Chapter II

Literature and History: Towards History-Fiction

Literature may be defined as that which has permanent interest because both of its substance and its form, aside from the mere technical value that inheres in a special treatise for specialists. For a great work of literature, there is the same demand now that there always has been; and in any great work of literature, the first element is great imaginative power. The imaginative power demanded for a great historian is different from that demanded for a great poet; but it is no less marked...on the contrary, very accurate, very real and vivid, presentation of the past can come only from one in whom the imaginative gift is strong. (Roosevelt 8)

That literature certainly has its roots in history is corroborated by various writings of the world literature. The proposed study intends to take up some select fictions that deal with history. And the researcher aims to foreground the dynamic interaction between history and fiction thereby arriving at the perception of how fiction narrates history and how these “chronicles” of time present and time past, present the idea of history as such.

History in the conventional sense can be defined as a record of “real” events that happened in the past. Traditionally, history is considered as a branch of literature, and then as a discipline, that has a close link to science. It is generally taken for granted that there is truth in everything history supplies to the world. No questions or doubts generally rise against history because people usually lack access to the past hence do not question authenticity of the past. Therefore, it is a wonder when history says that Sher Shah Suri laid the GTR (Grand Trunk Road) to Delhi that we do tend to agree with the statement. Somebody asks, “Do you know the history of First Battle of Panipet in 1526 A.D.? It was a great one, only with thirty thousand soldiers Babur fought Ibrahim Lodi and seized Delhi”. Generally, there is a universal tendency to accept history without questioning the authenticity of the recorded history. On the other hand, Indian history is given in most of the textbook as “blood stained history”, history of events, dates, killings, blood. The historians have never bothered to record people, culture, and way of life of people.
In terms of history and history writing, and metafictional novels as Patricia Waugh would term it, it is evident that “history consists of multiple worlds which are fictional” (104). At this point, in a postmodernist context, fiction about history is called “historiographic metafiction”, a term coined by Linda Hutcheon, which has been discussed in the first chapter. Nevertheless, before dealing with the interrelatedness and history-fiction interface, it is better to investigate history, fiction, narrative, and analyze the discourse that marks this phenomenon.

History is often defined as a study of past events. The past is not very comprehensible, although it might be put together coherently by an imaginative, in the case of a novelist or a filmmaker, or an evidence-seeking mind, as in the case of a historian. The past is available to us only in shreds and shards in form of fragmented recordings presented to us in many modes (oral, coins, recordings in reeds and skins, and ancient epic poetry and literature). The absence is great and a never-explorable territory except in the case where an accidental finding corroborates such an absence. It can only be scrutinized and systematized by filling in the gaps with imagination as the necessity of a medium demands. Thus, history can be defined as writings about how we tell the story of what happened rather than a story of what happened. In this sense, any narrative is always and already a metanarrative. The first chapter explained how the conception of how the story is told about what happened has taken considerable shifts from generation to generation in refining and focusing the problematic nature of history.

The word “narrative” indicates that there is an arrangement of events, characters and plot, which are organized like a story (Gunn 26). However, if one considers the word “real”, a number of arguments arise regarding reality and any number of permutations and combinations of past events are possible (?) because of the ‘interpretive characteristic of history writing, of all writing’.

The difference between traditional historicism and new historicism lies in their respective reading/understanding of history. While in the hands of traditional historicists history is handled as universal, history in the hands of new historicists is regarded as cultural (Dogan 78-79). New historicists believe that a literary text can never be evaluated apart from the social, political and cultural conditions of the society in which it is produced. In this context of cultural production, subjectivism plays a key role in new historicism, as nothing about history can be objectively known. As a result, no one can be regarded as an authority on a historical subject, as there may be so many interpretations on that subject.
Since the eighteenth century, particularly the four major theorists of historiography of the eighteenth century have rejected the concept of objectivity: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Johann Gustav Droysen, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Benedetto Croce. All of these theorists have accepted the dominance of interpretation in history writing. Hayden White stated in his article “Interpretation in History” that all of the four names were against the “innocent eye” of the historian. For instance, Droysen believes that interpretation is compulsory and inevitable, as the historical record is not complete/can never by complete. As for Nietzsche, interpretation is necessary in order to reach objectivity. (284).

In terms of the scientific aspect of history, traditional historians regard history “as an empirical search for external truths corresponding to what was considered to be absolute reality of the past events” (Onega, 1995: 12). Thus, they believed that past could actually reflect truth and this was a generally accepted notion among the eighteenth century historians. White also added in his article that traditional historians explain past events by a concise reconstruction of the recorded documents and that new historians whom White called as “meta-historians” (282), explain past events by interpreting the documents subjectively. New historicists interpret the documents sometimes by including some other facts or comments, but sometimes by excluding some of them. That is why White asserted: “A historical narrative is thus necessarily a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative” (281). Therefore, it is impossible to talk about objectivity while dealing with history, as new historicists blur the line between so-called facts and the interpretations about these facts. At this point, the writers determine the importance of events and chose what to explain and what to ignore. Besides White, E. H. Carr deals with the importance of the interpretation of the historian in history writing. He noted, “It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context” (11-12). Therefore, subjectivity is an indispensable concept in the process of history writing. However, in order to reach the aim of objectivity, traditional historians give place to footnotes, citations, quotations, and bibliography, which are scientific attempts. On the other hand, postmodern historians believe that this is done for ideological reasons. Traditional historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth century “conceal its ideological structure behind a scholarly façade of footnotes and ‘facts’” (Himmelfarb 75).
An implication of this phenomenon could be located in the way women look at history. Women historians, for instance, want to break with the existing notion of history writing and have contributed several notions of *histories*, which would tell of the experience of both men and women as opposed to earlier notions of history, which has covered the experiences of men alone. Women historians such as Natalie Zemon Davis (b 1928-) a Canadian and American historian of the early modern period, Joan Wallach Scott (b 1941-) an American historian of France with contributions in gender history and intellectual history, Sheila Rowbotham (b1943-) a British socialist feminist theorist and writer have also contributed to the conceptual positions of history. Natalie Zemon Davis has expressed her earnestness for female voice in her work *Women on the Margins* (1995) which opens with the exchange between her subjects Glikl bas Judah Leib and Maria Sibylla Merian and herself and ends with a dialogue between Laurent Joubert. The book’s vital point is to reflect the voice of the nun, the beggar and peasants of the time.

