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# The End of History in Graham Swift's Waterland

*A dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial  
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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my family who are the most important persons in my life.

I would like to express my gratitude to every single person who in a way or  
another backed me up.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to define the relationship between “the End of history” as philosophical concept and postmodernist critique of history in contemporary English literature notably in Graham Swift’s *Waterland* as historiographic metafiction, with the aim to explore the meaning of history and its end, through relying on Fukuyama interpretation to the end of history, in which the research paper shows the difference between his position and postmodern attitudes. Moreover the research investigates the postmodern reaction to the notion of referring to history as Grand narrative, Furthermore the objective is to examine how the concept of the “End of History” is represented by the Grand narrative Tom Crick and how the past or history is being questioned in swift’s *Waterland* which allows us to get a full understanding of the nature of history itself.

**Key words** : History, Grand Narrative and historiographic metafiction.

## General Introduction

Postmodernism is a complex term started to be used more systematically in 1960s and that refers to socio-historical condition, arts and the vision of the world. Moreover, Postmodernity refers to this socio-historical condition and the change in people's perception as a result to the rapid growth of media, popular culture and globalization. All these social cultural and historical changes need to be reflected in arts, literature and new theories.

More importantly one of the most important aspect that characterized postmodern era is the scepticism toward reality and universal truth. Postmodernists are suspicious of those who make universal truth claims. All claims of universal meaning are viewed as imperialistic efforts to marginalize the rights of others, the most important value of Postmodernity is the rejection of all totalizing ways of viewing any dimension of life. In postmodern world, truth and reality are shaped by personal history, social class, gender and culture, these factors, according postmodern thinking combined to shape the narrative and meaning of life as culturally embedded without any universal application.

Postmodernism is the direct result of a great disillusion with science, progress, universal truth and history as progress, which led postmodernist call for the end of grand narratives and the end of history, this postmodern scepticism toward metanarratives and the incredulity of history led the rise of historical novel and historiographic metafiction in which they explored the nature of history. Moreover historical novel is characterized by marginalizing major historical events and scepticism to the official history, notably in Swift's *Waterland* (1983) which calls the concept of historical truth into the doubt by associating a historical reality with a personal stories.

This thesis "the End of history" is taken into account both as an important feature of postmodern culture and as a suitable topic in which historiographic metafiction provides a response to the question that raised by postmodern thinker calling for the need of rereading the past, at the time where social and cultural transformation in globalizing world are challenging the conceptions of historical events.

As an attempt to define the relationship between "the End of history" as a philosophical concept and the representation of it in swift's *Waterland* as historiographic metafiction, my research work will consist of three chapters. The first one will provide an insight about the philosophical debate on end of history by examining general questions

about history and its meaning, even with particular discussions concerning the definition of history. Then I intend to base my work on the interpretation of Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and Last man* (1992) in order to give a full circle of understanding and a solid ground about the contrasts between his position and postmodern attitudes.

The second chapter will take into consideration the literary interpretations of history and its end by giving a definition to the "Grand Narrative" that is usually connected with modernist thinking in that they are organized around "the story" of human progress in an attempt to totalize cultural narrative schema, then I intend to show the postmodern reaction to this concept in historiographic metafiction notably in Swift's *Waterland* with the aim of examining the protagonist Tom Crick as Grand Narrative. I intend to show how the novel challenges the received version "the Grand Narrative" of history. Moreover the theme of stories and history in *Waterland* will be highlighted in order to show how the nature of history is represented in the novel.

The third and the final chapter will include analysis, quotes and passages from the novel to show the representation of the end of history by Tom Crick as Grand Narrative.

Finally, my research paper intends to reveal the representation of history in Swift's *Waterland* and its relation to the end of history as philosophical concept and how it implied in the novel.

**Chapter one:**  
**The Philosophical Debate on The End of**  
**History**



## **Introduction**

This chapter provides an insight about the philosophical debate on the end of history by examining general questions about history and its meaning. Then deals with some philosophers who meditated about the end of history and their influence on postmodern comprehension of history, by paying attention to Francis Fukuyama's interpretation to the end of history and to show the contrasts between his position and postmodern attitudes. Through his book, *The End of History and The Last Man 1992*, Fukuyama argues that the progression of human history as a struggle between ideologies has reached an end, therefore he hopefully welcomes the end of history. Furthermore, an insight concerning postmodernist's views about the end of history and postmodernist era which witnessed the rise of historical novel and histrographic metafiction. This chapter refers to Fukuyama's arguments and to an other philosophical attitudes in order to introduce the context within the novel in this study is read.

### **1. What is History ?**

History is usually connected with developement of humanity as well as with the investigation the portrayal of the past. The past is one of those ideas which history involves, but it is not synonymous of it. History refers to interpretations of the past in the present. As *Keith Jenkins* observes :

History is one of the series of discourses about the world. These discourses do not creat the world but htey do appropriate it and give it all the meaning it has (1991:6)

More precisely, history is a record of the past, however, it doesn't count with it. History is a way of thinking about the past, but the events of the past as told by history are not identical with the events as they happened. Jenkins affirms that historians couldn't cover the totality of the past events on the ground that their essence is for all intents and purposes boundless, no record can recoup the past as it was.

Moreover, history is something more than what occurred before, it is our method of comprehension and representing the past in order to form a body of knowledge. Since the human needs of history, historians are in charge of prevailing acknowledged thoughts of the past, their undertaking is to comprehend and clarify it.

They recount diverse stories of the same past, suggesting conversation about it and discovering some importance inside it, thus the way of their written work must be basically examined, not straight forwardly acknowledged, because there is no truth installed in a records.

