

## The Historical Novel

Prof. Sahar Abdul Ameer Haraj Al-Husseini

[sahar.abudalameer@qu.edu.iq](mailto:sahar.abudalameer@qu.edu.iq)

Yacoob Shaker Jabur

[jacobayad@gmail.com](mailto:jacobayad@gmail.com)

جامعة القادسية/ كلية التربية

**Abstract:**

Of the most major topics, a historical novel may have, is a historical representation. The historical representation is the major millstone of the historical novel. Critics, novelists, reviewers, and even readers have been debating for decades on different aspects related to those representations. These aspects may include the nature of representations, are they true in terms of reporting historical fact? Could they replace historical books and documents, and the like? Historical representation simply means the narration of historical events in historical novels within a specific time and place, regardless of the function the narration wants to achieve.

**1.1: Historical Novel**

Of the most prominent novel genres that have a long history is a historical novel. It is that kind of novel that is replete with many historical facts, events, battles, and real people no matter how much those issues are accurate as being represented in a narrative form. Although Avrom Fleishman argues that “Everyone knows what a historical novel is; perhaps that is why few have volunteered to define it in print.” (Fleishman 1971, p. 3). Yet, there is a need to look at what does the historical novel mean? And what are the basic requirements that a novel should have to be regarded as historical?

First of all, according to Merriam-Webster provides the following definition: “a novel having as its setting a period of history and usually introducing some historical personages and events”(Merriam-Webster, n.d.), this definition indicates three requirements that should be met

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to regard a novel as a historical one. These requirements are real people and real events that took place in the past. Thus, a character, a plot, and history are essential factors by which the historical novel is determined. Encyclopedia Britannica also offers a similar definition, that is, “a novel that has as its setting a period of history and that attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity (which is in some cases only apparent fidelity) to historical fact”(Britannica, n.d.). The Britannica definition focuses much on bringing the sense of the past as a determining tool “spirit, manners, and social conditions” these factors are the essence of a realistic view of the past, that makes the past come to life again.

The two definitions share one core feature the historical fictional work must have that is the past or history as its setting period, though it had not set in specific. In other words, real people and circumstances in the past are subject to be novelized, or being part of the fictional work is the intrinsic nature of the historical novel. This is what the historical novel means in its simplest principle.

However, one major fact here on the two definitions is that both of them are general and have no crucial specifications for singling out the historical novel from other types of novels. For instance, these definitions are too general in respect of how many years should be counted in order to regard a given period as history.

Novelists and critics have their contribution to what the historical novel is. The Historical Novel Society's definition is “To be deemed historical (in our sense), a novel must have been written at least fifty years after the events described. Or written by someone who was not alive at the time of those events, and therefore approaches them only by research”(Historical Novel Society, n.d.). This definition sheds the light only on the past by emphasizing how many years should be passed. In addition to that, the writing process of the novel must be approached by

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conducting a research, not by, say, an eyewitness. Accordingly, that's what makes it historical.

This is due to the fact that history is mainly brought to us in a narrative form. Much similar to that is John Buchan's notion that:

An historical novel is simply a novel which attempts to reconstruct the life, and recapture the atmosphere, of an age other than that of the writer. The age may be distant a couple of generations or a thousand years; the novel may find its drama in swift external incident, or in some conflict of the spirit; it may be picaresque or domestic, a story of manners, or of action, or of the heart (Buchan, 2013, p. 19868).

This also indicates the period should be older than the life of the author himself/herself. Moreover, Buchan seconds the notion of bringing the sense of the past, saying: "and recapture the atmosphere," this capturing can only be reached by accurate descriptions of the era and the geographical aspects of the place in addition to the other issues that construct the novel settings. While Joyce Sarricks defines the historical novel as "novels have as their primary concern the re-creation of a historical era through rigorous, accurate detail. They are set in the past, before the author's lifetime or experience." (Sarricks and Wyatt 2019, p. 169). Sarricks cements that the events of the novel should come before the author was born, and once again she pays attention to the accuracy of the genre, even minutiae in certain cases should be real.

Furthermore, Fleishman's idea of the historical novel is that "is pre-eminently suited to telling how individual lives were shaped at specific moments of history, and how this shaping reveals the character of those historical periods. In doing so it is both a dramatic and a social fiction, but is distinguished from the types that go by those names by the balanced weight it attaches to the personal and the collective experience of men in history." (Fleishman 1971, p. 10). Though he does not mention the accuracy in a clear tone, "telling how individual lives" requires to be as precise as one could in picturing a certain period. He assumes this can be reached by the

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character who belongs to those times. This can be applied to both fictional characters and real ones.

