

Unmasking History: Revealing Authoritarian Regimes and Propaganda Through the Lens of Metafiction

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the requirements for the degree of
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It is hereby declared that

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3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
5. This thesis was conducted with the help of some authentic primary and secondary sources.
6. This study wishes to interpret some scholarly sources regarding its field of study.
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Approval

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Ethics Statement

The thesis is conducted following and maintaining all ethical guidelines. These guidelines are covered in greater detail in the methodology section. The paper is done ethically with no plagiarism and replication of other scholarly or literary work. The primary and secondary books, articles and journals that are used are given proper credit and mentioned as per the guidelines.

Abstract

The research paper examines how Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* both employ the blending of fact and fiction, especially through metafiction, to criticise repressive historical regimes, reimagine oppressive institutions and their lasting effects. Both the novels reveal fundamental historical discourses and show how controlling structures like slavery, colonialism and dictatorship cause not just physical violence but long-lasting psychological trauma. By intertwining personal narratives with larger historical forces, the authors expose how the past continues to shape present identities and freedoms in ways that often appear fantastical. The purpose of this study is to examine how metafiction can use multiple literary tools to replicate, restore the past and offer an opportunity to reimagine it. It discloses the multi dimensional realities and how truth takes shape with time. There are much deeper meanings to just basic characters, their lived experiences and collective memory. This research paper will present the significant factual and historical narratives that challenge economical, sociopolitical debates and racial injustice. The paper will further show that these literary techniques not only reimagine historical events but also act as powerful vehicles for critiquing, offering readers deeper insights into the persistence of systemic injustice and the construction of identity in postcolonial settings and postmodern contexts.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 Metafiction

Metafiction blurs the line of fact and fiction reminding the readers they are reading a constructed story. However, they are presented with the reality that might have been recorded at a certain period. They are offered multiple layers of perspectives through unreliable narrators to question how much of it is true and to reimagine the past by themselves. The readers are thrown into a spot where they are contributing to the storytelling by putting their imagination, while knowing it is a fiction book they are reading. Politics, social structure and foundational theories are like that- they are meant to be questioned as long as the question arises. Both of the books are written under a strong foundation, that intermittents readers from a fictional thinking into a real world where they indulge into the brutalities of institutions like slavery and Trujillo's fascist era.

A literary element or approach known as metafiction reminds readers that they are reading a manufactured story by breaking the "fourth wall." The phrase originates in theatre, where the "fourth wall" is the imaginary wall separating the audience and the performers on stage. The purpose of traditional theatre is for the audience to watch the play unfold without having any interaction with the actors or the performance. The "fourth wall" is the invisible partition separating the performers and the audience, while the other three "walls" are the

physical sides of the stage. By interacting with the audience and bringing attention to the fact that the performance is a work of fiction, the actors or characters break down this barrier. This method challenges the reader to consider ideas beyond what is immediately apparent.

Additionally, this blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality and questions storytelling traditions. Through the use of chosen facts, emotional appeals, and repetition, propaganda shapes a certain vision of reality. Any narrative, particularly political ones, loses the appearance of objective truth when metafiction highlights its own creation. It frequently imitates official discourses, such as political speeches, history texts, and news reports, but distorts or subverts them to expose contradictions, prejudices, or absurdities. This is a straightforward method of highlighting the moral or logical shortcomings of propaganda. Centralised control of the truth is essential to totalitarian governments and prevailing ideologies.

Metafiction—by presenting multiple perspectives, unreliable narrators, or contradictory versions of events—refuses to endorse a single authoritative version of reality, which destabilizes propaganda's power. These books were produced during a period when literature served as a means of dismantling the barriers that politicised realities only displayed. During colonisation, the pro slavery activists justified the injustices of slavery through every means. Under a fascist rule, people were unable to use the media and express freely so that the real image of the oppressive regime stays concealed. Under such settings, writing techniques play a huge role to give us a real life glimpse straight from the fictional story to the real life propagandas.

1.2 Underlying Historical regimes

The primary books, *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz both will rediscuss historical discourses, multidimensional truth circulating slavery, racism, and authoritarianism. These novels do not merely present an organised full fledged story to the readers but keep our investigation, curiosity and question alive. Both authors reveal how deeply ingrained social and political goals are in both individual and societal history. Whitehead challenges America's sanitised tropes about race, freedom, and institutional violence by reimagining slavery via an alternate history perspective and literalising the Underground Railroad. His combination of metaphor and realism illustrates how white supremacy persists throughout history and takes on various forms. Similar to this, Díaz critiques the legacy of U.S. imperialism and Trujillo's tyranny by fusing pop culture, Dominican history, and personal pain. Through shifting narrators, footnotes, and meta-commentary, he reveals how identity and fate are distorted by colonialism, misogyny, and generational trauma. The political factors influencing memory, race, and resistance are revealed through inventive storytelling in both books, which resist linear, official histories. Even the so-called liberation agents in this world, like the railroad's "conductors," have flaws and are frequently faced with moral quandaries. This complexity casts doubt on oversimplified ideas of right and wrong and presents a more sophisticated, critical view of the entire historical period. The primary books both carry metafictional elements but they are used differently. Oscar Wao explores Dominican culture, using magical realism to depict a harsh time period. Whitehead's reality illustrates how racial violence and white supremacy are ingrained in American culture beyond the South, since even the so-called "free" states participate in the system of racial subjugation. Slavery is a subject matter that requires to be looked at through

slave narratives, pro slavery justifications and fiction to depict the truth. This is when we will be able to answer how the real-world agendas shape the narratives surrounding race, power and history?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Historiographic Metafiction and Collective memory shaping narratives

Through the use of metafictional elements, the research paper poses revelations regarding historical regimes. However, metafiction is more than just a method that may be used alone. Reaching the deep underlying structure of history, race, and societal issues requires the unfolding of several levels of understanding. In the late 1980s, Linda Hutcheon coined the term "historiographic metafiction" to characterise works that assert historical authenticity while simultaneously being profoundly self-reflective (metafictional). "Historiographic metafiction works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction" (Hutcheon 02). In storytelling, discourses of history can align and take the reader back in time for them to judge the situation and to observe how it took turns over the ages. The whole purpose of historiographic metafiction is to time travel and set a framework to see how perspectives change with time, people, setting and observation. Whitehead transforms the real railway into a real, physical underground infrastructure that runs beneath the South. She describes the setting in which the institution of slavery was practiced, which is a quintessential metafictional device. The railway is a fictional historical intervention that operates underground with trains and stations. While warning readers that history is fabricated, selective, and frequently mythologised, she encourages "belief." These metafiction works draw attention to their own narrative creation

while fusing fictional stories with historical events or characters. They are contradictory in that they are both "self-reflexive" and assert historical reality from the past. History is seen as a manufactured narrative (a discourse), much like fiction, rather than as an unvarnished truth. Novels and historical texts both use narrative employment to structure and mould meaning. Since history differs from speaker to speaker, it has multiple layers. History should be questioned or scrutinized and not be accepted just how it is presented. This implies how Hutcheon exposes the ideological dynamics influencing historiography and challenges history's claims to objectivity without rejecting it. By using metafictional devices like footnotes, commentary, shifting perspectives, parody, temporal distortion, or intertextual references, these works usually highlight their own creation. In order to simultaneously challenge and support historical views, the books place themselves inside a larger cultural discourse by making references to other texts, histories, and genres. Hutcheon first lists notable works of historiographic metafiction, including *Pynchon's Mason & Dixon*, *Ragtime*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and *The Name of the Rose*. These are works that fictionalise historical people or events while also drawing attention to how storytelling rewrites history and how fictional they are. By treating both as narrative inventions, it blurs the line between history and fiction and challenges readers to consider how histories are created—and whose version is presented. It is a defining feature of postmodern literary theory, impacting writers' and critics' comprehension of the interrelationships among truth, narrative, memory, and history. I believe historiographic metafiction offers a chance to study historical plots and storylines from a different perspective. History can be revisited, challenged, and given newer viewpoints, insights and facets. Hutcheon also believes that the cultural movement like postmodernism is paradoxical and that it affects many traditional fields. For example, we encounter perplexing paradoxes in

contemporary theoretical discourse: those skilful denials of mastery, rejecting conventional literary methods, totalising negation of totalisation, and persistent declarations of discontinuity. The postmodern novel simultaneously asserts and denies, installs and subverts, and uses and abuses the conventions of both fiction and historiography. One of the main ways that the contradictory nature of postmodernism is textually embedded is through the intertextual parody's dual (literary/historical) nature. The consequences of the doubleness of this parodic process have not been well addressed, which may be one of the causes for the recent intense discussion about the concept of postmodernism. "Historiographic metafiction appears willing to draw upon any signifying practices it can find operative in a society. It wants to challenge those discourses and yet to milk them for all they are Worth" (Hutcheon 16). This literary style "appears willing to draw upon any signifying practices it can find operative in a society," according to Linda Hutcheon's notion of historiographic metafiction. It seeks to question those discourses while simultaneously using them to the fullest extent possible. It captures how Colson Whitehead tackles the topic of slavery and the political structures that surround *The Underground Railroad* requires a grasp of this concept. Postmodern historical fiction reuses prevailing historical narratives to both reveal and critique their ideological foundations rather than categorically rejecting them. In this sense, Whitehead's book serves as a potent illustration of how fiction can interact with history to examine how the past is remembered, told, and institutionalised in addition to revisiting it. The historical and cultural accounts of slavery in America, especially those found in traditional slave narratives and history books, are a direct source of inspiration for Whitehead's work. Plantations, auctions, slave catchers, and fugitive escapes are some of the familiar aspects he uses to provide historical authenticity to the tale. Whitehead questions the validity of official history while simultaneously gaining emotional force from it by evoking and

then twisting well-known historical signifiers. In *The Brief wondrous life of Oscar Wao*, the disputes and differences between the genders questions its historical background. This is a wonderful example of what Hutcheon means when she talks about "milking" and "challenging" hegemonic discourses. *Oscar Wao* reveals the tension between the real and other worldly elements- that reveals much about the trauma, tyranny and political exploitation. The writing style has the capability to delve the readers into the real world and historiographic metafiction serves the readers exactly what they need. Her concept of interconnection between history and fiction will play a massive role in explaining how much reality is exposed through metafiction. The conclusion that can be drawn from the understanding of Hutcheon's argument is that history and fiction are both constructed through narratives.

Maurice Halbwach defines "collective memory" as something that is shared by everyone in the environment one is in. According to him, collective memory is the idea that memory is a gradual accumulation that is influenced by societal factors rather than merely being a product of an individual or personal transformation. According to him, people's memories are shaped by the frameworks established by their families, communities, social networks, religious communities, and society in its entirety. Memory is a social construct that is influenced by the language, norms, and values of the group to which an individual belongs. In order to maintain its identity and togetherness, every group and social background communicates and protects its own version of the past. Collective memory emphasises some events while leaving out others, frequently to suit current demands or narratives. It is not an abstract and comprehensive history. It changes throughout time as the group's identity, passions, and social environment shift. "The expression

“Vivre dans la mémoire des hommes,” for example, attributes memories in a vague way to humanity” (Russell 795). The french phrase literally translates to ‘live in the memory of men’. This resembles that a person, event or act can be eternal or live even after death through remembrance, memory, emotion, storytelling- leaving a mark on history. He adds, “It most likely does not imply that every single living person will preserve a given memory in his or her mind but rather that a given memory will continue to exist in some unspecified part of humanity” (794). Collective identity is what societies choose to remember (or to forget) and it shapes their identity. Memory can also be politicised by remembering certain figures to keep their ideals alive or forgetting them is a tactic to silence a debatable, risky part of history. Memory can also be shaped, edited or influenced by an authoritative agenda. If we consider how a country recalls a major war. National identity may be shaped by a nation's common memory of a war as one of bravery and sacrifice, highlighting solidarity and patriotism while downplaying or ignoring internal dissension or atrocities. The underlying massacre, sufferings, death and turmoil that lingers through the affected ones go unnoticed. Halbwachs essentially made the case that social context is always a part of individual memory, and that it is through this context that we create and retrieve our memories. Monuments, educational programs, documentaries, and public remembrances that emphasise tales of bravery, selflessness, and solidarity are frequently used to create the communal memory of that conflict. Citizens are given a sense of pride and national identity as a result of these portrayals. This memory is selective, though, and may minimise or leave out contentious elements like domestic conflict, human suffering, or war crimes carried out by the country's own armed forces. Future generations' perceptions of the past are shaped by these selected memories, which eventually become firmly embedded in the communal consciousness. In this sense, history is not only preserved but also reconstructed by the collective

memory to support contemporary ideals and social cohesiveness. Dominican Republic through the lens of Diaz's novel gives us insights into the era of Tyranny. There are multiple visions about how Dominica treated people. The characters collective memory speaks far into the history of the oppression and its ongoing effect on people. We get multiple perspectives on how a nation can be different with people in order of different gender, culture, identity and social status. In *The Brief wondrous life of Oscar Wao*, the layers of memory displayed through various focalisations demonstrate the novel's intricacy. The narratives in part 2 were focused on Lola's account. "Old World Dominican mother" is how she describes her mother. This depiction is not of a heroic or resilient figure. She is damaged and she passes generational trauma. In a way, Lola blames her mother for how her life turned out and the unending torment she is subjected to. She blames her upbringing that broke her integrity and will power from within. It illustrates how a disruptive, abusive setting can lead to domestic destruction, generational pain, and future threats. In contrast, from Beli's perspective in part 3, the narrator (Yunior) states that "Dominicans are Caribbean and therefore have an extraordinary tolerance for extreme phenomena". Yunior makes a remark about the real Dominican societal structure, which has women suffering from abusive relationships and hierarchy. Dominican women are subjected to both exterior and domestic male control. It became explicit by the female characters who oppose machismo, sexual assault, domestic violence, and harsh political regimes. Most of them endure with utmost strength and will, while others succumb to helplessness and powerlessness. Even the male characters acknowledge the injustice and the horrors, but they are powerless to demand justice and autonomy. Oscar's return to Dominica towards the book's conclusion offers yet another perspective on the story's portrayal of Oscar's imaginary homeland. When Ybon's boyfriend's men drag Oscar to a cane field to be thrashed, history repeats again. The narrator asks, "How's

that for eternal return?" .It appears that the cane-field is used as a metaphor to denote a location of surrender. For Oscar, it is a place of giving up his life, while for Beli, it is a place of giving herself up to God. In this way, the story presents Dominica as a region of ambiguity where things are given and taken; Oscar's life is taken and Beli's is given. The book now appears to offer a contrasting perspective of America and Dominica. The fictional motherland of Dominica is portrayed as the antithesis of Oscar's birthplace. Oscar, on the other hand, lives in America, which accepts his hybridity. Halbwach's theory is a perfect scheme to analyze how memory shapes opinion, past and present. History is not only an account of events recorded in books and texts but also in the lived experiences of people and tales that pass down generations from them.

