

History as Metafiction

A Study of Three European Postmodern Novels:

**Graham Swift's *Waterland* (1983) Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* (1989),
and Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984).**



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

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine how postmodern novels self-consciously synchronize history in fiction. To be more precise, how and why history has been used in metafictional dimension as a postmodern discourse. In order to discuss the idea of history as metafiction, this paper has attempted to present a background of modernism and its legacies; and how postmodernism emerged as a cultural phenomenon. History is a contested idea, and how postmodernism approaches the idea of history is also discussed to clarify why metafictional writing is significant to postmodern discourse. And lastly to illustrate the idea of history as metafiction this paper consolidates on three novels *Waterland* (1983), *Foucault's Pendulum* (1989) and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984).

Introduction

Postmodernism is a cultural phenomenon which is a reaction against modernism. The concept of postmodernism is mostly labeled as ‘arcane jargon’, ‘cliché’, ‘diffuse’, ‘obscure’, ‘airy’, ‘ghostlike’, ‘fussy’, ‘much contested’, ‘deeply controversial’, often it is done in the form of an attack or as a subverting technique, in critiquing the notion of postmodernism. So, it is pertinent to have an understanding of modernism and its legacies, before plunging into an in-depth discussion of postmodernism, in order to form a comprehensive premise of this dissertation. The transition of modernism to postmodernism can be traced through a discussion of modernism and its legacies. Chapter one discusses a precise understanding of modernism- how modernism evolved in the western civilization and how it brought its decline. The second chapter attempts to sketch a comprehensive understanding of postmodernism through the transition of architectural postmodernism to literary postmodernism and postmodern treatment towards history. Third chapter concentrates on theoretical understanding of metafiction.

Chapter 1

Modernism

Let us begin with a precise understanding of Modernism's history and evolution, and that will take us to the 'much contested' term Postmodernism. Modernism is a heavy term historically associated with the Western culture and civilization. The origin of, considered by most of the literary historians, modernism and modernist movement has shown its presence in the late nineteenth century. As a broad and wide ranging movement modernism stated its appearances in different spheres of society and cultures- architecture, economy, painting, literature, music, fashion and life style and so on.

The core impulse of modernism was to break down all the conventional and traditional rituals, forms, contents and cultural practices of life. A deliberate attempt had been constantly maintained to achieve the modernist trend in each sphere of art and culture. The First World War (1914-1918) had a horrific and farfetched effect on Western culture. The implicit ramifications are reflected different forms of arts as well as literature. World War One fueled the anxiety as well as spread alienation among the people from every stratum of society. One of the most prominent modernist writer Ezra Pound's phrase provides a concrete sense of modernism's agenda- 'make it new'. His phrase further confirms modernism's drive to go beyond and break away from the traditional norms and forms of western culture. According to many critics and literary historians, the notion of *avant-garde* is considered as one of the key characteristic marks of modernism. Etymologically *avant-garde* is a word from French origin and signifies a militant meaning "advanced-guard"¹. There was emergence of a group of artists, politicians, philosophers who attested themselves as the *avant-garde* artists through their perception of works. The

¹ Following *Online Etymology Dictionary*. <http://www.etymonline.com>

modernist tradition strictly maintains certain rigid ethos which is a conscious attempt to distant modernism from the past. This intentional withdrawal of modernism from past or Ezra Pound's jargon "make it new" provide the latent polemic to comprehend modernism. As a separate period modernism, for an example, contrasted with romanticism; where the later fostered love for nature, worshipped and sought solution from nature, whereas the former harbored on 'alienation' from nature and conventional social life. This sharp contrast can be vividly exemplified in the poems of John Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* (1819) and T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915) respectively. For the examples above, it can be discerned that romanticist approach, and poetics of art, to the world fundamentally requires an anti-rational experience or rupture from the fixity of life, but this trend is roundly censured in modern polemics.

Since the self-generated intense wave of modernism brought change in European art and culture up to the first half of the twentieth century, so the subsequent transition of thought process of modernist artist explicitly echoed in their cultural practices. It is possible to draw a fine sketch of literary modernism in Peter Barry's word's "In literature, finally, there was a rejection of traditional realism in favor of experimental forms of various kinds." (Barry 79) In addition, he outlines some of the salient traits of the literary modernism, "A new emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity, that is, on *how* we see rather than *what* we see; A movement (in novels) away from the apparent objectivity provided by such features as: omniscient external narration, fixed narrative points of view and clear-cut moral positions." (79)

In addition, modern literature is full of anxiety, there is a strong presence of judgmental and moral position, industrial society, city stands for glorified space for living; and technically narrative flow maintains chronological and unified plot structure and the finishing has a definite ending. The decline of western civilization and impact of industrialization are recurring theme in

modern literature. The sense of loss and fragmentation of life is echoed with a tone of lamentation. Modernist authors, in other words, always hark back for the loss of center. W.B. Yeats's poem *The Second Coming* (1919) asserts "Things fall apart; center cannot hold;"² This poem exemplifies a key theme of modernism- anxiety and fear of dysfunctionality in world.

As suggested earlier, modern literature, like D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913) and James Joyce's *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man* (1916), exhibits the tension of modern life. Each writer created a work of literature with the aptitude of modernist creed. For instance- anxiety, alienation, entrapment of the protagonists, judgmental moral position are predominant in these novels. The most apparent commonality exists between the protagonists, Paul Morel and Stephen Dedalus resemble simultaneously is a state of entrapment and sense of anxiety which results in their indecisiveness of actions, except they set off to embrace city life. In love life, for example, both are stuck amid women. On one hand Stephen has developed a deep affection for Emma Clery, considers and worships her as a symbol of eternal femininity, and on the other hand he used to visit brothels. He falls into a state of confusion whether to be an avid Catholic priest or embrace philosophy and art. The same is applicable for Paul. He hovered around Miriam and Clara, even his mother had terrific effect on his love relation with other women. Paul is similar, in terms of judgmental moral position, hence he considers Miriam as Spiritual, complex, and naïve conversely Clara stands for progressive and strong woman. Above all, essential characteristic features of a modernist fiction are implicit in these two novels such as chronological plot structure and a definite finishing.

What prompted, however, modernism to urge for 'new' and how modernism backed up is aspiration? The possible answer to this question follows this manner: the resurgence of, in fact,

² Yeats, W.B. *The second Coming* (1919). Poetry Foundation. Web.

rational thought and science, and their usage and application in Modern period (1914-1945) can be tracked down to the Renaissance (1500-1660). The Renaissance nourished primacy of individual, wished for a complete man and promoted imagination. During Renaissance there was comprehensive flourishing of scientific and philosophical ideas. In physical science Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo; and in Philosophy René Descartes were prominent among the Renaissance personas. Most of accounts of modern philosophers and historians embedded early modern period back to the Renaissance. In short, the prominence of reason and science fuelled the Modernism's ambition to uphold new discourses or modernist schism for life and philosophy. The firm belief on reason and science undoubtedly was the pivotal catalyst to form the Self's compulsion to conquer the universe. In Bertrand Russell's observation "Technique conferred a sense of power: man is now much less at the mercy of his environment than he was in former times. ... Unlike religion, it is ethically neutral: it assures men that they can perform wonders, but does not tell them what wonders to perform." (Russell 481-2). If technique assured power, then obviously technique sprung from knowledge- preferably scientific knowledge. In discussing the Renaissance's profound influence on modern European thinking Lawrence Cahoon remarks "By the eighteenth century momentum began to gather behind a new *view* of the world, which would eventually create a new *world*, the modern world of science and industry and business and cities...where the rhythm of life was to be increasingly dictated by machines rather than by nature"³ This dream of a *new world*, or the aspiration to Utopia through knowledge, again suggests Enlightenment project.

