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Scotland and the novel

Scottish fiction, meaning at once fiction produced in Scotland and fiction that made Scotland its topic, became one of the leading genres of European Romanticism in the decade after Waterloo. Its distinctive forms, the three-volume historical novel, magazine tale and fictitious regional memoir, were the product and fuel of a spectacular Edinburgh publishing boom in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, which was also characterized by innovations in the periodical genres of quarterly review and monthly magazine. The proportion of British fiction titles produced in Scotland rose steeply from a mere 0.5 percent in the first decade of the century to 4.4 percent in the 1810s and then to 12 percent in the 1820s, reaching 15 percent, or 54 out of 359 titles, in the peak years of 1822–5.¹ Following a nationwide financial crash in 1826, booksellers cut back the production of new novels, especially in Scotland, and invested instead in miscellanies, serials, reprints, and the genres of “useful knowledge.” “Our publishers of the proud northern metropolis seem to have lost all pluck since the lamented death of their great father, Mr Constable,” remarked *Fraser’s Magazine* in 1830: “the vaunted Modern Athens is fast dwindling away into a mere spelling-book and primer manufactory.”²

The meteoric career of Scottish fiction, as everyone at the time acknowledged, traced the career of an individual author, Walter Scott. The publication of *Waverley* in the summer of 1814 accelerated a modest rate of growth into a regional bonanza. The ruin of Scott and his principal publisher, Archibald Constable, in the 1826 crash precipitated a general decline of Scottish fiction, with little of note appearing after Scott’s death in 1832. Meanwhile, the great series of *Waverley Novels* (as they came to be called) established the major trends in British Romantic fiction publishing: the displacement of poetry from the summit of the genre system by the novel, the heightened formal definition of the novel, the professionalization of production and marketing, the standardization of format for new works (three volumes, post-octavo, 3 rs./6d. the set), and even a masculine takeover

of what had hitherto been characterized as a feminine kind of writing.³ The formal predominance of Scott's novels, shaping as they were shaped by the infrastructures of Regency-era literary production and reception, accompanied the commercial predominance recently analysed by William St Clair. Scott sold more copies of his novels "than all the other novelists of the time put together."⁴ The unprecedented print-runs of new titles such as *Rob Roy* (1818, 10,000 copies) were followed not just by reprints but by reissues in different formats, culminating in the publishing innovation of Scott's last years, the appearance of all his novels (followed, posthumously, by his other works) in a uniform edition corrected and with new introductions and notes by the author in a series of five-shilling monthly "small octavo" volumes, the so-called "Magnum Opus" edition (1829–33). "Scott and his partners achieved an ownership of the whole literary production and distribution process from author to reader, controlling or influencing the initial choice of subjects, the writing of the texts, the editing, the publishing, and the printing of the books, the reviewing in the local literary press, [and] the adaptations for the theatre," comments St Clair, with slight hyperbole.⁵ "We have been now, for some years, inundated with showers of Scotch novels, thicker than the snow you see falling," complains the English narrator of Sarah Green's satire *Scotch Novel Reading* (1824). If the works of the "Great Unknown" seemed ubiquitous, their famous author's insistence on formal anonymity gave that ubiquity an uncanny cast, as though commercial mass-production were a kind of haunting. Scott's own preface to *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1821) stages an encounter with "the Eidolon, or Representation, of the Author of Waverley" in the inner labyrinth of Constable's shop: this phantasm, at once weird and humdrum, defends his right to be considered "a productive labourer" whose "bales of books" are as "profitable [a] part of the public stock" as "the goods of any other manufacture."

The characterization of a "close vertical and horizontal concentration of media ownership"⁶ on the part of Scott and his associates suggests an aesthetic and ideological as well as commercial monopoly that could be expected to have stifled rival projects, and some commentators have cast Scott's impact on the Romantic novel in such terms. This essay considers the antithetical claim, that Scott's massive success encouraged rather than deterred the production of alternative forms of Scottish fiction. The experimental richness of Scott's novels – by no means confined to the first in the series – opened up the literary field, provoking further innovations, quite as much as their industrial predominance may have closed other possibilities down. The demand stimulated by the Waverley Novels made room for a proliferation of Scottish fiction by other hands, some of which consisted of more or less mechanical imitations (Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's

Lochandhu: A Tale of the Eighteenth Century, 1824, and *The Wolfe of Badenoch: A Historical Romance of the Fourteenth Century*, 1827), and some of which made claims to a rival originality. The most notable authors of “secondary Scottish novels” (in Francis Jeffrey’s slighting phrase⁷) were James Hogg, John Galt, Susan Edmonstone Ferrier, John Gibson Lockhart, John Wilson, and Christian Isobel Johnstone: all of whom were associated, at one time or another, with the publisher who arose to challenge Constable’s ascendancy in the postwar Edinburgh book trade, William Blackwood. (Two other novelists, Elizabeth Hamilton and Mary Brunton, produced Scottish variants of the Irish “national tale” before the appearance of *Waverley*.)

