

**Treatment of Time and History in the narration of Postmodern
Literature:**

**Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*
and Tim O'Brien's *How to Tell a True War Story***



I n s p i r i n g E x c e l l e n c e

Shammee Akter

ID: 14263003

Department of English and Humanities

August 2017

**Treatment of Time and History in the narration of Postmodern
Literature:**

**Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse- Five*, Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*
and Tim O'Brien's *How to Tell a True War Story***

A Thesis

Submitted to

The Department of English and Humanities

of BRAC University

by

Shammee Akter

ID: 14263003

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Masters of Arts in English

August 2017

Contents

1. Acknowledgements	1
2. Abstract.....	2
3. Introduction.....	3-14
4. Chapter 1	15- 24
5. Chapter 2.....	25- 31
6. Chapter 3.....	32-35
7. Conclusion.....	36-37
8. Works Cited.....	38-40

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I am grateful to Allah for giving me good health, patience and confidence to accomplish this academic endeavor (thesis) amidst all obstacles within the scheduled time. I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam. The writing of this dissertation would not have been possible without his indispensable guidance, constant advice to nurture it, untiring effort and cordial encouragement along with his theoretical and thought provoking lectures on Postmodernism. I also thank to the honorable chairperson of the department, Professor Dr. Firdous Azim for her guidance throughout the time.

My completion of this project could not have been accomplished without the support of my friends, especially Kamol. Your encouragement when the times got rough are much appreciated and duly noted. Finally, I am thankful to my parents, my husband and my little boy (Rafayel) for their constant support.

Abstract

Postmodernism is considered as one of the broad terms in contemporary cultural domain.

Literature is perhaps the most familiar aspect where postmodernism can be understood. The issue of time and history is a vital aspect in any literature. This paper has attempted to discuss postmodernism and the treatment of time and history in three postmodern literary works. The selected literary texts are Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* (1991) and Tim O'Brien's *How to Tell a True War Story* (1990).

Introduction

The world entered the era of postmodernism in the 1980s which is essentially a cultural turn in which many modern assumptions and ideas are continually contested, investigated and critiqued. The term postmodernism, first coined by an English historian Arnold Toynbee, has multiple meanings now. It is not *post* to modernism in the sense ‘after’ it rather runs parallel to modernism along with its distinctive features. It is not a theoretical school that promotes an ideology in the guise of concepts and assumptions. Postmodernism does not have a single defining aspect like classicism or romanticism. Rather it is a movement that has grown out of everyday life and the experiences of living in a complex world and branched out to a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study that include- philosophy, art, music, television, literature, film, fashion, law, technology and so on. Postmodernism, in other words, is a response to modernism and hence exists in close proximity and conversation with modernism. Both modernism and postmodernism originated as a kind of protest against prevailing norms and styles. Therefore, before understanding what postmodernism is, it is important to revisit modernism and identify areas that lead themselves to postmodern critique.

According to Peter Barry “Modernism was that earthquake in the arts which brought down much of the structure of pre-twentieth-century practice in music, painting, literature, and architecture.” (Barry 78) This statement assures us that modernism was a deliberate movement that attempted to influence arts and culture of all sorts. The main force that shaped modernism was the extreme and extensive use of reason and science often to the expression of imagination and creation. Modernism brought in a sea change in society and culture; in particular it initiated

the transformation of Western thinking. Modernism as we know it has progressed in several waves where Renaissance or early modern movement being the first. Renaissance promoted individualism, humanism, imagination and sense of the self. These characteristics have remained with the phenomena called modernism that travelled through the age of Enlightenment (Eighteenth Century), Romanticism (Late Eighteenth Century and Nineteenth Century) and the troubled Victorian times, from where it picked up newer elements- such as a love for reason and rationality, in imagination and loss of faith, confusion of all kinds to finally enter the Twentieth century.

Modernism has desire to search for a center, it is characterized by anxiety which can be existential as well as epistemological anxiety. For example, in W.B. Yeats's poem *The Second Coming (1919)* we get an account of modernism's anxiety and desire to search for a center "Things fall apart, the center cannot hold" (Yeats 3) Thus, it increasingly becomes problematic. Before Renaissance burst in with the power of individualism, science and a new awareness about the self, stability, order, dominance and control. However, modernism believes in values, order and identify which are enriched by self-knowledge. It introduces itself as a unifying force and asks for a homogenized sphere of culture and identity. Modernism thus shows that it has certain ideologies attached to its core and therefore it attempts to formulate or construct others following that ideology. William Faulkner, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound are among the many who have grounded their literary creations on artificiality, aristocracy, eurocentricism, class distinction and superiority. Postmodernism, challenged these and many other aspects of modernism. It promotes naturalism in place of artificiality, the idea of the subaltern in place of elitism, localism in place of eurocentricism and homogeneity in place of class distinction.

Postmodernism, in a historical sense, first started in architecture. Architecture in deed is the most visible area to identify the differences between modernism and postmodernism. From architecture postmodernism branched out to literature, art and social science. "Postmodernism was not the invention of literary critiques, but literature can certainly claim to be one of the most important laboratories of postmodernism." (Connor 62) By the 1970s and 80s, literature established itself as an area where postmodern could find a fertile ground. Modernists however critiqued postmodernism for a lack of a transcendent morality. According to Paul Sheehan postmodernism "...is not so much process of completion than as a complex maneuvering between ending and renewal, to carry out this maneuver, philosophical postmodernism has performed a comprehensive demolition job on Western orthodoxies." (Sheehan 21) In contrast to modernist philosophy, which is grounded on essentialism, postmodernism attempts to deconstruct the established ideas of modernism. For instance, modernism considers the West as self and the East as it's other. In addition, racial superiority is also part of its essentialist view point. Thus modernism facilitates certain class, group as superior than others. But postmodernism is against these categorizations and critiques all these pre-established and fixed notions and ideas.

However, Jean-François Lyotard, one of the road-makers of postmodernism, has argued in his essay *Note on the Meaning of the 'Post' (1992)* that the word postmodern implies a meaning of the notion postmodern as something coming after modern. According to Lyotard, "One point about this perspective is that the "post-" of postmodernism has the sense of a simple succession, a diachronic sequence of periods in which each one is clearly identifiable. The "post-" indicates something like a conversation: a new direction from the previous one." (Lyotard 76). But, rather than pointing to a particular frame of time, postmodernism can be understood as a

way of thinking. However, take argument into account; it can be assumed that postmodernism can be seen in a broad philosophical sense.

