POSTMODERNIST HISTORICAL NOVELS: JEANETTE WINTERSON'S AND SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVELS AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTIONS

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ABSTRACT

POSTMODERNIST HISTORICAL NOVELS: JEANETTE WINTERSON'S AND SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVELS AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTIONS

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The aim of this dissertation is to study postmodern historical novels, which are labeled "historiographic metafictions" (Hutcheon 1989: 92), in terms of their allowing for different voices and alternative, plural histories by subverting the historical documents and events that they refer to. The study analyzes texts from feminist and postcolonial literature, Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry*, and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* as examples in which the transgression of boundaries between fact and fiction is achieved. Basing its arguments on postmodern understanding of history, the thesis puts forward that historiography not only represents past events but it also gives meaning to them, as it is a signifying system, and turns historical events into historical facts. Historiography, while constructing historical facts, singles out certain past events while omitting others, for ideological reasons. This inevitably leads to the fact that marginalized groups are denied an official voice by hegemonic ideologies. Therefore, history is regarded as monologic, representing the dominant discourse. The thesis will

analyze four novels by Winterson and Rushdie as double-voiced discourses where the dominant voice of history is refracted through subversion and gives way to other voices that have been suppressed. While analyzing the novels themselves, the thesis will look for the metafictional elements of the texts, stressing self-reflexivity, non-linear narrative, and parodic intention to pinpoint the refraction and the co-existence of plural voices. As a result, historiographic metafiction is proved to be a liberating genre, for feminist and postcolonial writers, that enables other histories to be verbalized.

Key words: Historiographic metafiction, Postmodern novel, women writing, postcolonial literature, Jeanette Winterson, Salman Rushdie.

ÖZ

POSTMODERN TARİH ROMANI: JEANETTE WINTERSON'IN VE SALMAN RUSHDIE'NİN ROMANLARININ TARİH-YAZIMCI ÜSTKURGU OLARAK İNCELENMESİ

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Bu tezin amacı İngiliz edebiyatında "tarih yazımcı meta-roman (üstkurgu)" olarak da adlandırılan postmodern tarih romanlarını, içerdikleri tarihi olayları ve kayıtları çarpıtarak farklı seslere ve alternatif çoğul tarihlere izin vermeleri açısından incelemektir. Jeanette Winterson'ın *The Passion* (Tutku) ve *Sexing the Cherry* (Vişnenin Cinsiyeti) adlı romanları ile Salman Rushdie'nin *Midnight's Children* (Geceyarısı Çocukları) ve *Shame* (Utanç) adlı eserleri incelemenin konusunu oluşturur. Tarih yazımcı meta-romanların, tarihi gerçekleri çarpıtarak ve onları romanların farklı bağlamlarında yeniden yazarak kolonilerde sömürülenler, azınlıklar, kadınlar ve benzeri marjinal grupların sessiz tarihlerini ön plana çıkardığı bu tezle iddia edilir. Bu tez savlarını postmodern tarih kuramına dayandırarak, tarih yazımının geçmiş olayları sadece yansıtmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda bir anlamlandırma sistemi olduğu için geçmiş olaylara anlam yüklediğini ve böylece tarihi olayları tarihi "gerçeklere" dönüştürdüğünü öne sürer. Tarih yazımı, tarihi gerçekleri oluştururken ideolojik sebeplerden belli geçmiş olayları seçerken diğerlerini

yok sayar. Bu da kaçınılmaz olarak bizi marjinal grupların tarih yazma sürecinde göz ardı edildiği gerçeğine götürür. Bu yüzden tarih, egemen düşünceyi yansıtan tek-sesli bir söylem olarak kabul edilir. Bu tez, tarih yazımcı meta-romanları tarihi gerçekleri bozma yoluyla egemen sesin kırılmaya uğradığı ve baskılanmış diğer seslere imkan veren çok-sesli bir söylem olarak inceler. Bununla birlikte, romanların kendisini incelerken kırılmanın ve çok sesliliğin varlığını gösterebilmek için romanlardaki metinlerarası ilişkiyi, yazım sürecinin kurgusallığının farkındalığını, kronolojik olmayan anlatımı ve parodiyi ön plana çıkararak üstkurgu öğelerini çalışır. Sonuç olarak, tarih yazımcı meta-romanın öteki tarihlerin de seslendirilebildiği bir yazın türü olduğu ortaya çıkar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tarih-yazımcı metaroman, Postmodern roman, kadın yazını, kolonileşme-sonrası edebiyatı, Jeanette Winterson, Salman Rushdie.

To Füsun and Arda,
who have made it all possible

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Aim and the Scope of the Study

This study analyzes Jeanette Winterson's novels *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* as postmodernist historical novels in line with the form historical fictions have taken with the introduction of postmodernism. The study argues that Winterson's and Rushdie's novels can be read as subversive texts that problematize the boundary between history and fiction, and question the monology and claim to objectivity of historical representation. This study categorizes these novels of Jeanette Winterson's and Salman Rushdie's as representatives of historiographic metafictions which enable different voices to be heard by opening the dominant discourse of history to multivocality. Both novelists' postmodernist texts are analyzed with respect to their use of different voices and alternative histories, through the writers' emphasis on how history is a human construct.

It is after the linguistic turn, which denotes the poststructuralist deferral/split between the signifier and the signified and its subsequent influences on other fields of study, that there has emerged a rather different view of the historical novel, seen as "the historical turn" in fiction (Keen 167). "What is 'new' in the new historical novel is its treatment of history as a form of discourse," as Raymond A. Mazurek argues (194). The postmodernist view of history argues against conventional history writing, which is claimed to be shaped ideologically by the dominant discourse, and against its claim to

represent historical events truthfully and objectively. In order to falsify the objectivity of conventional history writing, it bases its arguments heavily on the poststructuralist theories which claim that language creates and shapes reality. "Historical events then have no immanent structure," Aruna Srivastava argues, "but only one imposed by an ideologically conditioned historian. The act of creating histories, then, is an ideological act, designed to support political and moral systems" (66). The poststructuralist view entails the idea that there are plural meanings and truths as opposed to one meaning or one "Truth". It is a denial of the empirical concepts of history on which traditional historical novels before the introduction of postmodernist views were based.

The inclusion of history in recent postmodern fictions like those of Jeanette Winterson and Salman Rushdie has been reshaped by the postmodernist theory of history. The postmodernist historical novel questions the clear-cut division between history and fiction, since, as pointed out by Greenblatt and Gallagher in *Practicing New Historicism* (2000), history has become more literary and literature more historicized as a result of the postmodern condition. By means of their overt metafictionality, postmodern texts challenge the capacity of history to represent reality outside the text, and the truth-value of historical knowledge as well. The fact that they are highly self-reflexive novels points to the process of constructing, ordering and selecting, which presupposes that history is a human construct as is literature. Therefore, postmodernist historical novels attempt to insert history into fiction to subvert historical "facts" and rewrite them from a perspective different from the accepted interpretation. In such postmodernist texts, which question the problematized relations between history and fiction, the hitherto silenced histories of marginalized groups are sometimes foregrounded through this rewriting and subverting of historical material.

As these arguments also suggest, the postmodern elements and the self-reflexivity of the two writers' novels that will be analyzed in this study help point out the devices by which historiography produces meanings and they challenge historiography's authority. Jeanette Winterson's novels are known for

the feminist/lesbian awareness through which the writer handles her themes of how gendered identity is constructed by patriarchy and how it can be deconstructed. Winterson's *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry*, additionally, question the truth-value of history as a patriarchal discourse and threaten its monology through mingling it with the fantastic and grotesque elements of the novels. In *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* Salman Rushdie makes the East and the history of India and Pakistan, respectively, the themes, and he openly parodies the historical discourse of the colonial West. The choice of one feminist and one postcolonial writer in this study is due to the fact that both feminist and postcolonial writing can produce texts that are highly subversive in their nature as they are consciously resistant to the dominant discourse of history that patriarchy and the colonizer use to suppress the other. Defining the common features of historical novels after the emergence of postmodernism, Suzanne Keen argues in her study that, "[t]hese historical novels bear a strong relationship in their revisionist spirit to the feminist and postcolonial tradition" (179). In the hands of these writers, therefore, historiographic metafiction becomes a liberating tool because

> for all its playfulness […], historical fiction has a strong political resonance especially for women and ethnic writers: the imperatives behind female and ethnic (re)writings of history are inescapably different from those of white men. If one of the driving forces in the writing of historical fiction is to give a voice to the silenced Other, then for a woman or ethnic author to write into being the unaddressed past and its muted subalterns, or to rewrite an established male-authored work, presents a challenge for both author and reader. (Heilmann and Llewellyn 142)

These novels of the two writers are studied in terms of how they highlight the silenced histories of marginalized groups such as ethnic/political minorities, the colonized, and women through rewriting historical facts within the different contexts of the novels. The novels will be referred to as *Passion*, *Sexing*, *Midnight's*, and *Shame* throughout the citations in this thesis.

Chapter 2 gives a survey of the recent developments in the field of history experienced after the postmodern/poststructuralist impacts, as the discussions of the postmodern philosophy of history initiated by thinkers like Hayden White have become influential in shaping the historical novels written after the eighties. By emphasizing the textuality of historical knowledge, these theories concerning postmodern history make it possible to grasp the fact that history is ideologically constructed, serving the dominant discourse, and so it is monolithic in nature. With the increasing interest of contemporary fiction in history as a theme, there have emerged attempts of literary theoreticians to define those novels which insert historical material and merge fact and fiction within their self-reflexive narratives. Chapter 2 outlines these definitions and tries to explain the characteristic features of historical novels written in the postmodern era. Linda Hutcheon's definition of "historiographic metafiction" is used in the analysis of the novels in this study as the term she coined is found to be all-encompassing. This chapter also discusses how women and the colonized are excluded and silenced by earlier authorial discourses, by referring to the feminist and the postcolonial theories that show women and the colonized as "Other". Claiming that history should be seen as the discourse of patriarchy and/or the colonizing authority, the chapter shows how feminisms and postcolonialism treat history.

In the following chapters, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, Winterson's *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* are analyzed individually in the light of these discussions. While Chapter 3 seeks to combine the features of feminist writing and historical fiction to show the presence of alternative voices of women in Jeanette Winterson's work, Chapter 4 tries to reveal the attempts of Rushdie's characters in both novels to challenge the totalitarian history writing of the West. The novels are analyzed in terms of their postmodernist and metafictive elements and in terms of how they are used subversively by both writers to challenge the boundary between story and history and to bring the untold stories to the fore.

Chapter 5 concludes the study by comparing and contrasting Winterson's and Rushdie's ways of questioning the objectivity of history. Both novelists use fantasy, magic realism, and parody in a subversive way to challenge not only historical representation but the limiting boundaries of any kind. It is claimed in this study that the genre of historical fiction becomes a liberating narrative for both Winterson and Rushdie where they can convey difference and multiplicity and offer alternative histories.

CHAPTER 2

THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 The Postmodern Philosophy of History

The postmodern philosophy of history – an understanding of history and historiography under the influence of poststructuralist thoughts – constructs the theoretical background to the analysis of historical novels written in the postmodern era. Gertrude Himmelfarb outlines in her article "Postmodernist History" the contemporary tendency that history writing follows in the postmodern age. Her observation is that postmodernism has become influential in many disciplines, including history. When applied to the field of history, postmodernism, which refutes both the fixity of language and text and the assumed connection between language and reality, turns into "a denial of the fixity of the past, of the reality of the past apart from what the historian chooses to make of it, and thus of any objective truth about the past" (Himmelfarb 1999: 72). The postmodernist view of history argues against conventional history writing and its claims to present historical events truthfully.

The scientific aspect of history in the nineteenth century claimed that the past could be reflected as it actually happened. Traditionally, history was seen in the nineteenth century "as an empirical search for external truths corresponding to what was considered to be absolute reality of the past events" (Onega 1995: 12). Thus, it was a scientific search for knowledge. This view is opposed by later historians – Hayden White being the leading postmodernist philosopher of history among them – who argue that historical facts cannot be represented objectively because they cannot exist independently of the

historian. Historical events can only be reached through documents and other texts and historiography turns historical events into historical "facts". Such an argument stresses the role of the historian as a determining factor in giving significance to certain historical events and inserting only these events into historical accounts while ignoring others, sometimes for ideological reasons.

The postmodern philosophy of history bases its arguments on poststructuralist theories which claim the textuality of reality. Poststructuralist thought makes it clear that history is a text, "a discourse which consists of representations, that is, verbal formations" (Abrams 183). The past can never be attainable in a pure form as historical events; it can only be reached through chronicles and archival documents. Poststructuralist impacts open the way to a historicist study of literary texts, analyzing literature in the context of social, political and cultural history, and regarding literary history as a part of a larger cultural history. This perception of history in literary studies is formulated by Louis Montrose as a concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history. He says:

> By the historicity of texts I mean to suggest the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing […]. By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest, firstly, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question […]; and secondly that those textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediations when they are construed as the 'documents' upon which historians ground their own texts, called 'histories'. (Montrose 20)

This conception initiated by Montrose aborts the notion of history as a mere reflection of events happening out there. Even though it may seem to represent an external reality, history as a text is a construct. Therefore, it is claimed that "the cultural and ideological representations in texts serve mainly to reproduce, confirm, and propagate the power-structures of domination and subordination which characterize a given society" (Abrams 184). As a result,

history, like literature, comes to be "a product of language […] and a narrative discourse" that consists of representations of historical conditions and a similar power-structure (Schleifer and Davis 373). Furthermore, historians can no longer claim that their study of the past is objective and able unproblematically to represent the external reality: the "[p]ast is something we construct from already written texts of all kinds which we construe in line with our particular historical concerns" (Selden 188). The existence of contradictory histories in the plural as opposed to a single "History" has emerged as another subsequent assumption. The postmodernist view of history "rejects the idea of 'History' as a directly accessible, unitary past and substitutes for it the conception of 'histories,' an ongoing series of human constructions" (Cox and Reynolds 4).

Hayden White elaborates on this new concept of history, mainly in his *Metahistory*, by founding his arguments on the theories of Barthes, Foucault, Derrida and Genette. He determines the aim of metahistory as finding answers to questions concerning the epistemological status of historical explanations and the possible forms of historical representation. For White, narrative form is the only possible form of representation in the writing of history (1973: 9). He proposes in *Metahistory* a theory of narrative that draws parallelisms between history and literature. He argues that traditional historiography uses the narrative form in which historians convey the knowledge of the past and he analyzes the "deep structure of the historical imagination," claiming that all history contains a deep verbal structure and that a formal theory is needed to analyze the deep structure (1973: 9).

In "Historical Text as Literary Artifact," White highlights the idea that history writing consists of the process of "emplotment" in which chronicles turn into stories. To him, it is a necessary operation since "histories gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of mere chronicles" (2001: 223). It is generally believed that chronicle facts make no sense at all on their own, for the historical record is thought to be "fragmentary and always incomplete"; that is why the historian is obliged to make a plausible story out of facts through "the encodation of facts contained in the chronicle as components

of specific kinds of plot structures" (White 2001: 223). Such an obligation to make "stories out of chronicles" is the reason for the presence of some story elements in history writing. White explains how these elements bring history writing to the level of literary composition by indicating that

> the events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like – in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play. (2001: 223)

The idea of emplotment entails the aforementioned role of the historian in shaping the stories made out of chronicles according to his choice of the most appropriate structure for ordering events into a meaningful and complete story (White 2001: 224). This suggests that historical facts, as White claims, "can be emplotted in a number of different ways, so as to provide different interpretations of these events and to endow them with different meanings" serving different ideologies and worldviews (2001: 224). White also draws attention to the fact that the historian can trace past events in historicized records, documents or archives, but he can never reach the contexts of past events in any definite way. The historian, therefore, has to invent contexts in order to make past events significant and meaningful. He indicates that the milieu in which those documents take place is not accessible, hence not "given" but invented as well (2001: 228). As a result of the process of emplotment, historical works are "verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences" (White 2001: 222, italics in original).

Admitting the role of the historian in narrating past events and dwelling on the same issues as Hayden White, E. H. Carr describes briefly how the process of transforming past events into historical facts is actually the interpretation of the historian himself. He contends:

> It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context […]. [T]he only reason why we are interested to know that the battle was fought at Hastings in 1066 is that historians regard it as a major historical event. It is the historian who has decided for his own reasons that Caesar's crossing of that petty stream, the Rubicon, is a fact of history, whereas the crossings of the Rubicon by millions of other people […] interests nobody at all. (11-12)

Although Hayden White in his work draws attention to the general reluctance to consider historical representations as verbal artifacts, the above arguments of both White's own and E. H. Carr bridge the gap between history and literature, the gap which was widened by the attempts of those historians who tried to equate historical accounts with sciences. A new kind of "fictional" history emerges when the distinction between history and fiction gets blurred. It is safe to say that history has become rather "metafictional" than fictional only, for the ultimate aim of postmodernist history is to lay bare the devices whereby past reality is constructed through the writing of history. Hence the prefix of *meta-* in White's celebrated title *Metahistory*. The title, according to Susana Onega, draws a parallelism between the metafictional awareness in fiction and "the metahistorical trend in history" (1995: 12). Metafictional self-consciousness gives way to a metahistorical self-consciousness in history writing as White claims:

> By drawing historiography nearer to its origins in literary sensibility, we should be able to identify the ideological, because it is the fictive element in our own discourse. We are always able to see the fictive element in those historians with whose interpretations of a given set of events we disagree; we seldom perceive that element in our own prose. So, too, if we recognized the literary or fictive element in every historical account, we should be able to move the teaching of historiography onto a higher level of self-consciousness than it currently occupies. (2001: 235)

It has already been mentioned that traditional history in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is an attempt to reflect historical events in an objective way. In order to reach this aim, it depends on archival research, primary sources, and eyewitnesses; and it enhances its scientific objectivity by accurate quotations, citations, documentation in footnotes and bibliography. However, postmodernist history draws attention to these attempts of conventional history to "conceal its ideological structure behind a scholarly façade of footnotes and 'facts'" (Himmelfarb 1999: 75). With this "higher level of self-consciousness" that White mentions in his study, the methods and devices that are exploited to make history seem objective should also be questioned and challenged:

> To 'demythicize' or 'demystify' this history, postmodernism has to expose not only its ideology – the hegemonic, privileged, patriarchal interests served by this history – but also its methodology, the scholarly apparatus that gives it a specious credibility. (Himmelfarb 1999: 75)

The emphasis of the postmodern theory of history on the role of the historian in interpreting past events entails the fact that historical events are described through a subjective eye and interpreted through historians' own perspectives, and that historical information is in no way pure and innocent, because "historical narratives do not reveal meanings that are always there, rather they construct meaning much as fictional narratives do" (Baş 16). Hence, if historical narratives do not represent the external reality, then "they must represent something else and in so doing they will inevitably be political" (Bertens and Douwe 6). Official history is believed to be the history of the dominant power and it suppresses the history of minority people; as Elisabeth Wesseling states "the absence of ethnic minorities from […] history does not result from some sort of natural, automatic process, but from deliberate exclusion" (1991: 166). The idea justifies the endeavour of postmodern fiction to give voice to the history of the suppressed. Therefore, postmodernism is a way of releasing history from the influence of the dominant totalitarian and

patriarchal ideologies and it celebrates a multiplicity of histories. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese in "History in a Postmodern World" qualifies postmodern history as the one which does not ignore the suppressed. Fox-Genovese, in this respect, points out the close affinity of postmodern history with identity politics in contrast to its lack in traditional history writing. To her,

> postmodernist history draws much of its appeal from the contemporary obsession with identity politics […]. [T]o meet the standards of gender, race, and class, history must focus upon those who qualify as 'marginalized,' 'disempowered,' or 'victimized'. (44-45)

2.2 History as a Theme in Contemporary Fiction

Outlining the trends in British fiction between 1979 and the 1990 (when his book was published) in *The Modern British Novel*, Malcolm Bradbury marks a tendency in British fiction toward history especially in the novels of the "eighties":

> Certainly exploring past and recent history, at a time when its progress seemed either ambiguous or disastrous, and many of the progressive dreams of the earlier part of the century had plainly died, did become a central theme of Eighties fiction. (432)

For Bradbury, this tendency is the outcome of the developments that we have mentioned concerning the field of history which show that "writing history is more like writing novels than we often choose to think" (1993: 432). Therefore, Bradbury seems to stress particularly Hayden White's influence on this tendency in novel writing toward history and historical themes, as he acknowledges that "what we understand by history, the means by which we construct significant histories, and the way we relate those histories to our understanding of our own situation" has been reshaped by the recent philosophy of history (1993: 432).

The historical novels in the eighties, the era being marked with the flourishing of many fictions written in the postmodern novel genre, differ greatly from the historical novels written in the previous years. Postmodern fiction rejoices in the coming into existence of this recent postmodern understanding of historiography. Postmodern historical novels insert historical documents, events and historical personages into the fictional worlds of their works, drawing attention at the same time to this process. Literary critics foreground the intense preoccupation with history in the works of many contemporary novelists such as Graham Swift, Peter Ackroyd, D. M. Thomas, Salman Rushdie, Julian Barnes, John Fowles, Jeanette Winterson and Angela Carter among many others.

2.3 Postmodern Ontological Questioning and Self-Reflexivity

Brian McHale in *Postmodernist Fiction* distinguishes modernist and postmodernist fiction in terms of two different "dominants". For him, "the dominant of modernist fiction is epistemological" (9). Accordingly, modernist fiction is mainly concerned with epistemological questions such as "How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? […] What is there to be known?; Who knows it?; How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?" (9). McHale argues that postmodernist fiction, on the other hand, is more interested in questions "either [of] the ontology of the literary text itself or [of] the ontology of the world which it projects" (10). Some questions given in *Postmodernist Fiction* to exemplify McHale's thesis about the ontological dominant are:

> What is a world? What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a world (or worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? (10)

The underlying idea is the ontological questioning of reality. Postmodern philosophy accepts reality as a construction. Consequently, since there is nothing to represent out there, the postmodern text comes to be a way of reflecting the idea of constructed reality by means of its overt self-referentiality. Postmodern fiction is usually marked with intense self-reflexivity that denotes the author's consciousness of the rhetoric of the text. Instead of reflecting an external reality, the postmodern author refers to the rhetorical devices used to create the illusion of external references: "Postmodernist writing is basically fiction of the medium. Rather than representing the external world, postmodern literature folds in upon itself in order to explore its linguistic and literary conventions" (Wesseling 1991: 3). The self-conscious narrator of postmodern fiction constantly refers to his own writing process and its fictionality in order to remind the reader that the novel is a construct of language. In every sense, "the novel," as Robert Burden states, "interrogates itself" (155). Self-reflexivity, then, is a counter-argument against established constructions of reality and to referential discourse. Its function is to make the novel eliminate the postures of realism. The presence of a self-conscious narrator who points to the rhetorical devices constructing the text is a means of breaking the illusion of reality. As Onega explains, the aim is to build an illusion only to destroy it (1993: 57).

To build the connection between self-reflexive and metafictional challenge which serves postmodern questioning, Patricia Waugh's theory of metafiction which she discusses in her work *Metafiction* should be referred to. She defines metafiction as "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (2). As is stated, in the light of poststructuralist theory the outside world is accepted as a "text," fiction constructed by language; and metafiction, to Waugh, makes us aware of how the reality is written in the way a literary fiction is written by means of laying bare the devices used in creating imaginary worlds. She claims: "If our knowledge of this world is now seen to be mediated through language, then

literary fiction (worlds constructed entirely of language) becomes a useful model for learning about the construction of 'reality' itself" (3). In other words, self-conscious fiction is seen as a way of exploring "the relationship between this arbitrary linguistic system and the world to which it apparently refers; […] the relationship between the world *of* the fiction and the world *outside* the fiction" (3, italics in original).

Metafiction as such shares the poststructuralist concern with the centrality of language in constructing everyday reality as Waugh argues that "language *constructs* rather than merely *reflects* everyday life" (53, italics in original). In the novel writing tradition, this leads to the existence of a fictional work "which consistently displays its conventionality, which explicitly and overtly lays bare its condition of artifice, and which thereby explores the problematic relationship between life and fiction" (Waugh 4). Such a foregrounding of metafictional novels requires the inevitable destruction of both the reader's conventional expectations and in turn the illusion of reality created in the fiction reading process. An imaginative historical world is constructed by the reader throughout the duration of the reading and this fictional world is treated as "true" within the context of the novel. However, the metafictional novel manages to destroy this illusion by its constant reference to the very act of writing itself. Waugh contends: "To create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction" lays bare this fictional illusion (6).

In her study, Waugh puts forward the argument that metafictional novels have the potential to prove that "history itself is a multiplicity of 'alternative worlds,' as fictional as […] the worlds of novels" (104). The metafictional novels are able to foreground the fictionality of history by means of including real historical events and figures in their fictional contexts. Waugh writes: "In the midst of their overtly fictional or 'alternative' worlds, these novels do present the reader with […] historically determinate particulars" (104). It is claimed in her study that when historical incidents and personages are forced to enter into the context of historical writing, they are inevitably "recontextualized"; such a process, for her, proves that "history, to this extent,

is also 'fictional,' also a set of 'alternative worlds'" (106). The metafictional novels help reveal the fictional construction of history by handling historical figures, events, and sources and self-conscious narrative at the same time. The questioning of historical reality is pursued through the self-conscious construction in metafictional novels. Historiographic metafictions, by referring to the historiographer's arbitrariness in singling out certain events and by referring to narrative as the only tool of historiography to write about past events, just as it is the main element of literature, treat history as a verbal artifact in the same manner.

2.4 Definitions of Postmodern Historical Fiction

Under the influence of postmodern innovations in both history and fiction, historical novels develop into a new form. Postmodern texts that refer to historical documents and events reflect the assumption of the postmodern theory of history, which is that traditional approaches to historiography are no longer valid and that multiple histories are possible. The insertion of historical characters or events into the fictionality of texts differs in postmodernist novels from classical historical novels of the nineteenth century. Brian McHale argues that in the traditional historical novel "historical realms – persons, events, specific objects and so on – can only be introduced on condition that the properties and actions attributed to them in the text do not in actuality contradict the 'official' historical record" (87). Therefore, it is only limited to the "dark areas," to use McHale's term, of history where there are blanks in the official records (87). Whereas classical historical novels pay attention to this rule, postmodern fiction does not as it is overtly self-conscious. When there is the presence of historical figures or events in fictions, "an ontological boundary between the real and the fictional" (McHale 89) is transgressed, which is defined by McHale as an "ontological scandal" (85). The difference between classical historical fiction and postmodern fiction is that the former avoids anachronism and the contradiction of official history through producing

fictional only in "the dark areas," whereas "postmodern fiction, by contrast, seeks to foreground this seam […] by visibly contradicting the public record of 'official' history; by flaunting anachronism; and by integrating history and the fantastic" (McHale 90). McHale's label for historical novels written in the postmodern era is "the postmodernist revisionist historical novel," revisionist because

> it revises the content of the historical record, reinterpreting the historical record, often demystifying or debunking the orthodox version of the past [and] it revises, indeed transforms, the conventions and norms of historical fiction itself. (McHale 90)

Linda Hutcheon in her *Poetics of Postmodernism* labels postmodern historical novels as "historiographic metafictions" since they thematize the theory of contemporary historiography and problematize the distinction between history and fiction. She explains her reason for such a label thus: "[historiographic metafiction] puts into question, at the same time as it exploits, the grounding of historical knowledge in the past real. This is why I have been calling this historiographic metafiction" (1989: 92). Linda Hutcheon's definition puts stress especially on postmodernist historical novels' "intense self-consciousness about the way in which all this is done" (1989: 113). Her definition is governed by the paradox created by the intermingling of metafictional self-reflexivity and historical reality in novels, "novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages". A postmodernist theory of history, as it has been stated previously, helps us understand that history invents stories about past events and it foregrounds certain events while suppressing some others for ideological reasons. Accordingly, in the analysis of postmodern historical novels, the metafictive elements, intertextuality, self-reflexivity, non-linear narrative and parodic intention foreground this process. Historiographic metafictions attempt to use historical material within the parodic self-reflexivity of metafiction which aims at undermining realism.

Historiographic metafiction is not only concerned with the question of the truth-value of objective historical representation but with the issue of who controls history. Therefore, in historiographic metafictions, the idea that historical "facts" are constructed ideologically is particularly emphasized. Hutcheon says: "All past 'events' are potential historical 'facts,' but the ones that become facts are those that are chosen to be narrated. […] This distinction between brute event and meaning-granted fact is one with which postmodern fiction seems obsessed" (1991b: 75). Thus, one of the attempts of historiographic metafiction is to focus on past events and historical personages which history chooses not to include. The excluded events are foregrounded, their stories are retold and alternative histories are composed in historiographic metafictions. As a result, a multiplicity of histories is achieved since historiographic metafictions write alternative versions to the already accepted one.

A study of the "alternative histories" in postmodern novels is theorized by Elisabeth Wesseling by the term "Uchronie," borrowed from French to denote utopia in the form of alternative versions of the past. The concept provides the postmodern novel with the significance of utopia in historical fiction writing and "utopian anticipation of the future" (Wesseling 1997: 203). Wesseling, in *Writing History as a Prophet*, defines uchronian history novels as such with their emphasis on subverting the past events and characters only to create alternative versions:

> It locates utopia in history, by imagining an apocryphal course of events, which did not take place. Alternate histories can be unfolded from different perspectives within the context of a novel. An uchronian fiction may be set in the past, where it shows alternate history in the making. It may also be set in the present whose shape has been determined by an alternate course of historical events. (100)

Uchronian historical novels, therefore, refer to the fantasy that creates counterfactual versions of real historical events and to its close relationship with utopian thinking. They create utopias in history by imagining an invented

course of events which might have taken place. According to Wesseling, this can be done in several ways but the most common are the transference of historical personages or events from one age to another, or the insertion of a historical figure in a fantastic world, the depiction of losers as winners, and the shift in the historical significance of events (1997: 205). It is clear that Wesseling's uchronian novels are not limited to the "dark areas" as conventional historical novels are; on the contrary, they are inimical to the official version of historical records.