2.2 The combination of Fabulation and Metafiction

Robert Scholes coined the term "fabulation" to describe literature that values creative imagination over exacting realism. It embraces the fantastic—myth, science fiction, fantasy, and magical elements—while addressing contemporary issues. often combines voices, genres, and techniques and is referred to as storytelling. It usually blends high and popular culture in an arbitrary manner. Instead of seamlessly incorporating magic into the mundane, fabulation often stresses the act of creation and celebrates its intrinsic artifice, in contrast to magical realism. Junot Díaz's novel is a hybrid story that alternates between a tragic family saga and historical realism (Trujillo's dictatorship, Dominican diaspora existence). Because it blends historical narratives with myth and fabrication to unveil deeper truths, Scholes saw this mashup as fabulation. According to Scholes, fiction should be understood as more than just mere depiction or representation; instead it is a "politics of structure and love" that contributes to the sustaining of human civilization. He highlights that fiction offers an imaginative experience that is essential

to our well-being. The term "fabulation" describes a style of writing that embraces imagination, metaphor, and myth in place of rigid rigorous realism. Instead of only reflecting the world as it is, it enables authors to create new realities. Metafiction, on the other hand, makes reading more diverse and engaging by assisting readers in escaping the constant fictional touch and factual declaration. Together, metafiction and fabulation enables readers to see fiction as both an artistic creation and a way of rethinking life. "It is appropriate at this point to pause and recall two of fabulation's defining characteristics: "delight in design" and "ethically controlled fantasy""(Morace 373). The term "delight in design" describes the innovative and playful manipulation of narrative structure in fabulation, where the author purposefully creates a realm full of imaginative possibilities. Readers are drawn into a fictitious world where the conventional laws of logic and reality can be suspended because of the author's delight in crafting the story, which enables the blending of reality and fantasy. "Ethically controlled fantasy" refers to the author's need to steer the fantastical aspects towards a more significant moral or philosophical goal. Instead of engaging in sheer whimsy or escapism, the dream is designed to elicit reflection, alter views, or disclose realities about society and human nature. Both characteristics help fabulation stand out as a genre that combines creativity with ethical reflection. Fabulation allows a stage for meaningful fantasy that can enable both entertain and teach. Robert Morace's review essay *On Fabulation and Metafiction* engages with Robert Scholes's influential ideas about fiction as both imaginative production and self-reflection. Readers are compelled to recognise the ways in which language, structure, and imagination mediate even "factual" narratives of history or identity. Scholes insists that this blurring is not a weakness but a strength: it makes fiction an ethical and imaginative force in society. Applying this viewpoint to Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, makes it very evident. Díaz uses a narrative technique that

combines the mythological and the factual to create Dominican history. The supernatural "fukú curse," an eerie force that is said to haunt the Caribbean, is used to explain Rafael Trujillo's dictatorship in addition to historical words. As the narrator says, "They say it came first from Africa, carried in the screams of the enslaved; that it was the death bane of the Taínos, uttered just as one world perished and another began" (Díaz, 1). Here, Díaz crafts a fictional past that combines historical trauma with myth. Yunió's footnotes frequently stray into metafictional commentary, as in his statement that Trujillo was "a portly, sadistic, pig-eyed mulato who bleached his skin, wore platform shoes, and had a fondness for Napoleon-era haberdashery" (Díaz, 2). These footnotes blur the line between factual history and irreverent commentary, reminding the reader that history itself is always narrated, never neutral. Díaz exemplifies what Scholes refers to as the politics of structure and love in this way: fiction gives voice to the suppressed traumas of dictatorship and exile by redefining cultural memory in a way that realism alone cannot. Another remarkable illustration of fabulation and metafiction as formulation may be found in Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*. The Underground Railroad was a system of safe homes and escape routes for enslaved individuals in the United States. When Cora first encounters the underground system, she is stunned: "The tunnel opened up and the full wonder was revealed. The tracks ran on as far as she could see, vanishing into darkness. The steel ran south and north, picked out of the rock like a seam of coal" (Whitehead, p. 67). In order to help readers better grasp history, identity, and cultural survival, both authors blur the boundaries between fact and fiction. Works such as *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and *The Underground Railroad* show how fabulation and metafiction can be essential tools in processing cultural memory and social truth. It is also the kind of fiction that gives us the

imaginative experiences required for human well-being. Fabulation, according to me, works in favor of metafiction to playfully draw attention while critiquing serious topics.

The underground railroad is in itself reflective of an institution that is ruthless and captivating. We do not realise when and how we are into a serious discourse of human transporting and objectification- metafiction dwelling in the storyline in such an intricate way that brutal objectives and propaganda, characters are subjected to, are surfacing. “Usually there was a grain of truth in the underground railroad stories. They are exaggerated rather than wholly false accounts. Because of the romantic nature of the material it easily lent itself to exaggeration” (Gara 338). The article by Larry Gara employs Eliza Harris's famous escape across ice floes as an example to explore whether stories about the underground Railroad are true or mythical. Because they were recounted in newspapers, abolitionist pamphlets, novels (like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), and oral history, these tales frequently combine reality and embellishment. Whether these stories were factually verifiable, their repeated occurrences over time gave them mythological weight. This proves that storytelling does more than simply document history; it forges a collective cultural memory that influences how coming generations view the past. Even if its specifics weren't always historically accurate, the Underground Railroad narrative came to represent bravery, freedom, and moral clarity. Collective remembering, or cultural memory, frequently gives emotional narratives precedence over rigorous factual accuracy. Although scholars point out that the Railroad was less structured and more dispersed than the legends imply, it is nonetheless remembered in America as a system of valiant escape routes and abolitionist safe houses. Because myth motivates people, produces heroes, and offers a moral compass, the essay demonstrates how myth can have a greater impact than truth. By visualising the Underground Railroad as a genuine railroad with trains, tunnels, and stations underground,

Whitehead takes the metaphor literally. By doing this, he draws attention to the ways that myths, and tales, even if they are not historical accounts, can convey emotional truths. History vs. Legend, or what actually happened vs. what we believe ourselves happened, is the tension that *The Underground Railroad* explores. Memory vs. Fact is another factor we need to indulge in. “Many years later those abolitionists who wrote reminiscent accounts of their underground railroad service added immeasurably to the legend of the mysterious road” (Gara 337). The Underground Railroad's memory is greater than the total number of actual escapes. Whitehead writes about how Americans remember and mythologise slavery, not just the past. Whitehead's fictional railway dramatises freedom in a way that is memorable to society, much like Eliza's ice-floe escape. This serves as a reminder that, even when it deviates from historical reality, narrative may capture the emotional truth of oppression. This demonstrates how storytelling evolved from disjointed, frequently simple escapes into a mythical structure that endures in American culture. Whitehead's book challenges readers to face the moral and emotional realities of slavery by using that fabled ability to bend history into metaphor. Both imply that history is not just about facts but also about the narratives we decide to share, and that narratives have a greater influence on cultural memory than archives alone. Storytelling shapes reality, but so does the person telling it. The impact of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was controversial but real. Many argue that the white author Harriet Beecher is unable to reach the sentiments of the victims and depict rightfully as she is no way connected to the slaves nor did her roots of ancestors. Many raised questions that slavery should be looked into through the direct accounts of the slaves. This is where Harriet Jacobs' narration can be compared to hers, where Jacobs takes through her journey of being trapped in the attic for 7 years. While, the story preserves into the readers' memory as memoir and first hand experience. Eliza in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a real character taking a role in

a fictional book, making it heavily layered and ornamented in readers' memory. The comparison of two living, documented characters like Harriet Jacobs in *Incidents into the life of a slave girl* and Eliza is where we discover how the direct account of a slave is different and has a mirroring effect of reality in contrast to Eliza who is displayed by a white narrator through a fictional storytelling. "The legend of the underground railroad is a combination of fact and fancy" (Gara 335). She adds "Many of the stories handed down by word of mouth had a factual basis, but frequent repetition has led to exaggeration and sometimes, in the annals of local history, fantasy has become fact" (335). By "Fact", it refers to an Underground Railroad which was a network of free Blacks, abolitionists, and supporters assisted enslaved individuals who had fled bondage. Conductors, escape routes, and safe houses are all documented. Thus, the historical reality of these valiant escapes and acts of resistance constitutes the "fact" portion. While "Fancy" envisages stories, abolitionist propaganda, and later cultural memory all exaggerated, dramatised, and mythologised the actual events throughout time. There will be some addition or deduction of the original incident as it travels through time and narrators. For instance, the story of Eliza Harris jumping across ice floes to cross the Ohio River is a potent symbol, but historians question whether it actually occurred. These additions transformed the Underground Railroad into a heroic, cohesive myth that occasionally obscures the more nuanced, fragmented historical reality. Furthermore, the "legend" is powerful precisely because it blends truth and imagination. The fact is Enslaved people did resist and escape. Altogether, this combination shaped how future generations understood slavery and freedom: not just as historical events, but as stories of courage, risk, and triumph. The statement by Gara mentioned above, means that our cultural memory of the Underground Railroad isn't just a record of history—it's also a set of stories that inspire moral lessons. Legends make history accessible and emotionally powerful, even if they

aren't always literally true. I view this Underground Railroad as an embodiment of the very combination of fact and fancy. I believe, even within some exaggeration of narrative, as the story passed down generations, might have gained variations, still has realistic and historical significance. When the metaphorical elements are backed up by historical key figures, it is a much more reliable understanding. It teaches us how mythmaking can reveal deeper truths about slavery, memory, and freedom.

“Various motives drive this contemporary interest in dramatizing how language moves and touches, including the influence of Deconstruction in the American academy. Deconstruction, like Marxist and psychoanalytic criticism, writes drama into the very making of meaning” (Feldman 02). Modern metafictional dramatise the movement of language—not only across pages, but also across plots, civilisations, and philosophies—as they attend to the predicament of discourse. Metafiction seems like an ordinary literary technique but it has the ability to showcase historical satire or agendas with a fresh perspective of the new era. This current interest in dramatising the movement and touch of language is motivated by a number of factors, including the impact of Deconstruction on American academia. Like psychoanalytic and Marxist criticism, deconstruction incorporates theatre into the process of meaning-making. William H. Gass coined the term Metafiction- a form of fiction that is aware of its status as fiction. In his essay, *Philosophy and The Form of Fiction*, Gass is credited with creating the term metafiction.

“Stories in which the forms of fiction serve as the material upon which further forms can be imposed” are what he referred to as metafiction. To put it another way, self-aware fiction that highlights both its structure and its content. Fiction is Words, Not Just mimicking. Gass questions the notion that the main function of fiction is to reflect reality. He contends that

literature is an independent meaning-system composed of words and formal structures rather than a clear window into life. These are powerful because of their internal consistency and expressive force, not because they necessarily reflect reality. Literature holds the power to tell a story that merely reality cannot present in a combined way. Reality is perspective and perspective has variations. But literary work scaffolds to tell a bigger reality that probably just a situation is unable to unfold. A similar case is seen in the era of slavery where North and South were segregated in such a way that people living under the same nation, lived completely different lives believing in different truths. The outlook does not serve all the crucial truths. However, literary meaning addresses the underlying political, social, and economic agenda rather than merely concentrating on the vision and clear solutions. Truth must be forged out of the fabricated and multifaceted insight that is presented for us. "Gass describes the dedicated story-teller as "a true lie-minded man," and the novelist as one who has ceased to pretend that his business is to render the world and knows instead that he must make one "from the only medium of which he is a master—language""(Allen 07). William Gass considers the nature of storytelling and the function of the novelist in this statement. Gass by referring to him as a "true lie-minded man" implies that the committed storyteller deliberately embraces fiction and imagination rather than attempting to portray the world as it is. According to Gass, a novelist does more than just reflect reality; rather, they build a brand-new reality that is wholly determined by words. This is consistent with Gass's idea of metafiction, in which the author admits the limitations of language in depicting the outside world and the artificiality of storytelling. Authors frequently conflate fiction and reality in metafiction, highlighting the writing process itself. According to Gass, the role of the novelist is to create a new world through words, not to accurately portray the existing one. Presenting an external reality becomes less

important than examining the potential and limitations of the written word. Gass emphasises linguistic form—the rhythm, the melody, the mere structure of words—instead of traditional narrative motifs like plot advancement or realistic character development. He challenges readers (and authors) to consider the reasons behind word choice and the ways in which arrangement affects meaning and awareness. He calls Fiction as the "Container of Consciousness" . In his more general works, Gass characterises sentences as "containers of consciousness"—not the reader's or author's, but the text's own consciousness—rather than just as instruments for communication. His writing enacts a type of thought rather than portraying it. Gass's metafictional and formalist viewpoints were revolutionary for their time and established the theoretical framework for the self-referential turn of postmodern literature. He defied prevailing trends that prioritised ideological reading or social messaging by remaining consistent in his devotion to the beauty and musicality of prose. Fiction uses language to create worlds and awareness. In my viewpoint, it should be understood that fiction is a language creation with its own aesthetic and thematic goals, rather than as a copy of reality. The form, language, and deliberate craftsmanship is important to develop character reality and build that space for readers to join. If the readers are not engaging the metafictional world, breaking the barrier of fact and fiction, then how will the narration be examined? The innovation is in the blurriness of that line where readers not only imagine themselves a part of the story tellers but also delve into the real, critical discourses.

2.3 Relationship between Literature and Human experience

First, Michael Novak poses the question, "How should we interpret fiction?". Before philosophy, can fiction serve as a serious source of reflection or is it merely a diversion? The central query: "*What is the relation between literature and human experience*" (Novak 100). Fiction invites us to inhabit new horizons—ways of seeing and living. It suggests facts about life that formal philosophy may articulate inadequately. Literature is a lens rather than a mirror; it helps us see and experience new possibilities in addition to reflecting life. In America, pragmatism, science, and business frequently dominate intellectual life. In response, writers (Mailer, Styron, Bellow, Roth) turned to sex, love, and human experience in an attempt to find purpose where ambition and science fell short. The philosopher-novelist tradition, in which fiction bears profound meditation on human wholeness, is still more prevalent among European authors such as Camus, Malraux, and Gide. We can better understand human beings through fiction than through abstract systems. Because it may display several horizons simultaneously—narrator, character, and reader—it is the most flexible form of communication. While philosophy might offer insights, fiction represents the lived reality. The mythmakers came first, followed by the philosophers, as Aristotle saw. Novak's argument is that philosophy frequently comes before fiction, not the other way around. We have exclusive access to human horizons—how individuals perceive, understand, and select lifestyles—through novels. Fiction offers the raw material of human experience, whereas philosophy then considers these lived boundaries. Because fiction exposes the lived horizons of human experience, Novak contends that philosophy and fiction are closely related. Literature frequently serves as the foundation for comprehending life itself, whereas philosophy arranges and evaluates these horizons. The novel is an action. "In fiction, it is true, we are given an image of ourselves; but it is not an image to

look at as in a mirror, it is an image to live through, an action which we are obliged vicariously to share” (Novak 101). The novel invites us to explore a new horizon rather than describing man's position in evocative metaphor and symbol so that we can examine it and perceive ourselves. Through a method of thinking about our life, it recreates the perspective and provides the guidelines by which we live. As a result, literature consistently proposes an epistemological fact that philosophers who are enchanted by physics and mathematics frequently ignore: a way of life is lived before philosophy can express it, and even then, it may do so poorly. Human beings exist before theories about them. Before epistemology, there is the knower. Fiction tends to be before philosophy and a correction of philosophy since it begins with the experience of horizon. Even Aristotle acknowledged that mythmakers came before philosophers, and he was careful to ground his philosophical theories in basic horizon experiences: in metaphysics, the sense of wonder and the unbridled desire to comprehend; in ethics, not a linguistic definition of "good," but the standard of a man of practical wisdom who is present in all seasons. However, philosophy that is based on human experiences has fallen on hard times, which is why fiction feels so disconnected from philosophy, particularly in America. To me, the fictional ability to construct and build, opinion and belief, in a person is an intricate and profound process. It should be used wisely to challenge brutal regimes and battle harsh realities. It plays a vital role that is why it becomes an integral instrument to delve readers into discourses like slavery, racism, classism and gender.

In Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction, Patricia Waugh provides a pioneering and critical analysis of a dramatic shift in the late 20th-century narrative and function of fiction. She defines metafiction as "fictional writing which self-consciously and

systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality." This definition forms the basis of her main argument. Metafiction, therefore, is fiction about fiction—narratives that address their own constraints, traditions, and processes. "Contemporary metafictional writing is both a response and a contribution to an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures" (Waugh 7). Fiction, according to Waugh, no longer reflects reality. Waugh argues that the emergence of metafiction is a reaction to a problem of representation in the contemporary world and places it within the larger intellectual currents of postmodernism and poststructuralism. In past literary traditions, fiction was frequently viewed as a clear medium that allowed for the accurate reproduction of reality, especially in 19th-century realism. The goal of realist books was to give the impression that the author was a detached observer documenting life, complete with believable events and cohesive characters. Waugh contends, however, that this faith in fiction's capacity to depict reality has been seriously weakened. The persuasive power of grand narratives, those broad, universal explanations of truth, history, or progress, has diminished. Metafiction is the literary expression of this change. By interrupting the plot, speaking directly to the reader, placing themselves within the story, or making references to the writing process itself, authors of metafictional works commonly shatter the appearance of narrative continuity. Waugh also questions the idea that metafiction is a product of postmodernism alone. She links its origins to earlier authors such as James Joyce, whose modernist experiments opened the door for later metafictional techniques, and Miguel de Cervantes, whose *Don Quixote* openly engages with questions of fiction and reality and interrupts the traditional linear plot. Waugh points out that metafiction is no longer an unusual or bizarre literary technique in the modern era. Rather, it has

emerged as a primary means of expression for a large number of serious writers, illustrating a broad societal change in the perception of language, representation, and reality. Modern metafiction incorporates self-reflection within the narrative framework itself, whereas earlier metafictional works were frequently isolated experiments. Metafiction challenges conventional storytelling genres that claim to offer a direct portrayal of reality by employing strategies like parody, irony, and genre play. These techniques expose the limitations signaling that the “reality” depicted in traditional narratives is itself a construct, and not an accurate or objective portrayal of the world. She believes that the author loses sight of reality at this point and distances readers from reality. Postmodernist philosophy, which denies the existence of an objective, universal reality, is consistent with metafiction. Rather, it accepts that reality is a subjective concept and that all stories are interpretations influenced by context and point of view, which are always mediated through language, culture, and personal experience. Because metafiction acknowledges the inherent artifice in any attempt to verify reality, Waugh thinks that it is not a trustworthy method to identify reality. Instead of mirroring reality, metafiction reveals the ways in which literature shapes our understanding of the world, prompting readers to question the relationship between fiction and reality itself. In the end, Patricia Waugh's argument offers an important realization: since the concept of a single, knowable reality has been questioned, fiction no longer aims to mirror reality. Instead, metafiction provides an examination of how stories influence our perception of the world with the aid of self-reflexivity and how those stories can be dissected, put back together, or contested. In my opinion, metafiction holds the power to critique the past and reimagine a construction with a new perspective. The open endedness of fiction to depict reality and not constrain it within a certain motive rather open it to readers to critique in their own ways. Critics might assert that Waugh overstates the detachment of fiction from real-world

concerns, overlooking how many modern novels still deeply engage with history, trauma, and political struggle, even through innovative narrative techniques. For instance, Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016) reimagines American slavery through a literal underground train system, blending historical fiction with magical realism. The work stays deeply rooted in the historical tragedy of slavery, even though this method is inventive and metafictional in some ways. It uses its speculative parts to enhance, not obfuscate, its connection with reality. As a reader, it takes us further into the past and doesn't just confine us to the story. It makes it possible to re-examine and challenge history. There is no set reality; instead, it creates room for what we perceive to be the truth. Waugh claims that fiction stops portraying reality, but Whitehead's story refuses to give up on showing actual racial injustice and structural violence. Similarly, in Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), With a self-aware narrator who regularly breaches the fourth wall, makes allusions to comic books and fantasy literature, and includes footnotes, the story is incredibly metafictional. However, these stylistic decisions highlight the Dominican Republic's violent past under Trujillo's dictatorship and its generational repercussions through the characters' dysfunctional lives rather than addressing directly every brutal thing about that regime. A number of basic components, including magical realism, ambiguous ending, an unreliable narrator, diaspora, and collective memory, combine to illustrate larger societal facets, more complex goals, and power relationships. The voices of numerous notable historical heroes are restored in these books. There is a scope for open-ended interpretation, broader understanding, multi layered meaning and non dependency. The characters are reflective of past and real figures. They break free from conventional roles and challenge readers to look for more meanings. Are not metafictional writings intriguing? They are deeply provoking in the sense that they push the readers to look for meanings and study the past,

characters, power structure, society, and question what is merely presented to us. Thus, Waugh's theory might be justified to interpret other writings but I believe metafiction can still meaningfully depict reality while acknowledging its own constructed nature.

2.4 Racism, Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism impact on the mass

A fictional piece of writing also reveals a lot beyond culture, past and historical evidence. Through theories and discourses in metafictional literature, the economic structure of the time and its evolution across time are vividly depicted, enabling readers to connect it to each succeeding century. Cedric Robinson played a pivotal role in reshaping critical thinking around race, capitalism, and liberation struggles. His influential writings are collected in the book *Cedric J. Robinson: On Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism, and Cultures of Resistance*, edited by H.L.T. Quan with a foreword by Ruth Wilson Gilmore. Robinson popularised the idea of racial capitalism, which holds that capitalism has always been racial and depends on taking use of racial differences rather than just adapting them. He is best known for his seminal work *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. The articles, lectures, and previously unpublished works collected in this collection demonstrate the depth of Robinson's thinking and his lifetime dedication to dissecting oppressive systems and fostering resistance traditions. Racial capitalism as the structural underpinning of contemporary economies and social structures is one of the collection's main themes, highlighting how racial hierarchies are not merely incidental but rather necessary for capitalism to function. In his books, Robinson demonstrates how Black liberation movements in the United States and around the world produced a radical critique of modernity itself, which he termed the Black Radical Tradition. He maintained that

because this legacy is derived from unique cultural, historical, and intellectual forms rooted in African and diasporic experiences, it cannot be properly comprehended using Marxist frameworks alone. Robinson's examination of Black internationalism, in which he makes links between liberation movements worldwide—from African anti-colonial movements to Caribbean, Latin American, and African American resistance—is another significant component of the book. He is adamant that Black liberation be viewed as a component of a worldwide network of anti-oppression movements rather than as an isolated event. This method challenges the Eurocentric interpretation of political and economic history and emphasises solidarity beyond national boundaries. The book also focuses on cultures of resistance, highlighting the critical terrain of struggle that is formed by literature, art, and cultural output. Robinson contends that in addition to reflecting injustice, poetry, music, film, and other forms of cultural expression actively create counter-hegemonic visions that uplift communities and motivate group action. Long-lasting resistance requires alternative ways of knowing and being, which these works foster through radical imagination. Another reason the collection is significant is that it expands Robinson's body of knowledge by making previously unavailable works available. The volume, which was edited by H.L.T. Quan, places Robinson's writings in relation to current discussions in political economy, critical theory, and Black studies. In the foreword, Ruth Wilson Gilmore places Robinson in the context of current conflicts, demonstrating how his observations are still relevant in the struggle against global capitalism, state violence, and racialised injustice.

The Order: Inside America's Racist Underground by Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt and the works of Whitehead and Díaz depict how history, oppression, and resistance shape personal and collective identities, and the enduring effects of past systems of control continue to influence

future generations. The books also critique how control can be on multiple levels. While *The Order* has a blatant resemblance with the American past of wanting completely “White states” or “White superior states” at least, this book is also provoking a similar regime of how a society is controlled by taking control of individual power and agency as we see in Trujillo’s era in Dominican society. *The Order* talks about the emergence of the violent extremist organisation known as the Silent Brotherhood, which aimed to create a white nationalist homeland in the US. A realistic scenario from the era of slavery is reflected in the group's radical proposal to create a white-only nation in the United States. They used crimes like armoured car thefts and covert killings to raise money for their cause. The philosophy of the group stems from historical animosity, past resentment and opposition to alleged social reforms, including racial equality, government overreach, and civil rights movements. At the time, their actions constituted one of the worst domestic terrorism threats. The founder of the Silent Brotherhood, Robert Jay Mathews, is portrayed in the book as a dynamic leader who persuaded law-abiding people to support his extreme agenda. He was able to inspire others with his convictions even though he was a family man with no criminal history. According to Mathews and his supporters, they are defending a historical legacy that they see to be at danger. The FBI agent who was crucial in the investigation and, eventually, in the downfall of Mathews and the organisation was Wayne Manis. It emphasises how some extremist organisations are prepared to go to lethal lengths to express their hatred, something Mathews was also prepared to do in his pursuit of a country exclusively for white people. Mathews died in a shooting following a heated confrontation, and according to some accounts, he may have killed himself because he would rather die than give up. The philosophy that motivated Mathews throughout his life—a determination to die for the cause of white supremacy rather than make concessions or give up—is summed up in this last act

of defiance. The Order is based on a white supremacist objective, and the Silent Brotherhood uses violence to try to change America. Their philosophy is based on white supremacist ideas and Christian identity theology, which despise diversity and strive for a "pure" past and society. Attempts to maintain a white supremacist history—one that aims to downplay or suppress the existence and accomplishments of people of color—are at the heart of the book. Mathews and his supporters act in an attempt to preserve and defend their interpretation of history because they regard themselves as guardians of a dying tradition. “He claimed his Minutemen were not planning an insurrection; the organization was a strictly defensive instrument against communism in America” (Flynn 26). The authors hint at the supremacist idea that they can be violent and defensive to protect their racial ideologies and dominance of a certain racial group. This book is reflective of how the white mentality rooted from the time of slavery and still it is an emerging reason for many fundamental disputes of the country. The media, practices, public punishment and fabricated truth in display take over the truth and reality favoring the ruler and hierarchy. I believe Oscar’s death is symbolic of the numbing of voices that the nation witnessed. Many people like him suffered and were silenced. All three texts engage with the theme of extremist impact and historical erasure. Mathews' extreme right-wing philosophy in *The Order* aims to obliterate racial minorities' pasts. The main characters in *The Underground Railroad* struggle to restore what slavery attempted to take away from them—the right to be remembered. The curse imposed on the family in Oscar Wao symbolises the permanent eradication of their voices and experiences in the larger political and historical context. The main point, in my opinion, emphasises the frightening ability of extremist beliefs to reach and radicalise people, even those who seem like regular citizens. Their true purpose, which included neo-Nazi, anti-Black, and antisemitic language, was concealed behind this façade of patriotism. Their work

serves as a cautionary tale about the potential for violence and societal harm when such ideologies are left unchecked. In the name of patriotism, many political groups tend to cultivate the mentality of the countrymen and make them target a certain group of people despite them being the people of the same nation. This can be linked to how Americans created their own definition of “whiteness” and “blackness”. It was the people in the nation who cultivated this thought that they are different and they should be assigned differently. Through my analysis I see that this is exactly what the contemporary world of America is still struggling with. There is still a conflict of white and black even though slavery has exited the nation and the racist mentality resides there profoundly. Rafael Trujillo, the brutal dictator, called for the Parsley Massacre in 1937. Being mixed-race himself, Trujillo had strong racist prejudices towards Haitians, whom he viewed as inferior. He rejected the impact of Haitian culture, which was linked to African roots, and instead advocated for a "Dominican identity" that was linked to a European (especially Spanish) background. This was partially motivated by the desire to set the Dominican Republic apart from its neighbour, Haiti, and to establish a "pure" Dominican identity. Trujillo gave the order to massacre Haitians residing along the border in October 1937. The Spanish word for parsley, "perejil," was frequently used to identify the victims. Given that Haitian Creole pronunciation differed from Spanish pronunciation, Dominican soldiers would ask Haitians to say the word. People who mispronounced it were instantly killed. *The Order* validates my argument that extremist regimes and rule are never meant for the collective betterment rather it only empowers one certain group. Under the record of past evidence, they might look as the heroes maintaining order but in reality there are far different truths.

2.5 Systemic Oppression and its impact

Racism is an important concept, we encounter reading *The Underground Railroad* and *Oscar Wao*. To interpret it, the critical race ideologies discussed by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva in *Racism without Racists* and David Theo Goldberg are excellent to understand. “Most whites believe that if Blacks and other minorities would just stop thinking about the past, work hard, and complain less (particularly about racial discrimination), then Americans of all hues could “all get along””(Silva 1). But this is contradictory because they are the ones who cannot imagine a community of different races and spreading power. Colorblind racism is a belief that racism no longer exists and that everyone has equal opportunities. “Racial profiling on the highways has become such a prevalent phenomenon that a term has emerged to describe it: driving while black. In short, blacks and most minorities are, “at the bottom of the well”” (2). The subtle, institutional, and seemingly nonracial "New Racism" activities are the means by which modern racial inequity is perpetuated. Racial practices currently function in a "now you see it, now you don't" manner, in contrast to the Jim Crow era when racial inequality was upheld through overt, blatant measures (e.g., signs saying, "No Niggers Welcomed Here," or shotgun diplomacy at the voting booth). For example, residential segregation, is almost as actively carried out as it was in the past, is no longer evident and apparent but practiced. Rather, the preferred means of maintaining segregated communities are illicit actions like failing to display all available apartments, directing whites and minorities into particular neighbourhoods, charging minority applicants more rentals or prices, or failing to advertise units at all. The new methods of keeping minorities in a secondary position in the economic sphere include posting job openings in ethnic newspapers and mostly white networks, and directing highly educated people of colour into low-paying positions or positions with few opportunities for advancement. Politically, "racial

gerrymandering," multimember legislative districts, election runoffs, annexation of predominantly white areas, at-large district elections have become standard practices to disenfranchise" people of colour, despite the fact that the Civil Rights Movement helped remove many of the barriers to their electoral participation. White privilege is maintained in ways that transcend easy racial interpretations, whether in banking, dining establishments, school admissions, or housing transactions. Therefore, the characteristics of colour-blind racism are a good fit for the new racism in America. "I also argue like them that whites today rely more on cultural rather than biological tropes to explain blacks' position in this country" (7). Colour blindness or colorblind racism appears to be "racism lite" in comparison to Jim Crow racism. Colour-blind racism uses soft otherization ("these people are human, too") rather than name-calling ('niggers, Spics, Chinks'). Such connotative remarks implies that minorities are behind because they do not work hard enough, rather than claiming that God put them in a submissive position is just another way of differentiating and sidelining them. It views interracial marriage as "problematic" due to worries about the children, location, or additional burden it places on couples, rather than as wrong on a straight racial basis. However, this new ideology has developed into a powerful political tool for upholding the racial order. Colour-blind racism is the intellectual underpinning of a hidden and institutionalised system of racial oppression in the post-Civil Rights era, much like Jim Crow racism was a glue used to defend a violent and overt system of racial oppression in the pre-Civil Rights era. The best thing about this new philosophy is that it helps to maintain white privilege without making a big deal out of it or identifying the people it benefits and those it targets. It gives a president the ability to say things like, "I strongly support diversity of all kinds, including racial diversity in higher education". White people thus express opinions that protect their racial interests without coming across as "racist." Hence, we

can conclude about where America stands today. It has an ample number of white people who are colour-blind and may be resentful of minorities, criticise their morals, beliefs, and work ethic, and even accuse them of being the targets of "reverse racism." By "racism without racists," the author implies that even in the absence of visible racists, racism can persist. The four main frameworks: Abstracting liberalism, Neutralization, Cultural racism, Minimization of Racism are about colour-blind racism that enable individuals to defend racial disparities while seeming non-racist are examined by Bonilla-Silva. Abstract Liberalism is the practice of liberal ideals like equality and individual rights to argue against policies that promote racial equity. While neglecting the structural obstacles that racial minorities encounter, it highlights the idea of *meritocracy*, asserting that everyone has an equal chance if they work hard enough. For instance, despite the historical background of racial inequality, some may argue against affirmative action on the grounds that it violates "individual rights" or "equality of opportunity." By implying that racial inequality and segregation are "natural" or unavoidable, naturalisation serves to legitimise these practices. Neutralization justifies racial segregation and inequality by implying that these injustices are "natural" and inevitable. These practices do exist in a society of different races. Instead of addressing the institutional and historical causes of segregation, it asserts that people of various races naturally separate themselves due to "preferences" or "cultural tendencies." Cultural racism is the practice of using minorities' alleged cultural shortcomings as an excuse for injustice. Instead of taking into account the effects of structural inequalities like discrimination or lack of access to resources, it implies that the differences in income, education, and employment are due to the culture, values, or behaviour of minority groups. Minimization of Racism denies the significance of racism in society. It makes the argument that people are overly preoccupied with racial issues and that racism is no longer a significant problem. "Racism is not as bad as it

used to be," or "We've made progress; why are we still talking about racism?" are some statements made by people who employ this frame. This downplays the severity of persistent systemic racial problems. Silva believes that, frequently without publicly admitting racial bias, symbolic racism is the type of racism that tends to fit in with larger social systems that uphold racial inequity. The characters' experiences of racial oppression in *The Underground Railroad*, where slavery and its horrors are institutionalised yet frequently concealed by the fictitious explanations of a "natural order," represent this theory. Similarly, even in the absence of overt prejudice, Oscar Wao's identity and his family's problems are shaped by the legacy of colonialism and racial hierarchy. Both works' systemic structures show how racism persists without being overtly recognised, making it difficult for characters to live in a society where racial prejudice is not openly declared but rather woven into the very fabric of society. My further analysis shows how after the abolishment of slavery, there were indirect justifications to dictate why Black men are threatening to the society and they are the "chaotic one", "trouble makers" and most importantly "criminals". Silva's theory with legitimate real life examples aligns with my opinion that even today in the era of so called "anti-racist" America, racism still exists blatantly. Ways, methods and power might have shifted but in the historical past of slavery, "race" was a subject of oppression and today "race" is still a subject of discrimination.