For Friedrich Jameson, for example, postmodernism is a reaction against the totalizing philosophies of the enlightenment period. Postmodernism resists all philosophies as well as ideologies which are related to power and grand narratives. Wang Ning defines one of the postmodern characteristics as “A kind of worldview or a way of looking at the world and life, in which the world is no longer a world of totality but rather one of plurality, fragmentation, and decentralization;” (Ning 264)

Postmodernism argues that there is no absolute truth and the basic structures on which we built our whole society are the result of social hierarchy. Some of these social constructs include, power relations, gender binaries and social classes. Postmodernism argues that nothing is purely objective. It challenges the norms and ideas of modernism; and deconstructs those views.

Ihab Hassan exemplified the differences between modernism and postmodernism in his essay “Toward a concept of Postmodernism”. In this essay Ihab Hassan specifically mentioned the distinctions of these two paradigms. For example modernism concerns itself with presence, form, hierarchy, root, narrative/ grand histoire, paranoia, transcendence. In contrast, postmodernism deals with absence, antiform (disjunctive, open), anarchy, rhizome/surface, anti-narrative/ petite histoire, schizophrenia, immanence. It is possible to claim that the characteristics Ihab Hassan outlined in this essay are a collective reaction against modernist philosophy. Postmodernism celebrates anarchy or dysfunctionality. Modernists follow a formed and functional view of time while postmodernists celebrate the dysfunctional flow of time; which is as fractured as dysfunctional mind.

A great deal of postmodern theory depends on the persistence of a skeptical attitude. The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) is a seminal theoretical book in postmodern discourse. Where he argued, that we live in a time which say the grand narratives are in decline. Generally speaking, grand narratives stands as a totalizing force that attempts to legitimize all cultural practices including ideologies from a fixed body of knowledge. Modernism believes in grand narratives. Jean-Francois Lyotard mentioned "emancipation narrative" to designate all the grand narratives existing in the universe. Religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam are examples of grand narratives. In addition, he suggests that these Meta-narratives are contained in many philosophies such as Marxism and Hegelianism. Rather than following any single dominant meta-narrative with a totalizing desire to influence the entire culture, Lyotard celebrates the multiple micro narratives that ultimately lead to heterogonous cultural domain. The celebrations of these micro narratives are heterogeneous and contradictory in nature that shows a fluid state of postmodernism.

According to Lyotard, "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward meta-narratives" (Lyotard, 36-38) Here war and ideology can be considered as forms of grand narrative or metanarrative. War is armed conflict between two conflicted positions and ideologies. Wars are usually fought by people, justified through the ideologies on which these are fought to gain advantage. But such extreme display of violence results in mass destruction. The horror of two World Wars stands to signify this state. Postmodernism being suspicious and critical of ideologies disrupts, resists and ironizes the practice of grand narrative or emancipatory discourses.

Postmodernism celebrates some characteristics like irony, playfulness, black humor, inter-textuality, metafiction, pastiche, simulacrum, paranoia, temporal distortion, magic realism,

confusion over time and space, sense of fragmentation, avoidance of rigid genre distinction, questioning of truth, open ended, meta-narrative, hyperrealism and so on.

Roughly speaking, there are three kinds of postmodern literary traditions. First of all, South American literary tradition, where fiction writing is well-known for using the genre of magic realism. Under this literary tradition, slow moving rustic community life that is based on agriculture is depicted. This part of tradition has a long history of colonization, exploitation and cultural dominance. The indigenous people in South America had a diversity of culture with oral tradition which is summed up by storytelling with a magic realistic bent. But after 1960s there big cities emerged with postindustrial revolutions which created emptiness in the community life. In order to fill the void, created by rapid urbanization, magic realism was brought back to literature. Gabriel García Márquez is one of the greatest pioneers of this tradition.

The second literary tradition can be considered the North American postmodern literary tradition, which is primarily very urbanized and developed. The inhabitant is urban and speed is a part of its culture. In addition, it was not colonized in the same as South America was; it was in fact a settler colony. The people are educated and communicate in predominant language, English. There are political structures; such as democracy which is practiced by these people. North America in recent times has seen the rise of consumer and visual culture. All these characteristics make North American tradition different from South American tradition. Time is very important in this tradition. Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon and John Barthes are the greatest authors in this tradition.

The third tradition is the European postmodern literary tradition. This tradition is profoundly philosophical; it includes dark humor and irony. It is very noticeable that each of these three traditions have certain common the properties of postmodernism. They express a relation, accompanied by a specific kind of thought process, to the modernist tradition of literature. Although they from different cultures, but they share a common sphere of characteristics.

This paper intends to first understand the cultural turn that is postmodernism, and then narrow down of two coordinates that define any literary tradition- time and place. In addition to these two, paper will also try to understand the use of history in relative fiction. Three novels will be discussed. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* (1991) and Tim O'Brien's collection of short stories *Things They Carried* (1990). In these postmodernist literary works, time and history have been narrated using postmodern narrative techniques. Each of these fictions contains metafictional status. This paper will also discuss how history is moved by the progression of time or how time can be seen as a way of describing history. In that sense, time and history are interconnected.

Within postmodern understanding the notions of history and time are quite different from our general point of view. History is what dwells in the past. And this is always problematic because of it's dealing with times. The concept of history tries to formulate a progression of the human life, whereas time is a factor that decides and gives structure to this formulation.

Historiographers sometimes debate on the nature of history. If we look at the literary arena of the postmodern time, we can easily understand how postmodernist writers play with the

idea of time through using temporal distortion. After the Second World War some artists started developing postmodern narrative techniques going beyond modernist stylistics of writing.

History is the study of the past based on written documents, archives and archeology. History is seen as a grand narrative in modernist perspective but postmodern perspective is resistant and critical of the idea of grand narrative. In contrast to a postmodern understanding of history, modernist history is institutional. Most of the time history is written from the perspective of the elite. But postmodernists are questioning this statement.

Postmodernists believe that the individual experience is more important for history. But, in modernist history, it is always the narrative of power and class. Ordinary people's sacrifices or their contribution are hardly ever included in modern history. Regarding the subaltern people and historiography, Ranajit Guha, states, "The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism- colonialist elitism and bourgeois nationalistic elitism. Both originated as the ideological product of British rule in India" (Guha 1). In his essay Guha attempted to focus on the relationship among the same population which is called 'elite-subaltern' relationship. Again he suggests "The general orientation of the other kind of elitist historiography is to represent Indian nationalism as preliminary as an idealist venture in which the indigenous elite led the people from subjugation to freedom" (Guha 2). In Nationalist historiography power structure is important which also refers to control, authority and agency. For this reason, common people have always been unprivileged. Subaltern historiography emphasizes human history in micro level. Everybody determines their own purpose, own meaning, own beliefs. Postmodern way of thinking rejects any hierarchal establishment in historiography.

