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GRAHAM SWIFT'S *WATERLAND* AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

VOLKAN DUMAN

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Submitted by : Volkan DUMAN

Approval of Graduate School of Social Sciences, English Literature and Cultural Studies, Çankaya University

Prof. Dr. Mehmet YAZICI
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Art.

Prof. Dr. Özlem UZUNDEMİR
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Art.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Mustafa KIRCA
Supervisor

Examination Date: 13.12.2019

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Özlem UZUNDEMİR

Asst. Prof. Dr. Mustafa KIRCA

Asst. Prof. Dr. Elif ÖZTABAK-AVCI

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Name, Last Name: Volkan DUMAN

Signature: 

Date: 13.12.2019

ABSTRACT

GRAHAM SWIFT'S *WATERLAND* AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

DUMAN, Volkan

Department of English Literature and Cultural Studies

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This thesis aims to analyze Graham Swift's *Waterland* as postmodernist historical novel in the light of Linda Hutcheon's concept of "historiographic metafiction". Principally, the concept of historiographic metafiction suggests that history is a construction and cannot present facts objectively. In the light of these ideas, the study argues that Graham Swift's *Waterland* undermines history as a grand narrative through the main character Tom Crick, who is a history teacher and the only narrator in the novel. As a self-reflexive narrator, in a self-referential text, Tom Crick primarily blurs the definitions of history, story, reality, progress and fairy-tale. Furthermore, his paradoxical accounts on the relevance of historical facts create confusion in the reader. His distortion of reality through his stories as a means of redemption does not prove to be helpful except for himself. Thus, it is questioned by the present study in what ways Tom Crick is an unreliable narrator and a true historian, and shown that historical facts are not represented objectively in Swift's postmodern historical fiction.

Key words: *Waterland*, Historiographic Metafiction, Self-reflexive Narrator, Deconstruction.

ÖZET

GRAHAM SWIFT'İN *SU DİYARI* ADLI ROMANININ TARİHSEL ÜSTKURMACA AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ

DUMAN, Volkan

İngiliz Edebiyatı ve Kültür İncelemeleri Bölümü
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Bu tez, Graham Swift'in romanı *Su Diyarı*'nı Linda Hutcheon'un tarihsel üst kurmaca kavramı ışığında postmodern tarihi roman olarak incelemeyi amaçlar. Temelde, bu teori tarihin kurmaca olduğunu ve saf gerçekliği sunamayacağını söyler. Bu fikirlerin ışığında, bu çalışma Graham Swift'in romanı ana karater ve ayrıca tarih öğretmeni ve romandaki tek anlatıcı olan Tom Crick üzerinden *Su Diyarı*'nın tarihi üst anlatı olarak görmediğini ileri sürmektedir. Özdüşünümsel bir anlatıcı olarak, özgönderimsel bir metinde, Tom Crick ilk olarak tarih, hikâye, gerçeklik, ilerleme ve masal gibi kavramların anlamlarını bulanıklaştırır. Sonrasında, tarihi gerçeklerin uygunluğu üzerindeki çelişkili varsayımları okuyucuda kafa karışıklığına yol açar. Günahlarından arınma adına, hikâyeleri yoluyla gerçekleri saptırması kendi dışında hiç bir kimsenin işine yaramamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmayla Tom Crick'in nasıl güvenilmez bir anlatıcı ve tarihçi olduğu ve tarihsel gerçekliklerin Swift'in bu postmodern tarihi romanında objektif olarak temsil edilemeyeceği ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Su Diyarı*, Tarihsel Üstkurmaca, Özdüşünümsel Anlatıcı, Yapısöküm.

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INTRODUCTION

Graham Swift is one of the revisionist novelists of a generation who has become known since the 1980s along with some other writers such as Salman Rushdie, Emma Tennant, Martin Amis and Ian McEwan. Almost all of these writers have academic backgrounds and they have brought a new understanding into fiction writing. As they are equipped with literary theories, they can easily embrace postmodern techniques in their works. Swift is distinguished especially with his talents to record historical accounts along with personal accounts in an effective way to make his readers question the objectivity of historiography. Pascale Tollance suggests that Swift's works can be likened to a large room in which various voices can be heard to create a story (Tollance 141). Swift's dominant characteristic concerning his style is creating narrators who have a natural tendency to tell stories. Fiction and historical reality, and memory and reconstruction of the past are central to his novels. As the narrators in Swift's fiction are both executers and reporters of their own history, they cannot be defined as objective. His earlier novels such as *Waterland* (1983) and *Ever After* (1993) portray late-twentieth century characters with those of remote ascendants. His later novels such as *Last Orders* (1996), *The Light of Day (*2003), and *Wish You Were Here* (2011) cover contemporary times. His characters in either group have mundane lives (Cobley 272).

In his *Waterland*, Swift offers contradictory concepts and ideas about history and chalenges grand narratives, social codes of family structures, or personal perspectives of ordinary people. It is acknowledged in *Waterland* that human beings are "storytelling animals" and they do it with a motivation of leaving traces of existence behind. Through the novel, Swift conveys that story-telling is an escape from boredom of reality, finding a meaning in life in the local culture and geography and keeping away from unbearable troubles of reality. Besides, through the self-reflexive narrator, Tom Crick, it is suggested that history and story have similar connotations. Swift embraces history as a subject matter in *Waterland*, yet it neither offers a solution

as an academic subject nor a personal relief in the form of storytelling. The aim of this study is to analyse Swift's *Waterland* as historiographic metafiction and to discuss how history telling by the novel's narrator, who is a historian, is problematized. It argues that the paradoxical state in the narrator's reports in *Waterland* shows the "unrepresentability" of historical events in fiction. Therefore, this thesis studies Tom Crick's contradictory views and contemplations on history, reality, story, fairy-tale and end of history because it is claimed by this thesis that he consistently blurs the definitions concerning the field of history and cannot present a solution for those devastated lives or a hope for his students for the future.

Like such contemporary writers as Peter Ackroyd, Julian Barnes, A. S. Byatt and Penelope Lively, Graham Swift also deals with the relationship between reconstruction of the past and memory or history and fiction. Considering his themes, Slavomir Konkol suggests that loss and crisis are common motifs including traumatic experiences. His novels cannot maintain a linear unfolding of events as the characters are trapped in a traumatic alienation. They use narration as a way of managing personal or greater realities. Yet, they eventually conclude that struggling with fear is only momentary (105).

Although Swift's works are praised and respected to a great extent, there are some negative views as well. David Malcolm summarizes the criticisms under four qualities of Swift's novels: "a deployment of what are seen as one-dimensional, ultimately uninteresting, and unconvincing characters; an overshematic, insistently intellectual organization of his texts; excessive ambition; and the use of melodramatic story material that makes too great demands on the reader's emotions" (Malcolm 4). The negative views usually tend to focus on his characters. Readers do not have a clear view even on main characters, so they always have to make some deductions on characters' actions. Even at the end of any of Swift's novels, they cannot be sure of some incidents which are significant parts of the story. For example, about the characterization in *Waterland*, Michael Gorra stresses that the novel is short of intensity regarding the characters, but it is chiefly passionate about the story line (Gorra 11). The characters are depicted as ordinary and uninteresting figures without holding a strong view. As the character depiction is unsatisfactory, Swift's novels rely too much on the plot and sentiment. In a review of *Out of This World*, Harriet Gilbert

portrays the novel as “over schematic, more like a game-plan than a game played out, with symbols sticking up like marker flags and a structure of crossword puzzle symmetry” (Gilbert 35).

Malcolm suggests that four main standpoints arise in the works produced after the 1980s: “a fascination with historical events and processes of the distant and more recent past; a cosmopolitan opening out to settings and characters from beyond the geographical limits of the British Isles; a very substantial amount of mixing of genres within individual texts; and metafictional concerns” (8). It can be said that Swift is more concerned with the metafictional concerns as he discusses fictionality, storytelling and narration dominantly in his works. Yet, other elements except for the “settings” away from the British Isles are also in use in Swift’s works. In a comprehensive outlook, discussions on Swift’s work embody elements such as intertextuality and genre mixture; storytelling; narrative; troubled characters and national history.

Tamas Benyei holds another discussion on Swift’s works. He claims that critical readings of Swift’s fiction are generally associated with two classifications. The first one is the very common and well known notion, ‘historiographic metafiction’ which was introduced by Linda Hutcheon in her criticism of *Waterland.* The text interrogates history and narration self-reflexively and self-consciously. The second classification, a certain narrative mode, can be found in all Swift’s works. Characters are highly melancholic and their mourning dominates his fictions reflecting the personal mourning on a whole nation (Benyei 40).

Gita May expresses her admiration on Swift’s way of narrating a story as follows: “A superb storyteller, Swift knows how to use all the possibilities of the first-person narrative, with all the immediacy and spontaneity that this form entails. The constant subjective flow and ebb of sensations and emotions, and the ever present and intrusive recollections of past experiences, inform the narrator’s story” (May 427). Putting past and present together in his narratives, portraying family relations and legends in a way to distance the reader from the realities of modern day, but at the same time associating these personal and family interests to the nation’s history, are also among Swift’s qualities that make him a successful writer of postmodern fiction.

Waterland is the third and most celebrated of Swift's novels. The story mainly takes place in the South of England in the Fenland and Greenwich, London. Tom Crick, who is a history teacher in his early fifties and about to be fired because of her wife's scandalous act of abducting a baby, is the main character and narrator of the stories that he extracts from his and his family's local life experiences. Naturally, he is supposed to follow the curriculum and to inform his students about the French Revolution, but overwhelmed with his personal shortcomings in the disastrous outcome of his family's life, he starts talking about local history of the Fenland, contemporary to the French Revolution, and continues with the rise of his mother's family, the Atkinsons, in the field of barley brewery and his own family who worked initially as fishermen and then lockkeepers of the sluices for water drainage. Along with the local historical events, Tom Crick also tells his students about his family secrets and unravels his personal stories to his students who show no interest in history.

The stories which build up *Waterland* start with strange events in Tom Crick's childhood. After his mother's death he lives with his father, Henry Crick, whose life has shattered after having been wounded in World War II, and his retarded half-brother, Dick Crick, who is born out of an incestuous intercourse between his mother and her father, Ernest Atkinson. In their adolescent years, Tom, Mary, Dick and a couple of other friends in the neighbourhood involve in curious discoveries of human biology and Mary becomes pregnant. With Mary's machinations, Dick, who is probably in love with Mary, kills Freddie Parr, thinking he is the father. Then, with Tom's incentives, he reaches his father/grandfather's magic beer bottle, drinks and loses his wits, and commits suicide in the end. Mary has an abortion by a witch-like woman in the forest and it turns out that she would never have a baby again. Years later, Tom and Mary get married and move to London. Almost thirty years pass and the reader is not informed about those thirty years. Mary and Tom Crick live with the burden of the two young boys' death along with an unborn child's death in those years. However, eventually, Mary loses her wits and abducts a baby at a supermarket and she is sent to an asylum. Tom Crick loses his job, but before retiring he starts telling his stories concerning the deaths and local history of the Fenland, which can be considered as his urge for a redemption.

Waterland is a novel full of oppositions and contradictions. It deals with history and reality; land and water; sanity and insanity; history and story. There is claim for reality which never comes. History is invariably at the centre of the novel, and the narrator, Tom Crick is a history teacher who is pushed into early retirement. He questions the truthfulness, limitations and purpose of stories. Doing so, he never abandons the idea that history is a way of telling stories. Thus, George P. Landow suggests that "These questioning of narrative within its narrative makes *Waterland* a self-reflexive text." (Landow 198). Tom Crick, in one of his history lessons, talks about narration, story and even history:

> Children, only animals live entirely in the Here and Now. Only nature knows neither memory nor history. But man - let me offer you a definition - is the storytelling animal. Wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting marker-buoys and trail-signs of stories. He has to go on telling stories. He has to keep on making them up. As long as there's a story, it's all right. Even in his last moments, it's said, in the split second of a fatal fall - or when he's about to drown - he sees, passing rapidly before him, the story of his whole life (Swift 52).

The topic of his history class is the French Revolution but he rarely talks about it. He rather tells the students about his own past. Ivan Del Janik explains this as follows: "*Waterland* is a manifestation of a man's need to tell stories to keep reality under control, and Crick can be seen as a man telling his story in an attempt to cope with its implications" (Janik 83).

Tom Crick's ancestors largely took part in keeping the Fens of East England dredged and drained. His father was a lock-keeper and a water person as his forbearers. They all fished, trapped ducks, cut reeds and caught eels. At first they did not like the idea of draining water as they would be left without a living. They even tried to sabotage the draining but eventually, they were employed to do the job by Atkinsons, who were the ancestors of Tom Crick's mother (McKinney 822). Yet, this was not the only quality Crick's family had. They all had the gifted quality of telling stories which is mainly considered as "the filler of the vacuums" (Swift 68). The definition of 'history' and 'story' is blurred by the family members. Though Tom Crick is supposed to teach children the French Revolution, he fails to do so by interrupting his lessons with his own family history which is no less traumatic than the French Revolution. In either case, the students are offered no way out, which makes them bear the fear of a

Holocaust. Benyei states how history does not have any real value in this work: "History in this novel has appeared repeatedly as a conspicuously alien, abstract word, that has nothing to do with the everyday experience of day-to-day living, and is therefore unable to acquire any real referential value in the world of the novel" (Benyei 41).

Therefore, this thesis discusses different perspectives regarding history telling and its problematization in the three body chapters in light of Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction. In Chapter One, Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction composes the main body of discussions. Traditional historiography and postmodern historiography are also discussed in this chapter. In Chapter Two, the study focuses on the question 'Why do we need history?' and tries to answer this, discussing Tom Crick's views on the issue. It is conveyed that finding meaning in stories and the term 'make-believe' are prevailing motifs in answering the question. Curiosity is also discussed in this chapter within the scope of the same question. Besides, Tom Crick's role as a history teacher and the narrator of the story is discussed along with his defense of history. Chapter Three starts with the analysis of the role of a historian and an unreliable narrator. The chapter proceeds with Tom Crick's ideas on the distortion of history and tries to reveal why he is trying to fabricate his own history. In the third chapter, the end of history is discussed through Tom Crick, as a highly contradictory and unreliable narrator and historian. Distortion of reality and the existence of a Holocaust club founded by his students are also discussed in this chapter to reveal that history offers no hope for the future.

In the final chapter of the thesis, the conclusion that the study reaches is Graham Swift's *Waterland* is a historiographic metafiction which subverts the power of history as a grand narrative through the main character and narrator of the text, Tom Crick. Tom Crick displays his unreliability through his contradictory contemplations on the relevance of history. At times, he advocates history both as a means of official history and storytelling, but at other times, he shows that history is not a means of salvation or a source of information. Once for all, in his *Waterland,* Graham Swift shows through the paradoxical state at the narrator's report that the facts and truths cannot be represented in historical fiction.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

This chapter discusses the concepts of history, traditional and postmodern historiography in the light of Linda Huctheon's theory of "historiographic metafiction". Some elements of postmodern fiction will be discussed in relation to "historiographic metafiction" which constructs the ground theory for the analysis of Graham Swift's *Waterland*.

In her *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, published in 1988, Linda Hutcheon coins the term historiographic metafiction and defines it as novels "which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (*Poetics* 5). She also makes a comparison between postmodern works and historiographic metafictions by setting their similarities:

> In most of the critical work on postmodernism, it is narrative—be it in literature, history, or theory—that has usually been the major focus of attention. Historiographic metafiction incorporates all three of these domains: that is, its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historio*graphic meta*fiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past (*Poetics* 5).

Hutcheon states that, "what the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past" (*Poetics*, 89).

She further continues that "Historiographic metafiction keeps distinct its formal auto-representation and its historical context, and in so doing problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here—just unresolved contradiction" (*Poetics*, 107). Without paying regard to the historical context and letting the historical figures represent themselves historical facts cannot go beyond only claim of facts. So, running after an absolute truth which official

history urges is an impossiblity in historical sense. Transparency of historical referentiality and artistic originality are also abandoned. Hutcheon concludes that "Postmodern fiction suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological" (*Poetics,* 110).

Grand narratives or meta-narratives are among the two terms discussed in postmodern criticism of any work of art. The term meta-narrative coined by Lyotard have principally the same connotation with the term of grand narrative. The Oxford dictionary defines metanarrative as: "A narrative account that experiments with or explores the idea of storytelling, often by drawing attention to its own artificiality" (Lexico 2019). In his "Post Modern Condition", Lyotard refers to cultural grand narratives as legends, myths and fables. Societies no more hold a singular culture and ethnicity; legitimacy is now plural; and this leads to the decline of grand narratives. Instead, local values and practices become more important. Thus, Lyotard announces that "the grand narrative has lost its credibility" (Lyotard 37). Lyotard here praises the individual or temporary knowledge instead of collective knowledge. Holding on to a collective and imposed grand narrative usually enforced by the authorities in favor of their beliefs does not seem sustainable any more.

1.1. Traditional History Writing and Conventional Historical Novel

To support Hutcheon's essential claims that the past facts cannot be represented truly at present, firstly we need to survey the processes historiography has gone through.

Commentaries on historiography dates back to very early times. Aristotle (384-322 BC) distinguishes between a historian and a poet in his seminal *Poetics*. He claims that the historian "tells of what has happened" (43); on the other hand, the poet tells about the "things that might happen" (43). He further suggests that "For this reason poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history; for while poetry is concerned with universal truths, history treats of particular facts" (43-44). In his distinction, Aristotle stresses on the expectation that the historian

reports the past as it happened but the poet enables his judgements and enriches the text with alternative probabilities. He praises literature over mere historical report. Similarly, Simon Malpas, interpreting the same distinction in the contemporary period, claims that the historian's purpose is to "chart particular 'facts' and events without drawing more general conclusions about their meanings and connections," and to be able to do this s/he needs to become a "mere chronicler who records what has happened without passing judgement" (81). Yet, the poet "deals with the possibilities of what might happen and is concerned with 'universal truths' of human nature" (Malpas 81).