David Theo Goldberg in *The Threat of Race*, critiques the shift from antiracism (the active opposition to racial oppression) to antiracialism (the denial of racial categories) in modern societies. Goldberg argues that efforts to eliminate racism have been diluted into superficial commitments to "colorblindness" or "post-racial" narratives. He situates race historically as a tool of modern statecraft, rooted in colonial, religious, and scientific discourses, and explores how neoliberalism allows racial inequalities to persist while denying their existence. Goldberg

introduces the concept of the "racial state", emphasizing that race continues to be deeply structured into legal, political, and economic institutions despite official denials. Goldberg shows how demands for civility function to delegitimize anti-racist protest by labeling it disruptive or irrational. The language of civility is used to maintain a racialized status quo by redefining what counts as "legitimate" political expression. He analyzes how media, politics, and law deploy civility as a form of racial disciplining—particularly targeting black and brown communities. The "soft" violence of civility, he argues, allows systemic racial brutality to persist behind a facade of politeness and tolerance. Goldberg explores how civility discourse masks and moderates racial violence in neoliberal societies. Goldberg turns to Europe and the erasure of race from public discourse—what he calls "racial evaporation". He examines how Europe's self-image as post-racial and tolerant masks deep racial exclusions, particularly targeting immigrants, Muslims, and Roma communities. He critiques policies of assimilation, Islamophobia, and the denial of race-based data collection. Goldberg argues that European racialism is displaced onto culture and religion, producing racisms without the language of race. Despite claims to multiculturalism, European states often treat difference as a problem to be managed, not a feature to be embraced. Goldberg examines how Latin American states often celebrate racial mixture while simultaneously ignoring structural racial inequalities. He argues that *mestizaje* (racial mixing) operates as a racial alchemy, transforming visible racial difference into state-sanctioned national sameness—while preserving white supremacist logics beneath the surface. He also critiques the myth of racial democracy in Brazil and the violence enacted against Afro-descendant and Indigenous populations despite inclusive rhetoric. The final chapter is a sweeping synthesis of how racial neoliberalism operates globally. Goldberg ties together the forms of racial Americanization, Palestinianization, Europeanization, Latinamericanization, and South

Africanization into a transnational framework. Neoliberalism, he argues, does not eliminate race but restructures it in new, invisible, and often unaccountable forms. Under the guise of free markets, globalization, and democracy, it produces racial occlusion, social abandonment, and selective inclusion. The "enduring occupations" refer both to literal occupations (e.g. Palestine, Iraq) and figurative ones—the persistent racial occupation of space, labor, security, and subjectivity. David Theo Goldberg's idea of racial neoliberalism also sheds light on the racial oppression in both *The Underground Railroad* and *Oscar Wao*. Goldberg's theory explores how race continues to be a key mechanism in the neoliberal world order, where racialized inequalities are perpetuated not only through direct oppression but also through policies, social norms, and economic practices that maintain disparities. In *The Underground Railroad*, the novel illustrates how slavery is intertwined with economic exploitation, showing how racial oppression is institutionalized and perpetuated by capitalist systems. The way slavery and Black men were portrayed and integrated in the Northern people from an early age through books, media and ideologies. Goldberg's concept of racial neoliberalism can be seen in the way the system uses race to maintain power structures, even as it claims to be "colorblind" or progressive. Similarly, in *Oscar Wao*, the post-colonial and capitalist forces that shape the Dominican Republic reflect Goldberg's argument about how racialized practices are adapted to new economic realities. These works exemplify how race continues to inform social and economic relations, reflecting Goldberg's critique of a neoliberal world that sustains racial hierarchies under the guise of equality or progress. In my opinion, marginalisation is not a quick installation, rather done strategically. The fact that Northerners and Southerners of the same nation were segregated harshly was a strategy that was only possible because of the shared agreement and bonding of economic, social and political means. Neoliberalism does not deduct racial oppression but it does

bring the oppressors to light. It does make the racist order more explicit in the public eye. The focus on “individual responsibility” allows the system to unveil its inherently racist order while positioning the oppressed as the cause of their own disadvantage. Neoliberalism's emphasis on individualism and competition is one of its defining characteristics. This emphasis highlights the contradictions in society, particularly when the "equal opportunity" that neoliberal policies promise does not develop for marginalised groups. Neoliberalism makes it impossible for racialised communities' failures to achieve social and economic success to be covered up by welfare programs or government involvement.

Chapter 3 : Research Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of this research paper is to critique the ways in which history and identity are shaped by ideological agendas, offering a layered examination of how power distorts collective memory and individual agency. The paper intends to reveal the real-world agendas that shape the narratives surrounding race, power and history. The research conducted was to gather evidence that showed how fictional literature affects reality and perceptions of history through the lens of two primary books. The primary data for this research are from the two Pulitzer Prize winning novels: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) by Junot Diaz and *The Underground Railroad* (2016) by Colson Whitehead. The secondary sources were collected from a wide range of online resources, archival materials, books, and scholarly articles. Online resources, including academic databases, digital libraries, and credible research platforms, were essential for accessing up-to-date discussions, contemporary critiques, and digitized versions of

older texts. Archival sources provided a critical foundation for the study, offering access to original documents, early editions of seminal works, and primary records that inform the historical and intellectual development of the concepts under review. Books by major theorists and scholars in the field were consulted to establish a robust theoretical base, while journal articles, essays, and book chapters were used to capture secondary interpretations and scholarly debates. Collectively, these sources allowed for a rich, multi-layered understanding of the subject. The supporting books included major writings of its time like *Incidents in the life of a slave girl*, *The Order*, *Stamped from the Beginning*, *Racism without Racists*, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, *Slaughterhouse Five*, *The Mirabal Sisters*, *The Threat of Race* and many more.

A qualitative approach is conducted as it is most appropriate for this paper because the questions under investigation are rooted in concepts, histories, theories and discourses that cannot be adequately understood through statistical data alone. The goal is to capture meanings, contexts, and connections across texts and historical sources, with attention to how theoretical insights have been developed, contested, and applied over time. The main discourses in the primary books like Slavery, Racism, Metafiction and Dictatorship- should be examined through the structured framework of prominent literary critics. Hence, some of the few key figures like William Gass, Harriet Tubman, Patricia Waugh and many others' developed ideas and theories were researched and scrutinised into. The analysis followed a thematic and interpretive approach. Each text was subjected to close reading to identify recurring themes, key concepts, and patterns of argumentation. The analysis paid particular attention to how authors framed capitalism, race, resistance, and internationalism across historical and cultural contexts. A comparative lens was also applied, bringing different sources into dialogue to highlight both convergences and

divergences in theoretical perspectives. The scope of this study was deliberately broad in terms of source material, spanning historical archives, theoretical texts, and contemporary scholarship.

Chapter 4 : Research gap

Metafiction as a concept can be difficult to pin down. Although self-reflection, breaking the fourth wall, intertextuality, and other fundamental components are frequently linked to metafiction, there is not a single, universally accepted definition. Theoretical ambiguity may result from this, making it difficult to create a coherent framework for text analysis. Different approaches to using metafiction in writing will be imposed by different authors. Intertextual references, or texts within texts, are a common component of metafiction, although they can be difficult to comprehend. The social, cultural, and historical backgrounds of these references may complicate the interpretation further. The paper did not delve deeper into the “intertextuality” of the primary books. Metafiction can be found in a wide range of genres and periods, but certain texts are more obviously metafictional than others. Secondary books are also used to some limited amount. There is a possibility of conducting deeper research with more accounts of critics but were not done due to time constraints. There is always a scope for more in depth analysis.

Chapter 5 : Analysis

5.1 Key Elements and literary devices for crafting metafiction

Metafiction is primarily used to draw attention to readers that they are reading a piece of fictional work. But apart from that, metafiction provides a stage for the reader to connect with

literature realistically and holistically. Metafiction is also a tool that explores the relationship between literature and reality, life and art. Literature cannot be completely segregated or distinguished from human affairs no matter how fictional the writing strategies are. Art forms are created from human interactions and understanding of the world through someone's perception. Metafiction allows us to look into a real scenario through our own gaze and opinion. A reaction emits from metafictional writing because it does not provoke us into believing whatever is presented, rather there are gaps for us to figure out and put our judgement into. There are many elements that merge together to create this metafictional hue of reality and fiction.

Oscar Wao employs a number of important metafictional strategies. The main narrator, Yunior, is a speculative and unreliable figure who frequently criticises his own narrative. Readers are aware that they are receiving a version of events rather than an absolute truth because he admits his limited understanding of the characters' innermost feelings and thoughts. This gives readers the scope to take charge of the characters' reasoning, responsibility, and potential intentions. Because it challenges readers to consider the authenticity of the story, which is based on historical events, this method is also a crucial component of metafiction. Readers are reminded that the story is a manufactured, subjective account by Yunior's confessions such as "I'm not a good storyteller" and his sporadic interruptions of the narrative with remarks regarding his personal role in the story. In order to break the impression of a cohesive narrative and draw attention to the account's fictionality, Yunior frequently addresses the reader directly, breaking the fourth wall. Pop culture allusions and intertextuality are also used to guide us through the novel. Díaz blurs the boundaries between his fictitious story and actual cultural and historical realities by citing works by authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien, *The history of the Dominican Republic*, or the well-known novel *The Turner Diaries*. For example- The *fukú* curse in the novel

is also resembling a curse on the nation, which is a direct nod to the Dominican Republic's historical context, specifically the brutal dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. By including these cultural allusions, Díaz highlights how the novel is formed and invites the reader to think about how real-world history shaped the fictitious universe he constructs. The discontinuities of narration and remarks indicate that the text we are reading is a narrative narrated by Yunior rather than an impartial account of what happened. This usage of meta-narrative questions the idea of objective truth and draws attention to the story's fabrication. The author also reminds us in this way that we tend to believe historical accounts based solely on the testimony of others, which is precisely what makes them unreliable. For instance, Yunior occasionally takes the time to go into detail about his relationship with the family, his comprehension of their dynamics, and even his part in their narrative. A key component of metafiction is the self-awareness that is produced by these observations on the story itself. One must be conscious of their own beliefs and understandings while studying history from a variety of perspectives. It should be interpreted rather than fed.

Colson Whitehead challenges the distinction between reality and fiction in *The Underground Railroad* by incorporating aspects of historical fiction and magical realism. The novel's most noteworthy metafictional element is its literal depiction of the Underground Railroad as an actual, operational train system. This blurs the line between truth and fiction and deepens the reader's interaction with historical events. One of the best examples of metafictional approach is Whitehead's reworking of the Underground Railroad that turns a system of covert routes and safe havens used by oppressed people to flee to freedom—into a real, operational railroad capable of carrying individuals to freedom. Through the prism of fiction, this magical realist component compels the reader to reevaluate the historical occurrences of slavery.

For instance, the train comes to symbolise the dream of a safe journey to freedom as well as the prospect of escape. It highlights the difference between the wonderful, mythical version of the historical system that provides instantaneous passage to safety and the real one, which was invisible and frequently dangerous. Whitehead reimagines the history of slavery by creating parallel universes in several states and communities throughout the book. Though they are depicted in exaggerated, and whimsical ways, these locations, which have a sense of realism and unreality, reflect historical themes of racial segregation, oppression, and violence. Readers are forced to confront the facts of racism and slavery in a fresh, unnerving way by these other worlds. As a kind of social control, Black individuals in one of the made-up towns are sterilised under the pretence of medical treatment. By fusing these imagined atrocities with actual historical occurrences, this dystopian reconstruction of race relations exposes how societal constructions affect and distort history and offers a startling critique of America's racial past. Whitehead highlights how historical narratives may be reimagined by fusing actual historical events with speculative, fanciful aspects (such as the train and the fictional town of South Carolina, where Black people are sterilised). The novel's theoretical components serve as analogies for the absurdity of oppressive regimes and the dehumanisation of slaves. She combines a fanciful universe with a real underground railway with historical figures like Caesar and Cora. These books reveal how fiction, though unreal, can sometimes reveal greater truths about the real world.

Whitehead challenges readers to reevaluate the significance of historical events by fusing them with mystical aspects while drawing inspiration from actual historical characters, events, and the cruel system of slavery. Despite being set in a historical setting, the circumstances that the characters—Cora in particular—face frequently seem unreal. Real-world historical violence

and suffering are made more present, visceral, and unnerving by the story's "magical" or "fantastical" elements, such as the train, which produces a potent metafictional critique of history. Additionally, these figures represent real-life heroes who persevered in their efforts to end the cruel system of slavery. Both novels disrupt traditional storytelling. Díaz disrupts narrative expectations through the unreliable narrator, while Whitehead uses magical realism to disrupt historical fiction.

As a literary approach, postmodernism frequently shows scepticism towards grand narratives and established truths instead in favour of irony, intertextuality, and fragmentation. Its rejection of absolute meaning, which implies that reality is arbitrary and open to various interpretations, is one of its main points. This method makes it possible for fact and fiction to blend together, resulting in a story that continuously challenges the line separating the two. Reality is frequently shown in postmodern works as fragmented, non-linear, and layered with several points of view. This technique disrupts traditional storytelling by incorporating metafiction, self-referentiality, and playful transitions between genres or historical events. Postmodernism challenges the authority of the narrator, suggesting that truth is elusive and that all narratives are, to some extent, constructs influenced by the storyteller's perspective. Junot Díaz illustrates the intricacies of Dominican history, society, and identity in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* through postmodern approaches. The author asks us once more, "Is this really the truth?" through Yunior, the unreliable narrator. Pop culture allusions, historical occurrences, and magical realism are combined to produce a story that makes the reader wonder what is "real." The book frequently travels around between different perspectives and periods, emphasising how myths, individual tales, and communal history shape people's perceptions of the world and contributing to the fractured character of reality. Similar to this, Colson Whitehead

challenges the reader to consider the narrative, storytelling, and the "truth" of slavery itself by her characters' never ending challenges, the unknown routes and resonance of real life characters like Harriet Jacobs. He makes the reader face the atrocities of slavery both literally and figuratively. Both books offer a potent reflection on the ways in which our stories and our interpretations of them influence history, identity, and trauma.

Both the primary books heavily rely on the idea of canon as a literary device as well. A canon is a set of writings, concepts, or customs that are regarded as foundational or authoritative in a particular literary or cultural field or subject matter. Authors can reach beyond the boundaries of their own stories and access more general social, historical, and political realities by referencing or subverting aspects of the canon. Junot Díaz delves deeply into the canon of Dominican history and Western literature in *Oscar Wao*, revealing the intricacies of identity, power, and cultural legacies through allusions of pop culture, historical events, and classical works. On the surface, the book is about Oscar, a young Dominican man who finds it difficult to fit in and find love in a world that doesn't care about or support his ambitions. Nonetheless, the storyline of the book is influenced by both Latin American magical realism and references to classic Western literature such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *the Mirabel sisters*, and science fiction. Oscar's desire for a heroic, adventurous life is emphasised by the allusion to *The Lord of the Rings*, which reflects the novel's larger themes of identity and escape. In contrast to the political and historical weights that he bears, it emphasises Oscar's wish to rise above his everyday existence and pursue a sort of romantic, heavenly existence. By referencing these classic works, Díaz transcends the boundaries of fiction and provides insight into the larger cultural and social conflicts that are not restricted by the specifics of Oscar's life but rather connect to the colonial

past of Dominican Republicans and the globalisation of thought. It also reveals factual statements about the culture where unconventional and slow life makes one incompetent to live life blatantly and vividly like others. Every other nation has this little Dominican aspect in them where certain people lack behind due to their irregular personalities and they are subjected to a variety of unfairness, injustices and even death. These canonical allusions may initially appear to be literary "twists," but in the end, they aid readers in comprehending how history affects individual identities in the "real world."