Following a temporary takeover of Scott from Constable (with the first series of *Tales of My Landlord*, 1816), Blackwood launched *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817 as a rival to Constable’s brace of Whig periodicals, and began publishing book-length works of fiction (Ferrier’s *Marriage*, Hogg’s *Brownie of Bodsbeck*) the following year. Blackwood went on to become the most prolific publisher of novels and tales – some of which first appeared in his magazine – in Scotland in the 1820s. Modern critics have described a Blackwoodian school of Scottish Romantic fiction in competition with Scott’s, flourishing in the years when Scott himself forsook the making of modern Scotland for more exotic matter (after *Ivanhoe*, 1820). It typically consisted of comic and sentimental depictions of traditional, rural or small-town settings and manners, or of a materialist rather than supernatural mutation of Gothic exploring states of extreme sensation.⁸ In the early 1820s Hogg and Galt emerged as the most original authors of Scottish prose fiction next to Scott, masters of the distinctive genres developed in the Blackwood orbit, regional tale and fictional autobiography. Blackwoodian regionalism and “tales of terror” would shape English-language fiction of the 1830s and 40s, from Dickens and the Brontës to Poe, while the historical novel remained the prestigious form of the novel as such in Britain in the decade or so following Scott’s death.

Anglo-Irish writers had developed the national tale, a fiction addressing the internal formation of modern Britain upon the political and cultural absorption of its “Celtic fringe,” in the decade or so before *Waverley*. Nevertheless it was Scott who established the “classical form of the historical novel” (as Georg Lukács defined it in *The Historical Novel*) as not just a national but a planetary genre. Across continental Europe (Alexander Pushkin to Alessandro Manzoni), from North America to the Indian subcontinent, distinctively colonial and anticolonial variants of Scott’s national historical novel took root through the nineteenth century. Nor was Scott alone in reconstituting Scottish literature as a worldwide medium, coterminous with the commercial and administrative networks of empire. *Blackwood’s* capitalized on its distribution

throughout the settler colonies to address specifically colonial concerns and to redefine the miscellany as a quintessentially imperial genre.⁹

Contemporary reviewers noted this spectacular if belated rise of Scottish fiction. The novel, observed one, has assumed the role of classical epic to represent “the different modes of national existence . . . in modern times.”¹⁰ Another, writing the same year (1819), summed up what he understood to be the “important change” that had taken place “within these few years in the general taste and literature of Scotland”: in a strange reversal of “the usual progress of the human mind,” the “grave and metaphysical propensities of our countrymen” have succumbed to a “rage for works of fancy.”¹¹ The reviewer characterizes a shift from the curriculum-based genres of the so-called Scottish Enlightenment – moral philosophy, the human and natural sciences – to the bookseller’s genres of periodicals and fiction that flourished in Edinburgh after 1800. The shift tracks a general devolution of Scottish literary production from the academic infrastructure of the Enlightenment disciplines to the recognizably nineteenth-century conditions of an industrializing literary marketplace. Politics hastened if it did not by itself drive the change. The Anti-Jacobin reaction of the mid-1790s broke up the “Moderate” Whig consensus that had supplied the ideological medium of Enlightenment, as Pitt’s Tory government tightened its regional monopoly over Scottish patronage and institutions. The founding of *The Edinburgh Review* in 1802, during the “thaw” of the Peace of Amiens, marks a watershed. Constable’s pro-Reform quarterly renewed the liberal projects of Enlightenment – shut out from the universities – by relocating them in the marketplace. In turn, the *Edinburgh Review* dignified the commercial mode of periodical publication not only with the philosophical themes of Enlightenment (social history, political economy) but with its civic and professional ethos. Constable’s high fees and formal anonymity guaranteed his authors’ claim on professional status, underwriting the *Edinburgh Review*’s rhetorical claim on a judicial authority over the modern commercial public sphere. Scott himself, trained in Enlightenment institutions and principles and (indeed) a schoolfellow of its editors, contributed to the early numbers of the *Edinburgh Review*. The transformation of the cultural status of British fiction effected by *Waverley* and its successors, as Ina Ferris has shown, followed Scott’s dignifying investment of the novel, the commercial genre *par excellence*, with the tropes of “literary authority” established in the *Edinburgh Review* – the professionalized figure of an anonymous author as well as the Enlightenment discourse of philosophical history.¹²

