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# *The Reinvention of Scottishness in Walter Scott's* Waverley *and Its Legacy*

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*"There is a vulgar incredulity, which in historical matters, as well as in those of religion, finds it easier to doubt than to examine."*

— Walter Scott[1]

[1] Walter Scott, *The Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott: Chronicles of the Canongate*, Paris, Anthony and William Galignani (eds.), 1830, p. 124.

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# Introduction

The choice of this topic stemmed from my personal interest in Scotland. My fascination with this nation started several years ago and has endured unwavering ever since. It was perhaps my initial exposure to vague concepts surrounding its history and some depictions of its scenery that sparked my curiosity. This was followed by the realisation that, while it is a fundamental part of the United Kingdom, Scotland is often overlooked.

Gradually, I have begun to broaden my knowledge of Scottish lore, novels, and history, wondering whether those words and descriptions mirrored reality. Recently, when I managed to visit Scotland, I was impressed by the people's sense of attachment to their nation, as well as by the palpable reverence for history and pride in local traditions. In particular, though, I was drawn by the unadulterated remoteness of the Highlands, which reminded me of Walter Scott's vivid descriptions of those landscapes.

Nonetheless, it was my pre-existing fascination with this nation that enabled me to delve deeper into the works of Scott and other Scottish writers, rather than the other way around. This process made me realise that the idea I had crafted in my mind was consistent with the prevailing atmosphere characterising the works of this author. As such, I had the impression that the portrayal of his homeland that Scott intended to convey has endured in the way Scotland is constructed in people’s imagination and that traces of his significance are still discernible, as evidenced by his monument standing in the heart of the country’s capital. However, I was taken aback by the lack of recognition given to him nowadays, considering he had been the most widely read author of his century.

Although several previous studies have sought to evaluate Scott’s contribution to the genre of the historical novel, his efforts to dismantle unfavourable prejudices regarding his homeland remain largely uninvestigated. Therefore, the principal aim of this thesis is to explore how Walter Scott attempted to reshape the Scottish national identity and bestow value and appeal upon its image. Drawing upon his novels, with particular regard to *Waverley*, I investigate how this author challenged the widespread adverse ideas regarding the Scots and their nation, thus altering the common perception of Scotland and thereby instilling a restored sense of national pride in its inhabitants, accompanied by unprecedented fascination on the part of other European nations. Moreover, a further purpose of this study is to evaluate his literary and cultural legacy over the past two centuries. Attention is paid to the underlying factors contributing to the author’s significant decline, despite his previous noted prominence. This decay culminated in a notable lack of recognition not only from scholarly critics, but especially from the general reading public. Nevertheless, recent studies have unveiled that his

works are undergoing rehabilitation. Hence, I undertake to assess the extent of this revaluation and suggest potential means by which Scott's novels might be deemed pertinent in a contemporary context. This study cannot encompass the entire literary production of Scott; it is therefore beyond my scope to examine his poems or his short stories. The core is restricted to an analysis of *Waverley*, with hints at the other novels of the series.

After the Union with England in 1707, Scotland gradually acquired influence and economic prosperity. However, this was accompanied by a concurrent waning of its distinct national character. Considerable discontent emerged as the Scottish populace experienced a profound sense of identity loss, and became apprehensive about being reduced to a mere region under English rule, thus bearing only a scant memory of their past as an independent kingdom. A series of uprisings, most notably the Jacobite insurrection of 1745, was the culmination of such a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction, ultimately leading to the destruction of the way of life of the Scottish Highlands. Additionally, in that period, Scotland was plagued by numerous negative prejudices regarding both its culture and its people. In this background, Walter Scott proved crucial for the restoration of his native country. Considered by Georg Lukacs as the pioneer of the historical novel genre, with his first novel *Waverley* of 1814, Scott chose the Scottish Highlands as the backdrop for the narrative, delving into the culture of a society that had essentially vanished in the eyes of nineteenth-century readers. Subsequently, he authored a sequence of historical novels, commonly referred to as the *Waverley* novels, most of which were situated in Scotland. Despite their distinct historical frameworks and locations, they all featured a common characteristic, namely, the depiction of the losing side of history. Through their narratives, these works vocalised the experiences of a region and a society that had frequently been ignored. As a result of their nuanced and compelling portrayals, the novels have captivated a wide international audience. It is noteworthy that, throughout his literary works, Scott aimed to enhance the worth and significance of Scottish identity by continually confronting and discrediting common preconceptions. Through his profound understanding of history, coupled with his keen observation of local customs and values, he was able to skilfully portray various ranges of Scottish society. However, the main focus of these novels is on History itself; in fact, Scott used a fictional approach to address Scotland's recent history, wherein he simultaneously acknowledged the benefits of the union with England, while also expressing deep sorrow for the loss of the country's independence and the fading away of its national consciousness and customs. As a result, in *Waverley,* the underlying emphasis lies on change, with the recognition of the imperative of modernization and progress, while concurrently preserving

the nation's distinctive cultural heritage and treasuring its history. Despite his influence and success, a paucity of attention and relevance was bestowed upon his novels throughout the twentieth century, accompanied by a number of criticisms. Nonetheless, current developments indicate an effort towards the restoration and rehabilitation of his works. Hence, there has been a recent attempt to revive his heritage and value his cultural impact from a contemporary perspective.

This thesis is composed of three themed chapters. In the first chapter, an overview of the history of Scotland during the eighteenth century is provided to give an account of the events that served as the backdrop for Scott's novels. Particular attention is paid to the causes leading to the Act of Union with England in 1707 and its consequences, so as to point out the reasons for the loss of Scottish identity and independence. Furthermore, the focal area of interest centres on the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, since it caused the destruction of the traditional Highland society based on the clan system. What follows is a first glance into Scott's novels, beginning with tracing the roots of the genre of the historical novel before eventually exploring the innovations brought by him into the genre. This section sets out to determine why Scott is deemed the pioneer of the modern conception of the historical novel as well as the grounds for his remarkable achievement.

The second chapter is concerned with an examination of the strategies employed by this writer to alter and thus improve the reputation of the Highlands. It begins by laying out several of the general prejudices of the period regarding both the people and the land itself in order to gain a better understanding of the actual kind of preconceptions Scott wanted to dismantle. In particular, the first part deals with the characters of *Waverley*, aiming to compare their characterization and diverse personalities with the fixed and generalised image held by many people about the Scots. The Scottish landscape is the focus of the second half of the chapter, with the purpose of illustrating the effectiveness of Scott's evocative descriptions in changing the perception of the Highlands from a threatening and eerie place to a fascinating and worth-visiting land.

The third chapter focuses on his legacy, for it aims to evaluate the author's literary standing over the last centuries, from his international success to the neglect of his novels and his persona. The objective is to analyse the reasons for his downfall and the criticism of his novels. To give a better overview of the perceptions of his legacy over time, this section considers the nature and implications of the celebrations held to publicly honour him, so as to understand the evolution of his fame over the years. In addition, recent studies dealing with the recent rehabilitation of Scott's works are also taken into account, thus trying to establish

potential interpretations of these novels that would make them relevant and intriguing from a contemporary perspective.

Finally, the last part illustrates the lingering impact of his novels on contemporary literature and the common imagination about Scotland, taking the *Outlander* series by Diana Gabaldon as an example of a present-day adaptation of *Waverley*. This analysis is conducted within the broader framework of a contemporary phenomenon known as Neo-Victorianism, which involves the revival and sometimes adaptation of literary works and themes from the nineteenth century.

To investigate this topic, I have gathered insights and viewpoints provided by several scholars. As far as the selected sources are concerned, some of them constitute the pillars of this project and deserve particular consideration. First of all, Georg Lukacs is often cited, for he shed new light on Scott studies by regarding him as the pioneer of the modern historical novel. Moreover, *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, as well as Richard Sher and Gordon Donaldson's works have proven very useful sources for the tracing of the history of Scotland, with particular account of the major events that have marked the eighteenth century. A general framework and overview of the genre of the historical novel was mostly based on the studies of Herbert Butterfield, Ian Duncan, and Richard Maxwell, so as to gain an idea of Scott's predecessors and his innovations in the genre. Concerning the delineation of the characters, the contributions of Alexander Welsh and Harry Shaw have been essential, whereas Susan Oliver and Alison Lumsden's works turned out to be particularly interesting and instrumental for the section focusing on the Scottish landscape. Noteworthy, these references should be looked at in the context of the examples extracted from Samuel Johnson and Pinkerton's beliefs, which, albeit controversial, laid the foundation of Scott's novels since they showed the actual negative stereotypes about Scotland the author wanted to dispel. Moreover, *Scott at 250* by Lumsden and Archer-Thompson is to be mentioned with regard to the acquired facts about Scott's rehabilitation and the turn of his heritage. Silke Stroh has been responsible for proposing an analysis of *Waverley* from a postcolonial standpoint, while Harriet Martineau focused on the portrayal of female characters. Finally, Alexia Bowler and Jessica Cox offered interesting and useful insights for dealing with the Neo-Victorian genre.

Even though Scotland is not an independent sovereign nation, it still possesses a resilient sense of cultural heritage and identity. I argue that a significant portion of the collective consciousness pertaining to Scottish identity can be attributed to the literary contributions of Walter Scott during the nineteenth century. What hopefully emerges from this study is the skilled ability of this author to exploit the negative stereotypes and preconceptions

about both his compatriots and his country itself in order to convey a different and dignified image of Scotland. Throughout this thesis, I argue that to achieve this purpose, he has relied on the ambivalent nature of his beliefs, that is to say a deep passion and advocacy for Scotland's past and traditional values, coupled with an unwavering faith in a future of progress and change as an integral part of Britain. The studies taken into exam suggest that *Waverley*, as well as having transformed the genre of the modern historical novel, had the merit of making Scotland — and in particular the remote reality of the Highlands — known to readers of other European nations. I explore how, through his novels, this author presented a nuanced and expansive portrayal of the Highlanders, thereby diverging from the prevalent notion that they were savage, uncultured, and uneducated people. Moreover, I aim to show how the perception of the Scottish landscapes underwent a transformation, shifting from being commonly regarded as unwelcoming, dangerous, and gloomy to a region that fostered the desire to be visited. This newfound appreciation for the fascination of Scottish landscapes is to be attributed to the harmonious coexistence of the sublime and picturesque traits present therein. Furthermore, I contend that, in dealing with the Jacobite revolution, Scott wanted, on the one hand, to reacquaint the Scots with their past and that lost society, and on the other hand, he hoped to prompt the general readership to examine this delicate event in British history, without imposing unequivocal and categorical judgements upon either faction involved. As a matter of fact, all these aims were earnestly pursued by him, and he expressed sincere hopes of their fulfilment, as emphasised in his words in 1826:

> I have said what I wanted to say and put the people of Scotland on their guard […]. They are gradually destroying what remains of nationality and making the country tabula rasa for doctrines of bold innovation. The lowering and grinding of all those peculiarities which distinguished us as Scotsmen will throw the country into a state in which it will be universally turned to […] a very dangerous North British neighbourhood.[1]

Moreover, I argue that these literary works have effectively changed common views on what defined Scottish consciousness, for through their influence, Scotland and its cultural heritage gained significant attention and admiration. Indeed, the primary effect of these novels was to endorse Scotland as a captivating place to discover, "sufficiently different to be intriguing, distant but not dangerous, a mix of the new and the already familiar".[2]

[1] John Gibson Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott: In Four Volumes*, Paris, Galignani & Company, 1838, p. 27.
[2] Alastair Durie, as quoted in Ian Brown (ed.), *Literary Tourism*, Glasgow, Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2012, p. 49.

However, the content of these literary works has often been the subject of debate and criticism. Some scholars, like for instance Edwin Muir, have accused Scott of portraying a wrong image of Scotland, due to excessive romanticization and the perpetuation of stereotypes, instead of pursuing a pure and valid national identity. While this may be partially true, this thesis points out that an unadulterated and singular definition of national identity is not possible, for the concept of collective identity is inherently fictitious and results from carefully constructed fabrications. In fact, in this research I attempt to defend the view that literary works possess the ability to substantially influence a society's perception of itself as a unified entity. Moreover, I highlight that, while writing *Waverley*, Scott did not claim to present unequivocal and consistently accurate historical facts; rather, he was fully aware that his novel was a work of fiction, albeit within a real historical background. Therefore, the analysis undertaken prompts me to argue that these works have revitalized the notion of *Scottishness*, allowing it to endure through significant social, political, and industrial transformations during a critical time in Scotland's history. Moreover, I contend that they continue to hold relevance in the present era. My belief is consistent with McCracken-Flesher's thinking, who considers Scott the "architect of cultural Scottishness"[3], asserting that he continues to yield a formative influence on the development of the Scottish nation and still appears "to be everywhere"[4] in his native country.

In conclusion, dealing with this author has granted me the opportunity to expand my personal understanding of his thinking and literary accomplishments. A noteworthy finding has been the genuine fondness this writer held for his homeland, his unwavering commitment to contesting the negative appraisals of the Highlanders and their land, a deep-seated affection that motivated him to delve into the realm of historical fiction to endeavour to portray his nation as it deserved, making it visible in the eyes of many readers far beyond the national border. Such endeavours were imbued with a fervent desire to witness Scotland prosper and evolve while always treasuring its past and culture.

Moreover, I found it fascinating how he described and conceived the landscape as almost *alive*, to interact with, rather than as a mere stagnant representation with sublime but unapproachable traits. Finally, the juxtaposition of the roles of the historical novel writer and the psychotherapist, as proposed by Hayden White and mentioned in the first chapter, has garnered my interest. Indeed, within this perspective, the implied task of Scott was to weave traumatic historical events into the context of a pleasant narrative for his readers.

[3] Caroline McCracken-Flesher, *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 3.
[4] *Idem*, p. 11.

The dearth of exploration in recent times of a writer who had previously attained such remarkable success is a matter that continues to astonish me. Hence, this dissertation will hopefully advocate the necessity of revitalising interest in his novels.

# CHAPTER I

# A History of Scotland and Walter Scott's Historical Novel

## 1.1 Scotland from the *Act of Union* to the Early Nineteenth Century

> There is no European nation which, within the course of half a century or little more, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland.[1]

This quotation by Sir Walter Scott proves remarkably accurate in addressing the vicissitudes Scotland went through in the course of the complicated eighteenth century. Indeed, the eighteenth century has represented a pivotal period in Scottish history, a time of drastic change in terms of patriotic discourse and national identity. The loss of identity was mainly marked by the *Act of Union* of 1707, which sanctioned the union between the kingdom of England and that of Scotland, leading to the creation of one kingdom under the name of Great Britain, on 1 May of that same year. Gordon Donaldson distinguishes three different stages of the Union throughout Scottish history. First, there was a period of significant discontent lasting for nearly 50 years; then, between 1750 and 1850, the union was almost universally acknowledged and accepted as an inevitable component of the established order; and finally, since the 1850s, the Union has been the target of persistent criticism, especially from the Scottish viewpoint.[2]

Before delving into the specifics and the terms established by the treaty, the factors and reasons that led to this union must be taken into account. Scotland and England had already been politically united by the union of the crowns since 1603, when James VI, King of Scotland had succeeded to the English throne on the death of Queen Elizabeth I, who had died heirless. Despite James's best efforts to establish a new powerful nation, the union was merely dynastic, and the Crowns of England and Scotland continued to be distinct and separate. The king, who oversaw their domestic and international policies, ruled both England and Scotland as independent states. In fact, the post-1603 convergence was essentially political, whilst cultural and linguistic aspects had a slighter impact.[3] It is true that, since the union of crowns, the Scottish political elite tended to become more Anglophone in an effort to adjust to a political system in which the court in London now held most of the power and influence. Moreover, outside of Scotland's Gaelic-speaking regions, English was the most

[1] Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 375; originally published in Edinburgh, Archibald Constable and Co, 1814.
[2] Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: The Shaping of Nation*, London, David & Charles, 1974.
[3] Jenny Wormald, "Union of the Crowns", in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 608-609.

widely spoken language, and even in the Highlands, the clan elites were blending more and more with the south. However, even if historians acknowledge the extent and rapidity at which these assimilationist tendencies were gaining ground, their significance was not immediately apparent. For instance, Scots—rather than English—remained the preferred language for conversation in Scotland. This implies that this first political association did not also entail a cultural assimilation.[4]

**The Massacre of Glencoe**

Scotland's history was heavily marked by the English Civil Wars (1642–1651) and the founding of the Commonwealth. Scottish Royalists responded in support of Charles II, with certain Highland clans joining them. Charles II tried to thwart Cromwell's plot by allying with the Covenanters, but his army was routed at Dunbar in 1650. In response, Cromwell made the decision to seize Scotland and hand it over to a military governor in order to stop it from posing a further threat to the Commonwealth.[5] Afterwards, Scotland experienced political independence during Charles II's restoration and James II's rule, even though the Stuart monarchs did not pay much attention to their home nation, which was left in the hands of its Parliament. The Glorious Revolution and the coronation of William of Orange brought problems back. While the Stuarts were Catholic, William was Dutch and a Protestant, and if certain Anglican or Catholic clans in Scotland remained loyal to the exiled Stuart ruler, other Protestant clans, like the Campbells, enthusiastically embraced the new king. In an effort to put King James II back on the throne, several of these leaders rebelled against William. This insurrection, also known as the First Jacobite Rising, came to an end in 1689 with the Jacobite loss at Killiecrankie and subsequent Jacobite capitulations.[6] William requested the Highland chiefs swear allegiance to him by the end of 1691 in response to these uprisings. The Macdonalds of Glencoe were one of the numerous dissident clans, but they delayed taking the oath of allegiance because of travel difficulties. The government's response was harsh and included a horrifying act of brutality that ought to have acted as a warning against any future uprisings. The episode has long been portrayed as evidence of the widespread clan strife typically connected with the Scottish Highlands. Yet, the underlying causes of the massacre actually resulted from the government's history of using military force in the area and, more directly, from unrest at the political centre[7]. Inflicted on the residents of the Highland valley

[4] *Ibidem.*
[5] Magnus Magnusson, *Scotland: The Story of a Nation*, New York, Grove Press, 2003.
[6] *Ibidem*.
[7] Andrew Mackillop, "The Massacre of Glencoe", in Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 275.

at the end of January 1692, the exemplary reprisal meted out to the Macdonalds of Glencoe is commonly referred to as the Massacre of Glencoe. After receiving orders to destroy the rebel clan, the Campbell chief led a group of soldiers who spent several days with the MacDonalds, were hosted by them, and then turned on their hosts early on February 13th, killing 38 of them as some sought to flee. As claimed by Donaldson, the massacre at Glencoe, when one small clan was singled out as an example of the repercussions of persistent turmoil and uncertain devotion to the new monarch, was motivated by the almost hysterical dread of Highlanders and a determination, like that of Cromwell, to discipline them.[8] Scotland's national integrity was gradually eroding at this point, until it was lost in the eighteenth century.

**The Union with England: Its Grounds and Aftermath**

There was yet another reason for Scotland's rising dependence on the south, such as trade. As will be discussed below, trade has undoubtedly been a key passage to the establishment of the Union.[9] Before the Union, Scottish trade patterns were evolving in a way that made it more and more reliant on the English market, particularly in the crucial exports of linen and black cattle. By the 1690s, Scotland was also experiencing severe economic problems. They included decreased exports brought on by war and the aggressive mercantilist practises of the majority of European powers, as well as famine provoked by harvest shortages. Furthermore, Scotland did not seem to have the strength or capability to revitalise its economy as a sovereign state. This was clearly proved by the outcome of the Darien scheme, Scotland's final and unsuccessful attempt to build an independent overseas empire. In the late 1690s, William Paterson came up with the idea for Darien, an ambitious project to establish a trading colony at the Isthmus of Panama to regulate overland traffic between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.[10] Although a wealthy maritime power like England, with experience in colonisation and international trade, might have been able to realise Paterson's goal, the Darien Plan was too much for Scotland to handle. English support would have been helpful; however, King William's diplomatic efforts to prevent Louis XIV from obtaining all the Spanish inheritance upon the death of Charles II of Spain, who had no direct heir, prevented English participation or even sympathy for the Scottish cause. Invading a portion of Spain's colonial empire while attempting to get Spain to sign a partition treaty was obviously counterproductive. As a result, England proved to be hostile to the Company of Scotland's plan in Darien.[11] There have been

[8] Donaldson, *op. cit*., p 180.
[9] William Ferguson, "The Darien Scheme", in Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 162.
[10] *Idem*, p. 163.
[11] Tom Devine, *Scotland's Empire 1600–1815*, London, Allen Lane, 2003.

a total of three expeditions sent from Scotland. Yet, the venture was doomed by a lack of sea power. By April 1700, a stronger Spanish fleet had blockaded New Caledonia, forcing the Scots to surrender due to a fever and a lack of supplies. There were significant repercussions resulting from New Caledonia's fate and the Company of Scotland's demise. Nearly all Scots with disposable money had engaged in the Darien enterprise. "This initiative received an estimated 15–40% of the actual money spent in Scotland," says the report.[12]

Scotland's financial predicament was worsened by the loss of most of its liquidity, but there was also a constitutional dispute between the Scottish and English parliaments over economic issues and the succession that ultimately resulted in the legislative union of 1707. Despite this, the seventeenth century had seen scepticism and mistrust between the two nations impede the union, hence the decision to maintain separate parliaments that at least allowed for the potential of keeping separate kingdoms. The Scots were afraid of being absorbed into England like Wales had been over four hundred years earlier, becoming just another area of that country. That point was stated quite firmly by Scotland's parliament in 1704 with the approval of the Act of Security, recognizing Scotland's right to decide the succession of its kingdom, a direct reaction to England's Act of Settlement, which recognised the Hanoverians as the heirs to the throne. A constitutional crisis between the two nations was thus incited when England's parliament pressed against Scotland's recent economic difficulties, largely due to the failure of the Darien project, and immediately retaliated with the Alien Act of 1705, an ultimatum to the Scots to consent to the Hanoverian succession or be labelled a foreign country and thus prohibited from unrestricted trade with England and the colonies.[13]

Eventually, both countries reached the agreement to stipulate the act of union, conceding it would be beneficial and advantageous for both parties. Needless to say, the Scottish Parliament had to consider and debate the Articles of Union, which set forth the conditions for the treaty. Nevertheless, the terms were adopted despite the intense opposition they encountered. As claimed by Donaldson, England would not have allowed a breakup of the already existing union, and even assuming a hypothetical situation of armed conflict, the ill-trained and poorly equipped Scottish soldiers alone would not have been able to hold back the English army.[14] Furthermore, taking into consideration the situation from the English

[12] Richard J. Sima, "How the Cold Climate Shaped Scotland's Political Climate", available at: https://eos.org/articles/how-the-cold-climate-shaped-scotlands-political-climate, 4 February 2020, accessed 15 Dec 2022.
[13] Hamish MacPherson, "How the Act of Union Came about through a Corrupt Fixed Deal in 1706", *The National*, 27 September 2020, accessed 12 Dec 2022.
[14] Donaldson, *op. cit*., p. 188.

perspective, it is also interesting to note that England's worry that the Scots could support France and reignite the *Auld Alliance*[15] was pivotal in the process of reaching the union. Indeed, even with its acknowledged military might, England continued to rely significantly on Scottish soldiers, and it would have been devastating if they switched sides and sided with the French.[16]

As a result, by July 1706 the two sides had agreed to the terms of the treaty. The resulting twenty-five articles of Union formed the basis of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and it was created as a single British state. Theoretically, the autonomous legislatures of England and Scotland were to be replaced by a new British parliament, but in practise, what happened was just an expanded English parliament.[17] The union provided that the new Parliament of Great Britain in Westminster would consist of forty-five Scottish representatives in the House of Commons and sixteen Scottish peers in the House of Lords, replacing an independent parliament in Edinburgh. Scotland would only make up roughly ten percent of the representatives in each House of parliament, although having a population of about one million, compared to about five million in England and Wales.[18] Yet, the union was more concerned with achieving economic and political dominance than it was with ensuring equal representation for all British subjects, and as a consequence, Scotland was legally entitled to much less representation at Westminster than it actually obtained.

On the other hand, with the treaty Scotland was granted the freedom to trade openly with both England and the English colonies. Henceforth, in return for financial compensation, Scotland was required to pay taxes and customs at the English rate; albeit with some major concessions as to make the treaty more palatable to particular economic interests and the nobility, who at the time represented by far the most significant political force in Scotland.[19] The significance of the treaty also extends to what it did not deal with. The integrity of Scottish judicial institutions was upheld and the Scottish legal system remained independent. Moreover, more importantly, the articles avoided discussing ecclesiastical issues. Acts protecting the integrity of their respective churches were passed by the Scottish and English parliaments, and such Acts were annexed to the treaty.[20]

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[15] The *Auld Alliance*, established in 1295, was a pact of reciprocal support and cooperation between Scotland and France to counteract England's dominance. See Lynch (ed.), *op. cit*., p. 144.
[16] Ben Johnson, "The Act of Union', www.historic-uk.com, 28 February 2015, accessed 5 Feb 2023.
[17] Robert Harris, "Union of 1707", in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, cit., p. 604.
[18] Richard B. Sher, "Scotland Transformed: The Eighteenth Century", in *Scotland a History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 187-89.
[19] Robert Harris, *op. cit*., p. 605.
[20] *Ibidem*.

However, due to some of the abovementioned reasons among others, the Union was initially so unwelcome that it barely survived its first decade. More animosity was stoked by a new export tax on linen in 1711, a rise in the salt tax in the following year, and the extension of a heavy English tax on malt in 1713. The fact that in 1713 all Scottish peers backed an unsuccessful move to dissolve the Act of Union provides a good indication of how widespread the level of unhappiness was at the time.[21] Other episodes, though, were taken through unconstitutional actions. Riots broke out in both Edinburgh and Glasgow right after the formal declaration of the Union, and a year later, a French fleet came dangerously close to landing an army in Scotland in an effort to install the only surviving son of James II on the throne. Further grounds for complaint rest on the fact that to many Scots, "the nation appeared to have surrendered its national integrity and political independence for an unproven, and unwarranted, dream of economic prosperity".[22]

The Union failed to promptly produce the advantages that several pro-unionists had predicted it would. Before entering an era of comparatively stable conditions and rising incomes, Scotland had to endure two decades of unstable economic and political circumstances.[23] Since not all of the treaty's effects could have been foreseen and had to be managed in practise, some dissatisfaction in the years immediately after the union was almost unavoidable. Following those early years, the Scots still had to go through a period of fairly difficult adjustment as they figured out what it meant to be ruled as a component of a greater whole. The Union's economic benefits were first disappointing, mostly because there needed to be a period of adjustment in that area as well. It took until the middle of the century before the expansion of Scottish trade and manufacturing became indubitably obvious. [24]

Nevertheless, even taking into account the first actual financial advantages derived from joining England's domestic and international trade, the union had its flaws, particularly from a cultural standpoint.[25] It appeared that Scotland's interests were consistently disregarded in general and this caused discontentment among the population. The key to the new system was the lack of interest shown by English authorities; it seemed that as long as Scotland remained quiet, provided obedient votes in parliament, and furnished soldiers for the army, other events there were of little concern. Besides, the Lowlands -the southern part of Scotland- lost their importance and were reduced to just a region inside a bigger kingdom,

[21] Richard B. Sher, *op. cit*., p. 288.
[22] *Idem*, p. 290.
[23] *Ibidem*.
[24] *Ibidem*.
[25] P. Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, London, Continuum, 2008, p. 17.

while the Highlands remained even more on the periphery than before. As a result, the relationship between the centre and the periphery was completely altered.[26]

The tension between Scotland and England did not decrease as a result of the Union, either. In fact, the conditions under which it was established had simply served to increase the already existent hostility. It is remarkable an unpleasant episode reported by the Scottish author James Boswell in his journal. It is recorded that in 1763 he went to see a comedy opera at London's Covent Garden Theatre and he witnessed a case of strong hostility and prejudice when two Highland officers entered the theatre and, before the opera began, the audience started chanting: "No Scots! No Scots! Out with them!" [27] To state that Boswell was outraged would be an understatement. The officers had recently returned from a victorious siege of Havana where they had fought together with English soldiers. "At that moment", Boswell wrote, "I hated the English. I wished from my soul that the Union was broke and that we might give them another Battle of Bannockburn".[28]

Many Englishmen thought that the Scots were "clannish, chauvinistic, and excessively acquisitive"[29] and every instance of Scottish patronage or inappropriate behaviour by a specific Scot was cited as additional supporting evidence for their ethnic prejudice. Even so, the real cause of the widespread English hostility towards Scotland in the 1760s relied in large measure on the belated success of the union—or rather, on some Englishmen's unwillingness to accept the notion of a political alliance that would have allowed Scots to fully play an active role in the political, economic, and cultural life of a truly United Kingdom. Generally speaking, it can be claimed that the fact that the union required both Scotland and England to undergo psychological adjustment tends to be overlooked.

To conclude, it might be argued that the achievement of unity was not a guarantee in 1707, and neither was its maintenance after that moment; it was unlikely to occur before the 1730s and possibly not until 1746.[30]

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[26] *Ibidem*.
[27] Hugh M. Milne, *Boswell's Edinburgh Journal*, Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2013, p. 30.
[28] *Ibidem*.
The Battle of Bannockburn, which was fought in 1314, marked a pivotal triumph of the Scots over the English army. See Lynch (ed.), *op. cit*., p. 335.
[29] Richard B. Sher, *op. cit*., p. 190.
[30] *Idem*, p. 192.

**The Phenomenon of Jacobitism**

The general feeling of discontent and loss of independence prompted two major actions in an attempt to subvert the given political order and restore a Stuart monarch, also driven by the hope to give back more power to Scotland. This phenomenon is known as Jacobitism, a political movement that advocated for the return of the House of Stuart to the British throne.[31] Although the Highland clans and the Episcopalian north-east provided most of the support for Jacobitism, it also capitalised on widespread feelings of national unhappiness that permeated Scottish society. In fact, although it never represented a national movement, the failure of the Union allowed Jacobite's to portray themselves as protectors of Scottish liberty who were committed to overthrowing the Union and re-establishing Scotland's parliament. Moreover, it gave rise to a vibrant culture of music, art, and political symbolism that was centred on hazy notions of vanishing national greatness. Nonetheless, during the first half of the eighteenth century, it was a concern of more than just sentimental interest, for it aimed at military conflicts and drastic changes.[32] Alexander Balfour explicitly refers to the above discussed massacre of Glencoe as the trigger of the success of Jacobitism in Scotland: "[…] the massacre of Glencoe, that indelible stain upon the character of a monarch, […] it is beyond a doubt, that this event cherished and kept alive that attachment to the Stuart family […]"[33]

William III had authorised the murder of numerous innocent individuals in an effort to discourage other Jacobites from rising up in rebellion, but the massacre ended up being one of the most persuasive reasons for people to join the rebels in the two Jacobite uprisings, the first one in 1715 and the second, more decisive, in 1746. In addition, following this event, the government had recognised they could carry out unconstitutional military executions in the Highlands with relative impunity; therefore, among Highlanders the feeling of hostility towards the English and the English government ran even deeper and they were more prone to revolt against the existing state of affairs. [34]

**The Jacobite Rebellion of 1715: the First Unsuccessful Attempt**

A Jacobite insurrection broke out in 1715, led by John Erskine, 6th Earl of Mar, and included several opponents of King George of Hanover. Under the commands of the exiled king, James Francis Edward Stuart, commonly known as the Old Pretender, Mar recruited an army of Highlanders and deployed it. It is challenging to define Mar's precise role in the general organisation of the Jacobite uprising in 1715. On the one hand, he kept up his outward

[31] Andrew MacKillop, *op. cit*., p. 349.
[32] Richard B Sher, op. cit., p. 192.
[33] A. Balfour, *Highland Mary*, London, A.K. Newman, 1826, Vol. IV, p. 171.
[34] Andrew Mackillop, *op. cit*., p. 350.

submission to the new king and even gave a loyalty address. On the other hand, he outlined a thorough invasion plan in his first letter to the exiled Stuart court, which dates to early July 1715. [35]

This revolutionary act, however, only lasted about a year before the government's forces routed the Jacobite army. The Earl of Mar persuaded the Old Pretender to address a final letter to the Scots. He thereupon renounced his right to the throne, left Scotland and his Highland army, and sailed to France and thereafter Italy. Daniel Szechi argues that Mar was capable of putting together more than 20,000 men to take up arms; hence, in his estimation, this was a larger uprising than the one that occurred in 1745. Admittedly, the Jacobites had weak leaders and a weak overall strategy in 1715.[36] Far too late, the Old Pretender finally made landfall in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, but by that time, the battle had already been lost, and further military actions were ineffective. The tactics throughout this uprising of 1715 were "marked with a disastrous combination of chronic indecision and strategic incompetence".[37] A significant number of the captured Jacobites were later convicted of high treason and executed. However, with the exception of a select few, most of those who had taken part in the Rebellion were eventually pardoned by the Indemnity Act of 1717, which was passed in July 1717.[38] The Disarming Act, which is the most pertinent law, was adopted in 1716. The legislation compelled the disarmament of every Highlander as well as the dissolution of the Independent Highland Companies, which included the Highland regiments of the British army. It made it illegal for anyone in specific areas of Scotland to possess warlike weapons without a permit. General Wade and his English regiment were tasked with enforcing this law.[39]

A further repercussion of the First Jacobite Rising was the realisation by the government of the new Union that it needed to take action to maintain authority over the Highlands. Since English soldiers, unlike the Black Watch and the Independent Companies, were unfamiliar with the Highland area, its wilderness, and its impracticability, it was determined to improve the roads and bridges to make the most remote regions of the Highlands more accessible and, thus, easier to administer. The untamed, mountainous

[35] Christoph Ehrenstein, *John Erskine*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 17 Sept 2015, accessed 7 Jan 2023.
[36] Daniel Szechi, *1715: The Great Jacobite Revolt*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006.
[37] A. I. MacInnes, *Clanship, Commerce, and The House of Stuart*, East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 1996, p. 200.
[38] Peter Hume Brown, *A History of Scotland to the Present Time*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 154.
[39] *Idem*, p. 156.

environment, which made military transport especially tough, was actually one of the major issues in enforcing government rule.[40]

In order to address this issue, General Wade was sent on a mission to construct a network of bridges and roadways across the Highlands. Wade was able to construct strong forts and connect them with a network of routes, thus allowing government forces to travel swiftly through the northern region. In reality, this strategy did not prove useful in establishing military dominance over the Highlands; for instance, several Highlanders continued to use their old routes and detours, which English soldiers were often unable to track. In a report he wrote to King George in 1724, General Wade himself criticised the Disarming Act's lack of success.[41]

**The Jacobite Uprising of 1745: the End of the Clan Society**

Thirty years later, in 1745, a more determining Jacobite uprising took place. This event has indelibly marked both Scottish and – more broadly– British history for the drastic and severe consequences it brought. Charles Edward Stuart, commonly referred to as Bonnie Prince Charlie, made an effort to overthrow King George II and reinstate his father, James Francis Edward Stuart, as the rightful monarch of Great Britain. This ended Jacobitism as a political and revolutionary movement by serving as the final in a string of uprisings that had started in the previous century. It is imperative to highlight that, as suggested by Donaldson, not all Scots supported the Jacobite cause and the King's overthrow.[42] By the 1740s, a generation of Scottish people had grown up without ever knowing a time when Scotland was independent, and many Scots respected the Duke of Cumberland, the man who would be in charge of the eventual defeat of the Jacobites.

