Historical Fiction
For the Period of
The French Revolution

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ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL FICTION FOR THE PERIOD OF
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared under my supervision by

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entitled Analysis of historical fiction for period of French revolution

is approved by me as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Library Science

Katherine R. Sharp

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"History", says Victor Hugo, "Has its truth. Legend has its truth. Legendary truth is of a different nature from historical truth. Legendary truth is invention with reality for result. For the rest history and legend have the same aim - to paint under the man of a day eternal humanity." The manners of the times, the characteristics from which society derives the peculiarities of its own period become the natural province of the novelist. The value of his narrative depends upon its reality, and this in turn upon its historical accuracy.

The French revolution, with the swiftness of its tragedy, with its amazing variety of moving incident, has attracted many story-tellers, French, English and American. Out of this mass of material, ten novels have been selected for their historical accuracy and literary value as representing upon the whole the best treatment of the period. Two of these are written by Englishmen, two by Americans; the rest are of French origin. For historical accuracy and minute detail the French novels are by far the most satisfactory. For a grasp of the spirit of the times the Adventures of François is perhaps unequaled, while of the ten, Dickens' Tale of two cities is the best known.

Mr. John Thomson of the Free library of Philadelphia in preparing his Dictionary of Historical Fiction has used the following outline:

a. An historical personage introduced as a speaking character.
b. An historical event categorically described.

c. An historical town, city or place categorically described.

d. Positive and tolerably minute description of the society and manners of the period.

The leading characters of the novel are indicated by placing pas. (for passim) after their names. The word cur. (for cursorily) indicates the extent to which the lesser characters appear. A similar treatment is given to historical events.

This outline has been followed more or less closely in the subsequent lists prepared, and forms the basis of the present analysis. However the subject-matter here renders a modification necessary in that the outline is too broad for a satisfactory treatment of this period of history. An outline adequate for a period of a hundred years may not suffice for a period of ten years as crowded with incident as that between 1789 and 1799. Therefore characters are included in this analysis if the text gives a good idea of them, whether they are speaking characters or not. Historical events are included if they are of sufficient importance to the history of the period notwithstanding their relative unimportance to the plot. Throughout the analysis the period has been kept constantly in mind, the narrative has become of secondary consideration.

The arrangement of the material under the various heads has been made with a view towards facilitating reference. For this reason the historical personages are in alphabetical order and the historical events arranged chronologically together with the novels.
HISTORICAL NOVELS.

Author: Dumas, Alexandre Davy.

Title: Ange Pitou. 2 v.

Period: July, 1789 - October, 1789.

Historical personages:

Bailly - Successor to Flesselles. cur.
Calonne - Comptroller-general. cur.
Crosme - Lieutenant of police. cur.
Dauphin. pas.
Flesselles - Provost of the Merchants of Paris. cur.
Foulon.
Lafayette - Commander-in-chief of the National guards. pas.
Lamballe, Princesse de - Superintendent of the royal household. cur.
Launay - Governor of the Bastille. pas.
Louis XVI - King of France. pas.
Marie Antoinette. Queen of France. pas.
National Assembly: cur.
    Guillotin.
    Mirabeau, Gabriel Honoré.
    Monier.
    Sièyes.
Necker - Prime minister, 1789-90. cur.
Orleans, duc d' cur.

Polignac, Diane - Favorite of the Queen. cur.

Polignac, Jules de - Her sister. cur.

Provence, Comte de - Brother to the King. cur.

Revolutionists: pas.

Danton.

Desmoulins.

Maillard.

Marat.

Verrière.

Saint Priest - Minister for Paris. cur.

Sauvigny. cur.

Staël, Mme de - Daughter of Necker. cur.

Tourzel, Mme de - Governess of the royal children. cur.

Historical events:

1789.

April 28 - Réveillon riot. Bk.1, p.190.

July 11 - Necker is dismissed. Bk.1, ch.10.

July 14 - Rumors of the King using the army against the people. Mob after struggling five hours captures the Bastille. De Launay, the governor is murdered. Bk.1, ch.11-19.


