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**SCOTT-LAND: THE ROLE OF HIS NATIVE
LANDSCAPE IN THE HISTORICAL
NOVELS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT**

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Ph. D. THESIS

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT.

A broad survey is offered, addressing the manifold aspects of the role of his native landscape in Scott's historical novels. It seeks to provide fresh insights into established topics and to identify new ones, focusing attention as much upon the less celebrated titles as upon those more frequently discussed. A preliminary chronological account of secondary material demonstrates a development over the last two hundred years from simple tour guides, to scholarly works of which landscape is an incidental aspect, to a recent series of papers and journal articles in which it is established as the principal topic. From this account emerge certain common themes, most consistently the influence of aesthetic theory upon descriptive passages and the use of topographic metaphors to illuminate character and psychology.

For the first time Scott's life is contemplated from the perspective of his experiences of landscape. His ill-health as an infant exposed him to the Borders, its legends forming his taste for historicised landscapes. His apprenticeship to his father necessitated several journeys to the Highlands. His failed attempts as an artist prompted his achievement in verbal pictorial description. His lameness galvanised his characters as they performed compensatory feats of agility. Moreover his early autobiographical writings often presaged the terms in which he would later describe landscape in his fiction.

Scott's often ambivalent attitude to aesthetic theory has already been well documented, particularly with regard to *Waverley*. But the sense of utility which underpins and often amplifies picturesque values has not. Deeper analysis is similarly accorded such familiar topics as the timelessness of landscape as opposed to the mutability of human affairs, pastoral havens such as Mount Sharon, Roseneath and Liddiesdale, and the metaphorical function of natural phenomena, all of which have a historical significance. However new aspects – principally the way in which the contours of the Scottish landscape render historical events, such as the encounter at Drumclog and the Battle of Inverlochy, more explicable – are also identified.

The varying types and degrees of attachment to the Scottish landscape manifested by characters of different social statuses belie a profound egalitarianism. Fresh insights are sought by placing them in particular categories: those who are alienated from the landscape, those who function as cicerones, intimately familiar with the landscape but mobile within it, those who are obsessively bound to the landscape to the point of symbolic absorption, those who romanticise the landscape. From all this emerges a vision of the Waverley hero as one who, though often relying upon cicerones, prevails within the landscape.

Scott's personal interest in the supernatural is scrutinized to allow a deeper perception of various, disparate locales. What binds them together is the process, never previously elucidated, by which they acquire spectral associations, the terms in which Scott describes this process indicating the rationalism that tempered his interest in the supernatural.

Also new is the narratological significance detected in landscape descriptions. The work of theorist Gerard Genette is invoked to examine the descriptive purity of these passages, the idea of landscape being disclosed concurrently with the temporal succession of events and the way in which description can hasten or retard narrative tempo. Two original concepts – landscape as an agent of narrative plausibility and landscape as a metaphor for narrative structure and tempo – are also introduced and analysed.

Ultimately an attempt is made to estimate the consistency of Scott's achievement in the presentation of landscape. It is demonstrated that descriptive passages in his later novels often achieved a rarely acknowledged clarity and significance which those in his early novels did not infallibly boast. This attempt recapitulates subjects previously addressed, such as Biography, Aesthetic Theory, History, Characterisation and Narrative.

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INTRODUCTION

I.

In the Scottish historical novels landscape is the setting, the substratum on which narratives occur. Individuals traverse glens, toil through bogs and mountain passes, ford streams. Armies converge upon plains, descend from high to low ground, advance or retreat slowly and speedily according to the lie of the land. Both individuals and groups move in pursuit of personal and political goals, the two often intertwined. In doing so they leave their imprint, literal and figurative, upon the landscape, but not in perpetuity. The landscape outlives them. Their possession of it is, in time, usurped. It erases their tracks. It absorbs their constructs. It absorbs them. Some characters, though, do not imperil themselves on journeys over unfamiliar terrain. They become bound to a particular area, either through habituation or compulsion. In doing so, however, they remain vulnerable to it. Absorbed into their immediate landscape, they become little more than part of its fauna, sacrificing rationality. This sacrifice is manifested particularly in the way they fall prey to superstitions associated with their locality and entertain delusive beliefs about their own influence upon it. Yet intimate knowledge may enable those who possess it and those who rely upon them to prevail within the landscape and, hence, within the narrative.

As setting, Scott's landscape is certainly background. It is underfoot, it is circumjacent. But it rarely fails to illuminate the foreground – those who are contemplating it, those who are simply passing through it. It is described from their perspective and from the narrator's perspective upon them. It displays the preoccupations of both. But the illumination landscape provides stretches beyond the perimeters of the fictive world. It reflects many of Scott's experiences of the landscape he himself inhabited, prompting us even to consider his own physical condition. It displays aspects of aesthetic theory, of its development, of Scott's attitude to it. But it stretches still further, beyond the personal sentiments of the author and the current trends of his lifetime to reveal, though some might say dimly, aspects of recent literary theory. Indeed, if one wishes to impose broad divisions upon the subject of landscape in these novels, one might do worse than to separate the significance it possesses

within the fictional world (for instance the realisation its permanence offers characters of the extent to which their lives have changed over an interval of years) from that which it possesses outside (for instance the impression received by the reader that the developmental change inherent in history is reflected by natural phenomena.)

A number, though by no means all of these manifold aspects are touched upon in the existing critical discussion of the Scottish landscape in Scott's fiction. We can clearly trace the developments, albeit with gaps, of this discussion during the twentieth century and over the last thirty years in particular. At the outset writers on the subject tended to deal with it in a wholly biographical and touristic manner. Pieces such as D. MacMillan's 'In *Guy Mannering* land' from *The Glasgow Herald* (January 13th, 1910) and J. S. Martin's 'Sir Walter Scott in Clydesdale, (*The Scottish Field*, 60 (1932)) are characteristic, the latter recording Scott's visits to that area with respect to his depiction of Douglas Castle in *Castle Dangerous* and Tillietudlum in *Old Mortality*. Such locations are the pith of these early works. William Mathie Parker's 'A Study of Scott's Topography. Some Puzzling Landmarks' (*The S.M.T. Magazine*, 13 (1943)) attempts to reconcile structures such as Tully Veolan and Wolf's Crag with various real places. Early books published on the subject pursue very much the same strategy. J. F. Hunnewell's *The Lands of Scott* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1871) gives a chronological account of Scott's life with respect to the landscapes experienced by him and utilised in his fiction, as does C.S. Olcott's *The Country of Sir Walter Scott* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), while J. I. Kerr's *The Land of Scott* (London: Edward J. Burrow, 1931) takes more the form of an actual tour guide, describing, with maps, 21 routes that the reader might take in order to pace out the terrain of the novels in the Lowlands and Perthshire. The Borders are considered in most detail and with greatest sensitivity in W.S. Crockett's *The Scott Country* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1902). The region and Scott's experience of it are divided into chapters with such elegiac titles as 'Eden Scenes on Crystal Jed', 'Hawick Among the Hills', and 'Melrose Memories.' Its title was appropriated eighteen years later by O. Smeaton for another work which bore the self-explanatory subtitle: 'A tour round the Lowland

districts described in the works of Sir Walter Scott.' There was at this period, however, one work which sought to do more than simply trace Scott's already widely recorded peregrinations, treading unreflectingly over the same well-worn terrain, pausing only to distinguish those structures adapted for inclusion in the novels. It was a 1936 Munster University thesis by J. Miller entitled *Die romantische Landschaft bei Walter Scott*, an attempt to actually examine the uses which Scott made of landscape in his works. Indeed the 1930's and 40's, despite being the decades which represented perhaps the nadir of Scott's literary reputation, saw the first, albeit infrequent attempts at an academic appraisal of the subject, composed principally of Miller's thesis, Mody C. Boatright's 'Demonology in the Novels of Sir Walter Scott: A Study in Regionalism' in *University of Texas Studies in English*, 13 (1934) and Irene P. McKeehan's 'Some Observations on the Vocabulary of Landscape Description Among the Early Romanticists' in *Elizabethan Studies and Other Essays in Honor of George F. Reynolds* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1945). The same period marks a significant decline in guides to Scott's landscapes aimed at a wider readership, while in the 1950's there is a dearth of any material on the subject. However with the 1960's and the nascent rehabilitation of Scott's critical reputation comes a gradual accumulation of academic studies, growing incrementally in the 1970's and '80's. There was even a minor return to the form of the earlier guides, with familiar titles such as Marion Lohead's *Portraits of the Scott Country* (London: Robert Hale, 1968) and J. H. Pearson's 'The Novelist and His Region: Scotland through the eyes of Sir Walter Scott' in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 81 (1965) reappearing.

II.

The earliest 60s appraisals of the Scottish landscape in Scott's novels occur in critical works principally devoted to other subjects. For instance, in his famous analysis of characterisation *The Hero of the Waverley Novels* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), Alexander Welsh devotes a chapter entitled 'Character and Topography' to the way in which characters' personalities are reflected in their attitude to their

native environment. He distinguishes Magnus Troil's daughters, Minna and Brenda, in terms of their response to the wild scenery of the Shetland Isles, the more intense Minna, of the ' " deep feeling and high mind " ' ¹ identifying with qualities of the sublime, while the more phlegmatic Brenda is drawn to the beautiful — ' " the summit of the precipice " ', as opposed to the ' " calm sea beach. " ' ² He makes this distinction, between 'light' and 'dark' heroes and heroines representative also of the distinction between Highland and Lowland, nature and civilisation, in the other novels.

The following year Coleman O. Parsons offered many illuminating observations of landscape while engaging in the task of examining a quite different topic in *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction*. Discussing 'the outdoor haunting of the Waverley novels' he displays a sensitivity to different types of terrain, in particular, 'narrow valleys [...] moors and crags — confined, desolate and dangerous spots.'³ Nevertheless, the various locales alluded to remain strictly the context of supernatural legends or manifestations. They exist simply to cause unease, but Parsons does not examine in detail their different components, nor is the process identified by which that unease becomes promulgated.

History was the topic, some years later, to which Avrom Fleischman related topography in *The English Historical Novel* (1971). He evokes the Scottish and English landscapes and Jeanie's progress through them to elaborate a thematic structure of *The Heart of Midlothian* which regards her final settling in Roseneath as the completion of a symbolic circle, since her new home is roughly on the same latitude as her point of departure, close to the Firth of Clyde rather than the Firth of Forth. 'That her new position is both parallel and distinct from her origins suggests the inner quality of Jeanie's development,' he says. '*The Heart of Midlothian* is, then, an image of Scottish history in symbolic space as well as in dramatic time, it expresses its themes

¹ Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 52.

² *ibid.*, p. 51.

³ Coleman O. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), p. 121.

in its characters' movement through the world.⁴ He also deals with the switch to the mode of pastoral in what many have regarded as the otiose final volume and demonstrates that it is not as wholly unhistoricised as later critics, who seem not to have absorbed his insights, sometimes claim: 'To end on a note of a Highland Arcadia would have been to create an apocalyptic realm outside of history; to add Captain Knockdunder and the Whistler is to bring the realm into the world of politics, crime, and the continued historical experience of Scotland.'⁵

Mary Lou Lafferty produced the first sustained work on the specific role of landscape in Scott's fiction. Her Ph.D. thesis 'The Landscape Art of Sir Walter Scott: Scenic Description in Selected Waverley Novels' (University of Wisconsin, 1970) examines the way in which Scott uses landscape description to illuminate various aspects of his novels' artistic structures, in particular characterisation and theme, and the differences between them. She concedes the influences of aesthetic theories, especially the beautiful, the sublime and picturesque, upon Scott, but states that to assess his landscape passages in such terms would yield little interpretative value. Moreover, she confines herself to discussing only the early novels: *Waverley*, in which landscape description reflects and marks the hero's journey towards a mature perspective, *The Heart of Midlothian*, in which bloody criminal acts, bound up with the scene of their commission, offer us a better understanding of the ethical and religious dilemmas that Jeanie Deans must confront, and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, in which Edgar Ravenswood rejects the portents of misfortune and violence for his ancestors that have been offered by the Gothic landscapes that surround him and consequently falls prey to them. Thus Lafferty sees the protagonists of the three early Scottish novels as defined in terms of their response to landscape, ideally sustaining a balance between practicality and aesthetic response, this duality being reflected in the pictorial realism of Scott's descriptions.

⁴Avrom Fleischman, *The English Historical Novel* (London: John Hopkins, 1971), p. 94.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

Characterisation, History and the Supernatural having already been touched upon in various books, with their relationship to landscape distinctly, albeit partially illuminated, 1971 also saw the first detailed work on Scott's attitude to aesthetic theory and exploitation of it in his fiction. In 'Scott and the Picturesque: Afforestation and History', delivered at the Bicentenary conference in Edinburgh, Marcia Allentuck contrasts Scott's efforts as a rural designer at Abbotsford, inspired by the writings of Sir Uvedale Price, with his delineations of landscape in his fiction, inspired principally by Salvator Rosa. In both he displays a remarkable sensitivity to picturesque landscape, not in isolation, as mere scenery, composed of two-dimensional background, foreground and side-screens, but in relation to the human observer and his attitude to it. As Allentuck states, 'It was landscape humanised.'⁶ Moreover Scott as planter, despite his innovatory concern with history as a process in his fiction, exploited the transplanting system of Henry Steuart to accelerate that process, or, as Allentuck puts it, 'curved the future towards himself, and made it an inverted historical present, by leaping over the processes of time and history.'⁷ Meanwhile, in the same year, J. D. W. Murdoch, in 'Scott, Pictures and Painters' also assessed Scott's attitude to aesthetic theory and his relationships with particular artists. At the outset he states, unexceptionably, that, 'There are many references to painters in the Waverley Novels, and almost the whole of Scott's literary output is marked by a strong pictorialism in the conception of character and the description of scenes [...] Whether in landscape or in the portrayal of heightened emotion in dramatic scenes, Scott's writing had a deep resource in his knowledge of the visual arts, and in his use of this knowledge he was directed by a theoretical conviction that there was no essential difference between the aims of his own and the painter's art.'⁸ Murdoch goes on to describe Scott's artistic education, conducted principally through his acquaintance with aristocratic collectors such as the Duke of Hamilton, the Duke of Buccleuch, the Earl of Buchan, the Earl of

⁶Marcia Allentuck, 'Scott and The Picturesque: Afforestation and History,' in *Scott: Bicentenary Essays*, ed. by Alan Bell (Edinburgh: The Edina Press, 1973), 188-198 (p. 188).

⁷*ibid.*, 188-198 (p. 197).

⁸J. D. W. Murdoch, 'Scott, Pictures and Painters' in *Modern Language Review*, 67 (1972), 31-43 (p. 31).

Hopetoun, as well as his friendship with fellow law student William Clerk, whose forebear, Sir John Clerk, formed a great collection at Pennicuik House. The social foundation to Scott's interest in art was reflected in his subsequent association with the artists James Skene, William Allan, David Wilkie, who consulted him about picturesque localities before embarking upon a tour of Scotland, and J. M. W. Turner, about whose illustrations for the *Poetical Works* Scott was professedly unhappy, fearing Turner's experiments in colour but perhaps also suspecting that the illustrations would subtract lustre from his verse. In discussing C. R. Leslie, Murdoch addresses the fundamental issue of Scott's knowledge and appreciation of art, stating, 'Leslie's paradox that Scott had a brilliant eye for the picturesque but no judgement and no pretensions in the matter of pictures, has been generally adopted, and is basically an adequate analysis.'⁹ He reveals that Scott was more concerned with the emotional response conjured up by a painting than with its technical details. For him the more widespread that response, the greater the painting's value. This populism led him to be defensive in his assessments of art: 'There is a defiant, and at the same time slightly pathetic, insistence that, as a normally cultivated man, he should be allowed to offer comment and appreciation in the art of painting. The habitual deference to connoisseurs, the "I know nothing of art", cloaks an opinionated fascination with the subject, and a longing to speak out.'¹⁰

The Bicentenary event, the first major conference on Scott, produced an efflorescence of numerous aspects of Scott scholarship, discussed in detail for the first time. However, curiously, it was still some years before landscape began to be regularly addressed in journal articles. Peter D. Garside inaugurated the most recent phase of sustained interest with two pieces in 1977. Adopting Allentuck's interest in aesthetic theory, he produced 'Waverley's Pictures of the Past'. He identifies the analogy drawn in the novel between artistic perspective and Edward Waverley's flawed vision of not only the Highland landscape but its inhabitants and the events he

⁹Murdoch, 31-43 (p. 40).

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 43.

witnesses there. At the outset, as a trainee dragoon, he finds his sense of spatial perspective faulty. During his early experiences in the Highlands he focuses infallibly upon distant vistas, picturesque in their indistinctness. But as these vistas come inescapably into closer view, they are exposed as a good deal more dangerous and varied than anticipated. Even then he attempts to relegate uncomfortable realities, placing them 'in the background.' Garside also identifies the way in which Edward Waverley creates 'pictures' of the locations he visits, principally of Tully Veolan and of the waterfall beside which Flora Mac-Ivor poses at Glennaquioch. However in the former the figures in the composition – ragged, grimy village girls – refuse to remain mere static objects, but insist upon a recognition of social and economic reality. In the latter, meanwhile, the emphasis upon the scene's composition and Flora's composure within it convey, for Garside, a sense of artificiality. He forges a slightly tenuous link between the concept of the eighteenth century clan, which, according to Scott in *Tales of a Grandfather* blended modern 'humanism' with 'patriarchal devotion' and the scene's blend of 'refined' sentimentalism with 'primitive' allegiance, lending what seems wholly aesthetic an historical component. Nevertheless here, as in the approach to Tully Veolan, the irruption of a figure, this time a dog, compromises the scene's stasis. In both, states Garside, the 'picture' is unable to stand up to the restless, egoistic, 'plebeian' rush of human nature.¹¹

In the same year Garside also offered a meditation upon '*Redgauntlet* and the Topography of Progress'. He begins by identifying three levels of topographical detail in Scott's novels. He sees it as having a purely picturesque aspect, an ' "associationist" ' aspect (in which, for instance, mountainous scenery may be regarded as connoting society in its "primitive" state, and cultivated landscape civilisation) and as part of a literary tradition in which varieties of topography "place" moral positions. From these he extrapolates a fourth aspect, a combination of the three, which sees different aspects of landscape as bearing a contrastive, socio-

¹¹Peter D. Garside, 'Waverley's Pictures of the Past' in *English Literary History*, 44 (1977), 659–682 (p. 675).

historical significance. This perspective he applies first to Edinburgh, and to the dichotomy of the Old and New Town, the former representing 'an urban mutation of the clan system', the latter suggesting 'a new age — uniform yet individualistic, theoretically "democratic" but lacking in spontaneity.'¹² Having done so he moves on to the main subject of his work, the two locations of Redgauntlet's glen and Mount Sharon, stating that 'if their juxtaposition is carefully considered within the whole framework of the novel, it can be seen that, far from being an "escape" from reality, they have a particularly relevant bearing on Edinburgh and its transformations.'¹³ Garside focuses upon two descriptions of Redgauntlet's glen, the first offered by Darsie Latimer as he approaches it at night, the second when he leaves in the morning. Together they offer a dual impression, in particular of the Border clan almost totally dilapidated — an implicit explanation of the impossibility of a third Jacobite rebellion — in general of 'a part-symbolic, part-realistic presentation of the clan or "patriarchal" system, viewed in the most general historical terms.'¹⁴ These impressions are co-ordinated in Darsie's parting impression of the glen — a sweeping view following the brook that runs through it. The turbulent waters upstream, fed by a waterfall, convey the ancient clan system's natural, energetic spontaneity. But the ' "miserable huts" ' that lie downstream recall the misery and poverty inherent in the clan's operation and, by this stage, disintegration.

The Solway Dunes, which Darsie traverses after quitting the glen, have no historical significance. But, having met Joshua Geddes in this wasteland, he is conducted to the Quaker's abode. Garside states that 'From the start of the approach to Mount Sharon [...] there is a suggestion that a series of contrasts with the world of Redgauntlet's glen is intended.'¹⁵ He acknowledges that its garden is rendered in the ' "artificial" ' style approved of by Scott and Uvedale Price. The various components of the garden, together with Geddes' farming activities, conspire to create an

¹²Peter D. Garside, 'Redgauntlet and the Topography of Progress,' *Southern Review*, 10 (1977), 155–173 (p. 158).

¹³*ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 159).

¹⁴*ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 160).