Joan Wallach Scott has shared her version of gender history, which is original and promising. She writes drawing on the ideas from Michel Foucault:

Concepts of gender structure perception and the concrete and symbolic organization of all social life. To the extent that these [concepts] establish distributions of power (differential control over or access to material and symbolic resources), gender becomes implicated in the conception and construction of power itself. (Scott 45)

As a result, the discipline History, which is usually understood as a scientific study of facts and events which represent truthfully as it happened(?), has taken the position of creation/narrative. Hence there is a shift from ‘owned history to shared history’. Here the point is that history is created by human beings and human beings are created by history/histories. Commenting on Scott, Marnie Hughes-Warrington says:

In Scott’s view, the two major forms of women’s history - social history and ‘her-story’- are seriously flawed. In the 1960s and 1970s, social historians tried to shift attention in history away from the deeds of elite statesmen towards the experiences of ordinary people. Alongside studies of peasants, workers, and racial and ethnic minorities emerged those of women. (279)

Sheila Rowbotham is another feminist theorist who is interested in history. According to her, history demonstrates that what is needed is ‘a revolution within a revolution or, in the case of the developing world, liberation from the colony within the colony’: the overturning of both
capitalist conditions and the understanding of liberation as the power to control other things. This requires a radical transformation of the 'cultural conditioning of men and women, upbringing of children, shape of the places we live in, legal structure of society, sexuality, and the very nature of work'. (Rowbotham 245, 249)

History refers to what happened in the past, while historiography refers to what historians write about what happened in the past. History and historiography are the terms more often used synonymously, as in “a work of history”. Historiography is a study of not simply chronologies of historical evidence that are kings names, dates, places, events, etc. from the past but it is a study of ‘arguments/interpretations about the past that emerge from an immersion in and are built upon a foundation of historical evidence – the echoes and fragments and shards from the past that historians cull from archival collections and other primary sources’.

The novelist William Faulkner emphasizes in his *Requiem for a Nun* (1951) which is partly novel and partly drama that “The past is never dead. It's not even past” (Act 1, Sc. 3). Historiography stresses this notion of history. It does not mean that “facts” change all the time and that everything in history is relative but the process of interpretive spins that historians provide to the historical facts that they assert and spin together are continuously shifting. New primary sources can sometimes be found in the process of shifting historiographical postures. These shifts owe to adjust our ideas of history, attitudes, etc. in the present. Such shifts not only reorient how we perceive/understand the here and now, but also the there and then.

It may be argued that historiographic creation or historic thinking before the era of historicism and professionalization of history as a separate discipline was still naive and attached to collective memory, while historiography since the nineteenth century has been critical, reflective, and conscious of the uniqueness of time and period. Halbwachs’ attribution to collective memory of characteristics of precritical historiography (such as Christian typological thought) is significant and telling. Yet the transition from pre-critical historiography to historicism, however revolutionary, was not altogether new. Several indications of historicism can be discerned within the presumably naive historical consciousness that preceded it, including the distinction between one “spirit of the time” and another (*qualitas temporum* in medieval language). In no way did it lack awareness of varying linguistic uses: “Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spoke, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer”. (I Samuel 9:9); the poet, Cicero says, is permitted to use archaic linguistic forms. (17)
Fiction can be defined as “fiction about fiction: novels and stories that call attention to their fictional status and their own compositional procedures” (Lodge 1992: 206). Fiction is a literary narrative based on invented events, which have not happened in actual life. The unreal and imaginary telling of events is called fictions in general. In a specific sense, fiction stands for only narratives that are written in prose such as novel, short story; sometimes fiction is used as a synonym for the novel. Among the literary narratives, fiction stands to ‘a prominent degree based on biographical, historical, or contemporary facts’ (Abrams). These are called in generic terms as historical novel, science fiction, fictional biography, detective novel, social novel and nonfictional novel. Most of the philosophers and literary critics have focused themselves to the literary utterances, which constitute a fictional text. They are concerned with the “truth-value” of literary utterances. “Fictional sentences” should be regarded as referring to a special world, “created” by the author, which is analogous to the real world, but possesses its own setting, beings, and mode of coherence. Although these are imaginary things they ‘represent the verbal action’ of human beings. The words, expressions, and experiences, which are unreal/imaginary, however they are imitative of the everyday happening of the world. The truth-claims of narrative fiction can be judged based on “readers’ own moral, religious, and social convictions”. (Abrams 96)

Human beings use the language to express their emotions, aspirations, desires, sufferings, psychological status, failures and achievements, etc., in the form of story / narrative which demands plot, characters, settings, problems and Aristotelian concept of a beginning-middle-and an end. On the other hand, the narration of a story takes every ingredient from actual world whether it is tragedy or comedy and whether it is realistic fiction or fiction with fully imaginative events. Whatever may be, a fiction is an arrangement of language. Leda Cosmides and John Tooby characterize fiction as “information management” (quoted from Lisa Zunshine, 217). Thus, “Fiction can be defined as a type of discourse or communicative practice in which participants are transported, through a more or less immersive experience, to a STORYWORLD assumed to be imaginary rather than actual”. (Herman)

An important element of fiction is narrative, which needs to be analyzed before dealing with literature and history in order to comprehend historical fiction and its truth-value in a better manner. Narrative is a combination of plot, character, dialogue, genre, ideology, language and identity. It is ‘a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process and change’ (Herman 3). Marie-Laure Ryan describes that narrative is culturally not recognized as a general
category like that of historiography, historical fiction, science fiction, or fantasy. The framing of concept about an event bears a vital significance, which leads to frame narrative. The fantasy or imagination of the author in the form of a story kindles our mental framing of certain conception. In relation to this Marie-Laure Ryan says

If defining narrative has any cognitive relevance, it is because the definition covers mental operations of a more fundamental nature than passing global judgments of narrativity: operations such as asking in what order did the represented events occur; what changes did they cause in the depicted world; what do the events (and their results) mean for the characters; what motivates actions and does the outcome of these actions compare to the intent of the agent. If a text confronts us with such questions, and if we are able to answer them, we read the text as a story, or rather, we read the story told by the text, whether or not we are aware of what we are doing. (Ryan)

What one perceives in reality (?) is presented in the conversation form. The conversation requires a sequence of words and sentences to be told in an impressive way. The employment of language and its manipulation play significant role in arranging the events in the form of a story. Thus, Gerard Genette says, “one will define narrative without difficulty as the representation of events or of a sequence of events” (127).

In the process of representing events, the teller communicates to more than one audience at the same time employing multiple narrators and multiple events, which can be real and unreal. Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights (1847) has several points of view and narrated by more than one narrator. Commenting on Wuthering Heights Andrew Sanders says that “it plays with shifts of time and perception by balancing the complementary, but not really concordant, viewpoints of two major and five minor narrators” (423). This type of narrative fits the definition of Gerald Prince that narrative can also be, “the representation…of one or more real or fictive events communicated by one, two or several … narrators…to one, two or several narratees” (58). On the other hand, H. Porter Abbott says, “Narrative is the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse, story is an event or sequence of events (the action), and narrative discourse is those events represented” (16). To focus still further narrative deals with the cognitive and ideological discourse of the context represented in actual world. For instance, Salman Rushdie’s version of history of India in Midnight’s Children shows the contemporary need for understating of India as far as the socio-political and cultural-religiousness is concerned and also the often breakable relationship of Muslim and Hindus. He does not present the readers
with a final history of India, rather projects the temporality of India in the form of discourse and raising problems regarding history and its multiple shoots. Paul Ricoeur says, “I take temporality to be that structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity, and narrarivity to the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate reference” (165) while Peter Brooks says, “Plot is the principle ordering force of those meanings that we try to wrest from human temporality” (9). The historical fictions fit in Heise’s definition of narrative that “Narrative can be characterized as the mode by which we mediate and negotiate human temporality”. (Heise 47)

A good narrative is a multifaceted one. “Narratives” can be defined as a type of communication that happens in conversation, is composed of discourse, appears in a sequence, and is interpreted retrospectively (Boje). “Complexity” can be defined as non-linear relations, driven by small forces that result in the emergence of sudden changes that produce unexpected outcomes. (Morowitz)

The general focus as far as language is concerned used to be the isolated units of language such as sentence, or single words, phrases, and figures. According to M.H. Abrams, “Discourse analysis, as inaugurated in the 1970s, concerns itself with use of language in a running discourse, continued over a sequence of sentences, and involving the interaction of speakers (or writer) and auditor (or reader) in a specific situational context, and within a framework of social and cultural conventions”(66). He says that the current use of discourse analysis in literary studies has been taken a different movement by the speech-act philosopher H.P. Grice. According to Grice quoted from M.H. Abrams, “the users of a language share a set of implicit expectations which he calls the “communicative presumption” – for example, that an utterance is intended by a speaker to be true, clear, above all relevant”(67).

