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**DEATH OF “THE” HISTORY: ALTERNATIVE AND PARTIAL
(HI)STORIES IN JULIAN BARNES’S *A HISTORY OF THE WORLD
IN 10^{1/2} CHAPTERS* AND SALMAN RUSHDIE’S *MIDNIGHT’S
CHILDREN*¹**

**“Tekil” Tarihin Ölümü: Julian Barnes’in *On Buçuk Bölümde Dünya Tarihi* ve
Salman Rushdie’nin *Geceyarısı Çocukları* Romanlarında
Alternatif ve Taraflı Er-Tarih/Öyküler**

Sümeýra BURAN

Visiting Assistant Professor University of California Riverside
Assistant Professor Dr. Istanbul Medeniyet University,
sburanut@ucr.edu, sumeyra.buran@medeniyet.edu.tr

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3273-8125

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Abstract

*Whose perspective, whose truth, whose version of history can survive? Postmodern historiographic metafiction challenges the authority of the truth by highlighting alternative or small partial histories that have been neglected, ignored, untold, forgotten, bypassed, distorted, hidden, changed, omitted, eliminated, and eradicated. In this respect, history cannot be described as one concrete formulation or as a stable history but a collection of fragmented multiple histories. Julian Barnes’s *A History of the World in 10^{1/2} Chapters* (1989) and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1980) both deal with the historical facts, one in a playful and the other in a magical way, questioning what would happen if “the” history is rewritten by the other, ex-centric, excluded, unseen, unclean, abnormal, the victim or the ordinary people whose personal stories shape and deconstruct “the” history. What Barnes and Rushdie offer is “a” history of the world rather than the totalizing nature of “the” history of the world, demonstrating many possible partial histories and personal (hi)stories or (her)stories interrelated to the grand history or national history. This article examines how Barnes and Rushdie portrays an alternative historical rewriting by blurring the line between the factual and fictional history that makes readers question the assumptions about the objectivity and truthiness of history.*

Keywords: Postmodern Historiographic Metafiction, New Historicism, Alternative History, Partial History, Fictional History, Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie

Öz

*Kimin bakış açısı, kimin hakikati, kimin tarih versiyonu ayakta kalabilir? Postmodern tarihyazımsal üstkurgu, ihmal edilmiş, göz ardı edilmiş, anlatılmamış, unutulmuş, atlanmış, çarpıtılmış, gizlenmiş, değiştirilmiş, atlanmış, ortadan kaldırılmış ve silinmiş alternatif veya küçük taraflı tarihleri vurgulayarak gerçeğin otoritesine meydan okur. Bu bakımdan tarih, tek bir somut formülasyon ya da istikrarlı bir tarih olarak değil, parçalanmış çoklu tarihlerin bir koleksiyonu olarak tanımlanabilir. Julian Barnes’in *On**

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Buçuk Bölümde Dünya Tarihi (1989) ve Salman Rushdie'nin Geceyarısı Çocukları (1980) romanların her ikisi de eğer kişisel öyküleri ile "tekil" tarihi şekillendiren ve yeniden yapılandıran öteki, ek-santrik, dışlanmış, görünmeyen, kirli, anormal, kurban ve sıradan insanlar tarafından tarih yeniden yazılırsa ne olacağını sorgulayarak—biri latifeci diğeri de büyüü gerçekçi bir yolla—tarihsel gerçekleri ele alırlar. Barnes ve Rushdie'nin sunduğu, büyük tarih veya ulusal tarihle karşılıklı ilişkili olan birçok olası taraflı tarihleri ve kişisel (eril-dişil) öyküleri açımlayan tümleyici doğası ile "tekil" dünya tarihinden ziyade "herhangi bir" dünya tarihidir. Bu makale, Barnes ve Rushdie'nin, okuyucuların tarihin tarafsızlığı ve doğruluğu hakkındaki varsayımları sorgulamasına neden olan gerçekçi ve kurgusal tarih arasındaki çizgiyi bulanıklaştırarak alternatif bir tarihsel yeniden yazımı nasıl tasvir ettiğini inceliyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Postmodern Tarihyazımsal Üstkurğu, Yeni Tarihçilik, Alternatif Tarih, Kısmi Tarih, Kurgusal Tarih, Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie

*We are no longer able to think about absolute and unquestionable "facts"
or "truths" of history, speaking now of "histories" instead of history...
We ask: how have we, or do we, give meaning to events through
interpretation?*

Brenda K. Marshall

1. INTRODUCTION

Postmodernism, "for all its talk of difference, plurality, heterogeneity," is generally regarded as a denial of "unity, identity, totality, [and] universality" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 25). Hans Bertens claims that "in most concepts and in practically all recent concepts of postmodernism the matter of ontological uncertainty is absolutely central" (1986, p. 46), so it is some kind of denial of essentialist order and the absolute truth. Postmodernism favors plurality in everything: plural identity, plural truth, multiculturalism, multilingualism, multiple stories, and multiple histories. In this respect, as the postmodern approach gives importance to the possibility of multiple truths rather than one single or universal truth, the perception of history is one of its concerns, so and "history in the postmodern moment becomes histories [multiple stories] and questions" (Marshall, 1992, p. 4). Lyotard characterizes postmodernity with smaller and little narratives—"petit récits" in contrast to modernism's grand totalizing narratives, that is, rather than universal histories, he favors small stories—"petites histoires" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 564). As postmodernism deals with particular small (hi)stories "not told, retold, untold" as well as "forgotten, hidden, invisible, considered unimportant, changed, eradicated" (Marshall, 1992, p. 4), postmodern writing challenges the authority of the truth by underlining alternative or partial histories. In this respect, this study aims to handle how some postmodern historical fictional works make readers question the assumptions about history in terms of its objectivity and truthfulness.

One of the most critical “trends in contemporary British fiction is the attempt to address and rewrite narratives of the past” (Bentley, 2008, p. 128). According to The Random House Unabridged Dictionary, history is defined as “a continuous, systematic, narrative of past events as relating to a particular people, country, period, person, etc., usually written as a chronological account” (1993). However, in postmodern historical novels, as Raman Selden and Peter Widdowson state, there are no stable, fixed, or “single ‘history,’ only discontinuous and contradictory ‘histories’” (1993, p. 163). Besides, McHale states that “the dominant of postmodernist fiction is ontological” (2004, p. 10) and like ontology, which describes a/any universe or a plurality of universes, postmodern fiction talks about “a” history, plural histories, or many stories rather than the totalizing nature of “the” history. Thus, history cannot be described as one solid form or as a stable history but a collection of fragmented histories. In this way, most historiographic novels such as Julian Barnes’s *A History of the World in 10^{1/2} Chapters* (1989) and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1980) deconstruct “the” history and contribute to the postmodernist challenge to history. This paper demonstrates how these fragmented histories or personal stories are interrelated to the history within the postmodern historiographic novels by Barnes and Rushdie.

