



Myth and Reality: “The Blurring Lines Between Historical Fact and Fiction in *The Warm Hands of Ghosts*”

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Abstract

The essay "Myth and Reality: Within *The Warm Hands of Ghosts*' exploration of historical fact and fiction mythology the New Historicism approach examines the intricate relationship between narratives of the past and imaginative storytelling. During World War I the mystical aspects from Arden's writing create a parallel with human stories that explore memory and suffering. Through two storytelling threads the book examines how people shape historical accounts while interrogating absolute factual accuracy. This article explains how literary narratives function as a transformative resource which unveils multidimensional histories and sociopolitical topics alongside cultural developments. Through her integration of historical events and narrative invention Arden transforms historical study into a complex tapestry that defies fixed sequencing timelines. The investigation reveals that personal accounts serve as critical tools which reveal larger historical truths while forming strong connections to human experiences throughout history.

Keywords: New Historicism, historical narratives, fiction, World War I, memory, trauma, cultural dynamics and experiences.

Introduction

The dynamics between historical authenticity and creative invention emerge as a thrilling subject in Arden's "The Warm Hands of Ghosts" while concurrently demonstrating how story assembly challenges can be analyzed through New Historicism principles. A theoretical paradigm developed during the 1980s understands literature and history to be interconnected components which together show that literary works are directly transformed by their historical sociopolitical climates instead of merely representing historical events. According to Stephen Greenblatt who strongly supports New Historicism literature cannot be separated from historical contexts because each element informs and transforms the other. This approach teaches readers to analyze the production of stories, demonstrating that historical texts frequently contain biased opinions influenced by cultural notions.

Through the novel Arden skillfully incorporates elements of the supernatural with historically truthful events from World War I. The structure of dual narration Powerful explanation the interpretation of story characters through its comparison between direct frontline horror experienced by Freddie with Laura's emotional journey to find her brother. Through this interaction readers gain insight into both the emotional consequences of death and universal aspects of trauma and memory which have endured throughout all time. Through mythological

elements and ghostly entities Arden invites readers to question how truth manifests within historical records as he alters discrete fact from invented fiction.

Arden uses the paranormal and authentic World War I events in novel to develop his exploration of a dependable male-female connection. The dual narrative structure of the book shows us two essential character viewpoints through a powerful examination of Freddie's front-line horrors while Laura looks for news of her brother. This encounter highlights both the intense emotional damage of bereavement and fundamental themes about trauma and memorial institutions which humanity has endured since antiquity. Through unconventional storytelling methods that mix folklore with ghostly elements the author expects readers to question how historical truths manifest.

This academic discussion examines Katherine Arden's "The Warm Hands of Ghosts" as a demonstration of New Historicist principles using its blend of factual history with fictional elements. A New Historicist perspective reveals that Arden's narrative both depicts World War I history while exceptional supernatural components push historical storytelling toward new narrative extremes. Through its two-part narrative approach this work reveals connections between personal stories and communal recollections to improve our understanding of historical interpretation while enriching literary analysis. Through the literature created by Arden readers learn about the subjective dimension of historical events which helps to illuminate extensive sociopolitical themes thus permitting deeper exploration of human lived experience through history.

Research Questions

1. What role does New Historicism plays in analyzing the connection between historical fact and fiction in Arden's novel?
2. In what ways does "The Warm Hands of Ghosts" symbolize the challenges of narrative structure through its merging of fact and fiction?

Literature Review

Dean(1986)in his article "The Challenge of New Historicism", explores the advancement of New Historicism and its inference for American theology and intellectual discourse . Dean discovers the roots of New Historicism back to 19th century German historicism , which accentuate the interconnection of freedom and destiny enclosed by history. Furthermore, New Historicism adopts the beliefs of Richard Rorty and Nelson Goodman to dismiss transhistorical truths while studying only historical accidental factors. Dean states that New Historicism splits from its forerunner by highlighting the Interpretation of meaning depends on imagination instead of fixed transhistorical meanings. In the interpretive framework deals history as a dynamic interplay of narratives formed by the historical factors and subjective viewpoint of individuals and communities . By dispensing universal base and metaphysical concepts , New Historicism objects theological traditions that depend on more historical facts. Rather than , it supports for grip of theology as an outcome of historical interactions and cultural influences .