¹⁵*ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 161).

impression of Mount Sharon as, for Scott, 'an embodiment of Augustan culture, a rural and intensified version of the New Town'.¹⁶ In this respect he focuses upon the waterfall and its brook, as contrasted with those previously described: 'Unlike Redgauntlet's it flows away from the estate, suggesting an obscuring and turning away of the instinctive and spontaneous.'¹⁷ Thus the artificial, claustrophobic world finally prompts Darsie's 'escapade with Wandering Willie, ending in a return to the "vital" world of Redgauntlet's glen.'¹⁸ This act of escape indicates the flaw in an ostensible haven that is in fact fundamentally arid and unnatural. Garside concludes that Mount Sharon offers more than a critical commentary upon Augustan values but 'At its sharpest point [...] stands as a concentrated miniature representation of Enlightenment Scotland. In the moral attitudes of Geddes, one can trace the "natural philosophy" of Hume and Smith, in Joshua's fishing and farming the economic theory of the *Wealth of Nations*, in the domestic routine of the house the social and cultural habits of Georgian Edinburgh.'¹⁹ Though Scott was raised in this environment, he feels detached from Mount Sharon, being, according to Garside, 'an essentially "nineteenth century" person'²⁰. Nor does he identify wholeheartedly with Darsie's ' "Romantic" – or "pre-Romantic" – terminology'²¹. In presenting Mount Sharon and Redgauntlet's glen he does nevertheless offer a broad vision of Classic vs. Romantic values, though he remains objective about both.

III.

After Garside there were no more significant temporal gaps in studies of Scott's landscapes. In his two pieces he tended to reiterate, albeit with new insights, aspects of the topic which had been previously discussed. Richard E. Johnson in "The Technique

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 162).

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 163).

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 163).

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 163–164).

²⁰ *ibid.*, 155–173 (p. 163).

²¹ *ibid.*

of *Embedding in Scott's Fiction*' (1978) inaugurated a new symbolic perception of landscape. His subject is ostensibly the way in which Scott interpolates short poems or subsidiary, self-contained tales into larger narratives. Dealing in particular with *Waverley*, *Rob Roy* and *Redgauntlet*, he also accords different geographical spaces distinct connotations, which lend a corresponding significance to the Waverley hero's movements between them. The city, be it London or Edinburgh represents the 'historical', the Highlands represents the 'mythic'. 'Structurally', says Johnson 'the mythic past is embedded in the center of the story, and once the hero's adventures in it are over, the context of those adventures naturally disappears from view.'²² But, as he also concedes, the mythic past does more than disappear upon the hero's return from it; rather it and its values are obliterated, in a manner conveyed objectively by the fate of characters and structures in the text. As Johnson states, their annihilation 'symbolizes the final victory in the hero of reason over romanticism.'²³ Drawing all these observations together in his conclusion, he applies them to Scott's alterations to the ballad of 'Thomas the Rhymer' in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Specifically he compares Scott's version of the ballad with the peregrinations of his Waverley heroes: like Edward Waverley or Francis Osbaldistone, "True Thomas" leaves the everyday world, enters a mythic realm and eventually returns from it. The "gift", that of prophecy, with which he returns, 'both transforms his relation to "the earth" and helps define his role in it.'²⁴ In the same way the Waverley hero's experiences in the Highlands enable him to live usefully and happily in the ordinary world, "the earth", to a far greater extent than he did before.

This symbolic juxtaposition of different geographical areas is a theme pursued by William Howard in 'The Symbolic Structure of *Rob Roy*' (1979). In a manner similar to Johnson, he states that Scott distinguishes between the wildness and lawlessness of the clan, apparent in its history, and the civilisation and cultivation

²²Richard E. Johnson, 'The Technique of Embedding in Scott's Fiction', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 14 (1979), 63-71 (p. 66).

²³*Ibid.*, 63-71 (p. 67).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 63-71 (p. 69).

prevailing in the Lowlands. MacGregor operates in an area that is neither Highland nor Lowland, stretching between Glasgow and the Highland line. This area, in its basic topography, encourages and enables his cattle rustling trade. It is, according to Howard, 'the core of the novel, not only because it was the location of Rob Roy's exploits, but because it embodied a conflict which Scott recognised was a universally crucial one.'²⁵ The conflict was one which arose at any point of penetration between wild, lawless tribes and civilised society. Thus Scott goes beyond local significance, invoking the names of contemporary figures such as Addison and Pope in order to illuminate the contrast inherent in the British Isles between Enlightenment writers and thinkers and a man such as Rob Roy, compared by him with the medieval, mythic Robin Hood – a contrast contained here within a single region.

As the seventies ended, symbolic landscape – landscape as metaphor – seemed to be the aspect that exclusively preoccupied writers on the subject. In 'Waverley, Freud and Topographical Metaphor' (1979) Martin Meisel first identifies a link between topography and historical development, pointing out that mountainous areas, such as the Highlands, tend to feel the effects of social and economic change sometime after the Lowlands and retain their native traditions. He ties this in with Hegel's proposition of a 'Geographical Basis of History'. Then, graduating to specifics, he calls *Waverley* 'the first of the great historical novels where history is made into landscape, the temporal into the topographic.'²⁶ In particular he sees Edward Waverley's journey north from Waverley-Honour to Glennaquoich as a journey back in time, an historical regression. The interjacent landscape thus forms the novel's historical and geographical setting and Meisel states that, 'Scott's essential literary terrain, the native heath where he could fully declare himself, was this borderland, whether between England and Scotland, the Lowlands and the Highlands, or the past and the present.'²⁷ Though disclaiming any notion of an attempt to demonstrate a

²⁵William Howard, 'The Symbolic Structure of *Rob Roy*', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 14 (1979), 72–82 (p. 74).

²⁶Martin Meisel, 'Waverley, Freud and Topographical Metaphor', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 48 (1979), 226–244 (p. 228).

²⁷*ibid.*, 226–244 (pp. 229–230).

direct influence of Scott upon Freud, Meisel then moves to a psychological perspective. Edward Waverley, upon departing Waverley-Honour, imagines himself to be leaving behind his romantic ideals, but upon entering the Highlands he finds himself in a solid, observable landscape as romantic as any of his previous visions, conjured within the seclusion of his uncle's estate and imposed upon it. 'In the Highlands proper,' Meisel observes 'where barrenness and monotony seem to alternate to his perception with a landscape of caves, pitted bogs, chasms, narrow glens between mountains, and moonlight effects – a landscape of the id – Waverley yields more and more to the romance of this reality.'²⁸ By the time he encounters the Chevalier in Edinburgh, he is hopelessly confused, no longer able to distinguish the real from his romantically delusive world. This 'ultimate confusion in Waverley's mental landscape', represents, according to Meisel, 'the ultimate failure of the ego as the perceiver and representative of the external reality to the self.'²⁹ Having said this Meisel finally returns to a historical perspective, combining the eclipse of reality by romance in Waverley's perception, with the irruption of Highlanders into the Lowlands and the theory of geographic temporality. As he concludes, 'it is, after all, an invasion of the present by the past, [...] the known and visible by the unknown and sequestered [...] Waverley, coming at last to Edinburgh, fairly seems to have sent his own confusion before him, set it loose in the outer world.'³⁰

As the 1980's begin topographical metaphors recur in Alistair Duckworth's 'Scott's Fiction and the Migration of Settings' (1980). Duckworth demotes the mediation of Scott's landscape descriptions through aesthetic theory in favour of 'the descriptive conventions he inherited.'³¹ Invoking Saussurean linguistics in illustration of this, he goes on to state that such descriptions (the parole) acquire meaning primarily in relation to a system of literary tradition which embraces poetry, fiction, travel books, essays, works of history and sociology (the langue). Specifically they

²⁸ *ibid.*, 226–244 (p. 233).

²⁹ *ibid.*, 226–244 (p. 235).

³⁰ *ibid.*, 226–244 (pp. 235–236).

³¹ Alistair Duckworth, 'Scott's Fiction and the Migration of Settings', *Scottish Literary Journal*, 7 (1980), 97–112 (p. 99).

contain codes of representation — 'a word or phrase, inherited from the literary tradition that is used to achieve certain effects.'³² In more extended passages these codes have a more complex function, containing a chain of 'signifiers' whose meaning is easily recognised. As an example he takes 'the association of sublime mountainous scenery with irrational behaviour',³³ pointing out that 'the whole tradition of the gothic novel (and not simply the fiction, say, of Mrs. Radcliffe) stands behind this.'³⁴ Having in fact returned to aesthetic theory, albeit associated with literary convention, he goes on to draw the distinction between the sublime connoting solitude and irrationality and the beautiful connoting society and rationality. 'As one might expect,' he states 'Scott historicizes this opposition, and, while allowing the sublime to exact its full emotional dues, he associates it with cultural atavism. The glens of the Western Highlands, culturally speaking, pre-date the traditional landscape at Willingham, which in turn, pre-dates the landscape of prosperity in the Thames valley.'³⁵ Here again, therefore, we have a vision of historicized landscape which recalls Meisel's Hegelian concept.

After this preoccupation with symbolic landscape we also had, in 1980, the first full-length book published on the subject, James Reed's *Sir Walter Scott: Landscape and Locality*. The inclusion of the word 'Locality' in the introduction is crucial, indicating that Reid takes as his subject more than the mere physical contours of the terrain and the features apparent in it. As he states in his introduction, 'My concern throughout is with the whole landscape: people, architecture, traditions, in so far as they enrich the tale being told.'³⁶ There is at times an inescapable impression, however, that these components of the 'whole' landscape are together usurping a substantial place in the author's attention, and there is little close analysis of descriptive passages. Reed also deals with certain of the novels only in passing. 'I do not believe', he confesses 'my approach can be profitably made to all of Scott's works, not even in any illuminating sense to all of his Scottish novels, and I have excluded from detailed

³²ibid., 97-112 (pp. 100-101).

³³ibid., 97-112 (p. 101).

³⁴ibid.

³⁵ibid., 97-112 (p.107).

³⁶James Reed, *Sir Walter Scott: Landscape and Locality* (London: Althone Press, 1980), p. 1.

consideration all works in which I felt that environmental factors did not play a major part.³⁷ One might, however, suggest that landscape and locality play a far more significant role in *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, *The Fair Maid of Perth* and *The Highland Widow* than Reed allows. The works of other critics on those titles has demonstrated this fact and the present discussion will hopefully do the same.

The dismissal of *Old Mortality*, in particular, seemed to be quite comprehensively refuted by Jennifer B. Fleischner's 'Class, Character and Landscape in *Old Mortality*' (1982). She succeeds in bringing together all three topics by identifying different attitudes to landscape entertained by characters at different points in the social scale: the Bellendens at one end, the insurgent Covenanters, composed of peasants, labourers and small farmers, at the other, with Henry Morton roughly in the centre as a representative of the emergent middle-class. The aristocratic perspective is exemplified by the view from Tillietudlum — a pleasing backdrop, cultivated but displaying no evidence of agricultural toil. Fleischner says of it, 'The creation of pastoral gentility, a nature that is civilised, seems intended to authorise aristocratic rule. The picturesque in nature supports the status quo in society.'³⁸ In contrast the Covenanters' more intimate, utilitarian relationship with the landscape is embodied in the image of them prepared for the Battle of Loudon-Hill armed with farming implements, amid a desolate terrain which, since their exile to such areas, has come to seem their natural habitat. To this end Fleischner observes, 'this intermingling of the military with the agrarian makes the notion of the insurgents' particular and extraordinary relationship with the land as soldiers inextricable from the view of them as peasants and landowners in their more usual and harmonious relationship with nature.'³⁹ These views merge in Henry Morton who first sees landscape only in personal terms similar to the aristocratic perspective but later, at Loudon-Hill in fact, comes to appreciate its public aspect. Upon his return from exile he is able to hold both

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Jennifer B. Fleischner, 'Class, Character and Landscape in *Old Mortality*', *Scottish Literary Journal*, 9 (1980), 21–36 (p. 25).

³⁹ *ibid.*, 21–36 (pp. 26–27).

these views simultaneously, since his 'matured perspective now sees the unified double vision of his private and public life in the landscape.'⁴⁰ However, from this unified vision emerges a new symbolic perception of landscape, that has both private and public significance, as demonstrated by Morton's journey towards his encounter with Burley: 'Looking at nature with nature's as well as his own eyes, Morton discovers the mystery in the landscape. In the vision of the clinging trees he finds a parable of the refugees of all the world's scattered tribes. And in the stream whose course runs through the decaying landscape, Morton sees a parable of the course of humankind through life towards death.'⁴¹

IV.

Since work on specific aspects of landscape in Scott's fiction seems to agglomerate spontaneously, it is unsurprising to find three articles in 1983, all of which returned to the issue of aesthetic theory with regard to his descriptive passages. In *Scott's Fiction and the Picturesque* (1983) Eric Walker is principally concerned with the historicising of the picturesque, citing the Introduction to *The Fortunes of Nigel* in which Scott refers to the most 'picturesque' period of history. According to Walker he regards the sudden contrasts of light and shade as a metaphor for the phase of a nation's history when old traditions are being superseded by new. Walker equates it with the artistic effect of chiaroscuro, stating that, 'An aesthetic established in painting and landscape art here structures a vision of history.'⁴² Walker exemplifies this statement with reference to Ravenswood Castle in Chapter II of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, located at the confluence of mountain and plain. He states, unexceptionably, that 'the central conflict in the human drama is generated between the fierce impetuosity of the noble Ravenswoods and the dubious urbanity of the upstart Ashtons.'⁴³ However from this he concludes that, 'The narratives that constitute this imaginative history can be read

⁴⁰*ibid.*, 21–36 (p. 33).

⁴¹*ibid.*, 21–36 (p. 35).

⁴²Eric Walker, *Scott's Fiction and the Picturesque*, Romantic Reassessment: Salzburg Studies in English Literature, 108 (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1982), pp. 22–24.

⁴³*ibid.* p. 32.

as an elaboration of the story's opening image.'⁴⁴ The image does certainly concretise a vision of two conflicting forces, but it is difficult to comprehend from where Walker draws the temporal distinction. Surely the Lammermoor Hills and Berwickshire Plain represent two equally aged forces, rather than one regressive and the other emergent.

While Walker addressed the significance of the term 'picturesque' in relation to history rather than simply pictorial representation, so Alexander Ross in 'Waverley and the Picturesque', from the collection *Scott and His Influence* (1983) attempted to do the same in relation to narrative. Both Scott himself and Lockhart regard 'picturesque' narrative as one in which pictorial detail does have a stake, but which is also composed of fast-moving historical action and the consequent emotions of the characters embroiled in it. In *Waverley* this definition is exemplified, according to Ross, by incidents such as the stag hunt, the military encounter at Prestonpans and the retreat at Derby. He then goes on to offer an account of the picturesque values, both scenic and narrative, that permeate the remainder of the narrative. In doing so he indirectly defends Edward Waverley by pointing out (as Martin Meisel did to a certain extent before) that the physical world through which he passes contains numerous truly picturesque components in the form of landscape, individual and architecture which would form a romantic impression upon even the most detached observer. Thus the picturesque emerges as an aesthetic category that not only reveals the hero's personality but, by extension, motivates the narrative. As Ross concludes, the picturesque, 'offered Scott an effective pictorial method whereby he could recapture the outward show and landscape of the 1745 insurrection and at the same time bring the hero by virtue of his impractical upbringing into the rebellion which, as Scott describes it, is a very real military campaign played out against an equally real landscape that lends itself very easily to picturesque representation.'⁴⁵

Meanwhile, in the same volume, Barton Thurber assesses Scott's relationship to another aesthetic category in 'Scott and the Sublime'. He is concerned principally

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 34.

⁴⁵ Alexander Ross, 'Waverley and the Picturesque', in *Scott and His Influence*, ed. by J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983), 99–108 (p. 107).

with politicising the Sublime. He regards it, during Morton's encounter with Burley at the Black Linn in *Old Mortality* as representing the romantic extremism of the Covenanters, a symbolism endorsed by the fact that extreme Protestant dissenters did indeed seek refuge in such wild, secluded locations. The purpose of the Sublime here is, according to Thurber, to make political history, 'otherwise an extraordinarily abstract idea'⁴⁶, physical, in broadly the same manner as the location of Ravenswood Castle purportedly made physical the narrative premise of *The Bride of Lammermoor*: 'The romantic chasm becomes, therefore, an unforgettable image of a certain moment in Scottish political history. In a sense it is actually that moment, since there is so little difference between the physical setting and the metaphysical causalities that it resonates with.'⁴⁷ Thurber sees Scott's ability to utilise sublime landscape in this way as owing to the influence upon him of Hugh Blair, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh University, who placed the sublime in a specifically Scottish context and focused upon the sublimity of objects in the past, lent that aspect 'through a mist of distance or antiquity.'⁴⁸

This possibly gave Scott the inspiration to create, from sublime landscape, an objective correlative of events in Scottish history, as exemplified by the episode from *Old Mortality*, in addition to others ascribed by Thurber, including Edward Waverley's journey through the sublime pass of Bally Brough and subsequent visit to Donald Bean Lean's cave (both of which, through the figure of the Highland cateran, associated with Fergus Mac-Ivor and, by extension, Prince Charles Edward, connect him with the historical events of the '45) and Lady Staunton's encounter with her son by the waterfall in *The Heart of Midlothian* (The child, being also George Robertson's, who led the Porteous riots principally because he wished to liberate its mother, imprisoned for infanticide, from the Tolbooth, is thus, as Thurber says, 'the emblem of concerns public as well as personal.'⁴⁹) He concludes that, 'throughout his fiction it is the

⁴⁶Barton Thurber, 'Scott and the Sublime', in *Scott and His Influence*, ed. by J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983), 87-98 (p. 90).

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 87-98 (p. 89).

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 87-98 (p. 94).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 87-98 (p. 95).

sublime — harnessed, made articulate, known — that gave flesh to history, allowing Scott to speak the unspeakable in a new and striking way.⁵⁰

After this group of articles on aesthetic theory we see another, apparently spontaneous shift on behalf of Scott scholars back to symbolic landscape: topographic image and metaphor most often illuminating characterisation. Indeed this would appear, with aesthetic theory, to be the aspect of landscape most frequently discussed by modern critics. Again, in *Scott and His Influence*, Jana Davis examines 'Landscape Images and Epistemology in *Guy Mannering*.' Though she does refer to 'picturesque and sublime landscapes'⁵¹, her emphasis is upon terrain, obscured by various phenomena and climatic conditions that symbolise the limited knowledge possessed by those who contemplate them, most often the perpetually mystified hero Harry Bertram. In her analysis of the opening scene, in which the titular character rides uncertainly towards Kippletringan, she in fact dismisses the sublime, or at least the emotions popularly associated with it, in favour of an emphasis upon the unease inculcated by partial disclosure, saying that, the 'emphasis upon difficulties of perception is characteristic of the novel's landscapes: They provide a series of exemplary instances of limited, deceptive, or contingent perceptions which demonstrate the difficulty of knowing an obscured external reality.'⁵² The instance most clearly related to landscape is of the snow which blankets the Ellangowan estate. In discussing it, Davis invokes the name of the Scottish Common-Sense philosopher Thomas Reid, who believed in the essential reliability of our perceptions of external reality. Scott places in his fiction episodes during which that reality is obscured in precisely the way that Reid identified, but, '*Guy Mannering*'s images suggest that Scott is far less confident than Reid of the knowability of this underlying reality.'⁵³ Thus Davis, as she repeatedly states, sees *Mannering* and Bertram as embroiled in situations where the natural environment

⁵⁰*ibid.*, 87–98 (p. 97).

⁵¹Jana Davis, 'Landscape Images and Epistemology in *Guy Mannering*', in *Scott and His Influence*, ed. by J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983), 119–128 (p. 119).

⁵²*ibid.*, 119–128 (p. 121).