According to historians' point of view, the past can be reproduced in various ways and forms. Furthermore, history is a subjective method for clarifying the past, because the narration of the past events defines the reality that is captured in the produced history.

Any historical examination it goes for speaking about the past as it was, however, the past can't be truly represented as cannot be experienced any more, because any portrayal of it is an option that is other than it. As it is extremely observed in this passage :

In the same way the past constitute an independent reality, although one to which we do not have the same immediate access as to the outside world in its present aspect. The fact that we cannot perceive the past directly, does not mean that it is not real, it is part of reality just as much, and as such so worthy of our attention. The past exist for itself and is interesting by itself and needs no applications to justify its existence (R.G.Colling wood,2007:6)

This means that any pretentious claim to be able to reconstruct the past as it was, must be avoided, because postmodernists affirm that such knowledge is nothing but a personal and cultural construction, providing us with unreliable information about the past.

Postmodernism encouraged historians to take the irrational in the past, to give careful consideration to a thoughts and culture as impacts in their own particular ideas. This affect the credibility of history. Moreover, postmodernist reject reality and legitimacy of universal history because according to Gordon Wood(2008), the functions of history for society is like a memory achievements for individual, it offers experience to deal with the present and future. Thus History can be a method for creating identity, Identity turns around what we recollect and what we overlook, so our historical past either individual or public, is important to give same significance to our lives.

Another meaning for history can be defined as purposeful movement in which passed a social, cultural and political phenomenon, over and over, thus the end of history happens when history achieves its purpose. This does not mean that time stops, as it will never do. Freric Jameson (1998), argues that, time gets fragmented into a series of unending presents. The concept of the end of history led the postmodernists lose the methods in which we understand and know what happened in the past, and even the ways in which

identity can be formed, moreover the sense of Ending is usually connected , when ideology ends, so does history.

In *The Sense of an Ending*(2000) Frank Kermode sees that one steady component in people is by all accounts the longing for finding and making requests of implications. Sequence of event, plots and stories put our minds at rest, precisely in light of the human existence is determined by the need to be related to a beginning and to an end.

This need mirrors our experience of life itself where birth and passing are the definitive and unavoidable stage for each of us. In this manner, history as story, meets our feeling of having a place with bigger plan. Not exclusively do stretch the way in which we understand the world, yet, likewise they shape the path in which we conceive ourselves. This illustrated in the following passage:

History, so considered, is a fictive substitute for authority and tradition, a maker of concords between past, present, and future a provider of significance to mere chronicity.(2000:56)

Human beings turn to the act of storytelling in a request to adapt their need of making a significance to their life and to their comprehension of events. Storytelling has regularly implied the production of a consecutive plotting of one event after another with beginning, a middle, and an end. Traditionally, narrative history has involved a chronological linear order, as Kermode keeps up that it is the exact nature of fictional form in which thought, separated into beginning, a middle and end, that may include apocalyptic implications.

History is a constructed where the historian cannot achieve a record of basic successiveness, or chronicle without an ultimate end. To give a meaning to the story and propose a reason for, it should have an end, the same can be connected to history as a grand story.

Thus, the issue with history coherence, which postmodern raised is that such a continuity is not an element of past, but human construction. This means history is a contemplated account on the reported document of the past, yet these sources one clearly not aware about the human experience continuity. What is consistent is less real or frame in which reality exists in its obvious discontinuity, but in which our culture represents reality.

The urge to defend the continuity of history originates from human need to find order and significance out of chaos and discontinuity. Moreover, the historian aims to represent facts with that of transmitting coherence and meaning. But this coherence seems to be illusory revealing history to be just as human creation.

## **2. Fukuyama's *The End of History and The Last Man***

Francis Fukuyama is an American thinker known for his book *The End of History and The Last Man* published in 1992, through which he reconverts the end of history tradition as contrasting option to postmodernism by sharing the eighteenth-century enlightenment a belief in the power of reason and faith in progress. He uses the of the end of history to refer to the of completion of history coming to close, on the basis that liberal democracy has been accepted in several countries, Fukuyama keeps up that could be the objective of the ideological development of humankind and the last type of human government. In this sense, he considers that liberal democracy endorses the end of history, which not the end of occurrence of events. He relies in his book, on Hegel and Marx and also on views of thought, emphasizing that both philosophers thought about how possible it is of last from of society which would have satisfied historical evolution.

Fukuyama Focuses on those philosophers in charge of the improvement of modernity, using their ideas as an approach to interpret the contemporary situation. In addition to his vision about the end of history represented by ending of struggle between ideologies, he believes that such an end is positive. His theory can be seen as a contrasting option to postmodernism since it asserts that the enlightenment extend has been finally accomplished and the faith in progress has been rewarded by the creation and resulting univers alization of western liberal democracy.

As indicated by Fukuyama, the end of history must be comprehended in terms of the victory of liberal democracy, where on established request in which citizens may decide their destiny together gently under the liberal law. However, this does not imply that wars and different clashes would instantly stop.

Under the influence of his reading of Hegelian and Marxist thought, Fukuyama still thinks about a single history of mankind, at once universal and multiple. According to him, the values and institutions developed during, the western enlightenment are potentially universal, logical and historical progresses still to be conceived. So it is clearly noticeable

that Fukuyama's theory is influenced by the enlightenment project which is rejected by postmodernism.