The idea that poetry is universal but history is not changed in the 4th century. Bermann reports that St. Augustine (354-430) "in his De civitate Dei first positioned the particulars of history within a Christian providential scheme. Once rhetoric was accepted as an art affecting all writing and history could claim as much as poetry to be a locus of universal truth, the stage was set for the active assimilation—its critics inevitably would say confusion—of history and poetry" (Bermann 16). History and literature have equal positions unlike the earlier periods. The situation was not different during the Renaissance. Lionel Gossman claims that "Renaissance reflection on historiography conformed, as one would expect, to the precepts of the ancients. History writing was viewed as an art of presentation and argument rather than a scientific inquiry, and its problems belonged therefore to rhetoric rather than to epistemology" (228). Fiction was employed in historiography as it was thought to be an element of rhetoric. History was not seen as a scientific field of study or separate from literature until the end of the Enlightenment. Gossman avers that history "was always distinguishable from 'mere' scholarship and antiquarianism, and the ground of the distinction was in large measure that the historian was a writer, whereas the scholar and the antiquarian were not" (228). Before the Enlightenment, it was natural to think that fictitious elements should be used in historical writing. Even the earliest novelists copied historical writing in their novels, but they were not considered as modern historical novels. Nevertheless, Sir Walter Scott published *Waverly* in 1814 which is now deliberated as the first modern historical novel. It was a time after the French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon when history writing was shaped by the nationalist inspirations. Both history and literature were oriented in ideological teachings. As Gossman suggests writers of history and literature wanted to "inspire the entire nation… with their own political opinions" (167).

Through the end of the Enlightenment, history started to be seen as a science. Scholars believed that the past could be reported accurately by employing some empirical methods. In this respect Susana Onega writes that history was conceived in the nineteenth century "as an empirical search for external truths corresponding to what was considered to be absolute reality of the past events" (12). To be able to do this, it is expected that historians need to get rid of their political beliefs or ideological biases. As scientists, they are supposed to handle the task of reflecting the past in an objective manner. In this sense, Daniel Little states that the historian's job is to "shed light on what, why, and how of the past, based on inferences from the evidence of the present". In a scientific manner, the historian is expected to look into the details of the past through evidence or official documents, and accordingly compose the historical writing with an objective eye. The Enlightenment cultivated by positivism and rationalism detaches history from literature and makes it a scientific field. The obsession with rationality in the Enlightenment captured the field of history as well. Munslow asserts:

> what we as historians can know about the past is what it tells us through the available evidence. This means we must observe the evidence of our senses without passion or self-interest, without imposition or question-begging. The past is, therefore, a "given" and historians discover its meaning through the priority of sense over intellect, content before form (The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies 81, original emphasis).

In the nineteenth century, history casted out itself from a form of art and undertook a scientific claim. As a result, fact and fiction needed to be distinguished. Fact was considered as truth and fiction as the counterpart of it. German historian Leopold von Ranke was a significant figure who had an immense role in adopting history as an academic field. He was intrigued by Sir Walter Scott's novels and started to look into the Middle Ages. What he ends up about the past was a different conclusion from Scott's novels. Hayden White states that

> Ranke had discovered that truth was stranger than fiction and infinitely more satisfying to him. He resolved, therefore, to limit himself in the future to the representation of only those facts that were attested by documentary evidence, to suppress the "Romantic" impulses in his own sentimental nature, and to write history in such a way as to relate only what had actually happened in the past. This repudiation of Romanticism was the basis of Ranke's brand of realistic historiography, a brand which, since Meinecke's popularization of the term, has come to be called "historism" and which still serves as the model

> of what an appropriately realistic and professionally responsible historiography ought to aspire to (Metahistory 163-64).

Ranke declines the ideologies of Nationalism or Romanticism in the representation of the past as an objective truth. To do this, he used primary sources and reached almost all the documents in the archives. As Stunkel asserts, "he opened the doors of archives nearly everywhere (in Europe) except for the Vatican" (Stunkel 102). The methodology Ranke used requires objectivity, so he wanted to refer to the primary sources and eyewitnesses. Secondary sources could lead to repeat the mistakes of others. Stunkel claims that Ranke was "suspicious that the author of secondary works merely repeated one another's information and errors. The cure for such uncritical history was eyewitness narratives and original documents" (102).

Other historians of the twentieth century followed Ranke's methodology and adopted the claim of objectivity and ultimate truth. In this respect, Munslow suggests that "the Western tradition of history-writing is built on the correspondence theory of empiricism firmly rooted in the belief that truthful meaning can be directly inferred from the primary sources" (20). The historian is to reconstruct the past as it happened. There could be no alternative commentaries on the same past incident if primary sources are investigated thoroughly without ideological biases. Ranke's efforts provide history credentials as a means of representation of the past objectively, yet literature is considered as "a hindrance to the understanding of reality rather than as a way of apprehending it" (White, "The Fictions of Factual Representation" 25). The Enlightenment rationality pursued in Modernism requires history to follow such a path to claim objectivity. For Munslow, the data collected by empirical studies is "offered as interpretation in the form of a story related explicitly, impersonally, transparently, and without resort to any of the devices used by writers of literary narratives, viz., imagery or figurative language" (Munslow, Deconstructing History 10). Thus, there is no room for using imaginary devices in history writing which is expected to reflect the true past. Munslow suggests a list of processes for modernist historiography as follows:

> First, that there is a past reality that is intrinsically knowable by the knowing subject through the discovery of its structural principal; second, historical truth is found in the referential correspondence of the historians' facts to that structural reality, as derived through the conceptual procedure of inference; third, language is up to the job of written representation, and fourth, from these prior beliefs one absolutely basic law of human behavior becomes evident: by

> knowing things about the real past we can reasonably conclude, as liberal humanists, that individuals act rationally and possess purposive agent intentionality (The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies 4).

That is, it is possible to record past events following some procedures in a serious way in which language is the only a means of encoding the message, not a means of making the past happening entertaining to the reader. Following the Enlightenment's perspective of rationality and realism, the modernist view of history which seeks objectivity with empirical methods dominates the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, but beginning with the postmodern era a new understanding towards historiography starts to rise.

Varying approaches towards history have naturally influenced the genre of historical fiction and the treatment of history in literary works. Generally considered as the father of the historical novel, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) determines the emergence of this kind, so starting from his era, the processes the historical novel passes through needs to be discussed here. Avrom Fleishman, in his *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf*, reports that the emergence of historical novel overlaps with the aftermath of the French Revolution, "the age of nationalism, industrialization, and revolution" when people raised an awareness of their "historical continuity and identity" and when "widening commerce, population shifts, and factory organization created a new pattern of day-to-day life and consequent nostalgia for the old" (17). A large number of people wanted to know about their past and found a connection between their past and the present time. In relation to Scott's novels, Simmons noted that Scott's readers "could gain limited knowledge from the depiction of Scottish manners and character and the portrayal of important personages" (8). Yet, Scott's importance relies much on his struggle to formulate the form of the historical novel rather than the content. So as to define the historical novel, Lukács observes Scott's novels again and avers that the novelist uses details as " a means of achieving historical faithfulness" making "concretely clear the historical necessity of a concrete situation" (59). In this sense, "it matters little whether individual details, individual facts are historically correct or not" (Lukács 59). On the whole, Scott tried to give the historical details of the past he was writing. He reflected the ordinary man with ordinary actions to be able loyal to real historical deeds, so Scott's protagonists are generally "average human beings" used to "generalize and concentrate in an

historical deed" (Lukács, 39). Scott also uses grand characters in his novels but just to emphasize the time period he was writing about; his main characters are imaginative heroes he created. For Simmons, Scott's highly regarded novels are those in which he abandons romantic impressions and utilizes realist ones, and when he "shifted setting from Scotland to England or a foreign country and moved back in time, the personal element disappeared from his fictions and the romance eclipsed the realism" (10). Unlike the epics of the past, not using distant places as a setting and makes his novels more believable and appreciated.

After Scott, so many other writers tried to use his style in their fictional works but most commonly, they exaggerated the qualities of characters to make their works more appealing to the reader. Simmons argues about these followers that historical events and characters were so exaggerated that they just "serve[d] to break the unity of the narrative and insult[ed] the reader's intelligence" (12). The other subsequent romancers and novelists who followed Scott's footsteps more strictly were determined to write more accurate historical novels, and a new generation of writers who called themselves "historian-novelists" instead of romancers emerged. Some of those writers were Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Edward George Howard, Charles Macfarlane and Frederick Chamier. They investigated the past thoroughly for the true historical facts. Harold Orel mentions about the works of this group in his book and claims that "history brought a reader closer to the truth than Scott's historical novels ever could, or did" (17). In the 1830s and 1840s, the historical novelists continued to chase the true historical facts employing some investigation methods by the effect of Enlightenment. However, following 1848, when history was accepted as a discipline and started to be taught at universities, the number of historian-novelists declined. Professional historians employed more scientific methods in historical research when history was accepted as a scientific discipline. These professionals openly showed their despise towards both historian-novelists and literary historians. Within this respect, Simmons argues that "No longer were people accepting the original premise that readers could learn history through the historical romance, no matter how carefully researched the work may be. The genre, in a word, ceased to be a rival to history, both in theory and in practice" (57-58).

1.2. Postmodernist Historiography and Historiographic Metafiction

In the second half of the twentieth century, the distinction between fiction and history starts to go under questioning. It is the poststructuralist thought which shapes the postmodern understanding of history, and associates it with literature once again. Previous understanding of the modernist view that objectivity is possible in the historical inquiry and the representation of real past events can be conducted is questioned. The contemporary philosophers of history, such as Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit, Dominick LaCapra, and Louis Montrose suggest that history, like fiction, is constructed through language, and it is a result of a writing activity. As history is a conveyed through a writing process, textuality creates doubts on its objectivity. The poststructuralist perspective of language is crucial to understand the postmodern view of history. Jacques Derrida, decomposes the binary opposition between speech and writing[1] and sustains that speech and writing have the same connotation, for speech is "structured as writing" and "there is 'writing in speech'" or "What is written is read as speech or the surrogate of speech" (118). Munslow argues that in Derrida's opinion, logocentrism, "the ascendancy of the voice" (74) as in the case of phonocentrism, refers to a center, authority or determination which privileges a fixed signification. What Derrida offers here is within this system language is considered as an objective medium in the representation of what is happening. Spivak further claims that "Derrida does not believe in fixing the meaning in a text because he would not privilege a signifier into transcendence" (Spivak Ixx). In his *Of Grammatology,* Derrida suggests that "[t]he notion of the sign always implies within itself the distinction between signifier and signified, even if, as Saussure argues, they are distinguished simply as the two faces of one and the same leaf" (Derrida, 11). As opposed to Saussure's fixation of meaning into two oppositions, Derrida claims even in that there is no one fixed meaning; the meaning will eventually be deferred: "[O]ne can already suspect that an origin whose structure can be expressed as 'signifier of the signifier' conceals

[1] Saussure suggests that there is no real connection between the sign and the referent. So, instead of being referential Saussure claims that the sign is differential: "In the language itself, there are only differences. Even more important than that is the fact that, although in general a difference presupposes positive terms between which the difference holds, in a language there are only differences, and no positive terms. Whether we take the signification or the signal, the language includes neither ideas nor sounds existing prior to the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences arising out of that system" (118). Derrida follows Saussure's claims about differential features of signs but refuses his ideas about the binary oppositions.

and erases itself in its own production. There the signified always already functions as a signifier" (Derrida, 6-7). Thus, for Derrida, a transcendental signified is not possible through language whether this be a historical text or a literary text.

Similar to Derrida's ideas, Roland Barthes claims that "the text is a tissue, a woven fabric" and it contains "weave of signifiers" ("From Work to Text" 159). His emphasis on the word "fabric" suggests that the fabric is not a transcendental signifier, and it is filled with words which do not have a final signification either. The postmodern questioning of history writing and text on the whole challenges the modern understanding that objective and ultimate reflection of the past is possible.

The concept of language discourse is another topic to be discussed in postmodernism. In compliance with poststructuralism, Selden and Widdowson define language as "an impersonal system . . . always articulated with other systems and especially with subjective processes" (Selden and Widdowson 127). Michel Foucault, famous for his discussions on power and knowledge, elaborates on the concept of discourse. Briefly he associates discourse with power and knowledge and also historical knowledge. Foucault comments on documents that are a means by which historical knowledge is conveyed:

> The document, then, is no longer for history an inert material through which it tries to reconstitute what men have done or said, the events of which only the trace remains; history is now trying to define within the documentary material itself unities, totalities, series, relations. . . To be brief, then, let us say that history, in its traditional form, undertook to "memorise" the monuments of the past, transform them into documents, and lend speech to those traces which, in themselves, are often not verbal, or which say in silence something other than what they actually say; in our time, history is that which transforms documents into monuments. In that area where, in the past, history deciphered the traces left by men, it now deploys a mass of elements that have to be grouped, made relevant, placed in relation to one another to form totalities (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* 7-8).

Foucault sees history as a collection of documents aiming to form a whole with a totalitarian approach. To make the events in the past meaningful today, which actually may not sound meaningful in today's context, history uses different sorts of materials and documents and construct history. Absence of the original sources, along with its discourse in the relation to time and place and characters, history is inevitably a construction or reconstruction of the real past happenings, but with the discourse of

today, and the discourse of the historian. To form a totality, the historian naturally employs discursive compositions, and ideology or personal intelligence, for example, can produce biases and spoil the objectivity that is purported. Accordingly, Roland Barthes in his "Historical Discourse" asserts that "At the level of discourse, objectivity, or the absence of any clues to the narrator, turns out to be a particular form of fiction, the result of what might be called the referential illusion, where the historian tries to give the impression that the referent is speaking for itself" (149). Yet, in reality, the historian is speaking on behalf of the referent including only what happened and other possibilities such as what did not happen, or what might happen are excluded by the historian which actually determines the referent's discourse in the first place. Thus, Barthes concludes that "in 'objective' history, the 'reality' is always an unformulated meaning sheltering behind the apparent omnipotence of the referent" (154). Reality, then, is not achievable in historical texts. Then arises the question of how to position history as a field. With the discussions of poststructuralists and postmodernists on the linguistic quality of history, the divergent perspectives on history from rhetoric to science and to discourse is gradually getting it closer to literature once again.

The linguistic qualities of history as a form of recording the past instead of its claims to report the past realities dominates the views on history. This blurs the distinction between history and literature. Hayden White in his *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect* suggests that "every history is first and foremost a verbal artifact, a product of a special kind of language use and must be analyzed as a structure of language" (4). In this respect, history is not so different from literary works which need certain methods to be analyzed. Yet, the difference is as White states, "Literary discourse may differ from historical discourse by virtue of its primary referents, conceived as imaginary rather than real events" (*Figural Realism* 6). Literature already acknowledges the imaginary world but history has a claim to take real events as a subject matter. But the way they are produced makes them similar as White states, "the two kinds of discourse are more similar than different since both operate language in such a way that any clear distinction between their discursive form and their interpretative content remains impossible" (*Figural Realism* 6). Without the narrative form which is acquired as a literary technique, history is not possible, as narration is an inevitable element in reporting history. Other tools such as annals and chronicles would be short to conceptualize a past event. White maintains that the narrative

> serves to transform into a story a list of historical events that would otherwise be only a chronicle. In order to effect this transformation, the events, the agents, and agencies represented in the chronicle must be encoded as story elements; that is, they must be characterized as the kinds of events, agents, and agencies. When the reader recognizes the story being told in a historical narrative as a specific kind of story—for example, as an epic, romance, tragedy, comedy, or farce—he can be said to have comprehended the meaning produced by the discourse (*The Content of the Form* 43).

The report of the past can be comprehensible through narrative forms. Of course, history can be reported through different forms and the content of past events are praised traditionally over the form. But White proceeds that

> In its origin, historical discourse differentiates itself from literary discourse by virtue of its subject matter ("real" rather than "imaginary" events) rather than its form. But form here is ambiguous, for it refers not only to the manifest appearances of historical discourses (their appearance as stories) but also to the systems of meaning production (the modes of emplotment) that historiography shared with literature and myth (*The Content of the Form* 44).

Regarding the content, history and literature depart, for history aims to put together real past happenings and literature fictitious ones. Yet, if the historian tries to put forward the happenings of the past by stripping it from narrative form, history would only display a list of events or chronicles which may not be conceived as a whole entity. When narration is employed, this time the question of how the historian handles the events arises. He or she has to lay out a story eventually. As White avers, "The death of the king may be a beginning, an ending, or simply a transitional event in three different stories. In the chronicle, this event is simply 'there' as an element of a series; it does not 'function' as a story element" (White, *Metahistory* 7). The historian puts it "into a hierarchy of significance by assigning events different functions as story elements in such a way as to disclose the formal coherence of a whole set of events considered as a comprehensible process with a discernible beginning, middle, and end" (White, *Metahistory* 7). Aside from the necessity of emplotment that White emphasizes in the process of producing a historical material, he also questions the past happenings as facts. He claims that there is no "such thing as raw facts, but only events under description" (*Figural Realism* 18). That is, events are transformed into facts through descriptive protocols: "Figurative descriptions of real events are not less factual than literalist descriptions; they are factual-or,… factological--only in a different way" (White, *Figural Realism* 18). Even the primary sources for the

happenings of the past are formulated as a form of text to encode the message in a proper context. LaCapra defines the textual characteristic of the context as "all contexts are encountered through the "medium" of specific texts or practices, and they must be reconstituted on the basis of textual evidence. For the past arrives in the form of texts and textualized remainders…memories, reports, published writings, archives, monuments, and so forth" (History and Criticism 128). The historian has to reconstitute a context as they gather the information from an original text.