Literary authority, as Ferris also argues, relied on a hierarchical association of genre and gender: history books and quarterly review essays were written and read by men, while fiction was produced and consumed by

women. Scott's cultural elevation of the novel claimed what had hitherto been depreciated as a feminine commodity for a masculine domain of intellectual work. The strong traditions of British fiction in the first decade of the century had been shaped by women authors, including the dozen or so novels published in Scotland before *Waverley*, the most notable of which were Elizabeth Hamilton's *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808) and Mary Brunton's *Self-Control* (1811). (Brunton's *Discipline* appeared five months after *Waverley*, at the end of 1814). Reviewers placed these works in a line of moral-reformist domestic fiction running from Frances Burney through Maria Edgeworth, who gave the form its "national" (Irish) development, and Hannah More, who infused it with an evangelical didacticism. Hamilton and Brunton draw on Edgeworth for their moralizing depictions of Scottish "national character," ranging from its metonymic characterization as a residual dirt that must be cleaned up in order for the regional society to prosper (*Cottagers of Glenburnie*), to a Romantic investment in the Celtic Highlands as source of a primitive virtue aloof from metropolitan depravity (*Discipline*).

Scott himself recognized a feminine tradition of domestic fiction that he distinguished from his own, and hailed Susan Ferrier as the Scots counterpart of Edgeworth in Ireland and Jane Austen in England. Ferrier admired Hamilton and Brunton (as well as More, Edgeworth, and Austen), and began writing *Marriage* under their influence in 1810. Her novels rehearse a fruitful (Edgeworthian) ambivalence, as they counterpoise Scotch squalor and metropolitan corruption (in *Marriage*) and yearn for a moral authenticity that may inhere in old-fashioned national character (such as Uncle Adam, in Ferrier's *The Inheritance*, 1824). Ferrier remained the only notable practitioner of domestic fiction in Scotland after 1814. (Brunton died in childbed in 1818, leaving the didactic fragment *Emmeline*.) The only other Scottish Romantic woman novelist to enjoy significant literary success, Christian Johnstone, kept her distance from the tradition: mocking it by literalizing it, in a quasi-fictional guide to domestic economy (*The Cook and Housewife's Manual*, 1826), or combining the depiction of Scottish manners with the more dissident Irish mutations of the national tale by Sydney Owenson and Charles Robert Maturin (in Johnstone's *Clan-Albin*, 1815, and *Elizabeth de Bruce*, 1827).

The 1820s *Blackwood's Magazine* series *Noctes Ambrosianae* (co-authored by Wilson, Lockhart, and others) exhibits the gendered cast of Edinburgh literary life in the guise of a private party at a tavern, a nostalgic apotheosis of the clubs and societies that incubated masculine literacy in Enlightenment Scotland. The *Noctes* offers the symposium of Tory good fellows as a fantastic masquerade of the commercial and patronage systems of the

Scottish culture industry. Conversation unfolds through a succession of whisky-fueled feats of boasting, brawling, singing, and tale-telling: a carnivalesque rebuke to the “Whig junta” of the *Edinburgh Review*. The rarity of female voices at the feast glosses the comparative tenuousness of the feminine tradition of domestic fiction in Scotland. Garside and Schöwerling show that the correlation between a net rise in novel production and a proportional decline in female authorship in the decade up to 1825 was even stronger in Scotland than in Great Britain at large. Their statistics confirm recent accounts of the rhetorical accession of masculine “history” over feminine “romance” in the critical reception of Scott’s novels, and those novels’ internal allegories of a male appropriation of archaic female powers.¹³