Why so much reliance on Science and reason to improve human condition? What forces human beings to a lower state of being? German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who is considered

³ This quote has been extracted from the Introductory part of *From Modernism to postmodernism: An Anthology*. Edited by Lawrence Cahoon. Page 17.

as the greatest modern philosophers, in *An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'* defines Enlightenment “*Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another.*” (Kant 45) Specifically, the Enlightenment Project is the eventual manifestation of strict adherence to science and reason. The core promise of this broad project was to improve and enhance human condition through rationality, and to ensure progress and equality for human.

As a deliberate and far-reaching movement modernism aspired to achieve enlightenment but eventually resulted in severe crisis in social, philosophical, economic and intellectual arenas of western culture. Enlightenment project, in fact an intellectual project arrived at the apex of development in eighteenth century, promised extreme use of reason and science for human progress. Modernism gave birth of industrialization in Europe. The agricultural society was replaced with industrial settings which allured people to migrate village to city. The glorified city life encouraged its inhabitants to live an isolated but yet a rational life. Rationalism in everyday life took over religious faith. The use of Science and reason could not ease the life all people albeit of their class differences. The innovation of communication technology- telephone, and domestic appliances like refrigerator, electric kettles and electric iron, the spread of Ford Motor car etc. were only rich class bound consumption.

Having the glorification of City life in mind, Charles Baudelaire, a French poet and essayist, elucidated what is meant by *modernity*. According to his *The Painter of Modern Life (Year)* “Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable.” (Baudelaire 100) The picture and nature of a man in the social and cultural milieu of modern time depicted this way “He admires the eternal beauty and the astonishing harmony of life in the capital cities, a harmony so providentially maintained in

the tumult of human liberty. He gazes at the landscape of the great city, ... He is looking for that indefinable something we may be allowed to call 'modernity', for a want of a better term to express the idea in question." (98-99)

It could be argued that political ideology was entangled with Modernism; and thus it was endowed with authoritative, value-judgment and hierarchal sense. It was aspirant to determine everything with fixed knowledge. For modernism the article of faith was reason and rationality. There was formation of radicalism in political arena. This rise of violent extremist political or militant parties, who set themselves at the center of power, essentially claimed to be a unifying force and asks for a homogenized sphere of political, cultural and social space. In this way, modernist political ideology relishes complete silence or abolishing of difference and diversity. In other words, modernism has certain ideology attached to its core and therefore it attempts to formulate or construct others following that ideology. For example, Nazism, which had certain ideology, is the epitome of totalitarian politics. The fondness of fixity, political arena as an example, of modern European society further illustrates the insular attitude of modernism. One instance can be shown as the sheer violence for silencing racial and religious difference, in accordance with totalitarian ideology, is the holocaust. Some proponent of modernism attempted to justify the miss-use of science, for mass destruction and power, as appropriation of rational thought. The world, albeit, has witnessed the fallout of the Enlightenment Project. Italy, akin to Germany and Hitler's Nazi totalitarianism, witnessed the rise of a Fascist Benito Mussolini. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti outlined an intense sparking account in *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism* (1972), which was thundering for a utopia- through a Fascist, two of the agendas of that manifesto follows "We will glorify war- the world's only hygiene- militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for

woman. We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight for moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice.” (Marinetti 119) In Europe, to put it differently, modernism cultivated extreme nationalism, it was another marching of a totalitarian ideology a la all extremist radicalism, and the upshots were two bloodstained world wars.

Modernism’s gravitation towards seamless unification or homogenization did not appear merely in the rise of totalitarianism, as one instance of modernism’s drive, but to the other forms of arts as well. In the same way, we can consider modern architecture similarly exhibits its profound adherence to fixity and unified and grounded and rooted form of art. There was increasing use of geometrical designs for industrial and corporate outlook in architecture. The enlightenment dogma, science and reason for progress of human life had been coded in the form of geometrical designs, predominant in the expression of modern architectural language. The Swiss architect, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret a.k.a Le Corbusier, was one imperative proponent in modern architecture, argued one of his articles named *Towards a New Architecture* (1923) that “Modern life demands, and is waiting for, a new kind of plan, both for the house and for the city. ... The house is a machine for living in.” (Corbusier 132) Le Corbusier’s statement, ‘house as machine’ reassures the rigid mechanized outcome of modernity. If house is a machine, then a machine like this will only provide space for ‘non-living objects’. The conceptual and practical renunciation of human living space had been ensured for the sake of ‘newness’ and ‘rational’. This modernist concern with public living sphere and the yearning for continuation is further affirmed

Not in the pursuit of an architectural idea, but simply guided by the results of calculation (derived from the principles which govern our universe) and the conception

of A LIVING ORGANISM, the ENGINEERS of to-day make use of the primary elements and, by coordinating them in accordance with the rules, provoke in us architectural emotions and thus make the work of a man ring in unison with universal order. (135)

Here, Le Corbusier's account strongly suggests, on one hand the supremacy of rationalism- technique, knowledge; on the other hand the drabness of nature- agriculture and rural life- which is devoid of Enlightenment impulse. Likewise, in Germany, an analogous approach to architecture crept into Bauhaus. For this reason, modernism had enormous dominion over the architectural practices in Bauhaus-which is affirmed by their attachment to International Style. The pivotal purpose, again pursuing Enlightenment dogma for designing buildings, was rationality and functionality for mass people.

Modernism established value-judgment through socio-economic system. Capitalism assisted the expansion of industrial infrastructures in cities. This was also the growth of economic power. But these industrial developments eventually lead to oppression, as stated by Karl Marx that the Bourgeois class relied on the Proletarians. Economic status determined social status and thus the value-judgment was from the powerful position. This is one of the characteristic marks that cultivated, coupled with other factors, the worship of Individualism. This was essentially an attitude of hierarchy in society. The segregation of higher and lower culture in terms of this economic value was created in modern world. According to many literary historians the idea of Individualism was forged with practice of reason, science, bourgeois mentality and a cry for the urban life.