Provisional government is formed at the Hôtel de Ville. Bk.1, ch.11-12.
Lafayette takes command of the National guard. Bk.1, ch.11.

July 22 - Mob becomes uncontrollable. Lafayette is unable to rescue Minister Foulon and his son-in-law, Berthier de Sauvigny, from death. Bk.2, ch.10-12.


town, city or place:

Villers-Cotterets - Village near Soissons.

Paris.

Versailles.

society and manners of the period:

Village school. Bk.1, ch.1.

Poaching. Bk.1, ch.5.

Effect of the pamphleteers in the rural districts. Bk.1. pas.

Police requisition. Bk.1, ch.8.

Peasant types: pas.

Billot.

Ange Pitou.

Court life. pas.

Parisian mobs. pas.

Effect of Revolution on rural districts. Bk.2. pas.
Author: Dumas, Alexandre Davy.

Title: Comtesse de Charny. (sequel to Ange Pitou). 4 v.

Period: 1789-1794.

Historical personages:

Artois, comte d' - Brother of the King. cur.
Cléry - King’s valet at the Temple. pas.
Dauphin - cur.

Constitutional party: pas.

Bailly - Provost of the Merchants of Paris.
Barnave - Member of the National Assembly.

Duport -

Dumouriez, Gen. - Secretary of foreign affairs, 1792. cur.

Elizabeth - Sister of the King. pas.

Girondists: pas.

Platière, Jeanne Marie Roland de la.
Roland, Mme - His wife.
National Convention, Members of: cur.

Barbaroux.
Brissot.
Condorcet.
Dupré.
Gensonné.
Guadet.
Isnard.
Pétion.
Saint Étienne.
Rebecqui.
Vergnlaud.

Huguenin - President of the Commune.  cur.

Jacobian Club:  pas.

Journalists:  cur.

Desmoulins.

Hébert - Editor of Father Duchêne.

Fréron - Editor of Le Moniteur.

Carra - Editor of Annales Patriotiques.

Tallien - Editor of L'Ami des Citoyens.

Lafayette - Commander of the National guards.  pas.

Lamballe, Princesse de - Superintendent of the royal household.  pas.

Léonard - Queen's hairdresser.  cur.

Louis XVI - King of France.  pas.

Marie Antoinette.  pas.

Mathay - Keeper of the Temple tower.  cur.

National Assembly:  pas.

Mirabeau.

Guillotin.

Lameth.

Sièyes.

Marne, Prieur de la.

National Convention:  cur.

Necker - Prime minister, 1789-90.  cur.

Provence, Comte de - Brother of the King.  cur.

Revolutionists:  pas.
Marat - Editor of L'Ami du Peuple.
Robespierre.
Danton.
Orléans, duc d'.
L'Isle - Author of La Marseillaise.
Santerre - General-in-chief of a battalion of the National guard.
Tinville, Fouquier - Attorney-general of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Members of the Convention condemning the King.
Tallien - Secretary of the Commune. cur.
Tourzel, Mme de - Governess of the royal children. cur.

Historical events:

1789.
Removal of the Court to Tuileries. Bk.1, ch.16.
Oct.21 - Bread riot. Bk.1, ch.25.
Nov.7 - Decree passed declaring it illegal for any member of the Assembly to take office under the crown. Bk.1, ch.29.

1790.
Mirabeau undertakes management of foreign affairs. Bk.1, pas.
July 14 - King takes national oath. Bk.2, ch.23.

1791.
Jan. 30 - Mirabeau elected president of the Assembly. Bk.2, ch.16.
Feb. 19 - Aunts of the King stopped in their attempt to leave France. Bk.2, ch.34.

April 2 - Death of Mirabeau. Bk.2, ch.32.

April 18 - Riot over attempt of the King to go to St. Cloud. Bk.2, ch.35.


Sept.3 - Completion of the Constitution. Bk.3, ch.21.

Nov. 9 - Decree against the émigrés. Bk.3, ch.32-33.


1792.

April 20 - France declares war against Austria.

June 20 - Tuileries invaded by mob. King is compelled to put on his head a red cap, the emblem of the revolution.