Moreover, as a reaction to Fukuyama's confidence and positiveness. Postmodernists argue that it is not true that all people want liberal democratic capitalism to win, and it is very hard to share Fukuyama's outlook on the historical future, because it is easily contestable, by taking into consideration that if the world was actually more rational, wars would have eventually stopped in the new political system brought by reason, however, this is not the case.

Post modernists regard Francis Fukuyama's the end of history and the last man as a celebration of victory of the west. Its message, on the accepted view is that with victory in the cold war and the death of communism, the western way of life has emerged as the peak of humanity's historical evolution. Thus Fukuyama aims to represent a pattern of universal validity. He refers to the end of history with aim of totalizing the models of life. It seems clear that Fukuyama's commitment the belief of the end of history is sufficiently well advertised as to explain and excuse the modernist thinking that implied cultural narrative schema which explains Knowledge and a human experience. As it is extremely noticed in the following passage:

No regime-no " socio-economic system"- is able to satisfy all men in all places. This includes liberal democracy [...] thus those who remain dissatisfied will always have the potential to restart history (1992:334).

In this way Fukuyama claim that history ends in liberal democracy whereas postmodernists typically reject this modernist-Enlightenment conception of history which consider history as progressive concept whereas postmodernists reject Fukuyama's view. For example baudrillard sees that time and history is recycling and repeating itself. For baudrillard (1994) we live in a cyclical history where we cycle through systems of government but rather that ideas and values. In this way he rejects the "total" history, however Fukuyama believes not only that history has come to an end but also that such an end is positive, his thesis can be viewed as an alternative to postmodernism since it affirms that enlightenment project has been, finally accomplished and that the faith in progress has been rewarded by the creation and consequent universalization of western liberal democracy. So according to Fukuyama, the end of history must be understood in terms of the victory of the idea of liberal democracy as it is represented in the following passage:

The state that emerges at the end of history is liberal insofar as recognizes and protects through a system of law man's universal right to freedom, and democratic insofar as it exists only with the consent of the governed.(10)

Thus, it is clearly observed Fukuyama calls for the end of history in an attempt for calling to totalize and unify norms and models in a particular calling for universal truth, knowledge and history. Which is a position that refused by postmodernists thinkers and writers.

### **3. Postmodernists' Views About The End of History**

Postmodernists found a non progressive concept of history, which is explored and discussed in a fiction. They accept that history has no sense, and any philosophy of history which intends to interpret history as progressive one must be rejected. Postmodernists reject the supposition of modernism that good life will be achieved through reason and science, their relativism includes rejecting the primacy of reason or any ideology that claims to be rational.

Moreover, they refuse totalizing models or globalization, no single truth emerges, with the exception of certainty of different truths. As it is explained by the Russian-French philosopher Alexandre Kojève who depend on the interpretation of Hegelian logic through his book *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, lectures on the phenomenology of spirit (1969)*. According to him the rule of history is grounded on the human satisfaction and longing for acknowledgment, human looking for satisfying their goals and desire so they create a universal and homogeneous state which is a domain of flexibility where people's needs are perceived, legitimized and protected. This means that at the end of history man behaves with selfishness, he cares only for his survival and comfort. All these aspects of Kojève's philosophy like, the disillusionment with modernity, the rejection of totalizing principles and rejecting progressive history can be considered as the seed of postmodern thoughts and are reflected in English historiographic metafiction notably Swift's *Waterland*.

In addition, postmodernists, show scepticism about developed recorded story and linear temporality in historical events. They claim that history is a collection of discourses impulse with language which is a convention and that history is construction, but there is no link between them that forms a grand narrative.

Postmodernist redefine history by forsaking any dialectical interpretation based on the standards of causality and need. History has experienced an epistemological change, it takes on a new shape and makes its own particular theory based on the investigation of discontinuity, thus it is not continual movement of humanity along linear time, but in its essence discontinuity, as shown in the coming course:

The only important thing about history, I think, sir, is that it's got the point where it is probably about to end. (Graham Swift, 1893 p12)

The postmodern approach to history is sceptical because postmodernists believe that historical facts are inaccessible, so they leave the historian to his imagination and ideological bent to reconstruct what happened in the past, as Michel Foucault gives great perspective of postmodern history.

I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions I do not mean to say, however, that truth is therefore absent it seems to me that the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth. One fictions history on the basis of a political reality that makes it true, one fictions a politics not yet in existence on the basis of a historical truth. (1980:193)

Nonetheless, most postmodernists uncertainty that an exact recounting the past is conceivable on the grounds that they obscure the contract amongst reality and fiction. Some even claim that every single chronicled record are fiction. All this led to the incredibility of history. Moreover, postmodern scepticism and relativism regard science, knowledge and even history and politics as an illusion concept. Since, the totalizing narratives of modernity which have provided ideologies with legitimating philosophy of history, postmodernists react against this notion and reject to refer to history as grand narrative.

Grand narratives mean an approach in which any theory or intellectual system attempts to provide a comprehensive explanation of human experience. However, political ideologies like Marxism, nationalism and neoliberalism led to the rejection of grand narratives by postmodernists. Grand narratives, ones particularly associated with modernist thinking are composed around the 'Story' of human advance and perfectibility. However postmodernist scholars challenged any way of totalizing history, most prominently Jean-François Lyotard who considers 'totalizing' visions of history is blind faith as well as

referring to singular explanation provided by the grand narratives of modernity has led to an intolerance of diversity, which created the horrors of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Instead, Lyotard argues, we should embrace a multiplicity of theoretical viewpoints in order to appreciate the heterogeneity of human experience, and employ 'little narratives' to enable a better comprehension of local and temporary circumstance. In this way they are even sceptical about liberal democracy as universal governments. we might declare that we live in Free-market society where all can contend on equivalent terms, but actually the market is exploitative system worked for those having the financial power in their hands.