Postmodern and poststructuralist philosophers such as Hayden White, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault focus on the linguistic aspects of history and put it in a position very close to literature, both of which require the same or similar processes in the production, in that history is a product of historian, so it cannot claim to objectivity in reporting real facts of the past. According to the recent developments in the understanding of history writing after the second half of the twentieth century, history novel writing has taken a new shape.

This new shape can be named as historiographic metafiction which explores fiction writing and historiography, and their relation to each other, to problematize the constructed nature of the past in the form of history. Historical metafiction overlaps with the discussions about the linguistic aspects of history writing. Thus, it inquires "What is the ontological nature of historical documents? Are they the stand-in for the past? What is meant—in ideological terms—by our 'natural' understanding of historical explanation?" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 93). Hutcheon notes that historiographic metafiction asserts "skepticism or suspicion about the writing of history" (*Poetics* 106), and she maintains that historiographic metafiction "self-consciously reminds us that, while events did occur in the real empirical past, we name and constitute those events as historical facts by selection and narrative positioning. And, even more basically, we only know of those past events through their discursive inscription, through their traces in the present" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 97). Again, the literary aspects of history writing, namely narration and linguistic aspects, are emphasized. That is, the real referents are not there to represent themselves, so with a human composition by choice the past is reflected. For Hutcheon both history and literature "derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all

transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their complex textuality" (*Poetics* 104).

In historiographic metafiction, the qualities of self-referentiality, intertextuality, and objectivity, along with history and fiction, are exploited critically. It is contradictory in itself but the postmodern novel problematizes the way it is composed. The discussion in the novel about its own fictionality is defined by the term "metafiction". Patricia Waugh describes metafiction as "as fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (2). Similarly, in her article "Modes and Forms of Narrative Narcissism: Introduction of a Typology," Linda Hutcheon defines metafictional novels as "linguistically self-reflexive, demonstrating their awareness of both the limits and the powers of their own language" (23). Metafictional novels denote the writing process and question such notions as reality, history and truth as they are thought to be human constructions by focusing on the linguistic processes of writing. Thus, historiographic metafictions as self-reflexive novels emphasize the non-representability of an external reality. Additionally, they employ multiple points of view or an explicitly dominant narrator so that they can question the subjectivity of history writing. Neither of the modes provides "a subject confident of his/her ability to know the past with any certainty" (*Poetics* 117) because the former includes "a pluralizing multivalency of points of view" while the latter contains "over-assertive and problematizing subjectivity" (*Poetics* 161). Textuality of history is also highlighted in historiographic metafiction through the employment of intertextuality. Hutcheon suggests that postmodern intertextuality is "a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context" (*Poetics* 118). Besides, the use of intertextuality is a means to break the illusion that the fiction tries to create. Paradoxically, historiographic metafiction spoils the atmosphere it aims to generate in the first place as a form of fiction. Hutcheon further argues that historiographic metafiction "confronts the past of literature—and of historiography, for it too derives from other texts (documents). It uses and abuses those intertextual echoes, inscribing their powerful allusions and then subverting that power through irony" (*Poetics* 118). Hutcheon here complies with the postmodernist view that text is inevitable and even

that primary source that is referenced is construed by another human being. Underestimating "conventional forms of fiction and history writing," by employing intertextuality, historiographic metafiction displays that "history is not the transparent record of any sure 'truth' and that it is inevitably textual" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 129).

Reference is another element questioned in historiographic metafiction. As Hutcheon suggests, historiographic metafiction "both underlines its existence as discourse and yet still posits a relation of reference (however problematic) to the historical world, both through its assertion of the social and institutional nature of all enunciative positions and through its grounding in the representational" (*Poetics* 141). Naturally, historiographic metafiction does not deny that real past happenings are there, yet it problematizes their representation as true facts within creating an imitations of the original reference. Hutcheon also questions the fact and real events. "History offers facts—interpreted, signifying, discursive, textualized—made from brute events. Is the referent of historiography, then, the fact or the event, the textualized trace or the experience itself?" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 15). Events are those "which have no meaning in themselves," and facts are those "which are given meaning" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 122). Thus, the fact is not any different than the initial document which are both compositions of their kinds. Hutcheon suggests, historiographic metafiction "does not pretend to reproduce events, but to direct us, instead, to facts, or to new directions in which to think about events" (*Poetics* 154). Beyond doubt, the real events of the past are not denied here. But unlike traditional historians or historical novelists, who believed they would represent the past as it actually happened, the postmodern writers of historiographic metafiction are aware of the fact that the past can only be reproduced as an assumption, yet with a subjective point of view.

As White puts forth, "As a symbolic structure, the historical narrative does not reproduce the events it describes; it tells us in what direction to think about the events and charges our thought about the events" ("Historical Text as Literary Artifact" 52). Mostly grounding on White's assertion that "'every representation of the past has specifiable ideological implications'" (qtd. in Hutcheon, *Poetics* 120), postmodern history novel writing questions the ideology behind historical representation that past events can be objectively reflected. Accordingly, postmodern historical fiction is "always careful to 'situate' itself in its discursive context and then uses that situating

to problematize the very notion of knowledge—historical, social, ideological" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 185). Hutcheon states that discourse is inclined to "certain social, historical, and institutional (and thus political and economic) frameworks" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 184). The reality of the power cannot be underestimated in this context because discourse is commonly in the use of those who hold the power in their hands. Thus, their political or ideological point of views would be reflected beneath the lines. Hutcheon also connects linguistic aspects with ideology in a resemblance between history and literature when she states, "Both history and fiction are cultural sign systems, ideological constructions whose ideology includes their appearance of being autonomous and self-contained" (*Poetics* 112).

Unreliable narrator is another point to discuss in postmodern historical writing. Similar to Lyotard's definition of postmodern as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (24), for Hutheon, postmodernism "establishes, differentiates, and then disperses stable narrative voices (and bodies) that use memory to try to make sense of the past. It both installs and then subverts traditional concepts of subjectivity" (*Poetics* 118). The way narrators are portrayed puts them in an unreliable position. The narrator cannot even present a sense of subjectivity because their mind do not let them to view the past properly. In her "Remains of the Day", Katleen Wall elaborates on the notion of unreliable narrator and suggests that "discourse itself offers clues to narrators' unreliability, their verbal tics giving us some indication of preoccupations that render their narration problematic" (19). Discourse can be seen as a way to announce that a narrator is unreliable. Wall maintains that "the narrator's unreliability is frequently manifested in a conflict between the narrator's presentation of scene and his or her interpretive summaries or commentaries, and is signaled by the linguistic habits" (20). The unreliable narrator can also be identified as being inconsistent in his or her reports as stated again by Wall:

> Like unreliable narrators, we frequently lie to ourselves, and-with just a shadow of awareness- avoid facts that might undermine the coherence or the purpose of the narrative we construct about our lives. The standard definitions of unreliable narrator presuppose a *reliable* counterpart who is 'the rational, self-present subject of humanism,' who occupies a world in which language is transparent medium that is capable of reflecting a 'real' world (21).

In this respect, it is already discussed above in the postmodern historiography that beyond providing a means of transparent medium for the representation of truth, language is the cause of hindrance before the objective reality. According to Wall, a defensive tone of the narrator also reveals the unreliability. For example, when the narrator needs to clarify something, and uses " 'let me make perfectly clear', 'I should say', 'I should point out', or 'let me make it immediately clear'" (24). The motives for an unreliable narrator can vary as Wall suggests, "a number of concerns affect the placement of implied author's indications or signals of unreliability; these might be influenced by narrator's psychological motives for unreliability, the degree to which those are unconscious or conscious, or the author's purpose in using an unreliable narrator" (22).

It would be useful at this point to distinguish conventional historical novels and historiographic metafictional novels. Traditionally, historical novel urges for the writing of real past events with some empirical research into the past. However, historiographic metafiction does not have such claims. On the contrary, historiographic metafiction "plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record. . . . certain known details are deliberately falsified in order to foreground the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history and the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error" (*Poetics* 114). The manipulation of truth in the past is deliberated to problematize the claims for the facts and truths of the past. Hutheon maintains, "As readers, we see both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order. Historiographic metafiction acknowledges the paradox of the *reality* of the past but its *textualized accessibility* to us today" (*Poetics*, 114) So, historiographic metafictions is not concerned with reporting the past but laying out the fact that reality is not accessible, subverts the already established ones.

Unlike the protagonists in conventional historical novels who are typical of their kind, the protagonists in historiographic metafictions "are anything but proper types: they are the ex-centrics, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history. . . . Even the historical personages take on different, particularized, and untimely ex-centric status" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 114). This is to incorporate with "a postmodern ideology of plurality and recognition of difference; 'type' has little function here, except as something to be ironically undercut" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 114).

Also there are major historical figures as fictional characters in historical novels but in historiographic metafiction those major characters can be represented as minor characters and their depictions are always unfaithful to the known facts. It is very common to see alternative representations of such historical personages in almost all historiographic metafictions. In such novels, the narrator is also unreliable to distort the known facts or the way they are reflected.

In postmodern historiographical fiction, authors usually employ an unreliable narrator to blur the fact and fiction. Instead of facts are given, personal stories are preferred. Postmodern philosophers argue that like fiction, history is also a construction. That is, everything about past cannot be known because history writing is shaped in the hands historians. Even if there are plenty of official documents, the writer/historian decides how to handle it, use it and reflect it. Chroniclers blur the terms fact and fiction as the facts are told by people. It is not earthly to believe that historians reflect the absolute truth. The discourse of the historian would somehow give the hints of subjectivity. As Acheson suggests, "The only historian who could write history with absolute authority would be one possessed of the omniscience of God" (Acheson 90). Obviously, it is not even a matter of discussion. Therefore, to assume that historians tell the pure fact is not rational.

To conclude, historiographic metafiction presents "a novel about the attempt to write history that shows historiography to be a most problematic art" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 112). Being self-reflexive, it discusses fiction, reality, past in a historical context and avoids a final conclusion about historical fact. Positioning itself as anti-totalizing, historiographic metafiction intends to "re-write or re-present the past in fiction and in history" in order to "open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 110), for, postmodern fiction rejects a single truth but instead emphasizes the plurality of truths. As Hutcheon notes, "Historiographic metafiction suggests that truth and falsity may indeed not be the right terms in which to discuss fiction" because "there are only *truths* in the plural, and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness per se, just others' truths" (Hutcheon, Poetics 109).

CHAPTER TWO

TOM CRICK'S DEFENSE OF HISTORY

The present chapter of this study argues that Tom Crick defends history in various forms, for he sees history as a medium for people to comfort themselves with diverse aspects of life such as make-believe, storytelling, feeding curiosity or finding meaning in stories. Accordingly, this chapter tries to answer the question "why we need history?" and thus focuses on the defense of history in the text regarding the concepts of "make-believe" and "finding meaning in stories". Further, it continues with Tom Crick's defense of history as a historian. One other motivation for the historical urge in the novel is regarded as "curiosity," which is also discussed in this chapter. Finally, the cyclicality of history against progressive history is discussed through Tom Crick's views.

History is the main theme and the sole focus of *Waterland*. The narrator, Tom Crick has contradictory views on the subject, which can be observed through his struggle to legitimize historical relevance in both the scientific field and social life; however, at other times, he condemns history, believing it is not a way of redemption or way out. In his book *Graham Swift,* Lea defines *Waterland* as "continually teetering on self-contradiction; it functions at the boundaries of meaning and is constantly threatened with the collapse into non-meaning" (Lea 96). Through Tom Crick, the novel consistently looks for ultimate reality by telling stories, but these stories in a way distance the reality even further. For example, when he is standing on the longitude "0" in the Greenwich Observatory, he is actually standing on the starting point of human history (Swift 150). This means that the particular spot is taken as a starting point for the use of geographical science. Yet, it has no real referential value in the lives of humans. This could be a point that scientists decide. There is no physical referent proving it, but scientists assume it is there. The revolving of the earth starts here and ends here without a specific starting and ending time. This is something

constructed theoretically by humans for scientific research and starting point of the Greenwich becomes a reality.

Tom Crick's view of history is always controversial; he sometimes despises history, but more commonly he is in favor of history. He lists stories by "Made-up stories, true stories; soothing stories, warning stories; stories with moral or no point at all; believable stories and unbelievable stories; stories which were neither one thing or the other" (Swift, 10). Winnberg points out that "Tom comes to realize that there is no history, but there are histories, each one formed through selection and exclusion and dependent on its particular point of view. From a view of a linear progression, he turns to a view of history as a directionless, multidimensional structure" (Winnberg, 113). For instance, the French Revolution or World War I may have a significant impact on so many people but to the Cricks, locks, sluices and silt has the utmost importance because on daily basis, they have to accomplish their responsibilities and make a living from that job. They are not soldiers fighting against an enemy. In this sense, history only matters as long as it has an intimate touch with their presence. Though inconsistent in the discussions of history, Tom Crick never abandons "history" and advocates it even when he is about to lose his job: "If you are going to sack me, then sack me, don't dismiss what I stand for. Don't banish my history..." (Swift 28). Tom Crick associates himself with history so deeply that he refers to it as "my" history. Nevertheless, raising the question "Whose history?" one more time here, he insists that history should abide even in his absence.

2.1. Make-believe and The Power of Storytelling

The phrase "make-believe" is one of the recurring motifs in *Waterland*. It is defined by Oxford dictionary as "The action of pretending or imagining that things are better than they really are" (Lexico.com). This motif is employed in the novel as a means of coping with reality. Tom Crick is only one of the performers of make-believe. His family and his mother Helen's family also employ make-believe in their lives. For example, Helen's father, Earnest Richard Atkinson, believes and wants everyone else to believe that his potato-head son, born out of an incestuous relationship with his daughter, Helen, would be the savior of the world. He struggles so hard to make

especially his daughter to believe in his ambitions to make his son the savior of the world. Even in his death-bed, he prepares a gift box for his son, which is filled with a sort of ale and causes the drinker to go mad. This would cause the catastrophic end of his son. As the main character and the narrator, Tom Crick is examined in terms of "make-believe" in the following section.

In one of his lessons, Tom Crick starts talking about the phrase "make-believe" and explains it thus: "One might argue that you've already waived your responsibilities to the curriculum by turning your lessons into these story-telling sessions" (Swift 156). The story-telling sessions are indeed his make-believe sessions in which he tries to find an audience to rehabilitate both himself and the students as they have lost their interest in history lessons. Tom Crick claims that abandoning the curriculum and telling stories is "still history" (Swift 156). He sees history and story identical; however, he, at times, engages in distorting the reality for the sake of his make-believe reality. Once he is agitated by the harsh reality that he and his wife could no longer continue their lives hiding from the past, he employs "make-believe" method in his class to justify himself in front of his audience and then maybe he can find comfort to maintain his life. In the case of his wife, he never knows why she abducts the baby, or what is really going on in her confused mind, because he does not have absolute authority on her mind. In other words, he is not an omniscient narrator. The only thing he can do is to ruminate about her actions. So, he says that they "don't know the half," so "a good half must be make-believe" (Swift 140). As Tom Crick accepts that he is not able to command on Mary's motivations, there is only one thing to be done: to create a story to justify her actions and soothe their agonies.

History in the form of "make-believe" is a means for people to deal with the terror of life. In Tom Crick's case, this is more about replacing his faults within a greater context. In a greater historical context, his wife's abducting a baby, in which Tom Crick himself has an immense role in her doing so, has a very little impact in the eternal history line. He also underlines that those who seek the comfort of history are to be sympathized. This can be defined as Tom Crick's self-delusion. He is obviously trying to minimize his guilt. "Yet, in sympathizing with those who take comfort in make-believe, he is seeking to persuade us that he is ultimately a likeable figure—one who can tolerate the weakness for make-believe of uneducated people like his wife

and father." (Acheson 99). Though holding contradictory views on history, and often believing that history has many different forms, Tom Crick praises and promotes history for his students who have lost their faith in history or the future but want to live in the here and now. With his statement, "Children, only animals live entirely in the Here and Now…" (Swift 68) he wants to show his students that history matters.

Concerning the power of storytelling, it can be said that Tom Crick is a successful storyteller regardless of whether the stories meet his desire to find a meaningful pattern in his life. Brewer and Tillyard in their "History and Telling Stories, Swift, Graham *Waterland*" suggest that "*Waterland*'s narrative not only reflects on the meaning of history but also exemplifies the difficulty of distinguishing history from fiction. For *Waterland* contains long passages which, in Swift's words, attempts 'to present imaginatively actual history'. They are indubitably successful" (Brewer and Tillyard 50). Tom Crick admits that after years of studying and teaching official history, he ends up with a realization that "history is a yarn" (Swift 68). That is to say, he wants to convey that the real power concerning history is in the stories. Regarding the opposition between 'artificial history' and 'natural history," Tom Crick states: "What is this thing that takes us back, either via catastrophe and confusion or in our heart's desire, to where we were? Let's call it Natural History" (Swift 141). What he is trying to deliver is that in the times of troubles, it is not the official history we refer to, but instead it is natural history, namely, stories. Unlike the official history, stories can help us deal with traumas of the past. As Geoffrey Lord states, "the cyclical course of *Waterland*'s structure, and its past orientation, imply that one is irrevocably bound to the past" (Lord 150). That's why we refer to natural history in troubled times. For example, as Malcolm suggests, "…the narrator (and the novel) is always ambivalent about stories and their function and value. Stories save Henry Crick from the scars of war" (Malcolm 96). Henry stays at the hospital for three years but cannot be cured along with many other casualties from World War I because the damage is not only in his body but in his mind as well. What cures Henry Crick is Helen's stories. Similarly, Tom Crick associates the reasons for his becoming a history teacher to the power of storytelling in the times of despair. He says, "My becoming a history teacher can be directly ascribed to the stories which my mother told me as a child, when, like most children, I was afraid of the dark" (Swift 67). As he sees history and story identical, when he puts himself and Mary in an uneasy situation, he embraces history

as a profession. He escapes to story books by which he means "history". In one of his private conversations by Price, Tom Crick states: "But all stories were once real. And all the events of history, the battles and costume-pieces, once really happened. All stories were once a feeling in the guts. I've got a feeling in the guts right now" (Swift 296). Once again he reassures that his pain is real and he needs to turn his pain into story so that he can soothe his agony or find a means to maintain his life.

