

Historiographic Metafiction: An Experimentation of Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* and *The Blind Assassin*

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Abstract

*This paper focuses on the brief history of Canadian literature by projecting the landscape of Canada, their culture, customs, and their literature. Then it introduces the major writers of Canadian literature including Margaret Atwood and her works. Finally, it introduces the technique of historiographic metafiction and how Margaret uses the technique in her two novels *Alias Grace* and *The Blind Assassin*. It deals with the novel *Alias Grace* where Margaret Atwood uses the technique of historiographic metafiction to rewrite Susanna Moodie's *Life in the Clearings* in a fictionalized way. It brings out the technique of historiographic metafiction found in Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin* where the story of two sisters, Iris and Laura, was taken from the historical event. Here in this novel, Margaret Atwood uses different kinds of narrative techniques where she makes Iris as the speaker to narrate the story. Margaret Atwood's two novel *Alias Grace* and *The Blind Assassin* have been analysed by interpreting it with the technique of historiographic metafiction.*

Keywords: Historiographic Metafiction, Narrative Techniques

INTRODUCTION

Canada is a multiracial country and attracts people from many parts of the world. Especially Canada has a wide variety of landscapes; the mountains, the prairies, lakes and rivers with many national provincial parks to protect the habitats. In Canada regionalist and geography continue to influence the various aspects of life even in modern times. As a nation Canada was not born on the battle field but through peaceful negotiations and consensus; because Canada has two founding cultures-French and English- it was seen as a place that is a cultural mosaic rather than a cultural melting pot. In Canada, natural environment has undergone major changes due to great technological developments. This is reflected to some extent in novels like Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and Ethel Wilson's *Swamp Angels* and also in Anita Van Hark's *The Tent Peg*. The changes in the social environment have been brought about in Canada mostly by the large immigration which has been taking place. As the critic Northrop Frye observed, Canadian Literature is haunted by the overriding question "where is here?" "Thus, metaphoric mappings of people and places became literary imagination."

Robert William Service (1874-1958), Canadian poet, he emigrated from England to Canada in 1894. The works of the British writer Rudyard Kipling influenced his poems. Two of Service's best-known poems, "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" and "The Cremation of Sam McGee," appeared in the volume of poetry *Songs of a Sorrow* (1907). Service also wrote *Ballads of a Cheechako* (1909), *Rhymes of a Rolling Stone* (1912), *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man* (1916), and *Ballads of a Bohemian* (1920). Duncan Campbell Scott (1862-1947), Canadian poet and writer, born in Ottawa, Ontario, Scott's work reflects his travels his knowledge of indigenous and emphasizes the heroic conflict of humanity and nature. His collections of poetry include *The Magic House* (1893), *Labor and the Angel* (1898), *Lundy's Lane* (1916), *Beauty of Life* (1912), *The Green Cloister* (1935), and *The Circle of Affection* (1947). His short stories are collected in, *In the Village of Viger* (1896) and *The Witching of Elspie* (1923). Susanna Moodie was written from the perspective of a settler. Moodie and her family eventually settled in the small but growing town of Belleville, and in her 1871 revision of the book not only does she acknowledge the changes that had taken place in the society around her, but she also reveals a growth in her own independence and commitment to Canada.

Margaret Atwood, an internationally known contemporary Canadian woman writer. She is one of the most important writers of her generation. For more than twenty years she has published a body of work-novels, poetry and essays-that is consistently challenging, innovative, originals, intelligent and uncompromising. Margaret Atwood, (born November 13, 1939 in Ottawa, Ontario), she is the second of three children of Margaret Dorothy, a former dietitian and nutritionist, and Carl Edmund Atwood, an entomologist. Due to her father's ongoing research in forest entomology, Atwood spent much of her childhood in the backwoods of Northern Quebec

and back and forth between Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie, and Toronto. She became a voracious reader of Literature, Dell pocket book mysteries, Grimm's Fairy Tales, Canadian animal stories, and comic books. She attended Leaside High school in Leaside, Toronto and graduated in 1957.

