Chapter I

Chronicling History and History-Fiction: A Theoretical Frame-Work of History and Fiction Interface

We need history, certainly, but we need it for reasons different from those for which the idler in the garden of knowledge needs it... we need it, that is to say, for the sake of life and action, not so as to turn comfortably away from life and action, let alone for the purpose of extenuating the self-seeking life and the base and cowardly action. We want to serve history only to the extent that history serves life... (Nietzsche 59)

The study of history, its understanding and interpretation has become more dynamic in the contemporary world than in the past. Scholars from different areas of research hold diametrically opposing and sometimes radically different points of view. “Father of history or father of lies” says J.A.S. Evans, of Herodotus in “The Repetition of Herodotus”, an essay in Classical Journal (1968). Evans accuses Herodotus’ recording of history where intentional lie, inconsistency, errors of fact and judgment undue credulity and easy acceptance of unreliable sources of information dominate in his historical narration. However, the spirit of Herodotus strikes a harmonious chord with Hayden White and Linda Hutcheon of postmodern historians and postmodern historical novelists like Salman Rushdie, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Vikram Chandra, and Shashi Tharoor. Herodotus, however, stands recognized in the contemporary context of his remarkable fusion of chronology, ethnology, geography and poetry into a work that is both readable and an important source of information on the ancient world.

In the Histories Herodotus shared his opinion about history, “I will proceed with my history, telling the story as I go along of small cities of no less than of great. For most of those, which were great ones, are small today; and those, which used to be small, were great in my own time. Knowing, therefore, that human prosperity never abides long in the same place, I shall pay attention to both alike”. (Warrington 158)
The *Histories* also contains more than 80 references to oracular evidence. He probably also used oral information to construct the speech in his *Histories*. From the above reference, one can conclude that Herodotus is not very particular about history being scientific and he strongly believes that the sense of history is time and place oriented. Memory supplies history according to contemporary context. Therefore, Jameson states concretely “History is therefore the experience of necessity” (102). History is the need of the hour and its representation through historical novel satisfies the audiences’ necessity. An Islamic historian Ibn Khaldun says in his *Muqaddimah* that a historian should get to the inner meanings of historical events. This involves a “speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. History, therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of philosophy”. (Warrington 174)

Commenting on Jean Froissart, a French poet, romance writer and historian of chivalry, Diverres writes, “Froissart expresses literary preoccupations: to record what he has learnt in ‘fine language’. He is concerned with writing in an attractive manner, and in order to do so he is prepared to take liberties with his material. While continuing to respect the facts, which he has received, he embroiders upon them and abandons to a certain extent the annalistic approach. Digression is more common, and so are the authors reminiscences, many of which have little to do with the main subject and world, at one time, have been considered by him unworthy of conclusion”. (Froissart 20-21)

The involvement of literary acts in the writing of history is something unavoidable. The language one uses to record the past events requires metaphors, phrases, and figures of speech, which are interpretative and fabricated. In connection to this, Ainsworth has argued that, “the historical tapestry that Froissart weaves is more than fascinating, and is sometimes even reliable as a record, but ultimately it is the weaving of the fabric itself, and the quality of the workmanship, that arrests one’s attention” (Ainsworth 70). Postmodern historians appreciate the opinion of Froissart.

Giambattista Vico’s views on the nature of historical knowledge and the relationship between the study of history and self–knowledge speak strongly to our times. “Vico argues in *The New Science* describing periods of history, ‘age of poetry’ that ‘people are brutish and irrational, but they possess strong imaginative powers. Through myths, which they take to be literal truths, they try to explain their world. Myths underpin their language, their institutions, laws and ideals’”. (Warrington 340)
Vico contends that through the study of history, we can gain insight into the ideas that shape our own times. Self-knowledge is important because it can help us to avoid a collapse into barbarism. Vico contends that the study of the past is made possible because ‘the true is convertible with the made’. It is “beyond question”, he writes, “the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found in the modification of our same human mind’. (*The New Science* 331 quoted in Warrington)

Commenting on Vico’s views Warrington says:

Vico suggests that any statement made by a person in the past must never automatically be accepted for historical truth. Rather, historical truth is to be found in the critical examination of words, myths, tradition and rituals. Etymology (the study of derivation of terms) is particularly promising, as many of the words that we use bear the traces of their origins in remote times. Furthermore, Vico believes that thought and language are intertwined. It thus follows that the words people use and how they use them offer an excellent indication of the ways in which they thought about the world”. (341)

First of all, Vico viewed myths not as false statements about reality or fanciful accounts of past events, but as embodiments of early outlooks and beliefs. Secondly, Vico challenges the then prevalent belief that only mathematics and science could produce certain knowledge. “That issues concerning constructivism and the relationship between science and history continue to dominate historiographical discussion today shows that it is worth the effort to recapture what Vico says” (342).

Kant, on the other hand, extends Vico’s views on history to embrace the concepts of rationality. He divides history in two categories, empirical history and rational history. According to him, empirical history is a record of past events written without preconception. Empirical historians merely look at past actions and ideas and draw their conclusions from the evidence they have found. In contrast, rational historians try to find an intelligible pattern in the apparently chaotic human past. Ostensibly, the rational historian’s task seems difficult, because world history appears to be ‘woven together from folly, childish vanity, even from childish malice and destructiveness” (180).

Historiography provides one with a methodology to interrogate and confront history as a product of socio-cultural, psychosocial and socio-political circulation. The term is often used as a meta-description of the study on history, or rather, the historicity of history. One such view of
Historiography is to explore the possibilities of interactions and influences from other fields that are traditionally either opposed or quite different from the canonical history. T. N. Dhar says that historians and philosophers of history show interest and open-mindedness to the absorption of influences from other disciplines. This change orients naturally towards historiography. Historians from the past have contributed to the development of the concept of history. Only in recent decades, they have seen that history as narrative, which leads to knowledge, and they also have paid close attention to the role of language. This has given a lead to the disclosing of other similarities between the structure and form of history and fiction.

Hayden White has written on the similarities between aims and forms of historical and fictional discourses. He asserts in one of his essays that the “technique or strategies that they use in the composition of their discourse can be shown to be substantially the same, however different they may appear on a purely surface, or fictional level of their texts.” (White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism 121)

In the West, history, like literature, has also originated from myth. Both literature and history have mythical origins. Arnold Toynbee writes that “History, like the drama and the novel, grew out of mythology, a primitive form of apprehension and expression in which – as in fairy tales listened to by children or in dreams dreamt by sophisticated adults the line between fact and fiction is left undrawn” (Toynbee 44)

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, history is defined, “(the study of or a record of) past events considered together, especially events of a particular period, country or subject”. According to Francis Parkman, history is defined that:

Faithfulness to the truth of history involves far more than a research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and yet the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue. The narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the time. He must study events in their bearings near and remote; in the character, habits, and manners of those who took part in them. He must himself be, as it were, a sharer or a spectator of the action he describes. (Parkman xii)

History can be defined from the historian’s point of view as:
History, is to be a fact, i.e. objectivity is sought (for thought is still abstract and seeks reality in an object) in pastness: so reality is envisaged sub but from specie praeteriti...History, like science, starts from experience: not from the merely here-and–now (pure perception) but from consciousness of an enduring and changing given world. This world already contains in itself its own past, experienced as that which we remember; so that the past as such is not discovered by history, which as it were prolongs and elaborates a phase of experience whose roots are already present to consciousness. (R. G. Collingwood 135)

Another way of looking at this interaction between history and fiction is to try to understand the way one reads history in relation to fiction. Since both are mediated by linguistic entities, it would be a good start to analyze the way language is assembled to convey meaning. There has been a recent contention on the ‘ability’ of a ‘reader’ as to whether or not one would be able to arrive at an authentic meaning of the written word when one is always mediated by language and other pre-formed notions attendant upon the reader’s interpretative consciousness. The conventional view of history and fiction falls into a binary tension. Most scholars apprehend history as something that is truer than fiction. “Is it possible”, asks Alison Lee, to view history as “a synthetic, self-structured body of pure, non-linguistic fact?” Alison further comments that history and fiction cannot be antithetical as language is the common medium through which both are realized. The only way to confront these conundrums is to look at views from both historical and literary angles. In his essay “The Fictions of Factual Representations”, Hayden White addresses these issues from the point of view of an historian. He argues that the nineteenth-century opposition of fiction and history arose in response to the “mythic” thinking, which, it was believed, had led to the “excesses and failures of the [French] Revolution.