When Tom Crick learns that he has to leave his job, he frees himself from the responsibilities of the curriculum which restrict his power as a narrator. Then, he starts his storytelling sessions along with the power of narration as mentioned in Meneses' "Historical Restoration, Narrative Agency, and Silence in Graham Swift's *Waterland*": "The freedom that Crick acquires through his dismissal is, above all, his legitimization as narrator. 'Old Cricky' is now the voice of authority in an alternative history that students and readers alike are bound to accept as what really happened" (Meneses 139). This is actually a bit complicated because Tom Crick's reports are highly contradictory and hard to believe; he is at times not sure about certain details such as who the father of Mary's unborn baby is. Still, he holds the power in his hands as he is the only narrator. The students are more interested in his personal stories than the official history.

Tom Crick employs stories as a means of distorting reality as suggested by Bracke in his "'Man is the Story-Telling Animal': Graham Swift's *Waterland*, Ecocriticism and Narratology":

> Crick tells, his London students help him make sense of his own past— and troubled present. Moreover, stories told and heard in *Waterland* may also be interpreted as means of escaping reality…To put it differently, *Waterland* is not so much suspicious of storytelling as that it acknowledges the inescapability of narrativisation in representing and making sense of the world. Rather than fighting this, the novel embraces storytelling by combining a wide variety of stories and genres. (Bracke 223).

As mentioned above, Tom Crick uses all means of stories believing in the power of them. Consistently discussing the different forms and suggesting that they all signify similar meanings, he undermines history as a scientific field, but once again he does not despise it or discourage his students away from it. Janik also proposes similar claims: "*Waterland* is a manifestation of man's need to tell stories to keep reality under

control, and Crick can be seen as… a man telling his story in an attempt to cope with its implications" (Janik 83). Further, to promote the significance of stories, Tom Crick declares that "when the world is about to end there'll be no more reality, only stories. All that will be left to us will be stories" (Swift 296). By stories here, he probably refers to "memories," or just storytelling as means of assigning meaning to the past events or sometimes eluding the reality.

To sum up, through 'make-believe' and storytelling Tom Crick ascribes meaning to life, copes with the harsh realities of life, and sometimes uses the power of storytelling to distort the reality as he wishes. Swift's employment of such confusing definitions and alterations on history, story, reality and other forms works as a means of historiographic metafiction in which reality is blurred and legitimization of the past is the main focus. Thus, history as grand narrative is under question. Swift challenges the relevance of official history or artificial history as Tom Crick calls it.

2.2. Tom Crick's Defense of History as a Historian

The narrator, Tom Crick's addressee in the novel is always his students. Readers are informed by the events and ideas through his speeches to his students. He has many resourceful discourses in which he mainly discusses the relevance of history in people's lives with a lot of different perspectives. But when it comes to his defense of history, it will be meaningful to start with his epic lines below:

> AND WHEN you asked, as all history classes ask, as all history classes should ask, What's the point of history? Why history? Why the past? I used to say (until Price reiterated the question with a new slant to it- and that distinctly trembling lip): But your 'Why?' gives the answer. Your demand for explanation provides an explanation. Isn't this seeking of reasons itself inevitably an historical process, since it must always work backwards from what came after to what came before? And so long as we have this itch for explanations, must we not always carry round with us this cumbersome but precious bag of clues called History? Another definition: Man, the animal which demands an explanation, the animal which asks Why. And what does this question Why imply? It implies- as it surely implies when you throw it at me rebelliously in the midst of our history lesson- dissatisfaction, disquiet, a sense that is not well (Swift, 111).

When discussing Tom's Crick's defense of history, it is not easy to make clear distinctions in the definition of history. So, it might be helpful to keep in mind that the

concepts of natural history, official history, factual history, fictional history or personal stories are all blurred. All throughout the novel, Tom Crick tries to justify the trauma he caused on the first hand. He has the gifted skills to use necessary instruments to subvert the already established understanding of reporting historical facts. Tom Crick's primary defense of history lies in his belief in history as a sort of consolidation with the past. The following lines that he addresses to his students reveal one of the attitudes he develops towards history: "Realism; fatalism; phlegm. To live in the Fens is to receive strong doses of reality. The great flat monotony of reality. Melancholy and self-murder are not unknown in the Fens. Heavy drinking, madness and sudden act of violence are not uncommon. How do you surmount reality, children?" (Swift 24). The answer for Tom Crick is in the dusty pages of history. For him, they may also involve myths and other forms of narratives, so he does not hesitate to employ myths in his lessons. Philip Tew offers an explanation for how Tom Crick uses myths and stories by the following lines: "If, turned toward the past, myth disarranges the course of history to the point of making it unrecognizable, when turned toward the future, it is the ideal instrument for preselecting historical events and therefore ridding them of all unpredictability" (Tew 144). Thus, as a master of 'history', he promotes the existence of history in any form possible; factual history, fictional history, story-telling, myths, stories and tales of any kind.

Tom Crick as a history teacher also has a wish to get his students ready for the future, because he believes, "Reality is so strange, so strange and unexpected" (Swift 32). If he succeeds in getting his students into the depths of history, he might be able to help them prepare for the 'unexpected'. As David Malcolm reports in his *Understanding Graham Swift,* Tom Crick has a faith in progress and refinement and rejects falling into despair. Maybe he has not changed much about his own disastrous past but he tries to change something in his students' lives in a better way. This is a never ending process, but this is what progress requires. And this is not any different from the water reclamation business that his family carried out for years. A history teacher's role is to continue telling stories not to let students forget (Malcolm 107). In his speech, Tom Crick insists that even when someone knows that they cannot change much, they still should keep doing whatever they are doing. This is a form of progress:

> There's this thing called progress. But it doesn't progress. It doesn't go anywhere. Because as progress progresses the world can slip away. It's progress if you can stop the world slipping away. My humble model for progress is the reclamation of land. Which is repeatedly, never-ending retrieving what it lost. A dogged and vigilant business. A dull yet valuable business. A hard, inglorious business (Swift 334).

In his defense, Tom Crick is pretty sure that there are no easy answers in the past. As he inquires, "What is a history teacher?" he answers, "He's someone who teaches mistakes" (Swift 235). Nevertheless, he should keep teaching the mistakes to reach a point one day. History "teaches us no short-cuts to Salvation, no recipe for a New World, only the dogged and patient art of making do" (Swift 108). In any case, Malcolm points out that "history is inescapable and deeply operative in the present" (88). He refers to the lines in *Waterland*: *"*Ah, do not ghost prove—even rumors, whispers, stories of ghosts—that the past clings, that we are always going back" (Swift 108). The present situation which Tom Crick is in, the one which essentially causes him to lose his beloved job, is connected to his past 30 years ago. It is then connected to his grandfather who believed that Dick was sent by God as a savior. So is the baby that Mary abducted 'sent by God'? Tom Crick's efforts to progress seem to break the shell of the Crick cycle in the Fenlands for a while but eventually, he is trapped in the past, the cursed history of the Cricks and the Atkinsons.

When Tom Crick is cornered by his students, especially by Price, the founder of the Holocaust club, that they do not want to look into the past or worry about the future, but instead, they want to live in the here and now, he articulates the words below to convince them about the inescapability of history. "Yet the Here and Now, which brings both joy and terror comes but rarely - does not come even when we call it. That's the way it is: life includes a lot of empty space. We are one-tenth living tissue, nine-tenth water; life is one-tenth Here and Now, nine-tenth a history lesson. For most of the time the Here and Now is neither now nor here" (Swift 67). If taken in a broader sense, Tom Crick informs his students that what they are now is a result of their past. What they enjoy now is instilled in them through their past. What they believe 'now' does not make sense without the counterpart 'past'.

For Tom Crick, praising history not only matters because it is a solution for progress but also a way of curing the past distress and sometimes finding meaning in

the dullness of life. People can find their own ways to deal with this kind of issues, but his inclination is towards the use of history in the form of stories. He asks his students, "What do you do when reality is an empty space?" and he replies himself: "You can make things happen- and conjure up, with all the risks, a little token urgency; you can drink and be merry and forget what your sober mind tells you. Or, like the Cricks who out of their watery toils could always dredge up a tale or two, you can tell stories" (Swift 67). Also, when he tries to explain the reasons lying behind his choice of profession as a history teacher, he states that his mother's telling him stories when he was scared in the dark as a child has an immense role (Swift 67). As Landow suggests, "Story-telling, and history, and books like *Waterland* are these people's prime defenses against fear" (Landow 201). We can also refer to Tom Crick's lines in the novel to upkeep Landow's ideas:

> It's all a struggle to make things not seem meaningless. It's all a fight against fear. What do you think all my stories are for... I don't care what you call it – explaining, evading the facts, making up meanings, taking a larger view, putting things in perspective, dodging the here and now, education, history, fairy-tales—it helps to eliminate fear" (Swift 241).

What Tom Crick feels about history does not always have positive echoes. Fairy tales, being the form of fictional history are not trustworthy and especially the students may not have the ability to differentiate the two. Thus, he endeavors to keep fictional history at a limited level and holds on to a factual one. History, he says, can "uncover the mysteries of cause and effect," but the problem is knowing where to stop in the cause-and-effect chain. That is to say, he does not necessarily reject the factual history in the name of story-telling alone. He still hopes that there are truths to teach children for the good and progress of their community. Many times, Tom Crick justifies his choice of a job, as a history teacher as given in the lines below:

> Until the Here and Now, gripping me by the arm, slapping my face and telling me to take a good look at the mess I was in, informed me that history was no invention but indeed existed—and I had become part of it. So I shouldered my Subject (Swift 67).

Tom Crick's interest is also in local history as well as universal history. He is into investigating the reasons of the past and so he decides to become a history teacher. Besides, he is a member of the Crick family, whose ultimate purpose is to tell stories

of any kind. He has an inherited skill of telling stories which he finds no different than history.

Yet, his methodology is contradictory according to Lea. In discovering the past happenings, he uses a style which is questionable to the audience. He sometimes advocates cyclicality of history rather than the linear flow, and he makes use of narration as a means of self-redemption (Lea 82). Even in his most outstanding stories that he tells to his students, he gives the hints himself that stories may not sound believable by articulating the words "believe-it-or-not-but-it-happened" (Swift 48). He pre-conditions his students for the confusion he is about to cause, and sometimes, he is not certain about the truths himself. When Mary reveals that she is pregnant, Tom Crick inquires who the father of the baby is. Mary says: "Of course it is not Freddie Parr, not Dick. It's you" (Swift 63). But his lines about the incident thirty years later are "Which still keeps me guessing" (Swift 63).

Tom Crick requires his pupils to be educated by referring to his personal experiences which do not have much to offer to the children as they are full of contradictory consequences. Why does he insist promoting inquisitiveness when it is a major devastation in his and people's lives around him? According to Lea, we need to seek the answer in the autobiographical form which requires disengagement and command of the text which cannot be observed in Tom Crick's stories. By employing some certain instruments of the style, he tries to persuade the audience along with himself that his journey to the past is enlightening, illuminating and offering a solution (Lea 94).

2.3. Curiosity and Finding Meaning in Stories

Waterland is mainly a monological discussion about history carried out by Tom Crick, in which he utters contradictory statements on whether history is necessary or not, or on some historical definitions. In this chapter, as the focus is on the defense of history, curiosity should be handled acutely because it is seen by Tom Crick as one of the main drives which prompts humans into the question 'why' and which leads to a call for history. In this part of the study, chiefly Tom's plea for his students to be

curious is discussed. Being curious will require history but not necessarily the "artificial history" as Tom Crick names it (Swift 207). Curiosity can also be fed by stories which construct "natural history" and become another way of finding meaning in life (Swift 206). The lines below substantially give us the core of Tom Crick's ideas on curiosity:

> Children, be curious. Nothing is worse (I know it) than when curiosity stops. Nothing is more repressive than the repression of curiosity. Curiosity begets love. It weds us to the world. It's part of our perverse, madcap love for this impossible planet we inhabit. People die when curiosity goes. People have to find out, people have to know (Swift 207).

Curiosity and finding meaning in the stories are the two prevailing motives engaged in *Waterland.* Whenever Tom Crick is confronted by the students, especially by Price, who wants to live in the 'here and now', about why it is necessary to study history or listen to the stories about Fenland, he defends curiosity, claiming that when they stop being curious about the past, they would have no future as everything will cease with it. He refers to his wife's condition when he says '(I know)' in the lines above because once she stopped being curious, she stopped living in that body. Tom Crick pictures Mary's curiosity as:

> Mary itched. And this itch of Mary's was the itch of curiosity. In her fifteen-year-old body curiosity tickled and chafed, making her fidgety and roving-eyed. Curiosity drove her, beyond all restraint, to want to touch, witness, experience whatever was unknown and hidden from her. Do not smirk, children. Curiosity, which, with other things, distinguishes us from the animals, is an ingredient of love. Is a vital force (Swift 57).

Tom Crick, for the sake of telling his story, but with the comfort of having been informed that he is to be sacked, awakens the students' interest in the past implicitly. This is of course as a result of his story-telling talent. According to Malcolm, to be able to find meaning in the stories, one needs to be a storyteller and Cricks have this ability to tell stories. In Tom Crick's story, Atkinsons (Tom's mother's family) are the history makers and Cricks are the ones who tell about it. Cricks have the tendency of turning the historical phenomenon into fairy tales and when Henry Crick (Tom's father) loses his wit to turn history into a story, this was the very sign of an abhorrence in Tom's eyes. Yet, luckily, Tom Crick does not lose his control over history as he is a great story-teller by means not only of his natural endowment but with the pursuing an academic profession in the field. He now knows what he is talking about. He is the

narrator of the novel and as he knows what he is doing both with his inherited gift and academic support, he is self-referential regarding the points he wants to make (Malcolm 92). Lea also confirms that he always exalts the qualities of curiosity to his young pupils and encourages them to ask the question 'why'. He maintains that human progress is contingent on curiosity rejecting the life as the way it is (Lea 94). When Tom Crick accounts for the reasons for his choice of his profession as a historian in the first place, he elucidates:

> So I shouldered my Subject. So I began to look into history – not only the well-thumbed history of the wide world but also, indeed with particular zeal, the history of my Fenland forebears. So I began to demand of history an Explanation…. And can I deny that what I wanted all along was not some golden nugget that history would at last yield up, but History itself: the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums, the dispeller of fears in the dark? (Swift 68).

He is not after historical facts only. He is also after the way history is conveyed to people through stories. The key word here is 'explanation'. When he is in a difficult situation, he always looks up to the past for an explanation. Curiosity into the past is seen by Tom Crick as a way of moving forward, for it is the major thing what makes humans different from other animal (Swift 57). To the questions "What's the point of history? Why history? Why the past?" (Swift 111), Tom Crick points to the question itself 'why' and tells that looking for clarification is a historical course and human beings who always seek solutions will have to refer to the past. He proceeds "your 'Here and Now' will be a history in the prospective years as was mine once" (Swift 111). He acquires that he also lived in the 'Here and Now' when he was younger without any deep contemplation on his actions and reactions but now, he regularly visits the past for an explanation and make-believe.

Tom Crick admits how he can be manipulative if he likes: "Only Price looks wary, only Price looks begrudging. Because I've won them over, by unfair methods? Because, I've licensed subversion?" (Swift 195). When promoting curiosity, Tom, appreciates 'natural history' over 'artificial history' as he is not satisfied with the pure facts but also interested in the personal touches. McKinney underlines Tom Crick's classification of history and suggests that he is campaigner of our urge for stories, and he feels that everyone should be aware of the impressions of 'fictiveness of our fictions.' Regrettably, most historians avoid the truth about the restrictions of the

subject field. Tom Crick ridicules the belief that history shall end up with objective truth. Nonetheless, he insists that our ingenuity should have the free will to make any conclusions we wish. This one can be defined as 'natural history', while the other one which seeks an absolute truth should be defined as 'artificial history' (McKinney 826). The twist he employs here to define 'artificial history' is very assertive. He is so determined that it is not credible to look for ultimate reality in history but the realities of various kinds. Realities of local figures are more credible and that's why he doesn't tell his pupils about the history what's already written in the books, but rather tells the true implications of the period covered from the French Revolution on, within the experiences of simple man of the Fenland. Interestingly, he also includes the grand happenings of the times such as wars, development of the railway stations and such which are crucial to the progress of nation in parallel to his fairy tales. The grand occurrence are not enough to satisfy our curiosity, thus we need the 'natural history' as termed by Tom Crick to comply with the make-believe we require. He defenses curiosity as: "when all things are learnt, when curiosity is exhausted (so, long live curiosity), that is when the world shall come to its end" (Swift 154). In the autumn of 1943, Mary's curiosity comes to an end at the age of seventeen (Swift 122) when she learns that she has a role in the killing of Freddie Parr and at the meantime she is pregnant. She was originally an overtly curious (especially about the opposite sex) young lady full of life energy although her father was thinking that he was successful in keeping her in a convent. After the truth about her pregnancy is revealed, she is really locked up by her father under their house. Nevertheless, it is not the locks keeping her there, but the loss of curiosity.

Tom Crick's mother told him bedtime stories all the time. His father also told stories. Tom himself tells stories and this way they help each other to cope with the harshness of the real world. "First it was a story—what our parents told us, at bedtime. Then it becomes real, then it becomes here and now. Then it becomes story again. Second childhood. Goodnight kisses . . ." (328). And according to Malcolm, "Mary Crick is mad precisely because she cannot turn what she has done—what has happened—into a story" (Malcolm 97). Initially, Mary loses her curiosity at the age of seventeen as a result of her pregnancy caused by her impulsive curiosity and the guilt in the murder of Freddie. After three years of seclusion, with the return of Tom Crick from military service, she seemingly recovers from her condition but never gets her

curiosity back. She just conforms to a typical life. But after her traumatic abortion her womb never recovers to produce a baby again. Yet, as reported by Tom, she never talks about it. She never uses the story-telling cure and eventually goes mad about thirty years later.

