THE HARMONY OF ARTISTIC TRUTH AND HISTORICAL TRUTH IN HISTORICAL NOVELS

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Abstract: Historical novels occupy a unique position in world literature because they combine documented historical events with artistic imagination. Such works not only recreate the spirit of a historical period but also reveal the emotional, psychological, and cultural realities of human life. This article examines the relationship between historical truth and artistic truth in historical novels through an IMRAD-based approach. The study analyzes how writers transform historical facts into literary narratives while preserving authenticity and artistic expressiveness. The theoretical framework is based on the views of scholars such as Georg Lukacs, Hayden White, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Walter Scott. In addition, examples from Uzbek historical prose, especially the works of Abdulla Qodiriy and Pirimqul Qodirov, are discussed to demonstrate the interaction between historical reliability and literary creativity. The findings reveal that successful historical novels maintain a balance between factual accuracy and artistic interpretation, enabling readers to understand history emotionally as well as intellectually.

Keywords: historical novel, artistic truth, historical truth, realism, Uzbek literature, literary interpretation, historical consciousness, narrative.

Introduction

Historical novels have long played an important role in shaping cultural memory and national identity. Unlike purely historical documents, literary works provide readers with emotional and psychological access to the past. Through artistic narration, writers recreate historical events, personalities, social conflicts, and cultural traditions while simultaneously expressing philosophical and moral ideas. The concept of historical truth refers to facts, events, and realities supported by historical evidence and documentation. Artistic truth, however, reflects the writer's creative interpretation of reality through imagination, symbolism, characterization, and narrative techniques. In historical fiction, these two dimensions interact closely. The historical novel emerged as a major literary genre in Europe during the nineteenth century. Walter Scott is widely regarded as one of the founders of the historical novel because his works successfully combined historical events with fictional characters and dramatic storytelling. Scott demonstrated that literature could revive the spirit of history while maintaining artistic value.

The relationship between history and literature has attracted the attention of many literary scholars. Georg Lukacs argued that historical novels should reveal the social and psychological realities of a historical period rather than merely repeat historical facts. According to Lukács, the true purpose of historical fiction is to show how ordinary individuals are shaped by historical circumstances. Similarly, Hayden White emphasized that historical narratives themselves contain elements of interpretation and storytelling. In his view, historians and novelists both construct narratives, although their methods and objectives differ.

In Uzbek literature, historical novels occupy a significant place in the development of national consciousness. Writers such as Abdulla Qodiriy, Oybek, and Pirimqul Qodirov used historical themes to explore social transformation, moral values, patriotism, and the destiny of the

nation. For example, O‘tkan Kunlar (Past Days) not only describes nineteenth-century Turkestan but also reflects social conflicts, family relationships, and national identity through artistic characterization. Likewise, Yulduzli Tunlar artistically reconstructs the life and historical environment of Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur. The harmony between historical truth and artistic truth is essential because excessive fictionalization may distort history, while excessive factual detail may reduce literary quality. Therefore, historical novelists face the challenge of balancing authenticity with creativity. The purpose of this article is to analyze the interaction between artistic truth and historical truth in historical novels and to examine how writers combine factual history with artistic imagination.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative literary analysis based on comparative and interpretative methods. The research focuses on theoretical concepts related to historical fiction and examines selected historical novels from world and Uzbek literature. The methodological framework is based on: literary-historical analysis; comparative textual analysis; narrative interpretation; theoretical synthesis.

Several theoretical perspectives guide this study. Historical Realism. Georg Lukacs considered historical realism the foundation of successful historical fiction. According to him, writers should represent the social atmosphere and historical dynamics of a particular period rather than simply describe events chronologically. Narrative Theory. Hayden White argued that historical writing itself is narrative in nature. His theory suggests that historical truth is often shaped through interpretation and literary structure. Dialogism and Polyphony. Mikhail Bakhtin emphasized the importance of multiple voices and perspectives in literary texts. Historical novels often include diverse ideological positions and social viewpoints. National Literary Tradition. The study also considers the contributions of Uzbek literary scholars and writers who explored the role of historical fiction in preserving cultural memory and national identity. The selected texts for analysis include: O‘tkan Kunlar; Yulduzli Tunlar; selected examples from world historical literature.

The analysis focuses on: representation of historical events; characterization of historical figures; artistic imagination; realism and symbolism; ideological and moral interpretation.

