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Nationalism versus Provincialism: A Hypothetical Paradox in Sir Walter Scott's Classical Works

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Abstract

Nationalist feeling is agitating again today. As far as the new and ultra- developed global scenario is concerned, a large facet of exotic invasiveness is surely up for grab. People of modern era are in the thought process that their native country might be under serious threat; even though; they would remain silent until their individual entity is rattled. In fact, the major statement of problem of this study is revolving around this pivot. To become a true patriot one must be an optimal lover of his/her country as well. To say the least, a patriot always thinks broad and should not confine himself within a short periphery. "The melting and dissolving" of the "peculiar features" as a nation like Scotland- under the Victorian era, is the monologue, of Sir Walter Scott and his ever demanding pieces of writings.

Keywords: nationalism, patriot, provincialism, paradox, hypothesis

INTRODUCTION:

Sir Walter Scott must be remembered not only as a pronounced story teller of 18th century literary revolutionary movement but also as one of the sheering forces in upcoming modern English literature. The concept " literature is not only for few, rather it's for public as well" was



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revolutionized all through the works of Sir Scott. Giving due respect and honor, literature of Wordsworth and Coleridge was confined to an extremely narrow circumference that included few patrons and critics. Sir Walter Scott was the first one who broke the shackles and propagated the literary campaign among the public. "Sir Walter Scott was the Luther of literature. He reformed and he regenerated. To say that he founded a new school is not saying the whole truth ; for there is something narrow in the idea of a school, and his influence has been universal" (Landon). Scott's poetry like *Marmion* as well as *Lady of the Lake* evoked through the minds of common people and off course, developed a resounding response throughout the country with overwhelming enthusiasm. Moreover, for the first time in history, romantic poetry became extensively popular among all ages.

Again, looking back to the prose of Sir Scott, that how much it showcased the men and women who probably for the first time, believed in themselves and thoroughly enjoyed the charm of reality. His novels draw the attentions of millions of readers and audiences who hitherto were the part and parcels of the previous patrons of the Romantic era. It's worth mentioning, readers who were having a very little idea what modern literature is all about, were eventually mesmerized as each and every novel of Sir Scott percolated through the veins of them.

However, some critics may call his prose and poetry lacking poetic excellence, but to be honest, in terms of sheer end to end actions, excess of youth, rapid and realistic approach made Sir Scott a significant force to be reckoned with in modern English literature.



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RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- ❖ Correlate the historical perspective and the novels of Sir Scott seen to have tapped in relevance of the public consciousness of the respective era?
- ❖ Illustrate the notion of patriotism and provincialism/regionalism as a hypothetical paradox?
- ❖ Retrospect Sir Scott's work in relation to the modern global scenario?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In order to enumerate this work I have introduced the following crucial aspects in succession to portrait this study.

- ✓ Enumerate the principles of journey metaphor keeping in view the historical narrative as stated by Sir Walter Scott in his classical works.
- ✓ Elaborate the moral contexts of Sir Walter Scott's classical works with theoretical backgrounds.
- ✓ State the major identities that signify Sir Scott from the rest in terms of traditional patriotism and narrow provincialism.
- ✓ Relate the reader's response critical theory as depicted by Dr. N. Holland.



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. Sir Scott was deeply engrossed by his previous successors of Romantic Era and at the same time, he was extremely keen to relate and diversify the romantic senses equivocally among the Scottish isles. Furthermore, a little interest was made to merge romance and reality before the *Waverley*.

In *Waverley*, possibly for the first time, romanticism and realistic thoughts were mixed. People around the world saw how 18th century romance and 18th century mannerism were blended to absolute homogeneity. In other words, Sir Scott set the manifesto of 18th century manners in a historical frame of literary creation.

Scott, however, wrote drastically and to some extent, without so much of care. He, himself confessed this fact. In fact, we would see that those are not with so much of literary delicacy and at the same time, never lived up to the expectation in terms of construction as well.

Sir Scott should be best described as the man with rapid action. Therefore, the sketching of characters in his novels is also supposed to be unfamiliar in most ways if we compare them with modern psychological novelists. He never went for vivid elaboration or analysis of characters and more often than not, failed to portrait the moral and mental proposition of those characters.

In addition, outlook of Scott towards history was not totally accurate too. He took liberty in terms of history, a touch too many and eventually, that did lead to the development of plenty of anachronisms. One classical example of such is found in *Ivanhoe*, which is full of romantic values



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but at times, completely untrustworthy if seen as a reflection of middle ages. As a whole however, he was astonishingly successful as teller of external sphere of an Era, especially, the manner through which he described the lives and beliefs of common men and women.