Nevertheless, the firm belief and enthusiasm for the purpose shown by the supporters was still cause for concern and had to be repelled. Throughout this rebellion, Charles Stuart and his troops achieved a number of triumphs, even taking control of Edinburgh and decisively winning the Battle of Prestonpans in 1745. Prompted by Charles's promise of significant help from English Jacobites and especially the expectation of a French arrival in Southern England, the Highlanders resolved to attack England, aiming at reaching London and thus the parliament. As a result, the Jacobite army managed to march as far south as Derby, in England, before turning around and withdrawing back to the Highlands. In fact, the anticipated assistance rapidly fell through, particularly from France which did not seem prone

[40] Richard B. Sher, *op. cit*., p. 297.
[41] See Stella Moretti*, The Highlands in the Romantic Novel Culture and Identity in Early 19th-century Scottish Literature,* Phd Thesis*,* Ca' Foscari, Venezia, 2016.
[42] Gordon Donaldson, *op. cit.,* p. 204.

to fully support the Jacobite cause. The Scots quickly recognised they were outnumbered and in danger, therefore they pondered on withdrawing; while most Jacobites agreed with the choice, it also irreparably divided Charles and its supporters. Although the Stuart cause gained another victory at Falkirk Muir in January 1746, the Rebellion was altogether defeated during the Battle of Culloden on April 16th.[43] The actual fight was fast and lasted less than an hour, indisputably resulting in a resounding government victory owing to the troops of the Duke of Cumberland. This battle is frequently referred to as the last fight ever to be undertaken on British soil.[44] The reasons for the defeat were evident: the battlefield had been an adverse choice, given that Cumberland's cannon was thus granted a clear field of fire, and the Jacobite army was fewer in number, hungry and worn out from a night march, demoralized, and undersupplied in comparison to their opponents' superior training and organisation. After the defeat and two months of eluding capture, Bonnie Prince Charles was assisted in his escape by Flora MacDonald, a Scottish woman, and he eventually managed to flee to France. However, he was unable to secure funding for a second attempt and passed away in Rome in 1788.

The happenings of 1745, from the uniting of the clans to the Jacobite failure at Culloden and the escape of Bonnie Prince Charlie, are a key theme in early-nineteenth-century Scottish literature. One striking example is Walter Scott's *Waverley*, which will be extensively discussed in this dissertation. The novel is based on the events of Forty-Five, making it one of the most heavily exploited historical moments in the literature of the time. The rebellion's consequences for Scotland and particularly the Highlands are generally of more interest than the specific events that ultimately led to its failure. Indeed, Donaldson's remark about the loss is highly significant: when the population of the Highlands must have been around a quarter of a million, there were only approximately 5,000 men in the Jacobite army on the battlefield of Culloden; it follows that the transformation underwent by Highland society was not a physical military loss, but rather a symbolic one, defined by all of its repercussions.[45] The actions used by England to prevent any further Highland insurrection were proportionate to the level of anxiety—if not panic—that the Jacobites' advance towards London had provoked among the English and the government. The brutality with which the rebels were treated at Culloden was the first indication of the British government's ruthless stance against them. No one who participated in the uprising was to be spared, according to the English motto "no quarter." The following description exemplifies the English strategy: it

[43] Andrew Mackillop, *op. cit*., p. 350.
[44] *Idem*, p. 351.
[45] Gordon Donaldson, *op. cit*., p. 296.

was recorded that many men were shot where they were lying; others were killed by burning. Moreover, in flagrant violation of the Act of Union, which guaranteed the independence of the Scottish legal system, more than 100 people were transported across the border into England, tried, and put to death; those who were spared death were forced into prisons, often together with their families, where many of them died from malnutrition and disease and some others were sent to the colonies as slaves. As far as the land was concerned, crops were destroyed while cattle, and sheep were slaughtered; every area of the Highlands saw the burning of cottages, homes, and farms.[46] The "harrying of the glens," as it soon became known, was carried out brutally and it is not surprising that the Duke of Cumberland acquired the epithet "Butcher," by which he was renowned across all of Scotland.

Once the insurrection was put down, harsh measures were employed, as well. In an effort to completely eradicate Highland cultural identity, the English took a colonialist approach. The underlying assumption was that Highlanders would abandon their support for the Stuarts once they were forced to adopt new lifestyles that would have removed Catholicism and feudalism. Robert Clyde claims that English and lowland Whigs held the view that the Highlanders' ferocious spirit of war and, hence, their loyalty to the exiled Stuarts, was a result of the blood running through their veins, just their way of being.[47] Clanship, which organised Highland people into communities led by chieftains, each one with specific authority, was the aspect of Gaelic culture that the English thought to be the most threatening. When seen through English eyes, clan chiefs acted like mediaeval tyrants, willing to commit murder and theft on demand. Such a social structure represented a kind of regional power eluding the control of the government based in London, and it was obviously in stark contradiction to the basic idea of Great Britain as it was created in 1707.

In addition to clanship, everything specifically from the Highlands had to vanish. Once these particular Gaelic customs and cultural traits had been eradicated, England aimed at replacing them with its own. Schools were built in the Highlands to accomplish this goal, which included teaching English and suppressing Catholicism in addition to enhancing literacy. Regarding clans, the English government made an effort to undermine the chiefs' authority by integrating them with the rest of the British nobility and encouraging them to run their lands more like companies. It was only afterwards that, according to them, the area could hope to see improvement, and with that, the Highlands could be turned peaceful. Imposing a contemporary commercial system upon Highland society quickly revealed its

[46] Peter Somerset Fry and Fiona Somerset Fry, *The History of Scotland*, Routledge, 1982, p. 196.
[47] Robert Clyde, *From Rebel to Hero. The Image of the Highlander*, 1745-1830, East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 1998, p. 17.

limitations. No longer able to compete economically with the rest of the Kingdom, many people struggled to survive and sustain themselves with their property. For improvers who converted farmland into sheep-farms, agriculture turned out to be a rather unsatisfying profession. The result was that tenants were no longer able to make a living from farming and were thus forced to leave the Highlands, either moving to large cities to work in manufacturing or to the New Continent. All of these reforms and measures were referred to by the government as "improvement".[48] The Highlands' culture, identity, and scenery were all altered by the imposed transformation. Therefore, Gaelic culture, which was perceived as posing a threat to the kingdom's unity, was explicitly targeted for destruction through measures like the ban on the Gaelic language, as well as the tartan clothing.

Yet, the Highlands reform laws passed after the Forty-Five were already revoked in 1782. Among these are to be found the Proscription Act, which approved the disarmament of the Highlanders and it essentially was a repetition of the former Disarming Act with harsher penalties that were this time strictly enforced. A new section of the act, known as the Dress Act, prohibited the use of the tartan, the kilt, or any kind of typical Highland dress, under penalty of harsh punishments including incarceration and transportation. After the Proscription Act, the Heritable Jurisdictions Act was enacted, which stripped the chiefs of their authority over clan members. On July 1, 1782, these laws were ultimately removed.[49]

**From the *Forty-Five* to the Age of Walter Scott**

It is nonetheless true that Scotland underwent a significant change in the eighteenth century, particularly after 1746, notwithstanding the turmoil of the previous decades. What occurred during the second of the three phases of the union, as characterised by Donaldson[50], was the development of a Scottish political awareness that shared British politics. Scottish representatives then began to have their voices heard as Scottish political history melded with British political history. Scottish voters frequently determined the makeup of the British government was frequently determined by Scottish voters when a Conservative majority in England was offset by a massive Liberal majority in Scotland. So, in the second part of the century, Scotland and England both began to move towards a shared future that was driven by a booming economy whose advantages could be gradually felt throughout Scotland. This century was also marked by extraordinary advancements and spectacular efflorescence of knowledge and literature. The Scottish Enlightenment was at its peak during this time. It was

[48] Alexander John Youngson, *After the Forty-Five: The Economic Impact on the Scottish Highlands*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1973.
[49] Retrieved from: http://www.electricscotland.com/history/highland_dress.htm, accessed 7 Jan 2023.
[50] Donaldson, *op. cit*.

an intellectual and philosophical movement that was at the time comparable to, and possibly even surpassing, that of all of Europe. It was a new period when the brightest minds from Scotland engaged in debate and competition with those from Europe.[51]

In the era after Scotland lost its autonomy, its people made a renewed effort to establish themselves in the hope to attain an unparalleled level of global acclaim for their accomplishments. Some scholars have made the claim that the Union of 1707 was directly responsible for the Scottish Enlightenment. Even if Scotland had found itself unexpectedly without independent power[52], the Church of Scotland's headquarters and leadership as well as the medical establishment and the universities remained; therefore, the Scottish aristocracy was nevertheless committed to contributing to these institutions and enhancing the values and prosperity of their nation. "A new middle-class elite that dominated urban Scotland"[53] and supported the Scottish Enlightenment was made up of professors, philosophers, medical professionals, scientists, lawyers, and architects. It's probable that the Scottish educated elite emerged from this yearning and dedication. One of the Union's most beneficial effects may have been to inspire in many Scots a vibrant new attitude, a psychological will to succeed, founded in both traditional Scottish views and new prospects. As Scots strove to overcome real and imagined shortfalls by proving their own merits to themselves and outsiders, a long-standing heritage of national self-doubt and insecurity grew into a creative force.[54]

The nineteenth century, on the other hand, strengthened unionism, in contrast to the tension of the previous decades: "There were few rewards in being anti-imperialist in a community which benefited so much by imperialism"[55]; "the industrial revolution […] seemed to create a common history for England and Scotland".[56] Regrettably, this new condition of agreement threw a shadow on patriotism towards Scotland itself, instead of Great Britain. In Scotland two dominating sets of hopes and concerns gave rise to the unusual sense of national identity that emerged during this time and endured for several decades. To a certain degree, it led to a concern with the modernising of Scotland's economy and civil society, which meant bringing a backward nation into a cosmopolitan world of trade and modernity. At the same time, it sparked a widespread worry that Scotland might evolve into

[51] Richard B. Sher, *op. cit*., p. 301.
[52] Michael Lynch (ed.), *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, 2001, pp. 133–37.
[53]Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Historical Age of the Historical Nation*, Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2002, p. 12.
[54] *Idem*, p. 13.
[55] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism. Scottish Society and Politics 1707-1977*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1977, p. 41.
[56] *Idem*, p. 73.

an Anglicized province, which left the Scots confused about their own distinguishing identity, about the ties that had characterized them when they inhabited a once independent kingdom.

It is in such a context, that the Scottish intelligentsia, under the leadership of historian William Robertson, began a tremendously fruitful and incredibly sophisticated effort to revise Scottish history and to recreate the historical pillars upon which the Scottish notion of a national identity was built. Robertson demonstrated that Scotland's historic constitution only had emotional and antiquarian value for the present, having become outdated and obsolete with the advancement of civilization.[57] One of the major symbols of national identity, emblematic of this period was developed on such historiographical foundations: the entertaining bard who recalls the triumphs of a heroic period but warns to live in the present. Most famously, Ossian's representation of this idea and Scott's memorable adoption of it served for its enduring symbolism.[58] At a time when revolutions, wars, and enormous growth in commerce were transforming the civilised world, it gave rise to popular historical literature that had a profound impact on that culture. It was a form of literature that revealed how a country may learn to honour its past without letting it compromise the present's pragmatic concerns. It was a legacy that bestowed upon a formerly declining country a cultural renown that it could not have probably achieved without sacrificing its previous political character.[59]

[57] Nicholas Philipson, "National Identity", in Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History,* cit*.,* p. 44.
[58] *Ibidem*.
[59] *Idem*, p. 442.

## 1.2 Writing and Inventing History

The historian Herbert Butterfield has made an effort to outline the traits that all historical novels have in common. He distinguished historical fiction from historiography in order to define it. In Butterfield's estimation, because historiography sees history as "the whole process of development that leads up to the present", it seeks to create a "generalisation, to discover a formula." By contrast, the historical novel aims to "reconstruct a world, to particularise, to catch a glimpse of human nature". The goal of a historical novelist is to "recapture the fleeting moment" by accurately capturing the distinctive atmosphere of a bygone era.[60]

Historical fiction's modern origin dates back to late the seventeenth century in France. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the genre emerged in Britain and grew to include a variety of subgenres.[61] *The Princess of Cleves* (1678), written by Madame de Lafayette, an insider at Louis XIV's court, served as its model. The 16th-century setting of Cleves focuses on Henry II's final year in power, the heroine's entrance at court, and the resulting romantic situations. The majority of the characters are historical figures, with the exception of the heroine, and the plot's schemes and intrigues play out rather accurately. It remained the most well-known and extensively read work of historical fiction for several decades.[62] Another contribution to the genre was written by the Abbé Prévost. He had escaped to England as an exile and developed a fascination with English, Scottish, and Irish history, which served as the principal historical anchoring for his two famous novels of the 1730s: *The English Philosopher* (1730), and *Memoirs and Adventures of a Man of Quality* (1728–31).[63] Lafayette was more conventional in her writing; in contrast to her, Prévost's strategy is more flexible and he had the ability to persuade his audience to accept almost anything; Prévost's work is characterized by the method of inventing fictions that, due to their astonishing extravagance, pass for historical accounts. The differences between the two authors in terms of style and theme shouldn't hide their affinities. Both portray their works as biographies or autobiographies, weave stories around great historical figures, and frequently stress the splendor of royal dynasties. Madame de Lafayette's writing was translated into English, while Prevost's novels would soon be warmly welcomed by Anglophone writers.[64]

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[60] Herbert Butterfield, *The Historical Novel*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1924, p. 3.
[61] Richard Maxwell, *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650–1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
[62] *Idem*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period,* Cambridge, 2008, p. 65.
[63] *Ibidem*.
[64] *Ibidem*.

The popularity of historical fiction took place in both England and France during the first half of the eighteenth century, with the latter providing most of the contributions, even when English or occasionally Scottish history was addressed. Daniel Defoe's writings, such as *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1719) and *Memoirs of the Plague Year* (1722), are among the most well-known English examples.[65] Even so, it has sometimes been claimed that *Longsword Earl of Salisbury: An Historical Romance* (1762), most likely credited to Thomas Leland, was the first authentic English historical novel.[66] In *Longsword*, a mediaeval English knight attempts to defeat an invading force and return to his homeland after a prolonged military war. Identifiable historical sources are used in the novel, but the sense of chronology is far less precise than in Lafayette or Prévost.[67]

A new element to the genre was introduced by *The Castle of Otranto* by Walpole, published in 1764. Primarily, the Gothic fiction subgenre was fundamentally changed by this book; perhaps less obviously, this text also contributes to the field of historical fiction. Walpole alternates between different social conventions, customs, and beliefs from his own time to the period in which the story is situated. To put it another way, readers are forced to develop a historical sensibility, which enables them to tolerate occurrences that they would otherwise find unacceptable and to realize that manners are depending on time. This novel is filled with peculiar, enigmatic figurative moments that, in the context of historical fiction, represent a bold experiment in comprehending and recreating historical time: the past is seen as a place where people behave differently and, more importantly, perceive the world and the events that take place there in a different way.[68]

The second half of the eighteenth century saw a rise in the popularity of biography and memoirs. This need for more in-depth portrayals of the lives of well-known historical personalities fostered the market for fabricated biographies of those individuals, frequently referred to as "heroic novels." [69] A noticeably influential precursor was Jane Porter's fictionalized account of William Wallace, *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810). The concept of international resistance movements captivated Jane Porter, and, due to its political undertones, *The Scottish Chiefs* was banned by Napoleon. This implies that, although being set in the

[65] *Idem*, p. 67.
[66] See John Stephen's survey of the conventional wisdom on this subject in his edition of Longsword (New York, New York University Press, 1957, pp. vii–viii.
[67] Richard Maxwell, *op. cit*., p. 66.
[68] *Ibidem*.
[69] Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000.

chivalric period, a novel like *The Scottish Chiefs* can seem to be securely rooted and relevant also in the historical moment of its writing.

However, despite all the discussed contributions to the genre, it should be pointed out that according to the critic Georg Lukacs "the historical novel arose at the beginning of the nineteenth century"[70], and more precisely, this temporal reference coincides with the apparition of Walter Scott's *Waverley*. In fact, Lukács made the case in his seminal study of the genre that Scott's created the classical form of the historical novel, and that he owed little to no inspiration from earlier writers. New historical circumstances -the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars first and foremost- were crucial in enabling the new form of representation. Overall, Lukacs' work supports the notion that the works of the seventeenth century should be labelled as novels with historical themes rather than actual historical novels. The reason for this is that they only qualify as "historical" in terms of their purely aesthetic choice of topic and attire, given the fact that the writers entirely recreated the manners of their own period in both the personality or attitude of the characters and in their behaviour. Even in the influential Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, history is deemed as being portrayed as mere costumery according to the perspective adopted by Lukacs, since only the peculiarities and wonders of the past matter, rather than an accurate depiction of a certain historical era. Although Georg Lukacs has been the main advocate of this theory, in addition to him, several critics of historical fiction, including Herbert Butterfield, Avrom Fleishman, and Harry Shaw label works published prior to Scott's as costume dramas, Gothic romances, or fantasies and start their explorations of the genre with Waverley.[71] Before Scott, the genre lacked a specific historical element—that is, people's distinctive personalities were not derived from the historical characteristics of their time. On the other hand, he managed to give the novel a historical connotation not simply by placing the action in a certain time period and blending fictional characters and situations with real-life events, but also through a mirroring "inundation" of the world of the novel with the "dynamic currents of historical time".[72] Thus, Scott is regarded as a pioneer. This notwithstanding, he was also rather skilled in knowing what to grasp and exploit from his predecessors. Scott gained knowledge from the vast selection of literary and historical materials at his disposal and, in particular, relied

[70] Georg Lukacs, *The Historical Novel*, Merlin Press, 1989, first published in Russian in 1937.
[71] Anne H. Stevens, *Tales of Other Times: A Survey of British Historical Fiction 1770-1812*, Las Vegas, University of Nevada, 2001.
[72] Richard Maxwell, *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650-1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 29.

on the Scottish Enlightenment school of historiography.[73] Among the main English-speaking writers, Scott is often deemed the most educate; he was aware of what had already been accomplished and written before him and succeeded in bringing it all together while maintaining a clear sense of his own personal purpose. The main inspirations for his works are still up for debate. Jerome Mitchell traces Scott's inspirations all the way back to Chaucer and mediaeval romance, particularly the Middle English romances[74] while Jane Millgate credits mediaeval romance as the main source for his works.[75] Scott, though, was also well-versed in French historical fiction literature. Like Lafayette, Prévost, and their successors before him, he constructed fictional heroes who appeared to veer in and out of history. Even more, Scott admired *The Castle of Otranto* as a ground-breaking example of the genre of antiquarian historical fiction; Walpole's book remained Scott's most significant point of inspiration throughout the course of his career as a novelist.[76] Even more than Walpole, he created a complex framework for his novels that allowed him to give readers the impression that they had been transported back in time to interact with the customs and systems of a bygone era. Moreover, Scott managed to deal with central and critical events in the manner of the Porters. His novels immerse the readers in history, in an overwhelming way. The point was to convey a compelling tale that has the impression of an emergency, of a crisis, that needs to be addressed immediately. Similarly to the Porters and much more so to his famous Irish contemporary Maria Edgeworth, he discovered a means to contain and conjure the energies of national identity, spirits that had been evoked by recent historical events, like for instance the French Revolution.[77] Yet, whatever insights Scott may have taken from earlier works, according to many scholars he nevertheless remains the founder of the genre of the historical novel as it is now conceived, and *Waverley* is deemed to represent its paradigmatic form.

### *Waverley* and the Reasons behind Its Huge Success

*Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* deals with the happenings of the Jacobite uprising in 1745. Although it was not actually published until 1814, the subtitle "It's Sixty Years Since" refers to the alleged time of writing, 1805, sixty years after the insurrection. The Englishman

[73] Richard Maxwell, "The Historical Novel", in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, cit., p. 66.
[74] See Jerome Mitchell, *A Study of Sir Walter Scott's Indebtedness to the Literature of the Middle Ages*, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1989.
[75] See Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist*, University of Toronto Press, 1984.
[76] Richard Maxwell, "The Historical Novel", in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, *cit*., p. 67.
[77] *Ibidem*.

Edward Waverley, the protagonist of *Waverley*, is a young man who has spent his youth fantasizing and reading about romantic ideals and adventures. Waverley is sent to the army, a position he feels unsuited for after spending his formative years on the grounds of his uncle's manor house. His time on duty is merely a temporary condition, as he inadvertently prepares for the experience of a lifetime. Soon after, the young man leaves his regiment in order to travel to Scotland and visit the Baron of Tully-Veolan, a friend of his uncle, and gets to know his beautiful daughter Rose. Waverley learns about Scottish culture and then gains firsthand knowledge of the Highland way of life, witnessing the life of the MacIvor clan. He develops a friendship with Fergus, the clan chief, and falls in love with Flora, Fergus' sister, but due to certain misunderstandings, he gets entangled in the Jacobite Rising. The young man takes part in the Jacobite army's initial military victories but soon finds himself divided between his former devotion to England and his new commitment to Scotland. However, he leaves the rebel army just before the Jacobite cause ultimately fails. Back in safety, Edward obtains a pardon, but Fergus is found guilty and put to death, Flora leaves the country, and most of the supporters of the uprising leaders get killed. Eventually, when Waverley marries Rose and returns the Bradwardine family to their old status, happiness is at last found.

When *Waverley* was published, for reasons that are still the subject of much speculation, Scott wanted to remain anonymous and thus hid the author's identity. According to Thomas Crawford, there are a number of potential motivations: the lingering notion that writing novels was not a proper career for a gentleman; a vulnerability to criticism; recognition of the utility of secrecy as a promotional tactic; a mere love of anonymity; or ultimately, the psychological requirement for a *persona* and the aesthetic desire of a formal frame inside which the story might be confined.[78]

Despite Scott's anonymity, Waverley's success was utterly astonishing: four editions of the book were sold in as many months, and a further 40.000 copies were purchased when the entire "*Waverley* Novels" volume was published in 1829. In the course of the Romantic period, the "Author of *Waverley*" or "the Great Unknown" as he became known, "sold more novels than all the other novelists of the time put together"; little more than a decade later he was still "by several orders of magnitude, the author whose works had sold the largest number of copies in the English-speaking world."[79] An analogous level of critical reputation matched this popularity. Victorian readers admired and referred to Scott as the "Wizard of the north" who revived the ballad, epic, and romance genres for the reading population of the

[78] Thomas Crawford, *Walter Scott*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, Scottish Writers series, 1982, pp. 13-14
[79] William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 221.

industrial modern age. The historical novel was an excellent example of how the novel as a whole was modernizing as a national literary genre. Outside of Britain, from Russia to Italy, his renown was even stronger, and the book was rapidly translated into many different languages.

In great part, Scott's decision to write about Highland civilization and to have his story take place there, in the north, contributed to his enormous success. In fact, this piqued people's interest and curiosity on various levels. It is noteworthy to note that the English people as well displayed this kind of interest. Watson identifies a sense of longing for the rustic and sentimental in nineteenth-century Scotland in literature, which coincided with an English interest in Scottish history and landscape, since they did not have much knowledge of those territories.[80] As already argued, the previous century had led to the loss of Scottish identity, consequently it can be argued that writing about Scottish history itself was an act of self-identification in which the country's past was exploited to define its identity. The goal of literary nationalism was to forge a culture and identity that was as distinct from the English one as feasible.[81] Highland culture served as a focal point for Scottish nationalist writers in order to achieve their goal of fostering a distinct non-English identity. Due to their prolonged isolation from England and the Lowlands, the Highlands were seen to be the region where traditional Scottish customs and ways of life lasted longer unaffected by English culture. This is one of the possible reasons for the growing interest in the Highlands as a base for national identity. As a result, national writers have made an effort to preserve some aspects of Highland culture and incorporate them into the distinctive identity of Scotland.[82] In addition to that, the nation's past is also used as a source of identity, with particular emphasis placed on the events that are deemed to be most representative and emblematic of the nation. The treatment inflicted on the Highlanders after Culloden was seen as a symbol of Scotland's national loss, which is another fundamental reason for Scottish attention in Highland history. Gaelic culture had never before been acknowledged as a component of Scottish national identity before romanticism. This shift in perception resulted from particular historical and cultural circumstances, which made contemporary Scots identify with the Highlands as the emblem of their lost independence, where the consequences of the English domination were more pronounced. Only after it had been eradicated was Highland culture saved and elevated to the national emblem.[83] Romantic nationalists disapproved of the forceful implementation of

[80] See Roderick Watson, *The Literature of Scotland*, London, Macmillan, 1984.
[81] See Robert Clyde, *op. cit*.
[82] Stella Moretti, *op. cit*., p. 85.
[83] *Ibidem*.

reforms upon the Highland society, even though they agreed with the improvers that it was necessary to get rid of archaic practises associated with feudalism. The Highlands, for Scottish nationalist writers, served as the more obvious illustration of the imposition of advancement on less advanced areas, emphasising the cultural drawbacks associated with modernity. It was held the view that advancement and progress were positive, as long as they did not include the annihilation of customs and behaviours that, although archaic, formed the foundation of a people's very identity.[84]

Another component in its popularity is perhaps the fact that it was not written with the mere purpose of telling a story; rather, Scott's aim was that of disputing and challenging prejudices regarding Scotland and its people.[85] Needless to say, Scotland was still internally split at the time. Notwithstanding the forced improvement, the English government continued to consider the Highlands as a foreign area to colonise, whereas the Lowlands enjoyed a type of semi-peripheral condition. Therefore, the Highlands can be easily described as a peripheral region, lacking in local government and administered by what once was a foreign nation, England. Hence, Scott was tasked with educating a Great Britain that is almost entirely unaware of the history, heritage, and traditions of Highland society, even on the Scottish side of the border. Notably, he found no need to describe Hanoverian society as it existed *'Sixty Years Since*. This is due to the fact that, in his opinion, whereas Hanoverian society had been on the correct and modern side of history even those sixty years before, Highland society had been on the unaccepted and wrong one and had therefore been crushed. He viewed history as the never-ending cycle of hostility, rapprochement, and loss through which we accept change.[86]

In any case, very little was known about this territory as well as its inhabitants, especially beyond preconceptions. This is made clear in the preface of *Waverley*, where he emphasizes his willingness to portray Highlanders "in a more favorable light than they had been placed hitherto, and tend to procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles"[87] in response to preconceived notions that were already in place. He acknowledges the intention of dispelling negative perceptions about Scotland by responding to them. Moreover, he wanted to portray and exploit Scottish traditions and history, without inventing or enhancing prejudices, so that future generations might recognize themselves in his words.

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[84] Robert Clyde, *op. cit*., p. 32.
[85] Alison Lumsden, *Beyond the Dusky Barrier: Perceptions of the Highlands in the Waverley Novels*, Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 2009.
[86] Kathryn Sutherland, *Introduction*, in W. Scott, *Waverley*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. XIX.
[87] Walter Scott, "General Preface", in *Waverley Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, University of Georgia Libraries, Harper, ed. 1829, p. 12.

This is something he insists on in *A Postscript which Should Have Been a Preface*, where he remarks his goal was to describe his characters "not by a caricatured and exaggerated use of the national dialect, but by their habits, manners, and feelings," adding that "to the rising generation the tale may present some of the manners of their forefathers."[88] *Waverley's* portrayal of manners is an important aspect; therefore, Scott meticulously gives the reader vivid depictions of Highland society, customs, and geography when discussing the Highlands.

In addition, the choice to set the novel in 1745 should not be overlooked either, for several reasons. It was released soon enough after the Jacobite Rising for readers to still be able to remember it; as a matter of fact, Scott was able to make certain that historical facts could be securely mixed with made-up ones because the events depicted date back just far enough to be deemed a part of the past while still being recent enough to have living witnesses to confirm them. In his discussion of different types of memory, Jan Assmann asserts that a particular temporal space will gradually fade away after 80 years, yet the desire to preserve this temporal space will intensify after 40 years. This is what he refers to as 'communicative memory', the kind of memory that may be shared in real time with eyewitnesses. Writing about these historical events allows to convert this communication memory into cultural memory, establishing it as the foundation of identity.[89] Still in *Waverley's Postscript*, the focus is given to change and progress after the happenings of 1745, for as writes Scott: "... we are not aware of the progress we have made until we fix our eye on the now distant point from which we have been drifted."[90] The narrator emphasises that if the past is left behind, it is impossible to determine one's position in history, and that there can be no possible future for a nation without an understanding and an embrace of its past.

In this regard, a comparison between the therapist's role in psychoanalysis and that of the historian has been considered: it is the responsibility of the historian to contextualize traumatic or dangerous events within the framework of a familiar and comforting narrative. The goal of the historian is to reacquaint his readers with lost or repressed events by bringing them to mind and placing them inside the context of a story.[91] Likewise, Scott deals with the English invasion of the Highlands while attempting to defend it as a necessary prerequisite for Scotland's and Britain's further advancement.

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[88] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 375.

[89] See Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. München: C.H. Beck, 1997, as quoted in Christian Kucznierz, *Imagining Scotland. National self-depiction in Sir Walter Scott's "Waverley", Lewis Grassic Gibbon's "Sunset Song", Irvine Welsh's "Trainspotting" and Alasdair Gray's "Lanark",* PhD thesis, Regensburg, Universität Regensburg, 2009, p. 51.

[90] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 376.

[91] Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact*",* in R. Canary and H. Kozicki, eds., *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1978, p. 87.

The situation of Scotland during the Jacobite Rising of 1745 strongly contrasted with modern Scotland, which at that time represented a more quiet and vital part of Great Britain, and dealing with it was a useful means to analyse the sacrifices needed to get to the situation of his time. The historical novel, and more broadly, all literary genres that deal with history, have a tendency to use literature as a tool for historical analysis and enquiry into questions concerning contemporary society and culture. The 1745 Jacobite Rising is examined in Waverley in terms of its cultural, social, and political repercussions in order to explain the political and cultural position of Scotland in the early nineteenth century. John Ruskin claimed that Scott's ability to encapsulate the spirit of his time was the driving force behind his success.[92] In fact, Scott provided a solution to the urge of modern people to delve and look back on their past in order to understand what led to their present. Ruskin asserts that this need is coupled with an aesthetic yearning to flee the present, more specifically from the alienating reality of contemporary life, spent in industrial towns: "[...] [man is] driven to seek in history, [...], the fulfilment [he] cannot find in everyday life" [93].

Hence, although writing about the past, the link with the present is always extremely central. In particular in the *Postscript,* but also in the whole novel, Scott makes an effort to combine two different types of narration in order to form a new one. It merges two separate histories into one, by turning Scotland into the land of romance, England into the main leading part of history, and making them converge to finally make the United Kingdom their shared future story.

Adopting a similar position, Murray Pittock described post-Union Scottish writing as being twofold, with a connotation of doubleness, Scottish on one side and British on the other, rather than as lacking or broken.[94] As stated by Michael Gardiner, the unique nature of Scott's creation might be interpreted as a conciliation between his own conflicted feelings, with a British mind solidly in favour of one side and a Scottish heart inclined towards the other. Gardiner's point is that a cultural duality had developed within Britain that was able to preserve "Scottishness" as a daily experienced national identity. Early nineteenth-century literary figures like Walter Scott served as an example of this by viewing Britain as the head, such as the reasonable and rational half of a Scottish person, while the "heart" is romanticised as a melancholy type of remembrance that can never be realised as a condition again.[95]

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[92] J. Ruskin, *Modern Painters III* [1856], in E.T. Cook, A. Wedderburn (eds), *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols, London, George Allen, 1903-1912, Vol. V, p. 330.
[93] *Idem*, p. 326.
[94] Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 87.
[95] Michael Gardiner, *Modern Scottish Culture*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005, p. 32.

