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# **Historiographic Metafiction in Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012)**

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## **Dedication**

I am extremely grateful to my parents for their love, prayers and sacrifices they have made to see me happy and to accomplish my studies. I also express my deepest thanks to my lovely sisters, Tinhinane and Lamia for their encouragement and valuable prayers in order to complete this dissertation successfully.

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## Abstract

The historical novel has developed over the twentieth century and most of postmodern authors have embraced historiographic metafiction in their literary historical works which have combined both elements of history and elements of fiction. The readers' inability to believe in historical novelists and how they extract truth from those postmodern historical novels remains a prominent issue of postmodern novels. The aim of this dissertation, then, was to portray how Hilary Mantel (1952) used historiographic metafiction in her sequel novel *Bring up the Bodies* (2012), to question the truth of historical inquiries that were mixed with imaginative details in the novel and to highlight the importance of the multiplicity of interpretations of the author/reader to form a new distinct meaning, as it aimed to demonstrate Mantel as a reliable and a faithful author. To achieve this aim, the historical, analytical and explanatory approaches were adopted. The research was structured in three chapters, in which it analysed the accordance of both the philosophy of postmodernism and the philosophy of history in relation to the postmodern historical fictional novel, and explained how historiographic metafiction presented accounts of the past. It, further, explored whether a historical novelist was a reliable author. It was argued, in this study, that the historical novelist presented truth according to different understandings and interpretations of the past records. As a result, Hilary Mantel's contribution to historiographic metafiction demonstrated her reliability and credibility as historical fictional author. From this point, historiographic metafiction plays a significant role in representing the past while stressing the significance of different understandings and interpretations of both the author and the reader.

## Résumé

Le roman historique s'est développé au cours du XXe siècle et la plupart des auteurs postmodernes ont adopté la métafiction historiographique dans leurs œuvres historiques littéraires qui combinent à la fois des éléments d'histoire et des éléments de fiction. L'incapacité des lecteurs à croire aux romanciers historiques et à la manière dont ils extraient la vérité de ces romans historiques postmodernes reste un problème prédominant des romans postmodernes. Le but de cette étude était de décrire comment Hilary Mantel (1952) a utilisé la métafiction historiographique dans son roman *Bring up the Bodies* (2012), de remettre en question la vérité des enquêtes historiques qui ont été mélangées à des détails imaginatifs dans le roman et de souligner l'importance de la multiplicité des interprétations de l'auteur et le lecteur pour former un nouveau sens particulier, et démontrer que Mantel est un auteur fiable. Pour atteindre cet objectif, les approches historiques, analytiques et explicatives ont été adoptées. La recherche a été structurée en trois chapitres, où la chercheuse a mis l'accent sur la conformité de la philosophie du postmodernisme et de la philosophie de l'histoire par rapport au roman de fiction historique postmoderne, et expliquer comment la métafiction historiographique présentait les comptes rendus du passé, et également chercher à savoir si un romancier historique était un auteur fiable. Dans cette étude, il a été soutenu que le romancier historique présentait la vérité selon différentes compréhensions et interprétations des comptes rendus du passé. En conséquence, la contribution d'Hilary Mantel à métafiction historiographique a démontré sa fiabilité et sa crédibilité en tant qu'auteur de fiction historique. De ce point de vue, la métafiction historiographique joue un rôle important dans la représentation du passé tout en soulignant l'importance des différentes compréhensions et interprétations de l'auteur et du lecteur.

## الملخص

تم تحديث الرواية التاريخية على مدى القرن العشرين، وقد تبنى مؤلفي ما بعد الحداثة تقنية الميثاقص من منظور السردية التاريخية في أعمالهم التاريخية الأدبية التي جمعت كل من عناصر التاريخ وعناصر الخيال. إن عدم قدرة القارئ على الإيمان بالروائيين التاريخيين وكيف أنهم يستخلصون الحقيقة من روايات ما بعد الحداثة التاريخية تظل قضية بارزة لروايات ما بعد الحداثة ومنه قد كان الهدف من هذه المذكرة هو تصوير كيف استخدمت هيلاري ماننيل (1952) الميثاقص التاريخي في رواية *Bring up the Bodies* (2012) ، والتشكيك في صحة الاستفسارات التاريخية التي كانت ممزوجة بتفاصيل خيالية في الرواية، كما ارتأينا في هذه المذكرة أن نسطر أهمية تعدد التفسيرات المتعلقة بالكاتب والقارئ لتشكيل معنى جديد و مميز، كما تهدف إلى إظهار الرواية التاريخية ماننيل كمؤلفة موثوقة ومخالصة. وللوصول لهذا الهدف تم اعتماد المناهج التفسيرية، التحليلية والتاريخية. يتكون البحث من ثلاثة فصول، حيث تم تحليل توافق كل من فلسفة ما بعد الحداثة وفلسفة التاريخ فيما يتعلق بالرواية الخيالية التاريخية لما بعد الحداثة، و شرح كيف اظهر الميثاقص التاريخي روايات الماضي، وعلاوة على ذلك، التحقق ما إذا كان الروائيون التاريخيون مؤلفين موثوقين. وكما تمت الإشارة إلى أن الروائيين التاريخيين قد ادرجوا الحقيقة في أعمالهم الادبية وفقا لأوجه فهم وتفسيرات مختلفة للسجلات السابقة. وبناء على ذلك، فإن إسهام هيلاري ماننيل في الميثاقص التاريخي قد بين موثوقيتها ومصداقيتها كمؤلفة خيالية تاريخية. ومنه يلعب الميثاقص التاريخي دورا هاما في تمثيل الماضي مع التأكيد على أهمية مختلف وجهات الفهم والتفسيرات لكل من المؤلف والقارئ.

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# **General Introduction**

Eventually, historical novelists portray and discuss past events, historical characters and past social problems in their literary works. During the period of the twentieth century, the historical novel changed its path where it recalls the past to vivid life differently. The reader in this case may find difficulties in perceiving reality while he/ she has no prior knowledge of his readings. However, Authors claim they are not responsible for their reader's misunderstandings of the content; therefore, they call their readers to conduct research in order to make meaning easier to grasp. From this point, authors explore new interpretations of a given past event, for instance the history of the Tudors; this distinct interpretations mislead the readers of postmodern historical novel.

The era of the twentieth century witnessed a break with traditional values and rejecting the ideals of absolute truth. What resulted a new contribution of literary features in many disciplines such as: art, architecture, literature music, etc. In literature, a number of postmodern thinkers, like Linda Hutcheon (1947), introduced a significant postmodern feature. Consequently, postmodern thinkers call for both the plurality of readings and the plurality of truths.

The aim of this dissertation is to identify the use of historiographic metafiction in *Bring up the Bodies* (2012) by Hilary Mantel, and to demonstrate whether or not the British novelist, Hilary Mantel, is a reliable author. It further examines the question of history truth and the significance of the readers' awareness of prior knowledge. The main goal of this latter is to discuss both postmodern philosophy as well as the philosophy of history that postmodern novelists relate it in their literary works. And finally, depicts whether the authors as he/she shows his powerful knowledge of the truth as he/she rewrites a specific historical record, and then his literary work is reliable; therefore, he/she is considered as a reliable author. What is important is that Hilary Mantel's postmodern novel brings events and historical characters to vivid life in a brilliant way that attracts me as a

reader and a researcher to wonder about the truth in her novel; thus, it interests me to analyse the implication of historiographic metafiction as a postmodern feature in *Bring up the Bodies*.

Eventually, historiographic metafiction, as coined by Lina Hutcheon, is used in many postmodern literary works as John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's women* (1969), *The Public Burning* (1977) by Robert Coover, Hilary Mantel's *Bring up the Bodies* and many others. It stresses the question about the relation between both fiction and reality in postmodern literary works. This latter also proposes an analysis where comparing events to the historical facts.

Moreover, the goal of a historian or a novelist is to revive and give meaning to the lives of the dead as did Hilary Mantel in her novel *Bring up the Bodies*, where she narrates past events of the Tudor era. From this respect, the reader will actively create an active act of remembrance. Mantel argues that the facts are often incomplete for the past historical records and they are linked to the historian's, a novelist's or a reader's own interpretations. She motivates her reader to think creatively about the facts and mainly to consider the problem of the gap in the archives. Mantel's *Bring up the Bodies* illustrates the history of the Tudors in a creative way, the reader while reading the novel will grasp on the key characters as Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and others from the view of Thomas Cromwell. Furthermore, she engages her reader with her amazing writing style, for instance she creates scenes where the reader feels he is present in the era of the Tudors.

Documenting historical facts may lead to many problems of unreliable events and facts; thus, historiographic metafiction aims to differentiate between the two elements and applies it to literature in order to suit any novelist's goal. In this excerpt, it is relevant to pose one main question that of whether the historical records used in historical fiction are a

reliable narrative construct. This study is formulated by three sub-questions as follows: how can the philosophy of both postmodernism and history affect contemporary literary works especially the historical fiction? Is the novelist or the historian responsible for misunderstanding and misinterpreting historical records? Does the novelist Hilary Mantel demonstrate the possibility of knowing the truth in her novel?