Max Weber, a quintessential German sociologist, who bespoke one of the depressing aspects of modernism. In Weberian understanding, modernity snatches and conquers an individual's rational faculty. He argued on the politicization of science and maintained that the use of rationalism indeed was a manipulation to serve certain vision. In his lecture *Science as a Vacation* (1918) he questioned the validity and understanding of universal science by all modern men and depth of knowledge a modern man should have to be progressive. By engaging, in fact an ironic statement, a modern man's understanding of his innovations and a savage's familiarity of his hunting tools – Weber pointed out the irrational aspect of modernity. Following Weber's words "The increasing intellectual and rationalization do *not*, therefore, indicate an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives." (Weber 128) Furthermore, the distaste for a modernized society expressed in his words "The fate of our time is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the "disenchantment of the world."" (131)

Finally, let us consider each of the cultural spheres discussed above, where modernism put its signature- literature, architecture, politics and society. We can sense a clear impact of rigidness. Ideology is cardinal to modernism. Nationalism, being a component of modernism, transferred into a totalizing force which endeavored to place itself at center. Modernism wrote the code for indifference and morality through which culture was engineered. Architecture, painting, literature, music, fashion do not exist in vacuum even history writing is also domiciled within a certain time and space. To take an attempt for ease human life and develop a culture and civilization, Western culture in this context, is one thing; but the illogical and fanatic orientation in human life under the veneer of 'science and progress' is ambiguous and vague thing. To be more precise, say for instance the Stone Age, supposedly the age of *non-rational*

beings from the perspective of the modern man. That age did not initiate any brutality and mass killings, despite lacking Enlightenment philosophy, what modernism did. Nevertheless for Jürgen Habermas, the staunchest adherent of modernism, 'Modernity is an Incomplete Project'; this utterance, whether optimistic or arrogant, emphatically suggests the resurgence of modernism. A question comes, again, for whom? Launching the indifferent system for another expedition towards Utopia would be an immediate answer to the question raised. If modernism initiated a project to march away from barbarism, ignorance, inferiority to civilized, enlightened, rational and just world or Utopia, then how mass destruction can be a rational solution. Modernism, therefore, brought its own demise. This failure of modernism itself paved the way for flourishing of postmodernism as a cultural term.

Chapter 2

Postmodernism

Generally speaking, postmodernism is a style and movement in culture in the late twentieth century. The decade after 1945 was a span of time when postmodernism, as a cultural phenomenon, started mounting in adjacent spheres of cultures. Postmodernism, like modernism but with a distinctive nature, permeated in many spheres of culture including- architecture, painting, philosophy, lifestyles, law, cricket, science and technology, cinema and television, music and literature as well.

Though the visible emergence of postmodernism was in late twentieth century, considered anonymously by most of theorists and historians, but according to many literary historians and critics the term 'postmodern' was in use much earlier time. In 1870 John Watkins Chapman, an English painter, applied the term to define all the paintings that went beyond the dominant trend Impressionism. It was one of the techniques practiced by nineteenth-century modern artists in Europe. Then in 1917, another instance, this term was also employed by the German philosopher Rudolf Pazwitz to designate the new form of culture developing in Europe. The socio-political context when Rudolf Panwitz used this, the notion of postmodernism, is very important since time and space was World War One and it was time of sheer violence and anti-humanist culture started developing in Europe.

Architecture is the most grounded and concrete form of art. It is a combination of science and art. Postmodernism first emerged in architecture as a reaction to modern architecture's adherence to an International Style. This apparent International Style was guided by a sophisticated methodology and ideology to create and design city space for its dwellers. Charles

Jencks is an influential postmodern architect and theorist. His *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977) is an instrumental work, in fact a watershed in the development of postmodernism as a cultural term, in architectural arena. He argued the death of modern architecture. To quote “Modern Architecture died in St Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3.32 p.m.” (Jencks 457) To make the claim he adopted a semiotic approach to read modern architectural buildings. He attacked the proponents of modernist ethos, for example Le Corbusier’s endorsement for Urbanism, in architecture. Following his statement “Modern Architecture, as the son of the Enlightenment, was an heir to its congenital nativities too great and awe-inspiring to warrant refutation in a book on mere building.” (458)

In *What is Post-Modernism?* (1986) Charles Jencks expanded his notion of postmodernism in art and fiction. He provided an account how architecture and fiction can be viewed as analogous in terms of postmodern understanding. He proposed, for defining Post-Modernism, the concept of double-coding. According to his words double-coding is “...the combination of Modern techniques with something else in order for architecture with the public and a concerned minority, usually other architectures. ... Double coding to simplify means both elite/popular and new/old and there are compelling reasons for these opposite pairings” (459) In essence, this notion conveys a fluid state that maneuvers from a fixed and unified edge to loose and fracture edge. To put it differently, it suggests a slight continuation of past and going beyond that. This is a clear resonance of hybridity and pluralism in architectural language and provides significant insights for other forms of arts as well. Hence in literature he praised Umberto Eco for emphasizing irony to revisit past. To some extent irony is analogous to double-coding.

However, Ihab Hassan’s *The Postmodern Turn* (1987) is seminal in postmodernism, particularly in postmodern literary discourse. He pointed out a schematic difference between

modernism and postmodernism. Modernism is marked with Hierarchy, Mastery/Lgos, Creation/Totalization, Root/Depth, Narrative/*Grande Historie*, Determinancy and so on; conversely Postmodernism is marked with Anarchy, Exhaustion/Silence, Decreation/Deconstruction, Rizome/Surface, Anti-narrative/*Petite Historie*, Indeterminacy and so on. This schematic differentiation is fruitful to understand the concept of postmodernism in numerous cultural spheres. The question of Determinancy, for instance, in narrative structure is commonly conceived as a fixed and rational composition of plot. It could be argued that Ihab Hassan's endeavor to define postmodernism, parallel to Charles Jencks, has an implicit resonance of pluralism and heterogeneity. According to his words "Modernism and postmodernism are not separated by an Iron Curtain or Chinese Wall;... We are all, I suspect, a little Victorian, Modern, and Postmodern, at once. And an author may, in his or her own lifetime, easily write both a modernist and postmodernist work."⁴

As for an instance we can consider Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* (1991), which is one of the renowned European postmodern fictions. The story, which is about the life of a Nazi doctor, is most spectacularly narrated in reverse way. In a reverse narration *Time's Arrow* (1991) tells the past actions of a Nazi doctor and thus revisits the history of holocaust. This instance of reverse narration is a sheer reaction to a modernist fiction's treatment of chronology time. In Ihab Hassan's terms it could be argued deconstruction of formal narrative structure.