Stephen Greenblatt initiated a new critical movement and introduced a new critical school in 1980 that he called “New Historicism,” which has become one of the postmodernist critical approaches. New historicist critics are concerned with “the role of the historical context in interpreting literary texts and the role of literary rhetoric in interpreting history” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 4). New historicism does not consider history a neutral knowledge, and literature is not an expression of historical knowledge. Jean Howard claims that “literature is an agent in constructing a culture’s sense of reality” (1986, p. 25), and for new historicism, “the object of study is not the text and its context, not literature and its history, but rather literature in history” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 3). So, we cannot separate literature from history because both have powerful effects on each other and play a role in interpreting the other. McHale argues that “the postmodernists fictionalize history, but by doing so they imply that history itself may be a form of fiction” (2004, p. 96). By regarding this, Doctorow defines that “history is a kind of fiction in which we live and hope to survive, and the fiction is a kind of speculative history...by which the available data for the composition is seen to be greater and more various in its sources than the historian supposes” (1983, p. 25). That is, history and fiction combine with each other, and the historiographic metafiction both “install and then blur the line

between fiction and history” (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 113) or fact and fiction.

In the same way, McHale states that “in postmodernist revisionist historical fiction, history and fiction exchange places, history becoming fictional and fiction becoming ‘true’ history—and the real world seems to get lost in the shuffle” (2004, p. 96). However, neither literature nor history can represent reality better than the other, and as new historicists claim, “no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths, nor expresses inalterable human nature” (Veese, 1989, p. xi). Likewise, Kubilay Geçikli asserts that new historicism “remains doubtful of canonical and formal historical accounts, focuses on the history of those who were not allowed to speak throughout history” (2016, p. 173). Hence, we can say that real events and fiction take place together in history, which leads us to question whether history is written partially or not.

History is expected to be convincing, but we cannot be sure if it tells the absolute truth, so we must take into consideration that there might always be alternative histories instead of “the” history. Sometimes history may not reveal the ultimate truth but becomes just a mere reflection of the real events. Truth is not a stable category that can be known objectively, so; historians might interpret the significance of the past for the present by considering the power relations. Accordingly, “[n]ew historicism is a mode of critical interpretation which privileges power relations as the most important context for texts of all kinds” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 6). Moreover, as Taniyan asserts, “in the postmodern age, it seems naive to believe in representing ‘what actually happened’” as the historian’s personal traits, his ideological position, his ambitions, are important in understanding the version he proposes” (2015, pp. 55-56). Because all historians are subjects like other people, new historicism cannot talk about any possible objective history writing. Besides, similar to the postmodern concern with the multiplicity of truth and rejection of the ultimate truth, new historicism has doubts of the objectivity of history-writing. Therefore, new historicism is doubtful about the reliability of historical accounts because there is not one particular truth but multiple truths and alternative ones in postmodern historiographic fiction.

History can be told partially from the eyes of the historian, or the historian himself can tell the events from the perspective of the authority and the victors. Marxist critics regard historicism as the stories of the victors and ruling class or the dominant power. Derek Walcott claims that history writing as a kind of fiction “depends on whether we write this fiction through the memory of hero or of victim” (2003, p. 371). Michel Foucault, who has a significant influence on new historicism, echoes Nietzsche’s

critique of history as a “suprahistorical perspective” with his argument about history which “always encourages subjective recognitions,” thereby, the power which is associated with the truth, in Foucault’s terms, creates “historian’s history” as a kind of neutral truth but it is actually “apocalyptic objectivity” (1977, p. 152). Foucault claims that power relation is the determining factor of all kinds of knowledge, and in terms of historical knowledge, it plays an important role as well: “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119). Walter Benjamin sees history writing as a kind of power thoroughly in the hands and under the control of historians (Brannigan, 1998, pp. 37-42), and this leads to a problem in the objectivity of history writing. As Althusser and Benjamin claim, the truth is “simply a version of events preferred, indeed imposed, by the dominant or ruling group in society” (Brannigan, 1998, pp. 42). Thus, we can say that in postmodern philosophy, there is no ultimate truth, reality, and history.

Postmodern historicism is not as Fredric Jameson argues, “the disappearance of a sense of history” (1998, p. 20) but a new criticism of the totalitarian authority of the grand-perspective history. I argue that it is the death of “the” history and birth of “a” history as an alternative version or many small partial histories. Linda Hutcheon coined the term “historiographic metafiction” as a new form of historical novel and also a characteristic of postmodernism in her *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988). In this new perception of history, which also echoes New Historicism, the writing of history aims to “narrate past events in such a way that events seem to narrate themselves” (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 92). Barnes’s *History of the World in 10^{1/2} Chapters* and Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, personal stories narrate “the” general history, and this new form of fiction includes rewriting or representing the past both in fiction and in history. As the word ‘histoire’ in French means both history and story, Barnes and Rushdie present us these two words within their historiographic novels, and we see historical references as well as historical personages in their postmodern fiction. In other words, historical contexts or history are reconstructed and reinstalled in these fictions that have both historiography and the novel form. While classical historical fiction follows a general historical process and the protagonists are also a general type, postmodern historiographic metafiction follows a particular story and the protagonists are “the ex-centrics, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history” (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 114). Hence, we can say that new historical fiction challenges the

objectivity, neutrality, and impersonality of history because it becomes subjective, partial, and personal.

Besides, new historicism emphasizes the intersection of literature with historical anecdotes and with the cultural and personal experiences of ordinary people. Instead of mentioning the critical historical events and/or figures, new historicist studies or historiographic metafiction focus on the lives of ordinary people at a particular historical period or age. The anecdotes “thereby expose history” and are therefore suitable narratives for new historicist studies in that they provide a comprehensive understanding in limited space (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2020, p. 50). New historicists tell stories of the unknown ordinary people, and the style of stories in the novels is similar to that of the anecdotal style of writing. That is, Rushdie and Barnes tell only parts of the characters’ lives, and their stories do not prepare the reader for what is going to happen because history is the pieces from the daily lives of these people that are narrated.

Moreover, Hutcheon claims that “the interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both ‘authentic’ representation and ‘inauthentic’ copy alike, and the very meaning of artistic originality is as forcefully challenged as is the transparency of historical referentiality” (2003, p. 110). In this way, she questions the received stories of history by claiming that postmodern fiction has a desire to go back to the past in order to review the recorded histories, so she names postmodern as “ahistorical” (2003, p. 87). Hutcheon states that postmodernism faces the “nightmare history” of modernism that problematizes history, and the postmodern “reinstalls historical contexts as significant and even determining, but in so doing, it problematizes the entire notion of historical knowledge” (2003, pp. 88-9). Concerning this, history is always narrated from the perspective of those who write it, and because it is difficult to be objective for human beings, the history he writes or tells becomes (hi)story or (her)story. Furthermore, as Aristotle states in his *Poetics*, history tells just “what has happened, the other [poetry] what may happen,” and therefore, he sees art (poetry) as “higher thing than history” (2008, p. 17). Therefore, the mode of writing is “limited to the representation of the contingent, and the particular” (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 108). In this respect, personal stories are higher than history. Unlike history, the personal stories in the postmodern historiographic metafiction tell what somebody tells about what happened, so we can say that personal story creates partial histories rather than “the” history.

