Chapter 8

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Both Sir Walter Scott and Shri Kanaiyalal Munshi are legendary literary artists who established themselves as writers of historical novels and there is no doubt about the quality of their works. Both of them dealt with political intrigues, machinations, internal and external conflicts, power-struggle etc. in their historical novels with consummate perfection. The plots of both the writers have many similarities. Both of them created works of art without sacrificing the historicity of the events and personalities in the novels. Certain characters in the novels are creations of the writers, but they do not adversely affect the truthfulness or logicality of the action. On the contrary, such characters add artistic charm to the novels.

8.1 Contribution of Scott to the Historical novels of English Literature

It has already been established that Walter Scott was a pioneer in writing historical novels. He was a forerunner of historical novel, which bore him the title Father of Historical Novel. The novelists of the 18th century had already extended their roots in the writing of novel proper when Scott came on the stage with a novel of a different genre. The novelists of the century had been content to paint men and women of present times; until the wonderful series of Waverley novels appeared.
Scott proved himself to be a fantastic writer, as he was able to churn out richly
descriptive prose due to his deep skill for character creation. The worlds he
recreates for his readers are fully functional and believable. He was influenced
by the writing of Cervantes, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Burns and many of the old,
classic medieval tales such as Beowulf.

Though a wide variety of novels were already written till the advent of Scott,
yet, as regards the genre of historical novel, Walter Scott deserves the credit
of pioneering it and making it popular among the reading public. By fiction-
alisng history and reinventing characters, Scott left an indelible impression on
the minds of the readers. He moved from the medieval ethos of chivalry to the
mercantile ethos of modern times. The historical novel mentored and de-
veloped by Scott is an invaluable contribution to English literature. After his first
series of Waverley Novels, Scott was hailed by the readers to such an extent
that in spite of faults in his writing, he was accepted and recognized as a leading
novelist of his times. Scott was more in tune with Victorian society, as by infus-
ing spiritual values and strong moral tone, he appealed to the Victorian ideals.
His semi-mythical tales helped fulfill a need for nostalgia amongst the public
as they strove to deal with the rapid industrialization and urbanization that was
transforming society and generating unprecedented societal problems. The ide-
als and beliefs in his novels reflected the mood of the society in which Scott was
living. Scott was very meticulous in looking up old records and he was draw-
ing upon his collection of legend, tradition, history and poetry that he had been
gathering for forty years. With his sharp and poignant memory, Scott used to
produce the material as per his will with incredible accuracy.

His novels cover a broad range of action that are associated with private in-
terests rather than concerned with public interests. Except the love story of Lucy
Ashton and Edgar Ravenswood of The Bride of Lammermoor, the love depicted
among the partners in other novels of Scott is generally weak and pallid. The
love story between Effie Deans and George Staunton in The Heart of Midloth-
ian; between Ivanhoe and Rowena in Ivanhoe & between Amy Robsart and the
Earl of Leicester in Kenilworth do not attain the culmination; there is no gush of
emotions between the lovers and the focus of Scott is only on the presentation
of strife and the enmity among political parties of the times. Instead of love, it is
the passion and dissension of parties that are portrayed splendidly.
Chivalrous to women, Scott has given the readers, a galaxy of heroines: Jeanie Deans, Lucy Ashton, Rebecca, Amy Robsart and a host of others belonging to different ages. As an aristocratic loyalist, he has painted great gallery of royalties, in which are to be found Richard Coeur de Lion and his brother John, James I of England, Queen Elizabeth and many others. It is among his chief literary virtue that he blends fact and fiction in his novels in such an artistic way that it gives a feeling of enormous contentment to the readers. Scott, through his practical mind and his awareness of the rudimentary facts of life, has given a verisimilitude of characters through his novels. The past which appeared to be a dismal ground of dead heroes turned out to be vibrant and charged terrain with a multitude of men and women in the novels of Scott. Scott endeavoured to introduce imaginary characters along with the historical characters and imparted a fictional touch to the historical novel. Vivid description of nature, deeds of bravery and valour and the presentation of the sublime world of romance make the novels of Scott endearing and catchy. The exchange of dialogues between Lucy Ashton and the Master of Ravenswood; between Amy Robsart and Leicester; and between Effie Deans and George Staunton mark the ingeniousness of Scott's art of handling romance. The vivacity of expression, sharp and witty dialogues and the use of native dialect put into the mouth of inferior characters like Caleb Balderstone, Wamba and Gurth is noticeable in the novels written by Walter Scott.

