Revue de Traduction et Langues Volume 18 Numéro 02/2019, pp. 106-113
Journal of Translation and Languages **مجلة الترجمة واللغات**
ISSN (Print): 1112-3974 **EISSN (Online): 2600-6235**

Authorizing the Other Version of Writing Back in the Arena of Modern Times: The Postmodernization of Postcolonial (Hi-) Story

Chaami Amine
University of Djilali Liabès Sidi-Bel-Abbès-Algeria
amine.chaami@univ-sba.dz
0000-0002-0837-4854
Dr. Grazib Mohamed
University of Moulay Tahar of Saida- Algeria
mfgrazib@hotmail.com
0000-0002-9459-5599

To cite this paper:
Chaami, A. & Dr. Grazib, M. (2019) Authorizing the Other Version of Writing Back in the Arena of Modern Times: The Postmodernization of Postcolonial (Hi-) Story. *Revue Traduction et Langues 18(2),* 106-113.

Received: 08/ 03/2019; **Accepted**: 29/12/2019, **Published:** 31/12/2019

Abstract: *The present research paper is an attempt to embark on a postmodern narrative mode of identifying, comprehending, elucidating and restructuring what was written in the past. It is for reshaping and redefining the constructed image of other by distorting the stereotypical images of Other. Thus, the research paper presents a lift of narratives to another level by giving voice to the other and by presenting their own accounts. This research paper underlines the guidelines for postmodern authors to defend against and correct the existing distortion of postcolonial subjectivities and positions in postmodern times.*
Keywords: *The Other- Writing Back- Modern Times- Postmodernism- Postcolonial- (hi)story.*

الملخص: هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لوضع اطر نظرية سردية لإعادة ما كتب عن الأمم المستضعفة والتي كانت غالبيتها مستعمرة فيما مضى في الوقت الحاضر وذلك عن طريق تحليل وشرح وإعادة كتابة ما كتب في الماضي من تاريخ محرف وقصص مشوهة. ويتم ذلك بإعادة تشكيل وتوضيح الصورة التي تم إنشاؤها من قبل الآخرين عن طريق تشويه الصور النمطية للآخر. وبالتالي، إعطاء صوت للآخر لكتابة تاريخيه وقصته من وجهة نظره التي تم إغفالها وغض الطرف عنها فيما مضى. وتقدم هذه الورقة البحثية مبادئ توجيهية وأسس منهجية للمؤلفين الذين يكتبون تحت مظلة ما بعد الحداثة للدفاع عن تاريخهم الذي كتب نيابة عنهم محرفا ومشوها وتصحيح الأكاذيب التي نسبت إليهم.
الكلمات المفتاحية: الأخر، الكتابة المضادة، العصر الحديث، ما بعد الحداثة، ما بعد الكولونيالية.

Corresponding author : Chaami Amine

1. Introduction

In the Postmodern times, a quest is undertaken for rendering problematic concepts, domains, and institutions that have conventionally served as the pillars for our perceptions of who we are and what construct the universe by which we are surrounded. History, with the intention of recapturing and explaining the past, has traditionally been considered veracious. However, within the last thirty years, (hi-)story is subject for a postmodern examination. In the context of postmodernism, the drafting of history is considered an enormously problematic task and it is exactly this crisis of representation that the present research paper presents and investigates. The present research paper dissects the topic in five sections for the sake of analyzing it; starting by simple sections for simplifying the topic, and ending by complex sections for lifting out the complication and the convolution of the research paper.

2. The Dichotomy of History and Literature in the Crucible of Modern Times

An understanding of history over the wave of poststructuralist thoughts constructs the theoretical background for the analysis of historical novels which are written in the postmodern era. Gertrude Himmelfarb states in her article which is entitled *Postmodernist History (1999)* that history writing follows in the postmodern age. Himmelfarb scrutinizes that postmodernism has become influential in many disciplines, including history. When applied to the history, postmodernism, which refutes both the constancy of language and passage and the assumed connection of language with reality, twists in "a denial of the fixity of the past, of the reality of the past apart from what the historian chooses to make of it, and thus of any objective truth about the past" (Himmelfarb, 1999: 72). It refuses and refutes the conviction of representing historical events truthfully.

