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## **THE HISTORICAL NOVEL RECONSIDERED: THE CASE OF GEORGE ELIOT'S ROMOLA**

### **Abstract:**

Although George Eliot is recognized as a seminal author of the XIX century English realism, *Romola*, her fourth novel, is not usually remembered amongst her most relevant works. Several contemporary and even more recent critics have considered it a failure and dismissed its XV century Italian background and accumulation of historical detail as irrelevant to the XIX century English novel. However, it has often been said that, generally speaking, all of George Eliot's novels are historical because all of them are set in a particular place and time, the social and political circumstances of which are of central importance to the lives of the characters and to the developments of the plot. The present work aims at analyzing *Romola* as George Eliot's attempt of revitalizing and modernizing the form of the historical novel. The paper traces a line of continuation and development from the XVIII century realistic novel to the rise of historical fiction with Walter Scott to Eliot's reevaluation of the form in *Romola*. By the end, it is expected that the paper is able to establish that, in *Romola*, George Eliot takes on the tradition founded by Walter Scott and remodels it according to her unfolding awareness of the new historical and artistic tendencies that would later be characteristic of Modernist fiction.

### **Keywords:**

George Eliot, *Romola*, Historical Novel