⁵³*ibid.*, 119–128 (p. 123).

externalises the confusion under which they labour. But ultimately landscape is not always obscured and disorientating. The Point of Warroch, where the infant Bertram was kidnapped, finally dispels the mental mists which have occluded Bertram's recollection since that crime's commission, objectified in the climatic conditions he has experienced. As she concludes, 'The past is transformed by the revelation of its true circumstances, allowing the reinstatement of Bertram and the punishment of the criminals. The circular pattern extends to the accompanying images: the scene of the crime, recalled throughout, becomes the setting for revelation and punishment, giving shape and completion to the imagery and plot.'⁵⁴

This method of analysing characters through their relationship to their environment persisted in Graham Tulloch's 'Imagery in *The Highland Widow*' (1986). The images associated with Elspat MacTavish ostensibly serve only to convey her bond with the landscape. They are principally her identification as 'Woman of the Tree' and the absorption of her dwelling into the ground, though the details of the latter are perhaps not examined to the extent that they might be. However there is a far more complex procedure being pursued through the narrative in this respect. Both Elspat and the narrator exploit the same imagery of animals, birds, hills, clouds. But they do so to different ends: she to reinforce her bond with both the topography and traditions of the Highlands, he to reveal the limits of her feral, instinctive behaviour and the violent lawlessness implicit in the traditional life to which she subscribes. Ultimately, when combined with the views expressed by her son, the conflicting imagery attains a purpose beyond simply exposing Elspat's erroneous attitudes, to present a vision of the narrative's social and political context. It can thus 'be seen as supporting a complex but consistent view of historical change in the Highlands [...]' What the imagery does is remind us that there is, here, no simple endorsement of the present and rejection of the past, but a complex attempt to sort out what is good and bad in both past and present.'⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 119–128 (pp. 127–128).

⁵⁵ Graham Tulloch, 'Imagery in *The Highland Widow*', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 21 (1986), 147–157 (p. 156).

Concluding this trend, imagery is also the preoccupation of the most recent article on landscape and Scott, B. J. Tysdahl's 'Unifying and Disruptive Imagery in *Old Mortality*' from a third collection, *Scott in Carnival* (1993). Tysdahl traces the development of various recurrent images and extended metaphors, identifying the issues which they gradually define. They provide, 'an implicit commentary on war and peace, and on the nature of time and eternity,'⁵⁶ which is 'seen in descriptions of landscape, in dialogue, and in the preaching of the Covenanters.'⁵⁷ However, true analysis of landscape description is relatively scarce. Like Jana Davis, Tysdahl contemplates the view from the battlefield of Tillietudlum in order to demonstrate, not class divisions, but the opposition of 'martial versus agricultural values'.⁵⁸ The developing significance of a word such as 'plough' is traced to demonstrate the thematic movement of the novel from discord towards peace in a pastoral context at its conclusion. As an implement it again emphasises the link between the Covenanters and their environment, but in the early stages it is used as a weapon whereas, in the final chapter, 'it is prominent again, and now in its simple, elementary sense: it is as if it had been cleansed, in the course of the story, of the slag of perverted usage.'⁵⁹ With respect to this final chapter, Tysdahl also focuses upon the landscape itself to demonstrate what he calls 'the most important development in imagery in this part of the novel' which 'highlights a shift in what we might call the 'deep structure''.⁶⁰ Landscape imagery now conveys the mythic pattern of the narrative in its closing stages, thus preventing it from appearing too blandly pastoral – a charge often levelled at it. In particular Morton's apparently arbitrary blunder into the Clyde is seen as constituting part of a symbolic pattern of events. Tysdahl calls it 'one of Morton's visits to Hades, or his 'death by water', from which he returns to life.'⁶¹ The others, in which he also

⁵⁶B.J. Tysdahl, 'Unifying and Disruptive Imagery in *Old Mortality*', in *Scott in Carnival*, ed. by J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Aberdeen Literary Studies, 1993), 172–183 (p. 172).

⁵⁷*ibid.*, 172–183 (p. 173).

⁵⁸*ibid.*, 172–183 (p. 176).

⁵⁹*ibid.*, 172–183 (p. 177).

⁶⁰*ibid.*, 172–183 (p. 180).

⁶¹*ibid.*, 172–183 (p. 181).

prevails, are the shipwreck in which he is involved en route to exile in Holland and his emergence from the Black Linn after his encounter with Burley. In conclusion Tysdahl identifies a marked change in narrative mode, detectable in landscape imagery, from the 'biblical and linear' to the 'classical and cyclical' which enable the final chapters to 'unite the idyllic with the earthly.'⁶²

V.

Coming, to an extent, full circle, one sees in the 1980's, as in the 1960's, a number of books which, though ostensibly preoccupied with other topics, contain much useful criticism of landscape in Scott. Jane Millgate's *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (1984), in the course of describing Scott's creation of a new fictive genre out of existing romance conventions, identifies the way in which it is also created, in part, out of historical and regional detail. This blend of literary precedent, specifically the pastoral, with the regional, is displayed by Dandie Dinmont's farm, Charlieshope, and the surrounding area of Liddiesdale. She commends Scott's presentation of this pastoral haven tempered by regional detail, demonstrating the way in which it is gradually prepared for from the moment when Bertram departs the Lake District. On his journey the landscape becomes localised and acquires historical associations. As Millgate observes, 'The mountains are no longer generalised scenery; they have names — Skiddaw and Saddleback — and a meditation on the Roman Wall and the fall of ancient civilisations quickly gives way to the prompting of hunger that lead Bertram into "a small public house."⁶³ In the public house he meets Dandie Dinmont and eventually accompanies him to his farm, Charlieshope, through a region that is composed of very distinct physical features and has its own history, memorialised in ruined Border fortresses and balladry. Her praise of Charlieshope is not however also apportioned to the Roseneath section of *The Heart of Midlothian*. Whereas the temporal and geographical specificity of the former 'gives historical substance to the

⁶²ibid.

⁶³Jane Millgate, *Sir Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 71.

deployment of pastoral interlude',⁶⁴ the latter, no less specifically located, is seen by her to 'conform more closely to the simple contrastive pattern of the traditional pastoral than to the more complex strategies of the historicised pastoral.'⁶⁵ By presenting the final volume as undiluted pastoral, disturbed only by 'faint historical ripples', she dismisses Avrom Fleischman's view that the incursive forces in *Roseneath* are more than just 'traditional pastoral figures.'⁶⁶

Regionalism is also addressed by W. J. Keith as a distinct component of Scott's innovation in literature. His 1988 book *Regions of the Imagination: The Development of British Rural Fiction* develops its discussion of Scott from a biographical perspective, focusing upon his Border upbringing and the area's interfusion of landscape and associated legends. This, according to Keith, gave Scott the inspiration for 'a rich fictional formula — 'romantic' events set against 'real' landscapes — that initiated a strong tradition within the regional novel'.⁶⁷ Furthermore the Borders not only provided Scott with a vision of an historicised region, but also structured the narratives of his novels. Thus many of them, such as *The Black Dwarf*, *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *Redgauntlet* are founded upon Border conflicts, while in others there is nevertheless a sense of disjunction between two landscapes, two ways of life, most often Highland and Lowland, as William Horwood recognised. Examining, in this respect, Edward Waverley's journey from Tully Veolan to Glennaquoich, Keith describes it as a move 'out of the world of Maria Edgeworth into that of Ann Radcliffe'⁶⁸, thus concurring with Alistair Duckworth's notion of literary conventions being just as important as pictorial ones in the composition of Scott's landscape passages. He goes on to identify further Radcliffian elements in the pass of Bally-Brough and Flora Mac-Ivor's waterfall. Recalling the work of Martin Meisel, he sees the former location as demonstrating that 'the romantic Highland landscapes are

⁶⁴ibid., p. 163.

⁶⁵ibid.

⁶⁶ibid.

⁶⁷W. J. Keith, *Regions of the Imagination: The Development of British Rural Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 24.

⁶⁸ibid., p. 33.

beyond the reach of maps. If we believe them at all, they provide no more than a dream-landscape'⁶⁹ – the landscape of the id, in other words. Meanwhile the latter illuminates the problems of reconciling romantic scenes with real geography, the resolution to which problem is found in *Guy Mannering*, with 'the generalised, "picturesque" ' ⁷⁰ manner of *Waverley* being succeeded by a more 'controlled, documentary quality.'⁷¹ He goes on to identify the increasing unification of landscape and character in Scott's novels, focusing, in particular, upon the way that the moor across which Morton is led before the battle of Loudon-Hill is viewed not from a romantic sublime but a regional perspective, concerned with the locals' difficulties in combating the ' "disadvantages of climate and soil." '⁷² Similarly, in *Rob Roy*, the distinct reactions to landscape expressed by the titular character and Nicol Jarvie indicate their respective personalities, while in *A Legend of Montrose* Dugald Dalgetty's preoccupation precludes any appreciation of the picturesque. 'In these effects,' says Keith, 'Scott has completely integrated his landscapes and his characters.'⁷³ His discussion of regionalism in Scott concludes in an examination of *The Bride of Lammermoor* which, he states, boasts a wholly imagined but vivid world. None of its specific features – Ravenswood Castle, Wolf's Hope and the ruined tower, the Mermaiden's Well and the Kelpie's Flow – is real, as W. S. Crockett confessed. But all combine to exude a powerful sense of locality. It is, in other words, 'a region of the imagination existing in the mind as a separate fictive realm'.⁷⁴

Examining the attention accorded to the subject of the Scottish landscape in the *Waverley* novels, we can trace a development from populist surveys to detailed critical analysis. This corresponds to the way in which the edifice of Scott, mighty in his time and through the rest of the nineteenth century, crumbled in the early twentieth only to be erected once again, albeit on a far smaller scale, out of new materials and by

⁶⁹ibid., p. 34.

⁷⁰ibid., p. 36.

⁷¹ibid.

⁷²ibid., p. 37.

⁷³ibid., p. 38.

⁷⁴ibid., p. 39.

markedly different craftsmen several decades later. When the reconstruction first took place landscape had only relative importance and was most often subsumed beneath other topics, esteemed more worthy of attention. The bicentenary year was crucial in this respect. Thereafter landscape asserted itself as a principal topic of papers, journal articles and, in one case, a full-length book. As it did so certain areas of preoccupation began to manifest themselves. Indeed the present view of the subject would appear to be divided into two broad categories: aesthetic theories and topographic metaphors. The following discussion will invoke both in a more comprehensive survey of the role of the Scottish landscape in the Scottish historical novels than any hitherto attempted. It will review Scott's life and search his autobiographical writings for new insights into his experiences of his native landscape, his sentiments towards it and the way in which these influenced its presentation in his novels. It will embrace existing theories of landscape's historical function while disclosing new ones. It will scrutinise the haunted places previously identified, draw fresh comparisons between them and propound a process of 'supernaturalisation' common to all. It will recapitulate the aesthetic theories that influenced Scott and his attitude to them, going on to demonstrate how they were underpinned, at times even amplified, in his fiction by a profound sense of utility. It will reveal a new narratological significance for landscape description, specifically the extent to which such passages can retard or hasten the pace of the narrative, the fact that they are never entirely static. It will address the familiar relationship between characters and their environment, but elaborate particular categories into which they may be placed. Finally, it will challenge the assumption that Scott's landscape descriptions, in common with the rest of his powers, declined utterly towards the end of his career. It will attempt, overall, to forge subtle links between the aforementioned topics, demonstrating how they cast a contrastive significance upon one another. In doing all this it will address not only the major titles, but those less often discussed.

CHAPTER ONE
LANDSCAPE AND BIOGRAPHY

I.

Though born in Edinburgh, in 1771, amid the dismal and insalubrious surroundings of the College Wynd, a narrow alley that formed the principal entrance to the old buildings of the College of Edinburgh, Walter Scott came to consciousness and accumulated his first memories in an altogether different environment. In spring 1773, at the age of about eighteen months, in order to combat what his parents could not at the time have realised was an attack of poliomyelitis, he was sent just over thirty miles south east of the capital to Sandy Knowe in Roxburghshire. The farm of his grandfather, Robert Scott, Sandy Knowe was set among a wind scoured Border landscape composed of gently undulating hills, punctuated by numerous rocky outcrops. In the distance it was bounded on three sides by much larger hills: the Lammermuirs to the north, the Cheviots to the south-east, the Eildons to the west. This near encirclement served to isolate the Borders from the rest of the country and to preserve its consequently distinct traditions, a preservation which Scott would himself make permanent in his first literary venture.

This early environment also stimulated and gradually confirmed Scott's taste for landscape that was not only visually attractive, (or, failing that, not *even* visually attractive) but rich in historical and supernatural tradition. He could scarcely have wished for a landscape more deeply suffused with such qualities than the one which surrounded him in his infancy. As Edgar Johnson notes:

All this Border country was haunted and historic ground. Within those Bildon Hills, the child was told, Thomas the Rhymer, whose home had been in nearby Ercildoune, had been imprisoned by the Queen of the Fairies. At sunset their lengthening shadows bathed the blue-gray ruins of Melrose Abbey, within whose chapel lies the wizard's tomb. Farther down the Tweed, in a smooth and lazy loop of the river, glowed the pinkish orange sandstone of Dryburgh Abbey, embowered among the dark green of its ancient yews. A little farther still, almost facing each other across the stream, were Mertoun, the seat of the Scotts of Harden, and Lessudden, the home of the Scotts of Raeburn, elder branches of the great Scott clan to which Wattie's family belonged. Not far to the south was Lilliard's Edge, named for a Scottish maiden heroine who had fought and died there in the battle of Ancrum Moor. From a rocky eminence four miles north of

Smailholm frowned the blackened ruins of Hume Castle, a thirteenth-century fortress captured and destroyed by Cromwell in 1651.¹

But before it was to determine his taste in landscape and thus create an important aspect of his personality, both as tourist and artist, the Border country performed its more immediate function of repairing young Walter's constitution. Carried out and laid in the fields around Sandy Knowe, under the vigilant gaze of Sandy Ormiston, the cow bailie, he soon began to exercise his afflicted limb, first crawling, then walking over the grassy slopes and seeming in the process to absorb renewed health with the fresh air which he inhaled. As he later observed in the 'Ashestiel' memoir, an autobiographical fragment written in a later border dwelling, 'I who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude was now a healthy, high-spirited and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child.'² However, the Border landscapes in which he was cradled not only granted him the stamina with which to traverse others but taught him how to look at them. He was aided in this education principally by his grandmother, 'in whose youth the old border depredations were matter of recent tradition.'³ Her instruction deepened and enriched his vision of the surrounding landscape. It also confirmed another aspect of his personality – fearlessness. Not only is he reported to have displayed a precocious indifference to, indeed enthusiasm for, tumultuous natural phenomena, lying forgotten once among the knolls as a baby, clapping his hands captivatedly at flashes of lightning, but, as a six year old on a later visit, he rode a dwarf Shetland pony round the rocky acclivities of the tower of Smailholm, much to the consternation of his Aunt Janet.

It can be seen, therefore, that, though dispatched to the Borders purely for the sake of his health, Scott received many more subtle influences from the area once that health was assured. Referring to his sojourn in Kelso with Aunt Janet in 1783, Scott claims to have conceived his devotion to landscape then, though the indefatigably sceptical John Sutherland questions whether a boy of eleven could display such sensitivity:

¹ Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown*, 2 vols (London: Hamilton, 1970), pp. 9-10.

² David Hewitt ed., *Scott on Himself: A Selection of the Autobiographical Writings of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1981), p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

'The idea that he could have had these essentially adult and precociously romantic responses to landscape is hard to credit.'⁴ Yet surely, given the circumstances of his upbringing and the influences to which he was exposed, such a response, though unusual, is not impossible, as he so eloquently recalls it:

The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind naturally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of landscape around me and the historical incidents or the traditional legends connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time my love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion...⁵

It was the fulfilling of this passion which inaugurated the adolescent Scott's career, modest at first, as a tourist, albeit after several more spells, for the sake of his health at Sandy Knowe, and trips to Prestonpans and Bath, both in the company of his Aunt Janet. During his first period at Edinburgh University, from 1783 to mid-1786, with his closest friend from Edinburgh High School, John Irving (1770-1850), he scrambled every Saturday over Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, Blackford Hill or the Braid Hills. Often becoming entangled in some inaccessible nook, Scott seemed to entertain an almost fanatical desire to test his agility and defy his lameness in extricating himself without the help of his companion. Such brief crises no doubt inculcated in him the sense of drama which his characters were later to share when struggling over similarly rugged spots.

As time went on, the friends wandered further in their rambles, exploring all the castles within a ten mile radius of the capital and walking to the villages of Roslin and Cramond. The object of these often fatiguing ventures, for Scott at least, had been determined by the richly historicised Border landscape of his childhood:

My principal object in these excursions was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery or what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events. The delight with which

⁴John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 25.

⁵*Scott on Himself*, p. 29.

I regarded the former of course had general approbation, but I often found it difficult to procure sympathy with the interest I felt in the latter. Yet to me there was as much pleasure in wandering over the field of Bannockburn as in gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling castle. I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary few delighted more in its general effect [...] But shew me an old castle or a field of battle and I was at home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and overwhelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description.⁶

Such excursions were therefore as much literary as physical exercises, with Scott also flexing his descriptive muscles, discovering the power that inhered in carefully chosen words. His early fellow tourists represented his first audience and the intrigued attention which he was able to elicit from them augured well for the reaction of their infinitely more numerous successors:

In crossing Magus Moor near St. Andrews, the spirit moved me to give a picture of the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews to some fellow-travellers with whom I was accidentally associated and one of them though well acquainted with the story protested my narrative had frightened away his night's sleep. I mention this to show the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery.⁷

Despite this distinction, however, Scott, in his youth displayed an infallible ability to absorb himself as thoroughly in the romance of a setting as in that of a narrative and sometimes in both simultaneously. Ensnared in a snug nook in Salisbury Crags during those early expeditions with Irving, he read voraciously – Spenser, Ariosto, Boiardo – thus, as he raised his head from the book in his hands, exchanging a chronicle of knight errantry for the green landscape all around, the vista of the city, and the shining Forth beyond, he no doubt felt enveloped in a total romantic spell. Later, as he himself says, ‘wood, water, wilderness itself had an inexpressible charm for me and I had a dreaming way of going much further than I intended so that unconsciously my return was protracted and my parents had sometimes serious cause of uneasiness.’⁸

⁶ibid., p. 37.

⁷ibid.

⁸ibid., p. 36.

II.

Exasperated as Scott's father, a Writer to the Signet, often was by his son's failure to reappear from such excursions until late at night, he was soon to give him the chance to extend them, albeit in a professional capacity. After his first spell at Edinburgh University, Scott three years later became apprenticed to his father, and began to work in his legal practice. Much of the time he was confined to the office, toiling through a new and altogether different landscape – 'the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances'⁹ as he put it – but his father's acquaintance with many Highland clients enabled him to penetrate for the first time the wild northern region, which held for him, unsurprisingly, a powerful romantic allure. In the autumn of 1786 he was invited for a visit by one of those clients, Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle, whose estates lay in Argyll. An old Jacobite who had been 'out', as Mr. Scott would euphemistically have put it, in both 1715 and 1745, his tales of those days had kept Walter agog as a boy. During the first stage of the journey to Invernahyle, he paused on the Wicks of Baigle to survey the Vale of Perth, with the Grampian mountains rearing up in the distance. 'A northern screen' he called them, in accordance with tenets of the Picturesque, when, many years later, toward the end of his career, he recollected the prospect in the persona of Chrystal Croftangry, the narrator of *The Fair Maid of Perth*:

I recollect pulling up the reins without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me as if I had been afraid it would shift like those in a theatre before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real.¹⁰

But, as impressed as Scott always was by such natural scenery, he found that he could not satisfactorily commit that impression to canvas. His attempts to do so began

⁹ibid., p. 32.

¹⁰Sir Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), I, 19

about 1785 and were later conducted under the tutelage of his friend, William Clerk.¹¹ As he himself states in the 'Ashestiel' memoir:

...I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other or to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect. I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety though my latter studies have led me to amend and arrange my original ideas upon the subject. Even the humble ambition which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me from some defect of eye or of hand was totally ineffectual. After long study and many efforts I was unable to apply the elements of perspective or of shade to the scene before me and was obliged to relinquish in despair an art which I was most anxious to practise.¹²

It is interesting to note the vocabulary which Scott employs here: 'dissect [...], comprehend [...], amend [...], arrange [...], defect [...], study [...], apply [...], elements.' He is invoking vaguely scientific terms to try to comprehend a skill that is predominantly intuitive. In attempting to 'dissect' the scene into its various parts he is thus substituting a systematic process for creative impulse. Gifted so prodigiously in one area, Scott could not accept the absence of ability in another as frustrating but commonplace; it had rather to be a 'defect' of some kind, capable of correction through constant practice, just as his infant lameness had been overcome. Yet those analytical skills which he attempted to apply to painting stood him in excellent stead when it came to a related activity in which he was most certainly gifted: verbal pictorial description. They enabled him to pinpoint the salient features of a scene, and place them carefully in relation to one another with a true sense of imaginative perspective. His failed attempts as an artist also taught him to describe directly from nature, thus preserving its variety, rather than from imagination, which, however vivid, tends to be equipped with a few stock vistas, or from paintings, which, as a source, tend to produce the static, varnished prospects favoured by Ann

¹¹William Clerk (1771-1847) came from a remarkably artistic family. His father, John Clerk of Eldin, was an accomplished etcher and his uncle, Sir James Clerk, possessed a notable picture collection at Penicuik House.