Nevertheless, Harry Shaw takes a different step in approaching the historical novel. He takes for granted that what is only required is how one can single out the historical novel from other types of novel. Consequently, historical novels are those works that in any way reflect historical milieu with respect to fictional probability. According to him, this kind of novel is much similar to the social novel which he refers to it as an industrial:

A simple but accurate answer is that the term historical novel denotes a kind of novel which can be differentiated from other groups of novels not in terms of a defining compositional technique (the picaresque novel), nor through its power to evoke a set of emotions (the gothic or sentimental novel), and certainly not in terms of the period in which it was written (the eighteenth-century novel). Instead, the principle of differentiation involves the milieu represented, which makes the closest parallel in our list the industrial novel. Though it seems fair to say that the industrial novel is a narrower category, it is the same sort of category as the historical novel (Shaw 1983, p. 20)

Furthermore, Jerome de Groot emphasizes the importance of the realist style of writing to conceptions of authenticity. It might explore the articulation of nationhood legacy, in his words:

a historical novel might consider the articulation of nationhood via the past, highlight the subjectivism of narratives of History, underline the importance of the realist mode of writing to notions of authenticity, question writing itself, and attack historiographical convention (De Groot 2010, p. 2).

On the other hand, these definitions give birth to so many questions, such as, how far back is it appropriate to set the novel to make it historical? For a period of 100 years? For 50 years? For 40 years? Before the writer's birth? Which period one can pick? If a period is settled, who is entitled to do so? In addition to that, Sarricks and Buchan are of the opinion that before the writer was born, this raises the following question: what about the readers who may live

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much longer, that they might live the circumstances the novel depicts or they may be contemporaries of the novel's real heroes?

This means that it is hard to pick the line between the past and the present. This leads to a grey area in certain circumstances, blurring the distinction between them. In Math's terminology, it may be direct proportionality, namely, the more one digs into history, the further one joins the historical genre. While coming closer to the present time makes it a grey area in which it is too difficult to define.

Having said that, all the meanings of the definitions listed above indicate the fact that there should be some sort of history portrayed in this genre. Thus, in general, the historical novel is basically an imaginary story of the past in which times, events, and characters are historically involved.

However, the first historical novel *Waverley* by Scott is written in 1814. And, the time of the real events that it portrays is in 1745, the calculated time is 69 which can be regarded as the determining time for calling a novel a historical one. There is no need to say that *Waverley* is not enough to determine the time, but surely it can help here since it represents the manifesto of this genre. This period can be taken into consideration. In theory, it could help in estimating the time of the past that a writer should consider. Nevertheless, surely it is not the significant proof one can take. Therefore, counting 69 years to say this is a historical novel, or saying that less than 69 would not be historical would not nail it. Thus, it is not that precise.

Due to the fact that the generations are a continuing process which cannot sharply isolated, to a reader born in the 1990s, novels set during 1970s may be considered suitably historical, but readers who vividly remember the 1970s may not agree. It follows that some

critics argues of graded period by saying that “ If all novels are historical, but some are more historical than others.” (Spears, 1995, p.1).

Many critics and novelists have tried to put rules that a novel should meet so that it could be regarded historical. In this thesis, there will be six rules that have been summed by Joyce Sarricks. Picking up the Sarricks’ rules is because these rules are comprehensive and cover almost all the aspects the historical novel may have. However, there is an important issue here that needs to be highlighted, that is, these rules or standards are already individually mentioned by different prolific critics in separate cases. Thus, one or more critics have raised, for instance, one feature, say, the historical accuracy in the literary works like in a novel or in any other narrative form, to prove or refute his/her argument in speaking of the historical fiction. What Sarricks did, is that, she put them into one platform as one package calling them the rules or the characteristics of the historical novel. Accordingly, the rules will be referred to as the Sarricks Rules in this thesis. The rules are as follows:

1. “There is a wealth of accurate historical detail relating to setting (geography, customs, beliefs, culture, society, habits) as well as to characters and events.
2. Story lines may focus on a particular historical event or time period, or they may follow the life of a character (real or fictional). Novels may raise difficult social or moral issues through the plot.
3. Characters may be real or fictional, but they are portrayed in such a way that they fit the times. The historical setting shapes their lives and actions.
4. Historical novels are usually big books, with stories that unfold at a leisurely pace. Even shorter Historical novels are usually so densely written that they must be read slowly.
5. Language and style may affect a reader’s experience. Some readers appreciate an “authentic” style, while others find this distracting. Dialects and format choices (such as epistolary novels) also affect reader reaction.
6. The tone of Historical novels runs the gamut from rollicking to somber, and this tone may be a major, if unacknowledged, factor in reading choices.” (Sarricks, 2019, p. 170).