It became imperative to rise above any impulses to interpret the historical record in the light of party prejudices, utopian expectations, or sentimental attachments to traditional institutions. in order to find one’s way among the conflicting claims of the parties which took shape during and after the Revolution, it was necessary to locate some standpoint of social perception that was truly “objective”, truly “realistic” (White, The Fictions of Factual Representation 26)

As a result, history was generally viewed as a true account of the past, authentic descriptions of the events in the past thus giving history a preferred state as against fiction, which is generally understood as the individual whims, and fancies of the authors who put together only
‘their’ account of events in history. Hence, the importance of historical research is to get “factually accurate statements about a realm of events which were (or had been) observable in principle, the arrangement of which in the order of their true original occurrence would permit them to figure forth their true meaning or significance” (ibid 25). It is evident that apparently events do not cohere in any particular sequence and that the author provides the much needed coherence and builds on history.

However, this view has been challenged by observant historian and literary critics alike. White, for instance, says that the production of history and fiction are not entirely dissimilar. The methods the historians and novelists use, the techniques both historians and fiction makers undertake reveal similar patterns of work. Hayden goes to the extent of saying, not without truth, that the “way in which we know the past is through historiography which is subject to the same creative processes as fiction. The writing of history, as he points out, in “The Fictions of Factual Representation,” is a “poetic process” (White 1976: 28). The meaning of the word “poetic” derives its significance from its etymology. The Greek word “poiesis” signifies a form that is methodically put together. What is relevant for this study is that this “methodical putting together” involves not only scientific methods but also methods that the agent that puts together thinks as scientific. In his sense, such an agent, himself being a product of history, is a victim of socio-political and socio-cultural circulations that inform his ‘account’ of history. Hence, the current understanding is that history is a form of “narrative” just like fictional narrative. Further discussion on the “narrative” nature of history will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters. On the other hand, the present chapter will foreground the “historicity” or the “authenticity” of history. In other words, how the so-called “truth” is achieved in the compilation of history. On a deeper analysis it is evident that the methods of history to achieve a semblance of truth or objectivity will bring to light the way these elements interact to lure the readers of history into believing what they read is a truthful account, unemotionally and objectively composed sans any political, cultural and personal bias. On the other hand, history, in fact, gives a narrative account of a point of view. An authentic model of history would be that which simultaneously takes into account all the timelines, parallel and vertical, which of course is humanly impossible. In order to understand the real nature of history one should look into the spine on which history is constructed – Time. Time forms the very backbone of history giving it the logical coherence that once perceives. What is time other than the perception of it by humans who stand to benefit from it? Is time singular, linear or is it something that we ‘read’ as singular and linear based on our limited perception. The post-scientific interpretation of time, the many worlds interpretation of
quantum physics and the current models of universes read time as continuously forking and parallel realities. Alternatively, time is understood as having multiple, parallel, non-linear progressions. In this sense, a ‘true’ historical account should take into consideration these multiplicities of time. The question is whether or not the canonical or the orthodox history takes into account all the aspects of time. In this connection White argues in “The historical Text as Literary Artefact” that historical narratives 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, The Historical Text as Literary Artifact 42). Does this mean that the value of history as a text that interacts with the world is to be brushed aside? One would assume that such a view of history would make it untenable and value-free and that history has lost its centrality as a hard-core, scientific, objective and therefore authentic, ‘meticulously researched’, and chronicled account of time past. While it is true that such a radical view might displace history it, in fact, opens a scholar to a new possibility. The interrogation of history has not only opened up new perspectives on history per se but also fresh implication for the reading of fictions – particularly the history-fictions of select authors. The select fictional works of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Gosh, Sashi Tharoor, Vikram Chandra, and Ashwin Sanghi have been read taking into account not only contemporary theories of fiction but also the present understanding and theorization of history along the lines Arnold J. Toynbee, E.H. Carr, Paul Ricoeur, Michel Foucault, Hayden White, Fredric Jameson, Linda Hucheson, T.N Dhar, and Paul Sharrad. Commenting on White’s conclusion Alison states, “White places historiography on the same plane as fiction, but denigrated neither. As he sees it, both use conventional literary structures-tragedy, comedy, irony, metaphor, among others-in order to manipulate the reader’s perception”

Arnold J. Toynbee’s perspective of history is cyclical and foregrounds the circulatory aspects of history. He categorizes history into four aspects such as an age of growth, a time of troubles, a universal of state, and interregnum or disintegration. He says that history can be studied as, “history of all known civilizations, surviving and extinct” (11). According to him, a primitive civilization with strong effort tries to be civilized and acquires the civilization in its ‘perfect’ status and in course of time, it disintegrates itself to primitive. Toynbee strongly believes that by analyzing cyclical understanding of history one can encounter certain laws and guiding principles, which determine the destinies of successive civilizations. This view of Toynbee suffered much criticism for its apocalyptic strain that sounded the death knell for what is now termed as Western Hegemony and for his advocacy of the movement of history from west
to east. Toynbee's view on Indian civilization may perhaps be summarized by the following quotation.

The vast literature, the magnificent opulence, the majestic sciences, the soul touching music, the awe-inspiring gods. It is already becoming clearer that a chapter, which has a western beginning, will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race. At this supremely dangerous moment in history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way. (A. J. Toynbee)

Toynbee’s theory slants towards a description of history not as a unified and continuous whole but as a mélange of various petite histoire from multiple civilizations; these small histories in themselves possessing a coherent, self-contained whole. Having reduced his count of civilizations from 21 to 13, as many civilizations were put to an end before their natural fruition, he averred that major civilizations around the globe is subject to a series of evolutionary stages: Genesis, Growth, Breakdown and Disintegration. Using this framework, he was able to describe and predict the modern histories as well.