Not just Scott’s example, then, but the patronizing and professionalizing ethos that framed it, the larger cultural legacy of the Scottish Enlightenment, contributed to a relative exclusion of women authors from the literary boom in postwar Edinburgh. Brunton and Ferrier, gifted as they were, followed the respectable path of female authorship mapped in the early career of Burney, eschewing public visibility and professional status. Johnstone, the most versatile of the women writers, presents the contrasting case of a successful professional career. Johnstone’s forays into prose fiction were framed by her journalistic experience, first at the *Inverness Courier* (1812–26) and later (from 1832) at a succession of Edinburgh Radical magazines. Standing behind the name of her husband, master printer John Johnstone, she played an editorial role as well as that of main contributor. When *Elizabeth de Bruce* did not meet with the anticipated success, Johnstone turned from writing novels to the magazine genres of tale, essay, and review, and achieved her most influential literary work (after 1834) at *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine*. Nor, however, were male authors more successful when it came to sustaining a professional literary career: Scott’s ruin, hastened by reckless expenditure on his country estate at Abbotsford, is shadowed by his protégé Hogg’s perpetual struggle with insolvency, while Galt’s adventures included colony-building in Upper Canada and a spell in debtors’ prison. Wilson and Lockhart settled into literary careers as the editors of *Blackwood’s* and the *Quarterly Review*, but both gave up writing fiction.

The “Moderate” consensus restored with the *Edinburgh Review* did not survive the resumption of war against France. The end of the war in 1815 unleashed a political and ideological polarization across the periodical press, hardened by economic recession, worsening social tensions, and the intensifying national debate over electoral reform. The epoch of the full-scale commercialization of Edinburgh literary culture, in short, was also that of its virulent politicization. Both tendencies find superlative expression in

Blackwood's Magazine, the most influential work of the postwar decade besides the Waverley novels, and the principal matrix for alternative forms of Scottish fiction. Founded as a Tory counter-blast to the pro-Reform press, *Blackwood's* momentous achievement was the construction of a "Romantic ideology" to oppose the Neo-Enlightenment liberalism (tied to the emergent science of political economy) of *The Edinburgh Review*. The magazine equipped Tory politics with an aesthetic ideology of cultural nationalism shaped by its avant-garde mixture of literary forms and discourses, key among which was fiction.

Although the quarterlies had condescended to notice novels, beginning with Edgeworth (who pioneered the novelization of Enlightenment philosophical history) and then Scott, they tended to cultivate a neoclassical suspicion of fiction as such. *Blackwood's*, in contrast, became the leading, experimental forum for publishing non-novelistic kinds of prose fiction in the early 1820s, establishing the modern short story as a genre and developing a variety of styles and formats, including serialization (Galt's *The Ayrshire Legatees* and *The Steam-Boat*, 1820–1; Hogg's *The Shepherd's Calendar*, 1823; David Macbeth Moir's *Mansie Wauch*, 1824). *Blackwood's* juxtaposed fictional with non-fictional articles (whereas earlier magazines had segregated them), and corrupted the latter with fictional devices such as disguised or fictitious contributors and narrative and dramatic frames. Ethnographic sketch and satirical mock-autobiography mutate into works of sheer invention, with historical and imaginary characters sharing the same page. The most elaborate of these satirical para- or pseudo-fictions included Lockhart's novelized anatomy of the Scottish cultural scene, *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, much of which appeared in *Blackwood's* before coming out in book form in 1819, and the serial symposium *Noctes Ambrosianae*, which took off (after several try-outs) in 1822.

Both these works promote the Blackwoodian cultural politics of an "organic" sentimental nationalism, by turns rowdy and nostalgic, through fictional techniques: in the *Noctes*, a series of festive dialogues among editorial personae ("Christopher North"), fictionalized versions of real people (Lord Byron, "the English Opium-Eater," "the Ettrick Shepherd," i.e. Hogg) and invented characters, some of whom have strayed from the pages of Scottish fiction. *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* crowns Scott with the laurels of a Tory Romantic vision of national culture in the course of Lockhart's general critique of a cosmopolitan, proto-Jacobin Scottish Enlightenment and its present-day heirs, the Edinburgh reviewers. Lockhart attacks the liberal professionalism of the *Edinburgh Review*, arguing that its commercial base drives a fatal wedge between the reviewers' claims to judicial disinterest and their Whig *parti pris*. Scott's fiction, in

contrast, occupies an aesthetic high ground of national representation, rising above mere politics. The symbolic appropriation of Scott stands on a larger platform than his role as literary viceroy of the “Dundas despotism” in Edinburgh, backer of Tory periodicals and patron of *Blackwood’s* authors (including his future son-in-law). More plausibly than Sir Walter Scott, Laird of Abbotsford, the Author of *Waverley* could represent (although by no means uncontroversially) a Scottish culture in all its historical variety and complexity, thanks to the novel’s newly won status as the literary form of national life. In the early nineteenth century the novel’s rhetorical unification of a modern reading public, through the performative invocation of national life, made it the normative genre of an ascendant middle-class culture – in contrast to the reviews and magazines, the proliferation of which expressed the politicization of modern social divisions.¹⁴ Edinburgh, arguably, was the decisive site for this development, and the *Waverley* novels its decisive agent. They themselves tell a version of this story: the history of a modernizing nation-formation out of the savage clash of factions, out of “politics” and “ideology” as such.