Atwood began writing at the age of six and realized she wanted to write professionally when she was sixteen. In 1957 she began studying at Victoria College in the University of Toronto. Her professors included Jay Macpherson, and Northrop Frye. She graduated in 1961 with a Bachelor of Arts in English (honors) and minors in philosophy and French. In late 1961, after winning the E.J. Pratt Medal for her privately printed book of poems, *Double Persephone*, she began graduate studies at Harvard's Radcliffe in 1962 and pursued further graduate studies at Harvard University for two years, but never finished because she never completed a dissertation on "The English Metaphysical Romance" she has taught at the University of Tuscaloosa (1985), where she was visiting M.F.A. Chair, and New York University, where she was Berg Professor of English. Atwood's first novel, *The Edible Woman* (1969), won international acclaim; other novels followed: *Surfacing* (1972), *Lady Oracle* (1976), and *Life Before Man* (1979). Objecting to the classification of some of her works as feminist, she pointed out that she began dealing with themes such as growing up female in the 1950s and sex-role definitions before they were popularized by the women's Liberation movement of the 1970s. *Girls* (1977), *Bodily Harm* (1981), *Murder in the Dark* (1983), *Bluebeard's Egg* (1983), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1983), *Cat's Eye* (1988), *Wilderness Tips* (1991), *Good Bones* (1992), *The Bride* (1993), *The Blind* (2000), *Cat's Eye* (1988), *Wilderness Tips* (1991), *Good Bones* (1992), *The Robber Bride* (1993), *Bones and Morality* (1995), *Alice Grace* (1996), *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Penelopiad* (2005), *The Tent* (2006), *Moral Disorder* (2006), *The Year of the Flood* (2009). *Alias Grace* is a historical fiction novel, first published in 1996 by McClelland & Stewart; it won the Canadian Giller Prize and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. The story is about the notorious 1843 murders of Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery in Upper Canada. Two servants of the Kinnear household, Grace Marks and James McDermott, were convicted of the crime. McDermott was hanged and Marks was sentenced to life imprisonment. Although the novel is based on factual events, Atwood constructs a narrative with a fictional doctor, Simon Jordan, who researches the case. Although ostensibly conducting research into criminal behavior, he slowly becomes personally involved in the story of Grace Marks and seeks to reconcile the mild-mannered woman he sees with the murder of which she has been convicted. Atwood also wrote an earlier work, the 1974 CBC Television film *The Servant Girl*, about Marks. However, in *Alias Grace* Atwood says that she has changed her opinion on the question of Marks' culpability.

The novel is written from various points of view, told mostly through the eyes of Grace Marks and her "alienist" doctor, Doctor Jordan (employing first and third person respectively).

Grace Marks claimed various interpretations of her involvement in the murders including one in which she states that she could not remember what happened on the day of the murders and another in which she temporarily possessed by dead girlfriend of hers. Historiographic metafiction is a term originally coined by literary theorist Linda Hutcheon. According to Hutcheon, in "A Poetics of Postmodernism", works of historiographic metafiction are "those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages". Historiographic Metafiction is a quintessentially postmodern art form, with reliance upon textual play, parody and historical reconceptualization. *The Blind Assassin* centers on the protagonist, Iris Chase, and her sister Laura, who committed suicide shortly after the Second World War ended. Iris, now an old woman, recalls the events and relationships of her childhood, youth and middle age, as well as her unhappy marriage to Richard Griffen, a rival of her industrialist father. Interwoven into the novel is a story within a story, a roman à clef attributed to Laura and published by Iris about Alex Thomas, a politically radical author of pulp science fiction who has an ambiguous relationship with the sisters. That novel itself contains a story within a story, the eponymous *Blind Assassin*, a science fiction story told by Alex's fictional counterpart to that novel's protagonist, believed to be Laura's fictional counterpart.

The novel takes the form of a gradual revelation, illuminating both Iris' youth and her old age before coming to the pivotal events of her and Laura's lives around the time of the Second World War. As the novel unfolds, and the novel-within-a-novel becomes ever more obviously inspired by real events, it is revealed that Iris, not Laura, is the novel-within-a-novel's true author and protagonist. Though the novel-within-a-novel had long been believed to be inspired by Laura's romance with Alex, it is revealed that *The Blind Assassin* was written by Iris based on her extramarital with Alex. One author often associated with historiographic metafiction is Michael Ondaatje, in works such as *Running in the Family*, *In the Skin of a Lion*, *The English Patient* and *Coming through Slaughter*. Salman Rushdie's novels *Shame* and *Midnight's Children* can also be regarded as historiographic metafiction in their re-writing of the history of Pakistan and India in the early- and mid-twentieth century.