On the other hand, E.H. Carr comments on the scientific nature of history where the historicity of history would be decided by the context in which it is placed. History is known for the factual/details/evidential representations. What is fact? Is it definable? “Chanakya was the most intelligent man in the Magadha Empire” is a fact. Water boils at 100 degree is fact. A fact has no meaning in itself unless it is linked to the present context. According to E.H.Carr, facts are not the products of the historians but they become historical facts when they are related to context and interpretation. He writes:

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 ... it is the historian who has decided for his own reasons that Caesar’s crossing of that petty stream, the Rubicon, is the fact of history, whereas the crossings of the Rubicon by millions of other people...interests nobody at all. (E.H.Carr)

Commenting on historians, E.H. Carr says that the duty of historian is to select, interpret and present facts according to their experiences and interests. In representing the facts the historians should judge and study the facts according to the present context. There is a relation between historian and the present context. This engagement with the present context is what Carr calls, “an unending dialogue between the past and the present” (30).
Jean Paul Gustav Ricoeur has offered his ideas on the interpretation of texts. According to Ricoeur, anything can be understood by interpreting it. All writings employ linguistic materials like metaphor, figures of speech. Our understanding of something is based on certain conditions – if these conditions are explored then anything can be understood. Drawing ideas from these thinkers – Kant, Heidegger, Ricoeur show that humanity is language. His concern is about how we come to know things – epistemological and about what we are and what it means to be – ontological. Ricoeur’s writings on hermeneutics are shaped by the epistemological and ontological hope that “through interpretation we can learn about what we are and how we know about our world”. (265)

According to Racouer, linguistic expressions can be categorized into concepts and symbols. By this he means single meaning expression and double meaning expression. Commenting on symbols, Ricoeur says that symbols have a ‘mixed texture’ that invites both the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ and hermeneutics of belief’. He writes, “Hermeneutics seems to me to be animated by [a] double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigour, vow of obedience. In our time we have not finished doing away with idols and we have barely begun to listen to symbols. It may be that this situation, in its apparent distress, is instructive: it may be that extreme iconoclasm belongs to the restoration of meaning. (265)

Linguistic expressions cannot be taken as literally as they are. The metaphorical and symbolic expressions of texts can suggest multiple ways of looking at the world. However he cautions us saying one must be on his/her guard for not imposing one’s own meaning on the studied expressions rather one must listen with openmindedness to the linguistic expressions because they can tell us about our assumptions about the world and ourselves. These theoretical claims of Ricoeur can be linked to pragmatic accounts about history and fiction and the relevance of history in the contemporary cultural context.

The novelists who engage with history and the historians who engage with ‘facts’ search for absent causes, “sedimented layers of previous interpretation, and ‘long-dead issues’ (Jameson 9,11) as they try to make up the classic duty of interpreters of history, unravelling and then knitting again, “the network of interweaving perspectives of the expectation of the future, the reception of the past, and the experience of the present” (Ricoeur, Time and Narrative Volume 3 207)
Hayden White has contributed some theories, which have turned the directions of both history and literature. The above-mentioned concepts of history are questioned and made free from the shackles of ‘scientific and objectivity’. Unless historians stop deceiving themselves that they cannot establish the ‘dignity of historical studies’, it would be hard for them to really participate in the discursive nature of current research in historiography.

According to White, the historians must realize that their production and recording of histories and the way things ‘really happened’ do not correspond to each other. Historians must select evidence and fill in gaps while writing history. This can be seen in Sea Of Poppies by Amitav Ghosh.

Commenting on the literary aspects of history, White says that histories are, “not only about events but also about the possible sets of relationships that those events can be demonstrated to figure. (White, The Historical Text as Literary Artifact 94)

White, like Paul Ricouer, says that the linguistic expressions especially the uses of conventions of figurative language are used by historians while writing their histories. Linguistic expressions are not technical languages like scientific terms or laws, which are static for all times and all places. White says that these expressions are assumptions, which are subject to change. One can only hold conscious or unconscious assumptions of history and historical writings. Based on the theory of White, the select novelists will be studied in order to explore the possibilities of how history and fiction interact to record chronicles of time past and time present.

The concept of history has progressively changed from viewing it as harping of history as ‘scientifically true’ to history as subjective and interpretative. However, historical writings claim truth of some kind. The question is whether “truth is an epistemological, semantic, or both” (White, Afterword: Manifesto Time 227). The subjective and interpretative natures of history become the key focus of historical writings in the twentieth century.

Chakrabarty raises the issue of the imagination in reference to the case of subaltern studies, which has to posit a past reality of the colonized covered over, hidden or repressed by colonial powers before it can begin the work of consciousness-raising in the present. Subaltern studies is a good example of critique –history because it must begin by dismantling the ornate cover story which blocks access to the past of India’s poor and oppressed groups. (White, Afterword: Manifesto Time 228)
English literature, especially Indian writing in English is quite familiar with the Rushdian dictum “Handcuffed to history” (Rushdie MC 1). The present zeitgeist throughout the world is looking back into our history within the contemporary context. The correlation and engagement of history with literature are well acknowledged and known from the earlier time. It is indispensable to outline the significance of this connection. There is interrelatedness between literature and history from the dawn of the literary writings/creations along with various literary forms. There has been a progress in novelists’ application of history where the political figures, events are aesthetically represented facts in fiction.

The novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onwards has always incorporated forms like satire, allegory, myths and storytelling and engagement with history. However, in the last three decades there has been a perceptible shift in the uses of allegory, myths, magical realism, history and storytelling by the novelists and filmmakers. The central point to the work of novelists and filmmakers is the skilful engagement with history, which appeals to the receiver. They interrogate and examine history through imagined stories/imagined histories in order to have a grip over human imagination and to the extent that it is necessary to examine precisely why history has become so important in the contemporary context. The major areas of postmodernism, theories of historiographic metafiction, deconstruction, hybridity, intertextuality, fragmentation, parody and magic realism will be discussed in this chapter as how the select novelists apply these techniques in their respective novels in order to bring to focus the history-fiction interface, historicity of fiction and the fictionality of history.

History and fiction share social, cultural, political and ideological contexts from earlier times. It can be traced in the fictions of Miguel de Cervantes, Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. Miguel de Cervantes’ Don Quixote onwards there is intertextuality with the novel as a genre. This is considered the early example of metafiction. David Herman says that Miguel de Cervantes’ Don Quixote is the ‘story of a middle-aged impoverished country squire who has been spending all his time reading chivalric romances about the feats of knights errant. He takes into his head to go into the world as one, achieve fame and glory through adventures, including fighting magicians and monsters, and win the love of a beautiful damsel. Nevertheless, the reality around him is of course quite different, so the novel as a whole becomes the story of the constant conflict between imagination and reality and its consequences, sometimes funny and sometimes moving. (Herman)
These authors set the trend to what is called self-reflective fiction where the themes suggest the prominent ideology: socio-cultural, political-economic and historical-religious position of the time. Supporting this argument Andrew Sanders says of the eighteenth century fiction, “the symmetry of the novel’s construction is not, however, merely a modern prose version of Homeric or Virgilian form; it is a tidy neo-classical shape which can contain within it a whole series of comments on other eighteenth century forms: the satire, the pastoral, the comedy, and the mock-heroic. It is also a reflection on the work of modern masers: Cervantes, Rabelais and Swift” (Sanders).