I argue that the historical fiction may be considered as a reliable source for readers; however, authors distinct themselves from the whole responsibility of providing falsified truth of historical documents employed in their literary works because they present history according to their findings and own understandings; from Hilary Mantel's imaginative character Thomas Cromwell, she demonstrates how her blend of both fictive and historical elements and the usage of historiographic metafiction features are what makes her a trustful and a credible historical author.

Previous studies identified the influence of the reader's previous recognition of the story he/she seeks to learn, maintaining his/her knowledge and translations, as A. Raymond discussed in his paper (2015). While, Catherine affirmed both historians and novelists stressed the claims, the reader may encounter, of proclaiming the truth (s) of the novel and prepare him/her to wonder if the facts used in the novel are reliable or incorrect (2015). In an article composed by Barbara Z Thaden, in 2005, attracts on the usefulness of the intertexts while enhancing the metafiction of historiography in the postmodern novel.

In an article penned by A. Raymond on "Metafiction and a Historical Novel" (2015), Raymond analysed Robert Coover's *The Public Burning* covering the Rosenberg case. On this account, Coover's novel reveals various issues confronting another authentic novel. He brought up the problem of what is fresh in the historical novel, introducing the use of history as discourse.

Furthermore, Catherine Calloway, examines truth, in her article, “How to Tell a War Story: Metafiction in O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*” (1990). Catherine Calloway highlights the significance of intertexts while valuing the metafictional historiography in the postmodern novel: *The Things they carried*. The focal objective of Calloway’s paper is moulding the readers' awareness. It links the preceding histories to the present or the future. She explains how O’Brien pushes the reader and calls him/her to determine the truth of the implication of historical records. From this prospect, Calloway reveals answers of the unreliable nature of the actual world in *The Things They Carried*.

At last, in an article titled “Charles Johnson’s Middle Passage as Historiographic Metafiction” by Barbara Z. Thaden (1997) the writer focuses on Linda Hutcheon's characterization of the term historiographic metafiction. She specifies that postmodernism focuses on those truths which prompt the reader to realize new various approaches to relate the story to the prevailing variable historical moment. According to Hutcheon, parodic intertextuality is noteworthy for postmodern novels; she portrays the relevance of joining narratives, events and problems from previous works that changes the reader's awareness of those works. So, tolerating historiographic metafiction requires being more cautious to the significance of intertexts. For Linda Hutcheon, it adjusts the past in the present's light issues.

Historiographic metafiction plays a relevant role in contemporary literary works for questioning the truth implied by historical novelists and distinguishing reality from fiction. Moreover, the methodology of this dissertation employs the historical, analytical and explanatory approaches, where it will be divided into three main chapters. The first chapter entitled “The Postmodern Philosophy and The Philosophy of History”. Theoretically, it examines the philosophy of both postmodernism and histories through the eyes of a

number of postmodern thinkers while the second chapter: “Historiographic Metafiction in Contemporary Fiction” will analyse historiography as a term defined by many postmodern critics and its employment in contemporary fiction. Whereas the final chapter explores historiographic metafiction in, *Bring up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel.

## **Chapter One:**

# The Philosophy of Postmodernism and the Philosophy of History

## **Introduction**

Postmodernism emerged in the late 20th century as a shift from the trend of modernism which rejects all traditional values. From this respect, postmodern fiction embraces new techniques as historiographic metafiction. It is considered as one of the postmodern thinkers' core feature and interest.

This chapter defines postmodernism and introduces some key concepts from postmodern theory and the philosophy of history from postmodern thinkers like Anthony McGowen (1965), Linda Hutcheon, Michel Foucault(1926- 1984), Hayden White (1928-2018), Jacques Derrida (1930- 2004), and so forth. Moreover, this chapter goes through Foucault's Theory of the Discontinuity. It further discusses the idea of the detachment of the text from the author and the stability history.

### **I. 1. The Philosophy of Postmodernism**

Complex, contradictory and distinct, postmodernism is hard to define, according to Edward MacDowell (1860-1908) and John Hostler (1848-1901); it has no specific and accepted definition, as to what postmodernism refers to and how it can be related to history and historiographical practices. First, the term postmodernism means, “several or indeed many, different things” (Thompson 6). According to Gerald Graff (1937) and Nicholas Zurburgg (1947), Linda Hutcheon states in her book: *A Poetics of Postmodernism*

that postmodernism is a rejection against modernism<sup>1</sup>, “postmodernism contrasts with the seriousness of modernism” (50).

According to Perry Anderson (1938), the term first appeared in the work, 1934, of Federico de Onís (1885-1966), the Spanish writer, who used postmodernism to visualize a response to the artistic movement that followed modernism in the early twentieth century. He, Anderson, added the initial appearances were with a hyphen “post-modernism” and was integrated during in (1934) and (1977) it “became part of the public discourse” (Thompson 8).

### **1.2. a. The Incredulity towards Metanarratives**

A most influential definition of postmodernism is provided by the French philosopher Jean François Lyotard (1924-1998) who claims that postmodernism means the “incredulity toward metanarratives” (186). J. F Lyotard, among others, lost faith and questioned metanarratives<sup>2</sup>. Along with Lyotard's definition, Linda Hutcheon, another figure who rejected metanarratives, argues that postmodernism is best regarded by smaller and multiple narratives and not through grand totalizing narratives. In this aspect, postmodernism rejects grand narratives, metanarratives, which do not seek any universality and do not require any absolute truth. (<https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/10250/1/Hutcheon1994Incredulity.pdf>).

Therefore, Postmodernists admit that there is no aim for reality and no foundation for absolute definition, where society or individuals constrains meanings. Significantly, the plurality of narratives, readings and interests can create one's readings and interpretations.

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<sup>1</sup> Modernism is a period in literary history which started around the early 1900s and continued until the early 1940s. Modernist writers in general rebelled against clear-cut storytelling and formulaic verse from the 19th century. Instead, many of them told fragmented stories which reflected the fragmented state of society during and after World War I. (The University of Toledo, What is Modernism?)

<sup>2</sup> Metanarrative or grand narrative is a theory developed by Jean François Lyotard that tries to give a totalizing, comprehensive account to various historical events, experiences, and social, cultural phenomena based upon the appeal to universal truth or universal values. (New Word Encyclopedia)

In short, Postmodernists aim for self-reflective narrative, in which the reader becomes more conscious of the shortcomings behind historians' writings.

### **I .2.b. The Relationship between Poststructuralism and Postmodernism**

Postmodernists link the postmodern theory to the French philosophers of Roland Barthes (1915-1980), Jacques Derrida, and others in the 1960s and early 1970s who studied all forms of culture technologies, etc. The prefix 'post' in poststructuralism shows the disruption to the continuity of preceding philosophy and the disruption to the disapproval of scientific pretension, in particular. Hence, poststructuralists highlighted the term speech, which became one of their major concerns in their studies.

Both Emile Benveniste (1902- 1976) and Jacques Derrida stress the significant role of speech that Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) claims that it offers the world a presence, in other terms, the sign has a direct and immediate connection with the word, and its interpretation is consistently and stably linked to the word. Naturally, poststructuralists and postmodern thinkers would emphasize the subjective, conventional presence of language and history. Poststructuralists who saw distinct ways of awareness and identification, the emphases, the diameters of history, and daily life in the contemporary world endorsed a fully historical perspective.

Peter Hallward (1968) and Knox Peden state in their two- volume work edited, *Concept and Form (2012)* that the past two decades were a period where the poststructuralists' style of thought had a remarkable influence on the intellectual culture and history. They, poststructuralists, abolish a conception of a stable understanding of meaning and subjectivity. Adding to this, the writings of Michel Foucault have become a significant stimulus in social theory and the philosophy of history. In their study of history

and community in sign framework, code, and discourse, poststructuralists generated alternative theories. Discourse theorists claim that meaning is not easily provided rather it is constructed by individuals and their society.

## **I. 2. c. The Concept of Discourse and the Theory of the Discontinuity**

### **I.2.c.1 Discourse in History**

Discourse has been commonly employed by several authors, who prefer to use this latter with their ends and definitions in their work. The most useful and interesting definition of postmodernism is that of Michel Foucault in his *[The] Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). In his text, Foucault attempts to explain the history and to place individual concepts in history. In this way, he incorporates the concept of discourse and discursive fields.

Continuity, difference and rupture in history have been the principal focus of Foucault, in his book *The Archaeology of knowledge* where he describes discourse. For Foucault, “discourse is not an ideal, timeless form that possesses a history, but as a fragment of history, unity and discontinuity in history itself” (Stringer 11). In brief, it is a historical component; he, further, stresses a novel way of thinking about history writing and current political information. The British historian, Geoffrey Barraclough (1908- 1984) has claimed, in *An Introduction to Contemporary History* (1964) that we individuals are living in a distinctive world, period, from the modern one. He explains how the structural changed from traditional to the fresh world needs a novel framework (Best 9).

### **I.2.c.2. The Theory of the Discontinuity**

Along with Foucault's theory of discontinuous history, he insists on the focus of the differences instead of the similarities. Foucault highlights the elements of the discontinuity rather than the elements of the continuities where he does not narrate stories of the past that match the present or how the past is like our present. He aims to show how the relation between the past and the present is odd. In particular, he tries to shift the historian's position from one who embraces the present by collecting the interpretations and meanings of the past. The historian needs to be aware; hence, he/she should produce the past as distinct.