In addition, Dean responds to the critiques of New Historicism—namely, claims of its relativism and subjectivity. Although some oppose that this approach subvert objectivity , Dean focuses its ability to foster pluralism and radical empiricism . He underscores that New Historicism based on familiarity with historical particulars over universal distractions , making it apt for theology and other disciplines . For instance , theologians like Cornel West and Jeffrey Stout have used New Historicist ideas to review religious ethics and Afro-American revolutionary Christianity , shows its changing potential .

Parvini's (2018) "New historicism and cultural materialism" delves how New historicism, developed in 1980s as a reaction to formalist approaches to literature, emphasizing on the interplay between literary texts and their historical perspectives. Embedded in Stephen Greenblatt's renowned work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), Parvini depicts it as a perspective that shows literature as a tool of the cultural, social and political forces of its period, refute the concept of individual a maestro. Representing densely on the theories of Clifford Geertz, Michel Foucault and Hayden White, Parvini consider that New Historicism applies ways such as "thick description" to discover historical texts and descriptions as culturally enclosed results.

A hallmark of New Historicist analysis, as Parvini (2018) focuses, is its capability to connect clearly irrelevant artifacts with literary works, reveal the associatedness of history and literature. Main ideas involve Geertz's "local knowledge", White's "poetics of history" and Foucault's "power knowledge" dynamic, which, as explained by Parvini, assert that power and knowledge are unitedly strengthen and shape cultural discourses. In Greenblatt's essay "Invisible Bullets" (1988), as Parvini notices that epitomize the perspective by manifesting how literature can either subvert and reinforce power structures. In overview, Parvini (2018) contends that New Historicism links history and literature, dwelling the effect of power, culture and historical context on literary development. Regardless criticism, its participations to considerate the cultural dynamics of literature endure importance.

Li and Lewis (2021) in their paper *Fables agreed upon: A comparative study of new historicism and alternate history*. Theoretical studies in Literature and Art analyze, contends how New Historicism demur the objective notion of historical fact, highlights that history is formed by subjective contexts and power dynamics. Employing on thinkers like Michel Foucault, New Historicism deals history as an established text, alike to literature, where multiple perceptions synchronize. This method fades the division between factual history and literary fiction, emphasizing the intertextual and dialogic nature of both genres.

In their evaluative study, Li and Lewis (2021) examine how alternative history (AH) supports New Historicism. AH perspective splits from conventional historical accounts by speculating "what-if" contexts, unfolding the variety of historical clarification. Both New Historicism and AH highlights the created essence of history, denying its interpretation as a linear or monophonic narrative. In lieu of they focus oppressed voices and counterfactual viewpoints, suggesting a void for alternative perspectives. These perspectives emphasize the qualitative and non-linearity of history and its analysis, overcoming conventional historiography.

The authors discuss that AH performs New Historicism's emphasize on intertextuality and dialogism. Specifically, AH novels, like Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*, represents by apposing traditional historical timelines with assumed alternatives. Such discourses analyze innovative cultural unease and ideological challenges, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the past, present and future. Moreover, AH and New Historicism both break down spectacular historical narratives, motivating a reanalysis of conventional power structures and historical ideas. Li and Lewis (2021) recognize criticisms of both perspectives. New Historicism has been involved of connecting influential convictions by integrating revolutionary voices into prevailing ideology, while AH probability historical perversion via its tentative nature. Regardless of these oppositions, the authors emphasize the transmute prospective of both frameworks in reconsidering historical and literary studies. By highlighting the inseparability of history, literature and ideology these point of views promote in depth acknowledging of cultural narratives and their socio-political connections.

Halpern (1994) in his article “Shakespeare in the tropics: From high modernism to New Historicism Representations” discovers how New Historicism modifies the study of Shakespearean works , for instance *The Tempest* , by ingrained them within their cultural and historical perspectives. The approaches exhibit how New Historicist analysis disturb the conventional separation of literature from its socio-political background, highlighting the interplay between text and the cultural impels of imperialism and colonialism during the Renaissance. Halpern locates *The Tempest* at the interchange of modernist and postmodernist perspectives, exhibiting its colonial allegories and ethnographic foundations .