No less crucial than the topical assumption of Enlightenment historicism in Scott’s novels, in this light, was their categorical reinvestment in a rhetoric of fiction, abstracted and historicized under the pre-modern title of “romance.” David Hume’s *History of England* provided the model of a Moderate historiography with its national narrative of Whig progress tempered by Tory sentiment and its apertures of sympathetic identification with “wavering heroes” such as Falkland and Clarendon. Hume also provided the philosophical justification for Scott’s combination of history with romance. The intellectual plot of Enlightenment, in Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, dissolves the metaphysical foundations of reality and covers the resulting void with a sentimental commitment to “common life,” everyday social intercourse, intermittently recognized as an imaginary construction of reality ratified by custom. Thus *Waverley* narrates not only the emergence of modern civil society through the final conquest of an ancient regime (Catholic, Jacobite, feudal, tribal), but a Humean dialectical progression from “metaphysical” illusion through melancholy disenchantment to a sentimental and ironic reattachment to common life. Scott works out this scheme in an internal allegory of the rise of the novel as modern national form, in which the movement from primitive imaginary modes of “romance” through an empirically exigent “history” yields a third, synthetic term, the combination of romance and history that is realized in *Waverley* itself. Scott’s historical novel, the material medium of our work of reading, constitutes the vantage point of modernity as it produces the plot of its own production. Reflexively insistent on their fictional status, Scott’s novels activate

scepticism rather than belief as the subjective cast of their reader's (rather than their protagonist's) relation to history, which includes, in the logic of metafictional reflection, the reader's own historical situation.

Following Hume, then, Scott made fiction the performative technique of a liberal ideology, one that stakes its modernity upon the claim of having superseded primitive modes of belief or ideological identification – superstition, fanaticism – through a capacity to stand apart from and reflect on the submerged life of history, the blind rage of politics. The Romantic Tory apotheosis of Scott would require (however) the excision of these roots in an Enlightenment culture compromised by Humean skepticism. Lockhart's account of Scott in *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* accordingly shifts from a critical appreciation of the work of fiction to a cult of the author, around whom the category of "literary authority" can be more confidently reassembled. "Peter's" report of his pilgrimage to Abbotsford, to bask in its landlord's charisma, establishes the thoroughly counter-Enlightenment formation that Thomas Carlyle will later call "hero-worship." Scott's authority is of a kind that compels his readers' belief, according to Lockhart, just as his writing provides a necromantic medium for historical truth and national spirit. The identification of Scott's works with Tory Romanticism thus required a measure of symbolic violence, which did not go uncontested. William Hazlitt, a frequent target of *Blackwood's* contumely, proclaimed the universal merit of Scott's novels ("His works (taken together) are almost like a new edition of human nature") by cutting them off (in a reciprocal symbolic violence) from the deplorable political views of their author, exploiting the division of labor implicit in his anonymity. Scott's death in the year of the Reform Bill prompted Radical reviewers Christian Johnstone and Harriet Martineau to take up Hazlitt's reclamation of his achievement for a new, liberal and progressive "spirit of the age." The property not of a party interest but of all mankind, the Waverley novels belonged to the nation's future rather than its past.

The insistence on conventions of fictionality, framing a Humean closure on the theatre of common life, characterizes the aesthetic that Jerome McGann has called Scott's "Romantic postmodernity."¹⁵ "Here ends the Astrologer": with these words Captain Mannering, renouncing an equivocal art, terminates the chain of romance devices that makes up Scott's second novel *Guy Mannering, or the Astrologer* (1815). The last chapter of *Old Mortality* (1816) zooms forward from the abyss of civil war to the ordinary present, where dressmaker Miss Martha Buskbody, connoisseur of "the whole stock of three circulating libraries in Gandercleuch and the next two market towns," bullies the work's putative editor into wrapping up his story according to the proper conventions. Conservative skepticism

receives Scott's most exuberant treatment in *The Antiquary* (1816), a meta-Waverley Novel or Shandification of historical romance in which, despite the invocation of an unusually intricate plot, nothing happens: or rather, sensational events – manslaughter, infanticide, incest, a discovery of buried treasure, a French invasion, the repulse of a Roman invasion, the writing of an epic poem – turn out not to have happened, covering the one big event that must on no account be admitted to constitute the plot of the present: revolution.

