvir etme kapasitesi konusunda şüphe uyandırması gibi okuyuculardan tarih yazımının doğruluğunu sorgulamalarını istiyor. Çalışmada aynı zamanda Possession'ın tarih yazımına güvenmek yerine sahte belgeler ve bilinçli bir anlatım kullanarak aynı amaca nasıl ulaştığı üzerinde duruluyor. Son olarak tez, her iki romanı doğru bir şekilde karşılaştırmayı ve karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Byatt, Doctorow, Tarih, Kurgu, Postmodernizm, Amerikan Tarihi, İngiliz Tarihi.

## ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

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<b>Anahtar Kelimeler</b>	Byatt, Doctorow, Tarih, Kurgu, Postmodernizm, Amerikan Tarihi, İngiliz Tarihi.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**Vs.** : Karşı

**P.** : Sayfa

**Etc.** : Ve benzeri gibi

**Vol.** : Sayı

## **SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH**

The study aims at exploring and defining what historiographic metafiction is as well as comparing and contrasting its elements in the two novels *Ragtime* and *Possession*.

## **PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this study is to analyze and compare E.L Doctorow's *Ragtime* and A.S Byatt's *Possession* in the light of historiographic metafiction. Both of the novels blend historical characters and events with fictional ones in order to take off the curtain that is separating the two. Therefore, both novels introduce an interesting clash between fiction and reality.

## **METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

The term historiographic metafiction was coined by the very famous and respected Linda Hutcheon, in addition, many scholars and writers have shown interest in the theory. The analysis and comparison provided of both novels is presented in a way that clearly showcases the similarities and differences to the reader.

## **HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM**

In both novels, E.L Doctorow and A.S Byatt blend reality and imagination in order to break down the wall that separates the two and also to prove that history which is widely regarded as concrete by most people, is on the same page as fiction, making them both constructs.

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS/DIFFICULTIES**

Although there are many articles and theses that involve the subject, Historiographic metafiction was first introduced in the 1980, this means that it is fairly new compared to other literary theories, making the resources and research done about it limited.

## INTRODUCTION

History is an attempt at both being analytical and imaginary when it comes to the human past. It deals with the inquiry and understanding of many changes across multiple timelines. History experts inspect, dissect, search, as well as break down various kinds of documentation. These not only include written historical records, but also word of mouth in addition to historic monuments, and art of all types. History is the main basis of many subjects and topics from literature to science. Many historians have a way of spotting and examining information, in addition to making clear historical sense of their data, which is very difficult to begin with. It is typically considered to be the base and origin among the other types of social sciences. History is recognized as a crucial element in the whole development of humanity, and multiple scholars have described it in multiple manners. History is a very deep concept as it mixes and combines the highlights of both art and science. Its main vision is to unearth reality and the facts behind it. Not only does it focus on the backgrounds of cultural and international figures, but also the truth behind civilizations and customs. It is very simply the study of mankind. It deals with man in both space and time. It explains the present in regard to previous periods. History requires stability and consistency. The lore behind history is very vast and complicated. It deals with the story of man in relation to his past doings. The reasons why history is taught are always shifting due to certain ideas and narratives being pushed in every society. History starts in the past, runs through the present and ends up in the future. The determination of goals and objectives is required. The instructional objectives must be clearly specified. Pupils should gain information and develop specialized perspectives, opinions, pursuits, and preferences as far as history is concerned. The study of is beneficial as a subject in a variety of areas. Historical education ideals include strict, illuminating, useful, lawful, artistic, academic, political, nationalistic, and economic considerations.

Fiction is writing that involves the author's invented characters, events, and/or surroundings. However, all of the elements in a fake narrative do not have to be fictitious. Fantastic personalities could be placed in a genuine setting, the characters could be imagined but the place in which the story occurs could very well be real. Real characters, on the other hand, might be employed in a hypothetical tale that revolves around an imagined event or scene.

The relationship between history and fiction has always been a very complicated one, this has always caused a split between different authors, scholars and readers. While some believe that history is to be utterly respected in its original format, others tend to push those boundaries and explore the many layers of past events and historical figures in order to prove that history itself is nothing but a construct that is mostly followed and believed blindly. Some historians and thinkers called out the skepticism that came along with the postmodern era, Ricoeur explains: “So, what is it that stands steady in the face of skepticism? It is always experience, expressed by language and illuminated by intelligence.” (Ricoeur, 1990, p9) The postmodern interplay and reciprocal implication between fiction and history is considerably more intricate. Hutcheon sheds a light on the uniqueness of the postmodern novel:

The question of one's self and subjectivity; the matter of context alongside portrayal; the interwoven historical nature of man; as well as the philosophical significance when we write with regard to history are all addressed in postmodern written works. While they will be discussed in subsequent portions, a short summary at this time will clarify how these themes fit into poetics of what is postmodern. (Hutcheon, 1988, 117).

Historiographic metafiction seeks to situate itself amid the context of history while retaining textual validity as imagination. The historical and fictional intertexts assume simultaneous significance as a parodic rewriting that involves the actual "world" and the written word's literary heritage. Historiographic metafiction is a phrase that was originally coined in “A Poetics of Postmodernism” by Hutcheon, it refers to postmodern works, often famous novels, which have a high level of self-reflexivity and discuss past events and figures in a contradicting and complex way. This is a postmodern art genre that largely depends on linguistic play, parody, and historical re-conceptualization. In the eighteenth century, history became of big importance and relevance. Even if each historical epoch was defined by its unique profile, there could only be one History. The inclusion of historical events into fiction never called into doubt the originality and veracity of the historical field of study. Fea backs this up: “Historians are constantly guided by the sources—they cannot make things up—but they do have the ability to construct their tales in an "artistic" manner.” (Fea, 2013, p3). However, beginning in the early twentieth century, the authority of History as a dominant subject began to be called into doubt due to a variety of circumstances. For starters, the experience of two World Wars instilled skepticism in all historical notions. These events had a big impact on a lot of 20<sup>th</sup> century authors as they started rejecting the concept of history as something truthful and completely

untouchable as it once was. This mindset drove most of these authors to explore Fiction and history's association with each other and the inclusion of imaginary events and characters in historical eras became more than a means of entertainment but instead a powerful statement with many implicit messages between their works' lines. A number of these authors went as far as implementing real life icons as supporting and entertaining characters while using their imaginary ones as a way to connect with the readers and take them on a journey to look at and examine history through the lenses of a skeptic. The biggest role in these types of novels would usually be linked to the narrator as he was used in many instances as the author himself, this was commonly implemented in order for the reader to connect better with the plot and to detach the writer from the work so that it doesn't seem like his purpose is to solely have an influence on the readers' opinions. Ricoeur explains: "The richness of the idea of emplotment and, consequently, of narrative time is unquestionably a privilege of fictional storytelling, rather than historical narrative." (Ricoeur, 2014, p61). Instead, authors would use these narrators as messengers that only convey their true opinions masked as regular events and ideas to the readers who have the free will to explore and interpret them as they wish. Authors also employed intertextuality, which could act as a bridge that connects their work to another literary work, a work's detailed study, or even aid in the incorporation of a certain style of writing.

Many novels used intertextuality as a way to narrate and connect with readers in addition to giving clues and laying out information that have to do with the way the story is going to carry out, as well as themes and the framework of the text, allowing the author's intentions and the reason for his narrative to be identified, that may assist in showing the writer's intentional motives in facing history through fiction. Another strategy was the use of constant shifts between the past and present. This also serves as a wakeup call to the reader every time the shift occurs and reminds them that past is nothing but expired present, this means that it is only known by people who have witnessed it and could only be relayed by the truthful ones. It also serves as a means to break down and destroy the "constructed aura of the past" in order for the reader to look at those events and eras in an objective way. Epigraphs are also crucial since they are utilized to convey a novel's common subject in each chapter. In fact, they could even direct readers to key imagery or essential concepts that are fully established throughout the chapters. Furthermore, epigraphs are utilized to introduce the novel's



core idea. For example, epigraphs, when positioned and used appropriately, may serve as a vivid explication that immerses the reader in the novel's events.

The term Post-modern literature refers to specific aspects that deal with the style writing that become popularized following the second World War (some examples would be, reliance on breaking things down, contradictory writing, problematic narration, and so on) as well as a backlash against the ideas of the Enlightenment implied in Modernist literature. There are no definitive dates for the emergence and collapse of postmodernism's appeal, as there are for all artistic eras. The year 1941, when both Irish author James Joyce and English novelist Virginia Woolf died, is frequently cited as a rough limit for the beginning of postmodernism. However, the word "post" does not always signify a new period. Rather, it might represent a reaction against modernity in the aftermath of WWII. Some claim that the beginning of postmodern literature might be characterized by notable literary works or events. Metafiction consists of writing about writing, bringing to the reader's attention the insincerity of art in addition to the way fiction functions, and typically disregards the importance of the avoidance of logical understanding and critical thinking. It is mostly utilized to undercut the power of the writer, in order to come up with unique plots, helping the story start, progress and end in an unusual manner, to help the reader delve into the plot and remark on the process of narrating.

Doctorow is the creator of numerous highly praised novels that merge history with social commentary. Although he had been writing novels for years, it was not until the release of *The Book of Daniel* in 1971 that he achieved renown. *Ragtime*, his second novel, was a financial and critical triumph. *Ragtime*, which was released in July 1975, was an instant hit with readers. Doctorow's work is both highly esteemed and controversial, and it is distinguished by serious philosophical probings, a complex and varied language style, and the juxtaposition of historical personalities in strange, sometimes surreal, circumstances and places. His novel pushes the boundaries of the literary genres on which he relies. In constructing his own poetics of involvement, Doctorow wants fiction that is both politically important and artistically sophisticated and intriguing. *Ragtime* depicts the life of New Rochelle middle class family who make banners and flags. The story also deals on immigrant poverty and black persecution, which prompts one black jazz artist, who has lost everything due to white mistrust and hatred, to grab possession of Pierpant Morgan's collection. Emma

Goldman, the revolutionary, and Stanford White, the architect, appear and bow out. The middle-class family's cohesion and affluence deteriorate, and one cynical son creates explosives instead of Fourth of July fireworks. Doctrow constructed the tale of *Ragtime* from a historical viewpoint, bringing it up to date with modern marginal concerns. Doctrow has demonstrated racial prejudice between whites and blacks. The story focuses on the persecution of blacks by whites, which causes one black jazz artist who loses everything due to white mistrust and hatred to grab possession of Pierpont Morgan's library. Doctrow has attempted to convey the Ragtime Era's history as authentically as possible via a retrospective lens, bringing up to modern marginal concerns. History is conveyed through literary clues while writing about realism fiction incorporating history. The history of racism during the Ragtime Era has been portrayed through textual remnants in literary form in E.L. Doctrow's novel *Ragtime*. History depicts the past. History is used as a starting point for action. Depending on the circumstances and purpose, history may serve as guidance and a source. History may be used to prepare individuals for the future. History and fiction became related genres in the postmodern era.

Historical fiction is a prominent way of writing. It exhibits the profound historical literary link by having novelists and writers explore unprecedented historical angles to come up with a tale. Those tales may be fully fictitious or fictionalized depictions of real individuals and events. (What Is the Connection Between Literature and History?, 2023).

Not just history, but fiction additionally and at times just as efficiently depicts true historical and contemporary events in a way that allows the reader to feel the situation as it was and is. History is supposed to be a record of facts regarding previous occurrences. Facts are happenings to which we have assigned meaning. In this example, history is broken down and conveyed through fictional depictions in postmodern literature. The past is retold through the eyes of fictitious people. Historical events can be learned through historical traces in today's story depiction.

A.S Byatt whose real and full name is Antonia Susan Drabble, the oldest daughter of a judge, was born in Sheffield in 1936. She got married to an economist by the name of Ian Byatt in 1959. They have two children. They split up in 1969, and after that got married to Peter Duffy. They were the parents of two girls. Her earlier works were less successful, and she was outshone by her younger sister, but since the 1990s, when she received the Booker Prize for *Possession: a Romance*, her success has far surpassed her sister's. Her writing is very cerebral - it needs knowledge of English

literature - but she also delivers a fantastic tale and brings her characters to life. The beauty of Byatt's novels, like other great novels, is that they function on so many levels - romance, psychological research, intellectual dialogue, old-fashioned storytelling - all of these elements are there in Byatt's work. *Possession*, a novel by A.S. Byatt is a fresh look on the history of the Victorian era. As a result, it is regarded as a convincing historiographic metafiction in modern British writing. The novel's principal feature is the intertwining some of the Victorian era's history and literature material. Intertextuality fosters dialogues and also generally points out what is wrong with the Victorian society, in all of its social aspects and angles.

Byatt's *Possession* defies the average narration style of literature in addition to its approaches by exposing the dichotomy of what's real and fake as well as what's past and recent. She uses epigraphs at many points and in many ways in the story in order to reply to the Victorian point of view. To put it in the simple way, the past and the present seem to coexist and complete each other, which explains why the present and past always have a cause and consequence type of relationship that always has them linked. *Possession*'s story is difficult mainly because of the intertextual play through that facilitated Byatt to criticize the features of the Victorian times. Furthermore, Byatt rejects the concept of a clear ending which was a big part in the style of Victorian writing. *Possession* is a complicated, multilayered and unique postmodernist reflection on the Victorian romance, that possesses engaging and at many times quite touching characteristics. Alsop and Walsh praise the novel:

The 1990 Booker Prize winner, *Possession* by A. S. Byatt is a brilliant, perceptive, and intricate postmodernist book in which "bridges" do in fact "proliferate," but not "probably" at arbitrary" or "with uniform verisimilitude". (Alsop & Walsh, 1999, p163).

The story implies that the Past historical times may be deemed beneficial to the modern world; nonetheless, the Past demonstrates the importance of researching it and the many good results and information that stem from doing so. The real past alongside fiction are combined to produce a fresh perspective of what is past and what is current. Throughout her novel *Possession*, Byatt relies on inter-textual references and connections to back up the fundamental tenets of historiographic metafiction that history and fiction go hand in hand as they are both nothing more than a man-made constructs; their claim to truth telling is uncertain; and reality is not possible to be recreated in written history. The novel cleverly and beautifully incorporates intertexts

of both history and literature to emphasize that historical records rely on the author's subjective view. *Possession* challenges traditional genres of fiction and history by officially connecting real past and imagination through the shared bridges of intertextuality. The novel effectively contends that the reader, whose only connection to the past is through linguistic fragments, can never hope to obtain any type of authentic, actual, or unmediated depiction of truth. *Possession's* reconstruction of the past and retelling of truth not only symbolizes that restricted access but also emphasizes the value of recounting reality. The novelist's exceptional range of narrative methods is also assisted by the postmodernism tools with which they are most equipped. Thus, intertextuality, pastiche, epigraphs, historical metafiction, and the unattainability of truth are masterfully exploited by the novelist in order to portray her conceptions and thoughts in building an extraordinary and unique work of postmodernism that has the capacity to contend with any constraints. *Possession* aids readers in finding the differences and similarities between past and current events in order to determine what conclusions or results are possible.

# 1. HISTORY

## 1.1. The Meaning of History

History is a very complicated chain reaction, each society from different eras and walks of life have an impact on history, while also doing their best to uncover and document truths from past societies that existed before them. White explains further: “History is the story of communities— nations, social groups, families, and so on— defining themselves as opposed to their others, when in reality there are only differences among them.” (White, 2014, Preface x). History enumerates its researchers’ aim to dig into the past in order to analyze it and make sense of it. That explains why a certain event or piece of information may have different variants and be far from consistent, each historian provides a different version when it comes to certain details. That explains why history is constantly studied and analyzed thoroughly. History retells the stories of past societies as well as their leaders and prominent figures, it sheds a light on their failures in addition to their victories. Many people tend to confuse history with history and assume they are one, while past is simply actions that have occurred once upon a time and are not prone to change, history on the other hand is the attempts made by man to unearth the reality behind those events. Generational gaps and cultural differences showcase how every person has a unique look on the past. It utilized different basis, concerns, as well as ethics to draw different conclusions about history.

History is a very useful tool to uncover and understand past events instead of solely recording them. Historians are meant to break down and explore the validity of certain people and events. The big difference between pas and history is an interesting conversation to many people. Jenkins explains: “Let me begin by saying that history is a discourse about, but not the same as, the past. This may seem strange to you since you may have missed this distinction earlier or, if not, you may not have given it any thought.” (Jenkins, 2003, p7). The thing that relates the two is that past itself is the main focus of study for historians, the difference between the two is indeed very significant. History is an effort to comprehend and make meaning of the past, not just a record of it. Causation is another key idea in the study of history. In their quest to comprehend the reasons behind historical occurrences and changes, historians

frequently argue over the relative weight of various elements. While others stress social or cultural issues, some historians concentrate on political or economic concerns. The study of causation is crucial because it enables us to comprehend why events occurred in the manner they did and can prevent us from repeating the same blunders in the future. Jenkins stresses on the importance of historians' work: "There is nothing in this terrain that screams 'geography'. However, a geographer could easily account for it geographically...Historians, too, may use the same logic to support their work." (Jenkins, 2003, p10). Historians analyze continuity and change over time in addition to cause. A very common debate between historians is whether the pivotal events throughout history are due to unrelated outside consequences or stem internally from those societies. They scrutinize the different ways some cultures and societies change, either for the good or the bad, throughout time. Some historians say that technological innovation drove the Industrial Revolution, but others highlight the significance of social and cultural elements in driving the changes. Periodization is a further essential subject in the study of history. Historians frequently split history into periods based on major events or changes. Some of these eras which are at times established on economy, culture and politics aid history enthusiasts become aware of the past and constant evolution of societies. Breaking down history into different segments aids in processing it more easily, separating into smaller chapters is always a more useful way of studying history. Many experts claim that humans are only a small part of each one of these chapters, others insist that we are fully and generally involved. Whether the former or latter hypothesis is correct, history appears to surround us everywhere we turn. In Europe, for example, history can be found at every turn, since the old continent preserves its imprints extremely plainly.

History must adapt to the postmodernist consumerist culture and become commercial in order to survive. Nowadays, people are very free to explore and travel anywhere they desire due to the freedom that comes with living in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Every single historic monument is one ticket away from being visited and discovered by tourists. This makes history even a bigger interest in recent times due to its availability and evidence. People appear to be continually aware of history's existence through tourism, movies, popular TV channels, literature, and other media. Despite the fact that students often dislike history as a school subject, the modern media has managed to put it back into the limelight with cinematic revivals that give fresh

reinterpretations of previously regarded accepted historical truths. The historical film appears to have been revitalized by cinema and television. However, the reality remains that their subject matter is founded on or inspired by what we call- in one word -history. Many theorists now examine the notion of history and draw it closer to the concept of fiction by emphasizing startling parallels. These post-structuralist, deconstructivist, and postmodernist ideas present a new perspective on history, one that questions the conventional idealism that history deals with undeniable truths anchored in reality and backed by evidence. The new voices show that, on the contrary, history and fiction share a common basis, and that history cannot be objective because it relies on narrative and representation, both of which corrupt reality as they pass through the mind of its author, creator.

## **1.2. The Importance of History**

Any topic of matter that is analyzed, also needs to be vindicated; advocates should rationalize its importance. A lot of well-known subjects are magnets to the people that are interested about them, but the reality is that these practices should also provide the not so informed people with information regarding their aims and importance. History can be a very good teaching tool when it comes to relaying moral messages and ethical agendas. Fea explains that:

While a historian is not able to explicitly tell the moral of his or her story, when it's presented in an interesting manner that will always be apparent to the reader. We're making sense of our world by using stories. That's how our own experience and that of other people are brought to order. (Fea, 2013, p5).