In fact, given the topic of the novel, it might be easily assumed that Scott was against the Union and eager for a return to independence for his country; yet the truth is exactly the opposite. Critics have often considered this author a rather complex man and described him in a paradoxical way. An appropriate account of him is perhaps the one given by Hugh Trevor —Roper, stating that "within him there were two souls"[96], he was both modernist and traditionalist, the very educated man from the Enlightenment who unmasked the deceit of Ossian, a Unionist believer but also the romantic and patriotic Jacobite. All in all, he professed himself a pro-unionist, but due to his studies of law, he wanted both parts to be equally handled in the treaty. Scott wanted to keep the best aspects of the past while at the same time he acknowledged and was grateful for the advantages of change. He was a fervent Unionist, but a union of fair alliance between a Scotland that was proud of its Scottishness and an England that was confident in its Englishness.[97] What he wanted was for the two constituents of the United Kingdom to be equal, to enjoy the same benefits, without situations of submission or strong conflict. The kind of union that Scott envisioned did not necessarily involve total assimilation; on the contrary, he desired and believed it was feasible to strike a balance between the preservation of some differences and peaceful fusion and advancement. Yet this readiness to appreciate diversity was inexorably linked to the fact that it no longer represented a threat to the well-being of the nation.[98] As a result, writing about the Jacobite revolt also represented for him a way to get his contemporaries to reflect on that delicate historical moment, to make them accept it for what it was, without condemning it or, on the contrary, idolizing it, for the purpose of a more aware and peaceful future coexistence in that new nation, which was Great Britain. Many times, critics have interpreted Sir Walter Scott's choice of setting for *Waverley* as a symbolic resolution of political strife and acceptance of Scotland's final bonding to England, with the ensuing loss and displacement of a Scottish identity into the British one. And yet, 1746 signified far more than just Scotland's loss of autonomy; it also marked the end of the last failed effort to bring back the absolute monarchy, which the British Isles' revolutionary age between 1640 and 1688 had abolished, the end of the feudal system, and the beginning of the path towards the emergence of a bourgeois society.[99]

[96] Hugh Trevor Roper, *The Invention of Scotland,* New Haven, Yale UP, 2008, p. 211.
[97] See Stuart Kelly, *Scott-land: The Man Who Invented a Nation*, Edinburgh, Polygon, 2021.
[98] See Edwin Muir, *Scott and Scotland. The Predicament of the Scottish Writer*, Edinburgh, Polygon, 1982.
[99] Nairn Tom, *The Break-up of Britain*, London, New Left Books, 1981, pp. 15-16.

**After *Waverley*: Innovations in the Genre of the Historical Novel**

Before delving into the innovations brought on by Scott in the genre, it is interesting to discuss why *Waverley* can be qualified as the model for the historical novel in the first place. A historical novel is such if it actively incorporates the idea of history as a forming force, affecting not just the people within the plot but also the author and reader outside of it. During the course of the reading, readers discover that the main characters in such works must battle not only the influences of history in their own period but also its effects on life at all times. The idea that everyone's destiny is determined by fate is represented by history rather than the gods.[100]

*Waverley* excellently satisfies this criterion since it is easy to find in Scott's book the active presence of history that Fleishman refers to: history in *Waverley* is the surge that sweeps Edward Waverley into Scotland, the Highlands, and the Jacobite Rising conflicts, and it is the historical Battle of Preston that separates Edward from his Highland companions and enables him to make a comeback among his English compatriots. In addition to that, as his works make clear, this romanticised sense of nostalgia for the past and leading role of history is, as already introduced, never separated from a connection with the present.[101] History is comprehended in relation to contemporary life through its viewpoint and issues. A current, fictional recreation of the intricate and varied historical world is the goal of the historical novel. This process closely resembles the historian's in terms of its fundamental characteristics: the historian uses narrative and rhetorical structures of organisation that are primarily literary to give shape to presupposed precise events of the past from a position that is both ideologically and temporally located in the present, whereas the historical novelist who uses history as the basis for their work provides another vision of the past, albeit a fictionalised one.[102]

As already stated, Scott’s contribution was the cause of a rise in notoriety and appreciation for the genre. Up until that point, women had driven the early nineteenth-century fiction market and had produced the majority of these predecessor genres. In fact, the affiliation of the novel with female authors and presumably female readers was frequently cited as evidence of its low position in culture. As a result, Scott's contribution, which united fiction to history, was seen as a recovery of both reading and writing novels as legitimately

[100] Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel*, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins Press, 1971, p.15.
[101] Annalisa Oboe, “Historical Discourse and Historical Fiction”, in *Fiction, History and Nation in South Africa*, Venezia, Supernova, 1994, p. 15.
[102] *Ibidem*.

manly activities as well as a "philosophical" elevation of the genre.[103] Scott was a pioneering contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*, which laid the groundwork for Scottish culture's post-Enlightenment age through its revival of the liberal intellectual projects of the century in the rapidly developing print market. When Scott left aside poetry to dedicate himself to prose fiction, he drew on the 'literary authority' tropes established by the Edinburgh Review to elevate the novel, which had previously been dismissed by critics as a sentimental, feminine genre. He did this by reclaiming authorship as a professional rather than an amateur or just economic activity, and imbuing romance with the same intellectual respectability associated with history, the most esteemed of the human sciences of the Enlightenment human sciences. Reviewers could assert that by 1819, when his fame had reached its peak, the novel had succeeded in fulfilling the epic role of illustrating the various modes of national existence in modern times." Scott transformed the novel into a contemporary epic "by making it national, and he made it national by making it historical".[104] The novel's prestige was enhanced as a result, and it was reclassified as a masculine genre.[105]

The mere title of his first novel is pioneering and clever in itself. Bearing the name of a common person, *Waverley'*s full title informs the reader that it deals with the dual story of a person and a historical event. The Jacobite uprising of 1745 is intertwined with the life of fictitious character Edward Waverley, making for a life that is both imagined and accompanied by a verifiable external chronology.[106] Moreover, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* appears as a slightly enigmatic title, for readers must literally take Scott's invitation to remove sixty years from the publishing date in order to deduce that the story will deal with the events of 1745. To place his stories in the context of historical time, Scott employed a variety of strategies, and in this case, the feeling of having to strive for this knowledge is crucial to the book's impact; similar to Edward Waverley, the reader is drawn *into* the historical event, rather than being drawn towards it. History is thus unexpected.[107]

Nonetheless, it is surprising that, while considering other subtitles for *Waverly* besides *'Tis Sixty Years Since*, never has he contemplated naming it *Waverley: a historical novel*.[108] While Scott is careful to note that his novel is built upon historical research and the

[103] Ian Duncan, "Scott and the Historical Novel*",* in Garside, O'Brien (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 2: English and British Fiction 1750-1820*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 315.
[104] *Idem*, p. 314.
[105] Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 79-104.
[106] Kathryin Sutherland, *op. cit*., p.1.
[107] Richard Maxwell, "The Historical Novel", in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, cit., p. 70.
[108] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 28.

testimonies of people who took part in the Highland Rebellion, he also freely acknowledges that his story is not entirely true and that he has "embodied in imaginary scenes, and ascribed to fictitious characters, a part of the incidents which I then received from those who were actors in them."[109] The fictional universe of Scott may fall halfway between "a romance of chivalry" and "a narrative of modern manners," according to Dekker.[110] He introduces a wide range of different fictional modes for the development of his new style of fiction, and he does so between these two polarities. Scott was hesitant to put himself on the part of either romance or novel; thus, he labelled his fiction a "romantic composition"[111], a title that avoids the distinction. Yet, he uses the word *novel* to denote a breakthrough in the world of fiction or a divergence from his past creations. He does not, however, assume that his readers will mistake fiction for history. Although the two are clearly intertwined in his works, there is also a distinct element of fiction. Fiction, imagination, and romance are for him tools for expressing what he wants to convey, rather than obstacles.[112]

It is exactly in this awareness, in the dual nature of fiction and history and the dynamic relationship between these in his novels, that lies the uniqueness of Scott's work, his unparalleled, incomparable achievement in the history of the novel. In fact, in the former French tradition, such as in the aforementioned works by Prévost or de Lafayette, the emerging historical novel was established around the contradiction between a fictional tale of private life and the public accounts of historical events, whereas, Scott's novels definitely manage to blend the two to their greatest potential. They achieve this not only by correlating private and public fates, but also by depicting how everyday life is inevitably overwhelmed by the waves of social and economic transformation that underlie historical events, such as the demise of feudalism, the disintegration of traditional cultures, and the gradual beginnings of modernization.[113] In Scott's works, everything about human life is portrayed as historically ingrained, developing, and interrelated. His personal passion for folklore and tradition has enabled him to accurately portray the daily lives of common people in the context of their era. Heritage and folklore, which are so central to his novels, become essential components for comprehending the differences between English and Scottish divided by the border, as well as between the Highlands and the Lowlands. With the aid of his historical imagination, Scott was able to reproduce and portray the traditions and daily life of men in older times,

[109] Walter Scott, Postscript, in *Waverley*, cit., p. 375.
[110] George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 12.
[111] Walter Scott, in *op. cit*. p. 376.
[112] *Ibidem*.
[113] See Guardini Teixeira Vasconcelos Sandra, "Wavering over Borderlines: History and fiction in Walter Scott", in *A Journal of English Language, Literatures in English and Culture Studies*, n. 57, 2009, pp. 139-155.

establishing a link between the thoughts and habits of his characters and the society they lived in. The novel's historical area manages to incorporate descriptive material from daily life as well as a record of public events, both common people's lives, and the lives of elite groups.[114] Scott was the first novelist in Europe to portray not only the middle classes but also the working poor as well as those on the periphery of society: outlaws, ethnic minorities like Highlanders, and Jews, as leading autonomous lives, with distinctive languages and unique backgrounds. But common people are not merely included in the story, they are actually the engine of the plot, the main protagonists. This is made feasible by his use of an innovative viewpoint from which history is approached, one that emphasises how events alter the course of ordinary people's lives rather than how great men shaped the path of history. By placing a protagonist in a more genuine and authentic historical context, the author is able to portray both the protagonist's story and the story of the social sphere in which he is involved. This gives the protagonist's fate the potential to represent society's fate, serve as society's ideal representation, and provide an opportunity for society to remember or to envisage itself.[115]

Hence, Scott's goal was to depict how history affected the formation of people's identities as both individuals and citizens of a country by showing how it affected their daily lives. Writing about common people as protagonists during a time when the search for a distinguished identity was so prevalent drove authors to focus on the past as a source of information about their ancestry and origins. This understanding can be, by extension, gained by readers when they are able to relate to the historical novel's heroes and heroines; it is through empathy with those characters that it is possible to comprehend their motivations for action; hence the value of portraying history through the perspective of an ordinary person. Historical fiction has evolved from a simple antiquarian attempt to depict the past to an instrument of social and historical criticism: “What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the re-telling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events”.[116] What is important is to relive the social and personal motivations that influenced men to feel, think, and behave historically as they did. He shows historical changes as changes in everyday life. He always begins by demonstrating how significant historical changes affect people's daily lives, and the impact of changes on individuals who respond passionately and promptly to them without understanding their reasons. Only by starting from this position, from the very basis, can he depict the complex intellectual, political, and moral movements that such transformations invariably engender.

[114] *Ibidem*.
[115] Ian Duncan, “Scott and the Historical Novel”, in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, cit., p. 316.
[116] Georg Lukacs, *op. cit*., p. 42.

But implying that the distinctive character of Scott's writing depends solely on the depiction of downtrodden and exploited classes would consist of a limited interpretation. Like every other great popular writer, Scott seeks to capture the entirety of national life in its intricate connection between "above" and "below"; his merit lies in perceiving the basis of the social system as the very foundation and artistic justification for what occurs above, in the upper classes.[117]

What was also peculiar in Scott's approach to historicity is that *Waverley* can be considered historical in two different ways. When reading historical fiction, the surroundings, languages, characters, and events are considered historically accurate in one of two ways. They may encourage some form of historical effect within the work, such as giving the reader a window into the past, in which case the likelihood goes *inward*, to the structure of the work itself. Alternatively, they may reflect societies, styles of speech, or events that truly occurred in the past, and in these scenarios, their probability points away from the work to the reality it represents, *outward*.[118] In *Waverley*, while Edward's probability mostly depends on how he advances the historical purpose of the book, Fergus MacIvor in the novel has both internal and exterior probability. The Highland Jacobite nobility is accurately portrayed in the figure of Fergus, who also accurately captures the historical flaws that, in Scott's perspective, ended the rebellion. On the other hand, Edward Waverley serves as the reader's entrance into the book; he is so alien to that world, that it appears as though he is travelling both time and space. He largely serves as a plot device, allowing the novel's historical significance to be felt as strongly as possible.[119]

Still discussing his common protagonists, Lukacs went so far as to claim that Scott's heroes are only ordinary and mediocre individuals. Although this choice of heroes drew harsh criticism, Lukacs believed that to be ironically the secret to his grandeur. Scott explores the "middle route" between the extremes and attempts to establish the historical truth of this way through his representation of history's great crises.[120] This fundamental tendency manifests itself immediately in the manner he builds his plot and chooses his main character. A more or less typical English gentleman serves as the *hero* of every Scott book. He typically possesses some practical intellect, though never to an exceptional degree, and moral integrity, but these qualities rarely develop into a vast human passion or a passionate commitment to a noble cause. The Waverleys, Mortons, Osbaldistons, and similar families from the *Waverley Novels*

[117] *Idem*, p. 49.
[118] Harry E. Shaw, *The Forms of Historical Fiction*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 21.
[119] *Ibidem*.
[120] Georg Lukacs, *op. cit*., p. 32.

are appropriate, respectable, and typical members of this category of English provincial aristocracy. The most glaring indication of Scott's remarkable and ground-breaking epic abilities would be the fact that he centres his works around a "middling," merely decent and never heroic protagonist. By using people whose behaviour and fate consistently match social and historical forces, who get carried away, and who do not embody unwavering and extreme positions, Scott tries to depict the conflicts and enmities of history.[121]

Belinsky, on the other hand, does not draw a major distinction between the main character and the minor ones. According to him, there are times when the supporting figures are more intriguing and interesting as people than the mediocre lead character. His argument for this is that, in his perspective, regardless of how essential the characters appear, the true hero of the epic remains history itself, not the individual, with the main character serving only as an exterior central point around which the events develop. By virtue of the epic's grandeur and significance, the person is, in a sense, subject to the event rather than the other way around.[122]

A further change in the field of the historical novel is Scott's way of dealing with famous historical heroes, which is in stark contrast with how it was approached by his predecessors, such as in Jane Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs.*[123] Only when they are relevant historically and serve a certain function do great historical figures like Bonnie Prince Charlie, Rob Roy, and others like them appear in the story. These characters are not stylized or elevated on a Romantic pedestal by Scott; rather, he presents them as flawed human beings with both good and negative traits.[124] Nevertheless, they never convey a trivial impression; even with their flaws, they appear to be historically striking. The main cause of this, of course, is the author's profound appreciation of the peculiarities of different historical eras. Yet, his ability to mix historical grandeur with true human attributes in this manner is dependent on the style of his writing. As a supporting character, the famous historical figure is able to fully express his or her humanity and all of its attractive and less admirable traits. He achieves a multifaceted and complete manifestation of his identity but only to the extent that it is connected to the major historical events; his position in the action indeed limits his ability to act outside of significant historical contexts. In addition to accurately describing Scott's compositional style, these observations also make reference to general depiction guidelines, namely how significant figures are shown. The epic and the historical novel differ

[121] *Ibidem*.
[122] *Idem*, p. 35.
[123] Richard Maxwell, *op. cit*., p. 67.
[124] *Idem*, p. 45.

significantly in this area. The national nature of the main themes of epic, the relationship between person and nation in the era of heroes, necessitates that the most important person holds the central place, whereas in the historical novel he is necessarily only a minor role.[125]

Scott incorporated new tendencies into the novel even as far as the writing style is concerned. Lodge pointed out: "Scott started a vogue for using prefatory quotations, old songs and ballads as epigraphs for chapters - a kind of overt intertextuality".[126] Such trends have two purposes according to Lodge: "one is thematic," which he believes turns into "components of the plot;" and the other is to "establish the credentials of the authorial narrator as a well-informed and reliable guide to Scottish history, culture and topography".[127]

At the same time, the *Waverley* Novels were excellent collections of facts and information. They featured footnotes, much like a history manual, and they included both general information and historical details. Scott's works were dense with details and information, since the purpose of creating historical romances was also to pique readers' interest in history and inspire a desire to learn more about the past.[128] The construction of a Highland hut, as well as an exact description of how people used to dress, were just a few of the questions and curiosities that readers might find answers to. Indeed, another draw of Scott's books was what was perceived to be their outstanding realism. Everyone was surprised by the incredible sense of reality they exuded. With a genuine passion in the subject, Scott played around with his passion for Scottish history and customs to give *Waverley* the most realistic appearance possible. Realism was abundant in his fiction, though that of Scott was devoid of any association with eighteenth-century realism with its descriptions of sexual indiscretions or crude images.[129]

Consequently, *Waverley*'s footnotes attest to the novel's assumption that it is a trustworthy source of information on the distinctive elements of Scottish history and culture in the eighteenth century. These archival materials demonstrate the validity of the text's broad depictions of traditions and historical developments and give a clue as to whether the author thoroughly investigated and researched the subject he wrote about.

Additionally, footnotes were also exploited as a means to stifle prejudices and resentment, for even if the period of the stories he was dealing with was considerably different from the time of his readers, in the notes he promptly remarked that now that

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[125] *Ibidem*.
[126] David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction,* New York, Viking Penguin, 1992, p. 165.
[127] *Idem*, p. 165.
[128] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 35.
[129] John Henry Raleigh, "What Scott Meant to the Victorians", *Victorian Studies*, Sep. 1963, Vol. 7, No. 1, Symposium on Victorian Affairs, pp. 7-34.

particular place had changed and was no longer how he had described in his novel. It should be borne in mind that Scott's key objective was always to welcome diversity, focus on change and not foster feelings of resentment. The following passage from the novel *Rob Roy* is exemplary in this regard. When Frank Osbaldistone, the first-person narrator of *Rob Roy*, enters MacGregor's village, he makes the observations listed below:

> The little children also, […] some quite naked, and others very imperfectly covered with tatters of tartan stuff, clapped their tiny hands, and grinned at the English soldiers, with an expression of national hate and malignity which seemed beyond their years.[130]

This scene, which is part of a story set roughly a hundred years before it was published in 1817, is marked by chaos, filth, and animosity. In a footnote, the author addresses the reader as a possible tourist and assures them that the same location "now affords a very comfortable little inn".[131] This comment is doubly relevant since it indicates that attitudes, in addition to facilities, have changed; and it, therefore, protects the author, as the mediator between past and present, from any obligation to discuss any residue of hostility.[132]

**Other *Waverley* Novels: a Different Setting for a Common Aim**

Despite his remarkable innovations and success, Scott has been repeatedly accused of composing costume drama, immortalising just one image of Scotland and its culture as markers of antiquated and never modernising national identity.[133] Instead, each of his *Waverley* Novels is an examination and exploration of significant historical events in Scottish history. In each of his novels, he aims for modernity and is concerned with presenting *possible Scotlands.*[134] As Gary Kelly pointedly summarises, "Scott's principal subject in his first eight novels is the 'modernization' of Scottish society, that is, its transformation, through a series of historical crises, [...]".[135]

He contrasted the past with the present, the desire for the past with the forces of change that are unavoidable, in novel after novel. Here lies the irony of Scott's well-known defence of historical advancement: the imagination behind it is beholden to history's losing side. The author's self-division delineates the distinctive feature of the modern imagination:

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[130] Walter Scott, *Waverley Novels*: *Rob Roy. The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, Cadell, 1843, p. 229.
[131] *Ibidem*.
[132] Malzahn Manfred, *Imagined Histories*: *The Novels of Walter Scott*, United Arab Emirates University, 2011, p. 95.
[133] Mayhead Robin, *Walter Scott,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973, p. 43.
[134] See Caroline McCracken-Flesher, *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow*, cit.
[135] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830*, Essex, Longman, 1989, p. 141.

the desire to live in both the past and the present, enjoying the present's comfort and safety while mourning what is deemed to have been left behind and lost.[136]

If by its conclusion, *Waverley* manages to balance the demands of history and romance in a risky manner that is realistic yet melancholy, the novels that come afterward disturb this equilibrium by experimenting with different focuses and historical periods. The leitmotiv characterising Scott's great series of novels that dominated his career as a novelist is always history and the way it affects people.

After *Waverley*, it is the early 1780s, during the peak of the Scottish Enlightenment and Scotland's absorption into the expanding networks of empire, that became the primary setting of *Guy Mannering*, a novel that was first published in 1815.[137] Published a year later, his third novel, called *The Antiquary*, revolves around an amateur historian. Similar to his works *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*, he wrote it with the intention of capturing Scottish life at a specific time period, in this case, the final decade of the 18th century. A trilogy of "fictitious narratives, meant to show the manners of Scotland in three different periods," as described by Scott, culminated in this book, "*Waverley* embraced the age of our fathers, *Guy Mannering* that of our own youth, and *the Antiquary* refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century."[138] In line with this remark, readers were encouraged to read the novels in chronological order, starting with the conflict between the old and new administrations in 1745 and ending with the world crises that gave rise to the present. In the same year, *Old Mortality* was published. This book is set in the distant past, in 1679, during the Covenanters' insurrection against the Crown. The book is a significant piece of modern Scotland's cultural history in addition to being a story of conflicted loyalties. This novel too deals with Scott's attempt to exorcise the violent history of a nation that was hesitantly accepting its position as a member of the modern United Kingdom.[139] With *Redgauntlet*, in 1824, Scott returns to depict a Jacobite insurrection, but this time, interestingly enough, the uprising is entirely fictional and hopeless.

A more insightful examination is owed to *Rob Roy*. While it could seem as though the Author of *Waverley* made a return in 1818 with this recent novel, revisiting the same issues like the Jacobite uprising, the demise of the clans, and reworking its plot of a young Englishman's march north into involvement with rebels, this book actually shows a shift in the pattern that Scott was frequently accused of repeating. According to Peter Womack, the

[136] Kathryn Sutherland, *op. cit*., p. 21.
[137] Ian Duncan, *op. cit*., p. 317.
[138] Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. David Hewitt, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.
[139] Ian Duncan, *op. cit*., 318.

untamed Highlands and its people are only noticeable and important once modernity extinguishes them as symbols of its own past.[140] But, in this case Scott presents a unique perspective since *Rob Roy* does truly personify a vigour that will not vanish into the oblivion of the past like the Jacobite nobility. The figure of the wild Highlander pertains to both the past and the present since the modern age calls for a return to the ideal of *natural man* while also incorporating real savages into the imperial economy's growing horizon. The dichotomy of savage and modernity in *Rob Roy* reinforces rather than cancels out one another, and Clan culture here possesses a stubborn sovereignty; it may appear marginal compared to industrialised centres, but it is the core of its own society and subject to its own laws.[141]

It is natural to draw comparisons with *Waverley*, for instance in *Rob Roy's* primitivism denotes dignity and also honour, exactly the opposite of a fate of disappearance as in *Waverley*, where Scott had linked the collapse of the Jacobite uprising with the historically determined end of clan society, symbolised by the chieftain Fergus' hanging. Scott's readers were already aware of the clans' collapse; but, in this novel, they continue to exist as the undercover participants in an imagined present, empowered rather than diminished by their position outside of the law. The historical incidents facts in *Rob Roy* serve as merely a supplemental element to the action and a modest illustration of one facet of the broader issue Scott is investigating. He is looking at the general condition of people who have been stripped of their identity and faced relocation from their place of origin. In contrast to Scott's first novel, where they are merely historical characters, the Highlanders in this one are symbolic figures whose background and attitude help to depict the struggle of all oppressed minorities.[142]

Finally, it is necessary to take into account *Ivanhoe*, a romance of the mediaeval English period that deals with the deeds of the Saxon knight Ivanhoe after his return from the Crusades, which was published at the end of 1819. It signalled a purposeful turning point in the career of the Author of *Waverley,* since he shifted both time and place for this story. The simultaneous jump backwards into the High Middle Ages and particularly from Scotland to England is explained as a result of how the modern English reader perceived history. A typical English reader, to Scott, was prone and "totally willing to believe the weirdest things of the wild and extravagant Scottish people", but at the same time being" not half as much

[140] Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands*, London, Macmillan, 1989, p. 150.
[141] *Ibidem*.
[142] Howard William, "The Symbolic Structure of Scott's Rob Roy", *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Vol. 14: Iss. 1, 1979, p. 73.

disposed to think that his forebears led a radically different life than himself"[143]. This illustrates one of the book's intended meanings, which is a caution against historical forgetfulness. Scott evidently wished to emphasise that the ultimate historical difference between civilized societies was their historical separation from a less civilised past that was yet shared by everyone.

**The *Waverley* Novels: a Powerful Means for the Shaping of Scottish Identity**

At this point, it can be argued that perhaps the only actual pattern in Scott's historical novels, especially in the Scottish ones, is to remind his readers of their past and their roots; thereby making history the foundation for their present condition. The 1800s Scottish society on which Scott based his writings lacked traditions and a shared sense of community; as a result, he worked to establish both of these things while also preserving historical traditions, since "where national unity is lost the past is lost too, for the connection between the present and the past has been broken and the past turns into legend, into the poetry of pure memory".[144]

As the past only exists in our memories, Assmann claims that the concept of the *past* as a whole is a cultural phenomenon. This act of remembering is a self-aware one because a culture chooses the particular past it wants to preserve and in doing so shapes individuals' perceptions about their culture. Furthermore, cultural memory can integrate identities that history cannot or has excluded; and the foundation of cultural identity is frequently some type of myth[145]. Muir concurs with this viewpoint, stating that "a people who lose their nationality creates a legend to take its place"[146]. As collective identity is always fictitious and is only the outcome of meticulously crafted fabrications, texts are produced in order to preserve identity, and also novels can have a significant impact on how a social organism views itself. [147]

Thanks to the myth-making influence of Walter Scott's historical novels, Scotland was able to envision itself as a territory with recognisable images and iconic symbols, not less significant than England in the newly unified kingdom. It is worth underlying that Scott's concern with national identity extended beyond literature. King George IV paid a visit to Edinburgh in 1822, marking the first reigning visit to Scotland in almost two centuries, and as a Highland Society member, Scott oversaw the planning of the event. Furthermore, the Scottish writer was the man George IV most desired to meet in all of Scotland.[148] For the

[143] Walter Scott, Postscript to *Ivanhoe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 16.
[144] Edward Muir, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
[145] Assmann, *op. cit*., pp. 52-59.
[146] Edward Muir, *op. cit*., pp. 160-161.
[147] Oboe, *op. cit*., p. 18.
[148] Hugh Trevor Roper, *op. cit.,* p. 212.

organization of the celebration, Scott significantly requested all the nobility, Highland and Lowland alike, to dress in tartan and Highland attire. This event exemplifies Scott's intention to convey to the king and England the impression of a united Scotland, in which both Highlanders and Lowlanders are clad in the same manner, exhibiting not only their internal unity but also their distinctiveness from the English.

It is true that Scott emphasised British nationality over Scottish provincial identity, but he did so without undermining the cultural significance of Scottish manners, heritage, territory, or history. Viewing his works as a way to ratify the Union with England, he succeeded in rekindling Scotland's sense of history and historical unity.[149] Needless to say, not even with all his novels did he manage to cover the vastity of Scottish history or the diverse traditions and customs of the country, but he nonetheless offered his own idea and a way to pay homage to his homeland.

[149] C. Harvie*, Scott and the Image of Scotland, Walter Scott: The Long-Forgotten Melody*, London: Vision and Barnes and Noble, 1983, p. 31.

CHAPTER II

# The *Waverley* Novels Promoting Scottish Identity

## 2.1 Beyond Preconceptions: Scotland from an English Perspective

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, only two potential and contrasting narratives generally emerged among writers in relation to Highlanders, both marked by a tendency towards an extreme perspective. These people were glorified as heroes and idolised as noble savages on the one hand, while on the other they were labelled as primitive or even animals. Such contrasting theories about savages have been investigated by the historian Ronald Meek.[1] Although it is commonly known that modern ideas of savagery had an impact on eighteenth-century social science by inspiring criticism of society through the concept of the noble savage, less well recognised is the fact that these ideas also fostered the birth of a new theory of society's growth through the concept of the ignoble savage. Focusing only on one of the two perspectives, on the other hand, the focal point of Robert Clyde's inquiry[2] is the romantic rehabilitation of Highlanders with an emphasis on their transformation from a group of criminals, Jacobite insurrectionists, and idle Celts, into a valiant and heroic population, fortified by countless virtues, like for instance the values of the family or clan, the peaceful coexistence with nature, and hospitality.[3] Clyde believes that the ascent of a modern socioeconomic system, which emphasizes commerce, pecuniary gain, and self-centeredness, has slowly undermined the traditional values within British and European society. As a result, the Highlanders were one of the few remaining groups that still possessed these fading traits.[4]

In any case, both these viewpoints on Highlanders become apparent: whereas the Highland Myth is rooted in the notion of the heroic barbarian, some other novelists and writers were more likely to view pre-improvement Highlanders as undignified savages. Indeed, not all nationalist authors gave the Highlanders a favourable portrayal; for instance, in Hamilton's *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* from 1808, Highlanders are not praised as great heroes and the peasants of the quiet village of Glenburnie are chided for being filthy, slothful, and chaotic.[5] Therein lies the core distinction between Scott's *Waverley* and other texts with the same setting: Scott does not portray the Highlanders as being in any way exaggerated.

[1] Ronald Lindley Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 2-3.
[2] See Robert Clyde, *op. cit.*
[3] *Idem*. p. 66.
[4] *Idem*, p. 43.
[5] Stella Moretti, *op. cit*., p. 101.

Instead of being depicted as a group of heroes and heroines, Highlanders are shown to be a perfectly average group of human beings, emphasising how their positive traits, as hospitality and generosity, coexist with as many flaws.[6] Scrupulous attention is paid by Scott to the delineation of the characters and their respective personalities — precisely because the novel aimed at dignifying Scotland and its past, this required a diverse representation of the population. I will explore how the author attempted to a certain extent to free himself and the ambiance of his novel from popular preconceptions.

I consider alongside the General Preface to the *Waverley Novels* also Scott's critique of Joseph Rison's *Annals of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots; and of Strathclyde, Cumberland, Galloway, and Murray*[7], which provides some insight into the specific prejudices the author had in mind while writing his *Waverley Novels*. In this context, Scott discusses several viewpoints on the Highlanders, focusing on those of the Scottish historian John Pinkerton (1758–1826). He sharply condemns Pinkerton's assertion that ''—the Celts of Scotland are savages, [...] always are, and continue to be, a dishonoured, timid, filthy, ignorant, and degraded race".[8] These are actual examples of the kinds of preconceptions Scott attempts to dispel. By creating well-rounded characters with a variety of personalities, in his *Waverley Novels* Scott is thus fighting back against such prejudices and engaging in a discourse with those misconceptions about the Highlands and their people that were upheld by the previous generations.

**Scott's Characters**

To give a general overview of the organization of characters, it is commonly acknowledged that the series of the *Waverley Novels* adheres to a pattern of double figures.[9] Such a motif is a result of a greater dynamic in Scott's writings between dualisms like Scotland and England, law and justice, past and present, reality and romance, etc. Alexander Welsh has noticed a broad pattern throughout the *Waverley* Novels and classified the characters into two groups: passive figures and dark heroes. "The actions and commitment of the passive hero in the

[6] Ian Duncan, *op. cit*., p. 314.
[7] Joseph Rison*, Annals of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots; and of Strathclyde, Cumberland, Galloway, and Murray*, Edinburgh, Ballantyne, 1828, quoted in Alison Lumsden*, Beyond the Dusky Barrier: Perceptions of the Highlands in the* Waverley *Novels*, Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 2009, p. 167.
Note aside, *The General Preface* to the *Waverley* Novels was not written with the publication of *Waverley* but was added in 1829 as a general introduction to the Magnum Opus edition of Scott's fiction.
[8] John Pinkerton, *Enquiry into the History of Scotland and Dissertation on the Goths*, Edinburgh, 1814, as quoted in Alison Lumsden, *Beyond the Dusky Barrier: Perceptions of the Highlands in the* Waverley *Novels*, Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 2009, p. 167.
[9] See Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the* Waverley *Novels*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992.