An example of historiographic metafiction is Daphne Marlatt's novel *Ana Historic*. It is the process of re-writing history through a work of fiction in a way that has not been previously recorded. In Marlatt's novel, this is achieved through journal entries of a fictional character that represents a form of reality for women both in the past and in the present. Often, historiographic metafiction refers to the loss of the feminine voice in history. Erin Moure's poetry broaches this subject.

ALIAS GRACE

Alias Grace is Margaret Atwood's first historical novel. The main character is the Irish-born immigrant Grace Marks, who lived in Toronto during the nineteenth century. In 1843 the sixteen-year-old maidservant and the stable boy, James McDermott, were accused of having brutally murdered their employer, Thomas Kinnear, and the housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery. James McDermott was hanged on November 23rd 1843, for the murder of Thomas Kinnear, while Grace's capital sentence was commuted to life imprisonment because of her sex and young age. The murder of Nancy Montgomery - who had been Kinnear's mistress and died pregnant - was never tried, as there didn't seem to be any need for it, with the culprits having been already punished for the murder of the wealthy landowner, Thomas Kinnear. Moreover Alias Grace is a well-crafted work of imagination, which examines the convoluted relationship between men and women, and between affluent and those without social position. It potently combines violence, the forces of sexual attraction, and a practical insight into the harsh existence of the poor, with a tender and surprising lyricism.

Atwood's Alias Grace is concerned with a teenage girl, Grace Marks, who is brought up by her parents in miserable conditions and she is thrust out into the evil world and has to suffer attempts of molestation in the public world. This misery of hers culminates in the assassination of a housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery and the consequent trial and her subsequent life in the asylum and penitentiary. The story of Grace Marks, what happens to her and the events connected with these, is central to the world. In the novel Alias Grace by Margaret Atwood the author uses many narrative techniques to convey the feelings and thoughts of the main character Grace Mark. Atwood uses a mixture of metaphors, similes and motifs to describe what is happening to Grace and her point of view through her ordeal. Grace, an obviously troubled girl narrates the above and through metaphors the reader gets a better understanding of her confusion. Throughout the entire piece Atwood uses fantastic metaphors that illustrate vivid mental images.

The first part is named the 'Jagged Edge'. In quilting this is a pattern made a square with sharp, piercing and pricking points projecting on all the four sides. The second square is the 24 year old Grace Marks, the star attraction of penitentiary who is killed at overbearing, one believes that she is good enough and quite enough, but it is not easy being quiet and good. The second part is named after another design in quilting, namely 'Rocky Road'. The third pattern, the selected is the pattern called 'puss in the corner'. Here we get the first glimpse of the cat through the words of Susanna Moodie as she describes Grace in her life in the Clearings. This pattern in quilting brings out yet another face of Grace Marks. The face of Grace Marks as a servant in the governor's palace. Hereafter, that is from the fourth part onwards till the Grace gets the information regarding her amnesty by the Canadian government we find her only as a seamstress incessantly quilting patterns after patterns like

1. Young Man's Fancy

2. Broken dishes
3. Secret lover
4. Snake fence
5. Fox Fence
6. Hearts and gizzards
7. Lady of Lake
8. Falling Timbers.

Quilting is a creative work. The seamstress selects from the existing pattern which are accepted, appreciated and adored. Yet the craftsmanship of the quilters allows them ample freedom in the re-creation of the accepted patterns. On the other hand two methods of characterization often distinguished are that in which the author shows without comment a character words and actions implying rather than describing their traits, or tells the reader directly about the characters.

Grace is good at quilting. She has been quilting since she was four years old. This habit of quilting which she inherited from her mother is perceivable in the character of Grace throughout her life presented in the novel. Grace encounters sexual advancements from many quarters. To begin with, while she travels in a coach, the co-passenger tries to nestle against her. The same passenger tries his erotic advancements in an inn and it is Jeremy who rescues her. When Grace's employer takes liberties with her, she has no other alternative but to quit the job. Grace sees Mr. Kinnear staring at her bare knees, while she is scrubbing and rubbing the floor. It is through some clever excuses that she gets away from McDermott's wily trap. Even Dr. Bannerling and the warders of the prison try to exploit her sexually. To Susanna Moodie, Grace is a celebrated murderess who is envious of Nancy's relationship with Mr. Kinnear and who instigated McDermott to do away with Nancy and Kinnear. Moodie presents Grace as a culprit. On the other hand, Atwood gives a new dimension to the whole character of Grace in *Alias Grace*; Grace is made a really complex character which denies a simplistic explanation.