Scott's greatest successes came in emphasizing patriotism and loyalty towards his native land. He took simple characters but achieved a lot of success as he introduced men and women of Scottish isles whom he knew in and out like the palm of his hands. Common people like farmers, soldiers, peasants etc. were all got sizable status in his works and writings. Furthermore, he believed that the exuberance of youth could rejuvenate a country like Scotland and several of his novels, in fact, was revolved around this concept. Later on authors of his next genre depicted Sir Scott as the principle architect of developing the idea of "*New Scotland*".

Sir Scott arguably is one of the greatest historical novelists of all time. Novelists around the world of last century or so who have concentrated on history and historical characters acknowledged him the most.

Scott's novels were more towards public rather than personal interest. Therefore, with the exceptions of *Bride of Lammermoor*, most of his novels were pin pointed to rapid action and response. He portrayed admirably well each and every character by his own style.

He concentrated his novels and not to mention his characters towards the heroic aspects of history. History was almost resurrected through his literary columns as historical characters again



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found their ways to come back and express themselves in the pages of his writings. Eventually, the fighters of all six centuries starting from *Crusaders* and continued in chronological fashion as, *Covenanters*, *Cavaliers*, *Roundheads*, *Papists*, *Jews*, *Gypsies*, *Rebels*, found themselves in and began to think realistically. It's worth mentioning that apart from Balzac in France, no other novelists of that era approached history in such a way as Scott did during that period. In this context, Mitchell quoted admirably; "I cannot always pin Scott down to a medieval source to the exclusion of other possible sources. In such cases it is altogether conceivable that three or four or more literary works from different periods of literary history were on his mind at the same time" (Mitchell).

Sir Scott was a true lover of his country. He knew every bit of his native land. Readers merely missed hardly a moment of Scotland as he illustrated the beautiful serene valleys, moors and mountains that covered the Scottish atmosphere. In reality, this very sense and love for his native country imbibed through his classical works including the poems and novels. He, by all means, was a true patriot of his motherland and to say the least, each and every place in his writings was well chosen as they were simply considered the virtual reflections of natural Scottish lagoon.

The most classical illustration of such harmony is found in *Old Mortality*. There Morton enters the cave of an old *Covenanter*, where spiritual terror is inspired by a fanatic's struggle and is paralleled by a physical terror of a huge gulf with a potential flood, expanded by a slippery tree trunk.



The Achievers Journal

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The 2nd illustration is found in another of his novel *The Talisman*. In this novel, two champion fighters meet face to face, all guns blazing towards each other with all their armories in the repertoire in the middle of a scorching desert. However, at the end of the day, they eat their food together in the cool oasis.

The third illustration is found in *Ivanhoe*, one of the great novels of Sir Scott. The climax is around a love scene, where Ivanhoe is severely wounded, found wanting at his helplessness. Rebecca simultaneously hides and reveals her love and keeps on showcasing the potential assault within the castle, underneath her window. Her thoughts are focused on the fight and at the same time on her love, of course, both are undoubtedly natural.

Sir Scott synchronized the essence of scene and action and blended a harmony in his entire works. His greatness lies especially on resurrecting and reconstructing past era. He was instrumental in reforming the history and historical events which up to then were mere dry facts. He was the first man who through his own individualistic approach introduced common men and women into the volumes of historical cascade and attracted the minds of all ages as depicted by Thomas Carlyle, " This historical novels have taught this truth.....unknown to writers of history: that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state papers, controversies, and abstractions of men" (Carlyle 51).



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To illustrate more on this, not only the realms of history but also the valleys and serene planes, the ever charming call of mountains along with the proper blend of men and women, farmers, soldiers, pirates, gypsies, even school masters developed a virtual Scotland in front of eyes.

With these varieties of characters Scott never proclaimed himself in his works. His novels are by no means the gold mines in terms of literary prolificacy but to say in few words, the inner soul of Scotland is visualized if gone through his novels like- *The heart of Midlothian*, *Waverley*. He was the true illustrator of Scottish genre without a shadow of doubt. The universal womanhood and manhood came out so vividly through his works that it will remain a perfect literary epitome.

Reader's response theory and N. Holland: Dr. Norman N. Holland arguably is one of the greatest assets of modern English literature who not only developed a new theory of psychoanalytic approach and cognitive poetics but at the same time illustrated a new dimension to the readers to think.

