

## Jeanette Winterson’s Encounter with History: *The Daylight Gate* as an Example of Historiographic Metafiction

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### Abstract

Postmodern rejection of objective knowledge and of the belief in language to provide a faithful representation of reality lead to the reappraisal of various notions including history and bring a different approach to its relation to literature. Coined by Linda Hutcheon, the term historiographic metafiction defines an experimental form of historical novel which problematizes the conventional notions of historiography. Jeanette Winterson’s *The Daylight Gate* focuses on the famous Pendle Witch Trial and develops a counter-history by employing the perspectives of those whose stories are excluded for ideological reasons. This paper aims to analyse *The Daylight Gate* as an example of historiographic metafiction in terms of its blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction and its deconstruction of the monolithic nature of history through alternative voices. This study also explores the ways in which Winterson demonstrates the subjectivity of historical discourse as well as its textual and constructed nature.

### Keywords

historiographic metafiction  
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### About Article

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## Jeanette Winterson’ın Tarihle Karşılaşması: Bir Tarih Yazımcı Üst Kurmaca Örneği Olarak *Günışığı Kapısı*

### Öz

Postmodernizmin nesnel bilginin varlığını ve gerçekliğin dil yoluyla yansıtılabileceği inancını reddetmesi tarih olgusu da dahil olmak üzere çeşitli kavramların yeniden değerlendirilmesine yol açmış, aynı zamanda tarih ve edebiyat ilişkisine de yeni bir bakış açısı kazandırmıştır. “Tarih yazımcı üst kurmaca” terimi geleneksel tarih anlayışını deneysel bir şekilde ele alarak sorunsallaştıran tarih romanlarını tanımlamak için ilk kez Kanadalı yazar ve eleştirmen Linda Hutcheon tarafından kullanılmıştır. Jeanette Winterson, 2012 yılında yayınlanan *Günışığı Kapısı* adlı romanında Pendle cadı mahkemelerinin kurgusallaştırılmış bir anlatısını sunar ve öyküleri görmezden gelinen, gizlenen ya da yok sayılan ötekileştirilmiş karakterlerin bakış açılarıyla yeni bir karşı tarih inşa eder. Bu çalışma, gerçeklik ve kurgu arasındaki sınırların bulanıklaştığı ve farklı sesler ve hikayeler aracılığıyla tarih kavramının bütüncül yapısının yeniden analiz edildiği *Günışığı Kapısı*’nı “tarih yazımcı üst kurmaca” örneği olarak incelemeyi amaçlar. Bu çalışma ayrıca Winterson’ın tarihsel söylemin özneliği ve çoğulluğunun yanı sıra metinsel ve kurmaca yapısını hangi yöntemlerle yansıttığını irdeler.

### Anahtar Sözcükler

tarih yazımcı üstkurmaca  
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Jeanette Winterson  
Günışığı Kapısı  
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## Introduction

The sceptical attitude postmodernism assumes regarding the notions of “truth” and “reality” leads to the re-evaluation of many realms, including historiography where the status and reliability of historical narrative have been examined by significant scholars such as Hayden White and Frederic Jameson. In his influential work, entitled *Tropics of Discourse* (1978), in which he scrutinizes the relationship between history and fiction, White touches upon the difficulty of obtaining an objective history and defines historical narratives as “verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences” (White, 1978, p. 82). White argues that historiography implies a process of “emplotment”, which is carried out by making stories out of chronicles. He regards the historian as a “storyteller” who is capable of producing a credible story out of an accumulation of facts, which do not have any meaning in their “unprocessed form”. During the process of “emplotment”, the historian cannot escape entirely from bias and he is inclined to repress and eliminate certain events, while highlighting some others. Moreover, White explains that in order to constitute a historical narrative by the use of historical records, which are always “fragmented” and “incomplete”, the historian has to employ “constructive imagination”, which leads him inevitably to “what must have been the case” (White, 1978, p. 84).

White draws attention to the correspondence between historiography and fiction in terms of the techniques they employ, such as “characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies” (White, 1978, p. 84) and underlines the fictional nature of historical narrative:

How a given historical situation is to be configured depends on the historian's subtlety in matching up a specific plot structure with the set of historical events that he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind. This is essentially a literary, that is to say fiction-making, operation (White, 1978, p. 85).

