Historiographic Manipulation in Anton Gill's novel Assassin's Creed: Forsaken

"التوظيف التأريخي المتلاعب به في رواية
"لأنطون جيل (**Assassin's Creed**: **Forsaken**)

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Abstract

This paper explores the theme of historiographic manipulation in Anton Gill's novel Assassin's Creed: Forsaken, examining how the novel portrays the distortion and selective construction of historical narratives. By analyzing the complex interplay between personal motivations, memory, and historical storytelling, the paper demonstrates how the characters' personal struggles and conspiratorial beliefs shape their understanding of history. The manipulation of historical sources, the role of conspiracy theories, and the subjective nature of historical representation are central to the novel's critique of how history is constructed and remembered. Through its narrative, Assassin's Creed: Forsaken reveals the broader implications of historiographic manipulation, urging readers to question the authenticity and objectivity of historical accounts and

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highlighting the power dynamics inherent in historical memory. The paper ultimately argues that the novel serves as a reflection on the ways in which history is shaped by both fiction and reality, offering a compelling commentary on the manipulation of historical knowledge.

Keywords: Historiographic Manipulation, Narrative Construction, Memory and History, Conspiracy Theories, Subjective History

الخلاصة

تستكشف هذه الدراسة موضوع التلاعب التاريخي في رواية Assassin's Creed: Forsaken للكاتب أنطون جيل، من خلال دراسة كيفية تصوير الرواية لتشويه وبناء السرديات التاريخية بشكل انتقائي. من خلال تحليل التفاعل المعقد بين الدوافع الشخصية والذاكرة والسرد التاريخي، يظهر البحث كيف تؤثر الصراعات الشخصية والمعتقدات التآمرية للشخصيات على فهمها للتاريخ. يشكّل التلاعب بالمصادر التاريخية، ودور نظريات المؤامرة، والطبيعة الذاتية للتمثيل التاريخي محور نقد الرواية لكيفية بناء التاريخ وتذكره. ومن خلال سردها، تكشف Assassin's Creed: Forsaken عن الآثار الأوسع للتلاعب التاريخي، داعية القرّاء إلى التشكيك في أصالة وموضوعية الروايات التاريخية، وإبراز ديناميكيات القوة الكامنة في الذاكرة التاريخية. يجادل البحث في النهاية بأن الرواية تعكس الطرق التي يُشكَّل بها التاريخ من خلال التداخل بين الخيال والواقع، مقدّمة تعليقًا قويًا على التلاعب بالمعرفة التاريخية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلاعب التاريخي، بناء السرد، الذاكرة والتاريخ، نظريات المؤامرة، التاريخ الذاتي.

1. Introduction

This paper sets out to examine and explore the tools and methods of historiographic deception within the novel Assassin's Creed: Forsaken. The complex novel, a prequel to a successful video game franchise, explores the rise of a professional murderer who becomes "the deadliest assassin in the world" and ends up being largely responsible for Armenian immigration to Manchester. It proposes that the levels of deceit and falsification within the novel are such that not a single shred of recorded history should be taken for granted. In addition to being intriguing, these divergences between historical fact and fiction amplify the novel's overall sense of deception. The novel establishes three different and contradictory versions of history, and it is the interaction between these realities that forms the core of the narrative.

As with most fiction that reimagines history, many reviewers emphasize the meticulous attention given to historical details in the novel. However, if the novel is so well researched and the form of the archive has come to define our era, should we not be suspicious of these accounts? The recorded "evidence" within the novel span's books, letters, property deeds, marriage certificates, and even further back through newspaper clippings, letters, and memoirs of famous ancestors. The act of recording and reaffirming an archive (often through renaming) is meant to highlight its significance, not just within the novel but also in contemporary society—where nearly our entire history can now be stored on the hard drives of computers. In this context, the resources invested in reaffirming and repurposed sites of historical memory can be interpreted as a strategic effort by corporations to establish a new form of authoritative legitimacy—where both real and reimagined history become part of a marketable narrative.