Opinions vary whether Grace is a culprit or victim and whether she is to be hanged or not. It is very difficult to form a conclusion regarding this issue. However there can be no doubt that is a woman who is more sinned against than sinning. Nancy is the house-keeper and mistress of Kinnear. Whenever Mr. Kinnear is away, she is amiable and affectionate to Grace. Then her behavior is courteous, and she doesn't hesitate to smile and crack jokes. But whenever Kinnear is present at home she acts like a tigress. She never allows Grace Marks to go before Kinnear. Also she doesn't like being put in the wrong by Mr. Kinnear. She is afraid of McDermott. Thomas Kinnear, a middle aged bachelor comes from a Lowland Scots family from Kinlock, near Cupar in Fife. Although people spread rumors about him and Nancy, he never cares about them, and lives in the palacious house Richmond Hill. His chief interest lies in hunting, riding on horseback and reading. Being a hypochondriac he is always concerned about

his health. Even though he is kind towards servants he sees to it that he gets things done from them. In the words of Dr. Simon Jordan, Mac Kenzie is short, pear shaped man with narrow shoulders and a comfortable little belly swelling under his tartan vest and with a pocked and tuberos nose. He has small but observant eyes. He is not a lawyer with a lot of professional experience. But still he takes up the case of Grace. He knows that Grace is guilty. But he does see the loopholes and he argues with it and he comes off with it and he comes off with flying colors in reducing the hanging to life term imprisonment. The success of Grace's legal case makes him a famous lawyer. Her historical events as well as historical figures are referred to or investigated in order to both posit the necessity of history and investigate it as a demonstrable discourse. Each heroine addresses multiple versions of truth, the construction of history as myth, power issues and the human construct, as well as problematic narrative voices, including the unreliable narrator. I argue that Canadian women's historiographic metafiction re-examines traditional historical narratives in order to reveal the wounds of Canada's past and write women back into history from which they have traditionally been excluded.

THE BLIND ASSASSIN

Set in the time period from the late nineteenth century to the end of twentieth century, *The Blind Assassin* can be deemed as *The Chase Saga* in which Iris historicizes the past of the Chase family, from the rise of the button factory to its replacement by Griffen-Chase Royal Consolidated. Corresponding to the development of industrialization, the button business faces the ups and downs in the historical contexts of wars, recession, etc. This historical setting of capitalism, and the two World Wars, moreover, is intertwined with the narrative focus of the maternal lineage – Adelia, Liliana, Iris, Aimee, and then Sabrina – in the Chase family. Though not in the center of their family business, the first few generations of the female characters have their lives, and especially their marriage, closely connected to it, serving either as objects of exchange or as the sole manager to salvage the family business or maintain its financial balance. Iris's grandmother, Adelia Montfort, is a daughter of a once prosperous family that had earned their fortunes in the railroad industry. Because of the downgrading of her family, Adelia is married to Benjamin, whose button factory is at the peak of its luck. Marriage is an act of trade also for Iris, who is married to Richard for the same reason as her grandmother: money, only that by then, in 1930s, it is the button factory that faces the crisis of closing and Iris's marriage is how her father saves their family factory.

Iris's mother, though not a valuable object as Adelia and Iris serve in their marriage, does function to maintain the operation and order of the button factory during the First World War. Thereby, woman is an object of exchange for the continuity of accumulating money. Other than marriages, many aspects of woman's living condition are detailed in Iris's memoir. Iris records a past as though she is a historian documenting events. Yet, how is her writing different from official history? Why does she write? How does she relate official documents to a personal family

history? This chapter aims to examine Iris's writings to show how she achieves self-assertion by recollecting and reconstructing her past life. One of the techniques used often in the novel is the representative official recording: newspaper reports. The death of Laura is a classical one in its contrast between Iris's account and the newspapers'. In the beginning of the book, we have seen Iris's suspended version of Laura's death. Readers are led to doubt that Laura's death may not be a simple suicide. Followed by Iris's suspicious version, newspaper clippings report the event which has a very different focus as a conclusion. After ruling out the possibilities of Laura's suicidal part by Iris's statement only, the news concludes, "The accident has occasioned renewed protests over the state of the streetcar tracks on this stretch of roadway" (3).