So, postmodernists prefer the local knowledge and reject totalizing theories and look at the world with no objective validity for them truth is invented, not discovered. They claim that there is no truth outside ideology, as well as truth is conventional and relative rather than absolute. It is changeable because it is provisional human fabrication.

The human desire to discover some truth lies in the chance to hold a pluralism of little and local stories delivered in historical and cultural contexts. Thus, scepticism towards grand narratives does not really mean the end of history but rather opens the way to a multiplication of stories as it is addressed in Graham Swift's *Waterland*.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up postmodernists reject the presupposition of modernism, that history can be narrated as grand narratives, as well as they reject the notion of totalizing models and the explanation of Fukuyama's theory that claim the end of history occurred when the conflict between ideologies, has reached an end, so he declares to the universal history and totalizing models. However, postmodernists declare and found a non progressive concept of history which is explored in fiction and historiographic metafiction. As it will be discussed in the second chapter notably Swift's *Waterland*



**Chapter two:**  
**Literary Interpretations of History and its**  
**End**

## Introduction

This chapter covers the definition of the grand narrative which is a term connected with modernist thinking, in that they are organized around the "story" of human progress and perfectibility, and totalizing cultural narrative schema which explains knowledge and experience. On the other hand, it shows the postmodernists' reaction to this concept, adopting Linda Hutcheon's formulation of historiographic metafiction, and analyse how narrative strategy of the novel *Waterland* conveys the historical moments. More importantly, it shows how the novel challenges the received version, "the grand narrative" of history through giving an insight to the stories of Graham Swift's *Waterland*.

### 1. The Grand Narrative and Postmodern Reaction

According to John Stephens (1998), the grand narrative or metanarrative is a global totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience which means a story about a story, enveloping and clarifying other "littell stories" within conceptual models that make the stories into the whole. Moreover, the grand narrative is a term was created by modernists to mean a hypothesis that tries to give a totalizing comprehensive record to different historical events and social, cultural phenomena, calling for universal truth or universal values.

In this context, the narrative is a story that functions to offer power, social traditions and authority. A master narrative or grand narrative is one that claims to explain different events in history and gives significance by associating all these different events and phenomena as a kind of universal knowledge.

However the concept of grand narrative is criticised by postmodernists, in particular. The french philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, through his book: *The Postmodern Condition : A Report on Knowledge*(1984), Criticize the Order theories of Marxism which explains the social order through offering the priority to the materialist instead of a cultural account of cohesion. Marx focuses on disparities in material wealth and political power in capitalist societies.

Many Marxist have progressively grasped cultural accounts of social order, for instance by explaining, working-class incorporation via a dominant ideology, others have cited that

monetary and political coercion has proved a remarkably effective source of stability, particularly where power is legitimated as authority.

Moreover, Lyotard rejected the older theories of metanarratives, and the explanation of social order which can be also connected with the names of Emil Durkheim and Talcott Perrrsons and functionalist school which depends on the role of shared norms and values in maintaining cohesion in society. Thus, Lyotard considers postmodernism as a recurrent historical phase within modernist, not as the beginning of new era . In this book, postmodern condition Lyotard defines postmodern as scepticism towards metanarratives, This incredulity is certainly made from progress in sciences, however according to Barry Peter(2002), postmodernism is term used to embody a huge variety of attitudes, and it is relevant to realms of the humanities, politics, philosophy and sociology.

Postmodernism is a term given to an age in which a sudden influx of technology and constantly expanding social variety must be met with new methods of portroyal. The postmodernist employs it with tone of pleasure and liberation (2002:65).

Lyotard is broadly seen as one of the most influential postmodern scholars. Fundamently, he considers as war against social, cultural and theoretical agreement and ideological unity. As well as he believes knowledge has turned into product and therefore methods for empowerment. He considers knowledge as being communicated via narratives, or distinctive method for translating the world events. However, grand narratives are authoritative, setting up their political or cultural views as absolute truth beyond any approach of complain . They have totalizing effect on the lifestyle, reducing it to universal codes, which desiccate, their local counterparts. In a culture driven by metanarratives, the ideology of prevalent administration basically has monopoly on knowledge, which Lyotard opposes by means of calling for a new global of knowledge primarrily based on mininarratives.

Mininarratives don't contain any global truth however collectively they shape a goup of information more proficient at depicting the contemporary condition than the generalizing ideologies of grand narratives.

For lyotard, the postmodern culture separates itself from the need for the epistimological hiearchy which cultural and political movements that include modernism and Marxism appear to authorize. Lyotard reports that the grand narrative has lost the

credibility in postmodern condition. Lyotard's concept of postmodernity lies in the neglecting of metanarratives. He argues that there can not be a universal body of knowledge. Moreover, the basic supposition of both scientific and cultural narratives is that all societies are uniform and their ethnicity, identity and troubles are the same this presumption of metanarratives is not worthy to Lyotard.

Marxism and Functionalism are examples of metanarratives that postmodernists reject as grand theories, they see that is difficult to identify any Fundamental truth supporting human culture.