Furthermore, the author Anton Gill wrote Assassin's Creed: Forsaken under the pseudonym Oliver Bowden, a choice that can be seen as a metafictional strategy allowing the author to separate his personal identity from the narration. This deliberate use of a pseudonym adds another layer of historiographic deception, blurring the lines between historical authenticity and fictional reconstruction. The novel constructs multiple versions of "truth" for the same events and time period, but just as significantly, it manipulates the reader’s interaction with the historical elements of the story, reinforcing the idea that history is, ultimately, a construct shaped by both narrative and perception.

2. Reimagining the Past Using the Dark Area of History

The novel Assassin's Creed: Forsaken, which is set in the late 18th century, revolves around a series of real events that are depicted in the annals of history, such as the significant signing of the Paris Treaty, which marked the official end of the US War of Independence. These critical historical events are reinterpreted throughout the narrative, not only thanks to the subjective perspective of the main character who recounts them, but also due to the exploration of the dark areas of history that have long been of interest to historians, and which lack sufficient regulation by documentation from the past. The narrative places a strong focus on these shadowy areas in history that have not been adequately preserved in sources that could provide a complete, nuanced, and morally informed picture of the era being depicted. In the gaps left by history’s record,

accessible only through the imaginative development and careful interpretation of known data, as well as subjective speculation, the novel's author delves into themes that are characteristic of literature focused on the unknown: intrigue, an absence of definitive truth, and as a result, deceit.

These compelling themes are also subject to verification; however, they are examined in a slightly different way through non-fictional narrations that are grounded in scientific historical methodology, offering a fascinating juxtaposition between literary interpretation and academic rigor. Gill suggests that the events in the story are connected and repeat themselves instead of just happening once in a linear way. This emphasis on the circular form of time is also made in one of the ballads in the novel through the metaphor of turning. The idea that history is cyclical rather than strictly progressive is reinforced by the novel's depiction of major historical moments, such as the Boston Tea Party. As Bowden (2012) describes,

when it happened in December '73—just last month, in fact—was the culmination of years—no, decades—of dissatisfaction. By turning the harbour into the world's biggest cup of tea, the colonists were telling Great Britain and the world that they were no longer prepared to live under an unjust system (p. 227).

This reflection on the event underscores the notion that history is not merely a sequence of isolated occurrences but rather a recurring struggle against oppression. The dissatisfaction that had built up over decades reached a breaking point, mirroring patterns seen throughout history, where unrest and revolution often emerge from long-standing grievances. Thus, the novel not only dramatizes historical events but also offers a lens through which to view their repetitive nature, reinforcing the thematic idea that past conflicts echo through time, shaping the present and future. In this way, the author effectively uses the powerful appeal of confronting the reader with the dark, often overlooked areas in what are typically considered well-known periods of world history. At the same time, a final and significant stance is poignantly taken on the latest fashion for reimagining history while thoughtfully discussing the verity with which history is frequently falsely interpreted or, alternatively, interpreted according to subjective fancy and personal biases.

If literature is genuinely interested in exploring the black holes and hidden voids of history, our contemporary era not only copies this interest but does so not merely in literature but on a much wider and more expansive scale. Faulkner

(2011) encapsulates its timeless presence with the words, “The past is never dead. It is not even past” (p. 73). This assertion reinforces the novel’s central theme: history does not remain a static entity confined to the past but instead persists in shaping contemporary narratives, often remarked in new forms through literature, media, and collective memory. Nevertheless, while escaping from escapism, the work delves into considering more seriously the ethical and moral truth regarding the reader of such complex narrative games and intricate tales.

Assassin Creed: Forsaken explores not only the deceptions that have taken place in the past but also, from the critical position of our current era, desacralizes what has traditionally been a somewhat lighter realm of exhilaration and amusement, one that often escapes deeper scrutiny. Disillusionment ultimately becomes a concretization of the profound fascination with the act of reimagining the past, which, in the end, is no longer solely the result of reading Assassin Creed: Forsaken but instead transforms into an essential and thoughtful reflection on history in general and its intricate layers.