It was Scott who made the scene an essential element of his novel. Scott had a great affection and deep love for Scotland. His novels breathe the atmosphere of Scotland and feel the presence of beautiful natural objects of the place. The place chosen by Scott is so appropriate that the action seems almost to be the result of the natural environment. It is evident in the incident of Ivanhoe in which Ivanhoe lies wounded raging at his helplessness, while the gentle Rebecca alternately hides and reveals her love as she describes the horrible assault on the castle, which goes on beneath her window. Ivanhoe's thoughts are all on the battle; Rebecca's on the man she loves; and both are natural, and both are exactly what is expected under the circumstances. This fascinating example reveals the fact that Scott tried to preserve perfect harmony between the scene and action.

Scott's success as a novelist led to great haste in the composition of his stories. His plots were constructed hurriedly, carelessly and finished somehow.
As for his style, it is spacious and ornate, but he has paid little attention to rhythm and melody. His sentences are shapelessly written at various places. The same haste is observed in his handling of characters which finish weakly after they have begun strongly. An outstanding example of this is Mike Lambourne in Kenilworth. Even though, Scott’s works are the products of continual exercising of the imagination yet they are not given the careful labour which alone assures perfection. A curious observation regarding Scott’s style of writing is his overuse of words- unhappy and unfortunate in his novels. In The Heart of Midlothian, Scott has used the word unhappy 80 times; in The Bride of Lammermoor, 19 times, in Ivanhoe, 29 times and in Kenilworth, 53 times. Similarly the use of the word unfortunate is 77 times in The Heart of Midlothian, 18 times in The Bride, 20 times in Ivanhoe, and 37 times in Kenilworth.

8.2 Contribution of Munshi to the Historical Novels of Gujarati Literature

Munshi proved himself to be a majestic and brilliant story-teller in the depiction of historical events in his novels. Munshi did not stick to the historical incidents as they occurred in the past, as his purpose in writing novels was not to retell the history. He always concentrated on the artistic delivering of the facts, the foundation on which he built the plot of his novels. His love for Indian culture is manifested through his novels. He emphasized the need to acknowledge the majesty of Indian culture and recognize the values laid by it. His novels fused together Eastern values and Western ideologies. He followed the French novelist, Alexandre Dumas in his art as a story teller whereas Sir Walter Scott, the English novelist, provided a model for his historical novels. Munshi’s artistic achievement is the result of his spontaneity and his objective of writing was unrestricted self expression rather than critical evaluation.

His versatility of characters, both historical and imaginary is unparalleled. His characters are basically the projections of his own self and they reflect his strength, weakness and aspirations. A rare dynamism and indefatigable zeal in portraying heterogeneous characters blended with an amplitude of his imagination, is observed in his novels. It is noteworthy that no field of human endeavour was left untouched by the bounty of his literary ingeniousness. He could leave
an indelible impression on the readers to such an extent that the readers get simply carried away with the incessant flow of his thoughts. It is primarily Munshi's absolute and total commitment and his invaluable gift of narration that enabled him to produce the positive effect of his novels on his readers. At times, Munshi gets extremely personal and puts his own self in the portrayal of his characters.

Munshi's love for Gujarat is so intense that he has put his heart and soul in describing various provinces and regions of Gujarat in his historical novels. Kak's surge of emotions for Manjari; Munjal Mehta's fondness for Minaldevi; Tribhu-vanpal's bonding with Prasanna; Ra'Khengar's love for Ranakdevi; Devprasad's fondness for his wife Hansadevi; King Jayadev's infatuation for Ranakdevi; Vag Bhatt's attraction for Samarath and Munjal's feeling of remorse for the injustice done by him to his wife Fulkunwar- are all the instances of Munshi's extraordinary skill of narration. Munshi has employed in his novels, the language that is intelligible to the readers of all classes. The description of Bhimdev's gush of emotions in Jaya Somnath, at the sight of naked Chaula, is so vivid that Munshi's own romantic temperament is fully revealed. His writings are based on the principle Art for Art's sake; his sole purpose behind writing the novels is to present the historical facts in an interesting manner.

