Time and Tide

The Implementation and Receipt of Narrative Historical Writing, Fictional and Non-fictional

By

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For my mother, my thanks for so much.

And to my father: "Too low they build who build beneath the stars."

For my wife and daughter, lights of my life.

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Chapter One
Time and Tide—Introduction

Time and Tide. These words take us into the passage of time, and in essence, our own historicity (and never mind about "waiting for no one"). Here are the waves of time, the tendencies, leanings, courses and currents that shape and direct our historical lived experience, our engaged existence. In these swells we find, adrift as it were, historical writers—both truth-tellers/historiographers—seemingly the guardians of truth and those that void off that unpleasant destiny of having to repeat our past—and the inventive fictionalists, tending the sometimes weedy patches of what is perhaps less known (that is, invented) about life, history and our times. I will in this analysis of historiography and historical novels align myself with sentiments felt and delved into by both of these writers/narrativists. To be sure the historical fiction writer may seem to be doing something more than a little anti-intuitive (or worse, combatively contrarian), but I will in this analysis of these two genres show how fictional and non-fictional varieties of historical writing are transacting modes in a single archetype/paradigm that takes in a continuum of properties: that which is existential/vital, phenomenological/intentional, experiential/intersubjective, hermeneutic/epistemological, historical/temporal, narrative/aesthetic, ontological/existential, cognitive/conscientious, and communicative/linguistic (that's a mouthful, I know).[1]

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[1] Note that I will sketch the above noted continuum later in this work. Above I use the term "transact," which will be important throughout my analysis. The designation is from John Dewey (1859-1952) and Arthur F. Bentley (1870-1957) in their *Knowing and the Known*. Transactional analysis for Dewey and Bentley allows for "the seeing together, when research requires it, of what before had been seen in separations and held severally apart" (112). The two probing philosophers wrote that "The transactional is in fact that point of view which systematically proceeds upon the ground that knowing is co-operative and as such is integral with communication. By its own processes it is allied with the postulational. It demands that statements be made as descriptions of events in terms of durations in time and areas in space" (vi), and

The formational historical discourses that emerge out of this fertile interplay become, as we will see, something like two sides of the same coin, and ultimately function as foils in a vast historical dialog.[2] The central conception I will posit in terms of historical writing in these respects, which I will consider from a number of different perspectives and in light of a number of different disciplines, is that the textual and corporeal actualities of narrative, consciousness, and history are tightly braided into a veritable synthesis, by way of narrative's emergence from, continuity with, incorporation within, and similar configuration to history/lived experience. By examining the threads of this plaiting, and how the varied factors interface with and condition one another, we will learn more about how and why histories, fictional and non-fictional, are written the way they are, and more about their consequence in the human historical conversation. In a word, my aim is to show how fictional and non-fictional histories map onto each other, with touches of the imagined and constructed alongside the remembered, the experienced and the witnessed; the empirical/researched functioning alongside the discursive/composed; and all of these matters and partitions becoming something like a gestalt of our temporal/narrative experience, with its looks backward into memory, onto present experience, and forward into the anticipated future. We will find that the historian and the novelist have been "presented with different but overlapping opportunities," as

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continued that "Transaction is inquiry which ranges under primary observation across all subjectmatters [*sic*] that present themselves, and proceeds with freedom toward the re-determination and re-naming of the objects comprised in the system" (122). Some might be inclined to equate "transaction" with "interaction," but Dewey and Bentley wrote that "the interactional presentation is not adequate, and […] broader statements must be obtained in full transactional form in order to secure that wider conveyance of information which is required" (126). In sum, and in a Rortyan turn, Dewey and Bentley define transaction as that "where systems of descriptions and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to 'elements' or other presumptively detachable or independent 'entities,' 'essences,' or 'realities,' and without isolation of presumptively detachable 'relations' from such detachable 'elements'" (108).

[2] Again, in terms of vocabulary, that I use the word *formational* here is a perhaps a bit quirky, but I think effective. View the term as associated with both the verb *to form* and the noun *form*, yielding the *formative* adjectives *generational*, *propagative*, *promotional* on the one hand (the truth-tellers, I refer to); and *compositional*, *creative*, *aggregative* on the other (meaning the fictionalists).

William Styron (1925-2006) once wrote ([2], 445). To prove all of the above, I will create encompassing, organic, and synthetic explanatory and theoretical maps and models that include examinations of aesthetic factors, compositional technique, historically conditioned consciousness, historical and literary theory, and parameters of truth and epistemology. As evidence of the above I will examine a range of examples from historiography, historical source materials and fictional historical writing. I should note that I will create at least two theoretical models that will explain and illustrate these points. It's a big job ahead, a long journey, but I look forward to the fascinating bounds we will examine.

"But stop right there," the skeptics will utter: "Any claim that the fantastic fundaments of fiction could somehow seep into the stuff of history, the verity of lived experience, and any insinuation that this richly wholesome, truthful herbage could be tilled into or cultivated out of the weedy patches of fiction, is nothing less than bonkers, out-and-out sacrilege." Indeed, here we should note that historical fiction is inevitably seen as a troublemaker in a discussion like this, and many people, "scientific historians" particularly, dismiss any possibility of this genre being seriously considered alongside historiography in terms of historicity, truthfulness, actuality, and the like. Though I will consider this view, granting it authority, we will in the end find that it is simply not entirely true, and that historical fictions are not some sorts of counterfeit cut-outs portraying whimsical (and of course false) views onto what is not in fact the past, but are credible, newly imagined representations of the past that was experienced, authentically effecting enlarged historical apprehension through a rich amalgamation of psychic and aesthetic relevancies and relationships that cross over into historiography, proper. My study will, in a word, highlight underlying vincula linking fictional and non-fictional breeds of historical narrative. These rhizomatic linkages run deep and wide, and ultimately constitute something of a nutritive system delivering the same sustenance to both historiography and historical novels. My study thus encompasses not only letters, but also *life*, and my examination will assume that life—historical experience/consciousness, incident, meaning and outcome—is assimilated into letters—fictional and non-fictional historical narrative—and then back again. "[W]e are in history as we are in the world," writes David Carr (Charles Howard Candler

Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Emory University), and this "serves as the horizon and background for our everyday experience" (*Time, Narrative and History*, 4). From a stance like this I will argue that a given modal historical narrative is "read up" out of aestheticized conscious experience, composed into narrative by historians and historical novelists, read out by readers, and then replaced within a healthy reciprocal, contextual circle of human experience (history) and communicative endeavor (narrative). I have in effect introduced here my theoretical Aesthetics Ethic, chapter two of this book.