Whitehead, on the other hand, uses myths, historical facts, and canonical works to raise the emotional and thematic stakes of his story. The account of Cora, a fugitive slave, appears to be a straightforward historical fiction work that describes the atrocities of slavery and the fight for liberation. However, Whitehead blends the real and the imagined by using both fantastical elements (the literal train) and historical canon parts (such as abolitionist publications, testimonials of former slaves, and experiences of slavery). Whitehead escapes the constraints of a simple historical narrative by utilising the canon, especially the historical reports and the idea of a hidden railway. In the book, the underground railway turns into a metaphor for escape, hope, and the difficulties of true freedom. Whitehead also reveals the hidden realities of the terrible history of slavery by fancifully rewriting this canon. The railway itself stands for a continuous fight for liberty that extends well beyond the story's historical setting. Beyond the fictitious universe, it reveals the human need for liberation, challenging us to reevaluate the realities of institutional oppression and the extent people would go to in order to escape it.

Both books reveal levels of meaning beyond the immediate, made-up situations of their heroes by drawing on the canon. Díaz and Whitehead situate their characters within a broader, interwoven network of social, political, and historical influences by drawing on the literature,

myths, and histories that have influenced nations and societies. These forces have real-world ramifications and are not limited to the fictitious realm. Both writers use the canon to question temporal and geographic constraints. *Oscar Wao* transverses time, connecting Oscar's destiny to the larger historical background of the Dominican Republic, particularly its colonial and post-colonial conflicts. Comparably, *The Underground Railroad* traverses place and time, offering alternate points of view that compel readers to face historical facts in a non-linear way. Both novels show that although fiction is limited to the written word, realities regarding race, oppression, identity, and freedom are constant and transcend storylines. These books transcend the boundaries of fiction by drawing on the canon to allude to both historical occurrences and mythological frameworks, giving readers a sense of more general, universal truths about the human condition. These realities include the enduring nature of racial and cultural oppression, the pursuit of individual and group liberation, and the challenge of meaning-finding in a world influenced by uncontrollable forces.

5.2 Individual vs Collective Memory in Historical narratives

The footnotes in *Oscar Wao* also reveal the agenda of controlling collective memory. By highlighting the fact that history is frequently a matter of selective recollection, Díaz challenges the notion that history can be written or understood objectively. The book reveals how some events are either neutralised or removed from the national historical narrative, especially those that include injustice, trauma, and violence. Díaz contends that by suppressing the voices of the disadvantaged, especially those who endured under Trujillo's tyranny and American

interventions, this selective memory furthers a political objective. Díaz raises concerns about whose history is recorded and whose perspectives are ignored by fusing personal tales with the broader historical background. This is part of a larger criticism of how the powerful or dominant write history, leaving under-represented groups to fight to get their voices heard.

Lastly, the gendered creation of power in the framework of Dominican history is another historical goal that the novel reveals. The way the women in the de León family—Beli and Lola in particular—are portrayed in the book illustrates how women have traditionally been oppressed and dominated in Dominican culture. Díaz uses the story of the de León family to show how official historical records have frequently ignored women's realities, especially when it comes to love, sexuality, and power. The feminist undertones in the book also imply that gender dynamics that uphold patriarchal systems also influence how history is constructed, in addition to political and racial objectives. Junot Díaz employs metafiction in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, especially in his footnotes, to expose the motivations underlying the creation of history.

Junot Díaz explores in *Oscar Wao* the historical trauma inflicted by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic and its enduring effects on the country's communal memory. The trauma of this time period affects the characters' identities and lives and is not limited to the victims of Trujillo's cruelty; it is also carried down through the generations. Through family stories, the characters' experiences of violence, tyranny, and terror brought on by a totalitarian government are repeatedly reenacted, influencing the family members' perceptions of themselves and the outside world. This shared story of suffering includes Ybón's experiences under Trujillo's rule, the anguish of her exile, and the emotional wounds she bears to this day. The characters require an awareness of the trauma, which is not unique to any one individual but

rather shared by the Dominican people. The book demonstrates how people absorb this collective memory, suffering psychologically and politically as a result of the historical trauma.

Storytelling plays an important part in Oscar Wao because it helps people recall and comprehend the trauma of the past. The story, which is mostly told by Yunior, demonstrates how pain is passed down through the generations by fusing historical background with personal tales. The characters' destinies are significantly shaped by the collective memory of the dictatorship, demonstrating the unbreakable grip of the past on the present. Readers are led to wonder about Oscar's mental health and the weight he carried for years due to his strange behaviour and difficulties adjusting to everyday life. His mental state is questionable and his past experiences shaped him to view the world differently.

The displacement of the Dominican people, especially those who escaped the violent Trujillo regime, is referred to as the diaspora in Oscar Wao. The main character, Oscar, is from the Dominican diaspora in the US. He is attempting to start over in a new nation, far from the family anguish and political violence that befell his forefathers in the Dominican Republic. From the experiences of Oscar's mother (Belicia), who was personally impacted by Trujillo's tyranny, to Oscar's sister (Lola), and ultimately to Oscar himself, the novel's generational pain is transmitted through the family. The family's painful experiences have spread throughout the diaspora and are not limited to the Dominican Republic. They are unable to overcome the wounds caused by the past, even in the United States, and the burden of this trauma moulds their identities and prospects. In particular, Belicia bears the trauma of having been sexually assaulted by Trujillo's men when she was a young woman. This experience had an impact on her life as well as the lives of her children, especially Oscar. Her resentment and lack of genuine affection for her kids, particularly Oscar, demonstrate how trauma may be inherited and impact the development of

positive connections. Their family's collective memory includes the scars of suffering and terror left by Trujillo's tyranny. Due to his ongoing battles with his family's troubled past and his own feelings of inadequacy, Oscar's trauma is also ingrained in his identity. His family's battle to overcome the trauma of their past is intertwined with his quest for identity, yet the trauma still has an impact on him that he is unable to completely understand or manage.

In addition to his family's past, Oscar's troubles in the United States also stem from his own search for identity and belonging. As a Dominican-American, he experiences body image problems, unrequited love, and racial and cultural estrangement. Oscar's unsuccessful attempts at love and his inability to find personal fulfillment show that he is still bound by his family's curse even in the United States. Like his relationships with other women, his relationship with the girl he loves, Miriam, ends badly. Oscar is nonetheless trapped by the anguish of his family's past while being geographically far from the horrors of Trujillo's rule, indicating that relocation by itself does not offer a way out of generational misery. The *fukú* represents the notion that trauma can have legendary and supernatural repercussions in addition to psychological ones. The family's horrific past in the Dominican Republic and their current life in the United States appear to be connected by a curse that seems to transcend time and location.

Colson Whitehead examines the horrific legacy of slavery in the US and its impact on trauma and communal memory in *The Underground Railroad*. The horror of slavery haunts the characters, and Whitehead draws on the idea that trauma is ingrained in both individual and collective history to depict the terrifying escape via a real train system using magical realism.

The most obvious example of magical realism in *The Underground Railroad* is the literal depiction of the railroad as a real train system that runs underneath. By transforming it into an actual train that can carry characters from one state to another, transcending time and space, this fantastical element—which has its roots in historical fact—is elevated into the realm of magic. The reader is placed at a metafictional remove from the historical reality of slavery because of this aspect of magical realism. Although the tragedies of slavery are true and extremely traumatic, Whitehead creates a tension between history and imagination, reality and fiction, by using the magical railway to let the reader engage with the trauma of the past in a symbolic and changed way. Rather than merely providing a fantasy getaway, magical realism blurs the boundaries between the story's fictionality and historical occurrences. This is where this technique acts as a brilliant tool to address the scope to explore reality beyond its narration. Whitehead addresses the historical erasure of the Black experience and the manner in which history itself may be reimagined or rewritten through this book. The train turns into a metafictional device, serving as a metaphor for the way history is written as well as a literal component of the story. Whitehead demonstrates how memory and narrative frequently influence even the most horrific and genuine historical occurrences, including slavery and the Underground Railroad. He is drawing attention to the subjectivity and artificiality of historical narrative in this way. In addition to being a means of escape for characters like Cora, the train also represents movement in the larger context of both historical and individual travel. Whitehead used this technique to demonstrate how stories themselves have the power to take us to new locations and how our understanding of history frequently involves more interpretation than historical reality. Whitehead challenges the reader to consider how pliable the past is and how fiction shapes our perception of it by turning the underground railway into a real train. But

it's not an easy escape from the train. The idea of narrative boundaries is another thing that Whitehead plays with in true metafictional form: although the characters, particularly Cora, may physically escape slavery, they are never truly free from the psychological scars of their trauma. Whitehead himself carries a wounded heart to describe what slavery meant for the Black people, and his identity as a Black man makes the writing more connected to the past. The novel's depiction of slavery is so horrific and inhumane that it almost seems more appropriate for the realm of magic than reality. Whitehead creates a disorienting and frightening effect by using the train that passes from one state to another to mirror the endless horrors of slavery. The actual world and the fanciful are inextricably linked.

The anguish of forced travel, dehumanisation, and ongoing fear of being discovered are particularly symbolised by Cora's voyage. She experiences psychological and physical abuse while riding the railway between states, which becomes ingrained in her collective memory. The book demonstrates how this pain is not unique to any one person but rather is experienced by generations of African Americans who are descended from slaves. In addition to Cora, the other characters who have either lived through or are still dealing with the effects of slavery also have the psychological scars of slavery. A shared memory of suffering, brutality, and oppression shapes their decisions, behaviours, and anxieties. Slavery haunts them in a similar way to how collective trauma impacts people long after the event has passed. Whitehead also presents the concept of the underground railway as a memory system, in which the mental and emotional process of liberation is entwined with the actual physical escape from slavery. Although the bodies of the characters may escape, their memories and thoughts are frequently trapped by trauma, illustrating how collective memory impacts the community's perception of identity, freedom, and survival.

Both *The Underground Railroad* and *Oscar Wao* demonstrate how trauma affects a larger group's worldview and sense of identity in addition to being a personal experience. In *The Underground Railroad*, trauma is reflected in the lived experiences of those fleeing slavery, with memories of violence and dread still present even in moments of apparent freedom, but in *Oscar Wao*, trauma is transmitted through legends, curses, and familial ties. The protagonists' attempts to escape their pasts in both books—whether it's Cora attempting to flee the legacy of slavery or Oscar seeking to discover himself in spite of the curse of family history—illustrate how profoundly the past affects the present. In the end, both books make the case that because the past continuously influences the present and the future, the fight to recover from historical trauma is continuous and cyclical.

5.3 The Subjectivity of Historical Truth

The construction of history plays a vital part in intriguing the readers about reality, subjective reality and man made narratives. In *Oscar Wao*, the footnotes replicate the authoritative tone of historical research, which has traditionally sought to present objective, factual views of the past. However, Díaz challenges the way history is remembered and retold, particularly the history of U.S. imperialism and the violence in the Dominican Republic during the Trujillo era, by undermining this authority with humour, irony, and bias. So what does the book reveal about the historical evidence?

A sense of legitimacy seems to be established by Díaz's use of dates, personalities, and events such as the assassination of Rafael Trujillo, the political unrest in the Dominican Republic, and the impact of U.S. imperialism on the island. This is where readers think beyond the fictional

existence and reflect on the bigger reality of Dominican history. A veneer of academic rigour is added by the footnotes' writing style, which is reminiscent of scholarly citations. By doing this, Díaz addresses the postmodern notion that history as we know it is a construct that can be manipulated rather than an unchangeable truth.

“The pejorative *pariguayo*, Watchers agree, is a corruption of the English neologism “party watcher”” (Díaz 19). In the passage, the term “Pariguayo” is explained in the footnote. It explains how the First American Occupation of the Dominican Republic, which lasted from 1916 to 1924, led to the widespread use of this name, which is a distortion of the English phrase “party watcher.” During this period, American Occupying Forces personnel would go to Dominican festivities, but they would observe from the sidelines rather than take part in the dances. As previously stated, it is associated with the U.S. military occupation through the name *pariguayo*. Throughout the occupation, American soldiers observed but did not engage with Dominican culture, attending local gatherings without taking part. Being a “pariguayo” meant adopting this passive, disengaged attitude. By demonstrating how the U.S. military's presence in the Dominican Republic was not only a political and military intrusion but also a cultural one, the footnote connects this behaviour to the broader problem of American imperialism in that country.

Therefore, the phrase “pariguayo” describes a person who observes others during social events without taking part. It characterises a person who is viewed as passive, who doesn't “dance” (either participate physically or figuratively), and who, as a result, is viewed as a social outcast or someone who doesn't belong to the vibrant, energetic group. This is important given Oscar's persona, who is characterised as being cold and finding it difficult to blend in socially,

much like the Pariguayo. The phrase emphasises his sense of alienation and inability to fully engage in the social situations in which he finds himself. In addition, the footnote humorously connects Oscar's character to the word's history, highlighting how, in the eyes of his family and society, he exemplifies what it means to be a Pariguayo. The narrative not only describes Oscar but also hints at how American power is always intrusive and full of propagandas.

Díaz draws attention to the wider ramifications of American imperialism, which may quietly mould and change the lives of those who are subjected to it even in cases when it is not explicitly violent. The word "pariguayo" refers to the sense of alienation or passivity that comes with living under imperial rule, where local culture is studied and watched but not fully accepted or assimilated by the foreign conquerors. Through its ongoing tactics and influence, the United States intervened and maintained control over the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic experienced significant persecution, brutality, and violations of human rights under Trujillo's leadership, including the Mirabel sisters. "The Mirabal Sisters were the Great Martyrs of that period" (Díaz 83). The story line changes from describing the memories of a girl from Beli's school to important historical personalities who brought about the downfall of Trujillo's time. "Their murders and the subsequent public outcry are believed by many to have signaled the official beginning of the end of the Trujillato, the "tipping point," when folks finally decided enough was enough" (83). These footnotes take us to a real life lens through which we visualise the female characters and the story continuing Beli and Lola.

The Mirabal sisters who are also known as "Butterflies," executed plans and led the June 14th Movement following the torture and murder of several dissidents by Trujillo's government on June 14, 1959. They did their best to make people aware of Trujillo's crimes. They were arrested by the police along with their husbands who were tortured but later they were freed. Their parents disapproved of Trujillo, the man who took over in 1930, but they forbade their daughters from joining the underground resistance movement. Trujillo's men harassed Minerva Mirabal when she turned down his proposals at a party, and they even canceled her legal law license. To make the murders appear like an accident, the sisters and their driver were beaten to death by officers of the Dominican Republic's secret police, which included the allegedly "right-hand man" of dictator Rafael Trujillo. Their bodies were then placed inside the car and driven off over a cliff. Nobody is fooled by the cover-up, and the Mirabal sisters became martyrdom in the Dominican struggle. Trujillo also perished in a roadside ambush within a year. The ruthless killing of three well-known sisters highlighted the unadulterated brutality that served as Trujillo's real source of power. The activities of the Mirabal sisters and their assassination occupy a significant place in modern Dominican history and the tale of how the country finally crumbled even if their martyrdom did not directly cause his downfall.

“Though Trujillo’s death did not immediately bring democracy to the Dominican Republic—his successor, Joaquin Balaguer, continued the authoritarian tradition until the late 1970s—the country did not return to the level of brutal repression experienced during his reign” (Pruitt 14). Having mostly kept her distance from the opposition, Dedé Mirabal survived the Trujillo government and raised both her own and her sister's children. While Dedé's son Jaime David Fernández Mirabal held the position of vice president of the Dominican Republic (1996–2000), Minerva's daughter Minou Tavárez Mirabal went on to become a congressional

representative and vice foreign minister. The historical novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez, published in 1994, contributed to the global rise in fame of the Mirabal sisters.