The world has witnessed two great wars and there are numerous established and justified historiographies on that incident. But the postmodern response to that historiography is narration of the same incident from multiple points of view; and these different accounts of a single event, become celebratory in tone. This is celebrated in the silence of the common people in the face of adversity. For most of the historians comprehend their research might be influenced by the certain political ideologies or power structure.

In general, metafiction means going beyond fiction. There are many ways to achieve the status of a metafictional writing. In *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* Patricia Waugh defines metafiction "...as fictional writing, which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality." (Waugh 2) Thus metafiction attempts to blur the line between fiction and reality. Metafiction can assume many forms. For example, it can include intrusions in the narrative to comment on the writing, involvement of the author with the fictional characters and his or her attempt to transform and filter reality.

Linda Hutcheon also outlined postmodernism and metafictional writing, but in more specific ways. Hutcheon showed how history can be used as a metafictional writing in her theoretical book, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. According to her statement, "Historiographic metafiction refutes the natural or common sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction. It refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both by questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems" (Hutcheon 93). History is built upon facts and evidence; whereas fiction is created purely through the authors imagination and emotions. Postmodernist writers blur this boundary between fact and fiction.

Time has been a difficult phenomenon to understand even scientists have struggled to cope with it. Time is also considered in terms of the different measurements that are used to quantify and sequence events. As the French Philosopher Henri Bergson suggested, time is basically duration; it is both linear and chronological as well as disruptive of these orders. In our day to day life we experience time as a continuous flow. Modernist authors are comfortable and maintain the clock time in order to construct their narrative structure. They firmly believe that there should be a logical flow of time with the flow of the story. But, take recourse to psychological time- the time as perceived by the mind whenever necessary. They firmly believed that there should be a logical flow of time with the flow of the story. In modernist trend of writing fiction requires linear progression or continuation of storyline. For instance, in D.H Lawrence's a realistic novel *Sons and Lovers (1913)*, the author maintains logical flow of time within the flow of the story. Even in the stream of consciousness technique, moments become very important and a moment is seen as a complex construct of many psychological elements where time becomes almost a projection of the mind.

Postmodernism breaks the rules about time in order to go beyond the established norms of fiction writing. In many postmodern novels, times become multi-linear; it can be shown with multiple references during the same narration. Postmodern fiction often simultaneously projects the diachronic and synchronic notions. It does not usually follow a linear development. There is a complete disruption of clock time. Temporal distortion of time is one of the literary techniques that use a nonlinear timeline. The author may jump forward or backward in time. Modernism expresses time as a matter that cannot be overcome, whereas postmodernism liberates this thought and play with time as varied possibilities where people experience time subjectively.

While discussing time and postmodernism, David R. Dickens and Andrea Fontana mentioned Georg Simmel's categorization of culture as objective and subjective. In this regard it is possible to claim that the notion of time, say the clock, being a component of time measurement can also exist in both objective and subjective form. In addition, Dickens and Fontana illustrate the point of subjective experience of time drawing on the work of Michael Flaherty. Flaherty categorizes time and how humans experience time subjectively. There are three categories- first, protracted duration- which is the happy time and time flows slowly without any alteration; second, temporal compression- this category precisely entails war time and violent nature of existence where time passes very quickly; and third, synchronicity- this mode of time signifies rational clock time which is considered the standard measurement of time. (Fontana and Dickens 395)

Postmodern novels dealt with psychological time where time dwells in the past. Psychological time is a time that we experience in our mind as a memory of our past. Postmodern novels have a tendency to exemplify a psychological understanding of time. "We know, in fact, that war leads to trauma for large numbers of people, including soldiers who fight and civilians who are caught in the crossfire or forced to flee fighting. Wartime brutality and atrocity, such as mass killing, ethnic cleansing, torture, and rape, can also be psychologically traumatic for both soldiers and civilians." (Mendeloff 594)

Psychological time can be experienced through drugs also. People who get addicted to drugs usually measure time in a different way. For example, in Will Self's *The Sweet Smell of Psychosis* (1996) the author is projecting a character named, Mr. Bell and shows how the time that his mind constructs. Bell is always stuck in his mind where mechanical time clashes with psychological time. Will Self comments "It was late on the cocktail period and the atmosphere in the Sealink Club bar was, to say the least, rocky. Over the past couple of hours, a lot of

rebarbative , ulcerated and embittered people had been working hard at bedding their resentments down in sensory deprivation tanks full of alcohol” (Self 6).

The American novelist Thomas Pynchon also narrates psychological time in his celebrated novel *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965) which depicts a narcotic society which depends on LSD and other drugs. For example, Dr. Hillarious, a psychologist believes in telepathy, and experiments with LSD on his patients. By taking drugs he has lost his rational understanding of chronological time. His chronological life blends with hallucination or imagination that is why he frequently calls people late at night for chit chat which indicates his mental instability.

Chapter 1

Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), or *The Children's Crusade*, is a reconstruction of the history of the Second World War. Using self-reflexive techniques the author travels through time and looks at through the protagonist Billy Pilgrim's lens. This novel makes an attempt to describe the violence and brutalities of World War Two, particularly the firebombing of Dresden. Vonnegut has constructed the entire narrative built around a time and history in a way that subverts the established forms of fiction and creates confusion about time. Although this novel starts with linearity of time, later the flow of time becomes distorted. The narrator travels back and forth in time and describes different events of his life. The narrative technique of this novel is deliberately employed by the author to understand the cruelty and brutality of history. This chapter will look at how Kurt Vonnegut, using postmodern techniques, questions and interprets the idea of history and time in a different way.

The novel narrates the story of a former American soldier Billy Pilgrim who participated in World War Two. In the very first line of this novel the author remarks, "ALL THIS HAPPEENED, more or less. The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true." (Vonnegut 1) In this way the accounts of the Dresden firebombing makes us revisit and experience the hollowness of war. Pilgrim was confined as a prisoner of War (POW). Later, he was rescued by American soldiers. He returned to his country and married Valencia and had two children. He was in a plane crash, but somehow survived and was hospitalized. Meanwhile, Valencia died of carbon monoxide poisoning. In the hospital, Pilgrim starts time traveling. Then he starts narrating his experience of Dresden. Billy Pilgrim's account of past actions is very important as he himself has witnessed the war. As narrator tells us "And Billy had seen the greatest massacre in European history, which was the fire-bombing of Dresden." (73)

This is a quite complex war novel in terms of its narrative flow. As remarked by Edelstein “It juxtaposes satiric glances at suburban life in America during the Fifties and Sixties, the horrors of death and war--especially the fire-bombing of Dresden during the last days of World War II--and Billy Pilgrim's problematic adventures in space and time.” (Edelstein 128)

