



## WALTER SCOTT - A FOUNDER OF A GENRE OF A HISTORICAL NOVEL IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

Walter Scott, a prominent figure in English literature, is hailed as the pioneer of the historical novel genre. This article delves into Scott's life, his contributions to literature, and his impact on the development of the historical novel. By examining his most notable works, including "Waverley" and "Ivanhoe," this study explores how Scott revolutionized the literary landscape by blending historical events with fictional narratives. Furthermore, it investigates the techniques Scott employed to bring history to life, his portrayal of characters against historical backdrops, and his influence on subsequent generations of writers. Through a comprehensive analysis, this article sheds light on Walter Scott's enduring legacy as the founder of the historical novel in English literature.

**Key words:** Historical Novel, Walter Scott's life, Famous Novels,

### INTRODUCTION

Two of the most well-known fictional works by Scottish author Sir Walter Scott, a prominent role in English romanticism and one of the most well-known writers of the 19th century, are the subject of my article. He began his writing career by translating foreign melodies and soon after began to publish his own poems and ballads. But it was his writings that elevated him to prominence even 1.5 centuries after his passing. Beginning with the publication of books in 1814, he concentrated on topics and themes significant to the Highlanders, his forebears, and the Scottish Border region. Scott had the option of selecting from a wide range of previously popular novel genres for his career, but Maria Edgeworth's Irish regional novels served as an influence. He wrote nearly entirely historical books over the following twenty years of his life, starting from that point on. Walter Scott continues to be



honored for his contributions, inventions, and dissemination of the historical fiction. This article examines the romantic and historical components of the well-known historical books *Rob Roy* and *Ivanhoe*, as well as the extent to which they are related. The first section provides an overview of Walter Scott's biography and discusses his goals, influences, writing style, and literary evolution.

### **What is a Historical Novels?**

Literary works in the genre of historical fiction establish their fictional story in the context of specific historical events that actually happened. The phrase can be used to describe other narrative forms as well, such as those seen in video games and graphic novels, as well as in theater, opera, film, and television. It is most frequently used as a synonym for historical fiction literature. and order to visualize a story, it frequently employs symbolism and allegory through the employment of figurative and metaphorical aspects.

The historical setting and attention to manners, social mores, and other elements of the period is a fundamental component of a large portion of historical fiction. In order to provide readers a greater understanding of how historical personalities might have reacted to their surroundings, authors also commonly decide to investigate famous historical figures in various situations. Typically, historical romance aims to romanticize bygone eras. Certain subgenres, like historical fantasy and alternate history, purposefully incorporate fantastical or ahistorical aspects into novels.

Readers have been enthralled with this genre for decades. The historical novel was first made popular and recognized as a genre of fiction in English literature by Sir Walter Scott.

Sometimes, passionate nationalism movements are fostered by historical fiction. The *Waverley* books by Walter Scott sparked interest in Scottish history and continue to do so.[Reference required] After Poland lost its independence due to the Partitions of Poland, a series of novels by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski popularized the history of the nation. Henryk Sienkiewicz penned a number of hugely successful novels that depicted battles between invading Swedes, rebellious Cossacks, and predatory Teutonic Knights against the Polish people. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1905.

*La Princesse de Clèves*, a 1678 anonymous French novel, is among the earliest examples of the historical novel in Europe. Considered a masterpiece, it marks the start of the contemporary psychological novel tradition. Most people agree that Madame de La Fayette wrote it. The action takes place at Henry II of France's royal



court between October and November of 1558. With amazing accuracy, the novel recreates that time period. With the exception of the heroine, almost every character is a historical person. The mysteries and events play out quite accurately in the official records. *La Princesse de Clèves* "appears to have developed" into the historical novel in the UK, "and then via the Gothic novel."

Father of Historical Novel – Sir Walter Scott's life, Education & Career.

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland on August 15, 1771, Sir Walter Scott, 1st Baronet, was a Scottish historian, novelist, poet, and playwright. He is frequently referred to as the Father of the Historical Novel since he is regarded as its creator and best practitioner. Scott was affected by his upbringing in a family that shared Robert Burns's strong sense of tradition and attachment to Scottish traditional traditions.

Scott's mother was a doctor's daughter, while his father was a lawyer. He had a wonderful memory for reciting poetry and, from an early age, he fell in love with reading poetry, history, drama, and fairy tales.

Scott excelled in languages at the esteemed Edinburgh High School, where he was recognized for his sharp mind and outstanding ability. Later on, he pursued his education at the University of Edinburgh, where he focused mostly on literature and history. His early years saw the beginning of his love with Scottish history and folklore, which would eventually serve as a major plot point in his novels.

Scott decided to follow in his father's footsteps and become a lawyer after completing his studies. He started off as an apprentice solicitor before becoming a well-known and accomplished attorney. His passion for books remained unwavering in spite of his work obligations.

Translating the German ballad "Lenore" into English was Scott's first published work in 1796. Then, in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–1803), he collected a collection of Scottish ballads that contained some of his own poems. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, his first original poetic romance, launched his career as a poet and was published in 1805.

After contracting polio in 1773, he recuperated by visiting his grandparents' home in the Scottish Borders, where he learned about the area's background. Scott was able to construct perceptive pictures of Scottish characters and situations because of his extensive knowledge of Scottish history and society as well as his keen observation of its customs and attitudes. He was especially concerned with maintaining Scottish customs and culture, and he was a major contributor to the resurgence of interest in Scottish folk music and ballads.



His books, including *Waverley* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1817), and *Ivanhoe* (1820), restored interest in the Middle Ages and chivalric customs, and reawakened Scottish pride. Eventually, his writings were recognized as Scottish literary classics.

### **Sir Walter Scott's Famous Novels.**

Sir Walter Scott is renowned for several famous novels that have left an enduring mark on English literature. Some of his most notable works include:

1. "*Waverley*" (1814): Considered the first historical novel in English literature, "*Waverley*" follows the adventures of Edward Waverley, a young Englishman who becomes involved in the Jacobite uprising of 1745.

2. "*Ivanhoe*" (1819): Set in medieval England during the reign of Richard the Lionheart, "*Ivanhoe*" tells the story of a Saxon knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, as he fights against Norman oppression and strives to restore Richard to the throne.

3. "*Rob Roy*" (1817): Inspired by the life of Scottish outlaw Rob Roy MacGregor, this novel follows the adventures of the protagonist, Francis Osbaldistone, as he becomes embroiled in the Jacobite rebellion and encounters the legendary Rob Roy.

4. "*The Heart of Midlothian*" (1818): Set in Edinburgh, Scotland, this novel revolves around the trials and tribulations of Jeanie Deans, a young woman who embarks on a perilous journey to London to seek a pardon for her sister, wrongly accused of infanticide.

5. "*Kenilworth*" (1821): Set during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, "*Kenilworth*" is a tale of intrigue, romance, and political maneuvering centered around the love affair between the Earl of Leicester and the beautiful Amy Robsart. These novels, among others, showcase Scott's masterful storytelling, rich historical detail, and vivid characterization, solidifying his reputation as one of the greatest novelists of the 19th century.

### **CONCLUSION**

Sir Walter Scott's legacy as the founding father of the historical novel is undeniable. Through works like "*Waverley*" and "*Ivanhoe*," he revolutionized literature by seamlessly blending history with captivating fiction. His enduring influence spans not just literature but also cultural and artistic realms, leaving an indelible mark on generations of readers and writers. Scott's timeless themes and vivid storytelling ensure his place among the greatest authors in English literature.



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