Essential to New Historicist readings is the concept of Shakespeare as both contestant in and critic on the imperial ideologies of his period. Greenblatt’s idea of “invisible bullets” as analyzed in Halpern’s work, stances Shakespeare as an ethnographer, considering the dynamics of colonial confrontation between England and its “alien others” . In *The Tempest* , casts like Prospero and Caliban personify these dynamics , with Prospero depicting European dominance and Caliban portraying the colonized “Other”. From this perspective, Caliban’s language and identity are recognize as shaped through Prospero’s power, reflecting colonial traditions of subjugation and cultural integration.

Halpern analyses the oscillation among contextualizing and decontextualizing characteristics in literary criticism . He discusses that New Historicism acquires this conflict from modernism, which often compared Renaissance drama with non-Western traditions under the cover of anthropological analysis. This technique is highlighted by Greenblatt’s method of merging historical perspectives with Shakespeare’s texts to reveal the ideological underlying theme of power, control and resistance.

The New Historicist framework also highlights the dialogical connection between text and context. Halpern(1994) discovers Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* as a point where colonial ideologies are not simply represented but actively discussed, exposing the challenges of Renaissance power structures. By describing Caliban as both victim and rebel, Shakespeare analyzes the oppositions of imperialism while moderately reinforcing the power of European customs.

Halpern’s interpretation focuses the purpose of New Historicism in figuring out Shakespeare’s work as a dynamic influence of text , history and ideology . *The Tempest*, by its analysis of colonial themes and power dynamics, manifests how Renaissance texts relate with and analyze their socio-historical contexts.

Öztürk(2003) in his work “A New Historicist Approach to *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad” employs a New Historicist technique to analyze Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* . In his study , Öztürk examines the interplay between history, culture and literature. New Historicism , as a framework, subverts conventional ideas of history as an objective historical narrative, rather than affirming that history is created and persuaded by the biases of those who preserve it . This approach is essential in acknowledging *Heart of Darkness*, which Öztürk applies as a counter-memory to prevailing Western ideologies .

Öztürk(2003) discusses that Conrad’s work indicates a challenge in Eurocentric historical perspectives by describing European imperialism as a power that demoralizes both the colonized and the colonizers. By Marlow’s journey, the work contrasts Europe and Africa, not as binary alternates, but as objects confined by a shared, innate human behavior. The novel analyzes imperialistic explanations of “progress” by exposing the deeper brutality enclosed the nominal “civilized” Europeans. Such as, Marlow’s perception of African customs evokes a contemplation

on humanity's unified prehistoric origins, implying that observed "Other" is an image to Europe's primitive nature.

Öztürk also emphasizes how Conrad opposes the temporary hierarchy enforced by Western historical perspectives. Africa is portrayed not as a prehistoric relative to Europe but as a capacity that conserves verity lost in European contemporaneity. By connecting the Congo and Thames rivers, Conrad symbolizing bind the past and present, signify that Western culture's history is entangled from its colonial manipulation. This analysis expands to the description of narrative intrinsically. Öztürk observes that Conrad's splintered narration reflects the turmoil of orderly historical perspectives, highlighting that truth is not a linear development but a intricate interplay of memory and forgetting.

Although, Öztürk analyze Conrad's viewpoint that lasting in a Eurocentric rational, regardless its revolutionary ideas. By describing Africa as Europe's past, Conrad casually emphasizes concepts of European temporal supremacy. However, the New Historicist reading highlights Heart of Darkness as a critical text that examines and undermine colonial ideologies.

Xu and Huang (2018) in their paper "Study on Frankenstein from the Perspective of new historicism" employ New Historicism to critiques Mary Shelley's Frankenstein as a representation of its historical, culture and ideological perspectives. The framework emphasizes the connection between literature and history, interpreting historical artifacts and literary works as similarly individual perspectives. By recreating the novel's historical background, the study analyzes how Frankenstein interconnects Romantics objectives, social ideologies and the era's scientific and religious conflicts.