2. JULIAN BARNES'S *A HISTORY OF THE WORLD IN 10^{1/2} CHAPTERS*

Hutcheon describes historiographic metafiction as “those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (2003, p. 5). History cannot be successful in telling the other's stories because of its partiality, not reflecting the ultimate reality. Hence, historical accounts can be partial and subjective, changing from person to person, from victor to the victim, from successful to failed one. We cannot separate fiction and history from each other, so we can say that postmodern fiction can be a kind of history and that each historical text can be a kind of fiction. We cannot talk about a whole (hi)story as in classical history but many histories/stories. Like in history, in every fiction, we cannot be sure if there is one reality and truth about an event or any individual. So, we can conclude that every kind of fiction, especially historical fiction can be changed according to the narrator's perspective, and a historian who is also a fiction writer may fail to capture the reality by telling her/his own version of events subjectively/partially. Julian Barnes's *A History of the World in 10^{1/2} Chapters* is, as the title indicates, a fictional portrayal of world history. However, it does not tell “the” grand totalizing history but petite personal (hi)stories. In other words, in the novel, “there is no ‘the’ history- there are only histories” (Moseley, 1997, p. 109). Richard Locke comments on the complicated effect of the title as:

comic grandiosity is apparent from its aggressive title. A history, then, not fiction; divided with confident precision into chapters, though we note the humours, if whimsical precision “10½.” The title suggests a book that will flaunt genres, categories of communication, numbers that don't neatly conform to our devotion to the order of ten. This self-advertising title is a boast that mocks itself by calling attention to its literary and cognitive form (1989, p. 42).

Barnes collects these ten independent stories as a whole, and his style suggests that “history is just a series of competing, perhaps overlapping, stories” (Moseley, 1997, p. 135). In this respect, we can say that the novel is not an overview of world history, but Barnes' stories strongly give historical knowledge related to real historical accounts.

Besides, new historicism does not believe in causality in history and regards history as a history of coincidences. About this, as Buxton claims, “[f]or Barnes, the history of the world is a continuing series of ironic

coincidences and unlucky accidents” (2000, p. 60). That is, the ten chapters demonstrate the alternative versions of history, and Barnes does not create a relationship between the events as history indeed has no cohesive context. The only linking elements between those ten and half chapters are that each chapter contains oceans, rivers, streams, or in other words, we see a variety of vessels as “voyages of salvation” (Moseley, 1997, p. 134). For example, throughout the book, we see references to Noah’s Ark or the woodworm, which shows how history repeats itself with some coincidences and unlucky accidents. Noah’s Ark sails throughout the novel and all the ships in the novel are Ark like vessels as human lifeboats; the ship in “The Visitors,” the Titanic and St. Louis of “Three Stories,” the sailboat carrying “The Survivor” and raft of the Medusa in “Shipwreck.”

As Buxton claims, Barnes’s novel “is an interrogation of grand narrative, rather than an acquiescent surrender to its historical force” (2000, p. 57). Salman Rushdie also finds that “the novel as footnote to history, as subversion of the given, as brilliant, elaborate doodle around the margins of what we know we think about what we think we know. This is fiction as critique” (1991, p. 241). So, we can say that Barnes, in his text, tells a history or histories by questioning the truthfulness of the history and it is a postmodernist work “with the radical skepticism about knowledge, truth, and referentiality that implies” (Moseley, 1997, p. 120). In other words, in writing a history of the world, Barnes picks up some of the stories from history and narrates an alternative understanding of history by weaving historical themes and events in a fictional way that his historiography challenges to classical historicism. There are some differences between the old historicism and new historicism or historical novel and historiography; the former deals with more details, a chain of events, while the latter only offers rough outlines by dealing with the daily lives of ordinary people. Also, old historical narratives include historical progress in a linear way, and they “invariably privilege the perspectives and interests of the historical victors” (Buxton, 2000, p. 59). Postmodern fiction writers do not care to remain loyal to historical records or official history because they create their own histories through their own selection of stories. In other words, postmodern fiction writers have the right to tell their own versions of histories and question the credibility of history. That is, we cannot deny the existence of the past but question the credibility and truthfulness of the historical accounts. There is not any external truth in these postmodern fictions but just self-references and “apocryphal or alternative history” (McHale, 2004, p. 91). Whose history can survive or whose truth is told is an essential point in the novel, so we cannot be sure about the real version of

the story. So, postmodern historical fiction may tell the alternative versions of the history, hidden or lost parts of the history rather than just the stories of the victors.

Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt claim that they want “to find in the past real bodies and living voices, and if we knew that we could not find these—the bodies having long moldered away and the voices fallen silent—we could at least seize upon those traces that seemed to be close to actual experience” (2020, p. 30). So, we can say that new historicism is interested in otherized and silenced groups that have not been allowed to raise their voices throughout history because understanding the other or alternative history is essential to understand the central. For example, mad people (Kath), guilty ones (hijackers), other creatures (woodworm), inferior people (Jews, Arabs), uncivilized people (native tribes) are those whose stories are rewritten in Barnes’s new historicism in *A History of the World in 10^{1/2} Chapters*. That is, personal stories of people and history are accounts of power relations.

Barnes’s history portrays class discrimination as “the” history itself by showing binary oppositions in terms of power relations such as clean/unclean, normal/abnormal, English/Jews, healthy/sick, women/men. Kath Ferris answers the reason for this separation in the fourth chapter as: “Everything is connected, even the parts we don’t like, especially the parts we don’t like” (Barnes, 2012, p. 83). That is, we sometimes omit or hide the parts that we do not like, as what history does. In the first chapter, *The Stowaway*, we see the separation of the animals into clean and unclean classes. Noah’s family is claimed to favor the clean animals, so their cleanness becomes their doom when the history is told by the clean when the unseen and unclean woodworm like a new history rewriter reveals an alternative reality of “the” history. However, in the novel, the unclean one, the woodworm, tells the alternative history of Noah. Likewise, the passengers in *The Visitors* are separated according to their nationalities by the hijackers. The same type of discrimination is seen in *Three Simple Stories* that some of the doomed Jews are planned to be saved; “but how would you choose the 250 who were to be allowed off the Ark? Who would separate the clean from the unclean?” (Barnes, 2012, p. 184). Then, when the Titanic was sinking, we see the separation of women and children from men (first women and children). Next, in the chapter *Upstream*, South American natives are regarded as primitive and unclean who are “riddled with diseases” (Barnes, 2012, p. 200), so they face the same type of discrimination by being separated from the white Europeans. Then, in the *Shipwreck* of Medusa, “the healthy were separated from the unhealthy like

the clean from the unclean” in order to relieve themselves from suffering, so they cast the unhealthy into the sea (Barnes, 2012, p. 121). The binary opposition of normal and abnormal is also indicated in *The Survivor*: Kath, who has mental issues, is regarded as abnormal because of her escapism, sailing away from the destruction of the world at the time of Chernobyl and another nuclear incident, the Cuba crisis (1962). Thus, we cannot be sure that “the” history is objective when it is written or told by the dominant power or the rulers. The novel questions what would happen if the history is told by the unclean, unseen, victim, unhealthy, abnormal, mad, the other, women and children, that is, by the weak ones.

Postmodernist historical fiction tells what would happen if events have taken an entirely different course. As a postmodernist novelist, Barnes exposes an alternative version of the historical knowledge, and the first example of this partial historical knowledge is seen in the first chapter *The Stowaway*, which tells a new version of the Biblical history about the Noah’s Ark. The history of Noah’s Ark and the flood, which is the basis for the entire novel, is told from a stowaway woodworm’s point of view. In other words, the story is retold through the eyes of the unseen and unclean woodworm, which is one of the “Not Wanted on Voyage” (Barnes, 2012, p. 7). In this chapter, we see the self-reflexive and critical voice of the woodworm who claims that his story is different from historical Biblical account, stressing his version is supposed to be trustworthy or in other words, he wants the reader to believe his version of (hi)story rather than “the” history which is written by the victors, or in this case, Noah as the religious authority:

Now, I realize that accounts differ. Your species has its much repeated version, which still charms even sceptics; while the animals have a compendium of sentimental myths... (animals) were chosen, they endured, they survived: its normal for them to gloss over the awkward episodes, to have convenient lapses of memory. But I am not constrained in that way. I was never chosen. In fact, like several other species, I was specifically not chosen. I was a stowaway; I too survived; I escaped (getting off was no easier than getting on); and I have flourished...When I recall the Voyage, I feel no sense of obligations; gratitude puts no smear of Vaseline on the lens. My account you can trust (Barnes, 2012, p. 4).