They might be reread respectively for the accuracy, the storyline, the characters, the big book, the language, and finally the tone. Anyway, it is not necessarily that the rules or standards should be all met in order to call a novel a historical one. The only standard that must not be dropped out is the time which is the past in this case, therefore, the novel should bring the sense of the past in an unambiguous way. While all the other rules can be missed without violating the word historical as a genre in general.

The same principle can be applied to the historical novel. That is, the standards of the historical novel usually vary according to these characteristics. Some have major standards of the historical novel such as *War and Peace* by Tolstoy. While other historical novels only have mediocre standards, namely, a novel may refer to a period in the past only or may have only real historical people or may only refer to ancient events without telling the event themselves. These are the minimum features the historical fictional work has to have. On the other hand, the problem that emerges, with the mediocre standard novels, is that they usually blur the line between the historical genre with other genres, which many times leads to confusion about the novel type or genre.

However, the Sarricks Rules are only meant for the public by which they understand what the literary work is about, its type, its structure, and the like. It is not for the genius authors whose creativity is to break the norms of their major and provide a new form or a modified genre as Sir Walter Scott did in his masterpiece *Waverley* (1814), which was a manifestation of a new genre, that is, the historical novel.

Since history is much involved in this genre, this involvement leads to such kinds of arguments, what is the relation between the historical novel and history? How much accurate the

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historical narrative should be? Does it really matter the portrait of the past in literary works should be accurate? However, there is an issue that needs to be highlighted in regard to accuracy.

In talking about it, there is a need to distinguish between the accuracy in telling the truth of the past events and about historical figures, for example, if someone writes a novel about Lord Acton who was an English historian and also was a Catholic politician. If the novelist portrays him as a singer or a football player, or say, about his doctrine saying that he was a Jewish which he was not indeed. Then in terms of ethical perspective, the author does not transfer the past as accurately as it should be. Still, this inaccurate representation of the past does not breach the genre from being historical. This is the kind of accuracy that the novelists, critics, scholars, and even readers have been debating for many years, and still, they have.

On the other hand, if the accuracy is meant to fully describe the settings of the novel so as to imitate the sense of the past, then this relates to the core of the genre. For example, if a writer is trying to novelize *The Battle of Maldon* which took place in 991 AD, and the settings were not accurate, say, they have been depicted as having military aircraft, tanks, and they wore a very modern military uniform. Though the author keeps telling the truth about the results that the Vikings won the battle and exacted tribute from local leaders in Hampshire, Kent, and west England, and Aethelred was forced to give them five tons of silver. This kind of accuracy makes the novel awkward since it loses to capture the spirit of the given period it represents (Atherton, 2021, p. 108-110).

In brief, accuracy in terms of the settings and transferring the past, capturing of the past, then accuracy should be done as much as possible while if the accuracy is meant in terms of reporting historical facts, then accuracy is preferred to be met.



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Having said that, there are two contrasting perspectives on historical novel accuracy. The first is that the historical novel must be authentic, and there must be a full consensus between the fictional work and the case it portrays as history records it, whether, it is an event, a historical figure, a battle, or a description of the daily life of certain geographical and ethnographical matters. In his defense of accuracy Kemp says: “Perhaps the biggest irritant for the HNS reviewers is writers giving their characters contemporary mindsets, in taking them out of the conventions, culture and behaviour of their times and giving them an ‘enlightened’ temperament.” (Kemp, 2018, p. 3-4).

The second perspective holds that novelists should not have an ethical responsibility to be historically correct while fictionalizing the past in a manner that differs from fact.. According to author Elizabeth Chadwick, the authors of historical fiction do not have an obligation to be accurate in their writing since historical literature, of course, is not the same as history books. She explains “it is not about dumping all that knowledge and research into the text. That’s the last thing you want to do. Your aim is to entertain readers with a riveting story, not bore their socks off.” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 4-5).

Furthermore, given the fact that when a historian tells us about certain events in the past, he/she believes it is true, at least from their point of view based on a piece of evidence they find it good enough. While the novelist when he/she tells us about the past via their work they know they are making use of their own perspective. Accordingly, this makes it really hard to stand for or against accuracy. Hayden White urges the reader by explaining that histories can be exposed to the same kind of fictional device imposition as literary texts. Academic history and historical fiction might have more in common than one would expect, for instance, White argues:

Within a long and distinguished critical tradition that has sought to determine what is ‘real’ and what is ‘imagined’ in the novel, history has served as a kind of

archetype of the realistic pole of representation...Nor is it unusual for literary theorists, when they are speaking about the 'context' of a literary work, to suppose that this context, the 'historical milieu', has a concreteness and an accessibility that the work itself can never have, as if it were easier to perceive the reality of a past world put together from a thousand historical documents than it is to probe the depths of a single literary work that is present to the critic studying it (White 1978, p. 89).