Similar to White Andrzej Gasiorek centers his arguments around the constructed nature of history and refers to history's dependence on narrative methods which are associated with literature. According to Gasiorek, historical sources have been recorded in the form of written documents and thus they are open to interpretation as any other written work, which tend to have multiple meanings rather than reflecting one single meaning. Postmodernism stresses out the textual nature of history and also the unattainability of historical reality, since

“[t]he interpreter has no access to an unmediated, pre-discursive historical real” (Gasiorek, 1995, p. 49).

In her seminal work, entitled *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988), Linda Hutcheon also underlines the problematic nature of history. Contrary to modernism, which is believed to possess a hostile attitude towards history due to its emphasis on the necessity of obliteration of the historical consciousness, postmodernism reveals a tendency to return to history. As Hutcheon (1988) points out, “There seems to be a new desire to think historically, and to think historically these days is to think critically and contextually [...] Modernism’s “nightmare of history” is precisely what postmodernism has chosen to face straight on”.

According to postmodernist thought, a natural affinity exists between history and literature, and Hutcheon (1988) evaluates both history and fiction as discourses “[t]hat both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past”. Coined by Hutcheon, the term “historiographic metafiction” is employed to identify novels that are “intensely self-reflexive but that also both re-introduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge” (Hutcheon, 2005, p. 275). By challenging the foundation of historical knowledge, historiographic metafiction rejects the singularity and transcendency of historicity and at the same time blurs the boundaries between history and fiction in order to reveal the constructed nature of the historical narrative.

Petru Golban (2018) states that: “The postmodern views on the individual subject, language, novel, society and the historical process shape the content of historiographic metafiction”. The concerns of historiographic metafiction go beyond the issue of history’s assertion of accurate and objective reflection of the past, it is also preoccupied with the problem of representation. In this context, Hutcheon (1989) 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”. Historiographic metafiction reveals that during the historicising process, the historian adopts an ideological and subjective perspective that leads him to represent the dominant discourse of the period, visible in the act of suppression or exclusion of the stories of the marginalized groups such as working class, ethnic minorities, gays and women. Therefore, historiographic metafiction concentrates on previously neglected subjects and through the deconstruction of the monologic discourses of canonical texts and

the development of counter-history, it gives voice to those whose past was excluded and also underlines the multiplicity of truths.

### **James I and Phenomenon of Witchcraft**

Published in 2012, Jeanette Winterson's *The Daylight Gate* is centered around the famous Pendle Witch Trial of 1612 and attempts to construct an alternative version of the "official" history, delivered through the perspectives of the marginalized characters who have been accused of witchcraft. Touching upon various issues such as love, religion, and conflict between Catholics and Protestants, black magic, the notions of history and reality, gender inequality, and violence against women, the novel is set in the early seventeenth century Lancashire, a period of strong political and religious instability for the country. The anxiety and uncertainty in the state which stemmed from the absence of a recognized heir seemed to come to an end with the accession to the English throne of a legitimate male monarch, James I, in 1603; however, his reign created a polarized nation in terms of religion, politics and economy. His ardent belief in the king's absolute authority given by God accompanied by his views which reduced parliament to a restricted institution, responsible only to provide consultancy if requested, led to frictions between the Parliament and James I. With regard to religion, it was also a turbulent era, in which the impacts of English Reformation, beginning with Henry VIII's conversion of the country's official religion to Protestantism which ended the hegemony of the Catholic Church in England, coexisted with Counter Catholic Reform that manifested itself in destructive attempts such as the Gunpowder Plot. The plot was organized by a group of Catholics, who planned to re-install a Catholic dynasty through James's daughter, Elizabeth, and it intended to blow up the Houses of Parliament with gunpowder. Yet, an anonymous letter led to the revelation of the plot which marked the beginning of a difficult period for Catholics.