By these lines, Barnes depicts that a petite unseen animal rewrites an alternative version of history. With nothing to lose or gain, the stowaway claims that his story is the most accurate one because he insists that much of the Ark’s history is untrue, yet is presented to make historians and Noah’s

people look good. We learn the historical account from the story of the woodworm that Noah's Ark, which is a Biblical vessel, is built by Noah, God's chosen, in order to save his people and animals from the flood and the wicked world into a new and fresh existence, but it is "more like a prison ship" (Barnes, 2012, p. 4). The woodworm claims that "What the hell do you think Noah and his family ate in the Ark? They ate *us*, [animals] of course" (Barnes, 2012, p. 13). In this alternative history, Noah has an unpleasant personality, and the real role of the raven and the length of the flood are omitted from the biblical account. The woodworm argues that the trip took four years, not 150 days, as it was claimed: "it rained for forty days and forty nights? Well, naturally it didn't... No, it rained for about a year and a half, by my reckoning. And the waters were upon the earth for a hundred and fifty days? Bump that up to about four years...Your species has always been hopeless about dates" (Barnes, 2012, pp. 4-5). Also, he claims that the Ark was more or less a flotilla with eight vessels rather than just one mighty ship as known. That is, from the mouth of the woodworm, it is portrayed that history can be modified according to the needs and desires, which makes the history subjective, and that real historical events may turn out interpreted versions for one's point of view:

You aren't too good with the truth, either, your species. You keep forgetting things, or you pretend to [...] I can see there might be a positive side to this willful averting of the eye: ignoring the bad things makes it easier for you to carry on. But ignoring the bad things makes you end up believing that bad things never happen. You are always surprised by them. It surprises you that guns kill, that money corrupts, that snow falls in winter. Such naivety can be charming; alas, it can also be perilous (Barnes, 2012, p. 29).

Moreover, he also states that Noah was not nearly as devout or holy as one is led to believe: "Noah – what points is there in not telling you the truth? – was bad-tempered, smelly, unreliable, envious, and cowardly. He wasn't even a good sailor" (Barnes, 2012, p. 16). Noah is referred to as a drunken rogue, but in comparison to others, Noah was a stand-up guy: "You've always been led to believe that Noah was sage, righteous and God-fearing, and I've already described him as a hysterical rogue with a drink problem? [...] Noah was pretty bad, but *you should have seen the others*. It came as little surprise to us that God decided to wipe the slate clean" (Barnes, 2012, p. 8). Noah is being portrayed as God's chosen ones, the one that would save humankind as well as the beasts, though Noah is shown as being an ill-tempered drunken rogue with few navigational skills by the woodworm. The last example given by the woodworm about the untruthfulness of Noah's

history is the story of the raven and dove. When the Ark lands mountaintop, a raven and a dove are sent to check the level of waters, and again, the narrator denies the history by claiming that it is the raven that finds the land:

Now, in the version that has come down to you, the raven has a very small part; it merely flutters hither and thither, to little avail, you are led to conclude. The dove's three journeys, on the other hand, are made a matter of heroism. We weep when she finds no rest for the sole of her foot; we rejoice when she returns to the Ark with an olive leaf. You have elevated this bird, I understand, into something of symbolic value. So let me just point this out: the raven always maintained that he found the olive tree; that he brought a leaf from it back to the Ark; but Noah decided it was 'more appropriate' to say that the dove had discovered it (Barnes, 2012, p. 25-26). And the narrator claimed that after that event the raven "felt hurt and betrayed at this instant rewriting of history" (Barnes, 2012, p. 25). He stated that the reason of the sad croak in the raven's voice is because of this dissatisfaction and disappointment and by contrast the dove began to sound well from that moment.

In the chapter, *The Wars of Religion*, we see a partial testimony. In the sixteenth century France, around the time of the Inquisition such a lawsuit could take place, the woodworms are put on trial and accused of eating the leg of the throne on which "Hugo, Bishop of Besançon" (Barnes, 2012, p. 63) was sitting and so causing him to "fall like mighty Daedalus from the heavens of light into the darkness of imbecility" (Barnes, 2012, p. 64). Barnes presents us with a series of trial transcripts like historical documents, but the story ends with partial judgment because of the missing part that the court documents had been eaten by the woodworms who became unhappy with the outcome of the case. The novel depicts that like the woodworms, the history writers may hide some parts of the events, or like the court, they may support the powerful ones but not the weak ones as woodworms. Thus, the reality of "the" history changes from nation to nation or person to person as long as it is shaped by one side's interpretations. The woodworms in these two different chapters portray the two sides of a coin through the historical accounts that while one side's history defends an event, the other side's history condemns it. So, there might be multiple sides of history, even a religious account.

In *Project Ararat*, the personal story of Spike Tiggler and the historical account of James Irwin, who is the eighth person to walk on the moon, have similarities. Besides his success as an astronaut with NASA, he wrote a book named *More Than Earthlings An astronaut's thoughts for*

Christ-centered living, by which he is perhaps most notable for his Christian work. He thought that his experiences in space had made the presence of God even more real to him than before, and then he led several expeditions to Mount Ararat, Turkey, in order to search for the remains of Noah's Ark. However, in Barnes's fictionalized narrative, Tiggler's personal story and the history of Irwin differs in some ways. The first one is that Irwin's history takes place three years before Tiggler's story; Tiggler starts his fun for his expedition one year after his trip, but Irwin starts his Ararat expedition in 1982, ten years after his space experience. Both Irwin and Tiggler are astronauts and experience God spiritually when they stepped on the moon. However, Tiggler hears God's voice, who suggests that he should go to the Month Ararat in Turkey and find the Noah's Ark there. During his expedition on the month, Tiggler finds a human skeleton assuming that he has found Noah's remains. However, later he learns that the skeleton belongs to a very old woman, Amanda Fergusson, whose story is told in the chapter titled *The Mountain* and who is disillusioned by finding a vineyard cultivated by Noah himself and dies in a cave on her journey to find the Ark on the Ararat. This chapter depicts how historical facts might turn out the fallacy, like how religious records or feelings might be false representations.²

The "Three Simple Stories" are also based on historical accounts, the story of Titanic, the stories of Jonah and James Bartley, and the story of Jews during the Holocaust. The narrator of the first story, an eighteen-year-old student, meets with Lawrence Beesley, who is one of the survivors of the Titanic disaster. Beesley has managed to escape from the ship in women's clothing (as priority was given to women and children) just before it goes down. Beesley is so taken with his tale that he has written a book about the Titanic, but of course, "he made no mention of female dress in his book *The Loss of the Titanic*" (Barnes, 2012, p. 174). Although Beesley does not live the disaster actively because of his cowardliness, "he would be telephoned by newsmen eager for him to imagine the fate of the victims" (Barnes, 2012, p. 173). Later, Beesley is hired to consult on a movie named "A Night to Remember," a period piece about the Titanic, and he insists on being on the "ship" to be able to feel the disaster once again, but the director refuses him. Then, Beesley dresses up and stands at the rail but once again, he is taken off the boat before it sinks "and so, for the second time in his life, Lawrence Beesley found himself leaving the Thank just before it was due to go down"

² There are also some references to the historical events such as to Hiroshima bomb in 1945, the Korean War, the Russians' first Sputnik and Project Mercury, mammoths found in glaciers, and the strategic importance of Ararat: "or Agri Dagi...had been the meeting-point of three great empires-Russia, Persia and Turkey" (Barnes 270).