Lyotard sees the distinction between scientific knowledge and related to the belief of reason, traditional authority, scepticism of religion. Lyotard claims that these liberator metanarratives (Functionalism and marxism) are in charge of making possibility of war, Totalitarianism and a gap between the rich and the poor . More importantly, Lyotard considers the grand narratives as myths, fables and legends, and he writes about the decline of it- as it is presented through this passage:

In contemporary society and culture, the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what made of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or narrative of emancipation (1984:37)

More importantly, the two most critical functions of postmodernity are their competition to the concept of progress and rejection of metanarratives by opposing the concept of progress they have puzzled the modernist's conviction that reason and science might result in progress, in light of this positive thinking all the supposed modern organisations go for this rational ideal. The idea of universal rationality itself is a metanarrative and modernity has many such metanarratives which deviate distinctive local narratives for instance, with its perception of typical rationality, modernity has its concept of human welfare, which it blindly applies to all feasible situations and all human communities.

In this process it neglects the thoughts of welfare nourished by different societies and communities in relation to their local environment. For this reason , it pretends to ship out a universal message and powerfully suppresses the local narratives.

Moreover, the post-industrial society is distinctively unique in relation to the modern industrialized world, as with its development, knowledge and information have turned out to be vital for financial and social survival. This period has seen a revolt against many existent sorts of authority and it challenged the rationalism and liberal individualism that were the signs of modern societies. As Sim Stuart Wood put it :

One of the best ways of describing postmodernism as a philosophical movement would be as a form of scepticism – scepticism about authority, received wisdom, cultural and political norms, etc- and that puts into a long- running tradition in western thought stretches back to classical greek philosophy ( 2001:30)

As mentioned above, the term postmodernism refers broadly speaking to a variety of responses toward culture, values and life therefore it is simple to conceive it as a response against some assumptions, especially those which have become distinguished with the arrival of modernity. It questions the Enlightenment concept of progress and affirms a disbelief in the purity of knowledge. As Jean-François Lyotard advances, it is a reaction against totalizing theories or grand narratives, and he opposes the concept of universal truth. He defines postmodernism as incredulity toward metanarratives.

## **2. Historiographic Metafiction: Framing History in a Fiction**

Contemporary writers who address the rewriting of history are encouraged by the need to highlight the gap, which is not possible to fill, between the actual past and any portrayal of it. Historiographic metafiction answers the need to think about history and reality as well as shows the ability to represent them. Linda Hutcheon suggests a definition to historiographic metafiction as a following :

By this I mean those well-known popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages . (Hutcheon ,1988:5).

Historiographic metafiction is observed by using history, it is concerned with historical activities, it makes history its subject and displays on historiography. It combines metafictional factors with precise and deep attention to history, including the three genres: literature, history and theory as well . It is precisely the literary, self-conscious

combination of history and fiction. Postmodern hypothesis challenges the separation of literature and history. On the premise that history and fiction and human constructs historiographic metafiction commits itself to rethinking the form and the contents of the post. Thus, it raises the issue of what writing approximately history implicates and questioned the sense of different interpretations of the post. Hutcheon argues that historiographic metafiction is inherently contradictory, it really works within conventions in an effort to subvert them. While asserting reference to the history world stay with the double consciousness of its Fictionality and Foundation in real events.

For Hutcheon, the meeting of metafiction and historiography create an other sort of composing extraordinarily fit for satisfying the poetics of postmodernism. The term historiographic shows the critical thinking to history and in the writing of it. As well as historiographic metafiction uses metaphictional strategies to underscore history is a production or construction, not something regular that counts with the past, but a literary artifact. The attracts a regard for the way that we know the past through different writings, that means all historical sources are intertextual.

Thus intertextuality has a fundamental role in postmodern literature, in addition historiographic metafiction turns to the intertexts of history and literature. Postmodernism affirms that to get reality as it is delivered and maintained by cultural representation of it. According to the view of the historian Dominichs La Capron historiographic metafiction shows that we know the past only through its relics, traces and its textualised remains. As Linda Hutcheon adds in the following passage:

The intertextual parody of historiographic metafiction entails, in a way, the views of certain contemporary historiographers; it offers a sense of the presence of the past, but a past that can be known only from its texts, its traces (...) to parody is not to destroy the past, in fact to parody is both to enshrine the past and to question it. And this, once again, is the postmodern paradox. ( 125- 26)

In addition, historiographic metafiction raises a debate inside fiction on the methods in which history works and is to be understood. Moreover, historiographic metafiction is based on the common reliance of fiction and critical theory. Postmodern authors are worried almost the issue of the construction of a critical history also self-reflexivity is a

major element of all postmodern historical novels as they contemplate on the production and the reception of histories. The metafictional self-reflexivity allows the reader to ponder on his insight of the past and the ways we have accomplished such knowledge. As Lida Huchon explains in this passage:

The reader is forced to acknowledge not only the inevitable textuality of our knowledge of the past, but also both the value and the limitation of that inescapably discursive form of knowledge (127)

According to Steven Connor (1996), postmodern historical novels generally consider historical narrative, observing how the circumstances in which we live shape the way we comprehend the past, they reconnect the past to the present, as he argues in the following passage:

Historical narrative such as it is evidenced in the novel of history in the postwar period is not a matter of representing the truth of history but of constructing the terms of a conversation or structure of address between the past and the present (1996:164)

Historical novels return to history critically. Their concern for what has been before does not just count with a nostalgic return, as well as contemporary is pervaded by the past, along these lines, the novels focus on both the movement of history and the rhythms of conventional life. Moreover, in the historical novels, historical events are turned out to be profoundly influential on the way in which characters develop their comprehension of their own vision and national pasts, as it will be noticed in the grand narrative Tom Cricks in Swift's *Waterland*.