Moreover, the study of Nietzsche's history in *The Use and Abuse of History* (1874) inspired Michel Foucault among other bright contemporary French thinkers as Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995). In his work, he focuses on the critical history; yet, historians, historical novelists use the past in their works where they judge, interrogate and question the past records. He further claims that pursuing truth is not impartial. He adds that one can explain the past by what is powerful in the present. Historians claim that they are recreating history; therefore, a historian explains the present by the past to ensure that he/she achieves the truth; however, Foucault's theory is not based on objectivity.

Therefore, the epistemology of Nietzsche permits one to stress the thoughts of Foucault in his Theory of the Discontinuity. According to Foucault, the Discontinuous means manipulation and controlling the past while trying to understand it and it "is a form of knowledge and a form of power" (Poster 119). He added that discourse remains discontinuous and follows a set of rules when writing history or any literary work. In addition, he states, "Historical, theoretical, or literary discourse is always discontinuous yet

held by rules” (qtd. in Hutcheon 98). Michel Foucault replaces the universal and the general by the specific and the particular.

Hayden White, another figure joined the poststructuralists, states that they use the concept of discourse in historiographic metafiction; therefore, unlike the Western traditional narrative, followed by the continuities, historiographic metafiction embraces the Foucauldian thought to abandon the continuities. And still he, Foucault, visualizes history as a discourse, not as a history of things. Hayden and other poststructuralists stress great importance to the discontinuous theory. He explains how historians describe the facts to centre them in the present. Yet, the heart of the issue highlighted by Hayden White is not the facts which are used by historians but it is in the way of manifesting and interpreting those facts. As a whole, the theoretical assumptions of Foucault determine the literary interpretations and historical accounts.

### **I.3. The Philosophy of History**

#### **I.3.a. History and the Issue of Destroyed Sources**

How can a novelist show the truth in her/his historical literary work? And what are the obstacles of self-awareness a novelist may face? History is the study of past events, facts, individuals, society, etc. and a Historian composite a story from their comprehension and interpretations of the past. They add recent records while discovering additional facts, events, to the one that are already written. Each generation has its history; thus, new historians insert their recent events. As a result, a historian's key role is to make sure he/she finds the evidence and source s/he needs to produce a clear and unified account of the past. A historian uses many available sources like archives; however, they may confront a

serious problem: a problem of a destroyed and untrusted source throughout the historian's inquiry (Alpha History).

Then, how would s/he find an answer to this issue? For such situations, s/he may search for an eyewitness, ear witness, or with the help of event reports, memories, or interviews that were documented a few years later of the reviewed event; but, it raises another main question. What interests a historian record is based on his understandings. However, it may affect and mislead the reader eventually. For instance, the history of the Tudors<sup>3</sup> (British History) has been told and written many times differently due to the unique interpretations of the incident. Historians and novelists, among others, use all the available sources such as speeches: speech to parliament, 24 December 1545 (Figure.1.3), and love letters sent by Henry VIII to Queen Anne Boleyn, etc. The following examples<sup>4</sup> are letters written to Queen Anne Boleyn in 1527/ 1528 by the hand of the king's loyal servant, where Henry VIII expressed his feelings, as he was suffering from Anne's absence, with total sincerity wishing to meet his lover.

Example 01: (Figure 1.1.)

The approach of the time for which I have so long waited rejoices me so much, that it seems almost to have come already. However, the entire accomplishment cannot be till the two persons meet, which meaning more desired by me than anything in the world; for what joy can be greater upon earth than to have company for her who is dearest to me, knowing likewise that she does the same on her part, the thought of which gives me the greatest pleasure. Judge what an effect the presence of that person must have on me, whose absence has grieved me my heart more than other words or writing can express, and which nothing can cure, but that begging you, my mistress, to tell your father from me, that I desire him to hasten the time appointed by two days, that he may be at court before old term, or, at farthest, on the day fixed; for otherwise I shall think he will not do the lover's turn, as he said he would, nor answer my expectation. No more at

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<sup>3</sup> The Tudors is an English royal dynasty descended from Henry Tudor, Tudor monarchs rule from Henry VII (1485-1509) to Elizabeth I (1558-1603). (Britannica)

<sup>4</sup> For the second example, see figure 1.2 pages 52.

present for lack of time, hoping shortly that by word of mouth I shall tell you the rest of sufferings endured by me from your absence.

Written by the hand of the secretary who wishes himself at the same moment privately with you, and who is, and always be,

Your loyal and most assured servant,

H. No other (AB) seeks. R. Tierney (qtd. in Jokinen)

With another contemporary figure, a brief discussion of the grand narratives is required. Along with Foucault, Hayden White ignores the grand narratives and replaces them with the smaller narratives or “les Petits Récits”, in his “Metahistory” (1973) notes:

[I]n my view, “history” as a plenum of documents that attest to occurrence of events, can be put together in [many] different and equal plausible narrative accounts of what happened in the past accounts from which the reader or the historian himself, may draw different conclusions about what must be done in the present. (283)

Consequently, for Hayden White, the plurality of readings and interpretations is validated. The dominant interest of a historian or an author has changed to the text and the reader's interpretation. He questions the “Authority of the Author” and places the reader as the centre of attention. He, further, states in this aspect, “When we are concerned with the history of historical writing, it is that should interest us, not the intentions of the writer” (406).

### **I .3.b. The Detachment of the Text from the Author**

#### **I .3.b.1. The Plurality of Narratives**

In an interview with Ewa Domanska (1993), Hayden White emphasized the relation between the text and the author where he followed postmodern thinkers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Furthermore, he states that the text is detached from the author. In other words, the concept of the detachment of the author from the text stresses the theory of Jacques Derrida, known as “The Death of the Author”<sup>5</sup>. The Death of the Author, surely, urged to the birth of the reader. The reader now is the new centre of the text.

As fresh perspectives emerged, it called for the recent idea of the plurality and the multiplicity of interpretations. Here, the reader is considered as a participant and a producer of knowledge and meaning in his readings, so the author is not responsible for the distinct and the multiple readings.

#### **I .3.b.2. The Plurality of Readings**

The plurality of readings and the multiplicity of interpretations tend to distinct the idea of absolute truth. It makes the historical accounts indefinable. Ronald Barthes calls it the “writerly texts” that lead to the emergence of different interpretations (Ghasemi 2). From this sense, the reader is an active producer of meaning of past narratives, instead of being a passive reader and a consumer of knowledge. As a result, the reader has a major role in identifying and constructing meanings, and the interpretations differ from one reader to another.

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<sup>5</sup> The Death of the Author is a concept from mid-20<sup>th</sup> century literary criticism; it holds the author’s intentions and biographical facts should hold no special weight in determining an interpretation of their writing. (TvTropes)

### I .3.b.3 The Plurality of Interests

Hayden White states when discussing the plurality of interests:

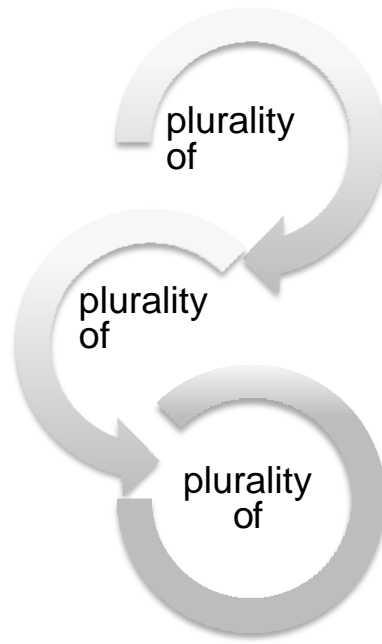
No historical event is intrinsically tragic, it can only be considered as such from a particular point of view or from within the context of a structured set of events of which it is an element enjoying a privileged place. For history, what is tragic from one perspective is comic from another. (qtd. in Ghasemi 3)

How both historians and readers see and interpret history is different because of their multiple personal interests. He, Hayden, refers to this idea in his *Literary Theory and Historical Writing* (1999) by illustrating how history is being created on both sides of the barricades, and how this latter works from one side to the other. These claims lead to another postmodernist theory, arguing that they construct the truth from the individuals and society. Logically, what we accept and embrace as truth depends on the interests of our community for social, religious, political, etc. interests. He, also, argues in “Metahistory” that authors/ historians or readers are free to interpret historical accounts the way it interests them. He states, “We are free to conceive history the way we please” (qtd. in Ghasemi 3).

Again, the plurality of narratives, readings, and interests spotlight the importance of polyphony or “multivocation”<sup>6</sup>. Ihab Hassan commented on this idea that the existence of multiple views of realities and truths is regarded and interpreted differently.

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<sup>6</sup> Multivocation is a term presented by Ihab Hassan, a postmodern feature, its focal point is to maintain the plurality of realities or truths according to the reader’s different perspectives as he reads and interprets the text material.