The seventeenth century was also marked by a prevailing belief in witchcraft and James's policy concerning the issue had a considerable influence over both Scottish and British experiences and attitudes towards witchcraft. Through his connections with the Danish court, James paved the way for the dissemination of continental beliefs regarding witchcraft, which included the pact with the devil and Sabbath in Scotland and, as an agent of God on earth, he considered himself to be the greatest enemy of the devil. He personally interrogated the suspects in the North Berwick Witch Trials, during which more than one hundred people were accused of practising witchcraft and plotting to kill James and his wife, Anne, by engendering storms on their voyage from Denmark to Scotland. Having constructed a

hegemonic discourse related to witchcraft through his treatise *Daemonologie* (1597), in which he examined the notions of magic and sorcery; by adopting such a religio-political perspective, James had a crucial role in the enactment of English Witchcraft Act of 1604 that introduced harsher punishments than the ones existent during the Elizabethan period. Although James began to lose his profound interest for the witchcraft practices and developed a sceptical perspective in the subsequent years, the phenomenon of witchcraft retained its significance as it became a perfect medium for James's political ideals. By creating a destructive and riotous power, which was regarded as a menace to the social order, James found a way to assert the necessity of his absolute authority. Moreover, by positioning himself as the primary target of the Devil, James secured the significance of his existence and the supreme role he possessed as the Lord's Anointed. Through witchcraft, James assumed the pivotal role he aspired to, since he seized the opportunity to become the epitome of the ideal ruler who instructed and protected his subjects against this constructed threat. As Daniel Fischlin (1996) pointed out, "Such a myth was necessary to his political survival, especially in the perilous and anxiety producing political context prior to his ascension to the throne of England in 1603".

### **Lancashire Witches Revisited: Winterson's *The Daylight Gate* as Historiographic Metafiction**

Revolving around such a tumultuous period, Winterson's *The Daylight Gate* presents a fictionalised account of historical events that led up to notorious Pendle Hill Witch Trials. The novel begins with the ominous encounter between Alizon Device and the pedlar John Law whose refusal of Alizon's panhandling for pins incurs her wrath which eventuates in her bewitchment and maiming the pedlar with the help of her grandmother Demdike. Demdike's archrival, Mother Chattox gives evidence against them and when Demdike brings countercharges and accuses Chattox of "being a witch from the womb" (Winterson, 2012, p. 27), the magistrate of Pendle Forest, Roger Nowell, has no choice but to send them to Lancaster Castle, where they have been imprisoned in inhumane circumstances for months. The trial was conducted in August 1612, and the group included Alice Nutter, a wealthy landowner, along with the Demdike and Chattox families were convicted of witchcraft by the nine- year- old Jennet Device's testimony.

In her work, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), Hutcheon (1988) states that "Historiographic metafiction always asserts that its world is both resolutely fictive and yet undeniably historical, and that what both realms share is their constitution in and as

discourse". In her novel, Winterson establishes a historical context that encompasses realistic details, settings and historical characters, yet simultaneously she distorts the authenticity of this realm by sprinkling fantastic elements in it. The novel offers a sense of historicity through the presence of historical personages such as William Shakespeare, Thomas Potts, Roger Nowell, Christopher Southworth, Edward Kelley and John Dee, the members of the Device and Chattox families, and Alice Nutter, and also by the detailed depiction of the real places such as Read Hall, the Rough Lee, Malkin Tower, Newchurch in Pendle, Whalley Abbey. Moreover, the novel provides a realistic picture of the period through the narrativization of some historical and political events that had significant impacts on the era, such as the Gunpowder Plot, Protestant-Catholic tensions, the Witchcraft Act of 1604, the Lancashire Witch Trials, together with the references to James's policies and his *Daemonologie*, which reflects his obsession with "witchcraft and heresy of every kind- including those loyal to the old Catholic faith" (Winterson, 2012, p. 8). At the same time, Winterson subverts the historical reality by embedding some surreal elements in the novel: the Faustian pacts, which are signed in blood for eternal power and wealth, magic potions for everlasting youth, a talking spider, a severed head that speaks, the "Dark Gentleman", who is the devil himself, and the black masses he attends. *The Daylight Gate* blends the historical facts with the imaginary and fictional ones, hence problematizing the conventional notions of historiography. Winterson blurs the line between fiction and truth by inserting fictive elements within a historical discourse and presents the constructedness of history as well as fiction. Winterson creates a fantastic world, filled with magic and spell, where the boundary between life and afterlife is violated, and the past, the present, and the future are intertwined. Yet the novel also embodies political and historical facts regarding seventeenth-century England and in so doing situates the reader in the liminal space between fact and fiction. Moreover, the novel includes intertextual references to the other historical and literary texts such as, Puritan theologian William Perkins's *A Discourse on the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, James I's *Daemonologie* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which enable Winterson to convey a sense of reality and provide the reader's awareness of the "textualized traces of the literary and historical past" (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 127).