Opposed to the late Enlightenment and Romantic period's, Frankenstein symbolizes the Romantic aim on personal subjectivity and emotional insight. Xu and Huang highlight that Romanticism responded to Enlightenment criticism, that Romantics condemned for degrading humans. Shelley's novel depicts extreme emotional arguments, as represented by Victor Frankenstein's lightness while developing life and his afterward misery over the monster's devastating effects. The monster's desire for consent and amity reflects these concepts, mirrors human feelings like joy and resentment. The Romantic ideal of reviving human psyche is clearly taken in the novel's rich inner terrain.

Of an ideological concept, Xu and Huang discuss in the novel analyses conventional religious beliefs meanwhile mirroring the societal concerns enclosing scientific developments. Victor Frankenstein's effort making life barriers religious customs, representing humanity's conceit and it's contend opposed to divine power. Despite, the perspective also supports religious values, as Frankenstein endures divine consequences for his "blasphemy". This dichotomy shows the ideological struggles of the period, comparing the urge for scientific development opposed the sustaining impact of religious conventions.

The research further indicates that Frankenstein discusses expanded societal concerns, like the industrial upheaval's effect and the class conflicts of the time. By portraying the monster like a tool of human objective and forsake, Shelley analyses the societal forms that oppressed the "other", representing the marginalized in a promptly evolving world.

Xu and Huang (2018) summarize that Frankenstein exemplifies the New Historicist doctrine of interconnectedness between literature and history. The novel mirrors its times of turmoil, societal marginalization and conflicts between development and customs, inspiring readers to analyze complex connection between cultural perspectives and literary texts.

Theoretical framework

The blurring of historical fact and fiction is explored from a theoretical standpoint using Katherine Arden's "The Warm Hands of Ghosts" while offering New Historicism as a potential and compelling theoretical framework. First popularized by Stephen Greenblatt in the 1980s, an approach that demands the literary text should be examined based on historical and cultural context. As for the New Historicism theory, this theory believes in the interrelationship of the literature and the history.

The link between fact and fiction is one of the major themes of New Historicism. In "Shakespearean Negotiations" (1988) for example, Greenblatt questions the accepted distinction between historical and literary works arguing that they contribute to our knowledge about a given historical period; "There is no escape from contingency, no freedom from the appropriation of one's work by others." From this perspective the literary work is not an autonomous ad historic object but is instead most intimately woven into the fabric of its historical and cultural context. Instead Greenblatt contends that literary and historical works all result from complicated social, economic, and political circumstances that help to determine its progress and significance. Consequently, the work acquires different meanings with time as the work is being repeatedly read in different historical periods.

New Historicism is especially helpful in considering the ways in which truth and falsehood are intermingled in "The Warm Hands of Ghosts." This thesis holds that all historical narratives are, to some extent, constructed and, therefore, fictional. This is evident in Arden's novel since the novel contains magical realism elements, ghost stories, and realistic episodes of the World War I. Because the Arden's novel has a dual narrative, alternating between Laura's search for her brother and Freddie's experience on the front, the novel allows Arden to use historical facts and otherworldly elements. This style of writing is reflective of New Historicism ideals—valuing distinct and contrasting views—and recognizing that history is not one, overarching narrative. Ghost stories and supernatural themes might be seen as the novel's investigation of the psychological aspects of war upon the person and time concerning the battle's recurring cultural beliefs. The use of elements from and incorporation of both myth and history in this way is in line with New Historicist views of the convoluted historical connection between history, literature, and cultural memory.

Arden uses real historical events, like the Halifax explosion of 1917, in combination with haunting apparitions and surreal experience adhere to the New Historicist idea that artistic texts are both a product of the contextual historical and a way of historical thinking. Here we can see the presence of ghosts in a story is a metaphor of war's post traumatic history/effect, where psychological reality and supernatural occurrence are not clearly distinguished.

From the perspective of the New Historicism, 'textuality of history,' the novel represents an approach of memory and storytelling whereby the character Faland, in return for stories in exchange for Freddie, erases Freddie's memories. However, this concept means that history is created and written as a fiction, as other stories of Freddie and Faland. These encounters, as New Historicists would posit, insist on the factious, a merging of the fact with the fiction, and thus stress the New Historicist idea that historical stories remain subject to interpretation.