Since the late 1970s, most of the critics have increasingly adapted discourse analysis to the assessment of the conversational speech in fictions as well as dramas. M.H. Abrams says:

A chief aim is to explain how the characters represented in a literary work, and also the readers of that work, are constantly able to infer meanings that are not asserted or specified in a conversational interchange. The claim is that such inferences are “rule-governed”, in that they depend on sets of assumptions, shared by users and interpreters of discourse that come into play to establish meanings, and furthermore, that these meanings vary systematically, in accordance with whether the rule – guided expectations
are fulfilled or intentionally violated. Such explorations of conversational discourse in literature often extend in the literary narratives. (67)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak says in ‘Feminism and Critical Theory’ (1985) that literary texts exhibit some kind of thoughts, which are presupposed by the notions of the world and consciousness of the most ‘practical critic’. Spivak refers to the male texts as practical critic. She agrees to take them as examples to work out feminist ideas and reassess them rather than neglecting as adversaries. As far as male texts’ discourse are concerned:

These texts must be rewritten so that there is new material for the grasping of the production and determination of literature within the general production and determination of consciousness and society. After all, the people who produce literature, male and female, are also moved by general ideas of world and consciousness to which they cannot give name. (Spivak)

In the narrative process, the authors use language, which goes beyond the required communicative expression. Such language / expressions are focused in order to analyze those patterns of linguistic expression across in texts highlighting the relationship between such language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. This analysis is called discourse analysis. “Discourse analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations. It also considers how views of the world, and identities, are constructed through the use of discourse” (Paltridge 2). Discourse analysis examines both spoken and written texts.

Literature generally refers to “things made from letters”. In recent centuries, literature concerns with some of the political movements like literature of feminism, post colonialism, psychoanalysis, post–structuralism, post–modernism, romanticism, and Marxism. In addition to this, literature concerns with nation, race, gender, and caste which become literature of Black writing in America, Indian writing, Dalit writing, African writing, women’s writing, and others. This can be brought under general categories. There are World Literature, National Literature, and Regional Literature, which engage with history indulging in the act/art of chronicling in order to bring their own narratives. In the contemporary context, there are other literatures like
Electronic literature, Films, and Graphic novels and comic books, which are, create from the digital environments.

Literature is a canon, which consists of those works in language by which a community defines itself through the course of its history. It includes works primarily artistic and also those whose aesthetic qualities are only secondary. The self-defining activity of the community is conducted in the light of the works, as its members have come to read them (or concretize them). (McFadeden 56)

Literature represents tradition, culture, and language of people of world in their own way. On the other hand, it functions as initiator of new worlds of experience, which bypasses its boundary as a historical or cultural creative work. In the Indian context, there are several literatures: canonical Indian literature, all the Regional Literatures, and Oral and Adhivasi literature that can be broadly referred to literature in India. In connection with this, Murali Sivaramakrishnan says,

Writing in English in this country could be seen side by side with writing in other regional languages as well. English is as much indigenized and nativised as Marathi or Gujarathi, Tamil or Malayalam. The historical terrain of Indian writing in “english” could be seen to parallel the nuances of the writings in the regional languages too. (V.T 3)

The researcher has probed into the literature that concerns with the subaltern, minority, forgotten, imagined communities, and voiceless people and has brought out how the authors have historicized and problematised and have given some space in history to the literature that is deprived of the mainstream history. The select authors concentrate on the Indian Fiction in English on specific features such as history, language, landscape (place), customs, dialects, temporality (time), and characters situated in a particular region. In a way, these select authors have tried to turn “our heads backwards into our past” (Sivaramakrishnan, Introduction: Theorizing Interreadings 1). And as Murali Sivaramakrishnan rightly observes,

Literature is not the only domain where these (sense of place, time and action) issues are problematised, of course. The consequences of the decode–encode complex and its dimensions in terms of the cultural–historic rhetoric/fabric has been discussed and debated ad nauseam by now in academic circles all over the world, in as varied a discipline like Anthropology or Cybernetics, Geography or Ecology. (ibid)
The contemporary postcolonial Indian fiction in English, which engages with history, has drawn our attention into narratives of local, marginal and the forgotten terrain. The fictional writers of this type have written postmodern historiographic metafictions where story telling becomes an act/art of chronicling as well as narrativising history and politics. The act of storytelling, their narrativity becomes an alter history. The entire thesis is centered on this fact as to how the select authors engage with history in order to process history rather than to produce it along with experimenting/highlighting the local flavour thereby creating some identities for the marginal.

Literature is not only able to characterize the ideology of the contemporary society but also shape / (re)form / general beliefs of the society. It is highly difficult to criticize which creations of the authors is influential/revolutionary. There is no doubt about the author’s shaping/manipulating/changing the thinking of people of the authors’ period. The reader is an important being who locates in the texts the ‘multiple playfulness of meanings’ (Derrida). The reader’s position in the world of fiction apparently brings changes over the period of time and variations in the dominant ideology. Mikhail Bakhtin says in this regard in *Discourse in the novel* that the novel being realistic is influential and revolutionary, which permits the ideology and system of beliefs of the author to be noticeable in myriad styles. R.V. Young says that literature is not ‘innocent’ (4) but throws multiple ‘discursive practices’ as Foucault mentions in most of his works.

Thus an attempt is made to highlight the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its possibility and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility; in this account, what should appear are those configurations within the space of knowledge which have given rise to the diverse forms of empirical science. Such an enterprise is not so much a history, in the traditional meaning of that word, as an ‘archaeology’. (22)

Foucault attempts to explain that the practices of beliefs, cultural habits, religious dogmas, social practices produce minds. The practices of ideology shift in the course of time. The shifts take place according to the socio-cultural and geographical-religious milieu. Our mind is produced, programmed, and processed.

There is a progressive materialization and emergence of a “positive turn” in human sciences and it appears appropriate to study the relationship between history and fiction. Though
the relationship is done greatly and potentially to prove the “historicity of the text” and the “textuality of history” in the ancient times, early modern times (renaissance times- Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare, Spencer, Milton, and so on), and much bearings of the connections between literature and history, and historiography are given to early 19th century.