The relatability of history allows its enthusiasts to involve themselves in scenarios and stories and to either apply those moral codes to their daily life or open their eyes to things they should either avoid or gain as human beings. Fea says that:

Any discussion concerning the historian's profession must begin with a difference between historical and past events. A good amount of people believe that both of these terms go hand-in-hand. But it is actually the opposite. (Fea, 2013, p2).

Inspiration usually stems from historical figures that have endured and conquered the hardships of life more than in can arise from fictional ones. In this case people learn from a real-life example rather than a random fictional event, and not only does this have to do with real-life personalities—the famous ones who have a big

effect on history—it also has to do with the studying of rather average individuals who can be looked at as an example courage, perseverance, or peaceful dissent.

All modern nations have a rich history in their own sense, and they encourage learning about history since it is the base of identity and pride. History related information in an umbrella that covers things from the creation of man to the way he has lived and survived. History is also important for work as it inspires and educates many political figures, scholars and different people from all walks of life. The work range for historians is very vast, they can be researchers, work in television, with the government and also in museums. In addition to the work field, history is also applicable in many areas such as educations, many history enthusiasts tend to choose from a big scope of departments since history can be found in literature, law school and even business. The link between history and literature is complex and synergistic:

The relationship between history and literature is very noticeable, since literature is , in a way, a voice of history. This creates a very strong link between history and literature. The main difference between the two is that history is more lenient towards reality while literature is one of the seven arts. The two concepts often form and create fictional as well as non-fictional tales (What Is the Connection Between Literature and History?, 2023).

By offering a vivid and compelling narrative that captures the spirit of a specific age or event, literature has the power to bring history to life. Through literature, readers may delve into many eras, learn about the lives and experiences of historical figures, and obtain a greater comprehension of the complexity of human existence. It is impossible to stress how important history is to literature since it enhances our cultural heritage, broadens our knowledge, and encourages empathy and critical thinking. The preservation and transmission of the tales and experiences of earlier generations is one of literature's primary functions. Authors may reconstruct long-gone worlds through historical fiction, for instance, and convey them in a way that is understandable and relatable to readers today. By connecting with the past through these accounts, we may better comprehend the tribulations, joys, and feelings of people who lived in different eras and underwent various hardships. By diving deeper into these tales, readers claim a higher understanding of the details as well as a sense of consistency.

History is also very useful when tracking the evolution of man in specific and societies in general. This also includes values and morals, realities and assumptions as well as answers to a variety of historical questions. Jenkins explains:



On a theoretical level, I'd want to make two points. The first is that history is one of a succession of discourses about the world (which I shall sketch in this paragraph and then explore). These discourses do not produce the world (the actual stuff on which we appear to dwell), but rather appropriate it and imbue it with all of its meanings. (Jenkins, 2003, p7).

Literature gives us significant insights into the thoughts, dreams, and problems of individuals from various eras. It assists us in seeing the similar threads that connect us as humans over ages, while also recognizing the diversity and distinct viewpoints of diverse cultures and communities. In addition, historical fiction encourages empathy and compassion. Reading about history and its pillars, the reader is immersed into the past and motivated to look at things from the eyes of someone from that historical era. This aids tremendously in taking a look at one's morals and values and examining the source of many constructs that they are born into. History enthusiasts may humanize historical characters via writing by understanding their shortcomings, virtues, and the circumstances that impacted their acts. Because of this empathy, history can be approached with a more nuanced and critical mentality. History and literature are inextricably linked forces that enrich one another. Literature brings history to life, helping us to connect with it, sympathize with other points of view, and participate in critical inquiry. Literature becomes a means for cultural heritage preservation, knowledge expansion, empathy development, and critical thinking development through addressing historical topics and events. The value of history in literature cannot be overestimated since it acts as a portal to individuals' collective past, guiding us toward a more enlightened and compassionate tomorrow.

### **1.3. The Definition of Historiography**

Historiography can be defined simply as the history of historical writing. White explains that:

Traditional historiography has been based on the belief that history is a collection of real-life tales, some that deal with a person and other that involve a society as a whole, the main objective of a historian is to do their research and present the tales behind it, the level of truth in these stories depend on the way they were relayed between the generations and told by the historians themselves (White, 1990, pX).

The setting in which historians lived and wrote, as well as their assumptions, ideologies, ideas, and methodologies, are all important aspects of the study of history that are perhaps more pertinent. On the surface, historiography can be easily distinguished from historical methodologies, theories, and philosophy. But nothing is

ever that easy. Representation and interpretation are essential to the enterprise. The typical chain of knowledge production and truth claims—this deals with how people are informed and even witness events, testifying as well as believing—and also the written information—in addition to their cognitive skills, knowledge and truthfulness—are equally significant.

A body of historical writing on various subjects is referred to as historiography. It also refers to the practice and study of historical writing. The methods and resources used to study history are also included in historiography. White states that:

Because it is here that our yearning for the imagination, the possibility, must compete with the imperatives of the real, the actual, historiography provides a particularly excellent ground on which to study the nature of narrative and narrativity. (White, 1990, p4).

When it comes to history, from its basic version to its most complex and philosophical one, the focus of research in the discipline of historiography has grown and varied over time. The field is poised for a huge renewal with a multitude of new methods and methodologies as a result of the interest in developing fresher ways that has arisen in recent decades, especially in fields like cultural studies. The study of how history is presented is known as historiography, literally the "writing of history." The questions "What's important?" and "What do I emphasize?" naturally arose as historians gathered an increasing amount of information about the past. As historians started the process of assessing data and choosing the information to be presented, a number of distinct concepts emerged. These principles offer a historical interpretation or a central idea around which other material starts to cluster. These guidelines help historians decide what to convey and how to deliver it. They are also used by lecturers.

Many arts and sciences share the same baseline and origin, but history on the other hand is very original. History is also considered very straightforward and practical by most people since it discusses and deals with real life occurrences and individuals. Generally, a lot of the historians' claims are backed up by proof such as documents that come in different forms. Some of these documents are art, letters, religious books or even research from former historians. Additionally, through conducting interviews with people, historians occasionally provide their own evidence. It also analyzed the reality and benefits as well as certain devices that are found in the literature of history. Whether it masks itself as something entertaining or intellectual, it holds up as the most common way to document past events, set morals and rules as

well as paint narratives. Edward Hallett's "What is history" is usually recognized for the way current history is studied and analyzed, this work raised a lot of questions about the conventional methods of studying about history. His writings are still being published today. For instance, a large portion of critical historiography in the 1960s concentrated on how women, minorities, and labor were left out of recorded history of the United States. These historiographers contend that because historians of the 1930s and 1940s were also products of their eras, their conceptions of who was "important" to history reflected the sentiments of the time. The classical historians influenced the humanistic perspective of history, which was revitalized in the times of renaissance. The common viewpoint is distinguished by its focus on political issues and outstanding individuals paired with an engaging historical narrative. This historical view focuses on man's battles for status and land, disputes between people among themselves and with others, international interactions, as well as the people who have had a significant mark on history. The main goal is to seek for international clashes between people or whole societies, as well as the outcomes of those wars. The romantic perspective of history emerged in the early nineteenth century. This viewpoint is distinguished when looking at the emphasis that it has on a whole nation. Personality and with society go hand in hand, and its continuity across time, its ascent and successes, as well as its sorrow and failure, become the emphasis of the historian's portrayal. Attention to political concerns and outstanding people is insufficient to show a certain society as a living, breathing homogenous group.

#### **1.4. History And Metafiction**

##### **1.4.1. An Introduction to Metafiction**

When the narrator and characters in a novel are aware of the fact that they are in an imaginative work, an interesting dynamic is created, this is called metafiction. Waugh explains this: "The term metafiction is used to discuss a work of written fiction that showcases itself as a remnant in order to put a question mark on the chain that links reality and fiction" (Waugh, 2002, p2). Metafiction deviates from traditional narrative standards and is frequently most closely related to postmodern prose. A self-aware narrator injects their perspective into the text to create a fictitious work that makes remarks on fiction. The main objective of metafiction is to shed the light on the

main differences between a fake world displayed in a work and the real one. This can be seen in many different arts and means of entertainment, such as books, stories, video games, movies, TV and even theater. It can also be used to satirize literary genre norms, defy assumptions, expose lies, or provide a window into the human condition.

Metafiction lends a text additional meaning by offering an external, exploring view of a self-contained world, and is frequently employed in postmodernist fiction to comment on the world that our character inhabits. Though generally done with a wonderful sense of humor, its practitioners would sweep away the norms of conventional fiction. One of their arguments was that older authors had taken the form too seriously and had used it to make weighty moral assertions or tediously exacting details. Fiction might do this, of course, but if authors would temporarily leave aside their seriousness and enjoy the delight that comes with artistic creation, they could accomplish so much more. Metafiction is defined by its self-reflexivity at its center. It is cognizant of its own existence as a work of fiction and frequently includes clear references to that fact. Hutcheon defines metafiction as follows: "The current definition of metafiction is that it is fiction about fiction, it involves elements of self-commentary as well as its own terminologies." (Hutcheon, 2010, p1). Narrators remarking on the act of writing or characters admitting their status as characters in a tale are examples of metafictional elements. Metafiction pushes readers to challenge the borders between fiction and reality by purposefully revealing the narrative's artificiality, testing their expectations and allowing them to interact with the work on a deeper, more analytical level.

To highlight its self-awareness, metafiction usually utilizes humorous narrative strategies and artistic conventions. To challenge standard storytelling norms, it may incorporate unorthodox narrative structures such as stories inside stories or non-linear narratives. It may also include intertextuality, referring to other literary works or genres, or reference itself. These approaches underline the narrative's created structure and blur the borders between fiction and reality, enabling readers to actively engage in the process of interpretation. Another very important goal of metafiction is to deal with why fiction is the way it is as well what it serves as. It also motivates literature enthusiasts to give their attention to the way stories are fabricated and the type of influence it can have on them. Another function of it is analyzing authors themselves in addition to their intentions, motives and the way they go about trying to connect

with the reader. Metafiction also helps readers self-reflect on their assumptions and opinions while they are consuming literature. Furthermore, metafiction calls into question the concept of objective truth in narrative. Metafiction recognises that all storytelling is essentially subjective and that every narrative is molded by the author's perspective and the reader's perception by emphasizing the artifice of the tale. It calls into question the dependability of traditional narrative frameworks and urges readers to investigate alternate approaches to story construction and perception. Metafiction, in this way, promotes a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of reality and the diversity of opinions. Metafiction also provides a platform for literary experimentation and invention. Metafiction broadens the possibilities of storytelling and offers up new opportunities for creative expression by deviating from standard narrative norms. It enables authors to question and defy accepted literary rules, to toy with reader expectations, and to explore unexpected ideas and subjects.

Metafictional works frequently challenge readers to embrace ambiguity, uncertainty, and contradiction by pushing the boundaries of what is deemed "acceptable" or "normal" in narrative. It is fictional work that exhibits itself as an artifact with the goal of exploring the link between what is real and what is merely fiction. These types of literature not only have the goal of addressing the way fiction functions as a narrative implicitly by presenting a critique of their own techniques of composition, but in addition to that they investigate fictional elements of the world beyond literature. As a result, metafiction may be found right in between the criticism of literature and fiction, examining the link between the two. As a result, the mimetic illusion created by literature is sometimes damaged or even obliterated. A self-conscious vitality emerges at the point of confluence, influencing both critique and fiction. A story's thematic emphasis alone might suggest metafiction. Themes dealing with common grounds of reality and fiction heighten the reader's awareness of the story's artificiality. Metafiction is a function of reading rather than a quality of the core text, and so is highly dependent on the reader.

Although the elements of metafiction change in relation to the way it is utilized, a path that has certain similar traits may be identified. Such attitudes are mostly applied in conjunction, even though they could at certain times be used alone. Metafiction frequently incorporates intertextual connections as well as references by looking into the way fiction functions; merging theoretical and critical components;

presenting authors who are themselves works of fiction; and even breaking down these writers' works. Writers of metafiction frequently cross the narrative line as they get involved to give opinions; putting themselves in the same place as their imaginative characters; talk to the reader in a straightforward way; and even showcase the way external reasons such as narratives or society can shape what is called reality, ultimately attempting to exhibit that nothing is concrete and that reality is a construct in many contexts and cases. Something that metafiction also does is that it employs unorthodox and innovative approaches, such as: rejecting traditional storylines; disallowing itself to merge with reality.

#### **1.4.2. Historiographic Metafiction**

The term is used to describe fictional works that incorporate historical fiction and metafictional literary techniques. The expression is mostly used when referencing certain novels that are part of the postmodernist movement. The skepticism point of view is a very important key point of postmodern literature, and this did not exclude history, religion and even science. History was only one of the few things that this movement focused on. Linda Hutcheon is one of the most influential and important figures when it comes to postmodernism. She is the one who coined the term "Historiographic Metafiction" and her book

*A Poetics of Postmodernism* delves into what makes postmodernism what it is. Hutcheon claims that: "The norms of both fiction and historiography are utilized and abused, implanted and subverted, affirmed and rejected in the postmodern novel. (Hutcheon, 1989, p5).

At first glance, the word "historical metafiction" seems to contradict itself. History as a concept is generally and mostly linked to real-life, whereas works of fiction are in tune with the imaginary; yet, metafiction, which denotes the self-reflexive tendency, suggests playful creativity and rampant innovation, which seems to be at odds with the realist implications of the historiographical. Nevertheless, recently works of fiction and history are being mentioned as two things that connect, claiming that history and fiction are almost the same, meaning they are both constructs. Ricoeur believes that history and fiction are more related than people seem to think:

Isn't every story stated as if it had happened, as evidenced by the common use of the past in order to describe the imaginative? This means that fiction draws from history just as much as history borrows from fiction. (Ricoeur, 1990, p82).

If they contain particular components, literary works are regarded as historiographic metafiction. First off, in contrast to conventional historical fiction, the protagonist of historiographic metafiction is a character who appears to be inconsequential and is not a stereotyped, ideal representation of a particular group or significant historical figure. Secondly, historical information and facts are presented in a particular way in historiographic metafiction. Historical information, especially purposely incorrect information, is frequently utilized to both validate the work of fiction and undermine historical discourse, much like how protagonists are not well-known historical characters but rather are figures on the edge who could have existed. Finally, by juxtaposing historiographic works and works of historiographic metafiction, this serves to raise questions about the existential nature of both genres. The main distinction between the two is the historiographic metafiction's self-consciousness of its own fictiveness and its parodic subversion of genuine historiographical discourse. Hutcheon states that:

The postmodern interplay and reciprocal implication between fiction and history is considerably more intricate. Historiographic metafiction tries to position itself in the context of history but also while considering itself as only fiction. (Hutcheon, 1989, p4).

There are other significant elements to this genre besides the ones just stated. Additionally, intertextuality is essential to postmodern prose. It is frequently incorporated in a clear manner to reiterate the notion that all writings are intertwined, much like words in a language. Historiographic metafiction focuses on historical occurrences and historical characters who are eliminated by history, and their stories are told. Additionally, it is demonstrated that historiographic metafiction constructs substitutional histories. Furthermore, by eradicating the previously acceptable presentation in order to push this interpretation outside of the center and uncovering the histories of other historical characters that were deleted, historiographic metafiction expresses the quiet histories of peripheral groups. According to some, "historiographic metafiction" is obsessed with historical characters as well as events and is particularly interested in them. It discusses the study of historical writing and uses history as its primary subject. It is asserted that "historiographic metafiction" combines metafictional elements with a focus on history studies, which encompasses three genres: theory, history, and literature. This tendency relates to consciously intertwining imagination with history in literature. The postmodern perspective rejects the distinction between history and literature because both are forms of writing that utilize

linguistic and intertextual frameworks. It is argued that "historiographic metafiction" focuses on revisiting and changing the forms and contents of the past because imagination and history are seen as human structures. Historiographic metafiction raises the issue of what history writing implies by exploring the sentiment and several possible historical representations.

Historiographic metafiction begins as a paradox: it works inside particular accords in order to subvert these conventions. It is believed that historical metafiction must maintain a dual consciousness of its imagination and its foundation in real-world events. The rebirth of interest in history is one of the rising new tendencies in British metafiction. Significantly, history refers to both "historiography" - a specific discursive discipline - and "history" - the actual events investigated by this discipline. Because history denotes both a type of discourse about facts and facts themselves, this makes it a key field of study in recent critical theory in the United Kingdom and the United States during the last decade. This concern in history has now become the fundamental critical concern of current British authors at the end of the 1990s. Historiographic metafiction is one of the postmodern literary features that challenge metanarratives since they are very on dimensional. Additionally, postmodern philosophy declares the writing of history, including the underlying assumption that it records the past authentically and correctly, to be a problematic act. Because of its problematic aspect, history is a main focus in most cases. There is a widespread misconception that is generally constructed about postmodernism, and it is that it opposes ultimate reality or concrete explanations. Postmodernism, on the other hand, challenges any previously formed facts or definitions in a problematic way. As a result, in terms of historiography, postmodernism challenges narrative representations of the past.

Postmodern historiographic metafiction questions how past events are perceived and believed by people, because past events can only be known or alluded to via texts of the written past or told stories. It is the portrayal of the past in narrative form textuality of history-writing that postmodern fiction criticizes. Hutcheon seems to hold fiction to a very high standard: "It is also a long tradition, which dates back to the ancient Greeks, that distinguishes fiction both from and better than history in its form of writing focusing only on descriptions of contingents and specificities." (Hutcheon, 1988, 108). Textuality is a very important and basic element that links literature and history together. A literary work can only exist via written words, and it is up to



history enthusiasts to skim through and dig into the records of history to uncover what they are looking for. As a result, textuality emerges as a shared feature found in both the study of history and the art of literature. This explains the reason that history has become an important subject of most current critical thought today. Textuality and history are inseparable since writings play a big role in learning or teaching about past events. Metafictional methods are used to undermine the established conventions of historical storytelling. By mixing historical facts and fictitious characters, the line between truth and fiction is blurred. However, although historians and writers of historical novels strive for coherence when writing, consistency is not sought for in this postmodern approach to history. On the other hand, fragmentation is a prominent feature of historiographic metafiction. Fragmentation in certain texts implies that all truth behind history is anything but legitimately related and provided in a cohesive narrative form, language plays a big role in the way that events of history are perceived as facts that are fictionally organized to make a believable tale. The main use of fragmentation is that it evokes the fractured aspect of history. People who read novels that contain both history and fiction are bombarded with moments that remind them of the novels being works of imagination, regardless of how historical and truthful its backdrop is. This controversial relationship is proposed in order to point out the differences and similarities that have to do with the mental or official records-based historical knowledge with the way certain information are exhibited by postmodernism. This is why historiographic metafiction novelists shed a light on self-reflexive and conscious characters as well as narrators in order to relay messages to the readers, they act as eye openers. Traditional historical writing aims for historical authenticity, but historiographic metafictionists strive for the problematization of expressing historical material through the use of metafiction methods. The essential premise of historiographic metafictionists, as discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, is that we can only learn about the past via literature. Because there is always a means of representation, this connection to the past is always indirect.