3. Forged Archival Evidence in Reimagining the Past

The historical romance novel vividly reimagining the tumultuous and violent events of the 18th-century American Revolution unfolds a rich tapestry, playing host to yet another intricate narrative of historiographic deception. This compelling novel intricately attributes several historically dubious forged papers to the central protagonist: Haytham, who finds himself as a pawn in the relentless Assassin-Templar War. His multifaceted character ruminates deeply in an insightful afterward. The evidence I now present appears, indeed, too extraordinary; however, the people in question are yet alive, walking among us. I shall, therefore, cautiously omit their names, though they remain indelibly etched in my memory, and their voices still ring with intolerable anguish in my ear. With a further, lengthy conclusion penned by a later editor, assuring the continued existence of the pivotal character, Haytham, as recently as the year 2012, the narrative goes to considerable lengths to meticulously investigate the various ways that novelistic manipulation of historical archives might function within contemporary discussions.

As Berger (1963) aptly notes, “The past is malleable and flexible, changing as our recollection interprets and re-explains what has happened” (pp. 56-57). This insight directly informs the novel’s approach to historical fiction, where

past events are not fixed but are reshaped through the lenses of those who interpret them. Furthermore, it expands the boundaries of what historical fiction can encompass, diving headfirst into the realms of forgery and a critical examination of historical practice, questioning the very fabric of reality versus fiction. The inclusion of these intriguingly painful and deeply unsettling documents not only disinforms the novel's readers but also distracts them significantly, compelling them to concentrate solely upon unexpected reveals. These include the sudden appearance of an apparently female castaway who is dressed as a man and the intense moment in which a former adversary's hired saboteurs inexplicably refuse to kill our protagonist.

They do so because they recognize, and presumably sympathize with, his chronic pseudonymous misrepresentation of self. Additionally, the text makes a bold decision to reveal the full extent of its own deceptions, effectively negating the original objectives of forgery that might have been intended. This dissemblance offers surprisingly less to the historical novel genre than one might expect. It embodies that elusive truth which so often escapes the confines of history as a grand narrative. Just as modern critique of documents, institutions, and historical representations has progressively excised our faith in supposedly objective archives, so too does this narrative challenge the reliability of the historical record it seeks to portray. Hutcheon

(2003) explains, "The theoretical implications of this kind of coincide with the recent historiographical theory about the nature of history writing as narrativization of the past and the nature of the archive as the textualized remains of history" (p. 128). This notion directly relates to the novel's treatment of historical representation, where the "archive" is not a neutral, unchanging account of events but rather a construct subject to interpretation and manipulation. In doing so, it invites readers to question the very nature of truth and the complexities that lie within historical storytelling itself.

4. Linking to Forged Archival Evidence

The characters in Assassin's Creed: Forsaken frequently possess forged archival evidence, a vital aspect upon which they heavily rely for their mobility within diegesis. An essential point to consider is that their ambitions, deeply entangled with these forged archives, extend far beyond the various complications that are inherently linked to the cryptographic nature of the scripto-entopic fabric present in the story. As a result, these ambitions speak

volumes about the plot-driven urgency that propels the narrative, stretching its scope well beyond the confines typically associated with conspiracy thrillers. Often, these documents take on a crucial role in performing narrative work, effectively driving the plot forward with substantial emotional investment from the protagonists involved. For instance, Haytham Kenway's relentless, never-give-up attitude intertwines with his complexities as a character, particularly when it comes to shaping the narration that surrounds him. Reflecting on his journey, he recalls,

It struck me when the bombardment began, and I began to pray Charles had made his escape that this might be my final journal entry, these words, my last. I hope that Connor, my own son, will read this journal, and perhaps, when he knows a little about my own journey through life, understand me, maybe even forgive me. My own path was paved with lies; my mistrust forged from treachery. But my own father never lied to me, and with this journal, I preserve that custom (Bowden, 2012, p. 274).