The irony is that throughout his reign, Trujillo mistreated women. Nonetheless, women made a significant contribution to the opposition to him. He met his demise at the hands of women, whom he perceived as fragile, easily manipulatable, and exploitable beings. He had delusions that his secret plan of killing the sisters would enable him to continue his cruel rule. The Mirabal sisters became human martyrs, and the light and hope of women's empowerment were embodied in their sacrifice. They are regarded as the Dominican Republic's heroines. The world now cherishes female role models like the Mirabal sisters who rose from the nation where a dictator suppressed women and where males viewed women as mere eye-pleasing and sexually satisfying entities.

The characters, Beli and Lola, are portrayals of the real-life victims and warriors who fought many battles internally and externally. A new society emerged after Trujillo's rule ended, one that values gender equality, harmony, and women's empowerment. Following the end of the 31-year Trujillo regime, not only did women experience tremendous changes in the political, social, and economic spheres, but countrywide. Mirabel sisters are resonating powerful women who fought many battles which in turn helps the readers to relate how the setting was equally tormenting for Beli and Lola. Hence, the bizarre behavior and unsettling lives of the women are understood.

Lola is a unique example of an active, outspoken woman who is not afraid to challenge those who try to box her in a society where women are typically expected to be quiet, submissive, and meek. Her unconventional style and physical presence convey a message of strength and courage which we do not see in another female character, Beli. The expectation in Dominican society is

that women should project an image of beauty, delicacy, and attention to their physical attractiveness. She goes against that expectation breaking through the gender role expectations.

Beli, due to her attractiveness, draws the attention of affluent and captivating men, such as "the Gangster," who seduces her and severely harms her. Beli becomes pregnant as a result of her relationship with the Gangster, but when his wife who is a prominent figure in Trujillo's inner circle, learns of it, Beli is nearly killed by beatings. "Under the dictatorship, women earned suffrage and other gains, but were defined primarily by their roles as mothers" (Manley 06). Women are expected to be homebound and good-looking. We see how the beauty of the women in the novel is blatantly mentioned. While Belicia's magnificent beauty brings her menace and life-threatening situation, Lola in her untraditional appearance faces endless criticism and constantly draws unwanted attention. This deduces that women in all forms of appearance are unsafe and social norms only conform them to be tamed and not to give the secure life they are promised.

A cabinet member for Trujillo was concerned that he may lose the favor of his boss. In an intentional move, he chooses to show his loyalty to the government by "gifting" his daughter, who is fourteen years old. "After Trujillo brutally rapes her, she flees and hides with nuns who facilitate her escape to the United States" (Alvarado 03). This incident from an article is just one of the many real-life incidents where young girls and women were in a subdued grasp of the dictator. But one common thing in all these incidents was that people were frightened, helpless, and could not say 'No' to him. "Stories also abound of Trujillo's abduction of virginal girls during his provincial travels, of his beautiful victims spied on and romanced during official balls and functions" (Derby 216). In formal arrangements and parties, women were highly observed. He would randomly catch an eye on someone and order to bring him the girl like he is amused by an

object and now wants the ownership of it. Derby (216) adds that this is also why parents therefore went to extreme lengths and measures to shield their daughters from the tyrant, as rejecting his advances came with a heavy price—even costing the job of the girl's father.

The novel provides some substantial clues that are metaphors and relatable to real-life incidents with an underlying deeper understanding which Diaz thought to be the most ideal way to critique a dictator at that time. The Leon family's superstitious belief in the fuku curse tormented them for many generations. The curse reflects the thirty-one-year rule of Rafael Trujillo, during which time he committed several wrongdoings, including the abuse and oppression of women by the dictator himself. In the book, the downfall of Belicia's father, Albelard is shown when he tries to save Belicia from the grasp of Trujillo. He is punished for treason and in tragedy she loses both her parents. Belicia represents all those women throughout the nation who suffered from sexual abuse by the dictator. In countless instances, the dictator also treated the spouses of hostages, elderly ladies, and minors like objects and subjected them as he wished. Trujillo's desperation for abducting, forcing, and preying on young girls made him the unconcealed rapist that everyone knew and yet he sustained the throne for more than 30 years. Dominican men always view women sexually.

Díaz also exposes the goal of creating a national identity that ignores the darker aspects of Dominican history and the complexity of race. The Dominican Republic's effort to distinguish itself from Haiti and the rest of the Caribbean is one of the major historical agendas exposed in the book. Long-standing racial tensions between Haitians and Dominicans are mentioned in the footnotes, especially the Dominican Republic's attempts to set itself apart from its Haitian neighbours by advancing a narrative of racial purity that was frequently associated with European ancestry. By arguing that it is founded on exclusionary beliefs that marginalise

Afro-Dominicans and obscure the Afro-Caribbean origins of Dominican culture, the novel challenges this manufactured racial identity. Díaz clarifies how the ruling class aimed to conform the Dominican Republic to a lighter-skinned, European ideal by rewriting the country's history to suit their needs. It is revealed that this agenda, which still shapes Dominican identity today, is a type of historical manipulation that ignores the complexities of Caribbean history and race.

The character of Abelard, the father of the De León family, is among the most striking illustrations of this tension. The Dominican perception of Haitians as inferior and unwanted is embodied by Trujillo's administration, which targets Abelard, a prosperous and proud Haitian man. Reflecting the long-standing hostility between the two communities, the story makes reference to the notorious "Haitian Massacre" of 1937, in which Trujillo ordered the murder of thousands of Haitians residing near the Dominican-Haitian border. A significant event in the novel's historical setting, this massacre represents the racial and ethnic divide between Haitians and Dominicans.

To emphasise these conflicts, Díaz also makes use of linguistic and cultural allusions. For instance, Yunior, a character who is romantically involved with Lola, one of the main characters in the book, publicly disparages Lola's mother Beli's Haitian heritage. Yunior's disparaging remarks, such as his dismissive and demeaning use of the term "The Haitian" and his view of her as "other," stem from his alleged belief that Beli's Haitian ancestry should be suppressed or concealed. He remarks that her accent is proof of his superior status. Her upbringing is a prime example of the contempt that many Dominicans have for Haitians. The wider societal division that has been maintained for many generations is reflected in this personal hostility. Díaz shows

how colonialism, ethnicity, and power still influence Haitian and Dominican identities and relationships, adding to the racial and cultural tensions the book explores.

Oscar Wao carries its historical weight to critique how the historical past of a big regime should be questioned and examined regardless of the time it passed or from the age it is viewed. Similarly Colson Whitehead presents a novel that is not only critical of its storyline but of the time that has so much underlying conflicts, untold truth, unreported agendas and underneath sufferings. His fictional novel does not limit itself to fiction only, rather transcends into the real world's disputed yet significant leaders of America today and then. The institution of slavery is a significant subject that cannot be fully comprehended or evaluated based solely on the accounts of either White or Black people. Instead, theories and ideas from notable critics are still expanded to give people a rational perspective and highlight the period of brutality. This book is examined from a variety of theoretical angles.

What are the historical unknown that gets revealed and questioned in the novel? *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead is a novel that is profoundly critical of history that speaks about slavery and brutalities of life. The railroad is a foundational theme which takes the reader back to the time when people used this place as a significant route for escaping. The book is not only reflective of the slaves but also gives readers a fresh unbiased vision for perceiving the times of oppression. The book recognises Cedric Robinson's revolutionary achievements and serves as an essential resource for comprehending the ideas' continued importance. It emphasises how race and capitalism are inextricably linked, how important international cooperation is, and how effective cultural resistance is at sustaining liberation movements. In addition to reaffirming Robinson's intellectual genius, the book prepares future generations to face the interconnected

problems of racial oppression and economic exploitation for readers interested in critical theory, Black studies, political economy, and world history.

Reading *The Underground Railroad* through Robinson's concept of racial capitalism is ideal. In the book, slavery—which is based on racial exploitation—is not just a cruel system of labour but also the cornerstone of the American economy. Robinson's assertion that capitalism has always been predicated on racial hierarchy is aptly embodied by Whitehead's account of the plantation system, which shows how Black people were commodified, brutally controlled, and circulated as property. Furthermore, the various states Cora travels through—such as South Carolina's medical experiments and North Carolina's genocidal policies—showcase how racial capitalism adapts to diverse locales and constantly finds new methods to control and exploit Black life. "All capitalism is structured by 'racialism,' and creates inequality among groups," Robinson contends. Therefore, it is appropriate to identify all forms of capitalism as racial capitalism. Robinson believes that capitalism was never a neutral, colorblind system but instead developed from preexisting racial hierarchies within European feudal societies. "Capitalism and racism, in other words, did not break from the old order but rather evolved from it to produce a modern world system of "racial capitalism" dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide" (Foreword 13). Race became vital, not peripheral, to capitalism's operation as it grew through slavery, colonialism, and empire, all of which were based on the exploitation of racial diversity. Because of this realization, Robinson came up with the phrase "racial capitalism," which refers to the historical inseparability of capitalism and racism. In this way, racism is a structural necessity of capitalism rather than an unintended consequence that has allowed for centuries of increased exploitation of African, Indigenous, and other non-European peoples.

Robinson also criticises traditional Marxism for failing to recognise the unique characteristics of Black movements. Robinson highlights that although Marx and Engels examined class conflict in European contexts, their framework was unable to adequately account for the ways in which Black resistance developed from distinct historical and cultural experiences. At this point, Robinson presents the idea of the Black Radical Tradition, which he describes as a lengthy and developing history of African Americans' resistance against colonialism, enslavement, and white supremacy worldwide. This tradition, in contrast to European radical traditions, drew inspiration from African cultural innovation, oral storytelling, spiritual practices, and communal values. It stood as a separate radical framework with its own ideas of freedom rather than being a derivative of liberalism or Marxism.

Robinson also emphasises the diasporic and global aspects of this tradition in Black Marxism, weaving together battles from the Americas, the Caribbean, and Africa into an ongoing chain of resistance. He shows how these traditions were passed down and changed by thinkers like Richard Wright, C.L.R. James, and W.E.B. Du Bois, who then incorporated them into larger international movements against exploitation. Through narrative, song, and communal memory, culture itself turns into a crucial location for both resistance and survival. Robinson demonstrates how Black radicalism is intricately entwined with cultural life and the imagination, and cannot be limited to politics or economics. The concept of racial capitalism has two enduring contributions of Black Marxism: how capitalism depends on racial dominance to operate, and the Black Radical Tradition, identifies the distinctive forms of resistance and political imagination developed by Black people throughout the diaspora. When taken as a whole, these ideas offer a framework for comprehending both the persistent oppressive systems and the radical alternatives that Black communities have consistently produced.

The Black Radical Tradition refers to the historical and intellectual movement that emerged to liberate Black people from economic, political and social domination. Robinson highlights that, in contrast to European frameworks, Black resistance has always established its own radical traditions. This heritage is dramatised via the Underground Railroad through acts of survival, revolt, and escape. From previous rebels like her grandmother Ajarry to other fugitives and allies she encounters, Cora's trip is not only an individual escape but also a part of a collective legacy of fight. Whitehead's conception of the Railroad as a real underground railroad system represents a creative and cultural kind of resistance. Similar to Robinson's theory that cultures (songs, stories, and radical imagination) sustain resistance, it is not only material but also spiritual and creative.

Black Internationalism is a political and cultural movement that aims to unite Black people across national borders in the struggle against colonialism, racism, racial segregation and imperialism. It concentrates on bringing global solidarity among African descended people and emphasises the interconnectedness of their struggles for liberation. Despite being situated in the United States, Whitehead's book speaks to Robinson's Black internationalism. Robinson maintained that Black conflicts have to be viewed as a component of a worldwide network of oppression resistance. In the book, the Underground Railroad links several states and communities, hinting at future international unity among African, Caribbean, and diasporic peoples. Although it is more regional and symbolic in Whitehead's fictional depiction, Cora's voyage reflects Robinson's assertion that resistance is not isolated but rather is networked, transnational, and relational.

A political, intellectual, and cultural movement known as "Black internationalism" highlights how intertwined and global Black struggles against racism, colonialism, capitalism, and

imperialism are. It is based on the understanding that resistance must be understood and implemented beyond boundaries because the oppression of people of African descent has always been transnational, spanning continents through colonial dominance, the slave trade, and contemporary global capitalism.

Fundamentally, Black internationalism emphasises solidarity with other oppressed peoples throughout the world as well as within the African diaspora. It emphasises how Black communities, activists, and philosophers have connected struggles in the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the United States, viewing them as a common struggle against economic exploitation and racial dominance. Afro-Caribbean Marxism, which linked Black liberation to larger anti-capitalist movements, and Pan-Africanism, which aimed to bring African nations and peoples of African descent together, are examples of this heritage. It also includes the international networks created by individuals like Claudia Jones, Angela Davis, C.L.R. James, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, and modern groups that connect Black liberation to anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements.

Black internationalism is culturally manifested in literature, art, and music that travel the world and establish common languages of resistance; poetry, novels, hip hop, jazz, and reggae all contain radical critiques that transcend national boundaries. Politically, it maintains that racial justice movements in one nation are linked to battles in other nations, such as the connection between Jim Crow in the United States and apartheid in South Africa or the worldwide struggles against militarism, police brutality, and surveillance in the context of Black Lives Matter now.

Black internationalism, according to Cedric Robinson, is about acknowledging that the Black Radical Tradition is fundamentally global, not only about solidarity across borders. Black

people's resistance has always been global in scale, bridging the gap between liberation movements from Haiti to Ghana to the United States, as the African diaspora was established by transatlantic slavery and colonial conquest. To put it succinctly, Black internationalism is the idea and practice of worldwide Black solidarity, based on the knowledge that resistance must cross national borders in order to challenge global systems of racist capitalism and imperialism.

Whitehead's work serves as an illustration of Robinson's emphasis on the role that cultural output has in maintaining resistance. *The Underground Railroad* becomes a cultural text of resistance by reinventing history via speculative fiction, celebrating Black ingenuity, survival, and tenacity while also making readers face the brutality of slavery. Oral histories, hushed Railroad rumours, and community ties all foster hope throughout the book, supporting Robinson's assertion that cultural practices produce counter-hegemonic visions that enable repressed people to persevere and rebel.

Lastly, Whitehead and Robinson both stress the value of radical imagination in the fight against oppression. Robinson demonstrates how Black cultural and intellectual traditions produce fresh perspectives on the world. In a similar vein, Whitehead transforms a metaphor—the Underground Railroad as a clandestine network—into actual infrastructure. In addition to changing the course of history, this reimagining emphasises the need for visionary thinking in resistance. Robinson's faith in the transformational potential of radical thought is echoed by Cora's survival, which rests as much on imagination and hope as it does on physical escape.

By highlighting the act of narration itself rather than merely its characters or storyline, metafiction challenges the conventional bounds of storytelling. In addition to other literary

works, it frequently blurs the boundaries between truth and fiction, allowing readers to see the connections between the real world and the imaginary world. Metafiction can compare its characters to those in other books or even real-life people because of this self-awareness. In doing so, it makes reading more complex and engaging by provoking readers to consider identity, the nature of storytelling, and the impact of literature on everyday life. Real-life slaves like Harriet Tubman and Harriet Jacobs are reflected in the characters and their attempts to flee enslavement. Cora is inspired to rebel against the conflicts and destructive aspects of her existence, while her mother, Mabel, was executed for her effort to flee the Georgia farm.