¹²*Scott on Himself*, p. 37.

Radcliffe among others. Years later, when J. B. S. Morritt of Rokeby¹³ was amused by the diligence with which his guest noted down the details of a specific scene while Scott was staying with him at his vast Yorkshire property, the latter observed:

“that in nature herself no two scenes were exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes, would possess some variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded; whereas – whoever trusted to imagination, would soon find his own mind circumscribed, and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would sooner or later produce that very monotony and barrenness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patent worshippers of truth.”¹⁴

As Lockhart later stated, Scott’s descriptions were ‘equally remote from the barren generalizations of a former age, and the dull servile fidelity with which so many inferior writers of our time fill in both background and foreground, having no more notion of the perspective of genius than Chinese paperstainers have of that of the atmosphere, and producing in fact not descriptions but inventories.’¹⁵ The very selectivity which Lockhart identifies and praises might never have been so fully achieved had it not been for Scott’s struggles to produce artistic renderings of scenes which had inspired him.

During his Highland trips, Scott’s omnivorous memory was, even at this relatively early age, amassing a huge fund of anecdotes of the ’15 and ’45, imparted to him by Invernahyle and others. Not only that but he was beholding the very locations where they occurred, such as the cave in which the aforementioned gentleman claimed to have eluded English troops after the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

On another occasion, Invernahyle’s kinsman, Stewart of Ardsheal and Appin, wished to eject some contumacious tenants, the Maclarens of Invernenty from his lands at Balquhiddier, at the east end of Loch Voil. Armed with a summons of removal and

¹³John Bacon Sawrey Morritt (1772-1847) was an independently wealthy M.P. and scholar, owner of Rokeby Park in Yorkshire.

¹⁴John Gibson Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott Bart.*, 5 vols (London: Macmillan, 1900), II, 232-233.

¹⁵*ibid.*, I, 106-107.

accompanied by a sergeant and six men from a Stirling regiment, the young Scott rode stoutly over the Trossachs and round Loch Katrine, being diverted all the time by the sergeant's tales of Rob Roy MacGregor. These, incidentally, were supplemented some years later, in March 1793, when Scott, by this time a qualified advocate called to the Bar the previous July, visited a fellow student from University, George Abercromby (1770–1843), later Lord Abercromby, in the company of another, Adam Ferguson. Abercromby's grandfather, Mr. Abercromby of Tullibody, described to his guests an encounter with a Highland cateran who received him in a cave hung with carcasses of his own cattle and persuaded him to assure the future safety of his herd by paying protection money to the MacGregor. Like many of the earliest anecdotes collected by Scott, this one was destined for inclusion, not in his narrative of *Rob Roy*, but in his first novel, *Waverley*. Similarly, in July of the same year Scott and William Clerk, visited relations of the latter, the Rattrays, at their seat of Craighall Rattray in Perthshire. The manor and the adjoining village clearly made a profound impression upon Scott, so much so that, years later still, Clerk, reading the description of Edward Waverley's arrival at Tully Veolan, immediately identified the anonymous novel as the work of his old friend and erstwhile travelling companion.

Despite the opportunities now afforded him through his apprenticeship to observe new scenes, hear new tales, encounter new personalities, Scott continued throughout this period and his subsequent University career (1789–1792), to ramble far and wide on weekend and long vacations purely for pleasure, now in the company of fellow trainee lawyers, prompting his father to acidly observe, ‘ “ I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better than a *gangrel scrape gut* ” ’ (a vagrant fiddler).¹⁶

Nor had he by any means forsaken his beloved Borders. Soon after his admission to the Bar he was introduced to Robert Shortreed, the Sheriff-Substitute of Roxburghshire, by his friend Charles Kerr, Shortreed's cousin and the original of Darsie Latimer in *Redgauntlet*. In the company of Shortreed, who possessed a detailed knowledge of the area, Scott made the first of his seven ‘raids’ into Liddesdale over the

¹⁶*ibid.*, I, 128.

next seven years, collecting the materials from which his first literary success, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders*, was composed. Reminiscing many years later, in 1829, Scott wrote: 'Heard of the death of poor Bob Shortreed the companion of many a long ride among the hills in quest of old ballads. He was a merry companion, a good singer and mimick and full of Scottish drollery. In his company and under his guidance I was able to see much of rural society in the mountains which I could not otherwise have attain'd and which I have made my use of.'¹⁷ By the end of this period, in 1799, he had endured one unhappy love affair with Williamina Belsches, daughter of M.P. and baronet John Belsches, later wife of the banker William Forbes, and had, soon after, married Charlotte Carpenter. The beginning of the new century saw him established with his wife and eldest surviving child, Sophia, in a house at 39 North Castle Street, Edinburgh and, in the summer, in a small country house at Lasswade, on the River Esk, earning a substantial income in the capital as an advocate and as Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire.

III.

In the summer of 1804, by which time the *Minstrelsy* had already appeared and his first wholly original work, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was only a few months away from publication, Scott leased Ashestiel, something of a hybrid structure, part farm, part manor house, which stood high on a wooded bank above the Tweed, six miles from Selkirk. The steepness of the bank and the fact that it was densely populated with ash trees lent his new home its name, 'stiel' or 'steel' meaning steep. The property was formerly owned by Scott's uncle, Colonel William Russel. Scott leased it, in the absence of Colonel Russel's son, who was serving in India, for the sum of £325 a year. Its surroundings are evoked most succinctly by Lockhart:

On one side, close under the windows, is a deep ravine, clothed with venerable trees, down which a mountain rivulet is heard, more than seen, in its progress to the Tweed. The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest

¹⁷*The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by W.E.K. Anderson (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 584.

verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose. The heights immediately behind are those which divide the Tweed from the Yarrow; and the latter celebrated stream lies within an easy ride, in the course of which the traveller passes through a variety of the finest mountain scenery in the south of Scotland.¹⁸

This description of Ashestiel once again illustrates the natural features which possessed the greatest attraction for Scott. Rivers and streams, so vivid and pervasive an element in his fictive landscapes, tended to flow by or very near to all his Border dwellings. And there is the sheltered geography of the ravine, reminiscent of his early surroundings and of Roseneath in *The Heart of Midlothian*, an idyll, ostensibly cut off from the historicised world without, as Chapter One will demonstrate.

The property was also ideal for Scott in that it was set amid a landscape dense with historical and supernatural associations. To the west there was Minchmoor, which had supported the tread of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, in flight from the Battle of Philiphaugh, near Selkirk on 13th September 1645, where his forces were finally defeated by Covenanters under the command of David Leslie. Slightly further off, in Peeblesshire, were Manor and Holms, supposedly haunted by Merlin Sylvestris, called by W. S. Crockett 'the weird, half-crazed Minstrel of Upper Tweeddale.'¹⁹ The tower of Elibank stood upstream, once home of Muckle-Mou'd Meg, the ugliest daughter of the Treasurer Depute of Scotland, Gideon Murray. Scott's grandfather, William Scott, had been forced to marry her on pain of death, a misalliance which greatly amused the young Walter and, he suspected, accounted for his own congenitally broad top lip.

Due to its seclusion, Ashestiel was rather inaccessible. The nearest road passed three miles away, connecting Selkirk with Edinburgh. To reach Ashestiel from this main road one was obliged to cross a ford, a crossing which became uncertain, indeed perilous, when the Tweed was in flood. Yet this potential hazard enabled Scott to indulge a passion

¹⁸Lockhart, I, 370.

¹⁹W.S. Crockett, *The Scott Country*, 4th edn (London: Adam and Charles Black), p. 230.

which he seemed to retain throughout his life for hurling himself into preferably turbid waters. As J. A. Skene²⁰, quoted by Lockhart, notes:

"The ford of Ashestiel was never a good one, and for some time after this it remained not a little perilous. He was himself the first to attempt the passage on his favourite black horse *Captain*, who had scarcely entered the river when he plunged beyond his depth, and had to swim to the other side with his burden. It requires a good horseman to swim a deep and rapid stream, but he trusted to the vigour of his steady trooper, and in spite of his lameness kept his saddle manfully."²¹

The final phrase perhaps holds the key to understanding Scott's fondness for such aquatic adventures and indeed all his strenuous outdoor exertions. The man, just like the child who, according to Lockhart, is supposed to have scaled the face of rock up to Edinburgh Castle for a dare, conscious of his infirmity, felt compelled to prove himself braver than all his able bodied contemporaries. A similarly handicapped writer, Lord Byron, shared Scott's fondness for such aquatic adventures, as Peter Quennel records: 'He found water a friendly medium which gratified his liking for speed and desire for power. On land he moved awkwardly and was aware of his handicap; but, when he swam, his deformity was not preceptible. The limbs that balked at a dance floor could traverse the Hellespont; he was daring and self-confident, strong and envied.'²²

Even as late as 1827 Scott was still indulging in reckless immersions, as his *Journal* indicates: 'I found myself on horseback and in front of a roaring torrent. I plunged in as I have formerly done in good sad earnest and got to the other side.'²³ This compulsion informed his art as well as his life (in *Old Mortality* alone, both Henry Morton and John Balfour of Burley are immersed in the Clyde) and sometimes even imperilled his friends. As Skene again observes:

²⁰James Skene of Rubislaw (1775-1864) was an Aberdeenshire Laird who, like Scott, attended the Edinburgh High School. They shared a passion for German literature, and for horsemanship, Skene joining the Edinburgh Light Horse which Scott formed in 1797.

²¹Lockhart, I, 417.

²²Peter Quennel, *Byron: The Years of Fame, Byron in Italy* (London: William Collins, 1974), p. 286.

²³*Journal*, p. 348.

"He had an amazing fondness for fords, and was not a little adventurous in plunging through, whatever might be the state of the flood, and this even though there happened to be a bridge in view. If it seemed possible to scramble through, he scorned to go ten yards about, and in fact preferred the ford; and it is to be remarked, that most of the heroes of his tales seem to have been endued with similar propensities — even the White Lady of Avenel delights in the ford. He sometimes even attempted them on foot, though his lameness interfered considerably with his progress among the slippery stones. Upon one occasion of this sort I was assisting him through the Ettrick, and we had got upon some tottering stone in the middle of the stream, when some story about a *kelpie* occurring to him, he must needs stop and tell it with all his usual vivacity — and then laughing heartily at his own joke, he slipped his foot, or the stone shuffled beneath him, and down he went headlong into the pool, pulling me after him. We escaped, however, with no worse than a thorough drenching and the loss of his stick, which floated down the river, and he was as ready as ever for a similar exploit before his clothes were half dried upon his back."²⁴

Another activity which was a particular favourite with Scott, later reproduced in both *Redgauntlet* and *Guy Mannering*, was salmon spearing, both in daylight and in the dark, known, under the latter conditions, as 'burning the water'. Torches were held over the surface of the water to locate the salmon below. When one was spotted it was thrust at with a spear. Often the ill-judged force of the thrust would precipitate the fisher over the gunwales of his boat and into the cold water, the alerted salmon darting away unmolested. According to Skene, the attractions of the sport " " consist in being penetrated with cold and wet, having your shins broken against the stones in the dark, and perhaps mastering one fish out of every twenty you take aim at " "²⁵. Yet whatever its dubious pleasures, salmon spearing remained one of Scott's favourite activities, perhaps because it again enabled him, in a situation where everyone's equilibrium was impaired, to compete on equal terms. His great enthusiasm for horse-riding probably had a similar basis. Though he had to submit to being ignominiously heaved into the saddle, once astride, he had only to rely on his skill as a rider rather than his native agility.

During the following years Scott continued to devote himself to poetry and to divide his time between Edinburgh and the Borders, with occasional visits further north,

²⁴Lockhart, I, 424-425.

²⁵ibid., II, 420.

such as the one he and his wife Charlotte made in June 1808 to the country house of Lord Melville²⁶ near Crieff in Perthshire, in the course of which they saw Bannockburn, just the kind of locale, as he himself confessed in the *Ashestiel* memoir, calculated to inspire a feeling of romantic exaltation in him. Two years later, invited by the Laird of Staffa (an island off the coast of Mull), he embarked upon another excursion, this time to the Hebrides. Setting out on July 10th, on the first stage of the journey, to Oban, he most often forsook the company of his wife and eldest daughter to stride alone over the bare, uneven terrain which the carriage meanwhile negotiated by a more conventional route. They stayed at Ulva House, on the isle of Ulva, the Laird, Sir Reginald MacDonald's residence, and, on July 18th, visited Staffa and Iona. Scott was deeply impressed by Fingal's Cave. Yet again he pitted his infirmity against the imposing geological formation, scrambling undaunted over the cave's basalt columns. His description of it, in an undated letter to Robert Southey, demonstrates admirably the pictorial skills which he would later exercise in the service of his fiction:

The scenery is quite different from that on the mainland — dark, savage, and horrid, but occasionally magnificent in the highest degree. Staffa, in particular, merits its far-famed reputation: it is a cathedral arch, scooped by the hand of nature, equal in dimensions and in regularity to the most magnificent aisle of a Gothic cathedral. The sea rolls up to the extremity in most tremendous majesty, and with a voice like ten thousand giants shouting at once.²⁷

The connection forged between a naturally formed structure and a man-made one, the specific anatomical detail ascribed to nature and to the sea, the impression of size and power which dwells in the reference to giants — devices similar to all these may be found in the *Waverley* novels, as shall be demonstrated.

²⁶Robert Saunders Dundas (1771-1851), later 2nd Viscount Melville, followed the political career pursued by his father, filling many of his posts, such as M.P. for Midlothian, Keeper of the Signet and First Lord of the Admiralty, as well as being President of the Board of Control for India and serving briefly in the Duke of Wellington's ministry.

²⁷Lockhart, II, 148.

IV.

In 1812, the expiration of his seven year lease, and a consequent rise in rent, prompted Scott to quit Ashestiel and look elsewhere for a new property, knowing that he would have to forsake it sometime anyway when his relative Colonel Russel returned from India. Encouraged by the popular success of *The Lady of the Lake*, he purchased a farm, again situated on the Tweed, halfway between Selkirk and Melrose. Known officially as Cartley Hole, and unofficially as 'Clarty Hole', the property, as its alternative designation suggests, would not have struck the casual viewer as unusually appealing. But it was this very barrenness which appealed to Scott, who saw great potential for landscaping the entire area. As Sutherland notes: 'The property, which was beautifully situated but devoid of trees or any distinguished buildings – would serve as a *tabula rasa* for Scott's architectural and landscape visions. He could do in stone and oak what up to now he had only been able to do in words – build castles and paint scenery.'²⁸ And once again it was rich in history. Nearby places, such as Skirmish-field, Change-law and Turn-again commemorate the Battle of Melrose, fought in 1526 to gain possession of the person of young King James V. Having purchased the farm, he named it Abbotsford. Immediately upon taking possession of it, he began a widespread programme of planting new trees in order to adapt the landscape to his own taste.

Planting remained Scott's principal hobby throughout his later life. His activities in this area were informed by a scrupulous sensitivity to the innate character of the ground, and an adherence to the works of the theorist Sir Uvedale Price, dealt with in Chapter 3. Even when creating a new feature, he was careful to preserve a natural impression, as he wrote to Joanna Baillie,²⁹ who had sent him some pinasters: 'There is in the middle of what will soon be a bank of fine young wood, a certain gravel-pit, which is the present scene of my operations. I have caused it to be covered with better earth, and gently altered with the spade, so as, if possible, to give it the air of one of those accidental

²⁸Sutherland, p. 155.

²⁹Joanna Baillie (1762-1851), poet and dramatist. Born in Lanarkshire, she was educated in Glasgow and moved to London in her twenties. Scott was particularly impressed by her *Plays on the Passions* (1798-1812) and corresponded regularly with her.

hollows which the surface of a hill frequently presents.³⁰ It was the sense of permanency that partly attracted Scott to landscaping. Within his own lifetime he was able to survey the changes which his efforts had already wrought upon Abbotsford. But he also felt that he could die secure in the knowledge that the trees he had planted would continue to grow and to develop and would constitute as much a memorial to his existence as his art, impervious as they were to the caprices of critical opinion and public taste. When, in later years, one of Scott's guests at Abbotsford, Captain Basil Hall, observed that planting must be an interesting occupation, he is reported to have replied, 'Interesting! [...] you have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter — he is like a painter laying on his colours.'³¹ There is a hint in these words that landscaping, like the detailed pictorial descriptions which adorn his fiction, functioned, to some extent, as a compensation for his perceived shortcomings as an artist. They also illuminate a principal aim of Scott's efforts in this area, that of eliminating barrenness from the face of a terrain. His friend Mrs. MacLean Clephane³² is commended for this very achievement at one point in his account of the voyage which he undertook around the Scottish coast and the Hebrides in 1814:

At Torloisk, as at Dunvegan, trees grow freely and rapidly, and the extensive plantations formed by Mrs. C. serve to show that nothing but a little expense and patience on the part of the proprietors, with attention to planting in proper places at first, and in keeping up fences afterward, are wanting to remove the reproach of nakedness, so often thrown upon the Western Isles.³³

Scott had embarked upon this sea voyage at the invitation of the Commissioners for the Northern Lights. The purpose of the voyage was to survey the northern lighthouses and select sites for additional ones. Accompanying the party was Robert Stevenson, engineer to the Scottish Lighthouse Board and grandfather of Robert Louis Stevenson, who would supervise the construction of any new beacons which the

³⁰Lockhart, II, 38-39.

³¹*ibid.*, II, 368.

³²Margaret MacLean Clephane. She lived with her father and two sisters at the house of Torloisk on the west coast of Mull. Lockhart records Scott's first meeting with her in 1810 *en route* to visit the Laird of Staffa.

³³Lockhart, II, 439.

Commissioners deemed necessary. On the 29th July, therefore, they set sail from Leith in a cutter armed with six guns lest they should encounter any American privateers (the War of 1812 inspired by American anger at Britain's blockade of Europe was still raging). By this time Scott had completed his first attempt at prose fiction, (*Waverley*, published on July 1st) and the prospect of a new career as a novelist was opening before him, although, heaving around on the wild North Sea, it would be impossible for him to learn until his return what its reception had been. Therefore, the scenes and legends which he witnessed were, as usual, absorbed by his extraordinary memory but were destined to be reproduced in prose rather than poetry.

As he visited the Orkneys and the Shetlands he amassed a new range of sights – the Fitful Head across from Quendale Bay, on the southern most tip of the Shetlands and the Standing Stones of Stenness, overlooking Loch Stenness, north-west of Stromness, in Orkney – as well as superstitions, among them the belief that a man rescued from drowning would inevitably do harm to his rescuer and the petitioning of favourable winds for mariners. All of these would subsequently surface in *The Pirate*. Throughout his trip he also exhibited yet again that mania for incautious forays over precipitous landscapes, in which he had indulged since boyhood. Walking around the sand-flag cliffs of Sumburgh Head in Shetland, he records:

...on the very brow of the loftiest crag, I had no difficulty in sending down a fragment as large as myself: he thundered down in tremendous style, but splitting upon a projecting cliff, descended into the ocean like a shower of shrapnel shot. The sea beneath rages incessantly among a thousand of the fragments which have fallen from the peaks, and which assume an hundred strange shapes. It would have been a fine situation to compose an ode to the Genius of Sumburgh-head, or an Elegy upon a Cormorant – or to have written and spoken madness of any kind in prose or poetry. But I gave vent to my excited feelings in a more simple way; and sitting gently down on the steep green slope which led to the beach, I e'en slid down a few hundred feet, and found the exercise quite an adequate vent to my enthusiasm.³⁴

³⁴ibid., II, 367-8.

The conjunction of romantic prospect and literary rumination perhaps reminded Scott of being ensconced in his nook in Salisbury Crags as a boy, reading tales of knight errantry, which could in turn explain his submitting to the sudden, juvenile impulse of sliding down the grass with such abandon. It certainly demonstrates that his passion for landscape enabled the mature Scott, unlike so many people, to be seized by such transports of youthful enthusiasm throughout his life, at least until the decline in his health forbade it.