Aug. 3 - Sections led by Pétion demand that the Assembly depose the King. Bk.4, ch.7.

Aug. 9-10 - Commune of Paris expelled from office. Bk.4, ch.9.

Aug. 10 - Mob storms Tuileries; driven back by the Swiss guards; the King and his friends escape to the Legislative Assembly: the Swiss guards are ordered to cease firing and are massacred.
Assembly suspends King provisionally. Bk. 4, ch. 10-19.

Aug. 16 - Royal family imprisoned in the Temple. Bk. 4, ch. 22.

Aug. 19 - Revolutionary tribunal established. Bk. 4, ch. 23.

Sept. 2-7 - Massacre of royalists. Bk. 4, ch. 24-30.

Sept. 3 - Princesse de Lamballe refuses to take oath against the Monarchy and is murdered. Bk. 4, ch. 31.

Sept. 20 - Dumouriez and Kellerman defeat the troops of the Coalition at Valmy. Bk. 4, ch. 32.

Sept. 21 - National Convention is in session. The Monarchy is abolished. France is declared a Republic. Bk. 4, ch. 33.

Dec. 11 - Trial of Louis XVI. Bk. 4, ch. 37.


1793.

Jan. 15 - The Convention decides the King is guilty of treason and he is condemned to death.

Jan. 21 - Louis XVI is guillotined.

town, city or place:

Paris.

Versailles.

Villers-Cotterets - Village near Soissons.
Society and manners of the period:

Salon of Lamballe. Bk.1, ch.41.
Court life. pas.
Tuileries, Description of. pas.
Dames of the Marketplace, Queen's reception of. Bk.1, ch.29.
Jacobin club. Bk.1, ch.29.
Guillotine, Description of. Bk.1, ch.40.
" Execution by means of. Bk.2, ch.2.
Patriot altar. Bk.2, ch.23.
Peasant life. pas.
Constitutional Assembly. cur.
National Assembly. cur.

Critical estimate:

"'Be it understood that we are writing history, and not romance,' says the author more than once in the course of these volumes. The statement is incontestable in the sense that the strictly romantic portions of the story - those which deal with fictitious personages and events - furnish but a trifling part of the interest. But, on the other hand, it must be said that he who writes of 'the thing we call French Revolution' as it was, who takes its leading figures for his heroes, and describes its lurid scenes and incidents ranging from almost incredible grandeur to quite incredible infamy and horror, - such a one, we say, could hardly fail, were he the least interesting of writers, to
produce a work beside which the most intense creation of the brain of the novelist sinks into insignificance.

In 'Ange Pitou' the historical thread is broken at the invasion... by the Parisian populace on the night of the Fifth and Sixth of October... In the 'Comtesse de Charny' the narrative is resumed with the forced journey of the royal family from Versailles to Paris on the Sixth of October, and is continued, with substantial accuracy as to all the main events and innumerable minor ones, down to the Twenty-first of January, 1793, when Louis XVI., the well-meaning but fatally weak monarch, whom Carlyle calls the 'unhappiest of Human Solecisms', paid the penalty of his own weakness and indecision, and the crimes and oppression of his ancestors."

(Introduction to the Versailles edition.)
Author: Weyman, Stanley J.

Title: Red cockade.

Period: July 17, 1789 - June 13, 1790.

Historical personages:

Froment - Leader of the Catholic riot at Nîmes. pas.

Historical events:

1789.

July 20 - Effect of the news of the Fall of the Bastille at Cahors. ch.3-4.

Uprising of the peasantry. pas.

1790.

June 13 - Religious riot at Nîmes. ch.23-25.

Town, city or place:

Cahors.

Nîmes.

Society and manners of the period:

French royalist salon. ch.2.

Assembly at Cahors. ch3.

Formation of committees of municipal affairs. ch.5.

Rising of the peasantry and attack on chateau. ch.7-9.

Wearing of the tri-colored cockade. ch.9.

Duel between royalist and revolutionist. ch.12.
Attack by mob of royalist party. ch.13.
Wearing of red cockade by the Catholic party. ch.15 and pas.
Description of country inn. ch.17-18.
Mass in Capuchin church at Nîmes. ch.19.