**Figure 1.4:** Hayden White's Recent Idea of Constructing Meaning

### **I .3.c. History as a Changing Narrative**

History, for Mas'ud Zaverzadeh and Donald Morton, ought not to be treated as a fixed narrative however it concentrates on the diversity of accounts of the past. Through some of his works, Hayden White attempts to demonstrate how history is no longer fixed. Thus, it is a history of *becoming* rather than a history of *being*. Thereby, this latter discusses the ways to re-write history from different viewpoints that liberate historiography from being treated as fixed. Hayden brows in his essay “Literary Theory and Historical Writing” (1998) from Frank R. Ankersmit as follows:

The great books in the field of historiography [...] do not put an end to historiography, do not give us the feeling that we now finally know how things were in the past and that clarity has ultimately been achieved on the contrary [...] their effect is thus to estrange us from the past, instead of placing it upon a kind of pedestals in a historiographical museum so we can inspect it from all possible perspectives. (3)

In this context, history is a study that is never completed. As a result, both history and historiography are not absolute and final.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, this chapter defined postmodernism by several postmodern thinkers as Hayden White, Jacques Derrida and others. It also discussed the theory of Foucault of the Discontinuity in the light of postmodern works. In addition, it stressed the idea of the detachment of the text from its author where the plurality of narratives, interests and readings were significant while reading a contemporary work. Finally, the chapter concluded with the fact that history was never fixed but rather a changing record.

## **Chapter Two:**

Historiographic Metafiction in Contemporary

Fiction

## **Introduction**

As a postmodern technique and a kind of a postmodern novel, historiographic metafiction has significantly used in contemporary historical fiction while it stresses the issues of truth and the problem of representing and interpreting the past. Therefore, this chapter examines the concept of historiographic metafiction as a coined term by Linda Hutcheon and its usage in current literature; it explores the truth of history in the historical novels. This section discusses the challenges related to fictional history, historical novels and historical facts and events.

### **II. 1. Historiography and Truth**

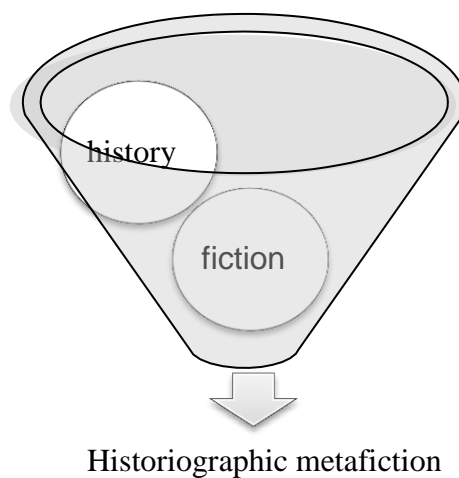
Reality or truth became the dominant concern of postmodernists in which they sought the truths of the past. Yet, the basis of historical knowledge of the real past is questioned by historiographic metafiction. Referring to history's writings in order to make up the historical mode of understanding, according to Paul Ricoeur (1913- 2005). The epistemological question of how people know the past joins the ontological<sup>7</sup> one of the status of the traces of the past. In other words, facts and events are important for new historical novels to trace the past. Therefore, historiographic metafiction rejects the present beliefs and standards into the past and asserts the specificity of the individual past events. Nevertheless, it realizes that it limits the readers' ability to know one's history. Postmodernists highlight historiographic metafiction as one of their works' principal characteristics.

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<sup>7</sup> Ontology is a branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being. It is the philosophical study of what applies neutrally to everything that is real. The term was first presented in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Britannica).

Thus, the past never changes; history is never fixed. History is the study of the past and its problems, it attempts to understand and interpret them. Hence, historians develop alternative histories that aim to change the reader's understanding and interpretations of their readings and wonder about a certain historical event. Historians' role is to explain and clarify past events, facts throughout their research and analysis.

Historiographic metafiction is a term first coined by the Canadian researcher and critic, Linda Hutcheon, in the late 1980s (<https://www.Cambridge.org>). It is a feature that portrays postmodernism. It doubts historical records of the past and its truth. Admittedly, it functions as a portrayal of the past events and as an updated history as a narrative. Indeed, the term historiographic metafiction comprises two noteworthy concepts: History and Fiction.



**Figure 2.1:** The Coinage of History and Fiction that contribute to Historiographic Metafiction

## **II.2. A Comparison between History and Fiction**

In one's culture, both history and fiction are important systems. Edgar Lawrence Doctorow (1931- 2015), for instance, related the two terms as forms to extract meaning from the world. Consequently, producing meaning and interpretations are essential for readers. As authors and readers are the ones who constitute both history and fiction as the focal point of their understandings. Hence, to introduce a record of what occurred in the past, historiographic metafiction uncovers that history relies upon conventions of narrative language and philosophy as demonstrated in Robert Coover's novel *The Public Burning*.

Linda Hutcheon claims, in this regard, “such novels inform readers that history is a kind of fiction in which we live and hope to survive, and fiction is a kind of speculative history” (25). Historians acknowledge that history and fiction have a reciprocal connection. Barbara Foley from this notion has stressed the historical novel and the anti-novel<sup>8</sup> reflects one another; however, the convention of historical awareness which requires prominent concern and security has been emphasized in contemporary literature, according to Hayden White.

## **II.3. The Historical Novel**

Simultaneously with drama, the novel was emerged only after the French Revolution while, the historical novel appeared with the emergence of the grand narratives (Heller 93). The historical novel depicted a progressive change and introduced modern

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<sup>8</sup> The term anti-novel came into vogue in the late fifties to describe those works which oppose, parody, or in some way attempt to transcend the form and content of the novel. It is associated with the new novel and the postmodern novel (The Electronic Labyrinth).

techniques from the Eighteenth Century onwards, highlighting problems of literary theory and criticism, of facts and fiction, identity, history, and reading and writing grand stories. Therefore, the new historical novel combines both imagination and factionalism. This latter addresses the question of the nineteenth-century continuities, in which they regard history and fiction from the same branch; however, today's historical novel challenges both tradition and literary criticism.

Aristotle distinguishes fiction from history and renders it superior, in order to open it up to the present, by mixing metafiction with self-consciousness, and prevent it from being decisive and theological; as a result the past is presented in both fiction and history. New Historical novels point to the need of separating fiction from history as narrative genres. This issue occurs as well in the contemporary philosophy of history and literary theory. From this aspect, Linda Hutcheon states, according to Hayden White, the historical novel is called "a true novel" Hutcheon (qtd. in White 111).

Postmodern writers determine to pretend that their literary works are not "simply made, but that [they] [exist]" (Hutcheon 107). Linda Hutcheon defined historiographic metafiction in her *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) as that which modelled on historiography if it is motivated by a notion of history as shaped by force, for instance: the Indian history was rewritten by immigrants, in Urdu and English; therefore, the novelist or the narrator is obliged or he is forced by history to write in English.

Linda Hutcheon notes in her *A poetics of Postmodernism* that Umberto Eco (1932-2016) has highlighted "three ways to narrate the past: the romance, the swashbuckling tale, and the historical novel" (113). From this claim, Eco asserts that historical novels, "not only identify in the past the causes of what came later, but also trace the process through which those causes began slowly to produce their effects" (qtd. in Hutcheon 76).

### **II.3.a. The Postmodern Historical Fictional Novel**

The historical novel is a novel that depicts the past social conditions using realistic events, historical facts and factual details. This genre of novels may include within its papers actual historical personage like the key character of Hilary Mantel Thomas Cromwell in *Bring up the Bodies*, as it may deal with a mixture of both fictional and historical characters. It may also concentrate on a single historical event or multiple historical events. The historical novel, more often, draws a broad image of any past society and the events that happened in that society spotting light on their private lives of fictional individuals.

Historians disagree whether the past is always presented as individualized or it is offered as typical or as a sharing value through time with the present. The Truth of details is irrelevant, for this György Lukács (1885-1971) believes that the historical novel is defined by relative unimportance of its use of detail which he saw as "only a means of achieving historical faithfulness, for making concretely clear the historical necessity of a concrete situation" (qtd. in Lukacs 59). Therefore, many readers of historical fiction would have different meanings; they will disagree as writers of historical novels do.

### **II. 4. The Plurality of Truths**

Lies and misleading truth became the primary issue for postmodernists. For this reason, they give importance to the plurality of truths and challenging the reader's self-consciousness and wondering what is true. In fact, many contemporary narratives, Fritz Fischer (1908-1999) says, "recognize the truth of the past" (Hutcheon 307). For instance, *The French Lieutenant's Woman's* readers draw the insights from the past and take great caution in every historical novel implication of the extracted lessons; however, these

claims were rejected in historiographic metafiction<sup>9</sup> stressing the significance of reality/truth, as Martin Cohen (1964) writes on the focal point of reality:

The real, the real. If only I had you once more, I would not be. writing this. Instead, I would rejoice at you. The lovely image of the real. The real itself, mirror-source of the image. The true real, a real devoid of [the]world, empty in the fullness of itself. That real for which we laboriously compensate, piling on. The nature of the real. A real thing burning in unreality. (152)

For this purpose, the use of fictional representation techniques permits novelists to construct fresh imaginative representations of historical accounts. The same method accompanied postmodern novels as it is part of the postmodernist approach that challenges the fictitious/factual portrayal of the past with paradoxes.

In a particular view, history and fiction were influenced by postmodern innovation when the historical novel depicts a new form, reflecting the assumptions of the postmodern theory of history which is that traditional approach to historiography is no longer valid and that multiple histories are possible. Therefore, novelists among others do not express the old style of writing and instead offer a new mode of historical novels that separate the past events from implementing the historiographic metafiction in their literary works.