The diary which Scott kept throughout the voyage, demonstrates the descriptive skills and unique vision of landscape that would inform much of his subsequent fiction. Here is an entry dated 25th August in which he is describing the high mountains of Quillen on the Isle of Skye:

They sunk here upon the sea, but with the same bold and peremptory aspect which their distant appearance indicated. They seem to consist of precipitous sheets of naked rock, down which the torrents were leaping in a hundred lines of foam. The tops, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into the most tremendous pinnacles; towards the base of these bare and precipitous crags, the ground, enriched by the soil washed away from them, is verdant and productive.³⁵

Scott's landscapes, whether factual or fictive, are rarely static. He communicates a sense of motion to the scene in two principal ways – firstly by introducing the element of running water and describing it as emotively as possible consistent with reality. Here the water is thrashed into a foam, so steep is the cliff down which it falls. This is a basic physical fact. Yet it also seems to reflect the vaguely troubled impression of awe which the onlooker must experience when contemplating such an imposing feature. The cascade both emphasises height and enacts the idea in the onlooker's mind of potentially falling from such a height, while the lexical choice, emphasising barrenness, precipitousness and stress, invokes qualities of the Sublime which Scott would frequently utilize in his novels.

³⁵ *ibid.*, II, 423.

Scott's other vivifying device is to focus upon evidence of stress in an ostensibly stable geological structure, recalling it with words such as 'rent' and 'split'. He also accords the insensate rock human characteristics. 'Bold' may be a term which one can apply to a mountain without compromising its fundamental nature. But 'peremptory' is much less typical. It doesn't suggest any distinct personality. But it does conjure up the vague idea of a mood, of the latent potential of the rock to impatiently shrug off unwanted tourists, hence the increased sense of inherent danger. Such hints are confined to a very oblique level, never raised to the status of actual personification. But they do contribute to the mysterious, frequently indefinable atmosphere of Scott's landscape descriptions.

One also detects in the diary signs of the metaphorical burden which Scott would often place upon natural phenomena, as in another entry, written three days later, when he and his companions visited the island of Iona. Here he contrasts the life of the monks of 'Melrose, Kelso, Aberborthock, Iona, etc.,etc.,etc., ' with that of a Highland chieftain:

The quiet, slow, and uniform life of these recluse beings glided on, it may be, like a dark and silent stream, fed from unkown resources, and vanishing from the eye without leaving any marked trace of its course. The life of the chieftain was mountain torrent thundering over rock and precipice, which, less deep and profound in itself, leaves on the minds of the terrified spectators those deep impressions of awe and wonder which are most readily handed down to posterity.³⁶

The device has not yet achieved its eventual subtlety. It is still more overt simile than complex metaphor. Not only that, it is qualified by the phrase 'it may be', as if the writer were aware of the possible tenuousness of his comparison. There is no such qualification in the second sentence, however, and the simile is succeeded by a true metaphor: 'like a dark and silent stream' vs. 'was a mountain torrent'. Moreover, as the sentence progresses, the two domains of 'life' and 'torrent' become more and more closely entwined, until the latter is being discussed in terms really more suited to the former: 'most readily handed down to posterity.' Precisely the same domains will be

³⁶ibid., II, 434.

invoked by Scott many years later in the short story *The Highland Widow*. Elspat MacTavish upbraids the clergyman Michael Tyrie thus:

“The priests of old were like the winter torrent which fills this hollow valley, and rolls the massive rocks against each other, as easily as the boy plays with the ball which he casts before him — But you! you do but resemble the summer-stricken stream, which is turned aside by the rushes, and stemmed by a bunch of sedges — Woe worth you, for there is no help in you!”³⁷

Though it in fact contains a double simile, like the original — priests equated with torrent equated with boy — this statement remains fairly straightforward. Since it is rendered in direct speech it cannot really be any more intricate. But complex natural imagery became a salient feature of Scott’s descriptive prose.

On September 8th, 1814, Scott and the Lighthouse Commissioners, having contended with fierce winds round Arran, and subsequently finding themselves becalmed in the Firth of Clyde, finally docked at Greenock. When he arrived back in Edinburgh, it was to discover that *Waverley* had been selling at an unprecedented speed. A third edition of a thousand copies was about to be approved to supplement the three thousand already printed. Within a couple of months a fourth would roll through the presses. It had become the most successful anonymous novel ever published.

V.

During the next few years, Scott’s frantic writing activity necessarily restricted his expeditions, though in July 1817 he travelled with Charlotte and Sophia to reacquaint himself with Rob Roy country, in particular the outlaw’s cave at the head of Loch Lomond. The more immediate Border landscape also continued to fascinate him, familiar though it was, and he particularly relished the opportunity to expound its historical associations for the enlightenment of those unfamiliar with them. Thus, in 1819, while

³⁷Sir Walter Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate etc.* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), p. 190.

traversing the area in pursuit of various electoral matters with his future son-in-law, he enthusiastically related past events with characteristic vividness. Lockhart recalls:

And so we rode by Philiphaugh, Carterhaugh, Bowhill, and Newark, he pouring out all the way his picturesque anecdotes of former times – more especially of the fatal field where Montrose was finally overthrown by Leslie. He described the battle as vividly as if he had witnessed it; the passing of the Ettrick at daybreak by the Covenanting General's heavy cuirassiers, many of them old soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, and the wild confusion of the Highland host when exposed to their charge on an extensive *haugh* as flat as a bowling-green. He drew us aside at *Slainmen's-lee*, to observe the green mound that marks the resting-place of the slaughtered royalists...³⁸

Throughout his life Scott retained that peculiar vision which somehow enabled him to look beyond the physical present into the past. Surveying the field of battle he could see the ghosts of the late combatants, hear their cries and enter into their psychology, in the process alerting both his companions and readers to the way in which landscape both preserves and effaces their memory, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

During this period in his life, Scott mostly confined himself to adapting the landscape around Abbotsford. His property was expanding all the time, and at least doubled with the acquisition of a farm at Kaeside, which included the celebrated spot of Turn-again. He also purchased the property of Totfield from his neighbour, John Usher, its principal attraction being that it included a ravine named Huntly Bank, supposedly the scene of Thomas the Rhymer's encounter with the Queen of the Fairies (detailed to in Chapter 3). Scott renamed it 'Rhymer's Glen.' Despite his literary success and the rise in his income, these acquisitions of land represented a large and not altogether prudent expenditure, particularly since they relied upon as yet unearned profits from his novels. In writing again to Joanna Baillie, he betrays a certain defensive self-justification about his land hunger:

³⁸ibid., III, 284.

The land is said to be reasonably bought, and I am almost certain I can turn it to advantage by a little judicious expenditure; for this place is already allowed to be worth twice what it cost me; and our people here think so little of planting, and do it so carelessly, that they stare with astonishment at the alteration which well-planted woods make on the face of a country.³⁹

So profoundly sensible in other matters, Scott seemed incapable of exercising the same prudence when confronted with the prospect of new land to purchase. By 1816 Abbotsford had already grown from 150 to 1000 acres. The adjacent smallholders had long ago cannily surmised that the purchase of land, regardless of its condition or true value, amounted to an addiction with Scott. It became almost a challenge to them to see how much money they could extract from his purse for a hundred or so miry acres, after which they would transplant themselves to much improved dwellings and count their profits. If one of them possessed a tract of land, however dismal, that featured some kind of legend, preferably supernatural, they could be assured that he would find it even harder to resist. Even if the land had none, he would infallibly discover or invent one. Here he describes, to Lord Montagu⁴⁰, in a letter from 1824, one such purchase:

I think your Lordship will be much pleased with the fine plantation on Bowden Moor. I have found an excellent legend for the spot. It is close by the grave of an unhappy being, called *Wattie Waeman* (whether the last appellative was really his name, or has been given him from his melancholy fate, is uncertain),/who being all for love and a little for stealing, hung himself there seventy or eighty years since (*quere*, where did he find a tree?) /at once to revenge himself of his mistress and to save the gallows a [...] labour. Now, as the place of his grave and of his suicide is just on the verge where the Duke's land meets with mine and Kippilaw's – (you are aware that where three lairds' lands meet is always a charmed spot) – the spirit of *Wattie Waeman* wanders sadly over the adjacent moors, to the great terror of all wandering wights who have occasion to pass from Melrose to Bowden.⁴¹

³⁹ibid., III, 38-39.

⁴⁰Lord Henry Montagu (1776-1845), brother of Charles, the 4th Duke of Buccleuch (1770-1819) who was the chief of Scott's clan from 1812-1819.

⁴¹Lockhart, IV, 169.

Here we have three of Scott's most salient characteristics combined in one statement: land hunger, concern with and pride in social status and fascination with local traditions. This is also precisely the sort of supernatural aspect with which he invests his fictive landscapes. He was always acutely sensitive, despite the apparent jocularly with which he describes it, to the idea that a mysterious or horrifying act, committed on a particular spot, somehow transmitted a concomitant atmosphere of dread to that place.

Further valuable insights into the attitude of Scott to landscape are offered by the American novelist Washington Irving's account of his stay at Abbotsford in 1817. As they stood atop a nearby hill during one of their several rambles, the host enumerated the surrounding points of interest. His guest did find himself responding to the names which, through Scott's earlier achievements as a poet, had acquired almost talismanic significance for readers throughout the world: Lammermuir, Smailholm, Galashiels, Torwoodlee, Galawater, Teviotdale, the Braes of Yarrow, Ettrick stream. Yet he found the actual physical reality before him somewhat less inspiring:

A mere succession of grey waving hills, line beyond line, as far as my eye could reach, monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees, that one could almost see a stout fly walking along their profile; and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream, flowing between bare hills, without a tree of thicket on its banks.⁴²

When he confessed this slight disappointment to his host, Scott replied,

"When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like an ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills; and if I did not see the heather at least once a year, *I think I should die!*"⁴³

The sentiment may be unsurprising when we consider that Scott is referring to his formative environment. But it also reminds us of the way in which his attachment to a landscape transcended the merely picturesque.

⁴²Washington Irving, *Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey* (London: John Murray, 1835), p. 30.

⁴³*ibid.*, p. 31.

During his visit Irving also noted entertaining similarities between Scott and one of his characters, Jonathan Oldbuck of *The Antiquary*. When showing his guest the preatorium and remains of a Roman Camp, he revealed, 'a knowledge of castramentation that would not have disgraced the antiquarian Oldbuck himself.'⁴⁴ His amusement was soon dampened, however by the persistent drizzle which attended their excursion. Drenched, Irving proposed seeking shelter. Scott conceded that it was rather wet, and mentioned a connection between the Scottish landscape and climate which might have proceeded from the lips of one of his own Highland bandits in *A Legend of Montrose*: 'True, [...] I did not recollect that you were not accustomed to our Scottish mists. This is a lachrymose climate, ever shivering. We, however are children of the mist, and must not mind a little whimpering of the clouds.'⁴⁵

VI.

If his new literary success had circumscribed his peregrinations around his native land, the financial disaster of 1825 almost precluded them altogether. Metaphorically, if not truly, chained to his desk, whether it was in Mrs. Brown's lodging house in North St. David Street, Edinburgh (the Castle Street house with its contents having been sold), or Abbotsford, Scott every day toiled ceaselessly, churning out page after page, chapter after chapter, and engaging in other work, such as the compilation of his massive life of Napoleon, to satisfy the demands of his creditors. In doing so, he produced novels, such as *Anne of Geierstein* or *The Surgeon's Daughter*, set in landscapes which he had never himself beheld, thus compromising his own injunction, offered to Morritt so many years before, about always copying from nature. Confined to his new existence, he must have felt as he had done in his youth when an apprentice in his father's office, toiling through that legal wilderness. Indeed, in a Journal entry dated 25th May 1826, he speaks of 'the strange dreamy feeling which made [me] for some days feel like one bewildered in a country where mist or snow has disguised those features of the landscape which are best

⁴⁴ibid., p. 72.

⁴⁵ibid., pp. 96-97.

known to him'⁴⁶ One immediately recalls the plight of Harry Bertram, similarly confounded by a Border snow storm in *Guy Mannering*. However on December 31st 1827 he states, with markedly more optimism: 'I am now perfectly well in constitution and though I am still in troubled waters yet I am rowing with the tide, and less than the continuation of my exertions of 1827 may with God's blessing carry me successfully through 1828, when we may gain a more open sea if not exactly a safe port.'⁴⁷ This despite the fact that only a week earlier, on December 23rd, he had said, 'The feeling of growing and increasing inability is painful to one like me who boasted in spite of my infirmity great boldness and dexterity in such feats the boldness remains but hand and foot, gripe and accuracy of step, have altogether fail'd me the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak and so I must retreat into the invalided corps and tell stories of my former exploits which may very likely pass for lies.'⁴⁸ Such markedly contrasting sentiments, expressed within so brief a space, indicate the mental and emotional turmoil which Scott experienced at this time. By March 7th 1829 his mood seemed more resigned: 'And die I think I shall though I am not such a coward as *mortem conscire me ipso*. But I 'gin to grow a weary of the Sun and when the plant no longer receives nourishment from light and air there is a speedy prospect of its withering.'⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Scott did undertake one final trip, accompanied by Lockhart, to rectify what he thought was his unsatisfactory rendering of Douglas castle in Lanarkshire and the surrounding area in *Castle Dangerous*. In doing so he demonstrated a nascent diligence, necessarily absent from his more exotic productions. Thus, on 18th July 1831, he and his son-in-law set out for Lanarkshire, an area which Scott had not visited since his boyhood. Though oppressed by his increasing infirmity and the lowering skies that day, Scott seemed inspired to exertion by the sight of the castle emerging into view on the moorland ridge between the Tweed and the Clyde. According to Lockhart, it took all his strength to restrain the weakened old man from attempting to ascend to it. Nevertheless,

⁴⁶ *Journal*, p. 149.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 406.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 403.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 530.

on other occasions, as he records, his father-in-law, having suffered several paralytic strokes, could no longer yield to what before had been the irresistible spell of running water. The last occasion that John Leycester Adolphus⁵⁰ saw Scott active among his native hills was on an autumn excursion in the same year, to the Linns of Ettrick, on the way to the tower of Oakwood:

"When we came to the Linns, we walked some way up the stream, and viewed the bold and romantic little torrent from the top of the high bank. He stood contemplating it in an attitude of rest; the day was past when a minute's active exertion would have carried him to the water's brink [...] So much was his great strength reduced, that, as he gazed upon the water, one of his stag-hounds leaping forward to caress him had almost thrown him down; but for such accidents as this he cared very little."⁵¹

About the same time, however, Scott did conduct J. M. W. Turner round notable Border sights which the artist had been contracted to sketch as illustrations for a new volume of the poems. Among them was Smailholm Crag, where, reclining on the turf as he had done sixty years before, Scott recalled to other members of the party, including Lockhart and James Skene, his Border infancy lying among the sheep and lambs. As Lockhart recalls:

He seemed to enjoy the scene of his childhood — yet there was many a touch of sadness both in his eye and voice. He carried us to Dryburgh, but excused himself from attending Mr. Turner into the inclosure. Mr. Skene and I perceived that it would be better for us to leave him alone, and we both accompanied Turner.⁵²

Scott must have felt that he had finally come full circle, the strength which he had fought to achieve in spite of his lameness now dissipated by financial worries and overwork.

⁵⁰John Leycester Adolphus (1795-1862). Author of *Letters to Richard Heber Esq. M.P. containing critical remarks on the series of novels beginning with 'Waverley' and an attempt to ascertain their author.*

⁵¹Lockhart, V, 347.

⁵²*ibid.*, V, 348.

Scott's final great excursion, to the Continent, had been long planned and anticipated. His original intention of travelling by steamer from Leith to Rotterdam, sailing up the Rhine, then crossing the Alps into Italy, was amended at the request of his son Charles to a sea voyage on the Admiralty frigate 'Barham' to Malta, then Naples. Embarking from Spit Head on October 29th, the ship battled through strong west winds to Plymouth, turned south into the Bay of Biscay, skirted the coast of Portugal and, having passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, the north coast of Africa, reaching Valetta on 21st November. Having departed from Valetta, the capital of Malta, on December 13th, Scott, his daughter Sophia and son Walter, arrived in stormy weather at the Bay of Naples on the 17th, where they were met by Charles Scott. While in Naples he made many trips to nearby areas. On one such, northwards to nearby Pozzuoli and Cumae, on April 3rd 1832, he demonstrated that though so far away, his attachment to his native landscape was undiminished by the intervening distance. The archaeologist Sir William Gell, who accompanied him and, though himself wheelchair-bound, fulfilled the task of pointing out features of historical interest which Scott himself would have undertaken had they been among the Borders, records his reaction:

The Lago d'Agnano was among the first places we visited, and he was evidently quite delighted with the tranquil beauty of the spot, [...] It quickly recalled to his mind a lake in Scotland which he immediately began to describe, the name of which I cannot remember, but which was evidently the chief source of his gratification in seeing the Lake of Agnano, for I afterwards found that his only pleasure in seeing new places arose from the poetical ideas they inspired, as applicable to other scenes with which his mind was more familiar.⁵³

Perhaps it was, in part, Scott's subconscious telling him that his time was soon at hand and reminding him that he had always expressed a desire not to die abroad. Soon, on April 16th, his party set out northwards for Rome. From there they travelled to Bologna. Stopping at Castiglione, near the top of the Appenines to dine in his carriage, Scott was

⁵³Sir William Gell, *Reminiscences of Walter Scott's Residence in Italy, 1832*, (London: Thomas Nelson, 1957) p. 2.

again prompted to think of Scotland by the snow clad pines. After Bologna they went to Venice. The voyage home, overland, began on May 23rd from Venice, over the Alps, into Germany to the Rhine and thence to England. Charles Scott's fears about the strain induced by overland travel were confirmed. Having deteriorated on the uneven roads, his father suffered another stroke on the steamer that carried them down the Rhine. After crossing the North Sea from Rotterdam he arrived in London on June 13th, insensible.

He remained in a stupor on the first stages of the trip to Abbotsford. But as he approached his home the surrounding terrain retained sufficient influence to dispel the fog of apoplexy that obscured his faculties. As they descended into the vale of Gala he was reportedly heard to murmur "Gala Water, surely - Buckholm - Torwoodlee." ⁵⁴ And when the Eildons emerged into view he became almost as excited as when visiting Douglas Castle the previous year. This time it took not only Lockhart but two others to restrain him at the sight of Abbotsford. Home, briefly sensible again, he confined his rambles to being propelled around his gardens in a bath chair, accompanied by his two young grandchildren. But there was, ultimately, to be no miraculous recovery as before. He died on 21st September. His last journey was round the Eildon hills to Dryburgh Abbey, his final resting place, where he would mingle with the soil of the land which had been both his home and his inspiration.

⁵⁴Lockhart, V, 421.

CHAPTER TWO

LANDSCAPE AND HISTORY

I.

History is possibly the topic most often connected with landscape in critiques of Scott's work. The following statement, by James Reed, is characteristic: 'What he does see is man, and the works of man, in a total landscape: Land, buildings, people, manners, history, fused by time. Scott's man leaves in his wake ruined towers, decaying abbeys, flints, spearheads, broken helmets, bones; legacies of a feudal faith and a romantic chivalry. Every ride or walk with Scott was a history trail, like his writing, with the anecdotal, reminiscent richness of the experienced and informed observer.'¹ Scott scholars thus tend to present his landscapes as suffused with historical significance. But that historical significance is often seen to dwell more in the constructs of man – the antique detritus scattered through the landscape, as itemised by Reed. Ruined towers *attach* historical significance to their locations; the significance does not proceed from the actual terrain. What the following chapter will attempt to do is identify instances in which the landscape possesses an historical significance that is, albeit to varying extents, its own. Of course man must be present to experience that significance, but it will nevertheless be the significance of the natural, unaltered contours of Scotland.

The aspect of landscape and history most frequently noted by Scott scholars is the relationship between the timelessness of the former and the mutability of the latter. Reed articulates it in the first chapter of his work: 'The best landscape passages in Scott's poetry and novels reproduce an organic and vital context for human activity; frequently he represents a power not subject in the same way as his characters to the forces of time and change, and consequently one which appears as a counter by which man's own passing may be reckoned.'² The sum of the effects engendered by the forces of time and change is history. But, for the purposes of this discussion, history as a subject will be divided into two sub-categories. One is public history: events, often martial, in which many people participate and which often have repercussions for the entire nation. The other is private history: events in the life of only one person, or a small group of people, no less significant

¹James Reed, *Sir Walter Scott: Landscape and Locality* (London: The Athlone Press, 1980), p. 9.