(Barnes, 2012, p. 175). The narrator ends his story by saying he was “familiar with Marx’s elaboration of Hegel: history repeats itself, once as a tragedy, and twice as a farce” (Barnes, 2012, p. 175). Hence, Barnes tells us the tragic history of the Titanic from a different perspective through the personal story of Beesley, who is a coward survivor of the Titanic. This part depicts how a historian can distort the facts for the benefit of one’s side.

The second story is based on the Biblical story of Jonah, and Barnes shows us this Biblical history through the personal story of James Bartley, who shares the same fate with Jonah. According to the Biblical narrative, God tells Jonah: “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against: for their wickedness is come up before me” (The Holy Bible, Jonah 1:2, 585), but he is hit by a terrible storm at his Voyage on the sea. Jonah is thrown overboard by the sailors claiming that the reason for the bad luck is Jonah, which causes him to be swallowed by a big fish. Jonah finds himself on the land after the fish vomits him after three days. In the text, the author tells a similar tale about James Bartley, a man who had been lost at sea and eaten by a whale in 1891 but was found alive when the whale was killed. Through the personal story of Bartley, Barnes gives the historical account of Jonah as the history repeats itself once again. History repeats itself, but it changes each time, and history, like myth or religion, is full of incredible stories and victories, but they might also be credible for some others. Which one we prefer to believe in is important because there are many similar histories or alternative histories. We can question whether the story of Bartley is more accurate or more factual than that of Jonah. Both lack scientific credibility because once inside a whale, a man cannot possibly live; he may drown, suffocate, or have already died of a heart attack. In case the readers still reject to believe this alternative story, the narrator comments that “one day there will be a case, one which even you will believe, of sailor lost in a whale’s mouth and recovered from its belly; maybe not after a half day, perhaps after only half an hour” which is maybe more credible for science (Barnes, 2012, p. 180). This chapter shows that some incredible or unreliable stories might be a part of factual histories by alternative recordings.

The third story is based on an actual historical event that tells the Voyage of the damned, and it is about how The St. Louis ship is prevented from landing on the countries just because of carrying Jewish passengers.³ Following the historical account, after The St. Louis sailed from Hamburg to

³ Barnes also verifies this tale’s historical basis in his authors note like a real historian that “The third part of Chapter 7 takes its facts from *The Voyage of the Damned* by Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan-Witts (Hodder, 1974)” (Barnes 310). However, again fact and fiction blur.

Cuba with 937 passengers, most of whom were Jews seeking asylum from Nazi persecution, the Germans pretend to have some sympathy by letting them sail away although they know that the Jews will not find a place to land. When the ship arrived at the Cuba border, their passports were denied. After the ship sailed from port to port, eventually, the St. Louis docked in Antwerp after forty days and forty nights. Finally, the “Belgian government announced that it would admit 200 of the passengers” and “Holland agreed to take 194, Britain 350, and France 250” (Barnes, 2012, p. 188). The novel depicts that the powerful authority writes the history eliminating the weaker from the history of the world.

However, another chapter, *The Visitors*, tells the cruelty of the same race, Jews, towards Arabs. Barnes, using two opposite perspectives of history, depicts that either side can be the victim in two different times of “the” history, which can show up itself in the opposite direction that one’s victim might be another’s cruel. In this part, Barnes gives a number of differences between his fictional character Franklin Hughes’s personal story and the historical account, but these differences also give references to the actual history. In Hughes’s personal story, an Anti-Zionist Arab group called a “Black Thunder” hijacked the cruise ship Santa Euphemia, and according to the real historical event, a Palestinian group hijacked an Italian cruise ship, the *Achille Lauro*, in the Mediterranean in 1985. The hijack in Barnes’s story depicts the hijack as a pre-planned action, but the historical accounts for the hijack of the *Achille Lauro* show that it was not planned because the Palestinians “in a state of panic and confusion” decided suddenly to hijack the ship when their arms were discovered. In fact, we cannot even be sure of the real state of them; it was claimed to be in this way by the Palestine Liberation Front, who apologized for this event (PLF). Moreover, while the historical accounts show that only one passenger, an American tourist named Leon Klinghoffer, was killed, Barnes’s history records the death of more passengers and also Arabs when the hijack is ended, and the ship is saved by “American Special Forces” (Barnes, 2012, p. 58). The last difference about the demands of the hijackers shows how history can change from the different recording of the countries; while the hijackers of the real *Achille Lauro* wanted fifty Palestinians to be released from the prison of Israeli, Barnes’s hijackers demand three of their members be released from the European prisons. This scene shows how politics play a role in history writing, so truth changes according to whose perspective the history is written.

The novel also shows how history classifies some groups according to their religion, beliefs, race, color and ethnicity through the alternative

version of the same scene when the group classifies the passengers according to their passports to put them in order for the executions: “Zionist Americans first. Then other Americans. Then British. Then French, Italians and Canadians” (Barnes, 2012, p. 57). Then, Hughes, as a history lecture, is forced by the Anti-Zionist group to deliver a talk from the Palestinian version of history on how the Israeli persecute the Palestinians and to explain the necessity for their execution. The group wants the passengers at least to learn “how they are mixed up in history. What that history is” by showing “a historical view of the matter” (Barnes, 2012, p. 51). Then, Hughes lectures “a” history of the world to explain the reason of the terrorists’ attract; “the regrettable necessity of violence, a lesson taught the Arabs by the Jews, just as it had been taught the Jews by the Nazis” (Barnes, 2012, p. 56). The Arab leader says that “[i]n the Middle East, we must understand, there are no civilians any more. The Zionists understand this, the Western governments do not. We, alas, are not civilians. The Zionists have made this happen” (Barnes, 2012, p. 56). That is why they call themselves “freedom fighters” and Hughes also never calls them terrorists but visitors. This also shows how perception of history changes from the eyes of westerns and eastern or villains or victims. This scene shows that what the Jews have learned from history is that “the only way to survive was to be like the Nazis” (Barnes, 2012, p. 55), thus, terrorists/freedom fighters indicate that the philosophy of history is a kind of destructive force, so in order to survive like the Nazis or the Zionists who learned their lesson, they need to kill: “The world is only advanced...by killing people” (Barnes, 2012, p. 50-51). Barnes relates this historical fact to the reason for his fictional Anti-Zionist group’s actions; some survive in the destruction of the other as Hughes does. This chapter depicts how history is written by the victors, but yesterday’s oppressed victims might be cruel oppressors one day, and this chain of cruelty continues to spread like a virus. So, history repeats the vicious circle unless the world rewrites other possible histories.