Decoste suggests that Tom Crick objects not only to the attempts to differentiate the notions of reality, story and history but also more to those reinforcements which demands a final answer like history as narrative, exploration or query (Decoste 394). Thus for him, "the study of history is the very opposite, is the very counter-action of making it" (Swift 201). There are people who rather make history instead of asking why. For example, Dick, Tom Crick's potato-head brother never asks why he put that empty bottle in his room. Why he doesn't talk to anyone about the murder although he knew the truth about it. Still he is the major contributor in the stories of Tom Crick. Or the headmaster Lewis never asks why Mary is in such condition. He just takes action and asks Tom's dismissal. It is not that he is someone of an ill-heart. It is only because by his nature, he is among the makers of history. The competence of 'why' when it comes to find a final answer is an infinitive process for Tom Crick: "that incessant question Whywhywhy [becomes] like a siren wailing in our heads and a further question begins to loom: when-where-how do we stop asking why? How far back?" (Swift 107). This further question, however, is for him almost an illegitimate one, for the Why which, pursued, never comes any closer to a final answer is indeed an incessant one. Curiosity, "our natural and fundamental condition" (Swift 194), is endless; it "will never be content" (203). When Price scolds Tom Crick about his insistence and says: "You know what your trouble is, Sir? You're hooked on explanation. Explain, explain. Everything's got to have an explanation" (Swift 170). For Tom, those who stop asking 'why' and who are no more curious are the damaged ones. For example, when talking about Thomas Atkinson, he says: "History has stopped for him. He has entered the realms of superstitions" (Swift 85). After his wife gets ill and Thomas Atkinson is not able to find a cure, he is cut off from the realities of life and surrenders to the superstitions. Also, Tom's father never wants to learn what is written in Dick's letter (Swift 323), for he wants to avoid the reality and wants to create his own reality.

On several occasions during his sessions, Tom Crick addresses his audience: "Now who says history doesn't go in cycles?" (Swift 209). As long as history goes in cycles, there will be no way to end up with a closure. As long as we crave for explanations and ask the question 'Why', it will never be possible to find a final answer. There will only be a looking for meaning in the history or stories to feed our curiosity.

2.4. Cyclicality of History vs. Progress

For Tom Crick, history goes in cycles. His inquiries into his personal stories which he replaced with the official curriculum at school start with his exclamation: "Now thread carefully history teacher. Maybe this isn't your province. Maybe this is where history dissolves, chronology goes backwards. That's your wife over there; you know, Mary, the one you thought you knew. But maybe this is unknown country" (Swift 265). When he discovers that Mary has lost her sanity, time goes backwards for him as speaking of progress is not possible for them with an insane mind. This happens after thirty years of marriage when they have pretended to have a good life since the traumas and deaths they caused in the past. When Tom Crick talks about the flow of history, he states:

> It goes in two directions at once. It goes backwards as it goes forwards. It loops. It takes detours. Do not fall into the illusion that history is a well-disciplined and unflagging column marching unswervingly into the future. Do you remember I asked you- a riddle- how does a man move? One step forward, one step back (and sometimes one step to the side) Is this absurd? No. because if he never took that step forward- Or- another of my classroom maxims: There are no compasses for journeying in time (Swift 139).

Tom Crick asserts that history is not a pathway to the future, so it is meaningless to expect it to give us a directory for a better life ahead. He contradicts his own ideas about curiosity and pursuing "why" for finding meaning which indeed refers to a better future because he pushes his students to find out an explanation for the things around them and in this way they can learn a lesson and move forward. However, his perseverance as to the cyclicality of history confutes his hopefulness for the future. Another challenge about Tom Crick's views is offered by Tange in her article:

> Tom Crick's problem with history is ideological. As an academic discipline, history attempts to reintegrate a number of disconnected data into one continuous story-line. It is founded on the nineteenth-century ideal of universal progress and is essentially an optimistic vision. Humanity has progressed from savagery through barbarism towards civilization, and because evolution continues, the present will always represent an improvement upon the past. According to Hayden White, however, only historians have remained loyal to this progressive ideal. (Tange 81).

Tange's suggestion which supports Tom Crick's opposition to linear history line is very central to the novel. When he states that "There are no compasses for journeying in time" (Swift 139), he emphasizes the random nature of life in history. Tom Crick sees his wife with a crying baby in her arms, and he tells himself "Now tread carefully history teacher [...] maybe history dissolves, chronology goes backward" (Swift 265). He immediately goes back to his past experience with Mary, including an unborn baby and Mary's three years of seclusion after the traumatic abortion. Tom Crick's endeavor here is to challenge the imposed progress the grand narrative asserts with a singular point of view. His distaste of this formal history makes him replace it with the more meaningful form of history - his story. At least in his stories he is trying to find an explanation to the question 'why,' which in fact is an endless process and which also makes history for Tom Crick an endless process too.

> All the stories were once real. And all the events of the history... once really happened. But when the world is about to end there will be no more reality, only stories... Stories will be our only reality. We'll sit down, in our shelter, and tell stories to some imaginary Prince Shahriyar, hoping it will never (Swift 257).

As suggested by Decoste, the infiniteness of the Why makes it so mighty. The question of where to stop asking "why" is in vane as curiosity would never come to an end (Decoste 395). And this proves the endlessness of history either in the form of an inquiry into the past to find a meaning, or story-telling cure. Thus, putting history on a linear chronology does not offer Tom Crick an answer anymore. However, Daniel Lea suggests that he is not consistent in his discourses concerning the cyclical or linear history:

> Crick is thus caught in a bind of historical methodologies: he preaches the cyclicality of history and practices the linear model of cause and effect. This discrepancy reveals a great deal about Crick's psychological instability, but it

> also reflects the novel's abiding concern with resolution and with the answering of one significant question.' What went wrong? (Lea 75).

Tom Crick's contradictory views mentioned above by Lea alone can be reflected as his powerlessness before his students for whom he struggles to convey teleological information about the nature of history and hence life. He indeed gives himself in when he addresses to his students: "Sacked school-teacher, husband of a baby-snatcher, says: 'I believe in education' … I don't know if my thirty-two years as a teacher have made any difference" (Swift 239-240). He wipes out with the lines above all his attempts to shape his students on a certain course. Again, inconsistent with the cyclical nature of history, Swift also fights against another grand narrative, 'God' when he says: "But God doesn't talk any more (Swift 268). Here, it can be concluded that for Tom Crick, in a linear history line, God has disappeared and people cannot hope for a salvation. Asserting this notion that God is not coming back, he opposes the very idea of cyclical history flow in which history repeats itself.

Tom Crick also employs the local setting to justify himself. As believed by Tange, "Tom stresses, justifying his abandonment of the centralist myth in favor of a decentered, Fenland perspective" (Tange 82). As he fails to find a meaning in conventional history, he turns his direct attention to the local one which of course requires more idiosyncratic stories. Tange maintains that another constituent in Tom's reasoning for a denial of history is time. Understanding of time is strongly connected to the idea of progress and past refers to the chain of events in the chronological order. This makes the time linear and mere imaginable motion is to future. To clarify, 'history doesn't repeat itself', because it is against the notion of progress (Tange 82).

Focusing on cyclical history, Tom Crick mentions about the French Revolution and the World Wars in the form of the end of the world. They aimed to better the world but instead they entailed the end of the world for many lives. Within the historical cycle, they tend to repeat themselves for another end of history. Tom Crick complains about humanity as follows: "Why is that every so often history demands a bloodbath, a holocaust, an Armageddon? And why is it that every time the time before has taught us nothing?" (Swift 145). Tom Crick's discourse here reveals his despair for the end of history as he strongly advocates that history goes in cycles. Further, he supports his

ideas about the potential end of history when he articulates: "In July, 1940, Hitler contemplates- as in 1805 Napoleon had contemplated- the invasion of England. Only to put it off and go marching off to Russia. Just as Napoleon once did. Now who says history doesn't go in circles?" (Swift 182). What Swift could be concluded here is that people do not learn a lesson from the past and although history is inevitable, they are still doomed to suffer the consequences of progress. Decoste contends a similar discussion: "Thus the history Crick himself collects from varied domains and passes on in his lessons is one which refutes the narrative of progress, and which moreover suggests, in its fearful conviction that the waters and bloodbaths will return, that narrative cannot shelter us from the mortal finality and absurdity of the real" (Decoste 388). This idea above again confronts Tom Crick's promotion of narrative as a means of finding comfort.

About the progress of humanity Tom Crick says: "We believe we are going forward, towards the oasis of Utopia. But how do we know-only some imaginary figure looking down from the sky (let's call him God) can know - that we are not moving in a great circle?" (Swift 139). He subverts the idea of linear history, and he exemplifies the situation in his address to his students as when people took down Louis XVI and Mary Antoinette they were expecting a better world with a better leader, but they gave themselves in the rule of Napoleon (Swift 339). His handling another destructive force is World War I through his father Henry Crick, who was not killed in the war but was seriously wounded physically and mentally. The life had stopped for him and he had lost his storytelling legacy along with his life energy until he encountered Tom's mother, Helen Atkinson. In this sense, Kumar agrees that World War I has wiped out the hope people carried in the progress of 19th century (Kumar 208). Henry Crick only recovers after he is exposed to stories told by Helen, but in the cycle of history, history can again come to an end for him in some other great loss, for example in World War II.

In sum, Tom Crick's persistence that history goes in cycles and repeats itself and thus progress is not possible contradicts his discourse about the necessity of historical urge. This way, he cannot reassure his students that a good life is awaiting them or they have no reason to be afraid of the nuclear holocaust. The examples he shares from his own life also prove this. No matter how hard he tries to hide from the

devastations he caused directly or indirectly, he is eventually captured in the cycle of history. The deeds he and his wife were involved in years ago appears in front of them and not in the form of a redemption but instead in the form of a haunting past.

Overall, regardless of his contradictory views, Tom Crick advocates history and though he is fired from his beloved job, he still endeavors to raise his students' spirit concerning history. Nonetheless, he offers some distinctions between artificial history and natural history. He suggests that the former is constructed, but natural history is more personal because it includes the stories of local people and their intimate feelings. Besides, natural history as suggested by Tom Crick enables people to create their own reality through storytelling. This is referred to as 'make-believe' reality in the book and it is usually helpful in the times of trouble. When people are not satisfied with the reality offered by life, they can escape to their make-believe world. Further, with the power of storytelling, he can eliminate the fear of the past and make sense of the world in which he is living. Thus, throughout his sessions in the classroom, he endorses his students to embrace history in any form possible. Finally, cyclical nature of history is highlighted to show that history does not always mean the past.

CHAPTER THREE

THE END OF HISTORY

The present chapter discusses the subversion of history in *Waterland* in the light of postmodernist idea that history is a construction, mainly through Tom Crick's view on history. Distortion of reality and devastated lives of some characters and the existence of a Holocaust club founded by students are also discussed. End of history has been a recurring theme in British fiction and a part of real British life. *Waterland* was written when nuclear paranoia was at its peak. Holocaust clubs, dugout shelters were not very uncommon at the time. In this novel, Swift offers a formula to the end of the world through its historical context. He combines the real fear of the war between nations and nuclear annihilation with his fear of the end of the relevance of historical writing. Therefore, this chapter investigates his blending of nation's fears through his characters Tom Crick, Henry Crick, Price and Mary, along with some other minor characters regarding the end of history. The study further argues that history offers no hope for the future through analyzing the main characters and Tom Crick's disbelief in history. In the second part of study, the Holocaust club founded by a student called Price will be scrutinized. How and why students are so hopeless about the future will be discussed in this section. In the final part of study, reality beyond the discussion of history and devastated lives of some characters will be analyzed.

The eschatological urge goes back to biblical references in Christian cultures, but other major religions also include apocalyptic ends in their teachings. When this sort of apocalypse is put aside, western societies have continued to develop a more realistic and secular sense of doomsday. World Wars, the French Revolution, the Cold War and nuclear threats have been the new forms of revelation of the end of the world for westerners. According to Glasson, writing about the end of the world comes out in the times of chaos, crisis and intolerable situations (Glasson 2). However, this type of writing has paradoxically an implicit promise for a new and better start. Especially

with the secular apocalypses like the French Revolution or World Wars, a new order is aimed after the destruction. Walter Benjamin also argues that the traumas of the past can be reclaimed and compensated at present or in the future (Benjamin 256). From the ideas above, it can be inferred that history comes to an end for a better start, but in the case of Swift's *Waterland*, this may not be the case as Tom Crick says:

> Once upon a time people believed in the end of the world. Look in the old books: see how many times and on how many pretexts the end of the world is prophesied and foreseen, calculated and imagined. But that of course was superstition…and the world believed it would never end, it would go on getting better. But then the end of the world came back again, not as an idea or a belief but as something the world had fashioned for itself all the same it was growing up (Swift 333-334).

For Tom Crick, there is no ultimate forward moving because history goes in cycles and it cannot be concluded that the future will be a better start. The world fashions the progress on one hand, and the same world fashions the end on the other hand. Here Tom Crick refers to the technological and nuclear advances both of which can be seen as progress and evil at the same time. This is also suggested by Wheeler who says revolutions for a better end are misguided concepts of progress (Wheeler 68). Better societies were expected in the past apocalypses like the World Wars but the nations were not soothed after the wars. Thus, Krishnan Kumar suggests that today's fears for the end of history do not involve a hope for a better future (Kumar 205). After the paradigm shifts in the second half of the 20th century, such as the post-war psychologies or the independence of the colonies, British writers tended to write about the holocausts and the end of history. Malcolm Bradbury suggests that "the pre-twenty-first century world, shapeless, un-prophesied, profoundly insecure" asked for apocalyptical fiction (Bradbury 400). Francis Fukuyama in his *The End of History and the Last Man* adds to the discussion of the end of history theory with a detailed investigation, yet his concentration is mostly on the political idea of liberalism and how Western societies have reached a point where historical progress is accomplished and history has come to an end. Still his definition on universal history is remarkable. His phrase, "attempt to find a meaningful pattern", compromises with Tom Crick's understanding of history in which he finds storytelling a form of history to eliminate fear and find meaning in life, and curiously the word "attempt" reveals how inconclusive those attempts might be:

> A Universal History of mankind is not the same thing as a history of the universe. That is, it is not an encyclopedic catalogue of everything that is known about humanity, but rather an attempt to find a meaningful pattern in the overall development of human societies generally (Fukuyama 55).

Tom Crick's definition of history reveals that he does not believe in history: "I present to you History, the fabrication, the diversion, the reality-obscuring drama" (Swift 40). Yet, he has many times in the novel suggested that history is a form of story-telling and he believes in stories. His view on these two concepts makes him contradictory in himself. While he is telling real life experiences of his own or his family's, he is repeatedly using the expression "once upon a time" at the very beginning of the stories, implying that even he is, as the storyteller in the first person, not accountable, let alone the grand narrative, history. It is made clear in the novel that Tom Crick values stories above history, but not with a claim that they are more believable or realistic. Instead, he believes in the power of story-telling which helps both the encoder and decoder to find a way out of their traumas. That is mostly why he offends the linear history line and underlines the cyclicality of history which cannot be interrogated in the cause-effect relationship. To his pupils he says, "history is a thin garment, easily punctured by a knife blade called Now" (Swift 42). To be able to define his existence "Now," he often refers to the past as a source.

3.1. Tom Crick's Problematization of History

This section involves a discussion of the role of the historian and the place of historiography in *Waterland*, and the aim of this part is to analyse how the novel problematizes the understanding of history and historical writing. Tom Crick is suggested to be unreliable and confused in reporting historical facts. Throughout the novel, there is an ongoing discussion on narratology conducted by him, which actually is highly contradictory. In view of that, Tom Crick's distortion of reality is analysed. Accordingly, Graham Swift's employment of Tom Crick as the narrator and main character in *Waterland* is examined as his challenge of history as grand narrative.

The common expression used in the postmodern world "his-story" refers to history as construction of the historian. No matter how solid the evidences of historical happenings, it is still the historian, a human being who reports history. Acheson specifies on Hayden White's ideas remarking that no matter how complete a narration may appear, it is still the historian to decide what to include or leave out. This is not any different in imaginary or real narratives (cited in White 10, Acheson, 90).

> The only historian who could write history with absolute authority would be one possessed of the omniscience of God. Such a historian would be aware of all the events that took place during a given period of time, would be able to make the definitive selection for purposes of writing his historical narrative, and would write it secure in the knowledge that his interpretation of these events could not be questioned (Acheson 90).

To start with, methods of reporting historical happenings construct a great body of discussions in the novel. The manner Swift handles this topic presents plenty of material to initiate a firm analysis of the novel. According to Malcolm, the treatment of narrative and story is complicated in *Waterland*. As there are different types of sub-narratives and all claim that they are the best for revealing the truth, they are into the trap of implausibility. This gives them partial or limited level of trustworthiness. Also, the narrator of the novel insistently blurs the distinction between story and reality and introduces narration as a way of escaping from reality. Finally, the reader is left alone with the text (Malcolm 97). Tom Crick's remark on this is: "First there is nothing; then there is happening; a state of emergency. And after the happening, only the telling of it" (Swift 329). The representation of history is undermined by Tom Crick in the lines above with a discourse taken with the word 'only'. He does this on purpose for sure because the self-reflexive text, with a self-reflective narrator consistently distances the reader from the potential claim of reality. Irish points out that it is quite natural that Tom Crick's narrative resists a final answer because the theorists of history such as Hayden White and François Lyotard focus on the dominant existence and the power of narrative which throws the reader back into the text as in *Waterland.* Swift's fiction can also be observed as an exploration and inquiry into history, cannot just be observed as the narration of past events. What has been commonly underscored in scholarly readings of the novel is the manner in which it asserts the inescapability of narrative and demonstrates how "[k]nowing, or even seeking to know, cannot be separated from telling" (Irish 919). Such accounts reveal that historians' function is story-telling to a

great extent. It may be a deliberate or unintentional process carried out by them. Decoste suggests that "*Waterland* both insists that history is, ultimately, only story, and champions the humbler claims of fiction, of the *petit recit*, over the pretensions of self-styled 'objective' History" (Decoste 378). Historians pretend to be reporting facts about the historical events but indeed, they are telling their own stories. Landow also agrees that Tom Crick's way of telling history within the stories proves history to be narrative (199). But John Schad suggests that "Swift's text identifies official History, in Lyotardian fashion, as but a totalizing metanarrative in need of replacement and deconstruction by a less presumptuous 'post historical digression'" (911-12). The reader witness Tom Crick's hesitations in his stories as he never helps the readers to feel certain about any of the past actions. He is usually keeping away from certain accounts of history.