This encapsulates the multifaceted nature of his character and shows how the use of forged documents enriches their personal and narrative arcs, further intertwining the themes of deception, legacy, and the emotional weight carried by the characters as they navigate their intertwined histories. Sponsored by Haytham Kenway, this intricate web of complicity, as evidenced through a multitude of documents, is vividly expressed through themes of seduction, collapse, intoxication, and a disinterested form of disclosure. In this way, it becomes clear that Haytham's emotional intelligence is deeply embedded within the manipulated corpus of these documentary records.

By engaging in a process of substitution and focusing on transforming raw facts into complex fictional figurations, both Charles Lee and Haytham prioritize this streamlined portrayal to avoid the arduous task of delving into the archives for the so-called 'genuineness' of their discoveries. Consequently, they resort to an approach marked by violent cryptanalysis when they transgress the inscriptions, which is essential for the success of the conspiracy they are orchestrating. The act of accessing these archives transforms into a performance, echoing an encrypted order, where the dossiers covering marriage, canonical structures, and similar topics serve as veiled repressions.

I looked at the documents spread out before us. Drawings of what looked like an ancient race of people building something—The Observatory, presumably.

Slaves breaking rocks and carrying huge stone blocks. They looked human, but not quite human (Bowden, 2013, p. 128).

It is crucial to acknowledge that the text itself is never engaged with in its authentic sequence and hierarchical arrangement. This detail is significant to consider as we approach the conclusion of this paper. The characters' interactions with concrete, albeit forged, pieces of evidence create the potential for viewers or readers to experience a form of diegetic in-mediares encounter. This results in a thickened or 'living' message emanating from the archives, thereby establishing a firm connection between personal motives and a larger discourse surrounding the historical narrative's authenticity. At the level of plot development, the characters consequently misplace the reception frame that would typically identify these elements as forgeries. The narrative, instead, refrains from presenting any indictment.

Accordingly, one might put forth, it is then important to come to a 'close' reading of the intricate issues of deceit provided by my archived examples. It has been established that Assassin's Creed: Forsaken is saturated with layers of forged evidence, comprising four distinct levels, all crafted by various adversaries who share animuses – those that are ultimately unveiled to Haytham and Charles by their hidden ally, Achilles. These layers are inherently fictional and serve functions in terms solely of the narrative's disclosure, compelling investments toward the in-media-res archive and its integral parts, while the characters engage in their decisive diegetic acts to dismantle the system contained within the documents. One might ponder, what does one stand to achieve when crafting this intricate network of forged archival connections? Most notably, it adds considerable depth to the narrative fabric and suggests a pointed critique of the pervasive issue of authenticity in historical writing. This critique shines even within the highly formalized scriptor bookish form that is clear in the hypothetical diegesis of Assassin's Creed. According to LA Capra (1985):

Narrative in history tends, with some exceptions, to remain set in its nineteenth-century ways. Developments in narrative history tend to be on the 'scientific' level of better documentation and data collection, and in line with these developments, Ranke is probably the most widely emulated narrative historian (p. 122).

The nature of archival authentication, indeed, becomes a matter of premium importance, interrogating the endangered makeup and the intricately negotiated

character of authenticity itself. In doing so, it stands out distinctly and brings us back to the deeper issue of how the personal drives of the forgers illuminate the shared animus – arguably, their personal motivations and drives carve out a pathway for what might be considered 'relevant' to the characters in their complex narrative web. The interplay of these motivations underscores the multifaceted nature of truth and fiction, blurring the lines in a rich tapestry of storytelling that continuously invites the audience to question the very foundations of knowledge and belief within this captivating universe.

5. Oral History Forged

The novel engages deeply with the intricate processes by which historical realities may be translated, interpreted, and skillfully manipulated into various narratives. Readers are invited and encouraged to embrace the role of amateur historians, demanding that they analyze the text critically to make informed decisions about which internal recollections they can deem reliable and which ones might have been cleverly rewritten or altered for narrative purposes. This prompts the readers to think critically and ask themselves to what extent the final "text"— in this case, comprising Haytham's recollections of his father's oral history—can truly be considered an accurate translation of a historical reality that remains obscured from our view, as it exists in a form we have not encountered in its original state.