Time became very unpredictable during the War period. Because time loses all balances and urgency during the War, where nobody knows what would happen. War deals with the uncertainty of life. There is a terrible ontological insecurity that the war brought forth. Vonnegut is very much concerned about time and thus crafted time in the narrative structure in a way that expresses and reasserts the discontinuity and nature of time during the War. In the novel the narrator comments: “LISTEN: BILLY PILGRIM has come unstuck in time. Billy has gone to sleep a senile widower and awakened on his wedding day. He has walked through a door in 1955 and come out another one in 1941. He has gone back through that door to find himself in 1963. He has seen his birth and death many times, he says, and pays random visits to all the events in between.” (Vonnegut 17)

Billy Pilgrim has no sense of clock time. Thus, not belonging to particular age, he keeps shifting from one frame of time to another. In the planet Tralfamadore, “... Billy zoomed back in time of his infancy. He was a baby who had just been bathed by his mother. ... And then Billy was a middle-aged optometrist again, playing hacker's golf this time- on a blazing summer Sunday morning.” (61) And then he forgets he is in Tralfamadore as he asks consciously “Where am I?” (61)

In addition, before he was taken by the Tralfamadorians to their planet, he saw a movie on the Second World War and the role of American bombers in the war. This movie reminds

Billy of the sheer violence of war. After watching the movie he wanted to escape from the horrifying images that came to his mind. The narrator comments: “Billy saw the movie backwards then forwards- and then it was time to go out into his backyard to meet the flying saucer.” (54) This attempt to watch the movie backwards can be understood as a desire to get rid of the horrors of the war. Perhaps Billy wishes to go backward to his life and be happy; and then watching the movie forward signifies his wish to travel beyond the time of massacre time. But nothings provide him any rupture from the trauma. Even, when Billy had the plane crash and he had an injury in skull but he was alive and conscious. This accident also reminded him of Dresden massacre as he only remembered one address ‘Schlachthof-funf’. For Billy this incident was reminiscent of his past experience. The narrator comments “He supposed that they were part of an amazing new phase of World War Two. It was all right with him. Everything was pretty much all right with Billy.” (114)

The flow of time of this plot structure is fragmented. Vonnegut creates a disorder within the linear progression narrative structure in order to search for redemption from the massacre. According to Barry Lewis, “Postmodernist fiction does not disrupt the past, but corrupts the present too.” (Lewis 114) It is almost a way of making anarchy in already established narrative structure. This characteristic mark of writing literature takes us back to Ihab Hassan’s table where he has distinguished between many elements of modernism and postmodernism. Modernist authors, for example, are comfortable with clock time in order to construct their narrative structure.

Slaughterhouse-Five has some dimensions of Science fiction or Sci-fi plots play a key role in many postmodern novels to scrutinize the treatment of time. Vonnegut represents the Tralfamadorians as an alternative reality where time is represented in four dimensions. Billy

Pilgrim is abducted by a flying saucer from the planet to Tralfamadore. He stays there for many years.

To describe the immensity of death during war, Kurt Vonnegut has complicated the flow of time and space in his novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Time does not move in a straight line in the novel. In other words, functional clock time has been replaced with the non-linear flow of incidents and time. The central character Billy finds himself in between the laps of time. However his remaining years in the planet Tralfamadore can be measured as a micro second on earth. The writer has portrayed time in such a technique to express the discontinuity of time during war he find himself time tripping. In Tralfamadore everything happens simultaneously. Billy perceives this time and space from a three dimensional perspectives. But the inhabitants of the planet can perceive this time with four dimensions. The narrator says, "The creatures were friendly and they could see in four dimensions. They pitied Earthlings for being able to see only three. They had many wonderful things to teach Earthlings, especially about time." (Vonnegut19). In Tralfamadore, Billy came to know about free will and predestination. Vonnegut shows that there is no such thing called free will. Although the Tralfamadoreans can visit each and every moment of their lives they cannot remold or revert the past. The narrator comments, "Among the things Billy Pilgrim could not change were the past, the present and the future" (44). Billy feels the burden of living with the perspective of Tralfamadore's time; a time, which is occurring, has always occurred and will always occur. Billy Pilgrim, the time traveler always tries to get the real answer through time by dreaming or hallucinating. "Billy Pilgrim went on skating, doing tricks in sweat socks, tricks that most people would consider impossible-making turns, and stopping on a dime and so on. The cheering went on, but its tone was altered as the hallucination gave way to time-travel." (36)

Paranoia is a mental illness in which a person may wrongly believe that other people are trying to harm him. In other words there is a fear of being harmed by someone else. It is a psychological problem and in postmodern fiction there are paranoid characters. Following Barry Lewis “postmodernist writing reflect paranoid anxieties in many ways, including: the distrust of fixity, of being circumscribed to any particular place or identity, the conviction that society is conspiring against the individual,” (Lewis 118).

Billy Pilgrim was confined to the underground as a prisoner during World War Two. He also experienced the devastating destruction of Dresden that led to Billy’s psychological problems. Soldiers participating in a War tend to end up with trauma and are constantly paranoid of the outside world. Vonnegut tries to show how a psychologically affected soldier perceives time and reality. He is extremely terrified and this is confirmed by the narrator’s assertion, “He was down in the meat locker on the night that Dresden was destroyed. There were sounds like giant footsteps above. Those were sticks of high-explosive bombs. The giants walked and walked. The meat locker was a very safe shelter.” (Vonnegut 129). Here, it could be understood that the sheer violence forced him to think that only dead bodies are capable of not paying attention to violence or they are apparently unconscious of destructions. In a general sense, a meat locker contains animal flesh and getting inside any meat locker means to die. This statement confirms Billy Pilgrim’s paranoia.

Billy was admitted in a mental hospital in New York. There he found another army person, named Captain Eliot Rosewater, who was also in Dresden. The narrator says, “They had both found life meaningless, partly because of what they had seen in war.” (73) Billy’s mother had made a visit to the hospital and engaged in conversation with Billy and Rosewater. Within their talk Billy gets lost in time again. The narrator comments, “Billy fell asleep under his blanket.

When he woke up again, he was tied to the bed in the hospital back in the prison. He opened one eye, saw poor old Edgar Derby reading *The Red Badge of Courage* by candlelight.” (76) This is another important example of Billy’s quick rupture of time and space. This dislocation of time and space is very frequent in the novel.