The postmodern historical fiction looks for ‘gaps and marginalized silences’ (Fielitz 2) in the established ‘factual/truthful history’ (?). According to Sonja Fielitz, ‘text and context, literature and history are equivalent and interactive, and show no interest in the history of ideas, since history is textualized, ideologically constructed, non – transparent, resistant to objective understanding’. (Fielitz 2)

Historical novels deal with events of the past. They may follow the factual history or fictional history systematically. This dissertation will also explore the idea of the past and how the past events (which are being forgotten day by day), become a platform for the present and future. It is also about the use and abuse of history in history-fiction. The term “history-fiction” is meant to be the authors’ engagement with history and about the influence of the history on fiction and creating historicized novel or fictionalized history. The novelists merge the historical ‘facts’ and fictitious ‘history’ into literary texts where imagined alternate history dominate the actual representation of history. History-fiction is a bit different from historical fiction. In the sense, the novelists’ active involvement with history kindles the use and popularization of the generic category of the genre “Historical Fiction”. It explores, and evaluates the connection between history and fiction. It is a kind of narrative mode, which reconstructs history imaginatively. The result is that both the historical and the fictional characters may appear in the fictional narratives. Who has seen maharajas, Katabomman, Tippu Sultan and Chera, Chola, Pandiya and so on? The Historians make their level best to record the lives of the people of the past, but the novelists are those who give life to their bodies making the historical characters live and make it universally withstanding the test of time. The novelists create the historical characters in such a way that they are meaningful for all times. For instance, Shakespeare’s Othello, Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth and so many others are relevant even today. They give meaning to life; act as guides in our lives. Not many consider past as important or vital in bearing significant implications for the future. The (re)presentation of the past events either venerated as having absolute bearing on the present and the future or decried as an act of insignificant consequences. This thesis aims at how historical characters, events, myths, symbols, and other religio-political and socio-cultural metanarratives are/have been recast in the
contemporary Indian Fiction in English, especially that of post independence Indian fictions to (re)construct history and help to deliver us from this collective amnesia and remind us the pluralistic repercussion of the past in the present and, perhaps, the future, thus maintaining certain humanistic ethical perceptions and absolute values that are essential in creating an egalitarian society. Hence, this thesis attempts to close–examine the literary techniques that chronicle time present and time past.

The focus of this thesis is on how the select novelists deal with the social, political, and cultural past that run parallel to the mainstream (his) stories of their country. In addition, it will also depict their choice of narrative methods, their mode of characterization and how those characters are created to inspire us in a better manner in order to lead the present and future in the light of the past glory. Thus, the research work would be an attempt to bring forth various histories, historical characters, and their relevance today, and bring out their inter-relatedness. The critical framework used is based on the theories of historiographic metafiction, deconstruction, hybridity, intertextuality, fragmentation, parody and magic realism.

Many things of the past have become a part of our life now and they are simply taken for granted. For example, the statues of Buddha and photographs of Mahatma Gandhi that had a greater significance immediately after their time go unnoticed now. So are forts and castles pierce and arrow, deer horns and other ancient things. They are backdrops and are silenced conveniently. Now the contemporary novelists bring the backdrops in the front highlighting it for our attention. History is imagined with the relics and chronicles of the past by way the act/art of chronicling. Remembering the past is very enjoyable and pleasurable for one who is at rest. Time is (re)lived. The contemporary activities/pressures/busy lives shadow the remembrances/memoir of the pasts. Only relaxed mind/people with rest/meditative person/creative artists bring the histories/past events/ forgotten events/ by filling up the gaps in histories by chronicling them.

The aim of the thesis is not to challenge history but to tell the histories from different perspectives and by multiple/manifold ways to suit the time and to assert that even the historicised fiction/novelized history can create influence/multiple implications, looking and understanding the present context in the light of the past. Contemporary writers of India taking advantage of the elastic nature of histories create powerful imagined images of histories. These histories come from different states of India: Maharashtra, Bihar, Kerala, Haryana, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, thereby creating difference yet try to live together harmoniously with integrity.
There is the spirit and genius of [a] city, where almost every stone tells you a story, where history is embedded even in the dirty lanes...It has a definite and positive atmosphere which you can feel in your bones. (Jawaharlal Nehru 1982)

History cannot be given or (re)presented as it is or as it happened. It is like a deep hard surface which is covered by multiple layers of histories/fungus. One can only scratch the fungus rather than touching the hard surface. Because the time and temporality serve to form the fungus and the same ‘time and temporality’ demand the scratching the fungus of history as it demands. The process of digging from the fungus is called “very scientific” by hardcore historians. However, literary people do not seem to claim any single scientific true history but attempt to scratch all possible ways of imagining there by creating multiple histories. History can only be chronicled. According to R.G. Collingwood “chronicle is the past merely believed upon testimony but not historically known. And this belief is mere act of will: the will to preserve certain statements which we do not understand. If we did understand them, they would be history”. (202-203)

In contrast to this definition R.G Collingwood classifies that a chronicle is merely testimony and further goes on to describe that “the past leaves relics of itself, even when these relics are not used by any one as materials for history; and these relics are of many kinds, and include the relics of historical thought itself, that is, chronicles”(231). Paul Sharrad says that Indian Fiction in English has a great affinity with history and the technique of “chronicling is the better mode of recording the past: Just put all the facts down and let them speak for themselves”. (148)

Time and Space are two significant rudiments of fictional narrative. Generally, time is understood in terms of narrative which would form an understanding of the chronology of events. The concept of time and space can be traced / related with, “New Criticism, Formalism, Structuralism, Phenomenology, Myth Criticism and Linguistics” (Smitten 16). “What the concept of spatial form does is to call attention to the departures from pure temporality, from pure causal/temporal sequence”. (Smitten 19-20)

From ancient times to postmodern most of the narratives stand to emphasize these two components such as time and space. Some stories lay more emphasis to Time and other narratives lay emphasis to Space. Consequently, they can be classified into two categories of Narratives of Time and Narratives of Space. Narratives like Epics, Myths, and Victorian
classical narratives primarily bank upon unfolding of chronology of narratives: whereas narratives of stream of consciousness depend more on inner time than the clock time. Therefore, all these types of narratives can be collectively placed under the category of Narrative of Time in which the former category belongs to Outer Time and the latter belongs to Inner Time. Similarly, the Narrative of Space can also be seen operating at two levels of Outer space and Inner space. As evident from the nomenclature, the narratives of outer space dwell more on outer space in which the action takes place.

There are possibilities that might occur wherein the notions of space, temporality, and history which would be able to tell us about the past’s claims on the present; the past’s ongoing presence in the present state of things in a space such as the concept of black has changed taking shifts from antihero to likeable hero position. In movies of the past especially in Tamil Nadu, M.G. Ramachndran (MGR) who is a celebrated hero, is portrayed black in colour to play the negative role/ anti hero in Naalai Namadhe (Tomorrow is Ours), Neerum Neruppum(Water and Fire). In contemporary Tamil film industry if one is black in colour, he would survive the audiences’ support, for instance Rajini Kanth who has dark complexion but through his gymnastics and kinaesthetics, he has become a super star in Tamil Nadu. The point is that a character in a movie can bring an ideological change, attract people morally, and make people elevate such characters in their hearts without forgetting forever. Similar thing happens in the case of history where the authors create / fill the gaps in the official/factual (?) history by writing history-fiction / historical fiction so that people / readers would retain histories forever by building histories of nation for generation. It is like reading a novel before watching the same novel in motion picture. When one reads a novel, he/she has all the events and characters in their imagination beyond limit. The motion picture arrests such limitless imagination to some extent.