"The inverse vectors of historical influence in these contemporaneous works suggest the potential for multidirectional understanding" (Whitehead, 2010, p. 69). By explicitly intertwining Haytham's foundational memories with themes of individual and collective memory, the narrative pushes readers to reflect upon whether and why they might care deeply about the notion that storytelling and the act of remembering stories are both inherently processes of creatively deceiving, regardless of the intentions behind them. Historical accuracy, while remaining a significant benchmark, takes on a modified form as the story progresses, placing an emphasis on the profound impacts that flat-out lies may have on individual lives, even within a purely fictional context. In doing so, the novel richly unfolds layers of meaning surrounding the complexities of memory and narrative, fostering a deeper understanding of the interplay between truth and fiction.

Oral storytelling and story-retrieving serve vital roles in the comprehensive construction of a historical record within the narrative framework. This dynamic

interplay not only generates but also conflates intricate historical narratives that the active characters within the story utilize to theorize, reflect upon, and solidify their knowledge about the world they collectively inhabit. For the people represented in the narrative, the absence of authentic and genuine historical scholarly resources makes verbal storytelling and oral traditions the primary foundation for their invented forms of historical understanding. Childers says, "A narrative account that experiments with or explores the idea of storytelling, often by drawing attention to its artificiality" (Childers, 2020, p. 261). The material text itself provides a rich narrative background while simultaneously breaking the illusion of the narrative. This work represents a complex blend of genres, encompassing both the person and the public, and merging novelistic elements with documentary modes. It is crafted with the intention of being written against its very subject matter, creating a fascinating tension between form and content.

6. Selective source manipulation

Most research shortcuts are typically executed through the manipulation of various sources. When researchers are confronted with the challenging task of essentialist simplification, characters within the narrative must consciously make choices about which sources to foreground and bring to the forefront of their analysis while simultaneously ignoring, sidelining, or even misrepresenting others that may provide alternative perspectives. Munslow recommends that "the Western tradition of history-writing is built on the correspondence theory of empiricism firmly rooted in the belief that true meaning can be directly inferred from the primary sources" (Munslow, 2006, p. 22). Taken to the furthest fictional extent within the narrative of this novel, the very contents of privately owned texts and the innermost personal thoughts of individuals become destabilized and questioned. Assassin Creed: Forsaken stands out as particularly unique in my experience; while numerous discussions and analyses of historiographic deception within novels often focus on the field of history itself as a mode of modernist epistemology, this novel takes a more profound approach. It critically questions how we can genuinely trust not only the old sources and past scholars who have shaped our understanding but also the contemporary historians who currently interpret these historical narratives.

The belief that any historical source, no matter how seemingly innocuous, expressionlessly conveys the rationale behind the motivation of its author, along with the notion that an intense zeal for a particular project inevitably dictates one's methodology, represents a detrimental habit that I inadvertently carry with me from my training as a literary critic into my studies of history. Nonetheless, the primary reason such a prejudice proves unhelpful in the broader field of historical scholarship stems from the fact that history is a discipline in which the manipulation of sources is not simply confined to fiction or advanced propaganda, as is commonly seen in the contexts of literary works, religious texts, political science discourse, or even philosophical writings, but instead, it is, to varying extents, an unavoidable aspect of the historical narrative.