The First World War and the Second World war have been considered as the largest military conflict in human history. In *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a postmodern novel where the narrator describes firebombing of Dresden during World War two in a very ironic way. The author fictionalizes the history to negotiate the traumatized memory of the past and creates a somewhat peaceful reading. In this book, we see the author remembering incidents from twenty three years ago. As stated by the narrator, “I thought it would be easy for me to write about the destruction of Dresden, since all I would have to do would be to report what I had seen. And I thought, too, that it would be a masterpiece or at least make me a lot of money, since the subject was so big. But no many words about Dresden came from my mind then.” (2) This distance of time has been deliberately created to heal the pain of certain memories and to deal with it easily. People even reconstruct the memory of the past. The human mind reacts to any extreme sufferings which is incomprehensible. So sometimes we are unable to deal with history. History helps us understand the experiences of people in the past.

The protagonist Billy clearly exhibits symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. His experiences during the war eventually lead him into a traumatic condition. Through historiographic metafiction, irony, and temporal distortion of time, Vonnegut tends to represent the history of the brute matter of massacre in Dresden. The narrator says “The sun was an angry little pinhead, Dresden was like the moon now, nothing but menarel.”(6)This novel has examined the history of Dresden massacre which the author tries to highlight and handle by using those

literary techniques. It further looks at how the author challenges history and narrates history, not as a grand narrative, but as a simple manner of fictional narrative. To contrast with the modern novel which is genre based, postmodern novel does not carry one singular genre. Postmodern fictions celebrate multiplicity and hybridity. *Slaughterhouse-Five* can be seen as a science fiction, an autobiographic account, historiographic metafiction or war novel. In this regard Kathleen M Puhr comments, “It is postmodern in that it uses and also subverts the conventions both of science fiction and of war fiction, features a nonlinear plot, with jumps both in space and in time, and confuses the identity of ostensible author and the "I" of chapter 1.” (Puhr, 64)

The novel starts with the author’s own voice describing his own experience during the World War Two. The author makes a telephone call at night to his old war buddies since the narrator of this novel is traumatized *Slaughterhouse-Five* presents itself as a constructed narrative. The author confesses his subjectivity. The first and the last chapter of the book are written in first person narrative from the perspective of Kurt Vonnegut. Self-reflexivity can appear in postmodern fiction in many ways. Author can introduce himself into the narrative texts. It can be done through anagrams or making variations of the name, or entering into the text as a character, or through narrative technique. Thus, postmodern authors can cross the dividing line of reality and fictional world. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, there is a comment “That was I. That was me. That was the author of this book.” (91) This is an extreme example of self-reflexivity.

Irony is one of the essential elements in any postmodern novel. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut uses irony to represent the brutal experience during war period. History is not only signifies, it also ironized. It is a satirical and ironical novel. It explicitly shows extreme distrusts, anger and hatred to War- a form of meaningless human cruelty. Linda Hutcheon, in her book, *The Politics of Postmodernism* mentioned that, “The history of representation cannot be escaped

but it can be both exploited and commented critically through irony and parody” (Hutcheon 55)

In chapter 3 of the novel, we see the narrator mentions a female German shepherd. “She had never seen war before. She had no idea what game was being played.” (38) This is the irony directed to the people who initiated and called for the war. Even, a shepherd had to join in the killing mission. War is not only a project of killing mass people, but it is essentially a blood strained clash of two ideologies. As a postmodern novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five* makes fun of war stories- in a critical sense it is a reaction to a certain ideology. This book actually showed the dark side of war while demonstrating that life still goes on even in the worst of time, Billy Pilgrim, in order to consume the shock of loss, learns to use the phrase- *So it goes*. The phrase occurs whenever someone dies.

In addition, this novel ironizes and makes fun of a history professor. In Vermont Billy shared a room with a Harvard history professor Bertram Copeland Rumfoord. He used to ignore Billy’s words as his words had no specific contexts. He wrote *Official History of the Army Air Force in World War Two*. He is shown as quite arrogant and confident about his rigid academic scholarship. He was talking about the bombing of Dresden with his wife. Being a historiographer he was happy that he could let Americans know about their glorious history in Dresden. The narrator says, “Americans have finally heard about Dresden,” said Rumfoord twenty-three after the raid.” (140) Rumfoord does not believe that Billy was in Dresden at that time. Billy says “I was in Dresden when it was bombed. I was a prisoner of war.” (141). Academic historian Rumfoord’s words are portrayed by the narrator in this way, “Must we talk about it now?” said Rumfoord. He had heard. He didn’t believe.” (141). Here, it is very important to focus on the approach history professor Rumfoord had maintained a mode of history writing from a fixed point of view. For him war stands for glorification of heroes and wars are fought to defeat evil.

Such historiography on events excludes the sacrifice of Edger Derby, a school teacher who was accused of stealing a tea pot. Or more importantly historiography from certain ideological stand point would ignore a soldier's account of the same event.

Slaughterhouse-Five contains a series of urgent messages that make it a deeply humane book. This book makes us revisit our fundamental notion about what it means to be a human being and the dignity it entails. It also shows us how difficult it is to fit in the society. In large point Vonnegut emphasizes the human subject in difficult circumstances to expose the horror of the loss or the extreme nature of the tragedy that happens to individuals who are cut off from a large power structure. And understanding that, the individual needs to have a sense of dignity, needs to have some hope and purpose. Vonnegut takes another approach of history in which, a less important or minor characters or events are cut off from the mainstream or nationalist historiography. History at the micro level is created by the people who are supposed to be less important. Everybody wants to get a meaningful life. Vonnegut is concentrates on human psychology. In this novel we get to know Billy's frequent comments on life, history and philosophy. There are a couple of minor characters in this novel. Ronald Weary, an eighteen year old young man, dies with gangrene because when the enemy captured him, they took away his boots. He is forced to walk bare foot. "There was something about death and the ninth day. There was a death on the ninth day in the car ahead of Billy's too. Ronald Weary died- of gangrene that had started in his mangled feet. So it goes" (57). Another minor character is Edger Derby, a school teacher who has been executed by the firing squad for stealing a tea pot. "Derby's son would survive the war. Derby wouldn't. That good body of his would be filled with holes by a firing squad in Dresden in sixty-eight days. So it goes" (60). Billy is a witness of these incidents.

Vonnegut centralizes the suffering of individuals. He tries to show that all wars are void. War can never bring peace.

In Tralfamadore Billy delivers a horrific account of war and violence. As stated in the novel “I myself have seen the bodies of schoolgirls who were boiled alive in a water tower by my own countrymen, who were proud of fighting pure evil at the time.’... ‘And I have lit my way in a prison at night with candles from the fat of human beings who were butchered by the brothers and fathers of those schoolgirls who were boiled.” (84) The impact of violence of war was so deep on Billy Pilgrim that he did not forget to recount them in time travel in Tralfamadore. In fact, his travel in time can be understood as psychological mode of time. In other words, time represents a specific segment of history and in case of Billy Pilgrim time includes the inhuman, brute incidents of Dresden bombing.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that the above discussion focuses on postmodern technique of narrating time and history in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Time is fragmented in the novel so it moves back and forth; similarly the historical events are set along the incidents of personal history. Past and present are mixed together and eventually resulted in the blurring of fact and fiction. Most importantly, Billy Pilgrim’s narration on war represents history from micro level.