The above preface suggests relevant questions pertaining to my subjects. I quote two reviewers of the first draft of my study, who asked "What contribution does historical fiction make to 'history'?" and "What is gained in terms of historical knowledge and apprehension from historical novels?" My interlocutors, reasonably, are demanding details and complete explanations, asking how fictionalized history can become one "provisional guiding thread" in the tapestry of historical comprehension, with the overall fabric comprising "the successive assessments, interpretations and criticisms" leading to our "final judgment as to what the story really was, or as to what actually happened" (Gallie, 50).[3] My aim throughout this study will be to provide lucidity in precisely these respects. Historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) once wrote that "only by continually recognizing that possibilities are unlimited can the historian do justice to the fullness of life" (292)—and I think we need to open our minds to just such unlimited possibilities in terms of narrative historical fiction as it provides historical meaning, interpretation and understanding while ultimately "doing the justice" that Huizinga sought.

At one high level our topics become almost comically correspondent, with any "breach" separating these two genres a good bit narrower than what we might think. I have already referred to "the same sustenance" being delivered to the two genres under consideration. Historiography and historical novelization without question each have their own unique qualities, their own representational strategies and techniques (yes, there

[3] Giorgio Gallie (1928-2020) was referring specifically to historians here, but in my view we may all reasonably be "our own historian."

are differences), but they are also often of the same breed, meticulously accessing the same source historical documentation and evidence, recreating history in similar narrative/composed ways, reaching out to readers with varied interpretations of history with the same ends in mind (conveying what was and what might have been, each which have roles to play in historical writing, as we will see). When they take their places within networks of intersubjective communicative praxes, they transact into and out of one another, contribute to, compel and interrogate one another, and ultimately create fuller, more complete, and better historical apprehension and understanding. Is one admissible as historical evidence—truthful, accurate, impartial, "scientific"—and the other not—merely fabrications and phantasms? I think not, and feel that historical novelization, just as historiography, is one orb in the galaxy of historical redescriptions and corresponding/competing historical vocabularies, vying for acceptance. To turn to Peter Munz (1921-2006), "The most one can do is to check one story against another story. One can compare the two and any notion of 'truth' one can form must be related to such a comparison. Our historical knowledge, in short, is of historical knowledge—not of what actually happened" (205). How "knowledge" is "not what actually happened" may discomfit some readers, but let us proceed. Ultimately, I think that some of the principal perceived differences separating historiography and historical fiction are more a function of readers' receipt of the works than genuinely alien elemental differences at work. In the end—and I will return here to this point—I hope that we will find a transaction at work across these varied points, such that historical fiction may be recognized as something of a different order from the same menu, often comprised of different ingredients but at bottom providing the same sort of sustenance. Hayden White (1928-2018) put it this way: "[H]istory—the real world as it evolves in time—is made sense of in the same way that the poet or novelist tries to make sense of it, i.e., by bequeathing what originally appeared to be problematical and mysterious with the aspect of a recognizable, because it is familiar, form. It does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined; the matter of making sense of it is the same." ("The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," 98). To coin another metaphor, Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) once commented on the "deep kinship" of historiography and fictional narrative—but remember that kinship no doubt comprises a

wealth of difference, and every family has its black sheep.... (*Time and Narrative Volume 1*, 3.). As for these pragmatic similarities, we will at times find that, as I have noted, some historical novelists perform jobs essentially identical to those of historians, transmitting historical truth in realistic and deeply-researched ways that usually do no disservice to the historical record. And as well, the motivations of the writers of these two genres are often largely similar, with both wishing to convey something like an unadorned array of historical facts (there is a certain aesthetic and epistemological power to simple lists of historical data, which are found in both fictional and non-fictional historical narratives, a point I will examine). From this basis, a bit of expansiveness enters into the picture, with not only a good bit of creative license at work, but larger (often much larger) excavations of meaning from the historical record taking place. We may in sum say that all of these similarities emerge out of one very large common denominator in addition to those I have described thus far—the community of historical writers and readers, and their plethora of receptions of historical works, evidence and experience, which as noted I broadly denominate as an Aesthetics Ethic. To continue, and also emerging out of the Aesthetics Ethic, a principal reason for the close associations I am discussing is the narrative structure common to fictional and non-fictional history writing. M. C. Lemon offers a lightning-fast definition of narrative when he writes "When we offer someone a story, a narrative account of 'what happened' […] we cannot but structure this discourse in terms of a sequence of events […] done intentionally by us, for our purposes […]. Our structuring is meaningful; it manifests the reasons we have in doing it; it constitutes a rationale" (43; this sounds a bit like a theory of communicative rationality). Note here the meaning by definition manifested in temporal narrative, an interpretation that will underlie much of this analysis (a good story is more convincing than a good argument, as is sometimes said). In fact, for Lemon, narrative is such an essential discursive structure in terms of the transmission and apprehension of history that "if we were incapable of narrative that entire aspect of reality constituted by events would be beyond our awareness" (72).