Historiography underwent significant changes during Postmodernism, not just as a result of new methods to current literary criticism, such as New Historicism, but also as a result of new approaches to creating fiction about, or based on, historical events. The state of historical knowledge's trustworthiness, and hence truth and subjectiveness, came under rigorous study throughout the postmodernist era, as did

literature concerned with rewriting history. Furthermore, Poetics of Postmodernism reinstalls historical settings as relevant and even deciding, but in doing so, it calls into question the very concept of historical knowledge. What makes historiographic metafiction stand out is the heavy use of parody as well as self-consciousness. Historiographic metafiction is a fictional work that is very obvious and clear about that. This makes showcasing the past a non-biased matter and introducing history in a way that can be recognized by the reader which is intertextuality. This is a way for the authors to call out the concepts that are agreed upon universally for no solid reason. Furthermore, historiographic metafiction is concerned with recreating history from the perspective of its victims, namely minorities and others whose voices have been ignored in history to until.

### **1.4.3. Postmodernism**

Postmodernism in the western world, came along in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it's characterized with doubt, realness and non-bias and a big sense of skepticism. It treats history, along with other arts and sciences, as man constructed concepts that should never be met with blind trust. despite the fact that they weren't reserved to the 18th-century Enlightenment, many of the concepts connected with postmodernism might be considered an open rejection of universal views on philosophy. The ideas that follow represent the most significant views of perspective. Additionally, there is a quantifiable and tangible truth that exists and has qualities that are absolutely detached from individuals, notably their thinking, nations, customs, and study methodologies. The supporters of postmodernism dismiss this idea as a sort of naïve idealism. Postmodernists argue that what is real is a theoretical construct, the result of rational language and mental processes. The same idea also applies to history academics' inquiries into past events and society scholars' interpretations of social structures, processes, or behaviors. The narratives and justifications of history and science may be actually correct or false. Postmodernism focuses on the importance of logic and reason as well as scientific tools which are concrete. Hutcheon talks about postmodernism as follows:

In literature today, what we term postmodernism is frequently defined by extreme self-reflexivity and blatantly parodic intertextuality. In fiction, this typically signifies that metafiction is associated with the postmodern. (Hutcheon, 1989, p1).

Postmodernism completely denies the concept of truth when it comes to certain ideas and stories. Coming civilizations will inevitably try to be compassionate, righteous, refined, successful and generally better than the ones we presently inhabit. The supporters of postmodernism challenge the enlightened era's trust in the power of technological advancement and science to enhance mankind. Indeed, many postmodernists think that the tremendously destructive weapons of the Second World War were developed as the outcome of flawed (or uncontrolled) science and technical investigation.

Both logic and reason are universally legitimate, meaning that they pertain evenly to all minds and all domains of expertise. In the view of the supporters of postmodernism, logical thinking and reasoning are likewise basically hypothetical inventions, which render them relevant exclusively under the limits of established traditions of thought. There is a concept referred to as "the nature of man," it encompasses qualities, talents, or proclivities that are inherent in humans from origin as rather than features formed by cultural factors. Postmodernists argue that civilization has an undeniable impact on most, if not all, aspects that make up the mind of man. Language refers to and portrays an outside world. Connotations cannot be completely visible to the person speaking or listening because they are merely actions of numerous other meanings, which are actions of different interpretations, and and so forth—and are thus continually held back. Both of basic speech and the increasingly concentrated "discourses" of specific groups or norms display self-reference; such discussions are embedded in cultural behaviors and demonstrate the theoretical structures, ethical standards, and educational principles that define the society or culture within which they are made use of. Individuals can acquire information regarding natural actuality, and this knowing can eventually be backed by proof or rules which are solid or may be instantly obvious, instinctive, or possibly definite. Postmodernists deny logical basis in order to discover an adequate root of surety on which to develop the framework of reality (which includes science understanding). Generally, postmodernists believe that the west has witnesses a very big jump to postmodernism in last few decades. This mindset got rid of the Enlightenment ways and treated the majority of works and ideas with the point of view of a skeptic. Its two defining features are its attitude toward spoken language and its abolition of actuality. It is an idealism of linguistics or a philosophy that maintains that language generates

and shapes existence for the minds of people, or that there is no extralinguistic fact separate from our perceptions of it in language or discourse. It considers language to be a collection of indicators that only interact with themselves inwardly in an endless cycle of expressing that cannot attain stable significance. As a result, postmodernism denies the potential for speech or language to connect to an outside existence of truths, as well as the certainty of the meaning of writing. It happens that the past is a narrative subject matter full of substantial historical narratives or literary works, this clarifies how it rose to prominence and underwent the worst bombardment in its midst of postmodern criticism. Postmodern scholars claim that the primary routes that mankind's history has formed regarding nation, status, and faith are massive stories that give those who assume they are familiar with history a false sense of meaning. The postmodernists attack history on several grounds, such as the urgent of confirmation, cultural necessities, and dialect restrictions. They claim that the conclusion that the historian draws from the evidence is dependent on individual intellectual traits, and hence several depictions are possible based on a comparable set of evidence. Social choices and interests shaped historical understanding. The societal predisposition leads the student of history to misrepresent the past. The claimed wellsprings of history record merely those truths that were sufficiently interesting to record. Since they are impacted by culture and human constructs, regular information are unsatisfactory. Postmodernism has called into question historical accuracy, as well as the social sciences as a whole. Postmodernism's primary focus is the fact that culture and society as a whole are undergoing shifts indicating that previous fundamentalist ideas regarding objectiveness, fact, modern advancement, rising monetary demands, and common middle class standards have become eroded. The rejection of recorded authenticity is a crucial subject in postmodernism's logic.

Another important aspect of the postmodern approach to history is the removal of the boundaries and multiple levels of qualifications between good culture and scholarly culture through deconstruction and demystification approaches. Every historical explication is content. Postmodernism expresses skepticism regarding such accounts which is represented in a socially arranged way where information is formed all over again. It is an etymological optimism theory that asserts that dialect comprises and describes reality for human personalities, in addition to the absence of further phonetic truth that happens to be separate from the way it is perceived in dialect and

language in general. Postmodernists challenged history specialists' premises and shook off their comfort grounds by building their claims on ideas like reality and impartiality. However, history students outlined their strategies for countering the postmodern drive while failing to recognize the concept of the postmodern argument. Among the most notable developments of postmodernism in the last fifteen years or so has been a capturing theory of history. On the assumption that the chronicled content is a question in itself, made entirely of dialect, and thus subject to the cross examinations devised by the sciences of dialect use ranging from old talk to current interpretations. Postmodernists have set out to educate antiquarians on their teaching. Students of history have been encouraged to see the postmodern perspective as a means of fundamental self-reflection and training change.

## **2. E.L DOCTOROW'S RAGTIME**

### **2.1. Introduction to the Author and Plot**

Doctorow has written a number of critically praised books that combine history with social commentary. Although he had been writing novels for many years, it was not until the release of *The Book of Daniel* in 1971 that he received widespread recognition. *Ragtime*, his second novel, was a financial and critical triumph. Bloom wrote about Doctorow: "Doctorow was also a professor at both Yale and Princeton university school of drama during his career. He also possesses very prestigious degrees from other universities such as Hobart and the College of William Smith. In addition to that, he was an English Language and Literature teacher at the well-known New York University." (Bloom, 2004, p10) Doctorow's writing is both highly esteemed and controversial, with deep philosophical probings, a sophisticated and varied language style, and the placing of historical personalities in unexpected, sometimes surreal, circumstances and places. His novel pushes the boundaries of the literary genres from which he pulls. Doctorow finds fiction that is both politically important and aesthetically rich and engaging as he develops his own poetics of involvement.

Doctorow's work tries to expose and challenge the predominance of established or institutionalized discursive processes by blurring the differences between reality and fiction. E.L Doctorow is a New York native, specifically from the Bronx, in a house of readers and literary connoisseurs, reading was a very big part of Doctorow's childhood and identity. He got his degree from Kenyon in 1952 and from Columbia which was followed by a two year service in the US army. He worked as a staff reader for a motion picture business from 1956 until 1959. His first novel, *Welcome to Hard Times* 1960, was inspired by this job experience. Doctorow ventured into a new genre with *Big as Life* 1966. Despite the fact that he purposefully cast his first two novels in literary styles that were not often lauded by critics, both volumes got excellent praise. Meanwhile, Doctorow was pursuing a lucrative literary career. From 1959 to 1964, he was promoted from associate to senior editor at the New American Library. . He was designated Dial Press's editor-in-chief in 1964. However, the publication of his third work of fiction, *The Book of Daniel* 1971, established Doctorow as a prominent

American author, and he resolved to devote himself entirely to writing from that point on. Doctorow's writings, when read collectively, provide a rich picture of American history, driven in part by his fear over having lost out on history. He has reflected on the strangeness of his own generation's primary experiences of certain times, being too young to painfully feel the depression or fight in World War II, and too old at thirty to be recruited for Vietnam. *The Book of Daniel*, a novel nominated for a National Book Award in 1972, was inspired by the Rosenberg trials, which were part of the 1950s anticommunist fervor. Bloom states that: "When E.L. Doctorow published his fourth novel, *Ragtime*, in 1975, it cemented his writing career and remains his most popular work to this day." (Bloom, 2004, p11). *Loon Lake* 1980, Doctorow's next novel, was half fairy tale, part thriller. It showed the underlying fault-lines of class, sexuality, and violence in the American bedrock via the narrative of a young man set adrift during the depression. *World's Fair* (1986), which received the National Book Award, was yet another enthralling Doctorow time capsule; an uncanny depiction of a 1930s New York City youth viewed simultaneously through the eyes of the kid and those of the adult who remembers that childhood. Doctorow then put out a book by the name of *Billy Bathgate* which came out in 1989, the novel ended up earning him many important awards. Dean Howells. *Billy Bathgate*, a brilliant tour de force that tells the exploits of an urban Tom Sawyer apprenticed to the renowned Dutch Schultz gang, was dubbed a "modern classic" by John Le Carre. Doctorow found time between novels to compose the play *Drinks Before Dinner* 1978, which was initially staged by the New York Shakespeare Festival. Doctorow was also a teacher at Sarah Lawrence, Yale University Drama School, Princeton, and the University of New York University, where he is presently the Glucksman Chair in American Letters. He has many honorary degrees, including those from Kenyon College and Brandeis University.

Although Doctorow acknowledges that time and its passing had been important framing devices in his work, he objects to the label "historical novelist." His definition of a historical novel is one that produces literary history. He has taught literature and writing for the past thirty years, the last twenty-three at New York University. He frequently responds to inquiries with examples from famous writers' works, given with the folksy charm of an afternoon radio DJ whose ease in his profession makes what he says seem matter-of-fact. Growing up in the Bronx during the Great Depression, Doctorow was exposed to these writers early and frequently. Despite owning a music

business, his father was a literary lover who named his son Edgar Allen Poe after the poet. Doctorow's mother was a musician. Edgar Lawrence Doctorow is looked at as a great master of the historical fiction in America. He is the most recent author of *The March* (2005), a fictitious portrayal of General William Tecumseh Sherman's historic military assault from Atlanta's burned-out ruins to the Atlantic Ocean and north into the Carolinas, leaving a path of destruction that impacted the south for centuries. Doctorow appears to have written the novels based on real historical occurrences. Postwar authors wrote their works by combining imagined and historical elements. Doctorow's writings appear to be historical novels at first glance, but in truth, his novels combine historical, actual, and fictitious characters. As a result, his work might be seen as historiographic metafiction.

*Ragtime* has even combined both historical and fictional figures. The narrative opens in 1902 in New Rochelle, in the house of a family that includes the mother, Father, and a young kid. the mother's Junior Brother becomes madly in love with the famous beautiful Evelyn Nesbit, the former spouse of architect Stanford White, Harry Thaw, who has recently been accused with killing. When Harry Houdini's car breaks down in front of the family's house, he decides to swing by and visit them. Father joins researcher Peary on a Polar adventure. Mameh, Tateh, and the small daughter are members of an immigrant family who live in abject poverty on the Lower East Side. Evelyn Nesbit visits the Lower East Side, where she falls in love with Tateh's daughter, and her trips grow more frequent. Evelyn takes care of the little child when she falls unwell. Without Evelyn's knowledge, Mother's Younger Brother starts following her around. Tateh, Evelyn Nesbit, and the young girl attend a socialist convention where the main speaker, Emma Goldman, blames Evelyn for exploiting her sexuality in order to be notorious. Mother recovers and takes possession of the baby that she discovers interred alive in her lawn; she soon discovers it is the child of Sarah, a Black washwoman. Evelyn Nesbit and Mother's Younger Brother start seeing one other often. Evelyn's search for Tateh and his little kid is aided by Mother's Younger Brother, but it is useless. Tateh and his daughter are looking forward to leaving New York City and traveling throughout the eastern seaboard.

Meanwhile, Houdini trains how to navigate the air and performs for Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Countess Sophie. When Father arrives at New Rochelle, he is overcome with loneliness. Mother's Younger Brother learns how to make bombs.



Tateh and his daughter journey to Lawrence, Massachusetts, where a textile mill protest is taking place, and subsequently to a number of other locations. Tateh uncovers a novelty business in Philadelphia whose owner agrees to purchase the movie books Tateh has prepared. Tateh decides to return to Lawrence and settle down. J.P. Morgan and Henry Ford eat lunch together and discuss innovation and spirituality. A certain afternoon, a Black man named Coalhouse Walker arrives at their New Rochelle home and requests to meet with Sarah, who declines. After Coalhouse contacts her each weekend, Sarah eventually agrees to his marriage request. A few days later, Coalhouse Walker is on a journey to New York when members from the Emerald Isle firehouse obstruct his path. While Coalhouse seeks police aid, strangers wreck his car. When Coalhouse rants, he is detained. Coalhouse hires a lawyer with the funds that he was planning to devote to the big day. However, he is struggling to find an attorney willing to represent him. Sarah exits the property one evening to head to an event attended by Mr. Taft's Vice President; she plans to submit a request to the national government regarding Coalhouse's case. The law enforcement agents, on the other hand, brutally assault her; she rapidly gets ill and passes away. Coalhouse and his supporters detonate a bomb at the Emerald Isle fire station, killing four firefighters. Mother's Younger Brother departs to go with Coalhouse and his followers after Father and Mother's Younger Brother quarrel over the subject.

To stay out of the notice of the community members, Mother and Father relocate to Atlantic City. Willie Conklin is also under a lot of stress about having to move out of home. Tateh is introduced to Mother and Father in Atlantic City, and the young boy and girl instantly become good friends. To avoid the notice of the community members, Mother and Father relocate to Atlantic City. Willie Conklin is also under a lot of pressure to leave town. Tateh is introduced to Mother and Father in Atlantic City, and the young boy and girl instantly become close companions. Coalhouse tried to run away, as reported by investigators, but he perhaps made a little movement that he realized was going to result in his murder. Mother's Junior Brother goes crossing the country in Coalhouse's vehicle, ultimately ending up in Mexico, after which he enters the rebels and perishes approximately a year later. As hostilities grow across Europe, World War I looms. Morgan takes a flight to Egypt, thinking that seeing the pyramids will help him rediscover his spirituality. Rather, he is unable to sleep and is disheartened by his inability to experience what he had hoped for. His

condition rapidly worsens, and he passes. The narrator describes the brutal murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Countess Sophie. A year following the death of their father on the Lusitania, Tateh and Mother decide to get married. The story also addresses immigrant poverty and black persecution, which motivates one black jazz artist, who has lost everything due to white mistrust and hatred, to grab possession of Pierpont Morgan's library.

The revolutionary Emma Goldman and the architect Stanford White appear and bow out. The middle-class family's unity and riches deteriorate, and one nihilistic son creates explosives instead of Fourth of July fireworks. The family is ultimately brought together by love links to an immigrant family, whose circumstances improve as the narrative goes. The novel mimics the feel of a historical piece while staying on the surface, delivering dazzlingly polished situations in which 'real' and fictitious individuals are arranged like tiles. Doctrow has published a revised history of the Ragtime Era (1900-1920), bringing it up to date with present marginal concerns. Doctrow has demonstrated racial prejudice between whites and blacks. Among many important problems, the story concentrates on white persecution of blacks, which causes one black jazz artist, who has lost everything due to racial mistrust and hatred, to grab possession of Pierpont Morgan's library. During the Ragtime Era, whites mercilessly subjugated blacks, as seen by the vandalism of Coalhouse Walker's Model T Ford by Fire Chief Willie Conklin. Due to the administration's bias and partiality, Coalhouse Walker is arrested and subjected to mental torture. No court hears his appeal and refuses to record his case. As a result, he cannot seek justice in court. As a result, it demonstrates whites' completely inhumane, cruel, and erratic behavior toward blacks. He is obligated to actively battle against white institutions in order to give and attain the rights of black people. Coalhouse Walker was a martyr for black people's independence, freedom, and rights. Doctrow has attempted to convey the Ragtime Era's history as authentically as possible via a revisionist lens, bringing up to modern marginal concerns. History is conveyed through literary traces while writing about realism fiction incorporating history.

## **2.2. E.L. Doctorow's Ragtime, A Perspective of Historiographic Metafiction**

Doctorow starts off the novel by stating: "Never play Ragtime at a fast pace, that is not how it's supposed to be played..." (Doctorow, 1974, preface) The blurring of fiction and history, as well as the historical construction, are key topics in E. L. Doctorow's works. *Ragtime*, this piece is his best-seller, takes on the role of the historical book form while exposing its limits and relates to what is referred to as historiographic metafiction. Similar to many postmodern writers, Doctorow views history as an untrustworthy field and treats ideas like fact, realism, and neutrality with sarcasm. Doctorow's recourse to intertextuality, while mixing historical and invented personalities, and his rebuilding of the narrator's and characters' perspectives allude to the notion that history and the real world are always changing and rebuilding. Doctorow emphasizes the modifications to the economy and society that happened in the US during the Ragtime interval, along with the characters' and even the narrator's backgrounds. Around the turn of the century, America seemed to be making its path towards becoming a financial leadership, however it needed to deal with impoverishment, unfairness, and human right infractions. The country was seeking to develop its own sense of self while changing, merging these modifications, and so constantly rebuilding what it stood for. In a similar vein, Doctorow's heroes alter and rebuild their personas in order to realize their true natures.

The writer parallels the adjustments that occurred in this nation versus the ones that occurred in the daily lives of the citizens, indicating that the past too remains in turmoil and is continuously rewritten. The story's narrator, identical to the the main characters, is unsure of himself and alters his own identity over the story. Some suggest that the young kid is the all-knowing speaker; other parties emphasize the exclusion of a narrator's face and the possibility that *Ragtime* is its own narrator. The storyteller uses the first person only once: "Poor Father, I foresee the last of his journeys." I saw his ultimate adventure, Father. He comes at the new location, his hair up in surprise, and his visage appears stupid" (117). In this instance, the narrator opted for referring to himself as a "I." Since the narrator describes the Father as "Poor Father," it may be argued that the young child is the speaker. Considering he was not around when his dad passed away the young kid has to analyze the story of his dad's

farewell adventure, thereby shaping the trajectory of the entire family. The all-seeing person who narrates the story alternates between relaying stories about the novel's protagonists and explaining events and circumstances in American society. When the storyteller recounts tales of the people or recounts events from twentieth-century the United States, the audience is confused whether the story's voice distinguishes itself.

Many chapters in the novel merely depict various samples from the history of the US and its way of life which appear to be unconnected to the novel's themes and subplots:

The majority of the newcomers were from Italian descent alongside eastern Europeans. These immigrants were transported to the island of Ellis via sea. They were assigned tags, granted baths, and put on stools inside cages in a strangely elegant human factory of red brick and gray concrete. (Ragtime, 6).