Hutcheon presents historiographic metafiction as a self-conscious narrative that engages with the subjectivity, multiplicity and uncertainty of past events. She states that:

Historiographic metafiction is self-conscious about the paradox of the totalizing yet inevitably partial act of narrative representation. [...] It traces the processing of events into facts, exploiting and then undermining the conventions of both novelistic realism and

historiographic reference. It implies that, like fiction, history constructs its object that events named become facts (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 78).

In a similar manner, in her novel, Winterson demonstrates that history is contingent upon the interpretation of the self and she emphasizes the constructed nature of the history which emerges in a state of uncertainty and conflict. Lancashire Witch Trials occupy a remarkable place in the history of witchcraft as the first recorded and documented witch trial. Although, *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancashire*, which was written by the recording clerk of the court, Thomas Potts, is supposed to be a mere account of the trials, as Winterson remarks it is “heavily dosed with Potts’ own views on the matter” (Winterson, 2012, p. 8).

Potts is convinced that Lancashire is infested with witches, as well as the Catholic conspirators who fled to the county after the Gunpowder Plot. Strongly influenced by the King’s beliefs, Potts assumes that practising witchcraft and following old religion are equally treacherous and throughout the novel, he reiterates the same claim, “witchery popery popery witchery” (Winterson, 2012, p. 30, 98, 99, 163), which discloses the religious and political concerns prevailed in the first half of the seventeenth century. He believes that “where there is one witch there are many” (Winterson, 2012, p. 28) and thus, from the very beginning of the novel, he is determined to convict all members of Demdike and Chattox families. In James’s England, where the “safety depended on hatred” (Winterson, 2012, p. 17), everything and everyone is suspicious for Potts, including Alice Nutter, Roger Nowell, and Shakespeare due to his connection with Catesby, the leader of the Gunpowder plotters, and even his play *Macbeth*. Although Jane Southworth is the only Southworth who has abandoned Catholicism, he does not hesitate to imprison her in Lancaster Castle in an attempt to entrap her brother, Christopher Southworth, who escaped from the prison after his involvement in the Gunpowder Plot. The discovery of any witch or Jesuit in Lancashire ensures Potts the royal favour he desires. When Nowell offers him to renounce the idea of catching Christopher Southworth, Potts replies: “Give up? The reward is vast. And think of the glory. The advancement. If I were instrumental in the capture of Christopher Southworth, King James would raise me up.” (Winterson, 2012, p. 32). It is obvious that Potts, who is expected to present an accurate portrayal of the trials, is not objective but rather follows his own ambitions and he can easily bend the historical truth in order to fulfil his personal satisfaction.

One of the issues Hutcheon touches upon in her work is the textuality of history, indicating that the past can only be accessed through texts, such as documents, chronicles and

evidence, which are all regarded as human constructs, and she adds that: "Even the institutions of the past, its social structures and practices, could be seen, in one sense, as social texts" (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 16). Postmodernism emphasizes the correspondence between literary and historical texts, which are signifying systems that shared the common characteristic of textualism and thus distorts the concept of historical veracity. In her novel, Winterson also draws attention to the constructed nature of history and she demonstrates that history is open to various interpretations and encompasses different layers of truth. The *Daylight Gate* displays the construction of historical reality through Thomas Pott's *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancashire*, in which Potts has neglected certain facts, while highlighting others during the textualization process, in order to comply with the dominant discourse of the period and presents how the creator of the text also becomes the creator of reality:

Potts was pleased with himself; he was writing a book.

'Shakespeare,' he thought as he scribbled away. 'Foolish fancy. This is life as it is lived.'

'Do you have to write a book?' asked Roger Nowell, who was sick of it all.

'Posterity. Truth. Record. Record. Truth-' [...] Here is the title page: "The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancashire by Thomas Potts, Lawyer".'

'I suppose it will take your mind off the fact that the King's spies have failed to catch Christopher Southworth- again' (Winterson, 2012, p. 194).