### **3. Stories and History in Graham Swift's *Waterland***

Graham Swift's *Waterland* is a collection of Fifty-two stories narrated by the grand narrative Tom Cricks, who is a history teacher threatened by the rejection of history from the school curriculum, also threatened to lose his job as history teacher and forced to be retired. Most stories are addressed to his students at school trying to characterize the ideas of history, reality, revolution, the past and the present.

His history classes turn into tales and stories which are told in portions, moving from the past to the present as he admits that he combines facts and fiction, history and fairy-tale which are displayed gradually as fragments of lessons to be joined and comprehended by

educated readers and students. In this way , he shows the postmodernist idea that the grand narrative is an illusion by affirming that the different instances of historical truth presented in stories and the diverse interpretations of historical events need to be gathered in order to understand the present which is no more than another image of the past .

In addition ,Tom Cricks refers to the process of siltation that causes ' land reclamation' for living and working which means the same as silt develops land and recreate a new world, so that stories can be associated with silt as they recreate the past, the same as silt rebuild a new world which means we became aware through the previous experience. As was seen in the novel through the following passage:

Silt: which shapes and undermines continents, which demolishes as it builds, which is simultaneous accretion and erosion, neither progress nor decay (....) what silt began, man continued. Land reclamation (...) so forget, indeed your revolution, your turning-points, your grand metamorphoses of history. consider, instead, the show and arduous process, the interminable and ambiguous process- the process of human siltation- of land reclamation ( *Waterland*, 13-14)

On the other hand , Tom cricks shows the idea of constructing identity and past within stories. The identity of Tom Cricks is revealed through the stories he tells. The same as when his ancestors succeed to survive in the fenland in hard condition like rising waters and flood and they challenged all these harsh times through determination, creativity and patience. Similarly, Tom Criks overcomes his career difficulties by his determination to have personal story, understood by his pupils. Although Tom Cricks is warned by his headmaster Lewis that he will no longer to be able to teach history, and that he will be excluded from the educational programs. He is also warned by his students price, who interrupts his lesson about the French revolution and declares, he carries on his experience that ' history is coming to an end ' ( *Waterland* ,P86).

But Tom Cricks asks the headmaster not to prevent his own story or history by saying that ' don't banish my history...' (21), so he strongly defended the idea of recurrent Times, believing in the idea of circle historical events.

Moreover, he has acquired the gift of telling stories from his parents thus he does his best to rewrite history in his own stories, to clarify the past events in a debate with his students. As it is seen in the following passage:



How did the Cricks outwit reality? by telling stories. Down to the last generation, they were not only phlegmatic but superstitious and credulous creatures. Suchsers for stories. while the Athinsons made history, the cricks spum yarns. (18)

In this way, Tom Cricks's identity is constructed by his story and history, his ideas and words define his identity, in the way what when someone narrates on own story, he refers to the key events that characterize him. Tom Cricks refers to the historical truth as a tales . He asks his pupils to thinks about his stories and hypotheses, to interpret them in order to understand them. According to him, our knowledge and comprehension of history in realize through our nostalgia for the origins, for his vision of history combines through historian's creation in his own story. That is based on his cultural experience. As it is motioned in the following passage:

And because history accumulates, because it gets always heavier and the frustration greater, so the attempts to throw it off ( in order to go- which way was it?) become more violent and drastic. ( 94)

History can be reconstructed and given an identity according to the human interpretation. This shows the postmodern idea about the recreation of history, as well as when Tom Cricks affirms that history is a creation of human imagination moving in a circle which we cannot escape from, which reflected in the coming passage:

How it repeats itself, how it goes back on itself, no matter how we try to straighten it out. How it twists and turns. How it goes in circles and brings us back to the same place. ( 97)

The stories of Tom Crick promote the concept of cyclical history which means that everything returns to its initial origins. As it is shown in the fifteenth story ' about the ouse' by depicting that the river flows just to return to it self. This was illustrated in the following passage:

So that while the ouse folows to the sea, it flows, in reality, like all rivers, only backs to itself, to its own source, and that impression that a river moves only one way in an illusion (...) because we are always stepping into the same river. (100)

Additionally, Tom Cricks reflects to the idea of postmodern skepticism about the incredibility of history. Through narrating personal stories to intends to teaching his students about the French revolution, which means history is subjective and historian is narrating his own stories in which he depends to write history, which is expressed in this illustration in the novel:

What is a history teacher? he's someone who teaches mistakes. while others say, here's how to do it, he says, and here's what goes wrong.  
(159)

Moreover, in Tom Cricks promotes the belief that the past returns by the use of the word 'gone' as more appropriate than the use of ' dead', which means things are 'gone' they are supposed to come back. Particularly when he speaks about the death of his mother, in the 38<sup>th</sup> story' about the East wind 'As it is illustrated in the following passage:

For ' Gone', in such circumstances, is a far more elusive word. To little Tom, whose whole life might have been different if his father had told him what his infant heart was already braced to accept -that his own mum was dead no more, finished extinct-this word ' gone' carried the suggestion of some conscious, if perverse decision on his mother's part, as if she had not ceased absolutely to exist but was somewhere very far away, inaccessible, invisible, yet still there. (191)

## **conclusion**

To sum up the postmodern answer to the end of history is discussed in historical novels and historiographic metafiction. Moreover, postmodernist reacted against the notion of the grand narrative which entailed modernist thinking that implied totalizing cultural narrative schema which explain knowledge and human experience. Postmodernists found a non progressive concept of history and they have open the way to multiplication of stories as it is noticed in Swift's *Waterland* through the character of Tom Cricks, suggesting that history is reconstructed by both the past and personal stories as it will be examined in the third chapter.