> I taught you that there is never any end to that question, because, as I once defined it for you (yes, I confess a weakness for improvised definitions), history is that impossible thing: the attempt to give an account with incomplete knowledge, of actions themselves undertaken with incomplete knowledge (Swift 113).

Tom Crick confesses that history is impossible, yet in many other significations he states that one needs history to tell his or her stories. As for Decoste, by using such a language Swift employs Lyotard's view of the "postmodern condition" as the crisis of West's historical metanarratives, and legitimization of political and scientific progresses (Decoste 384). However, Swift's style departs to some extent from Lyotard's 'legitimization of metanarratives of History' (Lyotard 19-23) because his main concern is not legitimizing for any political or social reason. Instead his concern is founding some binds with the past pursuing redemption. Without finding a meaning, the human mind would not be able to maintain a cause for existence. As stated by Decoste "History as narrative, whether grand or humble, consistently works, for Tom Crick, to legitimize the past and conjure away nothingness, to posit purposes to keep the purposelessness of reality in check" (384). This legitimization here is not like the legitimization that Lyotard offers. This one is more personal, intuitive and down to earth. It offers redemption to people as Tom Crick states:

> Man – let me offer you a definition – is the story-telling animal. Wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the

> comforting marker-buoys and trail-signs of stories. He has to go on telling stories, he has to keep on making them up. As long as there's a story, it's all right. Even in his last moments, it's said, in the split second of a fatal fall – or when he's about to drown – he sees, passing rapidly before him, the story of his whole life (Swift 52).

Champion suggests that the writers defamiliarize the old way of thinking and approaches (Champion 37). This involves the questioning of history and deconstructing the already settled views and norms. In *Waterland* for example, even one of the most essential subjects like history is exposed to fading away by the removal from the school syllabus. Let alone defamiliarizing the historical tradition, they overall remove it from the syllabus. By doing so, history is decentred along with all its methods. This will probably lead to a new understanding into it. Another point Champion addresses is that "Much of the metafictional thought in *Waterland* is concerned with the problematics of historical realism, the juxtaposition of the opaqueness of events in the real world and the desire of the human mind for meaning" (Champion 37). This is exactly the situation with the narrator Tom Crick. As a history teacher he is supposed to teach history and tell historical events in the syllabus in a serious tone in the course of traditional history teaching. Instead, he tells stories by using an unorthodox personal style because he feels that listening to Napoleon's story which is written in the books is boring for his students. This opaqueness in the real story does not help either the students or Tom Crick to ascribe a meaning to the historical events. So he goes deeper into the personal stories and seeks a meaning. He finds reality as "Reality's not strange, not unexpected. Reality doesn't reside in the hallucination of events. Reality is uneventfulness, vacancy, flatness. Reality is that nothing happens" (Swift 46). For Tom, reality or the real historical events are actually nothing. If you do not assign meaning to it with an individual touch, it turns out to be nothing but a collection of meaningless letters in a history book.

Gasiorek also contributes to the discussion of relevance of narrative the history:

> The novel also suggests that narratives are the main way in which people make sense of their lives, but that storytelling can also be a form of displacement. Swift's narrator has to determine "where the stories end and reality begins" (Swift, 179), while the text as a whole shows how the past exerts a continual pressure on the present. Although historiography is shown to be incomplete in *Waterland,* the novel concedes that "what history teaches us is to avoid illusion and make-believe...to be realistic (p. 94) (Gasiorek, 204-205).

His contemplation reveals the operative function of storytelling as problematic in the representation of reality. Narratives, thus, are displacement of reality, and a distortion, so illusion and make-believe should be avoided. Tolften suggests that "Lyotardian line functions to discredit the commonsensical developmental views embodied in historical practice. That is, anyone who wants to understand the French Revolution or the Holocaust or the Victorian family has to examine the historical process that produced the phenomenon and the context in which it occurred" (217). Thus, Tom's struggle in reporting the past by local or personal means can be attained to Lyotard's contemplations presented by Tolften above.

Tom Crick's reports of the past do not make sense for the students in his class and eventually they lose interest in his reports on history. Non-representability of history can be observed throughout the novel especially from the title of the book. Water and land stand as a remarkable juxtaposition in which water becomes land (Lea 73). The title initially reveals that the novel would be set on contradictions and paradoxes. Even at the first glance, the reader can feel the discrepancy in the title. The narrator of the novel profoundly proves this discrepancy later. It can be suggested that Tom Crick finds history as a permanent repeating cycle because mankind despise stability. No one in his family including himself seems to learn a lesson from the terrible experiences they have had to undertake. Bracke believes that although *Waterland* has second thoughts about the dominant disposition of history as a grand narrative, it employs nostalgic obsession for accuracy which cannot be seen in postmodernism's slippery ground (Bracke 226). Tom Crick always looks for ways to find out what went wrong. He is after the reality for a correction and redemption as he suffers the most from the hidden realities of the past. The reason why his wife Mary goes insane in a way is hidden in her family's pervert relations along with the secret relation she had with Dick. Of course, Tom Crick and his father have immense role in the mechanization of this sensational history. And that is why they cannot find comfort in their personal lives. When Tom Crick articulates, "But I have not brought history with me this evening (history is a thin garment, easily punctured by a knife called Now). I have brought my fear" (Swift 42). he shows how he can control the history which can be manipulated easily. As Lea says, "As an autobiography, *Waterland* exhibits postmodernism's deep discomfort with the empiricism of hindsight and the

linear narrativisation of selfhood" (Lea 92). Thus, it can be concluded that as a historian, Tom's role cannot be defined as notifying the linear progress of history or talking about the deep feelings of the characters. The indifference of the narrator is usually essential in postmodern works.

Russel believes that the novel owes a lot to Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction and it turns the narrator's personal melancholia into a culture, geography and nation's pathologies (Russel 115). Tom Crick is caught up in destructions without intending to do so. His portrayal of the history of the Fenland, or history of wars and particularly the French Revolution is very negative in tone. Among the few moments he thanks the progress is when his wife is in an asylum. He reports that she would be announced a saint or a witch without the help of psychiatry. Russel also defines *Waterland* as a 'trauma fiction' and maintains: "Crick suppresses narrating two of the three crises of deaths for which he is at least partially responsible until late in the novel, while the majority of the novel relates how he coped with his "correlative crisis of life" through his immersion in professional academic histories (Russel 118). As Tom Crick holds the belief that history runs in cycles, he engages his stories in a way to hide his guilt within these cycles and makes them appear ordinary. To escape from being tormented by those dead bodies he left behind, he talks about the dead bodies in the Bastille and the French Revolution. In the meantime, he also shows how official history can twist the reality in the death of Freddie Parr. After the investigations and interrogations he is announced to be dead by accident but by the reports of the narrator, we know that it was a murder concealed by Tom Crick, Mary, Dick and even their father Henry Crick. Although Henry Crick is not aware of the murder, he has suspicions when he sees some fresh bruises on Freddie's temple, other than the one he caused with the hook to take him out of the water. Nevertheless, as he is a man who stops asking 'why' after his years of serving at the military, he does not look into any further explanations though he has a hunch telling him something is wrong with this death.

Although Tom Crick holds a doubtful position about human progress, he shows some signs of hope. He asks the headmaster Lewis: "do you believe in children?" (Swift 235). In this inquiry, he possesses a hope for the future through children. The naive Tom Crick regards that one generation will learn from the mistakes of an earlier

generation but the realist one knows history will repeat itself. History is always a struggle between constructing and destructing. In *Waterland* there is an endless fight between two opposing forces related to history. Natural history seems to be stable and resistant to human efforts. On the other hand, artificial history keeps trying to alter the landscape or other elements of natural history. For example, the Fen drainers pursue the draining in meaningless efforts as the water will reclaim what is taken from it. Accordingly Lea states, "That these forces are in perpetual tension, a metaphysical tug-of-war, is at the core of *Waterland* and Swift implies, neither can ultimately triumph" (Lea 94-95).

Tom Crick creates an identity through his narratives, and he complies with the requirements of a postmodern historian. As a self-reflexive narrator, he acquires the power of narration and he is aware that he can manipulate historical facts along with his own identity. In the portrayal of Tom Crick he lets his audience know only the things he chooses about his past. Within this context, according to Catana: "One's identity, which is nothing but one's story in a postmodernist context, is to be understood in the process of reading and of putting the storylines together. It is subject to a cyclical regeneration and reconstruction within stories; …Tom Crick's identity is revealed by the stories he tells" (8). Similar discussions are carried out by NoorBakhsh and Amjad in which they say he is afraid of the conventional understanding of history as there is no order in it, so parallel to the postmodern notion of historiography he composes his order through the stories he tells (15). To conclude, with all dilemma and paradoxical statements, Tom Crick is not a convincing historian and he proves to be highly subjective in the reporting of history.

As told earlier, *Waterland* and the narrator of the novel alike are self-referential considering their awareness in the way they handle the topic, which enables them to discuss their existence and relevance within the text itself. The narrative in the first place embraces narratology as a subject matter throughout the novel. The following lines explicitly reveal Tom's ideas on the issue:

> All the stories were once real. And all the events of the history, the battles and costume-pieces, once really happened. All the stories were once a feeling in the guts. ... But when the world is about to end there'll be no more reality, only stories. All there'll be left to us will be stories. Stories will be our only reality.

> We'll sit down in our shelter, and tell stories to some imaginary Prince Shahriyar, hoping it will never... (Swift 257).

History, reality and story all signify similar compositions here for Tom. As suggested by Landow, "He constructs history-his story. He constructs himself, and in the course of doing so he recognizes that 'Perhaps history is just story-telling" (Landow, 199). The way Tom Crick recounts the chain of events is remarkable. The story begins in an ambiguous mode with no hope for redemption as his absent-minded brother dies out of Tom's fault. And indeed, the brother Dick, was supposed to save the world, for he was sent by God (Swift 284). Tom Crick and Mary's baby was also dead even before it was born. So he needed to turn all this into a story in order to survive. And, to be able to tell his story, he decentred himself from his own story as suggested by Benyei:

> Crick constructs a gigantic narrative mechanism, including a complete mythology, metaphysics and metahistory, as well as magical narrative of inherited curse, writing himself into all these (meta) narratives in order to be able to absolve himself to write himself out of his own story; the extremely powerful rhetorical nature of the story, that is, Crick's pervasive presence in his narrative, conceals a desire to write himself out of his story, to be absent from it (Benyei 51).

Thus, Tom Crick's endeavour to tell his story within the scope of history lessons is a sign that shows how highly he sees story over history. Or, to say the least, history and story connote the same thing for Tom.

Tange proposes that Graham Swift engages three story-telling motives in his novel. Firstly, stories help Tom Crick to overcome dullness caused by the atmosphere of the flat landscape of the district, and turning it into a thrilling setting for his mythological stories and fairy tales. Secondly, stories play a prominent role in the local cultures of the region, setting them free from the dominant and typical history of the nations by means of oral tradition with its gossips, superstitions and myths. The third motif presents an evasion from linear flow of history with the employment of myths as an ahistorical element, which is very common in postmodern writings (85).

'Fairy-tale' is another element commonly expatiated in the novel. The narrator reports that it is all about fairy-tales. "But we lived in a fairy-tale place. In a

lockkeeper's cottage, by a river, in the middle of the Fens. Far away from the wide world" (Swift 1). "And since a fairy-tale must have a setting, a setting which, like the settings of all good fairy-tales, must be both palpable and unreal, let me tell you . . . About the Fens . . ." (Swift 8). By introducing the very idea of fairy-tale, Swift in a way establishes a ground for his unbelievably strange story, and blurs the concepts of reality, story and history. Because even the presence of that word 'fairy-tale' opens the fantastic world for the reader, the reality is naturally distanced from them. Maybe, the main idea is to distance reality and find more personal, intimate and local meanings by telling stories. "First it was a story—what our parents told us, at bedtime. Then it becomes real, then it becomes here and now. Then it becomes story again" (Swift 328). Swift continuously refers to the idea of telling stories to find meaning and according to Malcolm, Mary goes mad because she cannot turn the devastating experiences into a story (Malcolm 97). The distortion of reality is supported by Tom Crick with his specification of his homeland as: "Fairy-tale words; fairy-tale advice. But we lived in a fairy-tale place" (Swift 9). Among the components of a story: time, setting and characters, he describes the setting as a 'fairy-tale place' creating an impression that what is going to be told next is not real. He distorts the plausibility of his own stories by giving the setting in such a way. In one of his other sessions he says, "Children, you are right. There are times when we have to disentangle history from fairy-tale" (Swift 91). So, 'there are times' we have to distinguish history from fairy-tales, but what about the other times. The strong implication here can be observed that he considers these two notions same in the majority of times.

Tom Crick is a confused character and the narrator in the novel, *Waterland*. For a very long time covering his professional life as a history teacher, he has advocated the necessity of the conventional history. Through the end of his career, with another traumatic event, Mary's abduction of a baby and his losing his job, he starts to have second thoughts on the notion of history and believes that conventional or official history is not enough to comfort him, but they are the stories which have the power of making lives meaningful. When Tom Crick wants to switch from his own story to some historical accounts in 1833 in Paris, he acquires the difference between the fictional history and factual history in the following lines:

> Children you're right. There are times when we have to disentangle history from fairy-tale. There are times (they come round really quite often) when good dry textbook history takes plunge into the old swamps of myth and has to be retrieved with empirical fishing lines. History being an accredited sub-science, only wants to know the facts. History, if it is to keep on constructing its road into the future, must do it on solid ground." (Swift 91).

Saying "let us get back to the solid ground..." (91) he is either ironic, or paradoxical. At other many times, he suggests that history and stories are no different, so it is likely that he is referring to his point of view in an ironic state. Yet, if he says princely what he means, then he is falling into the paradoxical state. Although he wants to get to the solid ground, he confuses the students again by telling: "You listened to old Cricky's crazy yarns (true? Made up?)- in a way you never listened to a stranger-than-fiction prodigies of the French Revolution" (Swift 13). He is never allowing his students to truly believe him as he frequently uses the language of confusion. Not only confuse students about his stories but he also leads his students to have question marks even about the French Revolution. In order to introduce a setting, the Fenlands, for his stories, and to give the impression that what they are to hear are open to questioning, he says, "And since a fairy-tale must have a setting, a setting which, like the settings of all good fairy-tales, must be both palpable and unreal, let me tell you" (Swift 15). But sometime later, with his contradictory posture he says, "But let's keep clear of fairy-tales" (Swift 18). His reciprocal statements between one Tom and another Tom is undoubtedly controversial and fails to represent the historical accounts.

Although Tom Crick tends to clear himself from his past attachment in the terrifying events, and looks for a redemption, he sometimes agrees that he has done wrong: "Children, evil isn't something that happens far off- it suddenly touches your arm. I was scared when I saw the dark blood appear but not flow in the gash on Freddie's head. But not half so scared as when Mary Metcalf said to me later that day: 'I told him it was Freddie. Dick killed Freddie Parr because he thought it was him. Which means we're to blame too'" (Swift 42). In fact, Mary is to blame initially as it was her machination, but Tom Crick involves himself in the crime to share Mary's agony. Still he wants to give the impression that they were not evil but evil came to them. He even rises against the faith when he says, "Now, why can't everything happen by accident? No history. No guilt, no blame. Just accidents. Accidents…"

(Swift 264). Here, he again contradicts with himself as he mainly asked his students to follow the 'why' and find an explanation for everything.

Despite all his efforts, Tom Crick is not able find peace in all stories that he wants to justify his past actions or the troubled ones that he has contributed to. Malcolm suggests that according to Tom Crick, history is not comforting narrative, not decent resolution; it doesn't offer a fixed answer, just more Whys and demoralizing human failures and senselessness. Later in the novel he again defends history with examples about how history helps us find meaning and that people never stop looking for explanations. Moreover, throughout this novel and most of Swift's novels, historical events are represented as devastating and amoral particularly by means of those who hold strong views and delusions. "This is surely part of what Crick means by realism—a scepticism, a lack of trust in all the great narratives and yarns spun in history... Although Crick may express an uncertainty about the explanations of history as an intellectual inquiry into the past, he is in no doubt about the power of the past, the compelling" (Malcolm 87). His contradiction is again on the stage. He clearly expresses his distaste for history, but then repeatedly puts forth the inevitability of it. Similar to Malcom's suggestions, Brever and Tillyard bring up that for Tom Crick, even if history is the progress of time, it is not the progress of humankind. Because it is a cyclical progress, each advance invents fresh and worse challenges (Brever and Tillyard 50). French Revolution is referred many times in the novel as it is the true subject in the syllabus, but to convey that progress may not always be progress as it ends in tyranny. When Tom Crick says, "There is this thing called progress. But it doesn't progress, it doesn't go anywhere. Because as progress progresses the world can slip away. It is progress if you can stop the world slipping away" (Swift 334), it may appear to be a play on words, but he is actually talking about the common belief that the world would come to an end which is imposed for centuries by almost all the major teleological systems. And now we know scientifically that the world is not coming to an end (Save the religions). Thus, if there is no end, there cannot be a progress. His implication of circular movement of time corroborates the cause-effect relationship of linear history line to be overruled. All in all, Tom Crick believes that official history has failed as asserted by Brever and Tillyard and he turns back to stories:

> In *Waterland*, Crick's sense that official history has failed him, that it has not yielded up the answers it purports to provide, leads him to fall back on his childhood conception of history as 'telling stories'. Viewed in this light, that of youthful innocence, the purpose of history is not to explain or understand, and certainly not to provide a guide for future actions; it now acquires the more modest aim of providing solace and consolation (Brever and Tillyard 50).