Modernist writers attempted to break away from tradition erasing the past. Ever if they looked at past, they had a tone of lamentation. But postmodernist writers do not attempt to erase past rather they think of deconstruction of the perception to the world. Umberto Eco, one of the quintessential postmodern author and theorist, outlined literary postmodernism's response and

⁴ This quote has been extracted from the essay "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism".

negation with past. As stated by Umberto Eco in *Postmodernism, Irony, the Enjoyable* that “The postmodern reply to modern consists of recognising the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently.” (Eco 227)

The term postmodernism is frequently conceived as an entirely discrete frame of period and attitude. Postmodernism is not a chronological period or successor of modernism. French philosopher and postmodern theorist, Jean-François Lyotard writing in *Note on the Meaning of 'Post-'* (1985) attested the notion of postmodernism. For Lyotard “...the ‘post-’ of ‘postmodern’ does not signify a movement of *comeback*, *flashback* or *feedback*, that is, not a movement of repetition but a procedure in ‘ana-’: a procedure of analysis, anamnesis, anagogy and anamorphosis which elaborates an ‘initial forgetting’.” (412) Here the phrase ‘initial forgetting’ can be understood as modernism’s attempt to break away from the past. If in Lyotard’s statement postmodernism is ‘a procedure of analysis’ of ‘initial forgetting’. Then postmodernism can be clearly apprehended as a parallel critique of modernism, since as a procedure it examines, recollects, interpreters and questions modernism. In other words postmodernism is a way of thinking that manifested as a cultural term. As discussed earlier that the emancipatory discourse for human life, modernism’s core compulsion, is something that postmodernism critiques.

Perception is very crucial to our understanding. It requires the manner of noticing realities around us which is often determined by some fixed ideas and concepts. For example, foundationalism, naturalism and essentialism are arch beliefs in modernism since these maintains fixed understanding of realities. These perceptions promote fixed and justified understanding of external realities. In essentialist perception, say, gender is divided into two categories- male and female. Each category has certain fixed socio-political status. Judith Butler, nevertheless, as a

postmodern feminist employed an anti-essentialist approach to gender, deconstructed the notion of gender.

Pluralism and heterogeneity, in fact the bedrock of postmodernism, abjure the absolute truth, reality and authority. Despite having a unified structure in culture postmodernism avidly encourages multiple discourses in culture. Primarily postmodernism questions who's truth, reality to follow and who's authority to obey? Hence postmodernism is a critique, following Lyotard's notion, of anything that establish *per se* as totalisation. Totalizing compulsion abolishes difference, whereas postmodernism celebrates difference. That is to say, in postmodern understanding difference and heterogeneity lead to unity.

In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* Jean-François Lyotard defined "...*postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarrative. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it." (Lyotard 36-37) If metanarrative embodies an omnipresent philosophical and ideological project to justify its aim, then postmodernists would response to that inviolable metanarrative with a sense of repugnance.

Besides he also argued that there is no single dominant grand narrative, totalizing projects, in political sphere anymore; in contrast there are multiple little narratives existing in world. He alleges that grand narrative, or "emancipation narrative", always legitimates itself by a fixed body of knowledge. Grand narrative is insular and only demands for monolithic political and homogenous cultural domain; at the same time it proclaims it's capability to provide universal solution to the crisis existing in human society. Using Lyotard's notion of "emancipation narrative" it can be claimed that far-reaching socio-political discourses like Capitalism, Nazism, Marxism, Communism, Democracy, and extreme religious Fundamentalism

are exemplar of such totalizing institutional and ideological forms of knowledge. While pointing up how modernism is aggregated with grand narrative he remarks:

I will use the term *modern* to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meanings, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth. For example, the rule of consensus between the sender and addressee of a statement with truth-value is deemed acceptable if it is cast in terms of possible unanimity between rational minds: this is the Enlightenment narrative in which the hero of knowledge works towards a good ethno-political end - universal peace. As can be seen from this example, if a metanarrative implying a philosophy of history is used to legitimate knowledge, questions are raised concerning the validity of the institutions governing the social bond: these must be legitimated as well. Thus justice is consigned to the grand narrative in the same way as truth. (36)

Postmodern discourse of knowledge, on the contrary, is suspicious and questions abortive attempts of any sorts of grand narrative, and facilitates countenance to pluralism. In Lyotard's perception "Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. (37-38) This clearly is a celebration of diverse and multivalent political and culture with a single sphere. The second possible understanding can be a sheer response to modernist axiom through the formation of difference.

In *Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?* Lyotard points up the postmodern aesthetic and that also implies how modern fiction is concerned with past. As mentioned earlier

that postmodernism is a critique of modernism- Lyotard has applied a similar line of approach to modern literature. He exemplified two cases of modernist authors, namely- Marcel Proust and James Joyce, and argued that the former author was “a victim of the excess of time” and the later was “a victim of excess of the book or of literature”, who inherited from past instead their attempt to break with past. He comments “...Proust inherits it from Balzac and Flaubert,” (149) The modernist rubric of ‘making it new’ is thus not new but a reshuffling of the old, as hinted by Lyotard, with a banner of rationalizing ethos. The chronological narration, or say stream of consciousness technique, considered as a benchmark of modernist fiction, is a unified sequencing of feelings, memory, thoughts and perception of the protagonist. Heroism, for example, is idealized representation, can be achieved through stream of consciousness technique, of protagonist and it can be claimed that heroism is determined by grand narrative. To put it differently modernist fictions attempt to create, admittedly with a rational impulse intrinsic to its agenda, a new style and ethos breaking away from past yet they inherits from past. Following Lyotard’s observation “A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant.” (148) This insightful assertion ensures postmodernism’s non-authorial nature not only in literary postmodernism but other forms of culture as well. Lyotard defined who is a postmodern writer in terms of postmodern aesthetic:

A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the texts he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. ... The artist and the writer, then, are

working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*.

(149)

The above statements imply that the notion of a postmodern writer is fluid and places a postmodern artist in an autonomous place yet discrete from the authorial impulse. If an artist is authentically liberated from the prevailing styles, particularly of modernist edifice of writing, and at the same time facilitated to craft a style with pluralistic nature, then the space of literary arena becomes more vibrant and exciting.

Generally speaking, in earlier periods as for an example, authors used to keep an objective approach for composing narrative, unless it was an autobiographical fiction. Conversely, in postmodern discourse of art, authors can relish a complete rupture, from objective approach to literature. Using Self-reflexive narration an author can narrate his own story parallel with fictive the work. If it is possible to write without fixed systems, then it is similarly possible to create an alternative realm for fiction. Some of the fictions simulated forms of other structures for example encyclopedia, periodic table and so on. Within postmodern discourse of aesthetic- it is possible to have a numeral figure as a name for a fiction, for example, American novelist Ronald Sukenick's *98.6* (1975), signifies normal body temperature yet provoking an ironic reaction to what we conceive as normalcy. In essence, this postmodern aesthetic 'working without rules' enables an artist to celebrate pluralism and to formulate heterogeneous forms and content in literature and culture.

Postmodernism accentuates the idea of intertextuality in cultural sphere as a manifestation of celebrating pluralism. The lineage of intertextuality is from poststructuralism, where it is considered that no signifier is autonomous and always connected to other signifiers.

Julia Kristeva, first coined this term, meant ‘tissue of citation’⁵ to explain intertextuality. A Signifier is the most minimal unit to construct a fiction. Thus signifiers are integral part of a fiction. However, postmodernist fictions embrace this idea of intertextuality to contain and refer to other works. For some critics, it is a cross-reference in narrative flow. In this way, different texts and textual constructs are revisited and recontextualized along with the story. This enables postmodernist authors to dismantle the boundary of high and low art. It is a harmonizing act of referencing different texts yet achieving a plural meaning.

