



Cappadocia University

School of Graduate Studies and Research

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**THE REPRESENTATIONS OF HISTORY THROUGH
FICTION: CHRISTY LEFTERI'S *THE BEEKEEPER OF
ALEPPO* AND VICTORIA HISLOP'S *THOSE WHO ARE
LOVED***

Yasser KHAZNE

Master's Thesis

Nevşehir, 2022

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This thesis studies two novels that narrate incidents of civil wars. I wish to have a peaceful future for humanity. I hope to see the day when people enjoy their differences and live peacefully.

ÖZET

KHAZNE, Yasser, *Tarihin Kurgusal Betimlemeleri: Christy Lefteri'nin The Beekeeper of Aleppo ve Victoria Hislop'in Those Who Are Loved Adlı Eserleri*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Nevşehir, 2022.

Bu tezde, Christy Lefteri'nin *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) ve Victoria Hislop'un *Those Who Are Loved* (2019) eserleri Yeni Tarihselci yaklaşımla incelenmiştir. Tez, tarihsel olayların tarihsel rivayetlerdeki sunumunu kısaca inceleyen bir girişle başlamakta, Eski ve Yeni Tarihselcilik karşılaştırmasını da içermektedir. Ayrıca, “tarihin metinselliği”, “metinlerin tarihselliği”, metinlerle yazarların kültürel ve biyografik geçmişlerinin ilişkisi, “yıkım” ve “önlenmesi” gibi, Yeni Tarihselciliğin temel argümanları uygulanmış, diğerleri tartışılmıştır. Tarihi kurgusal romanların nitelikleri sunularak, tarihi kurgusal ve kurgusal olmayan romanlar arasındaki farklar tartışılmıştır. Girişin sonunda, yazarların geçmişi, yazdıkları dönem ve İngiliz yazarlar olarak Suriye ve Yunanistan'la olan bağlantıları hakkında bilgiler verilmiştir.

Tez, tarihi olayların, tarihsel kurgudaki ve tipik tarihi rivayetlerdeki sunumları arasındaki farkları ortaya koyup, romanları Yeni Tarihsel perspektiften incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Birinci bölüm, 2011 iç savaşında Suriyeli mültecilerin, tarihi rivayetler ve *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*'deki hikaye ve deneyimlerine ilişkin çalışmayı içermektedir. Çalışma, tarihî rivayetlerdeki bilgi ve belgelerle romandaki olayların aktarım biçimi incelenerek gerçekleştirilecektir. “Yıkım” ve “önlenmesi”, “metinlerin tarihselliği” gibi noktalar, romandaki mültecilerin hikayeleriyle incelenecektir.

İkinci bölüm, *Those Who Are Loved*'da siyaset, Yunan toplumu ve 1940'ların Yunanistan'ındaki diğer önemli olay temsillerinin analiziyle, tarihi olaylarda zamanın ruhuna ve önemine odaklanmaktadır. Aynı olayların tarihsel rivayetlerdeki temsillerine ilişkin bir çalışma da yapılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Yeni Tarihselci argümanların bahsedilen özelliklerini ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

Üçüncü bölüm, iki romanın ve yazarların yazma tekniklerinin karşılaştırılmasıdır. Romanların benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları incelenecektir. Çalışma, tarihi olayların tarihi kurgu romanlarındaki sunumunda daha fazla niteliğinin ortaya konulmasına yardımcı

olacaktır. Bu kıyaslamayla, Yeni Tarihselciliğin eleştirinin temel referans noktaları tartışılmaktadır. Sonuç, tarihi kurgu romanların niteliklerinin önemini özetlemekte ve ifade etmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Tarihsel Kurgu, Yeni Tarihselcilik, Tarih, Suriye, Yunanistan, Christy Lefteri, Victoria Hislop

ABSTRACT

KHAZNE, Yasser, *The Representations of History through Fiction: Christy Lefteri's The Beekeeper of Aleppo and Victoria Hislop's Those Who Are Loved*, Master's Thesis, Nevşehir, 2022.

In this thesis, Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) and Victoria Hislop's *Those Who Are Loved* (2019) are studied from a New Historicist approach. The thesis starts with an introduction that briefly studies the representations of historical events in historical accounts. It also includes a comparison between Old Historicism and New Historicism.

Additionally, the major arguments of New Historicism are applied such as “the textuality of history,” “the historicity of texts,” the relationship between the texts and the cultural and biographical backgrounds of the authors.

“Subversion” and its “containment,” and other arguments are discussed. The different types of historical novels and their qualities are mentioned. The introduction is finalized with information about the writers' backgrounds, the time of writing, and their connections to Syria and Greece as British authors.

This thesis aims at analysing the novels from a New Historical perspective as a contribution to the studies that aim to reveal the differences between representing historical events in historical fiction on the one hand and the representations of the same events in typical historical accounts on the other.

Chapter one includes a study of the representations of stories and experiences of the Syrian refugees of the civil war of 2011 in historical accounts and in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. This study is carried out by analysing the information and documentation provided by historical accounts and the ways of conveying the events in the novel. Points like the “subversion” and its “containment,” “the historicity of texts” are to be studied through the stories of refugees in the novel.

Chapter two focuses on the zeitgeist of historical events and its importance by analysing the representations of politics, the Greek society and other major incidents of 1940s Greece in *Those Who Are Loved*. However, a study of the representations of the

same events as represented in historical accounts is also undertaken. This study discloses the features mentioned earlier of the New Historicist arguments.

Chapter three is a comparison of the two novels and the writing techniques of the writers. The similarities and the differences between the novels are examined. This study aims at introducing the qualities of representations of historical events in historical fiction novels. Besides that, the main reference points of New Historicism are discussed in this comparison. The conclusion summarizes and states the importance of the qualities of historical fiction novels.

Keywords

Historical Fiction, New Historicism, History, Syria, Greece, Christy Lefteri, Victoria Hislop

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INTRODUCTION

REPRESENTATIONS IN HISTORY

Merriam-Webster English Dictionary defines “history” as: “a chronological recording of significant events (such as those affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes” (“History”). However, as history is a very wide subject, many other definitions of history are possible. Calvin Schrag, in his book *The Meaning of History*, defines history as follows: “History comes to be when a primary region, a human realm, constituted by men and nature, interplays with the nature that still remains outside that realm” (Schrag 706). It may be inferred from the previous quotation that history plays an important role in explaining the interaction of humans with all aspects of life. Nevertheless, history is not only confined to traditional historical accounts. It is also represented in literature and in many other records in fields like politics, media, culture, and economics.

The subjectivity of history has always been an argumentative topic and after the 1980s, the process of writing history became more open to debate due to the matter of the subjectivity of the historian/writer. For it was no longer accepted as an objective version of the past but as part of a larger political struggle between certain institutions of present times to which the historian/writer belongs. Hence, in historical records, there might be many contradictory tales and narrations about the very same incidents. A certain act can be observed as a revolution in one record and can be found as treason in another; the conqueror in a specific piece of news or history book might be seen as the occupier in other ones. Magdalena H. Gross and Luke Terra argue that there are many factors such as religions, cultures, ethnicities, social cohesion that affect the writing process of history that bring about controversies: “All modern nation-states have periods of what we call difficult history, periods that reverberate in the present and surface fundamental disagreements over who we are and what values we hold” (54). Moreover, it is not only the point of view that changes but also the people or generations who convey these stories and therefore, the preciseness of the events also change. So, by and by, some events get exaggerated, some neglected or suppressed while some other incidents are underestimated, manipulated or distorted.

Furthermore, arguments about certain incidents get intensified when the subject is divergent. For instance, when a war is included in the narration of a historical event, two stories or more are sometimes expected to come to the surface. This is because of the different points of view of those who convey the story. Thus, contradicting stories might occur. This problem of having contradictions may become even more complicated when the topic is a civil war, a war that may divide not only the society itself but also the members of the same family, and therefore, many conflicting stories come out. Additionally, Hayden White suggests that historical accounts tend to fill in the necessary missing parts of the story which may involve the interpretation of the historian:

The historian has to interpret his materials in order to construct the moving pattern of images in which the form of the historical process is to be mirrored. And this because the historical record is both too full and too sparse. On the one hand, there are always more facts in the record than the historian can possibly include in his narrative representation of a given segment of the historical process. And so, the historian must 'interpret' his data by excluding certain facts from his account as irrelevant to his narrative purpose. (281)

In addition, history as a field of study, and historians/writers as experts have their own measurements and tools to analyse, rate, sort out, and eliminate these records to conduct a piece of news or a record of history. Overall, history is not objective but is rather subjective and writing it depends on many factors.

In this thesis, Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) and Victoria Hislop's *Those Who Are Loved* (2019) are going to be studied as historical fiction novels that deal with historical incidents from a New Historicist point of view. Some of the main differences between Old Historicism and New Historicism will be explained, as well as the establishment of Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism. Additionally, the main points and arguments of New Historicism will be applied and discussed briefly in the introduction and in detail throughout the following chapters. Moreover, the differences between a non-fiction historical novel and a historical fiction novel will be explained. Analysing the novels from the New Historical perspective will help in revealing the differences between representing historical events in historical fiction and the representations of the same ones in typical historical accounts. In addition to that, the details that historical fiction can carry and deliver through fiction are going to be explained. In this thesis, the authors' lives, the time their novels were written in relation to the period they write about, and other factors are going to be analysed under the light

of New Historicism. Applying a New Historicist approach will contribute to the understanding of the texts and the complicated historical viewpoints, and how they are filtered through the writers' epistemes and our own ones.

In other words, this thesis aims at contributing to the studies that reveal the importance of historical fiction. This will be done by demonstrating the qualities and the details that historical fiction novels provide. This study assumes that historical fiction novels give details and crucial information that are not provided in typical historical accounts. This will be sustained by examining representations of historical events as they are represented in historical accounts, and by studying examples of the same historical events represented in Lefteri's and Hislop's novels. This comparison points out the missing points and the problems of representations of historical events in typical historical accounts, and it reveals the significance of historical fiction. Moreover, comparing the two novels *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Those Who Are Loved* and the detailed study of them will reveal additional qualities and details that historical fiction provides.

The British writers Christy Lefteri's and Victoria Hislop's historical fiction novels represent the lives of fictional families during significant historical events, as Lefteri includes the latest Syrian civil war which started in 2011, and Hislop dwells on the German occupation of Greece and the following Greek civil war during the 1940s. In this thesis, the influence of the authors' knowledge and backgrounds will be elaborated on to examine their effects on the writing process and the narration. Moreover, the thesis aims at analysing these two novels to see how historical fiction reveals and provides details about the *zeitgeist* that historical accounts do not. Nevertheless, the focus will not be only on the historical backgrounds and the conditions which the authors write within as Old Historicism tends to apply. This thesis will try to examine the messages and the meanings that the writers convey in their novels as New Historicism argues. Therefore, it is crucial to differentiate between Old Historicism and New Historicism, and their different arguments and approaches to literary texts.

OLD HISTORICISM VERSUS NEW HISTORICISM

The Old Historicism as a literary criticism method tries to understand a text by only examining the historical factors that affected the text, and thus it ties the meaning of a literary work to history, this precludes the authors of the ability to express any free ideas

without being fixed to their backgrounds and surrounding facts. Dwight Hoover explains Old Historicism and its origin:

The Old Historicism was a product of nineteenth-century German thought that argued a particular methodological approach - the need for historians to fathom the mental universes of past cultures and societies in order to understand them - and a particular value stance - a belief that each culture and society was a product of its historic circumstance and, hence, that no comparison, or rather evaluation, on a single standard or scale could be made. (358)

This led to a wide criticism against Historicism by many critics such as Michel Foucault. Nasrullah Mambrol writes in his article “New Historicism’s Deviation from Old Historicism”:

Foucault argues that old historians aimed at reconstituting the past by referring to documents about the past, and, appropriating facts and details such that the incoherent elements are concealed, and create a seemingly unified narrative of history, that complies with the discourse of the time and age. On the contrary, new historicists, work on reference documents from within to understand the inherent fissures. (par.3)

In the previous quotation, Mambrol explains Foucault’s idea about the crucial difference of a New Historicist approach, as New Historicism refers to historical documents to help understand the meaning and to create an argument about it. On the contrary, Old Historicists tend to use historical documents to judge the literary work and they consequently limit and fix its meaning.

Old Historicism tends to classify the literary works according to the general spirit of a certain age. This hierarchy, of history being above literature, was rejected by New Historicists such as Stephen Greenblatt and Harold Veaser. Moreover, Historicism depends on history as an objective source of information. However, this is totally rejected by New Historicists since that such objectivity does not exist and cannot be proved. History itself is a narration, and this narration is written by a historian who might write stories according to their needs: “That no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature” (Veaser xi). New Historicists believe that all interpretations and meanings are subjectively processed in one’s own selections of historically conditioned perspectives. Thus, objectivity is a myth.

Historicism depends on the historical facts and uses them in the text to reveal meaning, New Historicism—which occurred in the 1980s—challenges that by questioning the facts themselves, it interrogates the generality of Historicism and the way it fixes the meaning. New Historicism listens to the voices that create a complex dialogue

without fixing the meaning. In New Historicism, the text and the historical context co-exist. Researcher Nasrullah Mambrol writes the following in this regard: “New Historicism envisages and practises a mode of study where the literary text and the non-literary context are given ‘equal weighting’, whereas old historicism considers history as a ‘background’ of facts to the ‘foreground’ of literature” (“New Historicism’s Deviation” par. 1). Additionally, Old Historicism creates a hierarchical framework where literature goes under the historical framework. However, New Historicism breaks these hierarchies and replaces them instead with a parallel reading of both literature and history (“New Historicism’s Deviation” par. 1).

New Historicism is not only a renewed version of Historicism, but it is also a reaction to Formalism and New Criticism. These literary criticism methods (Formalism and New Criticism) focused on the literary works as independent and unaffected by historical facts: “The New Historicists combat empty formalism by pulling historical considerations to the center stage of literary analysis” (Veeser xi). Harold Veeser also writes in many chapters of his book *The New Historicism* about the points that New Historicists reject in New Criticism and summarizes their relationship as follow: “the new historicism hopes to displace the New Criticism” (Veeser 195). Therefore, it is concluded that New Historicism is an updated form of Historicism, and it is a response and a reaction to Formalism and New Criticism.

It is concluded that New Historicism is the new way of interpreting a text by taking the historical and cultural factors, as tools, to help understand the meaning of the text. Meaning is not concluded by judging only the text according to historical factors (as in Historicism), nor by ignoring the historical facts and effects (as in New Criticism). As explained by Peter Uwe Hohendahl:

The New Historicism has been referred to as a new movement or position that would replace the old historicism but also, and more important, supersede the prominent critical positions of the 1970s, notably deconstructionism and Marxism. Its proponents, among them Stephen Greenblatt and Louis Montrose, have hailed the New Historicism as a methodological *Kehre* steering literary criticism away from the formalism of the deconstructive approach and the positivism of the old historicism. (87)

In other words, Hohendahl explains the position of New Historicism as a new methodology that succeeded in *Kehre* (a German word which means sweep) the criticism into a new position.

Old Historicism is considerate of the “world” of the past, New Historicism gives more importance to the “word” of the past (Mambrol “New Historicism”). Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan express some of the critical ideas of Greenblatt’s New Historicism:

Back when New Criticism was getting itself named new, one kind of traditional criticism that it was replacing was historical. This historical work might or might not be governed by a specific theory of history - such as, for example, Marxism - but it would invariably see the historical as a context for the study of the literary work. Historical background, historical context: the language of a traditional historicism saw the literary work in the foreground and history in the background, with the task of the critic being to connect the two. The literary work might represent or refer to the historical context; the critic would make sense of the literary work by researching the history to which it referred. Without such background information, how could the reader understand anything from the wars fought in a Shakespeare play to the property laws that governed the plot of an Austen novel? One notable consequence was that a literary critic needed to read a good deal of non-literary work, and the critic's enterprise led to the historical archive. (*Literary Theory: An Anthology* 505)

The quotation stresses the importance of knowing the authors’ backgrounds and the historical context in order to get a good comprehension of the literary text. Therefore, in this thesis, the backgrounds of the authors and the historical frame of the novels are going to be examined. It is not only analysing the authors’ backgrounds that matters but also inspecting the texts themselves as literary texts that convey more details and a fuller picture about the story than historical records do.

Stephen Greenblatt declared the existence of New Historicism in 1982 as a more efficient way of studying and analysing literary texts since it deals with literary texts within a given historical context without tying the meaning only to the historical facts. New Historicism calls for a rethinking of the relationship between writing and culture, it also initiates a reconsideration of the ways writers specifically and human agents, in general, interact with social and linguistic systems (Mambrol “New Historicism” par. 3). Greenblatt writes in his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*:

I perceived that fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions family, religion, state-were inseparably twined. In all my texts and documents, there were, so far as I could tell, no moments of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, he ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused sharply upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact. If there remained traces of free choice, the choice was among possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force. (256)

On the whole, after discussing the differences between Old and New Historicism and the foundation of New Historicism. It is worth mentioning that New Historicism was

not welcomed at the beginning by many critics such as Jean-François Lyotard and Fredric Jameson who argue that New Historicism lacks a theory of history, but Stephen Greenblatt, Jonathan Goldberg, and Walter Benn Michaels were successful to defend New Historicism and set the example of New Historicists (Mambrol “New Historicism” par. 2).

APPLYING NEW HISTORICISM

There are many major points that New Historicism pays special attention to. In this thesis, these ideas and points are going to be used to interpret Lefteri’s *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and Hislop’s *Those Who Are Loved*. The first point that will be studied in this thesis is that of Louis Montrose who argues about the interrelation and interaction between history and literature in what is known as “the textuality of history” and “the historicity of texts.” History is conveyed and transferred to people through narrations and texts. These narrations are written by historians whose own perspectives and backgrounds may affect the production of these texts. Montrose in his *Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture* explains:

By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest, firstly, that we can have no access to full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question traces whose survival we cannot assume to be merely contingent but must rather presume to be at least partially consequent upon complex and subtle social processes of preservation and effacement. Secondly, that those textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediations when they are construed as the documents upon which historians ground their own text, called ‘histories.’ (20)

History books and articles that document the late Syrian civil war and those books that documented the Greek civil war in the 1940s are texts. Thus, history is textual. Likewise, in the future, Lefteri’s novel will be referred to as a historical fiction novel that is about the Syrian civil war since Lefteri writes about the events between 2011 and 2015 in Syria. Lefteri portrays the obstacles and the circumstances that many Syrians undergo and these representations can be referred to later. However, Lefteri’s representation is affected by her historical and cultural backgrounds. These points will be displayed and examined in the next chapters. Hislop, in *Those Who Are Loved*, represents life in Greece of the 1940s. Though Hislop wrote and published her novel in 2019, it is still a piece of literature that people can learn from about the history of Greece in that era. The same argument of writing a historical text applies to Hislop’s case. The effects of Hislop’s political and cultural background will be examined as well. As a result, Lefteri’s and

Hislop's texts have historical features in them. Additionally, New Historicism usually deals with the historical backgrounds of authors in a certain age or era. Lefteri and Hislop are contemporary writers that write about different eras. Lefteri writes about contemporary Syria. Meanwhile, Hislop writes about an era of history that is different from hers, nevertheless, their current time, cultural backstage, and historical facts still have effects on their novels as mentioned later in this thesis.

The second point that this study carries out is included in a chapter entitled "Counter History and the Anecdote" in Gallagher's and Greenblatt's book *Practising New Historicism* which writes about the New Historicist focus on the voices and texts that are excluded, silenced, or considered too ridiculous or insignificant to be included in history. Both novels are not silenced or insignificant, but they might be marginalized in the British society when compared to the mainstream media (as in the Syrian case) and due to the lack or non-existence of English novels that talk about Syria. Likewise, finding English history books that mention Greece of the 1940s might be easier than finding novels that talk about that era in Greece, since it is not a common subject for English novels. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt write in their book *Practicing New Historicism*: "Some of these alternative objects of attention are literary works regarded as too minor to deserve sustained interest and hence marginalized or excluded entirely from the canon" (9). Additionally, New Historicism focuses on marginalized characters' images in history. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, the hero and the heroine are ordinary people and not famous politicians as in the case of most historical accounts and the mainstream media. Likewise, Hislop's main characters are all from an average middle-class Greek family. While, in most of the history books, that portray the Greek civil war, the focus is on famous personalities. These points will be studied in detail in later chapters with reference to the texts that are analysed in this study.

The third point, New Historicism questions the power of "subversion" and its "containment" on texts and their interaction which results in creating the "self-fashioning." Subversion refers to the critical attitude towards social ideologies which represent the dominant ideas or concepts during a certain era. Containment means putting the subversion in a controllable scope. Self-fashioning is the process of shaping or forming something into one's own wishes to form an identity or public image to get

accepted by the current social standards. It includes fashioning the characters or the self-fashioning of the authors themselves.

“Subversion” and its “containment” are observed in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* as the characters rebel against their circumstances and the inhospitality they face wherever they go. Nevertheless, the characters seem to be content with the stage they reach in the UK at the end of the novel. In Hislop’s novel, subversion and containment are also embodied in the character of Themis, who is politically, culturally and socially rebellious against the ruling system and the society itself. However, Themis fails in her struggle and ends up as a typical housewife who cares about her family. Moreover, this leads to the result of the intertwining of “subversion” and “containment,” that is of the “self-fashioning” of human nature. The following chapters in the thesis will provide examples from Lefteri’s and Hislop’s novels. Lefteri, for instance, fashions the Greek language though her story is about Syria. Hislop as well fashions the newly accepted cultural norms of women wearing trousers and shows its unacceptance in the past (Greece of the 1940s) as alien and strange.

Both writers are British, and both write about other countries in these novels. Lefteri writes about Syria and Hislop writes about Greece which means that they are both apparently not under the control or the threat of authorities in those countries. However, this does not mean that they are completely free to express their ideas because they are still tied to their cultural and historical backgrounds. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt write: “It can suggest hidden links between high cultural texts, apparently detached from any direct engagement with their immediate surroundings, and texts very much in and of their world, such as documents of social control or political subversion” (*Practicing New Historicism* 10). In other words, writers may feel obliged to write in a way that appeals to their readers and audience. Lefteri’s and Hislop’s main audience is anyone who can speak English; however, they live within the British society and therefore, both authors might feel committed to the standards of the British community and its general attitude.

Many critics and theorists like Foucault and Greenblatt assured that the historical and cultural backgrounds of the authors are very important and crucial to understanding their texts. Moreover, the accessibility of the audience to the texts and their context, and the relation between texts and the cultural system. Additionally, Michel Foucault argues

that history is an intersection of discourses that establish an episteme, however, literature sometimes reveals a resistance to this episteme, and thus, each text is an example of many other types of discourses that reveal history (Mambrol “New Historicism” par. 2). New Historicism looks at a greater variety of political, social, religious and other discourses including the life of the authors in order to help us understand the texts. Therefore, in this thesis, the effects of Lefteri’s and Hislop’s cultural backgrounds will be revealed and discussed to interpret their novels. In the following chapters, for instance, Lefteri’s own imagination and idea about the Syrian geography reveal her own cultural concepts. However, this example and others will be studied in detail throughout this thesis.

HISTORICAL FICTION VERSUS NON-FICTION, AND THE QUALITIES OF REPRESENTATIONS IN HISTORICAL FICTION

Historical non-fiction, on one hand, is a broad category that includes many types of novels such as autobiography. These novels usually illustrate the life of a certain person or group of people, who once lived for real, during specific events within given time and place frames. These novels tend to focus on the lives of real heroes/heroines and the main incidents in their lives, which makes them—somehow—similar to the traditional historical texts. On the other hand, historical fiction novels—known as historical novels—present fictional characters within certain time and place frames. Author and dictionary writer John Anthony Cuddon defines a historical novel as follows: “A form of fictional narrative which reconstructs and recreates history imaginatively. Both historical and fictional characters may appear. Though writing fiction, the historical novelist typically researches his or her chosen period thoroughly and strives for verisimilitude” (333). Historical fiction novels tend to focus on the experience of fictional characters in a certain given time and place in history, and therefore, the cornerstone is shifted towards the experience and the atmosphere of the historical event.

In other words, historical fiction novels care more about including the social norms, manners and customs than what happened with real famous characters that historical non-fiction novels focus on. Authors Brandi Rissenweber, Jack Smith, and Alison Acheson explain the common points and the differences between historical fiction and non-fiction historical novels: “Both historical fiction and creative nonfiction that covers historical

events or eras serve to illuminate real events from the past in a compelling and dramatic way. But each has a different relationship with factual accuracy” (par. 5). In this thesis, Lefteri’s and Hislop’s historical fiction novels are examined to show the way they represent events and the qualities of this genre of writing, as both describe the details of historical incidents and their effects on people.

