CONCLUSION

Postmodernism tends to view the past as a vast, inchoate, fragmented, decontextualized, and synchronic congeries of forms, genres, and ideas. Postmodernist treatments of the past and history are typically criticized by historians. For the postmodernists, the past has no reality. History is nothing but a text: the principal problem of historical representation is that of narrativization. When it comes to representing the past, there is no important distinction between fact and fiction. Historical phenomena are best made sense by narrating rather than by model building and causal analysis of chains of events. Discussion on the relationship between history and literature go back to Ranke’s famous criticism of Walter Scott for mixing historical fact with fiction.

Traditional historical fiction, especially in the Victorian era, tries to reflect history faithfully, and plays the role of supplementing history and spreading historical knowledge. It respects verified historical evidence, depicts historical events and figures as truthfully as possible, and is usually written in the historically chronological order. Modern historical fiction explores the nature of historical knowledge, questions the authenticity of historical truth, and internalizes historical events according to the writer’s understanding and interpretation of history. It assumes that history, like fiction, is inevitably subjective to the historian’s personal inclination as well as to the limitation of historical data. Postmodern historical fiction
fictionalizes and appropriates history, and puts history in a subordinate position. It subverts established history by inventing other possibilities of historical development. It retrieves the submerged histories of the historically suppressed or silenced masses, to reveal the hidden power struggle in the establishment of historical knowledge.

The works of the American historian Hayden White, and those of others including Dominick LaCapra, Frank Ankersmit and Patrick Joyce, are often described as part of a shift or movement called “the linguistic turn” that explores the textuality of history. The historians who have initiated the linguistic turn work with ideas from literary theory and argue that, far from seeing literature as the fictional opposite of a factual history, historians should acknowledge their intimate relationship as two forms of writing that create, rather than find, meaning.

Although earlier writers, notably Paul Ricoeur and Roland Barthes, explored the relationship between narrative and history, it is the works of Hayden White that have had a particularly dramatic effect on many historians’ sense of the role and future of their discipline. White argues that historians do not find the meaning of the past by examining the facts, they invent or make meanings through their use of language. They do not reconstruct or translate lived stories into prose stories, but create meaningful narratives. In the construction of their historical narratives, historians
inevitably combine known or found parts (facts) with ultimately unknown and thus imagined/invented wholes.

Emplotment is the literary genre into which the story falls. According to White, every history, even the most “synchronic” of them, will be emplotted in some way. Emplotment is the act of giving something a plot, of putting it within a narrative structure. This is what authors do when they tell stories. This is also what historians do when they write reports. They do not just report the facts - they create a narrative, a story in an attempt to give their data meaning. Creating a plot for something inevitably means leaving some things out and emphasizing others. Emplotment is mediation of pre-understanding, event and story. White states that history fails, if its intention is the objective reconstruction of the past because the process involved is a literary one of interpretative narrative, rather than objective empiricism or social theorizing. His concept of history as narrative, as a literary genre, questions the claims of truth and objectivity in historical work. Semiotic analysis looks for the cultural and psychological patterns that underlie language, art and other cultural expressions. Of the two major traditions in modern semiotic theory, one is grounded in the European tradition led by the Swiss-French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, and the other from the American pragmatic philosophy led by Charles Sanders Peirce. Saussure explained how all elements of a language are taken as components of a larger system of language in use. Peirce investigated different categories
of signs and the manner by which we extract meaning from them. Peirce’s most important contribution is in the area of interpretation. According to him, the meaning making process is an infinite process of interpretation. This process of interpretation involves the consideration of the meaning of a sign in terms of all possible signification possibilities- a sign can be a signal, or an iconic, indexical or symbolic sign, all at the same time.

Roland Barthes’s semiotic theory focuses on the social phenomena of signs, specifically photographs. Barthes theory emphasizes how signs constitute culture and ideologies in particular ways. According to Barthes, these messages are constituted in two ways: through denotation, the literal meaning and reference of a sign and connotation, the meanings that are suggested or implied by the sign. It can be stated that myth appears natural or universal in its signification, or “myths are connotations which have become dominant-hegemonic” (Heck 125). There is an already assumed connotative meaning of the sign that seems natural from a particular context of cultural consumption. Thus, myth maintains an influential power through a quality of appearing self-evident. While Barthes’ methods still play an important role in the development of film theory, it was Christian Metz, one of the giants of French film theory, who became best known for the use of semiology as a method to analyze cinema. In Film Language, Metz argued that cinema is structured like a language. Adopting Saussure’s models, Metz made the distinction between “langue,” a language system, and “language,” a less
clearly defined system of recognizable conventions. Metz contends that film cannot be regarded as comprising a ‘langue,’ in the sense of having a strict grammar and syntax equivalent to that of the written or spoken word. Unlike the written word, film’s basic unit, which Metz calls the shot, is neither symbolic nor arbitrary but iconic, it is, therefore, laden with specific meaning. Metz suggests that film is a language in which each shot used in a sequence works like a unit in a linguistic statement. In his theoretical model, known as the “grandesyntaxmatique,” Metz argues that individual cinematic texts construct their own meaning systems rather than share a unified grammar. Metz’s cinesemiotics leans heavily on linguistic models.