In presenting parts of the peoples' activities, opinions, and arguments, or reflecting on early twentieth-century American society, the story does not follow a logical or chronological chronology. The novel finishes with a fake overview of American civilization and the transformations that occurred at the turn of the century, but not necessarily with an in-depth lesson taken from the varied stories of the characters. The characters' experiences begin in the current moment and are unconnected to the others. Because its author studies American everyday life, *Ragtime* looks to be an analytical book, yet it is exploratory since the narrative is witty in the way it reports ideas. Doctorow's work sounds like it came from a newspaper, yet it is completely imaginary. If consumers assume the information they are absorbing is factually unbiased, Doctorow's reportorial technique is dishonest. As the writer develops tales about both real and imaginary persons, his literary attempt alludes to a factual representation of fabricated circumstances. *Ragtime* mainly deals with the tale of two families, one English-American and another which consists of refugees from Europe and lastly a black family. One tale refers to Tateh, a Jewish immigrant and communist who flees to New York with his child, who is Little Girl. The mystery surrounding Sarah's baby's paternity begins the second portion of the tale. Readers soon introduced to Walker who turns out to be the dad, they end up being the final family of the tale.

Mother gets married to Tateh, who has altered his title to Baron Ashkenazy, and goes to the state of California along with the small kid, tiny girl, and Sarah's black child in the concluding section. The work's final portion portrays the way all three

principal dynasties in the tale merged into a turbulent blend of backgrounds. The freshly established family described at the story's end exemplifies how the U.S. family grew into an inter-racial and diverse community. The story's ending contrasts the novel's introduction, since the narrative voice says that America is made up entirely of white Citizens. The story's narrative voice portrays a false portrait of the United States, hinting to purity of ethnicity, national unity, and riches, all of which are shattered throughout the performance. The pairing of significant topics such as dedication to nationalism and ethnic background alongside items such as tennis racquets and shade umbrellas shows that the narrative voice is sarcastic and humorous. Given the author's portrayal of the United States as being empty of people other than white citizens, the new family formed at the final moments of *Ragtime* demonstrates an array of backgrounds encompassing people from different sexes, races and identities. This mingling of communities, ethnicities, and nations points to both the USA's history and its potential, in addition to its inhabitants who established their national sense of self on a contradictory blending of fresh individuals, and it also alludes to the world's ongoing remaking.

Whenever an American household incorporates individuals of many origins and identities, its heritage is constantly updated and altered. The bodily, emotional, cultural and civic modifications of the fictional individuals support the reinvention and reformation of past altogether. Tateh, for instance, changes his name along with his ideological beliefs, becoming the rich cinematic mogul Baron Ashkenazy rather than an idealistic a laborer rebel. Larry McCaffery questioned Tateh's economic prosperity in as a result of compromising his ethical views. As Tateh redefines the tale of his past by changing his persona and donning a veneer of authenticity, the young boy transforms fact into fabrication because.. The "duplicated event" expands Tateh's fascination with cinematically capturing individuals and stuff since the little youngster mimics himself. His reflective dual-sided replica is comparable to the amount of actors portrayed in cinema or pictures. The youngster is described as a shy youngster with no friends who chooses to eat through books instead of having fun in the outside world. He enjoys his grandpa's tales, which combine past events and fantasies, and who reads to him from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

Those texts were stories of people who became animals, trees, or statues. They were stories of transformation. Women transformed into plants, insects, and birds, while males transformed into serpents, pork, rocks, and even nothingness. (*Ragtime*, 42).

The tiny child changes his impression of a creation of fantasy into his perception of life by applying Ovid's stories of transformation to his reflection. In an egotistical motion, the young infant observes both the mental and physical shifts that his physique and psyche have encountered all over time.

The small child describes his entire adventure as the detachment of two areas of himself. In sense, the reflection in the mirror's replica and the truth are intertwined since his impression of it seems to be the same as his physical being and a sense of self. The child starts off using a recreation of real life, based on his grandpa's tale, then moves on to utilizing his own body to transform it into a visual, and finally fulfills the sequence with an additional replication or fictional version conveyed through a unique work of fabrication. The small boy's fascination in cinema is mirrored in his dual projection in the mirror, as well as the matching relationship among both of his identities implies the duplication of personalities and bodies depicted on the big screen. The child wants to be removed from his physical appearance and to see his fictitious image in the mirror or on a wide screen. Tateh's desire to make a film about his three children and convert them into illusory identities, foretold by the tiny boy's self-analysis effectively ends the narrative. Mother changes who she is and redefines her own life after she gets married to Tateh and became the adopted mom of two youngsters: the tiny daughter and Sarah's offspring. In order to team up with Walker's crew, Younger brother desires to be a black man. He is willing to forfeit away his advantaged white persona to stand up for the black man's liberty. He spends four consecutive nights waiting outside of a tavern simply to talk with Coalhouse and tell him that he can assist him. To follow the desires of a black person in America, the younger Brother disregards and undermines his loved ones.

Characters are prone to shifts and transformations even outside of the three primary families. Morgan along with Ford were equally obsessed with reincarnation and periodicity. The former maintains that there are global phases that occur across existence. He also believes that past and historical events always have a place in the future and present. He develops and depicts the Rosicrucians' understanding and "secret wisdom" of rebirth in his conversation with Ford, stating that this information and magic originates from the Greek modifications of the Egyptian pastor, Hermes Trismegistus. Morgan eventually reveals to Ford Seti the 1st's tomb, the preserved king of Egypt of the 19th Period. He asks Ford for a favor, which is to go with him to

Egypt, where the reality who they are and where they came from could be uncovered. Ford states that he has no doubt about the reality of reincarnation. Ford, ironically, discovers some "enlightening" thoughts about reincarnation in a cheap book. Morgan's ostensibly earnest endeavors to solve historical puzzles are mocked by the author by comparing them with Ford's less thorough research. Doctorow highlights the contrast that is Morgan's curiosity along with Ford's calmness throughout their discourse, which is funny. While Morgan reveals his secrets and almost passes out, Ford muses about his shoes. Doctorow created the interaction between the two merchants, their fixation with reincarnation, and their methods for learning history. It's unlikely that Ford and Morgan ever discussed reincarnation. Houdini engages in a unique form of rebirth. He stands of in the face of death fearlessly by continually pushing it; with each performance, he perishes and rises again like a Phoenix. He evades shackles along with traps; he even goes as far as asking for his own burial while still breathing. All off Houdini's techniques are simple tricks done on the audience by messing with their minds and taking them on an emotional rollercoaster. Finally, Doctorow's satirical mingling of real and fictitious people speaks to history's created narrative discourse.

Doctorow is a master at intertwining real life events with factual ones, which explains readers are often left clueless and wondering about what is true and what is fake, he does this by introducing his fictional characters to real ones, using an all-knowing narrator who explains and facilitates their discussions as well as their intentions.

Because of this omniscience, we may receive a range of perspectives on the Ragtime Age and the stories that form Ragtime. It provides us with a very detailed view into not only individual thoughts about the time period, but also the extent of the time period. (Ragtime Narrator Point of View | Shmoop, n.d.).

Doctorow also comments on the factional and fictional barriers seen throughout his novel along with various events , reasoning that so called facts, are meaningless and nothing but constructs ; explaining that fiction is just as if not even more versatile and creative. Doctorow's characters consist of historical figures, along with fictional ones. Doctorow positions some of these real life figures in unfamiliar waters and involves them in interesting, unfamiliar and unorthodox conversations that they have never had. The author does all of this to showcase the importance of fiction as he makes it very fun and relatable while also stripping history's status away by challenging its status.

### **2.3. Intertwining History and Fiction In E.L Doctrow's Ragtime**

Ragtime is a work that exemplifies Doctorow's historical theories. The novel is less about the Ragtime Era and more about how it is seen and how it could be composed and recomposed. It could be argued that Doctorow's fiction tries to expose and undermine the predominance of embedded or institutionalized discursive processes by blurring the lines between reality and fiction. The notion of actively addressing history--"the real-world act," as Doctorow refers to it in Ragtime--brings intellect and wit to the struggle. Hutcheon comments about the nature of Doctrow: "Doctorow does not share his predecessor's faith in the objective depiction of history, and his witty blending of truth and fiction, as well as his purposeful anachronisms, highlight this skepticism." (Hutcheon, 1989, p22). Doctorow's particular time begins in 1902 and concludes when, at a faster pace, he ties up his few remaining strings swiftly and cleanly at the end of World War I. In the process of making sense of history, ambiguity is a form of richness that cannot be safely removed. And Doctorow trims as little as possible. He just shifts the uncertainty in one or more directions. The blackness of the Negro, for example, is tied to the blackness of Tateh, the street corner artist, and they connect with the self-imposed blackness of Younger Brother, who becomes a minstrel of revolution and a bomb artist in blackface. Hutcheon makes this clear by stating: "In Doctorow's Ragtime, ethnicity (Tateh) and race (Coalhouse) are intertwined with class. Loon Lake incorporates art into the mix." (Hutcheon, 1989, p20). Still, if random history is to be disciplined, it can only be done by surrendering history and replacing it with a human design. In Ragtime, he pulls off a more comedic and daring stunt. Narrated history either understates or exaggerates events. As a result, Doctorow does both, and his distortions take center stage. He declares them. He takes pleasure in them. He makes a remark about them. On a more personal level, we have the families of Father-Mother-Younger Brother and, later, their immigrant equivalents in the Tateh-Mameh family. Their anonymity, as well as Doctorow's rapid style, accentuates a presentation as flattened as Tateh's silhouettes. The American melting pot, middle-class living, making sacrifices or doing good in a technology oriented, democratic U.S.A. Whatever the complexities of their positions, they follow their metaphorical destiny Enthusiasm. Doctorow is simply interested in the possibility of heartbreak or joy beyond their outlines. Otherwise, he maintains control by denying them depth and limiting their excesses to clear humorous understatement. Even the black Coalhouse



Walker Jr. and Sarah begin with narrow, circumscribed personal histories--the tragedy is that they become part of a wider, more public history.

America is a mixed society with a diverse population. In the novel *Ragtime*, There are several themes that symbolize the contemporary state of the American Ragtime Era (1900-1920). In his novel *Ragtime* (1975), E.L. Doctorow's account of the Coalhouse Walker story ironizes racism in turn-of-the-century America. There is still racial prejudice in America, particularly between the so-called upper class whites and the lower class blacks. Doctorow attempts to convey racial inequality between Whites and Blacks in American society during the Ragtime Era (1900-1920) through the description of Coalhouse Walker's incident. Whites regard blacks as barbaric, uncivilized, and feral. Despite the fact that blacks are capable, civilized whites do not acknowledge it. Coalhouse Walker is an authentic guy who has developed his expertise and charisma, which has caused whites to be provoked. It is apparent that white people in this case were envious, hostile, and disdainful of black people. Coalhouse Walker drives his Ford towards Firehouse Lane on a Sunday afternoon. As he approaches the Firehouse, he switches off his Ford, sets the brake, and steps down to the side of the road so that it does not hinder or bother other vehicles that are still running. He then visits the Firehouse department. Walker hoped that the cops would take care of his automobile. He also assigns two black lads to the car's maintenance and travels to the Firehouse. When he returns, the automobile has already been tainted by the controversies. The fire engine and horses have been removed. The road was devoid of volunteers, and his automobile was parked in the field. It is remarkable that in such a short amount of time, the automobile has already been damaged, and there is no one on the road, when volunteers were present previously. Walker notifies and appeals to the Fire Chief honestly about the desecration of his automobile, stating that he wants his car cleaned and the damage reimbursed for. Grinning mocks and degrades Walker's appeal instead of sympathizing and honoring it. The irony is on all colored or black folks. Coalhouse is subjected to inhumane treatment. At that moment, a traffic van arrives, carrying two officers, one of which being the traffic cop to whom Coalhouse Walker pleads. The traffic officer who is hearing Walker's appeal observes the car driving into the field and returns to the Firehouse. The traffic cop inquires of the Fire Chief whether he or his men had committed any desecration. The Fire Chief responds to the traffic cop by criticizing and blaming Walker: "The nigger here parked his

dammed car in the middle of the road right in front of the Firehouse. We had to move it, it is a serious business blocking a fire station, ain't that so, boys? The volunteers nodded righteously" (Ragtime, 65). After being accused of drinking and driving, being full of confidence and patience, Coalhouse Walker also appeals to the fact that he does not drink and has not driven his car off the road, slashed the roof, or defecated. He wants the damage reimbursed for as well as an apology. Though Coalhouse Walker's appeal is sincere, it is rendered ineffective by the harsh and biased policeman. But the officers being biased do not buy what they look at as excuses. Because of the prejudice of authority, Coalhouse Walker becomes and feels powerless as a result of his limited authority. It plainly demonstrates whites' oppression of blacks in general, as well as the prejudiced, inhumane, and harsh behavior of white people's power and administration against blacks. It may be seen in the administration's total disregard or indifference to Walker's request. The vandalized automobile is direct and credible evidence of the Fire Chief's crime against Coalhouse Walker. It is not only Coalhouse Walker who is subjected to injustice and repression, but all Blacks. The government is one-sided in that it provides justice and works solely for whites while ignoring black appeals, as seen by Walker's case. As a result, it is apparent that white power and administration are repressing blacks inhumanely and ruthlessly. Walker's car is damaged, and he is charged with intoxication, producing an unpleasant nuisance, and being arrested.

The misbehavior of the Fire Chief and police officers toward Coalhouse Walker is a challenge and irony to all blacks. Coalhouse Walker is not heard in the visible direct evidence, and we may assume how blacks are handled in other informal cases. We can claim that black people are treated inhumanely. It appears that those in authority relentlessly conquer the general populace, who are marginalized and helpless, and subject them to various forms of torture. So many important people have shaped history. Coalhouse Walker has been frightened and concerned about the event involving his automobile. The next evening, the household is surprised by Coalhouse Walker's unexpected appearance. Walker narrates the narrative of his vehicle accident to Father and Mother, who are seated in the parlor, calmly and honestly. As a result, the colored people do not have a broad living standard with shared fundamental human values. Everything is tough for black folks to obtain. In America, colored people are denied access to judicial proceedings and socioeconomic activity. The episode involving Coalhouse Ford exemplifies this state. It is apparent that Coalhouse Walker

has been subjected to inhumane and harsh treatment. It is both amazing and unfair that Coalhouse's concern is not being addressed by administration through his peaceful and lawful ways of petitioning authorities. He is suffering more as a result of this situation. This is unimportant to anyone. Walker's case is ignored and refused by all authorized persons in every court. It is evident that all legal procedures are exclusively for the benefit of the majority class. Minorities are constantly ostracized and subjugated through various tactics. Minorities are forced to live with the injustice perpetrated by majority. Minorities are cast in the shadows. The main features of justice are equal opportunity to consume rights from the judicial, legislative, and executive bodies in every country or nation. If all individuals do not have equal access to legislative, executive, and judicial rights, there will be utter inequity and anarchy.

In America, such a condition appears to exist between minorities, the marginalized, and majorities. Colored people are viewed as a commodity that can be bought and sold by the majority of rich people. Colored individuals have been denied work possibilities. As a result, they are impoverished and illiterate. That is why they are obligated to serve the wealthy majority. Poor individuals appear to have been denied justice. On the one hand, it is a commentary on capitalism. Even justice is measured in terms of money in capitalism. The irony on impoverished black people is capitalism and its policies. Capitalism makes it difficult for the poor to survive. In either instance, the majority is repressing and subduing the minority. Even the innocent Sarah has been preyed on by the governance of the majority classes. Thus, the white people are very ignorant to the rights of minorities here. The upper class has little to no sympathy for middle class people. This created a very big gap between upper class and middle class people, and even a bigger one between the rich and colored folks. They are stuck in situations that they cannot help but accept at times. Coalhouse even loses his fiancée Sarah after running the numerous courts, despite the fact that his situation goes unnoticed. Coalhouse is helpless, and he embodies the helplessness of all black and brown people. White people and their authority have rendered blacks powerless. He is rejected and expelled by every court body for treating people unfairly and inhumanely. As a result, he gets depressed and feels forced to attack his opponents, Firemen Chief and others. Black people are ruthlessly and culturally oppressed. They are treated in the same manner as wild animals. As a result, individuals of color felt forced to act radical. They were forced to revolt against the majority in order to achieve freedom

and equality. As a result, the flaming surge of insurrection by colored people against oppression in the 1920s was known as black radicalism. Such radicalism was their responsibility against the majority class. It is apparent that Coalhouse is enraged by the oppression of the upper class to dark people and himself in the case of his vehicle. He is so enraged that he is defying the administration and the whole majority class with his violent actions. While the white people's administration does not provide justice, he is obligated to provide justice on his own. It was also essential to achieve equality. However, in such an attack and conflict, innocent persons should be spared from both sides who are fighting one other. Everyone may agree, and it appears that there is widespread social unfairness in American culture. Willie Conklin, with the company of Emerald Isle Chief, would abuse the colored people inhumanely. He was going to pinch them. He attempted to torment them even more. As a result, Coalhouse Walker began to attack in these enterprises, resulting in numerous deaths.

Other individuals of the upper class despised Conklin because he assisted in inciting rage among the colored people rather than preventing attacks. The power from local to central has been one-sided, exclusively giving justice to whites while excluding blacks. Even the media is biased, since it is heavily influenced and controlled by the majority class. The press should seek authorization from the administration to report news about black extremism. It suggests that the press should only expose the negative aspects of black people after consulting with the authorities. It is obvious from the following lines:

It turned out that within an hour of the explosion he, or some other black men, left identical letters at the offices of the two local news-papers. The editors after conferring with the police chose not to print them. The letters were written in a clear firm hand and told of the events leading up to the attack on the Firehouse. (Ragtime, 78).

As a result, everything, including the press, is under the control of white authorities. Nobody is free and self-sufficient. The insurrection of Coalhouse Walker provides a glimpse into America's Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Many workers, white people, and firemen are murdered in this 1920s insurrection, and firehouses are damaged in the explosion. While the government's revolution spirals out of hand, and the administration is unable to provide security for the people, white people enter the streets armed with pistols and rifles. The issue has gotten so out of hand that everything has been destroyed by explosions, and there is confusion and disorder with a terrible situation. Even though the militia was patrolling the streets, an

explosion had already occurred, injuring and killing several people. A terrible situation was observed. Only after such huge loss of riches and human life can the authorities pretend to hear and care about Coalhouse Walker's cause. Finally, the authorities are forced to deploy a crane to remove the Model T Ford from Firehouse Pond. It is widely thought that Americans adore the machine, yet it has been damaged and is now submerged in water. As a result, it is contradictory and ironic in terms of their capitalist principles. People go to see the waterlogged and ruined car once it is placed in a public spot. The cops have to block the area off due to the enormous number of people. It demonstrates Coalhouse Walker's formal unfairness. However, white people are still unconcerned with black people's rights. Though it is a challenge to the grand narrative, it is mostly about whites' hate of blacks, as well as whites' fear of blacks as marginalized people. The new literary history written about minor problems challenges and undermines great myths. History should be all-encompassing. As a result, the new literary history is effective in incorporating key and vital components of grand tales while advancing to peripheral topics. As a result, history may be an all-encompassing and open-ended genre.