According to Hayden White in *Metahistory*, history and literature are interconnected in many ways. The essence of White’s views could be seen to reflect the current understanding of history-fiction interaction: in turning hitherto unrelated events and episodes of a time-line into a coherent history the authors, historians, employ fictional techniques such as logical sequencing of these episodes, building coherence through themes and titles, and “turning dates and events (a chronicle) into a logically ordered and thematically coherent plot”. This is what White calls emplotment. The representation of 1857 rebellion by the soldiers under the British India is often represented by the British as the “Sepoy Mutiny” and has been recast in the contemporary post-independent India as the first war of independence. For instance, Percival Spear, an English Historian records this event in his *A History of India: from the Sixteenth Century to the Twentieth Century* (2001) somewhat in misleading description where the Indian people used to be happy in the British rule and turned very barbaric as they were roused. He describes:

Then came the greased cartridges for the new Enfield rifles, smeared with cows’ and pigs’ fat, unclean to both Hindus and Muslims. The mistake was genuine, the cartridges were withdrawn, explanations were offered, but the flashpoint had been reached, the conviction ran like wild-fire that there was a plot against the old cultures; the Mutiny followed. (141)

The Mutiny proper began with the rising at Meerut on 10 May 1857 and the seizure of Delhi the next day; it virtually ended with the fall of Gwalior on 20 June 1858. (142)

But the Indian people as a whole regarded the event as another of those *gardis* or calamities, which periodically afflict their country. Soldiers were not expected to behave well in the heat of campaigns, while the plundering of cities and pillaging of innocent townsmen had often been suffered from other conquerors. The British were not thought
to be worse than other; what was discovered was that, when roused, they were no better. (143)

The actual mutiny had definite religious motives behind it. The revolts, so far as they had definite direction, looked backwards to the defunct Mughal and Maratha regimes which in their day had bitterly clashed. The agrarian risings reflected grievances stemming from government action. Nowhere can be found any sign of forward-looking action towards a united India. All the new westernized class were on the British side. Yet the whole mutiny-cum-revolt was highly significant and fraught with great consequences. Looking deeper into the situation as a whole I think it can be described as a last convulsive movement protest against the coming of the west on the part of traditional India. The state of the army and the greased cartridges incident provided the occasion for violence which otherwise might never have occurred; thereafter the shape of the affair was determined by traditional memories, hopes, and fears. The form of the revolt was fragmentary, its climate nostalgic. (143)

Tara Chand, a historian accuses that “most of the British historians call the outbreak of 1857 a mutiny, but the term is misleading” (G.P.Singh). V.D. Savarkar is the first Indian writer to call the movement that happened in 1857 a War of Indian Independence. In his book *The Indian War of Independence* (1947), Savarkar states that:

Nana Sahib, Azimulla Khan, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah, Begum Hazrat, Kunwar Singh, Tantya Tope and others etc., were some of the prominent leaders who played key role in kindling and planning and preparing the spark of patriotism among their countrymen. They inspired them to raise the banner of revolt against the British. They were guided by the principles and ideals of *Swadharma* and *Swaraj* upheld by Guru Govind Singh, Maharana Pratap and Shivaji. (G.P.Singh)

It is entirely arbitrary and it could be represented either way depending upon the personal views of the historian or the society, which is interpreting the events. This means that history is not separate from fiction and that for history to retain its semblance of truth, fiction has to exist. For fiction to retain its semblance of untruth, history has to justify its claim to authenticity. It is inevitable to escape this binary prison of mind. When White summarises his thesis in his introduction it is clear that he sees the historian as performing an act very much like the novelist when he says, “I believe the historian performs an essentially poetic act, in which he prefigures
the historical field and constitutes it as a domain upon which to bring to bear the specific theories he will use to explain “what was really happening” in it’. (White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe 1973: X)

As far as the historians are concerned, they decline the idea of a scientific, objective conception of history. They also lose faith in a solid, pre-existing fact. In contemporary historians’ point of view regarding facts are to investigate these facts in the narrative of their writings. They agree with the debate that history needs to be rewritten even within the writings of contemporary historians: “It is indeed the wide and varied range of experience covered by all the days of all the historians that makes the rewriting of history-not in each generation but for each historian-at once necessary and inevitable” (Hexter 13).

As far as the Indian paradigm is concerned, both the western historians and Indian critics demonstrate that India does not have history. Despite India being an older civilization, it is accused of not recording and not having the tradition of recording the past events. Disagreeing with D.N. Dhar’s view that Indian civilization ‘developed several indigenous forms of art, literature, theories, of aesthetics, and various complex and highly-refined philosophical systems, it missed out on developing a well-formulated Indian theory and practice of history”, the writer observes that the conquerors and colonizers abolished the previous historical writings – both physically and mentally in order to infect the foreigner’s conception of history. India might not produce Thucydides, Herodotus, Tabari, Ssu-ma Ch’ien. “Nearly a thousand years ago, the great polymath scholar al-Biruni complained that “unfortunately, the Hindus do not pay much attention to the historical order of things. They are very careless in relating the chronological succession Kings, and when they are pressed for information are at a less, not knowing what to say, and invariably take to tale-telling” (Velcheru Narayana Rao 1). This notion about India is not acceptable. The same notion has occurred to the colonizer. They have brought their own conception of history and ideas of writing and formulating history. They gauged Indian history from their point of view and through their conception of history. In India there has been writing, which have engaged with history in a very interconnected/overlapping way with literature. Indians are considered to be alien to history, especially the south India by the western historians. “Happy are non-historical societies-until this happiness is destroyed by the intrusion of discrete, empirical, retrospectively organized of solid facts” (2).

The pre-colonial India has had the historical consciousness through the recording and creative writings of various myths, legends, literature, puranic stories, and folklore, inscriptions
and coins. Historians read and reread and interpret these narratives in order to form and formulate some sort of factual—information, chronologies, dynastic sequences etc. Then creative writings bear significant presence in many of the Indian languages, especially Telugu, Tamil, Sanskrit, Marathi, and Persian. These writings may not appear like history to the eyes of conventionally oriented observers of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

The folk-epic narratives with historical consciousness are not dull enough to count as historical narrative. The creative authors have depicted their styles, various forms to make it alive and kicking. “They are often dramatic, rich in colour and taste, alive with feeling, as was natural to the genres in which they were recorded” (3). The contemporary Indian writing in English clearly shows the age-old Indian tradition of recording historical consciousness through literary works in fashions that are more critical, like poststructuralism and postmodernism, which serve to comprehend history much better than they imply.

According to Jeffrey Kahan, a Professor of English at the University of La Verne in Southern California historicism is a mode of thinking that assigns a central and basic significance to a specific context, such as historical period, geographical place and local culture. As such, it is in contrast to individualist theories of knowledge such as empiricism and rationalism, which neglect the role of traditions. Historicism, therefore, tends to be hermeneutical, because it places great importance on cautious, rigorous and contextualized interpretation of information, and/or relativist, because it rejects notions of universal, fundamental and immutable interpretations. (Kahan)

Historicism opposes this tradition because those ideal patterns demand law-governing, objective and truth oriented. As far as this tradition, which puts into an organized society is concerned the adherence to the ideal pattern is enlightened. Historicism opposes enlightenment. An anti enlightenment developed towards the nineteenth century in the West. Paul Hamilton says:

Anti-Enlightenment historicism develops a characteristically double focus. Firstly, it is concerned to situate any statement—philosophical, historical, aesthetic or whatever—in its historical context. Secondly, it typically doubles back on itself to explore the extent to which any historical enterprise inevitably reflects the interests any bias of the period in which it was written. On the one hand, therefore, historicism is suspicious of the stories
the past tells about itself; on the other hand, it is equally suspicious of its own partisanship: It offers up both its past and its present for ideological scrutiny” (3)

There is a great debate on what stance one should do an ideological scrutiny upon history. Some stability or stance must be established to interpret the historical writings because the language used in the recorded history is different from the language of the present users. The Time present critical outlook of the critics may create different judgment within that language. Paul Hamilton says that “the critic appears obliged always to read past works on their own terms without ever formulating a general theory of their why and wherefore” (17). He goes on to suggest some ways of understanding historicism which are informal coincidence of past and present which the critic has effected “and the second point is to use literary techniques such as “style”, “vocabulary”, “rhetorical skill” and “the mechanics of articulation”. This approach can be seen in poststructuralist theories in attempting to judge any work of art. In connection to this, Hayden White asserts that ‘the rhetoric of the historical work is... the principal source of its appeal to those of its readers who accept it as a “realistic” or “objective” account of “what really happened” in the past. (White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe 1973: 3)

The objective, scientific history becomes the subject matter of literary criticism. Before the advent of poststructuralism and postmodernism and deconstruction, most of the writing about history and historical fictions have attempted to present the past in their narrative as objective than a “display of formal analysis”. For example, the writings of Scott, some historical novelists who want to be faithful to the recorded official history in their story telling. If anybody writes history with a display of formal analysis and gap filling activities then the historians think that history is being murdered.