Despite being a fictional character, Cora reflects all of the cruel situations that slaves had. Her hardships are a reflection of Harriet Jacobs's own life. She could not be fully free anywhere in the country, according to Jacobs in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Due to fugitive Slave law, which stated that escaped slaves should be returned from the northern states to the South. If anyone helps them to flee or does not hand them over, they will be punished as well. "As the years drew closer to the climax of civil war, the fate of the escaped slave grew harsher; in 1850 the last Anti-Fugitive law removed every vestige of safety for free Negroes in the United States" (Buckmaster 147). In addition to being tortured in the workplace and behind closed doors, the female slaves lost their lives in the struggle for freedom. Cora clashed with anybody who bothered her and was often disobedient. Cora chopped off the dog's tail and used a hatchet to destroy the doghouse. Four enslaved men gang-raped her shortly after. When she was a young young girl, Jacobs' slave master also mistreated and sexually assaulted her. Are not the two characters speaking of the same past, breaking off the screen of fiction? We forget the characters are merely characters as the story immerses us in their depths and tribulations in such a cosmic

way. Both truth and the past are reflected in their roles. Both truth and the past are reflected in their roles. When a young boy named Chester accidentally spills wine on Terrance's shirt, Terrance becomes enraged. The brothers, who were in charge of the slaves, made the slaves dance for their amusement. Cora stands up for Terrance as he is ready to assault Chester, and as a result, they are both severely whipped. This makes me reflect on Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, who is killed by being skinned for trying to flee. Despite his aristocratic title, Oroonoko, an African prince, is betrayed and ultimately skinned to death. He is carried to Suriname after being kidnapped and sold into slavery, where he tries to lead an uprising against the colonists. The colonists see him as a threat and punish him severely in spite of his bravery and royal ancestry. Oroonoko is tortured, bound to a pole, and skinned alive as a last act of brutality, depriving him of his humanity and dignity. Even for someone of noble lineage, this tragic fate serves as a reminder of the dehumanising effects of slavery, colonialism, and racial discrimination. In a striking display of his unwavering spirit, Oroonoko finds the strength to smile at his executioners despite having been tortured and having his skin flayed. He shows that even in the face of death, his regal and noble identity cannot be taken away from him by maintaining his courage and dignity in the face of physical suffering and humiliation. His smile is a representation of his inner power and tenacity as well as his defiance. The real-life experience of slaves who fought valiantly for their freedom and dignity in the face of unspeakable brutality is reflected in Oroonoko's death. Oroonoko's last moments demonstrate the unwavering will of those who battled until the end, just like many other oppressed people throughout history who rebelled against oppression—often in little, silent acts of defiance or greater uprisings. Even though he is a fictional character, he is impersonating all those resilient nature of slaves who fought till the end. His narrative highlights the larger historical reality of people who refused to be subjugated

in the face of unfathomable circumstances. In the United States, the "One Drop Rule" disregarded anybody with African heritage as Black, regardless of how they looked. Therefore, Black people's fate of becoming slaves and being subservient could not be changed by their status, riches, marriage, or any other institution. Black people's identity was shattered from birth and they were oppressed from the inside out.

Cora is appalled when Dr. Steven recommends sterilisation at her subsequent medical examination. In order to examine the progression of the virus, Sam soon tells her and Caesar that there are rumours that the doctors are not treating some of the black inhabitants of the dorms for syphilis. To reduce the number of Black people, other residents are being sterilised by force. Cora fears that her true identity as a fugitive slave may have been exposed following a brief encounter with Miss Lucy. She goes to alert Sam, who hides her on the underground railway platform after informing Cora that Ridgeway is pursuing her. Cora discovers that Sam's house is on fire on the other side of the door after waiting in the dark. Despite being in danger of dying at every turn, Cora decides to fight. She is in danger of becoming the next "victim" because nearly every character she meets meets a cruel end. She decides to fight for her life yet continues to be supportive. Over the years, the Underground Railroad has served as an enduring record of enslavement and heinous crimes. No matter how much freedom and liberties Black people have, these railroads will never move to stop recording their historical injustices and suffering.

Cora's journey is reflective of Harriet Tubman and Harriet Jacob's lives. This highlights how not just the Railroad, but the characters are also directing the readers to look into the accounts of real life survivors and their dreadful struggles. They are responsible for creating a nation that America is today. After escaping slavery, Harriet Tubman—an American abolitionist,

humanitarian, and Civil War spy—became a leading figure in the Underground Railroad, helping to free about 70 enslaved persons. “She turned her own home into a Home for Indigent Aged Negroes, and anyone who came to her for help was not rejected” (Eusebius 26). When she was young, she suffered a serious head injury that left her with health problems for the rest of her life and vivid dreams that she took to be visions from God. After escaping to Philadelphia in 1849, Tubman returned to Maryland numerous times to rescue family and others, earning the nickname “Moses” for her efforts. The struggles and tenacity of those who fled slavery are reflected in Cora's fictionalised voyage, even though Tubman was an Underground Railroad conductor who helped many enslaved people reach freedom. Both characters traverse a terrain full of peril, treachery, and the perpetual fear of capture, but they represent the resilient human spirit pursuing freedom. Metafiction transports us to the past and recollections that parallel numerous other discourses. Our thoughts reflect time and actual people rather than just the characters and setting of a novel. Especially those who experienced these.

5.4 Pro-Slavery justifications and controlling ideas to construct reality

Black slaves were exposed to every act of resistance in order to prevent them from rising up in rebellion. To prevent slavery from being abolished, prominent opponents of slavery imposed a number of pro-slavery tactics. Following abolishment, there were additional arguments outlining the reasons why Black men ought to remain shackled rather than free. Even the religion that Black men believed in blindly, was used against them to plant a core belief in them that Black people are sent by God in a subservient position. Clergies and priests propagated the pro-slavery mindset. The slaves were told that white people were destined to govern while black people were

sentenced to bondage. According to biblical law, the enslaved Black women would either be used like animals in Jesus' name, beaten to death with divine blessings, or labour domestically till they died. Africans were meant to serve, while Europeans were meant to rule, according to God's plan and Europeans to intellectual prowess, Black to simple-mindedness. European women to Christian rectitude, slave women to self-absorption, household work, and burden bearing.

George Fitzhugh defended slavery as morally righteous by using religious connotations. Slavery, he claimed, Christianized and civilised African slaves. "The negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and in some sense, the freest people in the world. They are well-fed, well-clothed, and enjoy liberty because they are the only people in the world who do not have to work" (Fitzhugh, 20). The lives of the slaves were seen as a way of civilization and cultivating humanity and subtlety into the barbaric. The slaves were not paid or treated like any job holder. They did not have any value as a human or belonging from a race and community except for the value at which they were sold. The Biblical Passages that were Frequently Cited was from Genesis 9:25–27 — The so-called "Curse of Ham". "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will be to his brothers." They used to claim that Africans were destined to be slaves by divine order since they were descended from Ham. The slaves were also asked to serve their masters wholeheartedly. "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ."

Using observations from anthropology, biology, social statistics, and political history, Southern researchers and intellectual leaders developed a systematic view on slavery in order to support fundamental principles of slavery and generate oppressive representations of black women. Van Evrie calls black people are born with brains smaller than the white man. They do

not inhabit intellectual abilities to make superior decisions or hold the ability to be a ruler. He pictures black women as naturally promiscuous. They believe “polygamy is universal” and the women are “perfectly willing to change husbands or owners”. The black women in Africa have multiple partners hence obliging them into multiple sexual relationships is justified. This is how even children were taken away from the mothers and justified that they can produce as many children as possible from different partners. Black women can never produce delicate fabric and exquisite embroideries that are the handwork expertise of the Caucasians. The pro slavery narratives that justified their racism and sexism. African American women, despite being oppressed, developed a counter-hegemonic ideology to challenge racism, sexism, and classism, aimed at their liberation. Instead of accepting their roles assigned by the whites, they created a narrative of empowerment that was grounded in their own realities and experience. With this resilient ideology which is known as counter hegemonic ideology- Harriet Tubman did not give up on the brutalities of slavery. She kept fighting like Jacobs and opposed slavery. She escaped slavery and helped many slaves escape through the railway tunnel roads.

Intellectuals who supported slavery developed three main stereotypes, which were: The Mammy reinforces white male superiority by portraying Black women as asexual, submissive, and devoted carers to white households. The Jezebel: Presented as lustful and sexually promiscuous, it defends white men's rape and exploitation of African women. The Mule justified harsh exploitation by portraying enslaved African women as beasts of burden and highlighting their worth only as labourers. The notion that African people were inferior was propagated by racist scientific theories, which included claims that African women were subhuman.

W.E.B. Du Bois first proposed the idea of "double consciousness" in *The Souls of Black Folk*. It describes the internal struggle African Americans have when they see themselves from both

their own and a racist society's perspectives. Because they had to continually balance two identities—one imposed by their captors and another based on their own humanity, culture, and sense of self-worth. Under slavery, people were denied access to education, stable families, and personal agency, and they were viewed as property both legally and socially. Nonetheless, they cultivated strong cultural, spiritual, and familial identities inside their communities, clinging to religious beliefs, songs, and oral traditions that validated their humanity. They experienced a terrible dual knowledge as a result: they were continuously reminded by the dominant white society that they were not considered completely human, even though they knew they were.

In his groundbreaking book *The Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois first proposed the idea of split consciousness. According to him, it is the internal conflict that African Americans have when they look at themselves through the lenses of both their own self-awareness and the biased ideas that a white-dominated society has imposed. It's the conflict between being forced to fit in with a society that devalues Blackness and attempting to remain loyal to oneself and one's culture. As a result, there is ongoing tension, a sense of division, and a never-ending lack of acceptance as a complete being.

Particularly in the 19th century, when citizenship, freedom, and rights were strongly racialised, white men and black men had quite different experiences of what it meant to be an American. Some of these tensions are reflected in Walt Whitman's writings and poetry. White men often benefited from social privileges, complete political rights, and the freedom and opportunity that came with being a "citizen." The white men were viewed as the natural representatives of American values such as liberty and democracy but that cannot be the collective definition of the American citizenship as black people, Latinas equally contributed to the nation fabric of America. However, white people lived in this narrative of nationalism where

they dedicated all kinds of rights, freedom and security to themselves. Black males were frequently denied full citizenship, legal equality, and social acceptance, especially if they were or had been enslaved. Systemic racism continuously challenged and undercut their claims to freedom and inclusion.

Whitman, while celebrated as a poet of American democracy and the common man, has a complex legacy regarding race. The racial hierarchies are occasionally reflected in his works, which promote the concept of the "free American." Whitman honours America's various working men in "I Hear America Singing," although he focuses primarily on white labourers. Whitman recognises the sacrifices made by Black men in his Civil War works and subsequent poetry, implying that he recognises the importance of Black Americans to the country. Whitman did, however, occasionally voice opinions that reflected the inconsistencies of his time, such as paternalistic attitudes towards Black Americans or white supremacist beliefs. Whitehead's fictional character Cora bears a resistant mentality that she breaks free from double consciousness and fights her way towards freedom from an early age. Her loss of family members, friends, acquaintances and cut of guidance shreds her from any source of agency, strength and support. However, she never accepts that the way others are suffering and getting killed will be her fate too. She, unknown of her future and detrimental consequences, was blinded by her spirit and hopes to be free and oblivious of the dangers approaching her.

Slavery was not racially exclusive and initially practiced by people of many ethnicities and territories, including Eastern Europe. But as time went on, especially in the context of the Atlantic slave trade, the narrative changed, and most enslaved individuals became Black Africans, and the enslavement system grew more and more racially charged. When we look into

the historical evidence, it is evident that it was the people who racialised “slavery”. Why do we integrate slaves with being “black”? It is because of what we are told and how the hierarchies created such agendas for their benefits. Prior to the widespread enslavement of Africans, slavery in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa took several forms and involved enslaving people of all countries and races. The *Slavs*, especially those from Eastern Europe, were one of the main groups engaged in early European slavery. Because so many *Slavs* were taken prisoner and forced into slavery, the word "slave" itself was derived from the word "slav". Raids and conflicts were frequently linked to the capture of Slavic people. European nations like Portugal and Spain started extending their empires around the world in the fifteenth century, especially into Africa and the Americas. A large labour force was needed for this expansion, particularly for labour-intensive agricultural sectors like sugar, tobacco, and eventually cotton. European nations looked to Africa for slaves in order to fill the labour gap in the New World. Prince Henry of Portugal saw the value of African people in Western European Markets. They were more valuable than Eastern European slavs. It is rather said that racial differences and barriers were erected by people in power and elites to keep their power intact. The concept of "Blackness" was invented by Gomez Zurara. Historically, Black enslaved people and white indentured servants worked together for white slave owners and masters. They were tortured in the same manner and under brutalities. At a point, both the white men and Black slaves became united and stronger to rebel against the slave owners. That is when the white superiors strategized to divide them according to their complexion or race. It was their narrative to make Black “evil” and “inferior”. This was the beginning of segregating people who were meant to be united and who were on the same collective struggles. The indentured servants became free and started getting rights. They owned their houses and work while black people were only getting tormented. The indentured

servants who turned owners started targeting Black slaves who were their “peers”. This was the beginning of relating oppression to race and color. This narrative was strongly advocated by cultural, scientific and religious justifications. Racist and religious ideologies also contributed to this shift. Many white European colonists claimed that by introducing Christianity and European values to Africans, they were "civilising" them, which served as justification for their enslavement. The emergence of racial theories that saw Black Africans as "savages" or "heathens" strengthened this cultural and theological defence. Conversely, "whiteness" refers to the notion that some members of a society are entitled to particular privileges while others are not. “Whiteness” was associated with upper class, superiority, priority and power while “Blackness” is not. Considering the reality that slaves existed in both "whiteness" and "blackness," how contradictory is this belief? This argument was strongly established and refuted by Ibram X. Kendi. Kendi's book *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* offers an insightful and thorough analysis of the development of racist ideologies in the US. He contends that racism is not a product of human nature but a social construct intended to justify inequality.

One of the notable people Kendi discusses in his book is Thomas Jefferson, who demonstrates how history can be viewed from a variety of perspectives. One of the prominent figures in American history, Thomas Jefferson is celebrated as the author of the *Declaration of Independence* and a leading advocate of equality and liberty. His opinions regarding slavery and race, however, are extremely complex and contradictory. Jefferson's life and legacy demonstrate the prevailing racial ideas of his era by illuminating the multifaceted interplay between his support for slavery and racial inequity and his desire for freedom. Jefferson publicly advocated

for liberty and freedom, but he was a lifelong slave owner and supported slavery. He inherited slaves from his father when he was a young man and kept them as slaves all of his life. In the *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson famously stated that "all men are created equal," yet he did not apply this principle to Black people. He believed that slavery was a necessary evil that was difficult to eliminate without upsetting the social order. In actuality, Jefferson was sceptical that Black people could coexist with white Americans after being emancipated and thought slavery was an essential component of the American economy. Jefferson's contribution to the continuation of slavery complicates his legacy as a founding father. Even though he contributed to the development of American democracy, his views and behaviour towards slavery and race were essentially incompatible with the equality and liberty he promoted. Although he signed the 1807 abolition of the transatlantic slave trade into law as the third president of the United States, he did little to advance the abolition of slavery in general. His own hypocrisy on this matter has generated a lot of debate and condemnation. This demonstrates how Black people would label him a blatant racist and oppressor, even while many White people hold him in a particular regard. The obvious story of racism and racist individuals is still viewed in a variety of ways, and people's many worldviews provide reality with multiple perspectives.

In his book, Kendi argues that racist ideas, particularly those concerning Black people, were created and maintained to support an oppressive system, from slavery to systemic racism. Kendi mentions significant figures: Cotton Mather, Thomas Jefferson, William Lloyd Garrison (an abolitionist who fought against racist ideologies), W.E.B. Du Bois (a prominent African American intellectual who resisted racist thought) and Angela Davis (an activist who continued the fight for racial equality in the 20th century). Kendi also states about prominent Black women, Harriet Jacobs and Phillis Wheatley who made history. Jacobs inspired Black enslaved women to

Speak about their lives as slaves and raise their voices against unfairness and injustice. A woman slave has a stark difference and much more extremities than men slaves. There exists a gendered Truth about enslaved Black people. Black women, as a result of their state of self-unknown, the young enslaved girls were severed from womanhood even before they could discover what being a woman means or what power a woman holds. This was well planned by the abusers or the institution of slavery that when from an early age the female slaves are cocooned into a dark phase of mental subjugation and physical sexual submission, they will never gather the knowledge, power or strength to revolt against their captivators. Frederick Douglass's physical opposition to the slave system is a potent act of emancipation that affirms his humanity. By refusing to succumb to physical torture, Douglass not only protected himself but also destroyed the psychological chains of submission that slavery sought to impose. His act of defiance went beyond simple self-defence and showed others that oppressed people could demand release and claim their dignity. He revealed the atrocities of the Black men through strategic writing that did not upset the readers as it delved into the discourses through religious, political and sociological lens while narrating his life. Frederick Douglass's pursuit of education was one of the most significant and impactful aspects of his life and the abolitionist movements.