In the nineteenth century, the lettering of history was fundamentally the lettering of reality as it happened. By definition, history was "as an empirical search for external truths corresponding to what was considered to be absolute reality of the past events" (Onega, 1995:12). Therefore, it stands a scientific search for historical knowledge. However, the vision of seeking not haphazardly the historical knowledge is confronted by later historians namely by Hayden White. The historical facts cannot be represented objectively because they are not independently and separately. Historical events are merely reached through documents and other texts, and historiography turns historical events into historical facts. Such an argument stresses the task of the historian as a determining factor in giving significance to certain historical events in the historical accounts while ignoring others.

The postmodern thought of history bases its arguments on poststructuralist theories which assert the textuality of reality. Therefore, the past is not at all within the reach in an unpolluted form as historical events. It can only be reached through chronicles and archival documents. The weight of poststructuralist overlays for a historicist study of literary texts, analyzing literature in the socio-cultural circumstances of history, and regarding literary history as an ingredient of an improved cultural history.

3. A Text beyond Re-construction and De-construction

The abortion of concocting (hi)story as plainly a reflection of events which were from the ancient times, even though it may seem to represent an outdoor reality, (hi)story as a text is a construction. For that reason, it is claimed that "the cultural and ideological representations in texts serve mainly to reproduce, confirm, and propagate the power-structures of domination and subordination which characterize a given society" (Abrams, 1999:184). As a consequence, (hi)story is the outcome of language and a discourse of power. The postmodernist examination of (hi)story throws out the schemata of (hi)story as a straightforwardly open and single, and substitutes for it the outset of histories an enduring series of human deconstructing and re-constructing. Hayden White states that a new concept, mainly in his *Metahistory*. He states that the venture of metahistory is the probing and prying of responses to inquiries pertaining to the epistemological standing of historical elucidation and the probable forms of historical representation. It is approached by reading, recapitulating, and retorting. (Boughouas, 2019) For White, the narrative form is the only possible form of representation in the writing of (hi)story. He proposes in *Metahistory* a premise of narrative that draws parallelisms amid history and literature. It is stated that traditional historiography uses the narrative form by which historians convey historical data and he analyzes the "deep structure of the historical imagination" (White, 1973: 9). It contains a deep verbal structure and that a formal theory analyzes the deep structure. White highlights the schemata that (hi)story writing consists of the progression of emplotment. It is a necessary operation since "histories gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of mere chronicles" (White, 1973:223). It is the transformation of history into a story; it is the turn of archives into accounts.

4. (Hi)story: Interpretations and Limitations

It is generally believed that historical reality makes no sense at all when they stand alone, the historical record is constantly "fragmentary and always incomplete" (White, 1973: 223); that is why the historian is obliged to make a plausible story out of facts through "the encodation of facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures" (ibid). It is the compulsion to make "stories out of chronicles" which is the rationale for the presence of some story elements in history writing. White explains how these elements bring history writing to the level of literary composition by indicating the incidents which are set by a story by the repression or subsidiarity of certain of them and the stressing of others, by categorization, replication, variation of tone and standpoint, optional evocative strategies, and the like. In nutshell, all of the techniques, we would generally anticipate to discover in the emplotment of a novel or a play.

The concept of emplotment entails the abovementioned task of the historian in shaping the stories made out of chronicles in accordance to his predilection of the primarily appropriate structure for ordering proceedings in a meaningful and complete story. The historical fact is emplotted in a numeral of dissimilar ways, so as to offer different interpretations of these events and to award them with different meanings. Thus, it provides the sustainment for an intentional way of writing (hi)story. It is through a dive into memories and history. (Grine, 2014). White also calls attention to the reality that the historian traces the past events in historicized records, documents or archives, but he does

not reach the contexts of past events accurately. The historian, therefore, has to invent contexts for formulating past events noteworthy and evocative. He indicates that the milieu in which those documents are written is not accessible, hence not given but invented.

The narration of past is briefly described with the practice of transforming past events into historical facts. E.H. Carr describes briefly the way by which the transformation past events into historical facts is essentially the interpretation of the historian himself. He contends that: "It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context" (2008:11-12). Although Hayden White draws attention to the general reluctance to consider historical representations as verbal artifacts, the above arguments of both White's own and E. H. Carr viaduct the fracture amid history and literature, but the gap was widened by the attempts of those historians who tried to equate historical accounts with sciences. A new kind of "fictional" history emerges when the discrepancy amid history and literature gets indistinguishable. It is safe to say that history is rather "metafictional" than fictional only for the goal of postmodernist history is to lay bare the devices whereby pastreality is constructed through the lettering of (hi)story. It is the approach of approaching and fully understanding the (hi)story of the ancient times.