Murthy (2014) regarding the "objective reality of representation in historical accounts" (p. 55). However, it is essential to note that the selective drawing upon and manipulation of sources, as part of the ongoing and complex process of historical invention, can indeed be subjected to criticism on three distinct and important grounds. These grounds include the special expectations placed upon genres that have been developed by historians and scholars because of their rigorous practice of critical source evaluation, the consequential effects on the narrators themselves—those who relay the historical accounts—and lastly, the overall impact this manipulation has upon the story that is narrated. Throughout the subsequent sections of this work, I will delve into a thorough discussion of each of these critical grounds and explicitly apply them to the study and analysis presented in Assassin Creed: Forsak*en.*

7. Personal ambition, aspiration for growth, and the deep desire for transformative change

In accordance with the overarching goal of narrating significant historical events to build a rich and compelling plot and atmosphere, a thorough analysis of the novel involves a complex succession of treasons and acts of revenge intertwined within the intense confrontation between two pivotal characters - Haytham and Connor. This narrative also vividly portrays and brings together not only deaths but various other distressing situations that involve the demise of others. As such, the novel refurbishes the dramatic power associated with death and makes it a public spectacle of sorts. According to Sharon, "History never really says goodbye. History says, "See you later" (Sharon, 2019, p.91). The characters involved will find success and fulfillment if, once again, the novel

effectively combines both the collective experiences of society with the deep personal journeys of its characters.

This union is particularly highlighted in the exploration of latent motivations—which may or may not be overtly expressed—rooted significantly in family ties, such as the driving force of revenge, the yearning to fulfill a sense of justice towards their father, and the desire to uncover the true origins of one's son through the gentle caress of love discovered with a close friend. Additionally, this narrative thread delves into the construction of two daughters, which further enriches the fabric of this rich narrative tapestry, as well as the deeply interconnected relationships between the characters. In both the initial and final sections of the story, alongside the personal implications that are intricately woven into the overall narrative, it is vital to recognize that other significant events and desires play a crucial role in the storyline. Much of this novel's narrative foundation is firmly based on the concrete material of action; therefore, it is essential to note that the very first words uttered by Haytham are often declared aloud, serving as a poignant reminder not to overlook the grand narrative surrounding his father's best friend.

This figure, a youth of mixed blood, embodies a profound respect for the complexities of colonial history while simultaneously grappling with feelings of disdain toward the current situation. This tension is palpably present throughout the novel, which guides its exploration of the search for identity and belonging, as well as the quest for the truth regarding one's place in the universe. The unfolding narrative invites readers into a world where phenomena appear and disappear in a thousandfold through the lens of a library filled with knowledge and mystery, thus challenging characters to confront their fears and desires for redemption in a compelling and transformative journey.

8. Spreading conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories are undeniably one of the central themes that permeate the present novel, serving as a captivating element that draws readers into a web of intrigue and complexity. To effectively counteract and dismantle the fabric of these theories, it is absolutely crucial to first deeply understand their multifaceted nature and the intricate underlying mechanisms at play. Much like the hidden order that intricately connects a series of seemingly unrelated events into an elegantly designed historical narrative, one can observe that a literary or plot structure within the novel might be discerned as being carefully constructed to

re-enact, on a microcosmic level, this disguised order. It reveals itself to someone who finds themselves ensnared in the gripping clutches of a conspiracy theory, one that twists and turns with unexpected revelations and deeply held secrets.

As it is sharply pointed out, “that someone is seeking someone,” suggesting layers of intrigue, motivation, and an arduous quest for truth against a backdrop of deception and doubt. “In literature alone, our ideas of author, audience, reading, writing, book, genre, critical theory, and of literature itself, have all suddenly become questionable” (Hassan, 1982, as cited in Schlaeger, 2005, p.3). This exploration invites readers to engage with the themes presented on a significantly more profound level, encouraging contemplation of the psychological implications that accompany belief in such theories and the impact they have on society. Through the lens of the narrative, we are prompted to consider our own understandings of reality and conspiracy, leaving us to reflect on the delicate balance between truth and fiction in our everyday lives.

various human affairs and interactions in our daily lives. This intricate system is based not primarily on an absence of evidence but rather is termed “a poor man’s cognitive mapping in the postmodern world,” suggesting emphatically that individuals rely on these theories to make sense of the overwhelming complexity surrounding them. The motivation behind the act of spreading conspiracy theories could also be said to be deeply rooted in a somewhat perverse materialism, as the process of consuming a conspiracy theory often involves enacting a vivid fantasy of pervasive evil or a persecutory delusion that speaks to primal fears. It is said to serve as a coping mechanism for the individual who feels they have no meaningful control over their circumstances—economically, politically, and socially.