Apart from this, some scholars and critics, especially post-modernists, argue that it is not a history privilege to own the truth. Therefore, there is an urgent issue that requires a little bit of debating, that is, the academic studies advocate the idea that there is no such thing as historical fact. As Carr argues, there tend to be many realities. Carr rejects the analytical interpretation of a historian's work as an accumulation of facts. Carr divided facts into two categories, "facts of the past", that is historical information that historians deem unimportant, and "historical facts", information that the historians have decided is important (Carr 1990, p. 22-25).

Carr suggested that historians chose the past facts to convert into historical facts at random, depending on their own prejudices and ideologies. This can be applied to postmodernism's denial of the possibility of objective knowledge of the world.

Fictional stories invented by writers and the narrations fashioned by historians do not differ from one another in any essential respect because both are made out of language and equally subject to the latter's rules in the practice of rhetoric and the construction of narrative (Zagorin 2002, p. 14).

As a result, Stevenson addressed his Humble Remonstrance to him, since even Henry James appeared to think that the real could only be uncovered by close examination of immediate reality (Bernbaum 1926, p. 435-436).

Finally, since Aristotle, history has been associated with *what did*, while the fictional has been associated with *what might happen*, and the distinction has generally followed Aristotle's

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discovery that poetry is more serious than history because it contains general facts, such as possibility or necessity (Wilson, 2006, p. 21-22).

A historical novel may not be fully self-referential because it still points to someone else. A 16th-century American civil war might be imagined in a novel, but it would be science fiction rather than history. However, this does not turn a historical novel into a narrative kind of historiography, since the majority of the characters and their tales are fictional. Furthermore, the reality of a historical novel stays fascinating, while the truth of historiography can be defined as looking for verisimilitude with some simplification. This is why, with the exception of historical figures for whom nothing is known, such as the Apostle Paul in James Cannon's novel, biographies of representative historical figures cannot be considered historical novels (Wilson, 2006, p. 542-543).

Apart from that, there is a relation between the historical novel and history in terms of intertextuality. This relation becomes more overt when there the historical novel narrates real and accurate historical facts. it is a venture to say that there is a general consensus on what intertextuality means in its broader sense. Still, scholars and literary critics have their own definition or notion by which one can fathom how it works from a text to other ones. Anyway, Julia Kristeva's notion in her *The Bounded Text*, for instance, is that she questions the originality of any text. She argues that the "authors are not original", and texts are not made out of vacuum rather are compiled from other texts that already exist. This is true on the verbatim level as well as on the level of ideas. She argues that a text is "A permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva, 1969, p. 36).

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Moreover, she regards intertextuality as process of transposition, that takes place from one sign into another. Accordingly, in Kristeva's view, the text is not a single unit or a single tissue that comes out of vacuum, rather it is a mixture of texts (Kristeva, 1969, p. 15-16). To put it into a cultural conception, it is much similar to what is called as a salad bowl where multicultural communities are brought into one culture that share the core features of its components.

Furthermore, post-structuralist critics and semioticians argue that written codes, according to scholars who believe in intertextuality, surpass form. Thus, a literary work is no longer simply the work of an author, but rather the product of its association with other texts and writers, as well as its relationship with language which is semantics, syntax, and pragmatics (Phillips, 2011, p. 51-52).

Car's analogy of intertextuality. In the car's today is not made by one person. It is accumulation of contribution of many men, women or even children. this can be applied to any text.

Much similar to Kristeva's notion is, the Derridean view, he argues that "there is nothing outside the text"(Derrida 1972, p. 148). Which ensures that all interpretations are found in the reading and reinterpretation of texts, and that no text exists outside of its interpretation. Intertextual productions are thus central to literary development, requiring specific ways of thinking based on power structures, modes of rebellion, and so on.

These are simple commentaries on what does intertextually are only meant to show how intertextually shapes the relation between historical novels and history. Thus, Hayden White, Paul Veyne, E. J. Hobsbawm, and other scholars and narrative theorists have stressed the idea

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that both fiction and history were built in a way that something that does not occur outside of culture but is continuously produced through interpretations:

As such, both tradition and history are products of language, which is an insight that has opened up a new field in the study of intertextuality. This, of course, proved to be an inspiration for novelists: if historiographers use the same techniques, methods and strategies as novelists, is there then indeed a difference between the two? And, consequently, can fiction come with the same claims as history-writing. (Nagy 2014, p. 8)

Howard argues that the aim of reading literature is to explore its ideological purpose, and that intertextuality is a means for a work to replicate dominant ideologies. Intertextuality, Howard notes, is essentially a process of defining strategic and provisional boundaries. The following argument about intertextuality is offered by her:

In fact, I would argue that a new historical criticism attempting to talk about the ideological function of literature in a specific period can most usefully do so only by seeing a specific work relationally – that is, by seeing how its representations stand in regard to those of other specific works and discourses. A work can only be said to contest, subvert, recuperate, or reproduce dominant ideologies if one can place the work – at least provisionally and strategically – in relation to others. And, as I have argued above, the most illuminating field of reference may not be just other literary works (Howard 1986, p. 29-30).