²*ibid.*, p. 16.

to them for that, but without wider repercussions. Public history outlives its participants; private history is usually bound up with their own mortality. The relationship between timelessness and mutability belongs to both categories.

Thus, it is the timelessness of a landscape that allows it to impress its historical significance in the public domain more forcibly upon the mind of the traveller. The dead of Drumclog, for instance, may be long gone in Scott's time, but Drumclog itself remains very much the same. An historical imagination such as his could therefore gaze upon it in the nineteenth century and picture the contending forces of Claverhouse and the Covenanters all the more vividly because the moors looked essentially as they had done in the seventeenth. Its unalterable existence outside the fluctuations of human history better preserves the facts of that history. Throughout Scott's novels, landscape which does not yield to change evokes memories, both personal and otherwise, in characters who traverse it. For instance, in *Waverley*, Evan Dhu Maccombich points out to Edward Waverley, during their journey to the lair of Donald Bean Lean, a spot on which events of historical import have occurred:

"This," said Evan, "is the pass of Bally Brough, which was kept in former times by ten of the clan Donnochie against a hundred of the Low Country carles. The graves of the slain are still to be seen in that little *corri*, or bottom, on the opposite side of the burn; if your eyes are good, you may see the green specks among the heather."³

The graves are indeed still to be seen, but, as Evan points out, it takes a sharp eye to spot them. That ' "specks among the heather" ' should constitute the only evidence of the fallen is fitting. Their transience is absorbed by the constancy of the terrain – a constancy which exists partly in renewal, growing a new covering over excavations. The landscape obliterates their physical presence while commemorating their actions by preserving the precise circumstances in which those actions were prosecuted. But it should be noted that the memory is preserved only for those who are aware of the actual events. The uninformed traveller – Waverley without Evan Dhu, for instance – would

³Walter Scott, *Waverley*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), I, 145.

see no historical significance in the scene. This underlines the fact, established earlier, that though in this case historical significance dwells in the landscape itself (not in a man-made structure) the sensitivity of man is the prime condition of it.

The same effacement of history's legacy can be seen in *Old Mortality* when Henry Morton returns to the scene of the Covenanters' final encounter with Claverhouse's forces. It is now July 1689:

It was a delightful summer evening, that a stranger, well mounted, and bearing the appearance of a military man of rank, rode down a winding descent which terminated in view of the romantic ruins of Bothwell Castle and the river Clyde, which winds so beautifully between rocks and woods to sweep around the towers formerly built by Aymer de Valence. Bothwell Bridge was at a little distance and also in sight. The opposite field, once the scene of slaughter and conflict, now lay as placid and quiet as the surface of a summer lake. The trees and bushes which grew around in romantic variety of shade, were hardly seen to stir under the influence of the evening breeze. The very murmur of the river seemed to soften itself into unison with the stillness of the scene around.⁴

Just as the heather had encroached almost entirely upon the graves of Bally-Brough, here the field has returned to its natural state before being disfigured by trampling feet and hooves. Once again, therefore, the memory is both effaced and preserved: the marks of violence are no longer visible and the field now looks like it did before the violence erupted. (As Cuddie Headrigg comments a few pages on, ' "if ye had seen the blude rinnin' as fast in the tap o' that brigg yonder as ever water ran below it, ye wudna ha' thought it sae bonnie a spectacle." ⁵) The comparison with water emphasises the process of absorption, and the self determination which the real river is accorded confirms the prevailing sense of the landscape's deliberate reassertion of calm: 'seemed to soften itself into unison.' Indeed the Clyde is presented as the implicit agent of erasure, appearing almost to have swept over the field of conflict and submerged its ravages: 'the scene of slaughter and conflict now lay as placid and quiet as the surface of a summer lake.' That

⁴Walter Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, ed. by Douglas Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p. 288.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 290.

this process has been successful is endorsed by the unequivocal pleasure which the narrator takes in the scene: 'delightful summer evening [...] romantic ruins [...] winds so beautifully [...] romantic variety of shade.' The reiteration of the word 'romantic' (stamped upon the scene, as it is in *Waverley*) suggests a dehistoricising of the area. Where before it formed the epicentre for a convergence of historical antagonisms, now it has seen those antagonisms dissipate and has become almost a romance landscape, a Spenserian region without an historical context. But there are still signs of the presence of the past. Morton's martial bearing recalls the antagonists who once met there – he imports from exile the memory of previous discord.

In contrast to Bally-Brough and Drumclog, an area which has witnessed events of no great import can still be suffused with a sense of private history for those who have inhabited it or are returning to it after an interval of some years. There is a certain similarity here to the topic of Landscape and Characterisation, an aspect of which is the profound, almost morbid bond that is forged between a particular area and those who have inhabited it all their lives. In *Guy Mannering*, Colonel Mannering returns to the Ellangowan estate after an interval of many years:

After a pleasant ride of about an hour, the old towers of the ruin presented themselves in the landscape. The thoughts with what different feelings he had lost sight of them so many years before, thronged upon the mind of the traveller. The landscape was the same; but how changed the feelings, hopes, and views of the spectator! Then, life and love were new, and all the prospect was gilded by their rays.⁶

The decay of Ellangowan, like that of Bothwell Castle, is distinguished from the permanency of the landscape. It is also connected to the change in Mannering's disposition. His 'feelings, hopes and views' are the emotions of a human being. They are the product of his mind. Ellangowan is the construct of human beings. It is the product of their hands. Both, like the human condition, therefore admit of change and decay. This is the principal theme of the passage, although the final sentence does illuminate a subsidiary

⁶ Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), I, 122.

one. It further underlines the transience of human affairs by contrasting the real landscape with our perception of it. The former is a geological foundation on the surface of which events of varying importance to mankind occur. These events finally ferment into the history both of the nation and of individuals. The history of the nation is the sum of its inhabitants' experiences. But when a person embellishes the landscape with his own perceptions of it, he no longer really sees it; rather, he devises an alternative landscape for himself that will endure only as long the particular mood in which he views it. Thus, he diminishes the permanent, converting it into the ephemeral. Precisely the same egocentricity characterises Edward Waverley's view of the Highlands and it is the one from which he is roused when he realises that 'The romance of his life was ended and that its real history had now commenced.'⁷

The disjunction between the durability of landscape and the mutability of human history can result in an appropriation of the former, which the ostensibly fanatic Elspat McTavish illuminates in *The Highland Widow*:

"They say the Highlands are changed; but I see Ben Cruachan rear his crest as high as ever into the evening sky – no one hath yet herded his kine on the depth of Loch Awe – and yonder oak does not yet bend like a willow. The children of the mountains will be such as their fathers, until the mountains themselves shall be levelled with the strath."⁸

When people say that the Highlands have changed, they should say that the life lived in that region has changed; the landscape itself is indifferent to historical forces. In connecting herself and others to that landscape ("The children of the mountain"), she is emphasising the fact that she shares in that indifference. Thus, whereas a superficial reading of the speech might prompt one to assume that Elspeth is merely out of touch, a closer examination reveals her to in fact be *in* touch on a more fundamental level. She perceives that an historical event like the persecution following the '45, however momentous it may seem, is essentially unimportant. It does nothing to disrupt the cyclical

⁷ Scott, *Waverley*, II, 256.

⁸ Walter Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate etc.* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), p. 152.

progress of the natural world. Only an alteration of the landscape itself would be truly consequential (‘ “ until the mountains themselves shall be levelled with the strath. ” ’). In saying such things as “The Highlands have changed”, we try to appropriate the land, but it remains superior to us and nothing we do in our sublunary existence can be of much importance to it. That Elspat should perceive this is in marked contrast to the fanatical and delusional imagery to which she otherwise has recourse, as Landscape and Characterisation will demonstrate.

II.

Landscape can be historically significant not only as a context for events in the life of the nation, and its individual inhabitants, but also as a haven from such upheavals. In the final volume of *The Heart of Midlothian*, Jeanie Deans, having struggled in the wider world on her sister's behalf against the law prohibiting infanticide and the repercussions of the Porteous Mob's violence and the consequent displeasure of Queen Caroline, consort to and regent for George II, crosses over water to Roseneath which lies in Dumbartonshire between the Gareloch and the Clyde estuary. The crossing is heavily symbolic. It distinguishes those previous vicissitudes from her new life and Scott's previous mode of historical fiction from his new one of pastoral. The latter point is emphasised, lest the reader had missed it, by a quotation from Alexander Ross's ⁹ *Helinore: or The Fortunate Shepherdess*.¹⁰ Roseneath is identified unambiguously by the author as a Highland Arcadia, blessed by the munificence of the Duke of Argyle:

⁹ Alexander Ross (1699-1784). Poet. Born in Kincardine O'Neil and educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen, after which he became a schoolmaster.

¹⁰ 'The style of the country on each side was simply pastoral, and resembled, in appearance and character, the description of a forgotten Scottish poet, which runs nearly thus:-

The water gently down a level slid
With little din, but couthy what it made;
On ilko side the trees grew thick and lang,
And wi' the wild birds' notes were a' in sang;
On either side, a full bow-shot and mair,
The green was even, gowany, and fair;
With easy stone on every hand the braes
To the hills' feet with scattered bushes raise;
With goats and sheep aboon, and kye below,

The islands in the Frith of Clyde, which the daily passage of so many smoke-penned steamboats now renders so easily accessible, were, in our fathers' times, secluded spots, frequented by no travellers, and few visitants of any kind. They are of exquisite, yet varied beauty. Arran, a mountainous region, or Alpine island, abounds with the grandest and most romantic scenery. Bute is of a softer and more woodland character. The Cumrays, as if to exhibit a contrast to both, are green, level, and bare, forming the links of a sort of natural bar, which is drawn along the mouth of the Frith, leaving large intervals, however, of ocean. Roseneath, a smaller isle, lies much higher up the Frith, and towards its western shore, near the opening of the lake called the Gare-Loch, and not far from Loch Long and Loch Seant, or the Holy-Loch, which wind from the mountains of the Western Highlands to join the estuary of the Clyde.

In these isles the severe frost winds, which tyrannise over the vegetable creation during a Scottish spring, are comparatively little felt; nor, excepting the gigantic strength of Arran, are they much exposed to the Atlantic storms, lying landlocked and protected to the westward by the shores of Ayrshire. Accordingly, the weeping-willow, the weeping-birch, and other trees of early and pendulous shoots, flourish in these favoured recesses in a degree unknown in our eastern districts; and the air is also said to possess that mildness which is favourable to consumptive cases.

The picturesque beauty of the island of Roseneath, in particular, had such recommendations, that the Earls and Dukes of Argyle, from an early period, made it their occasional residence, and had their temporary accommodation in a fishing or hunting-lodge, which succeeding improvements have since transformed into a palace. It was in its original simplicity, when the little bark, which we left traversing the Frith at the end of the last chapter, approached the shores of the isle.¹¹

From the outset of the Roseneath section, Scott emphasises the spot's seclusion and draws a clear distinction between its accessibility *now* and its inaccessibility *then*. The fact that the change is generational, related wholly to the human world, is emphasised in the phrase 'our fathers' times'. The change in the landscape is confined to the change in the Scottish people's relation to it. Its absence of inhabitants might, in another context, be used by Scott to inculcate forboding, both in the reader and in the traveller. But here his purpose is to establish a haven of peace and security.

The bonnie banks all in a swarm did go.'

Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), II, 294.

¹¹ *ibid.*, II, 253-254.

He does attempt to prevent this haven from becoming bland. He emphasises the topographical variety of the region: the 'Alpine island' of Arran, the 'softer and more woodland character' of Bute, the 'green, level and bare' Cumbræes. Nevertheless, there is a sense of diminution here, an unusual northwards progression from the 'grandest and most romantic scenery' to something more yielding and rather less inspiring – a progression, in fact, from superlative, to comparative, to the merely descriptive. Moreover the 'natural bar', which seems almost to have been interposed deliberately ('drawn down') is not comprehensive, but admits the ocean which, as we shall see, can be regarded as imbued with historical meaning.

Roseneath, though a haven, is not wholly a romance environment. It is precisely located within a map of western Scotland: 'much higher up the Frith, and towards its western shore, near the opening of the lake called the Gare-Loch, and not far from Loch Long and Loch Seant, or the Holy-Loch.' It is not Middle Earth. It is secluded but not cut off from the rest of Scotland geographically. In the same way it is secluded but not cut off from public history. Analyses of the Roseneath sections tend to lurch from one extreme to the other. Some critics, such as Jane Millgate, assert that the final volume fails because it abandons historical significance: 'In the Knocktarlitie episode, however, the stylisation accompanying the generic shift combines with the introduction of a somewhat strenuously comic tone to make the episode conform more closely to [...] the traditional pastoral than to the more complex strategies of the historicised pastoral that Scott had himself originated.'¹² Avrom Fleischman, on the other hand, feels that with the addition of the final volume, 'The novel becomes a considerably more complicated vision of history' and that, 'To end on a note of a Highland Arcadia would have been to create an apocalyptic realm outside of history.'¹³ In fact, Roseneath's historical meaning resides principally in the condition of the kingdom (illuminated in previous volumes) from which it distinguishes itself; it has a contrastive significance.

¹² Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 163.

¹³ Avrom Fleischman, *The English Historical Novel* (London: John Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 95-96.

In the second paragraph, Scott describes Roseneath as protected not only from change and strife, but even from the harsher climatic effects. It is possible to view the 'severe frost wind' and the 'Atlantic storms' as a metaphor for historical forces. The winds 'tyrannise' over the 'vegetable creation'. 'Tyrannise' recalls other episodes in the novel which depict the exercise of absolute power – the mob killing of Porteous, the Doomster's pronouncement of death on Effie, Queen Caroline's pardoning of her; instances, moreover, which show the wider, historicised world at its most dangerous. And if one remains in any doubt that the forces of law by which Effie suffers can be equated with the blighting Atlantic gale, one only has to look as far as two pages on for confirmation. David Deans says of her: "She is a withered branch will never bear fruit of grace."¹³ But the chill historical forces of inflexible law, political faction and religious fanaticism are deflected by the cradling, encircling geography of the region. In it, as in its surroundings, the only changes are those wrought by human beings. Though the industry of the Earls and Dukes of Argyle is commended as constituting 'improvements', the phrase 'original simplicity' seems to yearn for its condition beforehand. What is more, in Scott's description of it so far Roseneath has been a secular idyll. But that phrase, 'original simplicity' also implies religious overtones. One thinks of man in his unfallen condition, inhabiting Eden amid the wilderness. An Eden-like haven is divorced from history in the sense that it can have no pre-history. Jeanie, who has contended successfully with the forces of history and, in particular, with the force of law, has proved herself worthy to enter this haven. But Roseneath banishes historical peril only for her, Reuben, their children and her father. Effie, who has not achieved Jeanie's victory, continues to be a victim of the historicised world, even in Roseneath. Her husband's death is partly a private tragedy, since he is killed by their son. But, though the alien robbers, to whose company the Whistler belongs, are, as Jane Millgate points out, 'traditional pastoral figures', they are also refugees from the second Jacobite uprising.¹⁴

¹³ Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, II, 257.

¹⁴ 'After the breaking out and suppression of the rebellion in 1745, the peace of the country, adjacent to the Highlands, was considerably disturbed. Marauders, or men who had been driven to that desperate mode of life, quartered themselves in the fastness nearest to the Lowlands, which were the scene of

That event, and the general machinations of the Black Duncan, therefore also represent the impingement of wider circumstances upon Roseneath. The murder is presaged by an interesting exchange between Butler and Staunton:

In fact, the dead and heavy closeness of the air, the huge piles of clouds which assembled in the western horizon, and glowed like a furnace under the influence of the setting sun – that awful stillness in which nature seems to expect the thunderburst, as a condemned soldier waits for the platoon-fire which is to stretch him on the earth, all betokened a speedy storm. Large broad drops fell from time to time, and induced the gentlemen to assume the boat-cloaks; but the rain again ceased, and the oppressive heat, so unusual in Scotland in the end of May, inclined them to throw them aside. "There is something solemn in this delay of the storm," said Sir George; "it seems as if it suspended its peel till it solemnised some important event in the world below."

"Alas!" replied Butler, "what are we, that the laws of nature should correspond in their march with our ephemeral deeds or sufferings? The clouds will burst when surcharged with the electric fluid, whether a goat is falling at that instant from the cliffs of Arran, or a hero expiring on the field of battle he has won."

"The mind delights to deem it otherwise," said Sir George Staunton; "and to dwell on the fate of humanity as on that which is the prime central movement of the mighty machine. We love not to think that we shall mix with the ages that have gone before us, as these broad black rain-drops mingle with the waste of waters, making a trifling and momentary eddy, and are then lost for ever."¹⁵

In introducing Roseneath, Scott described it as being sheltered from Atlantic storms. Here though, just such a storm, burgeoning in the west, threatens the tranquillity of the scene, not even in winter, but in late May. With the previous connection forged between harsh climatic conditions and the pain inflicted by the historicised world in mind, it is not difficult to suspect that this storm might herald potentially ominous events. That the events may be violent and destructive is indicated by the vaguely martial terms in which its advance is described: 'the huge piles of clouds which *assembled* on the western horizon [...] "correspond in their *march*." ' This implication is pursued even more clearly in the otherwise incongruous reference to the dying hero. Such an end is an incident of

plunder; and there is scarce a glen in the romantic and now peaceable highlands of Perth, Stirling and Dumbartonshire, where one or more did not take up their residence.' *ibid.*, II, 342.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, II, 393-394.

violence which belongs to the outside world – a world in which armies engage one another to determine the course of the nation's history. Scott is signalling that the calm of Roseneath is about to be breached. This Highland Arcadia is an opportune haven: it is not a prison like the Heart of Midlothian, deliberately constructed to admit no extraneous influence, as the gaps in the 'natural bar' previously indicated.

These implications are made explicit, appropriately, in the victim Staunton's first words: ' "There is something solemn in this delay of the storm [...] it seems as if it suspended its peel till it solemnised some important event in the world below." ' Though his words invoke elements of the quotidian ('peel') to describe timeless natural phenomena, it does assert the superiority, both physical and symbolic, of those phenomena to ' "the world below" '. Butler refutes this suggestion, but, in doing so, adopts precisely the martial metaphor which Scott introduced previously: ' "or a hero expiring on the field of battle he has won." ' Though Staunton then represents the process of history as a human construct (' "the mighty machine" '), he himself introduces very specific natural imagery: ' "mix with the ages that have gone before us, as these broad black drops mingle with the waste of waters." ' Presently we will see that these images, particularly the latter, are frequent in Scott. Very often he interprets history as a process of forward motion, like a flow of water. In this respect, Staunton's imagery can now be viewed in comparison with the introductory description of Roseneath. There natural imagery was employed to emphasise the region's seclusion from history. Here the water draws history into Roseneath. Since the flow is imbued with historical meaning, part of its volume disgorged from the symbolically charged clouds that advance overhead, one might easily surmise that just as the water which circulates through Roseneath is part of a larger, global mass, so Roseneath, however secluded, remains nevertheless a part of the wider world.

It has been suggested that Mount Sharon in *Redgauntlet* is a miniature Roseneath. Kerr says of it, 'Mount Sharon stands as an illusion of peace and harmony in a border region where conflict is the rule' ¹⁶ Kerr's choice of the word 'illusion' suggests that it is

¹⁶ James Kerr, *Fiction Against History: Scott As Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 116.

not really so. In fact it is, but unlike Rosencath and, as we shall see, Liddiesdale in *Guy Mannering*, it is constructed specifically as a haven from the dismal and perilous borderland which surrounds it. Certain of the features reflect the old-fashioned, semi-formal taste in landscape gardening, popular in the reign of Charles II, for which Scott, despite his adherence to Uvedale Price and the Picturesque, had some affection. They include the 'jet d'eau', 'cabinet', and compartmented summer and winter gardens. Yet there is one feature in Mount Sharon that Darsie, as narrator, distinguishes from the rest, and which we might regard as having a significance beyond that of the merely horticultural:

The brook, restrained at the ultimate boundary of the grounds by a natural dam—dike or ledge of rocks, seemed, even in its present swoln state, scarcely to glide along; and the pale willow—trees, dropping their long branches into the stream, gathered around them little coronals of the foam that floated down from the more rapid stream above. The high rock, which formed the opposite bank of the brook, was seen dimly through the branches, and its pale and splintered front, garlanded with long streamers of briars and other creeping plants, seemed a barrier between the quiet path which we trod, and the toiling and bustling world beyond.¹⁷

Water is again permeated with symbolic meaning. Here, the placidity of the brook reflects the calm which prevails at Mount Sharon. But it also hints at the sense of sterility and confinement that Darsie experiences during his sojourn there. Words such as 'pale' (occurring twice), 'quiet', 'scarcely', 'little', 'dimly', suggest a certain wanness. Not only is the brook prevented from flowing into the outside world ('restrained at the ultimate boundary'), there is also an impression of exuberance quelled and strength diminished: 'seemed, even in its present swoln state, scarcely to glide along; [...] floated down from the more rapid stream above.'