*Waverley* Novels are so restricted that any activity depends upon other sources of energy,"[10] he observes of them. The main characters have been regarded as passive in view of their connections to truly great heroes like Fergus McIvor, dashing advocates of hopeless causes who endeavour to entice young men into risky adventures. But more specifically, Welsh contends that all the heroes in Scott's novels are passive both because they are caught between opposing political forces and because they are susceptible to the seductiveness of feelings and temptations, which represent a threat to the stoic restraint they require to establish themselves as propertied gentlemen of conventional, conservative society. With this claim, Welsh essentially contends that Scott was drawn to the Highlands not only by virtue of their exoticism or romance but because they constituted a threat to the steady, established social standards.[11] As a result, the protagonists in the *Waverley* Novels' must be passive. When faced with the temptations of the exotic, they must resist them because their reason, social acceptance, and moderation are what defines them as heroes. Furthermore, these heroes are also anxious in a way, for they are constantly concerned about how they appear, about being misunderstood, and about how the judges of conventional morality evaluate their behaviour. They continuously fantasize about dying for their beliefs but never do, due to their passivity, since they are consumed by a sense of guilt that stems from their encounter with anarchic desires that traditional civilization forbids.[12] Such protagonists are unable to actively take part in the events of the story; they chose not to take responsibility for their actions, and they are carried from one location to another but remain by nature inert. Therefore, Fergus and Rob Roy, for example, who in Welsh's view are the so-called *dark heroes*[13], exhibit courage and boldness, whereas Waverley, Frank Osbaldiston, and Ivanhoe do not. The dark figures are deemed *active*[14] in the sense that they develop and carry out schemes; give instructions; ride quickly from one place to another, murder people, and overall behave aggressively in advancing the strategies that might help their goals.

However, a broader perspective regarding Edward's passivity and emptiness has been adopted by Lukacs, who draws on a more observant and —if possible — interesting area to assess the reasons for such a characteristic. Scott's main characters bear the duty of uniting the opposing forces that drive the novel's plot and whose conflict leads to a significant social crisis. Through the plot, a middle ground is pursued and discovered on which extreme,

[10] *Idem*, p. 40.
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 223.
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 226.
[13] *Idem*, p. 40.
[14] *Idem*, p. 24.

competing social forces can be reconciled.[15] During his time in Scotland as an English officer, Waverley joins the ranks of the rebellious Stuart supporters. His affiliations with the Hanoverian side are maintained as a result of his longstanding familial ties and the ambiguous nature of his participation in the revolt, which allows him to fight courageously with no fanatical stance. In this way, according to Lukacs, Waverley's lack of decision and hesitancy construct a plot that at one level provides the reader with a realistic depiction of the conflict on both sides, and at the same time allows to familiarize with the main figures on both warring parties on a human level.[16] Along the same lines, Kerr subsequently argues that the inclusion of a somewhat ambiguous character serves as a crucial unifying device, providing the reader with a dual viewpoint on the events depicted in the novels. The individual who seems to be on both sides simultaneously allows for what appears to be a balanced picture of the past, acting as a guide to the ways and customs of the past.[17]

In addition, Lukacs postulates a convergence between this way of composition and Scott's view of English history, which, as already argued, is that of a "middle way" establishing itself through the conflict of opposites. For Scott, the key people of the Waverley type stand for the enduring tenacity of English growth through the worst crises. In addition, however, Scott, as a realist, acknowledged that no civil war in history has ever proven so terrible as to turn every single person into a fervent supporter of one or the other of the opposing factions. Large groups of individuals have always been split between the two sides, shifting their loyalties back and forth between them. Yet, the actual course of the crisis has frequently been determined by these wavering sympathies. Therefore, according to Lukacs, Scott's passive and "middle-of-the-road heroes" represent also this aspect.[18]

To conclude, both categories of characters, passive heroes and dark figures, are exploited by Scott to emphasize how deeply ingrained prejudice against Highlanders was in British society.

**Edward Waverley: a *Wavering* Protagonist**

The first aspect to be underlined is that the decision to use English people as protagonists, unlike in the already mentioned Jane Porter' *The Scottish Chiefs*, for instance, is more effective, as highlighted by Caitlin and Dilawar Khan.[19] Because of this, Scott's writing had a

[15] Georg Lukacs, *op. cit*., p. 34.
[16] *Ibidem*.
[17] James Kerr, *Fiction against History, Scott as Storyteller*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 84.
[18] Georg Lukacs, *op. cit*., p. 37.
[19] Caitlin Khan and Dilawar Khan, "Sir Walter Scott and the Reinvention of Scottish Identity", *The Saber and Scroll Journal, Vol 10, n° 1*, Charles Town, American Military University, 2021, pp.64-71.

more reflective political undertone that made English readers relate to the English main character and thus re-evaluate their assumptions about Scotland and its people. As for the Scots, these novels recreated their reality by harmoniously integrating their romantic past with a shared future within Great Britain.

To begin with, the author's choice of Edward Waverley as the archetypal hero "functions as a prescriptive rather than a neutral norm".[20] A range of ideological premises must be endorsed to accept the general terms of the plot, the most important of which is the belief that an Englishman, because of his participation in the rapidly advancing change that led to the destruction of the Highland society, is a better indicator to the historical process than would be a member of that extinct society. Were Fergus Mac-Ivor portrayed as the main protagonist, with the plot's resolution focusing on his tragic end, *Waverley* would bear a different connotation and would culminate in a nostalgic commemoration of a lost cause; however, by stressing the perspective of the winning side of the story, the context and surroundings take on a greater impact.[21] In this regard, Edward's surname is very emblematic. His "wavering and unsettled habit of mind"[22] actually identifies him as a figure who is caught between cultures, women, and political ideologies. As a result of his hesitation, Edward becomes thus the perfect setting for the projection and investigation of other cultures and mindsets, where their tensions can be addressed to and ultimately resolved.[23]

The reader is immediately given some details about Edward's family history, which hint at the young man's relatives' role in eighteenth-century British history. While Sir Everard, Edward's elderly uncle, had been a Jacobite and represents the family's "hereditary faith in the house of Stuart,"[24] Richard Waverley, Edward's father, supported the Hanoverians who wanted to maintain the current British political system. The first seven chapters are structured in the Bildungsroman style, focusing on a young man's personality, temperament, choices, and views. Throughout the first part, history plays a limited part, affecting Edward only indirectly through the decisions of his father and uncle in the past. Interfering with Edward's life and contributing to his moral development, history gradually assumes greater importance beginning in Chapter VIII. The course of events takes Edward to Scotland and then past the so-called Highland line, the fictitious line dividing the Highlands and the Lowlands, where he eventually joins a Jacobite group.

[20] Barbara Foley, *Telling the Truth*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 153.
[21] *Ibidem*.
[22] Walter Scott, *Waverley,* cit. p. 35.
[23] See Kerr, *op. cit*., pp. 11–12.
[24] Walter Scott, *Waverley,* cit., p. 7.

However, right from the beginning, it is apparent that even though he supposedly is the protagonist, not a lot of specific information is provided about him. He is merely an ordinary individual who, either because of his youth or due to political and social factors, lacks a place in society and a distinct personality. Moreover, Scott does not give a physical description of Edward, thus letting the reader envisage him howsoever preferred. Some critics have suggested that the motivation behind the use of a protagonist who is "a sneaking piece of imbecility"[25] would also be that if the protagonist is shaded, the men and women who constitute the Scotland that Scott so desired to authentically portray consequently shine even more.[26] Even so, it could be argued that living such historical occurrence via the actions and perspectives of an outsider or someone who falls in between serves the purpose of transforming those very experiences into a source of identity. What inevitably follows is that, in light of the readers' same position as outsiders in such a historical context, it is more natural for them to relate to and empathize with the young Edward rather than with great figures like Charles Edward Stuart.[27] The purpose of the novel is indeed to elicit a response in the reader; in a book intended to examine the historical process, his treatment of Waverley as a hero places the emphasis exactly where it should be: on the structure of societies and events, not on a precise human's agency. As readers share Waverley's perception of the world, Scott engages them in his rhetorical and aesthetic interests in history primarily through their hopes and anxieties for Edward and his adventures.[28]

Even so, the most relevant characteristic of Edward's persona is revealed immediately, in the opening chapters of the novel, namely his pervasive feeling of wishing to live in another reality, in a land of romance and fancies. His extraordinary imagination and love of literature are two qualities that have a fundamental impact on his personality. As a result of his education and upbringing "of a nature somewhat desultory"[29], which is the true reason for his romantic outlook on life, our hero prefers to spend his time lost in his own imagination rather than engaging in real-world activities: "as living in this ideal world became daily more delectable to our hero, interruption was disagreeable, in proportion".[30] Edward's fantasies typically take place flipping through the pages of the books in the gloomy library of Waverley-Honour, his uncle's estate, or along the pathways through Waverley Chase, the territory that surrounds the Hall. He then spends much of his days in a constant and vivid

[25] Herbert Grierson (ed.), *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1811-1814,* London, Constable, 1932, p. 478.
[26] Alexander Welsh, *op. cit*., p. 179.
[27] Stella Moretti, *op. cit*., p. 71.
[28] Harry E. Shaw, *op. cit*., p. 182.
[29] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 12.
[30] *Idem*, p. 19.

condition of daydreaming. His romantic fantasies are inspired by the romance novels he frequently reads, which are set in mediaeval times, and by the family histories told by his devoted aunt Mrs. Rachel. At Waverley- Honour also his relatives share these feelings; as a matter of fact, their political views, unaffected by the harsh realities of the present, are as much the result of fantasy as the tales that the impressionable Edward spins from family lore. Waverley-Honour is a sanctuary from the past, a community of visionaries, who view the outer world through the distorting veil of a heroic past and a legend-covered curtain that hides the realities of the present.[31]

On the one hand, this pivotal trait of Edward's personality is a manifestation of his being a passive hero who avoids making crucial decisions and jumps into adventures primarily due to his love of romance rather than out of allegiance and commitment to a political cause; rather than in an ethical dimension where action is to be prompted by willing choices, he lives in a more aesthetic domain guided by romantic and sublime fascination. Indeed, instead of bearing a sincere devotion to the Stuarts' dynastic claims, his sentiments are based on yearning for the heroic figures of an idealised past, the dashing personalities of historical dynasties.[32] Edward is overpowered by circumstances that instead affect him as a human character would. In *Waverley*, history is a potent force that wreaks havoc on people's daily lives and completely transforms them. In fact, Edward does not surrender his original state of passivity and addiction to romantic reverie until huge historical events step in and force him to enter adulthood. On the other hand, though, it is precisely by virtue of this yearning for romance that Edward embodies the strongest prejudice against the country of Scotland: he expects to find a romantic and totally idealized land but, gradually, this myth will be almost always debunked. A peculiarity of his is that when he feels disappointed by what he sees, he tries to mask this disappointment and convince himself that every element, despite requiring adjustment and modernity, can still be assimilated into his notions of romanticism. He anticipates finding locations that exactly match the scenarios from the romantic and exciting tales to which he is so used. His idealisation of the Highlands is so strong due to his lofty aspirations that our young hero sometimes rejects the basic living conditions and rural customs of Scotland and seeks solace in his fantasies.

[31] James Kerr, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-93.
[32] *Idem*, p. 95.

**The Protagonist's Prejudices about the Lowlanders**

Even the Scottish Lowlands frequently gave off an impression of being different or *other* enough to be categorised as primitive and portrayed using preconceived clichés from a sense of superiority. Sometimes, just specific characters employ these tropes, and the narrator appears to avoid them. In other instances, the narrator indulges his own sense to spark more reasoning in the reader.[33]

Edward's first impression of Tully-Veolan, the Bradwardine estate is reminiscent of derogatory colonial rhetoric. He expresses his criticism in terms of enlightened progressivism[34] and concentrates on the filth and primitiveness of village life among the lower classes. "The houses seemed miserable in the extreme, especially to an eye accustomed to the smiling neatness of English cottages. They stood, without any respect for regularity, on each side of a straggling unpaved street, where children, almost in a primitive state of nakedness, lay sprawling."[35] He notices the filth but almost immediately tries to romanticise it as charming, while the narrator continues to be more judgmental of the lack of "progress" in rural Lowland life in the middle of the eighteenth century. But even at its most fascinating, Waverley is unable to eradicate progressive ideas.

> Village girls […] formed more pleasing objects; and, with their thin, short gowns and single petticoats, bare arms, legs and feet, uncovered heads, and braided hair, somewhat resembled Italian forms of landscape. Nor could a lover of the picturesque have challenged either the elegance of their costume, or the symmetry of their shape; although, to say the truth, a mere Englishman, in search of the *comfortable*, […] might have wished the clothes less scanty, the feet and legs somewhat protected from the weather, the head and complexion shrouded from the sun, or perhaps might even have thought the whole person […] considerably improved, by a plentiful application of […] soap. The whole scene was depressing; for it argued, at the first glance, […] a stagnation of industry, and perhaps of intellect. […] Yet the physiognomy of the people, when more closely examined, was far from exhibiting stupidity: their features were rough, but remarkably intelligent. It seemed […] as if poverty, and indolence, its too frequent companion, were combining to depress the natural genius […] of a hardy, intelligent […] peasantry.[36]

This portrayal of the Lowlands employs an already established concept, the idea of the noble barbarian, whose virtues are discernible even in a raw and natural state but would shine more

[33] Silke Stroh, *Gaelic Scotland in the Colonial Imagination: Anglophone Writing from 1600 to 1900*, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 2016, p. 146.
[34] On Scott's Enlightenment discourse on progress and on the classifications between "primitive" and "civilized" societies, also see Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
[35] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 35.
[36] *Idem*, p. 36.

brilliantly if refined by a civilising endeavour. [37] The eroticization of indigenous women in this section is another pattern that is akin to colonial rhetoric. To Edward's English eyes, their clothing is unconventional and exposes more of their bodies in contrast to English trends. Waverley further emphasises the foreignness of this Lowland Scotland environment by drawing comparisons between the local people and foreigners: in the paragraph just quoted, he is reminded of Italians. It should be remembered, however, that although the foreigners to which the Scots from the Lowlands are compared are "different" and possibly somehow "primitive," they are nonetheless fellow Europeans. As shall be seen, the Highlanders, on the other hand, are typically related to non-European outsiders, for instance 'Orientals' or the native people of overseas colonies, for they were all considered exotic and less "civilized" than European societies, as underlined by Makdisi[38] and Stroh.[39] Despite having a shared ancestry with the English, the Lowlanders are here considered to be less developed than their southern counterparts, but even while there is a sense of deprivation, desolation, and "backwardness", Edward —and the reader along with him— is still on the stable ground of the knowable.[40] Thus, the Lowland Scottish society of the middle of the eighteenth century is positioned in a developmental stage in-between the older feudal customs that are more thoroughly retained in the Highlands and the modern life already present in England.

**The Highlanders from an Englishman's Perspective**

When Edward arrives in the north of Scotland, he is initially astounded that such savage practises can still be observed so close to his civilized home: "It seemed like a dream to Waverley that these deeds of violence should be […] happening daily in the immediate vicinity, without his having crossed the seas, and while he was yet in the otherwise well-ordered island of Great Britain."[41]

However, later in the chapters, prejudice goes much further: Gaels are also compared to animals in addition to *strange*, *primitive* humans. With "the caution of a spaniel hiding a bone," it is written that a Highlander snatches a dead English soldier's cloak.[42] Another Highlander, who is engaged in a covert military operation, is said to have "snuffed the wind like a […] spaniel, […] stooped down upon all- fours, wrapped up in his plaid".[43] Yet, it is in

[37] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 147.
[38] Saree Makdisi, "Colonial Space and the Colonization of Time in Scott's *Waverley"*, *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1995, pp. 155-58.
[39] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 147.
[40] *Ibidem*.
[41] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 80.
[42] *Idem*, p. 242.
[43] *Idem*, p. 202.

this northern region that Edward is finally able to indulge his mediaeval and chivalric fancies where they can still be realised. The young Englishman quickly learns that the Scottish Highlands still use mediaeval military formations, and due to his education on chivalric tales from or about the middle centuries, he finds Jacobitism and Highland culture inevitably appealing. Gradually, he discovers the true nature of Scotland in the north, beyond hearsay and book fancies. It eventually becomes apparent that Scotland's culture operates according to a different set of rules than does England; therefore, his English ways of thinking about the world do not always apply. The Highlanders themselves are not what Edward imagined and he is frequently astonished and rebuked by his expectations. In addition, he falls in love with a woman who was born in these territories.

What is also true, though, is that even while his familiarity with and fondness for Scotland grow, he does not completely shed his English preconceptions, as proved in one episode in which, while momentarily imprisoned, he expresses the anxiety of being tried before a Scottish court owing to his limited comprehension of Scottish law and preconceived notions.[44] Moreover, despite everything he finally manages to see with his eyes and experience first-hand, his aspirations are never completely met since his imagination is moulded by fiction and unrealistic goals. His tourist-like mindset is what prevents him from accepting that not even that "land of military and romantic adventures"[45] truly satisfies his expectations. Waverley's dissatisfaction is also concrete evidence of his undeniable estrangement from that location, which is very different from the fairyland he imagined and he never succeeds in truly integrating and fitting in. All of Waverley's attempts to appear like a Highlander are futile, and they lead to comedic situations in which his actions are both inappropriate and entertaining. He is repeatedly saved by the Highlanders he meets, who treat him with an attitude of profound reverence and support, regardless of the situation. This is evidence of their unselfish hospitality, loyalty, and dignity, qualities that Scott honours in his Postscript. Edward is a character who is completely unfit for that specific location and lifestyle also due to his delicate constitution, which is highlighted whenever specific physical resistance is needed. To the readers is evident that Edward, engrossed in his romantic fantasy, is unaware that he would not have survived without the help of these people. He idealized life in this setting, failing to recognise that for them, it is a tangible reality in all aspects, rather than a dream, and that it is fraught with challenges and hurdles. Remarkably, the painstaking process of stripping him of his delusions reveals the danger that his naivety poses to both

[44] *Idem*, p. 183.
[45] *Idem*, p. VIII.

himself and other people. With him, the reader comes to understand the pointless resolution of this conflict, and if he were a more self-aware character, Edward Waverley might never be able to move past what he has seen and the harm he too has done.[46]

In the end, he chooses to forsake the Jacobite cause and seeks solace in his own familiar English world since he never entirely loses his English roots and fails to fully assimilate into the Highland community. He adapts to the changes he has seen in order to live in a harmonious relationship both on a personal and political level, since he weds Rose Bradwardine, the Baron's daughter. He decides on the Lowlands, modernity, and a secure union. The character of Edward Waverley thereby personifies, enacts, or generates the attitude towards history that the book aims to convey, namely, a regretful but necessary acceptance of development.[47] Waverley is a metaphor for the intermediate path, between reason and sentiment, attracted to the latter but eventually overcome and won by the former. Fascinatingly, he comes to terms with the end of the romantic phase of his life while living in solitude in England.

> […] and it was in many a winter walk by the shores of Ullswater, that he acquired a more complete mastery of a spirit tamed by adversity than his former experience had given him: and that he felt himself entitled to say firmly, though perhaps with a sigh, that the romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now commenced.[48]

Interestingly, not without reason has Scott made the contrast between romance, indicating the youth's adventures in Scotland, and history, representing his English future. Once again in a secure environment, when the external influences of Scotland have been replaced by the uniform, cultural, and *civilised* English surroundings, he is finally resolute in his actions. Furthermore, once this English influence is entrenched, he improves the lives of individuals in Scotland by bringing them back to a state of financial and personal security. With his voyage completed, a mature and experienced Waverley can consider the reassertion of a harmonious and peaceful British kingdom to be complete. With an understanding of the past and an appreciation for both its beauty and perils, he represents and foreshadows a union of bliss and mutual peace.[49] The crucial aspect, however, lies in the fact that there is no removal from or farewell to what Edward has witnessed and learned in the Highlands. Scott so strongly wishes to emphasise that Scottishness was not eradicated from history because the Union encompassed both worlds, both the inevitable development and the past and sacrifices that

[46] Kathryn Sutherland, *op. cit*., p. xxiv.
[47] Harry E. Shaw, *op. cit*., p. 179.
[48] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, p. cit., 312.
[49] James Kerr, *op. cit*., p. 103.

made it possible. Even after the nation has been completely pacified, Edward still maintains at least a few Highland customs that may now be enjoyed in a safe, tranquil context. For instance, when wandering around Scotland, he adheres to the Highland tradition of walking long distances, and the narrator underlines that "his campaign had considerably strengthened his constitution and improved his habits of enduring fatigue".[50] Remnants of Waverley's hybridity[51] and partial Gaelicness are brought up before Fergus's death, when the chief clan tells him: "remember you have worn their tartan, and are an adopted son of their race".[52] The figure of Edward, though not a native Gael, was briefly an *adopted* one, therefore he carries on the tradition in his own way. This young man, who exists at the meeting point of conflicting historical eras and cultures, survives the deaths of his companions. Yet, his perspective is less dreary for he is not an actual member of the lost Gaelic civilization and can thus resurface from his Highland period into his modern English self, remaining as a member of the new order with a secure future and progeny.[53]

To conclude with Edward's analysis, Makdisi proposes a theory for the protagonist's contribution and belonging as regards the geography explored by the novel. In his view, the imagined map that supports and maintains Waverley's journey, the base on which the tale is written and towards which the entire plot is driven, entails the simultaneous production of an imaginary topography.[54] In order to do this, it first proposes a rigorous dualistic structure through which the story is filtered. Beside Scotland and England in general, this entails a confrontation between the Highlands and the Lowlands. This dichotomy enables and depends on a network of other essentializing oppositions, including the imaginative against the realistic, the untamed against the domesticated, feudal against development, and others. Nonetheless, the novel depicts the Highlands as a region defined by the past, while aiming to demonstrate that the identity of the Lowlands is still relevant in the present. Hence, an overarching *chronological* dichotomy between the past and present coexists with the overall *spatial* one between the Highlands and Lowlands.[55] In this regard, Makdisi claims that every character in the book, with the exception of Edward himself, sets out, marks, and occupies a certain area of the plot's symbolic ground, and hence a particular political, social and historical stance. The only character moving across and between the novel's various areas is

[50] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 326.
[51] Here, *hybridity* is understood as a blending between two typically distinct life forms, as argued in Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 10. For more insights on postcolonial studies of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York, Routledge, 1994.
[52] Walter Scot, *Waverley*, cit., p. 359.
[53] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 172.
[54] Saree Makdisi, *op. cit*., p. 162.
[55] *Idem*, p. 162.

Edward; he is the explorer, the adventurer, and the traveller who, in doing so, connects these metaphorical territories together. This is because, when other characters move, they inevitably stake out new territory, which causes the novel's imagined map to move along with them. Consequently, the only character without either a firm territorial identity or a territorial constraint is Edward, the *wavering* hero. The remaining characters are dispersed in accordance with the territorial identities given by the dualistic epistemology of the imagined map of the novel, with Fergus MacIvor and Colonel Talbot occupying the two extreme places on either side.[56]

**Fergus MacIvor and Colonel Talbot: Challenging and Supporting Prejudices**

The character of Fergus does not fit the romanticised stereotype of Highlanders as individuals who fought for the Stuarts out of unwavering allegiance and moral rectitude. In fact, the Mac-Ivor chief is an educated man and cunning opportunist who switches sides when it serves his personal interests. Fergus is the epitome of his society, since he is described as "the model of a Highland Chieftain".[57] According to the narrator, living neither sixty years too late nor too soon he is the ideal representation of both the Highland Laird[58] and the precise period of the novel's historical setting. "Had Fergus MacIvor lived Sixty Years sooner than he did, he would, in all probability, have wanted the polished manner and knowledge of the world which he now possessed; and had he lived Sixty Years later, his ambition and love of rule would have lacked the fuel which his situation now afforded."[59]

As far as his personality is concerned, despite holding a position of leadership, Fergus always refrains from exerting his influence upon his men unless they agree with his viewpoints. Specifically, the Scotsman effectively demonstrates an adept comprehension of Edward's apprehensions and insecurities. The young Englishman is not completely cognizant of the comprehensive ideological implications of the occurrences that encompass him, and on the verge of the insurrection, Fergus serves as a reminder to Waverley that he ought to journey back to England if he is uncertain of his political ideologies. "And is this your very sober earnest," he wisely asks him, proving a keen understanding of Waverley's personality, "or are we in the land of romance and fiction?"[60]

Waverley might not be able to tell the difference, but Fergus has acutely grasped his dreamlike tendencies that could endanger their mission. Occurrences like this one, in

[56] *Ibidem*.
[57] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 112.
[58] "Laird": A Scottish man who owns a large area of land, *Cambridge Dictionary*, Accessed 4 April 2023.
[59] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 101.
[60] *Idem*, p. 146.

conjunction with Flora's persistent declaration that Edward could never attain contentment with a woman like her, serve as constant reminders that the romantic perception through which these events are observed remains exclusive to Waverley alone. Following the aforementioned theory proposed by Makdisi concerning the conception of imagined maps and territories, Fergus, much like the Highland territory he personifies, is meant to represent a vestige of the past. In other words, merely by embodying, recognizing and defending the standpoints of the Highlands, he automatically does the same for that fatally oppressed past they represent.[61]

As remarked by Stroh, the importance of cultural conciliation and border crossing is a recurring theme in this novel. Occasionally, such borders not only prove permeable[62] but are also at risk of disappearing entirely. The concept that fixed cultural categories are mere artificial constructs and the inadequacy of such rigid preconceptions are demonstrated by several examples of hybridity among cultures and traditions.[63] Indeed, in Stroh's opinion, the main members of the Highland elite, namely Fergus and, to a lesser extent, his sister Flora, are cultural hybrids, still partially rooted in traditional Gaelic heritage and partly moulded by the "rising civilizations" of Europe's urbanized cultures as a result of their education in France. Fergus's respectable education lends a shine, a nice veneer that makes him a more appealing character. His hybridity, which distinguishes him from the majority of his clansmen, is evident in the fact that he frequently combines French terms with his English speech. In addition, whenever Fergus employs Gaelic customs, he does it both occasionally and judiciously, only when it serves his purposes. Upon the arrival of Edward, the members of the clans expect their chief to appear before him accompanied by a substantial entourage of vassals, adhering to the customs and practices of Gaelic culture. Based on their experience, restricted to the Highlands, they believe that such an entourage would astonish English outsiders as well as native chiefs. In contrast, Fergus is a worldly individual who demonstrates a more realistic understanding of the perceptions of outsiders and refrains from improperly appropriating Gaelic culture:

> He was well aware that such an unnecessary attendance would seem to Edward rather ludicrous […] and while few men were more attached to ideas of chieftainship and feudal power, he was […] cautious of exhibiting external marks of dignity, unless […] when they were most likely to produce an imposing effect. Therefore, although, had he been to receive a brother chieftain, he would probably

[61] Saree Makdisi, *op. cit*., p. 164.
[62] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 160.
[63] *Ibidem*.

> have been attended by all that retinue […] he judged it more respectable to […] meet Waverley with a single attendant."[64]

It is noteworthy to observe that Fergus's conflicted views are apparent in his contemptuous remarks to Edward about the Highland customs he practises: the clan feast is described by Fergus as "the barbarous ritual of our forefathers"[65] and he apologises for the bewilderment that the large gathering of clansmen caused. "I must find them beef and ale, while the rogues will do nothing […] but practice the broadsword, or wander about the hills, shooting, fishing, hunting, drinking, and making love,"[66] he even utters, appearing to regret that his role requires him to adhere to unsophisticated and wasteful customs. Never does he totally repudiate his culture and values, though. What he seeks is perhaps the best of each world, a compromise that could effectively represent a middle ground.[67]

This notwithstanding, he also exhibits conventional and possibly cliché Gaelic traits, such as his belief in paranormal apparitions. The majority of the Highlanders in the story are superstitious, and this belief distinguishes them from the English characters as well as from the post-Enlightenment British readers. It leads to an intriguing and intricate conflict of attitudes that highlights Scotland's diverse society once more.[68] Moreover, in a trait of Fergus' temperament, Scott exhibits a prejudice that sees the association of the feudal system with age immaturity. In fact, Fergus occasionally provides examples of immaturity, or childishness, due to his being arrogant, obstinate, and easily irritable. His full authority as a feudal chief can also foster his stubbornness; as a result, his shortcomings and immaturity also reflect those of the "primitive" civilization he inhabits.[69]

Yet, in the end, rather ironically, the very characteristics that set him apart from the stereotypically conceived Highlander led to his brutal death.[70] In retrospect, the majority of Highlanders are considered only partially responsible for their misdeeds, due to the presumption that their primitiveness and ignorance were responsible for their misguided choices. However, this rehabilitation cannot befall the more civilised Fergus, because it is stated that "that he was enlightened and accomplished made his crime the less excusable."[71] Because of him, many thousands of men who otherwise would not have disturbed the peace were prompted to fight.

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[64] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 98.
[65] *Idem*, p. 113.
[66] *Idem*, p. 107.
[67] James Kerr, *op. cit*., p. 7.
[68] Christian Kucznierz, *op. cit*., p. 77.
[69] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 166.
[70] *Ibidem*.
[71] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, p. 352.

The strong symbolism of Fergus is ultimately captured in what is often regarded as one of the most emblematic scenes of the novel. Just towards the conclusion, Edward hangs a sizable portrait of himself and Fergus Mac-Ivor in Highland garb in the hall of his Scottish manor house.[72] First of all, an important common point is to be noted: they are dressed in the same way. As a mirror, or rather a negative print, Fergus seems the dark counterpart of Waverley, who, when clothed as a Highlander, becomes a "full son of Ivor"[73] and, thus, Fergus's brother. Nevertheless, the contrast between the two companions is highlighted: "The ardent, fiery, and impetuous character of the unfortunate Chief of Glennaquoich was finely contrasted with the contemplative, fanciful, and enthusiastic expression of his happier friend."[74] It is clear that Edward is described as being the "happier, fanciful and enthusiastic" character, while the other man is portrayed as "ardent, fiery, and impetuous" and also "unfortunate." As Kerr suggests, the two figures in the painting are intended to represent respectively Scotland and the newly formed Great Britain, and the amalgamation of the two individuals signifies a reunion of the previously separated entities. [75] Fergus is memorialised in the painting for his friends and fellow soldiers, but this tribute finds its necessity and achievability only in the aftermath of Fergus's passing and the consequent dismantling of the social order he embodied, thereby signifying the ultimate demise of an entire distinct tradition.[76] Furthermore, as a result of the Hanoverian victory, the represented past has also been constrained: Fergus and the Scottish chieftainship are no longer alive, and the clansmen in the background will no longer march in a rebellion. The painting obscures the painful aspects of the Highland experience, both recent and contemporary, such as Fergus' merciless execution and people's lives under the punishment measures. Although observers may be moved by the memory of the deceased Fergus, the aesthetics are not stained by particularly disturbing details of his execution. Only by obscuring these unpleasant details and emphasising the scenic and noble features can the painting be aesthetically pleasing.[77]

Scott's novels do not place Jacobitism at the centre of nationalism. Longing and sentimentality for an old feudal system that was clearly doomed to be wiped out by modernity are indeed present, but marginal. As previously stated, the main emphasis in Scott's work is on change; the Jacobites are significant not as a representation of the fight for national identity and independence, but rather because their loss signalled the start of a new period for

[72] *Idem*, p. 373.
[73] *Idem*, p. 229.
[74] *Idem*, p. 373.
[75] James Kerr, *op. cit*., p. 13.
[76] *Idem*, pp. 19-21.
[77] *Ibidem*.

Scotland. According to Pittock, the transformation of Scottish romantic nationalism into British patriotism, rather than Edward's development from a boy to a man, should be considered the central theme of *Waverley*'s Bildungsroman storyline.[78]

The antithesis of Fergus is Colonel Talbot, who embodies the utmost in English bigotry and prejudice and displays a bitter hatred for anything outside his worldview. Talbot is to represent the present's biased voice. He is an officer and Englishman, whose territorial identifications include the Lowlands and England.[79] When Edward encounters Colonel Talbot, who is described as a man "strongly tinged […] with those prejudices which are peculiarly English",[80] it is evident how far Edward has moved away from the anti-Scottish position of many of his English fellows. According to Talbot, all Gaels are "beggars"[81], as well as "a gang of […] cut-throats"[82], and he adamantly rejects being attracted by the beauty and personality of Flora. These are precisely the preconceptions and ideas of the Highlanders that Scott wished to dispel in his fiction. Edward, who by this section of the novel is much less prejudiced, seeks to moderate the other's xenophobia by remarking, "[...] You judge too harshly of the Highlanders."[83] Yet, despite Waverley's efforts to convince him otherwise, Talbot refuses to become acquainted with any of Edward's Highland friends and to broaden his mindset.[84]

**The Nuances of *Waverley*'s Minor Characters**

It is via the introduction of the minor figures that the novel depicts both the historical and social environment. The marginal characters provide a nuanced depiction and highlight the contrasts inherent in the narrative, adding a sense of local authenticity. In addition to illustrating Scott's painting of Scotland from six decades earlier, all minor Scottish characters serve also as a vehicle for the author to convey the vernacular of the region, allowing him to add even more local colour to his narrative by using the distinct language of the people.[85]

The social class of the common Scottish laird is represented by Baron Bradwardine. Similar to Fergus, he represents tradition and pride in his country, but he frequently alternates between English language and Lowland Scots, depending on the situation and the person to whom he is talking. This appears to be a clue as to the Baron's location situated amidst the

[78] See Murray Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland: The Stuart Myth and the Scottish Identity, 1638 to the Present*, London, Routledge, 1991.
[79] Saree Makdisi, *op. cit*., p. 163.
[80] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 272.
[81] *Ibidem.*
[82] *Ibidem.*
[83] *Idem*, p. 320.
[84] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 165.
[85] Christian Kucznierz, *op. cit*., p. 90.

intersecting territories of England and Scotland, or their respective cultural identities of Anglicization and Scottishness. Such a determination operates on both geographical and socio-cultural planes of reference. The individual in question is the one who introduces Waverley to a new world by actually escorting him beyond the border. He is indeed a border character; in him, rationality and emotion coexist, much as history and present coexist within his estate, as symbolised by the symbolic renovation and redecoration of his manor at the novel's conclusion.[86]

The court jester Davie Gellatly embodies most of the symbolism used by Scott to portray the novel's peripheral Scottish characters. Davie is the first person Waverley meets when he arrives at the desolate and wrecked Tully-Veolan. He wanders around a destroyed and hollow place, singing to Edward fragments of songs about Scottish history and telling him about the fates of the Bardwardine. Davie manages to outlive the house's devastation and, with him, the old tunes he has been singing the entire book. A character devoid of history becomes the bearer of tradition, foreshadowing the resurgence of Scotland that is to be brought about by Waverley and the novel itself.[87]

It should not be overlooked that, *Waverley* occasionally adopts the romantic patterns and clichés regarding Highlanders, regardless of whether the author, narrator, or characters share some of the same beliefs, or perhaps this might have been done even to comply with the expectations and preferences of readers of the time. Hence, the author's assessment of Gaelic *otherness* and "primitiveness" varies.[88] As examined, the Highlanders can appear to be honourable men but also despicable savages. The latter is best demonstrated by the figure of Callum Beag, the personal assistant of Fergus, who exhibits the unfavourable aspect of clanship and its too passionate loyalty, namely an equally ferocious hostility towards those who are not members of the clan.[89] He is the protagonist of an episode representing the quintessential cliché, where the narrator highlights the propensity towards aggression amongst Highlanders in comparison to the Englishmen:

> […] Edward gazed in his face, and discovered in Callum's very handsome, though embrowned features, just the degree of roguish malice with which a lad of the same age in England would have brought forward a plan for robbing an orchard.
>
> 'Good God, Callum, would you take the man's life?'