In *the Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon identified the postmodern historical novel as historiographic metafiction, since it focuses on the contemporary theory of history and on the problem of distinguishing fiction from history. Above all, she, further, clarified her justification when she states, historiographic metafiction aims to use historical materials within the parodic self-reflexivity of metafiction, and tries to recognize reality. Then what is historiographic metafiction?

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<sup>9</sup> Historiographic metafiction as a kind of a postmodern novel.

## II.5. Definition of Historiographic Metafiction

Historiographic metafiction is one of the postmodern features, which underlines the difference between historical facts and fiction. It indicates that history and fiction are the observations which lead their key claim to reality. The coined term historiographic metafiction was described as follows by Hutcheon, Historiographic metafiction often points to the fact by using paratextual conventions of historiography to both inscribe and undermine the authority and subjectivity of historical sources and explanations.” (Hutcheon 122-123).

Linda Hutcheon argues in her *The Poetics of Postmodernism* the definition of what makes history writing historical, that makes researchers or readers believe it is unchangeable and true, has changed from Titus Livius known as Livy in English (59 BC -17 AD), the Roman historian, to Leopold Von Ranke (1795-1886) to Hayden White. White notes that the prevailing vision of historians is one of writing history in the context of a fictional depiction of the past (94). Historiography and fiction decide which events will become facts. The postmodern issue points out the unavoidable difficulties with the concreteness of events and their accessibility. An important question that was raised is whether historians have a full trace or a partial one? Dominick La Capra (1939) has argued that all documents or artefacts used by historians are not neutral evidence for reconstructing phenomena that assume to have some independent existence outside them.

Postmodernists introduced and embraced the concept of multiplicity and plurality in their writings; yet, they strongly brought into doubt narrative singularity<sup>10</sup>. This latter corresponds to the suggestion for postmodern historiographic metafiction and the novel form. And historiographic metafiction, according to Derrida, creates the meaning of the

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<sup>10</sup> As it was mentioned in chapter one in “the Incredulity towards Metanarratives” (9).

past by stating an end in a source, as in fiction. Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida both asked for logical analysis and different readings to draw meaning from the past, thus shifting from the traditional divisions into that of discourse. In this respect, the ideology of plurality and recognition of difference is supported by historiographic metafiction.

Historiographic metafiction proposes that fact and lie may not be the right terms to examine fiction. Postmodern novels state that there will never be one truth; however, there is rarely false and there are different truths. For this, history and fiction are accounts of their frames, Art, for example. A novel, makes its reality, writing which truth and perfection of beauty meet though history is different, which search for outer facts.

#### **II.5.a. The Postmodern Novel under Historiographic Metafiction**

Postmodern historical novels are obsessed with the question of whose history survives. Almost every historical novel takes this for granted; historiographic metafiction destabilizes received notions of both history and fiction. Barbara Foley described the paradigm of the nineteenth-century historical novel the postmodern changes. She states:

Characters [never] constitute a microcosmic portrayal of representative social types; they experience complications and conflicts that embody important tendencies [not] in historical development [whatever that might mean, but in narrative plotting, often traceable to other intertexts]; one or more world-historical figures enters the fictive world, lending an aura of extratextual validation to the text's generalizations and judgments [which are promptly undercut and questioned by the revealing of the true intertextual, rather than extratextual, [the] identity of the sources of that validation]; the conclusion [never] reaffirms [but contests] the legitimacy of a norm that transforms social and political conflict into moral debate. (qtd. in Foley 160)

## II.5.b. Paratexts in the Historical Novel

Paratexts, such as footnotes, additions, bibliographies, acknowledgments, etc. are materials that historical novels included within its papers. It gives the reader more details and a huge amount of information about the text to ensure s/he feels a sense of authority and authenticity because these materials influence the reader's interpretation of the text and its changing meanings due to the plurality of readings<sup>11</sup>. Consequently, paratexts are regarded as highly important elements in historical novels like Hilary Mantel's *Bring up the Bodies*.

## II. 6. The Difference between Facts and Events

Historiographic metafiction cannot avoid dealing with the problem of the historical facts and the nature of its evidence; the related issue follows those documentary sources that are deployed; can they be neutrally related? Or do interpretations enter with narrativization? For this historiographic metafiction suggests a distinction between facts and events that many historians share. Linda Hutcheon states, in *the Poetics of Postmodernism*, that it configures events into facts by being related to “conceptual matrices within which they have to be embedded if they are to count as facts” (qtd. in Munz 15).

What history and fiction share in common is that both focus on knowledge concerning the human mind's understanding. They work through spiritual experience. Besides, history is a detailed analysis of evidence and events that have occurred in the past while fiction can represent events that never happened. For this reason, a novelist

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<sup>11</sup> See chapter one “The Plurality of Readings” (16).

Constructs an imaginative narrative and separates themselves from reality; and this it has been claimed in history.



Figure 2.2: Schema presents Events and Facts in the Postmodern Novel

“All documents process information and they do so are historical facts that limit the documentary conception of historical knowledge” (qtd. in La capra 45). Moreover, Carl L. Becker (1873-1945) wrote that, “the facts of history do not exist for any historian until he creates them” (qtd. in Ricoeur 525); in other words, representations of the past are selected to signify whatever the historian intends. Events have no meaning in themselves while facts produce meaning that postmodernists obsessively foreground. Then historiographic metafiction often points to this latter by using paratextual conventions of historiography to describe the authority and objectivity of historical sources and explanations.

Barbara Foley states that postmodern fiction does not “aspire to tell the truth” Hutcheon (qtd. in Foley26). As much as to question whose truth gets told. It does not so much associate “this truth with claim to empirical validation as contest the grounds of any claims to such validation. So how can a historian or a novelist check any historical accounts against past empirical reality to test its validity? For Hayden White, Facts are not given but are constructed by the kinds of questions we ask of events” (qtd.in white 43). In short, the past is a thing which cannot be eradicated, accumulated and imagined.

Postmodern novels, accordingly, raise another specific issue regarding the interaction of historiography and fiction that deserves more detailed study, the question of reference and representation; the intertextual nature of the past it is the ideology.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the coined term historiographic metafiction is a postmodern technique implied in historical novels, this latter has great importance in contemporary literary works, in this chapter, the issue of truth in historical fictional novels in comparison to the old ones was discussed. Adding to this, it differentiated the past from history, giving importance to historical facts and events while stressing their differences.

## **Chapter03:**

# **Historiographic Metafiction in *Bring up the Bodies***

## **Introduction**

Novelists have their own writing style to impress their readers while attract their attention and invite them enjoy their novels. Historical novelists present events of the past periods as they document the past facts in their new historical novels. Every novelist uses these facts in a specific way in order to make them fit into their own versions of history. This what leads to all sorts of difficulties in considering history and how it has been documented.

This chapter will discuss a number of questions in Hilary Mantel's *Bring up the Bodies*, using the key literary concept of Linda Hutcheon “historiographic metafiction”. In comparison to historical records, it will analyse how Hilary Mantel successfully retells the story of Henry VIII (Figure 3.1), Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and the world of the Tudor era from the eyes of Thomas Cromwell, and how this technique influences the readers’ comprehension as characters of *Bring up the Bodies* and as historical figures.

### **III. 1. The Analysis of Historical Accounts in *Bring up the Bodies***

#### **III. 1. a. The Gap of Resources in *Bring up the Bodies***

From the two previous chapters, it is worth mentioning that history changes up to the needs of the historian or the historical novelist. Hilary Mantel in her novel, *Bring up the Bodies*, makes some choices to fill up the gaps of lack of resources, she notes that the novel is not reflected as a fictional literary work but rather it portrays the issues of the historical knowledge. She re-imagines Thomas Cromwell as a historical figure, details, feelings, thoughts, and the view of the world during the reign of King Henry VIII from Cromwell’s eyes. She deviates from history as there is little said about Thomas Cromwell

(Figure 3.2) as a historical figure. However, is it not the case for King Henry VIII where she presented his true story during the period of (1535-1536), that was found in historical records and other representations. For instance, in an article titled *Henry VIII of England* (1491-1547) on the life of the king Henry VIII, A. F. Pollard writes:

The abolition of the papal jurisdiction removed all obstacles to divorce from Catherine and to the legalization of Henry VIII's marriage with Anne Boleyn (1533). But recognition of the royal supremacy could only be enforced at the cost of heads of Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher and a number of monks and others among whom the Carthusians signalized themselves by their devotion (1535-1536). Anne Boleyn fared no better than Catholic martyrs; she failed to produce a male heir to the throne, and her conduct afforded a jury of peers, over which her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, presided, sufficient excuse for condemning her to death on a charge of adultery (1536). (Encyclopedia Britannica 1911)

On this aspect, representing the history of Thomas Cromwell and Anne Boleyn among others has shown how history changes with the choices made by Hilary Mantel. She aims to maintain both the ideas of history is not fixed, and the plurality of interests. Mantel focuses on Queen Anne Boleyn in her *Bring up the Bodies*. As Thomas Cromwell, she remains an ambiguous character, and (Figure 3.4) one of the questionable characters in English history; her intelligence and courage made her queen of England; yet, they eventually destroyed her as it was portrayed in the scene of her execution.