Tom Crick has a lot to offer as to the definition of history, progress, reality or stories. He is a well-educated individual who also has self-awareness and a powerful intuition to interpret the actions around him in a cause-effect relationship. Save that, the mood of the characters in the novel including himself, as well as the mood the novel passes to the readers is really negative. Throughout the novel, we come across only with one character, Freddie Parr, with a sense of positive mood, who is killed at a very early age in his adolescent years. In this respect, Benyei offers that:

> *Waterland* is perhaps the most negative in tone among Swift's novels, at least as far as the possibility of overcoming trauma, of spiritual reconciliation and regeneration is concerned. Precisely because it conflates the time of the trauma with eschatological time, the narrative offers no hope, no point of exit out of its multilayered circularity (Benyei 52).

As the narrator, Tom Crick possesses the power of telling in his hands. However, he conveys the reader that he is in many case not certain about the historical accounts. Several times in the novel, he stated that he is still not sure about the father of the baby, Dick or him? "Or that's Mary's story" (Swift 262). And even after reading the novel all over, the readers cannot be certain whether Dick is his grandfather's son or Henry Crick's son as Helen sleeps with both his husband and his father hoping that she has a baby from Henry and at the meantime, consoling his father that she would have his child, 'The Savior of the World.' Tom Crick's hesitations in reporting the events puts the reader with a lot of question marks. Champion expresses that: "Tom Crick possesses a doubled consciousness, a cracked voice that expresses certainties about the world while it also, as Bakhtin would say, "cast[s] sidelong glances at those," as if a polemical rejoinder is embedded in every ounce of a conviction (30-31) (Champion 36).

Acheson also shares similar ideas with Champion. The first-person narrator, history teacher joins fact and fiction –two notions of history— by interlarding a

mixture of lectures on French Revolution, history of Fenland and his personal past. What he presents to his pupils are not conclusive. As he is a human, he cannot always decide which of the above topics to include and when exactly to include. Or whether what he includes are accurate or not is also questionable. His accounts are "limited in the same ways as his historical account and colored by his subjective desire to present himself in the best possible light" (Acheson 91). For example, when Tom Crick is contemplating on his dating with Mary, he says: "Freddie Parr. My own brother. You see the shape of my dilemma- and the extent of Mary's curiosity. And why I was obliged to meet Mary only at selected and predetermined times" (Swift 61). Mary is depicted by Tom Crick as a very curious young woman and her curiosity as he asserts is not limited to his body as an opposite sex. Even after thirty something years of marriage with Mary, he cannot make sure how far she went with Dick or Freddie Parr. This shows that they haven't talked about the details of those years as husband and wife and Tom Crick is in the dark concerning his own life story. When he is not capable of offering himself an explanation for his past, how can we expect him to offer a history for his students?

Tom Crick's presentation of personal history, along with the official history is ambiguous. He makes on account of his mother and grandfather's relationship as: "Once upon a time there was a father who fell in love with his daughter (now let's be clear, we're not just talking about ordinary parental affection). …" (Swift 226). Tom's starting his statement with 'once upon a time' gives the audience that the tone of a tale makes it unbelievable at the first place. Secondly, in the novel, the reader is never informed about how Tom Crick gets to learn about that scandalous information about his mother and grandfather. We only see a letter addressed to Dick which does not include so many details. So, the students or the reader have every right to think that the stories are invented by Tom. The situation is not so different with Mary. When Tom articulates the line as follows: "It's Mary's story, pieced together and construed by me. So how can I be certain what really-?" (Swift 249), he admits the ambiguity of the stories he tells. These are not the only lines he gives the hints of confusion about Mary. Several other lines from the novel below show how he is uncertain about the most important facts about his life and storyline in the novel:

> Or that Mary's story. Because first of all Mary's version went like this: we never actually- I just wanted to - (Swift 260) Or that's Mary's story. Because how did I know, how could I be a hundred per cent sure that when Mary said Dick's was too big, it really was too big? And that Mary hadn't proved to herself that it wasn't Too Big, in fact was just right, at the beginning of our little educational experiment? (Swift 262) …perhaps the truth is not as Mary says, but the other way round. Perhaps it's not Dick who bewilderingly yet doggedly pursues Mary, but Mary who, with much more guile at her disposal, would like to be better acquainted with Dick (Swift 247).

Tom's confusion in the accuracy of the events in the past that he has experienced in the first hand exposes how uncertain a narrator can be in recording history, and how unsuccessful a historian can be in ascertaining his students about the significance of history.

3.2. Distortion of Reality in *Waterland*

Attaching to stories, Tom Crick not only undermines the official history but he also subverts the reality, which still does not offer him a redemption because he is obsessed with the stories as a form of make-believe and make-do, and those subjective stories does not make any difference in the devastated lives of characters including himself and his beloved wife. Curiously, he admits what he is trying to do in the following line: "How did the Cricks outwit the reality? By telling stories" (Swift 25). Thus in this section of study, it is suggested that by bestowing on stories over history, Tom Crick firstly disrupts history as a field and then later with the subjective form of storytelling he distorts the reality with his highly contradictory reports, yet he eventually proves that 'outwitting reality' does not offer a solution either for him or other characters in the novel.

Tom Crick, tries to undermine the relevance of history as a scientific field and replace it with more superstitious method of recording the chronicles, the storytelling. However, as Meneses reports, "As a failed model of historical reparation, the chronicle that *Waterland* contains warns us that certain, ostensibly benign attempts to overcome the limitations of grand narratives via the establishment of alternative accounts might in fact replicate the very destructive methods they originally seek to counter" (Meneses 150). In as much as he attempts to deconstruct the single perspective grand narrative

History, he proposes another single perspective which even do not claim any objectivity unlike the former. Through the personal and local history, he presents an alternative history which he stabs to put in the center. In other words, he reconstructs his story to legitimize his deeds. When, Tom Crick says, “Reality is an empty vessel” (Swift 47), he can be interpreted that you can fill it as you like and you can create your own reality. He just does this throughout the novel because he is almost the only narrator in the story and we do not get to be informed about the other characters’ ideas and feelings on the first hand except for the student Price who very rarely speak for himself in Tom Crick’s sessions. We are just informed about the other characters’ actions and feelings through Tom Crick’s contemplations. Molcolm suggests a similar opinion in which he criticizes Tom Crick’s way of handling history in a subjective manner:

> Crick is not, and cannot be, omniscient. His own narrative’s claims to truthfulness are themselves undercut, objectified by the fact that he is a first-person narrator and by his own emphasis on the untrustworthiness of narratives. Thus the whole novel is marked by an irony and complexity typical of Swift’s work. There seems no solid ground, no acceptable hierarchy of discourse, perhaps not even that of the text’s implied author (Malcolm 92).

On the top of that, as Tom Crick’s reports as a first-person narrative are very contradictory concerning the definition of history, reality or storyline in which he often expresses his hesitations, he can by no means claim reliability in his accounts. His articulation of the following binary oppositions, “these fantastic but-true tales” (Swift 48) alone can be accepted as signification of his paradoxical state. Similarly, Janik elaborates on Tom Crick’s way of seeing history as follows: “History is a matter of reflection, the attempt to retrieve or find or impose logic and order on what is neither logical nor orderly; it is the creation of public reality” (Janik 85). Grounding that ‘reality is an empty vessel’, Tom Crick is eager to fill it as he wishes because as Janik mentions above, his life is not orderly and his wife’s actions crosses the boundaries of logic. That’s why he concerns so much as to build his own narrative and to create his own reality.

Tom Crick’s efforts to create his own reality does not seem to work. On this matter, Tange claims that “Tom Crick starts a personal campaign to construct a continuous narrative. He is ambitious, for he wants to connect not only the major

events in macro history, but his own alternative regional and personal narratives. Unfortunately, this attempt fails. He demands too much of history, which consequently breaks down" (Tange80). *Waterland* is full of discussions on fiction, history, reality and stories. In such a long novel, it is inevitable to be trapped in the contradictions on the essential discourse of the narrator and eventually, the self-reflexive narrator falls into failure in the representation of what he stands for. Indeed, the problem is that he does not always know what he stands for:

> I always taught you that history has its uses, its serious purpose. I always taught you to accept the burden of our need to ask why. I taught you that there is never any end to that question, because, as I once defined it for you (yes, I confess a weakness for improvised definitions), history is that impossible thing: the attempt to give an account, with incomplete knowledge, of actions themselves undertaken with incomplete knowledge. So that it teaches us no shortcuts to Salvation, no recipe for a New World, only the dogged and patient art of making do… yes, yes, the past gets in the way; it trips us up, bogs us down; it complicates, makes difficult. But to ignore this is folly, because, above all, what history teaches us is to avoid illusion and make-believe, to lay aside dreams, moonshine, cure-alls, wonder-workings, pie-in-the-sky- to be realistic (Swift 113).

In the lines above, it can be deduced that Tom Crick's confusion and contradictive reports about the history is a strong sign of distortion of reality, which helps Swift to undermine the historical relevance. For him, history as a field is impossible but history at the same time is inevitable. It 'gets in the way' as it does with Tom Crick. Avoiding the past and creating an illusion does not work for him. Thus, along with history, his make-believe is also useless in this sense. In fact, considering the statement above by him, history offers no hope.

Nothingness is another motif exploited in the novel regarding the distortion of reality and Tom Crick feels an urge to embrace history in order to escape from nothingness. Decoste has a sophisticated explanation for 'nothing' in the novel: "Crick's reality refuses to satisfy our longing for purpose and looms instead as an inescapable ontological "something" which is also a metaphysical or semiological "nothing." Indeed, "nothing" is the touchstone term in Crick's discourse on the real" (Decoste 381). For him, something is real only if you attain some meaning into it. It is reality if it is turned into memory. He maintains:

> But there is another theory of reality, quite different from that which found its way into my fraught after-school meeting with Lewis. Reality's not strange, not unexpected. Reality doesn't reside in the sudden hallucinations of events. Reality is uneventfulness, vacancy, flatness. Reality is that nothing happens. How many of events of history have occurred, ask yourselves, for this and for that reason, but for no other reason, fundamentally, than the desire to make things happen? (Swift 46)

Tom Crick categorizes people into two groups. First one is the conductor of reality, and the second one is the ones who turn those realities into stories. He puts himself as a member of Crick family to the second category who fill the 'empty vessel of reality' with meaningful stories. Once again contradictory in his reports Tom Crick blurs the distinction between the definitions as Decoste states: "Thus the history Crick himself collects from varied domains and passes on in his lessons is one which refutes the narrative of progress, and which moreover suggests, in its fearful conviction that the waters and bloodbaths will return, that narrative cannot shelter us from the mortal finality and absurdity of the real" (Decoste 385). With all his puzzling survey into history, Tom Crick achieves a dead end in the reassurance of the use of history. The ambiguity of the statements he articulates does not justify what he aims to convey. The order of story, real, here and now, and story again does not constitute a whole in the explanation of fictional writing or narration. Tom Crick does not pose a certain attitude as to what reality really is. He is "no longer sure what's real and what isn't" (Swift 42). He does not even recognize his wife. "That's your wife over there; you know, Mary, the one you thought you knew. But maybe this is unknown country" (Swift 265). Within the scope of this discussion Malcolm suggests:

> The novel's concern with storytelling—its metafictional concern—is closely related to the question of reality. Stories and narratives stand in complex relation to the already problematized issue of reality. The very panoply of different kinds of texts (fairytale, legend, detective story, psychological fiction, historical narrative) that the narrator feels he has to use to tell his story suggests both the elusiveness of reality and the necessity of employing a variety of different kinds of text to capture it. Both reality and the ability of texts to capture truth—the real—are hereby made highly problematic. But the position of *Waterland* on this issue is again quite complex. The text as a whole does provide some explanations (of Freddie Parr's murder, of Dick's death, and of Mary's madness). It can produce some texts that do seem to capture some aspects of the truth—the long chapter of Atkinson family history (chap. 9), and the account of scientific investigation of the eel's breeding cycle (chap. 26) (Malcolm 94).

Malcolm above puts forth that Tom Crick problematizes the narration by asserting too much confusion in his reports, which leads to unrepresentability of reality in fiction. He is successful to some extent in informing the audience, but as he is inconsistent in so doing, this cause another problem in the representation of reality.

To sum up, Tom Crick's distortion of reality along with subversion of other notions concerning history and his abundant use of definitive discourse drag him to contradiction and thus his lectures become confusing for both the students and readers. Representation of reality is blurred. Swift employs such paradoxical claims through the self-referential text that eventually narration spoils the supposedly esteemed grand narrative, history regarding its reliability and as a means of finding comfort through stories.

3.3. Holocaust Club and Devastated Lives of Characters

In *Waterland* all ostensible struggle that Tom Crick engages in is to promote history in any form as he names. However, beyond doubt, he is not able to achieve this goal. Devastated lives of various characters around him and the existence of a Holocaust Club founded by his students are indubitable signs of his failure. Hereby, Swift's deployment of Tom Crick as the main character and narrator can be evaluated as his will to undermine the historical authority within the scope of postmodern fashion. In this part of the study, devastated lives of some characters and the existence of the Holocaust Club founded by Tom Crick's students are discussed.

To start with, avoiding the reality for over thirty years and pursuing a make-believe reality, Tom Crick is not successful at consolidating himself. But, worse than him, as he pictures, Freddie Parr and Dick Crick suffer the most as they die in their adolescent years. Mary suffers both physically and mentally and cannot find comfort in her life as she cannot turn her fears into a story. Henry Crick also suffers after the war but he manages to recover through storytelling remedy applied by Helen Atkinson. The problem arises here when Tom Crick says storytelling is a means of finding meaning and making do in order to be able to move on. Nonetheless, he adds that those who do not have the skill to turn reality into stories are doomed to suffer. So, he does

not really suggest a solution because throughout the novel, he gives examples from his and his mother's families in which they do not have choice to be storyteller or not. It is in their innate nature. Accordingly, what Tom Crick is lecturing all throughout the novel about being curious, asking why and turning reality into stories to survive lie in their heritage. He is again inconsistent in his reflections. For example, when he says about his father Henry Crick, "He thinks: there is only reality, there are no stories left" (Swift 27), he pities his father as he has lost his storytelling knack. He returns from the World War I seriously injured and stays in hospital for three years. Nevertheless, he somehow recovers not because he regains his storytelling gift but Helen Atkinson, a nurse at the hospital, talks to him and tells her stories. So to say, Atkinsons are not storytellers by nature, but Helen Atkinson gains that skill because "she has cause of her own to be no stranger to fairy-tales (Swift 67). He denotes to her incestuous relationship with her father Ernest Atkinson. Tom Crick's setback here is if it is possible for Helen Atkinson to be able to gain storytelling skill, why is Mary not able to get that skill too.

Mary Metcalf, who used to be the most joyful and curious character in the novel, loses her curiosity and falls into despair when she gets pregnant and apply to a witch in the forest for abortion and informed that she would never have a baby again and afterwards when she causes two deaths. Tom Crick judges on this as "Then I see it's because something's gone from her face. Curiosity's gone" (Swift 62). For Tom Crick, when the urge for curiosity is gone, it is the end of the world, but even though they have been married over thirty years he has not been able to cure her as Helen Atkinson did with Henry Crick. After the abortion and deaths, Tom Crick leaves the town for his education and Mary lives in seclusion for three years. The reader is left blank about this three years and then they get married and the reader is again left blank over thirty years until the baby abduction. How Mary maintains her life without curiosity is not revealed to the reader. But then Mary is curious again. With God's revelation she abducts a baby in a supermarket. Tom Crick describes the situation as follows:

> And when she sits, with more leisure but no less terror, in the midst of catastrophe, when he sits- as Lewis can see himself sitting, for the sake of his children- in his fallout bunker; or when he only sits alone because his wife of over thirty years who no longer knows him, nor he her, has been taken away,

> and because his schoolchildren, his children, who once, ever reminding him of the future- came to his history lessons, are no longer there, he tells, if only to himself, if only to an audience he is forced to imagine, a story (Swift 68).

Mary is taken to an asylum and Tom Crick loses his job and students. But Mary is rejoiced after almost forty years. She finally releases herself from the burdens of the past. But as she does not turn it into a story, she loses her sanity. When Tom Crick addresses to his students, "Once upon a time there was a future history teacher and a future history teacher's wife for whom things went wrong, so- since you cannot dispose of the past, since things must be- they had to make-do" (Swift 130), he does not specifies that he is indeed the only one who manages to make-do. Obviously, Mary cannot make-do anymore. Besides, Tom Crick's urge for stories is only when the things go wrong. If everything is all right, stories or history (as he sees them as same) are not essential. By his contradictory nature he insists that they should pursue an explanation. "Children, don't stop asking why. Don't cease your Why Sir? Why Sir? Though it gets more difficult the more you ask it, though it gets more inexplicable, more painful, and the answer never seems to come any nearer, don't try to escape this question Why" (Swift 135). He admits that asking the question does not necessarily mean that you are to find answers. Tom Crick admits that he cannot propose a solution for the things when they go wrong. Implicitly, he can be interpreted that history does not present you a way out. It is only a way of life, but nothing more.