Jonathan Culler says in his essay, “Criticism and institutions: the American University” that there is a call for criticism on the part of critical theory and literary theory to give importance to the aspect of relationship to history. Therefore, as above mentioned, there is a demand to confront the engagement of history with literature by taking into account the socio-cultural, politico-economic aspect of history. As Salman Rushdie’s term, ‘handcuffed to history’ signifies inclination towards history does not only mean showing the multiplicity of histories but also arguing for failure to attend to histories. Jonathan Culler says,
A more serious recent attempt to set criticism in relation to history is Terry Eagleton’s lively account of the fortunes of criticism since what he calls “the rise of English”: Literary Theory: An Introduction. The call to history here comes, first, as a demand that criticism and theory take some responsibility for the historical plight of their societies and work for change, but also as a demand that criticism take account of its own historical character, as a product of the society to whose culture it contributes. (82)

The above quote will be the overall attempt of the present study of selected history-fictions where the representation of history in these novels will be judged with the relevance to the contemporary cultural context.

Adopting hermeneutical tradition in the judgment of history, the selected novelists historicize history from their own vantage point. Though it may appear that these novelists abolish history, they in fact, turn to history in order to have a better understanding.

Michael Foucault views the interpretation of past in a more radical light. The disclosing of various rules of discursive formulation has been his focused aim throughout his life time. He calls the discursive formulation as ‘archaeology’. He asks many questions about history.

What in fact are medicine, grammar or political economy? Are they merely a retrospective grouping by which the contemporary sciences deceive themselves as to their own past? Are they forms that they have gone on developing through time? Do they conceal other unities?” (Foucault 1972: 31)

From the above inquiries, one can infer Foucault’s views that history is not a fixed one. The sequence of events that history records are not permanent but they may be continuously scrutinized until ‘it can produce objective effect’ According to Foucault there is not a unified truth, which people may disguise from themselves and keep unconscious. He says there are contradictory manifestations in history. He sees this contradiction as a sign of an established discursive formation. Discursive formation is “a generalization of the concept of conversation to all modalities and contexts”. According to Foucault, it is “an entity of sequences of signs in that they are enunciations. An enunciation is not a unity of signs, but abstract matter that enables signs to assign specific respectable relations to objects, subjects and other enunciations”.

What Foucault means by contradictory element is that one may claim achieving truth by writing history about particular period. But that is not true. The attempt to discovery of truth in
history is an unending one because as Foucault says in his 1971 essay ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’. “If the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is ‘something altogether different’ behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence’ (Foucault, 1984, pp. 76-100)

This concept of history by Foucault can be found in the rewriting of fictional history by Salman Rushdie in Midnight’s Children where Rushdie spins history, after “true” history, he devices the previous history after claiming finding yet another true history. The game of truth in finding history is eternal.

The reading of a text using the New Critical approach might be one sided, as the new critical approach does not take into account the multifarious mediations that impinge upon the evolution of a particular text. Hence, there is the failure of New Criticism as a satisfactory critical outlook.

The authenticity or the devaluation of reality in the textual representation is a key point for discussion in the contemporary theory and practice of fiction. Fictional narratives and literary narratives render enough scope for the aesthetic and artistic pleasure of complexities, complications, anticipation and unravelling of the suspense. It is evident in Salman Rushdie’s The Enchantress of Florence where the representations of binary opposites are placed side by side such as: lived experience and fairytale narrative/fantasy, fictional history and official recorded history in the production of historical fiction. Assumption, magic realism and lived experience go into the making of many novels. Magical realism is employed by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Salman Rushdie frequently on their novels. It is characterized by “two conflicting but autonomously coherent perspectives, one based on an enlightened and rational view of reality and the other on the acceptance of the supernatural as part of everyday reality” (Chanaday). The term magic realism is not used in the contemporary fictions in the real sense or in the sense, it meant in the beginning. It is used by placing the binary opposites and their representation side by side without involving the fantastic or fairytale like element in the writings or paintings. Seymour Menton associates “the term’s juxtaposition of ‘magic’ and ‘realism’ with the psychological – philosophical ideas of Carl Jung, and suggests the oxymoron ‘captures the artists’ and the authors’ efforts to portray the strange, the uncanny, the eerie, and the dreamlike – but not the fantastic –aspects of everyday reality” (Hawthorn). In the current usage of the term, magic realism represents author’s personal emotion and experience of anxiety and the mental complications of isolation in order to have freedom and peace of mind. The main
aim of the fictional writers is not to render an alternate reality or world to the readers but to project the contemporary reality of the society in which the action of the characters take place. In connection to this, Linda Hutcheon argues that magic realism, “was less a rejection of the realist conventions than a contamination of them with fantasy and with the conventions of an oral storytelling tradition” (Hutcheon).

The uses of marvellous events or fantastic narrative in the fictional narrative do not disturb the understanding of the text or the reality of the text. In fact, the employment of magic realism would help and point to the current status of the reader. To put it in Coleridge’s term, the historical novelists create “persons and characters supernatural to make them credible” in order to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment” (Prasad). Real and fantastic are differentiated as they are juxtaposed in binaries. God, Devil or Vampire does not appear and one may not encounter such characters in the real world. Characters that are fantastic in the fictional narratives are understood in terms of the real.

Therefore, in connection to this, Chanady writes that

Magical realism does not occupy a distinct area of literary production separate from that of mimetic writing, as does the marvellous domain of fairy tales, where the laws of logic and verisimilitude are constantly infringed without affecting our ‘normal’ perception of reality, in a temporary suspension of disbelief. (Chanady)

Like magic realism, allegory and parody serve the purpose of the historical writings where the assumption of the events are read through the eyes of the contemporary socio-political, economic-religious and cultural context. An allegory is a narrative strategy, which is applied in most of the literary writings. According to M.H. Abrams, an allegory is a narrative, whether in prose or verse, in which the agents and actions, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived by the author to make coherent sense on the “literal,” or primary, level of signification, and at the same time to signify a second, correlated order of signification” (Abrams). This definition can be applied in the study of Shashi Tharoor’s The Great Indian Novel and Vikram Chandra’s Red Earth and Pouring Rain in order to focus the hypothesis there by bring thesis out it. The employment of allegory is as early as sixteenth century prose narratives Everyman, a morality play and also can be seen in Edward Spencer’s The Faerie Queene- an allegory of history and politics, and Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels- an allegorical satire involving history, politics, philosophy and the scientific. Many classic literary works especially, novels have used a classical type of fantasy, allegory, satire and fairy tale like the hero’s journey to another world, as
entertainment, or as satire on contemporary society, Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* is another example of this. Similar themes can be found in Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*.