Historical novel may include any other genre, that is, it could be thrill, romance, war, autobiography and at same time it is historical. In literature, a storyline means the plot or the theme a novel conveys. This standard seems less difficult than the other ones. Still, the themes of the historical novels are different and many. That is, in the best historical fiction, a motif emerges from real historical events and characters. The characters would be as historically correct as possible. However, their objective is the same as it is in a non-historical novel.

To offer a broad perspective of history, historical fiction should concentrate on a specific number of **incidents**, explaining them in detail and comparing them with individual actions. The

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genre may also act in the opposite direction, by watching a series of related incidents over a long period of time (Watt, 1957, p. 46-48).

*The Battle of Thermopylae*, which took place in 480 BC, is the subject of Pressfield's novel. Despite the ostensible theme, the novel, as told in Historical Fiction, will focus on a limited range of incidents, describing them in depth and using individual acts to provide a wider view of history (Orel, 1995, p. 8).

While, Ken Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth* recounts the creation of a cathedral over a fifty-year period. The storyline traces the building of the castle over time, as well as the changing events in the nearby village, all set against the background of historical events from the twelfth century (Sarricks and Wyatt 2019, p. 73-74)

In brief, historical novel could include all other genres, namely, a novel could be detective and historical at the same time. The same could be applied to romance, thrill, gothic and so on.

Since history is a story, then characterization, as Sarricks refers to, is "the flip side of the story coin" (Sarricks and Wyatt 2019, p. 73). This importance is true for both real historical figures as well as fictional ones. Thus, the characters cement the historical events to a great extent. In the character's defense, Elizabeth George argues that:

...story is character and not just idea... Put a human face on a disaster and you touch people more deeply ... we continue reading a novel largely because we care what happens to the characters ... an event alone cannot hold a story together. Nor can a series of events. Only characters effecting events and events affecting characters can do that. (George 2004, p. 5)

The characters in the historical novels are of three types. First, the novel may have real people who are populated in the fictional worlds along with citizens who never really lived at all or even with fictional creatures. Second, they may be all fictional ones that are portrayed in

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actual times, while the third one is nothing but real historical people. In either case, the characterization in historical novels is supposed to be joined while traipsing through time, bringing the readers to observe the past. The characterization can be reached as Sarricks points out in different ways,

Is the story about individuals, such as Kristin Hannah's WWII novel *The Nightingale*, featuring two sisters on divergent paths in occupied France? Perhaps it is a family saga, a group portrait that creates a vivid sense of history, as generations are foregrounded against the shifting landscape of time. *Downton Abbey* is a recent TV example of this type. Often the main character is a real personage. Novels following kings, queens, founding fathers, adventurers, and more are perennially popular. Figures who have been lost to history often make a new splash in the pages of these novels. In Jeffery Renard Allen's *Song of the Shank*, the former slave Tom Wiggins transforms his life and becomes an internationally known pianist. Few readers knew about Wiggins and his astounding talent until Allen's complex and sophisticated novel brought him to wide attention. (Sarricks and Wyatt 2019, p. 173)

Having said that, this portraying of characters whether they are real-life figures or fictional, the portray should bring the sense of the past in terms of how people talked, what tools fashioned their daily life, what they wore, what values they appreciated, what kind of rituals and beliefs they may follow, how they reacted to the problems bothered them and may still do to us as of today. Furthermore, assigning characters names that are fitting for the time frame of the novel adds another element of authenticity. As Guthrie emphasizes that the novelist needs to be "a more specific and less editorial description. Handsome in relation to a carriage could fit many places and almost any time-which is to say that it says nothing" (Guthrie 1954, p. 5).

Thus, the character's inner and external worlds should reflect the era through which they lived. Since they are merely the medium by which the past talks to us. Thus, even the fictional characters tell us more about the past:

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When fictitious characters are involved in identifiable historical situations, their function is not to fictionalize but to examine ways in which these situations may, in the widest sense, be defined (Wetherill 1985, p. 124).

In Michael Dobbs' series of novels *Winston Churchill*, The plot is told through the eyes of a fictitious prime minister's servant. Similarly, in his Roman novels *Imperium* and *Lustrum*, Robert Harris employs the device of narrating the plots from the viewpoint of a household slave, *Tiro*, who deals closely with the main character, *Cicero*, the Senator (Plante, 2013).