Chapter 2

Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* or *The Nature of the Offence* (1991) is one of the most influential European postmodern literary works on the Holocaust. This novel is centered on the brutal history of The Nazi Holocaust and most importantly the entire novel has been crafted in reverse narration. Martin Amis has attempted to deconstruct the idea of time and history setting out the entire narrative in reverse manner. However, the history of killing six million Jews is one of the darkest incidents in human history. This serious issue cannot be traced back in errorless manner, but as a postmodern fiction writer Martin Amis has revisited the event in an ironic tone. In this novel, the protagonist's life, who was a Nazi doctor, has been narrated backward that is starting from his death bed to his birth. This chapter attempts to investigate how Martin Amis has used time and represented the history of the Nazi Holocaust.

This novel tells the story of a Nazi doctor who was actively involved in mass killings at Auschwitz concentration camp during World War Two. As the whole story is set in reverse mode, so the actions are performed in a backward motion. Time and space, in fact, assume backward movement, but yet the narration evidently achieves an ironic affect to the holocaust event. The story starts in America and then to Portugal, Italy and finally arrives in Germany. In linear manner, nevertheless, he escaped Germany after the war to hide in America. The protagonist Tod Friendly, lying on his death bed in a hospital in Massachusetts, but as the story progresses, he gets stronger as he starts recovering gradually. In the novel his secondary conscious says "I was definitely becoming stronger. My doctors came and went, with heavy hands and heavy breath, to admire my new gurgles and whimpers, my more spectacular twitches,

my athletic jolts” (Amis 5). The conversations, eating and drinking, body functions all activities are set in reverse. All the events in the novel are akin to watching a film in reverse mode. The narrator comments “It just seems to me that the film is running backward” (8).

Tod Friendly’s secondary consciousness narrates the story. The idea of secondary consciousness entails the capability to trace back an individual’s past memories and history. The narrator, or say the secondary consciousness of Tod Friendly, self-consciously remarks “I have no access to his thoughts-but I am awash with his emotions.” (7) In *Time’s Arrow* the most intriguing event narrated in reverse way is he is gradually becoming agile and fresh. The narrator says “Watch. We’re getting younger. We are. We are getting stronger. We’re even getting taller.... All the other people are getting younger too, ... After October 2, you get October 1. After October 1, you get September 30.” (8) Then, eating a meal from plate engages either hand or fork to take pieces by mouth. But in the novel the common manner of having meal laid out in reverse. In the novel “...after skillful massage with tongue and teeth I transfer them to the plate for additional sculpture with knife and fork and spoon.” (11)

In addition, gender roles have been imagined in reverse manner. Tod Friendly in his dream experienced the anxieties and fear of a woman. The most interesting issue is along with living and non-living substances and their action; Tod Friendly’s dream is also set in reverse with a shift of gender roles. “Tod features another kind of dream in which he is a woman....A man is near us with his face averted, his slab like back half-turned. He can harm us, of course. But he can protect us, if he likes.” (58)

As the time is in backward motion the treatment of wounded patient is reverse as well. Tod Friendly was hurting his patients. To put it simply, the procedures of healing a patient's wounds have turned into an act of hurting him. In the novel

You want to know what I do? All right. Some guy comes in with a bandage around his head. We don't mess about. We'll soon have that off. He's got a hole in his head. So what do we do? We stick a nail in it. Get the nail-a good rusty one- from the trash or whatever. And lead him out to the Waiting Room where he's allowed to liner and holler for a while before we furry him back to the night. (76)

Even, the most striking event of non-living objects and their functionaries have been narrated in a reverse way. At the initial part of the novel we see mostly human actions are arranged in a backward motion. Time is an essential element that constructs our perspective on external realities. In our practical understanding of a car we comfortably assume that a car cannot have five reverse gears and one forward gear. In the novel "For example, you have five reverse gears and only one for forward, which is marked *R*, for Reverse. When we drive, we don't look where we're going. We look were we came from." (22)It is narrated that the protagonist receives a black and white television and the color television was taken away.

Time is a concept scientifically constructed, say clock time, to mark and categorize different segments of day and night. This marking is similarly applicable to history and past experience. An individual's experience if formulated in terms of the action, experience of a particular time span. Tod Friendly was a Nazi doctor. Nazism as an extreme radicalist ideology beholder had farfetched impact on people. As a doctor Tod Friendly has performed the agendas of The Nazi power structure.

Clearly, Tod Friendly was an active participant with the criminal activities and the inhumane, brute experiences drive him to a paranoid state. He then starts traveling backwards in time. At the initial part of the novel the narrator remarks “I’m not completely innocent” (8) As the events move backwards, he left behind the dark time of sheer violence and reaches a non-violent time. At the end we find the narrator commenting “Odilo is innocent. His dreams are innocent, purged of menace and sickness... Odilo is innocent. Odilo is, it turns out, innocent, emotional, popular, and stupid.” (150)

Martin Amis emphasizes how time heals the memory of brutal experiences and shapes us as a human being. “Time passed. Time, the human dimension, which makes us everything we are.” (68). Again he says, “Maybe I’m tired of being human, if human is what I am. I’m tried to being human” (93) .In the backward narration he reaches his student days. Afterwards, he experiences his unborn state and later he finds himself in his mother’s womb and is expecting to live in the world. As stated “Soon I’ll be born too.” (163)

However, in this novel the reverse account narrated by Tod Friendly’s secondary consciousness blurs and subverts the formal and rigid narration of history. Maintaining reverse narration the author is technically undoing history. Martin Amis self-consciously ironizes and makes fun of the norms of official history. In this way, he subverts the structure of traditional history since from a postmodern view point truth is always doubtful. In postmodern discourse the idea of absolute truth is always under suspicion. In this manner Postmodernist fiction deconstructs the idea of truth. In other words, it is an anarchic way of rewriting history.

Time and history are interconnected. The author meticulously sustains this technique throughout the narrative. Different time is always followed by different experiences. Thus the

events that constitute history change in accordance with the nature and mode of time. For example- the events of fire bombing in Dresden bombing cannot be experienced, unless being an eye witness, but we can certainly get proper historical accounts of the event. The time frame marks the length of a particular event. Formal history or historiography is always a narrative of power. The rise of Nazism is an extreme expression of uncontrolled nationalism. Even the existing formal historical account of Nazism cannot deny the argument that it only includes the perspective of a power structure.