Historical novels in the postmodern age present the potential of offering multiple historical possibilities in contrast to a single possibility sustained through the suppression of alternatives. As such official history is seen as a monologic discourse representing only the viewpoints of the dominant ideology which in turn creates history as a monolithic discourse. As we have seen, historiography, while turning real past events into facts, singles out certain real events while omitting some others. To Hayden White, historical writing consists of "the arrangement of selected events […] into a story" (1973: 7). Such an arrangement is carried out according to the dominant discourse since historical knowledge has come to be seen as an ideological construction to sustain its hegemony. In contrast to this, postmodern historical novels

> rewrite history from the perspectives of groups of people that have been excluded from the making and writing of history […]. They do not merely foreground groups about which official historiography tends to remain silent, but also allot them more power than they actually possessed. (Wesseling 1991: 162)

The uchronian subversion of postmodern historical fiction, as described by Wesseling, attempts "to inscribe the losers of history in our historical memory. To counter canonized history with apocryphal versions aims at […] strengthening the position of subordinated groups in the present and at suggesting possibilities for equality in the future" (1997: 206). Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction, as well, verbalizes the silenced histories of

marginalized groups by means of subverting the already accepted interpretation in order to force it out of the center and to reveal the decentralized histories of the ex-centric others. Linda Hutcheon declares the aim of historiographic metafiction as "to note the dispersing interplay of different, heterogeneous discourses," and she adds that

> what has surfaced is something different from the unitary, closed, evolutionary narratives of historiography as we have traditionally known it: [in historiographic metafiction] we now get the histories of the losers as well as the winners, of the regional (and colonial) as well as the centrist, of the unsung many as well as the much sung few, and […] of women as well as men. (1991b: 66)

Historical novels in the postmodern era have been discussed under different labels by various critics; nonetheless, Hutcheon's "historiographic metafiction" is regarded as an all-encompassing term. For example, Brian McHale, although establishing his own theory of historical novels in the postmodern age and labeling them as "postmodernist revisionalist historical novels" in *Postmodern Fiction*, observes no distinction in his later *Constructing Postmodernism* between this and Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction, and he groups the novels of the sort under Hutcheon's "historiographic metafiction": "a historical novel of the postmodernist type, the type that Hutcheon has called 'historiographic metafiction'" (1992: 152). In addition to singling out the mixing of historical figures and fiction and the rewriting of alternative versions, Hutcheon's term also helps treat a text as a subversive tool by foregrounding its realism-undermining metafictionality.

Postmodern historical novels fight against the known defects of the logocentrism, phallocentrism, ethnocentrism and imperialism of Western history. Such a feature of postmodern historical fiction becomes the main field of interest for such groups as political and/or other minorities, women and the colonized who have long been denied an official voice by hegemonic ideologies. Postmodern feminist thinkers, in this context, point out the fact that women are excluded from history, which comes to represent the hegemony of

patriarchy. Gerda Lerner in her chapter titled "The Challenge of Women's History" explains that women are silenced in patriarchal history and emphasizes the necessity to rewrite it:

> Women have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male-centered terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked questions of history which are inappropriate to women. To rectify this, and to light up areas of historical darkness we must, for a time, focus on a *woman-centered* inquiry, considering the possibility of the existence of a female culture *within* the general culture shared by men and women. History must include an account of the female experience over time and should include the development of feminist consciousness as an essential aspect of women's past. This is the primary task of women's history. The central question it raises is: What would history be like if it were seen through the eyes of women and ordered by values they define? (178, italics in original)

Hence Jeanette Winterson offers alternative versions of history in her novels by foregrounding the otherwise silenced lives, activities and achievements of women. Historiographic metafiction serves as a liberating genre for women writers that enables other histories to be verbalized.

The postcolonial rewriting of history, likewise, is an attempt to create alternative histories of the colonized as opposed to the official history of the colonizer. Postcolonial theorists believe that traditional history is used by the colonial powers in a discursive way as an instrument to construct reality on behalf of the colonizer; and such history inevitably leaves out the histories of the colonized. Postcolonial novels that include references to the colonizer's version of historical facts with a critical distance try to destroy the hegemonic accounts of the past by means of introducing the suppressed voices of "others" whose histories are silenced under the monology of colonizer's history. Salman Rushdie's novels can be read to illustrate that the process of colonization does not simply "impose its rules upon the present and the future of a dominated

country […] it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it," too, as Franz Fanon puts it in *The Wretched of the Earth* (210).

2.5 Bakhtin and Dialogism in Postmodern Historical Novels

Bakhtin's concepts of "dialogism" and the "carnivalesque" emerge as instrumental tools to study how silenced histories destroy the monologic discourse of the canonical history which can be opened to the dialogism of alternative voices. Bakhtin develops his idea of "dialogism" and "polyphony" in *The Dialogic Imagination*. Dialogism, as opposed to monologism, enables different voices in a literary text to exist simultaneously and in interaction with each other. This process is comparable to the process of dialogue. For Bakhtin, words are not neutral but they belong to other people. The individual engages in dialogue through the efforts of appropriating words into his own usage. Bakhtin, then, uses the term dialogism to explain the existence of "other" voices in an utterance (Vice 8). He states that

> [different voices] – as it were – know about each other just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other; it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other. (324)

In a given utterance, therefore, there is more than one voice serving different masters and purposes. Bakhtin explains the existence of other voices in an utterance by the term "heteroglossia," "another's speech in another's language" (324). To Bakhtin, such speech is "double-voiced discourse" as there is, within one discourse, "a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages" (325).

Such a theory enables the analysis of historiographic metafiction as a double-voiced discourse and thus indicates the co-existence of different perspectives and interpretations of a single historical moment along with the officially accepted historical knowledge. Furthermore, when read from the

perspective of Bakhtinian dialogism, repressed histories are in battle with the authoritative voice of the official history and are trying to open up its monologic discourse to Bakhtin's "carnivalesque". Bakhtin's concept of carnival can be explained as a means of introducing the language of the folk to the language of authority, which is "symbolic of the disruption and subversion of the authority" (Cuddon 111). Thus, it introduces alternatives and subverts authority. Bakhtinian carnivalesque in the reading of historiographic metafiction, then, has a liberating influence on the suppressed histories since during the carnival the hierarchy between the voices is turned upside down. By means of analyzing these elements in the novels, the aim is to pinpoint where the authorial voice is, to use Bakhtin's term, "refracted" to give way to the suppressed histories of marginalized groups. Bakhtin's theory of refraction refers to "the 'angle of refraction' of authorial discourse as it passes through various other voices" (Bakhtin 432). The means of anachronism, apocryphal imitations and parodic rewriting serve to "express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (Bakhtin 324). Postmodernist historical novels that transgress the ontological boundaries between fact and fiction and rewrite a certain historical era with parodic intentions can be regarded as double-voiced due to the dialogic interrelation between the canonized version and the subverted version of historical records. The novelist uses historical data, but he or she appropriates them to serve his/her own intentions, "to serve a second master" (Bakhtin 300).

2.6 Relations between Feminisms, Postmodernism, and Feminist Historiography

2.6.1 Theories of Woman as "the Other"

Feminist criticism aims at questioning the dominant patriarchal ideologies which represent and define "woman" according to male interpretations. Feminist critics and theorists analyze the condition of women under male domination and how gender is constructed, and they try to redefine gender

relations. Feminisms acknowledge that women are reflected as men's "Other" and silenced by the dominant ideology, so it focuses on how women are represented by patriarchal discourses and gives a fresh look at the ways of reflecting female difference in the writings of women, and at ways of recognizing "otherness". The following section will provide an overview of various feminist theorists' thoughts on the issue of women's silence and how the same silencing is valid in terms of history writing, and then ways of making the silent speak will be discussed in what follows.

The method of thinking that shows women as the silenced other is dealt with by many theorists ranging from Woolf to the so-called French school of feminists. In her influential essay, *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf asserts that man treats woman as a mirror reflecting his image and thereby acknowledging his self-presence. "Women," she writes, "have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (1944). Deprived of any other function in a male-dominated society, women are excluded from theoretical thinking as well as from literary writing. Woolf explains the exclusion of women as the natural outcome of the hostile social and economic conditions that have been imposed on them by the dominant patriarchy.

Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work, *The Second Sex*, analyzes the role of woman in society in the same vein but she states more overtly that female gender is the construction of male discourse, not a biological necessity. The most frequently referred to argument of Beauvoir's, which has also become a feminist motto, is that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (295), by which she suggests that it is not nature which makes one woman, but rather femininity is constructed. She shows that texts produced by men reflect women as the other and this helps patriarchal ideologies sustain power over the suppression of women. Masculinity, for Beauvoir, stands for society's "normal"; in contrast, femininity is perceived as the "other". The aim behind this feminist criticism is to describe and subvert the cultural repression of women.

Like de Beauvoir, Helen Cixous's analysis of male-dominated culture proves that femininity is constructed as the opposite of masculinity. Like other French school of feminists, Helen Cixous owes to the poststructuralist methods of thinking for the arguments that show woman and man in a binary opposition. Western metaphysics, as Derrida claims, is based on the principle of logocentrism. Logocentric thinking implies the hierarchical structure of binary oppositions such as presence/absence, speech/writing, and so on; and in these binary oppositions, women are always placed in the inferior position. Helen Cixous, in "Sorties," highlights that all hierarchical binary oppositions end up with the opposition between man and woman, and states that woman's place in this operation is man's other:

> In the extreme the world of 'being' can function to the exclusion of the mother. No need for mother – provided that there is something of the maternal: and it is the father then who acts as – is – the mother. Either the woman is passive; or she does not exist. (92)

What Cixous argues is that in the patriarchal order of language women are always absent. The term "phallocentrism" is used by feminist thinkers to denote the subordination of women to masculinity and their exclusion as the other. The phallocentric thought privileges the phallus as the stable signifier and presupposes "a view of the masculine as natural source of power and authority, and of the feminine as naturally subject to this" (Hawthorn 215). Seeing the phallus as the source of power, the phallocentric view, then, sees women as absence, passivity, and silence, "the negative of the positive" to use Shoshona Felman's term, (9) as opposed to presence, activity and speech. Thus it sustains in society the dominance of patriarchal power represented by the phallus.

Feminist criticism acknowledges that history is another field that women are silenced in and accepts it as an instrument that patriarchy uses ideologically to sustain its hegemony over women by excluding their activities and experience. The argument is that since the dominant culture privileges male experience through phallocentrism, history as a grand narrative has always been

"his story," excluding the accounts of female experience that patriarchy sees as inferior and absent. Feminist criticism makes it a central concern to question the validity of the knowledge claims of grand narratives like history. They seek to make it known that history constantly works to exclude women as the agents of knowledge:

> One of the most significant strands of thought on this issue draws upon the insights of historical materialism to generate an account of experiences common to all women which provides a foundation for a women's "standpoint" which has privileged epistemological status. (Kemp and Squires 142-143)

In order to show the absence of women in history as in many other grand narratives, Seyla Benhabib draws a parallel between the absence of the colonized in history and that of women, and in this way she points to the disruption of difference through exclusion: "We need only remember Hegel's belief that Africa has no history. Until very recently neither did women have their own history, their own narrative with different categories of periodization and with different structural regularities" (213).

When history is analyzed from the feminist point of view, it is clear that historical records are the narratives of "great men" and the wars they fought or lands they conquered, which, of course, indicates that men have always kept the centre in historical narratives. Women are either absent in the accounts of the past or always represented from a male point of view in the monolithic discourse of history that does not allow their difference. Therefore, feminisms see history as an oppressive, phallocentric grand narrative which should be deconstructed:

> Feminists have long criticized traditional accounts of the past for excluding women: they have provided supplements to existing histories, and replacements as well. They have offered critical analyses of the reasons for women's exclusion. They have argued that attention to women would not only

> provide new information, but expose the limits of histories written only from the perspective of men. (Scott 12)

2.6.2 Making the Silent Speak

Women's above-mentioned structural place as the excluded "other" makes a marked difference to their writing, and woman silence can be read as a resistance. There have been attempts of feminist theorists to make the silent speak in their studies. In "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity," for instance, Susan Gubar adopts the metaphor of "the blank page" from Isak Dinesen's short story with the same title, to stress how women's writings silenced by the patriarchal literary tradition are, in fact, subversive stories. In Dinesen's "The Blank Page", it is narrated that on their wedding night, the stained sheets of princesses are displayed with plates their names are written on to attest their virginity. Among these stained sheets is a blank, snow-white sheet with a nameless plate. "Dinesen's blank page," writes Gubar, "becomes radically subversive, the result of one woman's deficiency which must have cost either her life or her honor. Not a sign of innocence or purity or passivity, this blank page is a mysterious but potent act of resistance" (89). The blank page shows the silence of women but it proves female resistance at the same time. Therefore, "the blank page contains all stories in no story" (89).

Shoshona Felman shows the women's silence not only in literary texts but also in literary criticism in her article "Woman and Madness". Through Balzac's story "Adieu," which deals with women and with madness, Felman proves that in literary texts women are represented as the silenced other whose only speech is the speech of patriarchy. Women are reflected as they are seen from the male gaze, mirrors to reflect the figures of men. "Female sexuality is thus described as an absence (of the masculine presence)" (Felman 9). In the interpretation of literary texts alike, women, as Felman points out, are always spoken for. The institution of literary criticism reflects women through the same

male gaze, pronouncing "its expert, professional discourse, without even noticing the conspicuousness of its flagrant misogyny" (Felman 12). Felman analyzes this attitude through the interpretation of Balzac's story by two male academicians. Women are excluded from the interpretation of the story in their critical writings, so they come to be silenced and silent, and they are always spoken for, spoken in the name of; and as Felman concludes "to 'speak in the name of,' to 'speak for,' could thus mean, once again, to appropriate and to silence" (9). In her reading of the text, Felman does not speak for women but she gives voice to the women in Balzac's story. Her strategy for making the silent speak is "to re-learn how to speak: to speak not only against, but outside of the specular phallogocentric structure, to establish a discourse the status of which will no longer be defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning" (20). Felman's feminist reading of the text of Balzac's story is the reinvention of a language which is liberating for the speech of the silent (women).

Dale Bauer genders Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in order to make the silent speak. In "Gender in Bakhtin's Carnival," she develops a pattern of feminist reading which she calls "feminist dialogics" by refashioning Bakhtin's theories in order to "refashion inherited social discourses into words which rearticulate intentions (here feminist ones) other than normative or disciplinary ones" (672). Bauer regards the discourse of patriarchy as the authoritative discourse that makes women silent bearers of meaning, "as signs in the margins and the 'unsaids' of the text" (677). By approaching texts with a feminist dialogics, Bauer claims to articulate the female voice. "My effort, then," she writes, "is to read the woman's voice – excluded or silenced by the dominant linguistic or narrative strategies" (673). What makes this aim different from those of Gubar and Felman is Bauer's emphasis on voice and hearing rather than male gaze and female image. She contends, "I want to propose a model of reading based on a feminist dialogics, on the translation of the gaze (of the community, of reading) into hearing dialogized voices" (673). As such, her critical reading does not give way to another monologism by privileging only the female voice. Feminist dialogics enables many voices to compete for

ascendancy to power and to be heard at the same time. In the introduction to her *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic*, she maintains that "feminist dialogics becomes a way of recognizing competing voices without making any voice normative [,] resisting and subverting the monologic speech that produces silence" (Bauer and McKinstry 6).

As is clear from the writings of the above-mentioned theorists, women are in a position analogous to silence and women writers attempt in their writings to break this silence and turn it into a subversive voice against the patriarchal authority. Bakhtin's concepts come to be of special significance in this respect. Although Bakhtin never concerns himself with gender issues and never mentions patriarchal discourse as authoritative, his ideas are appropriated by several feminist critics, and by Bauer in particular, for its ability to provide a platform for silenced feminine voices to be heard along with the monologic voice of patriarchy. Diane Price Herndl, in her article "The Dilemmas of a Feminine Dialogic," turns Bakhtin's definition of dialogism into a definition of women writers' language. When Bakhtinian concepts are read through a gendered attitude, Bakhtin's definition, "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way," (324) becomes "a woman speaking man's language, expressing her intentions, but in a refracted, masculine-definite way" (Herndl 16). Herndl's refashioning of the concept foregrounds the double-voiced discourse in women's writing. Female silence, therefore, is paradoxically a double-voiced speech in dialogic interrelation with that of patriarchal speech, and it can resist hierarchy because of its double-voicedness and its dialogism.

2.6.3 Gendering Historical Narrative: Feminist Historiography

To make the silent speak in history, feminisms attack historical discourse by foregrounding its being a constructed metanarrative which helps patriarchy to sustain male dominance. With regard to history, the political objective of feminisms is "to engage in the deformation of phallocentric history and the

reformation of histories that focus on or integrate women's experience and the issues of gender" (Friedman 235). To fulfill this objective, feminist writers very often make postmodernism and its narrative techniques their tools to fight against the grand narrative of history, thereby using the postmodern in a subversive way because postmodernism seeks to deconstruct all metanarratives including history by foregrounding their constructedness. Postmodern writing practice with its metafictional representation poses ontological questioning against patriarchal discourses, and thus feminist writers can use postmodernist narrative techniques to challenge the discourse of patriarchal history through the subversive strategies of postmodern writing such as magic realism, irony, rewriting, metafictional writing and parody. Postmodern questioning enables feminist writing to deconstruct the history of "great men" and once historical discourse is deconstructed,

> the historian finds himself with a tabula rasa on which he [or she] may inscribe whatever interpretation he [or she] likes […] By deconstructing both the 'text' of the past and the 'texts' of all previous histories, new histories can be created in accord with the race/class/gender interests of their creators – or with the political and ideological dispositions that historians conceive to be in accord with those interests. (Himmelfarb 1997: 168)

With the introduction of postmodernist thoughts, then, history, like other grand narratives, has become the target of feminist criticism which challenges the monolithic language of men and problematizes the central role that they have traditionally played in historical narratives, and this brings forth the re-examination of women's place in history. The focus has become the ways of representing in history the unheard female experience:

> After centuries of western history that has been in the strict sense his story (the narratives of "great" men), historians have gradually turned their attention to the problem of historically representing women. (Elam 66)

2.6.4 Opening History to Multivocality: *écriture féminine*

Postmodernism challenges the monology of metanarratives, like the concept of linear history, in the name of plurality and difference. *Écriture féminine* emerges as another weapon that feminisms can make use of in writing women into history and reflecting female difference and multiplicity in historical records. Since "facts" are created and sustained on behalf of patriarchy through symbolic language, Helen Cixous, Luce Iragaray and Julia Kristeva, urge for a new style of writing, which is opposed to male language, celebrating women's difference and expressing the bodily experiences of women with the aim of changing the traditional representation of women as "other".

In "The Laugh of the Medusa," which itself exemplifies what she means by *écriture feminine*, Cixous points out the need to draw an analogy between the female body and women's writing, both of which consist of the qualities of fluidity, softness, and darkness. The term *écriture feminine* simply maintains the belief that the symbolic system is not adequate with its existing form to reflect women's difference. In the article, Cixous argues that "[writing] is reserved for the great – that is for 'great men'" (310). She writes: "Writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural – hence political, typically masculine – economy […] this locus has grossly exaggerated all signs of sexual opposition (and not sexual difference), where woman has never *her* turn to speak" (311, italics in original). To Cixous, writing for woman is a return to her body, a return to her sexuality which will free her from the phallocentric order of language. Women's writing will actually give them the chance to speak. At this point, Cixous's emphasis on the discursive nature of history should be mentioned. She believes that only through *écriture féminine* can woman make herself present in history:

> To write. […] An act that will also be marked by woman's *seizing* the occasion to *speak*, hence her shattering entry into history, which has always been based *on her suppression*. To write and thus to forge for herself the antilogos of weapon. To become *at will* the taker and initiator, for her own right, in

> every symbolic system, in every political process. (312, italics in original)

In other words, the idea of *écriture féminine* is there to show that language places women within a restrictive system in which it is impossible for them to be active subjects. Like Cixous, Irigaray defines women's writing again through drawing a parallelism between woman's body and her writing. She claims that female sexuality is plural and multiple as opposed to male pleasure, which is monolithically unified in nature because of the presence of the phallus as the singular sexual organ. In terms of language, this suggests the presence of the phallus as the required signifier for meaning, which is implied by the term phallogocentrism (a term which combines logocentrism and phallocentrism). In opposition to this fixed, monologic, rational discourse of phallogocentrism, Irigaray offers female writing that transgresses any boundary and is multiple. She states:

> her language in which 'she' goes off in all directions and in which 'he' is unable to discern the coherence of any meaning. Contradictory words seem a little crazy to the logic of reason, and inaudible for him who listens with ready-made grids, a code prepared in advance. In her statements – at least when she dares to speak out –woman retouches herself constantly. (qtd. in Moi 145)

Kristeva associates woman's body with language as well. She uses Lacan's psychoanalysis to describe her concept of "the semiotic discourse," which denotes, similar to *écriture feminine*, a sensual language occurring in pre-Oedipal period before the child enters into the symbolic language of the patriarchal discourse (Cuddon 249).

In line with the search for a writing style that can acknowledge women's difference, feminist writers put even greater emphasis on parodic rewriting, fantasy and magic realism, which signifies a move from linear narrative into writing in a language closer to the female body's qualities of fluidity and which can make, in turn, different styles and different representations available in their

writing. Such narrative in the hands of feminist writers proves the subversive nature of women writers working within historiography which they can undermine by a parodic distance through rewriting the male-dominated history particularly in places where it leaves a blank. These new feminist methodologies, "her-story methodologies" (Elam 67), in historiographic tradition allow for, according to Joan Scott, "a new narrative, different periodization, and different causes" in order to reflect female experience (qtd. in Elam 67). These narration techniques in women writers' texts can be regarded as qualities which *écriture féminine* brings to female writing. As opposed to the fixed, linear narration, they privilege discontinuous structures and a mixture of genres like history and fantasy. Feminist writers, instead of foregrounding the discursive role of the narrator in the ordering of the past, by parodying the presence of an objective, reliable narrator in traditional history writing, can provide their readers with the unreliable, manipulative narrator in their texts embodied in the first person narrative point of view.

Susan Stanford Friedman emphasizes the importance of history in shaping not only our past, but also our present and future; therefore, "the narrative act of assigning meaning to the past," she states, "potentially intervenes in the present and future construction of history" (233). It is safe to say that feminist history writing attempts to shape the present and the future as well as the past, as women writers consciously blur the distinction between the past and the present in their writings, and by means of fragmented narrative they disrupt the chronological sequence. Another point that distinguishes feminist historiography is its sensitivity towards avoiding the creation of another monologic pattern similar to patriarchal narratives which have excluded women. Because there is this anxiety within the feminist movement, "feminist historiography opens up the potential for feminists to engage in constructing histories in the plural, for recognizing that no single history can encounter the full dimensionality of the Real" (Friedman 236). Accordingly, feminisms should produce feminist histories in the plural "so as to avoid the creation of

grand narratives that reproduce the totalizing histories of winners in which the stories of losers are lost" (Friedman 236).

2.7 Relations between Postcolonialism, Postmodernism, and Postcolonial Historiography

The term postcolonial is used, in its broader sense, "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft 2). Postcolonial literary theory, then, includes any text written in previously colonized societies and also rewritings of literary classics from an alternative point of view. This definition is enough to denote the postcolonial tradition of "writing back" to deflect the Eurocentric bias of literature and literary analysis. However, like feminisms, postcolonialism is also concerned with discourses that construct non-Western cultures as the West's "Other" and help to sustain the Eurocentric perspective by marginalizing them.

Both feminisms and postcolonialism acknowledge that women and the colonized are represented as others and so are silenced; and both try to fight against the methods of thinking that silence women and the colonized. Edward Said argues in his *Orientalism* (1979) that European nations produced knowledge about non-Western countries and peoples through personal observations presented as scientific truths. Although Said concerns himself mainly with the representation of Middle Eastern people, it is still argued that through representations of non-Western people in writings by Europeans, a dichotomy is created between Europe and the Orient, a dichotomy similar to the one created by patriarchy between men and women to show them in a hierarchical order. Similarly again, this hierarchical dichotomy created through European representations of the East describes the Orient in negative terms: while the Western is reflected as superior, the Oriental is its inferior. As a direct result of these representations of the Orient by the Western, the image of the non-Western emerges as a "construct" as the West's "Other," which suggests the West's superiority: "The Orient was therefore not Europe's interlocutor, but

its silent Other," states Said in "Orientalism Reconsidered" (1997: 131). This thinking system also draws attention to the political dimension of this constructed identity as other: orientalist representations function to exclude the non-Western cultures and thus justify and legitimize the propriety of Western imperialism. Therefore, the central issue that we should be aware of, according to Said, is that all representations are ideologically biased. He argues: "any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambiance of the representer" (1979: 272). This idea results in the conclusion that there is no "true" representation free of ideological bias because

> it operates as representations usually do, for a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting. In other words, representations have purposes, they are effective much of the time, they accomplish one or many tasks. Representations are formations, or […] they are deformations. (Said 1979: 273)

Edward Said's argument in *Orientalism* is partly based on Foucault's idea of discourse, the textual nature of reality, and the close relationship between knowledge and power[1]. Like Foucault, Said sees knowledge and power as closely connected with each other in that power is exercised through using knowledge discursively. Said says: "'knowledge' [is] never raw, unmediated, or simply objective" (1979: 273). Obtaining of knowledge in the colonial context is not an innocent act of knowing, and it is exploited by the colonizer as the power that leads to its sustenance. Said's *Orientalism* gave way to various sorts of postcolonial textual analyses looking for ways of subverting colonial representations and recovering the voice of the oppressed, and producing new modes of representation which can enable this recovering.

[1] Foucault describes his conception of power and its institutionalization in *Power/Knowledge* as thus: "[I]n a society as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses (93).

Helen Tiffin in her introduction to *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* defines postcolonialism in terms of two distinct but at the same time co-existing archives of texts. According to this, the first archive regards postcolonialism as writing "grounded in those societies whose subjectivity has been constituted in part by the subordinating power of European colonialism" (Tiffin and Adam vii). However, the second archive she proposes narrows down the definition, and it focuses on those texts whose aim is to subvert the colonialist ideology:

> Here [the second archive] the post-colonial is conceived of as a set of discursive practices, prominent among which is *resistance* to colonialism, colonialist ideologies, and their contemporary forms and subjectificatory legacies. The nature and function of this resistance form a central problematic of the discourse. (vii, italics in original)

Seen in this light, postcolonialism is the study of and resistance to representational, dominant discourses – "the discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy, anthropology and linguistics" (Quayson 2). The subject of postcolonial study involves the analysis of experiences of suppression and resistance, difference, and marginality as a consequence of the discursive uses of these grand narratives. Therefore, the aim of postcolonial studies is the rejection of the grand narratives of Western imperialism and furthermore "[their] replacement by a counter-narrative in which the colonial cultures fight their way back into a world history written by Europeans" (Abrams 236-7).

Postcolonial commentators highlight the central role that the criticism of colonial history should play in their attempts to decolonize Western grand narratives, and believe that postcolonialism can be thought of as an assessment of history itself. Leela Gandhi asserts that postcolonialism "is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past" (4). Postcolonial literary critics therefore draw attention to the fact that during the colonial period much of the history writing of the colonized society was usually carried out by the European and in pursuit

of his own interests; and this makes history a discourse completely Eurocentric where the colonized other is excluded. This way of thinking points out the discursive role that history plays in colonial sustenance. History is depicted as the narrative through which the colonizing power asserts its hegemony over the colonized. Gandhi continues, "colonialism, in terms of this logic, is the story of making the world historical, or, we might argue, a way of 'worlding' the world as Europe" (171).

Postcolonial historiography, therefore, in line with the feminist questioning of history as the grand narrative, is against the Western historiography which is ideologically constructed to claim authority over the colonized other. This should be seen as the postcolonial challenge to the hegemony of the Eurocentric version of colonial history (Abrams 237). Postcolonial writing attempts to fragment this monolithic account of the past, as we have seen in the efforts of feminist writers, "with the voices of all those unaccounted for 'others' who have been silenced and domesticated under the sign of Europe" (Gandhi 171).

Stephen Slemon in his article "Modernism's Last Post" privileges the subversive nature of postcolonialism. His argument posits postcolonialism as a discourse of opposition to European structures and ideologies for the purpose of liberation from these structures and ideologies hostile to the difference of the colonized. He argues the term "post-colonial"

> proves most useful not when it is used synonymously with a post-independence historical period in once-colonized nations but rather when it locates a specifically anti- or *post*-colonial *discursive* purchase in culture, one which begins in the moment that colonial power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its others and which continues as an often occulted tradition into the modern theatre of neo-colonialist international relations. (3, italics in original)

The fact that postcolonial writing and literary theory attempt to deconstruct the dominant discourses makes them intersect in several ways with

the movements of poststructuralism and postmodernism. This is usually regarded as "the appropriation of contemporary post-structuralist accounts to the field of post-colonial writing" (Ashcroft 177). There is a fruitful way of bringing postcolonialism and postmodernism together in terms of thematic and rhetorical concerns as this will prove to be reinforcing, particularly when "these are brought to bear on questions of marginality" (Quayson 133). There are considerable overlaps in the concerns of postcolonialism and postmodernism, as Hutcheon discusses; and she analyzes these overlaps in three major groups of "formal, thematic, strategic" issues. She argues:

> [F]ormal issues such as what is called 'magic realism,' thematic concerns regarding history and marginality, and discursive strategies like irony and allegory are all shared by both the post-modern and the post-colonial, even if the final uses to which each is put may differ. (1991a: 168)

Postcolonialism resists the dominant discourse in the same way as postmodern and feminist literature does. It regards grand narratives such as history as a colonial tool which imperial powers use to sustain their existence. Accordingly, both feminist and postcolonial writing undermine the validity of so-called objective truth and knowledge. Certain postmodern techniques which question the validity of a single Truth are also detectable in postcolonial writing; therefore, the reader is likely to encounter discontinuous narrative, the inclusion and parody of different writing styles, magic realism, the cut-and-paste techniques of including documentary evidence, historical events combined with fictional/fantastic characters, and an extensive use of irony in postcolonial literary texts (Green 293-294).

Some particular emphasis must be put on the use of irony and parodic intention as rhetorical devices shared by feminist writing and postcolonialism to deflect grand narratives. Irony is known to have the capacity of working from within a discourse and, at the same time, resisting it; as a result of this quality, it becomes a useful strategic tool in subversive texts like women's writings and postcolonial literatures. Its being a rhetorical device operating within makes

irony a revisionist force that can easily resist the dominant discourse and give voice to the suppressed other.