Through this critical lens, those who subscribe to these often-dubious theories may seek to understand the irrational and frequently devastating ways in which they feel they are negatively affected in their daily lives. The forces that control him must therefore be perceived as at least equal in strength, and if they are greater in cunning and manipulation, this unfortunate realization leads to an interpretation that goes beyond mere human potential to understand, control, and ultimately reign over their reality. "Poor man's cognitive mapping in the postmodern age" (Livers, 2020, p.181). This ambitious project aims to illustrate some of the various ways these conspiracy theories can either mislead the clueless individuals who are drawn to them or tarnish the trustworthy figures in society, causing misunderstandings and widespread distrust. The project

endeavors to analyze the novel aspects of these theories, their intricate frameworks, and their far-reaching implications on society and individuals alike. In essence, it seeks to dissect how belief in these conspiracies can lead to unsettling consequences that ripple throughout various aspects of communal life.

Conclusion

Historiographic Manipulation through Anton Gill's Novel Assassin's Creed: Forsaken offers a profound examination of how historical narratives are shaped, altered, and often manipulated within both fiction and reality. By engaging with the themes of conspiracy theories, memory, and the subjective nature of historical storytelling, the novel provides a compelling lens through which we can interrogate the process by which history is constructed and understood. The narrative reveals that history, far from being an objective account of events, is instead a malleable and often distorted process influenced by the agendas, biases, and emotional drives of those who record it. Through its characters, particularly the central figures of Haytham and Connor, Assassin's Creed: Forsaken vividly demonstrates how personal motivations—such as revenge, justice, and the search for truth—can shape not only the individual's perspective but also the broader historical narrative.

In this context, historiographic manipulation is not merely a theme but a structural force within the novel. The characters' personal struggles and motivations drive them to reconstruct and reinterpret history in ways that align with their desires, often overshadowing the objective truth. The novel's depiction of historical events is thus not an attempt to preserve an accurate account of the past but rather a re-enactment of the complexities involved in remembering, narrating, and manipulating those events. As such, Assassin's Creed: Forsaken mirrors the ongoing tension in the field of historiography, where historians and storytellers alike must navigate the competing forces of memory, ideology, and power, often resorting to selective manipulation of sources to create compelling yet subjective narratives.

The novel's exploration of conspiracy theories as a driving force in the characters' understanding of history further emphasizes the role of historiographic manipulation in shaping both individual and collective memory. Conspiracy theories serve as an illustrative example of how historical narratives can be distorted to create an illusion of hidden knowledge or truth, and the novel intricately weaves this theme into its portrayal of the Assassins and Templars. In

doing so, it exposes the vulnerability of historical narratives to manipulation by those with power, and the profound effects this manipulation has on the perceptions and beliefs of both the characters and the readers.

By centering the act of historiographic manipulation within the fictional context of the Assassin's Creed universe, Anton Gill's novel invites readers to reflect on the broader implications of how history is written and remembered. It urges us to question the reliability of historical accounts, whether they come from fictional sources or from real-world scholars and challenges us to consider the impact of selective memory and distortion in shaping our collective understanding of the past. In this way, the novel serves as both a narrative and a meta-historical commentary on the power dynamics at play in the construction of history, urging us to remain critical of the sources we encounter and the motives behind them.

Ultimately, Assassin's Creed: Forsaken is more than just a work of fiction; it is a powerful exploration of the complexities of historiography and the pervasive influence of manipulation within historical narratives. Through its portrayal of characters grappling with the consequences of their actions and the histories they create; the novel encourages readers to confront the uncertain and often deceptive nature of history itself. As such, it underscores the importance of a critical, reflective approach to history, one that recognizes the subjective forces at work in the construction of historical memory and seeks to uncover the hidden mechanisms of manipulation that shape our understanding of the past.

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