In other words, Laura's death means a reminder to avoid public dangers for government. The effect appears often in Iris's memoir. As a family saga, the book is often times crossing the line of personal with political in a humorous way. When the news of Laura's runaway has been reported fictively in *The Toronto Star*, it ends in that the whole incidence is the fault of "postal delivery," and appeals for government's attention (258). Like the death of Laura, those events become an agenda for newspapers to present to government. The public concerns issued in each newspaper clipping are used here as propaganda to call for government's attention in seeing the problems and making a better life for people, while the significance of the cause of the event disappears. Iris's delineation of Laura's missing and death is comparatively a long story and enticing process for readers to go through. Under such comparison, the authenticity in official history thus seems comical and no longer a formal and realistic representation that we usually take for granted.

Another way people retrieve the past is through art, but again how art presents what happens is, in the novel, called into question. Port Ticonderoga, the location of the button factory, is named by Colonel Parkman, who led a decisive war during American Revolution. Therefore, there is a statue in town to remember him. But the statue of Colonel Parkman is from imagination, namely, nobody ever saw him or knew what he looked like, "since he left no pictorial evidence of himself and the statue wasn't erected until 1885, but he looks like this now. Such is the tyranny of Art" (145). The non-realistic statue of Colonel Parkman is well-accepted by the town people without doubt. The town's name and the statue even let some travelers misunderstand that the town is where the war took place back then. Those misconceptions resulting from artwork are rarely perceived by people because they are mostly intimidated by the word "art" which generates a rigid image that is authoritative and prestigious. Another bias resulting from art's monopolization is embodied in the young Iris's attitude toward Callista, an "artist" from outside of the town. "I was in awe of Callista because she was an artist, and was consulted like a man, and strode around the shook hands like one as well, and smoked cigarettes in a short black holder, and knew about Coco Chanel" (147).

The child Iris hardly knows the nature of Callista's work, despite her innocence, she is still convinced by the word "artist" as a title worth revering like the effect the word "history" generates. When Callista comes to Ticonderoga, she changes the stereotype of woman in Iris's eyes. Unlike other women in the town Iris used to see, the "artist", Callista acts as a man, and a man's words are powerful and convincing. This equation of art and masculine power exemplifies people's bias: men connected to influential power and woman to a weak one. Such bias reveals people's superficiality in perceiving the world. This awareness of the danger of being blind enables us to bridge the distance between self and others. In the case of Iris, she first writes to gain self-assertion, and then widens the scope to mend her relations with others. In addition to her personal justification, Iris's writing brings the lives of Alex and Laura into the center of the history. Hilde Staels says, "Both Laura and Alex are marginalized by bourgeois society, Alex being doubly marginalized as an orphan. Laura acts strangely from the point of view of dominant society" (157). Because of Alex and Laura's unusual behavior and mode of thinking, they are ruled off the stage in the orthodox system. Alex and Laura are brought back to the center with Iris's writing. Iris published her work under the name of Laura, and creates a posthumous fame for her sister. As for Alex, Iris's memoir creates a space of Alex, in which his image is more positive than the one people learn from the official account, an extreme agitator. Other than this, those intricately-nested stories reflect the lives of those female protagonists and explain their influence on each other, in which Atwood's concern with women reverberates again and again. While creating a community for women, Iris invites an audience into her history.

CONCLUSION

Margaret Atwood is a literary phenomenon in the realm of Canadian Literature. She has been a prolific and perennial writer. Her unique caliber is her knack of experimentation with different techniques in her role as a novelist. Every novel of hers is a new and novel idea and technique. This is one of the salient features that distinguish her from other Canadian novelists. The Introductory chapter unravels the evolution of Canadian literature with special focus on Canadian fiction. The chapter has also dealt with the emergence of the women writers who have established their fame and name in the firmament of Canadian literature. The chapter has dealt with Atwood as a writer too. A brief survey of Atwood's main fictional works has been done to trace the tempo and temperament of Atwood's writings.