> Often combined with some sort of self-reflexivity, irony allows a text to work within the constraints of the dominant while placing those constraints *as constraints* in the foreground and thus undermining their power. (Hutcheon 1991a: 177, italics in original)

The outcome of this foregrounding is a double-voiced discourse serving the silenced other at the same time, as is also the case in parody. Parody by its nature is double-voiced, for the parodist, according to Bakhtin's theory, imitates another's language and he or she adopts it for his/her own purposes, thus this language becomes reaccentuated by the parodist, made to serve for his purposes as well. As in postmodernism, these devices are used to make the silenced other, in that case women and the colonized, speak in a subversive voice. The inherent doubleness of parody and irony makes them the most convenient tropes for women's silence and for

> the paradoxical dualities […] of post-colonial doubled identity and history. And indeed irony […] has become a powerful subversive tool in the re-thinking and re-addressing of history by both post-modern and post-colonial artists. (Hutcheon 1991a: 171)

The notion of marginalization is indeed the shared concern that brings postmodernism and postcolonialism together: postmodernist resistance to the centre by the marginalized turns out to be resistance to European narratives by the colonized "other" in postcolonialist thought (Hutcheon 1991a: 170). This feature of postmodern thought is of significance for postcolonialism because it becomes "the rhetoric of this post-colonial liberation" (Hutcheon 1991a: 170). While certain devices and techniques of writing are shared by postcolonial and postmodern writers, "the uses to which such devices are put, or seem to be put, and the direction of their political valency are very different" (Tiffin and Adam x). This is mostly because postcolonial literature emerges more as a direct

outcome of the concerns in political issues than postmodernist literature does, since the aim of postcolonial literature is politically resisting colonialist ideologies while postmodern art is mostly seen as apolitical, a playground that demonstrates how reality is a construct like the work of art itself. The subversion of grand narratives by postmodern literature, however, proves to be a political way of decolonizing the imperial discourses for the postcolonial novelist. Self-reflexive, non-linear narrative, pastiche, and above all inclusion of facts combined with fiction, like the other postmodern techniques, take a political direction in postcolonialist texts. Such "instruments of postmodern writing serve as potential decolonizing strategies which invest devalued 'peripheries' with meaning" (Tiffin and Adam x). They offer opportunities to the postcolonialist writer to undermine colonialism's signifying system and to lay bare its operation in the silencing and oppressing of the colonial other.

The objections raised by Gayatri Spivak should be dealt with at this point as they shed light on both feminist and postcolonial criticism. In her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak questions the possibility of representing the subaltern voice written off the records by conventional historical accounts. The article is a criticism of the Subaltern Studies scholars and their studies carried out to represent "the subaltern" in colonialist texts. They read documents produced by colonial authorities in order to foreground the perspectives of the oppressed subalterns. Spivak is against the representation of the subaltern (her focus is particularly on "Third World" women) in the theories of the West, and she concludes that the "subaltern cannot speak" by making use of the "First World" instruments (104). For the oppressed to speak and make their voice heard, the representational systems that make them silent must change, and critics should question the oppressing discourse itself (McLeod 194). Spivak's above mentioned objection against appropriating Western theories to represent the non-Western, and patriarchal narratives to represent women, makes it possible to realize the necessity of challenging and subverting the discourse of history writing itself; and the ontological questioning and rhetorical techniques of postmodern novels can

make this subversion possible in women's writing and postcolonial literature alike. Said's and Spivak's writings on non-Western oppression as "Other" are the clear signs of their indulgence in writing back to the West:

> Both agree that while the issue of representing the marginalized and underprivileged is a deeply problematic enterprise, it is nonetheless a necessary part of the intellectual's job. (Kennedy 133)

CHAPTER 3

JEANETTE WINTERSON'S NOVELS AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTIONS

3.1 Winterson as a Postmodern/Feminist Writer

Patricia Waugh hints at how Jeanette Winterson's fiction relates to all the theories and concepts framed above in the previous chapter when she claims that following the first, "pre-theorized phase of the sixties" and the second phase of novelists "writing as a woman," there emerges "a third phase of explicit engagement with the challenges of postmodernism […] as women writers turn self-consciously and deliberately to the parodic and the fantastic, to masquerade and monstrosity" (Waugh 2006: 192). Jeanette Winterson as a contemporary postmodern/feminist writer falls into the third phase. Winterson's novels are, indeed, written as postmodern novels posing an ontological questioning of hegemonic thought systems; and she pursues this questioning with the feminist awareness explicit in her fiction as the problematization of gender identity is at the centre of her novels.

Winterson emerges as a writer who self-consciously explores the ambiguous status of an objective reality. In this respect, the target of questioning in her novels has become the metanarratives that the patriarchal order creates to shape reality and knowledge. When combined with the overt feminism in Winterson's fiction, it is quite clear that her novels seek to deconstruct the dominant discourses through the transgression of patriarchal boundaries with the aim of subverting the authority of patriarchal society. Her novels focus on how gender and gender relations are constructed; and they try

to subvert the traditional gender roles by introducing characters whose gender identity is unknown or vague, or characters who are marginalized because of their bisexual/lesbian love or grotesque bodies.

One of the unchanging themes in Jeanette Winterson's fiction is the exclusion of the marginal other. The main characters in her novels, particularly her female characters, may stand for what deviates from the norm, and therefore they are seen as "Others" in the patriarchal context. Her protagonists as queer/grotesque bodies or lesbians/bisexuals, are marginalized others with regard to heterosexual norms assigned by the patriarchal system. They recognize that their bodies and/or lesbian/bisexual love is "not the usual thing" in their social contexts (*Passion* 94), so qualities not desired by the male society are assigned to these characters to show them as others. At the same time, however, being "misfits," Winterson's characters in *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry*, the novels under scrutiny in this chapter, are depicted as subversive individuals because they pose a threat to the patriarchal order, so they are treated with fear.

The problematization of the boundary between fact and fiction is one of the outcomes of the postmodern questioning in Winterson's fiction. Winterson constantly foregrounds the fictionality of history in her novels. She utters in a radio conversation that "People have an enormous need […] to separate history, which is fact, from storytelling, which is not fact […] and the whole push of my work has been to say, you cannot know which is which" (qtd. in Grice and Woods 1). With her particular interest in history, which she makes a recurring theme in most of her novels, and with her questioning the validity of objective historical knowledge, Winterson's fiction has become a good example for historiographic metafiction. Her novels are written against patriarchal narratives; one of these narratives is the discourse of history and the writer tries to problematize it through exploiting the techniques of postmodern historiographic metafiction such as intertextuality, parody, self-reflexivity, fragmentation, and the rewriting of history. Another characteristic of her novels that should be discussed in this context is that her novels should be read as texts

which allow female voices to be heard in history. Winterson inserts historical material in her fiction, and she turns it into a playground where she can foreground the suppressed histories in the postmodern text of her novels. In an interview, she relates:

> I wanted to use the past as an invented country. So I knew I was going to land on some moment of history and rediscover it. […] We are continually understanding our past in a different way because we are continually reinterpreting it. And fiction does that very well. But you can only do it well if you let some freedom in for your imagination. You can't do it well if you are trying to lock yourself slavishly into your notion of the past –which will not be true anyway. Or if you're making the past into the present, but in a silly wig and a different costume. (Reynolds and Noakes 18, 22)

Winterson asserts in her fiction that history is an ideologically-laden discourse serving patriarchy to exclude female consciousness. Through her novels, "Winterson reflects on the way male […] historians have created our history books – how our objective history and our perception of gender are merely collections of socially coded information and biased impressions" (Bom 74). Her claim is that in this male-dominated history writing, women are excluded in the process and their voice is suppressed. She contends: "I do think that history is a collection of found objects washed up through time, and that some of them we do hook out, and others we ignore" (Reynolds and Noakes 22). To Winterson, history is simply a series of continual reinterpretations of the past, and this makes it possible in her fiction to write feminine subjectivity into history, or rather a her-story which denies any easy definition. In the introduction to the 1992 edition of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, she says: "Women's history is not an easily traceable straight line. […] Following us is to watch for the hidden signs, to look in the gaps and be prepared for strange zig-zags". As a result, her fiction opens up new possibilities with regard to historiographic representation where the voice of the repressed or marginalized "Other" will be heard, and postmodernism which is criticized as apolitical (Wesseling 1991: 3) becomes a strictly political tool in Winterson's novels due

to the lesbian/feminist concerns that she raises in her fiction. Taking Winterson's ex-centric characters into account, it is certain that she regards history as a patriarchal, and a heterosexist discourse as well, the "hetero-patriarchal" ideology (Palmer 2005: 192). Her fiction "installs a particular lesbian narrative space at the centre of the novels and their understanding of history, sexuality and identity" (Moore 122).

3.2 *The Passion* as Historiographic Metafiction

Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* can be read as historiographic metafiction as the text unites historical material with metafictional self-reflexivity, and it parodies and rewrites history apparently with feminist concerns at stake. Through parodying the historical narrative that is mostly embodied by the pivotal male character, Henri, and mingling it with fantasy, the novel attempts to deconstruct historical discourse based on the phallocentric view: "The combination of history with fantasy aligns *The Passion* with 'historiographic metafiction,' the type of novel characterized with intense self-reflexivity and a relish in story-telling which Linda Hutcheon considers to be the best expression of the contradictory nature of the postmodernist ethos" (Onega 2006: 56). The novel's emphasis on gender issues with feminist awareness allows the text to point to the exclusion of women's experience in history and to open a space for narrating the untold histories of the marginalized.

The Passion narrates the naïve French soldier Henri's admiration and passion for Napoleon as a great hero and the years he spent during the Napoleonic wars starting with the camp at Boulogne (*Passion* 8). The setting and the theme of the novel justify Napoleon's presence and references to some episodes from the Napoleonic wars in the text of the novel. The historical material in the novel, however, is not limited to Napoleon as a historical personage and the past events of the war. While serving in the army, Henri, in order not to forget anything, decides to keep a diary, to write everything down to shed light on the history of his time, including what Napoleon said (*Passion*

30): “This diary, as a tool for redefining history, contains more than just the minor details of Henri’s life or a standard record of battles. He also writes down what Napoleon says. […] This indicates that Henri was a reporter of his time, someone who met Napoleon and listened to him” (Pressler 17). A conventionally expected account in Henri’s diary would include Napoleon’s depiction as a great hero with his military triumphs, or defeats, an objective narration of the battles he fought, and the reasons for and explanations of some important events related with the Napoleonic wars. Such a narrative would undoubtedly focus on “great men” as feminist criticism has already put forth. So Napoleon and the traditional historical accounts of the Napoleonic wars, as they would be embodied in Henri’s diary, stand for what feminist thinkers criticize as ideologically-shaped historical narrative that serves patriarchy by excluding female experience: “Napoleon personifies the masculine linear force of history-making, rationality and war, where the feminine, woman’s history, becomes charted out of sight, considered to have no place on patriarchy’s official map of world events” (Stowers 142). Henri’s diary is expected to be a small-scale model for traditional history writing composed of past events, in a chronological order, and revolving around the great figure of Napoleon as he says that “[Napoleon] was the centre of the world” (*Passion* 13), creating a singular voice as the object of history. Nevertheless, Winterson’s *The Passion* problematizes history as a discourse of patriarchy, paradoxically by means of Henri’s diary again.

3.2.1 Parodic Rewriting of the Past

Henri’s intention to keep a diary to note down what happened without blurring (*Passion* 28) brings forth the idea of objective history writing in the novel, but he cannot manage this, so the outcome is a parodic imitation of conventional historiography, which gives way to Bakhtinian refraction. It is important to note that *The Passion*’s

> ironic treatment of Napoleon and the myth of heroic national destiny which he embodies debunks the "Great men" model of history. Winterson's version of Napoleon's ill-fated invasion of Russia is told from the perspectives of historically insignificant figures, who are the victims and losers of war. (Holmes 41)

The Passion rewrites history this time from the eyes of its main characters, Henri and Villanelle, both of whom are "victims and losers" of the Napoleonic wars since Villanelle lives in Venice, which has been invaded by Napoleon's army (*Passion* 52), and Henri experiences the irrational side of the war as a soldier when he falls victim to the unquenchable passion of a ruler for victory.

Besides the references to "factual" historical events and personages, *The Passion* is also distinct with self-reflexive philosophical questioning of history itself and of the validity of the historical records that Henri keeps in his diary. When Henri reveals his intention to write about his time, "something clear and sure to set against [his] memory tricks" (*Passion* 28), his fellow-soldier Domino raises objections to the truth-value of Henri's recording, first by uttering that "The way you see it now is no more real than the way you'll see it then" (*Passion* 28), and later by questioning Henri's character as a historian:

> Look at you, […] a young man brought up by a priest and a pious mother. A young man who can't pick up a musket to shoot a rabbit. What makes you think you can see anything clearly? What gives you the right to make a notebook and shake it at me in thirty years, if we're still alive, and say you've got the truth? (*Passion* 28)

In order to defend himself, Henri claims that he is interested in his own feelings only, not in the material reality of the war: "I don't care about facts, Domino, I care about how I feel. How I feel will change, I want to remember that" (*Passion* 29). This utterance suggests that the history he is writing is far from objective history writing and far from being chronological. On another occasion, Henri refers, in a self-conscious way, to the difficulty he faces while writing his diary, the difficulty of "trying to convey to you [the reader] what

really happened. Trying not to make up too much" (*Passion* 103). These self-reflexive and ironic comments on the nature of history create a critical distance between history and Henri's imitating this discourse.

The inclusion of the process of history writing/rewriting in the novel that Henri's diary makes possible brings the self-conscious questioning of history as a metanarrative. The characters of the novel keep reminding us that history is a construct by their references to the fictionality of what they narrate with the self-reflexive phrase repeated throughout the novel, "I'm telling you stories. Trust me" (*Passion* 5, 13, 40, 69, 160). By uttering this after narrating something hard to accept as true, the characters want the reader to believe what they relate, but at the same time they make it known that it is constructed. This metafictional aspect of the novel, therefore, problematizes the validity of the historical representation in the novel and foregrounds the fictionality of history by self-reflexively playing with the artificiality of the text. The blurring of fact and fiction through this self-reflexive playing complicates the veracity of the historical accounts that the novel refers to:

> By saying that this narrator is 'telling stories' […] Winterson makes us suspect him or her as an historian, so even though the 'trust me' tries to establish reliability, we are set in an endless oscillation between faith in and distrust of the narrator. We no longer merely take what history says as the truth, but we must treat it as if it is our own memory. (Pressler 18)

These self-conscious remarks of the characters shed light on another equally significant side of Henri's narration. His narrative is distinguished by revelations of those aspects of his character that would conventionally seen as "feminine," such as his distaste for killing that Domino mentions. Henri is portrayed as a character who obviously lacks the masculine qualities that a soldier supposedly has. This issue on gender turns into an even more crucial topic in the hands of Winterson as a feminist writer, because the whole idea of identity based on gender is problematized in her novels. *The Passion* exposes how gender is a construct – through the pivotal characters in the novel – and

tries to deconstruct the binary opposition between the masculine and the feminine by reversing the characters' gender roles and identities. While Henri is attributed with feminine qualities, the main female character of the novel, Villanelle exhibits "masculine" traits.

Henri's feminized character and his belonging to the domestic sphere of the kitchen in the novel in contrast to his being a soldier, for example, shows how traditional gender roles are subverted by Winterson. The separation between public and private spheres as a sign of gendered identity is a target of feminist criticism as well as a part of Winterson's novels:

> What the women's movement and feminist theorists in the last two decades have shown is that traditional modes of drawing this distinction have been part of discourse of domination which legitimizes women's oppression and exploitation in the private realm. (Benhabib 110)

Although Henri is a soldier in Napoleon's army, Winterson prefers to depict him as a highly sensitive man whose lack of strength is emphasized. He enrolls in the army with the dream of being a drummer but he is told that he is not strong enough to become a drummer. He relates: "The recruiting officer gave me a walnut and asked if I could crack it between finger and thumb. I could not and he laughed and said a drummer must have strong hands" (*Passion* 5). Instead, he has been recruited as a neck-wringer but only of chickens. Then he becomes Napoleon's cook, which shows Henri in the domestic sphere. He also proves to be different from the rest of the army people when he is especially sensitive to the soldiers' maltreatment of women. In the brothel scene, when the soldiers dehumanize the women there, it is Henri who feels outrage and draws attention to the solidarity among women (*Passion* 15). Henri's fondness for his mother is palpable from the very beginning and it can be seen as a reason for his feminized character. His echoing cry, "I was homesick from the start. I missed my mother" (*Passion* 6), again points to the feminized aspect of Henri. These qualities of Henri are, of course, at odds with the army life, which stands for the totally masculine world.

Villanelle, in contrast, is shown in the public sphere as a woman who works in casinos and likes roaming out on the streets, or rather the canals, of Venice, and like Henri, she challenges the accepted gender constructions. She is a "masculine woman": "I walked the streets, rowed circles around Venice, woke up in the middle of the night with my covers in impossible knots and my muscles rigid. […] I ate when food was put in front of me and slept when my body was throbbing with exhaustion" (*Passion* 102). Gender boundaries are further deconstructed by Villanelle's cross-dressing, which is seen as a subversion of gender identities by leaving the character's gender in ambiguity. Villanelle wears male clothes while working in casinos as a part of her job but it is revealed that she continues dressing as a man in her private life as well: sometimes, however, "[she] took to working double shifts at the Casino, dressing as a woman in the afternoon and a young man in the evenings" (*Passion* 102). Therefore, cross-dressing – which she deliberately pursues to confuse her gender – questions the whole fixity of the binary between male and female. Villanelle transgresses the traditional gender boundaries with her unique bodily features, too. In Venice, boatmen are born with webbed feet which, as rumoured, enable them to walk on water. Villanelle's father as a Venetian boatman expectedly had this unique quality but what is unexpected and unwanted is that Villanelle as a girl is born with these masculine webbed feet: "My feet were webbed. There never was a girl whose feet were webbed in the entire history of the boatmen" (*Passion* 51). When she is born, they immediately want to "cut off the offending parts straight away" (*Passion* 52), but they are well able to stand firm against the knife; and as a result, Villanelle's queer body remains hidden in her boots and becomes a means of blurring gender identity in the novel which patriarchy defines in terms of body. In this respect, her masculine body works like her cross-dressing:

> Villanelle enters the male domain because of a genetic inheritance. The oddity of webbed feet can remain hidden for years beneath boots, but there is no mistaking the implications: the search for clear-cut distinctions where gender is concerned is futile. (Doan 148)

Moreover, her webbed feet not only challenge the binaries between male and female but also make Villanelle distinct from other women by showing her as different from the conventional notions of femininity. Standing for a masculine quality, her webbed feet are "the symbol of the phallus. In spite of her being a woman, Villanelle is also in possession of a distinctively masculine trait in the novel" (Asensio Arostegui 13). As a person who admits to have sexual affairs with both men and women and who falls passionately in love with the woman she calls the "Queen of Spades," Villanelle further challenges the accepted heterosexual definitions of masculinity and femininity by highlighting the flexibility of this binary: "[gender's] conventions may be appropriated and re-enacted in a manner subverting heterosexual dominance. Different forms of lesbian cross-dressing and male gay drag can, in fact, challenge and subvert heterosexual norms by demonstrating their instability" (Palmer 2005: 190). She emerges as a threat to the patriarchal system, but – by her bisexually taking "pleasure with both men and women" (*Passion* 59-60) and by her lesbian affair which "[we] will admit […] is not the usual thing" (*Passion* 94) – is also a threat to the heterosexist division of gender identities and roles as the extension of patriarchal oppression. Her webbed feet indicate her masculine body which must be seen as the source of her difference in her patriarchal society, which brings the feminist and lesbian concerns of the novel to the fore.

By attacking gender identity and gender roles as constructed reality by patriarchal discourses, the novel also includes women's untold stories besides the past events narrated. The stories of women become audible as Winterson's women characters subvert the image of women created in the eyes of the patriarchy, as is seen in Villanelle's crossing gender boundaries analyzed above. With regard to female silence and women being spoken for, Winterson utters: "It has been very damaging for women who have had to passively receive all kinds of stories about themselves" (Barr 31). Thus, Winterson indicates the urgency, for women, to tell their own stories rather than being told stories by men. Accordingly, her women characters, both in *The Passion* and in

Sexing the Cherry, tell their stories through deconstructing the myths about women created by patriarchal discourses. For example, gender roles are transgressed by two "mother" figures in the novel. Both Henri's and Villanelle's mothers are depicted as assertive figures in contrast to the image of women seen as passive receivers by patriarchy. Although Henri's mother, Georgette, wants to be a nun, her father tries to force her into marriage, "assur[ing] her that marriage would be more fulfilling" than being a nun (*Passion* 10), which signifies the enforcement of the compulsory marriage in the hetero-patriarchal society. Being a strong woman, and "believ[ing] in the power of the Virgin," she leaves home in order to resist this oppression (*Passion* 10). To Georgette, marriage is even worse than being punished. Henri reports: "St Paul said it is better to marry than to burn, but my mother taught me it is better to burn than to marry" (*Passion* 9). However, she eventually marries when she sees it as a social necessity; she marries Claude not because she wants marriage, but because she has no other choice: "She couldn't go home. She couldn't go to a convent so long as her father was bribing every Mother Superior […], but she couldn't go on living with this quiet man and his talkative neighbours unless he married her" (*Passion* 11). Palmer argues that "she agrees to marry only because her parents prevent her religious vocation and entering a convent" (1998: 104). However, if we consider the "convent" here in the terms in which it is depicted in *Sexing the Cherry*, it means more than fulfilling a religious vocation; in *Sexing the Cherry*, the convent is depicted as a place where solidarity among women can be found, free from masculine suppression (*Sexing* 30-31). The constructed gender binary is also dismantled when Henri relates that "When [he] left, Mother didn't cry. It was Claude who cried" (*Passion* 12), attributing the quality of crying after someone departing, an action which is expected from a woman, to his father and showing Georgette as the stronger one.

The same transgressing of gender boundaries can be observable through the depiction of Villanelle's mother. She is also the opposite of what is expected from a woman in the role of a wife in a patriarchal society, turning the

roles of mother/wife and father/husband upside down. It is Villanelle's mother who does what a man is generally expected to do: "There was once a weak and foolish man whose wife cleaned the boat and sold fish and brought up their children" (*Passion* 50). As opposed to the image of woman as the passive one in the hierarchical gender binarism, Villanelle's mother is represented as the present of the absent, to rephrase Shoshona Felman's term, "the negative of the positive" (9). This is represented in the novel with the literally absent husband, "absent in death as he was in life" (*Passion* 51). Another example that shows woman as not the passive side in the hierarchical binary is the inventor's wife, who does everything to sustain their lives while her husband is busy inventing and reinventing to make people cheer up (*Passion* 27). When the woman is dead, it becomes clear she was the one who provided the husband's life; "[i]n that sense she was his god. Like God, she was neglected" (*Passion* 28).

Henri, as Cixous does, reduces all dualities to the binary between men and women. He says: "Soldiers and women. That's how the world is. Any other role is temporary. Any other role is a gesture" (*Passion* 45). However, by underlining Henri's feminine aspects and Villanelle's masculine qualities, Winterson proves that the binary between the two is not as stable as Henri thinks. Winterson fights against the traditional image of women by creating queer/grotesque bodies that subvert the image of the sexual female body as the object of male desire and by reflecting her women characters beyond the patriarchal definition of gender roles. Therefore, she manages to "subvert the traditional representation of woman in the roles of wife, mistress and mother" (Palmer 1998: 110). In *The Passion*, both Henri and Villanelle highlight the arbitrary nature of gender through role reversal and the deconstruction of the conventions of sexual difference; and this creates difference in their narratives.

3.2.2 Feminizing History through Henri's Diary

Jeannette Winterson makes the problematization of patriarchal history writing more heightened in the novel through representing Henri as a character with

feminized aspects belonging to the private space, which must be seen, as discussed above, as a blurring of gender differences. This is also supported by Villanelle's cross-dressing and her queer bodily features. All his "feminine" qualities make Henri's narration and its focus distinct from traditional history writing. Although Henri serves in Napoleon's army for a long period of time, he can only provide the reader with Napoleon's passion for chicken but nothing in the way of conventional historical accounts. Since Henri does not follow the tradition of history writing but his diary parodies it, his focus is on Napoleon not as a great Emperor as the chapter title indicates in the part Winterson calls "the Emperor," but as a short man who pushes a whole chicken into his mouth (*Passion* 4). The very opening sentence of the novel verifies that we will find a different Napoleon from the one that we know from the history books:

> It was Napoleon who had such a passion for chicken that he kept his chefs working around the clock. What a kitchen that was, with birds in every state of undress; some still cold and slung over hooks, some turning slowly on the spit, but most in wasted piles because the Emperor was busy.
> Odd to be so governed by an appetite. (*Passion* 3)

Henri's being a male narrator whose gender role is reversed becomes an important determiner in the selection of events and the accounts he narrates, too, and this may be seen as one way of bringing the voice of the marginal in history because the focus moves from the masculine army life to the army prostitutes and experiences of individual soldiers. Thus, what we find in Henri's accounts of the war is the untold stories of soldiers and prostitutes, and the historical events interpreted from their subjective views. This is in contrast with the kind of history that makes its primary concern the triumphs and failures of Napoleon as the great national figure. After Henri returns to the camp, leaving Napoleon in Paris for the Coronation, he provides the reader with accounts of the camp life, but rather than concentrating on the war and the army, he records the prostitutes serving the army whose story would be lost if Henri were to narrate the Coronation instead. In this way, Napoleon and the patriarchal view as the centre of history are pushed out of the centre, and the untold stories of

individual subjects become significant: "History becomes 'a playground adventure' and a mine for fragments and anecdotes while central figures of the grand recite are pushed into the margins or at least seen from a marginal perspective" (Quadflieg 105). Henri depicts minute details about the army life of the prostitutes thus:

> Napoleon himself ordered *vivandiéres* to be sent to special camps. *Vivandiére* is an optimistic army word. He sent tarts who had no reason to be *vivant* about anything. Their food was often worse than ours, they had us as many hours of the day as we could stand and the pay was poor. The well-padded town tarts took pity on them and were often to be seen visiting the camps with blankets and loaves of bread. The *vivandiéres* were runaways, strays, younger daughters of too-large families, servant girls who'd got tired of giving it away to drunken masters, and fat old dames who couldn't ply their trade anywhere else. […] Unlike the town tarts, who protected themselves and charged what they liked and certainly charged individually, the *vivants* were expected to service as many men as asked them day or night. One woman I met crawling home after an officer's party said she'd lost count at thirty-nine. (*Passion* 38)

Henri declares his intention "to convey to you [the reader] what really happened" (*Passion* 103), to record events in his diary as they happened, unlike "the old men" who blurred and lied while making the past (*Passion* 28). He sometimes gives exact dates for certain important events such as the date and the number of soldiers who died in the storm during the war out of a commander's passion for victory. He writes: "July 20, 1804. Two thousand men were drowned today" (*Passion* 24). Or on another occasion, he refers to the Coronation with accuracy in terms of its date and social implications (*Passion* 34), or to the battle of Austerlitz, one of Napoleon's greatest victories destroying the coalition against the French Empire (*Passion* 79). However, there abounds more subjective information which conveys Henri's personal impressions and feelings, not objective facts. Henri is unable to focus on the material reality because he is much more concerned with his own feelings in the

face of events; as he emphasizes, he does not care about the historical past but what he wants to represent is emotions (*Passion* 29). Therefore, in *The Passion*, in bringing the past to life, the memories of characters become more important than the past events, and the real historical events are interpreted from the view of the novel's characters who are unimportant individuals when compared to great men populating history. In her introductory note to the novel, Winterson writes that "*The Passion* is not history, except in so much as our lives are history," and thus she puts the individual memory of her characters as the basis for history instead of objective documents, which challenges its objectivity but makes the ex-centric the center at the same time. The past is reinterpreted from different angles by means of the characters' subjective stories:

> Henri offers just such an alternative anti-linear paradigm, countering the notion that history is composed of exceptional individuals [male individuals like Napoleon] and the public space of predominantly male activities [like the Napoleonic wars]. He veins the novel with his traces and memories of the home ["I was homesick"], the feminine [prostitutes and the lesbian love], which has been lost. (Stowers 144)

This brings forth the inevitable role of the narrator in interpreting past events, which is seen as a threat against the objectivity of historical discourse. For Winterson, it is important how past events are interpreted by Henri as the narrator and the author of his diary. Henri calls into question his own situation as a historian, self-consciously questioning the validity of his own historical record by implying that he has made up some of the content but is "trying not to make up too much" (*Passion* 103). Besides the rare hard facts about the war he conveys, Henri admits that he, as the historian of his diary, has distorted, bent or omitted certain historical facts while narrating the events; for example, in relation to the dead soldiers drowned in the battle, or "marrying mermaids," he "embroidered and invented and even lied" when talking to the villagers (*Passion* 50). Then, he asks: "Why not? It made them happy. I didn't talk about the men who have married mermaids" (*Passion* 50).

Henri narrates his story in a retrospective manner. The notes he has taken for his diary are reinterpreted in his present time by the adult narrator Henri in an asylum, like the historian who interprets past events in the present context of his time, assigning causes and effects to make sense of the past retrospectively. This is criticized as being disruptive to the accuracy of history writing from a distance. Henri's first-hand experiences and his memories in the army are, likewise, rewritten from a distance by Henri who tries to review them from a critical perspective, an action which guarantees the existence of the interpreting narrator and the constructed nature of history.

3.2.3 Mingling of History and Fantasy

The more acute way of challenging the monologic discourse of history and opening it to multivocality is the fantastic and the magic realist narrative of the novel which is interwoven by the stories told by Henri and Villanelle as the dual narrators of *The Passion*. Although the novel seems to be unfolding neatly one narrator after the other – the first part, called "The Emperor," being told by Henri whereas the second part, "The Queen of Spades," by Villanelle, where she relates her lesbian love – still a linear narrative is not possible because Henri includes deviations and reported stories of other people embedded in his story. Moreover, in the third part, "The Zero Winter" and the final part, "The Rock," both Henri and Villanelle take part in the narration, each disrupting the linearity by reporting another story. Thus, the narrative of the novel takes a form which can be put in opposition to the linear narrative of history. The opening part of "The Zero Winter," for instance, where Henri is documenting the marching of Napoleon's army to Moscow, seems relatively realistic and it is in accordance with the reflection, on a realistic level, of the historical material it includes. However, Villanelle's story of a lesbian love relationship disrupts this, which must be seen as an attempt to include the personal stories of women in the past silenced by the hetero-patriarchal history writing, and she is able to insert the fantastic elements of the novel by turning Venice into a city of

mystery where you can easily lose, or find, your way, at the corners of which you are told your fortune, your heart can really be stolen, and boatmen have webbed feet and can walk on water:

> Miss your way, which is easy to do, and you may find yourself staring at a hundred eyes guarding a filthy palace of sacks and bones. Find your way, which is easy to do, and you may meet an old woman in a doorway. She will tell your fortune, depending on your face. This is the city of mazes. (*Passion* 49)

Therefore, the novel can be said to fight against the features of the realistic depiction with the elements of magic realism and fantasy, which serves as a threat against historical objectivity and helps to show history as a construct.