In the final line the presentation of Mount Sharon as an enclave of peace is made explicit: 'seemed a barrier between the quiet path which we trod, and the toiling and bustling world beyond.' The condition of the brook encapsulates this distinction. Outside,

¹⁷ Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), I, 102.

the Solway waters are furious and unpredictable (‘I soon not only heard the roar of this dreadful torrent, but saw, by the fitful moonlight, the foamy crests of the devouring waves, as they advanced with the speed and fury of a pack of hungry wolves.’¹⁸) Within the precincts of Mount Sharon, the foam does not form crests but ‘little coronals’. The waters are confined, subdued and directed. Though nature in its unaltered state does exist here and is even complicit in the confinement of the waters – ‘The brook restrained [...] by a natural dam–dike or ledge of rocks.’ – the overall impression is of its being reduced, of the natural being made artificial: ‘*garlanded* with long streamers of briars and other creeping plants.’ Thus, in Geddes’ home, one has deliberately established order, and security, from the disordered, potentially violent border territory in which a fanatic is making a last desperate bid to engineer a third Jacobite uprising. If Roseneath may be regarded, at times, as unhistoricised, then Mount Sharon, where willow trees flourish in equally element surroundings, could be said to have been dehistoricised.

In *Guy Mannering* Dandie Dinmont’s abode in Liddesdale is more similar to Roseneath than Mount Sharon. It is also a haven. The robbers who attacked him represent the turbulence of the region, a borderland again, from which he and Brown are escaping, just as Jeannie Deans finally escaped from the perils of an historically troubled Union. In both cases, the haven is distinguished from the previous environment by a crossing over water, although, since Liddesdale is providing security from a more localised agitation, the waterway is, in this case, far more modest: ‘They soon came to the place he named, a narrow channel, through which soaked, rather than flowed, a small stagnant stream, mantled over with bright green mosses. Dinmont directed his steed towards where the water appeared to flow with more freedom over a harder bottom’¹⁹ Nevertheless, the description of Liddesdale will seem vaguely familiar to readers of *The Heart of Midlothian*:

Brown readily accepted the offered hospitality. Night was now falling, when they came in sight of a pretty river winding its way through a

¹⁸ *ibid.*, I, 269.

¹⁹ Scott, *Guy Mannering*, I, 211.

pastoral country. The hills were greener and more abrupt than those which Brown had lately passed, sinking their grassy sides at once upon the river. They had no pretensions to magnificence of height, or to romantic shapes, nor did their smooth swelling slopes exhibit either rocks or woods. Yet the view was wild, solitary, and pleasingly rural. No enclosures, no roads, almost no tillage, — it seemed a land which a patriarch would have chosen to feed his flocks and herds. The remains of here and there a dismantled and ruined tower showed that it had once harboured beings of a very different description from its present inhabitants, — those freebooters, namely, to whose exploits the wars between England and Scotland bear witness.²⁰

Liddesdale is presented, like Roseneath, as an oasis of protected fertility. Yet its seclusion is not as geographically emphatic. Nor is it deliberately exclusive, like Mount Sharon. Though it is certainly isolated ('No enclosures, no roads, almost no tillage'), there is a consequent sense throughout the description of compromise and moderation. The 'more abrupt' hills may better divert the elements, but they remain far more modest than the 'Alpine island' of Arran, having 'no pretence to magnificence of height'. The entire vista seems at times to tend towards blandness, with its 'pretty river' and 'smooth swelling slopes'. If these gentle undulations rippled on as far as the eye could see, this might indeed be the case. But the desolation and lack of cultivation beyond maintain a contrast which defuses the possibility. Variety is also added by the decaying structures which man has erected. As well as contributing the usual sense of the opposition between timelessness and mutability, the ruined towers commemorate the past in Liddesdale and testify to the passage of time. In their absence one might be tempted to view Dinmont's environment as one of pure, unhistoricised pastoral idyll. They, along with the area's balladry and place names which record local history and personalities ('At a little distance was the whole band of children playing and building houses with peats around a huge doddered oak tree, which was called Charlie's Bush, from some tradition respecting an old freebooter who had once inhabited the spot.'²¹) give Liddesdale an historical context,

²⁰ibid.

²¹ibid., I, 221-222.

albeit a context of its own, distinct from that of the surrounding world. Thus the pastoral world of Charlieshope can function as a haven from public history, which impinges in the final line, while remaining, as Jane Millgate puts it, 'like everything else in Scott [...] fully historicised,' even if its history tends more to be a folk history, which is something of a compromise between the public and the private, being regional, the sum of the experiences of a group of people limited both numerically and geographically. She continues, 'Time moves on in Liddesdale as elsewhere, its presence acknowledged [...] in the developmental change that constitutes history.'²²

In contrast to Mount Sharon, Roseneath and Liddiesdale which resist, to varying extents, the exertion of historical forces, Tully Veolan displays the clear irruption of historical forces, the crushing of Jacobitism being attested to most succinctly by two horse-chestnut trees, growing in a formal, *par terre* garden constructed upon very similar principles as that at the Geddes residence, albeit on a significantly larger scale:

In one compartment of this old-fashioned garden were two immense horse-chestnut trees, of whose size the Baron was particularly vain; too lazy, perhaps, to cut them down, the spoilers, with malevolent ingenuity, had mined them, and placed a quantity of gunpowder in the cavity. One had been shivered to pieces by the explosion, and the fragments lay scattered around, encumbering the ground it had so long shadowed. The other mine had been more partial in its effect. About one fourth of the trunk of the tree was torn from the mass, which, mutilated and defaced on the one side, still spread on the other its ample and undiminished boughs.²³

No other plant is as metaphorically fertile as the tree: its roots, extending deep beneath the ground, connote perpetuity; its steady development to often great size from the humblest of beginnings connotes consistency; its seasonal growth and shedding of leaves connotes the natural cycle of death and rebirth; its widely spread branches connote shelter and protection. The solidity and immensity of the horse-chestnut in particular amplify the sense of permanence that it conveys. The depredations wrought upon both trees, especially the first, directly correspond to the prevailing circumstances in the

²² Millgate, p. 74.

²³ Scott, *Waverley*, II, 282-283.

aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion. Like it, Jacobitism in Scotland was, after the third disarming act, passed with the Act of Proscription (banning the wearing of tartan and Highland dress) in 1747, as well as measures to abolish the hereditary jurisdictions of the chiefs, literally 'under-mined', with no less shattering consequences. One might also point out that the adoption as monarch of George I and the resultant triumph of the future, in the form of the prevailing House of Hanover, over the deep-rooted but regressive House of Stewart is reflected in the destruction of the aged, established horse-chestnut by gunpowder – by no means a modern compound, but one created by artifice rather than nature and introduced deliberately. The fact that the tree thus destroyed is described as 'shivered' into many scattered fragments, recalls those chill historical forces from which the encircling geography of Roseneath provided protection. Meanwhile the dispersal of the fragments and the shadow they previously cast reflects the demise of the Stewarts' influence and the fragmentation of their pursued, persecuted adherents. But, despite such dispersal, adherence does remain. Toasts will still be drunk covertly to 'the king across the water', hopes of a successful restoration of the Stewart line will still be entertained. Thus the two horse-chestnuts may, in some respects, be seen as representing two views of the aftermath of the '45: one pessimistic, regarding it as a total, unsalvageable catastrophe; the other optimistic, retaining at least a partial belief in the cause's recrudescence.

In the meantime however, life for the Jacobites is inevitably fugitive and uncomfortable, a fact eloquently conveyed by the Baron's means of concealment from the government forces who are quartered near his estate, on the Common moor:

About half-way up, [...] two or three bushes concealed the mouth of a hole, resembling an oven, into which the Baron insinuated, first his head and shoulders, and then, by slow gradation, the rest of his long body; his legs and feet finally disappearing, coiled up like a huge snake entering his retreat, or a long pedigree introduced with care and difficulty into the narrow pigeon-hole of an old cabinet. Waverley had the curiosity to clamber up and look in upon him in his den, as the lurking-place might well be termed [...] The cave was very narrow, – too low in the roof to admit of his standing, or almost of his sitting up, though he made some awkward attempts at the latter posture. His sole amusement was the perusal of his old friend Titus Livius, varied by occasionally scratching

Latin proverbs and texts of Scripture with his knife on the roof and walls of his fortalice, which were of sandstone.²⁴

The Baron's situation here, both physical and political – seeking refuge in the landscape as the survivor of a defeated cause – is very similar to that of John Balfour of Burley in *Old Mortality*, dealt with in the chapter on characterisation. The difference is that the Baron, not so unflinchingly fanatical, is also not so morbidly identified with his refuge; it remains to him merely opportune – a temporary expedient rather than a permanent withdrawal from the historicised world, even though it occurs on his patrimonial estate. Nevertheless other devices, commonly exploited by Scott to emphasise the bond between a human being and his environment, recur here. In particular he likens the individual to an animal, or in this case a reptile – a creature that clings permanently to the contours of its native terrain – though he does also use the word 'den', more often associated with mammals. There is however another procedure being simultaneously pursued which culls similes from the domestic rather than the natural world, indeed the specifically domestic world of Tully Veolan: the 'lurking-place' resembles not only a 'den' but an 'oven' and the Baron's insinuation of himself into it the insertion of a document recording a line of descent into a pigeon-hole. The latter simile also represents a sly commentary upon the Baron's propensity for pedantic, though scholarly, digressions. Nevertheless he retains a stake in the quotidian. The second simile prevents him from being totally absorbed into the natural world symbolically, even if he has already been so physically. The fact is underlined by his importation of artefacts from the mutable human sphere into the immutable landscape, and the inscription of human thoughts upon it. Moreover there is, in the objects invoked from the human sphere, an emphasis upon antiquity rather than transience: 'long pedigree [...] old cabinet [...] old friend Titus Livius [...] Latin proverbs [...] Scripture.' It is a regressive cache, in keeping both with the Baron's antiquarianism and his allegiance to a superannuated cause.

²⁴ *ibid.*, II, 296.

Once he has emerged from his lair he finds his estate restored, through the combined agencies of Colonel Talbot and the newly prosperous Edward Waverley and, by extension, the clemency of the Hanoverian government. But the restoration involves erasure. Though the horse-chestnuts in the garden are not specifically mentioned, those in the avenue, having suffered similar deprivations, are removed entirely:

In truth, not only had the felled trees been removed, but, their stumps being grubbed up, and the earth around them levelled and sown with grass, every mark of devastation, unless to an eye intimately acquainted with the spot, was already totally obliterated.²⁵

The removal of the trees is testimony to the type of restoration occurring at Tully Veolan and the experience of propertied Jacobites such as the Baron. Having avoided or endured persecution in the period immediately following the '45, he has gained an opportunity to survive, but not as he did. He must adapt himself, outwardly at least, to the new circumstances instead of shrilly and persistently railing against them. He must, in other words, be prepared not to abandon his Jacobitism but to no longer openly profess it. In the same way the trees in his avenue are entirely extirpated: an attempt is made to obliterate all evidence of their long established existence. The significance is clear, and recalls Fergus McIvor's earlier prophecy about the victorious regime: ' "Ay, they will make root-and-branch work, I warrant them." ' But to onlookers who knew of the trees' existence – like those who professed Jacobitism or were aware of the support lent it at Tully Veolan – the memory of the plantings persists and their physical traces are still dimly visible. In the same way Jacobitism in the Lowlands will no longer be apparent; it will be internalised, the hope of another uprising still nurtured in many bosoms, but articulated, if at all, behind closed doors. Tully Veolan is thus a vision of pragmatism: restoration determined by new principles and new circumstances.

²⁵ *ibid.*, II, 351-352.

III.

'The tide of history' has become a stock phrase – a cliché even. But it is a phrase made concrete in *Old Mortality*. Towards the climax, Burley, the fanatic Covenanter, falls into the Clyde, locked in a struggle with a dragoon. It is a fitting end for him. He is fighting one who represents the order which he and others like him have been resisting and is being carried away by a flow that symbolises the direction events have taken, in the form of the Recissory Act, passed upon the restoration of Charles II in 1660 (which annulled all legislation since 1633, meaning that not only was the episcopal system revised but various limitations on the royal prerogative, made in 1660–1 were also rescinded) and the 1681 Test Act, which obliged all lay and ecclesiastical office holders to swear to uphold the 1560 Confession of Faith and thus sought to establish royal supremacy in Church and State. They are events against which he has struggled:

As he approached the two soldiers, he collected his remaining strength, and discharged a blow on the head of one, which tumbled him from his horse. The other dragoon, a strong muscular man, had in the meanwhile laid hands on him. Burley, in requital, grasped his throat, as a dying tiger his prey, and both, losing the saddle in the struggle, came headlong into the river, and were swept down the stream.²⁶

The image, as shall be demonstrated by the chapter on characterisation, conveys the way in which Burley's intimate connection with the landscape, expressed as so often in the reference to an animal, makes him vulnerable to it. It also recalls the previous observation of Cuddie Headrigg to Morton. The co-mingling of the antagonists' blood with the water after they have submerged is a final echo of the carnage which the Covenanters' rebellion has wrought. This is the legacy of violence absorbed and dispersed by the flow of history. It presses on, portending, in its even course, the relative calm established by the Glorious Revolution of 1688–9 and the final adoption of Presbyterianism in Scotland, albeit without adherence to the original Covenants. As

²⁶ Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, p. 384.

Robert C. Gordon comments 'the sense of history bringing such men to naught is inescapable.'²⁷

Burley's fate has been much discussed. What has been less often noted is Henry Morton's own encounter with the Clyde. Earlier in the novel, distracted by thoughts of Edith Bellenden, he rides into it. The unlikeliness of this blunder suggests that Scott is trying to make a point:

A perfect master of all manly exercises, the management of a horse in water was as familiar to him as when upon a meadow. He directed the animal's course somewhat down the stream towards a low plain, or holm, which seemed to promise an easy egress from the river.²⁸

Before, in the description of Drumclog, we have a meadow as still as lake. Now there is a river in which Morton can ride as if on a meadow. Though his skill is emphasised in his extraction of himself from the waters, it is not difficult to feel that he, not being locked morbidly in the past like Burley, is better able to master both the literal and metaphorical flow and thus avoid becoming its victim. In this respect, one also notices the emphasis upon his identity as a human being, distinct from an animal: 'A perfect master of all *manly* exercises [...] He directed the *animal's* course.' (His escape from Burley's precipitous refuge will display a similar emphasis.) It is also worth noticing that he negotiates his way out of the Clyde through a policy of pragmatism – submitting to its pull for a certain distance in order to find an easier point of exit.

It is in *Redgauntlet*, however, that such imagery is developed to the fullest extent. Having read the novel, one can see, in retrospect, the irony of Sir Hugh Redgauntlet's first exchange with Darsie Latimer:

"Best make haste, then," said he, "He that dreams on the bed of the Solway may wake in the next world. The sky threatens a blast that will bring in the waves three feet a-breast."²⁹

²⁷ Robert C. Gordon, *Under Which King?: A Study of the Scottish Waverley Novels* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1969), p. 64.

²⁸ Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, p. 311.

²⁹ Scott, *Redgauntlet*, I, 37.

He impresses upon Darsie the importance of heeding the tides and judging them correctly. Yet he is himself a man who misjudges the moment — misinterprets the tide of events in encouraging Charles Edward to return to Scotland when there is not sufficient support among the Lowland gentry to generate another uprising. He upbraids his nephew for wool-gathering but his own ambition is one that is itself dangerously delusive. Indeed his whole activity in the Solway reflects his behaviour as a participant in the, albeit fabricated, historical events of the novel³⁰. As fishermen, he and his adherents gallop through the Solway waters, spearing salmon in a violent and inefficient but spectacular manner calculated to waste the largest amount of energy. Robert C. Gordon notes that, 'Redgauntlet is to become a fisher of men among troubled waters, his implement is to be the spear, but his nephew must be his comrade-in-arms.'³¹ Conversely, Joshua Geddes, the Quaker, erects nets, which allow the tide to do much of his work for him. Redgauntlet's fundamental flaw is, in fact, not so much to misjudge the tide as to disregard it completely. Suspecting that the Prince's followers will not accept the presence of Clementina Walkinshaw, he presses on regardless. Attempting to ensure their wavering allegiance, he kidnaps Darsie in a desperate episode during which, appropriately enough, both uncle and nephew narrowly avoid being swept away by the Solway tide. He can see the way the affairs of the nation are tending, but he will not accept that direction. He

³⁰ Charles Edward Stewart did in fact return to Britain after the second Jacobite uprising but only once, to London on 16th September 1750 where he was formally admitted as a member of the Church of England in an attempt to circumvent the threat to the Stewart cause represented by his brother Henry becoming a Cardinal in the Catholic church (1747). It was then that he met and formed a relationship with Clementina Walkinshaw, whose elder sister was mistress of the bedchamber to the Hanoverian Princess of Wales. His supporters urged him to end the liason but he refused. Meanwhile his conversion only increased dissent in their ranks. Nevertheless between 1752-3 there was a resurgence of Jacobite activity, principally in the form of the Elibank Plot. Concocted by, among others, Patrick Murray, Lord Elibank's brother and Dr. Archibald Cameron, brother of Donald Cameron of Lochiel, the plot's intention was that St. James's Palace and the Tower were to be seized by two or three thousand men in Westminster, after which a rising was to be led in Scotland by John Keith at the head of a Swedish force complemented by Scottish Jacobites. However, due to the machinations of a spy (Alastair Ruadh Macdonell) the plot was discovered and Archibald Cameron arrested on 23rd March 1753, ostensibly tried and executed for his part in the '45. //

See David Daiches, *Charles Edward Stewart: The Life and Times of Bonnie Prince Charlie*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973).

³¹ Gordon, p. 129.

attempts to divert fate. In the same way, as a Solway fisher, he pursues his own avocations, indifferent to the tide.

Quite apart from Redgauntlet's connection, or lack of connection with them, the Solway tides suggest a more pessimistic view of history than that of pure flow, as seen at the conclusion of *Old Mortality*. Rather, they are cyclical and cannot, therefore, be viewed as a symbol of progress. In *Redgauntlet* humanity is not cruising towards an undisclosed destination. Despite all the apparent convulsions of history, our fundamental situation remains very much what it was. This is apparent in the concluding chapter. Having pushed events in a particular direction, to a certain extent, Redgauntlet must submit to their returning to their previous condition. Having travelled to Britain, the exiled monarch must return to the Continent. The motion is one of advance and retreat, like that of the tide. In failure, Redgauntlet must acknowledge this, as his final exchange with Sir Richard Glendale indicates:

"And I also have your promise," said Redgauntlet, "that I may go on board yonder vessel, with any friend whom I may choose to accompany me?"

"Not only that, Mr. Ingoldsby – or I *will* call you Redgauntlet once more – you may stay in the offing for a tide, until you are joined by any person who may remain at Fairladies. After that, there will be a sloop of war on the station, and I need not say your condition will then become perilous."³²

What the exiles, in effect, attempt to do is alter the nature of history in the world of the novel. They try to initiate by force a forward motion, flowing towards a new status quo. But in *Redgauntlet* the status quo, in the form of the now established Hanoverian succession cannot be altered; the time of immense, irrevocable change is over – the '45 was the last attempt. In its aftermath events may lurch from one extreme to another, but the fundamental circumstances remain the same.

All these images find their summation in the final pages of *Waverley*:

³² Scott, *Redgauntlet*, II, 332.

The gradual influx of wealth and extension of commerce have since united to render the present people of Scotland a class of beings as different from their grandfathers as the existing English are from those of Queen Elizabeth's time. The political and economical effects of these changes have been traced by Lord Selkirk with great precision and accuracy. But the change, though steadily and rapidly progressive, has, nevertheless, been gradual; and like those who drift down the stream of a deep and smooth river, we are not aware of the progress we have made until we fix our eye on the now distant point from which we have been drifted.³³

Here, instead of individuals variously contending with or submitting to the flow, we have humanity as a whole being borne along from the past upstream, through the present of whatever point from which the flow is viewed, to the future downstream. The lack of self determination in this movement is emphasised by the passive construction: 'have *been* drifted.'