In other words, encountering lingering is in part about sorting out a way to reconfigure the linear relationship between past and present. It involves bringing the two together to sort out how they are enmeshed, thereby staging as an “intervention” instead of a “repetition.”

Thus, the value of a haunting lies in its disruption of notions of space as containable and static, of temporality as linear, and of history as something fixed, finished, and past. When we recognize the contingency of designations of space and separations of past from present, it is clear that it is impossible to claim spatial boundaries or the past’s relationship to the present as “settled” in any way. Such a realization draws us into a new way of relating to one another, of knowing ourselves to be related to one another.
Nations in the distant past, for example, but as an ongoing process evident in the way our spaces and identities are constituted today, then a different understanding of our relation to each other becomes necessary.

James A. Winders says in “Narratime”: Postmodern Temporality and Narrative” that “Narrative” is one of the most problematic terms bobbing along in the swift currents of postmodern cultural debate. It is particularly a buzzword of this theoretical moment. In what follows, discussion of “narrative” will also imply “time” (lived historical time as well as temporal dimensions of various kinds of narratives). Collapsing the two terms together, let us consider a new coinage “narratime”. “Narratime” in fact yokes together three concepts central to history: knowledge (the Latin narrare, meaning to know), time, and story.

Reasserting the importance of space as a cultural category and while pointing to alternative temporalities, postmodern aesthetics and cultural practices can be viewed as applications of Einsteinian temporal relativity to broad categories of contemporary cultural experience. Thus, they pose a challenge to fields in the human sciences that have relied on unproblematically sequential, linear notions of time. History is the discipline most obviously challenged to rejustify its disciplinary status as well as its epistemological claims in response to postmodernism’s multiple temporalities.

Whether or not they need postmodern theory to realize it, historians should be well equipped to understand that people experience multiple aspects of time in their lives. There is the lived time of one’s daily existence, the time of memory (our own personal memories and the memories recounted to us by the persons around us), and there is the time, often at odds with conscious, lived time, of our unconscious mind, a time of dreaming, involuntary memory, and repressed drives. At any given moment in our lives, we operate at the intersection of these multiple temporal modes. Any one moment in cultural history provides, in terms of memory, influence, and orientation towards both past and future, multiple experiences of time and therefore complex modes of representing and recounting experience. Multiple narratives, from oral culture to archival record, are therefore generated.

Andrew M. Greeley says, “History and historical fiction are necessarily not the same thing. The purpose of history is to narrate events as accurately as one can. The purpose of historical fiction is to enable a reader through the perspective of characters in the story to feel that she or he is present at the events. Such a goal obviously requires some modification of the
The frequent uses/allusion/referential nature of literature upon history generate the new genre called historical fiction which combines fiction and history creating a two sides of same paper.

Historical fiction is defined according to the Literary Dictionary (1998) “Historical Novel, is a genre in which the action takes place during a specific historical period well before the time of writing (often one or two generations before, sometimes several centuries), and in which some attempt is made to depict accurately the customs and mentality of the people of that period. The central character—real or imagined—is usually subject to divided loyalties within a larger historic conflict of which readers know the outcome”.

The novelists of the historical fiction strictly try to be faithful to the official history without pampering but venerating/praising/expressing liking to the past. The general definition of historical fiction is that it presents readers with a story that takes place during a notable period in history, and usually during a significant event in that period. Historical fiction often presents actual events from the point of view of fictional people living in that time. John Dewey writes that history means, “That which happened in the past” as well as “the intellectual reconstruction of these happenings at a subsequent time”. (169)

On the other hand, history-fiction is a fictional narrative which uses and abuses history for its needs. It applies history when history serves the purpose of the narrative. The novelists of the history-fiction make use of famous events, points of view and localised history, alternate history which may not be recorded in conventional history, with fictional characters either observing or actively participating in these actual events. Historical figures are also often shown dealing with these events while depicting them in a way that has not been previously recorded. Other times, a historical event is used to complement a story's narrative, occurring in the background while characters deal with situations (personal or otherwise) wholly unrelated to that historical event. Sometimes, the names of people and places are in some way altered.

The difference can only be in the ingredients not of the final product. History is like green chilly. Fiction is like coconut and curry leaves. Water is like imagination. The mixer would be historical fiction, that is ‘chutney’ (‘chutnmification’) (Rushdie, Midnight's Children 643- 44) used for idly and dosa in India. In ordinary context people converse of their children’s appearances, ‘she takes after her grandmother’; ‘he resembles his cousin in facial appearance, action and speech’. Here one can find that there is an attitude to refer to the past in order to
understand the present nature/ appearance of the children at the same time giving glimpses of the past characters’ shadows. Regarding weather report (rain) and climate, political issues, economical issues, geographical, cultural and religious issues and everything we tend to go back to refer to past events/happenings in order to understand the present context in a better manner.

The fictional reality that one encounters is merely a set of conventions from the society looked through different magnifying glasses. It is like a child repeating the language that is heard by it and creating its own by imitating. The contemporary novelists from India exhibit characters in fiction which reflect the culture’s ideology, for instance, the character Deeti in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* (2008) accepts the cultural and social evil *sati* without any second thought after the death of her husband.

Literature and history have their relationships from the earliest time. History has a mythical origin like literature evolved from myth. In connection with this Arnold Toynbee states 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)

Literature has a special place in society in transforming and supporting the emotions of people. The key purpose of literature is to render pleasure/entertainment to the participants/audiences. As Aristotle says that literature is also focused to didactic/moralistic/philosophic/supplying its version of truth about life it represents life as it is. It is like mirror to nature. It represents the way of life. Similar claims are made by History which is also representative of events as it is. The similarity of operations of these two disciplines is the act of representing the life of people. Of course, literature indulges in imagination based on life in the world. History claims that the imagination which it indulges based on scrutiny/objective ways, so it is scientifically true.

The historians who claim scientific veracity have not stood witnessing each happening and recorded meticulously by the side of kings and of common people. It is also impossible to record the happenings since time will not stand still, showing each happening in total. If it is impossible then interpretation/assumption/imagination/ representation/ creation/art has played the role of recording the past happenings. The moment literary applications involve in the writings of history it becomes literary and can be interpretative in multiple ways.
Literature does not claim to be scientifically verifiable or truth oriented in purpose. As New Historicists say that the literary artists are products of society, their creations have social, cultural, political, geographical and religious bearing to a greater extent. Camilo Jose Cela in her Noble Lecture entitled “Eulogy to the Fable” says that there are two pillars of literary endeavours: Aesthetics and ethics. According to her, aesthetics imposes a requirement on an essay, fiction, poem, drama to maintain certain minimum standards which distinguish it from the sub-literary world in which creativity cannot keep pace with the readers’ emotions, because the sub-literary world is monotonous incapable of creativity and genuine worthwhile fable. The second pillar of literature is ethics which has a lot to do regarding thought and freedom. (Cela142)

Kalle Pihlainen says praising literary narratives that they ‘serve as an appropriate model for historical writing because they go beyond a (more) straightforward account of events; they actively engage the reader on an aesthetic and not only epistemological level’ (Pihlainen2)

The genre ‘novel’ from 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 and how those various techniques are used by the select novelists.