[86] *Ibidem*.
[87] *Idem*, p. 94.
[88] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 156.
[89] James Kerr, *op. cit*., p. 11.

'Indeed,' answered [...].[90]

The strong inference the narrator makes in this passage is that a Scot would murder someone with the same delight with which an English lad would steal an apple. The novel draws a marked dichotomy in this particular instance, albeit one among other examples. Clichés come to life through the character of the Highland bandit Donald Bean Lean, who is the portrayal of the conventional but compelling figure of the livestock robber and intimidating cateran[91], whose characteristics aligned with the dominant perception regarding the Highlander population during the era in question. The contrast between the various cultures shown in the novel is further reinforced by Scott's depiction of a character like him. Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that even if before meeting him, Edward already had a prearranged idea of him owing to the stories he had heard of his activities, such judgements are completely twisted when he meets him since he is presented as:

> […] totally different in appearance and manner from what his imagination had anticipated. [...] From such accompaniments, Waverley prepared himself to meet a stern, gigantic, ferocious figure, [...] Donald Bean Lean was the very reverse of all these. He was thin in person and low in stature, with light sandy-coloured hair and small pale features, from which he derived his agnomen of Bean, or white; and although his form was light, well proportioned, and active, he appeared, on the whole, rather a diminutive and insignificant figure.[92]

In another noteworthy passage, the prejudice towards Donald Bean Lean is still conveyed remarkably strongly and he is *othered* in such a way that it both exemplifies Edward's viewpoint and plays on the preconceptions that readers of the time might have held.[93] Chapter XVII's poignant title, such as *The Hold of a Highland Robber*, may have been chosen to catch the reader's attention and provide a nice surprise. In addition to being a robber, Donald is another despicable example of barbarism, as readers will discover later, due to his plots to drive Waverley away from his Hanoverian troop. Yet, Donald himself tries to put on a civilised face or mask so as to make a positive impression on his visitor from England since he does not want to be perceived as a savage. His attempt to imitate other behaviours is unsuccessful in achieving its intended effect since, in fact, in Waverley's opinion, Donald's mock attempt is worse than typical old, barbarism:[94]

[90] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 162.
[91] "Cateran": a former military irregular or brigand of the Scottish Highlands, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Accessed 2 April 2023.
[92] Waler Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 88.
[93] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 155.
[94] *Ibidem*.

> In order to receive his English visitor in great form, […] he had laid aside the Highland dress […] to put on an old uniform, and a feathered hat, in which he was far from showing to advantage, and indeed looked so incongruous, compared with all around him, that Waverley would have been tempted to laugh, had laughter been either civil or safe.[95]

At the very moment in which a Highlander changes his traditional clothes, which characterize him as such, and therefore simply steps out of the fixed and rigid image that common perception has created of him, Edward finds it *incongruous*, somehow wrong, and his first instinct would be to laugh.

**Dealing with Mutual Prejudice**

It is now clear that the dismantling of prejudice is a key component of *Waverley's* effort to foster tolerance towards Highland people and culture, although some prejudices and interethnic ideas do remain unchallenged and unsolved. Yet, it is interesting to underline that Scott's strategy is to prove that prejudice and a lack of knowledge are in fact reciprocal: Highlanders and English or Lowlanders are equally prejudiced towards one another. Furthermore, rather than coming from true, first-hand experience, this judgment typically comes from hearsay or unreliable sources. Edward's aunt is one of his primary sources of preconceptions. On the day of his leaving, she cautions him "against the fascination of Scottish beauty […] as she had been assured."[96] "As she had been assured" emphasises that her beliefs are solely the outcome of rumour. When Edward, and with him the reader, arrives in Scotland, it becomes clear how hearsay may alter reality: the Baron is a Jacobite despite being a Lowlander, and Flora is a clever, refined woman despite being a Highlander.

This novel emphasises the Highlanders' perceptions and prejudices toward people coming from the south. One example is provided by Evan Dhu, for also men like him share the sentimental idea that the Highlanders are physically stronger and more manly than their southern rivals, as proved here: "Edward was anxious […] to remove the opinion which Evan seemed to entertain of the effeminacy of the Lowlanders, and particularly that of the English".[97] A further example is offered by Flora, another figure who lacks knowledge and is partial towards the English; this is one reason why she is not charmed by Edward. According to Flora, Edward's shyness "was, in her opinion, too strongly akin to timidity and imbecility"[98] because she was unfamiliar with English etiquette.

[95] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 89.
[96] *Idem*, p. 33.
[97] *Idem*, p. 85.
[98] *Idem*, p. 232.

Besides sharing prejudiced ideas, the two oppositions taken into account, namely between the Highlands and England, as well as the Lowlands, are treated with dignity. Scott endeavours to conduct multiple assessments aimed at culturally diverse communities, within a framework that acknowledges and respects their unique perspectives and customs. For instance, when describing the conflict between Jacobite rebels and government soldiers, he writes: "the two armies, so different […] yet each admirably trained in its own peculiar mode of war".[99] Moreover, respect can be seen in the employment of the Gaelic language, which demonstrates underlying respect for a peripheral language that might not be fully grasped by the author or the readership but is nonetheless thought deserving of representation. Thus, as Stroh points out: "The two countries' traditions are shown to be different, but equally meritorious".[100]

To conclude, I argue that the elements of Highland society are distributed among several characters within *Waverley*. Such construction serves an analytical and artistic purpose by allowing Scott to clearly represent certain historical traits and influence the reader's perception of the course that history has undertaken. If Flora MacIvor is the idealistic facet of Jacobitism, then Fergus is its practical dimension. When Donald Bean Lean is the outlaw who attempts to move away from fixed canons, Callum Beg is portraying the conventional, darker side of the clansman. And upon Scott's successful persuasion of the reader to embrace Waverley's union with Rose Bradwardine, a Lowland woman, over Flora Maclvor, a Highlander, the reader ultimately concedes to the end of the romantic heroic existence, paving the way for a more tranquil and secure modern era.[101]

[99] *Idem*, p. 244.
[100] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 151.
[101] Harry. E. Shaw, *op. cit*., p. 218.

## 2.2 Landscapes

### Scottish Landscape in Scott's Time

The historical context in which the *Waverley* Novels were set assumes utmost significance not only due to its chronologic viewpoint but also to its spatial dimension. The depictions of the Scottish landscape are intended to highlight the distinctive attributes of the national identity of Scotland. Should landscape be perceived as a representation, it becomes plainly evident that it is a "construct of the mind" since it draws on the interplay between sensory perception, individual experiences, and cultural identity.[102] One way to render landscapes into tangible and easily conceivable representations and communicate it to others is via literature. Consequently, the study of literature may prove to be a valuable means of attaining knowledge regarding the perception held by individuals regarding their surroundings within a specific time period. Prior to Scott's literary contributions, the Highlands of Scotland had frequently served as a backdrop for various narrative elements, while also serving as a symbolic representation of cultural distinctiveness from England, as previously remarked. Hence, the distinctive characteristics of the untamed and wild Highland terrain were frequently exploited by authors as a representation of national autonomy and freedom in literature.

Similar to his approach towards the portrayal of the characters, Scott intentionally sought to challenge common preconceptions of his era through his depictions of Scottish geography and landscape. By veering away from expected representations, he aimed to craft a distinctive impression that was divergent from prevailing viewpoints. A noteworthy observation is that a considerable number of writers who contributed to nationalist literature during the initial stages of the nineteenth century were from the Lowlands. As such, their perspective on the Highlands was that of outsiders as they lacked intimate knowledge of the actual lived experiences of Highlanders prior to the Forty-Five uprising, having not been members of their society.[103] The lack of first-hand knowledge left space to imagination, giving rise to an altered image of the Highlands environment, which was profoundly influenced by contemporary political and aesthetic values, as well as unfavourable prejudices. On the other hand, before writing his novels, Scott himself was a tourist and wanderer with a deep appreciation for the sceneries of Scotland. As he wrote in his memoir, "My principal object in these excursions was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery, or what afforded me at

[102] Matthew Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2007, p. 3.
[103] Stella Moretti, *op. cit*., p. 91.

least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events".[104] His love for the naturalistic Scottish sceneries is also evidenced in his argument in favour of the Scottish Borders. This defence was mounted in response to remarks made by the American author Washington Irving during a visit in 1817, wherein the latter described the local Scottish scenery as "grey and monotonous", to which Scott replied: "it may be partiality, but to my eye, these grey hills and all this wild border country have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land; it has something bold, and stern, and solitary about it".[105]

Nonetheless, a significant portion of the unfavourable reputation and prejudiced concepts surrounding the Highlands can be attributed to the accounts of an actual expedition undertaken by Johnson and Boswell in 1773. Johnson's *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*[106] together with Boswell's narrative of the identical journey, namely *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*[107], would emerge as one of the most significant inquiries into the society and landscape of the Scottish Highlands during this epoch and it did not paint a positive picture of Scotland. Indeed, in this production, the Anglo-centric reforms aimed at enhancing the quality of life in the area are frequently likened to colonial excursions on the New World, as if Northern Scotland were a colony to civilize. This is linked with a depiction of Gaelic society as having regressed in terms of diversity and developmental progression. The Scottish landscape is frequently shown as too dark and unsettling, blocking the view or catching the light. Furthermore, Johnson contends that such lands are lacking good qualities to such an extent that they would not even be worth invading: "Such lands at last cannot repay the conquest and therefore perhaps have not been so often invaded by the mere ambition of dominion; as by resentment of robberies and insults, […]".[108]

In addition, for a considerable number of English readers the source of the stereotype of Scotland that they most immediately associated with was John Wilkes's 18th-century newspaper, *The North Briton*. In this publication, Scotland and its people are repeatedly portrayed as poor miserable individuals, living in an unpleasant and dark environment.[109] Scott also criticised the language used in Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland*, published in 1769, a

[104] J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott,* 1838, as quoted in Stuart Kelly, *Scott-land: The Man Who Invented a Nation*, Polygon, 2021, p. 118.
[105] Quoted in Susan Oliver, *Walter Scott and the Greening of Scotland: Emergent Ecologies of a Nation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, p. 3.
[106] Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, London, William Strahan and Thomas Cadell, 1775.
[107] James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,* London, Charles Dilly, 1785.
[108] Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and the Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 34.
[109] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 96.

work that had a significant influence on Johnson's *Journey*. On the one hand, Scott acknowledged that it had helped southern readers to get to know isolated regions of the British Isles, but on the other, he did not appreciate the author's characterization of the people as barbarians and the landscape as savage and threatening. In 1831, in a letter to a friend, Donald Gregory, he brought up the subject and stated that he "tried [his] best to laugh the world, the southern world at least, out of these absurd prejudices."[110]

In the following paragraphs, it will be explored how Scott managed to successfully challenge deeply ingrained prejudices by means of his novels. His literary productions – and *Waverley* in particular – taught his readers to value and assign worth to the very elements of the landscape which had previously been considered deplorable and shameful. Scott's retelling of the national landscape came at the right time since it was depicted with sublime and attractive traits just when the nation of Scotland needed to distinguish itself as unique. Rather than only apprehension and eeriness, the kind of Scotland represented in Scott's writings was a place that encouraged exploration, and along with the rivers, mountains, and forests, the landscape alternated between being enigmatic and stimulating, as evidenced in *Rob Roy*: "Little lonely valleys, which opening on the road from time to time, seemed to invite the traveller to explore their recesses".[111] The readers were able to make this shift in perception step by step alongside the protagonists as they approach the unknown territory. Indeed, many of his novels' storylines can be summarised as travels, but the protagonists do not arrive at their destinations right away; it is, in fact, their journeys that hold significance. Their journeys are interjected with borders to cross which signify crucial moments and introduce the characters to utterly distinct worlds.[112] Undeniably, the portrayal of the Highlands before the *Waverley* Novels was already in existence; nevertheless, Scott pioneered the practice of emphasizing the act of crossing the Highland line. This aspect accentuates how the protagonist is most affected by changes in the surrounding terrain and natural environment, for these boundaries are portrayed in every instance as physical barriers preventing access to the territory beyond.[113]

**The Romantic Concepts of the Sublime and the Picturesque**

Undoubtedly, Scott was heavily influenced by the combination of the aesthetic concepts derived from Edmund Burke's seminal work, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), as well as Richard Price's *Essay on the*

[110] Susan Oliver, *op. cit.,* p. 17.
[111] Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, New York, Harper Collins, ed. 2012, p. 147.
[112] Sarah Bisson, *op. cit*., p. 95.
[113] Stella Moretti, *op. cit*., p. 29.

*Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1794).[114] Given that Scott received his education within the background of the Scottish Enlightenment and produced literary works throughout the Romantic era, such a contextual background is to be expected. However, it was the writer's skilful integration and conveyance of the sublime and the picturesque that underpins both the distinctiveness and success of his depiction of the Scottish landscape.

First, I will examine how Scott used Burke's concept of the sublime to characterise the area of crossing the borders to the Highlands. Burke emphasized the aesthetic significance of the sublime, perceived as the origin of mankind's most potent emotions. He asserted that the land possessed an inherent ability to elicit sentiments of trepidation, reverence, and awe. The sublime emanated from any image or phenomenon that instilled fear in humans, be it danger, obscurity, power, or greatness. Additionally, weather was also regarded as a source of sublimity, particularly when it took the form of menacing storms characterized by thunders and rain.[115]

In the same way, Edward Waverley perceives the mountains that separate the Lowlands from the Highlands as a threateningly impenetrable barrier: “Edward gradually approached the highlands of Perthshire, which at first had appeared a blue outline in the horizon, but now swelled into huge gigantic masses, which frowned defiance over the more level country that lay beneath them.”[116] Likewise, as Francis Osbaldistone from *Rob Roy* moves into the Highlands, the surrounding landscape also assumes a threatening and wild appearance that highlights his fragility: “The hills now sunk on its margin so closely, and were so broken and precipitous, as to afford no passage except just upon the narrow line of the track which we occupied, and which was overhung with rocks, from which we might have been destroyed merely by rolling down stones, without much possibility of offering resist”.[117]

The visual and spatial features inherent within these landscapes evoke the aesthetic principles delineated in Burke's concept of the sublime. Proportions assume an exaggerated quality, spatial organization manifests vertically, and a palpable sense of awe and apprehension of falling pervades the depiction:

> It was towards evening as they entered one of the tremendous passes which afford communication between the High and Low Country; the path, which was extremely steep and rugged, winded up a chasm between two tremendous rocks,

[114] Susan Oliver, *op. cit*., p. 14.
[115] See Edmund Burke*, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.
[116] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, p. 35.
[117] Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, p. 473.

> following the passage which a foaming stream, that brawled far below, appeared to have worn for itself in the course of ages. A few slanting beams of the sun, which was now setting, reached the water in its darksome bed, and showed it partially, chafed by a hundred rocks, and broken by a hundred falls. The descent from the path to the stream was a mere precipice, [...] On the right hand, the mountain rose above the path with almost equal inaccessibility […].[118]

A kind of sublime dread is also experienced by Darsie Latimer, the hero from *Redgauntlet*. Waves give rise to a semblance of ferocious animals, their undulating motion resembling the fur of wolves, and their loudness, along with the ferocious wind, is likened to the reverberating bellow of a hideous creature: "On we went, the sky blackening around us, and the wind beginning to pipe such a wild and melancholy tune as best suited to the hollow sounds of the tide, which I could hear at a distance, like the roar of some immense monster defrauded of its prey."[119] This metaphorical strategy effectively underscores the perception of peril while concurrently addressing the elusive nature of the feeling of sublime awe. Accordingly, it makes perfect sense to note that "near the border, figurality goes up,"[120] as insightfully observed by Franco Moretti about *Waverley*. He argues that the area beyond a boundary is frequently viewed as unfamiliar; because of this, elements and reality near the border are constantly expanding, assuming figurative and unrealistic traits. When confronted with the border, utilizing metaphors and other forms of rhetorical devices can be effective, and Moretti suggests that the reasons for this are related to the cognitive and emotional role of metaphors. Border symbolism provides a method for confronting the emotional effects of encountering an unfamiliar world.[121] Thus, metaphors act as a means of expressing the unknown that individuals encounter, "yet also *contain* it".[122] Within this context, caves are portrayed as menacing or transformed into enchanted realms inhabited by fairy beings. An array of demonic and monstrous entities pervades the narrative, imbuing it with an eerie and gothic essence. The proportions change close to the border, making familiar shapes suddenly appear ominous. The lines dividing reality and imagination become indistinct, and the beings inhabiting such realms display an affiliation with both domains, such as exemplified by the figure of Rob Roy, who alternates between the Lowlands and the Highlands, and his physical attributes convey an unsettling duality[123], as evidenced by this passage in the novel: "[…] gave something wild, irregular, and, as it were unearthly to his appearance, and reminded me

[118] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 84.
[119] Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 36.
[120] Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900*, London and New York, Verso, 1998, p. 45.
[121] *Ibidem*.
[122] *Idem*, p. 47.
[123] Sarah Bisson, *op. cit*., p. 98.

[…] of the old Picts who […] were a sort of half-goblin, half-human beings."[124] The incorporation of Gothic elements into the borders fills them with an inherent sense of alterity. According to Bisson, this distinctiveness is also accentuated by the disconcerting intrusion of the Gaelic language within *Waverley*.[125] Consequently, when getting closer to the border, the characters become disoriented. They step into a suspicious realm where the constraints imposed by the King's legislation are not in effect due to its obscure nature. However, they are forced into these enigmatic regions by a combination of external factors and an irresistible attraction. They are figuratively tempted by the boundary and what is beyond, which is primarily why they stray from the prescribed and conventional road. Thus, upon glimpsing the range of mountains separating the Highlands from the Lowlands, Edward is overcome with an overwhelming desire to cross them and explore what lies beyond.[126] The allure of the north and its sense of the sublime is further reinforced upon Waverley's arrival at the village of Tully-Veolan, which is reported to be situated "near the bottom of this stupendous barrier".[127] The term "stupendous" serves as a caution to the reader, since it implies that Edward is on his way to the Highlands and is already captivated by the mere idea of them. The attraction felt by these places is so strong that it is actually the landscape and the feelings it evokes within him which prompt him to join the Jacobite cause.

Furthermore, the characters are faced with the perils of an unsteady and deceitful terrain that persistently poses a risk of collapsing beneath their feet and engulfing them.[128] These include the marshes that are dispersed throughout the moors in *Rob Roy* as well as the quicksand present in *Redgauntlet*, where it is easy to get lost. The unknown landscape figuratively assumes the form of a maze, within which the individuals persist in their descent delving deeper into the unconscious.[129] In this regard, the protagonists' passivity is quite relevant: they are continuously being led, and this inaction also evokes the viewer's sense of awe when encountering the sublime. The characters' missteps and weaknesses are mirrored by their wanderings in the maze, such as Edward's constant hesitancy in choosing sides in the conflict and acting accordingly.[130]

At this point, it may be claimed that Scott's description of the scenery is extremely visual, almost pictorial in nature.[131] However, it is exactly in this respect, that Scott posits an

[124] Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, cit., p. 377.
[125] Sarah Bisson, *op. cit*., p. 99.
[126] *Idem*, p. 104.
[127] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, p. 35.
[128] Sarah Bisson, *op. cit*., p. 105.
[129] *Ibidem*.
[130] *Ibidem*.
[131] *Idem*, p. 94.

important distinction between the outsider perspective, exemplified by Edward Waverley, and that of the Highlanders with regards to their respective perceptions of the landscape. Edward's perspective on the natural scenery can be delineated as akin to that of a painting, wherein he assumes the role of a tourist appreciating the nearly flawless, ethereal, and purely aesthetic facets of the landscape. In essence, the avid gaze of the tourist or visitor relegates also the landscape to the status of a mere aesthetic object to be viewed and consumed.[132] He has a tendency to project his desires and ideals onto the world around him; as a result, the idyllic, flawless land of romance he expects to see can only be imagined. As a consequence, Edward's vision is quickly destroyed as the environment displays its flaws and pragmatic nature, emphasising the special qualities required for individuals to withstand it. Edward might view the landscape as merely a painting to be admired, with a propensity for imaginative misinterpretation, but Scott makes it evident that the sublime *in action* is valued above the sublime *in scenery* when it comes to its people, the Highlanders.[133] Indeed, the environment, specifically the landscape, possesses a formidable capacity to influence individuals. In particular, the untamed and sublime traits of the Highlands have a remarkable impact on Edward, but Scott portrays them as "a context, not a canvas, [...] a world of action, not an object of contemplation,"[134] contrary to how Edward views them. The distance required for a typical sublime experience is removed when one actually physically engages with the land, as opposed to being a passive observer. The familiarity the Highlanders have developed with the land and the consequent intimacy they experience with the environment it sustains show that for them, the land is not only idealised and faultless, but also dangerous and threatening, and they have developed strategies for coping with it, with all its wonders and challenges. The purpose of this distinction, which Scott makes, is to show that the *Waverley* Novels do not create a romantic, hollow image, but rather serve as a cautionary reminder to readers of the risks involved in building an identity within a too rigid framework.[135] This point is exemplified in an iconic passage where Flora Mac-Ivor takes Edward to see a waterfall in Chapter XXII. The scene begins with a detailed description of an ideal sublime landscape, following which Edward misunderstands what he sees and, given the instability of the surroundings, thinks Flora is in a position of jeopardy:

[132] Saree Makdisi, *op. cit*., p. 158.
[133] Susan Oliver, *Walter Scott and the Matter of Landscape: Ecologies of Violence for our Time*, The Bottle Imp, 2014, p. 2, available at https://www.thebottleimp.org.uk/2014/11/walter-scott-and-the-matter-of-landscape-ecologies-of-violence-for-our-time/, Accessed 4 February 2023.
[134] James Reed, *Sir Walter Scott: Landscape and Locality*, London, The Athlone Press, 1980, p. 14.
[135] Alison Lumsden, *op. cit*., p. 182.

> A small path, which had been rendered easy in many places for Flora's accommodation, led him through scenery of a very different description from that which he had just quitted. Around the castle all was cold, bare, and desolate, yet tame even in desolation; but this narrow glen, at so short a distance, seemed to open into the land of romance. The rocks assumed a thousand peculiar and varied forms. In one place a crag of huge size presented its gigantic bulk, as if to forbid the passenger's farther progress; and it was not until he approached its very base that Waverley discerned the sudden and acute turn by which the pathway wheeled its course around this formidable obstacle. In another spot the projecting rocks from the opposite sides of the chasm had approached so near to each other that two pine-trees laid across, and covered with turf, formed a rustic bridge at the height of at least one hundred and fifty feet. It had no ledges, and was barely three feet in breadth.
>
> While gazing at this pass of peril, [...] it was with a sensation of horror that Waverley beheld Flora and her assistant appear, like inhabitants of another region, propped, as it were, in mid-air, upon this trembling structure. She stopped upon observing him below, and, with an air of graceful ease which made him shudder, waved her handkerchief to him by way of signal. He was unable, from the sense of dizziness which her situation conveyed, to return the salute; and was never more relieved than when the fair apparition passed on from the precarious eminence which she seemed to occupy with so much indifference, and disappeared on the other side.[136]

As revealed, Flora's simple gesture of waving to Edward upon the precarious traverse of a pine-tree bridge suspended over a steep ravine elicited a profound physiological response in the man, rendering him momentarily breathless. Experiencing a sudden surge of emotions, Waverley finds himself taken aback and "unable, from the sense of dizziness which her situation conveyed, to return the salute". This scene thoroughly exemplifies the theoretical framework posited by Burke, pertaining to the notion of the sublime as a capacity to elicit psychological dread and physical immobilization in an observer, who can only experience both sensations by maintaining a sufficient distance. While the setting appears to be taken from a painting, Flora reacts in a way that is natural and comfortable to her, without showing any signs of anxiety. Edward, on the other hand, is terrified and on the verge of passing out, which also inverts eighteenth-century gendered and behavioural ideas that expected women to exhibit these more pronounced physical indicators of anxiety at the sight of a perilous scenario rather than men.[137] Waverley's incapacitation noticeably fails to meet the expectations of exhibiting masculine force typically associated with the physically challenging terrain of the Highlands. This episode, however, conceals further insights regarding the role played by the landscape outside of its aesthetic valence. As asserted,

[136] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 116.
[137] Susan Oliver, *Walter Scott and the Greening of Scotland: Emergent Ecologies of a Nation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, p. 16.

Edward can be considered a tourist, rather than a member of the Highland community; he observes the region from a psychological and cultural distance. Inclined as he is to interpret reality in terms of beauty and sublime and influenced by his romantic readings, his response to seeing Flora is based more on emotion and perhaps worry than on any cultural comprehension of the relationship between Highland people and their inhabiting terrain. From her perspective, Flora can see that the narrow bridge she is standing on, is both familiar and completely secure, and the unconcern — or *indifference* — with which she moves in such a terrain surprises Edward. In fact, she is so strongly connected to the surrounding environment—trees, rocks, waterfalls, and wide-open skies—that she is not floating "in mid-air, upon this trembling structure" as Waverley thinks, but rather she is a part of the landscape around her.[138] Even her name itself suggests a connection with plants and nature. Therefore, Flora, a Highlander, is a part of the landscape itself, in contrast to Waverley, who misunderstands the sight as something that could be seen in an artwork. As suggested by Susan Oliver, passages like this one in the novel investigate how a romantic idea of the Highlands might be built while also questioning such unyielding viewpoints.[139]

**The Significance of the Picturesque**

Despite the atmosphere of the sublime pervading the Highlands and consequently most of the storylines of the *Waverley* Novels, the ending concludes and aligns with the category of the picturesque. The term is rooted in the Italian language, specifically originating from the adjective "pittoresco," which was used to designate elements or subjects deemed worthy of depiction.[140] While Burke claimed that the encounter with the sublime triggers an overwhelming sense of reverence, writers who focused on the picturesque held the view that such an encounter fosters a feeling of *interest*, *surprise*, *curiosity*, which they believed to be a source of delight. Such sights encourage mental associations and connections, and instead of being overwhelmed, the viewer is inspired.[141]

The presence of humans marks a significant distinction between the two categories. In picturesque situations, people are typically present, but in a small number, surrounded by a natural setting that may also feature cattle and other indications of human habitation, such as modest homes or farms. On the other side, sublime contexts typically depict unspoiled, unadulterated environment where people are not present and the natural scenery is the single

[138] *Idem*, p. 17.
[139] *Ibidem*.
[140] See Stella Moretti, *op. cit*., p. 153.
[141] Roger Paden, "A Defense of the Picturesque", *Environmental Philosophy*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2013, p. 18, available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26167156, Accessed 10 Apr. 2023.

and true protagonist. As a result, whereas the sublime is spectacular but extremely unsettling since there is no discernible human involvement in it, the picturesque is something that is comfortable to look at, stimulating and pleasing, for it is affected by human presence.[142] In the face of the grandeur and potency of natural beauty, humanity experiences an overwhelming sense of helplessness, compelling the beholder to submit to the awe-inspiring spectacle before their eyes. Therefore, it would seem that the picturesque is the preferred strategy of portrayal for both the Lowlands and the southern borders, as well as for the locations where the order has been restored following the turmoil brought on by the Jacobite rebellions.[143] Scott was fascinated by Osbaldistone Hall from *Rob Roy*, *Waverley*'s ruined rural estate of Tully-Veolan, and the decaying community situated outside its walls because they were the actual tangible manifestations and outcomes of historical power. Thus, Scott's picturesque landscape serves to facilitate a confluence of the present, past, and even future, striking a balance between overpowering sublimity and a calmer picturesque. This same idea of harmony and balance in the landscape is also supported by this quotation by Price: "A good landscape is that in which all the parts are free and unconstrained, but in which, though some are prominent and highly illuminated, and others in shade and retirement; some rough, and others more smooth and polished, yet they are all necessary to the beauty, energy, effect, and harmony of the whole".[144] The notion of unity in Scott's *Waverley* does not hinge on the concept of uninterrupted progression but rather on the ideology of comprehending and embracing all traits, where even the awe-inspiring attributes of the Scottish Highlands matter and are not to be regarded as a source of shame.[145] Throughout this process, the story immerses the reader in the awe of sublime and wild landscapes before outlining the picturesque harmony that unites seemingly disparate elements in order to help the reader come to understand a more reliable representation of Scotland that can be incorporated within Great Britain. Scott adeptly employed the principles of the picturesque tradition to create a comprehensive representation of Scotland that encompasses all its seemingly disparate aspects and prevents his readers — or also visitors — from perceiving it as dangerous.[146] Thanks to this kind of resolution, the once menacing and eerie landscape of the Highlands becomes fascinating and undoubtedly more approachable to the reader. The powerfully evocative way to deal with the landscape employed by Scott enabled him to "voice a more

[142] Susan Oliver, *op. cit*., p. 18.
[143] Sarah Bisson, *op. cit*., p. 109.
[144] Uvedale Price*, An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and Beautiful*, London, Robson, 1794, as quoted in Sarah Bisson, *op. cit*., p. 110.
[145] Sarah Bisson, *op. cit*., p. 110.
[146] *Idem,* p. 111.

subversive, nationalist discourse" [147] to his Scottish compatriots, while concurrently presenting a portrait of Scotland that adhered to the political correctness expectations of his British readers, whilst also enthralling them.

**Surge of Interest in the Highlands**

Following the literary work of Macpherson's *Ossian* and particularly after the publication of *Waverley*, an increasing number of novels were set in the northern region.[148] The Scottish Highlands were becoming an increasingly utilised area in literature by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, evidenced by the growing number of Highlands settings in several works.[149] The reading public, which included both English people seeking to immerse themselves in the sublime and picturesque qualities of the region and Scots concerned with their sense of national identity, appreciated reading literary depictions of the Highlands. Scotland is considered the first area of the United Kingdom to have been mapped[150], due to the turmoil of the Forty-Five, but despite this early mapping, a significant number of Lowland and English readers still perceived the Highlands as unknown and alien to them, so descriptions of such areas in Scott's novels and in other literary works were met with great eagerness and interest.

Perhaps most significantly, the main reason for the public's increased interest in such landscapes stemmed from their association with a representation of pre-Union Scotland, implying the manner in which individuals envisioned Scotland before it merged with England. Edward Waverley embarks on a journey that gradually transports the reader to an archaic land, where the inhabitants continue to maintain a close relationship with their natural surroundings and adhere to ancestral customs. This way of life was characterized by a deep-seated commitment to the principles of living in harmony with nature "which they received from their fathers, and of old Scottish faith, hospitality, worth, and honour"[151], values that by 1745 looked to have already vanished from modern English society, thus triggering a sensation of longing and nostalgia for a world that was increasingly disappearing altogether.[152]

The evocative abilities of Scott to describe landscapes so well as to provide a new dimension to both the observer's imagination and value to the place itself are frequently

[147] *Ibidem*.
[148] Stella Moretti, *op. cit.,* pp. 152-54.
[149] *Idem*, p. 192.
[150] Matthew Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2007, p. 85.
[151] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, cit., p. 376.
[152] Stella Moretti, *op. cit*., p. 156.

mentioned in nineteenth-century literature. For instance, when the writer Henry James travelled across Scotland in 1881, he crossed a river, drove up dark streets, and eventually arrived at a massive illuminated castle. When an attractive woman showed herself out of a window within a clock tower, he uttered, "I found myself within the pages of a *Waverley* novel."[153] During the year 1889, the Lord Chief Justice of England Lord Coleridge embarked upon a visit to a rural place never visited by Sir Walter Scott. However, Scott was privy to knowledge of this region through hearsay and literary sources, which he subsequently utilized to vividly depict it within a novel. Coleridge was struck by "the extraordinary fidelity with which Walter Scott had caught the air and general feeling of the place."[154]

Similar praises were expressed even by Queen Victoria herself, as evidenced in her personal journals. The distant Highlands and lochs of Scotland were regarded by her as a haven from the trappings of modernity, and served as a beloved embodiment of an ancient world which she frequently linked to the literary works of Sir Walter Scott. "[…] This solitude, the romance and wild loveliness of everything here, the absence of hotels and beggars, the independent simple people, who all speak Gaelic here, all make beloved Scotland the proudest, finest country in the world […]".[155] Despite the fact that the extracts from her journals were exclusively shared with her close circle, her numerous visits to the Scottish Highlands have contributed to promoting awareness and interest in this region.