At last, New Historicism provides an insight into how Arden's "The Warm Hands of Ghosts" may be understood by an appropriate viewership. By calling attention to the complicities between literary history and actual events, and the fluidity of historical articulations, this approach gets us deep inside the heart of the novel's busy interplay between fact and fiction, memory and reality, and the lingering effects of historical turns on both individuals and cultural consciousness.

Analysis

Arden's in *The Warm Hands of Ghosts* masterfully blends actual historical events with fictional elements to challenge readers about real versus imagined narratives. Through New Historicism Arden shows history extends beyond dated records because it emerges from cultural beliefs united with personal experiences. Through its analysis the narrative teaches readers about the complex mechanism by which shared memories merge with personal wounds while revealing how fictions both hide and reveal genuine historical facts. Through plot development and symbolic language Arden examines how cultural currents form historical narratives while asking readers to examine the societal factors which mold our understanding of the past.

The Interplay of Myth and Reality in The Warm Hands of Ghosts

The central theme of myth versus reality receives expert treatment in *The Warm Hands of Ghosts* by Katherine Arden using techniques that align well with New Historicist analysis. According to this literary theory scholars focuses on how writings remain connected to their socio-cultural environment and historical moments while requiring analysis of cultural ideas' mutual influence on literature.

This overlaps with the concept of "dreams within dreams" which is (p. 61) is a perfect allegory for the overall idea of the historical account and its analysis. Memory and myth play an important role in the lives of Arden's inhabitants, and the author shows how the personal and the collective past are intertwined. This nested structure is typical of New Historicism that considers history as a set of interrelated stories rather than a sequence of events. Through fragmentation of history as a collage of stories, Arden offers readers a view of how memory and history interact and how myths can shape, manipulate or even preserve historical facts.

The contemplation found in the passage, "Laura sometimes wondered, idly, what happened when the celestial backers of one army encountered those of the other" (p. 83) emphasizes how myth serves as an interpretive framework which shapes historical narratives. Through celestial beings' cultures illustrate representational ideas which validate authority struggles and warfare procedures. By examining the relationship between mythical interpretations and factual historical events we discover how group memories and cultural discussions shape their storytelling thereby proving historical truths exist as artificial constructs. Through celestial analogies Arden provokes thoughts about how societies mythologize historical events to render moral meaning to situations which may appear indiscriminate or unjust.

The statement "No poet, living or dead, could have imagined this place, real, upon the earth" (p. 85) emphasizes the contradiction between reality and representation. This remark emphasizes how historical narratives are interpreted through cultural lenses, highlighting language and art's limits in portraying the entirety of human experience. Arden's investigation of these themes encourages readers to question the created nature of history and its mediation through cultural frameworks. This comment is a sobering reminder of how human understanding of the past is fundamentally restricted, constrained by the tools and viewpoints available at any particular time.

In the metaphor, "Winter said there's ghosts all around you. Faland snorted. When you swim in the ocean there's water all around you, but no one mentions it" (p. 149), the analysis targets those pervasive yet unremarked forces that affect perception. As an image representing historical realities masked by dominant myths the ocean demonstrates how New Historicists identify ideological structures which form both literary narratives and historical understanding. Faland suspects ghosts much like he doubts conventional storytelling because both experiences challenge

his audience to note the hidden power that shapes cultural memory processing principles. Through encasing invisible assumptions within metaphors, we recognize the significance of challenging cultural myths to create more thorough historical exploration.

The imagery in "Like faerie revels that end at sunrise" (p. 154) represents mythology's transitory charm and tendency to romanticize actual events. The fleeting character of the revels underscores how history, like myth, is molded by cultural ideas and narratives. Similarly, the line "Faland's hotel was like a miracle, I thought. So—so warm. His music. And then it vanished at dawn" (p. 181) employs the hotel's fleeting warmth as a metaphor for the selective romanticization of historical narratives. The hotel's transient warmth serves as a metaphor for the selective romanticization of historical narratives. These fleeting moments highlight the fluidity and impermanence of both personal and collective histories. Arden's use of transient imagery reinforces the notion that historical memory is not fixed but evolves over time, shaped by the cultural and emotional needs of those who remember.