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 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. But 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).

History writings contain both facts and fictions; facts that which can be debatable. The constituents of these elements overlap and demand for continuous exchange of literary critical activity. E. H. Carr observes that history is neither “a hard core of facts surrounded by a ‘pulp of disreputable interpretation’ nor ‘a hard core of interpretation surrounded by a pulp of disreputable facts’ but a diabolic between the two (Carr 986. 4, 18)

Literature exhibits freedom both to readers and to writers. The Sartrean concept of freedom logically entails for the writer the necessity of commitment and an acceptance of a literature engage. Sartre asserts that the writer-any-writer-is inevitably committed because he cannot soar above history, whatever his pretensions to doing so. Willy-nilly, he is involved in his own time; impartiality is impossible.

Jean Paul Sartre’s notion of commitment implies a ‘conscious affirmation of certain values’. The writer visualizes the human condition in its totality. She/he tries to explore and embrace a situation in order to unite the specific with the absolute. Literature kindles the reader to open up to a freedom in and through history. According to Sartre, Literature should be an irritant, a catalyst provoking men to change the world in which they live and in so doing to change themselves.

Commenting on Sartre’s notion of literature, David Cante says in the introduction of What is Literature? that literature is presented by Sartre as a form of social action and action by disclosure. He says that Sartre demands a literature of praxis, capable of becoming an essential
condition for action, the moment of reflective consciousness (XIV). According to Sartre, ‘aesthetic joy’ means aesthetic pleasure of literature, which forms a sign of a good work.

The general idea of literature is that everything that is written depends on the reception of the reader because Literature is subjective. The value judgments it presents will change in course of time. The central essence of Literature is change. That is why he defines Literature as Literature of change. Sartre says, “The meaning of Literature changes, not eternal”, the reason could be found in linguistic expression (Sartre). Terry Eagleton, in her essay “what is Literature?” says defining literature in relationship to language, “Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech”.

Literature reflects society and on human condition. By reflecting society, it urges us to think about our society. It gives aesthetic pleasure through language and characters. It presents ideology and changes ideology. It presents social and political effects as Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh present a world of fiction. Literature presents fictional worlds; such worlds can be perceived through reading Literature.

Marxists view literature that which changes the world to a classless society is a perfect work of art. Literature gives enough scope to our understanding of human condition. It presents a consciousness which opens to truth. Sartre says Literature engages history right from the beginning. He says that ‘elders have used chronological order to permit the reader to see the logical and universal relationship, the eternal verities’. According to him, a historical novel should portray the brutal freshness of past, its ambiguity. Literature embraces history and allows its traits on historical events. Historical datum/events are no longer seen single, accurate, objective and certain. Literature as mentioned above changes the ideology, consciousness in generation after generation. In relation to this, Sartre says literature engages history and distorts history to the realm of uncertainty. He says,

We did not want to delight our public with its superiority to a dead world – we wanted to take it by the throat. Let every character be a trap, let the reader be caught in it, and let him be tossed from one consciousness to another as from one absolute and irremediable universe to another similarly absolute; let him be uncertain of the very uncertainty of the heroes, disturbed by their disturbance, flooded with their present, docile beneath the weight of their future, invested with their perceptions and feelings as by high insurmountable cliffs. In short, let him feel that every one of their moods and every
movement of their minds encloses all mankind and is, in its time and place, in the womb of history... (174)

Sartrean concept of Literature and its engagement with history should be coupled with public and the writer’s reconsideration in order to re-integrate the absolute into history. For him, the collectivity passes to reflection and meditation by means of literature. It acquires an unhappy conscience, a lopsided image of itself which constantly tries to modify and improve. Therefore, Literature cannot be defined in a clear-cut manner. It accepts what is there in society and extracts into an ideology and shifts that ideology to yet another in future depending on the society in which it is written.

The literary elements and attributes can be applied to history so much so it deals with linguistic expression. There is a drastic change on the part of history writing. The historians who used to be uneasy no longer fight. They have given new dimension to the novelist’s ‘old habit of using and interpreting history in his fiction. In contemporary context, the novelists use of history in fiction is more wilful, more self-conscious, more sophisticated. In a conversation with Guner Grass, Salman Rushdie observes that writers of present time have inclination towards historical project: “... the purpose of the fiction was in a way paradoxical, that the fiction is telling the truth at a time at which the people who claimed to be telling the truth are making things up. Therefore, in a way you have politicians or the media or whoever, the people who form opinion, in fact making the fictions. And it becomes the duty of the writer of fiction to start telling the truth. This is a kind of paradox which perhaps, is true of many countries now” (54).

The coupling of fact and fiction leads to form a better world of imagination which forms a foundation for future history. History takes its newer version as the time pass by because of its encounter with different socio-political groups. Jawaharlal Nehru calls this kind of history “imagined history”. He states that,

This imagined history, mixture of fact and fiction or sometimes only fiction, becomes symbolically true and tells us of the minds and hearts and the purposes of the people of that particular epoch. It is true also in the sense that it becomes the basis for thought and action, for future history. (77)

History and fiction can be differentiated only by observing the similarities and differences with respect to the usage of language. These similarities and differences change from time to time. The recording of history depends on the societal change where many elements
decide the historical writings. Therefore, historians imitate novelists in the processes of writing history, because novelists have a prime position of imitating and representing reality. Historians use the literary techniques to represent history like novelists. This point has already been discussed elaborately in the first chapter. In this connection, T.N. Dhar says, “the problem of relating history and fiction has always hinged upon the similarities and differences between the two, which have constantly varied. The points of convergence between the two have been seen in narrative, figurative, and rhetorical terms, but emphasizing or blurring their similarities and dissimilarities is also a political act” (35-36).

The novel writing in India has stood in its own legs under the impact of the novel in West, especially of England. In fact, the novel’s engagement with history has been right from its origin. It is only from 19th century the critics have focused their attention to the novel’s engagement with history. The nature of literature is to present life as it is. In that case the fictional writers place ‘human conditions’ and human actions in a ‘recognizable geographical and historical space and a comprehensible time frame’ (19).

In India, most of the regional languages have engaged history in literature from ancient time onwards. Commenting on writing History in South India Velacheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam emphasis historical consciousness in “myths, legends, literature, puranic stories, folklore, and phantasmagoria of various types and forms” (2). According to them historians, recover history from the body of literature from several regions. These critics emphasis that India too had history. The notion of history from Indian point of view is overlapping with literature. They say:

These texts – in Telugu, Tamil, Sanskrit, Marathi and Persian – have usually been seen as something else, in line with the genre in which they are couched from folk-epic to courtly poetry (Kavya) to variously categorized prose narratives. They may not have looked like history to the eyes of conventionally oriented observers of the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries-probably because then works are not dull enough to count as historical narrative. They are often dramatic, rich in colour and taste, alive with feeling, as was natural to the genres in which they were recorded. (3)

These critics agree with history – fiction connection in literature. Though they highlight history, they also emphasize that the fictional narrative is better than history which gives mere details and data.
In India, fictional writing has been recognized because of the rise of national awakening. As the novel develops in Indian history writing in English there also develops the novelists’ engagement with history. As T.N. Dhar points out the novelists ‘awareness of the colonial situation and the social and political ferment it generated in the country’ (19), the novels of the earlier time in India has focused on political history. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says that literature has taken a significant dimension to Indian novelists’ involvement with history under the impact of Mahatma Gandhi. He says, “With the Gandhian revolution in our political life, there came about also a revolution in our writing” (271).