Due to Scott's remarkable prowess in vividly portraying the landscape and culture of his homeland, a significant increase in tourism was observed after the success of *Waverley*.[156] For many who had never been to Scotland, Scott's words managed to bring the country to life. Yet, for some readers, this mental representation was not sufficient, and the novels motivated them to visit the author's Scotland in person. As Kelly points out, the escalation of visitors can be attributed not only to Scott's portrayal of sublime and picturesque areas but also as a result of his attempt to explore and include all of Scotland by inventing fictional locations like manors or villages that appeared entirely plausible and had the advantage of lacking a discernible geographical identification while metaphorically being representative of any location in Scotland, symbolizing its essence as a whole.[157]

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[153] James Henry, *The Notebooks of Henry James*, Ed. F. O. Mattheissen and Kenneth B. Murdock, New York, Oxford University Press, 1947, p. 36.
[154] Ernest Hartley Coleridge, *Life and Correspondence of John Duke Lord Coleridge*, London, W. Heinemann, 1904, p. 359.
[155] Queen Victoria, *Our Life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861*, London, Smith, Elder, 1868, cited in Lionel Gossman, *Thomas Annan of Glasgow: Pioneer of the Documentary Photograph*, Cambridge, Open Book Publishers, 2015, p. 54, available at: http://books.openedition.org/obp/2540 Accessed 15 April 2023.
[156] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 95.
[157] *Idem*, p. 107.

Thus, it is reasonable to assert that Scott's literary works significantly contributed to the recognition of Scotland as a popular tourism destination. This accomplishment is particularly noteworthy given that a mere few decades prior, the country was primarily associated with unfavourable prejudices, such as those articulated by Samuel Johnson in his *Journey*[158]. According to Hook, Scott was the one who brought Scotland's romantic air to completion. Its rich and fervent past, the landscapes of its numerous mountains, lochs, and rivers, the brave and dignified nature of the inhabitants, as well as its well-established heritage of lyrical expression through poetry and ballads, all constituted key elements that had already captured a significant degree of romantic fascination. However, he concludes that these aforementioned facets of Scotland had assumed a fresh and thoroughly compelling form thanks to Walter Scott, rendering them impossible to resist.[159]

[158] Samuel Johnson, *op. cit*.,
[159] Andrew Hook, "Scotland and Romanticism: The International Scene*", The History of Scottish Literature Vol. II, 1660-1800*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1988, pp. 307-21.

CHAPTER III

# Walter Scott's Legacy

## 3.1 A Critical Approach to Scott Studies: from Decline to Revival

"In the nineteenth century Walter Scott was ubiquitous; in the twentieth he virtually disappears".[1] In the Western cultural sphere, there has been no other writer who has wielded such immense influence during their lifetime and yet been relegated to insignificance in the annals of literary history by future generations.[2] The reputations of all literary figures, including William Shakespeare with whom Scott was frequently and positively compared during his epoch, experience fluctuating fortunes over time. However, no other writer's notoriety can rival the rapid ascent and descent comparable to the extraordinary trajectory of Scott's public standing.

In order to examine the potential relevance of the literary and cultural legacy of Scott to contemporary critical and public discourse, it is necessary to conduct a retrospective analysis of how perceptions regarding Scott have evolved over time. Accordingly, looking to the future of Scott studies necessitates a comprehensive understanding of its past. The pertinent inquiry to raise is how an author who once enjoyed widespread popularity and commercial success, and who bestowed respect upon neglected cultures and landscapes, went from being celebrated as "The Great Unknown" to being deemed "The Great Unread."[3] The scope of this inquiry shall be limited to the author's competencies as a novelist and historian-thinker, excluding any evaluation of his proficiency in poetry.

### Scott and the Victorians

During the early nineteenth century, Walter Scott's public impression contrasted greatly with the aforementioned perspective. At that time, he was widely considered not only the esteemed representative of his home nation and an exceptional writer of his era, but also a prominent international figure.[4] During the nineteenth century, the astounding impact of the *Wizard of the North* was evident not only in Great Britain but also throughout the Western world.[5] In a letter dated 1818, Keats remarked on his recognition of the significance of his novels, noting

[1] John Henry Raleigh, *op. cit*., p. 7.
[2] *Ibidem*.
[3] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 3.
[4] John Henry Raleigh, *op. cit*., p. 8.
[5] *Ibidem*.

that in his contemporary times, three literary royalty held sway, namely Scott, Byron, and the "Scotch novels."[6]

An examination into Scott's reading public at his time reveals the extent to which his novels were received with enthusiasm and were avidly consumed. Over a period of eight years, Scott and his publishers incrementally raised the price of his novels, starting from one guinea for the three-volume edition of *Waverley*, to two guineas[7] for the four-volume edition of *Peveril of the Peak*[8]. The readers who possessed the financial means to keep the widely-read novels within their residences were limited to individuals belonging to the aristocratic and affluent factions of the middle class. Those who were financially less advantaged had the option to become members of subscription libraries, witness alternative theatrical renditions of the novels or acquire these dramatizations for half a crown.[9] During the period spanning from 1816 to 1830, Scott could count on lower-class and young individuals who perused condensed English and Scottish chapbooks of approximately twenty-four pages in length.[10] These publications were relatively inexpensive, costing as little as one penny or up to sixpence.[11] Regardless of the format of the *Waverley* Novels —whether distributed as pamphlets, plays, or extended stories— Scott's works were widely read due to his ability to captivate and delight his audience.

Several discernible attractions of his novels by the Victorians can be readily identified. According to Raleigh, these included the novelty of the plot of these novels, their wit, the rustic and genuine nature of their Scottish dialect, the distinctiveness of their characters, the sensationalism, the positivity, the ethical dimension, the predictable romance and satisfying resolution, the evocative descriptions of nature, the historical contextualization, the gripping depictions of military conflicts, and the enigmatic identity of the author — all of these elements were present in abundance as *Waverley* came to life.[12] Scott had managed to synthesize an innovative amalgamation of literary components that was unparalleled in both England and Europe. Furthermore, there was the general attractiveness of the shift from urban to rural settings for contextual purposes.[13]

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[6] Hyder Edward Rollins, *The Letters of John Keats*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1958, p. 16.
[7] Coleman Parsons, "Sir Walter Scott: Yesterday and Today", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 116*, no. 6, 1972, p. 450, http://www.jstor.org/stable/985759, Accessed 6 Apr. 2023.
According to Parsons, to draw a comparison with the American money system of 1972, this scenario would entail an escalation from a minimum of sixteen dollars to thirty-two dollars.
[8] Walter Scott, *Peveril of the Peak*, Edinburgh, Archibald Constable, 1823.
[9] According to Parsons, this would correspond to about two dollars in the currency of 1972.
[10] Coleman Parsons, *op. cit*., p. 450.
[11] This would correspond to seven to forty cents considering the currency of 1972.
[12] John Henry Raleigh, *op. cit*., p 10.
[13] *Ibidem*.

There existed additional and broader reasons for justifying the Victorian era's interest in the *Waverley* Novels. The former tense antagonistic relationship with Scotland had dissipated, thereby enabling the country to be discerned as both charming and picturesque without any perceived risk or threat. Besides, during the eighteenth century, Scotland's intellectual prowess transcended across England through what is commonly referred to as "the Athenian Age"[14] in Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment. These novels represented a notable manifestation of the intricacies and paradoxes inherent in human nature and historical events, while also offering a resolution to certain sources of concern; as a matter of fact, during the Victorian era, widespread apprehension regarding revolutionary upheaval was prevalent in English society. The Scottish novels of the time presented a vivid depiction of various schemes, insurrections, and domestic discord, yet all were ultimately suppressed in the interest of the English monarchy.[15] Finally, more generally, the Victorians expressed a strong desire for a national English epic, which they eventually obtained, albeit in an indirect manner, through a Scottish source that provided for their vicarious delight.[16]

Scott's primary objective has been entirely comprehended by his initial readers, as evidenced by this review: "The object of the work before us," Francis Jeffrey remarked in his review of *Waverley*, "was evidently to present a faithful and animated picture of the manners and state of society that prevailed in this northern part of the island, in the earlier part of last century."[17] It appears that the containing, unionist, and historical faces of *Waverley* were pivotal in guaranteeing a positive reception for this literary work during its era, as well as in exerting a long-lasting impact. Numerous commentators lauded *Waverley* for its exceptional precision in capturing the intricacies of both culture and history.[18] Many initial reviews drew upon the Enlightenment's theoretical framework of history, commending Scott's literary work for its portrayal of preceding societal organizations that were still prevalent in Scotland's Highlands and to a lesser extent in the Lowlands mere decades before, yet had already vanished from the majority of Europe many centuries prior. Francis Jeffrey, an editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, provided a comment on the matter:

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[14] *Idem*, p. 20.
[15] *Idem*, p. 21.
[16] *Ibidem*.
[17] Francis Jeffrey, "Review of Waverley, by Walter Scott*"*, *Edinburgh Review 24*, no. 47, Longmans, Green & Company, 1815, p. 20, available at https://www.google.it/books/edition/The_Edinburgh_Review_Or_Critical_Journal/Y7VZAAAAcAAJ?hl=it&gbpv=1, Accessed 15 April 2023.
[18] See Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 80–86.

> […] their vestiges were almost effaced, and their very memory nearly forgotten. […] The effect, indeed, is almost as startling at the present moment; and one great source of the interest which the [novel] possess[es], is […] the surprise […] that in our own country, and almost in our own age, manners and characters existed […] which we had been accustomed to consider as belonging to remote antiquity, or extravagant romance.[19]

In addition, *Waverley* immediately received appraisal for its authentic ethnographic portrayal, encompassing not only the customs and mentalities of previous eras but also investigating the sociocultural dynamics of its contemporary context, as demonstrated in this other review: "[…] The great traits of Clannish dependence, pride, and fidelity, may still be detected in many districts of the Highlands, though they do not now adhere to the chieftains when they mingle in general society; […] The traits of the Scottish national character [as depicted in the novel] can still less be regarded as antiquated."[20]

Finally, another reviewer referred to *Waverley* as follows: "A vehicle of curious accurate information upon a subject which must […] command our attention—the history and manners of a […] large and renowned portion of the inhabitants of these islands; of a race who, within these few years, have vanished from the face of their native land."[21] Given that the Highlanders had to be included within the national community, it was deemed necessary for British citizens to acquire familiarity with their history and culture.

Thus, it is clear that living and possessing literary skills during the nineteenth century inevitably entailed some level of exposure to Scott's novels, and the construction of the Scott Monument in the city of Edinburgh in 1844 served as a tangible manifestation of the renown of this writer.[22] However, inquiry into the legacy of Scott emerged at an early stage. In his review of Lockhart's, Thomas Carlyle asserted that a "considerable opposition party"[23] already existed during Scott's lifetime concerning the remarkable achievement of the *Waverley* Novels. Carlyle denigrated and accused the Scottish author by asserting that he had been "writing impromptu novels to buy farms with"[24], thereby impugning Scott's motives as being driven by pecuniary rather than literary and patriotic motivations. Moreover, apparently,

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[19] Francis Jeffrey, 'Review of Waverley', *op. cit*., p. 209.
[20] *Idem*, p. 210.
[21] Anon., in *the British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review, and Ecclesiastical Record*, London, F. and C. Rivington, 1814, p. 204, quoted from John O. Hayden, *Walter Scott: The Critical Heritage*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 69.
[22] Alison Lumsden and Kirsty Archer-Thompson, "Walter Scott at 250," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 47: Iss. 2, pp. 3–24. Available at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol47/iss2/2, Accessed 31 March 2023, p. 4.
[23] Thomas Carlyle, *Review of Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott*, London and Westminster Review, January 1838, pp. 293-345, quoted here from John O. Hayden, *op. cit*., p. 444.
[24] *Ibidem*.

complaints were also moved against his archaic pedantry and general recklessness, which were the results of a hurry, excessive production, and prolixity, as well as against tangled plotlines, lifeless heroes, weak heroines, and the difficulties of Lowland and Highland dialect.[25]

**The Celebrations of the Centenary of Scott's Birth**

These tensions are also discernible through an examination of the commemorations held in 1871, which were organized to commemorate the centennial anniversary of Scott's birth. This celebration, which was arranged as a tribute to the literary contributions and enduring influence of Scott, was inspired by the triumph of the centennial commemoration of the poet Robert Burns in 1859, which had featured a wide range of activities, involving both the lower class and the aristocrats.[26] However, if for the events of 1859 workers across Scotland had been exempted from going to work[27], this appeared unsuitable for Scott's honouring, in spite of the popularity of his writings and their numerous adaptations. Indeed, as argued by Lumsden[28], if Burns was established as a figure who represented the masses, the tenor of Scott's centenary was markedly more sophisticated. In conjunction with an exhibition of related artworks and original manuscripts at the Scottish National Gallery, a procession involving 200 individuals garbed in costumes depicting characters from the *Waverley* Novels took place in the city centre, with a fee of one shilling to participate. In an intentional reference to the festivities honouring George IV's journey to Scotland, which had been meticulously arranged by Scott, the centennial itinerary featured a production of Scott's acclaimed 'royal play', *Rob Roy*, at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal.[29] Arguably, the occasion that most solidified the exclusive nature of the commemoration to the greatest extent was an opulent banquet graced by the presence of notable and esteemed individuals. Two analogous banqueting events were arranged to take place simultaneously— one in Glasgow and the other in New York.[30] These activities served to maintain Scott's public prominence throughout the 1870s and engendered a thriving yearning to visit his house in Abbotsford. In July of 1873, the travel company *Thomas Cook* organized a tour for a group of American scholars to

[25] Coleman Parsons, *op. cit*., p. 452.
[26] See Nicola J. Watson, *The Author's Effects: On Writer's House Museums*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020.
[27] Christopher Whatley, *Immortal Memory: Burns and the Scottish People*, Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2016, p. 82.
[28] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 4.
[29] *Idem*, p. 5.
[30] *Ibidem*.

visit Abbotsford House, which was regarded as one of the most notable destinations within the United Kingdom.[31]

The underlying tenor of these celebratory events implies that there existed a growing misgiving that Scott and his creations no longer accurately portrayed the contemporary context.[32] Initially captivating the public imagination, Scott's literary productions were subsequently cast as nostalgic journeys targeted towards an older kind of readership and as suitable material for children in educational settings. Even worse, Lumsden and Thompson underline that there has been a tendency to reduce the complexity of Scott's imaginative output, frequently using his purported appreciation for knighthood and nationalistic sentiments to bolster imperialistic ideologies and mere romantic fantasies.

It is however true that at the end of the century, a period marked by a general fatigue with the Victorian era and its prominent figures, there was a notable emergence of high-quality scholarly works regarding Scott.[33] Specifically, in the years 1890 and 1894, David Douglas published an edited version of Scott's Journal from 1825-1832, while two major editions of the *Waverley* Novels were concurrently in the process of being published.[34] Despite this, Parsons claimed that it is a well-known truism in literary criticism that the period spanning from approximately 1880 to 1930 witnessed a pronounced neglect of Scott's work.[35]

**The Beginning of the Twentieth Century: New Perceptions and Viewpoints**

In light of these interpretations and perceptions of his artistic output, it is unsurprising that Scott's cultural influence experienced a decline in the wake of the First World War and its aftermath. This was a period characterized by a notable aversion among the public towards displays of chivalry and pageantry.[36] In 1924, Virginia Woolf made a forthright assertion that Scott, despite having been instrumental in the advancement of the European novel, had lost all ability to exert influence over other writers.[37] This was further compounded by the fact that the artistic principles of Modernism did not align with Scott's long-winded writing style. The critic Forster deemed Scott's literary works as exclusively appropriate for children[38], while Leavis did not include him in his literary heritage of the great writers, for the reason that his

[31] Caroline McCracken-Flesher, "Six Degrees from Walter Scott: Separation, Connection and the Abbotsford Visitor Books", *The Yearbook of English Studies, vol. 47*, 2017, p. 27. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.5699/yearenglstud.47.2017.0019, Accessed 7 Apr. 2023.
[32] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 5.
[33] Coleman Parsons, *op. cit*., p. 453.
[34] *Ibidem*.
[35] *Ibidem*.
[36] *Idem*, p. 6
[37] Virginia Woolf, "Sir Walter Scott: The Antiquary", in *The Moment and Other Essays*, London, Hogarth Press, 1947, p. 34.
[38] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, New York, Dover Publications, 2022, pp. 18-20.

success and popularity were founded upon a flawed *romance* convention.[39] During the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, as the literary landscape began to incorporate a more psychological dimension, Scott's works were deemed unsophisticated and antiquated.[40]

As observed by Ian Duncan, in the twentieth century, the *Waverley* Novels were regarded as akin to a Victorian monument; a dilapidated and unsightly presence that obstructed the flow of urban life.[41] In the 1920s-30s, the Scottish nationalist movement, known as the Scottish Renaissance[42], portrayed Scott as the architect of a Tory Unionist internal form of colonization, wherein romanticized versions of history were substituted for factual accounts, thus effectively rendering Scotland a representation of a "tartan-swathed, retro-Jacobite theme park."[43] This is consistent with the assertions put forth by Edwin Muir who, in his *Scott and Scotland* of 1936, contended that Scott, as well as the nation of Scotland itself, was actively involved in a process of myth-making, inventing, and revising the historical narrative of the nation. He argued that contrary to England — which in his view was permeated by a strong sense of real identity — Scotland's internal conflicts had deeply divided the collective consciousness of its citizens and that Scott had "spent most of his days in a hiatus, in a country, that is to say, which was neither a nation nor a province, and had, instead of a centre, a blank, an Edinburgh, in the middle of it."[44]

Nonetheless, Kelly proposes that such assumptions and allegations may be called into question when a study pertaining to England and its identity in the twentieth century is briefly taken into account.[45] In 2008, Simon Featherstone examined this topic in his study *Englishness*[46], wherein he scrutinizes the journeys undertaken by various writers, including but not limited to Priestley and his *English Journey*[47], Morton and his *In Search for England*[48] and Massingham's *Through the Wilderness*[49], all these books aimed at *rediscovering* England in the early decades of the twentieth century. This work underscores the diversity, as well as the controversial essence, of English identity throughout the twentieth century, encompassing

[39] Ian Brown, *Performing Scottishness: Enactment and National Identities*, New York, Springer International Publishing, 2020, p. 112.
[40] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 33.
[41] Ian Duncan, "Scott and the Historical Novel: A Scottish Rise of the Novel", in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 103-116, p. 103.
[42] Ian Ousby (ed.), *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 839.
[43] *Ibidem*.
[44] Edwin Muir, *op. cit*., p. 92.
[45] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 176.
[46] Simon Featherstone, *Englishness*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
[47] John Priestley, *English Journey*, London, Heinemann, 1934.
[48] H. V. Morton, *In Search of England*, London, Methuen, 1927.
[49] H. J. Massingham, *Through the Wilderness*, Cobden-Sanderson, 1935.

the tensions and questions that permeated Englishness as the nation's status evolved from that of an imperial power to a decreasingly influential entity. “Never before have so many people been searching for England”,[50] observed Morton. Each author undertook an elusive quest and Massingham encountered a country he described as “adrift from its landmarks, set in the void, an expressionless mask”.[51] According to Kelly, this comment evokes Muir's accusation and inference towards Scott, thereby offering the prospect that these authors from the early twentieth century searching for England were disappointed because the kind of England they had been looking for was, and constantly had been, a fictitious and idealized entity. What Kelly implies is that apparently the idea that Muir had of the English identity and for which he instead accused Scott was idealized as well.[52]

**Between Relevance and Rejection: on the Centenary of Scott’s Death**

Despite the decline of success and an emerging critical scepticism, the year 1932, which marked the centenary of Scott's death, was characterized by a surge of new biographical works and the initial volumes of Grierson's edition of Scott's Letters.[53] Notably, throughout Scotland numerous urban centers and localities, particularly those located in the Borders, hosted various events to honour the author. Nonetheless, due to its being the capital city and Scott's birthplace, Edinburgh kept a notably intimate historical bond with the renowned author. Hence, it is evident that the city resolutely aimed to surpass all other locations with its celebrations of his legacy.[54] The events included a theatrical masque at the Usher Hall, along with services of commemoration at St Giles Cathedral and Dryburgh Abbey, and a gallery exhibition at the Scottish National Gallery, and were all conceived by the Walter Scott Club in Edinburgh. Acting on behalf of the City Council, this committee made an unsuccessful effort to raise £5000 through public subscriptions in order to finance the proceedings.[55] The theatrical production was to represent the most significant commemoration, structured into distinct episodes, each dealing with passages from Scott's fiction. These episodes were arranged chronologically, based on the historical period in which the narrative was situated, rather than being structured according to the sequence of the original novel's publication.[56] The predominant ideology underlying this play was unequivocally centered on the conviction

[50] Morton, *op. cit*., p. 7, quoted in Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 176
[51] Massingham, *op. cit*., p. 109, quoted in Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 176.
[52] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 176.
[53] See Herbert John Clifford Grierson, *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 12 vols, London, Constable, 1932-1937.
[54] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p.7.
[55] *Ibidem*.
[56] Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, Paul Readman, *The Scottish People: “*A Masque of Sir Walter Scott's Characters”, *The Redress of the Past*, 2018, available at http://www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/1229/ Accessed 9 April 2023.

that Scott had possessed an unparalleled prowess to mirror the essence of the identity of Scotland through his written compositions. It was believed that the enduring legacy of the writer lay in his aptitude for portraying various facets of Scottish society.[57] The topic of national identity was still a matter of significant inquiry within the arts community, perhaps for this reason the Scott centennial commemoration served as a potentially advantageous means for delving into this recurring theme.

Another significant reason was the fact that the younger populace, who had grown up during the development of the cinema and the radio, began regarding Scott's novels merely as materials for academic recognition and studies, rather than a delightful read. In fact, despite the rich nature of the content depicted within Scott's works, they were, for the most part, regarded as educational literature rather than as captivating tales.[58] In the present context, it is evident that the Masque was intended to impart knowledge and motivation to a contemporary audience and to encourage a greater level of attention to Scott's literary works while fostering an appreciation for his portrayals of Scottish history and geography. Whilst the sentiment was undoubtedly held with great conviction, the aspiration in question was however unlikely to be achieved, for the celebrations appealed predominantly to those who were already admirers of Scott's work.[59]

This notwithstanding, the lines uttered by the character identified as the "Spirit" in the Masque performance at the Usher Hall are quite revealing: "You who are the people of Scotland, do you want to know the block from which you are hewn? No living man has drawn you such a portrait of yourselves as has Walter Scott."[60] In light of this, it can be asserted that Scott had been firmly established as the progenitor of a fundamental concept relevant to the Scottish nation. Yet, his importance was perceived to be rooted and stuck in the past rather than being relevant to the present. Undoubtedly, within certain strata of Scottish society, Scott's reputation was perceived as progressively problematic, and the Scottish Renaissance writers tended to reject the literary heritage he had bestowed upon them.[61] According to Hugh MacDiarmid, the centenary celebrations were deemed as a "farce"[62]; he also stated that the Edinburgh procession in honor of Scott's centennial would cause shame in any individual of intelligence.[63] According to James Robertson, "as the 20th century progressed, [Scott] seemed

[57] *Ibidem*.
[58] *Ibidem*.
[59] *Ibidem*.
[60] As quoted in Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, Paul Readman, *op. cit*.
[61] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 7.
[62] Hugh MacDiarmid, "Conclusion II", in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, London, Leonard Parson, 1926, pp. 114-115.
[63] *Ibidem*.

to become less relevant, and more out of step with the times."[64] Moreover, he argued that Scott's association with privilege, wealth, and a discredited form of romantic nationalism was detrimental to his reputation. Consequently, a dichotomy ensued between an engaging and thought-provoking interpretation of Scott and a relevant for the present and accessible one.

**Rediscovering Scott**

The period spanning from the beginning of the twentieth century to the sixties deserves some examination, due to its introduction of fresh interpretations and a rehabilitation of Scott's legacy from a critical point of view. The author's worth was reconsidered as a realist emerging from the Enlightenment movement and for his ability to effectively deal with change and historical manners.[65] It was in the already discussed *The Historical Novel* by Lukacs that the Scottish author was classified as a realist or anti-romantic figure, whose depiction of history as a process was regarded as ground-breaking, dynamic, and accurately reconstructing the societal and economic constituents of an immensely tenacious "historical necessity."[66] After Lukacs, David Daiches is also credited with being a progenitor of the contemporary movement to restore the literary reputation of Scott.[67] In his work *Scott's Achievement as a Novelist*[68], the author posits a compelling argument that Scott was a proponent of traditionalism while maintaining a belief in contemporary society. He claims he was an artist of imaginative composition and an expert in cultural history, with a primary concern "with the transition from the age of heroic violence to the age of prudence."[69] Another factor contributing to the movement aiming at his rehabilitation is linked to the aforementioned text, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels*[70] by Alexander Welsh, delving into a contemporary perspective on Scott's characters, asserting that their passivity stems not only from their role as observers and reconcilers between societal conservativeness and the forces of disruption, but it is also due to their being controlled by *property*. In the critic's view, it is indeed property, serving as the foundation for a well-ordered and law-abiding polity, that ultimately governs the heroes' anxieties and loyalties.[71]

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[64] James Robertson, "Learning to Love Sir Walter", *Scottish Review of Books*, 28 October 2009, at: https://www.scottishreviewofbooks.org/2009/10/learning-to-love-sir-walter/ accessed 28 March 2023.
[65] Coleman Parsons, *op. cit*., p. 453.
[66] Georg Lukacs, *op. cit*., p.47.
[67] Coleman Parsons, *op. cit*., p. 453.
[68] David Daiches, "Scott's Achievement as a Novelist", 1951, in Daiches, *Literary Essays*, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1956.
[69] David Daiches, "Scott's Redgauntlet", in *From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse*, Vol 9, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1967, p. 47.
[70] Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963.
[71] See Coleman Parsons, *op. cit*., p. 453.

Thus, the interest in Scott's works was restricted to the scholarly domain, as investigations and analyses into his texts were conducted by professional scholars, instead of university students. This resurgence of academic attention was, in reality, a belated response to the longstanding grievances of cultural nationalists who claimed that the studies of Scottish literature had been unjustly omitted from the curriculum of English literature for far too long.[72] Parsons asserts that Glasgow University is credited with being the first institution to introduce Scottish literature, and it was only during the academic year 1969-1970 that the Department of English Literature at Edinburgh University, in collaboration with the School of Scottish Studies, belatedly included a year-long course on Scottish literature as a component of its degree programs.[73] Thus students had formerly been denied even the opportunity to study Scott to the same extent as other writers.

Additionally, the author endured disregard from the general audience, as his works were no longer sought after for leisurely pursuits. Owing to their considerable historical density and frequently complex writing style, the *Waverley* Novels have not been considered as a source of pleasure reading during the course of the twentieth century. Even the realist novels of the Victorian era, which were characterized by their often complex and intricate plot lines and a multitude of characters, managed to surpass the works of Scott in popularity.[74] Besides, the nation-state, a concept considered very relevant in Scott's era, no longer elicited considerable interest among readers, in light of the rapidly expanding international political system. Even in Great Britain, the interest in narratives dealing with fights for the glory of past dynasties had diminished, shifting into a concern for broader perspectives and horizons.[75]

**New Interdisciplinary Approaches to Scott's Works**

The commemoration of Scott's birth bicentenary in 1971 remained a significant occasion nonetheless. The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club organized several events, alongside an extensive exhibition aimed at showcasing Scott's life and influence.[76] It also entailed other commemorative occasions, accompanied by a significant amount of media coverage, with the main purpose to reintroduce Scott to the public and, more notably, to defend his legacy. It was acknowledged that while Scott merited recognition, he likewise required rehabilitation.[77] According to John Hayden, the editor of the Scott Critical Heritage volume, "a revival of

[72] *Idem*, p. 456.
[73] *Ibidem*.
[74] *Ibidem.*
[75] *Ibidem*.
[76] A. S. Bell (ed.), *Sir Walter Scott 1771 – 1971: A Bicentenary Exhibition*, Edinburgh, The Stationary Office, 1971, p.6.
[77] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*. p. 8.

serious critical interest"[78] in Scott was evident. In 1971, the first Scott conference with international participation took place in Edinburgh. The titles of the conference sessions serve to exemplify the topical issues that were occupying the attention of the academic Scott community at that time. These issues included, but were not limited to, the relationships between Scott and Scotland, Scott and Turner, Scott and the Picturesque, The King's Visit, Scott and Germany, Scott in Hungary, and Scott and Italy.[79] This event marked the begin of a scholarly restoration of Scott, establishing a new paradigm that encompassed current textual analysis and a critical review of his works in the context of narratology, Scottish and global perspectives.[80] In spite of this, it was acknowledged by Edgar Johnson that the intellectual retrieval of Scott's reputation would only bear significance if his relevance was also duly recognized.[81] It was evident that the process of rehabilitating Scott would need to be founded not solely on his historical impact, but more significantly on his pertinence to modern audiences and contemporary critical issues. Multiple international conferences have occurred, indicating an expanding scholarly fascination with Scott that transcends Scotland. As prompted by the conference theme, a number of the papers delved into an exploration of Scott's literary contributions in conjunction with the works of other notable writers. These include investigations into the relationships between Scott and such literary luminaries as George Eliot, Byron, Dickens, Maria Edgeworth, Emily Bronte, as well as the extent of Scott's influence on Canadian novelists, Norwegian fiction, and Danish writers, among other subjects.[82] The rediscovery of Scott's contributions and their potential impact on the development of world literature has presented a new approach to examining his legacy. Indeed, several published research papers began to delve into Scott's works and writings from a perspective that surpassed the boundaries of national and narratological frameworks, thus broadening the scope of analysis. For instance, Lumsden[83] mentions research articles pertaining to the intersection of Scott and politics, Scott's relationship with religion, Scott's contribution as a folklorist, and Scott's involvement in the theatre. All these topics served to emphasize the expansive prospect of Scott studies, highlighting the potential for interdisciplinary approaches and future research in this area. In the prefatory remarks of the volume containing the papers related to the conference, Alexander and Hewitt claim: "We

[78] John O. Hayden, "Introduction," in *Critical Heritage*, *cit*., p. 22.
[79] Alan Bell, ed., *Scott Bicentenary Essays: Selected Papers read at the Sir Walter Scott Bicentenary Conference*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1973.
[80] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*. p. 8.
[81] Edgar Johnson, "Scott and the Corners of Time," in *Scott Bicentenary Essays: Selected Papers read at the Sir Walter Scott Bicentenary Conference*, p. 37.
[82] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*. p. 9.
[83] *Ibidem*.

very much hope that future readers of Scott, and of books on Scott, will be able to trace new developments in Scott criticism back to this conference."[84]

New developments and interest did indeed emerge, for in 1991, another significant conference titled *Scott in Carnival* was held in Edinburgh.[85] The papers originating from this conference mark a crucial point, serving as a cornerstone in shaping the trajectory of Scott studies in contemporary times. This event denoted indeed a high level of assurance in the field of Scott criticism, suggesting the idea that this author can be re-situated within present-day critical studies and approaches, thus enabling an analysis of his works in a contemporary key. The papers pertained to diverse themes, including "topics such as Scott and feminism, Scott and postmodernism, Scott and Empire and the implications of this in a post-colonial era".[86] This enhanced the notion that his literary compositions enable various interpretive frameworks, and he as a writer can be repositioned and contextualized within the framework of current challenges and concerns.

Undoubtedly, a noteworthy occurrence in the domain of Scott studies after 1991 pertains to the release of the 30-volume titled *Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (1993-2012*), wherein David Hewitt assumed the role of primary editor, opting for basing the texts on the initial versions instead of their subsequent revisions, with the desire to convey to readers the novels in their original form.[87]

Over the course of the last three decades, there has been a remarkable surge in both critical engagement and scholarly attention; Caroline McCracken-Flesher and Matthew Wickman provide a comprehensive overview of the trajectory of literary criticism in one of the most recent compilations of essays:

> The 1990s traced Scott's unappreciated impacts […] Assisted by that monumental work, the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels […] with the turn towards the twenty-first century the critical eye recognised an inventive author and a complicated person. Scott more and more has been seen as a self-aware, pre-postmodern author, prone to question and disturb form and history, the teller and the romance […] Increasingly […] we realise that some of Scott's supposed flaws actually stand as critiques of under-interrogated literary and historical canons […] numerous scholars are reworking Scott's relation with Romanticism. New vats of theoretical encounter stand open.[88]

[84] J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt, "Preface", in *Scott and His Influence: The Papers of the Aberdeen Scott Conference*, Aberdeen, Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983.
[85] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 10.
[86] *Ibidem*.
[87] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 11.
[88] Caroline McCracken-Flesher and Matthew Wickman, *Walter Scott at 250: Looking Forward*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2021, p. 3.