However, the traditional way of writing history in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is an attempt to reflect historical events in an objective way. The scientific objectivity of traditional history in the nineteenth and early twentieth century's is realized by accurate quotations, citations, documentation in footnotes and bibliography. Furthermore, postmodernist history draws attention to these attempts of conventional history to "conceal its ideological structure behind a scholarly façade of footnotes and facts" (Himmelfarb, 1999:75). The methods and devices that are exploited to make history seem objective should also be questioned and challenged.

5. (Hi)story between the Grand Narratives and the Small Narratives

The skeptic stance of postmodernism is submitted by the French theoretician Jean François Lyotard. In The *Postmodern Condition* (1979), Lyotard points out the status of knowledge in the contemporary times. Therefore, he embarks upon the subject of meta-narrative. Lyotard explains how those modern societies seek through meta-narrative stability which is the result of order, then, he associates solidity with totality. Stability, order and totality are established in contemporary societies by "grand narratives". Grand narratives attempt to masquerade the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social organization or practice. He is a proponent of postmodernism because it rejects those totalizing grand narratives. Hence, postmodernism is a splinter with held beliefs and calls for "mini narratives" or "little narratives" which are for perpetuity conditional, reliant and provisional for the sake of writing history.

Postmodernism is typified by uncertainty, chaos, and variety to give the opportunity to new voices to be heard. Lyotard refuses to consider the history of grand narratives as the official edition of history. The postmodernist writers have experimented the writing process of the small narratives by which they have defied traditional version of the grand narratives. The meta-fictional technique of the small narratives is used to re-

place the meta-fictional solitary of the grand narratives. In other words, Lyotard investigates the condition of "grand narratives" by which history is officially written. He defines postmodernism by its "incredulity towards metanarrative" (1979: xxiv-xxv). Lyotard states that postmodern artistic creations emphasize peripheral voices, a different view of reality and the implausibility of the authorized edition of history. It presents a crack in the prevailing dominant aesthetic way of the grand narratives.

The grand narratives are neither satisfactory nor sufficient to define the contradictions accumulated within historical knowledge. The writer thus searches for a virtual and broken story for challenging and eliminating any rhetoric of truth. The small narratives are related to the narratives of the powerless. According to Loytard, postmodernism as a textual strategy is marked by transgression and resistance to the modernist way of writing history.

Postmodernism is all the time referred to the forms of representation and the ways by which we depict reality. J.F. Lyotard states that all ways of writing depend upon narrative in order to corroborate themselves, and it could be said that all knowledge is principally narrative as, no matter of their intermediate, all the ways of writing necessitate the meta-narrative technique to clarify, authenticate or rationalize them (1984: 7). In the postmodern condition, "the grand narrative has lost its credibility" (Lyotard, 1984: 37). The grand narratives are substituted with the propagation of small narratives that are utilized to construct interim judgments about limited, specific situations, and cannot be globalized in an amalgamated format. The doubt for the legitimacy of these metanarratives leads to argue that postmodern knowledge is mainly produced by running counter discourse to the preconceived and already accepted historical reality.

6. Postcolonial theory in the Shoes of Postmodernism; An Extraordinary Way of Telling (Hi)story

The conventional version of (hi)story is impossible, and multiple histories are possible. The inclusion of historical characters or events into the fictionality of texts differs in postmodernist novels from classical historical novels of the nineteenth century. The traditional historical novel can only be introduced on condition that the historical reality which is the background of the novel is not in contradiction to the official historical record. Consequently, it is not possible to know the dark events of the history of humanity, there are surely blank pages in the official records of history.

The discrepancy between classical historical fiction and postmodern fiction is that the former avoids anachronism and the contradiction of official history through producing fictional only in accordance with the official version of history whereas "postmodern fiction, by contrast, seeks to foreground this seam […] by visibly contradicting the public record of 'official' history; by flaunting anachronism; and by integrating history and the fantastic" (McHale, 1994: 90). McHale's naming for historical novels written in the postmodern era is "the postmodernist revisionist historical novel". It amends the constituent of the historical documentation, and debunks the conventional version of past.