We may examine two brief examples that I think illustrate the above reflections. Consider this the opening broadside in my analysis. The following examples are very simple, but I think if pondered they indicate the fascinating interplay of the generic similarities and differences that we are considering. The time is late summer 1864, as the Union and Abraham Lincoln's prospects are at last looking brighter. Secretary of State William Seward, a rock-solid Lincoln loyalist, considers the impact of the latest Union battlefield successes on the hated Democratic party's nomination convention in Chicago. James M. McPherson, George Henry Davis 1886 Professor of American History, emeritus, Princeton University, writes in his great *Battle Cry of Freedom*:

> In retrospect the victory at Mobile Bay suddenly took on new importance, as the first blow of a lethal one-two punch. "Sherman and Farragut," exulted Secretary of State Seward, "have knocked the bottom out of the Chicago platform." (775)[4]

Now note how historical novelist Gore Vidal (1925-2012), in his *Lincoln: A Novel*, working with and conveying the same data, creates a novelistic/historiographic transaction, "raising the consciousness" and illuminating the apprehension of Seward, who is seen in a Cabinet meeting with Lincoln when presidential secretary John Hay (an actual historical figure who wrote a famed account of his experience working with Lincoln during the Civil War, and later served as Secretary of State under William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt) bursts into the room and hands Lincoln a letter from failed presidential candidate John Frémont:

> Seward did his best to guess the contents of the letter. […] If it had anything to do with the military, he would have given it to [Secretary of War] Stanton or [Secretary of the Navy] Welles first. So the message was political. But Sherman and Farragut had knocked the bottom out of the Chicago nomination convention. (578-579)

György Lukács (1885-1971) referred to factors like these in fictional historical writing when he wrote of "the derivation of the individuality of

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[4] Seward is quoted here from Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (New York, 1932).

characters from the historical peculiarity of their age" (19), while Frank Ankersmit, professor of intellectual history and historical theory at the University of Groningen, enjoined historians to incline their ears toward fiction for echoes of the past and a unmediated access to prior lived experience, such that "they will feel directly addressed by the past and that this may then have its resonance in their whole being" (*Sublime Historical Experience,* 282).[5] In sum, these are aesthetic/conscious and then epistemological and even ontological thrusts that are seen in both genres, though perhaps more prominently in historical fiction, with novelists making use of a broader palette on which to paint their historical canvasses. In a word, the aesthetic tools of the fictionalist are not the contrivances of the liar—the usual claim exposited to dismiss the value of fiction in terms of historical truth and actuality—but a once-removed techne, such that the tools of the fictionalist—narrative, recreated dialog, fictional as-if construction, figurative language, characterization, subjunctive incident, synthetic denouements, and the like—reproduce (or produce) historical truth—a full-bodied Ricoeur-esque "seeing as"—and, I will posit, validity claims comprised "not only of descriptions that make claims about the world (the data), but also of statements that interpret or generalize these claims" (Ryan, 823). These are all expansive topics, and I will leave them here, and take them up elsewhere in this work.

To continue this discussion of how novels "do their thing" and convey valuable historical information, the narrative structure of novels possesses a distinctive agglomerative quality, an unsurpassed density and, generally speaking (and in the hands of the best novelists), a finely-honed narrativity (to cut to the chase) that opens doors onto historicity. History, as Ankersmit has written, "comes to us in wholes, in totalities, and this is how we primarily experience both the past itself and what it has left us" (*Sublime Historical Experience,* 119). I think that the narrative of historical novels may map onto just such a conception, ultimately yielding awareness of "the nature of fact as observed in fiction" (Gore Vidal, "Vidal's 'Lincoln': An Exchange," para. 67) and a wealth of historical

[5] But it's only fair to note that good historiography can also achieve the kind of complex "whole being" (call it "totality," which we will repeat) referred to here by Ankersmit.

perspectives, attitudes, enlargements and dispensations. In short, and as noted above, readers "may then have its resonance in their whole being" (*Sublime Historical Experience,* 282). Wolfgang Iser (1926-2007) once wrote that "Fiction opens up a horizon of possibilities in relation to what is; to this extent it remains linked to realities" (*The Fictive and Imaginary,* 230), and also that "The reality represented in the text is not meant to represent reality; it is a pointer to something that is not, although its function is to make that something conceivable" (*The Fictive and Imaginary,* 13). My hope is that in terms of our study of history, we will be able to explore how fiction opens windows onto "what is" (that is, "what was") and prior "realities." As well, we will find that represented fictional historical realities will "point" to that well known, poignant, absent past— "what is not anymore"—and by way of fictionalization, make much of this past "conceivable" in both its pastness, and in its relation to our current and anticipated realities. Admittedly, historiography often does something like this, but again it is my opinion that fiction does it differently, and often more vigorously. Iser adds that "The new denotation generated by the canceling of denotation [in fiction, by way of as-if construction] can now take on presence by way of the newly released implications, which suggest the possible contours of the hitherto uncharted territory" (*The Fictive and Imaginary,* 249, with added text). This comment again reveals the possibility of appealingly wide vistas to be realized in fictional historical works as they reveal "newly released implications" and traverse across "uncharted territory" (no doubt, we should emphasize that it is to be charted) in their re-represented pasts.