As mentioned previously, many debates about the accuracy and the reliability of historical accounts are held. The same argument is valid for all kinds of historical novels. However, this thesis tries to prove that historical fiction novels provide a more efficient experience than typical historical accounts, by providing the general intellectual, moral, norms, feelings, and the atmosphere of an era known as the *zeitgeist*. Historical fiction novels relocate the focal point of the audience’s attention from the static information, that historical texts concentrate on, and the stories of famous characters as in biographical novels on one hand, to the experience of living within the time and place of certain events on the other.

Literature is a medium that represents each era within its social, political and historical context. Some critics and novelists believe that literature holds a mirror to our past and present lives. Likewise, many of the writers of historical fiction argue that by reading a piece of literature, a person can feel the *zeitgeist* of that specific era in which the text is written about. For instance, the novelist Sabina Murray writes that “Fiction’s true power lies in its ability to recreate the sensation of the past through its adherence to experienced time. Fiction introduces consciousness into the matter, the consciousness of its narrators, a consciousness that accepts all that cannot be proven along with all that is known” (par. 21). The settings of the cultural norms and morals provide a clearer understanding of incidents and their meaning. Historical fiction takes its readers from their time and place into the ones of a certain given era.

Nevertheless, and since history is a controversial subject, writers of historical fiction face some difficult obstacles because they include historical incidents in their works. Additionally, many critics such as Maria Margaronis argue about the effects of the authors’ lives and backgrounds on their works. In addition to the problem of having a mix of fiction and historical events as in the case of writing historical fiction in which

real incidents go hand in hand with fictional characters. Margaronis asks important questions which help in analysing this kind of literature:

All fiction is written on this territory, but when the work explicitly engages with historical events - when it is part of the writer's project to reimagine them - the ground becomes a minefield of hard questions. What responsibility does a novelist have to the historical record? How much - and what kinds of things - is it permissible to invent? For the purposes of fiction, what counts as evidence? What are the moral implications of taking someone else's experience, especially the experience of suffering and pain, and giving it the gloss of form? Can imaginative language discover truths about the past that are unavailable to more discursive writing. (138)

Margaronis questions the limits of using fiction within a historical context because the freedom of inventing characters and even incidents might confuse readers between what is real and what is fictional.

The writers of historical fiction have inspired many people with their detailed descriptions of almost every aspect of life belonging to the past within contemporary consciousness. Many creative writers illustrate a picture that is full of minute details in their works, from the scenes they set to the smallest details that only cameras nowadays can represent. Critic Thomas Mallon writes the following in this regard: "Only through these tiny, literal accuracies can the historical novelist achieve the larger truth to which he aspires namely, an overall feeling of authenticity" (604). Christy Lefteri and Victoria Hislop provide their readers with details and explanations that are not found in historical accounts. Lefteri and Hislop describe important issues that historical accounts take for granted, such as being aware of the norms of that certain era or age. Hislop, for instance, clarifies to her readers the differences between the norms and traditions in Greece of the 1940s and contemporary Greece. This example and other similar ones will be studied in detail later on throughout the following chapters.

Many genres of novels like biographies and historical novels deal with history. However, historical fiction does not claim to be a hundred per cent objective or true. It rather insures a more sufficient delivery of details and lively pictures of life in a specific time when compared with actual historical accounts. Furthermore, historical fiction already narrates fictional characters that carry the mission of conveying the details of life and the zeitgeist in which the events take place. Therefore, the importance of these literary texts lies in the settings they set and not in conveying numbers and historical statistics.

In this thesis, the authors' backgrounds, own ideas and concepts are examined to see whether this has affected the writing process or not. Lefteri, for instance, does use her contemporary sensibility and own ideas about Syria to fill the missing gaps resultant from her non-acquaintance of the country and its geography and climate. Nevertheless, some critics like Joanne Brown argues that historical fiction texts reveal more of the author's point of view than the historical accounts do: "Closely related to language accuracy is the problem of narrative voice, shaped not only by word choice but by the narrator's opinions and attitudes. These, of course, are filtered through the author's contemporary sensibilities. Some critics have insisted that historical fiction reveals more about its author than its historical subject" (Brown par.18). Therefore, studying the background of the authors is essential.

Historical fiction provides a wider view than history itself since it deals with the daily lives of common people. This gives the chance to understand the social norms and laws that certain people lived in during a historical event, unlike historical accounts that focus on the political, economic, or statistical aspects of a certain event. Sabina Murray explains how historical fiction demonstrates historical events in a way that enables the readers to understand certain issues: "Historical fiction allows us to read about things that we know, but it also allows us to not know these same things. In this way, historical fiction most closely represents how the stuff of history happens" (par. 30). Therefore, reading from traditional historical accounts does not offer the necessary knowledge of the norms and the historical settings of a certain era. Historical accounts offer knowledge of what happened. Historical fiction provides its readers with information that help people know how the events happened and under which circumstances and conditions.

It is known that literature can be affected by many surrounding outcomes and factors. However, literature can still carry details about the atmosphere and the incidents in a more precise way than records of history by telling the complete story in historical settings. History mainly takes into account the conflicting parties, the event, the numbers, and the results. On the other hand, literature pays more attention to the details of the incidents, the zeitgeist, the feelings undergone by people at a certain time, the daily life conditions and situations that are insignificant or not fairly represented in history. Regarding this point, the English historical novelist Hilary Mantel writes: "We rely on history to tell us. History, and science too, help us put our small lives in context. But if

we want to meet the dead looking alive, we turn to art” (“Why I became” par. 1). In other words, historical novels shift the interest from the chronological order of incidents into the meaning and the context of these events.

Literature provides us with the missing zeitgeist and the human experience during major events, and the reason why readers prefer historical fiction novels to history are well-expressed by the novelists Amor Towles, Hilary Mantel and Linda Kass: “We have likely heard stories about our own ancestors through family lore. But we don’t know and have not experienced their social and human motives and emotions inside their actual historical reality” (par.1). Likewise, in this thesis, events displayed in historical accounts and the same events represented in historical fiction are going to be compared. This will eventually make the differences of perceiving these literary and non-literary historical texts clearer, as in the first type; the readers are aware of the historical contexts and the norms of that certain given era, whereas readers of typical historical accounts are perceiving pieces of news from their own perspective and according to their own standards and norms.

Historical fiction turns the lenses of the camera from the famous people and the great events to those who are not famous, and this point is one of the New Historicist arguments in which the focus is shifted to ordinary marginalised characters. This change of perspective allows us to feel the incident and enables us to live the experiences of other human beings and imagine what our lives could have been like if it were all true. Historical fiction frees the readers from their modern lives and takes them back to the life of a certain era with its own conditions and laws:

Reading fiction about the regular, everyday people who lived through some of history’s triumphs and tragedies allows us to better imagine what our own lives might have been like. Not only in terms of how people lived back then, without all of our modern technology and conveniences, but also in regard to how we ourselves might have reacted to history as it happened. We are able to put ourselves in their shoes, to compare ourselves to them, to face the decisions and hardships that they had to face as if we were facing them ourselves. (Tod “Historical Fiction” par. 7)

Learning from history books requires a great deal of reading and/or researching among historical records which can be very much complicated and may also require additional background knowledge of the historical period of each record. This makes it very difficult to understand and follow, especially when the event or the people that are being discussed belong to another time. This is naturally difficult for people who live in

different periods, cultures and norms. It is perplexing to fully comprehend the way certain people used to think or act. Learning about different countries and different cultures requires research and a lot of investigations to have an idea about the atmosphere of a particular event, the way these people used to think during that time, or the customs and laws of that particular period.

On the other hand, reading historical fiction does not require that amount of further readings or investigations since it fully transfers the readers' minds into the world of that incident; putting them in the shoes of the characters, surrounding them with the same conditions, dressing them with the outfits of that era, and engaging them in times of the event. Sabina Murray explains it as follows: "historical fiction distinguishes itself by occupying a culture rendered alien to the reader through passage of time" (par.12). Therefore, historical fiction sets the readers free of their norms, standards and own understandings. It provides the readers with the necessary knowledge by setting the historical settings and norms.

Overall, this thesis does not suggest replacing our dependence on history as a source of knowledge, but it rather calls to widen it through a New Historicist outlook included in historical fiction. In other words, this thesis will help illustrate how historical fiction can assist and enhance our knowledge through the fictional details and the feelings that it transfers.

Nevertheless, readers are warned about the dangers of reading historical fiction by some critics. It is argued that the author might have a bad intention. Some of the readers completely and naively trust the writers sometimes in their search for the truth without doing any extra research (Litt 111). The English writer and academic Toby Litt suggests that we must spend some time studying how the readers consume the works of historical fiction, and how the production of a historical fiction text is realized in the first place:

It is hard to demonstrate that historical fiction is written in bad faith. All you have to is, for a moment, forget about bad faith and think about the purest good faith. First, imagine an entirely naïve reader who picks up a novel by Phillippa Gregory because they want to learn the truth about Anne Boleyn. Let's call the reader Alex. Alex completely trusts the writer not to mislead her (or him- Alex could be either) in any way about the past. (111)

Litt trusts history more than historical fiction novels as he writes: "If I found out that my child's history teacher preferred reading historical novels to history books, I would instantly lose a great deal of trust in them" (112). Litt thinks that the name of this

genre itself is deceptive as it provides history and fiction at the same time which might allow the writer to manipulate the incidents more freely. Litt goes on the argument that the reader of historical fiction knows less than the reader of history, his response to the supporters of historical fiction is like a warning: He is suggesting that these very same feelings and atmosphere might be simply what the author has imagined and predicted about that specific time: “What the reader will do is [to] *feel* [as if] they know more about the past. They may even feel they know more about *how the past felt*, or *how the past felt itself to be as a passing present*. This kind of knowledge is as bogus as any writer saying, ‘This is what I think Queen Elizabeth felt she felt?? about the Earl of Essex’” (114). It is thought that Litt’s argument is not valid for historical fiction novels because the characters are fictional and the aim of them is to represent the zeitgeist of a certain era rather than fabricating untrue stories about real personalities.

This thesis will illustrate the way literature affects people by enabling them to understand the humanitarian angles of the incidents. This point is widely missing in historical records. It is thought that the majority of people prefer to read about fictional characters than history due to their ability to identify themselves with these characters within that particular historical atmosphere (Barthes and Duisit 247).

In this study, the newly published novels in Britain, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri and *Those Who Are Loved* by Victoria Hislop will be analysed within the scope of this thesis as representatives and models of modern historical fiction in the UK. These two novels are similar on many levels and in many points as both are written by authors who are the daughters of Cypriot refugees, and both novels were published in 2019 which could be highly argumentative since Lefteri deals with contemporary events while Hislop deals with events from the previous, twentieth century. This enables readers to judge and investigate Lefteri’s novel more easily, whereas the historical resources for Hislop’s novel are already published and are limited.

However, due to the recency of the time periods that *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* represents, the thesis will depend on, for instance, news and articles that are written about the latest Syrian war, because there are no history books that document the latest Syrian civil war yet. As Joseph Baumgartner writes: “newspapers might appear to be just about the ideal kind of source for a historian” (“Notes and Comments” 256). However, the lack

of history books will not affect the research done for this thesis since all forms of journalism, including newspaper and news articles, are considered useful primary sources for historical research. Additionally, to understand and analyse the novels, it is important to examine the writing process and the techniques used. The inspiration and the connection between two British authors and these two countries Syria and Greece.

LEFTERI'S AND HISLOP'S BACKGROUNDS AND THEIR CONNECTIOS TO SYRIA AND GREECE

Christy Lefteri is a British writer who was brought up in London, however, she is originally the daughter of a Cypriot refugee parents. She is an instructor at Brunel University. Her novel was born out of her own experiences while volunteering at a UNICEF supported centre in Athens. Journalist Sorcha Pollak writes on *The Irish Times* website about Lefteri's experience and her involvement in the refugees' stories in Greece as she interviews Lefteri: "Lefteri began exploring the streets of Athens where she met men, women and children who had arrived in Europe seeking safety" (Pollak par.3). The novel was published in 2019, and it covers incidents that mainly took place between 2011 and 2016. Lefteri talks about the idea of her novel during her interview on the Book Reporter website with the following words: "It's about Nuri and Afra, who are refugees who have left Syria. They're forced to flee, and they make a really precarious, dangerous journey across Turkey, and through various parts of Greece, with a goal of getting to the UK. It was inspired by time that I spent as a volunteer in a refugee camp in Athens at the Athens Airport" (Fitzgerald par.2). Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is a novel that presents the life of two Syrian refugees—a man called Nuri and his blind wife Afra—who escape the still-ongoing conflict in Syria. The novel starts with flashbacks that take us back to their lives in Aleppo, the beginning of the civil war in 2011 and the following consequences, and their journey from Aleppo through Turkey and Greece until they reach the United Kingdom. Since the main characters are from Syria, it is crucial to introduce some pieces of information about Syria.

Syria is an Arab country with people belonging to various ethnicities and diverse religions and beliefs. Until the French occupation in 1920, it was a part of the Ottoman Empire. Syria won its independence from France in 1946. After that, Syria underwent unstable times of numerous military coups until the 1970s. Syria's modern history includes many wars with Israel. The unrest and the instability seemed to loosen until the

year 2011 when the civil war broke out, a war that has affected the people of Syria enormously and devastatingly forcing millions to leave their homes, torn apart between militants and foreign forces. Because of this war, the country and its people seem to have changed a lot and are likely never going to be the same again. Syria's history goes back to the most ancient known times in history, and its cities Damascus and Aleppo are considered among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, and Aleppo was a very important city during the Ottoman rule (Burns 98-100). Nevertheless, Aleppo was the most affected among the other Syrian cities by the destruction due to the latest civil war¹. Similarly, Hislop's novel is about another country, Greece. However, the time period of its writing and the historical settings of the incidents are different.

Victoria Hislop is also a British author whose parents are originally Cypriot refugees. She is known for her love for Greece, and she was even given the Greek nationality in 2021 in return to her several novels about Greece. (Hislop "Books"). Victoria Hislop's *Those Who Are Loved* is a novel that narrates the life of a Greek woman called Themis and her family during World War II, the Nazi occupation of Greece in 1941, and also during the Greek civil war that followed between the years 1946 and 1949. The novel starts with flashbacks as Themis, the heroine of the novel narrates the story of her family during the events of World War II and the civil war to her grandchildren. The inspiration for writing *Those Who Are Loved* came into existence after Hislop's visit to Greece as she wandered in the uninhabited island of Makronisos which was formerly a prison and an exile for communists during the Greek civil war. Her visit to Makronisos triggered her curiosity to read about those times and it took around ten years to have the novel accomplished as Hislop states in an article on her official website ("Those Who Are Loved" par. 1).

Greece is also a country with a very rich history and is full of well-known personalities throughout centuries. The modern history of Greece includes many clashes with the Ottoman empire. The country went through hard times during World War II and was occupied by the Nazis in 1941 until its liberation in 1944. The civil war started in 1946 and it was mainly between communists and the Democratic Army of Greece on one

¹https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/reach_thematic_assessment_syrian_cities_damage_atlas_march_2019_reduced_file_size_1.pdf

hand, and the Greek government supported by the UK and the USA on the other hand. After that, a conflict between Turkey and Greece took place in the 1970s about the island of Cyprus (Miller 24-26). Later on, Greece lived somehow a politically stable era but suffered from several economic depressions.

Overall, it is concluded that both authors write about other countries but during different historical periods. It is also worth mentioning that the writing styles and techniques of both writers are generally similar but slightly different on some specific issues. Lefteri and Hislop use the flashback technique in their novels, they include the epistolary style of writing as they rely on letters to illustrate events and to present the state of mind of the characters. However, there are some differences in the style and the chronological order of events as Lefteri goes back and forth more often than Hislop does. These similarities and differences will be examined in detail later in this study. Analysing these issues is going to contribute to revealing the abilities of historical fiction in conveying meanings and the historical settings of a historical era.

Moreover, apart from the similarities in using the flashbacks and letters in the writing styles of these two novels, there are some significant differences that will be helpful in analysing their effectiveness in providing the zeitgeist of history as examples of historical fiction with regard to the details provided, and many other aspects when compared to actual historical accounts. One of the important matters which New Historicism focuses on is the author's background and life, the time the text is written, and other affective factors like the accessibility of the audience to literary and non-literary texts that are related to the events. However, New Historicism cares about this information as a supportive factor to understand a text, unlike Old Historicism which fixes the meaning to these facts. Lefteri writes about the journey of a Syrian family escaping the ongoing civil war in Syria which started in 2011 and still continues to the present time of writing this thesis. Meanwhile, Hislop talks about the events that took place in Greece during World War II, the Nazi occupation of Greece in 1941, and the Greek civil war that followed between 1946 and 1949, which means that she is narrating events from a different era and time than her own time.

Lefteri deals with the history of a country that she has never been to, Syria. on the contrary, Hislop narrates the history of her ancestors' country, Greece. In other words,

Lefteri illustrates the geography of a country that she has never been to, and she explains details of a culture that she has never been part of before. On the other hand, Hislop deals with events that her own family was aware of, and she describes a country that she has been to. All these issues, the similarities and the differences explain the effects of these elements on the texts that New Historicism makes use of on one hand, and will assist the study of historical fiction as a more detailed and better provider of knowledge of historical events than historical accounts.

To understand how historical fiction novels provide a better understanding than historical accounts, a comparison, an analysis and a study of some pieces of news, historical records, and many historical accounts on one hand, and literary texts that talk about the same historical events, on the other hand, must be done (Murray par.3). Murray explains this issue as follows:

All art manipulates and distorts in order to create a resonance of truth, and in its reach, hits both the intended mark and its opposite, artifice, because the sincerity of the fiction writer is different than the sincerity of the historian. It is the difference between seeing a dead fox on the side of the highway and being inspired to fear rather than sorrow. The fiction writer organizes material and understanding out of a deranged sense of empathy and can anticipate the impact without ever reaching it. (par.23)

Therefore, Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and Victoria Hislop's *Those Who Are Loved* are going to be examined side by side with historical records that present the same subject and issues. Moreover, Lefteri and Hislop, and the effects that might have affected their texts are going to be examined, and the novelists' personal ideas and experiences will be shown and discussed from a New Historicist point of view. As a result, these pieces of information will determine the differences between writing historical fiction novels about contemporary events, such in the case of Lefteri's on one hand and writing about a certain period in the past on the other; Hislop's writing about the 1940s. Finally, this thesis will contribute to testing the effects of writing about a country and culture which is described from a distance as in Lefteri's novel, and of Hislop's experience as she writes about a culture and a country that are familiar to her.

Overall, this study of the representations of historical events in historical accounts and in historical fiction is going to be carried out throughout the next chapters. All the studies and analyses are going to be done within a New Historicist scope. In chapter one, a study will be fulfilled by analysing events from the Syrian civil war (2011) and the

representations of these incidents in historical accounts on one hand, and in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* on the other. This study compares real historical events represented as numbers and statistics in historical accounts, the same events as represented in the novel, and most importantly the different effects of both. The first chapter also displays how historical accounts generalise stories whereas historical fiction narrates personal experiences and atypical stories. Finally, the chapter compares individual stories of Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in the novel to the same news or articles in historical accounts. These comparisons are going to make the qualities of historical fiction stand out.

In chapter two, the same analysis is to be carried out for the representations of historical events of 1940s Greece in historical accounts and in *Those Who Are Loved*. This chapter focuses on the missing issues and details in historical accounts which are provided efficiently in Hislop's novel, such as the zeitgeist and the historical settings of Greece's 1940s. This chapter shows how historical fiction solves the problem of the *horizon of expectations* of the readers by presenting the degree of the plague, the starvation and other significant events that took place at that time in Greece. The representation of the incident of Kalavryta is an example. This chapter also spots light on the success of historical fiction in representing the state of mind of the Greek people at that time during the German invasion and in shedding light on political matters. These representations in Hislop's novel are all to be compared to the ones in historical accounts.

Thirdly, a comparison of the two novels and their writing styles and techniques will be done in the third chapter. This chapter starts by displaying the similarities of both novels and ends by illustrating the differences and it concludes with the significance of these similarities and differences in comparison to historical accounts. This chapter aims to reveal more qualities of historical fiction by displaying the nostalgia and other feelings that do not usually exist in traditional history books. This chapter studies the flashback technique used by Lefteri and Hislop and its effect compared to the one-directed chronological order of historical accounts. This comparison also shows the effect of including original words and expressions from the mother tongue of Syria and Greece. This chapter sheds light on the way these two novels shift attention to the lives of ordinary non-famous people. Additionally, the effects of Lefteri's novel as she writes about a country that she has never been to, Syria, and the different effects of Hislop's novel as

she writes about a familiar country to herself, Greece. The chapter ends with a display of Lefteri's avoidance of political subjects and Hislop's inclusion of politics. Finally, the thesis finalizes with a conclusion that will summarize the differences in the representations of historical events in historical fiction and in historical accounts, and the significance of these differences. This conclusion highlights the New Historicist arguments and points in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and in *Those Who Are Loved*.

1. CHAPTER ONE

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF EXPERIENCES AND STORIES OF REFUGEES IN *THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO*

1.1. NUMBERS AND STATISTICS VERSUS EXPERIENCE

Historical articles, websites, news agencies, and other means of media such as TV channels and radio talk about the displacement of Syrians due to the latest civil war which started in 2011. People from all around the world watch the news, read articles, and consequently, they have an idea about what has lately happened in Syria. It is supposed that people's reactions are different, some sympathize, some blame and some others do not fully understand the details such as the reasons behind the wave of immigration.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Website published on 9 July 2015 a piece of news which stated: "New arrivals in Turkey and updated data from Turkish authorities take total number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries to 4,013,000. The four million figure is made up of 1,805,255 Syrian refugees in Turkey, 249,726 in Iraq, 629,128 in Jordan, 132,375 in Egypt, 1,172,753 in Lebanon, and 24,055 elsewhere in North Africa" (UNHCR Divers par. 1). This piece of news, as a historical record, provides mere statistics, yet the reason behind the displacement is the war. A reader in 2022 cannot fully understand the motives behind this big decision of leaving a homeland and fleeing. This very piece of historical/statistical news can hardly explain how difficult it is to be displaced.

On the other hand, Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) talks about Nuri and his cousin and business partner Mustafa, the fictional characters, who might have really existed among the four million people previously mentioned in the above piece of news. In her novel, Lefteri represents the incidents of the same year, that is of "2015," when the protagonist of the novel Nuri, who has lost his only son, decides to leave. The novel sets the historical and geographical settings, explains how things escalate, and illustrates the problems that worsen the situation. Lefteri illustrates Nuri's and his cousin Mustafa's grief for leaving their dead sons, as well as leaving their passion for their beekeeping profession, back in Syria:

When the bees died, Mustafa was ready to leave Aleppo. We were about to go when Firas went missing, so we waited for him. Mustafa would hardly talk during this time, his mind

completely preoccupied, imagining one thing or another. Every so often he would make a suggestion about where Firas might be. ‘Maybe he has gone to find one of his friends, Nuri,’ or, ‘Maybe he can’t bring himself to leave Aleppo – he is hiding somewhere so that we will stay,’ or, one time, ‘Maybe he has died, Nuri. Maybe my son has died.’ (Lefteri 22)

As can be seen in the above quotation, the author represents the state of mind of the characters, which shifts the attention away from the general statistics and the numbers that history provides, into the psychological deciphering of one of the characters. This provides the readers with the experience of taking the decision to leave and understand the motives, the distress and the hopes of these people in fleeing. Mustafa has to leave the country within an hour before the soldiers come to arrest him after having to kill three mercenary gunmen:

My aim was good. I got one in the head, one in the stomach, the third in the heart. The fourth man stood and held his hands up and when he realised I had no shots left, he fumbled for his gun and I ran. He saw my face and they will find me. I have to leave tonight. I must get to Dahab and Aya. I should not have waited this long to leave, but I didn’t want to go without you and abandon you here in hell. (Lefteri 37)

The novel depicts how hard it is to take the decision of leaving one’s homeland, as Mustafa writes the following lines to Nuri in his letter:

I cannot wait here to say goodbye. You must convince Afra to leave. You are too soft, too sensitive. This is an admirable quality when it comes to working with bees, but not now. I will be making my way to England, to find my wife and daughter. Leave this place, Nuri, it is no longer home. Aleppo is now like the dead body of a loved one, it has no life, no soul, it is full of rotting blood. (Lefteri 38)

These representations of Syrian refugees and their stories, how they decided to leave their country, their circumstances and the zeitgeist of the period are all collected elements. The characters in the novel are fictional but the historical settings are real. A contemporary reader or another one in the future might take Lefteri’s representations of the Syrian civil war as a historical record that narrates life in Syria after 2011 (the starting of the war). Thus, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* as a literary text has historical features, and this is what New Historicism refers to as the “historicity of texts.” This proves that literary texts and historical records are correlated. In this way, the novel gives a new perspective on the historical event.