In her *Poetics of Postmodernism* (1989), Linda Hutcheon names postmodern historical novels as "historiographic metafictions" as she schematizes the theory of contemporary historiography and problematizes the peculiarity amid history and

literature. She explains her cause for asserting that "historiographic metafiction puts into question, at the same time as it exploits the grounding of historical knowledge in the past. This is why I have been calling this historiographic metafiction" (1989:192). Linda Hutcheon's definition puts a constant worry especially on postmodernist historical novels, "an intense self-consciousness about the way in which all this is done" (1989:113). Her definition is governed by the paradox created by the intermingling of metafictional self-reflexivity and historical reality in novels. The postmodernist theory of history exposes the scheme for inventing stories about past events, and foregrounds certain events while suppressing some others for ideological reasons.

The analysis of postmodern historical novels, the meta-fictive elements, intertextuality, self-reflexivity, non-linear narrative and parodic intention foreground this process of enlightening. Historiographic metafiction attempts to use historical material within the parodic self-reflexivity of metafiction which aims at undermining realism. Historiographic metafiction is not merely startled with the inquiry of the truth-value of objective historical representation but with the issue of who reins the progression of writing history. Thus, in historiographic metafictions, the proposal of historical fact is emphasized for grounding the progression of writing historical knowledge. Hutcheon states that: "All past events are potential historical 'facts', but the ones that become facts are those that are chosen to be narrated. […] This distinction between brute event and meaning-granted fact is one with which postmodern fiction seems obsessed" (1989:75). Therefore, the focal point of historiographic metafiction is set on what went before and historical characterization that history opts to eliminate. The expelled events are stranded, and their stories are re-narrated. As a result, a multiplicity of histories is achieved since historiographic metafiction writes alternative version which are different from the previously accepted one. Historical novels in the postmodern age present the prospective of presenting manifold historical possibilities in opposition to a single possibility sustained by suppressing alternatives and silencing the other version of (hi)story.

The official history is existed with a discourse of power and aims at representing the viewpoints of the prevailing ideology. Historiography, while turning real past events into facts, signals certain real events and omits some others. To Hayden White, historical writing consists of "the arrangement of selected events […] into a story" (1973:7). Such an arrangement is conceded according to the dominant discourse since historical knowledge has come to be seen as an ideological construction for sustaining hegemony.

Nevertheless, postmodern historical novel rewrites history from the perspectives of groups of people that have been expelled and disqualified from the documenting and drafting of history. It is not only for inculcating people on the subject of the stillness of official historiography, but it gives them more power than they truly possess. It gives them the power and acknowledges for them the right of writing history. The postmodern historical novel is for inscribing the suppressed in history. It sets for empowering the position of suppressed groups in the present. It is the diagram by which all voices are voiced. (Chaouib,2012). Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction, also, voices the silenced histories of marginalized people by subverting the previously accepted historical version for re-posing it out of the center and to reveal the decentralized histories of the ex-centric colonizers.

7. Conclusion

In the attempt of the demystification of historical knowledge, postmodernism has to expose not solitary the validity of historical knowledge, the hegemonic, privileged, patriarchal interests served by history; but also, its methodology, the scholarly apparatus that gives it a specious trustworthiness.

The postmodern theory of history stresses the role of the historian in interpreting past events entails the verity that historical events are described by subjectivity in view of the fact that the elucidation of history is from the perspectives of historians.

A historical piece of information is not innocent and above suspicion, because "historical narratives do not reveal meanings that are always there, rather they construct meaning much as fictional narratives do" (Baş, 1999:16).

The authorized edition of history is the dominant one. It suppresses the accounts of minority; and that is why, it is only a mirror for the ones of majority (Driss, 2016). Moreover, Elisabeth Weaseling argues that: "the absence of ethnic minorities from […] history does not result from some sort of natural, automatic process, but from deliberate exclusion" (Weaseling,1991:166). That is why, the postmodern historical literature attempts to voice up the voiceless portions in the (hi)story of humanity.

Therefore, postmodernism liberates history from the hegemony of dominant ideologies and powers. It celebrates a multiplicity of (hi)story. The postmodern (hi)story neither ignores the suppressed parts in (hi)story, nor accepts fully the available parts of (hi)story. Hence, the attention of postmodernist (hi)story is for the marginalized, disempowered, and victimized people in history.

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