The assertion, "Her conviction, born of long days and longer nights, was that if the world contained any magic at all, then it could not also contain their war" (p. 182) depicts the sharp contrast between ideals and terrible realities. This tension, viewed via the lens of New Historicism, represents the text's sociopolitical background, in which the destructive forces of war rule out the possibility of wonder or enchantment. Arden employs this dichotomy to demonstrate how literature balances hope and despair, asking readers to confront the ideological conceptions of peace and conflict. By juxtaposing magic and war, Arden forces readers to confront the contradiction between humanity's aspirations and its actions, providing a profound critique of the narratives that justify violence and oppression.

Similarly, the statement, "They are fighting their war in the last world, but we're dying in this one" (p. 242), encapsulates the disconnection between historical struggles and contemporary realities. It highlights how past events often overshadow present-day conflicts, prompting readers to question the authenticity of historical representation. By intertwining real events with imaginative storytelling, Arden challenges conventional notions of truth, revealing how history can be manipulated to serve contemporary emotional narratives. This observation underscores the importance of critically engaging with historical narratives, recognizing their potential to obscure as much as they reveal.

Historical Facts Versus Fictional Narratives

Katherine Arden's *The Warm Hands of Ghosts* explores the relationship between historical facts and fictional narratives, giving light on how history is formed, mediated, and frequently mythologized. This critical analysis examines significant statements that demonstrate the complicated relationship between progress, memory, and representation via the lens of New Historicism, which focuses on the interaction of texts and their socio-cultural settings. Arden's investigation provides a significant remark on how historical narratives are impacted by and reflect the cultural discourses and ideological battles of the period.

The quote, "What is progress?" Giving people God's power—to build ships like islands, or fly like birds, or set fire to the bowels of the earth like the devil in his damned pit—just writes their stupidity larger and larger until they drown the whole world" (p. 78) reflects profound skepticism about human progress and the ethical quandaries of technological advancement. Arden criticizes the sociopolitical settings that laud development while ignoring its moral ramifications. The imagery of building ships "like islands" and flying "like birds" represents humanity's arrogance in seeking to master nature, yet the reference to "drowning the whole world" emphasizes the

disastrous consequences of unchecked ambition. This critique is consistent with New Historicism's emphasis on how books reflect and critique the sociopolitical ideologies of their time . By presenting progress as both a boon and a bane, Arden draws attention to the contradiction in technological and social developments and the moral conundrums that occur when ambition takes precedence over responsibility.

The conflict between spiritual loss and material gain is summed up in the line, "Our hands get bigger and our spirits shrink" (p. 78). The consequences of society advancement are reflected in this paradox, as the growth of materialism and power systems frequently erodes emotional depth and sincerity. Using this metaphor, Arden examines how historical circumstances influence the stories we tell about advancement, showing that our perception of the past is always influenced by current issues and ideals. The idea of "hands" being bigger while "spirits" get smaller alludes to a world where consumerism and technological advancements are taking precedence over people's spiritual and emotional foundations. This conflict supports the claim made by New Historicism that texts are a window into the ideological and cultural conflicts of their era, offering a perspective for analyzing the effects of advancement.

The assertion that "no poet, living or dead, could have imagined this place, real, upon the earth" (p. 85) emphasizes how inadequate words and art are at expressing the essence of historical realities. This conflict between representation and reality shows how cultural lenses are used to create and mold historical narratives. This quotation illustrates how the constraints of language and artistic expression restrict our perception of reality, which is emphasized by New Historicism, which emphasizes that history itself is a narrative molded by multiple discourses. Even the most vivid imagination finds it difficult to capture the intricacy and horror of historical events, according to Arden's analysis of the ideological influences that shape how history is portrayed. This insight emerges of how historical facts combine with literary depictions while the way we narrate history tightly relates to cultural and ideological contexts.

A deep moment of self-realization is captured in the sentence, "He stood there frozen, and that was when he caught sight of the mirror over the bar" (p. 190). Self-reflection and the dual nature of perception—personal and societal—are symbolized by the mirror. Individual identities are created within larger frameworks of power and ideology, as demonstrated by New Historicism's emphasis on the interaction between texts and their sociocultural contexts. Seeing oneself in the mirror represents the conflict between individual stories and the social forces influencing historical portrayals, ultimately prompting readers to doubt the veracity of these depictions. The fragmentation and diversity of identity are highlighted by Arden's use of the mirror as a literary device, emphasizing how individual and societal history are influenced by the socio-cultural and ideological forces at play.