Lively characters, dramatic narration of historical events, witty dialogues, clarity of thoughts, eloquent style mingled with powerful squirt of emotions - are the key factors that elevate the novels of Munshi to great heights. But Munshi's overpowering self love thwarted him from envisaging those attributes of his characters' inner selves that had no association with his own psyche. His characters emerge as vibrant personalities but ultimately surrender to their author's will. A conspicuous example of it is Manjari's character of Rajadhira. The incident of Kak's arrival at the fort of Bhrugukacchha when his wife Manjari is nearing her death and consequently her death in Kak's arms, evokes disgust in the minds of readers rather than cathartic feeling. Manjari dies of hunger and thirst, but the very fact that Ambad Mehta and Manibhadra are survived in the same conditions, is an event that the reader is unable to appreciate. Manjari's death appears unwarranted and puts an end to the Shanta rasa of the novel. Similarly Ranakdevi's death in Rajadhira and her becoming sati appears merciless. The karun rasa that Munshi wishes to depict through this incident fails in his motive, as the event instead of evoking pity turns out to be melodramatic. Also the depiction of love between Samarath and Vahad Mehta in Rajadhira
provides *comic relief* rather than aesthetic pleasure to the readers.

In *Jaya Somnath* too, Munshi has shown the transformation of Chaula from Bhimdev's beloved to Lord Shiva's *dasiso* drastically that the reader finds it difficult to grab the situation in the right perspective. Chaula's husband Bhimdev is kept completely ignorant of Chaula's fluctuating psychology and therefore Chaula's last dance in front of Lord Somnath and her death evokes a feeling of anger and deceit in him rather than grief due to her demise. The character of Chaula painted by Munshi in *Jaya Somnath* is completely different from the historical character Chaula. Munshi never intended to rewrite history and make the past live by forcing his historical imagination to work on the material already explored by the antiquarian and the historians. It is amazing that in spite of having good knowledge about history, Munshi's novels do not create a true picture of the past. He takes immense liberties with history as he is inspired by the true visions of human grandeur and writes what touches his own heart. His innovative style of writing historical novels proved to be a great source of inspiration for his contemporaries as well as his successors. Munshi's contribution to the genre of historical novel has been so ingenious that he has won the hearts of many and has fascinated an enormous mass of readers throughout India.

### 8.3 Comparison Between the Contribution of Scott and Munshi to Their Respective Literatures

Sir Walter Scott and Shri Kanaiyalal Munshi belong to two different eras, two different countries and two different cultures, yet a great similarity between the two is evident in their writings. Both are influenced by the revolutions that ensued during their times; Scott was persuaded by the French Revolution that occurred in 1789, a period of radical social and political upheaval in France. On the other hand, Kanaiyalal Munshi's writings were affected to a great extent by the Indian national movement for independence. Both the novelists strove in mastering the writing of historical novels which in turn bore them rich fruits. Both were honoured with the title of *Father of Historical Novels* in their respective fields of literature; Scott in English and Munshi in Gujarati literature.

A great semblance is visible between Scott and Munshi in their deep affection
towards the soil of their native lands. In their childhood, both were interested in visiting castles, historical places, remnants of forts and the ruins of the cities. An inherent liking for listening to legendary tales, historical incidents and stories from the elders of their houses, is found in both the novelists. It is significant that Munshi was highly fascinated by the literature of England; he was a prolific and ardent reader of Scott, Hugo, Cervantes and others. He was highly influenced by the writings of Walter Scott; expresses his indebtedness towards him, which indisputably finds expression in his own novels. Scott, from his early childhood was drawn towards the historical tales which he listened from the mouth of his grandmother. He had a penetrating interest in knowing the happenings of the past ages that drew him towards reading all the books that came into his hands. Scott accumulated a huge lot of information regarding the past centuries and moulded them into novels and presented to the world in the shape of historical novels.

