

HISTORICAL MOTIVES IN WALTER SCOTT'S WORKS

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В данной статье рассматриваются особенности ключевых исторических романов и поэм Вальтера Скотта.

Ключевые слова: исторический роман, поэма, Шотландия, Англия, Вальтер Скотт

This article discusses the features of the key historical novels and poems of Walter Scott.

Keywords: historical novel, poem, Scotland, England, Walter Scott.

People have always been interested in history. Winston Churchill once said: 'A nation that forgets its past has no future.' Possibly, one of the most entertaining ways to learn history is reading. Historical novels can easily transfer the

reader to any place and century, to show faraway countries and life of different people.

The historical novel genre originates in the works of Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) who decided to intertwine the real facts and imagination. For two centuries, people all over the world have been reading his books full of great historic battles, famous kings and national heroes, poor peasants and monks, city dwellers and knights [1].

Walter Scott began his literary career as a poet. His first independent work was the romantic ballad “the Eve of St. John” (1800). From this time on, Walter Scott began to study Scottish folklore and history. He published “Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border” (1802–1803), which included both original ballads and revised Scottish legends [3, c. 299–301].

Walter Scott’s new works were based on historical events with a mixture of the real and the fictional, the historical and the artistic, which made his poems and novels so popular among readers [2].

First came “Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field” (1808), a historical romance in verse which tells about the war between the English and Scots in the 16th century. It concludes with the Battle of Flodden in 1513 [5].

In 1810, the poem “the Lady of the Lake” was published. The poem describes the war between the Scots of the lowlands (led by James V) and the highland clans (led by Roderick Dew) [9].

Scott also published two narrative poems, “Rokeby” (1813), set in Yorkshire during the Civil War, and “The Lord of the Isles” (1815), set in Scotland in the 14th century and culminating in the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

Walter Scott's career as a novelist began in 1814 when his first historical novel “Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since” was published. The novel tells of the Jacobite rising (1745), the attempt to restore the Stuart dynasty to the throne. The main character of the novel is Edward Waverley, a young English nobleman who participates in one of the most important events in the history of Great Britain [10].

The novel “Old Mortality” (1816) is considered one of the best works of Walter Scott. The author transfers the reader to Scotland of the 17th century, the period of the Covenanters, featuring their victory at Loudoun Hill and their defeat at Bothwell Bridge in 1679; a final section is set in 1689 at the time of the royalist defeat at Killiecrankie [6].

One of the most significant works of Walter Scott devoted to the history of Scotland is “Rob Roy” (1818). The novel describes the adventures of Francis Osbaldistone, who meets a man named Rob Roy. Rob Roy (Robert Roy MacGregor) was a Scottish national hero, often referred to as the Scottish Robin hood [8].

After 1819, the subject matter of Scott's historical novels has become noticeably broader. Going beyond the borders of Scotland, the writer turns to the ancient times of the history of England and France.

One of the best-known Walter Scott's novels is "Ivanhoe" (1819) tells the story of Wilfred of Ivanhoe who lives in the 12th century in England. The novel shows us the medieval life of the Anglo-Saxon and the Normans, Jews and Christians, noble families and poor people. "Ivanhoe" also influenced the perception of Richard the Lionheart, King John, and Robin Hood [4].

The events of English history are also depicted in such novels as "the Monastery" (1820), "the Abbot" (1820), "Kenilworth" (1821), "Woodstock" (1826).

"Quentin Durward" (1823) is one of Walter Scott's novels with the "continental" historical motives. The story is set in the 15th century and concerns a Scottish archer Quentin Durward in the service of the French King Louis XI. The reader observes the life of the nobles and the intrigues at the court of the French king [7].

We have reviewed several of Walter Scott's key works. If we summarize the events of the poems and novels, we can see a special, peculiar world of the real history and fictional stories, real people's lives and imaginary characters' adventures and feelings, some well-known historic events and specific national traditions. Thus Sir Walter Scott gives us the opportunity to remember the past for better understanding the present and predicting the future.

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