The process of mythologizing historical events is highlighted by Laura's observation, "She had built it up in her mind into some unknowable mystery and all along it was..." (p. 206). Her vision serves as an example of how personal interpretations obscure the reality of factual occurrences by turning them into myths. Laura's created mystery may reflect larger ideological frameworks that influence how history is viewed, according to the New Historicism notion that texts are embedded within socio-political settings. This quotation emphasizes how meaning gained from historical events is continuously filtered by current beliefs and values, highlighting the mobility of truth. By exposing the manner in which individual and societal myths are created, Arden's investigation of myth-making challenges readers to think about how cultural and ideological perspectives frequently obfuscate historical facts.

"Consider for a moment that your sister was still alive," the quote says. (p. 206). examines the conflict between cultural conceptions of memory and death and individual grieving .The romanticization of family ties and the cultural conversation about death are both criticized in this instance. This quotation demonstrates how grief and memory are impacted by dominant society conventions, which is consistent with the New Historicism theory that literature reflects the socio-cultural ideology of its time. The emotional impact of this reflection resonates inside its cultural setting as Arden uses this interplay to show how historical contexts create personal narratives. This passage's sobering examination of mourning serves as a reminder of the ways in which individual the intricate relationship between societal constructions and personal experience is shown when grief is entwined with larger cultural and historical narratives.

Through her works Arden explores developmental complexities while investigating identity and memory alongside the sociopolitical environment that shifts historical portrayals through New Historicism. Through careful analysis of specific quotations this study uncovers how history operates as a contested field that transforms meaning through ongoing debates about societal narratives. Readers delve into cultural and ideological influences that affect historical understanding because of Arden's sophisticated history presentation which questions authoritative historical evidence.

The Haunting Presence of Ghosts and Memory

Katherine Arden's *The Warm Hands of Ghosts* explores the intricate relationship between individual trauma, societal memory, and the sociocultural factors that influence identity. This essay examines how the eerie presence of ghosts and memories reflects larger ideological structures and historical narratives via the prism of New Historicism. The boundaries between personal experiences and collective histories are blurred in Arden's work because of its strong historical and cultural roots. The conflict between historical determinism and individual agency is summed up in the sentence, "Or must she just spend her life kneeling at the altar of her ghosts?" (p. 68). The memories together with enduring psychological traumas function as "ghosts" which shape personal identity through their impact on current conditions. The New Historicist interpretation understands "kneeling" represents a willingness to embrace both the transformative character of historical events and the subsequent consequences that result from them. Through Arden's narrative the unchangeable relationship between human action and community memory becomes clear by showing how individual experiences directly connect to historic influence patterns.

The statement, "Freddie was surprised somehow, that the musician was him. Faland seemed so remote. Detached. But there was nothing detached about his music. It reached a clawed hand right inside Freddie's forgotten heart, alive with things he was too wounded to feel anymore," (p. 190) Through visual artworks we understand how art has transformative power in uniting personal and communal experiences. Faland's music demonstrates how artistic expression connects to repressed emotions and shared experiences leading people beyond personal detachment as viewed through Freddie's journey to self-discovery in the song. The New Historicism theory shows that artistic works maintain deep relationships with their historical founding contexts. Through music Arden establishes how musical creations serve to reveal the history along with the personal stories of individual communities. Careful examination reveals that historical settings remodel human consciousness instead of providing a simple historical framework.

In the passage, "Freddie didn't miss the sun. He kept to the shadows and drank and watched Faland's mirror, lost in longing," (p. 202) Freddie's decision to stay hidden represents his defiance of social expectations and his withdrawal into self-analysis. The mirror blurs the lines between the

individual and society, acting as a metaphor for introspection. According to New Historicism, Freddie's seclusion challenges the dominant ideologies that influence his world. In line with the New Historicist claim that history is a tapestry of opposing voices, Freddie's story illustrates how personal experiences are shaped by broader cultural and historical influences by pursuing his own wishes and rejecting accepted beliefs.