### **III. 2. Depicting Truth in *Bring up the Bodies***

A question is posed on the truth of Anne's betrayal. Hilary Mantel notes that it is difficult to know whether Anne is guilty of adultery or not; she adds that through her novel she tries neither to unravel the mystery for the readers nor to answer the nagging historical question of Anne's case; however, she imagines what it has might been like to experience the last three weeks of her life (4th Estate Books, Hilary Mantel talks about Anne Boleyn).

She invites the reader to feel the speed of events, the fear Anne had, and live in the same poisonous atmosphere she lived in before her horrible tragic end.

Anne Boleyn had three pregnancies. The first result was in a daughter, both Henry VIII and Anne did not know at that time she would be Queen Elizabeth as one of the greatest monarchs in the English history; though, there were claims that Elizabeth I would be a queen. Hilary Mantel uses this fact in her novel when she writes, “one abroad believes that, if she fails to give Henry a son, the little Elizabeth can reign” (74).

According to Henry, Anne has broken her promise to produce him a male heir. As a result, he starts to look for other women. Therefore, Anne, for the same purpose, makes illegal relationships with other men and one of them is her own brother, though no one is certain of this kind of illicit relationships. Henry VIII claimed she committed adultery with 100 men; consequently, five men were accused with her and all the five died because of her. The following examples are readers’ reviews commenting on this point in Hilary Mantel on *Bring up the Bodies*<sup>12</sup>:

Example 01:

I see no where the writer makes any definitive statement about Anne Boleyn committing adultery on Henry. If anything she is ambiguous about it is to say the most. She makes it clear that Henry simply accuses her of it because she failed to give up him of it because she failed to give him a living son, so that Anne actually was guilty of it. (4th Estate Books. Hilary Mantel talks about Anne Boleyn)

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<sup>12</sup> 4th Estate Books. Hilary Mantel talks about Anne Boleyn. United Kingdom: YouTube.

Mightymisk, the other, states, “There is no shred of evidence that Anne Boleyn ever committed adultery.” Connor Harvey also comments on this point, “there is no evidence at all that Anne committed adultery. I don't think she'd be a stupid enough to do so since court was such a dangerous place at the time since she had many enemies who could use it against her to tear her down” (4th Estate Books. Hilary Mantel talks about Anne Boleyn).

### **III. 3. The Reader as a Centre of Producing Meaning**

The reader, therefore, receives the same amount of information of Henry VIII in the novel of Hilary Mantel, *Bring up the Bodies* as she lets her reader, experience the story from the eyes of Thomas Cromwell. For Mantel, a novelist as a reader lives inside the consciousness of her/his character; for this, she argues that some of her readers may think of her view of, for example, Anne Boleyn is harsh; yet, her technique lies in presenting Cromwell's vision of Anne, in other words, how Cromwell may think and look at Anne influences the reader's understanding.

### **III. 4. Re-Imagination of Thomas Cromwell as a Historical Character**

Thomas Cromwell occurs as Henry VIII's right-hand and this fact was implemented in *Bring up the Bodies* “A man of the king's age, he had been Henry's right arm since he came to the throne [...]” (72) (my ellipsis). In addition, Mantel presents him as brother figure to the king; she documents the significant role he plays around Henry VIII. The novelist through the following passage invites the reader to feel how Henry trusts his Master Secretary, she writes:

You would think, to look at Henry laughing, to look at Henry praying, to look at him leading his men through the forest path that he sits as secure on his throne as he does on his horse. Looks can deceive. By night, he lies awake; he stares at the carved roof beams; he numbers his days. He says,

‘Cromwell, Cromwell, what shall I do?’ Cromwell, save me from the Emperor. Cromwell, save me from the Pope. (8)

Thus, Mantel gives her historical characters a direction due to the use of historical documents. With this latter, she re-imagines the story of an admirable character through the existing facts of historical documents concerning Thomas Cromwell. For this reason, she, with the help of these possibilities, re-imagines the story of the Tudor era (1535-1536) from Cromwell’s vision. As a result, it creates an issue of depicting the truth from those possibilities; she comments on this that she cannot provide the reader a definitive version of the exact events (Libergts 27). However, she tracks the process in details in order to peruse the mystery of the story. In *Bring up the Bodies*, Mantel Perseus the tragedy of Anne Boleyn through the eyes of Cromwell.

### **III. 5. Retelling the Story of the Tudors in *Bring up the Bodies***

The novel dives to the heart of the Tudor era, as Henry used his desires to divorce Anne Boleyn to marry Jane Seymour<sup>13</sup> (Figure 3.3), and challenged the Roman Catholic Church, “Henry will never return to Rome, He will never bow his knee. Since my coronation there is a New England. It cannot be subsist without me" (77). As in history Mantel presents his wishes to reform the Church, “it is said that the king is destroying the church. In fact he is renewing it. “It will be better a better country.” (38).

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<sup>13</sup> Jane Seymour is the eldest daughter of Sir John Seymour, and the third wife of Henry VIII (Britannica).

### **III. 6. Features of Historiographic Metafiction in *Bring up the Bodies***

Hilary Mantel successfully uses Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction in her novel *Bring up the Bodies*. She utilizes fragmentation of the plot, real places, historical figures, letters and dialogues, etc. as features of historiographic metafiction.

#### **III. 6. a. The Fragmentation of the Plot**

Donald Barthelme (1931- 1989) declared in his short story *See the Moon?* (1966) "Fragments are the only forms I trust" (157). In the last few decades, some Contemporary British and American novelists, as Hilary Mantel, embraced fragmentation in their literary works that were opposites of linearity and coherence. According to David Meltzer (1937-2016), a fragment "appears incomplete, be it a sliver cut off from a larger whole, an unfinished work, or a work that seems insubstantial" (qtd. in Meltzer 106).

From this point, traditional novels used to tell a clear, linear story, and the reader easily follows the story he reads; however, contemporary British and American novels challenge the reader to piece together the events of the story so that it makes sense. This latter is also called fragmented narratives where a novelist moves up the sequences of her/his story, for instance she/he starts from the middle of the event, then she/he goes back and forth through the order of story events.

On this aspect, Hilary Mantel embodies fragmentation in her novel *Bring up the Bodies*. It starts where *Bring up the Bodies* stopped at Wolf Hall with the summer of dismemberment when Cromwell's wife and daughters died because of the Plague "His children are falling from the sky. He watches from horseback, acres of England stretching behind him; they drop, gilt winged, each with a blood-filled gaze" (3). Then she goes through the conversation of Henry VIII, Cromwell and the Seymour family during the

same period; afterwards, she moves to the story of Cromwell, she starts describing him as a man of 50 and dives through his past, where she tells her readers his journey to become Henry's Secretary. Through the following passage the reader experience what Cromwell has achieved through hard work and patience, and how Cromwell's past was exhausting.

Thomas Cromwell is now about fifty years old. He has a labourer's body, stocky, useful, running to fat. He has black hair, greying now, and because of his pale impermeable skin, which seems designed to resist rain as well as sun, people sneer that his father was an Irishman, though really he was a brewer and a blacksmith at Putney, a shearsman too, a man with a finger in every pie, a scrapper and brawler, a drunk and a bully, a man often hauled before the justices for punching someone, for cheating someone. How the son of such a man has achieved his present eminence is a question all Europe asks. Some say he came up with the Boleyns, the queen's family.  
(6)

Then she moves back to Seymour family during supper time; again, she goes to London talking about political matters about the Emperor's ambassador Eustace Chapuys, Mantel follows this technique throughout her entire novel.

### **III. 6. b. The Use of Historical Figures**

The old historical novelists like Shakespeare, employed real figures in their works. Authors with the use of historical figures draw the attention of readers and take them to a specific period of time. This latter influences their understandings and their interpretations of the past. Whereas, new historical novels depict the life of historical figures in a creative way, a novelist is free to create his own fictional world using real figures. However, the use of historical figures is a lazy practice and a failure of imagination. Yet, Hilary Mantel's embodiment of real life person in her fictional historical novel demonstrates her clever move to, first, attract her readers to think over that character or in order to read and know

more about him/her. Second, she chooses to fill in the gap of missing resources by re-imagining Thomas Cromwell. *Bring up the Bodies* concentrates mainly on three Historical figures: Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, his second wife, and Thomas Cromwell, his master secretary.

### **III. 6. c. The Use of Real Places**

Furthermore, some contemporary novelists use fictional places while others choose to employ real places for the purpose of convincing the reader about reality and truth of the story. Hilary Mantel embraces this technique through her novel *Bring up the Bodies*; she uses real places as Wiltshire, London, Northamber land, at court, etc.

### **III. 6. d. The Use of Dialogues**

Readers depict the use of dialogues in the novel between characters as Thomas Cromwell and King Henry VIII where she includes more details, what makes a scene looks vivid and the reader experiences the event as he/she is present in the scene because the novelist addresses the reader directly. For example:

Sometimes the king departs a place with just his riding household, the queen left behind with her ladies and musicians, as Henry and his favoured few hunt hard across the country. And that is how they come to Wolf Hall, where old Sir John Seymour is waiting to welcome them, in the midst of his flourishing family. 'I don't know, Cromwell,' old Sir John says.

He takes his arm, genial. 'All these falcons named for dead women ... don't they dishearten you?'

'I'm never disheartened, Sir John. The world is too good to me.'