Types:

Adrien, vicomte de Saux - Revolutionary noble. pas.
St. Alais - Noble of the ancien régime. pas.
Buton - Peasant. pas.
Benoît - Revolutionary curé. pas.

Critical estimate:

"'The Red Cockade', although an interesting and readable story, is far from being a great historical novel...
The book has plenty of action, and incidents of an exciting kind follow one another in quick succession. But all the incidents are touched with the same shade of color, and there are no deep impressive shadows and no bright gleams of sunshine in the book...'The Red Cockade' is a succession of thrilling incidents rather than a powerful novel in which the readers' interest is slowly aroused and sustained and finally held at a high pitch."

(Literary world. 11 Jan. 1896. 27:6-7.)
Author: Lytton, Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer Lytton 1st baron.

Title: Zanoni.

Period: 1789-92.

Historical personages:

Cazotte - Royalist. cur.
Chamfort - Secretary of the Jacobin club. cur.
Condorcet - Girondist philosopher. cur.
Couthon - Jacobin member of the National Convention. pas.
Dumas - General in command at Metz. pas.
Guérin - French painter. pas.
Henriot - Commandant-general of the National guard. pas.
La Harpe. cur.
Payan. pas.
Robespierre. pas.
Tallien - Secretary to Revolutionary commune. pas.
Tinville, Fouquier. pas.

Historical events:

Reign of terror. pas.
1794.

July 28 - Fall of Robespierre. Bk.7, ch.17.

Town, city or place:

Society and manners of the period:

Revolutionary prison. Bk.7, ch.16-17.
Robespierre's levées. Bk.7, ch.6.
Sans culottes. Bk.7, pas.

Critical estimate:

"We have the authority of the author for saying that this work 'is a romance and not a romance, a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot'... The work is a wild and overdone extravagance, with a liberal mixture of the true and beautiful; of eloquence and poetry... There is great extravagance, great incongruity, but, as will be seen, much beautiful thought and fancy, in this freak of imagination run riot; and many fragments of true practical wisdom... The French Revolution, even the Reign of Terror, was not all evil; but here only its most hideous aspects are represented: the blood, the perfidy, the cruelty. The overcharged picture is all shadows."

(Tait's Edinburgh magazine. Apr.1842. 9:215.)
Author: Gras, Félix.

Title: Reds of the Midi: an episode of the French Revolution.

Period: 1792.

Historical personages:

Barbaroux - Girondin. ch.6.
Danton. ch.6.
Mandat. ch.6-7.
Margan - One of the leaders of the Marseillaise. cur.
Pétion. ch.6-7.
Rebecqui - Commander of the military forces at Paris. ch5
Santerre. ch.6.

Historical events:

1792.

June 20 - Barbaroux writes to Marseilles to "send up to Paris six hundred men who know how to die." ch.3.
March to Paris. ch.4-5.
July 30 - Reception by Parisian populace. Santerre temporizes. ch.6.
August 10 - Storming of the Tuileries. ch.7.

Town, city or place:

Malmort.
Route from Avignon to Paris.
Paris.

Society, manners and customs:

Peasant life under ancien régime. ch.1-2.
Carmagnole - Revolutionary dance. pas.
Kissing of banner inscribed "The Rights of Man" by aristocrats. pas.
Singing of the Marseillaise. pas.
Trial by Revolutionary tribunal. p.344-50.

Types:

Randolet - curé of Malmort. ch.1-2.
Pascal and Vauclair - Reds of the Midi. pas.

Critical estimate:

The publisher's note at the beginning of the sixth edition contains the correspondence between Mr. Gladstone and M. Gras relative to the historical accuracy of the Reds of the Midi. Mr. Gladstone writes in part as follows: "Though a work of fiction it aims at painting the historical features, and such works if faithfully executed throw more light than many so-called histories on the true roots and causes of the Revolution which are so widely and so gravely misunderstood... In England, and I suppose in other countries, we are taught from our youth up to look with horror upon the excesses of the French Revolution. Books like yours will teach us that the principal blame due to those excesses lies with the system and the men who had been at work for generations before to efface from the mind of the
nation the idea of law, of public, civil and personal right."
Author: Dumas, Alexandre Davy.