Self-reflexive narration engages the author inside the narrative. Authors could show their participation in the narrative events. In most situations, this is a projection of an author inside the fictive world. For Linda Hutcheon, a literary theorist, this manner of projecting the any author into the narrative entails two modes⁶: overt self-reflexivity and covert self-reflexivity.

Let us now, however, focus on the idea of history, a key point of this dissertation, and how postmodernism approaches history. History means, in most situations, any particular record of past events, a documentation of earlier actions or in academic vocabulary it is study of the past. The act of writing history is defined as historiography. This is a complex process which constitutes collection of reliable evidence, judging the validity of facts and accumulation of all these for writing history. In other words it is process of documentation of perceived knowledge of past events. Nevertheless, postmodernism considers history as merely a construction. History can be written from a biased position. We can consider a musician who composes music based on his intimate feelings and encouraged by his surrounding environment. A folk musician, that is to say, living in a country side would never create heavy rock music. We can consider an author

⁵ The phrase ‘tissue of citation’ is borrowed from Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory 3rd Edition.

⁶ Hutcheon, Linda. *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. New York and London: Methuen, 1980. Web

who writes fiction, his imagination and experience to the world are integral to his artistic creation. The commonality, however, among any artist is the composition of feelings and expression of collective feelings in different forms. Hence, the process of writing history can be the ascendancy of politics in the field of the society. Class and ideology, or any forms of grand narrative, can alter the documenting process of the past events.

There is a relentless debate going on postmodernism and historiography in academic arena. Under the rubric of knowledge- the knowledge of historiography has assumed a contested position. For example critic Christopher Norris fiercely defends upper class or grand history. Norris hinted postmodernism as a mere “all-embracing literary theory” and accused postmodernism for “colonise other disciplines”. (Norris 93) For Norris postmodern critique or response in nothing but “premature and suspect” approach to “treatment of historical texts.” And that is dangerous enterprise for historiography. Norris claimed

...current ideas in literary theory provide at best a partial and at worst an actively misleading model for the conduct of other disciplines. They lend support to a fashionable relativist trend which undermines critical reason, treats history as simply a collection of fictions, and renounces any claim to distinguish between truth and the various currencies of true-seeming ideological belief. (97)

It is self-evident that Norris has an impulse to retain and inherit ‘reason’ that provides him a form of certainty in historiography. To cut this argument one question is ample: If instrumental reason excludes difference then who’s reason Norris want to simulate?

Conversely, in *Historiography and postmodernism*, F.R. Ankersmit stated that historiographic knowledge has inhaled the steam of essentialism. To quote “Historians have always been

searching for something they could label as the essence of the past...consequently everything could be understood.” (Ankersmit 289) And he assailed the creed of essentialist historiography in this way “Historiography today has burst out its traditional, self-legitimizing, theoretical jacket and is therefore in need of new clothes. This is not in order to teach the historian how he should set about his work as an historian,” (279)

Michel Foucault, French historian and poststructuralist, in *Nietzsche, genealogy, history*, eminently differentiated traditional history and “Effective” history to formulate the ambiguous and complex act of historiography. Following Foucault’s words

“Effective” history deprives the self of reassuring stability of life and nature, and it will not permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy toward a millennial ending. It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.” (Foucault 124)

Here three key notions of an “Effective” history have been emphasized. Firstly, “Effective” history has no transcendental drive; secondly, “Effective” history will not fade away and finally, optimal perspective is a requirement for “Effective” history. These are further clarified this way “The final trait of effective history is its affirmation of knowledge as perspective. Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in particular time and place,” (126)

Prehistory is a term exercised by historians to affirm the state of an incident prevailing before formal documentation. Thus history implies an endorsement of power. Capitalism and historiography, for example, would encode the prehistory from the lens of capitalism. Whereas

Marxist understanding of the same prehistoric event would attempt to manipulate the bourgeoisie history. In the same way, Nazi historiography would maintain a racial supremacy and would attempt to justify holocaust in terms of ideology. In essence, any politicized and class based manual of historiography radiate a sense of unquestioning or autonomous power to know and represent the past. The tendency to exclude opposition is a constant motion which affirms a desire for homogenized recording of past events. History is always narrative of power and “emancipatory discourse” plays the role of a justificatory. Nationalism, say, is an instance of such totalizing power that glorifies

Postmodernism is always suspicious and critical to that autonomous power of history. Postmodernism celebrates pluralism and difference. For analogous reasons it could be argued that postmodern historiography would include plural perspectives for a single narrative event.

Chapter 3

Metafiction

In this chapter I will attempt to discuss the idea of metafiction and its relation with postmodern literature. The prefix ‘meta-’ connotes two meanings: beyond something or change of position or state⁷. That is to say the generally the term metafiction signifies two attainable ideas. First, to go beyond the realm of fiction and secondly, the fluid state that novels have assumed. It is considered that metafiction is composite in nature. What enables a fiction to go beyond its common properties requires an open ended definition.

This idea of metafiction testifies a wide array of techniques, for example a novel can assume the structure and tone of a scholarly article with substantial use of foot notes. Another common but intriguing example is containing scientific or mathematical figures and equations inside the narrative flow. Even, one fiction can assume the tone of a historical account still maintaining literary affects.

However, the evolution of fiction through different historical periods embodies a huge description. But, the general characteristics of a fiction would include- detailed narration of actions, organized plots and interactions of characters.

As most accounts on this term tell us that Robert Scholes coined the term to designate the status of a novel as anti-novel. For him it was violation of standards of a novel. This determined standard of fiction writing has been recoded and reshuffled in postmodern aesthetic of art.

⁷ Following Oxford Advanced Lerner’s Dictionary

The practice of metafictional writing and its relation to postmodern discourse is often considered as a complex one. In *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984) Patricia Waugh claimed that the practice of metafiction is very frequent in postmodern fiction, but this idea already been existing before postmodernism became evident. According to Patricia Waugh “*Metafiction* is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relation between fiction and reality.” (Waugh 2) The postmodern approach to the external world is noticeable. Postmodernism considers the reality is a mere construction, thus fiction is also a construction of a writer who self-consciously asserts the fiction is a creation.

In order to emphasize metafictional novel’s multivalent and fluid nature that denies signifiers can transcend or justified as an interdependent entity by totalizing force. She comments:

Metafiction flaunts and exaggerates and thus exposes the foundations of this instability: the fact that novels are constructed through a continuous assimilation of everyday historical forms of communication. There is no one privileged ‘language of fiction’. There are the languages of memories, journals, diaries, histories, conversational registers, legal records, journalism, documentary. (5)

Here, one thing is evident that by flaunting the foundationalism metafiction exhibits a sense of incredulity to the insular attitude of modernist writing. In addition, metafictional writing minimizes its own status along with diverse forms of writing as metafictional writing draws on different styles to assume a pluralist nature.