M.H. Abrams says that “a parody imitates the serious manner and characteristic features of a particular literary work, or the distinctive style of a particular author, or the typical stylistic and other features of a serious literary genre, and deflates the original by applying the imitation to a lowly or comically inappropriate subject”(26).

Salman Rushdie employs irony, playfulness, black humor while discussing serious subjects and subjects of vital matters, for instance, “trouble in her eye means devil in her heart. Shame on her front, also, as any eye can see. It stickofies too far out” (*The Moor’s Last Sigh* 12). “And then, when funds are frittered, and children are cap-in-hand? Then can we eatofy your thisthing, your *anthropology*?”(*The Moor’s Last Sigh* 17). These sentences are in the form of childish wordplay.

The writers of historical fiction and history-fiction bring multiple elements in their writings. While producing a version of past most of the writers employ detective method, science fiction reference, pop culture allusion and letter writing. Amitav Ghosh’s *Hungry Tide* is narrated partly through documents written by one of the prominent characters in the novel, which is effective and contributes to the development and understanding of the stoic theme the fiction aspires to deliver. Introducing multiple elements in the fictional wrings is called pastiche, which helps to bring the fictional cultures and concepts closer to the reader.

The process of employing magic realism, irony, parody, playfulness and pastiche in literary works may question the authenticity of the historical writings and the originality of the authors, and the process of fictionality of fiction. This sort of fiction is known as metafiction.

Metafiction means writing about writing. It tells/reminds/makes aware of the fictionality of fiction or the artificiality of art to the audience. In *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* and *The Great Indian Novel*, the authors use the word ‘listen’ to bring reader’s attention to the fictionality of the fiction. For example, Salman Rushdie in *Midnight’s Children* says,

That’s why I fibbed, anyway, for the first time, I fell victim to the temptation of every autobiographer, 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. (*Midnight’s Children* 619)
Metafictional novels can also be called *fabulative novels*. According to M.H. Abrams, Fabulation novels, are fictions of “free-wheeling narrative” which consciously violate standard novelistic expectations by drastic and sometimes highly effective-experiments with subject matter, form, style, temporal sequence, and fusions of the everyday, the fantastic, the mythical, and the nightmarish, in renderings that blur traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic.

Metafiction overlaps with metanarrative because any postmodern fiction which reads like a metanarrative will contain a metafictional element. This type of narrative refers to other embedded narratives or refers to itself as to how the fictional narrative is done or narrated. Contemporary metafictional texts engage with history. These fictions produce a sort of “reality” where people, places, events and socio-political, religion-economic conditions are represented; and these can be historically verifiable. It problematizes by recording ‘real’ names, places, and events. However, the metafictional narratives employ the temporal dislocation. It still problematises. Temporal dislocation is used in postmodern historical fiction in several ways for the sake of parody and playfulness. Historiographic metafiction employs a variety of distortions in time – such as mobile phone at Chanakya’s time Television, cricket, jeans etc. For example, In *Chanakya’s Chant* the author places cell phone, television juxtaposing the events of 2300.

Linda Hutcheon has coined the aptest term “historiographic metafiction” in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* and the term has become a subgenre, which has connection with postmodern pastiche and its self-reflexivity. It refers to works that fictionalize actual historical characters, places, and events emphasizing on the processes of narrating and writing history there by opposing and questioning objective *history*. She defines historiographic metafiction as —novels that are intensely self-reflexive but that also both reintroduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge (1988; 285/286).

The key point of this thesis is not to challenge the recorded histories or to take up a stand against the past or its histories – but rather an attempt is made to highlight the interpretative and assumptive nature of histories in the select contemporary history-fiction writers. The element of past can be traced through historical writings where literary figurative speech dominates the subject. Asserting this point, Linda Hutcheon says that the intention of historiographic metafiction is not to “deny the *existence* of the past [but to] question whether we can ever know that past other than through its textualized remains” (1988: 19-20). She goes on to explain contemporary historical novels where the postmodern elements are prevalent that in ‘historiographic metafiction,’ “History is not made obsolete: it is, however, being rethought –as a
human construct” (1988: 16). “The postmodern,” she intends, “appears to coincide with a general cultural awareness of the existence and power of systems of representation which do not reflect society so much as grant meaning and value within a particular society” (Hutcheon,1989: 8).

According to Jeremy Hawthorn, Intertextuality is a relation between two or more texts which has an effect upon the way in which the intertext (that is, the text within which other texts reside or echo their Presence) is READ. It ‘is reserved to indicate a more diffuse penetration of the individual text by memories, echoes, transformations, of other texts” (182).

Linda Hutcheon comments in an essay “Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History” that the historical fictions can be “characterized by intense self-reflexivity and overtly parodic Intertextuality (1).

A reader can access the meaning of the literary text if it is with Intertextuality, but it is certain that no one can write a work of literature or historical writings without touching the ‘anchel’ edge of the Intertextuality. The production of literature or any creative work demands of literature conscious or unconscious influence from author’s context with suspect to socio-cultural, politico-economic, religio-psychological milieu.

After the creation of the text, a reader interprets according to his/her cultural context. In this case, the text of the author is different from the readable text of the reader. There is another text, which is inside the written text, which dominates in the supply of multiple meanings. It corresponds with the argument of Linda Hutcheon that “A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance” (Hutcheon, Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History 5). She explains that the writers of historiographic metafiction engage with art forms such as aesthetic, parodic Intertextuality, subjectivity (Hutcheon, Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History 3) which cite the intertexts of both the “world” and art. She goes on to explain quoting Derrida that employing these art forms the historiographic metafiction contents the boundaries that many would unquestioningly use to separate the two. If the formulation of Intertextuality contesting would be a “break with every given context, engendering a infinity on new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable” (Derrida 185)

There are several elements, which are contentious with respect to historical fiction. Only four elements are given focus. They are ‘between historical worlds and fictional worlds’, between ‘memory’ and ‘time’. History and historians try to record from the available historical details thereby creating a world, which would have happened in the “actual” past.
historians claim that they meticulously scrutinize the historical records before constructing the historical world. Similarly literary artists construct from available historical details a fictional world where the representation of historical characters, events, dates, names, may or may not be faithful to historically actual past. Here the similarity between the historian and the literary artist is that they both use their creativity to construct possible worlds. Lubomir Dolezel defines the fictional world as:

Fictional world of literature are specific kind of worlds. They are artefacts produced by textual poiesis and preserved and circulating in the medium of fictional texts. They constitute a subset in a broader class of fictional worlds constructed by various kinds of creative activities—mythology and storytelling, painting and sculpting, dance and opera, theatre, cinema and television. (4)

Textual poiesis is constructed by authors who live in the world and create events, characterizations, and modes of existence, which are essentially from actual world. This type of fictional world promotes the plurality of worlds and offers “a vision of literature as a perennial creation of “fictional landscapes, “fostering the plurality of worlds” (7). The fictional worlds do not serve the purpose of truth-valuation but satisfy the human need for imaginative expanse, emotional excitement, and aesthetic pleasure. On the other hand, the fictional world may serve as truth-value when they are compared with actual world events and incidents.