Aesthetically, this discussion seems to point to a certain estrangement to be found in historical writing, an idea I will pause to briefly examine. Normally we think of estrangement (uncharted territory, above)—a given epistemological gap that separates texts and reader understanding, possibly by way of properties germane to the text (a Derridean turn toward slippery signification), or also in terms of straightforward misunderstandings, failures to connect, insufficient knowledge and experience on the part of readers, etc.—as a uniquely fictional property, but I think estrangement in fictional history is part and parcel with that in historiography. Historiography, after all, is saddled, as is historical fiction, with the same difficulties in retrieving and recreating absent past

experience, and this estranges the writing in important ways (writing about what simultaneously was but is not). Hayden White writes that when confronted by "a set of events that appears strange, enigmatic, or mysterious," humans "encode the set in terms of culturally provided categories, such as metaphysical concepts, religious beliefs, or story forms" ("The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," 86). Ankersmit has written that "the historian's language is essentially an instrument that estranges us from our own or our cultural identity" (*Narrative Logic,* 47), and that, in no uncertain terms, the past, by way of historical narrative, becomes "dissociated from our experience of the world and then become[s] the tantalizing object of historical understanding" (*Sublime Historical Experience,* 358). This all sounds fairly estranging to me, perhaps even equaling fictional estrangement's unique, often expansive methodologies and outcomes. Ankersmit has written that sublime historical experience, by way of a necessary disassociation from that very experience (again, it's absent, and additionally it is "put at arm's length" in historical writing) "provokes a movement of derealization" (see *Sublime Historical Experience,* 336), and this derealization "paradoxically endows reality with presence that is far more real than reality ever is. […] [Historical experience] can acquire this directness since the protective shield that normally processes our experience of the world and that mediates between us and the world has momentarily been taken away—so that a direct confrontation with the world results" (*Sublime Historical Experience,* 337, with added text).

Ultimately, by way of the facts and facets introduced here, my hope is that we will be able to shed light on a "protective shield that normally processes our experience of the world" (*Sublime Historical Experience,* 337) and see how fiction allows us to "*stand face to face with reality itself in an encounter with reality that is direct and immediate since it is no longer mediated by the categories we normally rely on for making sense of the world*" (*Sublime Historical Experience,* 285, emphasis in original). Ankersmit called this the "right relationship" to the past, and though I would not claim that non-fictional history lacks proper relations to the past (to be sure it often does possess this), the point is that fiction can do its own thing, do it differently, do it well, and provide the avenues to understanding and

apprehension we are discussing. Fiction, in a word, provides the direct sense of historical apprehension referred to by Ankersmit, and though it is itself admittedly a mediating factor, it is nothing like those mediators "we normally rely on for making sense of" our historical experience (they comprise "the protective shield" that normally "mediates between us and the world" as Ankersmit wrote just above).

This is not to say that each and every historical fiction is automatically an improvement on historiographies. As in any artful/empirical enterprise, some perform better, and some perform worse, and of course as often as not any beauty (let alone value) is in the eye of the beholder (and let's not overlook false and revisionist histories, which we will examine). Indeed, all historical writing is subject to these conditions, constantly under the vigilant eyes of skilled observers and readers who compare and contrast works and findings and interpretations, with the aim of correcting errors, improving quality, providing fuller and more complete explanation, description and interpretation, and maybe even settling a few scores. I can simply say that I will do my best to choose high-quality examples from both of these genres for the fodder of this analysis, and that the reader is free to compare and contrast my findings across any other historical fiction and historiography, and make his or her own judgments. False, revisionist and pseudo-histories should probably be considered here, and I will take this up for a time later in this work.

In sum, I will approach the various compositional approaches and interpretive methodologies of these two genres and disciplines as overlapping, at times similar, at times divergent, but with both affording that Ricoeur-esque "seeing as" of the past. As Gore Vidal once wrote, "Perhaps, in the end truth is best *imagined*, particularly if it is firmly grounded in the disagreed-as well as agreed-upon facts" ("Gore Vidal's 'Lincoln': An Exchange," para. 68, emphasis added).[6]

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[6] These "imagined" and "seen as" pasts are, as noted, no doubt uncomfortable for some readers. In my defense, I say here that the idea that there is one great historical truth out there waiting to be excavated and then relayed in all its unadorned totality is almost completely rejected these days, even by professional historians, and instead a more generous and contextual allowance of varied interpretation and outcome is

This work is a revision and to some extent shortening of my PhD dissertation, published by National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan, in 2010. I will now explain in some detail, three of the major theses of this work (see pages 252-253 in the final chapter of this work for an even longer list of topics we will by then have covered). I will then review the contents of the book itself, name some of the principal analysts I will refer to, and finally, take a brief look at four of the principal works we will analyze.

The Aesthetics Ethic I will construct in chapter two is a dappled experiential ground, a dynamic, densely cerebral experiential field embedded within profoundly aesthetic conscious contexts comprising individual and community histories lived in an environmentality studded with manifold elements of subjectivity, objectivity and intersubjectivity, imagination and artfulness, intentionality and actualization, and, perhaps most importantly, enunciation/circumscription and communication in historical narrative. Understand this conception in terms of the etymologies of these words, with aesthetic from the Greek aisthētikos, "of sense perception," "to perceive," and ethic from the Greek ēthos, "character," "custom," related to words meaning "comrade," "kinship," and "family" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth* Edition). These two interacting conceptions will create, I think, a platform that will effectively allow us to traverse a continuum of historical apprehension and consciousness, and to see how these are effected in historical writing. Jerzy Topolski (1928-1998) nicely captured the essence of this rich interplay when he wrote that "Historical narratives […] invoke an aesthetic sense in virtue of which their identity is formed. […T]he aesthetic dimension is crucial in the formation of historical wholes" (198). Frank Kermode (1919-2010) also captured some of the philosophical, perhaps conceptual, flavor of this proposal when he wrote: "Since ethics

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widely accepted. This point by no means dissolves the boundaries between what is true and false, what is real and unreal, but it is acknowledged that what humans know and have experienced can be written up in varying ways and by way of wider allowances. Such allowances for "what actually was" may include fictionalized versions of history—or this will be my argument. To say the least, these points will require much unpacking—and I will return to them later in this introduction and elsewhere in this work.

is the relation between [the] fictional giant and the human animal, ethical solutions are aesthetic; we are concerned with fictions of relation" (160). Historical literature, fictional and non-fictional, is the key manifestation of these varied factors. The Aesthetics Ethic will require a lengthy and detailed theoretical explanation and defense, with the final picture a veritable arras web (to borrow from Hayden White) of historical narrative and related elements and experiences. A modified version of this study was published in 2016 in the *Asian Journal of Social Science Studies.*