There is no need to say this standard is much related to the fact that the historical novel should be a novel in the first place. Novels are usually books with a large number of words. Still, Sarricks pays more attention to the pace of the historical novel rather than how many words the historical novel should have. In other words, she does not focus on word count as a tool for the literary genre, she advocates that historical novels are typically books that are lengthy and are not usually referred to as fast-paced. According to her, since the historical novel is a big book, so the pacing is best characterized by phrases such as "engrossing," "building-in-intensity," "leisurely unfolding," or "unhurried." There is a need to create detailed histories and developing the different settings always makes these novels slow-starting, but once the threads of the plot are firmly in hand, the pace will be picked up.

Readers do not tend to enjoy Historical Fiction for its pacing, so the consequences of abundant use of detail and background orientation are rarely of concern. However, readers do expect a tale well told, and that includes one that moves at a pace that fosters engagement and creates a sense of immersion. (Sarricks and Wyatt 2019, p. 175).

Much similar to that, György Lukacs points out that the criterion for length is due to the idea that the entirety of life should be covered by a novel. Thus, he does not pay much attention to the exact word count. In addition to that, Jane Smiley indicates that length is an essential novel quality (Lukacs 1962, p. 33-34).



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In talking about the word number of the novel, there is no firm rule that can have the final say, for example, Smiley regards novels should have words between 100,000 and 175,000. While National Novel Writing Month says the novel should have at least 50,000 words. Some critics say 40,000 and above. Anyway, here is an example of big novels and the shorter ones, *A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth has 591,554 words, *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand is about 561,996 words, and *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy is about 561,304 words. These are big books. On the other hand, there are *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis has a number of 38,421 words, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl is 30,644 words, and finally, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is only about 29,966 words (Bransford 2018, p. 18-20).

The last three novels are obviously under the minimum number of words as indicated above 40,000. Still, these are masterpieces of the genre. But what about Scott's *Waverley*, how many words does it have? *Waverley* is estimated at about 132,000 words. Anyway, word count is often a ballpark number and not something exact.

Of many techniques a novelist uses is the language which is really tricky in this genre. Language, here, is a problematic issue that may irritate both the writer and the readers as well. This is due to the vicissitudes of history, there is an authentic period dialect each time. For example, it wasn't until the twentieth century that words like *okay* and *hello* were used. In the 1930s it is not usually to refer to the character as *drunk* instead they could be *blotto*. (Sinfield 1989, p. 29-30).

If authors use that dialect, surely the public may not understand it, then neglect it, and as a result, they get bored as they read such novels. If they use modern language, then the authentic perspective will be dropped out. In doing so they face a great responsibility. Some of Ken Follett

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readers make an excellent point that modern language may portray modern thinking and their feeling of undue modern language which Follett uses overly does matter:

Obviously, a novel set around the 12th century could never be written in contemporary prose. Such a book would only be intelligible to a handful of scholars, and not the fashionable masses at whom it was aimed. But some concession needed to be made in order to emphasise antiquity, or it might as well be set in the present. However, time and again I found myself jerked out of the spell by the kind of prose and dialogue that I can hear on the street every day. And because it was written in modern English, it inevitably portrayed 20th century thinking.... If Jeffrey Archer wrote a 'historical novel' I suspect it would be pretty much like this (Hughes 2021, p. 7)

Some critics argue that the novelists have to have an authentic choice of words and phrases such as using anachronism, like *thy*, *thine*, and *thou*, as well as using modern language so that the language will work for the public.

Still, one might ask, then, how much does the degree of anachronism really matter in the language of a novel, particularly in the usage of individual words? If so, then how much does it distract from the authenticity of a novel? For example, Scott's repeated assertions that he had done the requisite analysis to validate his understanding of what was possible in a given year, except that he was able to rearrange the details he had painstakingly collected. He confessed to having trouble interpreting Gaelic expressions; he only had a rudimentary understanding of the language.

In his Dedicatory Epistle to *Ivanhoe* (1820), Scott struggled - not always successfully - to defend his practice of using modern language. Chaucer, he argued, was best understood if his writings were read aloud, or if ordinary words were reduced to modern orthography (Orel, 1995, p. 8).

According to Orel, Sir Arthur Doyle was less concerned about historical language precision in his fiction. He didn't aspire for archaeological precision, and he confessed that he put in a few unusual Chaucerian words here and there to spice up the pure Anglo-Saxon

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vocabulary. On the contrary, Thomas Chatterton had dismissed any word that was new, and the result was a vocabulary that was unlike any that had ever been spoken in the United Kingdom (cited in Orel 1995, p. 18-19).