Interestingly, the former flaws attributed to Scott's work recently seem to be regarded as the ground for its value. The complex political landscape, alongside Scott's personal experiences and the historical setting he portrays, have aroused the interest of modern-day Scott critics.[89] The author's recognition that the past lacks a conclusive or invariable version, his respect for the periphery and the losing side of history, together with his distrust of those who assert unequivocal righteousness —such as characters like Fergus or Donald — have begun to be appreciated features. Likewise, a primary factor in his appeal in recent years has been his refusal to impose a particular set of thoughts and beliefs upon the readership, instead encouraging readers to think critically, evaluate the facts and question their assumptions just like the protagonists of the novels do during their journeys.[90]

A crucial aspect to take into account is that Scott's literary works have been perceived as more remote to the modern-day reader on account of their limited emphasis on the individual. As a matter of fact, Shaw claims they explore the broader implications of history, failing however to delve as deeply into the psyche of the characters.[91] However, this in turn might have contributed to a diminished level of interest among readers who were predisposed to seeking a greater understanding of the characters' psychological underpinnings. In terms of literary structure, Scott's writings seldom revolve around the concept of portraying his characters' inner thoughts and emotions or the spiritual maturation of the individual. The evolution of Scott's characters is observed, yet commonly portrayed as a swift transformation, or as an already established outcome, with limited emphasis given to the development of moral principles.[92] Edward Waverley exhibits a lack of emotional depth; moreover, he demonstrates a tendency towards adopting provisional beliefs rather than undergoing genuine changes, only to later recognize their false nature. The perceptible transformation observed in Edward, according to Shaw, is to be attributed to his remarkable efficacy in serving as the representative of the reader. The change perceived by readers is reflective of a shift in their own perspective, as they are absorbed and subsequently disengaged from the narrative's historical plot.[93]

While Lukacs, without offering an in-depth explication on the matter, claimed that Scott's novels may be lacking in moral and spiritual progression, but nevertheless grasp an accurate representation of human nature[94], Shaw presents instead a novel perspective that

[89] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 12
[90] *Ibidem*.
[91] Harry E. Shaw, *op. cit*., p. 128.
[92] *Ibidem*.
[93] *Idem*, p. 129.
[94] Georg Lukacs, *op. cit*., p. 47.

aims to redress this criticism. In his view, Scott utilizes external characterization to imbue his novels with a historical texture, guiding readers towards a nuanced comprehension of the intricacies of historical causality that characterizes historical events.[95] An illustrative example of this may be cited from Edward's younger years. Edward is perceived to be at risk of forming an attachment with a young woman of lower social standing. As a result, his aunt resolved to make him embark on a journey across Europe and presents her proposal to Waverley's uncle, who subsequently relays it to Edward's father. However, due to a myriad of historical and political factors, the outcome of her endeavours culminates in Edward's acquisition of a military commission. This did not meet her expectations "but she was under the necessity of submitting to circumstances".[96] This sequence depicts the manner in which history unfolds in a tangible, day-to-day way in the novels of Scott, engendering their distinctive historical aura through the intersection of human motives with each other and with social and historical influences. It portrays an ideological principle from the 18th century that is conspicuously weaved throughout the works of Scott which posits that events in history are brought about by the unanticipated outcomes resulting from actions motivated by human will.[97] Precisely because the characterization employed by Scott elicits minimal interest in the inner subjective experiences of the individuals involved, the reader's attention is directed towards the causal sequence and the historical factors that shape it.[98] In a different genre of novel, such as one focused on the protagonist's moral development, Edward's enlistment in the army might be analysed as a significant step in his moral growth. But in this context, Scott's depictions of external characterization, despite any inherent limitations, turn out to be beneficial within a work of fiction that delves into the historical dimensions of human existence. Similarly, it has been suggested by Richard Waswo that Scott's emphasis on the collective, rather than the individual, posed a challenge to the power structures emerging during the 19th century. Scott, he points out, "reminds us that identity is always social […] the external is not divorced from the internal but a part of it."[99]

Thus, the aforementioned qualities have also prompted critics to propose that Scott is not restricted by historical time frames. In fact, through his compositions which depict past events, he sustains a state of perpetual possible relevance. According to Ann Rigney, the

[95] Harry E. Shaw, *op. cit*., p. 136.
[96] Walter Scott, *Waverley*, *cit*., p. 24.
[97] Harry E. Shaw, *op. cit*., p. 136.
[98] *Ibidem*.
[99] Richard Waswo, "Scott and the Really Great Tradition," in *Scott and His Influence: The Papers of the Aberdeen Scott Conference*, p. 10.

concepts presented are adaptable to different periods and social contexts.[100] It is this characteristic that, as argued by Lumsden and Thompson, had rendered them highly prone to translation and adaptation in the nineteenth century and now allows them to be subjected to critical revaluation in light of recent theories.[101]

**Scott from a Contemporary Perspective**

The contemporary perception of Scott's literary production is markedly distinct from the one that was met with disapproval by late Victorians and Modernists. In critical discourse, it appears that a re-evaluation of his legacy has taken place, acknowledging that his work continues to hold relevance to the concerns of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[102] To gain a more contemporary understanding and enhance the present relevance of Scott's *Waverley* Novels, there exist two primary reading keys that 21st-century literary criticism and general readership can potentially adopt. For starters, the faint, nascent manifestations of feminism were perceptible in his novel*s*.[103] One of the distinctive characteristics of Scott's literary works was the portrayal of an unconventional heroine. During the early 19th century, several of these heroines gained prominence, notably Diana Vernon from the novel *Rob Roy*.[104] Her portrayal was characterized by qualities such as independence, bravery, intelligence, and unconventionality, as she continually complained about the unjust and subordinate position of women. Scott's female protagonists, characterized by their independence, may appear harmless in contemporary times; however, during their era, they were striking and inventive.[105] Harriet Martineau discerned this particular characteristic and was of the view that Scott's works could be read and interpreted in a feminist key, albeit in a dual capacity encompassing both favourable and unfavourable representations.[106] In his portrayal of traditional heroines, such as Rose in *Waverley*, the author depicted them under a negative light, highlighting their frivolity, lack of passion, and overall lack of depth due to their lack of societal emancipation. On the other hand, in portraying the characters of Flora MacIvor and the clever Rebecca from *Ivanhoe*, according

[100] Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 108.
[101] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 13.
[102] *Ibidem*.
[103] John Henry Raleigh, *op. cit*., p 19.
[104] *Ibidem*.
[105] *Ibidem*.
[106] Harriet Martineau, *Miscellanies*, Boston, Hilliard, Gray and Company, 1836, pp. 48-49, cited in John Henry Railegh, *op. cit*., p. 19.

to Martineau Scott demonstrated the potential of women to thrive when granted freedom, whether partial or complete.[107]

Furthermore, when considering *Waverley* in particular, it is possible to analyse it through a postcolonial perspective. According to Stroh, this novel is of considerable interest to this investigation due to its profound preoccupation with intra-British cross-cultural communication.[108] Notably, this work extends beyond a mere examination of the Scottish/English or Gaelic/Saxon opposition, as it employs a tripartite framework that mirrors the distinct identities of the Highlands, Lowland Scotland, and England. This complexity is heightened by mutually occurring blending and foreign influences, particularly French. The spatial and intellectual explorations of Waverley provide Scott with a wide-ranging opportunity to investigate disparities among the population of the nation. The phenomenon of otherness can be observed in the spatial relations between Britain, Scotland, and Highland Scotland, which may be conceptualized as a set of "Russian dolls".[109] While Britain serves as the overarching entity, it encapsulates the relatively smaller units of Lowlands and Highlands, each of which retains its distinct identity. Waverley's progression towards the innermost areas of this spatial configuration is marked by the fact that "the spatial units become smaller while otherness becomes greater"[110], thus also enabling the author to address issues of prejudices and intercultural communication challenges. Moreover, *Waverley* turns out to be an intriguing subject for postcolonial scrutiny due to its exploration of cultural distinctions, not necessarily to defend cultural diversity, but to facilitate wider British national unity.[111]

**Living History at Abbotsford House**

Hence, since his last major commemoration in 1971, the critical re-examination of Scott's literary contributions, along with the subsequent revitalization of his works, presents a significant reason for celebration. In addition, it is worth noting that now, over the course of the last ten years, Abbotsford House has been transformed, evolving from a family abode into a historical landmark overseen by a benevolent organization and managed by professionals, engaged in the study and reinterpretation of the value of Scott's "palace of the imagination"[112] and its association with his literary works. From an academic standpoint, an important consequence of this change pertains to the organization of Scott's personal library,

[107] *Ibidem*.
[108] Silke Stroh, *op. cit*., p. 142.
[109] *Idem*, p. 143.
[110] *Ibidem*.
[111] *Ibidem*.
[112] Lumsden and Thompson, *op. cit*., p. 15.

which has presented novel prospects for Scott studies and enriched pathways for investigating the intersections between Scott's artistic output and his collections.[113]

Nonetheless, the efforts of the Abbotsford organisation present a noteworthy occasion to delve into the inheritance of the writer in a more inclusive and easily comprehensible manner than the conventional approaches of literary criticism. This initiative provides an opportunity for direct involvement with the tangible, natural, and cultural assets of Scott's beloved manor and source of inspiration.[114] Additionally, it brings to mind Rigney's contention that Scott's authentic worth lies in his potential pertinence to contemporary times, as well as a diverse array of readers. As a passionate antiquarian and historian, Scott held a firm conviction that material artifacts of the past possessed the potential to animate our understanding of history. The sustained interest in museums and cultural landmarks attests to the incorporation of this notion into our contemporary cultural relationship with the past.[115] The availability of artifacts and findings from the past proved indispensable to Scott's inspiration and achievements as a writer of historical fiction. Scott strongly believed in motivating individuals, particularly the younger generations, to explore battlefields, landmarks, and ruins, to encourage them to investigate and contemplate the inherent attributes of their surroundings and envision the diverse historical events that took place there. The acquisition of knowledge beyond the confines of formal education and the ideas of exploring was an integral aspect of his artistic approach, and were fundamental to the conception and development of Abbotsford House itself.[116] Indeed, he also used his manor, as well as his collection of artifacts, as a catalyst for telling anecdotes regarding both the past and his contemporary era.[117]

Ultimately, it was through several initiatives related to his figure, including the outstanding *Waverley Balls* — to which guests would come dressed as knights and ladies from the past or as characters from Scott's novels — King George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822, and the various re-creations from his works on stage, that Scott promoted the development of a way to live and witness history that bears resemblance to the one still currently exhibited in a variety of historical sites through events which feature medieval fayres, jousts, battle re-enactments, etc.[118] One of the enduring contributions of Scott as a historical figure entails the prospect of revisiting the past through this perspective, as underlined by Lumsden and

[113] *Ibidem*.
[114] *Idem*, p. 16.
[115] *Idem*, p. 15.
[116] *Ibidem*.
[117] *Ibidem*.
[118] *Ibidem*.

Thompson.[119] The commemoration held in Abbotsford centred upon this concept, drawing inspiration from *Ivanhoe*. Attracting the general public to his residence through an eventful weekend filled with jousting, costumes, and battle re-enactments, reflects Scott's comprehension of history and serves as a means to stimulate new explorations with an author who would otherwise not have been known by visitors. The central aim of this strategy was to expand Scott's readership and enhance the public's comprehension of his life and legacy.[120]

**The Future of His Legacy and Studies**

The last commemorative events have marked a significant milestone in understanding Scott's legacy. The abovementioned events were characterized by crucial advancements that offer fresh perspectives on his broader interests and concerns, thereby enabling a renewed sense of relevance in his writings.[121] In spite of this, the notion of *relevance* is an unstable category that presents ongoing challenges, thus necessitating continued revision and revaluation of the writer's legacy, which may unveil new or unexplored prospects in the future.[122]

Within the context of his revival, there lies the possibility of finding a version of Scott characterized by a greater immediacy and transparency in terms of its pertinence to contemporary challenges. Although written two centuries ago, his themes may still aptly address a wide range of current concerns, encompassing matters such as national identity, the promotion of gender equality, and the ramifications of industrialization and revolution.[123] Scott was a historian who exhibited a keen interest in the bygone eras of humanity as well as a steadfast commitment to future advancement and progress, all the while vigorously safeguarding social ideals he believed were endangered and vulnerable within an increasingly uncertain global context.[124] Lumsden and Thompson suggest that the trajectory of Scott's studies may need to focus on the outward-looking, socially-oriented interpretation of his works, one that can be read in terms of collective and social dynamics. In these times, it may be necessary to redirect our critical focus towards this Scott, who offers insights into the conditions affecting our daily existence and provides a framework for dismantling or reconfiguring outdated power structures that no longer meet our needs.[125]

Notwithstanding the benefits that theoretical perspectives can offer, it is important to acknowledge the potential drawback of adopting an excessively theoretical stance, which

[119] *Ibidem*.
[120] *Ibidem*.
[121] *Ibidem*.
[122] *Idem*, p. 19.
[123] *Ibidem*.
[124] *Ibidem*.
[125] *Idem*, p. 22.

could indeed result in reducing the author to a mere object of intellectual curiosity, rather than a relevant and meaningful figure in the readers' daily lives.[126] What this author needs is arguably to be read by the general public as he used to be: his novels ought to be not only studied but also read for pleasure. This does not seem to be the case, as they are not frequently sought after in commercial bookstores, and his standing in the literary community is not entirely favourable.[127] It may be attributed to the fact that they engage with symbols and imagery about Scotland that have by now gained wide recognition and familiarity, or due to his frequent characterization as “stuffy, boring”, as noted by Kelly.[128]

Moreover, his novels continue to be often associated with a perception that the Highlands, and at times Scotland as a whole, lack a sense of modernity and progressiveness. According to this perspective, they are oftentimes related to a stagnant sense of identity, as the region is frequently romanticized yet simultaneously relegated to an ancient historical context. This construct would consequently engender a predetermined and unchanging image of the country. This view has garnered support from Pittock, who states that Scott “invented Scotland as a museum of history and culture, [...] Scott loved his country, but denied its contemporaneity.”[129]

Nevertheless, despite his conviction that Scotland required a precise and unique identity, Scott maintained a keen awareness of the potential risks associated with creating a too rigid and immutable one. It could be argued that it is actually this critical examination of the concept of identity itself, rather than Scott's rigid categorization of it within a romantic framework, that permits to be still discussing his contribution to the development of contemporary perspectives of the Highlands.[130] As shown, in his novels Scott presents multiple interpretations of Scotland and advocates for the ongoing development of Scottish national identity, rather than imposing limitations on it. Despite any potential discontent that some Scottish people may harbour towards the conflated association of their distinct national identity with stereotypical portrayals of the Highland region, it is undeniable that Scotland has derived significant cultural and symbolic value from the pervasive influence that this author has wielded in the shared imagery of both Scottish and English communities.[131]

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[126] *Ibidem*.
[127] Stuart Kelly, *op. cit*., p. 2.
[128] *Ibidem*.
[129] Murray Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland: The Stuart Myth and the Scottish Identity, 1638 to the Present*, London, Routledge, 1991, p. 87.
[130] Alison Lumsden, *Beyond the Dusky Barrier*, cit., p. 171.
[131] Caroline McCracken-Flesher, *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow*, cit., p. 111.

Foreseeing the evolution and management of Scott's heritage for the forthcoming decades is, obviously, unachievable. Despite intermittently experiencing shifts in popularity, the lasting impact of his work has been revitalized through numerous periods throughout the course of the past centuries, enduring various criticism and also undergoing numerous resurgences due to its inherent worth.

## 3.2 Scott's Adaptations in Contemporary Literature: the Case of *Outlander*

The discernible imprint of Scott's fictional and literary heritage persists to the present day. The notion of Scotland as envisioned by him, the alluring sceneries, and his portrayal of the Highlanders have endured in the popular perception of the Scottish nation. Numerous authors have been influenced by his legacy, one of whom is Diana Gabaldon, who serves as an exemplary manifestation of his enduring impact.[132]

Diana Gabaldon was born in 1952, in the state of Arizona, in the United States. In 1991, her first novel, *Outlander*, was published and, as of 2023, the *Outlander* series includes nine published novels, while the author has recently declared active engagement in the writing of the tenth and final novel.[133] The books are focused on diverse time frames, dealing with different socio-historical occurrences, encompassing places ranging from Scotland and Jamaica to the United States. The initial work, received the esteemed Romance Writers of America's RITA Award[134] and her prolific production of best-selling novels has continued to remain consistent, resulting in the publication of her works in 27 countries and 24 languages by 2012.[135] A testament to her success, the novels served as the inspiration for an ongoing successful TV series, *Outlander*, which premiered in 2014 and currently has seven seasons.[136]

All historical novels inherently traverse temporal boundaries, travelling through time by delving into the past.[137] Furthermore, certain works extend beyond mere temporal movement and also emphasize a physical voyage, where the protagonist navigates uncharted territories, crosses cultural boundaries, and engages in conflicts. Frequently, the physical movement of characters in spatial contexts results in a corresponding temporal displacement, thereby forcing the protagonist to confront a sort of imaginary temporal shift and cultural differences.[138] The concept of time travel is a prevailing theme in the storyline of the *Outlander* series, thereby enhancing and reinforcing this notion. Indeed, *Outlander* begins in 1946 and follows the story of Claire, a woman who goes to the Scottish Highlands for her

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[132] Barry Didcock, "Sir Walter Scott at 250: the Man, the Myth, the Monument", 7 August 2021, available at https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19491420.sir-walter-scott-250-man-myth-monument/, Accessed 6 April 2023.
[133] Emma Dibdin, "*Outlander* Author Diana Gabaldon Has Started Work on Book 10", 30 September 2021, at https://www.townandcountrymag.com/leisure/a37807616/outlander-book-10-diana-gabaldon-release-date-spoilers/ Accessed 10 April 2023.
[134] RITA Awards: Past Winners". Romance Writers of America, available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20150714074216/https://www.rwa.org/p/cm/ld/fid=535, accessed 10 April 2023.
[135] Danny McLoughlin, "Diana Gabaldon Statistics", December 13 December 2022 at https://wordsrated.com/diana-gabaldon-statistics/ accessed 8 April 2023.
[136] Philiana Ng, "Starz's *Outlander* Gets First Poster, Premiere Date", *The Hollywood Reporter*, 8 May 2014, Accessed 28 March 2023.
[137] Sandra Guardini Teixeira Vasconcelos, *op. cit*., p. 139.
[138] *Ibidem*.

honeymoon and ends up travelling through time, finding herself transported to the year 1743, in Scotland. While falling in love with Jamie, a Highlander, she becomes entangled in the Jacobite uprising. The sequel, *Dragonfly in Amber*, is characterized by a more pronounced adherence to the genre of historical fiction, owing to its extensive use of historical elements, with its primary focus on the Jacobite rebellion and on Jamie and Claire's attempts to stop it.

While the direct inspiration for her novel was ignited by a character from an episode of the Science Fiction TV series, *Doctor Who*[139], Gabaldon has always been transparent about the pervasive influence of the novels of Scott on her creative process. Indeed, she has recently been selected to write a foreword for a new publication of *Rob Roy*[140], and within this introduction, she remarks upon the perpetual allure of Walter Scott: "It's no wonder that Sir Walter Scott has been in print for the last 200 years and will likely remain so."[141] Her high regard for the Scottish author is duly recognized as evidenced by her invitation as a guest at the 250th commemorative Scott conference, when she said: "He had a good hand with human beings. He understood people. He was obviously someone who enjoyed watching people, listening to them talk, picking up the idiosyncrasies of their speech and habits."[142]

As will be illustrated below, in the first two novels of the series, *Outlander* and *Dragonfly in Amber,* the influence drawn by Scott's *Waverley* is evident and several analogies are readily discernible. Even so, there are differences, and within her literary productions, the amalgamation of genres is broadened, for they blend various genres, encompassing historical fiction, adventure, romance, as well as science fiction, and fantasy.[143]

**Neo-Victorianism: Revisiting and Adapting the Past**

This strong connection with *Waverley* constitutes an example of the broader contemporary tendency, commonly referred to as *Neo-Victorianism*, which is characterised by the process of revitalising and, in some cases, adapting nineteenth-century works and themes.

In this regard, in 2008, the University of Wales hosted a significant interdisciplinary conference titled *Adapting the Nineteenth Century: Revisiting, Revising and Rewriting the*

[139] Diana Gabaldon, (May 11, 2010). *The "Dr. Who" Connection*, at http://dianagabaldon.com/2010/05/the-dr-who-connection/, 11 May 2014, Accessed 6 April 2023.
[140] Willy Maley, "Outlandish History: The World-Changing Fiction of Diana Gabaldon", *Historical Novels Reviews n°10*, February 2023.
[141] Diana Gabaldon in Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, London, Folio Society, 2021, p. 7.
[142] Barry Didcock, *op. cit.*
[143] Jennifer Reese, "Book Review: Lord John and the Hand of Devils", *Entertainment Weekly*, 27 November 2007, available at https://web.archive.org/web/20141011020739/http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20162421,00.html Accessed 5 April 2023.

*Past*.[144] At the event, participants engaged in discourse on the various ways that the nineteenth century is presently being repurposed and incorporated into contemporary cultural discourses. The conference emphasized key themes related to the ongoing allure of the nineteenth century among readers, writers, and scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Specifically, the event focused on the notions of adaptation and the correlations, or lack thereof, between the past and present.[145]

In the same year, the *Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies* was established. The founder, Marie-Luise Kohlke, asserted in the inaugural edition that there existed a crucial need to address discourses surrounding the Neo-Victorian movement, encompassing the term itself, its classification as a genre or novel discipline, its significance as a cultural phenomenon, its role as a critique of socio-political structures, its potential for reinvigorating historical consciousness, its engagement with memory work, and its capacity for facilitating a critical interface between past and present.[146] It was thus urgent to establish a suitable platform be to facilitate discussions and promote Neo-Victorianism-related topics. Kohlke posited that Neo-Victorianism may be delineated as "the afterlife of the nineteenth century in the cultural imaginary."[147]

However, simply setting a literary work in the nineteenth century does not meet the necessary requirement for it to be classified as belonging to the Neo-Victorian genre. Indeed, the scholars Heilmann and Llewellyn have proposed a more specific definition to qualify the term: "neo-Victorian" [..] implies the fact of being 'self-consciously engaged with the act of (re)interpretation, (re)discovery and (re)vision concerning the Victorians".[148] Hence, it could be contended that this it employs Victorian backdrops, literary works, or themes in a mindful manner to evoke the Victorian epoch for the contemporary moment.[149] This literary genre draws upon the stylistic conventions, character development, plot structure, and settings of the nineteenth century while also delving into the pertinent cultural, moral, and societal matters of

[144] Alexia Bowler and Jessica Cox, "Introduction to Adapting the Nineteenth Century: Revisiting, Revising and Rewriting the Past", *Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies* n° 2, pp. 1-17, 2010, p. 1.
[145] *Ibidem*.
[146] Marie-Luise Kohlke, as cited in Margaret Stetz, "Review of Neo-Victorian Studies," *Victorian Literature and Culture,* vol. 40, no. 1, 2012, pp. 339–46, p. 341.
[147] Jessica Rose, "So what is Neo-Victorianism? A Working Definition", 5 November 2013, https://pastbooks.wordpress.com/2013/11/05/so-what-is-neo-victorianism/, Accessed 14 June 2023.
[148] Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, *Neo-Victorianism: The Victorians in the Twenty-First Century: 1999-2009,* New York, Springer, 2010, p. 4.
[149] Jessica Rose, *op. cit.,* Accessed 14 June 2023.

that era. Simultaneously, however, it is noteworthy that the neo-Victorian novel has a strong foundation in the present day.[150]

In her commentary on the contemporary fascination with adaptation, Linda Hutcheon notes that such habits are not exclusive to our epoch but rather exhibit a continuum and shared lineage with the traditions of the Victorian era:

> The Victorians had a habit of adapting just about everything […] We postmoderns have clearly inherited this same habit, but we have even more new critical materials at our disposal – not only film, television, radio, and the various electronic media, of course, but also theme parks, historical enactments, and virtual reality experiments.[151]

Although present-day adaptive practises may not be entirely new, what is fresh is the deliberate pondering and involvement in the process, which provides a valuable tool for examining contemporary society and enhancing the comprehension of how people can relate to and view their cultural heritage that is intimately linked to their present.[152] Numerous instances of adaptation entail a certain facet of critical analysis, alteration, revision, or disruption of their predecessors and/or the concepts and doctrines of the past presented therein. Sanders suggests that one piece of writing often inspires the creation of additional works. In her view, the delightful experience of reading often involves a balance between the known and the unknown, where the reader derives gratification from the dynamic interplay between familiarity and novelty, while identifying the similarities and differences that exist "between ourselves and between texts".[153]

More specifically, the works from the later part of the nineteenth century hold a remarkable appeal for present-day readers, viewers, and buyers. While the prevalence of adaptations of Jane Austen's works may indicate a widespread fascination in the pre-Victorian era, it is claimed by scholars, such as Bowler and Cox, that this fascination primarily centres around the literary output of this particular author.[154] Despite this, the Victorian era is typically regarded as a wide-ranging and significant period for readaptations in both its literature and history. This period is often presented as the immediate precursor to contemporary society, with its accomplishments being palpable even in present times.[155]

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[150] Beth Palmer, "Review of Neo-Victorian Fiction and Historical Narrative: The Victorians and Us and History and Cultural Memory in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Victorian Afterimages", *Victorian Studies,* vol. 55, no. 1, 2012, pp. 168–70, p. 168, available at https://doi.org/10.2979/victorianstudies.55.1.168 Accessed 12 June 2023.
[151] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, London, Routledge, 2006, p. XI.
[152] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 2.
[153] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 14.
[154] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 4.
[155] *Ibidem*.

Neo-Victorian novels gained more acceptance and legitimacy in the 1960s, when Jean Rhys' book, *Wide Sargasso Sea*[156], was published as a sort of prequel to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.[157] Thus, the emergence of Neo-Victorian fiction resulted in the establishment of a distinct genre within the realm of historical fiction. Additionally, Neo-Victorian fiction intersects with various pre-existing genres, including romance, children's literature, and science fiction. [158]

As suggested by Bowler and Cox, the impact of Victorian literary conventions extends even to works set in different periods but still incorporating some characteristics of a traditional Victorian novel.[159] These two scholars claim that a clear example of this can be seen in the massive popularity of the *Harry Potter* series by Rowling. These literary works incorporate various themes and motifs from nineteenth-century literature, specifically by writers such as Dickens and the Brontës. One of the most notable elements is the portrayal of an unfortunate, orphaned youth who must overcome hardship and ultimately find contentment, reminiscent of the Victorian Bildungsroman and drawing inspiration from characters such as Oliver Twist and Jane Eyre.[160]

Furthermore, numerous novels from the nineteenth century have been subject to recent adaptations that involve modifications to the plot, changes made to the characters' identities, or a retelling of the conclusion. This signifies a notable trend within the literary sphere towards reinterpretations of previously established works.[161] There exist various examples that illustrate this phenomenon, for instance, the recent *Olivia Twist*[162], Lorie Langdon's adaptation of *Oliver Twist* by Dickens, as well as Loren Estleman's novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Holmes*[163], a reimagined adaptation of Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. As concerns the re-telling of popular novels, the more recent text creates a nevertheless innovative and possibly unprecedented piece of work to be consumed, all while engendering many new and enlightening interpretations of its predecessor or source of inspiration.[164] Despite this, it can be argued that neo-Victorianism effectively bridges the divide between high and low culture by appealing to multiple types of readers. Such readers include those who are unfamiliar with

[156] Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea,* London, André Deutsch Limited, 1966.
[157] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 6.
[158] *Ibidem*.
[159] *Ibidem*.
[160] *Ibidem*.
[161] *Idem*, p. 10.
[162] Lorie Langdon, *Olivia Twist*, New York, Harper Collins, 2018.
[163] Loren D. Estleman, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Holmes*, New York, Doubleday, 1979.
[164] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 8.

the original Victorian canon and authors being referenced, as well as those who possess a heightened awareness of the *original* source.[165]

Not to be overlooked is the widespread impact of this phenomenon on the cinema and television industry. It is undeniable that the constant influx of neo-Victorian movies, which feature fresh adaptations of one or even multiple Victorian works, serves as proof of the genre's enduring appeal.[166]

An ongoing discourse exists regarding the inquiry as to why modern literature and culture consistently evoke the themes and motifs of the nineteenth century, and various perceptive answers are suggested. Heilmann and Llewellyn argue that in the contemporary culturally fragmented era, the nineteenth-century English novel provides a sense of comfort and belonging through its all-encompassing scope and collective aim.[167] However, there exists a potential peril wherein contemporary re-visionary narratives may erroneously interpret *the Victorian* as a homogeneous and simplified entity, a solitary monolithic signal, by elevating it to a cultural icon.[168]

Additionally, Bowler and Cox posit that the persistent adaptations and revivals of works, or elements in general from earlier epochs have the potential to generate distinct or more extensive understandings of the past. For instance, Victorian notions of gender, empire, and sexuality have often been challenged by Neo-Victorian adaptations.[169] In this regard, it is interesting to underline that the surge in adaptations of Victorian literature and history may serve as efforts to address historical injustices by featuring marginalized communities that were omitted in the original works. The allure of the Victorian era often leads to a desire to criticize the mistreatment and neglect of certain groups within society at that time, including women, those from lower social backgrounds, or homosexuals.[170]

Furthermore, the persistent involvement with the past demonstrates the ongoing endeavour to better comprehend the present. This belief suggests that the past holds valuable resources that should be carefully examined and explored for relevant connections to our contemporary postmodern society. Hence, it is vital to inquire about the various viewpoints that our present use of history provokes regarding the present and future.[171]

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[165] Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, *op. cit*., p. 228.
[166] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 10.
[167] Heilmann and Llewellyn, *op. cit*., p. 3.
[168] *Ibidem*.
[169] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 3.
[170] Christian Gutleben, *Nostalgic Postmodernism: The Victorian Tradition and the Contemporary British Novel*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2001, p. 10.
[171] Dana Shiller, "The Redemptive Past in The Neo-Victorian Novel", *Studies in the Novel 29*, no. 4, 1997, 538–60, p. 539, available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/29533234, Accessed 10 June 2023.

Thus, the allure of neo-Victorian literature and cultural objects from the neo-Victorian era transcends a mere yearning for the past and its aesthetic appeals. The Victorian era functions as a metaphorical reflection, albeit somewhat muddled, of our contemporary collective experiences. Numerous issues and concerns that are shared possess the potential for adaptations. According to the analysis conducted by Bowler and Cox, the phenomenon of projecting present-day concerns onto a Victorian framework can have a diminishing effect on their intensity, causing them to become more contained, somewhat distant, and less threatening. This observation suggests that neo-Victorian productions may also represent a form of evasion or retreat from contemporary concerns.[172]

Hence, in light of this phenomenon, I contend that a suitable case of an adaptation of Walter Scott's *Waverley* is to be found in the initial two volumes of the *Outlander* series by Diana Gabaldon, thus carrying an example of his literary legacy and impact.

## The Embodiment of *Myth* and *History* in Gabaldon's Novels

To begin with, it is evident that Gabaldon's first two novels bear a striking resemblance to *Waverley* especially as far as the storyline is concerned. Particularly noteworthy is the notion of featuring an English protagonist who becomes entangled in the 1745 Jacobite uprising while journeying through the Scottish Highlands. However, there exist multiple dissimilarities; a notable contrast lies in the methodology utilized by Gabaldon when it comes to the delineation of her characters.

In regards to the relational dynamic between the central figures, namely Jamie and Claire, as suggested by Dekker[173] a consideration of Friedrich Schiller's postulation articulated in his essay *On Simple and Sentimental Poetry*[174] (1795) is necessary in order to comprehend how male and female characters are portrayed in the historical romance genre. According to this essay, from a gender-based perspective, it can be observed that males are frequently associated with qualities such as intellectual prowess and familiarity with contemporary developments, whereas females are often viewed as possessing intuitive or instinctual tendencies which are more closely aligned with primitive inclinations.[175] In the scenario of *Outlander*, a complete role reversal takes place. Jamie, the Highlander, exhibits a stronger inclination towards following his instincts, particularly as a warrior, whereas Claire displays a greater inclination towards analytical thought, methodically assessing her

[172] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 10.
[173] George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 228.
[174] *Idem*, p. 225, originally titled *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, die Horen, 1795.
[175] *Idem*, p. 228.

surroundings, and exhibiting a desire for knowledge acquisition. Claire is the representation of the contemporary era since she comes from the future; in contrast, Jamie embodies a representation of the historical past, rooted in the fundamentals of humanity. Notwithstanding, particular aspects could be deemed as fitting within the initial dichotomy put forth by Schiller, particularly in the fact that Man is portrayed as emblematic of *history*[176], while Woman is associated with *myth*.[177] Initially, it could be posited that the Highlander warrior of bygone times, possessing a profound spiritual commitment and belief in mythological and pagan lore, bears a distinct correlation to the more evocative facets of the mythic domain. Nevertheless, Jamie also serves as a significant representative of a historical period and establishes a direct connection between the protagonist, Claire, and that period. On the other hand, Claire is perceived on multiple occasions as possessing the ability to use magic, while her modern knowledge of science and medicine is misunderstood as witchcraft. Additionally, she is often identified with various pagan mystical beings, thereby leading to her epithet as the 'White Lady' in the second volume. Hence, it can be inferred that this ambiguity contributes to endowing the characters with multifaceted and intricate attributes that may not be frequently observed in historical romance literature [178] or in *Waverley* more specifically, thus adding new nuances to Gabaldon's plot.