Racial supremacy is one of the inseparable aspects of Nazi emancipatory narrative. This issue was upheld by The Nazi's at the expense of other or minorities. Maintaining reverse narration the author has achieved the undoing of a violent history. As a fiction writer it is not possible to narrate each of the violent acts step by step. Even, for a historiographer it is almost impossible to write down each brute killing procedure.

It is narrated earlier that grand narrative aims to legitimize its own actions by setting a universal appeal. The core subject-matter of *Times Arrow* is holocaust and atrocities, performed by The Nazi party. In this context of postmodern fiction, it is critical to any grand narrative; therefore *Times Arrow* reacts with irony to Nazism.

Irony is one of the essential elements in postmodern narrative techniques. This novel uses a lot plenty of ironies to showed inhuman activities of killing Jews in masses. For example, the Nazi Doctor Odilo's revisits the dark time of his life. Interestingly it appears that he is engaged in healing the patients but the effect was opposite. As stated "It was I, Odilo Unverdorben , who personally removed the pellets of Zyklon B and entrusted them to pharmacist in his white coat."

(121)

The narrator comments on one of the scenes in Auschwitz as “One did not need to know why the ovens were so ugly, so very ugly. A tragically burly insect eight feet tall and made out of rust. Who would want to cook with an oven such as this? ... The dead look so dead. Dead bodies have their dead body language. It says nothing.” (120) Moreover, the narrator says, “The overwhelming majority of the women, the children, and the elderly we process with gas and fire.” (122)

Perhaps the most horrific and nerve-racking account is narrated in this way “My wife Hetra paid her first visit to Auschwitz in the spring of 1944, which was perhaps unfortunate: we were then doing the Hungarian Jews, and at an incredible rate, something like ten thousand a day.” (128)

In Auschwitz camp, Odilo used to control poison gasses in order to kill the Jews. The bodies of those Jews become gruesome. In reverse narrative technique those mutilated bodies regained their human structure and return back to life. The dark irony that is concealed in the reverse narration reveals the protagonist’s inability to escape from the inhuman deeds that he committed. It is important to note why Martin Amis projects Holocaust as undone while narrating in reverse. The temporal distortion of time, which destabilizes linear time frame, makes the plot move in loops. Amis, through his subversion of the tradition of linearity familiarizes the readers of the notion that a novel cannot explicitly recount the experience of time. Hence the Holocaust remains undone and peace seems to be restored in the end. Ironically the author describes the harsh brutality during the Second World War. It is really problematic to describe the destructions of war as well as the brutal matter of genocide in a linear time frame. But through this reverse technique the sheer atrocities are narrated yet ironized.

We were on the interface of bureaucracy and public relations. At this point of the Jews were being channeled back into society, and it felt to us to help dismantle and disperse the ghettos, where the light was always failing and disperse the ghettos, where the children all looked so old and full of knowledge, and everybody moved much too slowly or much too fast (140)

The narrator commented in the initial part of the novel that “This is a world of mistakes, of diametrical mistake” (8). The logical flow of time is absent in this novel. The narrator observed how Tod Friendly is traveling to the past which clearly suggests a psychological time. It is a time that we experience in our minds as memories of our past. Tod Friendly or The Nazi doctor Odilo, was an assistant of Uncle Pepi in Auschwitz. They experiment with dead children.

Pulleys, plungers, grates, and vents were the organs of the machine....The patients still dead, were delivered out on a stretcher like apparatus. The air felt thick and warped with the magnetic heat of creation. Hence to the Chamber, where the bodies were stacked carefully and, in my view, counter intuitively, with babies and children at the base of the pile, then the women and the elderly, and then the men. (120)

Tod friendly was traumatized and he had nightmares of atrocities of the holocaust. His past memories keep haunting his present condition. Through reverse time travel he escapes from the brute memories of holocaust. At the end of the novel, we find him young and innocent.

Finally, it is understood in the light of above discussion that *Time's Arrow* has narrated the entire story reversing the time. This reserving is quite unusual but this is used to undoing his individual connection with a historical incident.

Chapter 3

The concept of absolute truth has always been critiqued and questioned in postmodern literature. Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (1990) is a collection of short stories on the Vietnam War. In this book, *How to Tell a True War Story* explores the glorified projection of war and real account of a soldier who fought in the battle. O'Brien revisits past-memory of the war, and then associates those memories with his life. *How to Tell a True War Story* has a metafictional dimension that is a blurring of fact and imagination. The story is built on the event of the Vietnam War and recounts memories of real war experience. Tim O'Brien has explored the nature of truth and history, in War context, in an ironic way. This chapter aims to discuss how Tim O'Brien has represented time and history in this short story.

Time has been crafted in non-linear fashion in this story, and O'Brien's narrative moves back and forth with twenty years' time span. The story constantly shifts between past and present. The narration progresses as if the past incidents are revisited by the narrator. Our understanding of time in war contexts becomes a slow flowing phenomenon because of catastrophic atmosphere which threatens one's existence, and without existence time becomes meaningless. Physical or calendar time becomes numb during war time. In this text the narrator remembers his war experience where his buddy's sudden death puts him under traumatized situation. His past memories flash back in his mind where "The sound of dripping water", "the smell of moss" "the tiny blossom" every single incident reminds him. Now he is living in a moment where his past and present times mixed up together. In other word, he keeps crossing the boundary line between past and present.

Tim O'Brien's understanding of war is evidently transparent as an American army man he had experienced the Vietnam War. The narrator tells the story of a friend's friend. This is a story about war, particularly Vietnam War. Narrator's friend Bob Kiley writes a letter to Curt Lemon's sister. He consoled her saying that Curt Lemon was "A real soldier's soldier." (174) Bob waits for two months but she never responds. The narrator remembers these incidents from twenty years earlier. And then advances to discuss what a true account of war is. As he comments "There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue." (174) Afterwards, the narrator sheds light on certain important questions with relation to true accounts of the Vietnam War- who were the soldiers, what they become in war expedition and what they did in expedition time. As the narrator's comments suggests among other soldiers Curt Lemon and Bob Kiley were kids. They had no idea what they were doing in the expedition amidst deep forest. In the story "A nature hike, they thought, not even a war, so they went off into the shade of some giant trees- quadruple canopy, no sunlight at all- and they were giggling and calling each other motherfucker and playing a silly game they'd invented. The game involved smoke grenades," (175) for example on their third day of military expedition Curt Lemon dies playing grenade catch with Rat Kiley. Instead of blood strained confronting with enemy force. Rat Kiley kills baby water buffalo. Heroic fighting with enemy force is absent but they played silly games. Soldiers had no idea what they have been doing.