It was with *Old Mortality*, the main work in the first set of *Tales of My Landlord*, that Scott's Humean rendition of national historical fiction became controversial. Scott applies the basic plot of *Waverley*, in which a "moderate" hero finds himself involved in a rebellion, to the religious civil wars of the late seventeenth century. His treatment of radical Presbyterianism, source of a Scottish tradition of popular democratic politics, proved far more divisive than his treatment of counter-revolutionary Jacobitism. Dissenting reviewers repudiated the novel's claim on a principled Whig Moderatism, struggling between revolutionary and absolutist extremes to be born as the dominant ideology of the modern age; they objected, in particular, to the depiction of the Covenanters, champions of Scotland's civil and religious liberties, as wild fanatics. Rival Covenanter historical fictions were published challenging Scott's: Hogg's *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818), Galt's *Ringan Gilhaize* (1823). Both undo Scott's equation of the Covenanters with an archetypal revolutionary fanaticism, Hogg by stressing the natural piety of rural communities, Galt by distinguishing between the heroic epoch of the Scottish Reformation and its terrorist remnant, warped by government persecution. More striking is the articulation of their challenge in the deployment of literary form.¹⁶ *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* defies the retrospective, rationalizing order of Enlightenment, realized in a unified complex plot and an abstract English narration, for an intermittent recital in which local actors tell their stories in what are represented to be their own voices. *Ringan Gilhaize* fuses memory and history into Ringan's single narration, transmitting the life-stories of his grandfather, father and himself, to curate the ideological legacy of the Reformation in early modern Scottish history. Ringan's narration renounces fictionality for a story that rests on the strong term of belief, faith: keystone of an agency that undergoes a tragic declension from revolutionary collectivism to solitary pathological obsession.

Hogg's and Galt's formal alternatives emerge through the opening made by Scott's fiction for the characteristically "Blackwoodian" fiction that followed. The *Tales of My Landlord* announce a distinctively regionalist representation of national life in the medium of a set of tales: "To his loving

countrymen,” goes the dedication, “whether they are denominated Men of the South, Gentlemen of the North, People of the West, or Folk of Fife, these Tales, illustrative of ancient Scottish manners, and of the Traditions of their Respective Districts, are respectfully inscribed.” The most gifted of the Blackwood authors would develop this emphasis, making regional identity (the traditions of their respective districts) the foundation for their own claims on originality. Hogg’s tales – *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* and its successors, *Winter Evening Tales* (1820) and *The Shepherd’s Calendar* – ground their narrative matter and manner on the popular traditions of the Scottish Borders, centering on Ettrick, ranging to Liddesdale and Dumfries. Galt conceived of a series of “Tales of the West,” emanating from and representing Glasgow and Ayrshire as a world socially and culturally distinct from polite Edinburgh. Hogg and Galt gave the tale its richest formal development, the first-person fictional memoir grounded in local patterns of experience and discourse. Their characteristic work – radically divergent in other respects – promoted vernacular Scots to the main narrative language, in contrast to Scott’s framing of varieties of Scots speech within a general, obtrusively literary, imperial English. Galt had his own imitators, such as Moir (*Mansie Wauch*), Andrew Picken (*Tales and Sketches of the West of Scotland*, 1824) and Thomas Hamilton (*The Youth and Manhood of Cyril Thornton*, 1827). The novels and tales of Lockhart and Wilson – who also emerged, like Galt, from “the West” (but via Oxford) – forgo regional specificity for typical rather than particularized rural settings, drawing upon the moral–evangelical “feminine” tradition for a more sentimentally or sensationally intensive as well as didactic treatment (Lockhart’s *Adam Blair*, 1822; Wilson’s *Trials of Margaret Lyndsay*, 1823).