Privileging fantasy over historical referentiality and oral story telling over written record-keeping in *The Passion* is the sign of the postmodern distrust of history as a totalizing and single-layered grand narrative. In contrast to the grand narrative-style history, what Villanelle narrates, and the way she narrates it, is transgressive in nature and enables one to perceive and understand the many-layered reality of the past. Villanelle uses her fantastic tales within a text which is supposed to convey objective historical "facts," but she, in a sense, challenges the "notion" of history writing embodied in Henri's notebook as a source of truth at the same time by proposing her magic realist explanations. For readers, her storytelling becomes more trustworthy and reliable than facts themselves, leaving the distinction between what is fact and what is fiction uncertain.

The mingling of fact and fantasy in Villanelle's narrative is first provided by the mysterious story of webbed feet that the boatmen in Venice hereditarily possess. "Rumour has it that the inhabitants of this city walk on water. That, more bizarre still, their feet are webbed. Not all feet, but the feet of the boatmen whose trade is hereditary" (*Passion* 49). She makes it known that a boatman's wife, when pregnant, sails to the island where dead relatives are buried on her husband's boat at night with full moon in order to deliver her

offerings to the recently dead in her family: "a flask of wine, a lock of hair from her husband and a silver coin" (*Passion* 50). This ritual is performed to secure the webbed feet if the child is a boy. On her return, she must leave the boat covered with salt for a day and a night to avoid bad spirits. Later, Villanelle relates this element of fantasy with herself through her father who is a boatman with webbed-feet as well; yet, it is rumoured that Villanelle's being born with webbed feet comes from her mother's inability to follow the procedures of the ritual properly. When her mother learns that she is pregnant, she decides to sail to the island although she knows that she is not the wife of a boatman any longer because Villanelle's father has lately abandoned them or died. Therefore, on the island, she visits her father's grave instead of her husband's since he has no grave; and she loses the herbs she has to leave on the island and covers the boat with "so much salt that it sank" (*Passion* 51). As a result, Villanelle, despite her sex, is born with webbed feet and she is well able to walk on water like any other boatman in Venice. This unusual moment is narrated by Henri who realizes, in astonishment, that their boat is moving without anyone rowing:

> We were moving. How? I raised my head fully, my knees still drawn up, and saw Villanelle, her back towards me, a rope over her shoulder, walking on the canal and dragging our boats. Her boots lay neatly one by the other. (*Passion* 129)

Another fantastic element that should be referred to is Villanelle's stolen heart which is depicted as a separate entity and beating on its own out of Villanelle's body. When Villanelle falls in love with the Queen of Spades, who habitually visits the casino where Villanelle works, the Queen of Spades possesses her heart and it is left in the woman's house when Villanelle is sold by her husband to the army as an army prostitute. Villanelle asks Henri to help her to take her heart back by looking for it in the house of the Queen of Spades: "In that house, you will find my heart. You must break in, Henri, to get it back for me" (*Passion* 115). Yet, Henri does not believe that such a thing is possible: "you'd be dead if you had no heart. […] It was fantastic" (*Passion* 116). Nevertheless, when Henri breaks into the house, he realizes that Villanelle's

heart is really beating in a jar and she is able to live without it. In order to make Henri believe the veracity of such a thing, Villanelle has to reveal to Henri the other fantastic event in the novel. The icicle that Domino gave to Henri before he abandoned the camp in Russia is still "cold and hard as the day [Domino] plucked it from the canvas" (*Passion* 116), even in the warm climate of Venice.

For Villanelle, the realistic mode of narration is not adequate to convey female experience and the multiplicity in which she depicts the city of Venice. In Winterson's *The Passion*, fantasy is therefore used to upset the clear-cut distinction between fact and fiction and to open a space to narrate female difference. The narrative of the novel which mingles fantasy and history aims at an intentional deviation from the limits of a patriarchal world that is represented by Napoleon to the city of mazes where every boundary is denied. In her introductory notes to *The Passion*, Winterson states that the function of fantasy in the novel is not an escape from the existing reality but to create a different world where the reader can enjoy plurality. She states: "I wanted to write a separate world, not as an escape, as a mirror, a secret looking glass that would sharpen and multiply the possibilities of the actual world". Together with Henri's feminized accounts, Villanelle's fantastic narrative challenges the objectivity of the discourse of history, and within the realm of fantasy, she is able to narrate the untold story of her lesbian love and of the Venetians under Napoleon's invasion, so her fantastic Venice makes it possible "to imagine the ways that traditionally neglected historical voices could add depth and texture to flat factual accounts" (Meyer 213).

This separate, fantastic world can be found in its concrete form in the depiction of Venice as a city of fluidity which is open to difference and plurality since "in unpacking history as itself a narrative, rather than fact or truth, Winterson challenges the dominant masculine discourses within culture and uses Venice as her place of difference, of femininity" (Makinen 60). The city is put in opposition to the masculine pattern of Napoleon, which is reflected as a rational and singular realm where "straight roads follow, buildings are rationalised, street signs […] are always clearly marked" (*Passion* 112). With

its stable and singular nature, the world of Napoleon reflected in the novel can be read as a pattern of the phallocentric world which is totalizing, linear, and where the phallus is the centre. For Winterson, there is no way of reflecting female difference and her voice under such a totalizing discourse where binaries are strictly constructed, so she creates her fantastic city. Venice is depicted in accordance with the fluid-like quality of female identity. Likewise, it is reflected as a "watery city" (*Passion* 99): "There is a city surrounded by water with watery alleys that do for streets and roads and silted up back ways that only the rats can cross" (*Passion* 49). It is an ever-changing labyrinth (*Passion* 97) which refuses any strict shape and evades rationalization, "not even Bonaparte could rationalise Venice" (*Passion* 112). Being a city which stands for fluidity, Venice is without any boundary or opposing binaries, a paradigm where multiple forms and different voices may become possible.

The existence of alternating narrators in the novel makes it possible to grasp events from different perspectives and in a fragmented way, which poses the postmodernist distrust of the validity of historical knowledge. Villanelle's narrative interrupting that of Henri's makes dialogism and fragmentation possible in the novel because she brings different interpretations to the events, exposing the limits of history written only from the perspective of men. For instance, the first and the second chapters of the novel narrate nearly the same era, starting with some time before 1797 and finding an end in the new year's early days in 1805, yet two diverse stories are narrated by different characters who witness the same period of time. With regard to the fragmented reality, Henri relates:

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

The same idea is related by Villanelle when she watches her multiple, fragmented reflections on water: "On the lagoon this morning, with the past at my elbow, rowing beside me, I see the future glittering on the water. I catch sight of myself in the water and see in the distortions of my face what I might become" (*Passion* 62). Reality cannot be grasped through a single perspective, and in history it is male perspective, but we need multiple perspectives as in the copper pot to get rid of the totalizing historical discourse. Villanelle's narrative proposes multiple explanations by narrating events from her perspective, hence fracturing the past.

Villanelle's narrative also disrupts the linear flow of the historical events that Henri narrates in his diary. Although history writing requires a chronological sequence of events, Henri's narration, as we have seen, is far from being linear due to the deviations through stories about other people; but Villanelle's with a narrative composed of fantasy and magic realism disrupts it further by means of her deviation through story-within-the-story she narrates in "The Zero Winter" and she makes it fluid, without boundaries, like her watery city where "there is no such thing as straight ahead" (*Passion* 49). Therefore, *The Passion* can be said to resist the conventional linear narrative by introducing historical accounts in a non-chronological order, and such narrative discontinuity in the novel can be seen as one of the features of historiographic metafiction. Winterson's novels are marked with the subjectivity of time. When reading Winterson's texts, the novelist's interest in and her ability to approach alternatively to the concept of time are the first things that strike her readers. It is known that the writer's fiction tries to problematize and question our established understanding of time. In *The Passion*, this questioning takes place in that "Winterson unsettles the taken-for-granted distinctions between past, present and future, in this place [Venice] freed from linear temporality" (Stowers 143). Henri keeps reminding the reader that "there is only now" (*Passion* 29), an argument which shows the distinction between past and present as arbitrary and constructed.

Similarly, Villanelle points to the constructedness of the conventional division between past and present by indicating that such a division is actually impossible and that there is only the present: "The future is foretold from the past and the future is only possible because of the past. Without past and future, the present is partial. All time is eternally present" (*Passion* 62). Villanelle tries to deconstruct the linear concept of time in her narrative since it is at odds with female plurality. For her, there may be other ways of measuring time and she is aware that the traditional concept of linear time had been imported to Venice:

> In Venice, a long time ago, when we had our own calendar and stayed aloof from the world, we began the days at night. […] In those days (I cannot place them in time because time is to do with daylight), in those days when the sun went down we opened our doors and slid along the eely waters with a hooded light in our prow. All our boats were black then and left no mark on the water where they sat. (*Passion* 56)

3.3 *Sexing the Cherry* as Historiographic Metafiction

Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*, as the writer's *The Passion* does, fits into the categorization of historiographic metafiction on the grounds that in this novel, too, Winterson handles historical material within the metafictional framework of the text, combining it with the feminist issues. The historical material of the novel is mostly given through the narration of its pivotal female character, who is named "the Dog Woman" in the novel as she breeds dogs for fighting and selling (*Sexing* 11). The Dog Woman cites all the important historical events of the era she lives in, namely the years covering approximately 1630-1666, which is marked by the Fire of London. She refers to the major historical moments such as the Civil War, the execution of King Charles, the Great Fire of London and so on. This crude historical materialism emerging in the Dog Woman's narration is mingled with the fantastic stories of her adopted son Jordan, who serves as the dual narrator of the novel. The deconstruction of the historical discourse in *Sexing the Cherry* is due to this

merging of the factual with the fantastic. This is a characteristic historiographic metafiction which, as Linda Hutcheon claims, gives way to the celebrated postmodernist "paradox": "its world is both resolutely fictive and yet undeniably historical" (Hutcheon 1989: 142). *Sexing the Cherry* attempts to convey the historical reality of the seventeenth century England and includes historical events and personages as its characters but it draws attention, at the same time, to its fictionality by combining the factual with what is fantastic and fictional. The novel's overt politics in the issue of gender identity, and its constructed nature, this time more harshly intrusive than in *The Passion*, and the existence of a female narrator who not only catalogues the historical events but interprets them from her marginal position, allows a reading of the text as a means of voicing the untold histories of women as the marginalized other.

The Dog Woman lives in the seventeenth century London by the river Thames in a hut she built. Winterson creates the Dog Woman as such a detached character that she observes her time and its political events with a critical eye from the banks of the river she lives by, but at the same time, she is involved in these events with her own heroic actions or her individual comments on them. As known, the era was characterized by its political uncertainty as the Puritans and Parliamentarians revolted against the king, and put King Charles I to execution (1649). The Dog Woman depicts the execution of the king, describing its details in her narration as she witnesses this very historical moment (*Sexing* 70-71). Other minor events are also referred to by the Dog Woman, such as the mention of the closing of the theatres by the Puritans (*Sexing* 27) and their abhorrence for what is pleasurable (*Sexing* 26). Another way of including the historical material into the novel is that Winterson makes historical figures her characters in the novel, like John Tradescant, the Royal Gardener to Charles I, for whom Jordan serves as an apprentice and with whom he travels to remote places. Paulina Palmer describes the effect of blending fact and fiction in *Sexing the Cherry* as "problematizing the distinction between history and literature by blurring the difference between the two" (1998: 109). Winterson manages to blend these historical moments and figures with the

fictional in *Sexing the Cherry* also to give voice to the silenced histories of women because

> the historical events that take place in *Sexing the Cherry* are not focused from the generalist and totalitarian perspective required by world history, but rather from the subjective perspectives of two marginal narrator-characters. (Onega 2006: 76)

3.3.1 The Dog Woman's Fight Against "Great Men"

Sexing the Cherry manages to give voice to the untold histories of women through rewriting the historical events of the seventeenth century from the eyes of the Dog Woman, who can be said to hold a marginal position as a female grotesque figure and to reinterpret events from below. Winterson produces in *Sexing the Cherry* a subversive example of the grotesque female body with the portrayal of the Dog Woman as the Other. She is depicted as an exceptionally large woman with her giant-like and ugly body. The grotesque features of the Dog Woman are emphasized in different parts of the text. The Dog Woman herself points to her ugly body by asking, "How hideous am I?" (*Sexing* 24). She continues: "My nose is flat, my eyebrows are heavy. I have only a few teeth and those are a poor show, being black and broken. I had smallpox when I was a girl and the caves in my face are home enough for fleas" (*Sexing* 24). Her hugeness is compared to an elephant; she relates that she even managed to overweigh a circus elephant, thanks to her extremely heavy body (*Sexing* 24-5). With her large body, the Dog Woman is the source of fear for others. She says: "I know that people are afraid of me, either for the yapping of my dogs or because I stand taller than any of them" (*Sexing* 25). On one occasion, she lifts her lover, who cannot reach her due to her tall body, to help him kiss her, but the man faints because of the terror her appearance causes: "'What is it?' I cried. 'Is it love for me that affects you so?' 'No,' he said. 'It is terror'" (*Sexing* 36). Her hugeness, along with the fear it causes, is further emphasized when the

Dog Woman relates how her father's legs were broken by her heavy body: "When I was a child my father swung me up on to his knees to tell a story and I broke both his legs. He never touched me again" (*Sexing* 25).

In the representation of the Dog Woman, her uncleanness is also exaggerated like her huge physicality. Her smell evokes disgust in others. In order to force Thomas Johnson, who is a real historical figure inserted into the text, a merchant who displayed the first banana in London in the 1630s, and who holds an exhibition of the first banana as one of the characters in the novel, to show this rarity immediately, the Dog Woman grabs the man and pushes him into her dress as a punishment. She says, "He was soon coughing and crying because I haven't had that dress off in five years" (*Sexing* 12). Her bodily fluids are reflected in an exaggerated way as well. She sweats enough to fill a bucket: "I could scarcely step outside without sweating off me enough liquid to fill a bucket. These waterfalls took with them countless lice and other timid creatures, and being forced to put myself often under the pump I can truly say I was clean" (*Sexing* 21-2). Both in terms of her larger-than-life physical size and in terms of her exaggerated bodily qualities, the Dog Woman is viewed as the marginalized other who is the source of fear and disgust for men.

The history of "great men" pattern is challenged by the Dog Woman's subjective interpretations of the historical moments which she offers from her ex-centric position. In her version of history of the seventeenth century England, she mingles the accounts of past events with a reworking of the female body, which opposes the myth created by patriarchy about the image of women. Therefore, the grotesque body of the Dog Woman is a challenge against the representation of women as men's "other" which has been constructed by patriarchal discourses. The enormous body of the Dog Woman prevents her becoming a match for men, which serves as a subversive quality of her grotesque body in the novel. She embodies a female figure who does not fit into the image of woman created by patriarchy in terms of her sexual behavior as well. It is seen in the novel that men are unable to have a sexual relationship with her since her body is not in proportion to any man. She admits, "there's no

man who's a match for me" (*Sexing* 11). Her breasts, "whose nipples stood out like walnuts" (*Sexing* 10), are so big that she threatens men with pushing their faces into her breasts and making them suffocate (*Sexing* 12). Men's attempts to mate with her are doomed to be failures since they do not know how to deal with her enormous body. It is mentioned in the novel that her clitoris is like an orange in size and its hugeness prevents her mate: "'Madam,' he said, 'I am sorry. I beg your pardon but […] I cannot take that orange in my mouth. It will not fit. Neither can I run my tongue over it. You are too big, madam'" (*Sexing* 107).

Susana Onega claims that the Dog Woman

> challenges the definition of woman in Lacanian terms as 'absolute Other', as the mirror in which man can define himself. Unlike women under the patriarchal system, she does not need men to achieve a self-determination and therefore is not worried about failing to conform to the ideal of corporeal beauty devised by men. (1996: 304)

The Dog Woman is not the object of sexual desire for men due to her enormous body; and this grotesque quality of her physicality challenges the image of women as a constructed reality. Rather, she becomes the source of terror for men: "I am too huge for love. No one, male or female, has ever dared to approach me. They are afraid to scale mountains" (*Sexing* 34). Therefore, the Dog Woman challenges the accepted patriarchal norms of female beauty by her ugly body. "Uncontrollable, flowing, enormous, ugly, violent, tender, loving, energetic, smelly, noisy, rough, dirty, Dog Woman's body is everything that the female body is *not* supposed to be. It is an absolute escape from the image of the proper feminine body" (Haslett 42, italics in original). She fights against the patriarchal authority with the help of her grotesque body, which degrades men's power and authority. She bites off one man's penis (*Sexing* 40-41). Another, who tries to manage sexual intercourse with the Dog Woman, is swallowed by her vagina:

> He was an educated man and urged me to try and squeeze in my muscles, and so perhaps bring me closer to his prong. I took a great breath and squeezed with all my might and heard something like a rush of air through a tunnel, and when I strained up on my elbows and looked down I saw I had pulled him in, balls and everything. He was stuck. (*Sexing* 106)

Sara Martin in her article "The Power of Monstrous Women," where she analyzes grotesque female monsters in contemporary women writers, regards the Dog Woman as the "grotesque female protagonist who is presented as a triumphant woman" – as a monstrous woman who enjoys power over men (193). This is due to the fact that the grotesque quality of her body also means her departure from the conventions associated with proper feminine behavior and that her body is a reversal of the patriarchal image/myth created in terms of female body. The Dog Woman's twentieth century double explains: "I wasn't fat because I was greedy; I hardly ate at all. I was fat because I wanted to be bigger than all the things that were bigger than me. All the things that had power over me. It was a battle I intended to win" (*Sexing* 124). Therefore, both women's huge bodies should be regarded as subversive powers – to be larger than patriarchy, giving it fear and disgust.

The Dog Woman is only able to give meaning to the political events of the era as far as she can understand these; and she admits that her learning is very limited. Therefore, instead of the written accounts of past events, what we have got in *Sexing the Cherry* is how far the Dog Woman manages to come close to the facts, and she completes the blanks with her individual experience in the face of these events, which signals their constructed nature. This can be exemplified in her accounts of the Civil War. She starts narrating the war years objectively, in a realistic narrative as can be found in historical novels, but what follows is her personal judgments: "As far as I know it, and I have only a little learning, the King had been forced to call a Parliament to grant him money for his war against the kilted beasts and their savage ways" (*Sexing* 26). The historical events of the seventeenth century are reinterpreted by the Dog Woman by means of the fictional reasons she offers for these events, and what

we learn from the Dog Woman's narration is, for instance, the story of women during the war time along with the officially recorded "facts" about the Civil War. As a result, it can be said that the Dog Woman's narrative is closer to the discourse of historical fiction where a realistic account of past events is told: "The Dog Woman's narrative reflects traditional views of historical writing, such as linearity, objectivity and one singular point of view" (van Barren 19). However, along with the recorded facts, the reader is offered alternative histories of women. This can be seen in the following extract from the novel, where Winterson refers to a real historical figure, the leading Parliamentarian General Lord Fairfax (1612-71), and in what follows, she includes the experience of the women in the war:

> Black Tom Fairfax, with nothing better to do, had set up his cannon outside the window and given the order to fire. There was no window when I got there and the men had ridden away.
>
> There was a group of women gathered round the remains of the glass which coloured the floor brighter than any carpet of flowers in a parterre. They were women who had cleaned the window […] They loved the window. Without speaking, and in common purpose, the women began to gather the pieces of the window in their baskets. […] They gathered every piece, and they told me, with hands that bled, that they would rebuild the window in a secret place. (*Sexing* 63-4)

Another alternative the Dog Woman offers to the known version of past events is her revenge on the Puritans because of the king's public execution. The novel takes the execution of King Charles I as one of its themes and the narration of this past event includes historical characters like Scroggs and Firebrace as the supporters of the revolution. As an alternative to the officially accepted facts, the Dog Woman narrates how she punishes these two Puritans, taking the king's revenge. In her fight against the Puritans, the Dog Woman starts working together with a group of whores who decide to murder Puritans who visit the brothel they work in. When the corpses of the Puritans they

murdered disturb them, they ask for the Dog Woman's help, and while helping them, the Dog Woman learns that Scroggs and Firebrace are among the regular visitors of the brothel. On their next visit, the Dog Woman kills them, making them pay for their treachery by beheading both (*Sexing* 87-88). Thus, instead of focusing on the historical facts and the turmoil the execution produces, the reader is informed about the whores and their individual fight against the Puritans.

Offering fictional causes and reasons for the well-known historical "facts" is another way of mingling fact and fiction in *Sexing the Cherry*, and hence questioning the distinction between history and story and presenting historical reality as constructed. The Dog Woman observes that London has turned into a city of corruption due to the treachery against the king, and thus she believes that the plague, which caused many deaths in London during the 1640s, is a divine punishment: "God's judgment on the murder of the King has befallen us. London is consumed by the Plague. The city is thick with the dead. There are bodies in every house and in a street south of here the only bodies are dead ones" (*Sexing* 138). Similarly, for the Great Fire of London, she again produces her own reasons and her explanation is given along with the accounts of this event that occurred in 1666. She thinks that only a fire can cleanse the corrupted London. She hints at her involvement in this historical moment through her action:

> 'This city should be burned down,' I whispered to myself.
> 'It should burn and burn until there is nothing left but the cooling wind.' […]
> On September the second, in the year of Our Lord, sixteen hundred and sixty-six, a fire broke out in a baker's yard in Pudding Lane. The flames were as high as a man, and quickly spread to the next house and the next. […] I did not start the fire – how could I, having resolved to lead a blameless life? – but I did not stop it. Indeed the act of pouring a vat of oil on to the flames may well have been said to encourage it. But it was a sign, a sign that our great sin would finally be burned away. I could not have hindered the work of God. (*Sexing* 141-143)

The Dog Woman's female and marginal position has been challenged since she is seen as the supporter of the king; thus, the novel's giving voice to the histories of the ex-centric is debated (Pearce 178-179). It has been discussed that the parodic reworking of female body by means of the Dog Woman's grotesque body helps to gender the official history. Lynne Pearce, however, objects to this by claiming that "in *Sexing the Cherry* the (female) body does not effect its degradation in the spirit of the carnivalesque revolution; instead of overthrow of law and order, it is associated with the preservation of the constitutional status quo" (178). She comes to such a conclusion on the grounds that the Dog Woman is on the side of the Royalists and "her body (together with her nurturance/deconstruction of other bodies) is inscribed not with the sign of revolution but of counter revolution" (179). Pearce, nevertheless, has to accept the fact that "[the Dog Woman's] narration of the years 1630-66 causes them to be 'coloured' female" (179).

Although it may be disturbing to see the Dog Woman fighting against a so-called more liberal way of governing like the one Cromwell desired to bring to seventeenth century England and fighting for "the preservation of the constitutional status quo" as Pearce argues (178), the Dog Woman's fight is still against the dominant patriarchy, whether she fights for the king or would be fighting for the Puritans. Lucie Armitt claims that "Dogwoman, though purportedly fighting for the King, actually fights for herself, and for those readers sympathetic to her she seems to be fighting for us too, bearing in mind that the enemy is patriarchy, in either guise" (20). What should be taken into consideration at this point is that the period of the Puritan rule should be regarded as a historical era in which the masculine authority was felt oppressively by women, giving no chance to the expression of female experience during a time of political upheaval and civil war. In both of Winterson's novels discussed in this study, it can be said that the historical eras are chosen with care, because they were the periods when great male figures, like Napoleon in *The Passion* or Cromwell in *Sexing the Cherry*, populated the world history. Thus, it is not wrong to claim that the Dog Woman is fighting

against the history of "great men" as we have seen in Villanelle's narrative in *The Passion*.

3.3.2 Jordan's Alternative Stories: Mingling of History and Fantasy

The presence of the fantastic stories that take place in Jordan's narration in *Sexing the Cherry* emerges as a way of challenging the monologic discourse of history. *Sexing the Cherry* has the Dog Woman and Jordan as the narrators of the novel, and in contrast to those in *The Passion*, the narrators in *Sexing the Cherry* are separated from each other more clearly by means of different fruit symbols used for each narrator to indicate their narrations. The fantastic narrative of Jordan interrupts the so-called realistic mode of narration seen in the parts where the Dog Woman as the narrator gives a picture of the past events objectively. Therefore, Jordan's fantastic tales make it possible to narrate the story of the lesbian love affairs of the Twelve Dancing Princesses side by side with the political events of seventeenth century England. The fantastic stories and fairy tales in Jordan's narration are in direct opposition to the realistic narration of historiography and/or historical novel, which is mostly imitated, as we have seen, in the Dog Woman's chronological narration of the past events, and they open it to multivocality through creating alternative accounts and stories besides the already accepted "facts".

Jordan, as the apprentice of John Tradescant, travels to distant places to bring rarities to his country; however, Jordan states that the journeys he relates are not the journeys that he really takes with Tradescant. He rather narrates the untold stories of the journeys that he might have made, not the actual ones. Stated early in the novel, Jordan determines the focus of the novel for the reader in the words quoted below: the novel puts emphasis on alternative journeys and alternative histories:

> Every journey conceals another journey within its lines: the path not taken and the forgotten angle. These are journeys I wish to record. Not the ones I made, but the ones I might have

> made, or perhaps did make in some other place or time. I could tell you the truth as you will find it in diaries and maps and log-books. I could faithfully describe all that I saw and heard and give you a travel book. You could follow it then, tracing those travels with your finger, putting red flags where I went. (*Sexing* 9-10)

Therefore, the stories that Jordan tells are not the objective "historical" accounts of the journeys that he undertook with the real historical figure John Tradescant, something that is expected in a historical novel. The log-book that Tradescant must be keeping is not the focus of the novel. However, privileging storytelling over historical referentiality, Jordon tells the reader the story of his own fantastic travels to fairy lands, which can be read as his inner travels in search for his true self. Jordan reflects on this quality of his story:

> I've kept the log book for the ship. Meticulously. And I've kept a book of my own, and for every journey we have made together I've written down my own journey and drawn my own map. I can't show this to the others, but I believe it to be a faithful account of what happened, at least, of what happened to me. (*Sexing* 102)

Besides, Jordan's narrative is continually disrupted by fairytales that he integrates into his narration, like the story of Twelve Dancing Princesses and the story of Orion and Artemis. When this quality of his narrative is taken into consideration, it can be put in opposition to the realistic narrative of objective historical facts; and the novel, like *The Passion*, turns into a battlefield where a fight against the single-layered depiction of historiography and historical objectivity is carried out with the elements of magic realism, fantasy and fairytales, which leaves the distinction between fact and fiction uncertain and helps to show history as a construct once more.

Gender boundaries and old-established images constructed about women, that is, "phallocentric definitions of femininity" (Palmer 1998: 110), are overthrown in these fantastic stories integrated into Jordan's narrative. Besides the Dog Woman's depiction of the history of England in the

seventeenth century, told from a marginal perspective as it is experienced by individuals, Jordan's stories about the women who are against the patriarchal norms concerning gender identity are a means of inserting the untold stories of women and opening a space to narrate female difference. The fairy tales that Jordan reports subvert the myths created about women by heterosexist discourses and transgress gender boundaries; so they offer "counter images" (Palmer 1998: 110) for women and alternative ways of conceptualizing gender identity as opposed to the one defined by heterosexual thinking, giving voice to the silenced women.

In *Sexing the Cherry*, the mingling of fact and fantasy is seen, for instance, through Jordan's narration of the story of the fantastic places he travels to in search to find a dancer he saw once, Fortunata, who turns out to be the youngest of the Twelve Dancing Princesses. Among these fantastic places are the city of words, where "the words resist erasure," floating endlessly in the air (*Sexing* 17), bottomless houses in which "you will see, not floors, but bottomless pits" (*Sexing* 20), a city where its inhabitants replace their houses every night and also where Jordan meets the Twelve Dancing Princesses (*Sexing* 42), and the city of love, where to love is forbidden as "the entire population had been wiped out by love three times in a row" (*Sexing* 75).

In the city of words, Jordan finds the opportunity to explore the world of women by getting rid of the burden of his gender through dressing as a woman. Jordan's cross-dressing resembles that of Villanelle's in *The Passion* and deflects gender binarism as a socially constructed thing. Jordan utters: "I have met a number of people who, anxious to be free of the burdens of their gender, have dressed themselves men as women and women as men" (*Sexing* 31). Thus, when it becomes a burden that hinders him from being admitted to the place where prostitutes are kept by a rich gentleman, Jordan wears women's clothes and is accepted in female guise to the community of the whores in search for Fortunata (*Sexing* 30). He learns that these women can abandon the place if they feel like it through the stream of water running under the floor and leading to a convent, and that they can escape through the passage with the help of the

nuns and can take refuge in the convent; the nuns, on the other hand, can work for some time in the gentleman's brothel to raise money like other women in the city. Through the depiction of the lives of the prostitutes, Winterson plays with two old-established images of women in the patriarchal world: whores and nuns. Inserting the women's secret stories that Jordan reports means rewriting the silenced female experience into the historical narrative of the novel, and Winterson manages to deflect the image of women, either as nuns or whores, by showing the nuns and whores in an unexceptionally strong solidarity, in a lesbian love relationship, and without a defining boundary between the two. Therefore, the writer manages to disrupt the traditional representations of women by the masculine view in the roles of whores and nuns.

The story of the Twelve Dancing Princesses, however, is the most radical way of reversing, along with the angelic image of fairy tale princesses, the female image in the role of a "wife" which is sustained through compulsory heterosexual marriage and the transgressing of gender boundaries imposed by hetero-patriarchal discourses. The Twelve Dancing Princesses tell Jordan that their father kept them locked in a room and relate how they, flying through the window, fled their room without anybody's notice but turned back with worn dresses and slippers (*Sexing* 48). Their father, when suspicious of this situation, promised to get anyone who found out the secret of his daughters to marry any one of them (*Sexing* 99). A cunning prince, who pretended to have taken the sleeping draught the princesses gave him, caught them flying through the window, and the twelve princesses were forced to marry him and his eleven brothers. As opposed to the traditional discourse of fairy tales, the princesses in Winterson's text do not live happily with their husbands, which runs contrary to the expectations the traditional fairy tale creates: "He [the prince] had eleven brothers and we were all given in marriage, one to each brother, and as it says lived happily ever after. We did, but not with our husbands" (*Sexing* 48).