Early novelists in India have focused political – social and historical themes within the corpus of their writings in order to show the importance of the past and also to recreate their version of past in order to show people that the British version of the past of India is partial and misleading. These novelists’ engagement with history has stimulated a sense of pride in the minds of people which was a need of the hour.

Some critics disapprove of this kind of novels because they accuse that the novels fail to represent what really happened. T.N. Dhar commenting on such critics, says that they ‘assume that the past is something already known, and has congealed into a fixed shape; if the novelists want to write novels about it, all they need to do is to incorporate it into their work faithfully. If they fail to do so they are bad artists” (20).

K.S. Srinivasa Iyengar writes that the Gandian impact on contemporary Indian Literature has brought about results at various levels - such as choice of language, bilingual and regional language, and main focus on Gandhian themes. He praises K.S. Venkataramani’s Murugan the Tiller (1927) and Kandhan the Patriot for these novels depict “a picture of sharp and suggestive of the Gandhian Age” (282). He says of these novels that, “humour and poetry and politics and prophecy mingle together in bewildering fashion, but anyhow the result is a novel of permanent and paramount significance”. (282)

The point here is not to rehearse the entire novel writings in Indian writing in English rather to show that the novelists have incorporated history in Indian writing in English right from the beginning. In a close scrutiny of historical novel, one can find always a shift/change in the novelists approach to history. This change makes it what Bakhtin calls a plastic and uncompleted genre and calls “novelness”. Fiction and its connection with reality is not a concrete and fixed form and it needs broadmindedness to accept any change on the part of human experience. The
novelists’ engagement with history keeps changing because there are scope and several possibilities and new outlook for the novelists from the society in which they live in. In relation to this Bakhtin says that, “contemporary provides the point of view” (Bakhtin 23). In connection with this T.N. Dhar says that, “the novel also increasingly assimilates more and more of historical time and space and even actual historical persons. This is what it has been doing over centuries and what it would probably continue doing in future as well”. (25-26)

Historical novel can be defined in the older conception that it deals with the past almost like an epic. It incorporates past as a pre-formed thing, and treats it almost with reverence. If the novelists fail to produce such themes in their novels then they are not good historical novelists. Historical novel or history novel or history-fiction can also be defined in the modernist terms considering the novelists approach to history. The contemporary historical novelists have romanticized history, have sensationalized, have interrogated and have problematized it. They criticize history, satirize it, play with it, and even trivialize it. This type of historical novel focuses on “societal formations, groups, communities, and other institutional structures” (30). For example, Amitav Ghosh’s Sea of Poppies (2008) show interest in past which illuminate areas of social and cultural experience which have not received the attention of historians. Juliet Gardiner writes that historical novel is

Largely a result of the educational, social and political experience of those writing and reading history. It is in this spirit that the contours of the past have been remapped; existing questions have been reformulated; known facts have been reinterrogated; what was once considered marginal has been woven into the centrality of historical enquiry and historical research has been recognized as a more profound exercise than simply filling the gaps. (75)

An attempt will be made to demonstrate how the select novelists deal with history by using narrative modes and literary techniques which have been elaborately discussed in the first chapter and in this chapter too. The crux of the thesis is not to accuse or to expose historian’s unauthentic portrayal of history or to produce any periodized view of time or to question historical details there by producing another version of history, but rather the contemporary Indian novelists use their imagination, memory and freedom in choosing the past and interpreting it, shaping it as they want. There is a lot of flexibility and elasticity on the part of the novelists in adopting the historical details. They bring the contemporary experience, change and human condition within the corpus of their writing.
Most of the contemporary Indian Fiction Writers in English have drawn their source from the historical material but some of the novels lack in intensity of historical consciousness. However, their novels draw our attention to political consciousness, nation, culture, identity, language. Hazariprasad Dwivedi has stressed the fact that “Literature makes history”. Explaining the concept, clearly he states in his essay, “The Essential Nature of Literature” (“Sahitya ka marm”), “Literature which has been fed by all essential rasas of life is creative, active and continuously developing like life. It is desirable. Poetry is created which by creating new emotions has been adding to the sensibility of the creator” (Vichar Pravah 131-32 in Namvar Sigh).

This explains that if history is made by literature, it is not done so through direct process but by the duty of creative process and through literary technique. In other words, creativity becomes a powerful tool of literature in making history. Most of the select authors exhibit this creativity in the context of history. Moreover, these fictional writers engage with history in their fictions in a way “making history”.

Since creativity is involved in literature and making of history, one could imagine that the creation of literature is creation of “make – believe” history. Oriya writer Radhanath Roy has engaged this sort of creation of “make –believe” history in regional literature by intermingling actual events into fictional narrative. His creation of make-believe-history could not be possible had he not possessed a sense of history. However, his sense of history is drawn from his awareness of regional past, legends, folktales and peculiar incidents of Orissa. However, he has relied on the earlier historiographical findings by Stirling, Hunter and Pyarimohun Acharya. Commenting on Radhanath Roy’s Kavyas, Subhakanta Behera observes:

Radhanath’s Kavyas can be seen as projecting self – consciousness because they are not only thematically rooted in Orissa but also become authentic narratives on Orissa history, topography and mountains. He succeeded in articulating the ideas, aspirations and dreams of the Oriya middles class to which he belonged in the kavyas, and gave them a sense of pride as Oriyas.(1903)

The mutual sharing of ideas of history and literature has been there for centuries. The recognition of the interweaving has gained its prominence only late 19th century onwards. It is “make – believe” history because the imagined incidents in the kavyas appeared to be historical facts and Oriyas could take pride in them. Salamn Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh have done the same that
would be seen in the following chapters. The contemporary Indian Fiction Writers have created make – believe history that involves both facts and fictions – elements from traditional storytelling, legends, minor histories, and folklore. The following chapters would attempt to bring forth how the select authors construct make – believe history that further reconstruct self, nation, and cultural identities.