She, thus, remarks that metafictional novels react against the foundational aspects of fiction writing. In addition, she draws on the most significant idea of postmodernism and how metafictional novels convey the nature of present time. As suggested earlier that signifiers are not transcendent, so a fiction as an extended accumulated form of signifiers would also not transcend. Metafictional novels do not attempt to define reality but often authors claim that they are part of the story. Thus the dividing line of reality and fantasy becomes blurred. “The historical period we are living through has been singularly uncertain, insecure, self-questioning and culturally pluralistic. Contemporary fiction clearly reflects this dissatisfaction with, and breakdown of, traditional values.” (6)

Metafictional writing provides an abundance of potentials to shape, or more precisely to practice postmodern literary discourse, and to go beyond the foundational aspects of a novel. As stated by Waugh that “Metafiction is a mode of within a broader cultural movement often referred to as post-modernism.” (21) She paused the question of frame in terms of its relation with modernism and postmodernism and remarked that “Everything is framed, whether in life or in novels.” (28) For modernist ethos frame is a necessary medium to create reality, for example the treatment of time which is maintained with the order of clock. On the contrary, in postmodernist discourse frame embodies an illogical idea of fixity, and the imposition of fixity or frame in culture is problematic issue. That is to say, postmodernism celebrates absence, more precisely in this context of comprehending the idea of frame, the absence of frame is rejuvenating.

Since, postmodernism believes in immanence, so literary postmodernism would not proclaim itself to capable of representing the real world through its narrative. Postmodernism, instead, aspire for an alternative way through which the idea of real world could be perceived. While constructing the alternative sphere postmodern metafictional novels critique the multiple and

diverse elements and agencies of real world to achieve a simulated resemblance of reality.

Following Waugh's words "Metafictional texts show that literary fiction can never imitate or 'represent' the world but always imitates or 'represents' the discourses which in turn construct that world." (100)

However, in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) Linda Hutcheon also argued on Metafictional novels, particularly on historiographic Metafiction. For Hutcheon "...postmodern's initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life;" (Hutcheon 2) Here, the natural can be understood what modernism proclaimed to hold as natural. If Metafiction is singularly a discourse of going beyond, following Patricia Waugh, already perceived notions of novels, say foundationalism, then certainly mixing different and diverse genres would be an exciting example of Metafiction. It can be an intersection of science and war story. In this regard the most notable example is Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969).

How do we make sense of the world, particularly time and events? Certainly through perception we notice the world and this perception is filled with different discourses class position, ideology and language. For some philosophers, language helps us to make sense of the world. In postmodern perspective the notion of the text requires anything with a representational status. Even, silence is a category of text. Jacques Derrida's famous statement 'there is nothing outside the text'. For postmodernism hybrid form, which has inevitably pluralistic resemblance, is exhilarating. This is unavoidable as the time and space has become unstable. Hence the absence of purity of element or hybrid form is celebratory in postmodern arena.

Metafictional novels, as suggested earlier, self-consciously distort the distance of fact and fiction, fantasy and science or reality and imagination. In general, for Hutcheon, the mixing of historical fact within fictional realm, or the reverse procedure, is considered as historiographic Metafiction. It could be argued that from the perspective of a postmodern author the distrust to fixity of narrative form and nature is expressed through this hybridization of multiple genres, or say texts in poststructuralist perspective, and also a suspicious expression to formal accounts of history is conveyed. According to Hutcheon “Historiographic metafiction represents not just a world of fiction, however self-consciously presented as a constructed one, but also a world of public experience.” (36)

It is clear that metafiction is a form and style of resistance to the unified and coherent plot structures of novels. Metafictional novels are not a continuation of early traditions but a singular unit of fiction writing with a pluralistic resonance. In *Writing Against Simulacrum* Jenaro Talens remarks “The notion of author, whose creative imagination was considered at the origin of literature, has given way to the idea of a simple assembling of several languages and cultural elements, placed in relation to each other within determined writings that no longer enjoy the status of ‘work of art’ but simpler one of ‘texts’ or ‘collages’”. (Talens 326) These statements have implicit relation with the notion of metafiction because this reaffirms the status of metafiction as celebration of multiple genres. Historiographic metafiction is one key component of metafiction.

Chapter 4

History from the perspective of a history teacher

What if a history student with a real Second World War experience becomes a history teacher at high school? He would teach his students from his perception of history would definitely show a new direction beyond the curriculum. This exactly happens in Graham Swift's *Waterland* (1983), his most celebrated postmodern novel, which narrates history from the perspective of a history teacher Tom Crick. Interestingly this novel starts with, two epigraphs, a meaning of the word history; “*Historia*,-ae, f. **1.** Inquiry, investigation, learning. **2.** a) a narrative of past events, history. b) any kind of narrative: account, tale, story.” and a quote from *Great Expectations* ““Ours was the marsh country...””. These two epigraphs aptly forecast the upcoming narration of the novel which is personal history of life in a peripheral village. This novel tells the story of a high school history teacher who is asked to retired before the exact time of retirement.

In this chapter I have attempted to discuss how this novel has achieved metafictional status, particularly a historiographic metafictional dimension. In addition I have also attempted to explore how historical accounts have been synchronized along with the real historical incidents. In other words, this novel explicitly and self-consciously narrates personal or unofficial history along with the grand historic events. This multilayered narration is a confirmation for the pluralistic nature of postmodern understanding of narrative. This novel assumes a critique of grand historic events through its narration. Thus it attains a metafictional dimension being a novel with a critique inside it. The blurring of fact and fiction is a prime demand in historiographic metafiction which has also been reflected in parallel depiction of personal history

in the time and space of grand historical events. In an interview Graham Swift said this novel has relevance in present time and speaks contemporary concerns. (Craps and Swift 639)

This novel is narrated in a non-linear way and the narrator self-consciously affirms his association with the story. To quote “And it was Tom Crick, history-teacher-to-be, who, during the middle years of the Second World War,” (Swift 42) However, it is very important to note that the narrator Tom Crick has served in the military force during Second World war. At the same time he knows nature and theoretical conceptions of history. Hence his narration is eminently appropriate to understand history.