Each princess narrates one after the other, except the absent Fortunata, how they escaped from their husbands, or even killed them, and experienced happiness by means of their lesbian love. By rewriting the fairy tale from a

feminist perspective, Winterson uses it as a subversive tool to indicate that heterosexual marriage is not the only way to reach happiness, for Winterson's women characters at least. Heterosexual marriage, in Winterson's work, is what women are forced to accept and lesbian love is offered as alternative to heterosexual marriage by the writer. Winterson's rewriting the fairy tale from a feminist perspective further indicates that the female image in the role of a loyal wife is a construct. Grice and Woods write:

> Winterson exhibits the concern to use – and abuse – representations of women inherited from older and other narrative modes like mythology, folklore and fairy tale. This is analogous to Gilbert and Gubar's discussion of women writers' concern with the revision of images of women in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. (6-7)

The princesses' alternative stories are their revolt against the limiting borders that enforce heterosexual marriage as the only alternative; they become the stories of female suppression sustained by the phallocentric system that women have experienced in history. That is why the only happy marriage is the one between two women, not between woman and man. One of the princesses points out that, unlike the other sisters, she lived happily ever after with her "husband" as her husband turned out to be a woman, although her happiness did not last long because of the threat of the patriarchal world which is seen as against differences: "The man I had married was a woman. They came to burn her. I killed her with a single blow to the head before they reached the gates" (*Sexing* 54). As an alternative to heterosexual marriage, crossing the boundaries is celebrated in both of these novels by Winterson by means of lesbian love. Women are liberated from the limits of hetero-patriarchal world in Winterson's fiction through their lesbian relationships.

Grafting as a metaphor recurring in the novel is also used, in addition to Jordan's cross-dressing, to challenge gender boundaries and to imply alternative ways to express gender identity. The gender boundaries are transgressed in the text with the help of the grafting metaphor in that the grafting of the cherry, as

Jordan describes it, suggests a third, strong hybrid species which is sexed female (*Sexing* 79); and when read by Winterson, it implies the existence of other sexual identities beyond heterosexual binaries, opening a space for lesbian identity. Jordan defines this process as:

> Grafting is the means whereby a plant, perhaps tender or uncertain, is fused into a hardier member of its strain, and so the two take advantage of each other and produce a third kind, without seed or parent. In this way fruits have been made resistant to disease and certain plants have learned to grow where previously they could not. (*Sexing* 78)

Rewriting the female image in *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson shows the reader her new heroes, her women characters who not only attempt heroic actions but help to define this new female hero. Jordan's definition of a hero is a conventional type, meeting the requirements of a masculine hero in a patriarchal world as a brave and admired man. He utters:

> When Tradescant asked me to go with him as an explorer I thought I might be a hero after all, and bring back something that mattered […] I want to be brave and admired and have a beautiful wife and a fine house. I want to be a hero and wave goodbye to my wife and children. (*Sexing* 100-1)

According to Jordan's description, Tradescant is an ideal hero who is admired for what he does. He is the man who brought the first banana and pineapple to England after long journeys, perhaps to very remote exotic places; and he is rewarded by the king for this: "For Tradescant being a hero comes naturally. His father was a hero before him. The journeys he makes can be tracked on any map and he knows what he's looking for. He wants to bring back rarities and he does" (*Sexing* 101). Jordan's view about being a hero enhances the dichotomy created between men and women, which shows men in outer spaces and women waiting for them: "the heroes and the home-makers, the great division that made life possible" (*Sexing* 131). However, Nicholas Jordan's description of a hero at the end of the novel makes a difference in this. He says: "Heroes give up what's comfortable in order to protect what they believe in or to live

dangerously for the common good" (*Sexing* 138). Pearce sees this as "a new order of heroism: a heroism defined in terms other than conventional masculinity. What does this 'new heroism' look like is embodied in the ecological campaigning of the young woman chemist at the end of the novel" (179). According to this definition, both of these women characters should be regarded as "heroes," not only the ecologist girl, because the same heroism describes the actions of the Dog Woman as well. She gives up what's comfortable to fight for what she believes in, "car[ing] nothing for how she looks, only for what she does" (*Sexing* 101), and lives dangerously for the common good, slaughtering Scroggs and Firebrace for the good of the prostitutes who are the victims of the hypocrisy of men. *Sexing the Cherry*, therefore, rather than recording the history of heroes, writes the silenced histories of home-makers who are denied the role of the traditional masculine "hero".

3.3.3 Anti-Linear Time and Un-chronological Historiography

In *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson gives a list of lies whereby she contradicts our general beliefs. Among these lies, number 2 disclaims the fact that "Time is a straight line" (*Sexing* 83). Angela Marie Smith claims that "*Sexing the Cherry* makes overt its attack on 'historicism,' questioning the truth and the authority of dominant historiography in a list that enumerates 'LIES' of normative historiography" (30). As it is with *The Passion*, the writer's *Sexing the Cherry* not only depicts the major historical events that took place in the seventeenth century, but it is marked with its philosophical reflections on time, and particularly on the concept of time as a linear temporality and on the nature of historiography that depends on such a conceptualization of time. This philosophical questioning emerges mostly in Jordan's narrative, but it is hinted at early in the text with Winterson's epigraph concerning the language of Hopi Indians. In the epigraph, Winterson states that Hopi Indians have no tenses to distinguish between past, present and future and she asks, "What does this say

about time?" It indicates openly that our established concept of time as linear temporality neatly divided into time zones as past, present and future is a constructed reality and it signals the possibility of other alternative ways to approach time and history. In this epigraph in *Sexing the Cherry*, therefore, the traditional perception of time is put into question, and a time subjective and relative is experienced by the characters in the novel, particularly by Jordan through his journeys. Describing his journeys, Jordan states: "Time has no meaning, space and place have no meaning, on this journey. All times can be inhabited, all places visited. […] The journey is not linear, it is always back and forth, denying the calendar" (*Sexing* 80).

Winterson's concept of time as it is depicted in the novel has the effect of writing against our own criteria of time as a straight-line progressing forward. Seeing past, present and future intermingled with each other, "denying the calendar" as Jordan argues above, makes it possible to grasp past and present simultaneously. Jordan's philosophical reflections on this indicate that

> Thinking about time is like turning the globe round and round, recognizing that all journeys exist simultaneously, that to be in one place is not to deny the existence of another, even though that other place cannot be felt or seen, our usual criteria for belief. (*Sexing* 89)

Viewing time in such a way as to accept the simultaneity between past and present makes it possible for Winterson to reflect the novel's characters from different periods of time existing side by side. It can be said that the same conceptualization of time is further elaborated by Winterson through the narrative structure of the novel. Winterson complicates the novel's narrative structure through adding two other, twentieth century narrators/characters in the last part of the novel where a time lap of three centuries occurs. In addition to the Dog Woman and Jordan as the narrators of the novel, there emerge these two other narrators, a male character, Nicholas Jordan and an unnamed ecologist girl. What makes the situation complex is that Nicholas Jordan and the ecologist girl are regarded as Jordan's and the Dog Woman's alter egos,

showing close resemblances to them. For example, the ecologist thinks of herself as a huge woman like the Dog Woman:

> I had an *alter ego* who was huge and powerful, a woman whose only morality was her own and whose loyalties were fierce and few. She was my patron saint, the one I called on when I felt myself dwindling away through cracks in the floor or slowly fading in the street. Whenever I called on her I felt my muscles swell and laughter fill up my throat. (*Sexing* 123, italics in original)

Winterson, by means of creating the twentieth century characters as the doubles of the seventeenth century characters, hints at the possibility of "leaving us free to ignore the boundaries of here and now and pass like lightning along the coil of pure time" (*Sexing* 89-90). Makinen argues that

> the sense of time within the novel challenges traditional notions of linearity and of distinctions between past, present and future, to argue for a simultaneity of different presents so that Jordan and the Dog Woman exist in the 17th century and simultaneously in the 20th. (106)

Experiencing time in a relative way affects the characters' relationship with history. History cannot be told in linear, chronological narratives in Winterson's novels; and in the author's *Sexing the Cherry*, as in *The Passion*, an anti-linear view of time is reflected in the way history is represented through the novel's narrative, past and present merging into each other. The best example of this is that the Dog Woman's helping the Fire of London is narrated side by side with a parallel event taking place in the twentieth century, namely, the ecologist woman's wishful thinking to burn the factory which pollutes the river (*Sexing* 142). Therefore, the narration of similar events taking place at different times concurrently by the characters living in different time zones helps to blur the boundaries between past and present. The conception of time as "fluid" is reflected in the novel as it is in *The Passion*. Time is not a flowing water/river in Winterson's fiction because the writer treasures "an imaginative

impulse cutting through the dictates of daily time, and leaving us free to ignore the boundaries" (*Sexing* 89-90); its fluid-like characteristics denote its borderless nature and it disrupts the chronological order in the text. Such narrative discontinuity in both of Winterson's novels is a characteristic feature of historiographic metafictions, as Pykett asserts:

> The problems of mapping and measuring space and time are of course particular instances of the postmodernist problematization of knowledge and representations. How we know the present, how we know the past, and how we represent both or either are questions raised in and by Winterson's novels. (55)

3.4 Historiography through Women's Writing

In the writer's *Sexing the Cherry*, Jordan learns that women have a unique language of their own, a different language from the one that men use, when he starts living among prostitutes in the city of words. He says: "I noticed that women have a private language. A language not dependent on *the constructions of men* but structured by signs and expressions, and that uses ordinary words as code-words *meaning something other*" (*Sexing* 31, emphasis added). Although he states that he is denied this private language because of being "regarded with suspicion" as a man (*Sexing* 31), he realizes its importance for women both in terms of solidarity among them and of liberating themselves from the oppressive patriarchal world in which they live. Silvia Antosa argues,

> What Jordan understands is that he needs to free himself from all the limits that language and patriarchal language in particular, imposes on his perception of himself and external reality. It becomes necessary for him to discover feminine language, an hidden realm which he is eager to explore in order to 'rewrite' pre-existing patriarchal discourses within a 'feminist' mythology. (84)

The departure from the limits of a patriarchal world is also a determiner of the language used in Jeanette Winterson's novels, "meaning something other" (*Sexing* 31). The discourse that Winterson creates through Villanelle's narrative, for instance, can be regarded as a feminine discourse due to Villanelle's gendered position, and it may exemplify the feminine writing technique of *écriture féminine* with its subversive qualities. The same subversive features are detectable in the Dog Woman's use of language to grasp female difference in writing in *Sexing the Cherry*. Cath Stowers argues that Winterson's female narrators are distinct in terms of their unconventional language use, due to their marginal subject positions, and she claims that because of this, their narrative turns into a "'counter-narrative' and as such, a form of *l'écriture féminine*, a specifically feminist discourse" (141). The most obvious form of this challenging discourse of Winterson's female characters can be observed through the distinct use of metaphors that they foreground in different parts of their narrative. Winterson's use of metaphors and clichés in their literal meanings, which is defined by Helena Grice and Tim Woods as "literalisation of metaphors" (7), like Villanelle's losing her heart literally in *The Passion* (*Passion* 109) or the dancers' literal lightness that enables them to float easily in the air in *Sexing the Cherry* (*Sexing* 97), is a topic discussed by many critics (Sönmez 100), and examples are given particularly from her *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry*. There is another way of interpreting the device, which is, as a threat against the symbolic system and an attempt to realize *écriture féminine* because the novelist, by means of her literalization of metaphors, can be said to come up with a form of language, not dependent on "the constructions of men" (*Sexing* 31), working in ways different from that of the symbolic language and highlighting its constructedness.

Grice and Woods see literalization of metaphors as a way of weakening the transparency of language (7), focusing on the power of this technique to destabilize gendered identity, as they claim "the literalisation of linguistic metaphors works to undo gender roles" by playing with the symbolic order of language (9). Margaret J-M. Sönmez sees the literalization of metaphors as a

"characteristic of play with words" frequently adopted in Winterson's work (100). This quality of the language of Winterson's fiction is singled out by critics, as argued by Sönmez in "Voices from Nowhere," in which she briefly defines literalization in Winterson's fiction as "a recurrent tendency to turn back on a recently used metaphor, and bring it to literal life, or to 'literalize' a well-known metaphor without using it in its familiar sense at all" (100).

Regina Barreca, in her article "Metaphor-Into-Narrative," further elaborates on this unique way that metaphors are used by women writers in general. She states that women writers take a metaphor and "reliteralize" it in their writings, a pattern which she calls "metaphor-into-narrative" (243). The examples Barreca discusses show that women writers rewrite metaphors in their works, so it is likely to meet in these texts, for instance, a character who literally finds a needle in a haystack or a character who actually dies of boredom. A woman writer who makes use of literalization of metaphors, Barreca indicates, "dislodges them from their intended context," which creates the parodic incongruity between the conflicting contexts (249). The exploitation of the strategy of the literalization of metaphors and clichés is a way of parodying the convention which conditions the reader to perceive them on a figurative level; and, for women writers, using metaphors not figuratively but literally in their writings is particularly destructive in nature, for the strategy of metaphor-into-narrative encodes the very system reality is constructed with as it foregrounds the device from which the symbolic language is formed. Women's refusal to accept the symbolic meaning is their refusal to accept the authoritative voice, "the language of father" (Barreca 253). This rhetorical device plays with language, and as Barreca indicates in her article, "to play with language […] seems to play with the authority of the symbolic/masculine view" (254). In Winterson's fiction; therefore, the literalization of metaphors is used as a rhetorical device that questions the values behind the hetero-patriarchal view and makes the marginalized voice of "the other" clearly audible, for the literalization of metaphors in her fiction works to undo the singular discourse of patriarchal history.

In *The Passion*, Villanelle fights against the symbolic system of language used in the reflection of historical knowledge by means of her narration which problematizes this singular order of language. In this way, she is able to challenge the language of patriarchy with her new form of language that will value the female experience and multiplicity in historical records. For instance, by means of the aforementioned device of literalization of metaphors, Villanelle's language differs from symbolic language. The literalization of metaphors is one part of Winterson's fantastic narration in the novel, as the device creates suspense between believing and not believing. For instance, when Villanelle requires Henri to rescue her heart from the Queen of Spades who has stolen it, Henri is sure that she is "talking figuratively" (*Passion* 115). However, as mentioned, Villanelle assures him that she has really lost her heart and he should help her in "the re-possession of her heart" (*Passion* 109). Still hesitating, Henri accepts this and when he breaks in, he really finds Villanelle's heart kept in a jar. So together with Henri, the reader learns that the Queen of Spades has literally stolen her heart. For Henri to believe such a thing it is necessary that Villanelle should swallow it again:

> I heard her uncork the jar and a sound like gas escaping. Then she began to make terrible swallowing and choking noises and only my fear kept me sitting at the other end of the boat, perhaps hearing her die.
> There was quiet. She touched my back and when I turned round took my hand again and placed it on her breast.
> Her heart was beating.
> *Not possible.*
> I tell you her heart was beating. (*Passion* 120-121, italics in original)

To give another example to the literalization of metaphors in the novel, Venice is literally a living city as the streets may change places overnight due to the watery quality of the city: "The city I [Villanelle] come from is a changeable city. It is not always the same size. Streets appear and disappear overnight, new waterways force themselves over dry land. There are days when you cannot walk from one and to the other" (*Passion* 97). Similarly, when

Villanelle desperately falls in love with the Queen of Spades, love literally makes her walk on water:

> I took off my boots slowly, pulling the laces loose and easing them free. Enfolded between each toe were my own moons. Pale and opaque. Unused. I had often played with them but I never thought they might be real. […] Could I walk on that water? […] I tried balancing my foot on the surface and it dropped beneath into the cold nothingness. Could a woman love a woman more than a night? I stepped out and in the morning they say a beggar was running round the Rialto talking about a young man who'd walked across the canal like it was solid. (*Passion* 69)

It can be seen that the same device of using metaphors in their literal meanings becomes a way of playing with language and with its symbolic order in *Sexing the Cherry* as well. In one of the fantastic cities Jordan visits, he mentions people dying of love literally, for whom "Everyday new graves were dug in the hillside" (*Sexing* 76). *Sexing the Cherry*, however, offers striking examples to literalization of symbolic language in the narrative of the Dog Woman. Depicted as a grotesque, a misfit in the phallocentric order, the Dog Woman, too, produces examples of a language which does not fit into the metaphoric order of symbolic language. She is unable to understand language figuratively; and when she takes what is said to her literally, this gives way to comic scenes but at the same time subversive moments in the novel. Therefore, besides the metaphors that are used in their literal meanings that we see in Villanelle's narrative in *The Passion*, the Dog Woman's interpreting language with its literal meaning only can be said to serve the same purpose of fighting against the language of patriarchy.

After the king's execution, the Dog Woman gathers with other Royalists in a meeting house to listen to the words of a preacher. Interpreting the Old Testament, the preacher reminds the attendees of the famous quotation from the Old Testament, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (*Sexing* 84), and calls for the king's revenge: "Then you must go in secret and quiet, and gouge out

your enemies' eyes when you see them, and deprive them of their teeth if they have them. This fulfills the Law of God" (*Sexing* 84). The Dog Woman ironically thinks that it is the ability and learning of the preacher "to interpret the Scriptures" in this way, thinking that the preacher, like she herself does, takes these words literally (*Sexing* 84). The Dog Woman, therefore, avenges the king's murder by literally pulling out the eyes and teeth of the Puritans she comes across. She relates this as:

> By the time of the full moon I had done gallantly, I thought, and went to the meeting to hear stories of injury and revenge. I was suspicious to see that no one had brought any trophy of their right-doings, and so, as an encouragement, I tipped my sack of takings over the floor. I had 119 eyeballs, one missing on account of a man who had lost one already, and over 2,000 teeth.
>
> A number of those in the room fainted immediately, and the preacher asked me to be less zealous in the next fortnight or, if I could not be, at least to leave my sack at home. (*Sexing* 85)

On another occasion, the Dog Woman bites off the penis of a man who asks her for oral sex, unfortunately uttering "as you would a delicious thing to eat" (*Sexing* 41). When the Dog Woman interprets the man's words directly, she actually bites it off and begins to chew it:

> I like to broaden my mind when I can and I did as he suggested, swallowing it [the man's penis] up entirely and biting it off with a snap.
>
> As I did so my eager fellow increased his swooning to the point of fainting away, and I, feeling both astonished by his rapture and disgusted by the leathery thing filling up my mouth, spat out what I had not eaten and gave it to one of my dogs. (*Sexing* 41)

The Dog Woman's lack of knowledge about man's body and her naïve personality can be seen as the cause of her action because she believes that man's member will grow again (*Sexing* 41); however, what is behind her taking

what is said to her literally is her inability to interpret language on a metaphorical level. This is due to her resistance to the symbolic language of men; and she redeems language from the phallocentric monology by cutting off the phallus and feeding her dogs with it. As Silvia Antosa claims, "If London stands for the Symbolic Order, Dog-Woman and Jordan live outside it, that is, outside the rule of the phallus" (92); and she draws a connection of this with the playing with language Winterson adopts in the Dog Woman's narration: "Since she [the Dog Woman] is outside the symbolic order, she is incapable of understanding the metaphoric significance of language. Her fierce action shows the ambiguities of the dead metaphors, which are dominant in the patriarchal language" (93). Therefore, it is possible to read the Dog Woman's unique use of language when attempting to convey the historical facts of her time as a play with words, a play which foregrounds the instability of meaning, and hence is a serious threat against the patriarchal system.

Using metaphors and clichés in such a way in the hands of a feminist writer like Jeanette Winterson is a subversive act that must make the reader question how language constructs reality, because by using metaphors literally in her text, what Winterson manages to do is to make language refer to itself only, not to any outside reality. That both *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* attempt historical objectivity and use, at the same time, a form of narrative that challenges the symbolic order of language is a threat against history as a metanarrative. The literalization of metaphors in Winterson's fiction frees language from the phallocentric monology and gives it a fluid-like quality. Through this way, the writer is able to write invisibly between the lines in white ink the untold histories of women, as Jordan in *Sexing the Cherry* suggests, "For the Greeks, the hidden life demanded invisible ink. They wrote an ordinary letter and in between the lines set out another letter, written in milk" (*Sexing* 10).

CHAPTER 4

SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVELS AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTIONS

4.1 Postcolonialism and Rushdie

Salman Rushdie's position as a postcolonial writer can be seen as a problematic one. This is mainly because of the fact that he is an emigrant who writes in English, which makes him an "outsider" when dealing with the problems of the East. The narrator in his *Shame* utters, "this Angrezi in which I am forced to write" (*Shame* 38), words which imply that Rushdie is aware of these criticisms against him. He proves that he is well aware of this situation when he discusses the issue in the same novel with an objective eye:

> *Outsider! Trespasser! You have no right to this subject!* ... I know: nobody ever arrested me. Nor are they ever likely to. *Poacher! Pirate! We reject your authority. We know you, with your foreign language wrapped around you like a flag: speaking about us in your forked tongue, what can you tell but lies?* (*Shame* 28, italics in original)

Nonetheless, the particular themes and techniques that Salman Rushdie employs in his novels allow him to be labeled both as a postmodern and a postcolonial writer. It is pointed out that Rushdie's "use of irony, parody, and exuberant carnivalesque imagery and language," on the one hand, "have for many critics made him a paragon of postmodernism" (Booker 2); and on the other, "his particular cultural roots and the particular subject matter of his fiction have led many critics to see him as an exemplary postcolonial writer" (Booker 2). The postmodern qualities of Rushdie's novels can be said to assert

themselves more dominantly and thus water down the postcolonial politics in his writing, at least for European readers. Rushdie informs us that his novels are regarded as realistic novels of history and politics by Eastern readers (Ball 117). Yet, his novels always make the representational systems of Western thinking their subject matter and question their objectivity. History is one of these systems that Rushdie parodies and challenges in his novels. Actually, it can be said that his novels, particularly his *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, which will be analyzed in this chapter, emerge out of the engagement in the discursive use of history that has been dominant in literary theory and criticism. The overt political issues that find place in Rushdie's novels are seen as the direct outcome of the interest in postcolonial studies in literary theory (Booker 2). Accordingly, the novelist's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* are concerned with Eastern cultural traditions and history; and this shared quality of the novels makes them in turn the objects of postcolonial literary criticism. In *Shame*, Rushdie writes: "[the East] is a part of the world to which, whether I like it or not, I am still joined, if only by elastic bands" (*Shame* 28).

History and marginality are of utmost importance as themes in postcolonial writing and it is the general tendency that an attempt to insert historical events by the postcolonial writer is to subvert these events and thus to undermine the ideology behind them. And Rushdie is no exception. He draws on a variety of postcolonial theories to create new ways of conceptualizing the past and to generate alternative forms of writing which encompass its difference from the Western way and its presentation and its pluralism. The accounts of the historical events depicted in Rushdie's novels contradict their already known official versions. By means of creating alternative explanations and accounts, Rushdie tries to subvert the historical account of the colonizer. As a result, it is indicated that postcolonial novels like Rushdie's can "write back" to the imperial center and "decolonize Britain," as Rushdie argues in his essay titled "The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance" in *The Times* (qtd. in Ashcroft 33). In this article, Rushdie uses the phrase "the Empire writes back" to signify the potential power of postcolonial narratives to question the very

bases which Western imperialism rests on. Consequently, it is suggested that "rather than playing the 'Western game of History' and attempting to write – or rewrite – a history of the subcontinent, Rushdie has decided to challenge Western history on alternative grounds" (Reder 228). This feature in Rushdie's novels is in line with Spivak's concern about the inadequacy of the Western ideas to represent the "Third World," so instead of the already existing representational systems, Rushdie offers alternative narratives. His use of English in his novels, in the same way, should be seen as the appropriation of the colonizer's tool to write back because it is known that Rushdie is able to bend English language and to give it a new, hybrid shape to serve his purpose of representing the cultural identity of India. As a result, "the inventive impurity of Rushdie's heteroglot style provides a challenge to the idea of proper English, the King's English, and therefore to British colonialism" (Gorra 195). Rushdie's use of English language in a subversive way can be likened to Winterson's literalization of metaphors on the grounds that Rushdie's Angrezi as he uses in his novels is a conscious departure from the master's tongue, from the discourse of colonialism.

4.2 The Colonial Background in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*

Salman Rushdie's fiction becomes the target of criticisms owing to the lack of postcolonial material that enables the writer to "write back" against colonial imperialism. The criticisms are pursued on the ground that the writer's novels deal with the history and/or the political life of the colonized nation in the period when the colonization is already over and mainly focus on the period after decolonization (Booker 293). *Midnight's Children*, for example, reflects the era after India gains her independence, making Partition and the political figure of Indira Gandhi and her oppressive rule its objects of satire. Likewise, *Shame* writes about the political upheavals in Pakistan after the formation of the nation as an independent country, leaving the rule of the British out of his open criticism. Many interpreters particularly attack *Midnight's Children* in terms of

the aforementioned scarcity of "anticolonial material in this story of Indian independence" (Booker 293). In order to point out this lack more clearly, *Midnight's Children* is compared to the works of Subaltern Studies historians who attempt to rewrite the colonialist accounts of India's past in their writings. In that sense,

> the fictional retelling of Indian history in *Midnight's Children* makes little or no attempt to challenge, in the mode of the Subaltern Studies historians, traditional Western histories of India by reflecting the experiences of groups traditionally ignored by those histories. (Booker 294)

Although the past events referred to in both of these novels rarely go back before Independence to the colonial period, and as previously stated, all the major historical moments and personages are those emerging after Independence, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, nevertheless, should be read as "anti-colonialist" texts because it is the author's purpose to question and decolonize the discourse of history itself imposed by the colonizing power, through parodic rewriting in both novels. Therefore, rather than reworking a colonial period with a critical eye as Subaltern Studies historians do, it can be claimed that Rushdie tries to challenge the metanarrative of history as a totalitarian representational system. Neil ten Kortenaar in his "*Midnight's Children* and the Allegory of History" points to this difference between Rushdie's rewriting and that of Subaltern Studies historians, claiming that the history Rushdie rewrites is not

> history in the sense of a past recoverable by radical historians seeking the traces and empty spaces left in the archives [reminding one of McHale's dark spaces] by classes other than the middle classes and by groups other than intellectuals. This is the project of the Subaltern Studies historians; it is not Rushdie's. […] *Midnight's Children* is a meditation on the writing of history and, in particular, of that official history that constitutes the nation. (42)

Rushdie uses the same method in both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* to call up the colonial past in the texts of the novels: he manages to convey the representation of the colonial past on metaphorical levels by means of his pivotal characters' being illegitimate children fathered by colonial people. In *Midnight's Children*, as Michael Gorra claims, "the colonial background proves inescapable" although the novel narrates the political events of postcolonial India (191). The colonial background is mainly symbolized through a character, William Methwold. He is "one such departing Englishman" from the British founders of Bombay (*Midnight's* 94). William Methwold plays a significant role in Saleem's narrative as Saleem's biological father – something which is only revealed late in the novel. Saleem discloses that the nurse ready at his birth switches the newborn babies Saleem and Shiva. The latter is the son of their neighbours Wee Willy Winky and his wife Vanita, who gives birth at exactly the same time as Saleem's mother, Amina. So the reader learns that Ahmed and Amina are not the biological parents of Saleem. Still ironically, Wee Willy Winky is not the real biological father of the baby, either. Vanita had an affair with William Methwold, who is thus implied to be the true father of her newborn child:

> In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai famously turns out not to be the child of the wealthy middle-class Muslim family, the Sinais, with German and Kashmiri origins, whose history we so painstakingly trace in the first part of the novel, but the swapped, illegitimate baby of a Hindu street singer's wife Vanita, who dies in childbirth, and the Anglo-Indian landlord, the outgoing vestige of the colonialism, William Methwold, in whose property the Sinais are tenant-squatter-inheritors. (Lee 96)

The implication that Saleem is fathered by a colonial Englishman and an illegitimate child born at the exact time of Indian independence yields to symbolic readings and directly points to the colonization of India. Similarly, Saleem's grandfather Doctor Aziz sees himself as an illegitimate child who struggles to construct an identity: "[Doctor Aziz] was, despite their presence in

his head, attempting to re-unite himself with an earlier self" (*Midnight's* 11). He is educated in Europe and he learns there that India is fathered by Europeans. Given in the early pages of the novel, the following quotation constructs the colonial background that is pervasive in the novel:

> [A]long with medicine and politics, he [Doctor Aziz] learns that India – like radium – had been 'discovered' by the Europeans […] and this was what finally separated Aadam Aziz from his friends, this belief of theirs that he was somehow the invention of their ancestors. (*Midnight's* 11)

The topic of the illegitimate son in *Shame* is similarly related with the colonial past. The hero of the novel, Omar Khayyam Shakil, learns only later like Saleem that his unknown father is, with great certainty, a departing Englishman as in *Midnight's Children*. Omar Khayyam's birth is narrated like a fairytale in which Old Shakil's three daughters, known as Chhunni, Munnee and Bunny, are told to be the mothers of Omar. After a party hosted by the sisters, whose invitations are sent to "Angrez Cantonment and to the ballroom of the dancing sahibs," and which is visited by "a uniformed and ball-gowned crowd of foreigners. The imperialists! – the grey-skinned sahibs" (*Shame* 15-16), it is rumored that one of the three sisters is pregnant, which is seen as a scandal, "poppy-shame" (*Shame* 16). It is important to note that having a baby from one member of the "colonial authorities" (*Shame* 16), is described in war terms in the novel as a sort of invasion: "For what your begums want this lock-shock now? Invasion has already occurred" (*Shame* 17). The sisters agree to remain triune, "his mothers' three-in-oneness" (*Shame* 35), and keep their secrets, leaving the real father and mother unknown for Omar: "Omar Khayyam Shakil was raised by no fewer than three mothers, with not a solitary father in sight" (*Shame* 24).