Historical worlds can be defined as “worlds which are models of the actual world’s past”. “One and the same historical event or sequence of events (historical period, life, and so on) can be modelled by various historical worlds. In critical testing, these worlds are assessed as more or less adequate to the actual past” (Dolezel 10). Historians have limitations in constructing the historical narrative because they have to be focused only to the available historical details. They can alter the historical world a little only if they encounter a new historical data by discovery. If something is missing in the chronological history, the historian has to leave gaps without filling anything, as they want. On the other hand, the literary artists are free to vary, alter, and fill up the historical gaps. Literary artists also cannot give complete fictional worlds because it is humanely impossible. They can choose according to their whims and fancy. Though fictional and historical worlds strike similarities in their incomplete representation of worlds in their narrative, they show fundamental differences in their distribution and the manipulation of gaps. In The Enchantress of Florence, Salman Rushdie has taken a character, who has not been given, significance in the historical narrative of Mugal Empire. In Sea of Poppies, Amitav Ghosh has taken a single historical evident to fill the gap in the fictional world thereby constructing an alternative historical narrative of peasants, and life of slaves during The British Empire.
Fictional writers can invent gaps or fill the gaps depending on their imagination and memory. They are free to do so. If they make another gap in making historical novels then the gap will be filled by other fictional writers not by historians because the fictional gaps are irrecoverable. “We will never know how many children had Lady Macbeth in the worlds of Macbeth. That is not because to know this would require knowledge beyond the capacity of human minds. It is because there is nothing of the sort to know” (Dolezel). There is a difference in the treatment of gaps between fictional narrative and historical narrative. Historians leave gaps in their historical narrative when they do not get sufficient data about actual past. In connection to this Dolezel says, “Fictional gaps are produced by the fiction writer, are ontological and irrecoverable. Historical gaps are due to the lack of evidence or the historian’s selectivity; they are epistemological and can be filled either by future evidence or by the historian’s recasting of the relevance hierarchy”. (14)

However, both possible worlds are imitations of the actual world. One is developed out of historical details by imagination of historian and another is developed by imagination of literary artist taking/ filling gaps or using history if only the story demands. In other words, historical narrative by historians is “heard melodies”, but historical fictional narrative is “unheard melodies”.

Time and memory are very important while analyzing the theoretical frame works of history-fiction interface. Time is an abstract entity. The world gives meaning to the motion saying past, present, future and East, West, North, and South. One can incorporate all happenings at once in any form of writing because everything happens everywhere and every time. Time metaphor is a highly contentious one. Romila Thapar says that time is always a metaphor functioning in Indian history. She says time- kala derived from the root kal, to calculate, can also mean to destroy, a Kaladevan a god of destroyer. She defines time in her book *Time as a Metaphor of History: Early India* (1996) citing two types of time-cyclic time and linear time. She defines cyclic time that “it is continuous, without a beginning or an end. The cycle returns with unchanging regularity and in unchanging form. This amounts to a refusal of history, for no event can be particular or unique and all events are liable to be repeated in the next cycle” (5-6). She says, “Linear time is said to have a beginning and an end and has emphasized the uniqueness of the particular which has made events non- recurring” (6).

The Past can be approached by cyclic time or by linear time. There are several categories of time, which help to study and understand past. The postmodern fictional writers use non-linear time to represent time and history within the corpus of their writings. The contemporary
writers’ attempt at exploration of time and history is not just an exercise in intellectual curiosity but they question history and the concept of time and many facets of the past recoded in the historical narrative.

Another aspect of time is chronotope time, which is applied in the contemporary fictions. The “chronotope” is a term coined by Mikhail Bakhtin in the essay “Forms of time and the Chronotope in the novel”. It is used by Bakhtin to study time in literary works. The term means “space time” and the relationship between time and space. Bakhtin says that in chronotopic situations, “Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, and becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history”. He also claims, “it is precisely the chronotope defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time” (Bakhtin, Forms of time and the Chronotope in the novel). This theory can be used to analyze the select fiction in order to show the chronotope time. For example, in Vikram Chandra’s Red Earth and Pouring Rain Sanjay, the monkey tells story, which has stories within the story. While narrating the story the monkey also addresses the audience expressing his difficulties. Commenting on Midnight’s Children, Kevin Paul Smith says, “Saleem from Midnight’s Children constantly confounds the reader’s suspension of disbelief by taking up the mantle of the omniscient narrator” (93). The position of storyteller is shifting from one place to other. The chronotopic storyteller position is “the only time the study leaves the confines of literature and literary theory” (168). The narrative is self-conscious and self-reflective and referring simultaneously several time sequences. The movements recorded in history and fictional narrative are larger than the movements recorded in the past because of the speed in which human beings put in the contemporary context with ultra and high-tech transportation and hyperactive mode of living.

In this way, the contemporary Indian Writing in English, the fictional writers engage with history in chronicling the time past and time present there by creating infinite contexts. Linda Hutcheon says the application of parody and Intertextuality open ‘the text up, rather than close it down” and it challenges the single, objectivity and closed, ‘centralized meaning’ (5).

The above-mentioned theoretical framework obviously deals with historiographic metafiction bearing much significance on hermeneutic and formalist’s outlook. Based on this, the focal attempt will be to find out “the recognition of textualized traces of the literary and historical past” and a further attempt would be made to be aware of how and what these literary expression do to the chronicled histories in the selected history-fictions.

The literary techniques, which are employed in postmodern fictions and may be applicable to historical fictions as well, are irony, playfulness, black humour, Intertextuality,
pastiche, metafiction, fabulation, historiographic metafiction, temporal distortion, magic realism, technoculture and hyperreality, and paranoia.


Chapter I “Chronicling History and History-Fiction: A Theoretical Frame-Work of History and Fiction Interface” outlines an over view of the theoretical perspectives that involve in shaping/changing/manifesting the interrelatedness and the rendering of history-fiction/historical fiction in the contemporary society. Many similarities and distinctions are made between history and literature. The interrelatedness of these two disciplines has existed from ancient time onwards. The distinctions among the historians and their notions/understanding of history are explained. The thinkers who have tried to link history with literature are foregrounded. In contemporary world, the light of scientific history and authenticated history get dim before the brightness of novelized history/historicized fiction. The idea of history from ‘Father of History/Lies’ to Hayden White is referred to thinkers and historians, Herodotus, Ibn Khaldun, Jean Froissart, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Frederick Jackson Turner, Martin Heidegger, Arnold J. Toynbee, E.H. Carr Paul Ricoeur, Francis Fukuyama and Hayden White and some feminist historians, such as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Joan Wallach Scott, Sheila Rowbotham are mentioned in this chapter. The concept of Metanarrative from Hayden White and Linda Huchteon and the concept of New Historicism from Michel Foucault and Stephan Greenblatt are taken to frame the thesis. It also explains how the criticism takes off from New Criticism to deconstruction, from historicism to New Historicism and Reader Response Theory in the interpretation of the text on the part of reader. It traces the progressive developmental changes that have been taking place in the employment of history and the proximity accomplished between historians and novelists. The novelists’ use of historiographic metafiction, deconstruction, hybridity, intertextuality, fragmentation, parody and magic realism especially in Indian Writing in English/contemporary novelists from India are explained one by one in this chapter. It highlights how these techniques help the readers to form an imaginary
world filled with histories, which help to form and understand histories in the contemporary contexts.

Chapter II “Literature and History: Towards History-Fiction” introduces literature and history and their interrelatedness simultaneously defining the relevance of history-fiction in contemporary world. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to elaborate the title of the proposal. Terms and phrases like ‘chronicle’, the phrases ‘time present’ and ‘time past’ are explained. The genres such as ‘historical fiction’, ‘history-fiction’ are defined. This chapter introduces all other chapters and brings into perspective of the hypothesis. What is real? Is there scientific history? We tend to forget history thinking that it is tiring and dull act based on facts and figures. The importance of past follows our daily lives which can be portrayed only through historical/history-fiction.