In one of his class lectures we find him to define reality. He is maintaining a postmodern perception of reality to illustrate the idea of reality and history. It is like a precise account of the entire novel that he explores. He states:

Reality's not strange, not unexpected. Reality doesn't reside in the sudden hallucination of events. Reality is uneventfulness, vacancy, flatness. Reality is that nothing happens. How many of events of history have occurred, ask yourselves, for this and for that reason, but no other reason, fundamentally, than the desire to make things happen? I present you History, the fabrication, the diversion, the reality obscuring drama. History, and its near relative, Historionics...” (40)

However, the initial chapter depicts a vibrant account of rustic life in the Fens and suddenly assumes a tone of a detective story with the news of a floating dead body. The villages were concerned about the Second World War “...by the roar of ascending bombers-it was, to be precise, July 1943-that something floated down the Leem,” (4) The death of Freddie Parr could be understood as a micro-form of history in contrast with grand history. Even, the history of

Freddie's death becomes problematic. This further illustrates how complex the task of a historiographer to detect the past. It is always a fraction available to take notice. It was primarily conceived by the police man that Freddie was drowned because he was drunk and could not swim. If examined carefully, the police man as part of his investigation and interrogation looks for facts and constructs a report that eventually proceeded to court. This is a formal procedure for an agency of the state. And later it is revealed to Tom Crick that it was a murder- Dick committed the crime. Yet, it was justified through legal procedure that it was a mere drowning case. The narrator ironically comments:

So WHEN the pathologist had presented his report and the witnesses- notably my father, Henry Crick, and Police Constable Wyeabrow- had given their testimonies, the inquest into the death of Frederick Parr, sixteen, of Hockwell, Cambs, held at Gildsey Coroner's Court on July 29th, 1943, reached the verdict that the deceased had died by accident. End of story. (109)

There are numerous examples of personal history narrated along with grand historical contexts. The romance of Tom and Mary set parallel to the summer of 1943, Second World War time frame. To clarify their excitement "...I was late for my rendezvous. But Mary was not late"(43) To speak of, again, grand historical events and personal history Chapter 24 *Child's play* is vital. It draws on a historical event of July, 1940 when the France was occupied by German invasion; he says "In July, 1940, Hitler contemplated- as in 1805 Napoleon had contemplated- the invasion of England." (180) At the same time he affirms that they had arranged a swimming competition in the Fens. It was a time of Second World War and narrating personal story is blurring of fact and story. Grand history erases the history belonging to micro-level. The events of the eastern Fens would have been submerged. This argument is valid as Tom Crick has served

in the British military force during the Second World War. If events of past are considered as history, then Tom's affair with Mary would be considered as micro-level event.

Tom Crick considers story or fairytale similar to history, as he states "...history merges with fiction, facts gets blurred with fable..." (208) hence being a soldier he experienced "A strange thing, but the more the war progresses the more it loses its fairy-tale flavor," (220)

Tom Crick talks about grand historical events, still concentrating on history of micro-level by breaking the line between a formal historical account and a personal historical event. He is aware that the present is always haunted and shaped by history. But history is a consciously forged thing. He comments "We are one-tenth living tissue, nine-tenths water; life is one-tenth Here and Now, nine-tenths a history lesson. For most of the time the Here and Now is neither now nor here." (61) In another occasion, he asserts "Yes, yes, the past gets in the way; it trips us up, bogs us down; it complicates, makes difficult. But to ignore this is folly," (108)

The reason why he has been forced to retired early with full pension is directly connected with the early history in the Fens. The abortion of Mary at early age, which was operated by Martha Clay, left her incapable to have children. That emptiness urged Mary to snatch a child from another. This story was well covered in the local press and that enforced his early retirement as a history teacher.

Tom Crick gained aspiration to become a history teacher from his mother's story telling power, story reassured Tom. He comments "My becoming a history teacher can be directly ascribed to the stories which my mother told me as a child," (61) This is astonishing that how can a history teacher admit that history telling is parallel to storytelling, despite being aware of the tools and procedures for telling history. Two possible answers emerge that he knows histories

are constructed and determined by ideological constructs. Tom Crick experienced the blurred state between a story and a history. Both are constructed. He comments "...History itself: the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums," (62)

Tom Crick recounts his family history. He revisits the story of his forefathers in the Fens. In other words he delivers a genealogical account of his ancestors. He says "...the Cricks emerged from water, the Atkinsons emerged from beer.' (64) His father was a soldier of First World War and still bears a wound in the body. He comments "And now and then he rubs his right knee, the right knee wounded all those years ago in 1917." (36) If history had educative power then Tom Crick would have to join Second World War. This is also a strong reason he introspects history as only story. Thus, history has been fictionalized in the novel *Waterland*. He also draws on the idea that history consolidates on cause and effect narrative. And thus he comments "...history begins with our sense of wrong." (107) The idea of revolution is a glorified theme in history as it gives a sense of freedom. The formal nationalistic graph of a revolution would outline itself in a vertical shape. For Tom Crick the promise of revolution for Utopia is a vague thing. He comments "IT GOES in two directions at once. It goes backwards as it goes forward. It loops. It takes detours." (135) Revolutions problematize one's intrinsic perception to natural world. He directly ironizes the Enlightenment project this way "It cannot be denied, children, that the great so-called forward movements of civilization, whether moral or technological, have invariably brought with them an accompanying regression." (135) But, the grand narrative demands unquestioned power to lead common people toward utopia.

That the discovery of the printing press lead, likewise as well as to the spreading of knowledge, to propaganda, mendacity, contention and strife. That the invention of steam-

engine led to the miseries of industrial exploitation and to ten-year-olds working sixteen hours a day in coal mines. That the invention of the aeroplane led to the widespread destruction of European cities along with their civilian populations during the period 1939 to '45. (136)

As a history teacher Tom Crick raises the question for whom ordinary people actively participates in revolutions. To quote “But whose? Where do we place the revolutionary will? The petit bourgeois? The hungry masses? The political clubs?” (139) Under the context of teaching historical revolutions Tom Crick says “A subject for eclectic research (perhaps you’d like to pursue in some time?): the French wine and champagne industry during the French Revolution. Consumption up or down?” (236)

Chapter 5

Occult and medieval histories in *Foucault's Pendulum* (1989)

Umberto Eco is a quintessential European author in postmodern arena. *Foucault's Pendulum* (1989), by Umberto Eco is a complex fiction that makes extreme esoteric references to construct the fictional narrative. Perhaps it would be appropriate to consider this fiction as multiple webs of labyrinth and knowledge. This novel depicts the story of three extremely talented editors and their adventure of creating a conspiracy theory. In this chapter I have attempted to discuss how *Foucault's Pendulum* is a metafictional novel and particularly the Plan invented by the editors is also very important issue to look at.

The title of the novel itself conveys an esoteric resonance. At the same time it hints to French physicist Léon Foucault who invented a pendulum to detect the rotation of earth and it also resembles French philosopher Michel Foucault who eminently written on the notion of power. However, most of the documents tell us that by the word Foucault's Pendulum he did not hinted the philosopher. This novel also maintains a non-linear flow of events. And most importantly it has an open-ended finishing; the protagonist remains alone in a rustic country. Casaubon, the protagonist, has substantial knowledge on medieval knight temples. He joins a publishing company and befriends with Jacopo Belbo and Diotallevi. It could be inferred that the protagonist is self-reflexive projection of the author himself, if it is then Casaubon is a covert self-reflexive of Umberto Eco, since in the literary realm he is eminent as a medievalist. Regarding the plot of this novel eminent theorist Linda Hutcheon comments "There is a plot-or rather, a plethora of plots-all brought together into something called the "Plan." (Hutcheon 2)

In *Foucault's Pendulum* (1989) there is abundance of metafictional elements. This novel places itself at the extreme level of metafictional dimension. The most intriguing and sophisticated example of involving diverse genre in the narrative is several computer files and a long list for unlocking the password of a computer named Abulafia. Even, the first epigraphs is from an alien language, nor English or Italian, and demands for a special knowledge to get the meaning.