Next, Barnes, in chapter *Upstream*, shows us the historical knowledge about the native Indians whose tribe lives near the Mocapra River. The story consists of letters written by an actor named Charlie, who records a film in the jungle near the Mocapra in Venezuela to his girlfriend. The historical reference in this chapter is about Jesuit missionaries who were looking for ways to return back to the Orinoca many years ago. On their way, they met with the Indian natives from whom they wanted to build a raft. However, the missionaries drowned when the raft turned upside down, and the Indians escaped into the jungle and disappeared. Like a historical book, the film tries to refresh the same event, and the Indians are wanted to

play their own ancestors. However, they cannot make a distinction between real-life and acting. Although the crew relates this to their primitiveness, Charlie thinks that “they’re a sort of post-acting civilization, maybe the first one on the earth” (Barnes, 2012, p. 203). Barnes demonstrates how a personal story gives information about a nation’s or a tribe’s history from a personal perspective. Charlie regards Indians as the man of his word: “there they were, four of them, just where they said they’d be, in a clearing on a bend in the river” and describes them as “naked as nature intended, standing very upright which still didn’t make them very tall and looking at us without any fear” (Barnes, 2012, p. 196). In other words, unlike what history tells, Charlie shows Indians as honest and open, and they appear to live clean lives. Charlie counters the historical records which depict natives unclean.

Barnes, through the personal story of Charlie, demonstrates Indians as more modern and purer as nature. Although all the people think of the Indians as “fantastically primitive just because they don’t have radios,” Charlie thinks that “they’re fantastically advanced and mature because they don’t have radios” because “they’re teaching me [him] something without knowing they’re doing it” (Barnes, 2012, p. 200). Charlie begins to see things about the Indians from a more objective perspective, and the most important thing about the Indians Charlie realizes is that they “never lie, same as they don’t know how to act. No pretence. Now I don’t think that’s primitive at all, I think it’s bloody mature” and he relates this to living in nature as it never lies too (Barnes, 2012, p. 205). Because of that reason, they repeated the history by capsizing the raft, which caused Matt to drown, and finally, they disappeared like in the past; they could not understand that they were just acting as they regard everything told as real. Taking all, Barnes demonstrates that Charlie’s perspective of the Indian tribe tells us how world history is shaped by the conqueror, colonizer, ruler, western, and the clean.

The chapter *Survivor* also shows two alternative perceptions of reality or history. In one reality, Kath Ferris takes a voyage with her cats (like Noah) in order to escape the destruction of the world at the time of the Chernobyl disaster and find a new land to survive. Kath is sure that she is the lone human survivor escaping from a nuclear disaster and thinks that her conversations with the doctor are the result of her imagination. On the other hand, in the alternative version of her reality, the novel shows that the doctor is sure that she is delusional and suffering psychosomatic illness as a consequence of the radiation sickness. The doctor tells her, “you make up a story to cover the facts you don’t know or can’t accept. You keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them” (Barnes, 2012, p. 109). However, as

a reader, we cannot be sure whose version of the story is real when Kath says:

There was a battle here, a war there, a king was deposed, famous men – always famous men, I’m sick of famous men – made events happen [...] I can’t see their connections. I look at the history of the world, which they don’t seem to realize is coming to an end, and I don’t see what they see [...] Who made that happen? Which famous man will claim the credit for that? (Barnes, 2012, p. 97).

This scene is also a criticism of history, which is written by the patriarchy. Barnes shows that history is also mixing the fact and fancy, and we cannot decide which one is real.

In the same way, the *Shipwreck* chapter is also divided into two sections; the historical event about the shipwreck of the Medusa in 1816 and Gericault’s painting of this event, the former telling the history and the latter telling the speculation of it. The first part tells that the members of a flotilla were stranded without food and water on the ship and eventually had to resort to extreme means to survive such as the mutinies and acts of cannibalism that continued until the remaining members of the flotilla were rescued. The second part discusses the way to turn catastrophe into art or, in other words, this second section shows historical moment can be represented partially and; questions if the raft of the Medusa (like any historical event) can be fully represented. Barnes, depicting what Gericault as an artist chooses to omit some parts from the historical representation, claims that it is sometimes impossible to reflect or write everything that happened, so like writers/artists, the historians can omit some parts, and that makes us question the reliability of the history; what happens if the historian has omitted the right one. Gericault omits the mutinies and cannibalism, although those things were alluded to by Gericault, who changes some parts of the real event and paints the events subjectively:

The incident never took place as depicted; the numbers are inaccurate; the cannibalism is reduced to a literary reference; the Father and Son group has the thinnest documentary justification, the barrel group none at all. The raft has been cleaned up as if for the state visit of some queasy-stomached monarch: the strips of human flesh have been housewifed away, and everyone’s hair is as sleek as a painter’s new bought brush (Barnes, 2012, p. 135).

By this scene, Barnes portrays that the historians can change “the” history subjectively from their own point of view, from the side of victors or winners. In this chapter, the event is not reflected in the painting as it was in

the historical accounts. Gericault did not present “the survivor up the mast holding straightened-out-barrel-hoops with handkerchiefs attached to them” but instead painted a man who waves a cloth with the other twenty people on the ship. However, there were only fifteen survivors in reality because “the last fifteen healthy survivors pitched their thirteen wounded comrades into the sea,” so Gericault “dragged some of them back from the deep to help out with his composition” (Barnes, 2012, p. 131). As Bentley claims:

In recent critical theory, the idea of history has been pluralized to accommodate the sense in which accounts of past events are different according to the position from where they are viewed especially in terms of the ideological agendas that may lie behind the presentation of what appears to be an impartial view of historic events (2008, p. 129).

Thus, history is rewritten each time from the different views of historical events. Barnes demonstrates that history, like art/fiction, is the product of the fictive capability of the historian. In other words, Barnes’s history, in Monica Fludernik’s terms, is the “grotesqueness, paradoxicality and incomprehensibility” of the real world. As Barnes states in the half chapter, *Parenthesis*: “we make up a story to cover the facts we don’t know or can’t accept; we keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them” because “our panic and or pain are only eased by soothing fabulation; we call it history” (Barnes, 2012, p. 240). Barnes writes his comments about history, which are parenthetically set off from the rest of the novel in the half chapter. Barnes summarizes the problem of history as such:

History isn’t what happened. History is just what historians tell us. There was a pattern, a plan, a movement, expansion, the march of democracy; it is a tapestry, a flow of events, a complex narrative, connected, explicable. One good story leads to another... And, we the readers of history, the sufferers from history, we scan the pattern for hopeful conclusions, for the way ahead. (2012, p. 240).

According to Barnes, there are “a multiplicity of subjective truths,” but we evaluate these subjective truths and then “fabulate into history, into some God-eyed version of what really happened,” so we cannot talk about the objective truth and “this God-eyed version is fake-charming, impossible fake” (Barnes, 2012, p. 243). Nevertheless, Barnes paradoxically recommends us that we must believe that “objective truth is obtainable; or we must believe that it is 99 percent obtainable; or if we can’t believe this we must believe that 43 percent objective truth is better than 41 percent” because otherwise we can be lost (Barnes, 2012, p. 243). He argues that at

least we must value “one liar’s version,” but the most crucial question is: “whose truth do we prefer, by the way, the victor’s or the victim’s?” (Barnes, 2012, p. 244). The novel depicts that we must still believe in “a” history in order not to be lost. If we don’t believe any version of history, then we “merely surrender to the history of the world and to someone else’s truth” (Barnes, 2012, p. 244).

In the last chapter, *The Dream*, Barnes demonstrates that people need to believe in something in order to find the meaning of life. Barnes states that people need dreams “because you can’t get by without the dream” (Barnes, 2012, p. 307). This chapter indicates that the dream of Heaven may help people endure the violence of history and death because free will is subjective. In an interview with Barnes, he claims that “the way history is remembered and therefore to a certain extent the way history is written about is a matter of taste, but I certainly don’t believe that all tastes are equal, or that taste is any substitute for truth” (Freiburg and Schnitker 1999, p. 58). Still, the novel concludes that we should continue to believe in dreams, wills, Heaven, love, and history or histories in order not to be lost.