The region in which the novels of Scott and Munshi are set, also finds a perplexing similarity. Where the focus of Scott's novels is Scotland and England; Munshi's locale of his novels is Gujarat, his birth place. Munshi incessantly talks about the glory of Gujarat and advocates to protect the asmita of Gujarat, whereas Scott is fascinated by the beauty of Scotland, the region of his birth place and upbringing. A strong feeling of patriotism and pride for the motherland governs the novels of Scott and Munshi.

Though Scott's novels are based on history of England, France and Germany, yet his best novels are the ones which are preoccupied with the history of Scotland. Scott's reputation as a novelist stand on his Scotch novels - the novels that deal with Scottish history and manners. Waverley, Guy Mancering, The Antiquary, Old Mortality, The Heart of Midlothian, Rob Roy, The Bride of Lammermoor, A Legend of Montrose and Redgauntlet constitute Scott's list of masterpieces. The probable reason for this is Scott's more familiarity and affinity with the regions of Scotland compared to the other regions of the continent. On the other hand, Munshi's novels reveal a great influence of the French novelist Alexandre Dumas in his novels, especially in the trilogy consisting of Patan-ni-Prabhuta, Gujarat-no-Nath and Rajadhiraj. The amalgamation of French culture and Gujarati culture finds expression in the novels of Munshi. But the French influence recedes to a considerable extent in Jaya Somnath which Munshi writes after a gap of fifteen years.
Where Scott wrote only historical novels; Munshi tried his hand at writing social novels, autobiographical novels, essays, letters and other non-fictional works thereby contributing immensely to Gujarati literature. Scott established himself as a great poet and proved his share in taking English poetry to great heights. It was only after the advent of Lord Byron that he shifted to writing novels from poetry, the form with which he was very much at ease. As against Scott, Munshi established his supremacy in writing fictional and non-fictional works, but except some Sanskrit shlokas in his novels, he has not written poetry of any order.

Another strong similarity between two literary giants - Scott and Munshi is an artistic fusion of history and romance in their novels along with the manifestation of various rasas in their narratives. The novels of both the novelists are dominated by Veer rasa, Shringar rasa, Adbhut rasa and Karuna rasa. The brave deeds of Ivanhoe and the Master of Ravenswood in The Bride of Lammermoor depict Veer rasa; the description of Rowena's beauty in Ivanhoe and the conversation between Lucy and the Master of Ravenswood when both decide to marry each other in the novel The Bride of Lammermoor represent Shringar rasa; the character of Madge Wildfire in The Heart of Midlothian and Ulrica in Ivanhoe are indicative of Adbhut rasa whereas the fatal attack by Lucy on her bridegroom Bucklaw in The Bride of Lammermoor and Amy Robsart's death at the hands of Varney in the novel Kenilworth illustrates Karuna rasa. Similarly Munshi's novels are also replete with various rasas. King Jayadev and Kak's deeds of bravery in Gujarat-no-Nath and Bhimdev's valour in Jaya Somnath generate Veer rasa; Prasanna's mischiefs with Tribhuvanpal in Patan-ni-Prabhuta; the description of Manjari's fascinating beauty in Gujarat-no-Nath and the description of naked Chaula's beauty in Jaya Somnath are the examples of Shringar rasa. Moreover, the first dance by Chaula in front of Lord Somnath in the novel Jaya Somnath reveal Adbhut rasa whereas Ranakdevi's jauhar and her becoming Sati with the head of her dead husband in her lap in Rajadhíraj and Chaula's last dance as the Queen of King Bhimdev performed in front of Lord Somnath to woo Lord Somnath and her subsequent death in Jaya Somnath bring out Karuna rasa in the novel.

It is evident in the novels of both - Scott and Munshi that their purpose in writing novels was to fictionalize history and not to project the real historical incidents through their novels. The combination of historical imagination and
anachronism is the chief feature observed in the novels of both the novelists. Moreover the expertise in the unison of the narration of historical incidents and the imaginative incidents in the novels elevates both the novelists to such great heights that the precedents set by them are followed by many contemporary writers of their respective ages.