The union of fifty states constitutes America. White people were mostly believed to be mainstream or majority class. Representatives of the majority class engage in the establishment of rule and order. As a result, they only incorporate their favorable parts in the legislation, leaving out marginalized individuals. White people were exclusively welcomed in every sector of American government. Minorities and the underprivileged are treated inhumanely like slaves. Though Abraham Lincoln, America's sixteenth president, declared the abolition of the slave system, it can only be shown on a single letter. Similarly, the slogan of Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States of America, 'Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as the basic fundamental rights by birth endowed by God to all the people,' has been mocked by majorities' inhumanity toward minorities and marginal people in America. Even the law in the United States is skewed towards minorities. As a result, several revolutions have occurred. In 1967, all marginalized people conducted a significant and important uprising in the name of the Civil Rights Movement to give and attain the right of equality for all people, including marginal whites, blacks, and a big number of American residents. Coalhouse Walker's revolution is modeled after the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The insurrection is akin to that which occurred

during the Civil Rights Movement. Walker's revolution in the 1920s and the 1960s were both held to obtain and provide equal rights. The Coalhouse Walker protest seems to stem have been arranged in order to march and yell for the rights of blacks. On the other hand the 1960s Civil rights movement stood for every minority or person that was oppressed at the time. It seems like, throughout history, that African Americans were the most hated and discriminated against group in America. This is why the Coalhouse Walker protest can be linked to the Civil Rights Movement as there are many similarities between the two. Fredric Jameson believes that 1920s black radicalism, as textualized in *Ragtime*, degenerates into a parody. Coalhouse Walker's radicalism of the 1920s, according to Jameson, is a copy of the disgusting style of the 1960s. As a result, pastiche is insufficient to liberate the blacks.

Discrimination existed, continues to exist, and will continue to exist. According to Linda Hutcheon, revolt is vital for equality and liberation; it has historical significance, thus it is not an invain force; it is for freedom. The kind of uprising is appropriate since it ironizes key classes' history, ruling style, rules, and regulations. Instead of imitation as pastiche, Huctheon believes that parody is more trustworthy for the emancipation of people of color. Hutcheon underlines that colored people must revolt methodically and gradually, reflecting on their past in order to make their revolution historical and meaningful. Rights are attainable and should be reachable. As a consequence, everyone will be treated equally under the American legal system. According to Jameson, Coalhouse Walker's radicalism against white people's oppression of blacks in the 1920s is a terrible caricature of the 1960s and is ineffective for black liberation. According to Jameson, there appears to be an outdated irony in such a revolution against racism. This means that power is limited or insufficient in this situation, making black liberation impossible. As a result, it is a pastiche of the past. Doctorow has written a spoof of Jameson's 1920s black radicalism in the 1960s manner. It cannot ironize to the grand narrative sense of history in order to further produce new inclusive and open-ended history in the chain of dissatisfaction since this irony is a powerless irony only as pastiche, and such imitation as pastiche merely breaks down the past. Linda Hutcheon sees Coalhouse Walker's 1920s uprising against white tyranny as both trustworthy and compelling. Doctorow's use of 1960s style while writing about black rebellion in the 1920s is a parody according to Hucheon. Also, the copying of the rebellious 1960s technique provides liberation to

oppressed blacks. Thus, the parody of the 1960s provides liberation to oppressed people by reintroducing their dissenting voices into history textbooks, where they previously were missing. Hutcheon defines postmodern parody as the liberating agency of ironic quotation. And the ideal postmodern genre for liberation from the hegemonic worldview is postmodern historiographic metafiction. Whatever the case, it is apparent that Coalhouse Walker has made tremendous sacrifices in order to safeguard and protect black people's rights. He has fought against whites' ruthless subjugation of blacks and societal inequality. So, in the novel *Ragtime*, Coalhouse Walker is a main character who was martyred for black freedom and equality.

#### **2.4. The Relationship Between Fiction and History In E.L Doctorow's *Ragtime***

Doctorow uses *Ragtime* as a work that acts as a clear distinction between real events and imagined ones in order to emphasize how real history's tales are. His combinations of real and fictional characters create what is called historiographic metafiction by challenging norms. Doctorow connects the lives of historical individuals like Ford and Houdini with fictitious characters in attempt to lift the curtain that is separating reality and fiction. The novel focuses on a certain timeframe called *Ragtime*, but the author includes older real-life characters to remark on the starting times of the twentieth century. The work defies historical writings' standards and urges readers to reconsider the veracity of historiographical depiction. Furthermore, by choosing an anonymous narrator, Doctorow calls into doubt literature's ability to correctly reflect history. Doctorow uses fiction to narrate historical events using these strategies. Doctorow explores angles of gone days in *Ragtime* by implementing older historically loaded people as well as significant events. Following Sarah's passing away Walker along with some comrades torch down a fire department and name their alliance the "Provisional American Agreement." This is a satire that intentionally represents activists from the 60's black community and not the bracket of *Ragtime*. The author's characters additionally possess antique insight. From the get-go of the story, the Little Boy requests that Houdini tell the Duke of his impending killing. The author presents the reader with a one dimensional non-diverse society on purpose in order to urge the consumer to reconsider history as a whole. The novel's foreground is occupied

by three fictional families, each chosen to symbolize distinct social groups in America during the early twentieth century. The narrator depicts the beliefs held by white upper middle-class families throughout an interesting trio of imaginative households occupy the novel's prominence, every one intended to represent different socioeconomic groupings in the United States amid the early twentieth century. The storyteller shows the notions carried by white rich and families with regular incomes during that time in history and casts doubt on the level of extravagant living given to this place by depicting a pair of households that embodied the impoverished portions of a community that academics neglected. Through Walker, his wife along with their child, Doctorow illustrates racism prevalent during the Ragtime era. Coalhouser is shown as a well-off gentleman who personifies wealth as a byproduct of a more accepting and involving time frame. Doctorow, on the other hand, demonstrates how this fabrication was too good to be true for an African American man. This can be observed in the passage when the storyteller indicates how people are speechless and stare at Walker whenever he took his car out for a drive. Walker was fully cognizant that the way he carries himself, along with his style and ownership of a car were irritating lots of white folks.

The author uses imaginary people to push a different point of view about past times on the reader and does not construct his own conclusion of real-life events in this exhibition. Doctorow relies on actual-life occurrences such as Sigmund's travel to the States and Goldman's deportation. He blends it with the invention of fresh occurrences that appear to be improbable to happen in past events, in addition to the interaction of fictional individuals with real-life people. Doctorow pushes the reader to examine their preconceived notions about how accurate a picture of the past can be by inserting his own creation of events. Doctorow depicts historical individuals in a peculiar manner throughout the work, freeing them from historiographical frames. Doctorow displays a new human truth by incorporating these historical characters. In this manner, Doctorow resurrects historical figures in order to provide the reader with a unique brain-stimulating experience. Whilst the individuals of history are not crucial to the storyline, their inclusion poses doubts about whether the book is a piece of invention or historical documents.

As a work of historiographic metafiction, the novel erases the lines separating fantasy and the real world, implying that records of the past are no longer a tangible



truth about the past. Instead they are changeable tales that are supposed to be doubted, explored and changed. The author involves real life historical figures in the lives of fictitious characters in a special manner which makes it difficult to differentiate between fiction and reality. This presents readers with how easily narratives can be built as long as the scenario sounds interesting and immersive. Doctorow provides an alternative version of the old times that centers around his evaluation of the US's history by merging many parts that construct a picture of past understanding in which famous historical personalities along with happenings, plus imaginary individuals and occurrences are intertwined.

## **2.5. The Relationship Between History and Characters In E.L Doctorow's Ragtime**

Doctorow's novel highlights a collection of unnoticed individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds with histories that were seldom reflected in the usual narrative of history. Although the real-life characters in the novel are given names, the fictional individuals are only identified by categories of society such as parental positions or ethnicity. This resembles the focus given to important characters in historiographic stories, while ignoring the average Joe and his struggles and squeezing those people into one generalized category that they share, whether it is race, status or religion. A lot of the characters in *Ragtime* suffered from this, Mother, Father, Mameh, Tateh, the Jewish and The black families, just to name a few. Nonetheless, The Walker family are assigned names. Coalhouse is a man of distinction and morals who pushes against discrimination and defends his people with pride, consequently the Junior in his name a reference to the widely recognized MLK. Coalhouse Walker is undoubtedly *Ragtime*'s most important person, and his tale is exceptional for the time it is claimed to have happened.

The three families are divided at the start of the story due to ethnic, religious, and social divides, but through a sequence of events and coincidences, they are brought together and form one family by the end of the novel. Tateh, who has become Baron Ashkenazy, the Little Boy, the Little Girl, and the black kid all reflect a new multiethnic family structure. *Ragtime* is a critique of historical injustice and, as a result, an invitation to examine current social situations critically. Still, one may argue

that, rather than expressing sorrow over previous failures, Doctorow The three families are split at the outset of the tale owing to cultural, faith, and socioeconomic barriers, but they become reunited in tandem and create a single unit by the finish of the book via a series of happenings and circumstances. Tateh, now Baron Ashkenazy, the Little Boy, the Little Girl, and the black child all represent a new multifaceted household. The novel is an indictment of past oppression and, as such, an encouragement to thoughtfully evaluate present societal problems. Nevertheless, some might contend that, instead of simply lamenting errors in the past, Doctorow indicates, by adding fiction from past periods, that there continually exists the possibility of benefiting through blunders and being more ethically competent in the years that follow. As a consequence, the cultural significance of Doctorow's fictional characters is not limited by the novel's present, rather it is just as important to Ragtime consumers from the decade of the 70s as it is to contemporary ones. Although actual figures do not feature at the novel's center, but instead emerge on occasion, their presence raises questions about the novel's status as a piece of fabrication or a historiographic documentation of times gone by. Authentic instances, some examples would be Freud's trip to that the United States and Emma's exile to the Russian Federation, are intermingled with the invention of novel circumstances and the interaction of real and imagined characters. In front of the family's New Rochelle house, Houdini comes into collision with a telecommunications pole. Evelyn Nesbit finds herself underneath the guidance of ardent political Emma Goldman and shares a short-lived liaison with the mom's brother. Popular personalities, rather than normal genuine persons, grow into mythological ones. Every star acts as both a character and a force of history from the period of Ragtime. Freud, Goldman and Houdini are tied respectively to psychology, socialism and entertainment.

Because it was a time of immense change, the Ragtime Age is a fascinating period in humanity. Because the elements that real-life figures represent had such a large impact on life during the 20th century, these famous individuals tend to serve as symbols in historiographic narratives as opposed to existing, real people like everyone else. In the vast majority of minds, these individuals are glorified and given enormous reputation. None of these personalities are portrayed as extraordinary, but rather as typical individuals with imperfections and anxieties similar to the remainder of us. Houdini appears to be a genuinely uncomfortable person whose sole authentic joy is

his fondness for the woman who raised him. Freud feels subjugated by the United States, and the narrative contains a humorous account of his desperate wish to utilize a public facility that is not available. After turning into a target of Thaw's horrific attack, Evelyn Nesbit becomes enamored with Tateh's daughter. Morgan works tirelessly to make sense of his being, and his quest for meaning culminates in a depressing trip to the Pyramids, resulting in the deterioration of his health. Doctorow uses sarcasm as well as jokes to create fairly average historical personalities who don't pose a danger to limit the historiographic storyline to a tale presented by some about some. Countless reviewers regarded *Ragtime's* goal as Doctorow's attempt to alter history. Through going against the notion that historiography is a fixed, objective thing, Doctorow fosters famous people whose concepts and feelings the storyteller appears to have full entry to, necessitating his own design, and he builds such individuals in traditionally illogical contexts.

## **2.6. The Narrator and Use Of Historiographic Metafiction In E.L Doctorow's *Ragtime***

*Ragtime's* narrative voice is one of its oddities as a historical fiction. It's a detached, supposedly objective narrative that occasionally seems critical and biased. The narrator's individuality is carefully veiled, and some reviewers of *Ragtime* argue that the work can only be described as having a plethora of distinct narrators.

Doctorow provides us a bird's-eye view of the protagonists' internal conflict. He flashes in and out of consciousness like a psychotic jet pilot. (*Ragtime* Narrator Point of View | Shmoop, n.d.).

While some critics contend that the Little Boy cannot be considered the primary narrator of *Ragtime* since the materials used are so diverse, the narrative appears to be more of a societal force than a single individual. Bloom states that: "Curiously, while many critics praised the *Ragtime* narrative's artistic excellence, it took some time before they questioned the narrator in the book, and why Doctorow opted not to explicitly identify him/her/them. It also required time for essayists to examine important themes in their writing more deeply." (Bloom, 2004, p12) Doctorow employs a challenging technique to identify 3rd-person all-knowing storytelling for most of the novel, but right as it approaches its conclusion, the story's tone flips to a first person point of view:

Poor, Father, I see his final exploration. He arrives at the new place, his hair risen in astonishment, his mouth and eyes dumb. His toe scuffs a soft storm of sand. He kneels and his arms spread in pantomimic celebration, the immigrant, as in every moment of his life, arriving eternally on the shore of his Self. (*Ragtime*, 177).

The sudden alteration in narration arrangement generates the sense of an unexpected bombshell that during all of it, only one individual had been telling what was happening, regardless of it being true that his identity was well veiled beneath the reality that he provides and the quickening pace of his narration. Historiographic details, likewise, do not constantly show the story-telling consciousness that lies underneath the facts themselves. When the consumer reaches the end of *Ragtime*, they are compelled to rethink the novel's narrative, particularly the fact that it is not an objective work.

Doctorow advises the reader at the beginning of the novel not to quickly skim through the story because the storyteller overwhelms the audience with visuals and ideas. Skimming through the work at a quick speed makes it nearly hard to notice the little clues as well as subjects that lay beneath the surface of the presented culture. Nonetheless, it is difficult not to read the novel quickly. *Ragtime* is filled with sudden swings of emphasis and jumps around between different locales and people. Several commentators have identified the narrative's cadence as a linguistic analogue of ragtime music. Many others have connected it to the look of a theatrical release that the Little Boy's character is enamored with during the entirety of the book. Additionally, the Little Boy's inventiveness as well as care to particulars are suggestive of a working historiographer. The young boy is the quintessential postmodernism awareness since he depicts the temporal nature of everything around him. When it is revealed that the Little Boy is the narrator, it is fascinating to investigate how he portrays his own persona in the tale. His character's consciousness is distinct from the other characters who are shown as incapable of contemplating their individual reality. The Little Boy would have been given knowledge of a wealth of information on what was happening and was described in the novel, including diaries, journals, publications, documents, and letters.

The narrative also includes information from Houdini's unreleased works. Considering the fact that they are yet to be published, it looks unlikely that the Little Boy would have had access to them that may prompt the reader to question the narrator's reliability as a historian. The narrator also explains the characters' thoughts

and feelings, such as Houdini's amazement when he reads in the newspaper about Ferdinand's death or Freud's great unhappiness with whatever he encounters in the United States of America. As an outcome, it is apparent that the novel's descriptions of actual situations involve a substantial amount of inventiveness and creative thinking. Even though the book simulates and satirizes typical historiographic accounts, Doctorow's desire does not intend to put together a historiographic capture which purports that it is impartial and true; alternatively, he determines the necessity of individuality by demonstrating that seeking to reach neutrality is an insurmountable challenge. One more hint in the plot that backs up the Little Boy's identification as storyteller is when he sees his greatest hero Houdini at the beginning of the tale and demands for him to alert the Duke, referencing to Houdini's meeting with Archduke Franz Ferdinand in the nation of France. Although Houdini does not disclose this remark at the time, its memories come to mind in the midst of an act of his:

He was upside down over Broadway, the year was 1914, and the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was reported to have been assassinated. It was at this moment that an image composed itself in Houdini's mind. The image was of a small boy looking at himself in the shiny brass headlamp of an automobile. (Ragtime, 166).

Doctorow adopts a form of storytelling he refers to as "historical pedantic," which may be characterized as a form of storytelling range that falls somewhere among the intimacy of fiction and the vastness of reality. Ragtime's blend of fiction and reality forces the audience to come face-to-face with the wrongdoings that have taken place at all times of history. Generally, the use of historiographic metafiction is to blur the boundaries of reality and fiction in order to look at history as a construct and analyze the information that is associated with it objectively and to also decompose and recompose it. In Ragtime, there is a blending of historical characters such as Houdini or Nesbit as well as fictional ones. The three fictional families in the novel start off having no relationship and ends with them becoming one big mixed family. This can be seen as a reference to the melting pot that America is.

Doctorow's use of real historical people causes readers to examine conventional elements and ponder on the link between fiction and history. In general, when such individuals are introduced, their portrayal does not contradict widely held beliefs about their views and the way that they act, and they are cast in minor roles, primarily to verify the historical trajectory of the plot, to heighten the aura of authenticity of the historical recreation, and to reinforce the validity of the novel's historical

interpretation. While Doctorow occasionally provides his real historical characters the traditional role of supplying extratextual validation of the novel's historical assumptions, or elevates them above established knowledge into credible extrapolation in the way they interact with his fictitious counterparts, he often lets these characters take part in highly unlikely actions and exchanges and depicts them engaging in imaginary situations. This mixing of conventional and rebellious representations complicates the entire issue of context in the historical novel because it undermines the notion that the inclusion of real historical characters ought to fortify the relationship between history and fiction by bolstering the fiction's documentary legitimacy and instills skepticism that the novel's real-world characters and events are, at least in part, a product of the novelist's inventiveness. Hutcheon claims that:

Today in both fiction and history writing, our faith in empiricism and positivist epistemologies has been shattered, but we can't destroy it. That is to say, skepticism rather than any formal condemnation explains the characteristic paradoxes of postmodernism. (Hutcheon, 1988, 106).

Usually, historical characters are looked at as something concrete that nobody could criticize or doubt. Doctorow used his *Ragtime* novel to do the exact opposite of that through his use of parody and skepticism. He involves many real life characters and settings while maintaining the vibe of fiction that the novel is rich with. Doctorow dictates certain historically distorted events that involve the real characters by using his fictional ones. The real life characters in *Ragtime* break away from the shackles of history and come back to life in order to destroy reality's frames, since in *Ragtime* history is looked at as nothing more than fiction. Doctorow focuses more on remolding history in the novel rather than simply stating facts about the history of the ragtime era.

Usually, nothing is considered more concrete evidence than a photograph. In Doctorow's case, the author looks down on photography as a means of documenting history and uses this in many examples, the first would be Houdini's attempt at suggesting that his mother is alive and well and that the two still have a day to day relationship:

In his brownstone on 113th Street near Riverside Drive, Houdini arranged framed photographs of his mother to suggest her continuing presence. One close-up he laid on the pillow of her bed. He placed an enlarged photo of her seated in a chair and smiling in the very chair in which she had posed. There was a picture of her in a hat and coat walking up the stairs from the street to the front door. He hung this on the inside of the door. (Doctorow, 1974, p.73).

Doctorow's purpose of using these photographs would be to allude to the fact that photos, much like historical texts and word of mouth, can be easily manipulated. A second example would be Admiral Peary's only evidence of stepping foot on the North Pole, which is a blurred and distorted photograph:

Peary posed Henson and the Eskimos in front of the flag and took their picture. It shows five stubby figures wrapped in furs, the flag set in a paleocrystic peak behind them that might suggest a real physical Pole. Because of the light the faces are indistinguishable, seen only as black blanks framed by caribou fur. (Doctorow, 1974, p.30).