Chapter III “Sense of Place: History, Place and Location in the Select Novels” begins by explaining the sense of place and history’s concern with vital place in the contemporary context. In Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of poppies*, almost all the characters feel the sense of place and in fact long for the locality where they come from and where they miss it. The *Ibis*, the ship becomes the different places of people. The colonial sense of place gives an impression in the present to alter the notion of place and history of place at present. The same author’s *The Hungry Tide* questions the sense of place where the place becomes dislocated eternal displacement and departure. The geographical position is like the mother to each character. Most of the select fictions are narratives of dispassion. Moreover, these fictions posit a general narrative of challenge to colonial history. Nirmal has recorded the local histories in his diary, which form a narrative of Morachjhapi to the outside world. His writing about the histories of the local people concerns very much a sense of place. “They’re putting it out that we’re destroying this place; they want people to think we’re gangsters who’ve occupied this place by force. We need to let people know what we’re doing, and why we’re here. We have to tell the world about all we’ve done and all we’ve achieved” (HT 172). In Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, the location keeps shifting from Malabar to Bombay and Andalusia to Cabral Island. It travels across continents from the east to the west. Similar transiting can be found in Salman Rushdie’s latest novel *The Enchantress of Florence*. There are multiple shifts of location in most of the select novels. The contemporary contextualized readers are given room to understand the location from three or four angles. One the novelists shifting from time of writing to colonial time thereby representing time past within the time present and further stretched to readers to connect the sense of location and feel the transition in better manner. This transition is vividly brought out in
Vikram Chandra’s *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* where the location and temporality takes shift from America to India and from contemporary time to mythical time. The sense of place is foregrounded in most of the select novels. Shashi Tharoor exhibits this in *Great Indian Novel*, “it is the loss of that precious contact with one’s world and one’s earth, that pulling up roots and friendships and memories, that creates the dangerous instability of identity which makes men prey to others,... those of us whose spirits are moored in a sense of place”. (GIN 227)

On the other hand, Rushdie has felt the sense of place as homelessness. He feels a point of departure rather than rootedness. He expresses his longing and his position in the world as a minority community. He views himself as a hybrid person who cannot claim a particular place as his home because of his hybridity. Moraes Zogoiby in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* displays this sort of predicament faced by Rushdie when he goes to Spain. He says:

> I am like the Catholicized Cordoba mosque, I experimented. A piece of Eastern architecture with a Baroque cathedral stuck in the middle of it. That sounded wrong, too. I was a nobody from nowhere, like no–one, belonging to nothing. That sounded better. That felt true. All my ties had loosened. I had reached an anti–Jerusalem: not a home, but an away. A place that did not bind, but dissolved. (MLS 388)

This chapter has focused on how the local place becomes cultural and historical narratives coupled with environmental issues where the place vigorously connects, influences and manoeuvres the human drama. It highlights the select novelists’ concern with place, globalizing the local flavour, culture and history. They are proud to prove that they are the sons of the soil and they have their own histories to tell to the outside world, which may form as counter narrative to conventional history.

Chapter IV “Acting in Time and Out of Time: Sense of Time and Temporality” deals with period and temporality where action shifts from present to past and vice versa. In the select novels, the recording of ‘time present’ and ‘time past’ renders the static of time and the actions are more or less repeated right from ancient time. This type of fiction shows that all is time and time is all. The need of the time present is to reflect about past time/events which can be traced in Ashwin Sanghi’s *Chanakya’s Chant* where an ancient historical character Chanakya, the Strategist appears in the contemporary India with contemporaries along with all the evils of the politics. The novel is divided such a way in order to remind the reader the sense of time like “About 2300 years ago” (1) and “Present Day” (12). Similar settings of temporality can be found
in these novels too. *The Great Indian Novel* of Shashi Throor and Vikram Chandra’s *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* bring the past temporality into the highly technical world of cricket and cell phone society. The epic characters of Ramayana and Mahabharata appear in the postmodern society repeating the condition/political issues/cunning and corruption of the past time. Rushdie has broken the conventional time sequence. At the same time, he considers the importance of time. The self–reflexive narrator Saleem says in the beginning of the novel:

I was born in the city of Bombay...once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there is no getting away from the date, I was born in Doctor Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15, 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. (MC 3)

The select novelists have attempted to prove/stress Linda Hutcheon’s point, “traditional narrative models–both historical and fictional–that are based on European models of continuous chronology and cause and effect relations are utterly inadequate to the task of narrating the history of the New World” (Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* 51). The contemporary Indian fiction writers not only subvert the Western notion of history but also they rewrite history according to the traditional Indian epic writing blending mythical and realistic mode of writing in order to show the parallel in the contemporary socio-political and religio-cultural context.

Chapter V “Knowing the Nation: Characterization, Language, and Identity” takes up the three aspects of the novelists in terms of the relevance of their characterization today. The uses of history promote the characters to formulate ideological shifts in the minds of the readers. The final part of the chapter throws light on the uses of language. The national identity is expressed through Saleem’s voice. “India had been divided anew, into fourteen states and six centrally–administered territories. But the boundaries of these states were not formed by rivers, or mountains, or any natural features of the terrain; they were, instead, walls of words. Language divided us” (MC 225). Salman Rushdie’s *The Enchantress of Florence* traces the character, Qara Koz who has been deleted from the Indian history by Emperor Akbar. The adventures of the imagined historical characters reveal the eroticism of the West too. In Ashwin Sanghi’s *Chanakya’s Chant* the character, Chanakya is focused with his strategies and scheming to the present day politics. Nothing has changed especially the human relations in public affairs right from ancient mythology, which can be traced in *The Great Indian Novel* and *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* by Shashi Tharoor and Vikram Chandra respective authors. These novels present historical characters in order to demonstrate to the readers that the condition of human mind does
not take any holistic change rather it evolves in corruption and cunning at the same time the values of the past is kept alive by some characters. These novels may seem pessimistic in theme when they are profoundly scrutinized. Nevertheless, the hard-core reality is to present the present time in the light of the past time, which these novelists succeed in rendering the temporality. One of Salman Rushdie’s characters namely Akbar says in *The Enchantress of Florence* that “Not that we are so different from one another, but we are so alike” (EOF 171). The select authors’ intentions and their writings concern with the act/art of chronicling. Of course, history exists in the past; all try to interpret the past. Historians interpret and come up with history. On the other hand, the fictional writers create make –believe history and foreground some narratives, which form *histories* to us. The select authors indulge in as Tharoor says through Ved Vyas, “I would rather procreate history than propagate it”. (226)

Chapter VI “History-Fiction: Conclusion” reiterates the research project, recapping the novelists’ involvement to fiction and engagement with history, the representation of time present and time past through their narrativisation, characterization, uses of critical theories and the imaginative power and the choice of diction. All the select novels are compared and contrasted and brought up to the final conclusion of how history is made to live through fiction eternally by creating Platonic concept of idea of the world in the sense that histories live in memories by allowing themselves to multiple alterations. The chapter sums up all the arguments in the manner Robert Penn Warren says in the foreword of *Brother to Dragons: A Tale in Verse and Voices* (1979) about “historical sense and poetic sense which ‘should not, in the end, be contradictory, for if poetry is the little myth we make, history is the big myth we live, and in our living, constantly remake”.

40