Galt distinguished his original achievement from Scott’s: *Annals of the Parish* (1821) and *The Provost* (1822) are not “novels or romances” but “theoretical histories of society.”¹⁷ Drawing on the satirical form Edgeworth had pioneered in *Castle Rackrent*, Galt’s imaginary autobiographies of a country minister and a small-town politician eschew the Scott model of plot-intensive romance for an alternative fictional development of conjectural history, a trompe-l’oeil representation of historical change in the micropolitics of provincial society. Galt clarifies the anecdotal, annalistic form of local memoir into a medium that registers the vibrations between local everyday life and an emergent global political economy, between objective processes of social change and the subjective horizons of experience, with unprecedented sensitivity.¹⁸ Yet if these works exhibit the virtue Galt claimed as his “originality,” his most ambitious works engage the commodified form of Scott’s success, the three-volume national historical novel. Galt’s finest novels, *The Entail* (1823) and *Ringan Gilhaize*, work out a

strenuous and subtle debate with Scott's historical fiction in the early series of *Tales of My Landlord*. In *The Entail*, his masterpiece, Galt schematically recasts his rival's most formidable work, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818). Galt's novel, like Scott's, brings a family chronicle to bear on a legal crux that encodes a national-scale social and moral crisis, with Galt's indomitable anti-heroine, the Leddy Grippy, an exuberant parody of Scott's Jeanie Deans.

The comparison between Galt and Hogg charts a striking triangulation in the political economy of fiction in early 1820s Edinburgh. Galt challenges the Humean dialectic at work in the Waverley novels with a strong development of one of its terms, materialist social history, and a refusal of the other, antiquarian romance. Hogg, in contrast, asserts vernacular principles of storytelling in defiance of an Enlightenment cultural teleology. Hogg's tales, pioneered in his weekly miscellany *The Spy* in 1810–11 before their bravura development the following decade, experiment with a range of forms and styles (exemplified in *Winter Evening Tales*): novella-length satirical autobiography ("Renowned Adventures of Basil Lee," "Love Adventures of Mr George Cochrane"), autoethnographic sketch or anecdote ("The Shepherd's Calendar"), ghost story ("Country Dreams and Apparitions"). Hogg's more ambitious narratives offended polite taste by disrupting the conventions within which "folk" material was expected to be packaged, and by laying presumptuous claim to metropolitan styles and genres. In the 1820s Hogg too moved from the shorter forms of the tale to take on the prestigious, and profitable, form of multi-volume historical novel defined by Scott. *The Three Perils of Man: War, Women and Witchcraft* (1821), a medieval "Border Romance," rebuts Scott's brilliant antiquarian fictions (*Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*) with a ferociously comic performance of what can only be called a proto-postmodern magic realism. Sorcerers and demons share narrative space with historical barons and peasants amid outbursts of slapstick cruelty. *The Three Perils of Woman: Love, Leasing and Jealousy* (1823) tracks the dissolution, rather than development, of the domestic national tale into historical romance *à la Waverley*. The final scenes of *The Three Perils of Woman*, set in the desolated Highlands after Culloden, enact a traumatic meltdown of cultural meaning, by turns farcical and harrowing.

Scott himself strove in the field of formal and political contestation that made up Scottish fiction in the 1820s. In 1823 the Author of *Waverley* returned to modern Scotland, after a series of romances with medieval and Renaissance settings, for an experiment in the self-avowedly alien genre of female-authored novel (according to Scott) of contemporary domestic manners: *Saint Ronan's Well* veers queasily between satire and melodrama.

Redgauntlet: A Tale of the Eighteenth Century (1824) undertakes a full-dress reclamation of Scott's signature form of Scottish historical romance. *Redgauntlet's* historical retrospect includes an anthology of eighteenth-century genres – letters, journal, popular lyric, folk tale, Gothic novel, family history, law case, rogue's memoir, stage comedy – as well as of the Scottish Waverley novels themselves, as Scott rewrites the plot of Jacobite rebellion enmeshed with family romance related in *Waverley* and *Rob Roy*.¹⁹ In the summer of 1765 a last attempt at Jacobite insurrection dissolves into anticlimax and non-event: a failure to reenter history confirmed in the historiographical status of the plot as Scott's own fictional invention. (No such return of Prince Charlie took place *vingt ans après*.) Scott's resort to comedy for the elegiac key of failure decisively empties history of its metaphysical charge. Perhaps his finest work, *Redgauntlet* reaffirms – with dazzling virtuosity – the aesthetic of Romantic skepticism inaugurated ten years earlier in *Waverley*.