Throughout the novel, the difficulty of leaving one’s own homeland and the mixed feelings of fear, hope, and nostalgia are expressed in meticulous detail. Lefteri sets the novel describing Aleppo, the life of a Syrian family, and their house and workplace with the bees giving the reader a hint of what it is like to live in Syria and how difficult it could

be to leave it later: “Bronze was the colour of the city far below. We lived in a two-bedroom bungalow on a hill. From so high up we could see all the unorganized architecture and the beautiful domes and minarets, and far in the distance the citadel peeking through” (Lefteri 9). These images set the settings of the story and familiarize the readers with the general atmosphere of the place and time of the story.

Emotions and feelings are lost among historical records. Literature rescues the stories of people from melting in the general pot of history. The novelist Carrie Callaghan writes that “History lets us learn the billions of other ways humans have lived their lives, and fiction invites us into those lives through the beguiling magic of story. No life is ever one single story, and nearly every earnest story has truth to it. The more stories we learn, the more truth we absorb” (par.6). Thus, historical fiction opens gates to different understandings and points of view, unlike the traditional historical accounts that usually tend to give one general picture.

1.2.HISTORY, THE GENERAL; HISTORICAL FICTION, THE PARTICULAR

In general, history tends to deal with the results of certain events, and it is not inclined to give or deal with its details. On 10 May 2015, The Indian Express website posted a piece of news which stated that “Seventeen Syrian refugees including five children drowned on Sunday when their boat sank in Turkish waters on its way to Greece, local media reported” (“Migrant boat sinks off”). Here, the very idea of neglect of the details is disclosed through the headline itself, as only the number of dead people, the location, and the time are provided. There is no mention of names, personal stories, or the horrific details of the tragedy. Readers of this piece of news are merely introduced to an incident in a specific place due to the nature and the limits of this genre. There are not many details of the way they sank, the things they felt, or their identities. However, these historical accounts do not aim at providing these details anyways, and it is fiction that serves best as it illustrates images and details of various stories.

Historical fiction dives deep into the scenes of horror before a tragedy —the drowning of innocent children— as it takes the reader to the middle of the sea and exposes the feelings of pity and fear, the pity on the victims and the fear of being in their place. Historical fiction can blend the values of personal experience with the details of an

important problem. In other words, historical fiction can tell the story beyond the piece of news, giving the details of what it is like to be on a rubber boat, for instance, with many other refugees sinking in the sea. To illustrate this point, one may dwell on how Lefteri draws a picture of the terror as she depicts the personal experience of Nuri:

Then there was darkness I startled awake because there was panic. The waves were bigger. One man was shouting, ‘Get the water out! There is too much water!’

There were torches flashing, and hands scooping out the water, and children crying. Mohammed was wide-eyed and helping to empty out the water. I watched as men leapt into the sea, the boat immediately buoyant once again. ‘Nuri!’ Afra said.

‘Are you on the boat?’ ‘Don’t worry,’ I said.

‘We are.’

‘Stay on the boat. Don’t go into the water.’

Mohammed was still scooping the water with his hands; everyone else on the boat was doing the same. The girl began to cry now. She was calling out to the men in the sea, calling them to come back onto the boat. The water continued to rise and more men jumped out of the boat. Every child was crying except Mohammed. I could see his face, serious and determined, between the flashes of light. There was a moment of complete darkness, and when the light of the torch flashed again, he was gone. Mohammed was not on the boat. I scanned the water, the black waves, as far as I could see, and then, without thinking, I jumped in. It was freezing but the waves weren’t as big as I’d thought, and I swam around, flashing the torch across the surface.

‘Mohammed!’ I called. ‘Mohammed!’ But there was no answer. (126)

Here the characters’ state of mind is vividly pictured through the images of Mohammed, Nuri, Afra, and the other refugees on the boat, and descriptions of the terrors of the experience of travelling on rubber boats that can at best be usually vague or do not exist in historical records. As seen in the piece of news referred to above, neither the identities of the people who drowned nor the information about how the incident occurred is accessible in the nonfictional account. However, in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* readers know the story of almost every character on the boat and can feel their terror.

There are countless examples of the ways historical fiction, as in Lefteri’s novel, portrays the personal and private lives and experiences of people through representing the adventures of fictional characters. The common factor among these examples is the way the literary text transports the settings of the scene, the motives, and the conditions of the character, all within a non-fictional historical context. Lefteri presents many pictures of human suffering which are not mentioned with the same efficiency in historical accounts, as Lefteri provides the state of minds of the characters, the conditions they undergo and she delivers details on a high level that is not presented in history: “Historical fiction

allows us to read about things that we know, but it also allows us to not know these same things. In this way, historical fiction most closely represents how the stuff of history happens” (Murray par. 30). Historical fiction provides the complete picture of a certain event, as it sets the conditions before, during and after the main event and explains the way the process goes.

The sorrowful experience of unaccompanied children crossing borders, for example, is presented in some news. The United Nations website shares a report and a piece of news entitled: “Syrian conflict hits tragic milestone: one million children now refugees” (Matti). However, in this report, again only statistics and numbers float and the tragic fact that these children are parentless and desperately alone is presented as a mere piece of information. That is due to the fact that providing the state of mind of characters and their personal experiences are not the aims of historical accounts, and achieving this is not even possible:

The majority of child refugees, some 740,000, are under the age of 11, and more than 3,500 children in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq have crossed Syria's borders either unaccompanied or separated from their families, making them vulnerable to multiple threats including child labour, early marriage and the potential for sexual exploitation and trafficking.” (Matti par. 4)

Lefteri includes the feelings and the meanings from the characters’ state of mind as she illustrates the horrible details of such an incident. She writes about a girl who has to cross a river on her own leaving her father behind, giving the maximum amount of suspense and shock, such details are not commonly provided in historical texts of similar events:

A man was lowering a young girl into a large saucepan – the kind that we normally used to boil couscous. There was a long cable attached to it so that men on the other side of the river could pull it across. This man was trying to help the girl into the saucepan, but she was crying and had both arms wrapped around his neck and wouldn’t let go.
 ‘Please, get in,’ the man said.
 ‘Go ahead with these nice people and I will see you on the other side.’
 ‘But why won’t you come with me?’ she said.
 ‘I promise I will see you on the other side. Please stop crying. They will hear us.’ But the girl wouldn’t listen. So he pushed her in and slapped her hard around the face. She sat back shocked, her hand on her cheek, the men pulling at the cable as she floated away. When she was out of sight completely, the man sat on the ground, like there was no life left in him, and he began to sob. I knew he wouldn’t see her again. And that’s when I looked back. I shouldn’t have, but I turned away from the crowd of people and looked back into the darkness at the land I was leaving. (Lefteri 75)

By displaying the scene in detail, Lefteri presents a complete picture that includes an introduction, presumably to help the readers imagine the scene. She writes every single step in which a father is leaving his own daughter, this triggers the readers to think and

consider the difficulty of this situation. Lefteri captures the reactions of the characters and delivers the shocking scene. On the contrary, as in the UN piece of news previously referred to, readers are exposed to a statement that indicates only a general result. It does not provide the readers with any chances to think or imagine the details on the particulars unless they do external research.

Readers of historical fiction novels are provided with the motives beyond the incident, the fears and the hopes, and the details of the process that people go through. This sets some of the details that cannot be easily predicted or imagined when perceiving them from historical accounts. History tends to narrate the incident, the location of it, and the results, whereas historical fiction illustrates specific details. Moreover, the “historicity of texts” can be also observed in Lefteri’s detailed description. She provides information about the hardships that face the Syrian refugees which can function as historical records. This might happen in the future, as people may refer to Lefteri’s novel to learn about the incidents of the Syrian civil war of 2011. This correlation between history and historical fiction is explained by Alastair Taylor as he writes: “Historical fiction proper looks backward by the help of imagination and antiquarian study. But there is another class of work which we may call ‘contemporary’ historical fiction: that is, the epic, drama, or novel of contemporary manners, which acquires historical value only by the passage of time” (464). Thus, historical fiction novels and traditional historical accounts have similar qualities such as the fact that both are texts and narrations that might be subjective. However, there are differences related to the aims, the function and the information that each genre delivers.

1.3. ATYPICAL FULL STORIES

People’s feelings, understandings, and ideas differ due to many factors like the society in which they live, the experiences they acquire and the time they live in. When reading about certain events in history, everyone would naturally tend to view the incidents from their own perspectives and according to their own experiences and knowledge. Therefore, historical fiction presents a key for a better understanding of the whole story, since it provides the readers with the norms, conditions and laws of the era, the zeitgeist. Yet historical fiction is suggested only as an added value and not as a replacement of history. Mary Taylor and Brenda Rosler believe that historical fiction provides an attractive learning experience that helps students lay aside their standards and

understand history within a detailed context: “Reading historical fiction provides students with a vicarious experience for places and people they could otherwise never know. Often, they are able to see history through a child's point of view and identify with their emotions” (163). Taylor’s and Rosler’s suggestion of adding historical fiction for educational purposes supports the idea that fiction adds an important value and delivers ideas and meanings that history books do not provide.

In Lefteri’s novel, the hero and the heroine lose their son Sami. Nevertheless, most average readers would expect to see the pain and the sadness of that great loss in the reactions of the father and the mother. This expectation is due to the readers’ common knowledge of sadness and their own “horizon of expectation.” H.R. Jauss and Elizabeth Benzinger explain: “The social function becomes manifest only where the literary experience of the reader enters the horizon of expectations of his life, forms his interpretation of the world, and thereby has an effect on his social actions” (*New Literary History* 31). However, some of the feelings that all human beings know and experience, such as grief and sadness, could have other unknown or uncommon aspects/symptoms which are not ordinary and difficult to guess or imagine by people who have not experienced similar incidents, such as losing a child in a war. Lefteri does not mention the grief of the parents nor talks much about their tragedy, readers—while reading—feel that Lefteri underestimates a possible impact of such an important misfortune in her novel. Lefteri brilliantly holds back some mysteries to create suspense and shock the readers into discovering that Afra’s blindness is caused by her deep grief. This unexpected result is revealed nearly at the end of the novel. Due to her shock and sadness for seeing her son die in her lap after the fall of a bomb on their garden in Aleppo, Afra goes blind. She tells the untold story to the British doctor while he is examining her eyes:

‘It was a bomb,’ she says.

‘Can you tell me a bit more about it?’ Afra shifts in her chair, rolling the marble around in her fingers.

‘Sami, my son,’ she says, ‘he was playing in the garden. I let him play there beneath the tree, but I was watching him from the window – there’d been no bombs for two days and I thought it would be all right. He was a child, he wanted to play in the garden with his friends, but there were no children left. He couldn’t be inside all the time, it was like a prison for him. He put on his favourite red T-shirt and jean shorts and he asked me if he could play in the garden, and when I looked into his eyes I couldn’t say no, because he was a boy, Dr Faruk, a boy who wanted to play.’ Afra’s voice is strong and steady. ‘What was the last thing you saw?’ ‘Sami’s eyes. They were looking up at the sky.’ Afra begins to cry in a way that I have never seen her cry. (Lefteri 245)

Such an atypical reaction of an ordinary person and such a unique experience is not found in most history books. However, Lefteri's novel succeeds in delivering it by illustrating the details of the tragic death of Afra's son, and she succeeds in delivering unusual and unexpected feelings that are beyond the audience's horizon of expectations. Moreover, the argument of "subversion" and its "containment" which New Historicism introduces, is epitomized in the character of Afra. She loses her eyesight after her son's death and refuses to get the necessary treatment at the beginning. Afra denies seeing any light in her eyes. However, in the last chapter, Afra starts recognizing the lights and her problem seems to be contained.

Moreover, readers are exposed to many other and similar scenes and dialogues between Nuri and Mohammed—a parentless boy—who is in the same age as Sami, Nuri's son who passed away. However, nearly at the end of the novel, it is revealed that Mohammed is an imaginary character who is in fact the creation of Nuri's mind. Nuri refuses to believe or acknowledge the death of his son. Thus, readers are exposed to dialogues that take place only in Nuri's mind. In other words, Lefteri takes the readers into the mind of the character and enables them to comprehend very complicated feelings as such:

'Mohammed's?' she says.

'Yes. The little boy we met in Istanbul.' She leans forward as if she is in pain and exhales.

'This marble was Sami's,' she says.

'Sami's?' I say.

'Yes.'

'But Mohammed was playing with it.' I'm not looking at her now but I hear her exhale again.

'I don't know who Mohammed is,' she says. She hands me the marble.

'The boy who fell off the boat. Don't you remember?'

'A boy did not fall off the boat. There was a girl who kept crying and when her dad went into the water she went in after him and they had to pull her out and wrap her in the women's scarves. I remember it very well. Her mother told me all of it later when we were on the island by the fire.' She pushes the marble towards me, urging me to accept it. I take it, reluctantly.

'The boy who came with us from Istanbul to Greece,' I say,

'Mohammed. The boy who fell off the boat!' She ignores what I am saying, just gives me that look. She has already answered these questions.

'Why didn't you tell me before?' I say.

‘Because I thought you needed him,’ she says. (337)

In the above quotation, the readers are again introduced to an experience that is beyond their “horizon of expectation.” The readers of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* do not have a clue that a primary character that they are following throughout the novel, is the creation of the agonized father. Additionally, Nuri is another embodiment of “subversion” as he refuses to accept the loss of his son by creating an imaginary boy who is the same age as his son. Nevertheless, the “containment” is spotted when Nuri acknowledges and accepts the fact of his loss and he eventually looks forward to restarting the business of beekeeping in the UK with his cousin.

What a character thinks or feel is not normally mentioned in historical accounts. History focuses on the event and the numbers. On the contrary, historical fiction provides this exclusive trip to the state of mind and the personal experience of the character. The novelist Linda Kass explains this as such: “But a novel, different than a history book that recounts factual touch points of the past, tells a story and does so through character. What does this character think and feel? Now we are in the realm of fiction—historical fiction” (par. 4). In other words, historical fiction brings life to historical events as Crystal King writes in this regard: “Nowhere is that more true than in historical fiction, which allows readers to step inside the minds of those who have shaped the world we live in, and to imagine the all-too human side of history” (par. 1). Kass’s and King’s ideas are embodied in Lefteri’s novel as she delivers the emotions, the states of mind and the thoughts of the characters.

Additionally, news agencies normally present the results of an incident and maybe the reasons, whereas historical fiction novels provide the full story from the beginning till the end with a lot of its details. A listener or a reader of the news is introduced to one scene of the story, while the reader of historical fiction lives the whole fictional experience through the eyes of the characters, and therefore, the readers of historical fiction gain a unique experience of understanding and picturing the story. It is like seeing a piece of a puzzle, the particular, versus the whole picture, the general, with all its pieces arranged in their places.

1.4. OTHER REFUGEES' STORIES

While reading a historical text about Syria for instance, the reader automatically focuses on the Syrian case only and that it completely normal. However, historical fiction stories sometimes include other people's experiences, the experiences of people in similar conditions. In other words, it is not only the Syrian case that is to be focused on, but it is rather the human experience of any person who might face the same conditions. For example, in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, the readers are introduced to other immigrants and refugee stories such as the old Moroccan man who lives in the centre for refugees, and Diomande, the refugee from the Ivory Coast. It is implicitly indicated that regardless of the nationalities, any human being would react almost the same way when confronted with such hard circumstances. Historical fiction shifts the readers' attention from a certain group of people to the raceless human experience. Therefore, historical fiction takes the readers into the lives of other people and creates a better understanding of the past by making the readers feel the text as can be seen in the depiction of Diomande's story:

Diomande sits down again, dejected. 'But I tell them. I tell them life so hard. I tell them about Libya and prison and being beaten till I think I will die. I tell them my sister and mum's life difficult because of civil war. I have no job and my mum she sent me to find better life. I tell them all this. I tell them that here there is hope. Here maybe I will find work. I can clean, I can cook, I can teach, I have many skill.' The birds have silenced now and Diomande's back is so hunched over that the wings under his T-shirt look as if they are opening up. 'I also tell them how beautiful it is there, my country, how much I love being there.' (Lefteri 307)

Such inclusion of stories of people from other nationalities awakens the readers to the fact that these wars and misfortunes threaten every human being. Readers start to imagine themselves in the shoes of every character in the novel, not only the Syrian characters. Moreover, many other refugees' stories are represented in the novel, from Syria, Afghanistan, the Ivory Coast, Somalia, Morocco, and other countries. These stories show the bright and the dark sides of these people. In other words, Lefteri succeeds in delivering their stories without being biased or tendentious. Additionally, the readers' attention is now on the humanitarian case which does not care about nationalities. History focuses on the events related to specific people in a specific country whereas historical fiction concentrates on the humanitarian aspect. History shows us a certain case as a national one, historical fiction deals with the issue as something that could happen to any human being.

Feelings and understanding unite people from all over the world. Historical fiction frees the readers from political boundaries as in Nuri's description of the Moroccan man in the novel: "The Moroccan man stands to one side of us, watching this scene. I notice him now, the sad look in his eyes, the way he is winding his fingers around one another as if he does not know what else to do" (Lefteri 357). Crystal King writes in acceptance of this pattern: "But historical fiction novels are not only a better read but might be more helpful in making sense of the current world. Historical novels do not just tell us what happened; they make us *feel*. They create empathy for what other people went through in different times, in a way that is divorced from our own political baggage" (par. 12). Lefteri's inclusion of non-Syrian refugees' stories shows that the issues and circumstances the characters go through are not tied to any nationality, it could be anyone regardless of their nationalities.

Being the daughter of Cypriot refugees herself, Lefteri has volunteered in the refugees' centres and camps in Greece during the Syrian refugees' flow from Turkey to Greece escaping the ongoing conflict which started in 2011. These facts might have led Lefteri to empathise with refugees and to present their stories from their own perspectives, for her sympathy with the cases of the refugees is quite obvious throughout the novel (Fitzgerald par. 3). These sympathised representations of refugees might be part of the "self-fashioning" as Lefteri wants them to be the centre of the attention and tends to portray them as innocent good people who are facing a dilemma. Stephen Greenblatt explains the function of the "self-fashioning" as he writes in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*:

Self-fashioning is in effect the Renaissance version of these control mechanisms, the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment. Literature functions within this system in three interlocking ways: as a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes. The interpretive practice that I have attempted to exemplify in the essays that follow must concern itself with all three of these functions. If interpretation limits itself to the behavior of the author, it becomes literary biography (in either a conventionally historical or psychoanalytic mode) and risks losing a sense of the larger networks of meaning in which both the author and his works participate. (3-4)

Lefteri might have wanted to fashion refugees and to show them as good people who face difficult situations and hardships, and that they are eventually successful people who adapt to the new societies that they join later, as in the case of Nuri and Afra who reach the UK. This might be an attempt of her to celebrate the story of her own parents.

However, as Lefteri presents her readers with some stories that show them the hypocritical face of some other refugees, we can say that her empathy with the refugees does not prevent her from illustrating human nature as it is, truthfully including good and evil. In the novel, Lefteri depicts the story of an Afghan refugee who plays music brilliantly and seems to be a good person but he is, in fact, a child abuser:

Night after night, the predators came out of the woods. Nadim became more and more friendly with the two boys, and as the nights passed the boys disappeared and reappeared again, in the same spot, each time looking more troubled than before. But they had new shoes, and even a new phone, and they bantered with each other and fought and laughed, and they clung to each other, especially in the early hours of the morning when they returned from wherever they had been. Then they slept, late into the afternoon, even when the sun was beaming down on them, their bodies immovable, their minds switched off. (Lefteri 241)

These stories of refugees are once again proof of the “historicity” of the literary texts, as readers can learn about the refugees’ experiences during the era of the early 2000s. Readers can acquire knowledge about different conditions and circumstances of refugees from different parts of the world.

1.5. STORIES OF INDIVIDUALS VERSUS PUBLIC STORIES

Refugees and those who have to flee their houses usually suffer a lot on their way to seeking asylum. The word “refugee” is mentioned a lot in news agencies, in addition to many expressions like “refugees’ crisis” and many debates are held on the number of refugees and the burden they lay upon the host countries and societies. A piece of news on *The New York Times* website entitled “The Refugee Crisis Isn’t a ‘European Problem,’” is full of numbers and statistics that dehumanize the refugees and label them as “problems”:

The brunt of the crisis has fallen on the Turks, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, the Iraqis and the Lebanese. Funding appeals by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have failed to meet their targets. The squalor in the refugee camps has become unendurable. Now the refugees have decided that if the international community won’t help them, if neither Russia nor the United States is going to force the war to an end, they won’t wait any longer. They are coming our way. And we are surprised? (Ignatieff par.5)

However, the daily lives of these refugees and their sufferings, hopes, expectations, and the circumstances they undergo are hardly ever mentioned on news agencies or in books of history, and as mentioned earlier, this genre does not aim at representing personal stories nor at delivering details. Even though some reports, on some news agencies, do talk about some refugees’ stories and their sufferings, these reports do not provide the reader or the listener with the full story as well as historical fiction novels do.

Additionally, and most importantly, the effect of receiving these stories from news agencies or historical accounts is quite different from the ones perceived by historical fiction novels. To understand these differences and their effectiveness, it is necessary to make comparisons among the representations of similar stories in news agencies, history, and mainstream media on one hand, and, art, historical fiction novels, and other forms of literature on the other.

Lefteri provides the readers with the full story of a refugee, Nuri, his wife Afra, and their relatives through fiction. Lefteri explains to the readers the reasons behind each character's decision of leaving Aleppo, some leaving to save their lives, some to unite with their beloved ones, and many other reasons. For instance, Nuri explains one of his reasons to leave, which is to meet his beloved cousin again and re-establish their business and passion of beekeeping:

In the corner of the room there is a computer with Internet access. I sit down at the desk to see if Mustafa has sent me another message. He left Syria before me and we have been emailing each other throughout our journeys. He is waiting for me in the north of England in Yorkshire. I remember how his words kept me moving. Where there are bees there are flowers, and where there are flowers there is new life and hope. Mustafa is the reason I came here. He is the reason that Afra and I kept going until we got to the United Kingdom. But now all I can do is stare at the reflection of my face on the screen. I do not want Mustafa to know what has become of me. We are finally in the same country, but if we meet he will see a broken man. I do not believe he will recognise me. I turn away from the screen. (Lefteri 30)

Here, Lefteri represents another personal story that is also not among “the horizon of expectation” of the British audience, for instance. The common ideas and concepts of refugees are simply that they escaped war or looking for a job. Lefteri illustrates other reasons that widen the ideas of readers, she does this by introducing the characters and their lives before the main incident (the war), and this automatically shows the resemblance of human nature. In other words, almost any person would act similarly in such conditions. Thus, British society, for instance, becomes aware of other non-stereotyped personal reasons for immigration.

On the contrary, by taking the piece of news, which was published on 7 January 2018 on the *Vocal Europe* website with the headline “The Smuggling of Syrians Evolves Into An Economic And Social Conundrum In Turkey And Europe,” as a case study, it can be observed that news agencies merely report the reasons of the refugees' crisis, supposing, that millions of people have the same common problem: “Ongoing conflicts

in Syria have taken a devastating toll on the country's people. So far, 11 million Syrians have fled their homes. Most Syrians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries and in more distant EU countries" (Cengiz par. 2). The previous quotation affirms the stereotyped ideas about refugees; people escaping war and looking for jobs. In addition to that, the excessive use of numbers shifts the attention from the humanitarian aspects to the statistical and financial issues.

In the *Vocal Europe* piece of news, refugees and smugglers seem to be equalized and classified as dangerous threats to the host societies, and these refugees' sufferings and terrible journeys are naturalized and/or not mentioned. However, Lefteri depicts the journey of the Syrian couple to Turkey and the dangers they face, their stay in Istanbul and their deal with the smuggler, their dangerous rubber boat trip to Greece, their residence in the Greek islands and Athens, and their arrival in the UK at last and the procedures they undergo in the migration office. In the novel, all these incidents and experiences are provided in detail. The motives, the emotions, the fears, the expectations, the nostalgia, and many other human experiences are represented in the novel. For example, Lefteri writes about Afra and Nuri's stay at the smuggler's apartment and how the smuggler, Mr. Fotakis, tries to rape Afra:

There was a long pause, and then she said, 'He came in here – Mr Fotakis. I thought it was you because you'd locked the door. I didn't know he had the key. He came in here and he lay down beside me, just where you are lying now. I realised it wasn't you because of the smell of his skin when he came closer to me, and I called out and he put his hand over my mouth and his ring scratched the side of my face, and he told me I should be quiet or you would come back and find me dead.' She didn't need to say any more. (Lefteri 328)

However, news agencies tend to describe a wholistic picture and do not provide any individual experiences. Hence, rather than talking about such "trivial" details like rape, they mention the broad public problem of the Syrian war: "In terms of smuggling and trafficking, Turkey has been a hotbed of activity. The country's geographic location bridging Asia and the Middle East with EU countries helps to facilitate smuggling and trafficking operations" (Cengiz par. 4). This sheds light on a subordinate problem and neglects the main one, that is of the war. According to Cengiz's article, the problem is the smuggling taking place and not that the people are being smuggled.