Alias Grace is Margaret Atwood's first historical novel. The main character is the Irish-born immigrant Grace Marks, who lived in Toronto during the nineteenth century. In 1843 the sixteen-year-old maidservant and the stable boy, James McDermott, were accused of having brutally murdered their employer, Thomas Kinnear, and the housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery. James McDermott was hanged on November 23rd 1843, for the murder of Thomas Kinnear, while Grace's capital sentence was commuted to life imprisonment because of her sex and young age. The murder of Nancy Montgomery - who had been Kinnear's mistress and died pregnant -

was never tried, as there didn't seem to be any need for it, with the culprits having been already punished for the murder of the wealthy landowner, Thomas Kinnear. In the novel *Alias Grace*, author Margaret Atwood retells the story of Grace Marks, a real nineteenth-century Canadian woman who was accused of, and spent thirty years in jail for, the murder of two people. These murders were the most sensationalized story of the mid-1800s, and accounts of the trial and aspects of Marks's life were well publicized. Atwood was first attracted to this story through the works of so-called Canadian journalist Susanna Moodie, who wrote about a wildly crazy Grace Marks. In real life, Grace Marks, a sixteen-year-old Irish immigrant, was sentenced to life imprisonment for her role (which was never fully defined) in the murder of her employer Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery. Kinnear and Montgomery were having an affair, and many people have speculated that Marks, who was recently brought into the Kinnear household as a servant, was jealous. Montgomery, after all, was a maid, not the mistress of the house, and Marks resented Montgomery's airs of superiority. At least, that is one version of the story.

In *The Blind Assassin*, three stories are intertwined in this complex novel; in the end, they become one. In a series of flashbacks, the elderly Iris Chase Griffen writes of her long life. At the outset, newspaper clippings present three tragic deaths from 1945 to 1975: sister, husband, and daughter. Iris's pretty, younger sister, Laura, died at age 25 when she drove her car off a bridge. Two years later, Iris published Laura's novel, *Blind Assassin*, to critical acclaim, projecting the author to posthumous fame. One week later, Iris was widowed when her husband drowned. Then many years later, Iris's daughter, Aimee, breaks her neck and dies from the ravages of drug and alcohol abuse. Iris also loses care of her only grandchild, four-year old Sabrina. Iris looks back on the circumstances before and after these deaths. Growing up in small-town Ontario without a mother, Iris was expected to look after Laura. But the younger girl's guileless intensity inspired exasperation and jealousy, as well as affection. In the 1930s, the sisters managed to hide a young radical, Alex Thomas, in the family attic before he escaped to Spain; they both fell in love. But at age nineteen, Iris is forced to enter a joyless marriage to wealthy Richard Griffen out of obedience to her father who hoped that the union would save his factory. It did not.

Laura is bossed by the politically ambitious Richard and his domineering sister, Winifred. Defiance and maternity allow Iris to carve out her own space within the confines of the social situation. But she is increasingly estranged from the romantic, inscrutable Laura who is eventually sent to an "asylum" where she has an abortion. Upon her release, the sisters reconnect, only to hurt each other with painful revelations (unrevealed here to avoid spoiling the effect for readers; some will have guessed them in advance). The other two of the three stories stem from Laura's acclaimed novel "*Blind Assassin*," parts of which are interspersed. On one level, it relates the passionate affair of a refined woman (very like the author) and a political fugitive

(very like Alex) who meet in his sordid hiding places. On another level, it is an Ali Baba-esque fairy tale, invented by the lovers, about a cruel society in which child-labor, ritualistic rape, and human sacrifice are routine. The killers are children who have been blinded by their enforced work knotting beautiful rugs.

Historiographicmetafiction is a term originally coined by literary theorist Linda Hutcheon. According to Hutcheon, in "A Poetics of Postmodernism", works of historiographicmetafiction are "those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages". Historiographicmetafiction is a quintessentially postmodern art form, with reliance upon textual play, parody and historical re-conceptualization. Moreover historiographicmetafiction is, rather than what it is not, is basically a text that draws attention to the process of interacting with the past-with the documents, stories, and "facts" that make up that past. Historiographicmetafiction that is centered on history's textually and towards an approach that concentrates on the affective and disruptive ways in which tactile encounters with architectural places and material objects shape our investments in the past. In these two novels, there are plenty of elements which can be categorized under the term 'HistoriographicMetafiction' which can be analyzed with the use of postmodern perspective. Therefore, with the use of postmodern perspective, one can clearly see how Margaret Atwood has skillfully uses the technique of historiographicmetafiction in her novels, *The Blind Assassin* and *Alias Grace*.

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