Unless otherwise, the writer is able to tackle anachronism in an appropriate way. It was needless to take in whatever peculiar and antiquated words the writer had come across during his/her researches into a book he/she writes for the public. Using old and unfamiliar words and phrases might lead to backfiring results.

Having said that, there is no need to say that style is an easy task to tackle with respect to language. Many historical novels are pinned in the form of Literary Historical Fiction, according to Sarricks Stef Penney's *The Tenderness of Wolves* is a good example. While other novels seek utilitarian, straightforward styles, such as Amy Stewart's *Girl Waits with Gun*. Others, like Isabel Allende's *Ines of My Soul*, make use of diaries or memoirs (Sarricks and Wyatt 2019).

The study is of opinion to use neutral words and phrases that do not give any clue to the modernity nor anachronism. This solve the problem that is, the readers will fathom it at the same time it will not have modernity.

In literature, tone usually means the mood created in the novel by the word choice and the manner in which the text directs a reader to feel in a certain way (Watson, 1985, p. 35-36). A range of feelings and viewpoints can be evoked by the tone an author uses in his/her narrative. A large variety of textual styles may also be carried out by tone, this spans from terse to prosaic. For example, In Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and *Pick Up the Bodies*, there is the brutal and tense truth of the Tudor court during the reign of Henry VIII brought in these two historical novels. While readers anxiously wait for the volcano to explode in Robert Harris's *Pompeii*, understanding the destruction that ensues.

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Tone furthers the aims of Historical Fiction by helping enmesh readers in the milieu. It is not just details of landscape and dress that create the world of Regency England; the arch, witty, and sharp tone of that hyper socially conscious world also makes it vividly real to readers. (Sarricks and Wyatt 2019, p. 172)

Likewise, the melancholy, edgy, and bleak tone of many wartime historical fiction books helps promote the specifics of fighting and fighting costs, even more than the descriptions of troop movements and strategies of battle.

For it is a storyteller of the modern-day who talks to contemporary readers of Carthage or the Renaissance, of the Middle Ages in England, or of Imperial Rome. This, therefore, follows, according to Lukacs, the tone help in bringing the past into the present-day reader.

Here we see in a different form a similar problem to the one we observed in Flaubert: the combination of a desire for great deeds with a personal and social inability to accomplish them in reality is projected into the past, in the hope that this social impotence may lose its modern pettiness in the ostentatious attire of the Renaissance. However, this projection into an illusory monumentality-a monumentality merely of picturesque gestures, hiding the decadent, tormented broodings of the modern bourgeois-produces in the general tone of the writing notes as false and feelings and experiences as distorted as in Flaubert (Lukacs 1962, p. 224)

The mood has been part of scholarly considerations of historical knowledge. Mark Salber Phillips (Phillips, 2011, p. 128-129). argues that Scottish Enlightenment figures such as Lord Kames, David Hume, and Adam Smith have emphasized that in order to achieve success history should arouse people's emotions.

Therefore, historical fiction authors use rhetoric to reflect the manner in which the past is felt as well as seen in an applicable way. What part do these feelings, or their absences, play in forming historical perceptions? What are the emotional responsibilities of historical novelists when they write about history? They have the opportunity not only to have information into what

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is happening through them to the past, but also to raise new questions regarding the development and interpretation of historical facts (Watson, 1985, p. 79-80).

Having said that, there are three ways by which tone is accomplished, first diction which word use, second is through syntax, construction of sentences and word order, and third by what the character of the point of view reflects on. That is, the way the perspective character/narrator approaches the plot issue and other characters, as well as how he reacts to the circumstances around him, sets or changes mood. By altering what the character reflects on and by his changing responses to what is going on in the plot, as well as changing the vocabulary used for the emotions may be manipulated (Yip 2002, p. 1-3 ).

### 1.2: History Comes to Life

The interesting aspect of literature in general and of the novel in particular, is that it portrays ideas, beliefs or theories, whether the frame of those ideas is philosophical, psychological, sociological, criminal, or political, in a sensible way, by which the readers will be brought to see, to feel, to recognize, to taste, to live those ideas or beliefs, since the readers would use more senses rather than reading facts through history books. So, the difference in value between history and the description of those ideas depicted throughout the novel might not be significant with respect to knowledge. In other words, when a novelist comes up with **work, rises issues**, they might add nothing in regard to facts, but their major contribution is manufacturing those issues and ideas to be sensed. Novelizing pure facts in such a sensory frame usually causes a cosmic shift in people's view of the world. It would highly touch the audience on an interoceptive level.