Lefteri sets the motives behind the couple's decision of taking the risky waves on a rubber boat in order to reach Greece. Additionally, Lefteri exposes the readers to

dialogues that express the fear and the devastation of the characters who have no other track. The little boy Mohammed expresses his terror and distress to Nuri, and the whole experience on the rubber boat is illustrated:

A man started to recite a verse from the Qur'an, and as we went further out to sea, other people joined in, their voices merging with the sounds of the waves and the wind. I had one hand in the water. I kept it there, feeling the movement, the rush of sea, the aliveness of it, the way it got colder as we moved away from the land. I placed my other hand on Afra's arm but she didn't respond; her lips were pursed, like a closed shell. Mohammed's teeth were chattering.

'We haven't fallen in yet,' he said.

I laughed. 'No,' I said. 'Not yet.'

The boy's eyes widened, full of genuine fear. It seemed that he'd been relying on my ignorant optimism.

'Don't worry,' I said, 'we won't fall in.'

'People are praying. Allah will hear.'

'Why didn't he hear the other people?'

'We've been through this already.'

'I know, because we're special. My feet are wet.'

'Mine too.'

'My feet are cold.'

'Mine too.' Mohammed glanced over at Afra. (123)

This previous quotation symbolizes the details presented in Lefteri's novel, each sentence gives certain ideas and arises different questions, this long conversation delivers the suspense and the slow passage of time —according to the characters— since they are going through a horrifying time. These scenes are not represented in the same way in traditional historical accounts or the media, as such experiences are usually represented shortly and the focus is usually on the result and not on the experience itself. Lefteri goes on with illustrating the horrors of the dark night at sea. Then she sets the experience of a small child who drowns in the deep water, other little girls crying in despair, the terror of men, and the details of the horrific experience:

'Mohammed!' I called. 'Mohammed!' The torch flashed over the men's faces. I plunged into the black silence, but even with the torch I could barely see anything. I stayed under for as long as I could, feeling with my hands in case I should catch onto something, an arm or a leg; when there was no air left in my lungs, when the pressure of death was pushing down on me, I came back up gasping into the darkness and the wind. I was about to take a deep breath and go back under when I saw a man holding Mohammed, lifting him up into the boat. The women took the coughing and spluttering boy into their arms, removing their headscarves and wrapping them around him. We were deep into

international waters now; the smuggler was right, the water did change, the waves were different, their rhythms foreign. Then everyone flashed their torches, hoping a coastguard would see, hoping we were close enough to Greece that somebody would save us. These lights in the darkness were like prayers, because there was no sign of anyone coming. The men couldn't get back onto the boat – there was still too much water inside. I could feel my body becoming numb. I wanted to sleep, wanted to rest my head upon the moving waves and sleep. 'Nuri!' someone was calling. 'Nuri!' I saw the stars above, and Afra's face. 'Nuri, Nuri, there is a boat!' There was a hand on my arm. 'Uncle Nuri, a boat is coming!' Mohammed was staring down at me, pulling me. My life jacket had started to deflate but I began to kick my legs to stay afloat, to get the blood moving in my body again. (Lefteri 127)

In this excerpt, Lefteri illustrates the experience of the refugees while depicting multiple aspects of their experiences. She delivers the conversations between the characters, in addition to their thoughts and ideas. She sets the settings of the place and time delivering every important detail. All these factors contribute to a more complete picture of the scene and the situation. In other words, the absence of these elements in historical accounts takes away the humanitarian experience. This shifts the attention to the results without understanding the causes and the process as a whole.

Talking about the same experience of people risking their lives at sea, it is possible to refer to a few more details that are mentioned in the articles and pieces of news that tackled this issue as in this piece of news published on 27 September 2015 titled: "Migrant boat sinks off Turkey coast, 17 Syrians dead," the piece of news only provides the number of people drowned, the date they sank, and the number of survivors. Unlike historical fiction, in historical records, there are no personal details and there is no mention of motives, feelings, or human experience. The piece of news on *The Indian Express* goes as:

Seventeen Syrian refugees including five children drowned on Sunday when their boat sank in Turkish waters on its way to Greece, local media reported.

The Turkish coastguard recovered the bodies from the wooden boat that had set off from the Turkish holiday resort town of Bodrum for the Greek island of Leros, the Dogan news agency reported. The refugees drowned when they failed to get out of the boat's cabin, the news agency said. Another 20 migrants, who were on the boat's deck, survived and swam back to the Turkish coast, it added. All were wearing life jackets. The survivors were taken to a morgue in Bodrum to identify their drowned relatives.

There has been a sharp spike in the numbers of migrants and refugees setting out from Turkey in flimsy boats for the European Union in search of better lives. Most are fleeing conflicts and misery in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Africa. (Indian Express par.1)

The significant difference between the previously presented representations of the rubber boat trips, known as "the death boats," lies in the effect on those who are reading about these experiences. Readers of the previous piece of news, for instance, have little or no

information about the horrors and the reasons behind this tragedy. Although many people get affected and interact affectionately even with such a piece of news, it is easier for many other people to judge these refugees or mark them as mere risk-takers due to their lack of awareness of the dimensions that the Syrian conflict has or due to their prejudices. In other words, reading this piece of news requires little knowledge, at least, of the conditions these people undergo. In complete contrast to the readers of this piece of news the readers of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* are firstly introduced to the characters, their lives before the war, in the war, escaping the war, and at their final destination. The readers have access to the experiences of the characters and their challenges and confrontations:

In addition, stories of the past help children to understand that all humans have the same needs, wants, and desires: All people want to be respected and loved, feel secure, and have a sense of belonging. Through historical literature children can see the interdependence of humankind, realizing that we all are affected by the decisions of people we have never met. Finally, through historical literature, children may develop a clearer understanding of human problems and interpersonal relationships. This knowledge could help them see and judge the mistakes of the past and pursue new options in the future. The struggles and hardships that are courageously met by a character in a book may be a source of inspiration to children reading the work. (Johnson and Ebert 489)

One such example, which can clarify the role that literature and art play in peoples' lives, lies in the famous picture taken by the Turkish photojournalist Nilüfer Demir from Doğan News Agency of the drowned Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi. This picture shows the lifeless body of a three-year-old boy on the beach of Bodrum in Turkey. This image succeeds to spread a massive wave of anger, sorrow, and calls that demand the end of the Syrian catastrophe. *The Middle East Eye* website published an article about the outraged reactions of people about the photograph of Aylan Kurdi on 5 September 2015 with the title: "Aylan Kurdi Photo Fuels Anger on Arabic Social Media": "Arabic-speaking Twitter users express outrage and blame a number of world actors for the drowning of Aylan Kurdi" (Salahi par. 1). This example shows the effectiveness of art and literature, as hundreds of articles, news reports, newscasts and headlines which write and talk about thousands of people did not arise the same "outrage."

The photo was not the first image of the first child to get drowned and it is not likely to be the last. At least, tens of articles and pieces of news have reported numbers of Syrian children and families that drown in the sea for many years, however, little or no reaction came to the surface. How come a picture of one child has such an effect on people more than all these previously released pieces of news? Human beings apparently tend to get

affected by personal stories that they can relate to their own states of mind. This is exactly what literature and historical fiction novels can achieve; it is the representation of the incident as a part of it, and not as a viewer from the outside as history and news agencies do. Therefore, historical fiction does provide a deeper understanding, a more accomplished picture, and a more human experience:

Stories are central to human cognition and communication. We engage with others through stories, and storytelling is a lot more than just a recitation of facts and events. As human beings, we are automatically drawn to stories because we see ourselves reflected in them. We inevitably interpret the meaning in stories and understand ourselves better. (Corson-Knowles par. 2)

That is to say, historical fiction presents individuals' stories, and people tend to understand and react to a single person's story much more effectively than when reading or hearing a general story about a group or number of unknown people. Moreover, personal stories and experiences are marginalized in historical accounts or considered insignificant and unimportant but historical fiction restores the value of these stories and experiences. The marginalized characters in history are the centre of attention in historical fiction.

On the whole, it can be concluded that historical fiction conveys personal experiences and explains their significance, whereas historical accounts are concerned with statistics and the general aspect of the incidents. Additionally, the "historicity of texts" and "the textuality of history" were mentioned in many examples throughout *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. The focus on marginalized and atypical stories was mentioned in the analysis of the novel, and the elements of subversion and its containment were presented in this chapter. However, these points will be examined in a more detailed way in the next chapters. Additionally, the background of Lefteri, the inspiration for writing *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, the time of writing the novel, the techniques used by Lefteri, and other arguments and additional points are to be referred to in the following chapters.

2. CHAPTER TWO

THE ZEITGEIST AND THE REPRESENTATIONS OF HISTORICAL EVENTS IN *THOSE WHO ARE LOVED*

2.1. THE HISTORICAL FICTION'S ZEITGEIST, ATMOSPHERE, AND SETTINGS

The Greek culture is one of the most deep-rooted ones in history. Victoria Hislop writes about Greek society and culture—in her historical fiction novel *Those Who Are Loved*—during the period between 1939 and 1949, which is a complicated decade in the history of modern Greece. Those ten years witnessed World War II, the Nazi invasion of Greece, and the Greek civil war. Hislop sets the historical events and incidents within the atmosphere of Greece at that time, and she transfers the feelings, the motives, and the details of both everyday life and the people's personal stories and experiences.

All forms of historical accounts write about that decade of the Nazi occupation and the civil war that followed in Greece in the 1940s, such as internet websites, history books, news archives, and other means of media. Nevertheless, some of these historical accounts fail to deliver the zeitgeist, especially for readers in the twenty-first century who cannot fully understand the events particularly due to the huge distance that time creates. History gives accounts of the incidents, the numbers, the causes, and the results taking the background knowledge of its readers for granted as if all readers already know the rules and the settings of that specific era. Historical fiction depicts the whole picture to a better extent with its odds and normalities. For instance, the following text mainly displays letters exchanged during the Greek civil war as in the usual case with historical documents and texts:

This is what Loula Derveki wrote from the Averof women's prison to her brother Yiorgos on 16 September 1950: When we first came here we slept on the floor because we didn't have anything but the trousers we were wearing. Yiorgo, they didn't pay any attention to us, the guerrillas, and they said to us that we didn't go to the mountains to fight but to do something else, you know what. They want us to cook their food, to wash their dishes while they hang around and pretend that they are the leaders in the Averof prison. If Yiorgo it is to be like this, well, it is a pity that so many brothers have died; some of the educated ones tell us that the greater the number of us who die the more they become famous. Amalia Rirri fell sick with serious pleurisy and we had nothing to offer her, not even an apple. And some 'ladies' here, while they receive bags so full that they can't carry them, didn't give a single apple to this mother, instead they eat all alone to take care of their skin. Well, Yiorgo, they organize dances and several sketches, but they haven't even once invited us to participate. Certainly they are right, Yiorgo, because we don't have silk panties nor jersey underwear; the only things we have are the trousers and the

jackets we had on the mountains, and, you know, this is improper. (Carabott and Sfikas 150)

Average readers in the twenty-first century with their standard knowledge about Greece and its culture will not understand why women had to carry heavy bags, nor why wearing trousers and jackets was “improper.” This is because most readers in the twenty-first century simply would not know that women who fought in the Greek civil war, wore trousers just like men, and therefore, they were harshly criticized by the society at that time because it was not proper at all for women to do so (Mazower). Meanwhile, women in modern Greece are free to wear trousers and short jackets: “In order to understand our own situation, we need to see our times in context, otherwise we assume that people always acted and thought as we do” (King par. 14). Crystal King in this quotation explains that people tend automatically to apply their standards to what they read. They read and judge according to their own culture and their current situations. Historical fiction presents the story in its context, it sets the situation and the standard of a certain culture at a given time. Hislop presents what was proper and accepted in 1940s Greek society and what was not. This highlights the significance of specific information which might seem vague or might be underestimated in historical accounts. For instance, “women wearing trousers” seems a completely normal and insignificant piece of information to a contemporary reader. However, Hislop points out its significance at that period of time.

Moreover, to ask a Greek woman about such a practice in history now will sound awkward. Readers tend to apply their up-to-date standards and general opinions to any historical text unintentionally, this is quite natural as no one can expect or predict the standards, the norms or the special atmosphere of their cultural practice far back in history. Magdalena H. Gross and Luke Terra identify some of the problems that face while writing, reading, and understanding history: “All modern nation-states have periods of what we call difficult history, periods that reverberate in the present and surface fundamental disagreements over who we are and what values we hold” (52). These disagreements that Gross and Terra write about are seen on many occasions in Hislop’s novel. There are many examples of issues that were accepted in 1940s Greek and that are not now or vice versa.

Additionally, it is seen in the letter quoted above from Carabott’s and Sfikas’ book that such texts can be understood differently because they are conveyed through language

and narration. For example, sentences like: “they want us to cook their food, to wash their dishes” can be understood as a complaint or might be neutral to some others. This is due to the “textuality of history.” Understanding these texts depend on the context and the time of writing, in addition to the culture and the standards of readers themselves. Therefore, understanding the text depends on the cultural context of the historian and the readers as well. In addition to that, the historian might be writing from his own perspective.

On the other hand, in historical fiction, as in Victoria Hislop’s *Those Who Are Loved*, readers are introduced to the feelings of excitement in the dialogue between the heroine Themis and her sister Margarita who is very eager to try the trousers on. It is something that historical records do not find significant, whereas historical fiction presents a better way of understanding such ambiguous facts/details to the readers through dialogues:

Themis had been half-listening and now her interest was fully aroused.

‘They’re abandoning their families and using guns,’ he added, with evident disgust.

‘Women in trousers! With weapons!’ Margarita, who had loved parading about in her EON uniform (it still hung in her wardrobe), was sitting in the corner, sewing on shirt buttons for her brother. She still had a passion for dressing up, but these days it was haute couture she aspired to.

‘Trousers!’ she echoed.

‘How unnatural.’ Themis daydreamed. What would trousers actually feel like? She imagined they must be very comfortable. If someone handed her a pair, she would put them on in an instant. (Hislop 125)

Here, this example introduces the readers to the feelings of excitement and strangeness of an experience that might seem so normal and usual to readers from different cultures or periods of time.

Stories function universally, they enable the readers from other cultures and societies to understand the customs and traditions of other cultures in a specific time/era.

Tom Corson-Knowles writes supporting this idea:

Every culture has stories to tell. These stories form the basis for how we think about the world and live our lives. Stories preserve culture and pass on cultural knowledge from one generation to another. In essence, stories keep cultures alive. Stories provide a timeless link to ancient traditions, legends, myths, and archetypes. But they also connect us to universal truths about ourselves and our world. Through stories, we share passions, fears, sadness, hardships, and joys, and we find common ground with other people so that we can connect and communicate with them. Stories are universal, conveying meaning

and purpose that help us understand ourselves [and others] better.... and find commonality with others. (par. 3)

Accordingly, Historical fiction novels represent a full set of the given time and place's norms and culture which help readers to connect to the time of the events and the general intellectual concepts and ideas of a specific region. To illustrate, Hislop explains fully how shameful and strange it was for a woman to wear trousers, and how excited women were to try them on. Hislop explains this in a dialogue within the camp of the communist rebels:

Themis smiled.

'Though I always have a son and four daughters,' he added, chuckling.

'So the soldiers feel sorry for me. Who wants four daughters?'

'Probably nobody, when they're farming people,' said Katerina.

'You'll all turn into men soon,' he said more seriously.

'You'll have no choice.'

'What do you mean?' asked Maria innocently.

Thomas enlightened her. 'Trousers, for a start,' he said.

'Trousers,' repeated Despina.

'I always wanted to wear trousers.' Themis listened, excited. (183,184)

Hislop even describes how the heroine Themis feels as she tries the trousers on. Themis' fancy of wearing trousers, which is against the dominant cultural power, is what New Historicists call "subversion." Themis rebelliousness is seen as an attempt to defy the standards of society at that time. This experience of joy, excitement, and strangeness cannot be found in most history books. Moreover, historical fiction provides the readers with timeless and frameless understanding as can be read through the following lines: "Themis looked down at the unfamiliar sight of her legs in thick, tobacco coloured fabric. She had never felt more excited. Trousers. She felt both more naked and more fully clothed than before" (186). This previous quotation provides another example of subversive acts done by Themis. These factors of "subversion" and its "containment" reveal one of the qualities of historical fiction. Hislop presents the acts that are considered rebellious at that time in Greece, and thus, readers are familiarized with the cultural and historical settings. Meanwhile, similar acts might be vague in history books due to the nature of writing history, history documents events, numbers, actions and results. Historical fiction provides the subversion and the containment of that same era.

However, the transformation of the general concepts of that era changed and evolved within the society itself at that time, and eventually, Themis became used to wearing trousers afterwards. Hislop writes: “Already Themis could not imagine wearing anything but trousers” (200). “Containment” is presented in this quotation, as wearing trousers is acceptable afterwards and it is not a “rebellious” act against society anymore. “Containment” is sometimes achieved when the “subversion” is no longer valid as in this case of “wearing trousers.”

Writing about historical fiction, David Gilman argues that reading historical fiction spoon-feeds the readers because the writer is the one who does the research. History readers might miss some of the necessary information if they do not catch up with the necessary background information. These pieces of information would fill in the gap between the readers’ time and the period they read about. A good historical fiction writer will investigate and represent in her/his historical fiction all the necessary details, such as clothes, the society’s traditions, food, laws, and so on. Therefore, the readers will have a more complete picture that would not require them to do any extra research/reading to understand the motives, the settings, the contextual facts, and many other details:

And facts are the essential element in writing engaging historical novels. I want to know what my characters eat, how they dress, how often do they wash? I am constantly surprised by my research. For instance, I never knew that it was against the law to carry a sword in medieval London after sunset. That’s a good point to weave into a story. (Gilman par. 2)

A similar example shows the difference between the traditions of modern Greek society on one hand, and that of the 1940s on the other hand, as women did not work at that time. It was even shameful for a woman to work during those times. Hence, Hislop explains the atmosphere and this particular tradition very well in her novel as she writes: “Themis did not know many people whose mothers worked. Staying at home, as her mother always had, was common even in humble families, where extra money would have been welcome” (42). It is to say that historical fiction familiarizes the readers with the time, culture, and standards of a certain era and event which, therefore, helps the reader comprehend and relate to the events even better. Novelist Crystal King writes in this regard explaining her own experience as a reader and a writer of historical fiction:

A familiarity with history helps me understand and make these connections. Learning about the past through the stories of others has opened my eyes to the consequences of actions that I do not want to see repeated in the world in which I live. It

has shaped my ability to empathize with cultures and people that are foreign to my own experience. Reading historical fiction has colored my decisions and changed my actions—I truly believe it has made me a better person. (par. 5)

Many other examples can be mentioned in regard to each era's cultural rules and regulations. For instance, in the 1940s, women were not allowed to vote in Greece, and Hislop tells this significant fact as follows: "The combined relief and disappointment aroused by the letter were soon overshadowed by the forthcoming elections. Although women did not have the right to vote, Themis was glad that they were taking place" (173). Such an explanation contributes to the drawing of the whole picture; hence, readers learn about the exclusion of women from politics in Greek society at that time. Historical accounts might have mentioned this particular election, yet not necessarily might have cared to mention the fact of women not having this right since it was considered normal at that time. Women gained the right to vote unconditionally in Greece in 1952 (Franceschet et al 236). Hence, most history books that give information about Greece during the 1940s fail to mention this important fact, as they mention the names of parties or persons elected, the time the elections were held, and the results. For example, the history professor Haris Valvianos' book *Greece, 1941-49: From Resistance to Civil War* contains a whole chapter with the title: "The Elections of March 1946: Pandora's Box," yet it does not mention anything about women's prohibition of voting since that it is not something odd according to the writer's point of view.

This is, in fact, the point that New Historicism has always pointed out: it is not only the influence of the social, historical, and cultural conditions that affect the literary text but also the reception of the readers during the time of the reading, whether it is an old text or a contemporary one. Gallagher and Greenblatt explain this point in the following:

We never feel that we can simply put off all our historically conditioned longings, fears, doubts, and dreams, along with our accumulated knowledge of the world, and enter into another conceptual universe. But at the same time we do not experience works of art-or indeed any significant textual trace of the past-as confirmation of what we already know. In a meaningful encounter with a text that reaches us powerfully, we feel at once pulled out of our own world and plunged back with redoubled force into it. It seems arrogant to claim-such an experience for ourselves as readers and not to grant something similar to the readers and the authors of the past. (*Practicing New Historicism* 17)

This explains the significance of factors and conditions on the level of writers, readers, texts, and the historical situations of each in their times.

Likewise, readers during the 1940s in Greece would understand the significance of wearing trousers by women at that time. However, readers in the 2020s would never recognize such an implication. Hence, it can be claimed that historical fiction provides us with the spirit, atmosphere, and settings of a historical event in a specific era which helps the readers to understand and notice significant details that historical accounts do not necessarily provide. Hislop's description of the cultural norms, the costumes of that era in Greece and the state of mind of Greeks provide readers with historical information. This leads to the conclusion that Hislop's literary text is also to be considered a historical one (the historicity of texts). People might refer to Hislop's novel to learn about Greece in the 1940s. In general, people read and study history books and any other texts that dwell on a certain event in history. Literature is also an important part of historical texts. Much of the life during the era of Queen Elizabeth, for instance, is known and introduced through Shakespeare's plays and poems. They are not only the typical historical accounts that convey history. Literary texts function as "historical" alike. Hislop's text provides details and historical facts. These pieces of information enrich the historical knowledge about a certain historical event within its settings.

2.2.THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE INCIDENT OF KALAVRYTA IN HISTORY VS IN HISTORICAL FICTION

Many critics and novelists describe historical fiction as a device that preserves human feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Historical fiction aims at transferring the atmosphere and the feelings of people and their reactions to a certain incident: "Using literature as a means of reading the hearts and minds of individuals of long ago has, of course, its requirements" (Pasco 378). Most history books focus on the events themselves and do not usually record the feelings or the reactions of people. They tend to focus on the information and not on the experiences themselves. For example, in 1944 a massacre took place in Kalavryta, a town in Greece, as the Nazis killed all the men in that town in front of their wives and children taking their revenge as the people there had detained Wehrmacht² soldiers. This incident can be read in many history books like the one by

² The unified armed forces of Nazi Germany from 1935 to 1945

Mazower as follows: “A line of women, dressed in black, can be seen moving slowly down a road shaded by cypresses. From the cameraman’s notes, we find that this was Kalavryta, in the northern Peloponnese, almost exactly one year after all the men of the town had been shot by Wehrmacht soldiers” (Mazower 4). Moreover, Mazower mentions the same event in another page stating the following:

In retaliation for his men’s abduction, he embarked on a brutal series of reprisal raids in the mountains around Kalavryta and by the middle of December his troops had burned 25 villages and shot 696 Greeks, including the entire male population of Kalavryta itself, where his informants claimed the abducted Wehrmacht soldiers had been taken.” (179)

The lack of human feelings and reactions is very clear in the above historical records. The focus is on the event, the reason for the event, the numbers, and the results.

On the contrary, the same events of Kalavryta are narrated in Hislop’s novel as follows:

Vehicles and troops then advanced towards Kalavryta, burning down several villages on the way. When the Nazis arrived in Kalavryta itself, they pushed women and children into the school building, locked them in and set the rest of the village alight. Outside, almost five hundred men and boys over twelve years of age were then forced to march up to the hill overlooking the village. There they were lined up and methodically machine-gunned down. The witness, an old shepherd, who had been out in the fields with his livestock when the soldiers arrived, returned just as the killings began and said that the massacre of the male villagers took more than two hours. When the women and children escaped from the school every building in the village was ablaze. Over the following hours and days, numbed by shock, hunger and the cold, wives and mothers, sisters and grandmothers, began to bury their menfolk. According to the witness, the hands on the church’s clock tower stopped at thirty-four minutes past two. This, he said, was the time that the first man had fallen. After murdering the men and boys, the Germans had slaughtered thousands of animals and set fire to crops, leaving survivors with neither homes nor food. Themis was in tears by the time she finished reading, imagining how the women must have felt as they buried their loved ones. She suspected that the living might have envied the dead. (128, 129)

Here, Hislop points out humanitarian issues as she illustrates the victims’ feelings and expresses that those who died on that day are not just numbers, as in history, but they are husbands and fathers. The important incident here was not burying them, but rather was the bitterness of the wives burying their own menfolk, and the grief and horror of the children witnessing such a savage incident. The reader of Mazower’s history book might pass over this part of the book as it is only very much informative. However, the reader of Hislop’s novel may read the same part that mentions the very same incident and might become crammed with feelings but with a better understanding of the incident/situation. In other words, history detaches the readers and makes them passive, unlike historical

fiction novels that integrate the readers and merge them into the incident just as a person who is living through the same experience at the same time and place as the characters of the novels do. Hence, it can be said once more that historical fiction restores the feelings, the atmosphere, and the humanitarian aspect of the incident whereas history presents documentation.