The theme of being fathered by the colonizer helps readers to draw a parallelism between Omar and Pakistan. Like Omar, the country is conceived by the departing British, an argument supported in the novel by claiming that

the name of the country was fathered in England like Aadam Aziz's India which was invented by Europeans:

> It is well known that the term 'Pakistan', an acronym, was originally thought up in England by a group of Muslim intellectuals. P for the Punjabis, A for the Afghans, K for the Kashmiris, S for the Sind and the 'tan', they say, for Baluchistan. […] So it was a word born in exile which then went East, was borne-across or trans-lated, and imposed itself on history; a returning migrant, settling down on the partitioned land, forming a palimpsest on the past. (*Shame* 87)

Therefore, the metaphor of the relation between genetic and unacknowledged father and illegitimate child encapsulates, in a sense, the lingering effects of the colonial past in both novels, invoking the illegitimate past of the nation. This invoking of the colonial past is further provided in Rushdie's work through taking over by the colonized people what the colonizer leaves behind. In *Shame*, Omar Khayyam finds out that his grandfather's library was taken from an English Colonel and kept as it was:

> [Omar Khayyam] discovered that Mr Shakil's air of great learning had been a sham, just like his supposed business acumen; because the books all bore the *ex libris* plates of a certain Colonel Arthur Greenfield, and many of their pages were uncut. It was a gentleman's library, brought *in toto* from the unknown Colonel, and it had remained unused throughout its residence in the Shakil household. (*Shame* 33)

"The symbolic takeover of the intact Englishness," as Cundy puts it (59), is clearly seen at the sale of the Methwold Estate in *Midnight's Children*. With the end of the colonial period, when the other English people set out for England, leaving their possessions behind, William Methwold sells his villas built by the British, so his estate passes on to Indian families. The style and the names of the houses are also symbolic representations of the British colonization, through which the colonial background is invoked in the novel. The estate consists of "four identical houses built in a style befitting their original residents (conquerors' houses!) […] houses which their owner, William

Methwold, had named majestically after the palaces of Europe: Versailles Villa, Buckingham Villa, Escorial Villa and Sans Souci" (*Midnight's* 94-95). Saleem's father is sold one of these villas on the condition that they do not throw anything away or change anything until the midnight of the independence date – a peculiar condition that symbolizes the lingering of colonization:

> Methwold's Estate was sold on two conditions: that the houses be bought complete with every last thing in them, that the entire contents be retained by the new owners; and that the actual transfer should not take place until midnight on August 15th. (*Midnight's* 95)

In addition, they should keep the old traditions such as cocktail parties on certain occasions, although they have bought the estate. It can be concluded that "[b]y doing so he [Methwold] Anglicizes the Indians, who find themselves adopting a cocktail hour in a Muslim-Hindu land" (Fletcher, 178).

Besides, *Midnight's Children* is still marked with the representation of the colonial past because Saleem starts narrating his life story covering the time span before his birth. First, the reader is told about his grandfather, Aadam Aziz, who returns from Europe as a physician "in the early spring of 1915" (*Midnight's* 10). Up to the time of Saleem's birth, Rushdie refers to Mian Abdullah and his optimistic activities of the time, his assassination, and the 1919 Armitsar Massacre. Among them, the massacre, for example, is reported from the period of colonization and the horrifying atmosphere of the event is conveyed:

> It is April 7th 1919, and in Armitsar the Mahatma's grand design is being distorted. […] Doctor Aziz, leather bag in hand, is out in the streets, giving help wherever possible. Trampled bodies have been left where they fell. They have fired a total of one thousand six hundred and fifty rounds into the unarmed crowds, […] killing or wounding some person. (*Midnight's* 34-36)

At this point, the difference between Rushdie's depiction of the East in his novels and that of any other European author should be pointed out. Rushdie

can be said to strengthen the stereotype representations of the East that we can see in the works of Western writers because it is easily noted that his India in *Midnight's Children* is no different than its former representations as an irrational place where mysterious things govern; however, his depiction of India as a place for magic, the unknown, and diversity differs from those in Western narratives, such as Forster's and Kipling's fiction, on the grounds that their reflecting India as a "muddle" and a "teeming multitude" comes from the fear the West feels for the unknown, thereby reflecting India as the "Other," Europe's inferior, as Said argues (1997: 131). In Rushdie's depiction, on the other hand, there is a positive attitude toward and celebration of this unknown and the diverse, and the writer parodies the earlier representations of the East as the inferior "other" by exaggerating this "teeming multitude" nature of India to show it as a place open to plurality. In his novels, he plays with the accepted representations of India as a mysterious place where rationality cannot govern. This is what Rushdie does with the fortune-teller scene in *Midnight's Children* when the fortune-teller is seen literally sitting above the ground. Saleem's mother sets out for "the back streets" of India to visit a famous fortune-teller, and finally she reaches a room where there are "monkeys dancing; mongeese leaping; snakes swaying in baskets; and on the parapet, the silhouettes of large birds, whose bodies are as hooked and cruel as their beaks: vultures," and when she enters, she meets the fortune-teller "sitting cross-legged, six inches above the ground" (*Midnight's* 84).

Rushdie knows that Eastern people will always be represented in a hostile binary and will be misrepresented by Western people. In *Shame*, this criticism is spoken out loud when it is said that they "make our leaders look like primitives, wild men, even when they have foreign educations and fancy suits. Yes, always the malcontents, that's all they care about" (*Shame* 183-184). Rushdie's parodic reworking with the West's representations of the Eastern people prove their constructedness, and his rich depiction of India, and Pakistan for that matter, to highlight the difference with a positive lens "earned him […]

a reputation as the Indian who had finally wrested the pen from the grip of Kipling and Forster" (Morrison 139).

4.3 *Midnight's Children* as Historiographic Metafiction

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* offers its central figure Saleem's "his/story" as an individual mode of history writing that depends on and elevates individual experience as opposed to conventional scientific historiography which attempts to totalize individual experience. This consists of personal historical accounts of Saleem which are mingled with magic realism and the self-reflexive, non-linear and unreliable narration of the text. An attempt as such can be regarded as making the silenced individual in the grand narrative of history speak in that the individual becomes the centre, and his voice is in conflict with that of the dominant and hence multiple/multivocal. To argue this, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* can be analyzed in terms of historiographic metafiction, in which "ex-centric" voices that are pushed to the sidelines of "official" histories are represented (Hutcheon 1991b: 95).

Midnight's Children depicts the attempts of Saleem Sinai to write his autobiography. Saleem believes that his body is literally falling apart, so he decides to tell his life story in order to give meaning to his life. He regards this as the only possible way of getting rid of the cracks in his body and in his identity as well. The novel opens with Saleem's confessing the exact time of his birth. He feels obliged to utter the fact that he was born at the exact time of the independence of India:

> I was born in the city of Bombay … once upon a time. No, that won't do, there's no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it's important to be more … On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. […] Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world. (*Midnight's* 9)

As a result of Saleem's particular position as a midnight's child born at the time India gained its independence from the colonial rule, his life story goes hand in hand with that of the nation. Saleem blends his life with the political life of his country, claiming: "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country" (*Midnight's* 9). When the novel unfolds, it is seen that the whole plot is developed according to this belief of Saleem's, and he is seen as the comic hero of the postmodern novel to whom history becomes handcuffed rather than the opposite. The repetition of this claim in the novel overemphasizes the significance of the relation of his birth to the liberation of the nation itself. Saleem makes it known that his birth was celebrated by newspapers, and even the Prime Minister, Nehru wrote a letter to celebrate his symbolic birth but ironically the reader knows that it is a formal letter with some clichés sent to every baby born at the same night with Saleem. The letter and the headings cut from newspapers were hung on the wall of his room, and it reflects the illusory and comic condition in which Saleem grows up: "You are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India," reads Nehru's letter to Saleem, "which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own" (*Midnight's* 122).

This so-called historical significance of his birth gives the opportunity to Saleem to comment on the political and historical events in the Indian past. Because Saleem is, as he claims, handcuffed to history by his accidental birth, his autobiography reflects not only his individual life story but also the entire history of postcolonial India. This is the reason for the presence of historical personages and events in the novel that are referred to along with the life story of the protagonist from his birth to adulthood; and the mingling of the real with the personal, the historical with the fictional, gives way to Saleem's "his/story" conflicting with the official history of India. All the major events in Saleem's life are made to correspond to important political events in Indian history; thereby, a parallelism is created between the life story of the protagonist and the history of the nation ironically in Saleem's imagination because this parallelism

is created through mere coincidences as Saleem says, "such historical coincidences have littered, and perhaps befouled, my family's existence in the world" (*Midnight's* 27). Among the most prominent past events are the Emergency Rule, the civil war between India and Pakistan, Partition, and Amritsar Massacre. Rushdie includes various historical figures such as Mian Abdullah, General Zulfiqar, Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, and Indira Gandhi as his characters in the novel.

4.3.1 Postcolonial Challenge to Colonialist Historiography

When Rushdie's postcolonialist concern is considered in relation to history which emerges as a theme itself in his novels, Saleem's parodying and rewriting Indian history through his autobiography in the novel can be read as a challenge to the Eurocentric historiography as a discourse; after all, "history has, in the course of the twentieth century, emerged as a crucial ground for the contestation of postcolonial cultural identities" (Booker 286). Historiography as the totalitarian Eurocentric history writing of the colonizer reduces the heterogeneity of the Indian past; consequently, in *Midnight's Children* Rushdie attempts at subverting Western scientific historiography and the hegemony that this historiography represents by offering a non-linear and personal his/story, thereby standing for Indian multiplicity in this way. M. Keith Booker asserts that the postcolonialist challenge to the colonialist historiography is carried out on the grounds that "in the colonial situation, the only true historical event is the process of colonization and its aftermath, leaving no room for the colonized world to have a history of its own independent of the history of the European bourgeoisie" (287). British domination of India means the imposition on India of Western notions of history. With this regard, the whole of the Indian nation can be regarded as constituting the victim of history as the colonized nation whose voice is silenced in the process of history writing. Accordingly, it is seen as an outcome of the interest of postcolonial novelists in historical novels to "draw upon alternative visions of historical process derived from their own

indigenous cultural traditions and historical experiences" (Booker 288). What Rushdie tries to do is to create alternatives not only to events but also to the discourse of history that narrates these events.

In *Midnight's Children*, the subversion of the so-called objective historical discourse is achieved through the intermingling of metafictional strategies and historical reality. As *Midnight's Children* is about its central figure's struggle to write his autobiography, which resembles Henri's diary writing in many ways in being personal as opposed to the objectivity of history writing, the novel is by its very nature about fiction writing itself. If one considers "the Chinese box structure" that Hutcheon puts forward in *Narcissistic Narrative* as one of the fundamental elements of metafictional novels (1980: 57), it is observable that Saleem, a fictional character himself, composes his autobiography which consists of equally fictional elements that he makes up to appropriate the past events into his version, hence acting the role of a novelist. He is the narrator in the novel but at the same time a writer of his autobiography, and throughout his narration he reminds the reader continually of the fictional nature of the story he is telling by means of his self-reflexive remarks. Above all this, Rushdie is there as the writer of the novel and "we" as the readers. This quality of the novel makes *Midnight's Children* a novel about fiction writing and draws attention to its status as an artifact, and the inclusion of historical events and personages in the novel's metafictional context implies their fictionality and problematizes them as well.

Saleem is highly self-conscious as the narrator/writer of the novel, which makes it possible for him to reflect his writing process throughout the novel. In the course of his narration, Saleem comments on his writing process, particularly on the digressive nature of his narrative and the errors he has made. These comments make explicit Saleem's consciousness of his position as a writer and of his writing process. In the following quotation, Saleem directly refers to his writing as a piece of literature, an autobiography composed of fictional elements along with what he actually lived:

> Because I am rushing ahead at breakneck speed; errors are possible, and overstatements, and jarring alterations in tone; I'm racing the cracks, but I remain conscious that errors have already been made, and that, as my decay accelerates (my writing speed is having trouble keeping up), the risk of unreliability grows […] in autobiography, as in all literature, what actually happened is less important than what the author can manage to persuade his audience to believe. (*Midnight's* 270-271)

Saleem shows his reader how he tries hard to follow the order in which he wants to narrate his story. For example, he hides from the reader the fact that it is Mary Pereira who looks after his son until the right moment for this revelation comes. Due to his comment on this, the focus is again on the process of writing rather than the product itself:

> Someone speaks anxiously, trying to force her way into my story ahead of time; but it won't work […] wait on! She nearly wormed it out of me then, but fortunately I've still got my wits about me, fever or no fever! Someone will just have to step back and remain cloaked in anonymity until it's her turn; and that won't be until the very end. (*Midnight's* 209)

Other than the comments on his ordering of the events in the narrative, Saleem comments on his choice of a title for the chapter he is writing and tries to justify it as suitable when the title and the contents of the chapter are taken together:

> I have titled this episode somewhat oddly. 'Alpha and Omega' stares back at me from the page, demanding to be explained – a curious heading for what will be my story's half-way point, […] but, unrepentantly, I have no intention of changing it, although there are many alternative titles […] But 'Alpha and Omega' it is; and 'Alpha and Omega' it remains. Because there are beginnings here, and all manners of ends; but you'll soon see what I mean. (*Midnight's* 223)

Saleem tells his life story to his future wife, Padma. She is illiterate so she has to be satisfied with the amount Saleem consents to give out; even though she serves as Saleem's listener, she is at the same time his critical

reader/listener who comments on his narrative. Other than "we" as the actual readers of the novel, the existence of a reader/listener along with the narrator/writer within the novel completes "the Chinese box structure" of the novel. According to Padma, Saleem only "does some foolish writery"; she utters, "[f]orgive, Saleem baba, but I must tell it truly" (*Midnight's* 193). The presence of Padma as his listener gives Saleem opportunities to make humorous commentary on his own writing process. After revealing that he is going to digress again, Saleem immediately quits the idea lest Padma as his listener gets irritated. Thus, with its self-reflexive elements, the following quotation denotes the constructed nature of what Saleem narrates:

> I must interrupt myself. I wasn't going to today, because Padma has started getting irritated whenever my narration becomes self-conscious, whenever, like an incompetent puppeteer, I reveal the hands holding the strings; but I simply must register a protest. So, breaking into a chapter which, by a happy chance, I have named 'A Public Announcement', I issue (in the strongest possible terms) the following general medical alert: 'A certain Doctor N. Q. Baligga […] is a quack. Ought to be locked up, struck off, defenestrated. […] Damn fool,' I underline my point, 'can't see what's under his nose!' (*Midnight's* 65)

The role of the reader of a metafictional text, as Hutcheon argues, is no longer that of a passive receiver, but that of an active participant in the writing process: "the reader's task becomes increasingly difficult and demanding, as he sorts out the various narrative threads. The universe he thus creates, he must then acknowledge as fictional and of his own making" (1980: 49). Accordingly, *Midnight's Children* as a metafictional novel, with parodic and ironic intentions, demands of the reader to be an active participant in the creation of the text as the narrator wants the reader to fill in certain gaps in the novel. Saleem points out his inefficiency as a writer, so he makes it clear, in a humorous way of course, that there are points in his narrative which the reader must complete on his own: "I have not, I think, been good at describing emotions – believing my audience to be capable of *joining in*; of imagining for

themselves what I have been unable to re-imagine, so that my story becomes yours as well" (*Midnight's* 293, italics in original).

The metafictional implications where the narrator is self-conscious are used to parody the realistic and historical representation of autobiography, historical novels, or history writing because these are imitated with a critical distance and are in conflict with the context of the novel. The distance and incongruity between the expected representation of the past events, maybe in an objective way, and Saleem's fictitious accounts with self-reflexive comments are conveyed to the reader by the use of irony in *Midnight's Children*. Therefore, as Hutcheon formulates in *Theory of Parody*, irony becomes "the main rhetorical mechanism for activating the reader's awareness of this dramatization [the critical/ironic distance between the parodying and the parodied texts]" (1985: 31). It is part of the parodic discourse that enables the reader to evaluate the difference between the texts and it can be "playful as well as belittling; it can be critically constructive as well as destructive" (Hutcheon 1985: 32). Rushdie creates an irony between the conventions of autobiography, historical novel, and history writing and those of Saleem's autobiography. For example, Saleem claims throughout the whole novel that he is narrating the accounts "quite unequivocally" (*Midnight's* 338); what the reader finds however is nothing but fiction, a fairy tale. The function of irony in *Midnight's Children* is subversive because, according to Hutcheon, "there is both a division or contrast of meanings [the semantic function of irony] and also a questioning, a judging [its pragmatic function]" (1985: 53). This parodic intention of the writer serves as a tool to prove that historical accounts are artifacts. In the following quotation, Saleem tries to formulate the real reasons for the Indo-Pakistani war and to stick to the facts; however, what follows is a fictional explanation, which forces the reader to question the historical event:

> Important to concentrate on good hard facts. But which facts? […] If it happened, what were the motives? Again, a rash of possible explanations: the continuing anger which had been stirred up by the Rann of Kutch; the desire to settle, once-and-for-all, the old issue of who-should-possess-the Perfect-

> Valley? […] I present two of my own: the war happened because I dreamed Kashmir into the fantasies of our rulers; furthermore, I remained impure, and the war was to separate me from my sins. (*Midnight's* 338-339)

Parody in *Midnight's Children* not only ridicules and pinpoints the process through which Saleem's autobiography is constructed but it also, as Hutcheon highlights it, makes it possible to yield new ways of representing reality. Thus, it enables Rushdie to interrogate the discourse of traditional historiography on the one hand, and historical novel on the other. It offers new grounds for Rushdie to represent the voice of the individual. The metafictional strategies exploited in *Midnight's Children* highlight its status as an artifact and, by means of metafiction, Rushdie's novel is able to show historical "reality" as constructed and problematizes its objectivity. When the novel inserts real historical events into the metafictional context of the novel, it questions the boundary between so-called fact and fiction. Metafiction as a literary technique and Rushdie's parody are there to show that there is no absolute truth or objectivity in the representation of the past. Therefore, in a subversive novel such as that of Rushdie's, history, "although ultimately a material reality (a presence), […] is also 'fictional,' also a set of 'alternative worlds'" (Waugh 106).

4.3.2 Individual Mode of Connection: Saleem's Active-Literal Role

The alternative that *Midnight's Children* offers in place of the traditional mode of historiography is an individual mode of history writing that interprets the past events from below and elevates individual experience. This consists of personal historical accounts of Saleem combined with his self-reflexive narration. Rushdie avoids the historical approach that focuses on "great figures" that are of national importance so he creates an individual mode of history writing through Saleem's autobiography that focuses on the lives and experiences of the people who constitute the nation. As opposed to the version

of official history which attempts to totalize individual experience, Saleem's imaginary past "acknowledges the teeming millions of the Indian populace that are forgotten in most histories of India that prefer to focus on the great figures of history" (Price 102). As a result, Saleem's own individual history emerges as an ironic alternative to and a comment on the dominant, totalizing understanding of colonialist history writing of the West. The argument that Rushdie poses in *Midnight's Children* is that "individual recollections and assessments of history or reality as a whole are ultimately self-validating" as Catherine Cundy asserts in her analysis of the novel (34). Therefore, the individual's versions of historical reality provide his version of truth. An attempt as such can be regarded as making the individual silenced by the metanarrative of history speak, in that the individual becomes the center, and his voice is in conflict with that of the dominant, opening it to multiplicity.

Saleem, through the mingling of and correspondences between important political events and his particular life, depicts the unimportant individual – unimportant when compared with great figures in conventional history writing – and his experience in the face of historical events. This shifts the focus from the historical figures and events Rushdie deals with in the novel to Saleem, who experiences these historical events, and to his thoughts. For Saleem, his is an attempt to "revert from the general to the particular" in his account of his/story through his autobiography (*Midnight's* 334). He informs the reader about the different ways he is connected to the history of India, grouping these ways under "modes of connection":

> I must answer in adverbs and hyphens: I was linked to history both literally and metaphorically, both actively and passively in what our (admirably modern) scientists might term "modes of connection" composed of dualistically-combined configurations of the two pairs of opposed adverbs given above. This is why hyphens are necessary: actively-passively, passively-metaphorically, actively-metaphorically and passively-literally, I was inextricably entwined with my world. (*Midnight's* 238)

Saleem is not satisfied with his role as an individual in the construction of the national history, for the role determined for him is "active-metaphorical," "which groups together those occasions on which things done by or to [Saleem] were mirrored in the macrocosm of public affairs," or "passive-metaphorical," which includes political events that affect Saleem metaphorically, or "passive-literal," which "cover all moments at which national events had a direct bearing upon the lives of" Saleem and his family (*Midnight's* 238). However, Saleem wants to be involved in the construction of history "active-literally" as an individual, at the center, who can literally change the course of events; nevertheless, he knows that he is silenced and excluded from this role as an individual. He utters: "but it never became what I most wanted it to be; we never operated in the first, most significant of the 'modes of connection'. The 'active-literal' passed us by" (*Midnight's* 238-239).

In the process of constructing the individual mode of historiography, Saleem struggles to "place himself at the centre of a history that he himself creates, carving out an individual identity in a manner that has national implications" (Reder 225-226). In order to reach such an aim, to operate active-literally, he appropriates the historical facts, alters them and gives new meanings to these events so as to prove his central position. Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homelands*, in which he provides explanations for the unique characteristics of Saleem's narrative, confirms that Saleem "wants to shape his material [so] that the reader will be forced to concede his central role. He is cutting up history to suit himself" (Rushdie 1991: 24). This constitutes the ground where impersonal historical reality is contrasted with a subjective perception of reality. Therefore, the history writing which foregrounds the individual experience rather than totalizing individuals to whom things happen makes it possible to dethrone the central as it is clear from Saleem's endeavor. Through composing his autobiography, Saleem fights with Indira Gandhi for centrality. He says: "We were competitors for centrality" (*Midnight's* 420). In order to question the monolithic discourse of history and to claim his place in the construction of history, Saleem asks:

> *Indira is India and India is Indira* … but might she not have read her own father's letter to a midnight child, in which her own, sloganized centrality was denied; in which the role of mirror-of-the-nation was bestowed upon me? (*Midnight's* 427, italics in original)

In addition to the personal reasons that Saleem proposes for the possible explanation of the Indo-Pakistani war referred to previously, Mahatma Gandhi's death in the novel can also be given as an example to show how personal interpretations are important for the characters. Upon hearing of Gandhi's murder by a peasant, the Sinais, as two of the Muslim minority in India, are only interested in which religion the murderer belongs to. In relation to this political assassination, Saleem conveys the effects of this event on his family members instead of the political turmoil it produces. This illustrates that historical events are only important for the individuals to the extent that these events influence them passive-literally. The breaking of the news while they are in the cinema watching a film directed by Saleem's uncle Hanif gives the movie "the abortive end," initiating the downfall of Hanif's career later, and hinders Amina from visiting the race-track for a while, but they are relieved at the end to hear that the murderer is not a Muslim: "and finally the radio gave us a name. Nathuram Godse. 'Thank God,' Amina burst out, 'It's not a Muslim name! […] By being Godse he has saved our lives!" (*Midnight's* 142).

In *Midnight's Children*, the individual is portrayed as the victim of totalizing conventional historical discourse. "Saleem's story demonstrates [that] individuals can fall victim to a discourse – such as a national myth – in which they themselves are denied a role" (Reder 227). The historical and political events in the novel are not necessarily of topical value all the time, as is clear in Gandhi's assassination. Rushdie exploits the events as a political satire but Saleem believes that the significance of the historical events is that they have direct effects on individuals. Saleem can be regarded as the victim of history, as an individual "to whom things have been done" (*Midnight's* 232), for past events befall him and change the course of his life. Saleem adds ironically: "it is

the privilege and the curse of midnight's children to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace" (*Midnight's* 463). Therefore, Rushdie's handling of such political and historical events as Partition, the Freedom Movement, and the declaration of Emergency and so forth is a means to show individuals as victims of history. For example, it is the main significance of the problem of Partition as depicted in the novel that "Saleem Sinai is indeed a tragic victim of such events in his own life. The division of his family into two units with distinct national identities is a consequence of Partition" (Madhusudhana 13).

Likewise, Saleem's sexual impotence results from his castration by Indira Gandhi because of her oppressive policies. Saleem believes that Indira Gandhi regards the members of Midnight's Children Conference as political enemies, and therefore sterilizes them. Saleem assumes that the Emergency is proclaimed in direct response to the activities of Saleem and his Midnight's Children Conference:

> In 1975, Indira Gandhi declared a national state of emergency, attempting to squelch all opposition to her rule through censorship, suspension of civil liberties, mass imprisonment, and sterilization campaigns. […] Both Rushdie and Saleem attempt to subvert Gandhi's authoritarian rule and her mythical status in the Indian political imagery by allegorizing personal and national history within the context of the Emergency's repressive practices. (Kuchta 205)

Saleem and the other members of Midnight's Children Conference are also the victims of history as "representative[s] of a culture whose history has been supplanted by a dominant, European history that has controlled the continent" (Reder 225), for India, like Saleem, can be said to have fallen victim to Eurocentric totalizing historiography.

The mode of individual historical discourse Rushdie proposes as an alternative gives the individual the opportunity to create personal meaning from

history by highlighting some events and overshadowing others according to his personal view, which emerges as a threat to the objectivity of totalitarian history. Accordingly, it is claimed that "Saleem creates personal meaning from history, assigning historical events significance in relation to himself as an individual" (Reder 226). He creates personal and fictional explanations and makes up fictitious causes and effects for the already known supposedly historical facts. This means the blend of fact and fiction in his account, a quality which, as we have seen, subverts the official version of history. For example, Saleem assumes that he initiates by his own action the historical events documented in the novel. He claims he is responsible "active-literally" for the language riots that occurred in the 1950s. Language marchers demand "the partition of the state of Bombay along linguistic boundaries" (*Midnight's* 167). According to Saleem's fictitious account, his biking accident provokes the division: "In this way I became directly responsible for triggering off the violence which ended with the partition of the state of Bombay, as a result of which the city became the capital of Maharashtra – so at least I was on the winning side" (*Midnight's* 192). Similarly, he claims he plays a pivotal role in the Indo-Pakistani war. He thinks that the hidden reason behind the Indo-Pakistani war is the elimination of his family:

> Let me state this quite unequivocally: it is my firm conviction that the hidden purpose of the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 was nothing more nor less than the elimination of my benighted family from the face of the earth. In order to understand the recent history of our times, it is only necessary to examine the bombing pattern of that war with an analytical, unprejudiced eye. (*Midnight's* 338)

The analogy created between Saleem's autobiography and historical facts can affect the other family members as well. Saleem explains their actions with real historical events, drawing a parallelism between them. For instance, he explains the reason behind his sister's strange action of setting fire to their shoes by means of creating such an analogy:

> In the summer of 1956, when most things in the world were still larger than myself, my sister the Brass Monkey developed the curious habit of setting fire to shoes. While Nasser sank ships at Suez, thus slowing down the movement of the world by obliging it to travel around the Cape of Good Hope, my sister was also trying to impede our progress. (*Midnight's* 150)

Another example is the analogy between the deaths of two figures in Saleem's story, one fictional and one historical. The death of Nehru stands for an occasion for the passing away of Aadam Aziz. He says: "One last fact: after the death of my grandfather, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru fell ill and never recovered his health. The fatal sickness finally killed him on May 27th, 1964" (*Midnight's* 278).

In addition to the mingling of fact and fiction, Saleem gives wrong dates to the events in actual Indian history and confuses their causes to secure his place at the center. As a result, it becomes impossible to reach any correct accounts of events. The reader is exposed to Saleem's unreliable narration and cannot know what is "real" and what is fiction. One striking example to these errors is that Saleem places Gandhi's death in a wrong part in the chronology of his narrative because, as he claims, he made an error in the date. Nevertheless, Saleem accepts it as it is, thinking that it is his version of reality, and "only a madman," as Rushdie suggests, "would prefer someone else's version to his own" (Rushdie 1991: 25). Saleem states:

> Re-reading my work, I have discovered an error in chronology. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi occurs, in these pages, on the wrong date. But I cannot say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been; in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time. (*Midnight's* 166)

Other "errors" that Saleem makes are indicated by Rushdie himself in *Imaginary Homelands*, where he elaborates on Saleem's unreliable narration:

> During his [Saleem's] account of the evolution of the city of Bombay, he tells us that the city's patron-goddess Mumbadevi has fallen out of favour with contemporary Bombayites: 'The calendar of festivals reveals her decline … Where is Mumbadevi's day?' As a matter of fact, the calendar of festivals includes a perfectly good Mumbadevi Day, or at least it does in all versions of India except Saleem's.
>
> And how could Lata Mangeshkar have been heard singing on All-India Radio as early as 1946? And does Saleem not know that it was not General Sam Manekshaw who accepted the surrender of Pakistan Army at the end of the Bangladesh War – the Indian officer who was Tiger Niazi's old chum being, of course, Jagjit Singh Arora? And why does Saleem allege that the brand of cigarettes, State Express 555, is manufactured by W. D. & H. O.Wills? (Rushdie 1991: 22)
>
> It was also – along with Saleem's other blunder about the date of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination – a way of telling the reader to maintain a healthy distrust. (Rushdie 1991: 25)

The reason behind the errors in Saleem's account of the historical facts is that it is "memory's truth" (Rushdie 1991: 211), subjective and altered. In *Midnight's Children*, memory takes the place of the so-called scientific and objective documentation exploited in the conventional historiography. The fact that the historical truthfulness is conveyed through Saleem's memories, almost always unreliable, shows historical truth and reality in general as constructs. It enables Saleem to alter reality by depicting the events as he remembers. Therefore, the role of memory in Saleem's narrative is said to be subverting the claim of the traditional history writing to objectivity since the focus is on memory's ability to create subjective and multiple realities. Saleem draws attention to the role of memory in the process of constructing reality by pointing to memory's selecting certain events:

> 'I told you the truth,' I say yet again, 'Memory's truth, because memory has its own special kind, it selects, it eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no

> sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own'. (*Midnight's* 211)

The novel can produce multiple versions of reality by means of constructing the narrative of facts out of Saleem's memory. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie explains, "what I was actually doing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: 'my' India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions" (Rushdie 1991: 10). By means of resting Saleem's narrative on memory only and giving wrong dates for historical facts as a result, Rushdie questions the objectivity of history in *Midnight's Children*. The objectivity of Saleem's narrative is paradoxically challenged by the errors he makes in his own narrative and by ironically highlighting these errors by admitting them. The below quotation justifies the fact that "there is a growing movement away from the world of facts into an introvert world of intuitive perception of reality" (Madhusudhana 14). The outcome of opposing individual stories to official history is the blurring of the distinction between fact and fiction again. Saleem reflects on the influence of his errors on the authority of his narrative:

> Does one error invalidate the entire fabric? Am I so far gone, in my desperate need for meaning, that I'm prepared to distort everything – to re-write the whole history of my times purely in order to place myself in a central role? Today, in my confusion, I can't judge. I'll have to leave it to others. (*Midnight's* 166)

The fact that Saleem's account in *Midnight's Children* resembles the way memory operates gives the novel its fragmentary style. What constitute Saleem's account of Indian history as portrayed in the novel are fragments of memory. Although Saleem endeavors to reflect the whole of India, its past and culture, he is able to reflect it only in fragments, as Rushdie argues in *Imaginary Homelands*: because the novel is about memory he made his narrator "suspect in his narration; his mistakes are the mistakes of a fallible memory compounded by quirks of character and of circumstance, and his vision is

fragmentary" (Rushdie 1991: 10). This fragmented vision is conveyed through the perforated sheet in the novel. When Aadam Aziz returns from Europe, he is immediately asked to treat his future wife. However, he is allowed to examine her body only through a "perforated sheet". During the examination of the different parts of the body each time through the hole in the sheet without seeing her body in its entirety, Aziz tries to guess what the whole of the body is like:

> So gradually Doctor Aziz came to have a picture of Naseem in his mind, a badly-fitting collage of her severally-inspected parts. This phantasm of a partitioned woman began to haunt him, and not only in his dreams. Glued together by his imagination, she accompanied him on all his rounds, she moved into the front room of his mind […] but she was headless, because he had never seen her face. (*Midnight's* 25)

The image of a perforated sheet is all pervasive in the novel to emphasize the diversity and the process of seeing the whole through pieces. The idea that reality can be reached only through fragments becomes the leitmotif in the novel. In the same manner, the reader is offered the Indian past through a perforated sheet in fragments. The theme of fragmentation is a tool in the hands of Rushdie to challenge absolutes in the representation of reality. That the novel reflects reality in fragments is in opposition to the claims of the Western historiography to reflect the whole. The "broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost," with which Rushdie claims in *Imaginary Homelands* to reflect India, are of value because it makes the historical account given in the novel not objective as expected since some of the parts are lost (Rushdie 1991: 11). This indicates that Rushdie rejects objectivity that legitimizes totality and homogeneity. "Rushdie's history is not continuous or monolithic; it is fragmented, individual, personalized" (Reder 226) as Saleem fragments the official account.