This reaffirmation, mediated through the novel's insistence on formal miscellany, rebuts the aesthetic and ideological challenge posed by Galt in *Ringan Gilhaize*, which Scott burlesques in the inset story of the Redgauntlet family curse. (Galt returned the compliment by inserting a burlesque of this episode, in a chapter called "Redgauntlet," in his next novel *Rothelan*, 1824.) Hogg's masterpiece *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, published in the same month as *Redgauntlet* (June, 1824), has also been read as a reply to Galt's narrative of terrorist declension of the Covenant in *Ringan Gilhaize*, as well as a critical deconstruction of Scott's historical fiction.²⁰ Hogg splits his novel between the competing forms of imaginary memoir, its subjective horizon intensified into psychopathic delirium, and fictitious history, curated by an enlightened editor: far from resolving into a "moderate" synthesis, antinomies and antagonisms proliferate disastrously across the text. Both *Redgauntlet* and *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* share conspicuous formal and thematic features, including an elaborate self-reflexiveness about their material and cultural status as "tales of the eighteenth century," fictions of Scottish modernization, and as printed books, published at the end of the decade of national historical fiction inaugurated with *Waverley*. While *Redgauntlet* reaffirms the Humean paradigm of historical romance, *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* decomposes the ingredients of Scottish cultural modernity into a waste material residue, represented through the metonymic identification, in the final pages, of the sinner's unhallowed corpse with the text we are reading. A nauseating disintegration taints the author, his work, and the reader; and indeed, Hogg's masterpiece would remain all but unreadable until the twentieth century.

NOTES

- 1 Peter Garside and Rainer Schöwerling, *The English Novel 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles, Vol. II: 1800–1829* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 76.
- 2 *Fraser's Magazine* 1: 2 (March, 1830), p. 236.
- 3 Garside and Schöwerling, *The English Novel 1770–1829*, p. 15.
- 4 William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 221.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 “Secondary Scottish Novels,” *Edinburgh Review* 39 (October 1823), pp. 158–79.
- 8 See F. R. Hart, *The Scottish Novel: From Smollett to Spark* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 31–84; Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, eds., *Tales of Terror from Blackwood's Magazine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Peter Garside, “Hogg and the Blackwoodian Novel,” *Studies in Hogg and his World* 15 (2004), pp. 5–20.
- 9 For both developments – the national tale before Scott, the imperial reach of Scott and *Blackwood's* – see Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 137–51, 243–91.
- 10 “Thoughts on Novel Writing,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 4 (January 1819), pp. 394–6.
- 11 “Edinburgh Novels,” *Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany* 3 (June 1819), p. 60.
- 12 Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 19–59.
- 13 Garside and Schöwerling, *The English Novel 1770–1829*, pp. 72–5, 90; Ferris, *Achievement of Literary Authority*, pp. 79–104; Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 131–71.
- 14 Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 155–190; Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 18–46.
- 15 Jerome McGann, “Walter Scott's Romantic Postmodernity,” in Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen, ed., *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 113–29.
- 16 For a discussion see Ferris, *Achievement of Literary Authority*, pp. 161–94.
- 17 John Galt, *Autobiography*, 2 vols., Vol. II (London, 1833), pp. 219–20.
- 18 See Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, pp. 153–6.
- 19 See Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 54–65.
- 20 Douglas Mack, “‘The Rage of Fanaticism in Former Days’: James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and the Controversy over *Old Mortality*,” from Ian Campbell, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1979), pp. 37–50; Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789–1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), pp. 260–73.

The historical novel is a literary genre that links strong dramatic plot lines and credible human psychology, within a setting characterized by specific historical details. The founder of this genre, which had a great impact on Romantic Europe, was Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), whose novels, starting with *Waverley* (1814), created a passion for the historical novel among readers and writers that remains strong up to this day. He took the past of Scotland as his main subject and mixed it with imaginative adventures. He blended highly figurative language with dialect to portray real and living characters, who belong both to the aristocracy and the low, humble classes. He introduced a new concept of history, based on the lives of the ordinary people, rather than on those of kings and noblemen. Scottish fiction, meaning at once fiction produced in Scotland and fiction that made Scotland its topic, became one of the leading genres of European Romanticism in the decade after Waterloo. Its distinctive forms, the three-volume historical novel, magazine tale and fictitious regional memoir, were the product and fuel of a spectacular Edinburgh publishing boom in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, which was also characterized by innovations in the periodical genres of quarterly review and monthly magazine. The proportion of British fiction titles produced in Scotland rose steeply. Scottish fiction, meaning at once fiction produced in Scotland and fiction that made Scotland its topic, became one of the leading genres of European Romanticism in the decade after Waterloo. Its distinctive forms, the three-volume historical novel, magazine tale and fictitious regional memoir, were the product and fuel of a spectacular Edinburgh publishing boom in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, which was also characterized by innovations in the periodical genres of quarterly review and monthly magazine. The proportion of British fiction titles produced in Scotland rose steeply f