Henry James regards that fiction has to have a **"conscious moral purpose,"** and that experience and observation outweigh imagination as creative tools, as he beautifully described

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the novel, saying: “A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like every other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts.” (James, 2004, p. 6). So, novels are living things since they reflect the reality to a fair degree, while history seems to be tranquil. In addition to that, the most important factor, is that, philosophers, politicians or thinkers may use stories, not bare facts, and examples as techniques to prove their theories (James, 2004, p. 8).

Furthermore, Although social concerns represent anxiety about the future, fiction can also help readers appreciate their present condition by mirroring real-life events. Moreover, capturing the spirit of the past comes to be clear when Lukacs points out to Scott’s use of history as a means to understand individuals historically

The so-called historical novels of the seventeenth century are historical only as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume. Not only the psychology of the characters, but the manners depicted are entirely those of the writer’s own day. And in the most famous ‘historical novel’ of the eighteenth century, Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*, history is likewise treated as mere costumery: it is only the curiosities and oddities of the *milieu* that matter, not an artistically faithful image of a concrete historical epoch (Lukacs 1962, p. 19).

Then he added, “What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events.” (Lukacs , 1962, p. 42). Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that the historical novel brings history to life again, not by telling the truth but by evoking the feeling of those outmoded events. This is some kind of vivid process, to put it in Groot’s words “a dynamic sense of progress and, most of all, of history as process.” (Groot, 2010, p. 25).

History survives when fiction can help readers focus on their own thoughts and lives by helping them to create emotional bonds with characters that are close to them. When they carry

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out the ideals of the stories of their own lives, this will inspire them to feel pride not just in their cultural roots, but also in their own self-esteem and empathy for others.

From a discourse perspective, what postmodern studies and literature have shown us is that there is no clear-cut distinction between narrative history and narrative fiction and that the two should be conceived as opposite ends of a single scale or range, rather than as qualitatively separate genres. It's because both history and literature are discourses, and both are signification structures that help the readers making sense of the past. Hayden White, for example, argues that "different theories of the nature of society, politics, and history," (White, 1978, p. 97) are merely appearances, veiling the ultimate truth of "figurative characterizations." (White, 1978, p. 97).

Finally, as Margaret Atwood explains, this shows how historical novels work by invoking historical events "History is their horizon of possibility, the ground against which we judge them probable or improbable"(Gallagher 2011, p. 320). Consequently, this regards the fictional works as places for the building of provisional knowledge, what Gallagher calls discourse in the "subjunctive voice" (Gallagher 2011, p. 321).

### Conclusion:

Having traced different definitions of the historical novel, the study ventures to assert that the historical novel is like an umbrella that other subgenres of the novel can go under, namely, the historical novel could be a detective, a thrill, a romance, an autobiographical, a social, and war fiction at the same time. For example, *Homer & Langley* is a fictional historical autobiographic novel, *The Waterworks* is a historical detective novel, and *The March* is a historical novel about war. In contrast, it is really hard to believe that the historical novel could be science fiction since the majority of the opinions of the critics and novelists provides that the historical novel should bring the sense of the past in terms of time and place. Even if the

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narration is not accurate, the settings should be reasonable and reflect the sense of the past. This condition will eventually exclude the unrealism part of science fiction. That does not mean the historical novel could not be science fiction, but it is really rare and weird. In addition to that, most of the definitions include human beings as characters whether they are real historical people or they are totally made up. That is, the key issue is that the history of human beings or nations is all about. History is a kind of realism regardless of its truth, so as the historical novel should be.

Having said that, there is a general consensus on what the historical novel means. This leads Avrom Fleishman to say that "Everybody knows what a historical novel is; perhaps that is why few have volunteered to define it in print." Still, they do differ in several issues, one of the major differences the definitions have come across is how to determine the past. Past or history is not the concern of fiction in the first place. That is, it is an outsider condition of the historical novel. The study is of the opinion that the past should be determined by the researches of history, and not of fiction. So literary critics may not be entitled to determine what is the past. However, critics are of different says on the past. Some say that a fifty year period, others say before the writer's birth. Still this case is a little bit complicated, that is, due to the fact that the generations are a continuing process which cannot sharply be isolated, to a reader born in the 1990s, novels set during the 1970s may be considered suitably historical, but readers who vividly remember the 1970s may not agree.

There are many changes in the form and the techniques of the historical novel from its manifestation to the present time. It is said that the first literary works that combine the historical facts and fiction are those of Homer The *Iliad* and The *Odyssey*. In these two poems, historical facts and fiction had been melted together in one form. Then, there would be a departure between the historical factual writing and the fictional one. Some argues that until the Scott's *Waverley*,



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there were a little attempts to melt fiction with historical facts as was in The Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, and the Icelandic family sagas. The study has noticed that all those works were poems, this is because the novel has not emerged yet as a genre.

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