My assertion that human consciousness, lived historical experience and historical narrative are virtually one is an—probably the—essential scaffolding of my position, and will be taken up in chapter three.[7] In terms of historically mediated human consciousness and narrative, most important to note is the understanding that human consciousness has a profound and encompassing narrative essence and construction, as I have referred to. Many theorists, scientists and analysts examining consciousness have made this position clear, and as Fireman, McVay and Flanagan write, "Given that personal narrative and self-representation exist as human experience, they are therefore central to a conception and examination of human consciousness" (5). As I have exposited, the central point I will pursue in terms of historical writing in this respect is the correlative relationship of narrative, consciousness, and history. To borrow from consciousness researcher David Chalmers, I am in effect arguing for a principal of structural coherence.[8] In more detail, and in addition to the narrative structure of conscious lived experience, note the following points and ideas about human consciousness that I will examine: 1) How subjectivity, intersubjectivity and objectivity, in a combinatory compote, are processed through narrative practice in human consciousness, and how this impacts historical experience and narrative; 2) How consciousness is foremost a synthesizing operation, and how this relates to how writers of history themselves integrate ideas into ordered

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[7] One way to understand this is to refer to that "conscious experience, it appears, is really all that matters for your existence" (Husserl, "General Introduction"). I might reword this, if a bit playfully, to say, "conscious experience, it appears, is really all that matters for *your history*."

[8] From David Chalmers, "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, see <https://consc.net/papers/facing.html>.

plots, and the associated representation of characters and events in temporal/causal sequences with significant outcomes; 3) The Collingwood-esque idea of "history as thought," and how this can be connected back to conscious processes and historical narrative. For Collingwood (1889-1943) the corridors of human consciousness and understanding were intimately linked with historical experience and for him, famously, thoughtful processes and history are no less than "an idea which every [person] possesses as part of the fundamental endowment of *mind*" ("Inaugural" 166, emphasis added with added text). John Tosh, professor of history, Roehampton University, meanwhile, similarly refers to historical interpretation and understanding as a straightforward "discourse within a contradictory intellectual milieu" (134). These comments indicate how thought, which can be seen as a high-level manifestation of human consciousness, is at the very foundation of historical understanding and apprehension (these ideas will also be connected to Daniel Wickberg's histories of sensibilities in chapter two); 4) How historical and to some extent literary theory, with their impacts on historical narrative, have frequently emerged out of conceptions and attributes of conscious lived experience (this has not been acknowledged much less understood by theorists to date); and 5) How the conceptions of protention and retention along a temporal continuum in conscious experience can be seen at work in narrative consciousness and in turn narrated history. In sum we might view this expansive conscious/referential field as a global workspace, with its processes and functions managed and employed in order to integrate perception, enable adaptation, and provide information to a self system, with all of this helping us understand our place in history and the origins and architectonics of historical narrative.[9]

To return to aesthetic elements, the elements I will examine include multi-temporal emplotment, that richly mediated synthesis and variously conditioned dialectic in which "stories are told, life is lived" (Ricoeur, *A Ricoeur Reader,* 430). To truly understand the dynamics of plot, one must probe into its complex elements, and by doing so we will find that

[9] The Global Workspace idea of consciousness is by Bernard J. Baars, *In the Theater of Consciousness: The Workspace of the Mind,* and other works.

fictional and non-fictional emplotment is suffused with a number of aesthetic qualities, which I will examine in extensive detail in chapter four of this work. These qualities include: 1) imagination as a founding element of both historical novelization and historiography; 2) substantial focus on characters and characterization with varying points of view, subjective, objective and intersubjective; these characterizations and points of view can extend across narrators and characters in emplotted narrative, writers of historical narrative, and reading audiences; 3) a given fictive quality and fictionalizing techniques that condition fictional and also non-fictional historical writing; 4) an effort toward individual and community becoming or *bildungsroman* (which may impact characterization, temporality, point of view, and the like); 5) a vast heteroglossia and intertextuality, with different voices dialogically at play—"the sound of the human voice, or many voices, speaking in a variety of accents, rhythms and registers," as David Lodge has written (*The Art of Fiction,* 97); 6) a thoroughgoing modality, contingency and indeterminacy in historical narrative (with a nod toward a view of chaos in historical experience and apprehension); 7) linguistically, a semantic/syntactic richness and density that includes the skilled use of symbolism, metaphor, irony and other elevated uses of language + meaning, with these constituents organized into unifying/overarching and meaningful themes with an impact on characters and reading audiences; 8) dense temporality, employing diachronic and/or synchronic time frames, sometimes disrupted (such as by way of flashbacks, fast-forwarding or attenuation, or in instances of what Gérard Genette (1930-2018) defined as prolepsis and analepsis), but virtually always with something like identifiable beginnings, middles and ends (Exposition-Development-Incitement-Climax-Denouement); 9) rhetorical thrusts that extend across the aesthetic, moral, argumentative and historical; and finally, 10) liquid conceptions of truth in narrative and historical experience (and this will again be taken up in my theoretical model of historical truth in chapter five). Granted, different lists of aesthetic elements, created by different analysts will vary—but I will forge ahead with the list I have outlined here, building upon it with the hope that we will see in a number of different ways and in a number of different contexts how these attributes transact in human historical apprehension, historiography and historical fiction.

And now, the organization of my study is as follows. The reader will find that these chapters often interact, forecast and refer back to one another, which I hope makes my analysis and writing more coherent, synthetic and complete. As historian Saul Friedländer has written, "No single conceptual framework can encompass the diverse and converging strands" of a necessarily "integrative and integrated" history (xvi, xv). I could add the thoughts of Jeroen Van Bouwel and Erik Weberl, Ghent University, Belgium, who wrote recently of the value of an ecumenical explanatory pluralism in social sciences, which respects and utilizes an interesting and ranging variety of possible explicatory schema. For Van Bouwel and Weberl, "A consequence of our pluralism is that the ideal explanatory text for a social or historical phenomenon (that is, the comprehensive account of this phenomenon) will contain explanations of various sorts" (182). After the current chapter, the remainder of this study will include shortened versions of the chapters of my dissertation.