While presenting the qualities of historical fiction and its advantages, there are on the other hand some assumptions and opinions that are against historical fiction as a genre. Historical fiction faces some accusations of being biased and of employing the historical events or changing them in their favour as author Harry Shaw suggests in his comment below:

My definition of historical fiction has been primarily negative. I have tried to show that historical novels do not constitute a strongly unified, independent genre. The most we can say is that there are groups of historical novels, united by their dependence on broader fictional traditions, which constitute significant objects of critical attention. The group with which I am concerned, standard historical novels, shares the conventions of the realist novel; they are also united, in a minimal way, by incorporating within their systems of fictional probability a sense of the past as past. But as a result of these unifying factors, historical novels have in common a third characteristic—a shared problematic, which...assumes different degrees of prominence in different works, depending primarily on the end to which they employ history. (30)

However, this argument is exaggerated to some extent since historical fiction writers do change incidents in the life of the characters, but Harry Shaw does not pay enough attention to the fact that historical fiction authors write about fictional characters, and that is why it is called “fiction.” Additionally, most historical fiction writers do not change the main incident of history, but they rather change the lives of the characters to fit into the historical settings. Hislop does not change or employ the history of Greece during the 1940s to fit the end of her novel, but she rather adjusts the lives of the fictional characters to be compatible with history.

Additionally, many critics like Shaw argued that historical fiction writers must create characters to represent the cultural and historical settings of a certain period. Moreover, Shaw considers this a problematic issue:

Because historical novelists depict ages significantly different from their own and may aspire to represent the workings of historical process itself, they are faced with the task of creating characters who represent social groups and historical trends. But creating such characters involves certain inherent difficulties. This is a major reason for the problem with historical novels. (30)

On the contrary, in Hislop's novel, she does not use real characters to set the cultural and historical settings. Since the aim of this historical novel is to represent a story in that specific historical period, Hislop does not add characters to represent any social groups. Hislop sets the characters and the cultural atmosphere within the historical frame because this is the aim of a historical fiction story: to tell a story of people within that historical frame. Characters are not created to adjust or adapt to certain conditions; they are part and parcel of the historical fiction text. Shaw himself contradicts his own allegations as he admits that the aim of historical fiction is not directly history: "The novels I discussed in the previous chapter use history in a variety of ways to explore contemporary political and social concerns, to express and resolve personal feelings, to give energy to a love story. But in none of them does history serve as the primary subject" (100). In other words, Hislop does not employ the incident of Kalavryta to serve any cause, but she creates and uses the fictional characters to deliver the story with its details.

Nevertheless, Hislop's novel proves the opposite of what Shaw claims, because Hislop's book is not titled "The History of Greece" for example, and Hislop does not allege to be presenting documented history. Historical fiction supports history by giving the readers more details such as motives and feelings and transmits what history does not. Hislop's aim is to narrate the life of Greeks within a critical time in the history of Greece, and that is her primary subject. Likewise, many historical fiction novels aim at presenting a story within certain historical settings and do not represent history directly.

There are many other critics that have some points against historical fiction, as they argue about the degree and the quality of fictionality, the absence of references, the reception of the readers, and other factors (Dawson 74-80). On the other hand, some other writers claim that historical fiction writers fill in the missing blanks that exist in the historical accounts and that readers can differentiate between what is fictional and what is not. In other words, historical fiction writers do not claim to be writing documented history, but they are rather delivering the zeitgeist of that historical era through fiction.

It remains an ongoing question in historical fiction—how much of historical fiction should be history and how much should be fiction? —and every author answers it in a different way. Personally, I regard the gaps in the historical record as an invitation, and I love that historical fiction gives us a deeper window into people's humanity than most nonfiction can provide. As long as the author makes it clear, usually in an author's note, where they've chosen to substantially diverge from what's documented, I think it's pretty much all fair game. (Macallister par. 4)

Macallister's point of view here suggests that a mixture of fiction and historical facts can be viewed positively. This is due to the fact that historical fiction sheds more light on humanitarian issues. Therefore, the percentage of fiction or that of facts are not significant and this leads to the common points of both when terms like the "textuality of history" and the "historicity of texts" are discussed.

From the quotations taken from Mazower's history book and those of Hislop's, the "textuality of history" and the "historicity of texts" can be studied. Mazower's historical text is written and delivered through narrative language, and thus, it is subjected to the rules of any written text. Likewise, Hislop's detailed descriptions of the details of the incident of Kalavryta can be seen as a historical record of the atmosphere of the event and its impacts. Historical facts can be seen in Hislop's text: When the Nazis arrived in Kalavryta itself, they pushed women and children into the school building, locked them in and set the rest of the village alight" (128). A reader who might refer to Hislop's text would learn about historical facts and events by reading this literary text. Thus, Hislop's text functions as historical. However, both representations (Mazower's and Hislop's) are texts that include the perspectives of their own writers.

2.3.THE PLAGUE, THE STARVATION AND THE GREEK SOCIETY

In 1941 starvation hit Greece badly causing the death of thousands of people, sickening thousands and affecting other hundreds of thousands of people (Mazower 58-60). Historical texts do write about it. However, history tends to generalize the facts of starvations and illnesses and classify them as statistical information, whereas Hislop illustrates these tragic phenomena through representations of differences between various strata of Greek society. Moreover, Hislop presents the degree and the description of the hunger that stroke Greece in the 1940s. She writes about the deterioration of the situation throughout the novel. Hislop awakens the reader that death due to malnutrition is not a mere statistic; it is, for instance, the death of a human being, Fotini, the heroine's best friend and idol. Hislop describes the beginnings of this atmosphere of sickness and death in chapter six as she writes: "There was a lot of sickness around that winter – from the common cold to tuberculosis. There were rumours of an epidemic of the latter" (96). Hislop then shifts on to the description of Fotini's death and Themis's devastation after seeing her best friend dying on the street:

It's a girl,' said the man, who now carried the lifeless body in his arms. His comment was addressed to Themis, who stood by, staring with complete disbelief. She caught a glimpse of Fotini's face. Her friend was almost unrecognisable with her cheekbones pushing through the skin and her eyes bulbous. She looked like a ninety-year-old woman, but there was no doubt in Themis' mind that this was her friend. As the head had lolled to one side, Themis found Fotini's vacant eyes staring into hers. She had to look away. 'Never seen a corpse before?' said the other man, addressing Themis, who was sobbing now. He stepped forward to close her friend's eyelids. (98)

In *Those Who Are Loved*, Themis is determined to carry on the ideas that she used to discuss with her decedent friend, Fotini. This subversion is seen in Themis' determination to rebel against the political authorities at that time and to fight for her cause. Hislop writes: "Themis assiduously followed her routine, always carrying in her mind an image of Fotini. If she could save even one person, she was saving someone's child, someone's brother, someone's friend, and any risk was worth it" (135). The subversion is contained at the end of the novel when the main historical events come to an end, and Themis runs her own life and that's of her family.

Many history books mention the starvation that hit Greece in 1941 and seem to pay more attention to numbers and information. Mark Mazower's book *Inside Hitler's Greece*, for example, writes about it as follows: "In the winter of 1941-42, whilst thousands of people died of starvation in Greece, the level of food consumption in the Reich itself remained virtually the same as it had been before the war" (58). On the other hand, Hislop's description of one dear friend's death is much stronger than the "thousands of people" in Mazower's historical text. For instance, Hislop provides the reader with the shock of losing an important character and a human being. Fotini's character might have really existed and might be among these "thousands of deaths" mentioned in Mazower's text. Hislop adds the number of deaths symbolically, and more effectively as she writes: "This is the tenth we've found this morning. Tragic. These workers were paid to walk the streets each day to gather corpses. Along with the black marketeers, they were among the few whose lot had improved since the start of the occupation" (98). Hislop continues describing the gloomy and black atmosphere of her imagination which history does not necessarily force you to imagine:

In Athens alone, almost fifty thousand had collapsed and died from malnutrition over these months. Freezing temperatures and food shortages were a lethal combination. There were children whose final hours were spent scavenging for food or lying, lice-ridden, in the street, too weak to move. They were such a common sight that people would simply step over them to go on their way. Every passer-by would have his agenda: to find food,

visit a soup kitchen or even to call in on a seamstress who might be fashioning a new coat from an old one. Nobody had time to linger. Survival was the only concern. (104)

In this context, Hislop presents Fotini as an important and beloved character, then she makes it easier for the reader to feel the pain and the agony once she loses her life. Hislop talks about a number of similar cases which take the reader into the understanding of the amount of grief and of the significance of what happens. Hislop delivers the message as she writes: “Fotini was one of many thousands who had died from starvation in Athens that winter. Greece was at breaking point” (108). Hislop explains the significance and the value of losing a friend (for instance). She later expands this experience to the number of lost friends, this sheds light on the massive “meaning” of the number of deaths.

In other words, there were thousands of “Fotinis,” they are thousands of dear people—at least to someone— so they are not mere numbers. David Gilman talks about the success of historical fiction in delivering feelings and engaging the readers as he writes:

More than anything else let’s engage the reader and have them feel as if they are experiencing the period, the events that transpired, and our characters’ emotions. A well-researched novel is essential but more important than slavishly following facts is to create a strong sense of atmosphere and authenticity. (Par. 14)

On the other hand, history texts provide information about things in general. Mark Mazower writes about the reports of death cases due to the spread of illnesses, malnutrition and hunger. Nevertheless, readers cannot easily understand the meaning and the degree of these sufferings only by reading the historical text, because of our different concepts and understanding of these words.

Hunger, for instance, might be not having breakfast for somebody and might be starving to death for someone else Mazower writes:

Estimates published by the Ministry of Health showed that hunger was reported as the direct cause of between one-third and one-half of all deaths. Indirectly it was the cause of many more, as malnutrition increased people’s exposure to TB, influenza and other illnesses. From these figures Piraeus, with its largely working-class population, emerges as the worst-hit part of the Athens conurbation. In all, the official estimate of approximately 35,000 deaths from famine in the Athens-Piraeus area appears to be on the low side. (40)

Hislop’s novel provides this very scene with descriptions of the level of hunger and starvation that Greece reached at that time, and these pieces of information are examples

of the “historicity of texts,” as readers can learn about the historical events of that time by reading Hislop’s novel:

Many looked less than human: there were people with the bodies of children but the expressions of the old, men with eyes that bulged from their skulls, women with furry chins and limbs, this pelt being the body’s natural reaction to starvation and cold. Many were barefoot. Occasionally there was someone so weak that they struggled to hold a mug of soup. (Hislop 109)

History books mention the hunger and the numbers, Hislop, in this example, illustrates the images of hunger and the humanitarian aspects of these incidents.

Hislop also depicts the division of the Greeks at that time, not only within the Greek society but also among the members of the same family. Moreover, she also explains what each party believes in, and the points of view of each. The civil war in Greece took place between 1946 and 1949 in which many parties were involved, and many foreign governments and armies were entangled as well. However, she takes the readers into the minds of the brothers and sisters through the dialogues and monologues of the characters which allow the readers to see from many different perspectives: “Relationships between the children were as volatile as those between politicians in the outside world. [As siblings,] Panos and Thanasis never stopped arguing and wrestling with each other in an endless fraternal power struggle” (Hislop 35). Moreover, Hislop even refers to the degree of tension spread in the country through the dialogues of these siblings who are reflectively intensified: “Arguments in the Koralis home had intensified. What might once have been simple fraternal competition between Thanasis and Panos had metamorphosed into a war of opposing ideals, bitterly fought and with neither side having any hope of achieving victory, big or small” (Hislop 49). These conversations introduce the readers to the tension within the Greek society at that time, and this contributes to the understanding of different points of view.

Unlike history which shows the picture from the outside, Hislop’s novel takes readers on a trip inside the minds of Greeks and continues the way outside to the ground. All these previously mentioned dialogues enable readers to feel and understand the atmosphere before the Nazi occupation and the circumstances that lead to the successive civil war. Hislop describes the situation before the Nazi occupation with the following words:

They hoped it might lead to better times and restoration of civil liberties. Such a hope was not to be fulfilled. Within a few months, freedom of every kind was lost for each and every Greek, whatever their political beliefs, left, right or centrist, royalist or republican. Ultimately, neither the Greek nor the British forces who had arrived at the invitation of Metaxas' successor, Alexandros Koryzsis, could do anything to prevent a German invasion. At the beginning of April, the Nazis marched in. (67)

Crystal King writes in this regard saying that: "Nowhere is that more true than in historical fiction, which allows readers to step inside the minds of those who have shaped the world we live in, and to imagine the all-too human side of history" (King par.1). Hislop magically merges politics and points of view in the pot of the characters' minds and hearts, taking the readers into a unique experience, and enabling them to see the actions of history from different angles and through non-identical lenses:

In former days, political arguments had only occurred when Pavlos Koralis visited and brought friends to the house. Nowadays they raged between Thanasis and Panos. Even from early teenage years, they had opposing views on how to deal with their country's problems. Thanasis was in favour of the general and even admired Metaxas' own role models, among whom was Mussolini. Panos, on the other hand, did not like the rigid order that Metaxas represented. In fact, he was not keen on discipline in any form. Sometimes Kyria Koralis had to remind them that if their father visited she would have to tell him of any bad behaviour. They were too old and tall now to be disciplined by her but the threat of their father's wrath was enough to make them conform. One of his rare visits coincided with a bout of rebellious behaviour from Panos. (30)

In this example, Hislop explains the ideas and the points of view of both parties. She also represents the emotions and the motives beyond each one's position.

The general talk about the Greek civil war in historical account mostly contains the mentioning of the opposing parties and the foreign forces that support them, as well as the numbers and the statistics of battles, and the consequences. Most of these historical books do not provide enough information about the motives and the perspective of these fighting groups or parties, but they rather merely represent their positions and their already established opinions. This might also require further readings and research to understand some facts. For example, who the communists are, and why were they opposing the government. However, as Hislop represents these groups and explains their points of view and their backgrounds in detail, the readers do not have to do any research about communists or lefties (left-wing politicians). This is, for example, how the Greek civil war is mentioned in another book of history which is about the Greek civil war of the 1940s and about the role of the left-wing politicians during the war. The book reads the following:

The civil war of 1946-9, like the Occupation and the 'December Events' that preceded it, brought new suffering and destruction to Greece, leaving behind a legacy of repression, intellectual and cultural sterility, and foreign intervention, which ultimately led, as some historians believe, to the military dictatorship of 1967-74. More than 150,000 Greeks died in the civil war, over 5,000 having been executed for offences against the state, and between 70,000 and 100,000 communists left Greece and became political refugees in the countries of the Eastern bloc. In addition, more than 700,000 people became 'displaced' within Greece itself, the great majority having been forced out of their villages by the government in its effort to cut off the guerrillas from their sources of supplies and recruits. To these figures one must also add the children who were forcibly evacuated from the battle zone (both by the government and the 'Democratic Army', for political as well as humanitarian reasons), more than 25,000 of whom settled in the countries of Eastern Europe, some never to see their families again. (Valavianos 246)

However, through the monologue of the novel's heroine, Themis, below, Hislop presents us with a more personal explanation of these very moments and events. In the previous quotation from Valavianos, readers are provided with numbers, actions and statistics. Whereas Hislop provides the readers with the state of mind of a fictional character living that experience, shifting the questions in the readers' minds from how and how many to why and so what:

Themis was still sitting at the kitchen table, her books now spread out in front of her. Her mind was far away. Why, she was asking herself, would Jesus not be on the communists' side? Did he not say that the poor should come unto him? Did he not want everyone to be equal? They had been taken to church often enough and she was sure that this was what the priest had said. Perhaps the world was full of such contradictions and she had simply not noticed them before. (47)

Such images of monologues and the illustration of thoughts and feelings are found in Hislop's novel in numerous places. This unique personal experience is the core of historical fiction and the missing touch in traditional history books.

More social issues and argumentative topics are presented in Hislop's novel such as the different opinions people had about a certain topic at a specific time. Hislop, once more, displays the ideas of the people at that time and their thoughts about, refugees within the Greek community for instance, through the dialogues among Themis and her siblings:

'How dare you say that? How dare you suggest that the Church is on the side of those people!' shouted Thanasis.

'You mean trade unionists?'

'They're scum. They'll wreck this country.'

'What? By trying to make sure their families have enough to eat? That makes them scum?'

‘Feeding their families? You think this is their main aim? I don’t believe it. Most of those immigrants are just troublemakers.’

‘The refugees didn’t come because they wanted to. You’re a fool, Thanasis. They had no choice.’

‘You’re saying the politicians forced them to come and live here? To crowd us out? To take our jobs?’

‘You know it wasn’t like that,’ Panos tried to reason.

‘It was the government that took the decisions that led to the war. So it was their fault that all those people had to leave their homes and everything they owned.’

‘And they welcomed them into Greece so that they could make trouble, did they?’ (45)

Such dialogues explain the situation and the crisis of refugees at that time, it also represents the debates within the society itself at that time. This does not only give an idea about the society at that time, but it also makes the readers question themselves by presenting the story from different angles.

Historical fiction describes the level and the degree of starvation, and the plague as especially experienced among the different classes of the Greek society, through the providing of the opinions of people and their motives whereas history tends to generalize and classify the Greek society as one melting pot. This applies to the same idea mentioned in the previous chapter of the thesis, “the horizon of expectations.” Every person understands and views hunger from their perspective. Historical fiction frees the readers from their prejudgment and exposes them to the level and the degree of, hunger for instance, in that time and within that zeitgeist.

By analysing the example mentioned earlier about the representations of the same event of Kalavryta, the starvation, and the plague in history books on one hand, and in historical fiction on the other, it is found that such details and settings can be helpful for readers or even students/learners who want to learn about a certain period or event in history. Therefore, many scholars and authors, such as Mary Taylor Rycik and Brenda Rosier, think that historical fiction provides more details, sets the historical settings in a more efficient way, and most importantly engages the readers with the event, and some even called to teach historical fiction in classrooms: “Quality historical fiction can be used to teach history, but it can also help students connect with individuals who may have lived during these times. Welcome historical fiction back to your classroom” (Rycik and Rosier 166). This suggestion of Rycik and Rosier points out the benefits of reading historical fiction as it illustrates a fuller picture of historical events.

Historical fiction demonstrates how notions and opinions of a certain party were created and what motives were beyond them. Many critics such as Erin McTigue, Elaine Thornton and Patricia Wiese support the notion of depending, to an extent, on historical fiction to understand historical events as they write: “Understanding a character's motive in historical fiction allows for a deeper understanding of the narrative and history” (498). However, other critics warn that readers must be careful about certain issues in historical fiction. Erin McTigue, Elaine Thornton and Patricia Wiese think that readers should be aware of the paradox of historical fiction since it is the place where fiction and fact intermingle:

What even constitutes quality historical fiction, as well as concerns about using literature that may be misleading. First, there is the conflict between fact and fiction. Next is the appropriate depiction of realistic characters - including what is meant by realistic. It is also critical to recognize an author's perspective and its impact on his or her resulting work (not to mention the reader's perspective). Finally, are the dangers of inaccuracies presented and often believed to be fact? (McTigue et al. 496)

Joanne Brown adds to what McTigue, Thornton and Wiese mention and writes about the potential matters that can occur if people depend on historical fiction as a replacement for history books. She argues that no one knows to what extent fiction is included. The problem lies in the freedom that the authors have as fiction writers:

The problems associated with writing historical fiction are also our problems when we teach historical fiction, because they affect how we and our students respond to and interpret these novels. The problems involve matters of definition, the "truth" of historical fiction, the question of balance between historical details and fictional elements, the demand for authenticity and accuracy, and the issue of provenance. (Brown)

Additionally, there are many critics and historians who are against the involvement of historical fiction novels in any educational process due to concerns about the writers' possible bad intentions, the readers' own knowledge and comprehension, the ambiguity of the degree of fictionality in the literary work, and most importantly the quality of the literary narration in relation to history (Litt 111-115).

However, Hislop succeeds in drawing a full picture of a standard family in Greece. She invites the readers to the family's breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. Hislop provides details of Greek meals which will later help the readers understand how poverty later invades the Greek families and how the shifts in the family's meals represent each era.

She describes Kyría's delicious meals, the heroine's grandmother, as she explains how well she cooks and how generous she is. Hislop gradually shifts to express the stages Greek people went through during those times, as she describes the meals during the Nazi occupation, the arrival of Italian soldiers and the civil war. The meals are the mirror of Greece's economic situation.

At Patissia they were still eating well enough but even the Koralis family began to notice changes. For so many years, Kyría Koralis had been proud of the way she had fed her grandchildren: the generous wholesome meals, the fresh loaves, meat most days, vegetables from the market, home-baked baklava. She made her budget go a long way. Within a short period of time all of this changed.

At first she tried to conceal the problem but little by little the menus altered. First the meat became stringier, and then there was less of it. A single chicken could be stretched over several days until there was just a shred of it floating in a soup. Kyría Koralis had always kept a good stock of pulses in big glass jars on the kitchen shelf, but even the levels of chickpeas and lentils gradually went down to zero. (Hislop 81)

Then, meat and other kinds of food are mentioned many times throughout the novel. Hislop measures the economic situation of Greece using the grandmother's meals. For instance, the grandmother Kyría Koralis sells the jewellery she had to buy food for her grandchildren when starvation strikes their city. Hislop also applies this measurement to other families and groups. Hislop talks about the food when communist rebels gather to eat and when refugees and prisoners eat and in many other situations. Hislop writes about the astonishment of Maria, the heroine's friend, as she eats meat: "The stew was good. 'Meat . . .' said Maria with amazement. 'It's actually meat'" (188). Once again, "the horizon of expectations" problem is resolved through the detailed narration of details. Hislop successfully conveys the economic situation in Greece during the 1940s. She achieves this by illustrating the details included within the historical, economic, geographical and cultural settings. This detailed illustration frees readers from their own assumptions and clarifies the degree and the surrounding conditions of a certain event. In a history book, starvation or a plague might be mentioned once and afterwards another phrase might express, for instance, their deterioration. In such cases, it is difficult to estimate how were these starvations or plagues and to what degree they got worsened. In addition to the readers' own different experiences, cultures and backgrounds. However, historical fiction solves these problems by displaying the whole picture step by step.

Hislop takes the reader into the conversations and dialogues within the Greek families. This tour helps in understanding the motives, ideas, and feelings of the people

who lived during the historical events in the 1940s in Greece. History displays the parties and their counterparts and shows the surface image of the society. Whereas Hislop dives into the division within the Greek family: “Historical fiction, which often borrows actual moments in time related to shifting economic and societal issues, has an uncanny way of resonating with relevance even a hundred, or hundreds, of years later” (King par. 11). Hislop narrates many dialogues between the four siblings explaining their points of view. It is seen how Themis and her brother Panos have similar opinions, whereas their other siblings Margarita and Thanasis have totally different points of view. The family members have to confront each other or even fight on different sides. Hislop presents the conflict that history does not really expose, the conflict within the families.

Relationships between the children were as volatile as those between politicians in the outside world. Panos and Thanasis never stopped arguing and wrestling with each other in an endless fraternal power struggle. In addition to the new scar on his forehead, Panos had a few others, such as his brother’s superior strength. It was not only between the boys that battles raged. Margarita and Panos constantly squabbled over everything and nothing. Between Margarita and Themis there was no obvious argument, but the older girl never missed an opportunity to be spiteful. (Hislop 35)

Reading Hislop’s *Those Who Are Loved* as a historical fiction novel presents plenty of information to the readers about 1940s Greece. It delivers a more complete picture and atmosphere of Greece during that historical period than the one represented in historical accounts. Historical fiction provides many avenues for promoting the readers’ critical reading and thinking skills. Since historical fiction presents issues from different angles, readers could identify with the characters and preview conflicting opinions (Johnson and Ebert 489).

Finally, reading historical fiction could be more engaging since readers want to know all the details and what will happen next to the characters. Unlike history which gives direct information, results and facts. Thus, reading historical fiction novels besides the typical history books could enable readers and even learners to understand the historical events, the cultural issues, and the historical settings and atmosphere in a more efficient way.