One of the most striking examples is the reparation of readers/audiences to analyze Shakespeare what eventually leads to the invention of another concept known as dynamics of literary response where Holland depicts that a reader imparts his or her unconscious fantasy to a more pronounced consciousness. Eventually, this is imbibed in the total system or work.

In conjunction with the psychoanalysis and the dynamics, the reader response concept is more or less occupying the same orbit. The central idea of this concept is that writers create their stories



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or novels accumulating and persevering with their own experiences /expressions. However, readers on the other hand, assess the scenario all together by their personal feelings and react to the situation accordingly. One such example is the theme and attitudinal variations in music among the listeners.

Last but not the least, an allied version of reader response relationship is the introduction of cognitive poetics. It is according to Holland, the best foil of reader response theory especially in the part of continental Europe.

Reader response theory and Psychoanalysis in relation to this work: It is worth reflecting on Scott, born two generations after the 1707 Treaty of Union ended Scotland's existence as an independent state. In fact, Scott was intensely a Scottish. In the context of modern globalization, imports of multinational culture and an everlasting immigration, it is quite obvious, that many assume that their national heritage and identity are under crisis. In spite of that, people remain calm unless their personal interests are not encroached.

Here lies Scott's identity. He believed, Patriotism differs from nationalism. It is founded in love for the country and not resentment or envy of others.

Most of Scott's novels are primarily based on adventures rather than merely restricting to certain characters. It is the glorious actions and elements of adventure which eventually made Scott a hot



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favorite among the young readers/audiences. Therefore, it can be said that Scott's novels are predominantly, concerned on public than that of private perspective.

DISCUSSION:

Sir Walter Scott was appreciably a true son of his native land. Each of his novels enumerates great loyalty and belief towards Scottish isles of that era. Characters ranging as high as king to the lower most social chronology such as beggar; all finds their places in his novels with individualistic streaks.

During Sir Scott, Scotland was under the rules of British Empire, but Scotland was by no means given the true respect and colors by the British dynasty. This influenced Sir Scott to take up his writing pen to showcase that his very own country is no push over's. Eventually, in 1819 he catered this fact of ignorance towards Scotland by the British dynasty of that time. In *Ivanhoe*, he showed how a place like Scotland, a gold mine of facts and histories was thoroughly ignored.

Being a true patriot, he continued with his writings in an abrupt way, emphasizing on rapid and quick actions, not on mellow dramas. His principle was revolved around the fact if society is not good enough to give due respect to its cultural domains and heritage, it should be subjected to change.



The Achievers Journal

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He continued to cater his works among the common people, especially, to young and adolescents, whom he believed, the "potential revolutionist" of a society. Even though he was in all respect a true Scottish, but he was never bias in his approach.

Scott's success in changing the outlook of people is really admirable. He ignited the people all over, to think and believe in them. His success speaks volume for itself, as we may say he is the solitary writer among his contemporaries who sent the message to the common people that " if you have will power to steady him properly, you will overcome all obstacles, only keeping in mind, what he has to do".

Later on, however, authors like *Kenilworth*, *Nigel*, *Woodstock* gave Sir Scott tremendous respect and recognition and showed his potential and grasp in modern English literature. It's now quite obvious, that through the writings of his, fellow country men and women of Scottish isles reached the highest peak which had never been possible up to that time. *Count Robert*, *The Talisman*, and the other novels showed how he was able to merge the romance and rapid prolific actions in the same pot.

CONCLUSION:

Sir Walter Scott was thoroughly impressed by his previous authors in terms of historical cascade of events. Moreover, since the very early days of his career he was a true lover of his native land.



The Achievers Journal

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During the British Empire and the Queen, her dynasty marched along and propagated its wings across the world by invading millions of Ecorse of land.

However, among these life of growing economy and continuous prosperity, Scotland was merely forgotten, as this very land was just a part of British Isles. Not to mention the rich historical heritage and cultural background of Scottish domain was considered as remnants of British Empire.

All these events circulated through the veins of Sir Scott and the concept of patriotism came through his tremendous literary prolificacy. He convinced his country men and women to believe in themselves again. He attracted millions of his readers and admirers and stamped the meanings of patriotism in their minds for their native land. Having said that, he was not at all bias in his approach. He perfectly distinguished between patriotism and narrow provincialism.

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The Achievers Journal

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The Achievers Journal

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