**Claire Beauchamp Fraser: an Unconventional Heroine**

The distinctiveness of Highlands culture in *Waverley* is illustrated by Edward, who comes from another part of the kingdom. In *Outlander*, this is accomplished through the character of Claire who not only is from a different place but also from a completely different historical period, and this contributes to emphasizing the distinct traits of this culture.

Upon her initial arrival in the Scottish Highlands of the eighteenth century, Claire experiences a sense of bewilderment, after living in post-war Europe. The presence of Gaelic language incites within her a sense of intrusion, as she perceives herself as an 'outlander'. Because she is an independent woman, she often faces challenges and negative consequences in a patriarchal society. Furthermore, her contemporary understanding of the world appears irreconcilable with the Highlanders' ideals of justice and honour. As already explained, Neo-Victorianism often addresses injustices and historical neglect experienced by certain social categories, thereby also emphasizing its alignments with the field of gender criticism. The

[176] *Ibidem*.
[177] *Ibidem*.
[178] Stephenie McGucken, "A Love Letter to Scotland; The Creation and Conception of Heritage" in Valerie Estelle Frankel, *Adoring Outlander: Essays on Fandom, Genre and the Female Audience*, Jefferson, McFarland & Company, 2016, p. 29.

research on gender and feminism within the field of neo-Victorian studies exhibits a range of perspectives sharing a fundamental belief: the ability to tell one's own stories and revise and redress the narratives of the past is considered crucial in creating a more emancipated present and future.[179] This observation thoughtfully illustrates the character of Claire, who serves as the strong and emancipated protagonist of the narrative.

Thus, despite their similarities, Edward and Claire are very different from each other. While Scott did not provide a physical or personality description of Edward, Claire and all the other characters in *Outlander* are extensively described, encompassing both their appearance and spirits. Regarding her personality, it becomes immediately apparent to the reader that she is by no means a passive character, but rather a strong one. She is anything but meek, displaying independence and a progressive mindset, not dwelling on fantastical notions of romance. Additionally, while Edward lacks any sources of guidance amidst the murky land of the Highlands and the intricacies of their inhabitants, Claire does possess some degree of familiarity. Throughout her lifetime, Claire has gained a significant amount of knowledge of the historical happenings of Scotland. Therefore, she has a degree of familiarity with certain geographical areas and historical figures, and also possesses a degree of familiarity with some customs, even though she finds them unusual. Significantly, she knows the destiny of Prince Charles' campaign and the consequences it bears on the people of Scotland. To her, the complete eradication of the clan culture is not a shocking phenomenon; rather, it is an inevitable consequence of historical events. Despite this acknowledgement, she will endeavour to prevent the outcome, albeit with a sense of helplessness. As a result, unlike Waverley, driven by romantic ideals, her motives are definitely reasonable and serious. At first, she desires to go back to her husband in the future, and she is willing to take any actions to achieve it, while later in the narrative her priorities change and she struggles to rescue Jamie and the Highlanders.

As previously mentioned, Scott's works depict a dichotomy within the characterization of his heroines, with one type of character exhibiting traits associated with darkness and the other embodying qualities of light. According to Dekker, the first is “a wife, mistress or betrothed whose sexual allure or infidelity unmans the hero and precipitates the fall of the kingdom”[180] whereas the *light* heroine may be described as “a heroine of flight-and-pursuit narratives […] a virgin and heiress whose marriage to the hero reconciles warring factions of

[179] Bowler and Cox, *op. cit*., p. 10.
[180] George Dekker, *op. cit*., p. 222.

the past and builds securely for the future."[181] It is evident that Claire does not fall into either of the categorical distinctions, but rather exhibits characteristics that unite the two. When she first arrives in the seventeenth century, she is often mistaken for a woman of questionable moral character, often misidentified as a prostitute, with her physical allure and sexual attraction frequently remarked upon. Even Jamie's uncle, exhibits a degree of fascination towards her owing to her status as a foreigner. Moreover, she is even subjected to accusations of witchcraft due to her proficiency in the field of medicine, stemming from an unfortunate misinterpretation of her abilities, and she is almost burnt at the stake. However, throughout the entire second novel, the protagonist is consistently addressed as 'La Dame Blanche' or 'White Lady'[182], and she is commonly perceived as a nearly redemptive and chaste figure, imbued with graceful attributes and seemingly divine abilities. Hence, this phenomenon of duality makes Claire a complex and more realistic heroin, marking a detachment from the typical characterization of female characters by too rigid and often stereotyped characteristics. One noteworthy distinction between Claire and Edward Waverley lies in the level of involvement each character has with the foreign world they suddenly inhabit; notably, Claire becomes intricately interwoven within her surroundings. After enduring a series of adversities, she develops an affection for the rustic nature and simple lifestyle in the Highlands, although making attempts to improve it with her knowledge of historical and contemporary medical practices. If Edward and the Highlanders are two distinct groups, for he remains somewhat an outsider, Claire is an individual who assimilates into this community, preserving only her English accent as a reminder of her previous life.[183] Edward remains hesitant to make a definitive decision, thereby evading any potential repercussions that may arise from committing a wrong choice, and instead opting to return to the familiarity of his homeland and marrying Rose. Claire is not content with a predictable, and cosy existence. Despite being offered numerous opportunities to return to her time, she would always choose the past, the new and adventurous over the conventional and stable. Although she is aware of the dangers inherent in remaining in this untamed, underdeveloped, and challenging area of Scotland during wartime, she nevertheless opts to remain. "Even knowing their doom, Claire and Jamie defy history and predestination, as the power to choose is one of the most vital in the series."[184]

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[181] *Ibidem*.
[182] Diana Gabaldon, *Dragonfly in Amber*, New York, Random House, 2011, p. 343.
[183] Karla Zorcev, "Writing Historical Fiction: *Outlander* within the Romantic Tradition of Waverley", *Patchwork Journal,* Issue No. 4, Zagreb, University of Zagreb, 2020, pp. 121-35, p. 127.
[184] Valerie Estelle Frankel, Ad*oring* Outlander*: Essays on Fandom, Genre and the Female Audience*, Jefferson, McFarland & Company, 2016, p. 8.

In this regard, Claire's relationship with Jamie bears significance beyond its romantic nature, as the author imbues this eighteenth-century Highlander with contemporary attitudes and beliefs, which is a recurrent trait in novels adapting nineteenth-century works. Indeed, through the influence of Claire's progressive mindset, Gabaldon's male protagonist undergoes various changes and growth, ultimately regarding her as an equal partner in both their personal affairs and their endeavours, in what in actual fact was a patriarchal society. In this respect, it is also worth mentioning Sara H.G Frantz and Katharina Rennhak's opinion that "when women construct and write about men in fictional worlds, not only do they analyse the causes and effects of patriarchy, […] but they also construct their own realities, imagining alternative, ideal masculinities that are desirable from a woman's perspective."[185]

A further interesting point to consider involves the extent of blame held by Claire and Waverley. The historical fiction genre breathes life into the past by creating an alternate reality where the missing fragments of history are given existence. It revives the common individuals who played an essential role in shaping the world but whose accounts have been lost over time, thereby establishing a link between the past and the present.[186] Nevertheless, despite the genuine portrayal of their attire, dialogue, and ways, the fictional main characters exist within a state of ambiguity and a sort of limbo: having originated from the current era of authorship, they lack any existence outside the confines of the narrative.[187] Considering the character of Claire, it can be easily asserted that this fact is doubled, as she originates from a temporal dimension beyond the storyline's timeline. Consequently, her figure is even more elusive, devoid of a definitive belonging. In contrast to authentic historical figures, fictitious characters often serve as a means for the reader to access and connect with the past. As suggested by Sutherland, these main characters are time travellers, as evidenced by Edward's Scottish itinerary where the world appears increasingly archaic and primitive as he travels further north[188]; as for Claire, she literally is a time traveller, moving both in space and in time. Both protagonists participate in military conflicts and harm people, but they also turn against their own initial side and get involved in the insurrection. Despite this, Sutherland argues that the reader cannot entirely condemn the protagonists of historical novels due to their status as outsiders in an unfamiliar reality, and their position as the primary driving force of the entire narrative.[189]

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[185] Sarah S.G Frantz; Katharina Rennhak, *Women Constructing Men*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009, p. 2.
[186] Kathryn Sutherland, *op. cit*., p. 9.
[187] *Idem*, p. 10.
[188] *Ibidem*.
[189] *Ibidem*.

**The Intertwining of Historical Accuracy and Fictional Elements**

The significance of crossing the border to enter the Highland region is stressed in Gabaldon's novels, too.[190] Edward and Claire, at some point, discover that they are outsiders and do not completely belong to that unfamiliar society. Abruptly, Edward finds himself realizing his peculiar situation; his romantic ideals and fantasies transformed into a "strange, horrible and unnatural"[191] dream. The word *unnatural* holds importance: Edward is brought along by circumstances to align with the Highlanders, wearing similar clothes and engaging in their pursuits; despite this he remains an unfamiliar figure in an unfamiliar society; he remains an outsider and is unable to comprehend Gaelic. The same applies to Claire, who experiences this sentiment on multiple occasions. "Suddenly she is a sassenach, an *outlander*, in a country torn by war and clan feuds."[192] In fact, *Sassenach*[193] soon becomes her epithet, although initially used in a discriminatory way, it takes on an affectionate value when used by Jamie.

Additionally, as concerns the description of the background of the story, Gabaldon is able to maintain a similar writing style as Scott, yet adds her own distinctive touch to the writing.[194] The underlying context remains unchanged— Scotland and its inhabitants are depicted as an interesting setting, imbued with romance yet destined for tragedy. In her portrayal of the Scottish landscape during the nineteenth century, Gabaldon focuses heavily on pagan traditions, celebrations, and folklore that are characteristic of the area. The national superstitions and beliefs are depicted as an essential and firmly ingrained component of the people's daily existence, dictating their behaviour. At a certain moment, Claire is escorted to a spring where she is instructed to drink from it and then asked a question that is evaluated based on the spring's assumed ability to unveil hidden realities.[195] Once again, a passage discussing the folklore surrounding the *changeling* myth is present, and Claire observes as members of the community genuinely embrace its real existence.[196] The author offers several examples to show different features of this culture:

> Offering romance and adventure, the series incorporates the myths of the ancient Celts into a world on the end of rationalism […] Literature, myth, and symbolism permeate the series, connecting it with the history and culture of the period"[197] […]

[190] Valerie Estelle Frankel, *The Symbolism and Sources of* Outlander, Jefferson, McFarland, 2015, p.4.
[191] Walter Scott, *Waverley,* cit., p. 20.
[192] Diana Gabaldon, *Outlander*, cit., p. 866.
[193] The word itself comes from the Gaelic *Sassunach* and it was generally used in derogatory terms to refer to a foreigner, but specifically to English people. See https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/scottish-word-week-sassenach-1532354, Accessed 5 April 2023.
[194] Karla Zorcev, *op. cit*., p. 124.
[195] Diana Gabaldon, *Outlander,* cit., p. 261.
[196] *Idem*, p, 503.
[197] Valerie Estelle Frankel, *op.cit.*, p.1.

> and the main characters encounter significant ceremonies, creatures, and symbolism from ancient myth as they struggle through love, trauma, and adventure.[198]

Scott's novel depicts a strong connection between the Highlanders and the natural environment, a feature that has been previously mentioned. This occurs also in Gabaldon's books, for tartan patterns and typical clothing are just as much a part of the landscape as the mist-filled moors and green-filled valleys.[199] Both are equivalent, coexisting harmoniously: the relationship between people and nature is bidirectional — people are integrated into the natural world, and the natural world is intertwined with people's lives. Moreover, the *Outlander* books illustrate real locations in Scotland associated with the Jacobites as well as made-up places[200], thus evidencing that Gabaldon, too, invented fictional yet seeming realistic locations, just like Scott had done.

No less than in Scott's novels, a significant focus in *Outlander* is on the daily lives and local practices, as evidenced by the detailed portrayal of events such as the traditional Gaelic Handfasting ceremony held for weddings with a Gaelic vow[201], and the episode of the Gathering of the clan, involving a celebration of Celtic music and food, with clansmen expected to pledge their allegiance to the clan chief:

> 'I swear by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the holy iron that I hold, to give ye my fealty and pledge ye my loyalty to the name of the clan Mackenzie. If ever my hand shall be raised against ye in rebellion, I ask that this holy iron shall pierce my heart.'
> He lowered the dirk, kissed it at the juncture of haft and tang, and thrust it home in its sheath. Still kneeling, he offered both hands clasped to Colum, who took them between his own and lifted them to his lips in acceptance of the oath so offered. Then he raised Dougal to his feet. Turning, Colum picked up a silver quaich from its place on the tartan covered table behind him. He lifted the heavy eared cup with both hands, drank from it, and offered it to Dougal. Dougal took a healthy swallow and handed back the cup. Then, with a final bow to the laird of the clan MacKenzie, he stepped to one side, to make room for the next man in line.[202]

Likewise, the author used some historically reported details when dealing with military conflicts. The second battle Claire takes part in is the battle of Falkirk when scholars report that "it began raining and snowing heavily, with a strong wind blowing directly into the faces of Hawley's troops."[203] The weather was thus a determining factor in the outcome of

[198] *Ibidem*, p. 3.
[199] Stephenie McGucken, *op. cit*., p. 46.
[200] Direct answer from Diana Gabaldon's official website: https://dianagabaldon.com/wordpress/resources/faq/faq-about-the-books/ Accessed 5 April 2023.
[201] Diana Gabaldon, *Outlander,* cit., p. 277.
[202] *Idem*, p. 198.
[203] Edwards, "The Battle of Falkirk 1746", *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 1925, p. 129.

the conflict. In *Dragonfly in Amber*, the portrayal of Scottish men walking in harsh weather aligns with the aforementioned retelling of the battle: "They were coming up the hill, a small group of men in flight. Highlanders, both from the sound and the sight of them, plaids and beards and hair flying around them, so they looked like black clouds against the grassy slope, scudding uphill before the wind."[204]

Moreover, in *Dragonfly in Amber*, there is a depiction of the fear felt by Scottish soldiers just before the battle of Culloden. They were aware they were too hungry to fight and without any reinforcement, hence confirming factual events on the obstinacy of the Young Pretender persisting with the struggle despite the inevitable defeat. According to historical reports: "The army that entered the field battle of Culloden were starving, exhausted by weeks of marching, and poorly armed."[205] Gabaldon presents the same situation in the following manner: "Forced against his will to retreat, Charles had chosen this last stubborn stand, to place ill-armed, exhausted, starving men in a battle line on a rain-soaked moor, to face the wrath of Cumberland's cannon fire."[206]

**After *Outlander*: New and Old Touristic Trails**

Gabaldon's series —and especially the initial two seasons of the Starz-produced TV show— have significantly boosted tourism in Scotland.[207] As regards the statistics provided by VisitScotland— the Scottish official consumer website of national tourism— *Outlander* generated an average surge of 67% in tourism at the places referenced in the books or featured in the show.[208] The VisitScotland website offers dedicated pages for *Outlander*-related Scottish destinations and lore, promising tourists a memorable experience.[209]

This draws upon well-established recurrent themes in tourism dating back to the eighteenth century, centering around the idea of embarking on a journey that can offer visitors inspiration and greater insight, where history, culture, and picturesque landscapes all play a prominent role.[210] It is not unexpected for this kind of entities to appeal to a potential tourist's attraction towards historical and cultural aspects of a destination. However, by specifically targeting *Outlander* readers, there is an added promise of connecting with Scottish history as

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[204] Diana Gabaldon, *Dragonfly in Amber*, cit., p. 716.
[205] John Mitchinson and John Lloyd, *QI: The Book of General Ignorance*, London, Faber & Faber, 2010, p. 510.
[206] Diana Gabaldon, *Dragonfly in Amber*, cit., p. 889.
[207] Erika Mailman, "The *Outlander* Effect: The Popular Book and TV Series Is Increasing Travel to These Scottish Sites", February 14, 2020, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/the-outlander-effect-the-popular-book-and-tv-series-is-increasing-travel-to-these-scottish-sites/2020/02/13/900a2dfc-4c26-11ea-b721-9f4cdc90bc1c_story.html, accessed 10 April 2023.
[208] *Ibidem*.
[209] See https://www.visitscotland.com/info/tours/scottish-outlander-tour-b70b2c75 Accessed 12 April 2023.
[210] LuAnn McCracken Fletcher, *Literary Tourism and the British Isles: History, Imagination, and the Politics of Place*, Washington, Lexington Books, 2018, p. 191.

depicted in literature. This offers the possibility of a charming experience, akin to Claire's time-travelling through the standing stones, shifting from the present time to the past. The present-day correlation between Scotland, the tourism industry, literature, and historic romance is an extension of the longstanding connection that was particularly established by Scott.[211] Rigney suggests that during the nineteenth century, individuals' knowledge regarding Scotland's historical background and geographical features was largely shaped the narrative conceptualized by Scott.[212]

Scott and Gabaldon both emphasize the "historical atmosphere"[213] of the eighteenth century. Their characters find themselves grappling with the competing forces of romanticism and realism, and the meticulous depictions of the final stages of a culture serve to explore the significance of history and its impact on the present.[214] It goes without saying that these literary works are still fiction, as they do not claim to be historically accurate in all respects. Yet, as stated by Stephanie McGucken: "constructed authenticity and fictionalized history [...] as we have seen, [...] bring history to life for an audience in ways that are otherwise impossible. They are not meant to be historical re-enactments, but a backdrop for a fictionalized story based on history."[215] Hence, their purpose is not to replicate historical events, but rather to serve as a contextual setting for a fictionalized narrative grounded in historical events, by creating a similar atmosphere.[216]

In conclusion, I argue that Scott's legacy has exerted a significant impact and influence on Gabaldon's *Outlander,* which appears a contemporary adaptation of *Waverley*. Undoubtedly, for her debut novel, Diana Gabaldon delved into a Scottish narrative that was already intrinsically linked to a pre-established range of historical connotations and cultural associations shaped by fictional works. By writing her *Outlander* novels, she has reintroduced to contemporary readers Scotland's history, originally made famous by Scott.[217]

[211] *Idem*, p. 192.
[212] Ann Rigney, *op. cit*., pp. 136-138.
[213] Georg Lukacs, *op. cit*., p 48.
[214] LuAnn McCracken Fletcher, *op. cit*., p. 192.
[215] Stephenie McGucken, *op. cit*., p. 18.
[216] Karla Zorcev, *op. cit*., p. 132.
[217] LuAnn McCracken Fletcher, *op. cit*., p. 192.

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# Summary in Italian

La Scozia non è una nazione sovrana indipendente, tuttavia gode di una forte identità e di un notevole attaccamento al proprio patrimonio storico e culturale. Ciò che viene sostenuto in questa tesi è che una parte significativa della coscienza collettiva relativa all'identità scozzese sia attribuibile ai romanzi di Walter Scott scritti nel diciannovesimo secolo. Pertanto, lo scopo principale di questa ricerca è esplorare come Scott abbia tentato di rimodellare l'identità nazionale scozzese e di conferire valore e fascino all'immagine della nazione. Prendendo in esame i suoi romanzi, con particolare riguardo a *Waverley*, l'obiettivo è indagare come questo autore abbia contestato le diffuse idee avverse riguardo gli scozzesi e la loro nazione, alterando così la percezione comune della Scozia e infondendo un ritrovato senso di orgoglio nazionale nei suoi abitanti, accompagnato da un fascino senza precedenti da parte delle altre nazioni europee. Inoltre, un ulteriore scopo di questo studio è quello di valutare l'evoluzione dell'eredità letteraria e culturale di Scott negli ultimi due secoli, analizzando i fattori che hanno portato al significativo calo di interesse e attenzione nei suoi confronti.

Prima di addentrarsi nel dettaglio nella figura di Scott e nell'analisi di *Waverley*, è importante sottolineare alcuni aspetti storici che hanno contraddistinto la storia scozzese del diciottesimo secolo, rappresentando i fattori scatenanti che spinsero questo autore a scrivere il suo primo romanzo storico e servendo dunque anche da sfondo per la narrazione.

Nel 1707, dopo secoli di conflitti, venne costituito il regno di Gran Bretagna, portando all'unione tra il regno di Inghilterra e quello di Scozia. Questo evento segnò indelebilmente la storia delle due nazioni, tuttavia provocò particolare malcontento in Scozia, poiché i promessi benefici e la sperata prosperità economica tardarono ad arrivare mentre l'indipendenza era perduta, comportando un declino dell'identità nazionale scozzese. Pertanto, un notevole disappunto emerse come conseguenza di un profondo senso di perdita di identità sperimentato da molti scozzesi, i quali temevano di diventare presto una mera regione sotto il dominio inglese, con la sola memoria del proprio passato di regno indipendente. Una serie di rivolte, in particolare l'insurrezione giacobita degli Highlanders del 1745, fu il culmine di questo diffuso sentimento di insoddisfazione. La disfatta di tale rivolta – che aveva come scopo il ristabilimento di un sovrano della dinastia scozzese Stuart sul trono britannico – ebbe delle gravi ripercussioni sulle Highlands scozzesi, portando alla distruzione del modo di vivere di queste terre, dalla società dei clan al tipo di economia, fino alla soppressione degli usi e costumi. Questo tentativo di ribellione contribuì inoltre alla circolazione di diversi pregiudizi negativi che affliggevano gli Highlanders e il loro territorio.

Questi avvenimenti costituiscono il contesto scelto da Walter Scott per le vicende affrontate del suo primo romanzo, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since,* pubblicato nel 1814. Infatti, rendendosi conto dell'indebolimento dell'identità scozzese e dell'ostilità nei confronti dell'unione da ambo le parti, egli tentò di trasmettere un'immagine nuova e favorevole della Scozia e allo stesso tempo di promuovere la popolarità nei confronti dell'unione. Sebbene Scott non fosse il primo autore a cimentarsi nel romanzo storico, *Waverley*, è stato considerato dal critico Georg Lukacs come il primo vero esempio di questo genere letterario, sulla base del fatto che non è semplicemente ambientato nel passato, ma è permeato dalla storia in ogni aspetto. L'uso delle note di spiegazione e l'importanza conferita alla vita quotidiana e alla gente comune sono solo alcune delle innovazioni di Scott che hanno segnato una divergenza rispetto ad altre precedenti opere di natura storica.

Il romanzo riscosse un immediato successo, come evidenziato dalla vendita di migliaia di copie e da traduzioni in diverse lingue. Alla base di tale risultato vi era indubbiamente la decisione di Scott di raccontare la civiltà delle Highlands e di ambientare il suo racconto in quelle terre, in quanto ciò suscitò l'interesse e la curiosità dei lettori per svariate ragioni. Come già ribadito, il secolo precedente aveva portato alla perdita dell'identità scozzese, di conseguenza scrivere riguardo la storia scozzese rappresentava un atto di auto identificazione in cui il passato del Paese veniva sfruttato per definirne l'identità. A causa del loro prolungato isolamento sia dall'Inghilterra che dalle Lowlands, le Highlands erano viste come la regione in cui i costumi e gli stili di vita tradizionali scozzesi si erano conservati più a lungo senza subire l'influenza inglese. Questa è una delle possibili ragioni del crescente interesse per le Highlands, che le considerava come base dell'identità nazionale, distinta da quella inglese. Inoltre, non da trascurare era anche l'enfasi posta sugli eventi ritenuti più rappresentativi ed emblematici della nazione, vale a dire che il trattamento inflitto agli Highlanders dopo la sconfitta giacobita era percepito, in larga scala, come un simbolo dell'intera perdita nazionale della Scozia. Infine, si trattava di una società che era sostanzialmente scomparsa agli occhi dei lettori dell'Ottocento, di cui si conservava solo il ricordo, di conseguenza destava interesse. In aggiunta, per quanto riguarda gli eventi storici trattati, nell'affrontare la rivoluzione giacobita Scott aspirava, da un lato, a far conoscere agli scozzesi il loro recente passato e quella società ormai perduta, e dall'altro, a indurre tutti i lettori a riesaminare questo delicato evento nella storia britannica, senza imporre giudizi rigidi e categorici su nessuna delle due fazioni coinvolte.

Seguirono successivamente altri romanzi storici, comunemente chiamati i "romanzi di *Waverley"*, gran parte di essi ambientati ancora in Scozia, in diversi luoghi e periodi.

Nonostante le loro distinte ambientazioni storiche e geografiche, presentano tutti una caratteristica comune, vale a dire quella di dare voce alle esperienze di una terra e di una società che erano state spesso ignorate e mal giudicate. Va notato che, in tutti i suoi romanzi, Scott mirava a ristabilire il valore dell'identità scozzese affrontando e screditando continuamente i preconcetti diffusi nella sua epoca. Attraverso la sua profonda comprensione della storia, unita alla sua acuta osservazione dei costumi e dei valori locali, è stato in grado di ritrarre abilmente vari strati della società scozzese, delineando soprattutto il modo di vivere del popolo comune delle Highlands. Ciononostante, l'attenzione principale di questi romanzi è sempre sulla storia stessa; infatti, Scott ha unito elementi reali e verosimili ad altri di finzione per affrontare la storia recente della Scozia. Egli riconosceva i benefici dell'unione con l'Inghilterra, ma contemporaneamente esprimeva profondo rammarico per la perdita di autonomia della nazione e per l'affievolirsi della sua identità. Di conseguenza, in *Waverley*, l'enfasi implicita è sempre posta sul cambiamento, con il riconoscimento della necessità della modernizzazione e del progresso, preservando però il patrimonio culturale e storico distintivo della nazione.

Al fine di migliorare l'immagine delle Highlands, Scott ha impiegato diverse strategie per ritrarre sia la popolazione che il paesaggio. Aveva ben in mente il genere di preconcetti avversi che puntava a sfatare. Nello specifico, l'immaginario collettivo nei confronti degli Highlanders era solito a considerarli come barbari e selvaggi oppure come eroi e nobili combattenti. I personaggi di *Waverley* raffigurano invece una vasta gamma di personalità e classi sociali, offrendo così un ritratto ricco di sfumature e ampio degli Highlanders, lontano dai pregiudizi comuni. A tal proposito, a fungere da protagonista Scott scelse appositamente un giovane uomo inglese, che invitava quindi i lettori inglesi a identificarsi con lui, mettendo in dubbio i loro preconcetti man mano che il protagonista approfondiva la sua conoscenza della cultura delle Highlands.

Inoltre, anche la percezione dei paesaggi scozzesi ha subito un cambiamento. Questi scenari passarono infatti dall'essere comunemente reputati inospitali, pericolosi e tetri a venire ritenuti invece affascinanti e adatti a essere esplorati e visitati. La fonte principale delle idee stereotipate riguardo le Highlands era da attribuire ai resoconti di una vera e propria spedizione di viaggio intrapresa da Johnson e Boswell nel 1773, vale a dire *Diario di un viaggio alle Ebridi*. Questi racconti non dipingevano affatto un'immagine positiva della Scozia, anzi, la società gaelica era giudicata come regredita e primitiva, mentre i panorami naturali erano mostrati come inquietanti e poveri di luce. In Scott, il ritrovato apprezzamento per l'attrattiva dei paesaggi scozzesi risiede nella coesistenza armoniosa presente nelle sue

descrizioni tra tratti appartenenti alla categoria romantica del sublime e altri del pittoresco. Tali caratteristiche, tuttavia, non rendono questi paesaggi romantici o idealizzati, come una sorta di quadro da ammirare da lontano, bensì contribuiscono a rendere i territori delle Highlands dinamici e parte integrante della vita della gente che li abita, sfatando l'idea che fossero attraenti ma inavvicinabili. A dimostrazione dell'efficacia delle descrizioni evocative di Scott, ci fu un cospicuo aumento del turismo in queste terre, portando la Scozia a essere meta di numerose esplorazioni.

Gli studi presi in esame in questa tesi suggeriscono che *Waverley*, oltre ad aver trasformato il genere del moderno romanzo storico, ha avuto il merito di far conoscere la Scozia — e in particolare il remoto mondo delle Highlands — ai lettori di altre nazioni europee, poiché attraverso la sua influenza, la Scozia e il suo patrimonio culturale hanno guadagnato un'attenzione e un'ammirazione senza precedenti per questa nazione. Questo autore è quindi riuscito a cambiare le opinioni comuni riguardo il suo Paese e ha riplasmato un senso di identità tra gli scozzesi, qualcosa in cui identificarsi e distinguersi.

Tuttavia, nonostante la sua grande influenza e il suo successo, nel corso del ventesimo secolo ai suoi romanzi è stata conferita una scarsa attenzione, accompagnata da una serie di critiche. Nessun altro scrittore ha goduto di una tale fama e di un tale rapido declino. Fino a circa la prima metà del diciannovesimo secolo, Scott era ampiamente considerato non solo lo stimato rappresentante della sua nazione d'origine e uno scrittore eccezionale della sua epoca, ma anche una figura internazionale di spicco. La costruzione del monumento a lui dedicato nella città di Edimburgo nel 1844 rappresenta una manifestazione tangibile della fama di questo scrittore. Malgrado ciò, i primi accenni di discesa del suo successo sono osservabili nella natura delle commemorazioni tenutesi nel 1871, organizzate per commemorare il centenario della sua nascita. Il tenore di fondo di questi eventi implica che esistesse un crescente timore che Scott e le sue creazioni non rappresentassero più accuratamente il contesto contemporaneo dell'epoca. Se inizialmente affascinavano l'immaginazione del pubblico, le sue produzioni letterarie vennero successivamente ritenute viaggi nostalgici nel passato rivolte a lettori più anziani o come materiale adatto per i bambini in contesti educativi. Vi era inoltre una tendenza a semplificare la complessità della sua vena creativa, confondendo spesso il suo personale apprezzamento per la letteratura cavalleresca e i suoi sentimenti nazionalistici come strumenti per sostenere mere fantasie romantiche. A ciò, seguirono tuttavia alcuni studi e critiche letterarie a livello accademico, come ad esempio gli studi di Lukacs o di Welsh, ma in generale, l'attenzione dei lettori comuni diede spazio ad altri generi, ritenendo le opere di Scott all'antica e sorpassate.

Ad ogni modo, la commemorazione del bicentenario di Scott nel 1971 rappresentò un'occasione significativa poiché durante alcune conferenze letterarie incentrate su di lui vennero proposti nuovi approcci interdisciplinari per riesaminare e riavvicinarsi ai suoi romanzi. Invero, alcuni sviluppi e ricerche attuali indicano uno sforzo per il recupero delle sue opere, determinando pertanto un recente tentativo di far tornare in auge la sua eredità e valorizzare il suo impatto culturale in una prospettiva contemporanea. Una proposta che renderebbe questi romanzi – e *Waverley* nello specifico – rilevanti e interessanti sarebbe ad esempio quella suggerita da Silke Stroh, ovvero un'analisi di queste opere in chiave postcoloniale. Un esempio di riadattamento contemporaneo di *Waverley* sono i primi due romanzi della serie di *Outlander* di Diana Gabaldon. Queste opere rientrano nel genere del Neo-Vittorianesimo, che tratta il recupero di tematiche e produzioni letterarie dell'Ottocento con delle alterazioni e talvolta degli spunti di riflessione su problematiche attuali; ciò è spesso accompagnato dall'obiettivo di occuparsi di argomenti e gruppi sociali che venivano frequentemente trascurati nelle opere dell'Ottocento.

È necessario un recupero dei romanzi di Scott per riportarli non solo a essere studiati a livello accademico, ma anche a venire letti e far appassionare i lettori come erano soliti fare un tempo. Infatti, un fattore che ha influito negativamente sulla reputazione di queste opere sono state le critiche mosse verso il loro contenuto. Alcuni accademici, come ad esempio Edwin Muir, accusarono Scott di aver ritratto un'immagine errata della Scozia, rendendola troppo romantica e stereotipata, invece di perseguire una pura e convincente identità nazionale. Sebbene ciò possa essere parzialmente vero, la cui presente tesi tenta di sottolineare che una definizione pura e singolare di identità nazionale non è concepibile, poiché il concetto stesso di identità collettiva è di per sé fittizio e il risultato di fabbricazioni costruite. Le opere letterarie, invece, possiedono la capacità di influenzare sostanzialmente la percezione di un popolo o di una cultura. Inoltre, va sottolineato che durante la scrittura di *Waverley*, Scott non pretendeva di presentare solo fatti storici accurati e realmente accaduti; al contrario, era pienamente consapevole del fatto che il suo romanzo fosse un'opera di finzione, sebbene all'interno di un reale contesto storico.

Di conseguenza, va evidenziato il fatto che nei suoi romanzi Scott ha presentato molteplici interpretazioni della Scozia e sostenuto il continuo sviluppo dell'identità nazionale scozzese, senza imporre rigide costrizioni a essa. È innegabile che la Scozia abbia tratto un valore culturale e simbolico significativo dall'influenza pervasiva che questo autore ha esercitato nell'immaginario collettivo nei confronti di questa nazione.

In conclusione, nonostante abbia sperimentato saltuariamente cambiamenti di popolarità, l'impatto del lascito letterario e culturale di Walter Scott è stato recuperato diverse volte nel corso dei decenni; vi è pertanto la speranza che venga riportato in auge, riconoscendo dunque il suo valore.