Title: Chevalier de Maison-rouge.

Period: 1793.

Historical personages:

Girondins: cur.
- Barbaroux.
- Brissot.
- Feraud.
- Lanjuinais.
- Louvet.
- Pétion.
- Tinville, Fouquier-.
- Valazé.
- Vergniaud.

Harmand - President of the Revolutionary tribunal. cur.
Henriot - Commandant-general of the National guard. cur.
Lagarde - Counsel for the Queen. cur.

Montagnards: cur.
- Chénier.
- Colloc d'Herbois.
- Fabre d'Englantine.
- Danton.
- Hébert.
- Lindet.
- Marat.
Robespierre.

Prisoners at the Temple: pas.

Marie Antoinette.

Dauphin.

Elizabeth.

Santerre - Commandant of the Parisian National guard. pas.

Simon - Cobbler of the Temple, in charge of Dauphin. pas.

Historical events:

1793.

Attempts to effect the escape of the Queen. pas.

Mar. 9-10 - Revolutionary tribunal is established. ch.1.

June 2 - Fall of the Girondists. ch.18.

Reign of terror begins. pas.

Aug. 23 - Levy of all citizens capable of bearing arms. cur.

Oct.16 - Queen condemned at 4 A.M. is beheaded. ch.46-49.

Town, city or place:

Paris.

Society and manners of the period:

Description of the Temple and Conciergerie, Revolutionary prisons. pas.

System of espionage during the Revolution. pas.

Introduction of the Goddess of Reason and the Supreme Being. pas.
Denouncing suspects.  pas.
Trial by Revolutionary tribunal.  ch.51-52.
Death by the guillotine.  ch.55.

Critical estimate:

Le chevalier de Maison-rouge although not a sequel to
the Comtesse de Charny in the strict sense of the word, nev-
ertheless carries the narrative of the royal family on
through the death of Marie Antoinette. Although keeping up
to the standard in point of historical accuracy, it falls
short of the two preceding novels in finish and artistic
workmanship.
Author: Dickens, Charles.

Title: Tale of two cities.

Period: 1789-93.

Historical personages: None.

Historical events:
- Fall of the Bastille.
- Murder of Foulon.
- Murder of Berthier de Sauvigny.
- Murder of Flesselles.

Town, city or place:
- London.
- Paris.

Society and manners of the period:
- Parisian mobs. pas.
- Revolutionary club. pas.
- Revolutionary prisons:
  - Conciérgerie.
  - La Force.

Types:
- Barsad - spy. cur.
- Defarge, Mme - woman of the sans culottes. pas.
- La Vengeance - cur.
Critical estimate:

"'The Tale of Two Cities' is a tale of the great French Revolution of 1793, and the two cities in question are London and Paris, - London as it lay comparatively at peace in the days when George III was king, and Paris running with blood and writhing in the fierce fire of anarchy and mob rule. A powerful book, unquestionably. No doubt there is in its heat and glare a reflection from Carlyle's 'French Revolution', a book for which Dickens had the greatest admiration. But that need not be regarded as a demerit. Dickens is no pale copyist, and adds fervour to what he borrows. His pictures of Paris in revolution are as fine as the London scenes in 'Barnaby Rudge'; and the interweaving of the story with public events is even better managed in the latter book than in the earlier story of the Gordon riots... If anyone says of the book that it is in parts melodramatic, one may fitly answer that never was any portion of the world's history such a thorough piece of melodrama as the French Revolution."

(Frank T. Marzials. .Life of Charles Dickens. p.139-40. Great writers ser.)
Author: Hugo, Victor Marie, comte.

Title: Ninety-three.

Period: 1793.

Historical personages:

Battalion of the Bonnet rouge. cur.
Danton. Bk.2, ch.1.
Marat. "
Montaut - Jacobin. cur.
Prieur de la Marne. cur.
Robespierre. pas.