While analyzing the novels in the light of *New Historicism*, an idea advocated by Greenblatt, an American critic, it is evident that the novels of Scott and Munshi are influenced by the period in which they were written. The influence of the social sphere in which the novelists thrived and the books and theories that influenced them mark their presence in their novels. The writings of Scott and Munshi reveal the social background, cultural milieu and prevailing ideas of the times in which they wrote the novels. Scott recreated for the nineteenth century the real historical figures and brought them to life in the turmoil of their times by fictionalizing history and historicizing fiction. Similarly Munshi revealed the glory of Gujarat and its *asmita* in the twentieth century by fictionalizing history and weaving historical incidents of the past. The focus of both the novelists was on the revelation of the elemental facts of life, the large and ripe experience of a man, the immense variety of people and the essential homogeneousness of human nature. Moreover the presentation of odd and eccentric characters like Madge Wildfire, Lucy Ashton, Ulrica, Alasco and Whistler by Scott whereas Hansa, Ranakdevi, Shivarashi, Kundla and Chaula by Munshi depict the basic tantrums of human behaviour discernible in all the human beings in a lesser or higher degree.

Scott took an unusual interest in the portrayal of lowly characters drawn from humble background. The peasants, shop-keepers, house wives and servants painted by Scott impart an artistic touch to his novels. Characters of peagent boy, Wayland Smith and Giles Gosling of *Kenilworth* fall into this category. Scott's vast stores of legendary and historical information created a great variety of characters - whimsical, noble, shrewd, romantic and ludicrous. Knowing his own peasantry intimately, Scott makes the reader feel that his Jeanie Deans of *The Heart of Midlothian* is no creation of other times, but is a figure of Scotland in modern dress of his own day. Similarly, Munshi also introduced a multitude of characters belonging to both upper and lower classes of society in his novels. Both the writers could attract a great lot of readers since they took precaution that their novels do not become morose, dull and boring. A feeling
of self respect, nationalism and individual responsibility towards society reign supreme in the novels of Scott and Munshi. Endowed with the creative energy of imagination, Scott and Munshi made the readers feel the glamour of places and the actuality of the past. They could improvise a host of fantastic variations in their writing and welded together the past and present in a homogeneous whole. They evolved the countless customs and traditions of the society and reconstructed the bustling vigour of the past ages. Their sense of beauty was enough to kindle their imagination which when associated with their historical sensibility, gave enriching results in the form of historical novels.

Another startling similarity in the novels of Scott and Munshi is their assertion of male dominating society through their novels. Scott's women characters except Jeanie Deans of *The Heart of Midlothian* accept the authority of men over them. Effie Deans of *The Heart of Midlothian*; Lucy Ashton of *The Bride of Lammermoor*; Rowena; and Rebecca of *Ivanhoe* and Amy Robsart of *Kenilworth* are portrayed as submissive women acting in accordance with the wishes of their male counterparts. On the other hand, Munshi imparts a dignified status to women in his novels. Munshi's portrayal of the Queen Minaldevi in the trilogy as authoritative, proud and dignified woman; description of Prasanna of *Patan-ni-Prabhuta* and Ranakdevi of *Rajadhiraj* as dominating women reveal Munshi's chivalrous attitude. But Munshi's women, however, dominating and powerful they are, they have to finally surrender themselves to men. The glaring examples that supports this contention are the Queen Minaldevi's surrender to Munjal in *Patan-ni-Prabhuta*; Manjari's acceptance of Kak's superiority in *Gujarat-no-Nath* and Chaula's surrendering herself to King Bhimdev and accepting him as her husband, though finally she dances till death in front of Lord Somnath in Prabhas.

As regards women characters, Munshi never hesitated to describe the beauty of his heroines freely and unhesitatingly. Scott on the other hand could not succeed in portraying the finer elements of women and whenever he attempted to deal with romantic or sexual love, he could not lay his inhibited heart bare to the readers. The true passion is alien to Scott as he writes as a hard headed, common-sense professional man whose values are those of a settled society traditionally ordained. He accepts the world, facing life squarely and without illusions, bounded willingly by the restraints imposed by society upon the individual. Therefore, Scott, in a sharp contrast to Munshi, could be termed as anti-romantic
novelist, since he is not at ease while expressing the finer emotions of a human being.