The quote, "The people in the mirror could not disappoint in any way, and he would never fail them, or lose them, or mourn them," (p. 202) illustrates how individual trauma and the societal memory of war interact. By idealizing his relationship with the "people in the mirror," the protagonist here uses nostalgia as a way to avoid facing the agonizing reality of war. Arden utilizes this occasion to highlight the necessity for society to remember those who died in conflict while raising issues about how we commemorate the past via the prism of New Historicism. In cases of unresolved grief, where individual and societal traumas make it difficult to distinguish between historical reality and fiction, the "haunting presence of ghosts" becomes a metaphor.

In the novel, "Faland's voice dropped effortlessly, took on an intimacy that made Freddie's whole-body quake," (p. 206) Arden speaks to the emotional resonance and power dynamics of interpersonal exchanges. Faland's voice speaks of social conventions that decide the ways in which authority and relationships work through manipulation of vulnerability and power. It stresses how historical and cultural realities shape these very personal moments. Freddie's bodily response reminds us of the significance of these relationships, for the way the ideological framework in which their era was shaped affects peoples' emotional experiences.

Further, his loneliness is contrasted, with his need to connect in a war which showed the conflict between an individual's identity and social expectations. Arden uses metaphors, such as the mirror and the shadows, to point out the difficulties of negotiating personal aspirations within the walls of historical and societal forces. Freddie's decided withdrawal into the shadows also symbolizes his inability to find a solution to his own inner problems in the outside world, rather than his rejection of the social conventions. In *The Warm Hands of Ghosts*, this internal struggle is repeated time and again, not only bearing witness to how creating a historical narrative creates within the person his identity.

Arden also highlights the transforming potential of art as a way to bridge the gap between individual and collective experiences through her nuanced portrayal of Freddie and Faland. Freddie's self-discovery is sparked by the emotional connection of Faland's music, underscoring the importance of artistic expression in addressing repressed feelings and shared pasts. Arden's portrayal of this revolutionary process is consistent with the New Historicist claim that art and literature actively contribute to the formation of cultural and political beliefs rather than being passive objects of historical reflection.

Beyond personal experience, Arden's investigation of memory and trauma explores how wars are remembered, and their lingering effects. Uttering the eclectic jumble of words, the "people in the mirror" are a strong allegory for the constant existence of those lost in battle though reminding society to recall and respect past. Yet Arden also problematizes the separation of historical truth from fiction by investigating the ways in which this common memory comes to be made and preserved. Through the lens of New Historicism this critique purports to represent New Historicism's cultural narrative regarding the complex relationship between memory, trauma, and cultural structures since it entails opposite views and ideologies regarding the historical narratives. Ghosts and haunting become a major subject in *The Warm Hands of Ghosts*, and it points out the unbreakable link between the past and the present. By the way that Arden shows these ghostly

presences we can understand the effects that past tragedies have had on personal and societal identities. With the "haunting presence of ghosts," the continued influence of history and cultural outside influences on the present is symbolized through the unsolved sadness, repressed emotions that characterize the lives of the protagonists. Using this, Arden emphasizes how important it is to confront the past and interact with the past in the present rather than letting the past's dead weight dictate what you do.

Conclusion

New Historicism, developed in 1980s, links literature with its historical perspective, insisting that literary works mirrors the sociopolitical conditions of their period. It highlights the "historicity of texts and the textuality of history" emphasizing how history is formed and texts integrated in socio-political climates. In "The Warm Hands of Ghosts," Arden fuses supernatural aspects with World War I history, portraying the effect of individual and collective experiences on historical perception. By implementing New Historicist doctrines, readers able to observe how Arden's narrating struggles traditional historical validity, portraying that perspectives are subjective and formed by human memoirs. The novel's dual narrative framework, where Laura's locate for her brother connects with Freddie's front-line encounters, explains how individual stories enlighten historical concepts of trauma and memory. Arden's employ of supernatural factors inquires the essence of reality within historical narratives, reflecting the multi-faceted aspect of history and highlighting the role of individual memory in forming collective memory. This combination overcomes linear storytelling, proposing an explanation on how history is noticed, recollected and reconsidered by individuals.