The failure of constructing a meaningful border for democracy in E.L. Doctorow's fiction

Zohreh Ramin  
University of Tehran  
zramin@ut.ac.ir

Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Marandi  
University of Tehran  
mmarandi@ut.ac.ir

In his *Reporting the Universe*, a book of non-fiction, Doctorow, like many other western writers, represents his Orientalist mode of thought as he divides societies into two broad categories: countries, mainly Eastern, which are governed by a religious ruler, whose system of governance is an "absolutist theocracy" and in which the people are fanatic, religious, and backward-minded. According to Doctorow, the absolutist theocracy in such countries have safeguarded their power by suppressing freedom of expression, hence a hindrance to the outburst of multiplicity of voices and actions, regarded as a threat to the state. On the other hand, Western countries, specifically America, which are not governed by absolutist theocracy and have accepted the fact that holy texts have been communally redacted, have, according to this view, blessed their countries with the gift of freedom of expression and multiplicity, hence opening space for emergence of contradictory ideas, never claiming perfection. However, the ironical point in Doctorow is between what he claims in his nonfictional work and what he proves in his novels. His major novels reveal the impossibility of evolution and change, as the outcome of this so called democracy is nothing but degeneration, lack of justice and impracticality of freedom. With regard to Doctorow's theoretical ideas in his non-fiction, the present paper aims to show the impossibility and impracticality of Doctorow's claims regarding the American democratic system. While Doctorow believes America is governed by a democratic system which can evolve, his novels, which deal with the American past, delineate a bleak and dark picture of this democratic society in which no evolution is observable and history is the continual repetition of human tragedy.

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