In chapter two, I will fashion my Aesthetics Ethic, examining both aesthetic and ethical conceptions in what I posit is a broad intersubjective environmentality in which human beings live, and historical writers function. Stemming from this, there will be a look at the strictures and impacts on and in historical writing imposed by community, with examples of community ethics and morality conveyed in historical writing. Following this is an examination of Daniel Wickberg's histories of sensibilities. Finally, I will examine one particular narrative aesthetic factor that will be important as we move ahead: the idea of narrative as an explanatory paradigm. Note that in chapter two I will include a mapped graphic representation of "Individual and Community Lived Experience."

In chapter three, I posit the emergence of identical constituent epistemological and ontological formations across individual and community consciousness, and historical experience. The key connective tissue in this worldly consciousness is, probably needless to say, narrative, and the straightforward conception of narrative consciousness and subsequent presented and represented historical narrative will be examined in detail. I will also present an analysis of "Subjectivity and Objectivity: Theories of Coherence" here.

In chapter four, I will further analyze the aesthetic conceptions listed above in relation to historical writings. These aesthetic contours will include elements including, Imagination; Point of View; Fictionalization; Becoming; Heteroglossia, Intertextuality; Contingency, Metaphor, Modality, Chaos; Temporality; and Rhetoric. My aim will be to link these factors across a (conscious) human "aesthetic gaze" taking in and interpreting experience, and up into composed historical narrative.

In chapter five, I will analyze concepts of truth, as they are applied in fictional and non-fictional historical writings, and present my theoretical model of historical truth apprehension. Note that one version of some of this chapter was published in 2015 in *History Compass* magazine.

In chapter six, I will conclude and summarize the work and reflect on its significance. Note that in this chapter I will construct an "Historical Truth Continuum."

Note here that three analysts will play profound roles in my study going forward: Fredric Jameson (1934-2024), Paul Ricoeur and Hayden White. I will not examine these writers in detail here, except to say that Jameson in his *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981), urged scholars to "Always historicize!" and his exhortation jolted awake an entire generation. Jameson, Ricoeur and White have revealed in fascinating and deeply significant ways how, as some writers have only waggishly noted, something very close to fictionalization shapes non-fiction history. I will at times critique these three thinkers in order to prize open some of the key conceptions that play leading roles in the study of Narrative and History (call me brash, even foolhardy), and in these openings I will daub in some of the plaster of my own ideas with the aim of showing how fictionalized history and historiography often (even always) enjoy a correlative relationship. I will refer to many another historical analyst in this work, some quite substantially, but I note here these three standouts. Readers may note that in addition to these and other authors and analysts, there were number of personal communications I had during writing (some with the very analysts and authors cited here), and I include these quotes. I was very lucky that a

number of these often-brilliant specialists shared their ideas with me, personally.

The four main works we will examine include *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970), with its look at the experiences of soldiers on the western front, battle, and returning home in WWI. *The Confessions of Nat Turner* by William Styron, a historical narrative about everyday Southern U.S. country life and the shocking slave rebellion in decaying upland Virginia in the early 19th century. *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara (1928-1988), an examination of the Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War, and major fighters and amazing men who took part. And *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote (1924-1984), the shocking and terror-ridden tale of the cold-blooded murder of a farm family in Kansas in 1959, and the crazed murderers wild escape and final capture.

I will conclude this chapter with an expanded examination of the ideas I have introduced here, and continue to expound upon my central theses. In the remainder of the work I will continue along this winding path, examining the various topics I have introduced. Here I will explain some of the contours of the two genres I will be examining, analyzing, comparing and contrasting. Although I think at the ground level we know what is being referred to when we talk about historiography or historical novels, at a high level, varying approaches, understandings and methodologies can differ significantly. Historiography is probably easiest to begin with, for there is a general understanding of this genre as applying to history as history—the recalled and related actual historical personages and events from our past. This writing is empirical, analytical (even "scientific"), almost wholly realistic—with this approach sporting a long pedigree that extends far back into ages past, and which was particularly highlighted by the famed German historian and educator Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), and his stoutly defended effort to tell history *wie es eigentlich gewesen* ("how things actually were"). But there is a twist inside this seemingly pared-down and arch-realistic world, for even in the most "positivist" historical writing, there are usually significant dashes of creative conjecture, broad interpretation, what if/could have subjunctivity, and descriptive breadth in accounts of events

and trends, as well as the acts and thoughts of historical agents (even von Ranke recognized all of this, I believe). In a word, the relations of historical events and agents to prior and subsequent events and personages is subject to a good measure of creative and interpretive license. James M. McPherson has written that he employed a flexible narrative composition in his *Battle Cry of Freedom* in order to accommodate and convey the variegated contingency of lived experience, allowing him to "do justice to this dynamism, this complex relationship of cause and effect, this intensity of experience" (ix). Few historical writers would discount this idea, but von Ranke's approach would seem to limit it, and to be sure there are historians and analysts who shy from over-weighting a term like contingency, and related aesthetic ideas about lurking différance in historical writing, open-ended ideas about truth, free application of "pastiche," some sort of "meta-foregrounding" of the writer, oppressive anxiety of influence, etc. There are, in a word, those sterner observers who seek to contain historical writing and analysis strictly to actual periods and agents, with exacting adherence to the written and reliquary record, the past "as it is actually found." Obviously, and as just noted, a key area in light of these observations and this debate is the extent to which non-fiction historians may utilize what would normally be seen as fictional techniques and/or approaches in their writing. For most historians an understanding like this is unavoidable given the changes in literary theory and subsequent application of this theory into historical writing over the last 50 years or so—but few would ever claim that they actually fictionalize in their writing, and the farthest they would probably go is to admit that, yes, they do employ narrative structure and understanding in their writings, and that there is a small allowance for more expansive creativity—but no more. We will see slightly more liberal understandings like this—though still essentially ensconced in empirical history—in some of the works I will examine, such as *The Death of Woman Wang* by Jonathan D. Spence, an experiment in historical narrative with strong literary underpinnings (1978); *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*, by Paul Cohen, an experiment in multiple interpretations of history (1997); and *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland*, by Norman Davies, a unique present-to-past telling of history (1984, 1986). A principal historiographic work in my analysis will be McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988), which has justly