In narrating the historical past, Rushdie blends fact with fantastic elements and fairy stories. By means of including fantastic elements in depicting historical events through magic realism in the novel, Rushdie

attempts to question the possibility of objective historical reality. Saleem as a midnight's child is gifted with extraordinary talents. He can communicate with the other midnight's children through his gift of telepathy which enables the communication between them. The other midnight's children are gifted like Saleem with various extraordinary talents according to their time of birth: "during the first hour of August 15th, 1947 – between midnight and one a.m. – no less than one thousand and one children were born […] endowed with features, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous" (*Midnight's* 195):

> Midnight's children! … From Kerala, a boy who had the ability of stepping into mirrors and re-emerging through any reflective surface in the land – through lakes and (with greater difficulty) the polished metal bodies of automobiles … and a Goanese girl with the gift of multiplying fish … and children with powers of transformation: a werewolf from the Nilgiri hills, and from the great watershed of the Vindhyas, a boy who could increase or reduce his size at will […] from Kashmir, there was a blue-eyed child of whose original sex I was never certain, since by immersing herself in water he (or she) could alter it as she (or he) pleased. (*Midnight's* 198)

The above quotation is to give an idea about the world of the novel that Saleem draws for his readers. Real events and people from Indian history are inserted into this miraculous world of the novel and mingled with fantastic elements. The magicians' ghetto where Saleem begins to live when he loses his family in the war provides this juxtaposition of the real and the fantastic. There live jugglers who can keep one thousand and one balls in the air at a time, fakirs who can stray on to a bed of hot coals, the pullers of rabbits from hats, ventriloquists, beggars and so forth. One of the midnight's children, Parvati-the-witch, who can make people disappear, lives together with Saleem in this ghetto. Saleem discusses the effects of the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi on these ghetto people and midnight's children who are excluded from the history of India. Magic-realism in *Midnight's Children* gives the reader a chance to observe the problems of the Communist movement in India and how

such individuals as the poor and freaks in the society experience them by rewriting this historical moment from their eyes (*Midnight's* 399).

The use of fantasy and mythic elements has a liberating effect in *Midnight's Children*. Saleem attributes legendary qualities to the events that he refers to throughout his narrative and he changes historical reality with legend. He states that "sometimes legends make reality, and become more useful than the facts" (*Midnight's* 47). Through this metafictional reference, Rushdie implies that truth is relative and no truth is absolute and monologic by means of offering myth and legend instead of facts. Likewise, Rushdie proposes a mythical view of history, "Maha-Yuga," the transcendent history of the Indian culture, as opposed to the traditional historical mode. The Indian concept of Maha, "or the illusionariness of life" (Srivastava 68) emerges as a mythical view of history imminent in Indian philosophy. Yuga is used to refer to the unique conceptualization of time in Indian philosophy, "quite different from those of conventional history for they have a larger rhythm and a larger interval" (Srivastava 68). Saleem compares these two views of history in terms of the proportion of their understanding of time:

> Think of this: history, in my version, entered a new phase on August 15th, 1947 – but in another version, that inescapable date is no more than one fleeting instant in the Age of Darkness, Kali-Yuga […]. Already feeling somewhat dwarfed, I should add nevertheless that the Age of Darkness is only the fourth phase of the present Maha-Yuga cycle which is, in total, ten times as long: and when you consider that it takes a thousand Maha-Yuga to make just one day of Brahma, you'll see what I mean about proportion. (*Midnight's* 194)

Saleem offers the mythical view of history as an alternative so as to minimize the importance of the accurate dates in conventional history writing, which should be read as a threat to the accepted conceptualization of time: "no people whose word for 'yesterday' is the same as their word for 'tomorrow' can be said to have a firm grip on the time" (*Midnight's* 106).

The form of the novel, along with its themes, helps Rushdie subvert the historical discourse of the West. Though Saleem writes his autobiography and the narrative seems to be moving chronologically from Saleem's birth to his adulthood as expected in autobiographies, the novel is marked with its non-linear narrative style through Saleem's digressions. In the process of composing his life story, Saleem presents flashbacks to past events, or foreshadows events to come, or he narrates other stories and uses digressions within digressions. This hinders Saleem from constructing his autobiography as well because, like Laurence Stern's Tristram Shandy, Saleem starts narrating the time long before his birth, and as in Stern's narrative, the relation between time inside and time outside the narrative is a cause of tension. In order to complete his story despite the digressions, Saleem must "work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to end up meaning – yes, meaning – something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity" (*Midnight's* 9).

When Saleem digresses and is late to narrate his birth, he is immediately urged by Padma: "But here is Padma at my elbow, bullying me back into the world of linear narrative, the universe of what-happened-next: 'At this rate,' Padma complains, 'you'll be two hundred years old before you manage to tell about your birth'" (*Midnight's* 38). She is annoyed with Saleem's non-linear narrative because she is after "what-happened-nextism" (*Midnight's* 39), reflecting thereby the desire for a continual chronological view in narration. Rushdie reveals in an interview in 1985 that the digressive feature of the novel is an extension of the oral story-telling tradition of the Indian culture:

> Listening to this man (a famous story teller in Baroda) reminded me of the shape of the oral narrative. It's not linear. An oral narrative doesn't go from the beginning to the middle to the end of the story. It goes in great swoops, it goes in spirals or in loops, it every so often reiterates something that happened earlier to remind you, and then takes you off again, sometimes summarizes itself, it frequently digresses off into something that the story teller appears just to have thought of, then it comes back to the main thrust of the narrative. (qtd. in Ashcroft 183)

What lies behind Rushdie's fondness of the oral story telling tradition is his desire to reflect the heterogeneity of Indian culture as he claims in *Imaginary Homelands*:

> [T]he story is told in a manner designed to echo, as closely as my abilities allowed, the Indian talent for non-stop self-regeneration. This is why the narrative constantly throws up new stories, why it 'teems'. The form – multitudinous, hinting at the infinite possibilities of the country – is the optimistic counterweight to Saleem's personal tragedy. I do not think a book written in such a manner can really be called a despairing work. (Rushdie 1991: 16)

The non-linear narrative of *Midnight's Children* serves to undermine linearity and cause-and-effect relationship that is characteristic of historical narrative. They once more remind the reader that texts reproduce only a version of events and not the "whole story". "As he writes the novel, Saleem wrestles with a chronological view of history" and he aims at showing the discursive function of this "chronological, British-born(e) manipulation of history" (Srivastava 66). He tries to show chronological history is inadequate to represent the diversity of the Indian past by means of his resistance to linear narrative.

With its attempts to subvert conventional Eurocentric historiography, *Midnight's Children* is a parody of a form of discourse. It parodies the historical discourse which claims to create a single and unchangeable truth, through Saleem offering his readers accounts of events different from the officially accepted versions. The target of Rushdie's parody at this point is not history writing in the period of colonization only but also after colonization, since Rushdie shows that history in the hands of recent Indian politicians, or Pakistani politicians as will be observed in the following analysis of the writer's *Shame*, is just as monologic. He particularly attacks Indira Gandhi and her politics on the grounds that she uses force to deflect multiplicity, hence the aforementioned slogan, "India is Indira, Indira is India":

> The chief example of such parody is the book's depiction of Indira Gandhi. The satire of Gandhi turns precisely on the opposition between the multiple and the unified, and the imposition of force required by the latter. (Conner 296)

Midnight's Children exploits historical and political figures and mocks them as well as exposing the version of history that they impose on people. The novel opens their discourse to dialogism by writing different historical accounts of the events that are experienced by individuals which clash with the officially known versions. Rushdie's use of parody is a means of depicting the heteroglossic nature of the world as well. In Linda Hutcheon's view, Rushdie uses parody in *Midnight's Children* not only to mock and challenge institutional powers and their efforts to write a monologic, unified history but also to intimate the heteroglossic nature of the world. Hutcheon states that parody in *Midnight's Children* works

> not only to restore history and memory in the face of the distortions of the 'history of forgetting,' but also, at the same time, to put into question the authority of any act of writing by locating the discourses of both history and fiction within an ever-expanding intertextual network that mocks any notion of either single origin or simple causality. (Hutcheon: 1989: 29)

One dimension of events, one perspective is not enough either for Saleem or for Rushdie. The novel tries to suggest, in a celebrating way, the formlessness of India's all-encompassing structure due to its multiple cultures. India is diversity itself so any attempt of the totalizing discourse of the traditional historiography is liable to fail to reflect its diversity in culture. "To Salman Rushdie postcolonial rewriting of Indian history has to deal with the cultural diversity and the variety of ethnic identities in India. Otherwise, the idea of Indian people representing themselves in history once again sets up India as a homogenous entity" (Baş 48). A single perspective in explaining the historical events then is shown to be incapable of representing the whole Indian culture in the novel. In order to encapsulate the whole of reality, the novel should "swallow the lot," as Saleem points out:

> I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each "I," every one of the now-six-hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world. (*Midnight's* 383)

Rushdie's novels are characterized by plurality as implied by the multitudeness of Saleem's autobiography. M. D. Fletcher explains that "because there is no fundamental truth to appeal to, the appropriate strategy is a plurality of representational tactics" (17). Bakhtinian carnavilization, the process whereby a carnival multiplicity is rendered through the language of the novel, functions in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a response to the threat of totality imposed by historical discourse. It emerges as a mode of resistance to the totalizing efforts of historical discourse. Saleem's combining historical figures with fictional brings them down into everyday reality and it is argued that this can be read as a device exploited by Rushdie to bring down the serious and the lofty as Bakhtinian carnivalesque does (Fletcher 152).

A carnivalesque atmosphere is depicted in the novel through the ghetto where, as it is seen, people from different walks of life come together. Besides, the same atmosphere is given when Saleem's mother visits the fortune-teller while she is pregnant to learn the lot of her son. Amina is led "into the streets […] where poverty eats away at the tarmac like a drought, where people lead their invisible lives" (*Midnight's* 81). The scene conveys a variety of people, combined with magic realist depiction, at the very low, including "the men with elephantiasis of the balls and the beggars in boxcars," "children [with] black teeth," "and cripples everywhere," "a creature with heads and heads and heads […] these poor poor people," (*Midnight's* 81) a white man begging for food and money, "men with broken arms, women with feet twisted backwards at impossible angles, past-fallen window cleaners, and splinters bricklayers"

(*Midnight's* 83). Saleem manages to reflect the stories of them along with the history of India simultaneously.

Historical reality, in conclusion, is reflected in *Midnight's Children* as the process of discerning meaning, not as absolute and objective but constructed, for as Saleem puts forward "reality is a question of perspective," and thus multiple (*Midnight's* 165). Saleem uses the cinema screen as a metaphor in the novel to draw attention to the illusory quality of what we perceive to be real:

> Suppose yourself in a large cinema, sitting at first in the back row, and gradually moving up, row by row, until your nose is almost pressed against the screen. Gradually the stars' faces dissolve into dancing grain; tiny details assume grotesque proportions; the illusion dissolves – or rather, it becomes clear that the illusion itself *is* reality. (*Midnight's* 165-66, italics in original)

4.4 *Shame* as Historiographic Metafiction

Shame is "a sort of modern fairy-tale," indicates its narrator (*Shame* 70). Rushdie brings out in his magic realist *Shame*, written in a fairy tale manner, his satire and criticism against the oppressive rule of Pakistani political and military leaders and the damage they give to the emergence of democracy in the country, and at the same time, he elaborates on the close relationship between shame and violence. The novel depicts the life of its hero, Omar Khayyam Shakil, who bears the same name as the Persian poet, but as the narrator indicates, "no quatrains ever issued or will issue from his pen" (*Shame* 28); and through Omar Khayyam, it explores the lives of two families who take an active role in the national politics. Although the narrator says that his fictional country is not Pakistan, the parallelisms he creates and his insistent denials make it clear that he is writing about Pakistan and its recent political past. Two Pakistans are created in the novel, one fictional and one factual existing side by side: "The

country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exists, like myself, at a slight angle to reality" (*Shame* 29). The reader, however, is expected to know that behind the imaginary country as the setting of the novel is Pakistan, as it is implied by the narrator's play with words through which he creates an intended confusion. Rushdie, in this way, makes it possible to insert historical events and personages into the fairy-tale narrative of the novel, blending them with fictional characters to challenge the truth-value of these historical "facts" and to create alternative versions of them.

The "real" Pakistan gives the writer the opportunity to reflect the recent political history of the country. Rushdie refers to the political events of the period such as the division of India after Independence to allow for the formation of Pakistan as a separate independent country in 1956, the 1971 war over Bangladeshi Independence and the following secession of Bangladesh, and the execution of Bhutto in 1979; and he also inserts real political figures of the time as his characters but under different names. Thus, Iskander Harappa stands for Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who managed to resume civilian rule after the secession of East Pakistan, while General Raza Hyder stands for General Ziya ul-Haq, who deposed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and sentenced him to death, and so became the country's third military president. "Amongst the other key allegorical figures in the novel, President Shaggy Dog mirrors the martial law administrator General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan. Sheikh Bismillah […] caricatures the popular Bengali leader and first prime minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujib" (Morrison 151). However, Rushdie handles the historical material in the magic realist narrative of the novel with a self-reflexive narrator, which points to the constructedness of historical facts at the same time. Thus, *Shame* can be read as historiographic metafiction like the writer's *Midnight's Children*.

The narrator stands "at a slight angle to reality" to reflect critically, in a satirical tone, and so does the "fictional" Pakistan to allow allegorical readings (*Shame* 29). Unlike the other novels that have been analyzed in this thesis,

Shame does not insert a historical figure into the fictional world of the text directly, which forces the reader to approach them symbolically. In the writer's *Midnight's Children*, Indira Gandhi emerges as a fictional character, or in Winterson's novels, the reader comes across, for instance, Napoleon, King Charles, Cromwell, as her characters. In *Shame*, on the other hand, Rushdie uses different names for his historical characters or keeps their names untold like "General A." who stands for General Ayub Khan, president during 1958–69. The narrator, however, implies the resemblances between the fictional characters and the factual political figures in Pakistan's past. By means of this, it becomes possible to read *Shame* as a "national allegory" (Cundy 61) in which the characters of the novel correspond to real political persons to give way to the satire of oppressive dictatorial regimes. Although it is claimed in the novel that the narrator reflects an imaginary country, some historical facts find their places in the magic realist narration of Rushdie as listed above. He uses his satire as a weapon against the violence caused by a dictatorial regiment symbolized by the rule of both General Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa in *Shame*; and "[t]he reader is never left in any doubt as to who (individually) or what (socially, culturally, politically) Rushdie is pointing his less-than-subtle satirist's finger at. This is no fairy tale for children" (Cundy 50). The narrator reveals that he needs this real and fictional presentation of two Pakistans side by side to explore, along with the history of Pakistan, the theme of shame and violence, embodied by Raza Hyder's daughter, Sufiya Zinobia. He explains: "I have found this off-centric to be necessary; but its value is, of course, open to debate. My view is that I am not writing only about Pakistan" (*Shame* 29). When read as an allegory, the novel is not only about present Pakistan but reflects allegorically on the feeling of shame/shamelessness, and the narrator reminds us that "[s]hame, dear reader, is not the exclusive property of the East" (*Shame* 29), indicating its universality.

4.4.1 Rushdie's Modern Fairy-Tale: Blurring Fact and Fiction

Rushdie's narrative in *Shame* runs contrary to the novel's aim to reflect in a satirical tone the political history of the era with its magic realist and self-reflexive elements given in a fairy-tale atmosphere that elevates story-telling over historical objectivity. The narrator imitates fairy tales, rather than historical novels, when he opens the novel with the cliché words of fairy tales that back up the fact that the story told takes place in a remote country and a long time ago: "In the remote border of town Q., which when seen from the air resembles nothing so much as an ill-proportioned dumb-bell, there once lived three lovely, and loving, sisters. Their names … but their real names were never used" (*Shame* 11). The narrator does not reveal either the name of the town or those of the sisters to evoke the feeling that this can happen at any place and at any time and also to question their factuality, because when unused, the narrator utters, "they became a family myth in whose factuality they almost ceased to believe" like the unused household china (*Shame* 11). For this purpose, he even uses the Hegiran calendar to confuse the reader about the time of the story, but he lets us learn that it takes place in our contemporary world:

> All this happened in the fourteenth century. I am using the Hegiran calendar, naturally: don't imagine that stories of this type always take place longlong ago. Time cannot be homogenized as easily as milk, and in those parts, until quite recently, the thirteen-hundreds were still in full swing. (*Shame* 13)

Rushdie's fairy-tale mode of writing and his magic realist narrative is not isolated from the problems of our contemporary world, not an escapist mode of writing, but an eye-opener like Winterson's fantasy worlds that enables the reader to approach established "realities" critically. "Magic realism," claims Cundy, "may be the ideal form for representing the fragmented histories of post-colonial societies" (50). Rushdie's modern fairy-tale, therefore, emerges as a challenge against the known versions of historical facts, which interrogates their factuality by blending fact and fiction.

Another quality of the novel which helps to show history as a constructed reality is the self-conscious narrator of the novel. Like Saleem Sinai in *Midnight's Children*, the narrator in the writer's *Shame* makes self-reflexive remarks on the construction of his story, making comments on the reliability of his narration as well. He includes himself as Omar's friend, who narrates his story, but he problematizes, with self-aware notes, his right to tell the story of Omar Khayyam and he points out that he made up some of the content: "Maybe my friend should be telling this story, or another one, his own; but he doesn't write poetry any more. So here I am instead, inventing what never happened to me" (*Shame* 28). When he is forced to answer a question about the sisters, with regard to how they can afford the expenses of a party even though their father Old Shakil left them no fortune but debts, the narrator sheds light on his omnipresence this time:

> There arises a delicate question: how did they pay for it all? With some embarrassment on their behalf, and purely to show that the present author, who has already been obliged to leave many questions in a state of unanswered ambiguity, is capable of giving clear replies when absolutely necessary, I reveal that Hashmat Bibi […] went to the pawnshop. (*Shame* 18-19)

The above self-reflexive comments of the narrator prove that he shapes his story as he wants, leaving some information out while including some other as he chooses. As a result, he proves to be an unreliable narrator like Saleem. If we take into consideration the fact that the novel also sheds light on a certain period of Pakistani past, the presence of an unreliable narrator gains much more significance because it shows he narrates events in what order he wishes and he determines what to include. Such a discussion is particularly valid in terms of the narrator's efforts to follow the chronology of the events narrated as it can be detectable in linear history writing; however, he cannot accomplish the desired chronology in different parts of his narration because he cannot avoid digressions. The adoption of digressive writing in *Shame*, as in *Midnight's Children*, problematizes the linear and chronological narrative in the account of

the historical material exploited in the novel. The narrator observes self-consciously:

> But I have been out of doors for quite long enough now, and must get my narrative out of the sun before it is afflicted by mirages or heat-stroke. […] (it seems that the future cannot be restrained, and insists on seeping back into the past.) (*Shame* 24)

The unreliable narrators in the novels of Rushdie analyzed here, who conceal what is to come from the reader to narrate everything in its chronological order like a historiographer, can be regarded as a parody of a historiographer's process of constructing past events in a concrete narrative in which "ends must not be permitted to precede beginnings and middles" (*Shame* 22). In conventional historical novels and historiography, this can be avoided by means of the linear narrative, but in *Shame* the narrator cannot avoid revealing things to come before their desired moment in the narration. He provides the reader with effects before their causes. For instance, he hints at the death of Sufiya Zinobia earlier than it should take place in the text, without first mentioning the cause (*Shame* 22), but afterwards he decides to "command this death scene back into the wings at once" (*Shame* 23) and tells the reader that "Sufiya Zinobia must wait for a few pages yet" (*Shame* 49). The reader, therefore, is given a chance to observe the narrator's struggle to force them back into their rightful places in the narrative, reminding himself "First things first" (*Shame* 31).

In addition to self-reflexive comments concerning the construction of the narrative, the authorial intrusions of Rushdie strengthen the digressive narration and also damage the factuality of the so-called historical narrative in the novel by making his existence palpable as the writer of the text through his personal voice. Rushdie incorporates his personal reflections on history writing and the experience of migration, reports his friend's story on democracy, and gives dictionary meanings of words and quotes from medical sources, thereby performing an intrusion from the real world into the fictional world of the novel

and continually digressing from the main story. "This tends to take the form of 'asides' from the narrator to illustrate the intersections of Pakistan's story with his own experience, allowing him to insert himself into the narrative as a bit-player" (Cundy 50-51). Rushdie's voice can be identified in the quotation below which overlaps with the biographical information about the author: "I, too, know something of this immigrant business. I am an emigrant from one country (India) and a new comer in two (England, where I live, and Pakistan, to which my family moved against my will)" (*Shame* 85). These features of Rushdie's narrative in *Shame* emerge as the defining elements of historiographic metafiction, and they help to blur the distinction between fact and fiction. The novel forces historiography to come down to the same level of storytelling; and by means of this, it can give way to alternative histories in which the suppressed voices come to the fore.

4.4.2 Writing History from the Peripheries

In *Shame*, the narrator asks: "is history to be considered the property of the participants solely? In what courts are such claims staked, what boundary commissions map out the territories?" (*Shame* 28). These questions entail the fact that history, as an ideologically-shaped discourse, is written to serve the dominant discourse and selects what should survive while others cannot "float upwards from history, from memory, from Time" (*Shame* 87). This view of history brings to mind how Saleem sees history as a discourse in which the central great figures like Indira Gandhi can find place only and how he himself as an unimportant subject is destined to the "passive-metaphorical" role. Rushdie's reflections on history in *Shame* are generally directed to the very same feature of history particularly: that history writing is a selective process. This gains more importance in the hands of a post-colonial writer like Rushdie himself. The idea is supported by those words of Rushdie quoted from *Shame*:

> History is natural selection. Mutant versions of the past struggle for dominance; new species of facts arise, and old,

> saurian truths go to the wall, blindfolded and smoking last cigarettes. Only the mutations of the strong survive. The weak, the anonymous, the defeated leave few marks: field-patterns, axe-heads, folk-tales, broken pitchers, burial mounds, the fading memory of their youthful beauty. History loves only those who dominate her: it is a relationship of mutual enslavement. No room in it […] for the likes of Omar Khayyam Shakil. (*Shame* 124)

Rushdie's answer to these questions above is that Pakistan is "the peeling, fragmenting palimpsest" onto which different versions of history can be written (*Shame* 87). He indicates in one of his intrusions into the novel that: "I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build up imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I, too, face the problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change" (*Shame* 87). This attests that he rewrites history by selecting among events, hence imposing his counter-arguments on the history of Pakistan, because he knows "it is the true desire of every artist to impose his or her vision on the world" (*Shame* 87). In Rushdie's *Shame*, then, "the past is represented as a palimpsest, a text that is written over and over from different perspectives, driven by different personal, political and religious agendas" (Morrison 152).

The attempt to write individuals to history that can be detected in *Midnight's Children* is also seen in *Shame* as a method of refracting the discourse of totalitarian history writing to make the voice of the forgotten audible. The novel offers alternative histories through rewriting a certain historical era in "fictional" Pakistan from the points of view of peripheral people who have been excluded from the world history. Rushdie manages to include the voice of "peripherals" by reinterpreting the official history of Pakistan from the eyes of the family members of the two central political figures in the novel. As a result, the official history becomes another story among many stories told in Rushdie's novel, exposing "history" as a

construction of past reality like the narrator's other stories, and also turning personal stories of individuals into Rushdie's version of history.

The narrator makes it known that the hero of the novel, Omar Khayyam Shakil is a peripheral hero who "was afflicted, from his earliest days, by a sense of inversion, of a world turned upside-down. And by something worse: the fear that he was living at the edge of the world" (*Shame* 21). This brings about the fact that he is denied the central role as an unimportant subject, like Saleem, who is expected to be a passive-receiver in his own story: "a fellow who is not even the hero of his own life; a man born and raised in the condition of being out of things" (*Shame* 24). However, Rushdie's modern fairy-tale historical novel makes the voice of unimportant individuals, like Omar Khayyam Shakil, heard in his imaginary history of Pakistan by narrating the "factual" and fictional events side by side. Omar Khayyam is close to both Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder; he was a friend to the former before he married Raza Hyder's daughter, Sufiya. It seems that he does nothing to directly affect the political actions of both, and at the end of the novel, when interrogated upon the murder of Raza Hyder, he describes his peripheral condition as the victim of historical developments, not as the active participant in these: "I am a peripheral man […]. Other persons have been the principal actors in my life-story, Hyder and Harappa, my leading men. […] I watched from the wings, not knowing how to act" (*Shame* 283). The reader cannot witness Saleem's struggle to put himself at the centre of events in Omar Khayyam's actions; nonetheless, he is the focus of Rushdie's version of Pakistani history, "a minor character, yet also, paradoxically, central" (*Shame* 49). The narrator admits that "it was the fate of Omar Khayyam Shakil to affect, from his position on the periphery, the great events whose central figures were other people" (*Shame* 108). The novel narrates in part two, titled "The Duelists," how Omar Khayyam, unknowingly, causes the duel between two historical figures, Zulfiqar Bhutto and Zia ul-Haq, but this time only for a woman, not referring to their successive civilian and military rules:

> it was he who said with a tongue made too loose by the neurotic drinking of the evening that Mrs Bilquis Hyder was a lucky woman, Iskander had done her a favour by pinching Pinkie Aurangzeb from under Raza's nose. "If Isky hadn't been there maybe our hero's Begum would have to console herself with children, because there would be no man to fill her bed." (*Shame* 108-109)

The mainstream historical novel about Pakistan's past would dwell on the political lives of two historical figures: Zulfiqar Bhutto and Zia ul-Haq, but not on the families of Iskander Harappa and General Hyder as their allegoric counterparts, because it is revealed in the novel that "History had been waiting for Iskander Harappa to notice Her, and a man who catches History's eye is thereafter bound to a mistress from whom he will never escape" (*Shame* 124). Omar Khayyam, on the other hand, would be swept away to "the edge of the world, so close that he might fall off at any moment" (*Shame* 21). However, Rushdie manages to make history include personal accounts and to bring it down to the level of the ex-centric individual, and at the same time, he brings the political history of the era down to the level of fairy tales by focusing more on the family lives of the historical personages in the novel and by referring to the known "factual" past events in a storytelling manner: "Once upon a time there were two families, their destinies inseparable even by death" (*Shame* 173). The novel depicts Iskander/Zulfiqar Bhutto and General Hyder/General Ziya ul-Haq as relatives because Raza's cousin Rani is married to Iskander, and their family lives reveal the effects of political tyranny on the other family members who may fall victim to it. This shows the people as victims of historical events in the macrocosm and tells their stories which differ from the known facts.

In order to insert the voice of the peripheries, Rushdie includes women and makes them the focus of the story, explaining the causes of the political events in the novel through them and the effects of the consequences of these events on them. The narrator self-consciously reflects:

> I had thought, before I began, that what I had on my hands was an almost excessively masculine tale, a saga of sexual

> rivalry, ambition, power, patronage, betrayal, death, revenge. But the women seem to have taken over; *they marched in from the peripheries* of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies, histories and comedies, obliging me to couch my narrative in all manner of sinuous complexities, to see my 'male' plot refracted, so to speak, through the prisms of its reverse and 'female' side. (*Shame* 173, emphasis added)

Therefore, the historical facts about Raza Hyder and about the political developments of the era are accompanied with the stories about his wife, Bilquis. In part two, Rushdie refers to "the famous moth-eaten partition" with his satirical criticism (*Shame* 61, 77) and the subsequent war (*Shame* 77), and the assassination of the Prime Minister (*Shame* 81), but he narrates simultaneously why Bilquis is scared of the hot afternoon wind, Loo: she is the victim of the consequences of the intolerance that emerged in the society due to the partition. During the political turmoil just before Partition, at a time when the rivalry between the opposing groups was high, Bilquis's father, who owned a cinema theatre called Empire, decided to protest against Partition by "a double bill into his Talkies: Randolph Scott and Gai-Wallah would succeed one another on his screen," two films which became the symbol of the opposing groups and the partition (*Shame* 62). His attempts for more tolerance are met with a brutal bombing, which results in his death and Bilquis's life-long fear after witnessing this very moment (*Shame* 63):

> The walls of her father's Empire puffed outwards like a hot puri while that wind like the cough of a sick giant burned away her eyebrows (which never grew again), and tore the clothes off her body until she stood infant-naked in the street; but she failed to notice her nudity because the universe was ending, and in the echoing alienness of the deadly wind her burning eyes saw everything come flying out, seats, ticket books, fans, and then pieces of her father's shattered corpse and the charred shards of the future. (*Shame* 63)

Thus, instead of the political events themselves, the narrator focuses on the people as the victims of these events, as in *Midnight's Children*, and

accomplishes the decentralization of Raza Hyder. The narrator explains with self-reflexive remarks: "If this were a realistic novel about Pakistan, I would not be writing about Bilquis and the wind," points out the narrator, but he keeps blending historical and fictionalized narratives and creating alternative stories (*Shame* 68).