'You should marry again, and have another family. Perhaps you will find a bride while you are with us. In the forest of Savernake there are many fresh young women.'

I still have Gregory, he says, looking back over his shoulder for his son; he is always somehow anxious about Gregory.

'Ah,' Seymour says, 'boys are very well, but a man needs daughters too, daughters are a consolation. Look at Jane. Such a good girl.' (Mantel 27)

### III. 6. e. The Use of Letters

Along with dialogues, the use of letters is a method to make the reader feel closer to the story he/she reads and even closer to the characters, thus enjoy reading the story. In the novel Hilary Mantel implements letters to transmit her characters' true world and feelings. Historical novelists implement letters or diaries in their novels through which they tell past stories and deliver a given message in those letters; an example from Mantel's *Bring up the Bodies* illustrates this idea:

He writes:

Anthony's teeth.

Question: What happened to them?

Anthony's testimony, in answer to me, Thomas Cromwell:

They were knocked out by his brutal father.

To Richard Cromwell: He was in a fortress besieged by the Pope. Abroad somewhere. Some year. Some Pope. The fortress was undermined and a charge planted. As he was standing in an unlucky spot, his teeth were blown clear out of his head.

To Thomas Wriothesley: When he was a sailor off Iceland his captain traded them for provisions with a man who could carve chessmen out of teeth. Did not understand the nature of the bargain until men in furs came to knock them out.

To Richard Riche: He lost them in a dispute with a man who impugned the powers of Parliament.

To Christophe: Somebody put a spell on him and they all fell out. Christophe says, 'I was told as a child about diabolists in England. There is a witch in every street. Practically.'

To Thurston: He had an enemy was a cook. And this enemy painted a batch of stone to look like hazelnuts, and invited him to a handful.

To Gregory: They were sucked out of his head by a great worm that crawled out of the ground and ate his wife. This was in Yorkshire, last year. (101)

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the historical novel may present past events authentically; however, when the novelist faces a problem of resources, she/he chooses different paths and seeks for new ways to fill in the historical gap as Hilary Mantel did in her novel. Successfully, she embraced the technique of historiographic metafiction in her novel *Bring up the Bodies* which was clear when analysing the historical characters, flashbacks, dialogues, etc. Hence, throughout the analysis, the reader thinks of Hilary Mantel as a credible novelist.

## **General Conclusion**

Both the philosophy of postmodernism and the philosophy of history hold their significance in the new historical novel, historiographic metafiction, whereas Foucault's theory of the "Discontinuity" foreshadows the idea of the detachment of the text from its author. Consequently, the reader becomes the main focus of the text material which gives it a new perspective. As Hilary Mantel did, she centralized her reader to think creatively of her text while narrating her story from Thomas Cromwell's view. Mantel did not affect her story; however, she invites her reader to experience and feel the events of each of her historical characters.

On this regard, Hayden White's "the detachment of the text from the author" presents the concepts of the plurality of narratives, readings and interests which allows both authors and readers to extract meanings depending on their personal comprehension and interpretations. For this, the historical novelists liberate themselves from taking any responsibility of misunderstandings by their readers.

As a case study, Hilary Mantel's contribution to historiographic metafiction explains how she presented a clear image of the Tudor period. As a novelist, she employed true events of real people with imaginative details. Therefore, I conclude that she successfully used historiographic metafiction in her novel *Bring up the Bodies*. Consequently, she is a creative and a faithful author for retelling the story of the Tudors during the reign of Henry VIII without any changes of the story though she adds some imaginative details as such in the scene of the day of Anne Boleyn's execution. With all the details she imagined along with the historical event she made her reader feel the horrible tragedy as it was experienced by Anne Boleyn.

And as a trustful author, Mantel did not change the story of Henry VIII for a purpose of presenting him and the events around him as they occurred in the historical records and as everyone is aware of. Her aim from writing *Bring up the Bodies* is to present a fresh story that opens the appetite for her readers first, in order to enjoy the story, to experience those events as her characters did, and last, to push them explore and read more about the Tudor era with passion.

To conclude, Hilary Mantel's second Booker Prize *Bring up the Bodies* successfully mixes fiction and reality not only to present the Tudor period in a creative and in a different manner but also to extract the truth from a historical fictional novel. While the historical novelists grant the freedom of the auto-interpretations to their readers.

# **Glossary**

1. **Artefacts:** An artefact means an object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest. It is a synonym of historical object and antique. (Oxford Dictionary on Lexico).
2. **Intertextuality:** intertextuality is the complex interrelationship between a text and other texts taken as basic to the creation or interpretation of the text. (Merriam-Webster).
3. **Intertextual:** intertextual means deriving meaning from the ways in which texts are interrelated. (Collins English Dictionary)
4. **Multivocation:** multivocation or polyphony is a postmodern feature that maintains that there exist multiple versions of reality or truths according to the reader's interpretations and comprehension as he reads the text material. (Revisiting History in Hayden White's Philosophy, Ghasemi)
5. **Paratext:** paratext in literary theory refers to the meanings that are alluded to, above or beyond the printed text; interpretations of text. (Your Dictionary)
6. **Writerly texts:** Ronald Barthes (1915-1980) identifies the writerly text as the dominant mode in modern mythological culture in which forms of representation seek to continually blur the divisions between the real and the artificial. He proposes that the ideal text blurs the distinction between the reader and writer. writerly texts reveal those elements that the readerly attempts to conceal. The reader, now is in a position of control, takes an active role in the construction of meaning. (Ronald Barthes: Understanding Text)

# **Appendices**

## Appendix 01: Hilary Mantel's Biography

Hilary Mary Mantel was born on 6 July 1952, she is one of the most acclaimed English writers these days and she is known for her writing historical and fictional short stories. Mantel is for the first time the woman who won twice the Booker prize book for her fictional account of Thomas Cromwell's trilogy presented in *Wolf Hall* (2009), and its sequel novel *Bring up the Bodies* (2012). (Cunningham *Hilary Mantel*)

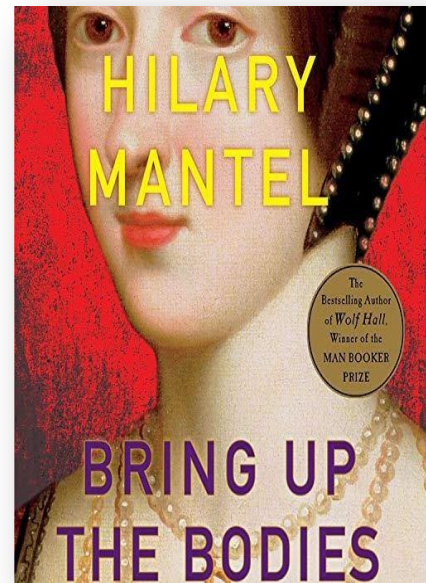


An illustration of Hilary Mantel by Joe Ciardiello. Downloaded from *A Bloody Season*-New York Times

## Appendix 02: Synopsis of Hilary Mantel's *Bring up the Bodies*

*Bring up the Bodies* is Published in 8<sup>th</sup> may 2012, it a more focused book than the one of *Wolf Hall*. This told from Thomas Cromwell's view of the world and the court during the era of the Tudors. It is divided into two parts. The story begins where *Wolf Hall* ended, "His children are falling from the sky. He watches from horseback, acres of England stretching behind him; they drop, gild-winged, each with a blood filled gaze"(3). It goes directly to May 1536 to the destruction of Anne Boleyn. *Bring up the Bodies* concentrates on the last three weeks of the same period where the Boleyn Empire crumbles, the relationship between Henry VIII and Anne quarrel.

In details, Mantel brought back the Tudor times to vivid life, she tells how Anne and Henry dispute all the time, the anger and jealousy of Anne from Jane Seymour when Henry wanted to Marry her, how Henry ordered Thomas Cromwell to find a way in order to get rid of her, when she got arrested and finally she was executed in a heart breaking scene. Cromwell did as the king asks because he was not along with the queen ,they had conflicts with each other, Mantel writes, In *Bring up the Bodies*, "He has made her queen, she has made him minister [...] but they are uneasy now" (34). Mantel's Novel ended the tragic death of Anne Boleyn.



*Bring up the Bodies* (*Wolf Hall*, Book 2) By Hilary Mantel.

Downloaded from  
[www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).

Figure in Appendices 01:

L'approchant du temps qui ma silongement dure me rejoyet tant  
qui me semble pres q de la venir ne au mains l'entire accomplissement ne  
ce perfra tant q le deux persons se assemblet la qille assemble est plus desire  
en moy endroyte que nulle chose mondaine/car q rejoyssment peut estre  
si grand en ce monde come d'aboyze la copanye de celle qui est le plus  
chere ayme/sachant aussi quelle fait la pezzaylle de son chose le penser d'uy  
me fait grande plaisir p Jugges adoniques que fra le personage labens  
en quel ma fait plus grande mole au ceuz que ni l'ange ni escripture  
peult exprinere/et que n'ames aultre chose excepte ce la peut remédier  
vous suppliant ma mestres de dire a mon fr vze pere de ma part que se  
luy prie de amancer de deux Jours le temps assme qui peut estre en court  
de bent le vied terme on au mains suz le vuz <sup>proffit se</sup> <sup>laquellement</sup> <sup>car</sup> <sup>est se pense</sup>  
quid ne froyte point le touze de amouzeus qui disoit ni accordant d  
mon expectation/moy plus d'astente de faute de temps esperant  
me bien toute que de boage vous diray la reste de painnes per  
moy en vze absence sustermes/escrpte de la main du secretaire  
qui se sustait d'astente priverment opres de vous <sup>et</sup> qui est et a jama  
sera

Vze loyal et plus assure sezbiteuz  
H<sup>aut</sup> <sup>de</sup> <sup>vous</sup> <sup>servir</sup> H<sup>aut</sup>

Figure 1.1: A Letter from King Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn, 1528. Luminarium:

Anthology of English Literature.