earned a reputation as an essentially positivist history conveyed within a model narrative account. In addition to historiography, proper, I will refer to various other sources, including *Slavery in the United States: a narrative of the life and adventures of Charles Ball, a black man, who lived forty years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a slave*, a memoir written by a former slave in 1836; and the actual confession and slender memoir of Nat Turner, taken from the rebel slave by one of the lawyers in his trial in 1831. I will refer to a number of other historiographies and non-fiction works as well, such as journalism accounts, diaries, and the like. In sum though all of these works count as "history," they are of different varieties and voices, with some examples simply empirical history, some more focused on the use of narrative in history writing, some a bit more experimental, some personal, and also additional archival resources. I am hoping this variety will serve us well, and I will extensively compare and contrast these works with fictional works in my analysis.

Some have posited a difference between history as *the actual events of the past*, and history as *written historical narrative*. I will address both in this study, and I will be clear about what I mean when I talk about either of these "histories." Nevertheless, I pause here to examine this conception—it will come up again at other points in this analysis. Note that at times I will use a term such as "history is first lived," and here some readers have expressed trepidation. Here I use the term "history is first lived," which will be brought up again below.

The concern, as noted here, is that there is a distinct difference (a chasm in fact) between "the past" lived by peoples, and their "history," that is, the written accounts of that past. Thus, the claim would be that to say "history is lived" is mistaken (history is written, not lived). I can follow this point—there is no difficulty in differentiating between an understanding of a people's past as comprising the events that took place in that past (always of course out of reach, "absent"), and the histories (fictional and non-fictional) composed after these "pasts" have taken place (with all of the associated interpretation, rhetorical flourish, manipulation, outright bias, etc. that these compositions entail). But can we really say that there is a complete disunion and dissonance, a veritably bullet-riddled no-man's-land separating these two categories? (Ontological

categories some would call them, though they might also be communicative/semantic, phenomenological, epistemological, etc.) Needless to say, they are different in essential aspects, but my position is that they evince a richly combinatory association, a given dependence on one another, and to be sure a strong "family resemblance." In a word, I posit a veritably macrobiotic relation of history/lived experience and narrative representation, which synchronize in fruitful ways and yield a strong, binding amalgamation, as I wrote just above. Frederic Jameson once wrote along these lines, and I don't disagree, that history "is inaccessible to us except in textual form [and] can be approached only by way of prior (re)textualization" (*The Political Unconscious,* 82). Professor Jameson also wrote, however, and errantly I believe, that "It suffices therefore that history be increasingly removed from us in time, or that we be removed from it in thought, for it to cease to be interiorizable, and to lose its intelligibility, which was only an illusion that was attached to a provisory interiority" (*The Political Unconscious,* 263; Jameson here is quoting Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) in *Le Pensée Sauvage*). In any case, I do not believe that I fudge the line between history, the past, lived experience, narrated historical works, etc., and I in essence reserve the right to use the word "history" (and on occasion other terms) to refer to a people's past. As for those written "histories" that come later, after "the past," proper, they are best and most often referred to in straightforward terms—principally historiography and historical fiction (though we would also have to consider journalism accounts, memoirs and diaries, etc.). The relationship between these two categories is so close and complementary, that to try to cleave them into wholly divergent classifications, essentially at war with one another, is unwise and unwarranted. History as we know and understand it is, of course, largely ensconced in narrative written works—this however does not dramatically disfigure meaning, explanation and understanding (admittedly, and as noted, there is a good bit of varied interpretation and classification at work, but we can handle the transactions going on here). In short, and to repeat, it is an error to say that narrative works put us at such a remove from history ("the past") that we are lost at sea, flailing for a secure hold on our apprehension of what once was/happened (to say nothing of that that means). In sum, and to conclude, the reader will always be clear about where I am coming from and what I mean when I

refer to "the past," "history," "historical narrative," "lived experience" and the like. The analysis here I hope is reasonably complete, but admittedly brief, and readers will continue to see my thoroughgoing defense of these and other associated ideas throughout this work.

Similar to historiography, we have a broad understanding of the historical novel that is not often disputed—a fictional work shaped around actual historical incident and personages, with this historical actuality providing these novels their main thematic and topical thrusts, as well as dictating their portrayal of action and characters. Many a historical novelist has made it abundantly clear that they have striven to adhere exactly to the historical facts in almost all essential ways—"During the narrative that follows I have rarely departed from the *known* facts" wrote William Styron of *The Confessions of Nat Turner* ([1], Author's Note, emphasis in original, no page number), and "All of the principal characters really existed, and they said and did pretty much what I have them saying and doing" wrote Gore Vidal of *Lincoln: A Novel,* (Afterword).[10] We see here, I think, another of those similarities linking historical novelists and historiographers.