**Chapter three:**  
**The Reconstruction of History**

## Introduction

This chapter introduces the illustrations about the end of history as historiographic metafiction, precisely in Graham Swift's *Waterland*. It is vital to show the representation of Tom Cricks as Grand Narrative to the concept of the End of history. It tackles the issue that history is a narration converted into stories, Fairy tales and histories. Moreover, dealing with the idea of history as cyclical that is represented in Swift's *Waterland*. Therefore a set of passages are to be represented in order to get a solid ground of how the end of history concept is implied in the novel.

### 1. Tom Cricks as Grand Narrative

Tom Crick as grand narrative character is in a charge of defining his self, by narrating his own stories and his own values, in his own ways, in order to show his identity, thus in this way he is disturbing and disputing the belief in the grand narrative as reliable method for narrating history. One of the central concerns in *Waterland* novel is history, which is usually presented as personal history or story, and it is linked with national and international contexts.

In *Waterland* Price who is a student in Tom Crick's history class, interrupts the class and questions the legitimacy of history. as it was seen in the novel through the following passage:

what matters, he went on, not knowing what sort of Fairy-Tale was about to envelop both his history teacher and his history teacher's wife" is the here and now" not the past.(...) the only important thing about history, I think, sir, is that it's got to the point where it's probably about to end.

(12)

This view underlines the thoughts of some recent philosophers who don't consider history as a reliable source for "truth". For example Fukuyama suggests that we are living at the end of history. In *The End of History and The Last Man* 1992, he introduces history

as human struggle to find the least harmful, political system. after the collapse of the soviet union, he believes that capitalist liberal democracy, which has always been the best system, won the fight and history is over. he argues that the only thing that stands before us is a continuous present, as it is reflected in price's words in *Waterland*, the " here and now". Fukuyama allowed himself to call for the end history with the aim of calling for totalizing and universalistic truth which means supporting the idea of the Grand Narrative.

In contrast, the notion of the end of history in *Waterland* may appear as reaction against the Grand Narrative. Graham Swift tries to point out the importance of the history to the understanding of contemporary life, in his novel Swift refutes the notion that history is about to end and uses it in creative way through reconstructing it by the narration of his own stories that reconstruct one story as history.

Tom Cricks the Grand Narrative in *Waterland* is history teacher in the middle school who lives in London. He is about to lose his Job for two reasons; the first one is the school at which he works rejected history from the school curriculum, and the second reason is his childless wife, Mary, has been convicted of stealing a baby from a local supermarket. On his last day, instead of teaching his students about the French Revolution, Tom Cricks narrated a personal stories that happened to him in country of English Fens in which the title of of the novel *Waterland* refers, and from which the two families, Tom and Mary are descended. Moreover, it is clear that Tom's life is in crisis and his story telling is an attempt to calm his "here and now" fears, to understand the meaning of his life, he recovers his past which is the key to his present.

In *Waterland*, Tom ignores to explain major events of traditional history, instead, he embraces his own history, thus he addressed the idea that history is subjective and human reconstruction. in this way history is the creation of his own words that is usually can not reflect reality. In Tom's class, the purpose of history seems to offer a reflection of reality, but the ability to explain things is limited, especially when the tool is language as it is mentioned in the following passage:

History is that impossible thing, the attempt to give an account with incomplete knowledge, of actions themselves undertaken with incomplete knowledge of actions themselves undertaken with

incomplete knowledge. So that it teaches us no shortcuts to salvation, no recipe for new world, only the dogged and patient art of making do (75)

We can explain the expression of ( art making do) as the art of reconstructing history. Moreover, Tom reconstruct his present and future through his past, which is already mentioned in the first chapter that the past gets fragmented into a series of unending presents.

The postmodern scepticism toward the Grand Narrative and history is clearly articulated in tom's stories or the way he uses the past to benefit of the " here and now" Tom tells his students what he wanted from history as it is reflected in the coming passage:

So I began to demand of history an explanation. Only to uncover in this dedicated search more mysteries, more fantasticalities, more wonders and grounds for astonishment than I started with only to conclude forty years later -notwithstanding a devotion to the usefulness, to the educative power of my chosen discipline- that history is a yarn 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 of the dark?(47)

More importantly *Waterland* reflects the postmodernist attitude which is against regarding history as progressive concept. it is clearly remarked that in *Waterland*, history and progress are the same notion, however they don't develop forward as Tom says in the following passage:

There is this thing called progress. But it doesn't progress it go Anywhere because as progress progresses the world can slipping away it's progress if you can stop the world slipping away. may humble model for progress is the reclamation of land. ( 229)

In this way history and progress portrayed as non progressive concept .As Tom believes in a never- ending need to revise progress which is extremely expressed in this passage:

My humble model for progress is the reclamation of land which is Repeatedly, never -endingly retrieving what is lost. A dogged, Vigilant business . A dull yet valuable business .But you shouldn't go mistaking the reclamation of land for the building of empires. (Ibid)

In this passage Swift opposes the western ideas of progress specially Fukuyama attitude who believes in the power of reason and faith in progress .The passage represents Swift's concern that since we produce technology, therefore it is our responsibility to direct it in a way that it serves our nature. this means Tom Crick refers the elements of modern rationalism through his stories, creativity and imagination.

For Swift historical investigation is a personal rather than a factual reality, a fact reflected in his protagonist narration in what is almost a stream of memories recollecting the past.