Iskander's wife, Rani Harappa's story, when compared to other women characters, is a more silent one – i.e. her silent resistance finds expression in the shawls she works on as a reaction to Iskander Harappa's tyranny when pursuing his oppressive regiment. She is made to live in a country estate by Iskander when she is unable to give birth to a son. Living separated from Iskander and his ambition for power, Rani becomes his silent judge who only exposes her husband's cruelty and misdeeds through in her many shawls that she named, for instance, "the torture shawl" or "the swearing shawl". Metaphorically speaking, her shawls depict the effects of Iskander's, namely Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's, civilian but oppressive rule on the people.

The marching of periphery people to the centre works both ways: they are either shown as the victims of historical events, experiencing the effects of them, or they may change the course of the imaginary history of Pakistan narrated in the novel. Sufiya Zinobia belongs to this latter group of people because she brings about the fall and subsequent death of her father Raza Hyder at the end. Sufiya's birth brings shame on her family and Hyder, who expects a son, denies the existence of their elder daughter by ignoring her entirely. She is a mentally retarded child who develops the illness of blushing, which is used to signal the extreme shame she feels in the face of irritating events. She symbolizes both shame and innocence. The narrator explains that

> idiots are, by definition, innocent. Too romantic a use to make of mental disability? Perhaps; but it's too late for such doubts. Sufiya Zinobia has grown, her mind more slowly than her body, and owing to this slowness she remains, for me, somehow clean (*pak*) in the midst of a dirty world. (*Shame* 120-121, italics in original)

The shame she feels for the misdeeds of others urges Sufiya to act violently. For example, when her father does nothing about Pinkie Aurangzeb's turkeys, which irritates her mother, and when this is combined with her fear of the Loo winds, she kills all the turkeys violently by tearing their heads off (*Shame* 138), which is described by the narrator as an action "that links *sharam* [shame] to violence" (*Shame* 139). Omar Khayyam is an expert in immunology and his talent is observed when he treats Sufiya's immune system after this event. However, her violence emerges again when she feels the shame derived from her inability to have a sexual relation with her husband Omar Khayyam, an inability which is compensated for by her ayah Shahbanou:

> [I]f she has a husband, and a husband is for babies, but babies-aren't-for-you, then something must be wrong. This gives her a feeling. Just like a blush, all over, hot hot. […] there is a thing that women do at night with husbands. She does not do it, Shahbanou does it for her. (*Shame* 215)

Like the turkeys she killed, this time she murders four young men, whose heads wrenched off their necks, with traces of semen on their bodies (*Shame* 216). When Omar Khayyam realizes that treatment is not possible this time for Sufiya, he, together with Raza Hyder, who fears that his public reputation may be damaged when this is learnt, decides to keep her locked up and sedated with medicine. Nevertheless, she manages to break out and increases the number of her murders after Iskander Harappa's execution by his father. Rushdie combines again what is history with what is fiction in Sufiya's story and manages to give a picture of how this shame turns into violence: "What had escaped, what now roamed free in the unsuspecting air, was not Sufiya Zinobia Shakil at all, but something more like a principle, the embodiment of violence, the pure malevolent strength of the Beast" (*Shame* 242). Sufiya's murders, in turn, are responsible for bringing down General Raza Hyder's government. When it is learnt that "the white panther" is his daughter, he has to leave in the garb of a woman and shelter under the house of Omar Khayyam's mothers, who kill him brutally to avenge their son, murdered by Raza Hyder's regiment.

Therefore, Rushdie's novel is not only about the political history of Pakistan, but it is colored with the stories he tells which are in opposition to the known facts:

> This is a novel about Sufiya Zinobia, elder daughter of General Raza Hyder and his wife Bilquis, about what happened between her father and Chairman Iskander Harappa, formerly Prime Minister, now defunct, and about her surprising marriage to a certain Omar Khayyam Shakil, physician, fat man, and for a time the intimate crony of that same Isky Harappa, whose neck has the miraculous power of remaining unbruised, even by a hangman's rope. Or perhaps it would be more accurate, if also more opaque, to say that Sufiya Zinobia is about this novel. (*Shame* 59)

Rushdie in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* challenges the notion that any type of historical discourse can make claims to accurately representing past events. He believes, like Said, that "description is itself a political act" and "describing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it" (Rushdie 1991: 13-14); therefore, he finds historical discourse questionable. Furthermore, he in general criticizes the idea of the possibility of an "objective" view of the historical past. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie writes:

> History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge. The reading of Saleem's unreliable narration might be, I believed, a useful analogy for the way in which we all, every day, attempt to "read" the world. (Rushdie 1991: 25)

Instead of such a selective and monologic history writing as conventional historiography, Saleem in *Midnight's Children*, for instance, tells his story in a way capable of representing the heterogeneity of Indian history. His is an aim to "encapsulate the whole of reality" (*Midnight's* 75). Nevertheless, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is still a target of criticism. Although it is accepted that the novel challenges conventional Western notions

of linear, cause-and-effect history, "there seems to be very little agreement about what Rushdie is proposing instead" (Booker 283). *Midnight's Children* declares that there are as many versions of the Indian past as there are Indians. This concept has proved to be very liberating for many Indian English writers "as writers have found themselves free to speak in a multiplicity of voices and write in a multiplicity of modes" (Rege 251). Rushdie opens the way for alternative solutions by deconstructing the grand narrative of history both in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. Instead of rewriting the known history, Rushdie, as Spivak suggests, challenges in both his novels the very notion of totalitarian history writing itself either in the hands of the colonizing powers or the national politicians. As a result, Rushdie believes that "the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' version of truth" (Rushdie 1991: 14).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

It has been argued and exemplified in the texts analyzed in this study that historical fictions written in the postmodern era problematize any clear-cut division between fact and fiction and question the objectivity of historical representation. This study has attempted to show that postmodernist historical fictions can offer to contemporary novelists a liberating and revisionist realm where they can rewrite history and create alternative histories of the silenced. This characteristic feature of the genre appeals mostly to feminist and/or postcolonial writers because women and the colonized people are argued to be silenced by the authorial discourse in history. In this context, the study has analyzed the feminist rewriting of history as an attempt to create alternative histories of women as opposed to the official history written by men. Feminist theorists believe that history is used by patriarchy ideologically as an instrument to construct reality on behalf of the dominant masculinity. Similarly, postcolonial historical fictions, too, can create alternative histories of the colonized conflicting with the monolithic history of the colonizer. As this study has argued, those historical novels which are written by women writers with certain feminist concerns and postcolonial novels that include references to the colonizer's version of historical facts with a critical distance can destroy the monolithic accounts of the past by means of introducing the suppressed voices of "others" whose histories have been silenced under the hegemony of patriarchal history and the monology of colonizer's history respectively.

In the light of this analysis of the novels by Winterson and Rushdie, it can be seen that both writers use postmodern and metafictional aspects of their

novels to subvert the monolithic discourse of history. Winterson's *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* are marked by their use of historical events and personages along with fantasy and grotesque, and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, as postcolonial narratives, include the history of the subcontinent with a satirical eye and ironically through the self-conscious and unreliable narrators of the novels. The study has analyzed, in line with the postmodernist view of historiography and historical novels, Winterson's *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* as historiographic metafictions and it has been claimed that these texts of both novelists include historical material along with metafictional self-reflexivity with the purpose of subverting the patriarchal and Eurocentric history writing. Therefore, the intermingling of a feminist/lesbian view in Winterson's novels and the postcolonialist view in Rushdie's novels with the metafictive strategies and postmodern elements is exploited in the analysis of the novels in order to show how the writers deconstruct the discourse of history which they find inadequate to reflect female and lesbian difference, and the diversity of Indian culture.

These postmodernist historical novels by Winterson and Rushdie should be regarded as texts where a *synergy* is created through their feminist and postcolonial revisions. The thesis emphasizes the political impulse of both novelists to write the histories of the marginalized and their common attempt to use their postmodernist texts as weapons against the orthodoxies of the patriarchal and colonial discourses. Written to celebrate the collapse of "upper case History," these novels open the way to private histories (in the plural) of individuals whose stories have remained untold. The thesis dwells on the shared fight of these novels against history as a metanarrative because the collapse of history as a metanarrative is seen as

> allowing people(s) who, hitherto negatively represented and/or ignored by Western logocentric/phallocentric metanarratives, have not yet had the opportunity to construct histories of their own; histories of emancipation and empowerment. (Jenkins 22)

In *The Passion*, the clash of two conflicting narratives creates the dialogic relationship between the discourse of the traditional history writing and the voice of the excluded other pursued in both Henri's and Villanelle's personal experiences. The monologic accounts of the patriarchal historiography, by this means, turn into a double-voiced discourse, reflecting the untold stories of individuals simultaneously. In *Sexing the Cherry*, the alternative stories of its characters also rewrite the image of women that has been constructed as men's inferior by patriarchal discourses. The novel not only deals with the historical representation of seventeenth century London, but it also includes the private stories of the Dog Woman and Jordan which destabilize gendered identity. Winterson manages this plurality in her novels through using fantasy as a subversive device to overthrow the authority of the patriarchal order. In the fantastic world of *The Passion*, the official historiography of "great men" is attacked by Henri and Villanelle who offer "a version of history from below, rather than the history of the official record or the history books" (Pykett 54). Likewise, Jordan's fantastic stories in *Sexing the Cherry* make the monolithic discourse of history refract to include women's stories. Winterson's fiction, in conclusion, is seen as an attempt, with feminist/lesbian awareness, to enable the silent women whose histories are suppressed by the hetero-patriarchal order to speak. In her attempt, the inclusion of the activities of women in history through rewriting a certain era or events is never enough for Winterson. Hers is an attempt to challenge the discourse itself which justifies the act of excluding female difference. When read as an example of "historiographic metafiction," it becomes palpable that both *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* are successful at deconstructing the existing discourse of patriarchal history through the subversive use of postmodern questioning.

Midnight's Children, on the other hand, seeks to parody the historical discourse imposed by the colonizing power through the novel's protagonist, Saleem's autobiography in which he makes changes in the known versions of historical events, gives us wrong dates, and comes up with his own explanations and causes that are conflicting with the officially accepted "facts". As a result,

he challenges the authority of the totalitarian history which Rushdie finds inadequate to reflect multiplicity. Regarding himself as the victim of such totalitarian history writing where only "great figures" like Indira Gandhi can hold the centre and where he is denied a role, Saleem tries to put himself into the centre in Indian history and offers an individual mode of history writing that depends on and elevates individual experience as opposed to conventional historical discourse. In *Shame*, the same decentralizing of the great historical figures in history is achieved by the writer this time by means of rewriting the recent political history of Pakistan through the perspectives of his peripheral characters. The history of Pakistan is told simultaneously with the stories of the people who are victims of past events and the tyranny of the political personages who Rushdie satirizes in the novel. In Rushdie's counter-narrative, the individual plays an active role and vies for the centre, and his/her voice is in conflict with that of the dominant. Therefore, the monolithic discourse of history can be opened to multivocality in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* as it can be in Winterson's.

Like Winterson's texts, Rushdie's novels can be seen as a parody of discourse. Rather than rewriting the history of a certain era, his novels analyzed here imitate the discourse of the totalitarian history of the West with a critical distance. The narrators in both novelists' texts lead us to this conclusion also, for particularly Saleem in *Midnight's Children* and Henri in *The Passion* emerge as the parody of the historiographer with their attempts to record the history of their times, but they cannot manage to convey what happened in an objective, linear narrative. Being unreliable narrators, they interpret past events as these events suit their purposes, rearrange them, and mingle history with fantasy and magic realism. Both writers' novels support the idea that the object of parody in the postmodern novel becomes discourses themselves which shape reality:

> Discourse is an essential object of parody in the postmodern novel, and this is not very surprising, given the significance postmodernism accords to exposing all discourses as

> constructs that can always be deconstructed and undermined. […] The postmodern novel, therefore, creates a non-hierarchical discursive realm where no discourse is immune to parody and where it is constantly implied that all discourses are products of language, which shapes reality and maintains an arbitrary relationship with it. (Korkut 72-73)

It has been observed that both writers blend the historical material they utilize with the fantastic and magic realist elements in their texts and it can be argued that fantasy is used by both writers as a strategic tool for the refraction of the monolithic discourse of history, for it gives the writers the opportunity to create a subversive site where they can insert the untold stories of their characters. Rosemary Jackson claims: "The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" (4). Accordingly, the novels which are analyzed in this study are able to rewrite the silenced histories of the suppressed with the help of the fantastic narrative used in opposition to the monolithic narrative of conventional history. Additionally, both in Winterson's and Rushdie's novels, a celebration of difference and diversity has been observed, in contrast to the discourses which see this difference in binary oppositions only. Rather than interpreting the one in terms of the other, the pluralistic view is achieved by the authors under scrutiny here by accepting the fact that they are fundamentally different. Therefore,

> The centre no longer completely holds. And, from the decentered perspective, the "marginal" and what I shall be calling the "ex-centric" (be it in class, race, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity) take on a new significance in the light of the implied recognition that our culture is not really the homogeneous monolith (that is middle class, male, heterosexual, white, western) we might have assumed. (Hutcheon 1989: 12)

Winterson's and Rushdie's novels reflect the postmodernist interrogation of objective reality. Both writers strive to challenge old-established realities whose truthfulness we take for granted, and they force their

readers to question them. “Reality” is seen as a spot of light and empty space by both Winterson and Rushdie to point to its less concrete existence than we assume it to be. In her *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson endeavors to show us that “Matter, that thing the most solid and the well-known, which [we] are holding in [our] hands and which makes up [our] body, is now known to be mostly empty space”. And her novels should be seen as her attempt to make us ask, “What does this say about the reality of the world?” Rushdie, likewise, draws attention to the illusory quality of reality by equating what we perceive to be “real” with dancing specks of light on a cinema screen. Instead of historical reality, therefore, the novelists offer us “the reality of imagination” (Winterson 1997: 151) and “imaginary homelands” where alternative versions of reality can find place side by side without the prison-house of hierarchical binarism.

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FLE 127 Spoken English I
FLE 128 Spoken English II
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FLE 220 Drama Analysis
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2007 (with Firat Karadas) "Orhan Pamuk's Blending of Verbal and Visual Forms of Art in *My Name is Red*", XII Annual Conference of BSBS, SWU Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

2007 “Ex-centric Historiography: Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as Historiographic Metafiction”, 1st International Graduate Student Conference of the Hellenic Association for American Studies, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki: HELLAS Graduate Student International Conference: Ex-centric Narratives, Identity and Multivocality in Anglo-American Cultures, Greece.

2006 “Postmodern Historical Novels”, SW/TX PCA/ACA Organization 28th Annual Conference New Mexico, ABD.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY

Postmodern Tarih Romanı: Jeanette Winterson'ın ve Salman Rushdie'nin Romanlarının Tarih-Yazımcı Üstkurgu Olarak İncelenmesi

Bu tezin amacı İngiliz edebiyatında "tarih yazımcı meta-roman (üstkurgu)" olarak da adlandırılan postmodern tarih romanlarını, içerdikleri tarihi olayları ve kayıtları çarpıtarak farklı seslere ve alternatif çoğul tarihlere izin vermeleri açısından incelemektir. Jeanette Winterson'ın *The Passion* (Tutku) ve *Sexing the Cherry* (Vişnenin Cinsiyeti) ile Salman Rushdie'nin *Midnight's Children* (Geceyarısı Çocukları) ve *Shame* (Utanç) adlı romanları incelemenin konusunu oluşturur. Tarih yazımcı meta-romanların, tarihi gerçekleri çarpıtarak ve onları romanların farklı bağlamlarında yeniden yazarak kolonilerde sömürülenler, azınlıklar, kadınlar ve benzeri marjinal grupların sessiz tarihlerini ön plana çıkardığı bu tezle iddia edilir. Bu tez savlarını yapısalcılık-sonrası düşüncelerin etkisiyle ortaya çıkmış postmodern tarih yazımı anlayışına dayandırarak, tarih yazımının geçmiş olayları sadece yansıtmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda bir anlamlandırma sistemi olduğu için geçmiş olaylara anlam yüklediğini ve böylece tarihi olayları tarihi "gerçeklere" dönüştürdüğünü öne sürer. Postmodern tarih anlayışı geçmiş olayları doğru ve tarafsız bir şekilde yansıttığını iddia eden geleneksel tarih anlayışına karşıdır ve tarih yazımının tarafsızlığına tehdit oluşturacak biçimde gerçekliği dilin yarattığı düşüncesiyle hareket eder. Geleneksel tarih yazımı, tarihi gerçekleri oluştururken ideolojik sebeplerden belli geçmiş olayları seçip diğerlerini yok sayabilir. Bu da kaçınılmaz olarak bizi marjinal grupların tarih yazma sürecinde

göz ardı edildiği gerçeğine götürür. Bu yüzden tarih, egemen düşünceyi yansıtan tek-sesli bir söylem olarak kabul edilir.

Eleştirmenler çağımız yazarlarından Graham Swift, Peter Ackroyd, D. M. Thomas, Salman Rushdie, Julian Barnes, John Fowles, Jeanette Winterson ve Angela Carter'ın eserlerinde tarih temasının yoğunlukla işlendiğine işaret etmektedir. Postmodern tarih romanlarında bu tarih anlayışının etkin olduğu bilinmektedir. Postmodern türde yazılmış romanların fazlaca görüldüğü yirminci yüzyılın sonlarına doğru kaleme alınmış tarih romanları birçok açıdan farklılık göstermektedir. Bu romanlar yukarıda anılan postmodern tarih anlayışını kutsar niteliktedir. Üstkurgu, tarihi olayları, kişilikleri ve kaynakları kendi kurgusallığını sergileyen bir anlatıyla ele alarak aynı zamanda tarihin kurgusallığını ön plana çıkarır. Bu romanlarda tarihi gerçeklerin sorgulanması kendine dönük anlatıyla sağlanmaktadır. Tarih yazımcı meta-romanlar, tarihçinin ideolojik olarak belirli olayları seçmesine ve yazın sanatının ögesi olarak kabul edilen anlatının olayları yansıtmakta kullanılabilecek tek yol olmasına dikkat çekerek tarih yazımının da aslında bir anlatı olduğunu vurgular. Bu tez, tarih yazımcı meta-romanları tarihi gerçekleri bozma yoluyla egemen sesin kırılmaya uğradığı ve baskılanmış diğer seslere imkan veren çok-sesli bir söylem olarak inceler. Bununla birlikte, romanların kendisini incelerken kırılmanın ve çokseslilığin varlığını gösterebilmek için romanlardaki metinlerarası ilişkiyi, yazım sürecinin kurgusallığının farkındalığını, kronolojik olmayan anlatımı ve parodiyi ön plana çıkararak üstkurgu öğelerini çalışır.

Tarih yazımcı meta-romanların amaçlarından biri tarihin dışarıda bıraktığı geçmiş olaylara ve kişilere yönelmektir. Böylece, anlatılmamış olan geçmiş olaylar bu romanlarda yer bulabilir, alternatif tarihler yazılabilir hale gelir. Sonuç olarak, tarih yazımcı meta-romanın öteki tarihlerin de seslendirilebildiği bir yazın türü olduğu ortaya çıkar. Bu özelliğiyle tarih yazımcı meta-romanlar, özellikle kadın yazını ve/veya kolonileşme-sonrası edebiyatında konu olan Ötekilerin unutulmuş tarihini seslendirebilen bir tür olarak kabul edilmelidir. Bu tez aynı zamanda kadının ve kolonilerde sömürülenlerin Öteki olarak nasıl tarih oluşturma sürecinde dışarıda

bırakıldıklarını ve sessiz tarihlerinin tekrar nasıl dile getirilebileceğini de feminist ve post-koloni kuramlarına değinerek tartışır. Feminist eleştiri, tarihin kadının sessizleştirildiği alanlardan biri olduğunu, erkek egemenliğinin sürdürülebilir olması için kadını dışarıda bırakan bir söylem olduğunu kabul eder. Fallus-merkezci bir üst-anlatı olarak kabul edilen tarihin sorgulanması kadın yazınında ana konulardan biri olmuş ve tarih yazımında sessiz kalanın sesinin duyulabilmesi için feminist olarak tanımlanabilecek yazarlar post-modernizmi ve onun yıkıcı olarak adlandırabileceğimiz ironi, fantezi, yeniden yazma ve parodi gibi anlatı tekniklerini buna karşı koymak için kullanmışlardır.

Benzer şekilde kolonileşme-sonrası yazınlarda, çoğunlukla sömürgeci unsur tarafından oluşturulan resmi tarihle çelişecek alternatif çoğulcu tarihler yaratma çabaları göze çarpar. Eleştirmenler, tarihin sömürgeci güç tarafından kendi çıkarına uygun bir tarihi gerçeklik yaratmak için kullanıldığını öne sürmektedir ve bununda kaçınılmaz olarak sömürülenlerin tarihinin dışlanması, teksesli bir tarih yaratılması anlamına geldiğine işaret etmektedirler. Bu yüzden kolonileşme-sonrası tarih yazımı, feminist yazarların tarihi gerçekleri sorgulamasına paralel oluşturacak biçimde, otoriter olan batılı tarih yazımına karşı durur. Kolonileşme-sonrası edebiyatı bu monolitik anlatımı diğer sesleri dahil ederek parçalamaya çalışır. Sömürgeci tarafın tarih anlatımını konu olarak seçmiş bu türden romanlarda eleştirel bir yaklaşım gözlemlemek olasıdır ve sessizliğe itilmiş Ötekinin hikayelerinin bilinen tarihi anlatımla yan yana yer alması çoğulcu bakışa olanak tanır.

Bu çalışmada Jeanette Winterson'ın ve Salman Rushdie'nin romanlarının tarih ve yazın arasındaki sınırı sorunsallaştırdığı incelenmiş ve her iki yazarın incelemeye konu olan metinlerinde egemen söylemin kırılarak çokseslilige izin verebildiği görülmüştür. Jeanette Winterson'ın romanlarında egemen düşünce sisteminin ontolojik olarak sorgulanması vardır ve bu sorgulama yazarın feminist tavrıyla ayrılmaz bir bütündür. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, bu sorgulamanın hedefini erkek egemen sistemin gerçekliği şekillendirmek için yaratmış olduğu üst-anlatımlar oluşturur. Winterson'ın *The Passion* ve *Sexing the Cherry* adlı romanları erkek egemen bir söylem olarak bu

üst-anlatımlardan biri olan tarihin tarafsızlığını sorgular ve yazar bu söylemin tekseslilığini tarihi anlatımı fantezi ve grotesk ögelerle aynı anda ele alarak tehdit eder. Yazar romanlarında cinsiyeti belli olmayan, muğlak bırakılmış veya lezbiyen ilişkilerinden ya da grotesk olmalarından dolayı ötekileştirilmiş karakterler yaratarak cinsiyet kimliği konusunda kabul edilmiş anlayışlara karşı koyar. Romanlarının değişmez konularından biri de ötekileştirmedir. Özellikle yazarın kadın karakterleri normalin dışına çıkan türdendir, ancak bu özellikleriyle baskın yapıya karşı tehdit oluştururlar. İncelenen romanlarda tarihin bu kez ötekileştirilmiş bu kadın karakterlerin sessiz kalmış tarihine de izin verecek şekilde yeniden yazıldığını görürüz.

Salman Rushdie'nin romanlarını, sömürgeci sürecin kurallarını sömürülen tarafa yalnızca şimdiki zamanda ve gelecekte empoze etmesi anlamında olmadığını, ayrıca sömürülen toplumun geçmişine de yöneldiğini ve bu geçmişi bozmaya çalıştığını gösterir metinler olarak okumak olasıdır. Yazarın bu incelemenin konusunu oluşturan iki romanı Batı yansıtma sistemlerinden biri olan tarih yazımını tema olarak alıp, onun tarafsızlığını parodik anlatı içerisinde sorgular. Özellikle *Midnight's Children* ve *Shame* için denilebilir ki Rushdie bu iki romanda Doğunun kültürel geleneği ve tarihine eğilmiş, geçmiş olaylara anlatımında yer vermiş, ancak bunu yıkıcı bir şekilde gerçekleştirmiştir. Rushdie'nin romanlarında yer alan tarih olayları bilinen tarihi gerçeklikle çelişir. Yazar bilinen olaylara alternatif açıklamalar getirerek batılı düşünce sistemi içerisinde oluşturulan totaliter tarihe bireylerin bu olaylar karşısında gelişen kişisel hikayelerini de anlatarak cevap verir. Böylece bilinen tarih Rushdie'nin anlattığı hikayelerden birine, bireylerin alternatif hikayeleri de tarihin kendisine dönüşür. Yazar romanlarında tarihi yeniden oluşturmak yerine batılı tarzda yansıtma sistemlerinin yerini alabilecek olası anlatılar sunar, her iki romanında da gerçekle kurguyu karıştırarak tarihi olayları ele alması, bireyi merkeze alarak geçmiş olayları yeniden yazması buna ulaşmak için kulandığı bir yoldur.

Winterson'ın *The Passion* ve *Sexing the Cherry* adlı romanlarında tarihi olayların ve kişilerin fantastik anlatım içerisinde yer aldığı görülür. Benzer

biçimde, Rushdie'nin *Midnight's Children* ve *Shame* adlı eserleri sömürgeciliğe uğramış Hindistan ve Pakistan tarihini romanların kendine dönük anlatısı içerisinde alaycı bir gözle yeniden anlatır. Her iki yazarın tarih yazımcı meta-roman olarak niteleyebileceğimiz bu romanları, postmodernizmin anlatı tekniklerini erkek egemen ve sömürgeci söylemlere karşı tehdit olarak kullanır. Bu tez iki yazarın ortak kavgasını inceleyerek, romanlarda tarihin üst-anlatı olarak çöküşünü ve çoğulcu tarih yazımının varlığını vurgular.

The Passion adlı romanda birbirleriyle çelişen iki anlatı, geleneksel tarih yazımı ile roman karakterlerinin hikayelerinde yer bulan bastırılmış tarihlerin sesi arasında dialojik bir ilişki kurar. Erkek egemen tarih yazımının tekseslilliği bu şekilde bireylerin anlatılmamış tarihlerine de olanak sunabilen çoksesli bir söyleme dönüşür. *Sexing the Cherry* adlı romanda ise karakterlerin anlattığı alternatif tarihlerde baskın söylem tarafından yaratılmış kadın imgesinin yıkılarak, yeniden yazıldığı görülür. Roman yalnızca 17. yüzyıl Londra'sının tarihini anlatmakla kalmayıp, baş karakterler olan Dog Woman ve Jordan'ın kadın imgelerini yeniden oluşturan hikayelerini de bu tarihi gerçeklikle yan yana anlatır. Winterson romanlarındaki bu çoğulculuğu fantastik anlatıyı erkek egemenliği yıkan bir güç olarak kullanmasına borçludur. *The Passion*'ın fantastik dünyasında erkeğin merkezi oluşturduğu tarih yazımı başkarakterler olan Henri ve Villanelle'in merkezin dışında kalan tarihleri merkeze taşımasıyla gerçekleşir. Benzer biçimde, yazarın diğer romanındaki Jordan karakterinin fantastik öyküleri kadının sessiz kalmış tarihini merkeze taşıyacak şekilde yazılmıştır. Sonuç olarak diyebiliriz ki, Winterson'ın burada incelenen romanları yazarın feminist tavrını da ortaya koyarak, tarih yazımında kadının varlığını ve onun hikayelerini dahil edebilmiştir. Tarih yazımcı meta-roman olarak incelendiğinde hem *The Passion* hem de *Sexing the Cherry* tarihin var olan baskıcı söylemini yapı-bozumculuğa uğratmakta başarılı olmuştur.

Diğer yandan, Rushdie'nin *Midnight's Children* adlı romanında tarih söyleminin parodisi roman karakterinin yazmaya çalıştığı otobiyografisi sayesinde mümkün olur. Romanda anlatıcı olan Saleem otobiyografisinde bilinen ve kabul edilen tarihi gerçekleri çarpıtır, yanlış tarihler verir, ve tarihi

olaylara bilinen gerçeklikle çelişecek açıklamalar ve sebepler sunar. Sonuçta, kendini merkeze koymayı başararak totaliter tarih yazımının otoritesini sarsmayı başarır. Yalnızca büyük tarihi kişiliklerin yer alıp, merkezi tuttuğu totaliter tarih anlatımı içerisinde kendisini zavallı olarak gören Saleem, bireysel tarih anlatımını buna alternatif olarak sunmakla bireyi Hindistan tarihinin merkezine doğru iter. *Shame*'de ise büyük tarihi kişiliklerin merkezin dışına çekilmesi, yazarın periferide olarak nitelediği karakterlerinin bakış açısından Pakistan tarihinin yeniden yazılmasıyla başarılır. Rushdie'nin yarattığı bu alternatif tarihler içerisinde bireyler etkin bir rol oynar ve merkezi değiştirmek için kavga verirler; bilinen tarihi çarpıtarak anlattıkları kişisel hikayeleri egemen söylemle dialojik ilişki kurar. Böylece, tarihin monolitik söylemi yazarın her iki romanında da çokseslilige açılır. Winterson'ın metinlerinde incelendiği gibi, Rushdie'nin romanları da söylem parodisi olarak görülmelidir. Yazar, belirli bir dönemin tarihini yeniden ele almak yerine, burada incelenen romanlarında batılı totaliter tarihi eleştirel bir mesafeden taklit eder.

Hem Winterson'ın hem de Rushdie'nin incelediğimiz romanlarında objektif gerçekliğe yöneltilmiş postmodernci sorgulamayı en etkin biçimiyle görürüz. Her iki yazar da kabul edilen gerçekliklere meydan okuma kavgası verir eserlerinde. Ve okuyucularını bunları sorgulamaya zorlar. "Gerçek" bu romancıların elinde artık bir ışık zerresine, boşluğa indirgenmiştir. Bu şekilde gerçekliğin zannettiğimizden daha az katı ve kesin olduğunu anlayabiliriz. Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry* adlı romanında bizlere, maddenin, elimizde tuttuğumuz ve varlığımızı oluşturan, o en iyi bildiğimiz en katı şeyin, artık bir boşluk olduğunu anlatır. Romanlarında bunun gerçeklik söz konusu olduğunda ne anlama geldiğini sorgulamamızı ister. Rushdie ise gerçeği sinema perdesinde dans eden ışık zerrelerine indirgeyerek gerçekliğin kurgusal boyutuna okurun dikkatini çeker. Bu yüzden, çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan her iki roman yazarı da, tarihi gerçeklik yerine bizlere kalıplaşmalar olmadan alternatif gerçeklerin yer alabildiği hayali ülkeleri, hayal gücünün gerçekliğini sunarlar.