But the above is only half true. For the freedom to imagine upward historical events and personages, filling in the gaps of all that is not fully (or even partially) known about these historical data, is broadly exploited by some novelists (but then, such dearths of understanding are also "exploited" by historians). At the extreme, some fictional works upend history in ways that are so broadly peculiar, conjectural or truly deviant from the actual past that they are not likely not be called historical novels at all (and recall again historical revisionism). The work of Thomas Pynchon is a good example, for although his works are historical to the

[10] Some readers will complain that Styron and Vidal are weaseling (they "pretty much" got history right), and that in any case since these writers are novelists they should be dismissed as liars and fabricators. Such a claim seems to me pedantic to the extreme, and ignores realities that condition historical reconstruction and the approaches of both historians and historical novelists. In any event, I warrant that Vidal and Styron have made credible and sincere claims about their efforts toward accurate and complete historical detail and understanding, and from there they have written fictional works about the histories they have researched.

extreme (I learned an awful lot about Germany's activities in Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Pynchon's *V.*), they tend to be expansive to the point of psychedelic in their explosively creative and imaginative construction, and extend far beyond any strict historicity. Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon* comes pretty close to being a historical novel in the strict sense—but the appearance of the "learn'd English dog" making sophisticated political, cultural, historical and philosophical observations discounts it (then again, it was the very historical Abigail Adams, wife of President John, who found Paris to be a delightful "city of entertainments" in which she saw "'a learned pig, dancing dogs, and a little hare that beats a drum'" [McCullough, 343]). Other works are more restrained but still do not fully meet my requirements, such as Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (with its masterful mid-text description of the Dunkirk evacuation in WWII), Michael Cunningham's *Specimen Days* (with its refashioning of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York city), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (which no doubt offers some of the most realistic and important interpretations of WWII experience ever written), or Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (with its delightful reconstruction of Bobby Thompson's "shot heard round the world" in 1951). These works offer wonderful historical descriptions and are in their ways steeped in historicity, but they are in sum a bit too "fictional," and don't have the full-bodied focus on specific historical incident and agency that the works I will study do. The historical novels that I examine are just that, novels fully and specifically focused on known areas and events in history. They "stick to the facts" in many ways, largely adhering to the historical record. Though of course they exploit narrative freedom in re-imagining the past (recall Styron and Vidal, just above), they are clear in their focus and in what they describe, and we largely recognize the history that is portrayed, and the impact that results from it.

I refer as far as "historical truth," to Hayden White, who said in an interview "I have never felt that the important thing is to find out the truth about the past. Rather, it is to find out what is real rather than what is true" ("The Aim of Interpretation," 65). (I admit that some observers have found Professor White's words puzzling and possibly even spurious; I will address these concerns going forward, and I think we will find White's words are in fact revealing). In sum I would count fiction as

one of the principal effectors or excavators that, alongside non-fiction historiography, elucidates the remembered, the historical traces and leavings, the communicative artifacts and just "what is real" in lived historical experience (that which was experienced, providing a coupled psychological/ontological connection/association and birds-eye view onto interpreted meaning, context, intimation, allusion, significance, etc., all of which is well conditioned by truthful apprehension).

To continue, the four historical novels noted above are an eclectic lot, each possessing distinctive attributes, and this I think will be an advantage, challenging our interpretations going forward, forcing us to rethink historical writing in unique and creative ways. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) is a fictionalized eyewitness account and memoir of historical experience and apprehension in World War I (the memoir is a unique but valid form of history, at once a "source historical material" and an independent creative construction). Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965) often comes off as empirical history, a "true crime" account—but it is in fact very much a fictionalized work of historical incident, which of course Capote famously called a "non-fiction novel," combining the idea of "non-fiction history," and the "fictional novel" for the first time ever. William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1966) is a historical novel masterpiece, meticulously researched and interpreted in true historian fashion—but the difficulty is that there is a scarcity of source materials on which to draw about the historical events portrayed—there is really only one document, the "confession" referred to above, outside of news reports on the massacre, that discusses Nat Turner in any way (I have pointed out that Nat Turner could write English, but never wrote a single document, not even a letter, in his life). This is, however, anything but unusual, and we will examine how Styron reconstructed his history within given constraints, in the end broadly re-imagining history in full-bodied ways. Finally, Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels* (1974) is a brilliant historical novel in the classic sense, very different from Styron's in that there is a wealth of source materials on which to draw about the Battle of Gettysburg.

The above in sum sketches most of the principal themes, arguments and works to be studied in this paper. David Lodge captures with aesthetic

élan this panoply of ideas, and, with my additions, combines historical experience and narrative in a neat aesthetic/experiential integument when he writes that literature "creates fictional models of what it is like to be a human being, [historically] moving through time and space. It captures the density of [consciously] experienced [historical] events by its rhetoric, and it shows the connectedness of [historical] events through the devices of [narrated] plot" (14, with added text). Lodge here refers specifically to literature, which we may, in terms of narrative, liken to historiography without too much difficulty.

With all of the above, I trust that readers have an overview of my approach, and ultimately hope that I have defended, at least here at the outset, the incredible power and ubiquity of historical narrative, which courses from the very foundation of lived experience, and from this source conditions and shapes the human communicative practices out of which emerge our stories and our histories. Humorist Ashleigh Brilliant has written that, "Strange as it may seem, my life is based on a true story," and his droll words remind us that life itself—our true history—stems from the fundaments of story—fiction we may say—such that given narrative elements structure lived experience (from *A-Z Quotes*). Strange as it may sound, I believe that in light of these connections, we may find that at times truth becomes fiction, and back again, with their varied constituents and tissues modulating, inflecting and metamorphosing within the alembic of lived and narrated experience in all of their copious glory.

In light of some of these main ideas, theorists and thinkers in years past have, I think, for the most part focused on nudging fiction a bit closer to history. To be sure they have been remarkably successful in this enterprise. My aim in this study, though part and parcel with this idea, may nevertheless be its reverse, and I will try to push history deeper into the fictive. At a high level, I think that descriptions and analyses to date have given less than complete attention to several key areas—aesthetics in lived experience (and, for that matter, in narrative), consciousness and human sensibilities, ethics and associated morality in historical experience and narrative, intersubjectivity, varied rhetorics, and the modality of existence (and narrative). In a word, the true extent of how a network of narration in history extends well beyond historiography, proper, and