## **2.Fairy-Tales**

Waterland opens with . Fairy - Tales" about the stars and the sluices in which Tom's father advices his son to learn about stars, hearts...ect, Tom's father had " a knacks for telling stories" says to his son:

And don't forget my Father would say (...) what ever you learn about people, however bad they turn out, each one of them has a heart, and each one of them was one a tiny baby sucking his mother' milks(...) Fairy tales words, Fairy tales advice. But we lived in a Fairy tales place.(8)

Then the novel goes on to portray the flat and monotonous landscape of the fenland. Tom Cricks through this Fairy tales attempts to depict the horror that he lived in the past and how these hard moments still influence his " here and now". Tom tagged som events with a specific date, like July of 1943, when the body of Tom's Friend Parr floating down the leem .As it is illustrated in the following passage:

And thus it was, one night in midsummer, when god's withheld benediction were shining in the sky, through this was several years after dad told us about the starts, but only two or three since he bedan to speak of hearts and mother's milk, and the tump-tump of the pumps was drowned now, in the evening , by the roar of axending bombers-it was ,

to be precise, July, 1943-that something floated down the leem. struck the iron work of the sluice and tugged by the eddies, continued to knock and scrape against it till morning. something extraordinary and unprecedented, and not to be disposed of like a branch or potato such or even a dead sheep- For this something was a body. and the body belonged to Freddie Parr, who lived less than a mile away and was my age, give or take a month(10)

This passage shows how the present moments can be disturbed by something that is situated in history the same as when Tom Crick's challenged had times in the Fenland, similarly he is facing some crisis in his immediate life, Tom is shaped by the "here and now" to see that he is a historical narrator and a participant in the events being told. As it is explained as following:

History was no invention but indeed existed- and I had become part of it.(47)

Constructing history as "his" story, through Fairy tales and personal stories that happened in the Fenland led to the entire of subjectivity which is inscribed into history.

This subjectivity is reflected from the first time in the second chapter, when he identifies both himself and his pupils, urging them to attend his story as it is illustrated in the following passage:

Children. Children, who will inherit the world. children (for always, even though you were fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, candidates for that appealing term" young adults", I addressed you, silently, as "children"- children, before whom I have stood for thirty - two years in order to unravel the mysteries of the past, but before whom I am to stand no longer, listen, one last time, to your history teacher. (11)

In many passages Tom Crick sees narration as a powerful tool to reconstruct history. Thus, he offers the possibility that history is a Fairy- Tale, these Fairy- Tales as he saw not necessary for providing comfort for only children who are soothed by listening to tales, but telling stories, he considers stories and Fairy- Tales.

As a fundamental component for reconstructing history as it is clearly remarkable in the following passage:



children, who will inherit the world. children to whom, throughout history, stories have been told, chiefly but not always at bedtime, in order to quell restless thoughts, whose need of stories is matched only by the need adults have of children to tell stories to, of receptacles for their stocks of Fairy- Tales, of listening ears on which to unload those most unbelievable yet haunting of Fairy- Tales, their own lives. (12)

History is a production of Fairy- Tales and personal stories which usually reflect the subjectivity of historian.

### **3. History as Cyclical Concept**

Tom opposes to the “Idea of progress” in many times and many passages , he considers history as human reconstruction and as cyclical it is illustrated in the chapter chapter “ De la Révolution” in the following passage :

[history] it goes in two direction at once .It goes backwoods 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 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 –[...] there are no compasses for journeying in time .As far as our sense of direction in this unchortable dimension is concerned , we are like lost Travellers in a desert , 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 great circle ?(93)

The idea that history repeats itself is emphasized by the use of deviations in sequential ordering , which suggests that time is cyclical .Tom ‘s view that children will grow up to make the same mistake as their parents that the same old things will repeat themselves . as he advices his students in the fallowing passage :

Less and less the image of the future , more and more that of something he is trying to retrieve, something he has lost [...] that he looked back in order to look forward (87).

## **Conclusion**

To sum up the concept of the End of history is represented in the novel through the Grand narrative Tom Crick in many passages, that show history as cyclical and reconstruction concept .Moreover ,Tom Crick as a Grand narrative refers to history as a reconstruction of Fairy –Tales and personal stories that reflect the postmodern skepticism toward history and the incredibility of metanarratives or grand narrative.

## General Conclusion

This thesis confirms that the most characterizing feature of the postmodern conditions is scepticism towards history. Postmodernists attack any claim of universal truth and attack the interpretation of the American philosopher Fukuyama to the end of history, who considers the end of history occurred when the struggle between the ideologies reached to an end, in this way he declares to the universal history and totalizing models through the calling for the faith in progress and he refers to history as progressive concept. However, the post modernists declare and found a non progressive concept of history they rejected the notion of history can be narrated as grand narrative, which means refusing any attempt to totalize models. They declare that we cannot count on undisputed nations of truth, objectivity and universal knowledge any longer.

Through this thesis the notion of the end of history is highlighted in Swift's *Waterland* as historiographic metafiction in which postmodernists react to the notion of the grand narrative. Tom Crick as grand narrative refers to history as human reconstruction not as progressive concept. This notion is explored in the third chapter in which we can see the multiplication of stories by Tom Crick, suggesting that history is reconstructed by the past and personal stories, which reflects the postmodern philosophy in that history is human reconstruction and it is subjective.

Finally the research paper shows the end of history concept as a reaction against metanarratives that refers to history as progressive and universal concept. Moreover, Tom Crick refers to history both as a cyclical concept and a reconstruction of Fairy-Tales and personal stories that reflect the postmodern scepticism towards the incredibility of history.

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