2.4. POLITICS AND THE GERMAN INVASION

Historical accounts bind people to certain classifications, for instance, in the case of the Greek civil war, there are people who support the government, and there are other people who do not, and they are in fact, on the side of the communist rebels. However,

human beings are not always fixed to their parties, and their support is not ultimate and unconditional. History classifies people and fixes their positions whereas historical fiction shows their true human nature as they can change their opinions very often or, at times, get angry with the party they support at a certain action and again change their opinions. However, history treats people from an essentialist point of view where they display no signs of change of opinion or opposition. History does not talk about people criticising their own country/party or who are angry at certain points with their own politicians, as seen in the historian Valavianos' historical book in which he writes: "On the morning of 3 December 1944, crowds of EAM supporters gathered in the centre of Athens, disregarding the government's prohibition of the demonstration. The police panicked and began firing at the demonstrators as they advanced across Syntagma Square in the direction of the police headquarters" (Vlavianos 50). In this example, Vlavianos mentions the supporters and the police and does not provide details that indicate that some of those who gathered might be not EAM supporters. They might be supporters of the other party but are angry and dissatisfied with the procedures done by the government. However, Hislop includes details of both types.

No shifts or changes only supporters and oppositions are seen in history: "Left-wing supporters who had been driven from their villages and dared not return to vote and by the fact that all local officials were supporters of the Government and all the machinery of provincial administration was in their hands" (Vlavianos 232). People are always classified in history, whereas historical fiction restores the human nature of people who are not always a hundred per cent on one side of the story.

On the contrary, the characters in Hislop's novel sometimes express their anger at certain actions and their human conscience which rejects some unacceptable deeds, and therefore, Hislop succeeds in delivering the reality of humans' nature which are not always a hundred per cent right. She explained that: "Even Margarita, who had always loved her EON activities, found the possibility of war anathema. She blocked her ears when everyone began to talk of it. She wanted a different life" (58). Moreover, Hislop describes the feelings of regret when Themis kills a teenager during one of the operations which shows us the dissatisfaction as Themis feels guilty for a Greek who killed a Greek:

Curiosity made her go closer and it was then that she realised how young her victim had been. He had only the faintest hint of down above his top lip. 'Theé mou,' she whispered

to herself, only now realising that she had tears rolling down her cheeks. He had not even taken his first shave. She backed away and walked across to the lifeless bodies that had once been her friends. This made her feel less remorse for the boy she had killed. (218)

Such pictures of people expressing rejection of certain deeds are not found in typical historical accounts. People, in general, are classified and set to be on one side in historical accounts, whereas, as in this example, Hislop breaks this classification and exposes the historical incidents from a humanitarian aspect that represents human nature in a clearer way.

Hislop also gives examples of mistakes committed by both parties. Panos, who is against the German support, and his brother Thanasis, who is with the German intervention in Greece, both agree on the importance of stopping the bloodshed and the terrible deeds done by both sides:

This evidence of mutual goodwill between Greece and Germany sickened Panos but it gave Thanasis new conviction.

‘Have you heard any guns?’ he asked Panos when he too returned to the apartment.

‘Has even one Athenian come to any harm?’ Thanasis was right and Panos could not deny it. (75)

Many examples of Panos and Themis—who support the communists—on one hand, and their siblings Thanasis and Margarita—who support the government forces—on the other hand, show that the first couple condemns the cruelty of some actions committed by the rebels whom they support, and that the second couple condemns similar harsh actions done by the government forces or the forces of the occupation which they also support.

Then came rumours of retreat by ELAS troops. These turned out to be true, as did the information that they were taking hostages with them as they went. They seized thousands and force-marched them into the mountains. Reports of their actions shocked everyone, whether they were on the left or right. ‘It’s barbaric!’ cried Margarita. ‘People are being dragged from their homes and forced to march barefoot. And they’re having to sleep outside in this cold . . .’

‘How can they do that, Panos? How could anyone do such things?’ asked Themis.

‘I don’t know, Themis. There is no excuse. I don’t know what’s got into them.’

‘Desperation?’ suggested Margarita. ‘They know they’re losing.’

Neither Panos nor Themis could disagree, nor could they condone such barbarism. The terror the communists were perpetrating was turning many of their own supporters against them. (Hislop 164,165)

History shows people as victorious and defeated, nevertheless, Hislop presents the true moments when people are only humans as they all share feelings of happiness or

despair. Hislop describes the feelings of the Koralis family members as representers of the Greek society after the incident of killing Metaxas:

“And so, while keeping their thoughts to themselves, Panos and Themis did not shed any tears for the dictator’s death. They hoped it might lead to better times and restoration of civil liberties. Such a hope was not to be fulfilled. Within a few months, freedom of every kind was lost for each and every Greek, whatever their political beliefs, left, right or centrist, royalist or republican.” (67)

Therefore, it is concluded that history fixes human beings in their positions while historical fiction points out human nature; human beings are not always on the same side of the story, people might be supporting a certain cause or party fully or partially. They might change their opinions; these interactions and changes are represented in historical fiction. However, history books might classify people and attach them to only one side. *Those Who Are Loved* illustrates representations of the Greek civil war of the 1940s; a war that took place not only among the people of the same country, the same family but also inside oneself. The novel takes the readers inside the family of Themis and enables them to live the experience from within that family. In historical accounts, that family does not even exist, and it is merely represented in numbers and statistics.

The “subversion” and its “containment” are observed many times and in many characters throughout the novel. All the siblings Themis, Panos, Thanasis, and Margarita have their political and rebellious ideas: Ideas that challenge society, the authorities and the culture. Panos joins the rebels and is handed to the Germans by the governmental forces: “Over the course of the next few hours, they learnt more. Panos had been arrested in the mountains by a member of a security battalion and handed over to the Germans” (Hislop 137). Margarita rebels against the standards of her family and society and flirts with German officers, Themis shouts at her sister: “You were too busy making friends with Nazis to notice anything” (Hislop 149). Greenblatt explains this interaction between “subversion” and its “containment” as he writes: “Self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss” (*Renaissance Self-fashioning* 9). Many other examples are found in Hislop’s novel, and they all represent subversive actions and ideas against the dominant culture, society or any other superior authorities. However, the subversive climax is resolved nearly at the

end of the novel. Each character's "subversion" is contained. For instance, Margarita's own rebellion against her family and her elopement to marry a German officer ends with her regret and disappointment. She finally marries another German man.

The German invasion of Greece in 1941 was a major event in the history of Greece, an important historical turn, and was one of the causes of the civil war that followed. The representation of this significant event differs in historical accounts and is quite different from the one in historical fiction. These differences can be observed by examining the representation of the same event in some history books on one hand, and the representation of the same event in *Those Who Are Loved*.

Hislop describes the atmosphere before the German invasion and the fears and hopes of the Greek people at that time. She shows the division among Greek people as some of them consider the German forces as allies, whereas other people view the arrival of foreign forces as an act of occupation. The four siblings discuss their opinions about Hitler and the Nazis before one of their meals together and each one of them metaphorically represents the different perspectives of the Greek people at that time. Greek people seemed to only share the fear of the future whatsoever was coming:

'It's correct that Metaxas looks up to Mussolini, Panos, but I think the admiration is mutual.'

'Hitler admires the Greeks too. And we should all be proud of that!' added Margarita.

'She's right, Panos,' said Thanasis triumphantly. 'Everyone knows that the Germans admire the Ancient Greeks!'

It was true that the Ancient Greeks were depicted in Nazi textbooks as their 'nearest racial brothers' but Panos reacted with scorn.

'They no longer exist!' he said. 'We're not the same people. And the sooner we stop pretending we are, the better.'

'Calm down, Panos,' urged Thanasis. 'It's a great thing for Greece that Hitler respects Hellenistic ideals.'

'I can't listen to this. And don't tell me to calm down!'

Thanasis rarely failed to provoke his younger brother to anger. Margarita sat with her hands clapped over her ears as her brothers began to shout. Thanasis was not to be deterred. Now that he had stirred his younger brother to boiling point, he got in his stride, feeling in command of the debate, all his facts at his fingertips.

'Look what great things Hitler is doing for his country! It's about leadership and discipline, Panos.'

'He even has a youth organisation,' Margarita chipped in. 'Lots of countries are following the same path.'

‘That’s the only thing you’ve said that I agree with,’ shouted Panos.

‘That fascists all follow the same path.’ Then a note of despair came to his voice: ‘But where will that path lead?’ (Hislop 56)

By these dialogues readers are introduced to the people’s points of view and their thoughts. In other words, it is the action and the experience reflected from the inside of the story. Readers become a part of the story as they engage themselves with the characters and the incidents. However, Hislop keeps the historical settings and does not omit the important historical facts that contributed to the following incident: “Ultimately, neither the Greek nor the British forces who had arrived at the invitation of Metaxas’ successor, Alexandros Koryziz, could do anything to prevent a German invasion. At the beginning of April, the Nazis marched in” (Hislop 67). In this quotation, the “historicity of texts” is also noticed. Readers can learn about historical facts and events by reading Hislop’s novel.

On the other hand, as seen in the following quotation, history seems to represent the picture from the outside, the atmosphere and the reasons that led to the German invasion are inadequate to general reasons without providing the people’s opinions, fears, or hopes: “In January 1941, three months before the German invasion, Metaxas died. Occupation would magnify existing social and economic strains and bring to the surface popular demands for a fundamental reshaping of Greece’s political system” (Mazower 14). The main focus is on the incidents and the results, and a general idea is represented without the inclusion of the people’s reactions or state of mind.

Overall, in history, readers seem to be aware of facts and incidents happening in chronological order, whereas readers of historical fiction novels seem to feel and understand the impact of these events on people in a more efficient manner as they provide the zeitgeist of that time: “Historical fiction has the power to make connections between the past and present in ways that facts and dates sometimes obscure. It brings people out of history and sets them beside you at the table whispering, laughing, fearful. And it can lead its readers in pursuit of the historical record” (King par. 16). By reading Mazower’s history book and that of Valvianos, the complete story is not fully understood and the incidents are difficult to follow. However, *Those Who Are Loved* presents a more accomplished experience.

On the whole, this chapter shows the differences between the representations of historical incidents in historical accounts and in historical fiction. Historical fiction provides the zeitgeist that is not easy to find in typical historical accounts. In *Those Who Are Loved*, Hislop represented the details of historical turns in 1940s Greece by providing the degree and the significance of each event, and thus, Hislop succeeds in skipping the horizon of expectation of readers. Additionally, the New Historicist arguments of “the textuality of history” and “the historicity of texts” are found and displayed through many examples. The “subversion” against political and social powers and authorities is discussed, and the “containment” of these actions is also mentioned and presented. However, in order to represent other characteristics of historical fiction, the next chapter includes a comparison between the style of writing, the topics and the techniques of Christy Lefteri and those of Victoria Hislop. Lefteri and Hislop have many similar points in their novels. These similarities are compared in the next chapter. However, there are many other different issues in both novels. These differences are due to divergence factors such as the period that each author illustrates, the dissimilar societies they represent and their connection to the cultures of Syria and Greece.

3. CHAPTER THREE

A COMPARISON OF *THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO* AND *THOSE WHO ARE LOVED*

3.1. SIMILARITIES OF TOPICS AND TECHNIQUES

3.1.1. The Flashback Technique

Writing historical fiction novels requires many conditions in order to start this complicated process, it demands the author to do wide research about the targeted story and seek as much accuracy and authenticity as possible (Noakes par.9). Additionally, this type of novel has some common writing techniques that formulate the general frame of this genre. However, there are many general styles and writing techniques such as the one-direction narration, the expository and many other styles. Author Richard Gebhardt points out six common fiction-writing techniques:

- a. Writing a new ending-consistent with the characters and the situation in the rest of the work-to a story or novel that ends with deliberate ambiguity about future developments.
- b. Describing a character and his or her actions in such a way as to suggest attitudes, feelings, or motives that the original work states directly.
- c. Rewriting an important segment of a first-person story or novel to make a different character the narrator, or to have a third-person point of view, limited so as to suppress the inner life of the original narrator and to feature the thoughts of another character.
- d. Writing original dialogue-consistent with character and situation-between two characters...
- e. Rewriting the opening pages of a work which begins with a summary narrative, so that the new version begins with a specific scene...
- f. Imitating distinctive formal features of a story or novel- sentence length or syntax, proportion of dialogue to narration, flashback structure, and so forth-while writing about 'original' material. (*Fiction Writing in Literature Classes* 151)

Lefteri and Hislop follow the last technique that Gebhardt explains above, as they start with the final status of the characters and go back to the starting point when the story takes place. Lefteri and Hislop follow this style. They both use many writing techniques and styles which play a significant role in conveying the incidents in their novels. Many similarities between the two novels can be observed, such as the style, the writing

techniques, the use of language, the way the scenes are presented and many other important points that will be mentioned in this chapter. However, there are significant differences that are worth studying and analysing.

The Beekeeper of Aleppo contains shifts from the present to the past using the flashback technique as the narrator goes back to the beginning of the latest Syrian civil war (2011) and the Syrian family's house back in Aleppo, and their life before that war. Moreover, Lefteri takes the readers backwards and forward in time on many occasions, each chapter belongs to a certain period in the plot; one belongs to the latest status they reach—which takes place in the refugees' centre in the UK—followed by another chapter which belongs to a previous stage in the Syrian family's journey before reaching the UK—in İstanbul for instance—, or even back to their hometown Aleppo before the start of the war, and so on. Likewise, *Those Who Are Loved* starts with the heroine Themis telling the story of her family during World War II and the Greek civil war in the 1940s, as she narrates the story to her grandchildren. Nevertheless, Hislop does not take the readers back and forth as often as Lefteri does in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, instead, Hislop goes back once and then continues the story in its sequential order until she completes the circle back into her birthday celebration when she had started the narration before. By doing this, Lefteri focuses on the state of mind of the characters and the effects of each stage on them, she compares their current situation to their old one. However, Hislop pays more attention to the chronological order of the historical events and the way they take place. Hislop's novel includes many significant historical turn points. Author Samantha Harvey describes this process: "It has a forensic quality, a power of retrospective illumination, of hindsight supplied by the reader who now knows more than the characters to whom the events are happening" (par. 8). This point that Harvey mentions points out that the focus in historical fiction is on the experience itself. Readers already know the results, however, their interest is now shifted to the way the incidents took place.

Traditional history books go in one direction of time. The shifts from the present to the past and this freedom of going forward or backwards in time are not found in historical accounts. On the contrary, this technique in historical fiction provides readers with a unique experience that allows them to trace the motives, the reasons, the consequences and most importantly shifts the focus of the readers from the incidents that followed or perceived a certain historical event to the reasons that lead to them, and/or the way these

events developed. In historical accounts, readers are exposed to events that take place chronologically which repositions the readers' interest in events, dates, and results without providing the link or the meaning of this link:

Let's say I know in chapter 3 that somebody dies. When, in chapters 4 and 5, I come to witness their illness and fight for survival, my *And then?* question is no longer "Will she die?" but "How did she come to die?" The emphasis shifts from *what* to *how/why*. Or, since *what happens* is always, irresistibly a question on the reader's lips, it's perhaps better to say that the motivation for the question shifts—what now propels it is the *how* and *why*. The curiosity is relieved of its task of finding out *what* the outcome is, and can expend itself instead on *how* and *why* it came about. (Harvey par. 7)

Just as Harvey explains in this quotation, in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, readers already know that the couple Nuri and Afra lose their son at the very beginning of the novel, but the readers are eager to know *how* and *why*. Additionally, Afra is blind, and her husband is having illogical conversations with a boy whose story is untold. Nevertheless, in chapter ten of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, the reason beyond Afra's blindness is revealed: "he says, 'can you explain to me how you became blind?' 'It was a bomb,' she says" (Lefteri 244). Likewise, the boy, Muhammed, is an imaginary character created by the mind of Nuri; a father who rejects believing the death of his son: "'The boy who came with us from Istanbul to Greece,' I say, 'Mohammed. The boy who fell off the boat!' She ignores what I am saying, just gives me that look. She has already answered these questions. 'Why didn't you tell me before?' I say. 'Because I thought you needed him,' she says" (Lefteri 336). The delayed reveal of these significant issues in the novel illustrates the unexpected effects of the incidents on the characters.

Similarly, the readers of *Those Who Are Loved* know from the very beginning that Themis will survive any possible hardships since she is the one narrating the whole story. However, the readers of the novels want to know how the story comes about. In other words, this ambiguity helps in obtaining a clearer comprehension: "The reverse narrative reclaims some clarity. It puts emphasis on tracing back what has seemed untraceable" (Harvey par. 8). This technique sheds light on the experience and the way it happens. In history books, results and facts are provided.

3.1.2. Nostalgia and Letters

Both Lefteri and Hislop take the readers deep into the characters' state of mind. The existence of nostalgic feelings and memories is seen in both novels. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Nuri remembers his dear cousin Mustafa and their beekeeping project as he

misses his old peaceful life: “I think of the field in Aleppo before the fire, when the bees hovered above the land like clouds, humming their song. I can see Mustafa taking a comb out of a hive, inspecting it closely, dipping a finger into the honey, tasting it” (Lefteri 110). Nostalgic scenes are seen on many occasions throughout the novel, another example is when Nuri remembers the peaceful days when his lost son was born: “I remembered Sami when he was a baby, the way he used to fall asleep with Afra’s nipple in his mouth, his little hand still clutching the material of her scarf. It’s amazing, the way we love people from the day we are born, the way we hold on, as if we are holding on to life itself” (Lefteri 138). Nuri also remembers his mother and Aleppo: “I remembered a tale my own mother used to tell me when I was a little boy in the room with the blue tiles. I remembered her with her head in the book, a red fan flickering in her right hand; eating kol w Shkor, her beloved Aleppo sweet” (Lefteri 138). All these scenes offer a comparison between how the characters’ lives were and how are they now. These dialogues reveal information that does not exist in typical historical accounts.

Likewise, similar feelings are presented in *Those Who Are Loved*, Themis remembers her lost friend Fotini and longs for their conversations when they were young students at school: “She remembered how she and Fotini would mime words at EON meetings if they did not believe in them, and she did a similar thing now” (Hislop 197). Hislop provides other examples that show the state of mind of the characters as they remember their lives when life was peaceful: “Themis would always remember that her grandmother had made spinach rice that day and Thanasis was bent over his plate as usual, shovelling food hungrily into his mouth” (Hislop 320). These nostalgic scenes represent the state of mind of the characters, and they compare the current new situation to that old status.

However, there are not any historical accounts that talk about the nostalgic feelings of displaced people. The author and journalist Erik Larson explains the absence of nostalgia in history since it is, by nature, personal and exists only in the memories of people: “it becomes increasingly clear that nostalgia has nothing in common with historical thinking, with the study of history, or with a clear understanding of the purposes of history. History, after all, will never teach the one thing that nostalgia inevitably teaches” (Larson 469). The absence of nostalgic images prevents readers from imagining

how was the situation before this particular event. This is even deepened when the readers do not have enough information about other cultures during different eras in history.

Both novels dive into the daily troubles that refugees and ordinary people suffer from during civil wars. Lefteri and Hislop describe in detail some of the problems that refugees and asylum seekers face, these matters that are not mentioned on the news nor in history books. Overall, nostalgia and other similar feelings have always had their vital places in literature from the very beginning of literature (Larsen 463).

Additionally, Lefteri and Hislop use the epistolary writing technique, they include many letters exchanged between the characters throughout the novels. These letters allow the characters to narrate incidents and their current situation, express their feelings and hopes, and share their expectations and plans. Mustafa writes an email to his cousin Nuri to tell him about the latest updates on his journey to the UK expressing his fears, wishes, and concerns:

Dear Nuri,

I spent one day in Austria in a military compound near the German border where they scanned us and took our fingerprints and then we were deported to a German youth hostel in the mountains. The winter here is very cold – we are surrounded by snow in an old house so high up that we are near the clouds. It reminds me of the Anti-Lebanon mountains and of my father and grandfather, of the days I spent with them at the apiaries, learning about the bees. But those mountains were full of sunlight and they looked down on the sea. These mountains are white and silent, and I do not know where they end and where they begin. I would like to make it to France. One of the guards has kindly offered to send an email from his phone and he is typing this for me. I have also sent an email to my wife, who is waiting for me still, and praying. I pray for her and I pray for you and Afra too. I haven't heard from you but I will not imagine anything.

Your dear friend, Mustafa. (Lefteri 99)

In this letter, Lefteri presents atypical refugees' stories that present totally new ideas about their crisis to British society. The news usually presents refugees as people who are trying to enter the country illegally, and it mentions their numbers and includes much statistical information about them. However, their hopes, circumstances and plans are vague or missing.

Likewise, many letters in *Those Who Are Loved* include information about the conditions the characters live during a certain time. This technique of using letters exchanged between the characters, which both Lefteri and Hislop use in their novels, helps the readers recap the situation and rearrange the ideas and emotions. The readers

understand the stage the characters reach in the novel through these letters. Theorist and author Irene Tucker explains some of the functions of epistolary writing: “But we ought to keep in mind that, in an epistolary novel as opposed to an actual letter, the author and reader of any given letter are not only the people whose names are affixed to the letter's text, but the novel's author and readers as well” (*Epistolary Novel and the Paradox of Property* 427). Moreover, Hislop explains the meaning of each paragraph included in the letters by illustrating the reactions of those who are reading the letter. For instance, Themis receives a letter from her son, Angelos, who writes about his arrival in the US and his new life. Anna, Themis’s other daughter, reads the letter to the family:

Dear everyone,

Everything is going well. I started my internship last month and am now living in the centre of Chicago. It is a very exciting city – you can see it for yourselves on the photo. I work in one of those very tall buildings, on the eighteenth floor, to be exact, and have marked my window with a cross!

I am enjoying my job, working as a junior accountant in one of the big firms. They have promised to promote me when I pass the next set of professional exams and they are already paying me well (much more than I would earn in Greece). I have even bought a car! It's white and fits at least four people on the back seat and has huge wheels. Everyone here has one and I go on trips at weekends with . . . my new girlfriend! She is called Corabel and she works as a secretary in the company.

Love, Angelos. (Hislop 403)

In historical fiction, these letters are usually used to express feelings, mark a turning point or explain the situation. However, letters are also found in some historical accounts and books, but these letters are often formal and carry instructions or orders. Additionally, they rarely contain any private aspects. On the contrary, the authentic letters which contain the daily lives of soldiers, citizens, and ordinary people are not shown in the historical books and they are only mentioned since they are insignificant from the perspective of history which focuses on famous leaders and decision-makers (Carabott and Sfikas 190).

These letters and exchanges that Lefteri and Hislop portray in their novels provide information about the life and the circumstances of the Syrian refugees during the period of the civil war of 2011, and the Greek fighters, prisoners and people during the 1940s. These illustrations can be referred to as historical texts that can tell about the circumstances of people during certain eras under the umbrella of the historical settings. Thus, the “historicity of texts” is appearing not only through these letters but also

throughout the whole narrations of Lefteri's and Hislop's novels. These letters include many significant historical facts and information, and thus, readers can learn about history from a literary text such as those of Lefteri and Hislop.

3.1.3. Names and Words from their Language

One of the other important methods that Lefteri and Hislop follow in their novels, is the use of words from the mother tongue of the characters. This enriches the novels with their "local color" touches that are totally unique. Lefteri includes many Syrian Arabic words in the novel, the same is done by Hislop as she uses words from Greek. This usage of the original language gives the texts a touch of authenticity, localizes and personalizes the readers' experience. Harold Veesser explains the importance of this:

In order to have local effects they must first have local expressions ... the local realm of somehow indigenous cultural semiosis is the crux of the manner, since external factors could only come into play on the basis of that already created recipe; and it is only from such a realm that valid anthropological knowledge could be derived and applied to the interpretation of culture at large. (*The New Historicism* 259)

Almost all people, for instance, eat bread on daily basis, however, each country or region has its own kind of bread. Lefteri uses the word "Khubz" which refers to the Syrian type of bread. This provides the readers with a taste of the local experience, unlike historical accounts that tend to use general internationally recognised words such as "bread." Lefteri writes: "I saw that she'd made bread again. 'You made khubz?' I said. 'I made it for Sami,' she said" (Lefteri 39). These usages of words motivate the readers to search and learn about other cultures.

A similar example can be seen in Hislop's novel as she refers to the special Greek type of bread "Tsouréki" as she portrays: "She walked to a bakery she had never been to before and bought a loaf for their dinner. There were only two days to go before Good Friday and they were also selling tsouréki, the sweet Easter bread" (381). Moreover, many examples of Syrian and Greek exclusive dishes and expressions are found in Lefteri and Hislop's novels. On the other hand, this personal and local touch is not found in history, for example, the word "bread" is mentioned thirty times in the history textbook of Mazower *Inside Hitler's Greece*, however, a word similar to "tsourekki" cannot be found. This is due to the historical books' discourse which is general and impersonal.