Figure in Appendices02:

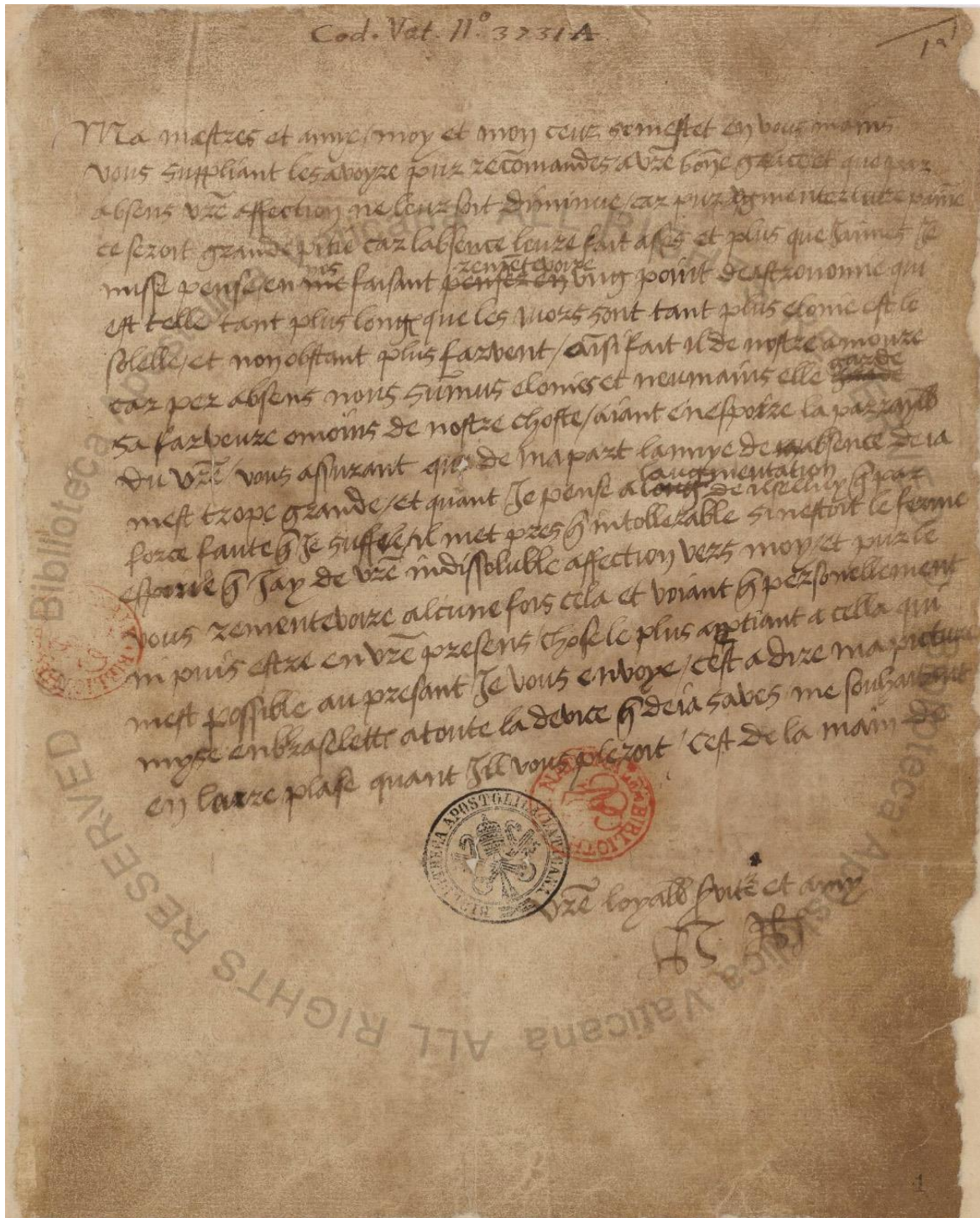
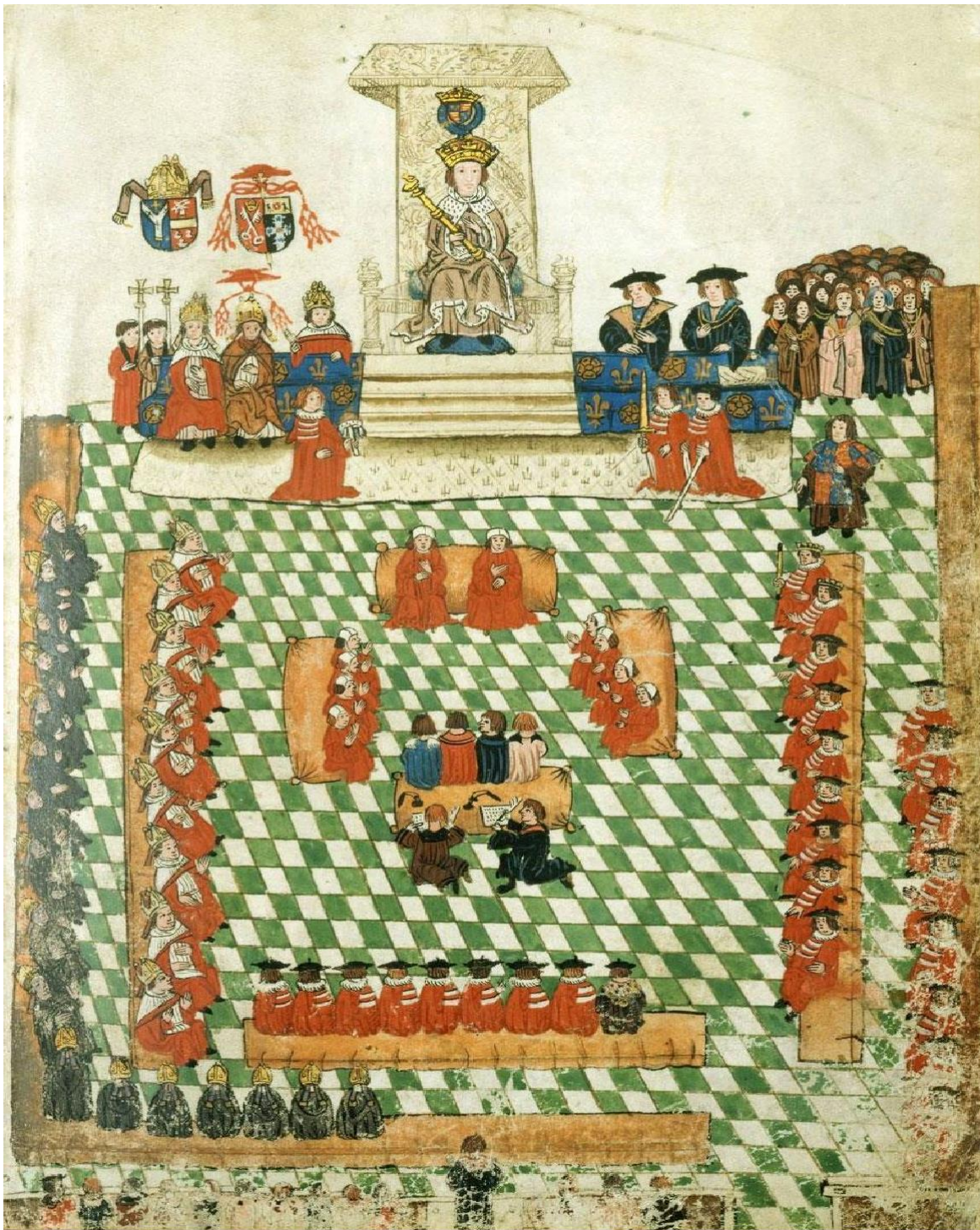


Figure 1.2: A Letter from King Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn, 1527. Downloaded from Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature.

Figure in Appendices 03:



**Figure 1.3:** A portrait demonstrates the Day of King Henry VIII's Speech in Parliament, Towards the Latter End of His Reign. Downloaded from Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature.

Figure in Appendices 04:



**Figure 3.1:** A portrait of King Henry VIII (1535) by Joos Van Cleve. Burghley House Collection. Downloaded from Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature.

Figure in Appendices 05:



**Figure 3.2:** A Portrait of Thomas Cromwell (1536) by Hans Holbein the Younger.

Downloaded from [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com).

Figure in Appendices 06:



**Figure 3.3:** The Unfinished Portrait of Jane Seymour, Tudor Queen by Hans Holbein the Younger. Shared by the Tudor travel guide.com. Downloaded from [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com).

Figure in Appendices 07:



**Figure 3.4:** A Portrait of Anne Boleyn the Second Wife of Henry VIII. Downloaded from [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com). Shared by joo.

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