In war time operation they set a listening-post in the mountain. They had been lying in there for a long time. There were other sounds but only forest sounds. After some days the men lose patience and they start hallucinating about as sounds. The narrator comments "Not human voices, ... the rock- it's *talking*. And the fog, too, and the grass and the goddamn mongooses. Everything talks. The trees talk politics, the monkeys talk religion. The whole country. They sent

radio message and the mountain was destroyed. “They blow away trees and glee clubs and whatever else there is to blow away. ... It’s all fire. They make those mountains bum.” (177).

After the bombing their Colonel asks about what did they had really heard there and says it costs six trillion dollars for firepower. The six-listening post men had no particular evidence. This incident shows that war is futile, war is not heroic action but war can be funny. To put it differently, war is always useless.

History as a grand narrative is an issue that postmodernist authors react against and make fun of most often in the form of irony. Metafiction is a common feature in postmodern literary practices. In this story, there is a self-conscious blurring of fact and fiction. If the description of a war is true or real, that description would have to state what historical accounts stands for. In our practical sense such narration is either entirely fact-oriented or a fictionalized account of historical events. In this short story Tim O’Brien has problematized our normal understanding of true war story. As the narrator commented “A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, or restrain men from doing the things they have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it.” (174)

War is an armed clash between nations, a grand narrative of the operating forces behind every war. Heroism is an ideology invested as it represents heroes of war holding certain values. A true war story, or say history, always presents a clear-cut moral distinction between good and evil. And within this binary construction there is a glorified celebration of the winner. War gives birth to heroes and their courageous endeavors. As mentioned earlier that postmodernism always resistant towards such grand narrative. Postmodernism makes fun of all-encompassing projects; in similar way war and heroism stand for universal standards. But postmodernism approaches these universal concepts with questions in mind. As in the story “In many cases a true war story

cannot be believed. If you believe it, be skeptical. It's a question of credibility." (176) In this statement the narrator questions the idea of question absolute truth and values. Postmodernism asks questions about whose truth to follow or believe and attempts to achieve a heterogeneous cultural sphere.

Tim O'Brien has participated in the Vietnam War thus he knows what can be a true account on war. His narration on war is not merely a result of imagination or any vale infused depiction of war. Moreover, he suggests the readers or listeners not to accept any truth-calming war stories as absolute.

Conclusion

As I discussed in the beginning, this paper, examined three postmodern literary works where time and history are interrelated. This paper has looked at the treatment of time and history in postmodern fictions. All three postmodern literatures explicitly show extreme distrust, anger and hatred to War, a form of meaninglessness human cruelty. War is clash of ideologies; wars are justified by grand discourse of nationalism. The dichotomy of good and evil drives the project of glorification.

The introductory part of this dissertation has discussed the basic theoretical ideas and features of postmodernism as well as on the relevant theories of postmodernism. The first chapter analyses the novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* and points out how history and time are crafted in postmodern discourse. The second chapter has delectated how, *Times Arrow*, reverse narration can be used as a tool for undoing violent history and escape from traumatized state of time. The third chapter focuses on the credibility of glorified narrative of war and how history and time is presented in non-liner fashion.

Therefore, history is as a narrative not as a grand or meta-narrative. Postmodern idea of historiographic metafiction has focused throughout the novels where fact and fiction blended together. The idea of truth is always doubtful and construct. The effect of the true war story will be to replace certainty with confusion.

In conclusion, it is possible to relate all three postmodernist fictions, or say the central characters' understanding of time and history, within a single thread. These fictions evidently indicate a rupture from modernist fabrication and design of fiction. Time and history in modern

fiction is crafted in linear progression following clock time. If there is any disruption or fragmentation of time, that is deliberately done for laminating the loss of the self. For treatment of time and history modernist fiction follow realist tone and style with a fixed moral and political position. However, these three postmodernist fictions disrupt clock time and celebrate psychological time or anarchic mode of time. It is a state where past, present and future mingle together yet creating a literary effect. It is clearly noticeable that the selected fictions for this dissertation share a common ground- which is war, particularly World Wars.

Violence cannot be narrated in linear process, if narrated in rational way then the narrative would assume a horror nature. And most importantly instead of reacting against violence, atrocities; it would create anxiety and fear. In case of *Times Arrow* the reverse narration is achieved with sheer irony. In *Slaughterhouse-Five* Billy Pilgrim's traumatized mind travels in time and revisits history of Dresden catastrophe. In *How to Tell a True War Story* time shifts back and forth and makes us to keep a suspicious attitude to anything that claims to be absolute moral account on war. Therefore it is evident that temporal distortion in plotline is done in celebratory manner. History is also deconstructed and ironized through metafictional writing.

Works Cited

Amis, Martin. *Time's Arrow*, New York: Harmony, 1991. Print.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2011. Print.

Connor, Steven. *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*. Ed. Steven Connor. New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2004. Print.

Dickens, David R., and Andrea Fontana. "Time and Postmodernism." *Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2002, pp. 389–396. Web.

Edelstein, Arnold. "Slaughterhouse-Five: Time Out of Joint." *College Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring, 1974), pp. 128-139. Johns Hopkins University Press. Web.

.

Guha, Ranajit. "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" *Subaltern Studies*. Oxford University Press. Print.

Hassan, Ihab. *Toward a Concept of Postmodernism*. Ohio State University, 1987. Print

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge. 1988. Pdf

..... *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print.

Lewis, Barry. *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*. Ed. Stuart Sim. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. Print

Lyotard, Jean-François. "Note on the Meaning of 'Post-'" *The Postmodern Explained*. Trans.

Don Barry and et al. Ed. by Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, P 75-80. Web

----- "The postmodern condition" *The Postmodern History Reader*. Edited by Keith Jenkins, Routledge, 1997. P 36-38. Print.

Mendeloff, David. "Trauma and Vengeance: Assessing the Psychological and Emotional Effects of Post-Conflict Justice." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2009, pp. 592–623. Web.

Ning, Wang. *Intruduction: Historicising Postmodernist Fiction. Narrative*. Volume 21, Number 3, October 3 2013, pp. 263-270. The Ohio State Univrsity Press. Web.

O'Brien, Tim. "How to Tell a True War Story," Paula Geyh et al. Eds, *Postmodern American Fiction: A Norton Anthology*. New York: W.W Norton, 1998. Print.

Puhr, Kathleen M. "Postmodernism for High-School Students." *The English Journal*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Jan., 1992), pp. 64-66. Web.

Self, Will. *The Sweet Smell of Psychosis*. London: Bloomsbury, 2011. Print.

Sheehan, Paul. *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*. Ed. Steven Connor. New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2004. Print.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*. London: Vintage. 1991. Print.

Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*. London: Routledge. 2001. Print.

Yeats, W.B. *The Second Coming*. The Poetry Foundation. Web.