3. SALMAN RUSHDIE’S *MIDNIGHTS’ CHILDREN*

The classic historical texts cannot focus on the fantastic historical dictions or magic realistic elements as they focus on the realistic accounts. “Postmodernist fiction, by contrast, seeks to foreground this seam by making the transition from one realm to the other as jarring as possible” (McHale, 2004, p. 90). In this way, in postmodern fiction, we can see both the fantastic and the historical fiction together, and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is a good example of this genre. In other words, in postmodern fiction, we can see the integration of history and fantasy or the combination of historical real and the supernatural. Bentley defines that “the magic realist context that serves to question the status of stories extends to the characters, some of which operate as realistic figures, some with grotesque features and fantastic abilities” (2008, p. 68). Rushdie presents this combination of fantasy (personal history) and national history (India) in his *Midnight’s Children* through the personal story of the protagonist Saleem Sinai. In other words, historical events are told through personal stories.

However, Saleem intentionally makes mistakes concerning a historical fact and deliberately refuses to correct it while writing about a historical event: “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 say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been; in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time.” Then, he

questions himself how his mistake will affect his position as a reliable narrator: “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 rewrite the whole history of my times purely in order to place myself in a central role?” (Rushdie, 2006, pp. 229-230). Like Saleem’s account, in any historical account, there can be mistakes put deliberately. That is why we should always question the credibility or reliability of “the” history. Unlike the classical history that is concluded once the past is written down, new historicism brings out imaginative reconstruction of the past in which history is open to new versions and new alternatives rather than a closed system. Therefore, Saleem presents us an alternative history, in fact, his history, whether the reader will believe the narrator or not:

Because I am rushing ahead at breakneck speed, errors are possible, and overstatements, and jarring alternatives in tone; I’m racing the cracks, but I remain conscious that errors have been made, and that, as my decay accelerates ... the risk of unreliability grows. ... I am learning . . . what happened actually is less important than what the author can manage to persuade his audience to believe. (Rushdie, 2006, p. 263).

These lines are good references depicting the limited and partial reliability of “the” history. As a history writer, Saleem rewrites and retells the history from his subjective point of view, which shows how history and fiction are intervened in each other. He recreates and interprets history in his own way; therefore, his history challenges the official version. In other words, he tells an alternative and partial history and reality through his personal story.

According to the story of Saleem, Indian history since Independence is supernaturally related to the fates of children who are born at the very moment, at midnight when India gained its independence on August 15, 1947, and British colonial rule ended on the land. Saleem states that his unique position is related to “the” history as he “had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my [his] destinies indissolubly chained to those of my [his] country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape. Soothsayers had prophesied me [him], newspapers celebrated my [his] arrival, politicians ratified my [his] authenticity” (Rushdie, 2006, p. 3). In other words, Rushdie demonstrates another version of history through the supernatural personal story of him. Saleem claims that these midnight’s children have supernatural, magical powers, and these characters are well aware of the powerful influence of the events in India on their identities. As supernatural characters, McHale states that “they are symptomatic of the intrinsically fantastic nature of Indian reality; but more than that, they, and

especially their spokesman Saleem, are microcosm of the Indian macrocosm, paralleling or mirroring public history in their private histories" (2004, p. 95). His narratives are related to the history of his own nation so we can find many references to India's history in this novel. That is, the history of Saleem and his family makes parallel references to "the" national history. Even in terms of physical qualities, Saleem resembles India: his nose is like a map of India; he loses parts of his body (his finger, part of his hair) when India loses land through the Pakistan war. As Saleem says, his personal "life has been transmuted into grotesquery by the interruption into it of history" (Rushdie, 2006, p. 57). It shows how history can exist for the colonizers, so his body becomes a partial part of history. In other words, "he is an embodiment of history and no more than a voice" (Dhar, 1993, p. 96). His miraculous power helps him to experience his journey of history since he was born thanks to his supernatural telepathic voice to communicate the other midnight's children born at 1 am on the Independence Day. Thus, Saleem becomes the voice of the (hi)stories himself:

Who what am I? My answer: 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 ... to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world. (Rushdie, 2006, p. 370)

That is, Saleem, as Rushdie's historian, rewrites his own version of history by problematizing the recorded history. Following Hutcheon's notion of historiographic metafiction, in Rushdie's self-reflexive magic realist novel, Saleem reintroduces alternative voices repressed by "the" history. In order to formulate the relationship between past and present, Saleem begins his narration with Aadam Aziz, his pseudo-father. Aziz is the first generation of the colonized India and also is the founder of a family whose son and not real son at the same time will determine Indian history. When Aziz came to India in 1915, he began to examine Naseem through a hole in a sheet and fell in love her by viewing her in parts. The metaphor of the sheet depicts the partiality of history that truth can limitedly be verified in fragments. This leads Saleem to understand both his personal stories and histories only in fragments: "above all the ghostly essence of that perforated sheet, which doomed my mother to learn to love a man in segments, and which condemned me to see my own like—its meanings, its structures—in fragments also" (Rushdie, 2006, p. 32). Thus, we see many references to historical accounts in his fragmentary recording of the past with some incomplete, partial, or missing accounts. When Aziz and Naseem were

married, World War I ended, and they began to live in Amritsar, where the British troops massacred many innocent Indian nationalists on April 13, 1919.

Next, according to historical accounts, a founder of the Free Islam Convocation and a social activist known as the Hummingbird, Mian Abdullah was assassinated in Agra in 1642. Aziz, like the others in that time, became optimistic about India's coming freedom. Meanwhile, in 1946, Saleem's mother Mumtaz married Ahmet Sinai by changing her name to Amina. Then, in 1947 when the tensions between Muslims and Hindus intensified because of the transition of powers as a result of British imperialism, Ahmet's business in Delhi was threatened, and he moved to Bombay when his warehouse burned down. After Independence in 1947 and the birth of midnight's children, Saleem became a symbol of Independence. In 1956, there were confusion and language marches in Maharashtra about the linguistic reorganization of states, and at that time, Saleem's father hit him, and as a result, he developed his ability to of telepathic communication with the other midnight's children. After that, when the Chinese troops attacked India in 1958, Saleem was also attacked at the time of the Midnight's Children Conference. Moreover, in 1965 during the Indo-Pakistani war and India's arrival to the nuclear age, we see Shiva's explosion of Saleem's life. In 1975 at the time of Indira Gandhi's Emergency Rule, Aadam Sinai was born, and 420 midnight's children were in captivity because of the population rule of the government. Finally, 1977 witnessed the defeat of Indira Gandhi's Congress, and the remaining of midnight's children were sterilized by the government. Taking all, not only Saleem's but also Aziz's personal story intersects with the nation's history or the history of the world. However, Saleem explicitly links his life to that of the country's and Rushdie shows that both Saleem and India struggle to establish their identities.