Names of neighbourhoods, streets, and other places are found in both, historical accounts and historical fiction novels. However, the way that history deals with these names is very different from the way that historical fiction novels do. Lefteri takes the readers on a journey on the streets of Aleppo locating every single landmark and building, just like a tour guide that shows the way and introduces the places. Lefteri illustrates some parts of Aleppo as she writes:

There, to my left, was the Queiq River; to my right a grey street with a narenj tree; ahead the famous Baron Hotel; over there was the Umayyad Mosque of Aleppo in the AlJalloum district of the ancient city, with the sun setting, painting the domes orange; over that way were the walls of the citadel, and here were crumbling buildings; and there was a broken archway in the al-Madina Souq, and over there a street in the western neighbourhood, the Baby al-Faraj Clock Tower, the abandoned terraces and balconies, the minarets. (208)

The same places are mentioned in some news agencies that pass the name of the place without providing the readers or the listeners with any details about the location or its qualities, for instance, the *Global Times* website published this piece of news on 27.04.2014 which indicates: “At least 15 shells slammed into Bab al-Faraj, Baroun Street, and the vicinity of the court house in Aleppo, following the rebels' blast that ripped through the industrial chamber and the adjacent electricity station in Saba Bahrat area of Aleppo, the report said” (Nizkor “24 killed in blasts by rebels in Syria's Aleppo”). The places here are just names to those who have never visited Aleppo and do not know their significance. Readers of this piece of news might not know the importance of this area “Bab Al-Faraj” as one of the most ancient districts in Aleppo where one of the world’s oldest tower clocks rises and which was built during the Ottoman role (Burns 262). Lefteri introduces the readers to its importance implicitly.

The Omonia square, which is a historical landmark in Athens, is mentioned many times in history books and in Hislop’s novel due to its symbolic representation and importance. History mentions “Omonia” as a place where an important event takes place in a specific time. The reader is an outsider who watches the scene: “Finally, on the 28th, some 3, 500 people gathered in Omonia Square with placards attacking the Nazi New Order” (Mazower 116). Whereas the same square is represented from the inside, as Hislop offers a trip with the characters from one street to another until they, the character and the reader, reach the square and live the event from there. Hislop leads the reader to the square as she describes the way that Panos and his sister Themis set off: “Linking arms, they set

off down Patisson Avenue towards Omonia Square. Their pace was slow, with Panos leaning heavily on his stick, and by the time they reached the city centre, they found themselves at the tail end of a long procession” (155). In other words, the readers of historical texts are visitors but the readers of historical fiction are among the inhabitants.

Additionally, providing names of landmarks and significant places in the novels can be considered a historical recording of these places and their symbolism. Lefteri’s and Hislop’s representations of these places within the cultural contexts of the time of the historical incidents can be referred to, and thus, the “historicity” of the novels is once again inseparable from the texts. Likewise, the usage of words and cultural expressions used by the Syrian or the Greek peoples in the novel reflects their historical culture during those eras.

Portraying significant places in Syria and Greece, and the technique of using words and expressions from the Syrian and the Greek cultures are very important points because Lefteri’s and Hislop’s audience is mainly the British society since they are British authors themselves, and each culture tends automatically to adapt its own standards and normalities. Gallagher and Greenblatt stress the fact of the importance of distinguishing the differences between the portrayed culture and its historical and cultural settings, and those of the audience:

In the analysis of the larger cultural field, canonical works of art are brought into relation not only with works judged as minor, but also with texts that are not by anyone's standard literary. The conjunction can produce almost surrealist wonder at the revelation of an unanticipated aesthetic dimension in objects without pretensions to the aesthetic. It can suggest hidden links between high cultural texts, apparently detached from any direct engagement with their immediate surroundings, and texts very much in and of their world, such as documents of social control or political subversion. (*Practicing New Historicism* 10)

Lefteri and Hislop set the historical and geographical settings in their novels and they introduce their readers to the standards of Syria’s and Greece’s cultures and societies during different eras. Lefteri describes the house of the hero and the heroine, and she introduces their lives before and during the main event of the Syrian civil war, and she represents many social standards throughout the novel. Similarly, Hislop—as mentioned before— sets the cultural and the zeitgeist of Greece in the 1940s. Thus, Lefteri’s and Hislop’s illustration of the cultural, historical and political settings of totally different cultures and times, those of Syrian and Greece, is crucial. The standards and the culture of contemporary British society are completely different, and therefore, settling the

historical and cultural settings and the zeitgeist are vital. Additionally, since the novels are written in an internationally widespread language—English—, the audiences and their own cultural and conceptual understandings vary. However, Lefteri’s and Hislop’s novels carried out the zeitgeist successfully and efficiently.

3.1.4. Motherhood and the Loss of Dear People

Lefteri and Hislop elucidate the feelings of mothers and their struggle during the hard times of wars and displacement. One of the main characters in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is Afra, a mother who loses her eyesight in grief after the loss of her son. Lefteri depicts the stories of many other mothers in the novel such as the African woman whose child is disseised from her, Lefteri presents many sad scenes when these women miss their children:

She was a young black woman with cornrows gathered into a high ponytail. As I walked towards her I noticed that her breasts were leaking milk into her white top. She caught my eye and self-consciously folded her arms across her chest.

‘Is because they took her,’ she said in English.

‘They took who?’

She didn’t answer at first. Her eyes darted around.

‘I no live here. I come here at night sometimes to be safe.’ I sat down on the ground beside her. She turned to me and showed me her arm. There were dozens of tiny round wounds. (205)

Lefteri’s narration and description shift the readers’ attention to details that are not usually mentioned in historical accounts. News and historical accounts focus on the incident and do not reveal any previous experiences or sufferings as long as they do not matter for the intended piece of information. Lefteri makes the readers think and remember that this woman had already suffered from other previous hardships, and it is not only this moment—when she became a refugee—that matters.

Likewise, Hislop depicts the scenes of Greek women struggling to feed their children in the concentration camps and detention centres. Themis suffers trying to breastfeed her son, Angelos, but she fails until her friend Aliko achieves success since she is also a mother whose child is taken away from her:

There was a moment of strained silence that was soon broken by the baby’s crying. Themis tried to put him to her breast but he moved his head to one side and continued to scream. Instinctively she held him out to Aliko, who lifted her shirt to let him suckle. The effect was instant. Suddenly the baby was calm, satisfied by the milk that flowed from the other woman’s breast. The women smiled at each other.

‘Thank you,’ whispered Themis.

‘I could feel his desperation.’

‘I’m sure you will be able to feed him again soon. But at least I can help for now. The others I’ve fed were soon back at their mother’s breast.’ Aliki closed her eyes.

Themis knew what might be going through her mind.

‘Perhaps someone else is feeding my son now. Who knows?’

The days went by and the women stayed close to each other, Themis with the now fast-growing baby strapped to her and Aliki by her side, always ready to suckle him when he was hungry. (274, 275)

Historical accounts mention such issues—like infants in need of nutrition—but do not provide details of the horrible sufferings that mothers endure. These historical accounts do not include personal or customized experiences, but they rather contain general public stories. Additionally, Hislop portrays the hunger, illness, and oppression the women suffered in the prison camp on Makronisos island in Greece where communist women used to be detained:

Themis watched Aliki breastfeeding her baby and knew he would not have survived without her. Her reliance on her friend became even greater when she was paralysed by stomach pains. Suspected of typhus, Themis was isolated and, during the many days of fever, she sometimes hallucinated that she was once again in solitary confinement on Makronisos, living in a twilight between life and death, senses unstimulated by sound or light. When she recovered, Angelos was pink-cheeked, giving his first smiles and with a tooth in bud. (281)

However, some of the history books do mention the sufferings of women in the detention camps but some other books tend to transmit these experiences as mere facts with little or no details: “This now started to ‘clean up’ Patras of communists and threw suspects and their families into a detention camp. It also helped the SS to guard Jewish deportees on their way to Athens and Auschwitz” (Mazower 325). Both novels contain scenes that talk about the feelings and the special sufferings that mothers undergo in civil wars. These representations are missing in historical accounts or not represented enough.

Additionally, historical accounts are full of information related to the numbers of dead people and similar statistics, nevertheless, historical fiction explains the significance of the death of these individuals; they are mothers, fathers, friends, siblings, sons, daughters, or dear people. Lefteri takes the readers into the harsh and devastating experience of Nuri and Afra who lose their son. In addition, Mustafa and Dahab are also deprived of their son Firas as he passes away too. Likewise, Themis, the heroine in Hislop’s novel suffers the loss of her friends, brothers, parents, and son. Each cataclysm

has its disturbing effects and consequences. These stories awaken the readers to the fact that the numbers, they read or hear about in the news or in a historical book, are not mere numbers and statistics but are indescribable afflictions.

Overall, Lefteri's and Hislop's novels include stories of mothers. Lefteri depicts the character of Afra —the blind mother— whose grief for her son is one of the main topics in the novel. Hislop's main character and heroine is Themis —a mother of five— who struggles to feed and support her children. Lefteri and Hislop —as historical fiction writers— represent the lives of ordinary people during significant historical periods. This presentation reveals other qualities of historical fiction that are mentioned in the next paragraphs.

3.1.5. The Life of Ordinary People, History of the Famous Vs Historical Fiction of the Unfamous

Since 2011 news channels, websites, and many other media means share the news of the Syrian civil war, statistics, numbers, and events. Additionally, a society like the British one is geographically and culturally far from the Syrian one. The British people specifically and the other remote societies hear and read about the latest events in Syria only from the news agencies and similar channels.

However, Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* takes the readers of different cultures into the life of two Syrian refugees. Lefteri provides the readers with a unique experience that enables and activates the sense of understanding, Lefteri exposes the motives of the refugees, the hardships they face, and the options they have and displays the story from a humanitarian perspective. A story of a couple who are not just a number of people as shown in historical texts or on the news. A piece of news shows a picture and a part of a story; however, a historical fiction novel tells the whole story.

In history, only famous people are mentioned, and the circle of attention belongs only to them. Most characters are usually made-up ones. Historical accounts may include a touching story, a piece of sad or happy news, or a specific detail about a certain subject. However, history keeps us separated from the events especially when reading about another era, unlike the literary texts that unite the reader with the characters and the events. This effect changes the passive interpretation of events into an active operation that indulges the reader. Literary texts seem to succeed in the process of delivering

emotions. Stephen Ahern explains: “In representations of embodied agents literary texts have long strived to capture human experience in its multivalent forms. Recent theorizations of affect have made us more attuned to the passing modulations of bodies affected by and affecting the others they engage with and the environments they inhabit” (Ahern 1). Lefteri and Hislop provide a palpable experience to their readers, as they set their plots in historical and cultural settings. Readers of Lefteri’s and Hislop’s novels receive information about a certain event, how was life before that event, what caused this to happen, what is expected to happen later and what all these factors mean. Ahern continues his explanation of the Affect Theory: “Also requiring attention are occasions when affect breaks free of the text or script to circulate through readers or audience members in ways that are hard to predict yet palpable nonetheless” (*Affect Theory And Literary Critical Practice* 1). These effects on readers are all considered advantages of reading historical fiction, a reading that provides the whole experience. However, “Affect Theory” offers other perspectives but they are not included in this study since they do not contribute to the purpose of this thesis.

The hero and the heroine of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* are ordinary people, Nuri and Afra. Historical fiction does not necessarily portray the stories of famous effective people, it rather tells the story of ordinary human beings and their life struggles. This attracts the reader to read more and understand more about a certain event due to the union that literary texts create, unlike history which deactivates human feelings. History, for instance, delivers the news of the death of thousands of people in a certain era back in history as a fact emotionlessly. On the other hand, historical fiction sets the historical context for the readers and introduces them to the main characters. Therefore, readers feel closer when reading about people who are of similar status as him/her, Mary Tod explains: “Most of us are ordinary people, living ordinary lives. So, when we read about others like us, who are then presented with extraordinary challenges or opportunities, we love reading about them risking all and winning, though with heartbreak along the way. We are them, and they us, vicariously” (Tod par. 10). People tend to sympathize with characters that are in similar situations and conditions, unlike the famous idealistic figures that seem to be living in a different world.

History focuses on important famous people, while historical fiction cares the most about ordinary people who are not famous. While reading the history of Greece during

the 1940s, from Mazower's book, for instance, the names of leaders and famous people are repeated numerously. Hitler's name is found more than 90 times in the book, even the title of the book contains his name "*In Hitler's Greece.*" However, in Hislop's novel, the heroes and heroines are ordinary Greek people. The names of famous people are rarely mentioned and only when necessary. Historical fiction takes the readers inside the events of ordinary people in their daily routine life. Readers can identify with those ordinary people and thus have a more complete understanding of what life was during specific times:

We all love to get glimpses into the lifestyles of the rich and famous, both of today and of years gone by, but most of us wouldn't consider kings and queens and celebrities to be people we easily identify with. But kings and queens and the countries they ruled couldn't function without the masses: the people who built their castles and roads, farmed their food, made their clothing, cleaned their houses, served in their armies, and turned their cities and ports into thriving centers of commerce and trade. Reading fiction about the regular, everyday people who lived through some of history's triumphs and tragedies allows us to better imagine what our own lives might have been like. (Tod par. 5)

Unlike historical accounts, in Hislop's novel, the main characters are all ordinary people, Themis is the heroine, and she is presented as a typical middle-class Greek girl. Themis takes the readers in flashbacks to her childhood and keeps surfing until she goes back to herself as a grandmother telling the story of her family and Greece during the 1940s. Panos is not a leader but is just one of the rebels. Thanasis is an officer in the governmental forces. Margarita is a young Greek lady that moves to Germany seeking love and stability. All the novel's characters are ordinary Greek people:

Real and famous historical figures make an appearance, but they are marginal in comparison with the middling sort of characters, all fictional, who, in finding a way through extremes, offer an individual perspective on the major events of public history. History is perceived to be both tragedy and progress, as the clash of declining and ascending societies and values exposes the historical determinants of all human actions. (Wilkins 19)

It is concluded from the previous quotation that famous people have their presence in historical texts. Whereas historical fiction sheds the light on ordinary people and displays their reactions to historical events.

Nevertheless, some historians and critics find the existence of real famous characters alongside fictional ordinary characters could create some problems, that is,

since these real characters have never interacted with these fictional characters, and therefore some as Joanne Brown finds it misleading: “Another problem associated with defining “historical fiction” is related to the common practice in which writers present actual historical figures alongside fictitious characters” (par. 3). However, none of the novels analysed in this thesis has fictional characters that directly interact with a real famous figure. Famous characters such as Hitler, are mentioned as part of the historical settings and are not part of any action throughout both novels.

3.2. DIFFERENCES

3.2.1. Lefteri’s Representation of a Foreign Country; Syria, Versus Hislop’s Representation of Her Ancestors’ Land; Greece

It is worth mentioning that both novels were published in 2019. However, one of the most significant differences between *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Those Who Are Loved* is that Lefteri writes about contemporary incidents —the latest ongoing Syrian civil war of 2011— that are still unfinished. Though Lefteri does not talk about the events of the civil war directly, she portrays the life of a Syrian couple whose life is totally affected and dramatically changed because of that war. Dissimilarly, Hislop talks about the main incidents and the political changes in that era and how they affected the life of a Greek family during the 1940s in Greece. This difference might have advantages and disadvantages for both authors. Hislop must have searched and investigated a lot to draw the settings of Greece, almost eighty years ago during the 1940s. Hislop narrates the stories of her ancestors and forefathers back in 1940s Greece. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Hislop has visited the Greek islands and cities, and these islands inspired her and triggered the notion of the novel. Moreover, Hislop herself is originally from Greece. Joanne Brown accounts for the prevalence of this pattern as she writes:

Writers commonly invest enormous time and energy sifting through archives, reading books about the period, and visiting the sites where the action of the novel occurs. This research goes far beyond learning about particular events. A careful historical novelist conveys a sense of the period through minuscule details about such matters as clothing, food, transportation, and social customs. (par. 6)

Unlike Hislop, Lefteri is able to investigate the events more easily since she interviewed Syrian refugees herself while she was working in Greece. Additionally, the advance of new technologies and the media must have helped her as well. However,

Lefteri has never been to Aleppo or Syria, and therefore, writing about the Syrian cities and describing the atmosphere could be a debatable issue since she depended on the narration and the descriptions of one of the refugees, Lefteri explains this in her interview with Sorcha Pollak for *The Irish Times*:

I knew Nuri and Afra had to go through Syria to get to Turkey, but I couldn't go to Syria, it would have been suicide. So we created this alternative. I was seeing Ibrahim every week and it was a gentle process which built the foundations in my mind. We'd sit there with a map and go through places. It's not a big part of the story, but it's an important part, so I had to get it as right as I possibly could. (par. 6)

Nevertheless, both novels succeed in delivering human experiences using fictional characters. They both do well in transferring the feelings and in getting the readers involved. Rebecca Steinitz, a British writer, agrees that historical fiction succeeds in engaging readers:

Contemporary historical fiction occupies virtually every point on the history–fiction spectrum: fictional stories of real-life people; narratives of real-life events experienced by fictional characters; fiction that rewrites novels of the past; and wholly fictional stories that inhabit an otherwise real past. Looking to the entire span of recorded and not-yet-recorded history (think *Cloud Atlas*), today the genre sets itself an equally broad set of tasks: to entertain and edify, redeem and reveal, plunge us into otherness and remind us of ourselves. (par. 1)

During Lefteri's volunteer work in the refugees camps in Greece, she had the chance to meet the Syrian families and listen to their stories directly. Lefteri as a former psychotherapist was able to understand the sufferings and hardships that those people went through. Therefore, she was successful in delivering these emotions and thoughts through her work. Journalist Sorcha Pollack writes in the introduction of her full interview with Christy Lefteri:

In the summer of 2016, writer Christy Lefteri travelled to Athens where she spent two months volunteering at a centre for women and children displaced by war. Each day she served tea and biscuits to more than 100 people. At the end of the afternoon, she watched as fathers and sons, who had waited all day for their loved ones, arrived to pick up their wives and mothers, and return to their makeshift homes dotted around the Greek capital. (par. 1)

Nevertheless, Lefteri cannot fully and only depend on the stories she heard while interviewing some refugees in the camps in Greece. Therefore, she must invent some dialogues and settings based on her own knowledge and ideas:

In many cases, we might have chronicles or other documentation available from which authors can draw inferences and build a story. If we are very, very lucky, we might have a person's own journals or even a recorded interview, depending on the timeframe involved. But even these more personal types of evidence don't allow us to hear a

person's innermost thoughts, or witness a private conversation. Authors have to invent dialogue based on what they have learned about a person from the evidence that is available to them. In short, sometimes they have to they have to guess how an historical figure might act. (McQuinn par. 2)

However, Lefteri did not have the chance to visit Syria's Aleppo, and this resulted in some minor mistakes in the geographical settings of the novel. Lefteri tries to set the views in Aleppo in many scenes, she sometimes succeeds but she sometimes does not. In one of the nostalgic scenes, Nuri remembers his city as he says: "That was our paradise, at the edge of the desert and the edge of the city" (110). The mention of "the desert" is repeated many times as an insisting backdrop. Hislop starts the description of the couple's house: "It was pleasant to sit on the veranda in the spring; we could smell the soil from the desert and see the red sun setting over the land" (9). However, any visitor to Aleppo will be surprised to read this sentence as there is not a dessert in Aleppo. Though the eastern part of Aleppo might be a little dry and dusty in the ruler areas, but it cannot be described as a "desert" at all. This is due to Lefteri's lack of information about the geography of Syria. Moreover, the climate in Aleppo is hot in the summer but a reader of this sentence would imagine a boiling climate as Hislop writes: "When it was cooler we would take a walk and watch the falcons flying across the sky to the desert" (9). Readers who do not know Aleppo or have never been there would be misinformed. Anyone who has read the novel and has also lived in Aleppo would find it strange to read this description.³ Kristen McQuinn writes in this regard:

Like it or not, authors have at least some modicum of power and authority and can influence what the public thinks. Many of their readers are going to take their words at face value and not look beyond that, nor do any research of their own to verify what they just read. The term revisionist history springs to mind. It behoves authors to want to spread accuracy as well as tell a good story. (par. 4)

Additionally, Lefteri mentions the Queiq river in Aleppo many times. Lefteri writes: "She was wearing a yellow dress, with a silk hijab. And her eyes, not the blue of the sea, or the blue of the sky, but the inky blue of the Queiq River, with swirls of brown and green" (21). However, the Queiq river in Aleppo is dry during most of the seasons of the year, and it is shallow even in winters, this river is known in Aleppo for being dirty and smelly, and its colour is not blue. Of course, Lefteri did not intend to mislead the readers as she tried her best to deliver the message she got from the Syrian families. Additionally, Lefteri exaggerates the hot weather again and talks about rivers that dry,

³ The author of this thesis was born in Aleppo 1986 and has lived there until 2015 when he had to leave his country.

however, there are not any rivers in Aleppo other than the Queiq which is already dry most of the year because of the weak stream and flow coming from Gaziantep of Turkey (Burns 57). Lefteri writes: “But, as the years passed, the desert was slowly growing, the climate becoming harsh, rivers drying up, farmers struggling; only the bees were drought-resistant” (12). All of these images suggest a dessert-like atmosphere and this is not very precise.

Moreover, Lefteri uses the word “desert” twenty-nine times in the novel to describe Aleppo or to metaphorically talk about other issues, this indicates her own imagination of Syria, as an Arab hot country. However, this misconception or stereotypical image might be due to her assumptions about Syria. This does not mean that historical fiction is misleading, but it is important to investigate the information and the facts in any historical or literary text. Pollak explains this in her interview with Lefteri: “Lefteri also drew on her knowledge of her parents’ native Cyprus, which lies a couple of hundred kilometres to the west of Syria. ‘The climate in Syria and Cyprus isn’t that different; the plants, the flowers and the smells. I used that as a basis’” (par. 7). Gallagher and Greenblatt in their *Practicing New Historicism* stress the fact of the importance of distinguishing the differences between the portrayed culture and its historical and cultural settings, and those of the authors: “since all cultures that are not one’s own are always located beyond one’s familiar horizon” (22). That is why New Historicists stress the importance of knowing the cultural background of the authors and the readers alike in order to create meaning. Each person has different ideas and concepts about the same issues and objects. A river for a European reader, for instance, might be blue, but the same concept of a “river” might be similar to a swamp for readers from other cultures and/or environments.

Lefteri uses an expression that is not natural or familiar to say in Arabic in the dialogue between Mustafa and his son Firas: “‘When will I get it back?’ Firas would say. ‘When it snows in the desert’” (15). An Arab speaker would instead say something like: “When the sun rises from the west” or “It is the hope of Satan entering Paradise” and would definitely not say “When it snows in the desert” as Lefteri writes in the novel. The knowledge of these expressions can be acquired only by Arabic native speakers or by people who have lived in an Arab country. It is suggested that writers of historical fiction must submit to many rules and must be very careful, McQuinn writes in this favour: “Accuracy can take a heavy turn as well, depending on the topic, time period, or location

involved. It's especially important that authors take care that people who are already minorities, underrepresented, or oppressed in some way are not made more so through inaccurate writing" (par. 6). Therefore, New Historicism stresses the importance of knowing who the author is and who the addressees are because the writers sometimes tend to make their own interventions and edition to complete the picture as they need, the French historian François Hartog writes in this regard:

However, while this work of discovery and analysis, which at best should produce a more or less complete inventory of static (rhetorical) figures, may be indispensable, more remains to be done. These figures are activated by the narrator, who makes his own interventions in a number of ways, from inside his narrative: any reading of the text must therefore attend to all the indicators as to who is speaking, for it is they that organize the rhetorical figures for the addressee and they, ultimately, that endow them with a definite persuasive power. (Hartog and Lloyd 210)

Lefteri's misrepresentations of some of the places in Aleppo are not intended but they are her own imaginations and ideas about an alien society to her. In other words, she filled the empty blanks from her own atmosphere and imaginative faculty by inserting her own knowledge and ideas. A river is blue to her, however, Queiq is not. She is a British novelist that belongs to a certain culture, and who has met Syrians in Greece, but has never lived among Syrians in Syria whose culture is quite different:

On the basis of the fundamental relationship established between two sets by the significant difference between them, a rhetoric of otherness may be developed, to be used by narratives that tell, primarily, of "others," travelers' tales in the widest sense of the expression. A narrator who belongs to group a tells the people of a about b; there is one world in which one recounts, another that is recounted. How can the world being recounted be introduced in convincing fashion into the world where it is recounted? That is the problem facing the narrator: a problem of translation. (Hartog 212)

These points mentioned might mislead those who do not know Syria and its culture, geography, and history, and might cause anger or despondency among Syrians or those who know Syria, author Christopher Bartel argues: "Historical inaccuracies in works of fiction can be a source of disappointment for some and a cause for outrage in others. One might feel that history is being treated unjustly and ought not to be so revised for the sake of entertainment" (213). The point that Bartel argues about is one of the reasons that New Historicists think that it is important to know the cultural background of the author of a certain piece of literature and his/her connection to the topic and its historical and geographical settings.