Results

The study demonstrates that historical novels achieve artistic power through the harmonious integration of historical truth and artistic truth. Historical Facts as the Foundation of Narrative Historical novels are usually based on real events, historical personalities, and social conditions. Writers rely on historical documents, chronicles, memoirs, and cultural sources to create authenticity. For example, Abdulla Qodiriy carefully reconstructed the social and political atmosphere of nineteenth-century Turkestan in O‘tkan Kunlar. Although the protagonists are fictional, the historical environment reflects genuine political conflicts and cultural traditions. Similarly, Pirimqul Qodirov used historical materials about Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur while writing Yulduzli Tunlar. Historical events such as political struggles, military campaigns, and dynastic conflicts are grounded in documented history. The findings indicate that historical truth provides credibility and educational value to literary works. Artistic Imagination and Emotional Depth. While historical truth establishes factual authenticity, artistic truth gives emotional and psychological depth to the narrative. Writers often create fictional dialogues, inner monologues, symbolic scenes, and dramatic conflicts that may not exist in historical records. These artistic

elements help readers emotionally connect with historical characters and events. For instance, in O‘tkan Kunlar, the love story between Otabek and Kumush serves not only as a personal narrative but also as a reflection of broader social and cultural tensions. The analysis reveals that artistic truth: humanizes historical figures; strengthens emotional impact; reveals moral and philosophical meanings; transforms history into lived experience.

Representation of Historical Personalities. Historical novels frequently reinterpret famous historical figures. Writers aim to present these personalities not only as political leaders but also as human beings with emotions, fears, and moral dilemmas. In Yulduzli Tunlar, Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur is portrayed as both a ruler and a sensitive intellectual. His emotional struggles, loneliness, and dreams are emphasized alongside his political achievements. This approach allows readers to perceive historical figures more realistically and empathetically. Social and National Consciousness. Historical novels also contribute to the formation of cultural identity and historical memory. Uzbek historical prose often reflects themes such as: patriotism; national awakening; cultural preservation; social justice. The study shows that writers use artistic truth to strengthen emotional attachment to national history and values.

Discussion

The relationship between historical truth and artistic truth remains one of the most debated issues in literary studies. Historical novelists constantly negotiate between factual accuracy and creative freedom. Georg Lukacs believed that historical fiction should reflect the “spirit of the age” rather than merely reproduce historical details. This idea is particularly relevant in Uzbek historical prose, where writers attempt to revive cultural memory through artistic narration. Abdulla Qodiriy did not simply describe historical Turkestan in O‘tkan Kunlar; he also criticized social stagnation, ignorance, and injustice. Thus, historical fiction becomes a medium for philosophical reflection and social criticism. Hayden White argued that even historians shape events into narratives through interpretation. This perspective suggests that complete objectivity in historical representation is impossible. Therefore, artistic interpretation is not necessarily opposed to historical truth. However, excessive fictionalization may create historical distortion. Some writers romanticize historical figures or oversimplify complex events for dramatic effect. Such approaches can weaken historical authenticity. Successful historical novels maintain balance by: respecting historical evidence; preserving cultural context; using imagination responsibly; avoiding ideological distortion.

Uzbek literary scholars have emphasized the educational role of historical fiction. Historical novels introduce readers to national history while also developing moral and spiritual awareness. Another important issue is psychological realism. Historical documents often focus on political events, while literature reveals emotional and personal experiences. Through artistic truth, writers explore love, fear, ambition, loyalty, betrayal, and inner conflict. In this sense, historical fiction complements historical science rather than competing with it. Modern readers are increasingly interested in historical novels because they provide both knowledge and emotional engagement. Historical fiction helps contemporary society understand cultural roots, historical continuity, and national identity.

Conclusion

This study examined the harmony between historical truth and artistic truth in historical novels. The findings demonstrate that successful historical fiction combines factual authenticity with artistic imagination to create meaningful and emotionally powerful narratives. Historical truth

provides the structural and factual basis of the narrative, while artistic truth adds psychological depth, symbolism, and emotional resonance. Together, these elements enable readers to experience history intellectually and emotionally. The works of Abdulla Qodiriy and Pirimqul Qodirov illustrate how Uzbek literature successfully integrates historical reality with artistic creativity. Historical novels play an important role in: preserving cultural memory; strengthening national identity; promoting moral reflection; connecting past and present generations. The study concludes that the harmony of historical and artistic truth is essential for the literary and educational value of historical novels. Writers who maintain this balance contribute not only to literature but also to historical consciousness and cultural development.

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