India has become a center of cultural and religious diversity, and so its history is rich and prolific. It also welcomes several languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, and Urdu that turns the country into a multilingual state. Different classes, ethnic groups, races, and religions coexist in India, and because of this plurality, the nation faces multiple diversities, and so does Saleem in his crack personality. For example, Saleem's personal story gives multiple interpretations of the Indian nation, and from the very beginning, he claims himself as crack as the history of India: "I mean quite simply that I have begun to crack all over like an old jug-that my poor body, singular, unlovely, buffeted by *too much history*, subjected to drainage above and drainage below, mutilated by doors, brained

by spittoons, has started coming apart at the seams. In short, I am literally disintegrating..." (Rushdie, 2006, p. 37). And like the Indian nation, Saleem is disintegrating, and neither he nor the new nation has succeeded in coming together in a harmonious form. That is, we see a fragmentary nature of his personal story, and this is the same for Indian history. He explains this correspondence between his life and the Indian nation as:

Your life, which will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own', the Prime Minister wrote, obliging me scientifically to face the question: *In what sense?* How, in what terms, may the career of a single individual be said to impinge on the fate of a nation? I must answer in adverbs and hyphens: I was linked to history both literally and metaphorically, both actively and passively, in what our 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-literally, passively-metaphorically, actively-metaphorically and passively-literally, I was inextricably entwined with my world (Rushdie, 2006, p. 238).

His stories and "the" history began to have a problematic connection, so "the" history becomes small histories. Also, as his story offers a real sense of history which "confirms [their] existence among countless lost events, without a landmark or a point of reference" (Rushdie, 2006, p. 155), like history, Saleem's story cannot tell history objectively because all he relates is personal; he offers his stories to Padma instead of the history itself. Padma becomes the reader or listener of his small (hi)stories. Because he claims himself to be connected to history from his birth, he wants to reveal this connection to people by preserving his memory to construct meaning for future generations, and because of this, he writes his story like a documentary. By creating his stories for Padma, Saleem subverts the continuity and the chronological order or the linearity of "the" history. Unlike history, his story includes multiple plots, even sometimes we see a story within the story. That is, we do not see any coherence or unity but a lot of interruptions for another story or by Padma to add her comments, Saleem says: "Interruptions, nothing but interruptions! The different parts of my somewhat complicated life refuse, with a wholly unreasonable obstinacy, to stay neatly in their separate compartments" (Rushdie, 2006, p. 187). In this respect, we can say that like his native land India, his stories cannot remain whole but split, and Saleem also cannot remain whole himself; he loses some part of his finger as well as a piece of his scalp and hair. In the same way, like the land of India, his identity, as well as his skin, begins to crack. The

more he records every single time of history, his body and identity continue to crack until he becomes partial like the (hi)story. Saleem argues this cracking of the wholeness as:

And I know, Saleem Sinai, intend briefly to endow myself-then with the benefits of hindsight; destroying the unities and conventions of fine writing, I make him cognizant of what was to come, purely so that he can be permitted to think the following thoughts: "O eternal opposition of inside and outside! Because a human being, inside himself, is anything but a whole, anything but homogeneous; all kinds every which thing are jumbled up inside him, and he is one person one minute and another the next. The body, on the other hand, is homogenous as anything... It is important to preserve this wholeness." (Rushdie, 2006, p. 236-7).

That is, Saleem's multiplicity resembles the multiplicity of India. When Saleem loses his memory as well as his multiple subjectivities and becomes a citizen of Pakistan, which was split at that time, he makes a relation between his memory and the history by losing both historical and personal consciousness: "in those days the country's East and West Wings were separated by the unbridgeable land-mass India; but past and present, too, are divided by an unbridgeable gulf" (Rushdie, 2006, p. 351). Derek Walcott claims that "history is fiction, subject to a fitful muse, memory" and adds that "in time every event becomes an exertion of memory and is thus subject to invention" (2003, p. 370). In this respect, we can think the pickle factory as Saleem's memory; he wants to freeze the events because he is very well aware of the fact that memory "selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of event" (Rushdie, 2006, p. 211). We see the subjectivity of both his personal story and "the" history, but in either case, they both create their own reality. For this reason, as he says, "no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own" his own version of Indian history (his story) only belongs to him (Rushdie, 2006, p. 211). Saleem makes a connection between his writing and the pickling process; if a single person can have materials for a whole country so a whole country or the history of a country can be pressed in a single book. He says, "every pickle jar...contains therefore, the most exalted of possibilities: the feasibility of the chutnification of history; the grand hope of pickling time!... I have immortalized my memories, although distortions are inevitable. . . We must live, I'm afraid, with the shadows of imperfection" (Rushdie, 2006, p. 459).

The novel also announces the death of “the” history through the historian role of Saleem, who argues that “for the first time, I feel victim to the temptation of every biographer, to the illusion that since the past exists only in one’s memories and the words which strive vainly to encapsulate them, it is possible to create past events simply by saying they occurred” (Rushdie, 2006, p. 427). Because of the “manipulators who use history as a source of power” (Dhar, 1993, p. 104), some misleading, wrong, missed accounts as well as “distortions are inevitable,” but in order to continue our personal stories, “[w]e must live, I’m afraid, with the shadow of imperfections” (Rushdie, 2006, p. 442). When he finishes his story, he finishes the jars of special chutneys in the factory as well, but he leaves an empty jar that is open to different versions of (hi)story because “the process of revision should be constant and endless” (Rushdie, 2006, p. 460).

4. CONCLUSION

Martha Rozett, in her study of the new historical fiction, *Constructing a World*, claims that “whether or not the novelist will admit to such an intent, an historical [historiographic] novel ‘teaches’ history, and does so with more attention to the values, superstitions, workaday life, pastimes, and material culture of a particular time and place than most textbooks do” (2003, p. 166). She argues that the imaginative postmodern historical novel by representing the history “tells you things you didn’t know or couldn’t possibly learn from a conventional history book...It helps you think about the world in ways that are different from the kind of reflection you would otherwise be capable of” (2003, p. 175). Following her views, we can conclude that postmodern historiographic fiction is the potential to teach history, and from such novels as *Midnight’s Children* and *A History of the World in 10^{1/2} Chapters*, we learn historical accounts from personal stories of ordinary people. In other words, as Brenda K. Marshall states, “Historiographic metafiction does not tell us how to think about a certain event; rather, it says: ‘that is one way of looking at things, now here is another, and another, and another’” (1992, p. 156), the official history leaves its place to multiplicity of subjective histories or stories. Therefore, it is evident that both Salman Rushdie and Julian Barnes deal with historical facts, one in a magical and the other in a playful way that we learn how personal stories both shape and reflect “the” history.

Consequently, postmodern historiographic metafiction like Barnes’s and Rushdie’s “don’t necessarily set out to critique historiography or the traditional methods of historical research as much as they imagine, explore, and narrate alternative understanding of history, often in an effort to compensate for the gaps or areas of neglect in existing narratives”

(Robinson, 2000, p. 163). Uncertainty about seizing the past leads to partial understanding of the historical accounts, and like the characters of the postmodern historiographic metafiction, we look at the history for answers. However, we only find more questions because of this uncertainty because history is a constructed reality like fiction, and both are open-ended and partial. Although history may be subjective, partial, or alternative, we should believe in the truthiness of history, even if there is only one percent chance. On the other side, alternative historical fiction or small stories (petites histories) may be regarded as the secondary source of historical accounts that may reveal the accounts of the hidden, lost, forgotten, excluded, untold, repressed, defeated, and the victim that is “an” alternative version/voice of the history. Therefore, as Barnes claims, we must believe in history just as we must believe in the alternative versions of history because without seeing the world from another point of view, we cannot understand the history of the world.

5. WORKS CITED

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