The postmodern novels are distinguished from traditional or classic historical fictions by their resistance to conventional certainties about what happened and why. A recognition of the subjectivity, the uncertainty, the multiplicity of truths inherent in any account of past events, and a disjunctive, self-conscious narrative, frequently produced by multiple narrating voices characterize postmodern historical fiction, appropriately called historiographic metafiction. It is a quintessentially postmodern art form which relies on textual play, parody and historical re-conceptualization. Rather than viewing history as a transcendent or wholly definable object of inquiry or representation, historiographic metafiction sees engagements with history as necessarily discursive, situational, and above all, textual. These (re)visions to history allow for new perspectives and identities to emerge from culturally
marginalized positions. While at once being eminently political, historiographic metafiction problematizes categories of essential unity and historical representation. Salman Rushdie’s novel, *The Enchantress of Florence*, offers interesting versions of different historical events, individuals and societies. Moreover, the relationship between history and fiction in the novel is playfully interactive. In *The Enchantress of Florence*, the narrative functions in such a way as to expose the implicit claims of narrative to the “truth of history.” Here the story-telling aspect of narrative is used to highlight the idea of history as a text among other texts. In the novel, history merges with fiction, and facts get blurred with fable. Rushdie plays with the idea of history as a form of story which is always woven out of the fabric of fables. The novel shows the process of textualisation of history through the narrator. The narrator usually reminds the reader of the importance of narrativization.

Every intellectual enterprise is based on a personal commitment and motivated by personal pleasures that sustain the researcher through the difficulties of his work. Historians are driven by their immediate context-intellectual, economic, social, political - and the individual concerns that move them to select one project over another. Each historian works from a specific position in relation to the historical object, a bias implicit in his “angle” of observation that carries with it the risk of ideological prejudice.
Film and television have been accepted as having a pervasive influence on how people understand the world. An important aspect of this is the relationship of history and film. The different views of the past created by film, television, and video attract closer attention from historians, cultural critics, and filmmakers. Many indeed have already come to terms with the moving image as an agent of historical knowledge.

The two documentaries, BBC documentary on *Gandhi* (2009) and *Mahatma: Life of Gandhi, 1869–1948*, produced by The Gandhi National Memorial Fund give details of the life of Mahatma Gandhi. While the BBC documentary is narrated by an omnipresent narrator who intrudes on the material, the second documentary is narrated using mostly Gandhi’s own words. In *Mahatma: Life of Gandhi*, Gandhi is presented as a man of peace and goodwill who fought evil and injustice with soul force. His life gives the message of truth and non-violence, supreme, unlimited love. He is the Mahatma- the Great Soul- the name given to him by the people of India. While there was no direct attack, the BBC documentary indirectly blames him for the many political happenings during the time of freedom struggle and Partition. Lack of sensitivity is deliberate and with a hidden agenda. It is one of the most blatant display of colonial audacity where a past colonial power uses its popular mouth-piece, BBC.

History is often a matter of perspective. It is evident from Clint Eastwood’s narration of the Battle of Iwo Jima from both the American and
the Japanese point of view in *The Flags of our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima*. It had been done before in *ToraToraTora* (1970), a combination of two movies that document the Pearl Harbour event from two perspectives—Japanese and American.

The Eastwood films focus in particular on how nations compulsively create heroes when they politically need them (like the soldiers who raised the flag on Iwo Jima) and forget them later when they do not need them. The film shows how such stories are manufactured by media and governments to further the aims of the country, whatever may be the truth or the feelings of the individual soldiers. Against the constructed nature of public heroism, Eastwood poses the private real bonds between men, against public memory he focuses on personal trauma.

Photographs have the ability to alter man’s perception of the world. “Historiophoty” describes the construction and representation of history in terms of visual images and filmic discourses. The semiotics of historiography and historiophoty differ but the principles underlying the process of signification is the same. Roland Barthes’s semiotic theory focuses on the social phenomena of signs, specifically photographs. Barthes’s theory emphasizes how signs constitute culture and ideologies in particular ways. The cultural and political messages are constituted through denotation where the literal meaning refers to a sign, and connotation where the meaning is suggested or implied by the sign. According to him, “the press photograph
is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms which are so many factors of connotation” (Image, Music, Text 31). The press photograph is multifunctional and can be interpreted at different levels.

The Vietnam war was the war that was lost on TV. The media was allowed to publish all kinds of images. During Vietnam the press was given remarkable freedom to report the war without any government control. Vietnam was the most heavily covered war in which reporters were not subject to extensive censorship. The purpose of war photography has shifted throughout the years. During earlier wars photos were purely used to inform the public. Images were sent back to keep the public updated on what their troops were doing. In contrast, recent war photography, due to censorship and embedding, has become nothing more than propaganda. Staged and altered shots are created in order to show the military in a positive light, thereby limiting the offence they create to the viewing public.

Visual media constructs historical narratives in a similar way print media constructs the past by producing a representation of reality. It is only the medium that differs, not the way in which messages are produced. Visual media uses visual semiotics in the combinatory relationships of visual signs whereas verbal media applies social semiotics in similar cultural context. Like the historical novel, the historical film draws attention to the range and nature of the emplotment that constructs a reality of the past. In the postmodern
understanding, the boundaries between history and film blur and vanish. The historians have explored the narrative strategies and fictive elements of novelistic discourses in the writing of history. Filmmakers use the narrative techniques of films to visualize history on the celluloid. Film theorists are conscious that the barriers between fiction and documentaries disappear. They rarely find any distinction between the visualized forms of historical fiction and documentaries. As visual narratives, films and documentaries carry the elements of subjectivity that their verbal versions also display. Historiophoty deals with the simultaneous denotative and connotative functions of photographs the combination of which emplots a historical narrative. Thus film, documentary and photograph visually construct the past in identical ways.