Historical events:

Warfare between the royalists and the revolutionists in the Vendée. pas.

Town, city or place:

Fontenay.
Paris.
Vendée.

Society and manners of the period:

Committee of public safety. cur.
Execution by guillotine. Bk.7, ch.6.
Military court martial. Bk.7, ch.2.
Peasant life in war-time in the Vendée. cur.
Vivandière of the Battalion of the Bonnet rouge. cur.

Critical estimate:

"Quatrevingt-treize is a monument of its author's finest gifts, and while those who are happily endowed with the capacity of taking delight in nobility and beauty of imaginative work will find themselves in possession of a new treasure, the lover of historic truth who hates to see abstractions passed off for actualities and legend erected in the place of fact, escapes with his praiseworthy sensibilities almost unwounded... Victor Hugo has given to this typic historical struggle of '93 the qualities of nobleness and beauty which art requires in dealing with real themes".

(John Morley. Fortnightly review. Mar.1874. 21:539)
Author: Mitchell, Silas Weir.

Title: Adventures of François.

Period: 1790-94.

Historical personages: None.

Historical events:

1793.
Jan. 21 - Death of the King. ch.12.

1794.
July 28 - Fall of Robespierre. ch.24.

Town, city or place:
Paris.
Musillon.

Society and manners of the period:

Types:
Quatre Pattes - Dealer in thieves' goods and leader of the faubourg. pas.
Ste. Luce - Aristocrat of the ancien régime. pas.
François - Foundling, chief, juggler and fencing-master through the French Revolution. pas.
Despard - Conjurer and revolutionist. pas.
Amar - Jacobin. pas.
Gregoire-Commissioner. pas.
Life of a choir-boy before the Revolution. ch.1-3
Life among the thieves of the Cité. pas.
Parisian mob. pas.
Fencing among the royalists and Jacobins. ch.11-13.
Sword duel. ch.13.
Peasant mob attacking ci-devant chateau. ch.16.
Revolutionary prison. ch.19-21.
Wearing white and tri-colored cockade. pas.
Denouncing suspects. cur.

Critical estimate:

"The serious-minded reader will perceive that the story of Frangois is no mere recital of bloody adventure, but a careful study of types and temperaments, a study of the stormiest period of the French Revolution. It is, moreover, a study conducted with anatomical, physiological, dietetic and autopsical skill.

Even did the book not bear upon its title-page the sign-manual of a physician, the stamp of the profession is on every page. The characters are sketched with a precision of detail possible only to the man of science; the presentation of the time is such as no mere artist could achieve; it has the historical exactness peculiar to the trained mind... In spite of this scientific basis on which they are built, the characters in 'Frangois' have all the reality of life."

(Critic. Dec.1898. 33:516-17.)
Author: Balzac, Honoré de.

Title: The Chouans.

Period: September 1799.

Historical personages:

Fouché - Minister of police. cur.

Historical events:

Skirmishes between the Chouans and soldiers of the Republic in Brittany.

Town, city or place:

Alençon.
Ernée.
Fougères.
Mayenne.

Society and manners of the period:

Peasant conscripts. ch.1.
Stage coach (turgotine). ch.1.
Peasant life. ch.3.
Royalist ball. ch.3.
Mass held in secret. ch.3. p.255-56.

Types:

Corentin - Spy of the Republic. pas.
Francine - Breton peasant girl. pas.
Critical estimate:

The following criticism although applied to the entire Comédie Humaine, is equally true of the individual volume under discussion.

"Three words are sufficient to express Balzac's aim in marshalling out this procession of over two thousand characters - to represent life... In all this the historian will find reasons for social transformation; the sociologist will find studies so deep that he will scarcely dare sound their uneasy depths; the philosopher will find the problems that have puzzled mankind through centuries, - and those of us who are neither historian, sociologist, or philosopher, will find the entertainment we demand of novels... It is because of his complete understanding of human nature that his novels are naturalistic documents - because of his complete mastery of the details of life that they are historical documents."

(Ella Stryker Mapes. Critic. Aug.1901. 39:159-64.)