In her article, "Imagination under Pressure" Tatiana Golban (2012) argues that: "The postmodern emphasis on the real as inseparable from the constructed and the textual became the matter of concern of the historical fiction". Keeping in mind the Foucauldian notions of power and discourse, Winterson reveals that reality and history become ideologically structured by the hegemonic power of the period. Potts's primary aim is not to convey historical records as they are, but to create an official history, so as to vindicate the policies of James who "had two passions: to rid his new crowned kingdom of popery and witchcraft" (Winterson, 2012, p. 17). The *Daylight Gate* provides the background of this official history by revealing how people are manipulated and reality is distorted in order to constitute a historical narrative that fits the dominant ideology. This is reflected in the novel by the example in which Constable Hargreaves and Tom Pepper offer James Devere a chance to save himself and convince him to testify against his family and Alice Nutter:

You could save yourself. Testify against your kin and they will burn and you will be free. We'll send you quietly. Roger Nowell will get you a billet in Yorkshire. You'll have food to

eat, clothes to wear, a barn to sleep in, a fire in winter. You can get married [...] All you have to do is to confess to Roger Nowell that the meeting at Malkin Tower was a band of witches (Winterson, 2012, p. 87).

Believing that he can gain his freedom and extricate himself from the miserable life he has been doomed to, James accepts to give evidence against his family and states that his mother, Elizabeth Device, called a meeting at Malkin Tower on Good Friday to make a plan to release those in prison and to kill the gaoler at Lancaster Castle. Winterson reveals that in recording historical facts or while creating evidence for the trial, most characters are preoccupied with safeguarding their personal interests rather than historical accuracy. The testimony of Jennet Device is at the centre of Pendle Witch Trials. Disregarded by her family and sold by her brother to Tom Pepper, Jennet is leading a pathetic existence: “she was a sad sight, dirty and torn and bruised, her blonde hair in knots, her skin calloused from crawling and hiding” (Winterson, 2012, p. 116). When the head asks Jennet whether she wants her family to return or not “Jennet shook her own head. ‘Make sure they do not,’ said the head” (Winterson, 2012, p. 191). Jennet knows what she should do in order to preclude their release from prison. She tells the court that she has seen the Dark Gentleman with her grandmother, Old Demdike, and reveals the familiars her family possess and also divulges the poppet and the head used by her mother to murder Roger Nowell.

Jennet Device shows no emotion; she has no emotion to show. Jennet looks at them. Her brother who sold her. Her mother who neglected her. Her sisters who ignored her. Chattox who frightened her. Mouldheels who stank.

She names them one by one and condemns them one by one.

They were all convicted. Potts wrote it down. Convicted of ‘practices, meetings, consultations, muthers, charmes and villanies’ (Winterson, 2012, pp. 198-199).

Potts achieves to construct a historical account that coincides with King James's views on witchcraft by using the testimonies of two desperate children, James and Jennet Device, and the confessions of the accused witches, who do not have any choice but to concede allegations against them. Incarcerated in a dungeon, thirty feet under the ground with no light, where they feel “pain, thirst, tiredness even when a sleep” (Winterson, 2012, p. 93), they begin to lose their humanity and embrace the roles imposed upon them. Jane Southworth opens her mouth to the rain, the only thing which helps her to maintain her sanity, as she believes that together with the rain some of the outside gets in this dreadful place and imagines Hell: “...[I]s it like this? She thinks that the punishments of the Fiend are made out of human imaginings. Only humans can know what it means to strip a human being of human

being” (Winterson, 2012, p. 93). Chattox is in a state of madness during the trial: “She spits and raves. She curses. She wants to be what they say she is; a witch. What else is left for her to be?” (Winterson, 2012, p. 197). The accused women, whose voices are silenced and who are confined within the limits determined by patriarchy, are obliged to accept to be defined by the hegemonic ideology.