Ragtime's narrative alterations seem to mirror the narrator's shift from accepting a certain perspective to establishing his own logic. This change can be seen from when the narrator claims that:

Women were stouter then. They visit the fleet carrying white parasols. Everyone wore white in summer. Tennis racquets were hefty and the racquet faces elliptical. There was a lot of sexual fainting. There were no Negroes. There were no immigrants. (Ragtime, 2)

At the start of the novel but ends up admitting that:

Apparently there were Negroes. There were immigrants. And though the newspapers called the shooting the Crime of the Century, Goldman knew it was only 1906 and there were ninety-four years to go. (Doctorow, 1974, p.3)

Doctorow contends that narratives do not only govern people, but that their shifting situations also shape the way that they perceive the world. In this case, the narrational transitions seem to be forced by the changes in the small boy's surroundings and household. Doctorow uses the narrator as well as the concept of historiographic metafiction in this case in order to open the readers' eyes to how one's experiences, lifestyle and entourage can alter their perception on certain things. This is a very significant view on Ragtime as it concerns what is perhaps the most notable characteristic of any historical novel, and that is the notion of history acts as the molding force on the characters, as well as the author and readers. Ragtime, unlike the regular historical novel, does not adopt a progressive theory of historical evolution, nor does it illustrate an ongoing perspective on history, the same way numerous examples of the genre choose to do. Doctorow's choice of metahistorical concept to elucidate the processes of history is that of transformation, or mutability, a viewpoint that varies from those already stated in numerous key ways. Change can sometimes be interpreted as development.

### 3. A.S BYATT'S POSSESSION

#### 3.1. Introduction To+ The Author and Plot

Dame Antonia Susan Byatt was born in Yorkshire on August 24th, 1936. She attended a Quaker school in York as well as Newnham College in Cambridge, Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, and Somerville College in Oxford, where she earned a postgraduate degree. She was a lecturer at the University of London's Extra-Mural Institute and the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts prior to joining University College London as a permanent Teacher in the fields of English and the Literature of America (Senior Lecturer, 1981). She departed in 1983 to devote her whole time to writing. She has lectured and given talks on her work all around the world, frequently with the British Council, and was Chairman of the Society of Authors from 1986 to 1988. Between 1990 and 1998, she served on the British Council's Literature Advisory Panel. She has been a member on a variety of literature prize evaluating panels, which included the Booker Prize for Fantasy, and has earned a reputation as a defined critic, consistently submitting to publications featuring the Times Literary Supplement, The Independent, and The Sunday Times, as well as BBC radio and television programs. She additionally served as an affiliate of the Kingman School of English Committee (1987-8).

*Shadow of a Sun*, was released in 1964, followed by *The Game* (1967), a study of the connection between two sisters. *The Virgin in the Garden* is the first novel of a four about the members of a Yorkshire family, published in 1978. *Still Life* (1985), which received the PEN/Macmillan Silver Pen Award, and *Babel Tower* (1996) continue the plot. *A Whistling Woman* (2002) is the quartet's fourth (and last) book. *Possession: A Romance* (1990), her most successful novel, received the Booker Prize for Fiction and the Irish Times International Fiction Prize and continues to enjoy significant critical and popular popularity. The plot revolves around two modern scholars, Roland Michell and Maud Bailey, whose study into the lives of two Victorian poets, Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, reveals closely interwoven destiny, much like their own. *Angels & Insects* (1992) is made up of two novellas: *The Conjugal Angel*, about Victorian attitudes toward death and mourning, and *Morpho Eugenia*, about a young Victorian explorer and naturalist named William Adamson and



his relationship with his employer's daughter, which was adapted into a film in 1996. Her debut work, *The Biographer's Tale*, was released in 2000. *Sugar and Other Stories* (1987), *The Matisse Stories* (1993), three stories each with a connection to a specific Matisse painting; *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye* (1994), a collection of fairy tales; *Elementals: Stories of Fire and Ice* (1998); and *Little Black Book of Stories* (2003) are all collections of short stories and fiction by A. S. Byatt. *Degrees of Freedom: The Early Novels of Iris Murdoch* (1965) and *Iris Murdoch: A Critical Study* (1976), as well as *Wordsworth and Coleridge in Their Time* (1970), are among her written criticisms. *Portraits in Fiction* (2001), by A. S. Byatt, explores instances of painting in novels with examples from Zola, Proust, and Iris Murdoch, a subject she initially studied in a lecture delivered at London's National Portrait Gallery in 2000. She received a CBE in 1990, a DBE in 1999, and the Shakespeare Prize from the Alfred Toepfer Foundation in Hamburg in 2002 in honour of her contribution to British culture. Her novel *The Children's Book* (2009) was nominated for the 2009 Man Booker Prize for Fiction and received the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction) in 2010. Her most recent works include *Peacock & Vine* (2016) and the short tale 'Sea tale' (2013).

The majority of Byatt's protagonists are creative individuals or scholars pursuing different ventures that are typically key to the tale, and the self-aware reports often call into focus the procedure of written and creative work, specifically the discrepancy between knowledge and the language and images utilized to express expertise. Intertextuality and literary allusions and references abound in the novels and stories, including references to fairytale and fantasy literature discourse, literary and linguistic theories, and literary history, particularly that of the Victorian period, which Byatt has extensive expertise in. "The phrase "multivalent" does not accurately describe this book since, as will be shown later, possession is not only a focus on duality but is a duality itself with a hint of parody." (Alsop & Walsh, 1999, p163) Her fascination in the 19th century spans to science and religion based debates, and a portion of her work reflects her concern with Darwinism. In addition to all of this, Byatt is a brilliant tale crafter, coming up with interesting, personas that bring life to her novel and riveting narratives that blend the rawness of society and history with the creativeness of fiction.

The love tale between the poets Ash and LaMotte is central to *Possession*. They meet at a literary brunch in a fancy neighborhood of London and begin an affair that turns out to be a personal disaster for each of them. (*Possession: An Unforgettable Lesson in Love and Letters*, 2013).

A.S. Byatt's novel *Possession* is a work of historical fiction. There are two parallel timeframes in the narrative. The first storyline accompanies modern researchers Roland Michell and Maud Bailey during their efforts to conduct studies on the written communications of the two poets from Victorian times Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, and their tale is presented in the subsequent chronicle of the work. Roland commences the story by studying a book that used to belong to Randolph. While pushing the pages, he discovers an impassioned letter to Christabel. He looks for Maud, a Christabel scholar who manages the library's cache of her unreported material. Maud gives Roland Blanche's journal, a companion of Christabel's, and he starts browsing it for answers. He tells Maud he stole the piece of writing from Randolph's collection and intends to return it. Maud feels like he is lying, but she resolves to conceal the document for that particular time. They go to Christabel's cemetery ahead of meeting Joan and George Bailey, the proprietors of the residence where Christabel resided while she spent time nearby. Maud discovers two fascinating memo collections, but the Baileys won't allow her examine anything before they've been evaluated. Roland contacts Beatrice Nest, the owner of Randolph's spouse Ellen Ash's exclusive diaries and a close associate of Christabel's. She agrees to Roland seeing Ellen's classified journals and provides feedback on Christabel's efforts. Ellen thought that Christabel's work was devalued and interpreted incorrectly by the majority of the audience.

When Roland returns home, he gets into a disagreement with the woman he dates, Val. Given their economic challenges, they are getting alienated. Nevertheless, he immediately discovers that the Baileys are willing to let him along with Maud examine Christabel's correspondence. Maud, a competitive scholar, suggests dividing each letter so that no one obtains the entire picture. The letters begin as polite literary correspondence until Randolph confessed to being in love with Christabel. Blanche snatches part of the messages, but once she is apprehended, the two resume contact. In private, a connection develops, with written messages detailing some of their rendezvous. Maud advises that Randolph join Christabel to Yorkshire. Maud and Roland headed out to move forward in Randolph's path, using the letters he wrote to

Ellen as their blueprint. After choosing to work together to figure out the ambiguity, Roland and Maud travel to the spots listed in Roland's notes. They begin to see links regarding Randolph's and Christabel's work, and they begin to build feelings for one another. On the other hand, a rival professor, Mortimer Cropper, is looking for proof to support Randolph and Christabel's romance. He seeks to buy the correspondence that was discovered by Roland and Maud given that he is a more respected researcher with more connection. As soon as Roland and Maud realize that their conclusions are being disputed, they go to France in incognito for the sake of their inquiry. Val suspects that perhaps something is wrong with Maud and her lover. In France, they meet Dr. Ariane LeMinier, who is looking into Christabel's cousin Sabine. Sabine discovered Christabel was carrying and finally placed the child to be adopted with a monastery. Cropper learns about the youngster from a professional perspective as well. Val, while out socializing a particular day, starts hearing stories about both of the artists' romance. She is taken aback to learn that Roland and Maud are genuinely conducting investigations collaboratively and aren't having a liaison. Cropper arrives in France additionally and Roland and Maud are devastated. Val and her most recent partner, Euan, pursue them upon their arrival to France.

Euan, the attorney, has uncovered information relevant to the investigation in an assortment of outdated records. When Christabel died, she left all of her documents and belongings to the Baileys, meaning that they're regarded as Maud's belongings and must not be purchased by Cropper. Cropper, on the other side, is advocating for a covert excavation of Randolph and Christabel's gravesite to look for anything suggesting they might have actually been placed with them. Roland, Maud, along with their friends journey to London to see whether the corruption is able to be stopped. Ellen adds in her notepad that not long after her partner died, she recovered his love letters to Christabel and placed them alongside him. Cropper arrives at the burial grounds running late at nightfall and commences excavating Randolph's burial site. He finds the package with the correspondence, but is arrested by Roland's gang. They return to the inn and examine the letters, discovering that Maud is a relative of Randolph's as well as Christabel, providing Maud ownership of every one of the files as well as access to what happened.

### 3.2. A.S Byatt's *Possession* as Historiographic Metafiction

*Possession*, sometimes known as historiographical metafiction, is a mixture of historical styled based books that include many of the intricate storytelling elements associated with historiographic metafiction, with the exception of its eventual unwillingness to offer closure. Hutcheon describes this as follows: "When it comes to postmodern literature, altering or displaying past historical or fictional events opens it up towards the present, preventing it from ever appearing concrete and teleological." (Hutcheon, 1988, 110) *Possession* is all about trying to comprehend the present by utilizing past events, thus proving it to be Byatt's most effective book thus far in terms of communicating the issues that have consumed the way she writes with grace and expertise. With *Possession*, the author reveals the 19th century's continuous hold on the public's creative thinking, revealing that what springs from the story is our desire to build a fresh perspective that speaks to the needs of current relevance while still representing our inextricable link to past times. To properly comprehend Byatt's convoluted literary journey, readers need to initially recognize the way she uses irony and parody to analyze historiography's subjectivity as well as the impact of the 19th century literary culture and society on our own.

The novel's intricacy stems from Byatt's masterful handling of her wide ensemble of people across two centuries. Since the publication of *Possession*, it has been very common for books to jump through time, but this was the first one I read and remains, in my opinion, the greatest. Byatt must have liked composing imitation poetry; lengthy, wordy, and suitable for Ash, and, in the case of LaMotte, evocative of Emily Dickinson's. (*Possession: An Unforgettable Lesson in Love and Letters*, 2013).

Parody, says Hutcheon, is an indispensable part of any historiographic metafiction, and she strives diligently to recast parody and significance that comes with it in late-twentieth-century literature and art. *Possession* allows readers to become aware of his or her precarious positioning within participation and distance. One could safely assume that a reader who gets through more than 500 pages of a work like *Possession* is already a fan of the Victorian novel, and might even feel some sense of nostalgia if not for the past itself, then regarding its traditions in literature. Pastiche is used to establish the novel's historical framework and the right Victorian hint, thanks to Byatt's laborious compilation of facts and examples culled from documents and existence. Pastiche is seen in *Possession* through letters of affection exchanged between Christabel and Ash, the narrative's fictitious Victorian authors and the works of poetry that both of them are said to have written. *Possession*, similar to

any historiographic metafiction, is densely packed with intertextual puns, and yet again, deceptive intertexts coexist with true ones. Roland discovers bits of Ash's initial note to LaMotte jammed among the pages of Ash's copy of Vico's "Principi di una Scienza Nuova" at the Library of London while looking for information for Ash's Garden of Proserpina. Roland ponders if these messages were written prior to or following *The Origin of the Species*, and if the recipient was Christina. Furthermore, Roland equates the British Museum's Viewing Chamber to Dante's Paradiso, in which the holy men, ancestors, and virgins gathered in neatly organized rows in a circular shape, a giant rose, and the leaves of a massive book, formerly strewn across the universe, now regrouped. On the other hand, Roland alludes to the "Ash Factory," where Blackadder and his scholarly associates worked "hunched in the bowels" of the museum's sulfur and cat urine-reeking lower level, as "the Hell." These fictive and actual intertexts coexist all through the work, highlighting the fact that it is fiction as well as Byatt's competence and the textual nature of the dead past resurrected via a comprehension of today's existence. The novel's opening quotation is taken from a work from Nathaniel Hawthorne names the "Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*." This paratextual highlights the Romance genre's artistic capacities, its built-in capacity to alter the real world, the author's liberty in creating the universe in relation to his desire and imagination, and how he tries to link past times, which is frequently revived in *Possession*, via the essence of present times, which keeps evolving away. In this way, Byatt's purpose is specified, and the romantic context of *Possession* is drawn out and validated.

When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel (. . .) The point of view in which this tale comes under the Romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. (Byatt, 1991, P13).

This section also refers to the relationship underlying actuality and fictitious scenarios, between the real world and the creator's universe of fictiveness. Byatt's work is a dual examination and explores the conflict among truthful and false fabrications. The novel's second epigraph, a significant part from the Victorian poet Robert Browning's poem *Mr Sludge, "the Medium,"* emphasizes *Possession's* fiction influence even more.," which concludes with the lines:

And if at whiles the bubble, blown too thin, Seem nigh on bursting,—if you nearly see The real world through the false,—what do you see? Is the old so ruined? You find you're in a

flock O' the youthful, earnest, passionate—genius, beauty, Rank and wealth also, if you care for these: And all depose their natural rights, hail you, (That's me, sir) as their mate and yoke-fellow, Participate in Sludgehood—nay, grow mine, I veritably possess them—. . . How build such solid fabric out of air? How on so slight foundation found this tale, Biography, narrative?' or, in other words, 'How many lies did it require to make The portly truth you here present us with?' —Robert Browning from "Mr Sludge, 'the Medium'". (Byatt, 1991, p14).

The fictional Victorian poet Ash's secret and extremely passionate liaison with the unknown poetess Christabel unfolds concurrently with the passionate relationship of Roland and Maud, pairing the historical past with present-day reality and providing a dual nature of focus. The writer plays with time, shifting back and forth between the past and the present. These chronological shifts disrupt one's perception of truth and highlight her writing's metafictionality. This means that Browning's *Sludge* exemplifies the fixation of historiographic metafiction writers with creating narratives and the unique portrayal of history, as well as the self-reflexive nature of the tale showcasing how it is a work of fiction through the author's fabrication of a maze of truth and lies. The majority of *Possession's* epigraphs are Byatt's own detailed and descriptive portrayals of the fictitious poets of the Victorian era LaMotte and Ash, as well as excerpts from LaMotte's lesbian companion Blanche's and Ash's partner's works. Byatt voices Ash's poetic historical dramatic monologues, which are similar to Browning's "My Last Duchess," and her fictitious character Mortimer Cropper's biography of Ash is titled *The Great Ventriloquist*, which relates to both Browning and Byatt herself.

The author suggested that historiographic metafiction authors utilize ventriloquism to satirize and challenge the frameworks of traditional literary norms in order to attain an important critical purpose. The parodic purpose of Byatt's ventriloquized Victorian poetry, on the other hand, differs from that of historiographical metafiction. Despite this the novelist admits that *Possession* is not a "harmless depiction" of Victorian times, setting, and situations she asserts that her employment ventriloquism is to channel the past thoughts and opinions instead of mocking them. Furthermore, via the actions of *Possession's* protagonists, Maud and Roland, Byatt demonstrates her desire to resurrect the literary voices of the past. In Chapter Five, Maud Bailey and Roland Michell discover a sequence of love missives composed between the Victorian poet-protagonists, Ash and LaMotte, that will necessitate a thorough re-examination of modern feminist and post-structuralist

analysis of both Victorian poets. Woolf is a veritably monumental alleviation to Byatt, her influence is detectable among pens of historiographic metafiction, not only through her use of metaphors, but also through her examination of how time, philosophy, and civilization affect the tone, and her farsighted perception that one's understanding and knowledge of history is inescapably textual, deficient, and constitutionally colored by the ideological hypotheticals of the annalist who attempts to objectively recite it without transgressing from a stable, if preferably restricted, ground. Not only does Byatt, similar to Woolf, focus on how history is read, but also how it is written, which is exemplified in *Possession* as metafiction.

Byatt condemns researchers who put their personal opinions into the language of the literature being studied. Similarly, in *Possession*, Maud and Roland's discovery of the Victorian poets' extensive chain of messages causes the all-knowing narrator to remind the audience that LaMotte's poetry were misinterpreted by Byatt's imagined critic, and subsequently by feminists. She also makes fun of titles like "Good Mother, Bad Serpent" and "White Gloves: Blanche Glover." In contrast to Ash and LaMotte, Roland and Maud are unable to assert, "I think, therefore I am," because they were educated to deny an independent existence of the individual. This explains their interest in Ash and LaMotte: both poets have coherent styles that they see to be unusual and exclusive, rather than verbally constructed, unreliable, or just imaginary. Byatt has written an exciting tale that immerses the audience in Maud and Roland's search for closure. While Ash and LaMotte's relationship ended, the poets had a daughter named Maia, who was raised assuming LaMotte was her aunt, which influenced Maud's realization that LaMotte was her three generation grandmother. Today's scholars all find "real affection" in classic romantic ways: Maud and Roland, Leonora and Blackadder, and even Roland's disgruntled former partner Val gets married to an accomplished attorney. Thus, goodness is awarded, and Cropper, the horrible selfish woman hater, gets hit. Is the resolution, however, as simple as this story implies? At the end of the day, there are several untangled knots to tie up. LaMotte passes away unknowing that Ash was never handed the the letter in which LaMotte acknowledged to their daughter Maia being alive and well. Ash dies without knowing LaMotte sent the letter or that Maia never submitted his concluding piece of writing to LaMotte. Roland and Maud are ignorant that Ash and Ellen never married or that Ash met Maia. This knowledge is only known to the audience through the all-

knowing narrator, emphasizing another principle of historiographic metafiction - that we can only gain insight into past events by means of the flawed records of previous generations.

As the reader is informed by the knowledgeable narrator at the outset of the postscript that showcases the meeting of Maia and Ash, we can never truly possess history that has been lost, obliterated, perverted, or goes undiscovered because it cannot be brought back to life. With the crumbs of its unfinished texts, we can only scratch the surface of the past times' mysteries. *Possession's* attempts by Byatt to copy or recreate the 19th century literary styles and patterns of speech contribute to the work's elements of pastiche, which is most obvious in LaMotte and Ash's communications. The text's language transition from the 19th to the present requires that the reader's projections move from the contemporary characters' theoretical, academic plot to the Victorians' existence which is rich with myths and symbols. Byatt seems to be trying to dispel a few of the myths and stereotypes that have been attached to them, such as their caution and inhibitions, in addition to women's passiveness. *Possession* seems intent on drawing an ironic distinction among postmodern and Victorian times that forces heroes of the 20th century to get a better understanding of history and a greater knowledge of their identities. This is in no way intended to indicate that previous history is fundamentally better than present-day situations, but rather that it is frequently easier to understand the most important aspects about the present moment by looking at it historically. According to Byatt, the Victorians provide the needed perspective.