In *Those Who Are Loved*, Hislop masters the Greek language and has visited Greece and its islands that she narrates about in her novel. Moreover, her parents are Greek

Cypriots, and she officially became an honorary Greek citizen in 2021. Therefore, she is considered a native Greek. Journalist Emma Harris writes in her interview which was published on Hislop's official website: "Victoria, who speaks fluent Greek after having lessons for several years, says foreign climes prove an irresistible draw – and they are where she gets her inspiration" (par. 9). In the same interview, Hislop talks about her fluency in Greek which has definitely contributed to her success in writing *Those Who Are Loved*:

I feel very comfortable being a foreigner. I don't find languages that difficult, I speak Greek, French and bits of Spanish and German. I'm starting to write a few things in Greek, one day I may write a novel in Greek and have it translated into English! The first year of learning Greek I spent learning the different alphabet and the grammar is quite complex – each noun has three cases, masculine, feminine or neutral. And sometimes it can quite illogical. But I can now speak pretty fluent Greek. It's always been travelling which has given me inspiration. But we should always be prepared for surprises. (par.7)

Lefteri has one single novel about Syria and does not speak Arabic, whereas Hislop has written many novels about Greece, this is published on Hislop's official website:

On her part, Hislop gave the Prime Minister a copy of her latest book titled "Those who are loved". She also said that she had been feeling Greek for a long time. "I love Greece with its problems and its difficulties, not only for its beauty. I love everything," she added. Hislop visits Greece very often and has a second home on the island of Crete. "The Island", one of her many best-selling novels is set on Spinalonga, an island off the coast of Crete that was Greece's leper colony for much of the 20th century. (par. 5)

Likewise, Hislop succeeds in delivering proverbs and expressions from the Greek language, she even writes sentences that were written during the demonstrations during the civil war, she includes this powerful motto that spread at that time: "The biggest banner of all read: When the people are threatened with tyranny, they must choose either chains or guns" (156).

Overall, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, historical fiction does not claim to be a hundred per cent accurate nor to be the source of complete authenticity. However, historical fiction does succeed in transferring the atmosphere, the settings and the details that typical historical accounts do not. Moreover, historical accounts might also contain mistakes and misrepresentations. This thesis does not aim at focusing on the complicated subjects of authenticity, truth and other similar issues, but it rather strives for displaying the differences and the advantages of the experiences and the details delivered by historical fiction.

3.2.2. The Two-Edged Greek Effect

As mentioned earlier, Christy Lefteri and Victoria Hislop were both born and raised in the UK, however, both authors' parents are Cypriot immigrants. This fact has an impact on their writing in the novels, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Those Who Are Loved*. It is easily noticed that both writers can speak Greek because of the intensive use of Greek sentences and names in both novels. Gallagher and Greenblatt write about the authors' effects on their texts as they tend to insert their own experiences and culture: "In a meaningful encounter with a text that reaches us powerfully, we feel at once pulled out of our own world and plunged back with redoubled force into it. It seems arrogant to claim such an experience for ourselves as readers and not to grant something similar to the readers and the authors of the past" (*Practicing New Historicism* 17). These effects of the authors' own culture or language are normal because this is part of human nature. These insertions or effects are most probably spontaneous and they are not restricted to the authors only, but they include the readers and their cultures and languages.

Nevertheless, this affectivity of the Greek culture and languages was helpful and useful in the case of *Those Who Are Loved*, due to the fact that this novel is about Greece and narrates the stories of fictional Greek families. On the other hand, it is thought that Lefteri's use of the Greek language is seen in the novel and might be quite distracting. The incidents in Lefteri's novel are set in Syria, Turkey, Greece, and the UK. However, Lefteri does not use any Arabic sentences, since she does not speak Arabic, but she borrows some Arabic words which are necessary to convey the local and the cultural experience as much as possible.

On the other hand, the fact that Lefteri is influenced by the Greek culture is noticed many times in the novel. Lefteri gives Greek names to many African characters such as "Angeliki." Additionally, Lefteri might have chosen the name "Diamonde," which is a name that is common in Africa, that resembles the famous Greek name "Diamond". However, this insertion has disabled the authenticity and originality of the novel, an African refugee with a Greek name!

What's your name?' I said.

'Angeliki.'

'That's a Greek name.'

‘Yes. It means “Angel”.’

‘Where are you from?’

And again this question seemed to disturb her. (Lefteri 224)

Moreover, the characters speak Syrian Arabic, and therefore, Lefteri borrows some significant Arabic words. However, the characters move to Turkey and there are no Turkish words mentioned. On the character’s next trip, to Greece, many smugglers and local Greek characters speak Greek, and their sentences are included. English is the main characters’ second language, and thus their conversations in the UK are carried on in English. Arabic and English are essential in the novel as the mother tongue of the characters and their second language which they use to communicate with non-Arab characters. Though Turkish and Greek are not of much importance to the characters in the novel, Lefteri’s own intervention is seen in this dialogue set in Greece: “‘Pies to olo – all of it,’ the old woman said, in Greek and English, and the young mother seemed to understand one of them and she gulped it down now and held the cup out for more” (225). It is thought that the use of Greek sentences shifts the readers’ focus from the refugees’ cases and the original subject of the Syrian couple.

Additionally, the use of Greek sentences is used in many places without even providing a translation of them, and therefore, the readers have to guess their meaning from the context or look them up using a dictionary. Lefteri depicts the conversation between a Greek woman and another woman refugee who is struggling to breastfeed her child: “They knew each other - the old lady had probably been here many times before. ‘Den echies gala?’ the old woman said, and in response the mother pressed her breast with her palm and shook her head. ‘Ochi,’ she said” (226). Readers who do not understand Greek might not be able to get the meaning of these ‘foreign’ sentences.

Moreover, instead of focusing on the Syrian culture and atmosphere, Lefteri’s own love for Greece and admiration is noticed, she even talks about Greek landmarks which might not be quite suitable for the novel:

‘Do you know the name of this park?’ he said.

‘Yes, Pedion tou Areos ...’

‘Pedion means “square”. Areos was god of war. He loved murder and blood. Did you know this? The old lady who bring food tell me.’

‘I didn’t know.’ (230)

On the other hand, I think that Hislop's use of the Greek language is relevant. The extensive use of Greek words and expressions, food names and recipes, and Greek squares and streets has contributed positively to the novel as these insertions enriched the Greek atmosphere and experience. Reading *Those Who Are Loved* provides the readers with the feeling of a Greek citizen living and experiencing the daily life of 1940s Greece. Hislop's own admiration of Greece is obvious everywhere in the novel, and as mentioned before, she was given Greek citizenship in 2021 to thank her for her novels. Hislop writes:

At least it's a chance for fairness!' she said. 'Maybe it will be a new start for this country!' 'Let's hope so, agápi mou,' responded Kyria Koralis. 'I am sure everyone will vote sensibly.'

'What do you mean, Yiayia?'' challenged Panos.

'I hope that every man will vote for the good of the country. That's what I mean,' she said. (173)

However, Hislop's favouring her own Greek roots might have affected her representations of some incidents that are quite arguable and debatable. Hislop describes the incidents which took place in Cyprus in the 1970s as "the Turkish invasion of Cyprus", this representation could have been affected by Hislop's own perspective since she is the daughter of two Greek Cypriot immigrants:

Then, just when Themis thought that this oppressive regime was going to continue for ever, the cold-blooded Ioannidis set out to achieve his long-held ambition to unify Cyprus with Greece. In mid-July he staged a military coup on the island to depose its democratically elected president, Archbishop Makarios, whom he regarded as a communist. It was a step too far. Greece's interference gave the Turkish government an excuse to invade Cyprus, claiming it had to protect its citizens living on the island. The result was a huge loss of Greek Cypriot territory and lives. (432, 433)

Regardless of whether Hislop is right or wrong, this might lead to the fact that it is not only history that could be biased but also historical fiction because the writers of both are human beings, and their texts are subjected to them and reflect their own ideas. However, the important differences and points that historical fiction succeeds in, and history does not, is the delivery of emotions, the spirit of the era, the cultural concepts and the human experiences.

3.2.3. Politics, Civil Wars, and the Plots in the Novels

The Beekeeper of Aleppo and *Those Who Are Loved* share many themes and topics, such as civil wars, women in civil wars, refugees, and many other topics. However, there are some topics that are discussed or mentioned in one of the novels and not in the

other, political issues, for instance, are not much presented in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and the main concentration is on the humanitarian aspect and the couple's journey from Syria to their asylum in the UK. There is almost no mention of any political views or the parties and forces fighting in Syria. Lefteri seems to keep away from falling into the swamp of the complex Syrian civil war. Lefteri does not give much attention to politics and deals with the incident from the perspective of a civilian who is forced to leave his country.

Politics is one of the most complicated and argumentative topics. Writing a historical novel that includes a knotty subject—civil war—might cause a lot of disputes. Lefteri might have saved herself—on purpose—from getting involved in such a complicated situation, where superpowers fight, and many ethnics and sectarian groups combat. Lefteri, as a British author who served in the refugees' camps, might have not indulged herself in the knotty details of the Syrian conflict due to her lack of knowledge about the disputes in Syria. In both scenarios, it is thought that Lefteri shifts the attention from the disturbing and unresolving issues of politics to the humanitarian results. Lefteri calls the consciousness of whoever is reading, and she puts the readers side to side with the fictional characters experiencing the events instead of passively watching the news or reading the articles about the Syrian conflict. In other words, Lefteri does the same thing that Nuri and Afra do in the novel; they leave the conflict aside and run for their future far away from the flames of the fire.

Unlike Lefteri, Hislop dives deep into politics and discusses almost all the important events. Hislop brilliantly shows the different perspectives the Greek people had during the 1940s. This involvement has enriched the historical touch in the novel, additionally, it had a kind of educational presentation as Hislop presents the ideas of each party or group of people. Hislop narrates the story of a standard Geek family during a historically significant period. Nevertheless, Hislop represents a lot of human issues, social and family problems, love stories and historical events all bound up together under the umbrella of the historical settings. Hislop also does the same as her fictional characters—Themis and her family members—do, as they fight and struggle for their causes. Likewise, Hislop wades the domain of politics and beautifully presents the conflicts' parties and their perspectives.

Hislop writes about completed past events that took place in Greece in the 1940s. The problem or the conflict of that story is over and already resolved. This gives Hislop the freedom of writing about politics. Readers will not be prejudiced or strongly biased toward one of the parties in the novel—as in the case of the ongoing Syrian conflict—, author Joanne Brown explains this: “When you write a story that takes place in times long past, you are more free. Your readers have less prejudice and will accept your tale with open minds” (Brown par. 7). On the contrary, Lefteri is writing about a contemporary era and a conflict that has not been resolved yet. Moreover, Lefteri’s audience is already divided between supporters and opponents, therefore, they might judge every single detail as far as politics and opinions are concerned. This fact might have prevented Lefteri from entering the swamp of the ongoing Syrian dilemma as she cleaved to the humanitarian aspect of the story. Gallagher and Greenblatt write about the critical points when reading a contemporary text:

We are trying, in other words, to deepen our sense of both the invisible cohesion and the half-realized conflicts in specific cultures by broadening our view of their significant artifacts. This ambition to specify the intriguing enigmas of particular times and places distinguishes our analyses from the contemporary pan-textualism of the deconstructionists who have their own version of the proposition that a culture is a text. (*Practicing New Historicism* 14)

History, by its nature, cannot stay away from politics as Lefteri has done in her novel. History’s main subject matter is ruled out by politics. History deals with a general story of a country, group of people, or a famous person. History does not represent the life of a family, for instance, during a certain historical event. It rather represents the incidents themselves.

The settings of both novels do not only differ in the narrated period, but they also differ in the settings of the events that take place. Lefteri’s novel is set in Syria, Turkey, Greece, and the UK in the years between 2014 and 2018. Whereas Hislop depicts Greece in the 1940s. Moreover, Lefteri depicts the life of the Syrian couple before the war, in the war, and their journey to the asylum. Hislop depicts the Koralis family and their life during World War II, the German invasion, and the Greek civil war.

Both novels have principled plots, however, the end of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is just like the Syrian civil war, unfinished. It is left to the readers to decide and imagine what will happen and whether the couple is going to be given permission to stay in the

UK and restart their lives, in other words, the future of the characters is left to the readers to decide on. On the contrary, the plot in *Those Who Are Loved* is completed and all the actions and climax are resolved, just as the Greek civil war, was fulfilled and finished.

Both novels represent the beginning of the wars and the worry of the characters about the possible consequences they might bring to the whole countries, Syria and Greece. Lefteri and Hislop refer to the turning points when the civil wars started providing the historical settings of these major circumstances: “It was late June, and in March of that year the civil war had just begun with protests in Damascus, bringing unrest and violence to Syria. I must have looked down at this point, and maybe he saw the worry on my face, for when I glanced up again, he was smiling” (Lefteri 16). Likewise, Hislop marks the beginning of the Greek civil war as she writes:

For a few months, things continued superficially as before, but in December King Constantine attempted to overthrow the colonels. He gathered troops loyal to him in the north of the country and claimed that the navy and air force were with him too. ‘It’s civil war,’ said Giorgos, as they all listened to the radio. ‘There are troops getting ready to fight each other.’ Themis found it difficult to decide which side she despised more. She would not fight for either and hoped that her children felt the same. (385)

The most important subject that both novels portray is the topic of civil wars and their effects on people. In both novels, the struggles and the sufferings of the characters are the consequences of the civil war. Lefteri and Hislop represent the human experience as they depict the episodes of the lives of the fictional characters. Both illustrate the devastating effects and results of civil wars on humans, societies, and countries. Lefteri describes the social and economic hardships on the tongue of Diomande, the refugee from the Ivory Coast, as he explains what has happened to his life because of the civil war as he expresses his hopes:

Diomande sits down again, dejected. ‘But I tell them. I tell them life so hard. I tell them about Libya and prison and being beaten till I think I will die. I tell them my sister and mum’s life difficult because of civil war. I have no job and my mum she sent me to find better life. I tell them all this. I tell them that here there is hope. Here maybe I will find work. I can clean, I can cook, I can teach, I have many skill.’ (Lefteri 16)

Likewise, Hislop describes the destructive results of the civil war in Greece as she illustrates the district of Trikeri in Greece:

Between the slats in the side of the vehicle she noticed all the changes in the landscape that had been made by the civil war. Not only had many hillsides been denuded of trees, but every town and village they passed through bore the scars. Buildings had been destroyed, and whole communities lay deserted. Many people had fled from their villages

to seek safety in the towns, often simply to avoid being caught up into the communist army. (Hislop 288)

Overall, the differences between Lefteri's text and her style of writing and those of Hislop's contributed to the success of these two novels. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* won the 2020 Aspen Words Literary Prize, and *Those Who Are Loved* granted Hislop the Bestselling Author Award in 2020. They succeeded in delivering what historical accounts did not. These differences have also helped this thesis illustrate the effects that New Historicism argues about. And thus, the life of the author, the geographical and the historical settings, politics, the audience/the addresses and many other factors that New Historicism care about are proven to have their impact on the meaning of a text.

On the whole, Lefteri's and Hislop's techniques convey historical events and stories in a way that historical accounts do not. Their novels include details, issues, and personal experiences that historical fiction lacks. Lefteri's and Hislop's backgrounds and their time of writing the novels in relation to the period they write about are proven to be of significance. Additionally, it is concluded that Lefteri and Hislop succeed in familiarizing the British readers with cultures and stories that are alien to them. Moreover, the argument of New Historicism of balancing the interpretation of texts between the authors' attitude and their texts on one hand, and the historical surroundings and circumstances, on the other hand, is carried out throughout the chapter. Finally, many examples of the major arguments of New Historicism are added to support the same points mentioned in previous chapters such as the "historicity of text" and the "textuality of history," the "subversion" and its "containment," and the audiences' cultural context.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the representations of many historical events and incidents in historical accounts on one hand, and in historical fiction novels, on the other hand, were compared and displayed. From this comparison, it is concluded that historical fiction novels provide their readers with a unique experience full of details and lively participation in the journey of understanding the historical norms and settings of a certain era. In short, historical accounts provide the readers with numbers and statistics, information, documents and facts. On the other hand, historical fiction contributes to the readers' comprehension and delivers the spirit and the feelings of incidents, the zeitgeist. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Those Who Are Loved* are examples of representations of actual incidents preserved and well-explained through fictional characters intermingling with real historical events. These representations show what is beyond the news and the statistical facts. Historical fiction brings life to the lifeless body of historical texts.

Human beings have always been interested in history since it is the teacher that teaches valuable lessons and saves the memories of those who preceded. Writing history has many forms and ways, such as news agencies, history books, and many other types. As shown in this thesis, historical fiction could be of great added value to history since it preserves human feelings, the experience, and delivers the historical and cultural atmosphere in a unique way. Historical fiction could complete the missing parts of the human puzzle that historical accounts do not pay enough attention to. Additionally, as New Historicism suggests; literary texts are part of history and they interact and affect each other. History is a narration of events carried out through language and texts and is affected by its historians' perspectives; the "textuality of history." Likewise, these literary texts, such as those of Lefteri and Hislop are literary works that convey the historical settings and the zeitgeist of certain eras, and they have historical features; the "historicity of texts."

As displayed in the previous chapters, it is concluded that reading only from historical accounts does not provide the full picture, it rather represents the story from the apparent part, and does not deliver the spirit of the event. On the other hand, in historical fiction novels, as in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Those Who Are Loved*, the stories of people are delivered in relation to a main historical event within the historical settings, philosopher Frank Ankersmit explains: "However, whereas a historical narrative aims at

the construction of some representation of part of the past, the historical novel applies the historical knowledge conveyed by a representation of the past to the historical novel's main characters" (45). As mentioned before, historical fiction provides the correct frame for the stories.

Many other conclusions are found in the previous chapters. It is dissolved that historical fiction reinstates the humanitarian angle of the events back from the fixed image that history narrates. Additionally, it gives back the heroism to the ordinary people, unlike history that glorifies or degrades the famous and sets the ordinary people as mere numbers and complementary elements. Historical fiction dives into the private lives of people experiencing the incidents in a certain period of time. It unites the readers with the characters and takes them inside the streets and squares side to side with the characters.

Historical fiction sheds light on the humanitarian issue as it provokes feelings of pity and fear among the readers. History focuses on nations, races, and other groups, whereas historical fiction focuses on the nature of the event and enables the readers to understand the motives, fears, hopes, conditions, and other details from the lives of the characters. Moreover, historical fiction tells the private story of a person, a family, or a group of people instead of the general overall historical picture. It helps people understand the story of the whole issue by narrating one personal private story; readers understand the difficulties the Syrian people go through by reading Nuri's and Afra's story in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. Likewise, readers could have a more detailed picture and could get more familiarized with the standards of 1940s Greece by reading Themis' and her family's story in *Those Who Are Loved*.

However, historical fiction does not claim to be writing direct history nor to have the topic of history as its main aim. It is a complementary part that provides the body of history with the spirit of the events and the zeitgeist. Historical fiction authors and historians alike could be biased, and subjective to an extent. And therefore, readers should always do more research and investigate the authors' or the historians' backgrounds.

Moreover, it is not only the historical and political backgrounds that affect a literary text—as Old Historicism claims—but it is also the writers' messages and many other factors. All of these factors must be studied to conclude meaning. In other words, it is demanded to create a dialogue about the meaning of the literary texts taking into

consideration the authors' backgrounds, their lives, the time of the writing, the period they write about, and all other factors that might affect the text.

In this thesis, the effects of the authors' backgrounds on the text were examined. Lefteri, for instance, misrepresented the geographical and climatic nature of Syria due to the fact that she has never been there. Additionally, Lefteri inserted Greek sentences, names and expressions that do not relate to the Syrian culture. Nevertheless, Hislop's admiration of the Greek culture and the extensive use of the Greek language and expressions were great and helpful additives that contributed to the historical and cultural touch that Hislop represented in the novel. In addition to that, some necessary pieces of information about Syria, Greece and the interactions of the British authors with these countries were displayed and reflected in the previous chapters.

Historical fiction is not the only genre of literature that can represent historical settings in a more philosophical way and with much more information and details, there are other forms of literature including poetry, drama, paintings, and other fields that can still represent the spirit of the incidents, as Aristotle says: "The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular" (9). Therefore, literature's rule in representing human history is irreplaceable and more effective than classical historical accounts.

It is also concluded that historical fiction represents the story within the historical context providing details and atypical information. It introduces the readers to the norms of a culture in a specific time, Sabina Murray adds on this point: "And historical fiction? Perhaps historical fiction distinguishes itself by occupying a culture rendered alien to the reader through passage of time" (par. 11). This, as mentioned earlier, frees the readers from their own culture and concepts by introducing them to the cultural, political and general atmosphere and settings of the story. In addition to that, these details and representations in historical fiction overtake the horizon of expectations of the readers.

Historical fiction unites the peoples as human beings facing similar circumstances, not as separate nations, and countries. It takes the readers into the experience of the action alongside the characters. These novels explain the meanings and open eyes to the effects of certain incidents. They awaken the consciousness of readers; these facts, pieces of news and statistics are actually the real lives and the fates of other human beings.

The Beekeeper of Aleppo and *Those Who Are Loved* are examples of historical fiction representing the human experiences of peoples during civil wars. Both writers use writing techniques that saved and preserved the historical touch, and therefore they represented the stories in a detailed way. The number of preserved feelings, emotions, notions, and ideas is big. However, the lives and the background of the authors, the time of the events they write about, the process of writing and the inspirations of these novels and many other factors have affected the literary texts as displayed previously in this thesis. These factors and elements are the key factors to understand and evaluate the meaning of a literary text according to New Historicism.

The arguments of “subversion” and its “containment” in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and in *Those Who Are Loved* are discussed, as Lefteri portrays Nuri’s and Afra’s journey to Britain and how their rejection of their realities and loss turns into the acceptance of a new life there. Themis’ and her siblings’ rebellion against the social, political, and cultural powers is resolved at the end of the novel. These subversions and their containments contribute to the “self-fashioning” of human nature.

In this thesis, Christy Lefteri’s success in representing historical events is mentioned, as she shifts the readers’ attention from numbers, informative pieces of news, general statistics and typical stories which are found in typical historical accounts, to the human experiences, the atypical stories, the motives and the individual stories conveyed in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. On the same level, Victoria Hislop in her *Those Who Are Loved*, achieves success in delivering the historical spirit, the atmosphere, the geographical and chronological settings, and she presents the political and the humanitarian aspects with the full picture that takes the readers deep into the Greek society and the minds of people at that era of Greece the 1940s.

In other words, historical accounts display a picture of events whereas historical fiction takes the audience into the experience of living these incidents. When representing historical events, historical accounts give answers to *who*, *what*, *where*, and *when*, while on the contrary, historical fiction cares about answering *how*, *why*, and *so what*. History accounts tell the story of an event, while historical fiction tells the story and the experiences of people who lived the event. It is thought and concluded in this thesis, that historical fiction is a provider of a great deal of information that is given in the right context. In historical fiction, there is no need for extra research to understand the events,

the literary text of fiction illustrates the complete story including what before the event, during the event, the historical and geographical settings, the cultural standards and norms of the era, and most importantly what reason led this to happen and what are the real consequences and their meanings.

Overall, both history and historical fiction are attempts to save the memories of people who preceded us, the incidents and the events that changed the lives of nations, and the stories that spring with wisdom that teach human beings how to create a better future. For a better reading experience, more details, preserved feelings and for a more complete picture of the story; it is historical fiction that best provides them all. The names and the memories of people who preceded us and those who lived and experienced historical incidents, such as wars and other significant turns, do not deserve to be written down as numbers. Those people whose stories do matter and whose stories are to be told. Let history count bodies and record results and let the souls and the feelings of those people live and prosper in their historical fiction world. I would like to close my conclusion with a line of poetry for Yiannis Ritsos which inspired the title of Hislop's novel, and which sums up why people write and read history and historical fiction; that is to save the lives and memories of our beloved ones: "Those who are loved, shall never die." Finally, it is hoped that other future research and studies of historical fiction might reveal other points and qualities that this thesis does not mention. Historical fiction has many other characteristics that could be observed as advantages or as disadvantages. Moreover, for other studies that might compare historical fiction to other genres, it is anticipated that this thesis might help or might be criticized or discussed.

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