The manners and customs of the society prevalent during the times cited in the novels have been described with a great vigour by Scott and Munshi. Moreover the supernatural element is also introduced with great artistry by both the novelists. Scott's portrayal of the legend associated with the Mermaid fountain in The Bride of Lammermoor and Munshi's description of Hingraj Chachar in Rajadhiraj depict the inclination of people towards supernatural forces. The blind faith prevalent during the times of both Scott and Munshi has been vividly presented by both the artists. The natural events presented in the novel are suggestive of actions of protagonists in future. Also an association of Nature and human action is strongly observed in the novels of Scott and Munshi. The Gothic features such as descriptions of ghosts, omens and prophecies are recurrent in the novels of Scott. In Munshi’s novels too, the hallucinations and supernatural element reign supreme.

As regards the narrative skill of Scott, he wanted to bring before the public Scotch men and women speaking the Scotch dialect amid Scotch scenes. His novels are full of Scotch scenes - drinking bouts of Scotch lairds and barristers, hunting and fishing excursions, shooting matches, the stagnant village and its vulgar rabble, the inn, the blacksmith’s shop, the school-house, and the peasant’s cottage. Most important of all, Scott enjoyed people. They live and move in his novel with a gusto that reminds the readers of Falstaff of Shakespeare’s drama Henry IV, Part I and II. His gift for dialogue was tremendous, and his use of the Scottish dialect to give it authenticity and conviction is equalled by few Scottish novelists. But since Scott wrote in haste, his style has not that subtle adjustment of words and phrases found in the great masters of English prose.

Munshi’s noteworthy contribution to Gujarati literature is in the matter of the use of colloquial language that he employed in his novels. He made use of sophisticated Gujarati language spoken by the educated and literate class of Gujarat. Along with the language of everyday use, he also employed regional peculiarities of the spoken Gujarati in cities like Surat, Broach and Mumbai, with which he was conversant.

The narrative style of Scott is extremely marvellous and his descriptions in the novels are exuberantly rich in detail and arrangement. The magnificence
of the antique places and extravagant lavishing of material splendour appeal to the artistic sensibility of the reader. A splendid description of the antiquarian details including descriptions of dress, weapons and armour add to a rich tapestry of the novel. A feeling for the culture and aspirations of the people of the Lowlands and the intense awareness of a Scottish national tradition is a positive aspect of Scott's novels. It is only when Scott deviates from being Scottish and turns towards cosmopolitanism that his weaknesses emerge. Munshi also endeavours to recreate the splendour and magnificence of Gurjar Desh against the backdrop of political and cultural currents prevailing in Gujarat of the times. Munshi's style of writing is so evocative and energetic that it leaves an indelible impression on the minds of the readers. Also the dramatic technique employed by Munshi makes his novels fascinating and dynamic. The antiquarian interests of Scott and Munshi at times overburden the narrative but their spontaneity and their basic instinct for what is picturesque and dramatic, leaves on the minds of the readers, an impression of lasting vitality.

In spite of the skilled artistry in presenting rich historical novels, both the novelists lack in analysing the processes happening in the psyche of the characters. With the exception of few characters, most of the characters of Scott and Munshi are portrayed externally and no Catharsis is experienced leaving the reader in a flux situation. In spite of the superficial flaws in form the writers do not detract in any way from the deep merits of their works. Their novels are an epoch-making phenomenon in their own times and they retain their original impact on readers despite their lapses. From a literary point of view, one may agree that the novels are faulty enough, but it is necessary to remember that they were written to impart delight to the readers and they have certainly succeeded in their motives. Among the varied elements brought together in the works of Scott and Munshi, it is indeed the realism which indisputably, after the history proves the supreme force of attraction. It could thus be aptly concluded that both the historical novelists are of high order and their contribution in the fields of English and Gujarati literature respectively is exemplary. Both share many similarities, though they differ wholly at some places. Yet it is remarkable that in spite of representing and belonging to two diverse cultures, the similarities witnessed in Scott and Munshi is astonishing. The novels they created shows how national character, national dialect and national characteristics merge together to form historical novel of substantive interest.