### **3.3. The Importance and Uses of Historiographic Metafiction in A.S Byatt's *Possession***

Historiographic metafiction, it might be said, aims to focus on real-life figures as well as happenings that were never included in any time for reasons that are moral and political. With the retelling of previous stories in historiographic metafiction, neglected people and what they went through is always the main focus, and a number of historical tales is formed as alternatives to the mentioned history, resulting in the creation of a multiplicity of histories. *Possession* is a good example of that since it is a multi-vocal novel which helps manufacture a number of stories while challenging all



of the constructs that separate fiction and history. Another thing it does is that it deteriorates the concepts that rely on a single opinion or point of view, it also challenges the unbiased nature that is the portrayals of two poets from Victorian times whose biographies have been repressed because they are morally incompatible with the official history. Instead of sticking to one narrative and running with it, *Possession* hands out a number of voices by subverting the historical records and events it alludes to, allowing multiple voices to be heard.

The story explores the multiple definitions of the term ownership, from the compulsive need to possess, which pushes some people to extreme measures to obtain what they desire, to love itself. The story addresses the humanistic interplay between love and guilt, boldness, and loss. (*Possession: An Unforgettable Lesson in Love and Letters*, 2013).

As a result, historiographic metafiction becomes a liberating force by allowing multiple narratives to be presented. Historiographic metafiction constructs occurrences from history instead of depicting them the same way they've been said to have happened. According to a postmodern interpretation of history, the past is made because it is accessed in format of textualization. Finally, the piece has a number of metafictional elements such as nonlinear storytelling and highlighting self-reflexivity through the creation of an unconventional all-knowing storyteller with a tone of parody. The main character of the book, Roland, is a scholar hunting for Ash, who is a famous Victorian-era writer. Browning is an influence on Ash. Two fascinating letters that Ash sent to an unnamed woman are discovered by Michell. As far as he is aware, Ash loved his wife dearly. He borrows the letters from the London library out of curiosity, studies them and discovers a hint that leads him to desire to find out more about Christabel LaMotte, a less commonly recognized Victorian-era writer. She has certain shared traits with authors from the 19th century including Dickinson, Rossetti, and Bronte. LaMotte, who was attracted to the same sex as well as a women's rights activist, resided in a house with an artist with the name of Blanche. Roland asks Professor Stern and Dr. Maud, a LaMotte relative who who was conducting research regarding her, about LaMotte and Maud then make the decision to visit LaMotte's cemetery, where they unexpectedly run with George and Joana Bailey. George and Joana Bailey provide Roland and Maud with further information about LaMotte, and they also give them permission to go to LaMotte's house, where they find letters attesting to the two poets' late 1850s meeting in Yorkshire. Then, Roland and Maud visit York and see that the two poets' works contain connections to York landscapes

and folklore. Fergus feels that they may have discovered something significant while in York, so he begins looking for them with Mortimer Cropper, Ash's American biographer. We learn via Sabina's journal, the daughter of LaMotte's cousin, that LaMotte travels to France after York and is pregnant. Beatrice Nest offers this journal to Maud's close friend Leonara Stern. In addition, Beatrice Nest offers Maud the journals of Ellen Ash, Randolph Ash's wife. Maud discovers through the journals that Ellen is already aware of his husband's adultery to her. According to the records, she commits herself when LaMotte runs away with Ash to York. Along with Leonora, who studies Ash, and Cropper travel to France with Maud and Randolph. LaMotte's pregnancy is revealed to Maud and Randolph after reading Sabina's diary, but they are unaware of the child's postpartum fate. They worry that the child maybe died. Due to the fact that Ash was interred with a box holding letters from Christabel, Roland and Maud decide to unearth Ash's tomb. A blue envelope with hair and a letter from Christabel to Ash are both inside the box. Ash attempted to read it, but Ellen hadn't handed it to him. The letter tells the characters that the sibling of Christabel received Maia, her kid, rather than dying.

Maud discovers that she is linked to Ash and LaMotte near the end of the story. After three interviews for jobs, Roland begins dating Maud. A Postscript reveals that Ash had full knowledge of everything to do with her daughter. The narrative closes with what appears to be a pleasant denouement. Despite the fact that the inhabitants of the twentieth century believe Ash doesn't know anything about his daughter, we as the audience have knowledge about their meeting. This is a rather ironic ending that raises questions about everything else in the story because it contradicts assertions of history. In conclusion, we can only learn about the past in textualized form; as a result, we can only learn about the events that historians have chosen to describe. We cannot know for sure if stories are factual or fabrications created for moral or political reasons. Because the events are not presented in chronological sequence throughout the novel, the postscript may be crucial in illustrating how history is cyclical. As a result, when the novel is over, there is no definitive ending since the Postscript forces us to start over. This can be seen in the evolution of Maud and Roland's relationship, as well as Ash and LaMotte's. That is, there are parallels between occurrences in the Victorian era and the twentieth century. Both the Victorian and twentieth-century couples, for example, visit York. Randolph and Roland both notice their partners' hair. Both

couples visit the Boggle Hole because the name appeals to them. Furthermore, there are parallels in the features of Maud and Christabel.

At the start of their relationships, Maud rejects Roland and Christabel rejects Ash. When Roland first meets Maud, he is evasive and avoidant. When the story concludes, Roland and Maud begin a relationship. Christabel also reluctant to write Ash at first but that changes eventually. Following that, we are told that they had a relationship and even had a baby. Thus, the narrative of comparable events occurring at different eras, and of persons with similar characteristics in different periods, blurs the boundaries between past and present. The narrative has a fluid-quality to it. That is to say, it lacks obvious and marked-down boundaries between time and space, as well as a chronological sequence. One of the characteristics of historiographic metafiction is narrative discontinuity. What is known about Victorian figures stems from twentieth-century academics' assessments of Ash, Christabel, Sabina, and Ellen's letters, diaries, and poetry, as well as other works. However, the personalities from the twentieth century are constrained by the information contained in these texts. If the records are speaking lies on purpose, these characters' perceptions of Victorian times and the personalities are incorrect. In addition, subjectivity in the journal entries or other documents makes them unreliable even if they are true. Many characters receive and assess information, making its reliability even lower.

Textualizing anything is writing it, which brings another essential point to the reader which is the purpose of language. The distinction between history and fiction becomes blurred when anything is textualized since both of them are discourses. Each of them has an own method for making sense of the past. In other words, historical and fictional systems shape the occurrences. According to Hutcheon:

Historiographic metafiction locates itself on the boundary between historical event and contemporary praxis. As we've seen, the past was actual but has since been lost or moved, only to be revived as a linguistic reference, artifact, or remnant of the real...While historiographic metafiction tantalizes us with the idea that the past is actually real, it also suggests that there is not an immediate connection to that existence that is not filtered via the contours of our numerous discussions about it. (Hutcheon, 1988, p146).

When LaMotte is described as a lesbian feminist writer who shared a home with a painter named Blanche Glover, this is amply demonstrated. The reader rules out the possibility that she has a romantic relationship with a man as a consequence of the works that have been written about her. However, all of the realities about Ash and

Christabel are refuted in the freshly discovered manuscripts by Roland and Maud, which is essential when interpreting the book as an instance of historiographic metafiction as history, in the postmodernist perspective of it, denies the notion of history. Ash and LaMotte's correspondence makes it apparent that she does not want to be a part of their relationship because he is married, which was improper in Victorian society. She's beginning to connect with him, though. Historians in the 20th century believe that, after examining such correspondence, they have found out the truth and are able to rewrite literary history. Indeed, the reason for fiction's inclusion of history is because it breaks seemingly real events and rewrites them to reflect a new perspective in comparison with our current understanding. That is why we have a number of histories instead of one historic fact.

Byatt used letters and other papers to achieve this goal. With each new discovery made through letters or other documents, a new depiction of history is revealed, exposing new facts since new documents render previous historical truths incorrect. For example, Mortimer, Ash's biographer, believes he knows everything about Ash, but he is surprised by freshly discovered records that contradict everything he has previously asserted about Ash. It's worth noting that these newly discovered papers might be altered in the future if new records that contradict the old ones are discovered. Another debate is if the biographies of the writers, like other texts, are reliable. As a result, having varied histories of people is beneficial. Because of current historiographic theory, there is always the possibility of looking at multiple histories of individuals rather than accepting what is simply handed as historical truths. These letters and other documents are also of another use in the novel, apart from being useful for investigating past events. Byatt takes advantage of intertextuality in these cases. By making use of intertextuality, it eliminates tunnel vision and allows a new historical image to be created.

In addition to letters, journals, and other materials, epigraphs are employed throughout the narrative to exploit intertextuality. The rest of the novel begins with an epigraph, which is a poem or a story with a special meaning, except for four chapters. For instance, Chapter five starts with a piece of Ash's poem *The Incarceration Sorceress* that seems to mean buried treasure and Maud and Roland discover the letters written by Ash and LaMotte in this chapter. Another poem by Ash, *Great Collector*, about a guy who's interested in antique collecting begins chapter six. Next, this chapter

introduces Mortimer, who's collecting everything about Ash. Ash's romantic song Ask to Embla begins the fourteenth chapter. It's connected to the fact that Roland and Maud discovered that Ash and LaMotte were in York together. LaMotte's glove poetry begins Chapter Eighteen. Blanche Glover's voice is heard for the first time in this chapter via hearing of Maud. It's as though LaMotte and Ash employ the glove metaphor, and it's somehow related to Blanche Glover. She carries a few secrets with her. It's believed that she kills herself because LaMotte is having an affair with Ash. In order to move the narrative out of Victorian times, Byatt relies on a variety of texts as has already been stated. As a consequence, it is possible to argue that the novel relies in particular on intertextuality.

Possession examines history as a human fabrication, emphasizing the lack of authoritative truth in written sources and historical records. Byatt substantiates the incapacity to achieve total knowledge of the past via the process of uncovering the relationship between Ash and Christabel. The novel questions the authority of history by recognizing that the facts provided are the consequence of the author's subjective interpretation, and therefore it postulates a power politics that defines our record of the past. The story subtly hints that our access to the past can never be error-free since every stored and recorded document is never devoid of human meddling. Possession delves not just into what goes undocumented, but also into the causes for such omissions. The discovery of the love letters allows historians to reveal a major event in the lives of the Victorian poets that has been cloaked in secret and is thus missing from official records. Scholars used unearthed letters and artifacts to bridge the gap between the realities of the past and the records of the past. The novel, on the other hand, contends that even the wisest and most clever scholar is unable to get complete access to the truth. The box discovered in Ash's grave contains an unopened letter as well as many trinkets, including a strand of hair. They draw the terrible conclusion that Ash died unaware of his daughter's existence based only on this evidence. However, the postscript claims that their conclusion is distant from reality. It describes an interaction between Ash and Maia in which Ash identifies Maia as his own daughter. In reality, there is evidence of this meeting, a lock of golden hair in Ash's watch, but it is misidentified as Christabel's by both Ellen and the scholars. Thus, the postscript recovers the forgotten reality and reminds the reader that seemingly little but actually vital events that stitch the fabric of existence frequently escape the eye of those who

write history. The encounter with his daughter is unquestionably a life-changing experience for Ash.

Possession has been claimed to be a historiographic metafictional novel, both by challenging the assumptions that have been drawn up on two Victorian poets, as well as by challenging any clear demarcation of fact and fiction, this question raises doubts about the objectivity of history representation. To achieve this goal, rather than relying only on historiography to find out the truth about history, the novel uses a self-conscious narrative. Thus, both in regard to material, which includes providing an alternative viewpoint on an era in history and figures in history, as well as methods, the novel can be regarded as a great example of Historiographic MetaFiction, for instance by its use of intertextuality, irony, and metafiction. Byatt's knowledge of Modern Literary theory and Victorian literature make it possible to repackage the past genres. She resurrects fairytale, romantic, gothic, and detective story traditions in order to inquire about the flatness and flimsy brilliance of postmodern literature, as well as their voids.

Numerous references to a number of literary works and genres of prose and poetry, revealing the character of historical fiction in its own right, are an eloquent expression of history's extraordinarily wide range of textuality. Possession is a pastiche of several literary genres, including gothic romance and crime novels, owing to the multitude of overlapping textual connections that bond Roland and Maud with Ash and LaMotte. Byatt's understanding of modern literary theory and Victorian literature allows her to recast historical genres. In order to reveal their emptiness and to question the dryness and superficiality of postmodern writing, she revives fairytales, romantic, gothic, and detective stories. A number of references to individual writers' works, genres of verse and poetry revealing their fictional characteristics demonstrate the extremely intertextual nature of history. Possession is a pastiche of many genres of literature, ranging from gothic and romance to crime fiction, because of the numerous intertextual links between Roland and Maud and Ash and LaMotte.

Possession bridges the gap between realism and romance by depicting the medieval subject of quest in a fresh light. In contrast to its actual happenings and locales, the subtitle romance lends the work an enchanting ambiance; also, the subtitle dispels any notions of a realistic picture of reality. Throughout Possession, Byatt

employs intertextual references and allusions to back up the fundamental concepts of historiographic metafiction that history and fiction are merely human constructs; their claim to truth telling is dubious; and reality is impossible to recreate in historical writing. The novel cleverly and beautifully incorporates intertexts of both history and literature to emphasize that historical records are based on the author's subjective viewpoint. *Possession* challenges traditional forms of fiction and history by recognizing their inevitable textuality and officially integrating history and fiction through the shared denominators of intertextuality. The novel convincingly contends that the reader, whose only connection to the past is through textual relics, can never hope to access any type of authentic, actual, or unmediated depiction of truth:

The two types of historical representation are called into question in historiographic metafiction, which have shown a parallel and proved history to be an invention. Only by its literary fingerprints can we recognize the past and history is a tale made of these traces. (ALAN V42n3 - the (Im) Possibility of Objectivity: Narrating the Past in Young Adult Historiographic Metafiction, n.d.).

*Possession: A Romance's* reconstruction of the past and rewriting of reality not only symbolizes our restricted access to it, but also emphasizes the value of retelling truth. In *Possession*, Byatt uses historiographic metafiction in a way that assists her in showcasing the fictional identities of Lamotte and Ash as if they existing as Victorian poets was actually the case. The poems and letters exchanged between the two love birds serve in humanizing and elevating them to being more than just two poets. Humanizing the two characters makes it easier for readers to delve into the story and relate to them. Alsop and Walsh state that: "Fitting for a neo-Victorian artifact, *Possession* is a complex work; the fact that it is filled with more than just divergent interpretations is evidence of Byatt's creative genius. The subject of "the right to read" is still a major one, nevertheless." (Alsop & Walsh, 1999, p164) In some cases, Byatt goes as far as making the characters self-conscious. This can be seen in a few instances in the novel as characters have awareness of themselves being constructs in the writer's work. The most notable example would be when Roland and Maud both realize that they are in love but at the same time that it isn't a good thing:

Oh no. Oh no. I love you. I think I'd rather I didn't." "I love you," said Roland. "It isn't convenient. Not now I've acquired a future. But that's how it is. In the worst way. All the things we—we grew up not believing in. Total obsession, night and day. When I see you, you look alive and everything else—fades. All that. (Byatt, 1991, P550).

Byatt tries to stay away from the casual representation of postmodern thinking and instead show that her characters' ideas and thoughts are by real people. The author

also strives to prove that the way her characters' live and view the world is influenced by their skepticism and self-consciousness. An example of the characters' skepticism is showcased when Byatt expressed that: "Things had changed between them nevertheless. They were children of a time and culture that mistrusted love..." (Byatt, 1991, P458). This goes hand to hand with making the reader have awareness and equally self-reflect as well as doubt the many pre-determined ideas and so called facts of history. This is one of the uses of historiographic metafiction. Other examples from the novel would be Roland thinking beyond the basics and questions his identity as well as his situation regarding Maud:

Roland had learned to see himself, theoretically, as a crossing-place for a number of systems, all loosely connected. He had been trained to see his idea of his "self" as an illusion, to be replaced by a discontinuous machinery and electrical message-network of various desires, ideological beliefs and responses, language-forms and hormones and pheromones. Mostly he liked this. He had no desire for any strenuous Romantic self-assertion. Nor did he desire to know who Maud essentially was. But he wondered, much of the time, what their mute pleasure in each other might lead to, anything or nothing, would it just go, as it had just come, or would it change, could it change? (Byatt, 1991, P510).

#### **3.4. A.S Byatt's Possession and Postmodernism**

There are certain characteristics that distinguish the postmodern fiction novels; one of these elements is returning to its past or looking back at Victorian literature, themes and places which many new English novels deal with. In particular, it needs to be pointed out that revisiting Victorian works is not an exercise of imitating them but rather changing them in the light of today's culture. Because postmodernism favors fragmentation, postmodern fiction is full of epigraphs and intertextuality. As a result, readers are unable to fathom the meaning of any of the texts; rather, they are freely accessible for a variety of perspectives. Furthermore, there is no coherent conclusion that the reader may reach in postmodern fiction. The possession of A.S. Byatt was an innovative way to view Victorian history and historiography. This has led to the conclusion that in modern British writing, this is a convincing historiographic metafiction.

The novel's principal feature is the blending of Victorian-era historical and literary elements. Intertextuality strengthens dialogues and critiques of the Victorian society in general, whether social, political, sexual, feminist figures, and so forth. Byatt defies typical literary narrative style and approaches in *Possession* by exposing the



conflict of fictionality/reality and the present/past. In various chapters, Byatt employs epigraphs to respond to the Victorian past from a twentieth-century viewpoint. To put it another way, the past is sometimes in a position quite similar to the present, and so any occurrences are linked by a chain of events. She also disagrees with the Victorian literary convention of a predetermined romantic resolution. In principle, *Possession* is a book that relates two distinct stories: one is the fictional love tale of two Victorian-era poets, and the other is the discovery of that love affair by contemporary textual scholars who fall in love while looking for what is real. Actually, both couples' love journey tales relate to each other, creating significance in their relationships and troublesome interactions. Both imagination and reality are heavily emphasized in postmodern novels, since both aspects are well challenged by scholars as well as readers in order to delve into the past and develop a new perspective of it. In reality, such books that are linked to postmodernism establish and then distort the border between fiction and history, claiming historical events and people. As a result, Byatt's intertextual drama *Possession* foretells that fiction and history cannot be separated.

Byatt's *Possession* employs a diverse and interesting range of storytelling forms, including extensive use of intertextuality. Hutcheon's work reveals how the emergence of postmodern intertextuality bridges the disconnect between the past and the present. So the past and present are entwined, as are fiction and truth. *Possession* is an attempt to re-create a link between the past and the present using metafiction and history. Despite the fact that the Victorian world has not yet been fully realized, there is much to be gained as tales lead the way and generate alternatives. The novel then uses intertextuality to parody another work as the setting against which it is written. *Possession* is a complicated novel with several narrative strategies; the function of a normal third person narrator is severely restricted, giving the reader the sensation of chaos. The concept of different narrations gives a unique tool for portraying personalities, particularly women. The novel's primary narrative is entirely built on the notion of intertextuality, as reflected by the various storytelling approaches. Thus, separate characters narrate the events in the novel; therefore, distinct voices are provided by Roland/Maud (20th Century narrator) and Ash/LaMotte (19th Century narrator). It is true that the characters in the novel are responsible for describing the story, which speaks to the diversity of narrators. The main narrator of the Third Person Personal is Roland, a Post PhD scholar in the 20th century. As he traces back the steps

of Victorian times, he tells stories about Ash's life, women and poems while becoming a narrator himself. While Roland was searching, he met a literary scientist named Maud Bailly. They'll go back in time to find out the real cause of Ashe's confidential letters to LaMotte and then they'll take a trip through history, going back as far as Victorian times.