Mary abducts the baby because she believes God has told her to do so. Indeed, Katrina M. Powell suggests that "Crick's fictionalization of reality through storytelling is not a viable option for the action-taking Mary" (Powell 65). Storytelling does not work for everyone as Tom Crick supposes. He maintains that she would be announced a saint talking to God in the past but thanks to the advent of psychiatry in the recent times, she was diagnosed as to carry some certain condition. He talks about the doctor's examination as: "He believes there is a condition called schizophrenia. He believes: it was because people were ignorant of such things that they once believed in- He believes: this is Mary; this is a bench; this is a dog. The last thing he wants to believe is that he is in fairy-land" (Swift 152). Tom Crick has difficulty in handling the reality as it is, and tends to take the situation to a fairy-land. But, the representative of the science of medicine, sees the reality in its material form. So, he has to face the harsh reality here that his wife has this condition called schizophrenia. His feelings can

be explained again with his own words: “History: a lucky dip of meanings. Events elude meaning, but we look for meanings. Another definition of Man: the animal who craves meaning- but knows”- (Swift 144). He knows why his wife is in this position. He knows his involvement in this horrible ending. Still, he desires to attain a meaning in this destruction.

Dick Crick is another wasted figure in *Waterland*. Tom Crick claims about him that “he can’t be taught. Can’t read, can’t write. Speaks half in baby-prattle, if he speaks at all. Never asks questions, doesn’t want to know. Forgets tomorrow what he’s told today” (Swift 242). Dick Crick is supposedly aimed to be the saviour of the world by his father/grandfather but he turns out to be a potato-head as Tom Crick calls. The problematic with him begins with the assumption that he is son of Ernest Atkinson because as Tom Crick reports “Thus the daughter tried hard by two man at the same time, both of whom she loved, to become pregnant” (Swift 230). We have no conclusion for certain about who the father is. We can just agree on Tom Crick’s assumption on that. Considering the time period, it is not possible to have paternity tests but as Dick Crick is an idiot by inborn, he is concluded to be Ernest Atkinson and Helen’s son by Tom Crick. He even resembles his brother Dick to his motorbike with which he has a perfect relationship unlike the relationship he has with people: “…in its mechanical animation, bearing a pretty close resemblance to Dick himself” (Swift 243). Using this uncanny resemblance, Tom Crick strips Dick off his human properties. Dick is naturally not capable of learning new things like other kids but once Tom Crick tries to teach him reading. When Henry Crick witnesses the view he says: “Don’t educate him! Don’t learn ‘im to read!” (Swift 243). Henry Crick is probably afraid of this because if he one day learns to read, he can read the letter in the wooden chest from his father/grandfather and learn about the truth. However, another problem is that we are never informed that Henry Crick knows about the letter. Tom Crick conveys that Henry Crick never wants to see what is inside in that wooden chest, and does not want his sons to see it either. Only curious Tom Crick chases the reality which is to cause his brother’s death. This is because, when he opens the chest and reads the letter, he cannot help telling his brother that Henry Crick is not his father. Besides, he gives Dick the maddening beer bottle and leads the way to his suicide.

Dick Crick by his nature can easily be manipulated. In their puberties, the kids are very curious about their own bodies and the bodies of the opposite sex. So they play games by the river to discover each other's bodies. Mary is the only girl to discover, so all of the boys fall in love with her including Dick, Tom and Freddie Parr. After those discovery sessions Mary becomes pregnant supposedly by Tom Crick. Supposedly, because even Tom Crick is never sure of the father. Mary for no reason tells Dick that Freddie Parr is the father and Dick kills Freddie Par with that specific beer bottle and commits suicide after he learns that his father is not his father. Although he is pictured by Tom Crick as a mechanical body, he shows the sign of human traits. As soon as he possesses human traits, he cannot bear the pain and commits suicide. As Tom Crick lectures, he says "First there is nothing; then there is happening. And after the happening, only the telling of it. But sometimes the happening won't stop and let itself be turned into memory" (Swift 326). Obviously, Dick is not able to turn happening into a story and memory, so he decides to put an end to all of it. Thus, Tom Crick's suggestion of chasing the reality and finding meaning in the stories and history does not work for Dick. He just disappears in the depths of River Ouse.

Another character whose life comes to and end and then recovers by means of storytelling cure is Henry Crick. Curiously, as a storyteller by family heritage, he cannot cope with the harsh realities of the war by himself alone. Tom Crick's supposition that Cricks are storytellers by nature is confuted by his father's desperation. Tom Crick states that "Henry Crick forgets. He says: I remember nothing. But that's just a trick of brain" (Swift 223). The details about the war is not revealed because Henry Crick prefers to forget what he has experienced. He does not choose to talk about his traumas along with many other things. Contrary to what he suggests, the only person in the novel who can abundantly employ the storytelling therapy is Tom Crick himself. That's why the reader is usually left with question marks and the representation of autobiographical record of history does not satisfy the reader. Even Henry Crick's very intimate feelings about Helen is depicted through Tom Crick's reports: "Ah yes, put it down, if you like, to improved methods of therapy, the know-how of doctors, or simply the passage of time, but Henry Crick will tell you it was none other than that angel in a nurse's uniform, that white-aproned goddess. Her and her alone" (Swift 225). The reader is left alone with Tom Crick's reconstruction of the stories of the third persons and we are tested with the feeling about whether the narrator

is reliable or not. To Henry Crick in an illusionary world, Helen may seem like a goddess but Helen is more down to earth. As Tom Crick reports: "Does Helen Atkinson, too, believe in miracles? No, but she believes in stories. She believes that they are a way of bearing what won't go away, a way of making sense of madness" (Swift 226). So she starts telling him stories. The stories she tells not only help him but helps her to take away the burden on her shoulder. After a while her stories has shapes a different form. "They not only becomes lovers, this strangely matched pair, they tell each other stories" (Swift 226). Henry Crick also starts to tell stories. In Tom Crick's understanding, he finds a way to cope with the reality. But then Tom Crick again argues that "But this hospital, into which, indeed, the father put reawakened energies, imagining great things (even miracles), only served to remind them how evil lingers and how things of the past aren't things of the past…" (Swift 228). He again falls into a paradoxical state in which he expresses that the past is not past. So, the burden of history Henry Crick and Helen Atkinson carry on their shoulders is not something easily evaded by storytelling alone. Once again his contradictory views are not enough for the reader to believe that historical desire in the form of stories can cure the devastations and help you find a meaning in life.

The existence of a holocaust club founded by his student alone can reveal that all the struggle Tom Crick endeavours to instil hope in the students through following the question 'why' and requiring an explanation for the things in the past is in vain. This is because students and young people not unexpectedly represent the hope for a future. Among them, the most outstanding character is Price who individually attracts the attention of Tom Crick in his up rise against the lectures or personal stories. Price is indeed the only character in the novel whose voice we can hear even if just a drop. The reader gets used to hear all the story from Tom Crick. His inclination as to see history as a means of life drive to be able to maintain a healthy life is only challenged by Price who can be defined as the representative of that young group. Price says, "The only thing about history, I think, sir, is that it's going to the point where it's probably about to end" (Swift, 14) As a member of the Holocaust Club, Price naturally thinks that the world will soon come to an end because of the nuclear annihilation. This means that, under the name of progress as it used to be in French Revolution or World Wars, some tyrannical leaders will claim a better world and destroy the already established one. In the postmodern world this is possible only by launching a missile and the

students are aware of that. This is because as Tom Crick teaches them, history repeats itself. Thus, they are not interested in the history or stories he tells. They are merely interested in the Here and Now. He tries to make his students believe in the power of history when he articulates: "I believed, perhaps like you, that history was a myth. Until a series of encounters with the Here and Now gave a sudden pointedness to my studies" (Swift 67). He refers to the traumatic experiences he lived and suggests that in the times of darkness, it is unavoidable to history or stories to make-believe. Somehow, Tom Crick's turning into his personal stories instead of official history awakens students' interest in the history. We can get this idea from Price's lines below: "But sir! Sir! That can't be all. What about the double bump on the head? What about that freaky brother? And this thing with you and Mary what's-her-name? (Hey, we never knew you-) What about our detective spirit? Don't stop, keep telling. That can't be the end" (Swift 114). Tom Crick's effort to put history in a more local and personal level which can be more meaningful seems to work for students. They may be gaining a sort of curiosity for the past. Nonetheless, it does not take away the belief that the world would come to an end. Besides, Tom Crick's stories are not reliable as they feel like fairy tales in the way they are narrated only by a single unreliable narrator. Price suddenly announces in class that history was a fairy-tale. "You see, perhaps he is on your side… the only important thing about history is that history has reached the stage where it might be coming to an end" (Swift 157). Maybe the students share the opinion suggested by the headmaster Lewis: "History breeds pessimism" (Swift 158). This may be because as students truly believe that the world would come to an end literally by a nuclear annihilation, there is no point in studying the history which cannot offer any help for them. They are only interested in the parts where Tom Crick tells about the adolescent discoveries of the opposite sex as they are themselves in those adolescent years of their lives.

The students' hopelessness for future can also be agreed when Price says the following lines about having children: "Who says we'll want to bring children into whatever world there is?" (Swift 258). It is clear from the reflections of students that they have no projection for future. That's why they insist that they live in the Here and Now. Although Tom Crick is lecturing students about the necessity of history, when he is himself in a troubled position, he feels the same as students: "But we lay there, waiting, that golden August evening as if it was the last place on earth. Because that's

what I thought, despite wheat fields and poppies and cornflower heavens: everything is coming to an end" (Swift 295). The lines above are articulated by Tom Crick when he has nothing else to lose. His wife; his job; everything that matters to him slips away from his hand and then with a typical paradoxical state, he feels that everything is coming to an end. He feels that even stories whose meditating power he has believed throughout the storyline would no longer help him. As we are presented in the novel, Tom Crick's contradictory views and reports make him in every moment in the story an unreliable narrator, historian and story teller. Thus it is not surprising that his inconsistent attempts to value history cannot be reflected to his student, the loyal audience he owns.

Concerning the distortion of reality and end of history, it makes sense to finish the chapter with the lines by Tom Crick below which are very well signification of how history can be manipulated and how it is not possible to reflect on history in fiction as the representation of truth and facts: "That neat phrase — it was official — meant that no one was guilty. If death was accidental then it couldn't have been murder, could it, and if it couldn't have been murder then my brother couldn't have been — And if my brother wasn't, then Mary and I weren't — " (Swift 131). Tom Crick and Mary announce themselves not guilty of the death of Freddie Parr as it is officially declared that it was an accident.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analyzed Graham Swift's *Waterland* in the light of Linda Hutcheon's 'historiographic metafiction'. Linda Hutcheon suggests that historiographic metafiction shows history as constructed (Hutcheon 120). Swift's *Waterland* is a historiographic metafiction as it is a self-referential text with a self-reflexive narrator referring to the definition and relevance of history, narration, reality and story abundantly throughout the novel.

In *Waterland* history is not seen as a well-respected and obligatory subject at school anymore. When Tom Crick is informed by the headmaster that he will have to stop teaching at that school, he frees himself from the curriculum and starts telling stories of his local town and his personal stories which include the death of two young boys, an unborn baby and Mary's losing her sanity. As the narrator, Tom Crick distorts the reality and blurs historical facts. He constantly contradicts in his judgements on historical reflections. Nevertheless, he does not stop praising history in different forms claiming that it is a source of make-believe, coping with the harsh reality and finding meaning in life and redemption.

Chapter One of this thesis discusses Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction as a theory grounded in this study. Historiographic metafictions are defined as intensely self-reflexive, yet paradoxically laying claim to the historical events and figures (Hutcheon, *Poetics,* 5). In the first section of the theoretical framework chapter, traditional history writing and conventional historical novels are discussed. It is conveyed that discussion on history writing dates back to Aristotle who views literature over history writing as it also offers what might happen besides what happens. Until the Age of Enlightenment, history writing is considered as a form of literature, yet with the discussions on rationality and empirical research, through the end of the Enlightenment, history becomes a scientific field which aims to reflect real facts of the past with an objective point of view. Thus, history and literature departs

regarding their claims. In the second section of theoretical framework chapter, postmodernist historiography and historiographic metafiction are discussed. With poststructuralisms and postmodernism, the linguistic aspects of history writing and accordingly historical fictions are discussed to suggest that objective representation of the past facts is not possible through language as a medium. As the claims for the past facts are compositions of historians/writers, they are prone to subjectivity and considered as historical constructions.

Chapter Two focuses on the defense of history and why history is important for Tom Crick. The question word 'why' is very important in this respect because he believes that the urge for history starts with that question. 'Why' naturally requires an explanation and this will necessitate an inquiry into the past. In the first section of this chapter, the term 'make-believe' and power of stories are discussed. For Tom Crick, one of the main drives that history is needed is the idea of make-believe. It is important because when people are not satisfied with their past and they want to bend historical facts, they can employ a make-believe reality so as to find peace with their past. This can be seen in many characters in the novel. For example, Ernest Atkinson, Tom Crick's grandfather as he cannot maintain the fame and wealth of his predecessors invents a world for himself, and in that world he and his daughter Helen would bear a child to be the savior of the world. That child is to be Dick Crick, who commits suicide because of his father/grandfather's maddening beer and Mary's mechanizations. Power of storytelling is discussed as a form of remedy. Tom Crick's father, Henry Crick, after staying at the hospital for three years following his being wounded in WW2, is cured by Helen Atkinson with a storytelling cure. In the past three years the field of medicine has failed to do so, as he is not only wounded in the body but also in the mind. Tom Crick also embraces the curing power of stories when he is overwhelmed with the harsh realities he experiences as a young boy. After partly causing three deaths, he escapes to story books instead of history books. For over thirty years he practices history as a professional subject, but he never abandons the power of storytelling. Further, he suggests that those who fail to turn their traumas into stories cannot hold the authority of their lives in their hands. Mary, Dick and Ernest Atkinson can be exemplified in this context. As they are not able to make use of the curing power of storytelling actively or passively, they end up losing their sanity.

In the next section of Chapter Two, Tom Crick's defense of history as a historian has been analyzed. He distinguishes artificial history and natural history. For him, artificial history is the grand narrative but natural history is personal and local. So it is natural history which touches on people's lives when required in the form of stories. In his defense as a historian, he also focuses on the cyclicality of history which, in fact, refutes progress because progress is only possible through linear history line. Tom Crick refuses progress giving the examples of wars, French Revolution, Napoleon and Hitler, and thus suggests that history repeats itself as in the examples given above. Nonetheless, cyclical history requires relating to past actions which is possible by means of history or stories. That theoretically means that history is not something in the past. This makes history or stories possible as a means of redemption.

Curiosity and finding meaning in the stories have also been analyzed in Chapter Two. Tom Crick consistently calls for curiosity in the novel. He asks his students to be curious as he believes it is the end of the world when curiosity is gone. *Waterland* is usually negative in tone as a text. The only moments in the story line when the reader can get a joyful mood is when the teenagers try to feed their curiosity by discovering each other's bodies. Paradoxically, it is again curiosity which leads the way to the catastrophic end of Freddie Parr, Dick Crick and Mary Metcalf/Crick. But still, Tom Crick fosters curiosity as a means of finding a meaningful pattern in life.

In Chapter Three of this thesis, end of history theme is analyzed through Tom Crick's contradictory state as a historian and narrator. On one hand, he promotes history, but on the other hand, with contradictory statements, he subverts historical relevance. In the introduction part of this chapter, grounding on the historical metafiction, it is claimed that any narrator or reporter of history is unreliable because they cannot have the omniscient point of view as a human being. They are doomed to subjectivity in their reports. Further, this chapter analyzes Tom Crick as an unreliable narrator and historian as he, as a master of storytelling and history, uses distortion of reality as a means of self-consolidation and redemption. As the only narrator in *Waterland,* he holds the power of manipulation of the past facts. The reader is never certain about some accounts as they do not have access to other characters' contemplations on the events. Besides, Tom Crick, values stories above other forms of history, which reveals that a final signification of the facts is not possible in a story,

for stories are traditionally conceived as an invented form of narrative. Tom Crick's confusion in his statements and in the definition of certain terms such as history, story, reality, progress, linear and cyclical history line or fairy-tales add to his unreliability as a narrator and historian. Another discussion carried out in this chapter is the existence of a Holocaust club founded by Tom Crick's students. The children are the future of humanity, but his students do not believe in the future. They find both history and future pointless as they suppose they would be victims of a nuclear annihilation. Thus, Tom Crick's urge for curiosity and history by means of finding a meaningful pattern in their lives do not apply to his students and it can be concluded that there is no hope for the future.

In conclusion, Graham Swift's *Waterland* is a historiographic metafiction which subverts the power of history as a grand narrative through the main character and narrator of the text, Tom Crick. Initially, he blurs the distinctions between history, story, fairy-tale, reality and progress. He holds the power of narration in his hand all alone and exploits it in the distortion of reality on his behalf with a fashion of deconstructing and reconstructing. The reader is left without any choice to reassure the truthfulness of the accounts he reports. So, Tom Crick displays his unreliability through his contradictory contemplations on the relevance of history. At times, he advocates history both as a means of official history and storytelling, but at other times, he shows that history is not a means of salvation or a source of information. Once for all, in his *Waterland*, Graham Swift shows through the paradoxical state at the narrator's report that the facts and truths cannot be represented in historical fiction.

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APPENDIX

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name **:** DUMAN, Volkan

Nationality **:** TR – Turkish

Date and Place of Birth **:** 28 May, 1981, Artvin

Marital Status **:** Married

Phone **:** 0535 484 60 50

E-mail **:** vduman@ktu.edu.tr

EDUCATION

Degree	**Institution**	**Year of Graduation**
MA	Çankaya University, Department of English Literature and Cultural Studies	2019
BA	Karadeniz Technical University, Department of English Language and Literature	2006
ELT Certificate	Karadeniz Technical University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, ELT Certificate Programme	2006
High School	Artvin Anatolian High School	1999

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	**Place**	**Enrollment**
2008- Present	Karadeniz Technical University	English Instructor
2007-2008	TEOL Dil Okulları Rize Şubesi	English Teacher

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

Elementary German