

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE POETICS OF HISTORICAL NOVELS CREATED DURING THE "SOUTHERN RENAISSANCE" IN LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

Razzakov Bakhrom Abdugafurovich

Namangan Engineering - Construction Institute, Namangan, Uzbekistan

E-mail : bahromrazzakov@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper explores the theoretical and practical aspects of the poetics of historical novels produced during the "Southern Renaissance" within a linguistic context. The Southern Renaissance, a literary and cultural movement emerging in the Southern United States during the early to mid-20th century, saw a revival of interest in regional history, identity, and cultural memory. Focusing on the works of key Southern authors, the study investigates how the poetics of historical novels intersect with linguistic features, such as dialect, vernacular speech, and narrative structures, to construct historical consciousness and regional identity. Theoretical analysis will draw on key literary and linguistic theories related to historical fiction, regionalism, and the interplay between language and memory. In practical terms, the study will examine specific texts, considering how the manipulation of language both reflects and shapes the portrayal of Southern history, culture, and social dynamics. This paper aims to provide a deeper understanding of how historical novels in the Southern Renaissance not only narrate the past but also participate in the ongoing negotiation of linguistic and cultural identities in the context of the American South.

Key words: cultural and intellectual movement, historical contexts, fictionalization, myth and fact, cultural divisions, racial segregation, moral ambiguity, critiquing contemporary social.

The Southern Renaissance, a cultural and intellectual movement that flourished in the Southern United States from the early 20th century, was characterized by a focus on regional identity, a deep engagement with historical contexts, and a profound exploration of language and tradition. One of the key literary genres that emerged during this period was the historical novel, which combined elements of fiction with a serious examination of history, cultural memory, and societal changes. These works were not only literary endeavors but also expressions of the complex relationship between past and present, and were pivotal in shaping modern Southern literature.

This article aims to explore both the theoretical and practical aspects of the poetics of historical novels from the Southern Renaissance. We will examine how language-both its structure and its use-plays a crucial role in constructing historical narratives. In doing so, we will consider the linguistic and stylistic features that are characteristic of the period's historical novels and assess how these novels engage with history, memory, and regional identity. [1, 55].

One of the key theoretical concepts in the poetics of Southern Renaissance historical novels is the role of memory and historical consciousness. Historical novels often serve as a bridge between past events and the present-day realities of the authors and their readers. In Southern literature, the legacy of the Civil War, slavery, Reconstruction, and the rise of the New South provided a rich tapestry for novelists to explore themes of loss, transformation, and survival.

The Southern Renaissance authors sought not only to document history but also to interrogate it, using fictionalization to ask questions about historical accuracy, myth-making, and collective memory. Authors like William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, and Ellen Glasgow incorporated aspects of history that were personal and regional, often blending myth and fact in ways that raised important questions about how history is constructed and remembered. Through the lens of fiction, the past could be re-examined, reinterpreted, and sometimes re-imagined.

The use of language in historical novels is crucial in constructing an authentic historical experience. During the Southern Renaissance, authors sought to capture the regional dialects, idioms, and linguistic patterns that were unique to the South. The Southern vernacular, with its deep roots in African American, Native American, and European traditions, provided a rich, textured medium through which historical realities could be conveyed. [2, 289].

Faulkner's use of Southern dialect, for instance, is not merely a stylistic choice; it is a reflection of the social and cultural divisions that existed within the South. The ways in which characters speak, think, and interact with each other reveal important aspects of their identity, their social standing, and their relationship to history. Through dialect, historical novels in the Southern Renaissance could articulate the tension between old traditions and new social realities, as well as the interplay between different cultural groups in the South.

Additionally, the representation of language itself-whether in the form of formal speech, rural dialect, or colloquial expressions-serves as an aesthetic tool. This tool is used to evoke a sense of time and place, as well as to communicate the psychological and emotional landscapes of the characters. For example, the use of "stream-of-consciousness" writing in Faulkner's works, with its often fragmented and disjointed language, mirrors the brokenness and the chaos of post-Civil War Southern society.

In practical terms, historical novels of the Southern Renaissance employ a variety of structural techniques that serve to immerse the reader in the historical period. One important feature is the manipulation of time. These novels frequently employ nonlinear narrative structures, moving back and forth between different time periods. This approach reflects the fragmented nature of historical memory and the way in which past events continue to shape present realities.

For instance, Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury" (1929) and "As I Lay Dying" (1930) both feature fragmented timelines and multiple points of view, which complicates the reader's understanding of the narrative. These narrative techniques not only present a historical reality in a fractured form but also highlight the complexity of personal and collective memory in the South. In such novels, time is

not simply a linear progression but a cyclical force, where the past continually informs the present. [3, 18].

Additionally, the structure of these historical novels often reflects the broader social and political dynamics of the South. For example, the hierarchical structures of Southern society—the rigid class divisions, racial segregation, and gender roles—are often mirrored in the way the narrative is organized, with certain characters' perspectives given more weight than others. The dominance of the white Southern aristocracy in early works like Ellen Glasgow's "Barren Ground" (1925) contrasts with the later more inclusive and nuanced portrayals of Southern life, as seen in works like "Go Down, Moses" (1942).

While historical novels of the Southern Renaissance are grounded in real events and figures, they often blur the line between historical accuracy and fictional imagination. Authors employed historical events, figures, and settings as a framework for exploring broader thematic concerns, such as the effects of racial injustice, the decline of the Southern plantation economy, and the impact of the Civil War on personal and collective identities. [4, 56].

For example, Robert Penn Warren's "All the King's Men" (1946), which focuses on the rise and fall of a political leader in the South, is grounded in the historical realities of the Southern political landscape but also freely fictionalizes aspects of the protagonist's character and motivations. The novel explores the moral ambiguity of political power, the intersection of history and individual agency, and the tragic consequences of personal ambition.

In this way, historical novels do not aim to offer an exact reproduction of the past but instead provide a lens through which to interpret the present. The historical novel thus serves a dual purpose: to inform and to question. The reader is invited to engage with both the historical record and the fiction that emerges from it, allowing the Southern Renaissance novelists to offer insights into the complexities of the South's past while also critiquing contemporary social, political, and cultural conditions.

The Southern Renaissance was characterized by an intense focus on style, which helped to define the literary movement. Writers such as Faulkner, Warren, and Caroline Gordon utilized a range of linguistic devices to evoke the texture of Southern life. The use of imagery, symbolism, and metaphor was central to the poetics of historical fiction in the period, as these devices allowed authors to explore complex psychological, social, and historical themes. [5, 273].

Faulkner, for example, frequently used the motif of the "land" to represent both the physical and psychological weight of Southern history. The "soil" of the South became a metaphor for the inescapable past, and the characters' relationship with the land mirrored their relationship with history. Similarly, authors like Ellen Glasgow employed a highly descriptive and introspective style that focused on the psychological depth of their characters, exploring how the passage of time shaped their personal and collective identities.

The historical novels created during the Southern Renaissance represent a dynamic intersection of language, history, and literary innovation. In both theoretical

and practical terms, these works provide a deep exploration of the region's past, its memory, and its identity, while also reflecting on the ways in which the past continues to influence the present. The poetics of Southern Renaissance historical novels is marked by a deliberate use of language to evoke a sense of time and place, and by the blending of historical accuracy with fictional freedom to illuminate the complexities of human experience.

The linguistic and stylistic features of these works—such as the use of regional dialects, non-linear narrative structures, and symbolic imagery—are essential in conveying the historical, cultural, and emotional landscapes of the South. Through their innovative and complex engagement with history, these novels continue to serve as a valuable resource for understanding the Southern United States, both in its past and in its present.

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