The events of this story are brought to life through poetry composed by characters from the narrative, namely Ash and LaMotte. In addition, the chapters have been written in a range of genres and are taken from protagonists' journals. Clearly, the writer intended to show how differences and similarities between Victorian and more recent times were reflected in its numerous types of narration. The interaction of the story and its structure, which takes place in two time periods: now and then, are well understood by readers. Intertextuality is of vital importance in Byatt's *Possession*, where the different contexts and references made by Victorian authors are placed into its text as they interrelate with our current situation. Hence, *Possession*'s a complicated language that includes Victorian era letters from Ash and La Motta as well as real character monologues. In addition, it is considered to be a clash of highs and lows, both past and present, history and fiction. Intertextuality has emerged in a narrative, ranging from text to situation. The use of epigraphs and reference citations, as well as Byatt's *mutandis*, is maintaining this link. It is true that Byatt's aim with the use of those words and references is to reveal truth behind her fiction, while at the same time providing historical context on which it might be read. The epigraph to the novel best sums up a lot of what's in it. Quotations and allusions, on the other hand, acquire a second voice. The inclusion of such voices within the novel structure's text gives diverse world views that illuminate one another. The existence of Victorian echoes in postmodern fiction is crucial. They, in fact, function as an introduction opener and as the primary voices that dictate the pattern of each chapter, as well as recognize its importance in connection to the narration's journey. Characters, stories, and ideas in a work can conventionally be addressed directly or sarcastically through the use of epigraphs. It should be highlighted, however, that these implications have no aesthetic impact on the work of art. Therefore, these epigraphs clearly demonstrate the Victorian era's social and sexual dysfunctional reality.

By using intertextuality, Byatt depicts the Victorian world in a postmodern manner. *Possession* successfully creates the metanarrative of history. Nonetheless, the

past is an integral component of the present, and its supernatural energy appears to push contemporary individuals toward realizing the past. Intertextuality broadens the narrative skeleton of the Victorian novel. Thus, the letters and poetry of the Victorian lovers (Ash and LaMotte) might serve as subtext, moving the reader from plot to subplot. This is the ability to freely shift from the present to the past. *Possession* highlights the poet's position by referring to both the nature of love and these occasions of creative inspiration. Byatt sets the story in the Victorian era in order to fulfill her purpose of legitimizing a critique of Victorian ideas. In the novel, Byatt employs *Possession* as a core metaphor to organize intertextual patterning. She is a novelist and literary critic who is interested not just in how people consume literature, but also in how it is written about. Throughout *Possession*, Byatt employs both fraudulent and legitimate intertexts, implying that readers are dealing with a work of fiction that must have been created by a brilliant literary master mind. Roland and Maud, the main characters, are unconventional. Thus, Roland finds himself in the marginalized position of a doctoral student who must serve Blackadder's interests while also attempting to keep his intentions of publishing his findings about the Victorian poet Ash secret in order to prove himself as a scholar and be a successful and respected Academic. Maud's hair is covered in a turban for the reason she was alienated from her feminist colleagues who said that blonde hair had appeal to men. *Possession* provides a picture of interaction between author and readers, both in the story as well as outside.

The omniscient narration in Chapters 15 and 25 has an impact on the plot of the novel since it provides background information not found in the letters, diaries, and poetry. As a result, book readers are more informed about the Victorian figures than current researchers. Readers may be frustrated when the lore behind the sealed letters is kept unknown until investigator Mortimer Cropper literary unearths it from the tomb in Chapter Twenty-Five because they anticipate the omniscient narrator to disclose every secret in *Possession*.

Sometimes there is a more fully omniscient narrator in *Possession*, and he has the full knowledge about each of those people. When we discover facts about the novel's nineteenth century protagonists, which none of the twentieth century characters have ever learned, this voice can be heard in sections. In sections in which the narrator has taken a step back from his story and speaks directly with us, that technique is also used. (*Possession* Narrator Point of View | Shmoop, n.d.).

Near the completion of the story, contemporary historians settle the fate of the Victorian poets' illicit child through the discovery of LaMotte's final letter to Ash. In that letter, LaMotte tells the reality that she has kept hidden for the past twenty-eight years since their brief love affair, their daughter is alive, married, and has a lovely child. LaMotte is conscious that she, like Roland, fashioned the past she relays. However, her letter was never delivered to Ash, and he never learned the truth. Instead, the truth was placed to rest with Ash. Scholars of the twentieth century, on the other hand, read the letter. In this context, it's important to point out that the majority of the work's epigraphs are Byatt's own ventriloquized translations of written work and correspondence by the fictional Victorian writers LaMotte and Ash. Additionally, some of the inscriptions contain passages from the diaries of Ash's wife Ellen and LaMotte partner Blanche Glover. Both past and present function as politically crucial times in the novel.

Possession creates a recurrent description of the events by merging the past and present in the narration, and the alternating temporal structure indicates the past's continuous dominance. Byatt connects the past and present by establishing two distinct collections of characters in both time periods. However, it should be recognized that in the postmodern fiction, understanding the past honestly is never allowed. Byatt rewrites and reflects the Victorian era in a postmodern setting by utilizing texts from the past within the metafictional story. Byatt's work is based on the topic of freedom. As a result, the omniscient Victorian book is no longer relevant to twentieth-century narrators. The people in the story are considerably more liberated, much like modern humans. The novel's opening scene depicts the Victorian era as dark, dreary, and full of mystery. The description is crucial because it demonstrates how twentieth-century academics view the Victorian era. Ash's book is regarded as unappealing, unworthy of analysis, and filthy, making people avoid touching it. It also implies that this work has been forgotten, that Ash was a poet who was underappreciated by both his contemporaries and his current readers. Most importantly, the novel foreshadows the effort to solve the big mystery.

Possession casts doubt on the readers' ability to reconstruct the past from its documented remnants. It highlights the topic of how one knows the past by demonstrating history's ability to present just a partial depiction of it. This also means that most people's lives aren't open books, and so traditional history doesn't have any

way of recording secrets. The consequence is that, as a result, the influence of history on current events grows so strong that it's difficult for readers to find out who the tale refers to. One of the most glaring and pervasive aspects of postmodernism is the incapacity to achieve the truth, which is contrasted with the search of it and the quest of a source of a tautology in knowledge. *Possession* falls short of the Victorian romantic and personal growth promise in this way. It, rather, challenges Roland and Maud's search for a unified framework of knowledge. Byatt attempts to emphasize in *Possession* that the past cannot be known and that the pursuit for the truth of the past is misguided. So there's not going to be a truth in Ash and LaMotte's Victorian secret love uncovered at the end of this novel for both academia literary scientists. In order to end their investigation, Maud and Roland decide to leave the others behind. Indeed, their disappearing and enigmatic character is reminiscent of their Victorian equivalents. As a result, LaMotte dies unaware that Ash's wife exists. Ellen hadn't disclosed a letter LaMotte had signed admitting to their daughter Maia's survival. By contrast, Ash will never be aware that LaMotte wrote the letter or that Maia did not send his last letter to LaMotte. Furthermore, neither Roland nor Maud know that Ash and Ellen's marriage has not yet been finalised or that Ash found out about his illegitimate daughter Maia. Consequently, only the readers via the narrator's suggestions, is aware of this knowledge, emphasizing another aspect of historiographic metafiction, the past may be known through its whole texts:

The narrative voice varies throughout *Possession* as the circumstance demands. The narrator frequently concentrates on teaching us about one character at a time, and the narrator will frequently employ free-indirect speech while doing so. What exactly is it, you ask? It simply implies that the narrator's voice is frequently influenced by the views of the characters being depicted. (*Possession* Narrator Point of View | Shmoop, n.d.).

In terms of passion, intelligence, and character, Roland Maud matches the inner-frame heroes LaMotte and Ash. Maud and Roland unearthed a very crucial reality during their investigation into Ash and LaMotte's relationship: LaMotte's strong friendship with her roommate-Blanch Glover. The LaMotte diaries provided yet another means to tell the narrative of a Victorian woman. Thus, based on the journal entries, 20th century literary scientists decided that LaMotte and Glover had a particular affair; this is accurate, at least according to Glover's feelings for LaMotte. Glover has gone through her most painful and sorrowful periods as a result of the relationship of the two loves (LaMotte and Ash) throughout the story. She believes Ash has stolen LaMotte away from her. As a result, she sobbed and longed to reclaim

LaMotte's attention. As a result, she kills herself since she can no longer bear their relationship. Maud shows Roland a collection of poems written by Emily Dickenson--an American poetess who spent her whole life in one room of her family's house--that deal with the usual female feelings of loneliness and alienation. "Historiographic metafiction, as a genre, is more concerned with who tells the truth than with how it is told.

Historiographic metafiction treats history as a subjective recounting of the past, with an intentional and satirical play on historical facts and happenings. As a result, in a historiographic metafiction, we receive a fictionalized version of history." (Historiographic Metafiction, n.d.) *Possession* is a satirical take on postmodern philosophy and fiction. *Possession*, in its reworking of the Victorian era, fluctuates between the Victorian past and the present by blurring the line between the two realms. The novel explores connections between the individuals and literary norms of the Victorian era and the story's modern setting. The novel's analysis of the Victorian era includes both the continuities and discontinuities of the current moment in relation to that era. In compared to the greatness of Victorian literary icons, current researchers and scholars of literature are depicted to be lacking of excitement and originality of thought. Unlike the passionate world of the Victorian lovers, the academic lovers' world is depicted to be soulless and shallow, and it is the discovery of the past that brings their lives to life. The richness of the Victorian past is contrasted with the dryness of current speech. In other words, by exploring the past, academics whose interests have been drained by postmodern notions are rekindled. As they observe the damaging influence of deconstructionist thinking on their sentiments of longing and affection, as well as the strength of passion in their Victorian parallels, Roland and Maud begin to lose faith in literary ideas. The goal is that people get caught up with the Victorian era. They are captivated with the Victorian era for personal and professional reasons. The work wanders between Victorian and postmodern literary traditions in order to draw links between the past and current characters. In terms of continuities, Byatt's portrayal of the past swings away from postmodernism due to its use of realistic norms associated with Victorian literature. In an age where narrative ambiguity is valued, she elevates a literary type who seeks reality in fiction. In contrast to the spirit of the period, Byatt demonstrates her dedication to realistic norms yet, at the same time, her depiction of the complicated moment undermines the sense of

reality. The novel is classified as postmodern since it combines several genres and styles, as well as textual self-reflexivity.

The novel's postmodern inclination is evident in its mimicry of postmodern clichés as well as its condemnation of this genre. Byatt exploits the identical postmodern clichés she criticizes; in this sense, the novel reveals the limitations of postmodern ideas, particularly post structuralism. She demonstrates how postmodern literary ideas, which dominated Roland's and Maud's minds, created a gap between the reader and the text. Post structuralism, which devalues subjectivity and removes man from his self, has profoundly affected Roland and Maud's view of identity. In *Possession*, Byatt challenges both modernist and postmodernist historiography, questioning the former's conviction in resurrecting the past as it was and the latter's denial of any possibility of comprehending the past. By depicting the researchers' academic pursuit, Byatt implies that a partial access to the past is achievable if both textual and contextual narratives are studied using multiple historiographic methodologies. Thus, Maud and Roland utilize their own literary studies, make use of their own theories and research of different poet academics such as feminists and biographers, visit the poets' homes, play detectives, examine multiple people's diary entries, and arrive at their final proof, which is in Ash's tomb. However, the conclusion makes it plain that, despite their best efforts, they never realized Ash had visited his daughter and had sent a letter to LaMotte that was not received.

## CONCLUSION

History is the study of the human past as it is documented in written texts left behind by humans. The past, with all of its convoluted decisions and events, people deceased, and history written, is what the general public views to be the unchangeable foundation on which historians and archaeologists stand. Many academics have considered history as a vital issue in man's complete education. It explains the current in relation to prior times. History necessitates stability and constancy. The aims and purposes of teaching history have developed in response to changes in philosophical thought as well as social and political actions. Goals and objectives must be established. The educational objectives must be clearly stated. Students should learn knowledge and develop specialized understandings, attitudes, interests, and appreciations for history. History is beneficial as a study in more ways than one. Teaching history has disciplinary, informational, educational, ethical, cultural, intellectual, political, patriotic, international, and vocational qualities. It is only by knowing and discovering where we come from that we can ever hope to find out who we are and what our goal in life is. In fact, the study of history has always been tightly linked with other human sciences, mainly philosophy as delving into the past was always an optimal way of self-discovery and social analysis too. Going back to the roots might very well be where every thinker and philosopher started their intellectual journey towards the uncovering of human nature and answering some of the most difficult questions asked, in relation to human motives, human identity and human destiny, which also translates into the exploration of one's past, present, and future. Trying to tackle other aspects of human sciences while disregarding history is like trying to revive and keep a tree alive without caring about its roots at all. Eventually, the tree would surely wilt and die, uprooted, and deprived of its basic needs, provided to it but no other than its roots. Aside from history, there is no better and no more efficient way to study a society. How do we expect to efficiently and accurately break down and analyze the elements of a society and apply all the sociological theories that man came up with, without going back to its history and tracking down the source of its components. The world as it is now is just the accumulation of hundreds of years of evolution, hundreds of years of progress and change and events that can only be summed up in history.



Fiction is defined as writing that features the author's constructed characters, events, and/or settings. However, not all of the elements of a fabricated tale must be fictional. Real people, on the other hand, might be used in a hypothetical story centered on an imagined event or scenario. The link between history and fiction has always been difficult, causing schisms among various authors, academics, and readers. While some feel that history should be honored in its original form, others want to push those boundaries and investigate the numerous layers of previous events and historical individuals in order to demonstrate that history is nothing more than a fabrication that is primarily followed and believed blindly. Literature as an art, is allowed a certain degree of leniency, given that it is by the creative need to imagine and visualize in order to convey an idea, a theory or a thought that the writer wouldn't be able to convey otherwise. Mixing fiction and reality or adding fictional events into the mix of history can't always be perceived as a distortion of facts or a deformation of what is, otherwise, a perfect record. In fact, the usage of fiction was one of the core aspects of ancient literature and the core of many civilizations, namely the Greek and their Greek mythology. This example conveys perfectly how fiction mixed in with facts can help build a whole culture and immortalize its myths; as unrealistic as they are Greek myths helped them answer questions that science couldn't at that time and it also helped them cope with the reality of not being able to find a logical explanation for everything, not to mention the entertainment that these fictional stories provided for the public.

Historiographic metafiction seeks to situate itself within historical discourse while retaining literary integrity as fiction. The intertexts of history and fiction take on simultaneous significance in the parodic rewriting of both the "world" and literature's textual past. Linda Hutcheon's term "historiographic metafiction" refers to postmodern works, notably popular novels, that are both deeply self-reflexive and paradoxically stake claim to historical events and personalities. This is a postmodern art form based mostly on language play, parody, and historical re-conceptualization. Historiographic metafiction at first glance, looks to be an inconsistency in concepts. History is meant to be related to the Real, while fiction is expected to apply to the Imaginary; and metafiction, which represents the self-reflexive strain, indicates playful creativity and rampant preferentiality, which appears to conflict with the realist connotations of the historiographic. Histories, especially those written in the nineteenth century, not solely focus on significant political personalities and their motivations, choices, and

individual flaws, but they also employ invented dialogues, free passive discourse, and sometimes even inner monologue, reorganize the order of events for creative effects, and cast the stories they tell into identifiable generic literary modes of origin. If anything historiographic metafiction draws a distinction between events and facts and it goes without saying that the existence of a past event doesn't directly mean that we know of it and it does not verify the accuracy of its transmission to us. Fact of the matter is, past events are merely what we have been told they are, granted that whoever took the task of preserving those events was completely neutral and granted that we may have more than one retelling of the story, the final version that we receive of this event, is by no means verifiable to its last detail. It is not the undermine the accuracy of the historical sources but their objectivity is what should be verifiable, so as long as these sources cannot be completely accurate, completely objective and as long as both these qualities cannot be completely proved, the historical retelling remains just that, a retelling. The point here is to decontextualize the historical event from the present and using it for what it was.

Both *Possession* and *Ragtime* are considered historiographic metafiction novels due to the way they explore history, they both present the reader with a reality check and makes them look at history in a whole different way. The key focuses of E.L. Doctrow's *Ragtime* are the blurring of history and fiction as well as constructing and deconstructing history. Like many of his contemporaries, Doctrow creates very believable and relatable characters, inserts them in a real era and molds very intense scenarios for them while introducing real-life icons to the mix. This proves his point that any reader with no knowledge about a certain era can easily be fooled to believe a fake narrative as long as it's presented in an immersive way Postmodernists believe that that the same logic applies to real history Doctrow's blending of history and fiction leaves the reader confused and not knowing which is which, his very clever ways of doing so consist of brief interactions between a real-life and a fictional character or using the omniscient narrator to relay unknown facts about certain characters or events to the reader. The use of fiction in novels helps in turning a series of historical events into a narrative with a plot. A.S Byatt uses *Possession* as a way for multiple voices and narratives to be heard. The usual attitude of history in general is that the winner or most popular is always the one to be remembered. The author does not seem to agree with or cosign this theory as her novel is a voice for those who are

the opposite of that. The author uses multiple tools to challenge the unfair nature of history, some of these tools are non-linear storytelling which helps the story not be stagnant and limiter or involve multiple scenarios in a parallel way, self-reflexivity which allows the work to reflect upon its own artistic nature and process as well as third person omniscient narrator with an ironic tone whose purpose is to take readers into the characters' minds and be more immersed in the story.

Ragtime has a very interesting approach to historiographic metafiction, the story was told from different points of view throughout the novel, which makes the narration and storytelling complex but also immersive. Doctorow also utilized fragmentation which allowed him to utilize different smaller portions from history in order to form a fictional tale that made sense and seemed real. Doctorow put a lot of focus on relatability, and he managed to achieve it by taking some of his characters a step above the norm, as he made them self-conscious and used them to raise questions about many historical constructs and shed light on their flaws. Another way the author utilized historiographic metafiction to make his work more relatable is by including social issues such as racism, sexism and classism. Doctorow also implements real-life characters along with his fictional ones to bring more life to Ragtime and give it more realism and credibility. The most obvious use of historiographic metafiction in the novel is the blurring of lines that separate what is fictional versus what is real. Doctorow mainly does this to challenge history and its status. On the other hand, Possession does a few things similarly and other things in its own different and unique way. A.S Byatt's novel, similar to Ragtime includes real historical figures in the novel to give it more authenticity but also goes a step beyond by implementing fictional character-written documents that serve in providing more context on their lives in the Victorian era while pulling open the curtains that border real literature and fictional one, thus making it more complex. The real events and characters included in Possession aid in making the fictional ones fit into the era and narrative in a realistic way. Another thing that Possession does similarly to Ragtime is providing multiple points of view as well as narrators in order to prove that there is always a variety of perspectives that come with history, proving that believing the first narrative that one is presented with does not make any sense. Possession consists of two storylines, one from the past and another from the present, this is done to show that the two are always related and that the past always steers the events of the present. The two stories being

both about love in somehow similar ways show that the past always finds its way into the present. Finally, both *Ragtime* and *Possession* are unique historiographic metafiction novels with similarities and differences, but strive towards the same goals which are to normalize history and make readers think freely about events in more open minded ways.

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## **CURRICILUM VITAE**

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