
Sir Walter Scott is traditionally known as one of Scotland’s most influential and prolific authors; his works helped define an era of writers and marked the beginning of a new kind of fiction. While recognized for the quality of his novels, little attention has been paid to his involvement in the illustration and publishing of his works. In his study *Picturing Scotland through the Waverley Novels: Walter Scott and the Origins of the Victorian Illustrated Novel*, Richard J. Hill addresses this omission, arguing that Scott was not only interested in how his novels were being pictorially represented, but that he was also involved in the process of choosing an illustrator or engraver whenever possible.

Unlike what other scholars have suggested, Hill argues that Scott’s interest in who illustrated and engraved his works was both a reaction to an evolving publishing market and representative of his dedication to producing a work that could be used as an accurate document on Scottish culture. Additionally, Hill discusses the contributions made to illustrated fiction by the Waverley novels, showing that Scott and his publishers helped establish this type of media as a profitable and popular form of publication. Particularly well done is his analysis of Edinburgh’s publishing scene and the need to follow or create a market for books with illustrations. Here, Hill reveals the intricate relationship between Scott’s
dedication to historical accuracy, a consumer-driven publishing industry, and new trends in illustrated fiction, all of which were necessary to produce illustrated editions of his novels in Edinburgh. Given the focus of his study, the illustrations Hill included to support his text are essential to this work. While more discussion on the images themselves may have been beneficial, these illustrations do an excellent job of portraying Scott’s overall goal of accurately representing Scottish culture.

Perhaps the most useful and unique aspect of Hill’s work is the ‘Catalogue’ he includes after his conclusion. In it, he details the illustrations produced by or for Scott’s publishers in Edinburgh, which necessarily contains all of the images Scott approved for his publications. Not only is this useful for better understanding Scott’s artist networks, but the Catalogue’s regional focus also helps quantify the success of Edinburgh’s publishing scene. Consequently, Hill’s work is useful for a variety of scholars across a wide array of disciplines, not simply those interested in Walter Scott himself. Historians of mass media and mass-produced art can certainly use Hill’s analysis of the networks that existed between Scott and the kinds of artists he chose to illustrate his novels. Likewise, those interested in literary history will undoubtedly benefit from Hill’s discussions on Scott’s involvement in marketing his work.

Hill periodically emphasizes the link between Scott, the illustrations of his publications, and Scottish identity, claiming, “a misunderstood, ill-researched, and stylized image of a highlander on a fashionable household object perpetuated the inaccuracies and stereotypes of costume and character to which Scotland was being subjected in the creation of a British Cultural identity. Scott wanted an artist, or artists, who would correct this imbalance in the visual market, reflecting his own efforts to do so in the literary market” (p. 113). Although this argument is quite insightful and adds an
additional layer of understanding to Scott’s works, Hill does not discuss Scottish identity or culture itself during this time period. Given the complexity of Scottish national identity at the time and considering Hill suggests that Scott had a central role in its portrayal, including a more detailed definition of what Hill refers to as ‘Scottishness’ would have further contextualized Scott’s importance.

One fascinating aspect of Hill’s assessment of the nineteenth-century publishing world in Edinburgh and London was how gender influenced whose books were illustrated and who the intended reader was. However, Hill does not spend much time on this topic. Although this is not a critical component of his work, this reviewer would like to have seen more discussion on this area of the publication industry within which Walter Scott worked as it may help to further explain the development of the illustrated fiction market and why Scott was ahead of his peers in participating in it.

The contributions *Picturing Scotland through the Waverley Novels* makes to discussions on Walter Scott and the nineteenth century publishing market in Edinburgh are numerous. The most important addition, however, is the insight it lends to placing Scott outside the role of author and establishing him as an important advocate of what he considered to be authentic Scottish history and heritage through the mass-distribution of images and texts mindful of historical accuracy. Hill’s multidisciplinary approach allows Scott to transcend his traditional role as a writer and become a figure deeply involved in the process of portraying Scotland.

*Jacqueline Cannata*  
*University of Guelph*