However, it is important to note that all there talented friends work in a publishing company where writing and editing and idea generating are major concerns. Their company invests money to publish their own works; therefore they are cautious about the public interest. But at some point, they start making a joke which led to the construction of their own version of a conspiracy theory. And their attempt to make a fun becomes an issue of serious interest of different occult groups. Casaubon could know that for Belbo it was "Beter to rewrite the books of others, which is what a good editor does." (Eco 23) This rewriting process can contain an impulse to reformulate and manipulate the story so that it gets blurred. And for Belbo it was a relishing segment. This making of the plan is a ridiculous act done intentionally by three friends, and this is a pure procedure of mixing historical facts with fantasy. Thus this novel primarily assumes a historiographic metafictional status. This is not a simple blurring of fact and fiction, the way Tom Crick did in *Waterland*, but here the mixing is of multiple genres- science, occultism, fantasy, history and so on. In this regard Rocco Capozzi remarks

...so Casaubon, Belbo and Diotallevi mix freely esoteric texts, historical facts, science and cabala. But by allowing their creative imaginations to run wild they lose perspective of what is real and what is fiction, and confuse a shopping list with a coded message. They give in to the irrational and become like Colonel Ardeni, Aglié, Prof. Bramanti and

the Diabolics, and thus become like the ‘lunatics’ that they had initially ridiculed.
(Capozii 630)

Here it is exciting to note that the characters create a non-fiction, the Plan, with a metafictional status. And on the contrary the underground agents like the Rosicrucian, the Occult group want to gain power over the world. It is usually conceived that those who want to establish a monolithic empire, obviously by dint of some grand discourse, are supposed to be rational. But here in Eco’s eventful novel *Foucault’s Pendulum* the irrational and funny thing has become a source and medium of power for different underground groups.

As clarified earlier that metafiction can assume any from fiction turned into history or the reverse. The Plan- the conspiracy theory becomes a metafiction. Since, there is excessive mixture of fantasy. One of the editors ironizes and deconstructs the idea of history. To quote “Progress demands its victims. But you must admit we are uncovering an immanent rationality of history.”(422)

In addition, regarding their imaginative power has been marked this way “...our brains grew accustomed to connecting, connecting, connecting everything with everything else, until we did it automatically, out of habit. I believe that you can reach the point where there is no longer any difference between developing the habit of believing.” (453)

This power of believing is realized by Casaubon “But if you invent a plan and others carry it out, it’s as if the Plan exists. At that point it does exist.” (603)

While reading a file, named “And what if it’s true?”, from the Abulafia Casaubon finds that Belbo wrote “Why write novels? Rewrite history. The history that then becomes true.” (514)
Here, it is explicit that history is not any grand narrative that cannot be reshaped, or reaffirms

that any history is a mere construction. In addition, there is a parody with the work of William Shakespeare, expressing a skeptical attitude towards a canonical literary piece, a characteristic mark of most of the postmodern fictions. “Why not set in Denmark Mr. William S.? (514) Again Belbo’s compulsion to rewrite other artists work.

Chapter 6

History of a national invasion.

Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) is considered as a typical European postmodern fiction. At the initial part of the novel we see that the author of this present inside the fiction. As stated "I have been thinking about Tomas for many years. But only in the light of these reflections did I see him clearly." (Kundera 5) A very important aspect of this novel is that it problematizes our understanding of binary divisions. This novel also narrated in a non-linear manner.

The storyline of this novel is simple, yet it lefts profound impact on our thinking. Tomas, Sabina, Tereza, Franz are main characters exploring the question of love in our world of experience along with historical events narrated inside the novel. This novel explicitly depicts the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia. The account of socio-political changes are evident in the novel, thus it attains a metafictional dimension. In addition, there is an ongoing philosophical discussion on eternal return and it contains a dictionary of words that is also fictionalized in the novel. The words are related to character's life and signify a history for them. The complexity of individual's love life runs parallel with national historical events.

For example- the word parade is define is a manner that reflects a history of Europe. Franz stayed in France and watched "...marching, shouting crowd as the image of Europe and its history. Europe was the Grand March. The march from revolution to revolution, from struggle to struggle, ever onward." (96) For Sabina the meanings of fidelity and betrayal have different significance. The narrator comments "...Sabina was charmed more by betrayal than by fidelity.

The word 'fidelity' reminded her of her father,"(87) In addition, the bowler hat had several meanings to her life. One hat stood for multiple personal histories.

The narrator comments regarding the invasion of a foreign army this way "...his country was occupied by Russian tanks. It was August 1968," (23) Another example "A terrifying soldier in the black uniform of the armoured forces stood at the crossroads directing traffic as if every road in the country belonged to him and him alone. (32) It is also portrayed in the novel that there was a protest against the Russian army. To quote "...hatred for the Russians drugged people like alcohol. It was a drunken carnival of hate." (25)

Tereza took photography as her profession. The narrator describes the situation, lens versus gun, in an ironic way

Seven days in a row, Tereza roamed the streets, photographing Russian soldiers and officers in compromising situations. The Russians did not know what to do. They had been carefully briefed about how to behave if someone fired at them or threw stones, but they had received no directives about what to do when some aimed a lens. (63)

Tomas was abandoned to practice surgery since he did not confess to the communist regime for writing an article against them. And thus, Tomas was converted into a window washer. Naming public places is a very significant to a country's culture and history. Conversely, renaming or erasing the former one is practice of power. This exactly happens in Czechoslovakia. "...they took a walk through all the streets they had known, and examined all their names: Stalingrad Street, Leningrad Street, Rostov Street, All the names were taken from Russian geography, from Russian history." (159-160) The reaction of the narrator was painful yet ironic "Overnight, the country had become nameless. (160)

However, the narrator also takes the chance to make fun with history, or to react against the oppressor. As he states “Not until 1980 were we able to read in the *Sunday Times* how Stalin’s son, Yakov died. Captured by the Germans during the Second World War, he was placed in a camp together with a group of British officers. They shared a latrine.” And that was insulting for Yakov and commits suicide.

Conclusion

It is clear that, in the light of above discussion, postmodernism represents history in a metafictional manner. This is postmodern aesthetic of literary discourse. We have seen that postmodern novels celebrate multiple genres within a single stream. In *Waterland* Tom Crick synchronizes grand historical events along with the personal micro-events of the Fens. Then, in *Foucault's Pendulum* we have seen how multiple esoteric genres can lead to a creation of an interesting Plan. Finally, in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* we have seen how the invasion of alien troops can alter the history of a country. The three novels discussed above are from European postmodern literary climate and therefore each of them has a profound philosophical orientation in their structure. There is lack of laughter and fun but the ironic resonance is evident in their expression of feelings.

To conclude, it could be argued that in postmodern discourse the idea of history is conceived as events. A story has event, so does a real life. From another perspective, postmodern metafictional novels celebrate heterogeneity and pluralism- history as a genre can be synchronized in the story to perform parallel flow of narrative events.

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