Phillis Wheatley was an enslaved Black woman and the first African American to publish a book of poetry, faced intense scrutiny and skepticism regarding her literary abilities due to the racist belief that Black people were intellectually inferior. Some critics even demanded evidence of her authorship, raising doubts about whether a Black person could create sophisticated art. Because they thought it was impossible for someone of her race to create such distinguished, intellectual poetry, a committee of well-known White men, including the Reverend Samuel Seabury, formally reviewed Wheatley's writing in 1772 to see whether she was the author. Black

people, especially women, were denied the intellectual capacity to produce meaningful art because of the widespread racial prejudice of the time, which is reflected in this.

Both authors develop layers of narrative in their metafictional works that reveal the gap between official histories and lived realities, demonstrating the ongoing influence of race and power on identity. In *The Underground Railroad*, Whitehead challenges the way history is remembered and manipulated by combining historical fiction with magical realism to attack the harsh facts of slavery and its consequences. This run-and-escape strategy had no end, as these Black characters in *The Underground Railroad* demonstrate. This prompts us readers to research the origins of institutions and ask who founded them. And where does it stop? What is the current treatment of Black people? It raises the question of when crime and violence are racially motivated. Both Díaz and Whitehead employ metafiction as a method to reveal how dominant power structures (such as colonialism, slavery, and institutionalized racism) have shaped collective memory and distorted the truth.

Lynching was a common tactic used to control and terrorise Black people in the South even after slavery was abolished, upholding White dominance and racial hierarchy. Lynching, which was frequently committed by mobs, was the public execution of Black people, usually by hanging but also by shooting, burning, or other violent methods. These acts of terror were meant to enforce social control, sending a clear message to Black people that any attempt to assert their rights, challenge racial norms, or defy White authority would result in brutal punishment. Lynching served as both a form of punishment and a means of fostering terror, which made sure that Black people "stayed in their place" in the racially divided society long after slavery was officially abolished. The scene where in front of Cora, the other two children were whipped and

thrashed on a simple insignificant matter is a portrayal of ‘dehumanisation’ that continued even after slavery ended. Despite the abolition of slavery, systematic racism still affects Black Americans today. Discrimination still exists in many forms, including racial profiling, unequal access to healthcare and education, police violence, and economic inequality. Black people frequently experience harassment, whether it takes the shape of overt acts like hate crimes and racial epithets or more covert ones like workplace biases and microaggressions. Inequality is still sustained in Black communities as a result of the legacy of slavery and the deeply rooted racist ideology that supported it. Black people must continuously struggle against oppression and for equal rights since, despite legal advancements, racial injustice and inequality still exist in America. This nation is not willingly accepting Black people and to give them equal rights.

Kendi critiques the notion of a “post-racial” society, arguing that systemic racism continues to exist even after the formal end of slavery. This idea is reflected in both *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and *The Underground Railroad*, where characters struggle against contemporary forms of racism and the false narratives of progress. Kendi’s critique of the persistence of racist ideologies after the abolition of slavery or the Civil Rights Movement could be used to explain how Díaz and Whitehead’s works critique the ideological narrative that suggests society has moved beyond racial oppression.

The long history of slavery shaped many narratives and turned man into heroes and villains. This raises a question for the readers, where does America stand today? How are Black people or African Americans treated now? This question still arises what nationalism means for Americans and if they still see everyone as equal? Black people are still harassed by “Stop and frisk”, racial stereotyping, police harassment etc. The black people are targeted as criminals while white men are equally committing crimes. What does crime have to do with race? There is always a reason

to keep them in an inferior position to keep the white people in power. Slavery ended but still Black people are still subjected to different forms of unfairness, unequal treatment and brutalities. It is the white men's perspective and stern mentality that Black people cannot have equal or more power than the white. Even now, when Black people reach significant milestones, white people are seen to condemn them or even feel the need to validate their accomplishments by raising eyebrows or proposing theories and agendas.

From the defence of slavery and segregation to the current racial inequities in wealth, health, and education, Kendi's book illustrates how racist ideologies have shaped laws and practices. The idea of anti-racism is one of the book's main themes. According to Kendi, people and society must actively seek to be anti-racist, which includes opposing and dismantling the systems that uphold injustice, rather than just being "not racist."

5.5 Multidimensional character: Oscar Wao

The characters are hinting at how as readers our knowledge does not supersede our readings and observation. We have to critically think and understand the depth of the words and choice of the actions. The characters are not residing with ordinary choices, having conflicting relationships, internalising their miseries and living under the brutalities of power dynamics. "The inclusion in the novel of so much information about Dominican history, then, suggests either that Yunior thinks readers *need* to know the history to understand the story, or that they *should*, in a more general sense, know more about Dominican history than they do" (O'Brien 84). This book reveals a lot of agenda that does not come along with the concrete idea of what Dominican culture or history speaks of. Do we know enough or the underlying dominion of the

society? Why are people suffering from past relational trauma and identity brutalities? Every society consists of multiple localities with class differences and hierarchies. But in his living experiences, he was struggling with an identity crisis, emotional turmoil and self dilemma. While other characters like Lola and Beli are sufferers and subjected to violence, killing and oppression. Oscar's early death also questions what was the core of his torment? The setting and political propagandas works the best on the lower class and succumbs to the helplessness and vulnerability of ordinary class people. There are two ways to interpret this statement. This either indicates that the history has an immediate impact on the story or characters. For instance, readers can better comprehend why Oscar's family suffers, why migration takes place, or why specific societal forces exist when they are aware of Trujillo's tyranny. Readers may not completely understand the story's motivations or stakes without this background information. Or This is more about making readers aware of historical facts than it is about the plot's mechanics. Even if the readers are not Dominican, Díaz (via Yuniors) may be encouraging them to understand how historical and political factors influence people's lives. It's a subliminal appeal for empathy and historical knowledge. The book teaches historical and cultural context at the same time in addition to sharing a personal narrative. Díaz compels readers to actively participate by incorporating history into the story—to investigate, enquire, or contemplate. According to O'Brien, this inclusion reflects the marginalisation theme: readers are made aware of their own knowledge gaps, just as Dominican voices and histories have been ignored or silenced. The historical details have two functions: they push readers to recognise how little they may know about Dominican history and assist in their understanding of the story itself. It is both a cultural education and a narrative requirement.

“Such marginalisation is a key theme in *The Brief Wondrous life of Oscar Wao*, from the most intimate personal levels (Yunior’s internalized marginalization of his own otakuness) to the most macroscopic and political levels (Yunior’s presumption of his readers’ total ignorance/marginalization of Dominican history)” (O’Brien 86). In this context, "marginalisation" refers to being pushed to the edges, disregarded, or viewed as trivial. According to O'Brien, the book examines marginalisation on a number of levels, both political and personal. “Yunior’s internalized marginalization of his own otakuness”. An obsession with anime, comics, or other specialised, niche pop culture is known as otakuness. Because of these hobbies, Yunior occasionally feels embarrassed or alienated. He minimises aspects of his identity because they are stigmatised or socially marginalised, which is an example of personal marginalisation. It demonstrates how someone might feel "outside" of society due to even minor personal characteristics. On a macro/political level, Yunior's assumption that his audience are completely ignorant of Dominican history and marginalise it. As the narrator, Yunior frequently thinks that readers are ignorant of Dominican history, thus he occasionally provides footnotes or digressions to clarify it. This reflects political and historical marginalisation: the Dominican Republic's history, particularly under Trujillo, has frequently been downplayed or overlooked in international discourse. By emphasising this, Díaz highlights the ways in which bigger historical forces—which are sometimes disregarded—shape communities and individuals.

In summary, O'Brien contends that the book consistently highlights marginalisation on all levels: Characters who are micro/personal feel alone or alienated in their own lives. Historical, sociological, and macro: whole cultures, histories, and experiences are disregarded or repressed. In doing so, the book invites readers to observe marginalisation and its consequences in both individual identities and more general historical or political contexts. By connecting personal

suffering to political oppression, the line demonstrates how Oscar Wao examines how marginalisation functions both historically and socially, as well as within individuals (their internal battles).

“I suggest that, by the end of the novel, the reader should be asking himself or herself the same question as Yunior: how have my choices regarding what to attend to and what to ignore contributed to personal and political injustices in the world— and what do I do about it?” (89)

The essay makes the case that readers are symbolically experiencing what it's like to live under an oppressive political system that suppresses, withholds, or manipulates information when they are "marginalised" by gaps in understanding (because of untranslated Spanish, inexplicable comic-book references, or footnote-heavy digressions). Under Trujillo, Dominican inhabitants had to decide which truths to seek and which to disregard in order to survive, much like readers must decide what to pursue and what to ignore. According to O'Brien, this is a political reflection of how authority shatters memory and knowledge rather than only being a literary challenge. Oscar cannot avoid the transgenerational anguish of Trujillo's agenda, despite the fact that he was born in the United States. O'Brien emphasises how the book demonstrates that political violence transcends national boundaries and generational boundaries, proving that history is never truly over. Oscar's terrible demise—his incapacity to lead a "normal" life—is a metaphor for how dictatorship and political corruption endure beyond the dictator's lifetime. According to O'Brien's essay, Oscar's life was destroyed by the political goals of Trujillo's dictatorship, which divided information, silenced voices, and passed pain down through the generations. Because of the novel's fractured and intertextual form, readers are forced to confront how politics can make even love and identity vulnerable, rethink what they know, and realise how power determines meaning. Oscar's death is also tragic because he was executed cold

heartedly. He died after years of isolation, seclusion, depression and embarrassment is a very tormenting ending. His death is framed as both tragic and heroic. He fought for being with a girl who he loved despite being warned about the violence and threats he was subjected to. He rewrites his story as something wondrous rather than pitiful. While many would consider his death to be a repercussion of the curse that his generations suffered in betrayal, fear and violence. But it also implies that his death resists the fuku curse by proclaiming love, breaking the cycle of silence and shame.

A new society emerged after Trujillo's rule ended, one that values gender equality, harmony, and women's empowerment. Following the end of the 31-year Trujillo regime, not only did women experience tremendous changes in the political, social, and economic spheres, but countrywide.

Women began to be granted more rights and opportunities, and they began to work alongside males in practically every field like healthcare, business, tourist agencies, factories, etc. However, prejudices still exist in people's attitudes and mindsets, particularly among dominating men and machismo. In the Dominican Republic, the doors to a more democratic nation opened. One major shift that was noticeable was the rise of women in politics. Milagros Ortiz Bosch became the first female vice president of the Dominican Republic in 1996. Subsequently, women were seen more prominently in political leadership positions. The nation has one of Latin America's highest rates of femicide. Several legislative changes have been made in the Dominican Republic since Trujillo's fall to enhance gender equality. The nation's constitution now protects equality before the law, and legislation has been passed to address domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. Since Trujillo's administration, women's access to

education has greatly improved. As a result, Dominican women more than ever before are pursuing higher education today. However, there are troubles in this decade as well. In the Dominican Republic, abortion is still prohibited in practically all circumstances which reflects the country's continuous struggles with patriarchal and conservative social factors.

Chapter 6 : Findings

Metafiction plays a vital role in critiquing historical narratives. Fiction itself holds the power to imitate grand and institutionalized narratives which cannot be directly addressed. Even if it can be addressed, it cannot be in the favour of every person's perspective. Hence, it is important that it is giving an open-endedness to its readers. Many writers like George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, 1984 played around with words to reveal crucial political situations and brutal regimes that people were subjected to. Even works of art in the literary world hold power to say things and revolt that intellectual people cannot. Some examples are- Picasso's *Guernica* and Frida Kahlo's *Self- Portrait dedicated to Leon Trotsky* and *The Migrant Mother* by Dorothea Lange. These works challenge prevailing narratives, highlight injustices, and question the status quo. It is done by profound presentation of color and brushes-which is more than just color and brushes. Similarly, for novels it is more than just words, characters, plots. All these elements are impersonating a bigger underlying truth and propaganda. People live through the experience of the time when they see the portrait with its vital, vigorous elements. Similarly, metafiction is yet another fictional piece of writing with characters, storyline but it takes aid of multiple other techniques, to establish a strong foundational base of meaning. It is important that we decode their work through the lens of the theories and ideas of famous critics and liable sources.

From looking into the primary books through the lens of multiple narratives, we can also conclude about the culture and community from an unconfined and “our” own position. Historiographic metafiction enables us to dictate historical facts and validate the evidence through newer resources. In *Oscar Wao*, the difficulties of being a young Latina lady growing up in a patriarchal environment are intertwined with Lola's story. Her connection with her mother, Beli, illustrates the difficulties she faces navigating Dominican gender conventions while residing in New Jersey, where her sense of self is further complicated by her racial and cultural identity. The book explores how Lola's experiences with misogyny, colorism, and cultural expectations are impacted by her intersectional identity as a Dominican woman living in the diaspora. Racism is another highly stereotyped tactic that is used in both Dominican and American contexts to keep people shackled and confined by demonstrating their inferior position. Silva and Coldberg's theories on race justify exactly how racism is an ongoing stigma that might be in exposure or concealed. But it is still there. Cedric Robinson makes the Marxist idea on Capitalism vital and interconnected to Racial capitalism which is important to understand the oppressors' theory of oppressing Black men. Even though Waugh's take on metafiction is not exactly how the research paper unfolds the historical events, Robert Scholes' “Fabulation” along with metafiction is a fantastic blend which produces intellectually critical yet engaging books like *The Underground Railroad* and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.

Chapter 7 : Conclusion

The writings by Diaz and Whitehead transport us from that restrictive environment to the present instead of keeping us in the past. It is impossible to read the novels without being transferred to a different setting and time. Through its interaction with reality, metafiction can be

used to reveal and dismantle sanitised historical images, including those associated with slavery and authoritarianism. The reader needs to consider the broader power dynamics that influence societal memory and identity in addition to the story itself. These works demonstrate how history is not a fixed truth but rather a manufactured narrative that reflects the prejudices and ideas of its period by fusing fact and fiction. The reader is compelled by this narrative deconstruction process to reevaluate historically accepted truths and critically examine how these events are remembered and recounted. Another significant finding from this study is that the period of time from which a historical record is examined is crucial. The present must also be used in order to analyse the past. The way Dominican and American culture has developed throughout time provides a guide to how it used to be. Both books portray the long-lasting psychological harm caused by repressive governments, revealing the cyclical nature of these social scars through the use of metafiction. The trauma of their ancestors is carried by characters like Oscar, Beli, Lola, and Cora, who are influenced by both individual and societal memory. In addition to narrating history, these books also examine how trauma is passed down through the generations and shows up in the present, casting debate on the idea of "post-slavery" or "post-dictatorship" societies. Nothing compares to the total abolition of a cruel, repressive period. There is always a remnant or remaining of its impact on people. From the horrors of the Holocaust to children still suffering from health problems brought on by the bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, such a vicious regime does not end easily. If we look into the context of the Bangladesh-Pakistan War, the independent Bengali nation is still affected by its leaders and institutions. The political system, the assassinations of intellectuals that resulted in a damaged literary era, and the resilient mentality of today's students are all reflections of its previous struggles and battles. Reality itself is not fixed, whenever examined, it must be looked at from multiple perspectives. To sum up, the

research study explores the various perspectives on how a novel that critiques history might be examined. Slavery, the Dominican Regime, authoritarianism, racism, and oppression are age-long debates and regimes that are highlighted in both books with the metafictional presence. The voices of real-life protagonists like Harriet Jacobs, the Mirabel Sisters, and Frederick Douglass give more strength to the argument that reality is not everything that we see, hear and tell.

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