Shifts in perspectives throughout the novel display the existence of alternative historical discourses, which have been excluded or suppressed, and enable the reader to attain unrecorded versions of the past rather than official representation of history. Hutcheon (1988) asserts that: “[i]t is clear that, the protagonists of historiographic metafiction are anything but proper types: they are the ex-centrics, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history. [...] Even the historical personages take on different, particularized and ultimately eccentric status”. Winterson highlights the experiences of those, who are marginalised and made invisible, as they fail to comply with the accepted norms of the Jacobean society, and in so doing problematizes the monolithic aspect of history. Moreover, through “different histories and journeys of the past, Winterson raises a new understanding of gender, class and race in terms of re-evaluating history” (Arıkan, 2016, p. 246). The Pendle witches belong to the lowest social stratum, except Alice Nutter, whose trial for witchcraft with the Demdike and Chattox families remains a mystery, and they struggle to survive in desperate conditions by begging and prostitution. When Alice Nutter asks the last time Jennet ate, Elizabeth Device replies: “Three days ago, like the rest of us. The parson calls Lent a fast, for it suits the church to starve the poor” (Winterson, 2012, p. 38). Beyond the ideological, religious and political ones, there are various other reasons that paved the way for the stigmatization of those women as witches. Elizabeth’s marginalized position does not solely stem from her social and economic status but she is also ostracised due to her abject appearance which arouses fear and disgust. Yet, another accused witch, Mouldheels, is also portrayed as a grotesque figure: “Mouldheels had flesh that fell off her as though it were cooked. And her feet stank of dead meat” (Winterson, 2012, p. 36). Although she adopts a respectable position in the society, Alice Nutter is unable to avoid being peripheralized, since as an intelligent and independent woman who owns a disobedient nature, she stands outside the stereotypes and poses a serious threat to the patriarchal status quo. Hargreaves mentions the disturbance he feels: ““She rides astride like a man, and she rides with the bird even though no woman is a falconer. I tell you I don’t trust her. A woman astride and a falcon following- that’s unnatural”” (Winterson, 2012, p. 25). According to the men around her, there is something uncanny in Alice’s prosperity, her strange youthfulness, briefly in Alice herself. Her wealth, which she acquired through the

invention of a magenta dye that attracted the attention of Queen Elizabeth, is questioned by Nowell, who suspects the existence of a pact between Alice and the Devil:

You know that Faust makes a pact with Satan through his servant Mephistopheles. That pact brings immense wealth and power to those who will sign it in blood. [...] The wealth of such persons is often a mystery. They will buy a fine house, find ample funds, and yet, where does the money come from? (Winterson, 2012, p. 57).

Since Alice is perceived as a threat to the dominant status quo, she becomes a target for those who easily manipulate any official record in order to pursue their personal agenda and thus annihilate that threat.

Employing the decentralized perspectives of those, whose voices are suppressed and denied, Winterson constitutes a counter discourse, which creates a space for the disclosure of the neglected experiences of the marginalized groups. Hutcheon (1989) asserts that through historiographic metafiction we “[g]et the histories of the losers as well as the winners, of the regional as well as the centrist [...] and I might add, of women as well as men”. In line with Hutcheon’s statement, *The Daylight Gate* reveals the erased stories of women and children, who were exposed to violence and physical abuse as well as the Catholics, who were penalized due to their religious beliefs, hence Winterson accentuates the historical plurality that negates the status of history as a master narrative that represents one single and objective truth. The novel’s polyphonic nature enables the reader to obtain multiple voices and stories rather than the totalizing representation of the past.

### **Conclusion**

Postmodernism problematizes the conventional notions of historiography and highlights its relation to fiction through the narrative methods they employ. Historical sources are open to interpretation, similar to any form of fictive narrative, because of their textual nature and thus encompass multiple meanings rather than representing one single truth. Historiographic metafiction situates its narrative within a historical context and presents the constitution process of historical discourse by focusing on its constructedness and multiplicity.

*The Daylight Gate* presents a realistic and detailed picture of the Jacobean era, the places are real places and the characters Winterson employs are real people, although she has “taken liberties with their motives and their means” (Winterson, 2012, p. 9). However, this sense of authenticity is destroyed by the embedment of supernatural and fantastic elements. As an example of historiographic metafiction, the novel blends the imaginary with the

realistic elements and obscures the boundary between fact and fiction. Through Thomas Potts's *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancashire*, Winterson displays the ways in which history is constructed and questions objectivity and truth claim of history. Potts's work is supposed to be "an eye witness verbatim account" (Winterson, 2012, p. 8), however, he foregrounds certain facts while eliminating some others during the emplotment process, in an attempt to comply with King James's policies regarding witchcraft. His "official history", which discloses historiography's relation to subjectivity, its textual nature and its dependence on the prevailing ideology, is based on the testimonies of two miserable children and the confessions of the accused witches who do not have any choice but to concede the roles assigned to them.

Rather than employing a generalist perspective, Winterson prefers to convey historical incidents from the subjective perspectives of those who are exposed to ostracism due to their appearance, economic status or gender. By giving voice to their traumatic experiences, which have been excluded and suppressed, Winterson presents the existence of the unrecorded stories and challenges the monolithic nature of history. *The Daylight Gate* distorts the authority of representation of historical reality and draws attention to its uncertainty, subjectivity and constructed nature.

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