Paul Sharrad says that the postcolonial studies consistently the theories of the place of history in literature and in culture in order to show the emerging voices of minorities and subaltern. He asserts that the focus on nation building as well as history making by regional literatures from the Common wealth in general arise from their own local traditions. For instance, the stories of Prem Chand, Rabindranath Tagore in the past, Salman Rushdie, Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh and others in the present have attempted globalizing the local in their fictions engaging with history. Sharrad says:

Without history – the succession of past events – there would be no Indian novel, and certainly no Indian novel in English. Without history – the codified narrative of those events – our understanding of literature and of the place in it of Indian English writing might appear quite different. (6)

As mentioned earlier the contemporary Indian Fiction writers do not write historical novels as per the definition of Walter Scott, Avrom Fleishman, F J Ticker and Georg Lukacs. On the contrary, the fictional writers imagine stories which overlap with histories of past and present there by creating a “make – believe” history which sometimes form a base for the historians to proceed in their historical narratives in future. In the writings of postcolonial fiction there is a sense of place, a sense of time and a sense of culture and identity. The essences of the local traditions are brought to forefront in the contemporary Indian fiction in English. History and literature not only share mutually, but also interweave and blend so that no one can tell which history is and which literature is. In this regard, Sharrad observes the relationship between history and literature as:

It is in the broad area of New Historicism, wherein history is not seen as an extratextual given to be transcribed more or less accurately into fiction, but is itself textually constructed, just as texts are historically situated and produced. Inside and outside not only overlap, but also interfuse – in this case especially because they are both part of the project of building nation and national culture. (14)
The comment on history and historian by Theodore Roosevelt aptly fits the context too. Roosevelt says, “The great historian must be able to paint for us the life of the plain people, the ordinary men and women, of the time which he writes. He can do this only if he possesses the highest kind of imagination (37). This highest imagination is the core and nucleus of literature which creates work of arts from the past present and future through observation and imagination. Thus, literature concerns with imagination and interpretation in the process of any form of literary work. However, history calls for literature not as some sort of imaginative assertion of what we already knew, but as an active and integral part of reaching an understanding of past societies and their association with the present.

On the other hand, literature presents by its technique a combination of factual and experiential truths as seen in Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*, and Sanghi’s *Chanakya’s Chant*. In this sense, the select novels for the study display that historical narrative cannot only concern itself with presenting factual information. Moreover, literature functions as response to system of values apart from the aesthetic function. Literature is produced in order to give pleasure and joy to life. However, it represents the society, mirrors the society which means its purpose is twofold—pleasure giving, and teaching. “Teaching” does not mean direct teaching or didactic act or pedagogic one. Literature by presenting the actual world makes us to think and connect one action with others, one place with another and one time with other. In this sense, literature responds to the structures of societies as well as to the systems of values thereby problematizing the existing one in its various forms. In the process of imitating societies, literature also focuses on history and attempts to establish a new version of histories through the imaginative process. This act problematises the conventional historians’ construction of history. The key focus of history writing and the methodologies of history writing are problematised/diluted. Literature highlights the problematical nature of history through its writings.

The singular position of history is deconstructed with multiple positions and multiple voices of voiceless people. In conventional works of historians’ focus used to draw the attention of the sophisticated, royally significant incidents and the events and happenings those are associated with Kings, Queens, and other powerful authorities. However, literature draws the attention of the local and ordinary events and things related to ordinary people as Roosevelt commented. In this sense, literature takes the factual events in to consideration and builds up its own histories which form a sort of response to the existing histories as well as to the societies of
the time. It draws histories of the past and tries to accomplish to order to present a torch to walk in the present as well as in the future. As Carr insists the interpretive nature of history, literature does this function. According to him, history, historical facts should be interpretative. Since historians observe the facts and choose the best out of several past events after put into multiple scrutinizes, they claim that history is scientifically true and meticulously correct. They tend to forget the literary nature of language as well as the deconstructive nature of language. They employ figures and phrases in order to explain historical events where the literary elements unknowingly exhibit the interpretative nature of history. In connection with this, David Walter Price observes:

If conventional historical narratives generally concern themselves with epistemological or even ontological questions, they place greater emphasis on causal relationships so as to produce an explanation of what occurred in the past. Rarely do such conventional histories draw attention to the notions of value formation as it affected the actualities of the past and as it affects the very construction of the historical narrative itself. (2)

However, there is no better hierarchy claimed between literature and history. History is not belittled and denied as significant one that may provide false representation of life. But postmodern has shown the mutual intertextual relationship between history and literature and everything is linked to the past to the present. In this line, Linda Hutcheon stresses the point that literature and history provide the intertexts that can be seen very well in the select novels. She goes on to say that, “there is no question of a hierarchy, implied or otherwise” between literature and history. “They are both part of the signifying systems of our culture. They both make and make sense of our world. This is one of the lesions of that most didactic of postmodern forms: historiographic metafiction”. (Hutcheon, Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History 28)

Historical consciousness becomes a vital point in the contemporary Indian Fiction in English. It is different from the ancestors who have built historical consciousness before independence in order to instigate patriotism. The earlier historical narratives are mainly based on western history and mode of historical narrative writing. Rosinka Chaudhuri comments on the writings of Toru Dutt, “A significant number of poems in the Album are historical. These poems (‘The Death of Mohammed Ghor’, ‘Jehangire’s Lament’, ‘The Flight of Humaoon’, ‘Tara Baee’), based on subjects taken from medieval Indian history, are narrative verse tales in the style of Scott’s ballads”. (Chaudhuri 71)
On the other hand, in the contemporary time, history is focused for introducing the local culture and history. A historian like a novelist chooses his material according to his prejudices, judgments, preferences and prescription. He includes, excludes, and stresses, sidelines the chosen historical materials depending upon his whims and fancy. Similarly, the historical novelists as mentioned earlier focus their attention in their writings to major the historical events/pasts that are recorded by historians. In addition to this, although the historical novelists use their imagination in creating historical novels they always try to adhere and faithful to the historical materials provided by historians of certain place. On the contrary, history-fiction writers create make-believe history. They take freedom to use the available historical materials and try to find gaps in historical narratives and fill them up through their imagination. In this way, they create another literary history, which provides truth-value.

David Walter Price calls novels, which engages with history as novels of poietic history. He defines novels of poietic history that which “presents us with the emotional, psychological, and intellectual dimensions that we experience from the inside of a fictional character or imagined situation. Rather than have an outside observer, the proverbial objective historian, describe events and explain why they occurred, novels of poietic history allow us as readers to experience the struggle to create values in one of several ways” (2-3). According to Price, the novels of the poietic histories concern with both actualities of the past and in the construction of the narrative about the past. This point is evident in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and in his other fictions and novels of Amitav Ghosh where the authors Indian fiction in English have offered counternarrative view of the established notions of history and at the same time they focus on the forgotten possibilities of the past.

The select novels for the research concern themselves with axiological questions. Axiology is the term first used by Paul Lapie in the early twentieth century in order to refer to meta–ethics. This is a study, which concerns with values of ethics and aesthetics. It functions as an investigative approach and can be used in this study of novels. The concept of good and value are highlighted in the postcolonial fictions. They are analyzed taking into account individual and social conduct and the historical milieu of the time. The novelists of Indian Fiction in English pose questions of value and try to establish an understanding of “what occurred in the past”. The fictional writers of the present study try to achieve this goal by building up characters, plots, and situations from history as well as imagined history that represent values coupled with historical facts.
The authors become a sort of historians who narrate histories of forgotten past with literary taste. They seem to harp on the importance of history, which produces values and humanity. These novelists exhibit sense of place and time thereby creating a sense of history. In general, we experience the sense of place and time through the setting, the emotional, psychological and intellectual states of mind that particular (historical) characters possess. To read about Amitav Ghosh, his sense of place, his dreams, and his aspirations, for example provides us a better understanding of place, border and multiple versions of histories. The following chapter deals with the sense of place, which functions as a point of departure and point of arrival. The characters always move with the space changing their roles forever.