The first sentence prepares us for the main image without referring explicitly to it. The nouns 'influx' and, to a lesser degree, 'extension' establish the concept of motion in developmental change. The word 'united' conveys the impression of wealth and commerce converging like streams to press on with redoubled vigour. After these adumbrative hints and the reference to Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk, author of *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland, with a View of the Causes and Probable Consequences of Emigration* (1805), comes the fully developed image. The word 'gradual' is repeated, forging an implicit link between the first sentence and this main image. In both *Redgauntlet* and *Old Mortality* some kind of stress was associated with the flow. Burley and Redgauntlet struggled against it. Even Morton felt briefly imperilled by its strength. Here it is so smooth as to be almost imperceptible. The depth referred to also emphasises how fundamental it is. It represents the progress of human life at every level, not just among statesman and monarchs. It is thus the flow of both public and private history. The final phrase describes Scott's own literary activities and innovation in the Scottish historical novels. By contemplating the past from the

³³ Scott, *Waverley*, II, 364.

perspective of the present ('we fix our eye on the now distant point'), he is able to gauge the distance we have travelled and truly appreciate the pace of the flow.

IV.

Finally, in the novels that weave into their narratives well-chronicled, or ostensibly modest but actually significant historical events, such as the Battle of Inverlochy in *A Legend of Montrose*, or Drumclog in *Old Mortality*, Scott displays a characteristic sensitivity to the way in which these events might have been determined by the Scottish landscape upon which they were prosecuted. It is recognised that the bog in which the Royal Life Guards under the command of John Grahame of Claverhouse became embroiled south of Strathaven on the 1st June 1679 left them vulnerable to the Covenanters, who, they had been told, were holding a conventicle there.³⁴ While the Covenanters – ordinary locals mostly, men, women and children – emitted shrill battle cries and sung psalms, according to Scott's account, their infantry fired densely and repeatedly upon the infantry stuck below them. News of this victory inspired many other natives of south west Scotland to swell the Covenanters' ranks. The eventual consequence was the Battle of Bothwell Bridge.

That Scott alters certain facts about Drumclog is beyond dispute. As C. S. Terry notes, he invented episodes such as the *mano a mano* encounter between Sergeant Bothwell and John Balfour of Burley and the former's flanking manoeuvre in order to elaborate the circumstances of a skirmish striking more in its ramifications than its strict occurrence. He also moved the date of the event back from 1st June to 8th May and

³⁴ 'Those whose consciences prompted them to disobedience began by refusing to attend church services held under the new authority, attending instead services conducted by an 'outed' minister. This disobedience was met by a series of fines. Non-attendance at the official services was punished by a fine; attendance at non-official services was punished by another fine. These non-official services were conducted in private houses or premises, and became known as 'conventicles'. Everyone attending a conventicle was liable to a fine; and heads of families were held responsible for the behaviour of their dependants. In due course they were even held responsible for the behaviour of their tenants or servants. The fines were on a scale so harsh that a family incurring them all would very rapidly be economically ruined.

So, secrecy became desirable, and conventicles came to be held not in private buildings, but in the open air, in some remote spot to avoid detection.' James Halliday, *Scotland: A Concise History* (Edinburgh: Gordon Wright, 1990), p. 84.

supplemented Claverhouse's forces to reduce partly the inequality between them and the Covenanters. Having thus shortened the odds against the poorly armed insurgents, composed mostly, in spite of their number, of ill-disciplined rustics, Scott next evokes the character of the terrain similarly to prevent their victory, though factual, from seeming too implausible: to sustain, in other words, the suspension of disbelief demanded by fictional narrative. The landscape of Drumclog lends the event of Drumclog credence.

Scott prepares the ground, as it were, in the preceding chapter. Riding through the surrounding district, Morton reflects upon the advantage which the topography would lend a faction such as the Covenanters:

"Surely," said Morton to himself, "a handful of resolute men may defend any defile in these mountains against such a force as this is, providing that their bravery was equal to their enthusiasm."³⁵

Morton's words here correspond approximately both to the bare facts of the coming event and Scott's adaptation of them. Resolute men, inspired to courage, do attack Claverhouse's forces, but they number considerably more than a handful; his forces are modest but Scott, as noted, supplements them; he also, as Aiton complained, does render their physical context more uncompromising. Moreover, in the very next paragraph, the motions described as occurring during Morton's meditations foreshadow both the difficulties that his captors will soon experience and, by implication, their eventual fate: 'While he made these reflections [...] The extreme difficulty of the road, which was in some places steep, and in others boggy, retarded the progress of the column, especially in the rear.'³⁶ The road lays before the traveller in miniature the specific physical details of Drumclog and conveys a hint of their consequence.

The purpose of these preliminaries emerges in the description of the Covenanters:

The total number of insurgents might amount to about a thousand men; but of these there were scarce a hundred cavalry, nor were half of them even

³⁵ Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, p. 128.

³⁶ *ibid.*

tolerably armed. The strength of their position, however, the sense of their having taken a desperate step, the superiority of their numbers, but, above all, the ardour of their enthusiasm, were the means on which their leaders reckoned, for supplying the want of arms, equipage and military discipline.

³⁷

Scott is engaged here in an ongoing compromise between fidelity to historical fact, as recorded by, among others, Magnus Linklater and Christian Hesketh,³⁸ and narrative plausibility. He concedes at the outset the Covenanters' superior numbers, while stressing that, in military terms, the proportional quality of their force was not impressive. The contrasted modes of concession and assertion are reflected in the lexical choice: 'The total numbers of insurgents *might* amount to *about* a thousand men; *but* of these there *were scarce* a hundred cavalry.' The process of compromise is also manifest in the qualifications that punctuate the description – 'but [...] however [...] but' – while the various factors inherent in the Covenanters' victory correspond exactly to those promulgated by Morton in his internal monologue (their numbers, the landscape, their resolve) with the last erected as the principal one: '“providing that their bravery is equal to their enthusiasm.” [...] above all, the ardour of their enthusiasm.' Ultimately, however, it is the landscape that, in the actual prosecution rather than the anticipation of the event, asserts itself as the determining factor. It is presented as the Covenanters' natural context in exile from their churches and communities: they are already present, ensconced in it, waiting for the Royalists to come upon them. It implicitly obliges them, perpetuating their peculiar mixture of bellicose tattoo and psalmody: 'As the horsemen halted their lines on

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.131.

³⁸ 'The congregation which had gathered that day was later numbered in thousands, but, by the time Claverhouse saw it, most of the women and the other non-combatants, warned of his approach, had been withdrawn. Claverhouse later calculated the rebels as four battalions of foot and three of horse. The best estimate, made later by the Covenanters themselves, put that at about 250 men. Though other accounts exaggerated their number wildly, they certainly outnumbered Claverhouse, perhaps by as much as two to one. They were a strange army.'

Assembled on a green slope, under the lee of Loudon-Hill, they had begun their service, conducted by the preacher James Douglas, whose weighty theme was tyranny and its evils. Hamilton was there, with his mounted bodyguard of some sixty men, having appointed himself commanding officer. He had been joined by Hackston, Balfour and Russell. The 'infantry', however, formed a more motley collection, most of them ordinary worshippers, with little or no fighting experience. Barely half of them were armed with muskets. The rest carried pikes, halberds, and even pitchforks.' Magnus Linklater and Christian Hesketh, *For King and Conscience: John Grahame of Claverhouse Viscount of Dundee* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989), p.43.

the ridge of the hill, their trumpets and kettle-drums sounded a bold and warlike flourish of menace and defiance that rang along the waste like the shrill summons of a destroying angel [...] While these solemn sounds, accented by a thousand voices were prolonged among the waste hills, Claverhouse looked with great attention on the ground.³⁹ There is a symbolic appropriateness in the manoeuvres and topography at Drunclog, of which Scott was doubtless aware. The Covenanters, banished as a result of their adherence to Presbyterianism to the barren, isolated high ground of south-west Scotland now exploit that position to their advantage, firing down upon the government troopers trapped in the inhospitable terrain to which they are unaccustomed.

As the encounter approaches and Cornet Richard Grahame prepares to ride downhill towards the insurgents bearing a flag of truce, the field of conflict and antagonists having been described, landscape seems to be pre-eminent in the minds of most informed observers, having superseded both superiority of numbers and relative enthusiasm: ‘“These fellows,” said Major Allan, an old cavalier officer of experience, “are three or four to one – I should not mind that much upon a fair field, but they are posted in a very formidable strength, and show no inclination to quit it,”’ Though it is undeniable that the Covenanters’ zeal is emphasised more often than their physical position, that position does emerge in the course of the event itself as the crucial circumstance which allows their zeal to prevail:

Mean time, the disaster which Claverhouse had apprehended did not fail to take place. The troopers, who, with Lord Evandale, had rushed down upon the enemy, soon found their disorderly career interrupted by the impracticable character of the ground. Some stuck fast in the morass as they attempted to struggle through, some recoiled from the attempt and remained on the brink, others dispersed to seek a more favourable place to pass the swamp. In the midst of this confusion, the first line of the enemy, of which the foremost rank knelt, the second stooped, and the third stood upright, poured in a close and destructive fire that emptied at least a score of saddles, and increased tenfold the disorder into which the horsemen had fallen.⁴¹

³⁹ Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, pp. 131-132.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

The first sentence acknowledges the narrator's preparation for this event, letting Claverhouse's apprehensions also represent, by extension, those of Morton, the narrator and Major Allan. The second sentence is a summary of those apprehensions: it also encapsulates the significance of Drumclog, with the inversion of the Royalists' and the Covenanters' physical positions – the former suddenly on lower ground – reflecting the inversion of expected superiority, an inversion engendered by the landscape. The two sentences which follow function as an elaboration of this situation. They display a remarkable tripartite symmetry. There are a series of actions prosecuted in the third sentence. Some troopers become embroiled in the bog; others stop short to avoid it; others go round it. But the three actions are disparate: they do not combine to represent any single, positive motion. The common factor between them is the bog which determines each. The fourth and final sentence similarly describes a trio of actions: the foremost Covenanters kneel; those behind stoop; those at the back stand upright. But in this case the various motions are not disparate, confused; rather they are united by a single purpose – to fire upon the Royalists. There seems to be little evidence here of the wild enthusiasm ascribed to the Covenanters previously. They display a discipline which takes advantage of the topography – without which, moreover, any amount of discipline or enthusiasm would be redundant. The final phrase – 'and increased tenfold the disorder into which the horsemen had fallen.' – applies to the riders' plight a common orientational metaphor, while simultaneously describing its physical reality: they have fallen into disorder by falling into the bog.

The outcome of Drumclog is not negotiable; the skirmish must conclude in the narrative as it did in reality. But within such restrictions there is some latitude, which Scott exploits to the fullest extent, in particular elaborating upon the facts to promote the Scottish landscape as a crucial agent in Scottish history, or at least this portion of it in this region. Similarly, in *A Legend of Montrose* Scott mingles, in his customary way, real and fictional characters, recorded historical events and invented episodes. The warp and weft of fact and fiction are woven together most seamlessly at the climax of the novel, the Battle of Inverlochy, during which John Grahame, the 5th Earl and 1st Marquis of

Montrose, King's lieutenant in Scotland, inflicted another in a series of defeats (preceded by Tippermuir and Aberdeen, succeeded by Auldearn, Alford and Kilsyth) upon the Covenanters' army, in particular Clan Campbell, led by Archibald Campbell, the Marquis of Argyle. Up to this point the narrative has tended to pursue three lines which occasionally intersect: the adventures of Major Dugald Dalgetty, professional soldier and graduate of the Marischal College in Aberdeen, a wholly fictional character, though derived in part from the memory of two seventeenth century Scottish mercenaries, Colonel Robert Monro and Sir James Turner, the historical conflict between Lord Kilpont, Earl of Menteith and James Stuart of Advairlich, with the introduction of a love triangle in the form of fictional Highland beauty Annot Lyle (intended as the predominant plot until the egregious Major elbowed his way to centre stage) and the chronicle of Montrose's campaign against Argyle during the winter of 1644-5. But at the Battle of Inverlochy, which occurred on the 2nd February 1645 and to which Scott is broadly faithful in his account (reproducing the rout of the government forces, as well as Argyle's vacation of the field with his injured arm in a sling, which devolved responsibility for leading the attack upon Sir Duncan Campbell) the different lines converge.

As Montrose's force marches westwards, through the mountains of Lochaber, the series of great achievements behind them and others to come are placed in perspective by the grandeur of the immediate context:

The power of man at no time appears more contemptible than when it is placed in contrast with scenes of natural terror and dignity. The victorious army of Montrose, whose exploits had struck terror into all Scotland, when ascending up this terrific pass, seemed a contemptible handful of stragglers, in the act of being devoured by the jaws of the mountain, which appeared ready to close upon them.⁴²

The first sentence is unequivocal. The rest of the passage, as so often in Scott, functions as an illustration of it, a fact that could scarcely be conveyed more clearly than in

⁴² Walter Scott, *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose*, ed. by J.H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 141.

the repetition of 'contemptible' and 'terror.' The 'power of man' is belittled not only overtly but implicitly in the way that it may be 'placed' anywhere at all. The beginning of the second sentence does allow Montrose some residual glory, the relative clause conceding the totality of his success and apportioning him his own measure of sublimity: 'whose exploits had struck *terror* into *all Scotland*.' But it is the move from the general ('all Scotland') to the specific ('this terrific pass') in the next clause that reduces Montrose: what is only particular, local in the Scottish landscape is nevertheless more impressive than what is pervasive in the history of the Scotsmen who inhabit it. With the advent of the 'terrific pass' Montrose's forces, previously 'The victorious army', are converted by context into 'a contemptible handful of stragglers'. Moreover the reference to a 'handful' recalls the phrase '*placed* in contrast' in the first sentence and lends it specificity: Montrose and his men, representing 'the power of man', appear so reduced that they may be lifted up, manipulated. With this reduction comes an inevitable vulnerability, obvious in the continued personification, 'the jaws of the mountain.' The abiding image is of Montrose's tiny warriors, scrabbling Lilliputians, about to be consumed by the active, hostile terrain.

Yet Montrose does negotiate the landscape successfully. And when the Battle of Inverlochy comes, the impression is of him mastering it, exploiting it to his advantage as the Covenanters did in *Old Mortality*. Now as then there is a sense in which Scott presents the landscape as favouring whomever historical circumstance is recorded as favouring at the time. Montrose uses it to conceal his forces and, as at Drumclog, it prolongs their battle cry in a symbolic proclamation of its adherence to their cause: 'The Campbells could distinguish, in the gorge of the mountains, the war-tunes of various clans as they advanced to the onset. That of the Camerons, which bears the ominous words, addressed to the wolves and ravens, "Come to me and I will give you flesh," was loudly re-echoed from their native glens.'⁴³ There is again, on the Royalists' behalf this time, rather than the Covenanters', a superior sense of belonging ('their native glens.');

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 141.

threat contained in their motto is represented by the inhabitants of the landscape ('the wolves and ravens') rather than the landscape itself – they are not the landscape's victims. We thus are prepared for Montrose's victory upon the field of battle:

The trumpets and bag-pipes, those clamorous harbingers of war and death, at once united in the signal for onset, which was replied to by the cry of more than two thousand warriors, and the echoes of the mountain glens behind them. Divided into three bodies, or columns, the Highland followers of Montrose poured from the defiles which had hitherto concealed them from their enemies, and rushed with the utmost determination upon the Campbells, who waited their charge with the greatest firmness.⁴⁴

Scott disregards certain details of the event, as described by Stuart Reid⁴⁵ and presents the rebels' attack unequivocally as an example of the classic Highland charge. The landscape not only joins the Highlanders in their present purpose, but is subordinate to them: 'the signal for onset [...] was *replied to* by the cry of more than two thousand warriors, and the echoes of the mountain glens *behind them*.' They have by now achieved symbolic mastery of their environment, which obliges them and enables the velocity of their attack to be increased, to the extent that they become redolent of a force of nature – a human torrent: '*poured* from the defiles which had hitherto *concealed them* from their enemies, and *rushed down* with the utmost determination.' The role of the landscape is, however, dual. It cannot appear to implicitly favour one side without disfavouring the other. Thus, after the rout, Argyle's forces find the topography of the area hostile to a safe retreat: 'Argyle's gallant army [...] had been chiefly driven back upon that part of the plain where the river forms an angle with the lake, so that there was no free opening either for retreat or escape. Several hundreds were forced into the lake and drowned.' The

⁴⁴ Scott, *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose*, p. 151.

⁴⁵ 'At first sight the battle of Inverlochy would appear to have been a classic example of the vaunted 'highland charge' in action, but as with other examples, such a simplistic view does not stand up under close examination [...] The rebels, having spent a cold and hungry night, had no reason to hang about, and immediately some of them set off down the hillside towards the government forces. Since the Irish moved off before the highlanders under Montrose's personal command, the MacDonalds afterwards claimed that Alasdair MacColla had begun the attack without orders and that in consequence the success was due to his direction and not Montrose's, but this is rather unlikely.' Stuart Reid, *The Campaigns of Montrose: A Military History of the Civil War in Scotland 1639-1646* (Edinburgh: Mercat, 1990), p. 85.

topographical detail is correct but there is no mention of such an entrapment in Reid's authoritative account, which draws upon innumerable contemporary sources.⁴⁶ As far as we can be sure it is an elaboration of Scott's, but one which perpetuates the sense, manifest throughout the chapter, of landscape, not actively favouring one side or the other, but nevertheless reflecting the emergent superiority of the Royalists and, by extension, the inferiority of the Covenanters. In particular, Montrose's forces do pursue a very real development from being menaced by their physical context to exploiting it militarily. Once again, as at Drumclog, landscape makes history more explicable.

What, therefore, is the essential relationship between his native landscape and history in Scott's work? It would seem to be fourfold. The first aspect might be called landscape as location. Events occur in a specific place. No matter that their historical significance may vary, they are, from the moment of their occurrence onward, associated with that place. Though it is impossible to determine when an event becomes 'historical', the place does often demonstrate the extent to which human events have advanced since. Its immutability illuminates the gap between now and then. The second aspect is landscape as haven. No place is insignificant except for that entirely destitute of inhabitants. But some places provide a refuge from historically significant events occurring elsewhere. They are temporary havens, contingent upon wider events – all the more distinct for being contrasted with a locale that is very deeply affected by the historical forces that surround and invade its precincts. The third aspect is landscape *as* history. In other words, features in the landscape appearing in a way that symbolises the process of

⁴⁶ 'Now, suitably encouraged by this success, Montrose and the highlanders comprising the rebels centre also moved forward. As was done at Aberdeen it seems likely that the advance of the centre was delayed until the flanks were secure and success already very largely assured [...] Almost at once the highlanders, both Argyle's and the levies, dissolved into a panic-stricken mob quite incapable of offering any serious resistance. There was indeed very little fighting at all in the accepted sense, but rather a ruthless butchery of the terrified rabble. About 200 of them retained only enough grim purpose to make for the safety of the Castle, but Sir Thomas Ogilvy at the head of the rebel cavalry succeeded in driving them away from it, and they were massacred by some MacDonalds [...] As with previous battles the majority of casualties were inflicted by the rebels not in the brief fighting but in the excited slaughter of helpless fugitives. There seems to be a general agreement that the pursuit was continued for eight to ten miles through the hills.' *ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

history. The fourth and final is landscape as a determining factor in history – an element in particular events to which we can have recourse in order that we may better understand how they occurred as they did. What unites these aspects is that they are all the conception of man. It was stated near the outset that historical significance can dwell in a terrain, not just in the buildings constructed upon its surface. This remains true. But however powerful a significance it is it remains a patina. It is the impression of the inhabitants. It is imposed upon the landscape, even though the permanency of the landscape renders it more acute. Landscape is not man's creation, but history is, and the relationship between them is forged by him.

CHAPTER THREE
LANDSCAPE AND ART

1.

Any discussion of the relationship between Scott's fictive landscapes and visual art must dwell predominantly on the cult of the picturesque. It is therefore imperative that before we examine this relationship, an explanation is offered of the picturesque's historical development, its basic tenets and Scott's attitude to it.

In common with many literary and artistic movements, the picturesque's precise moment of birth cannot really be determined with any degree of accuracy. We can however state that the word itself was in circulation several decades before the cult which bore its name achieved its full blossoming. Its occurrence can, for instance be observed in the early eighteenth century in Richard Steele's drama *The Tender Husband* (1705).¹ One also comes across it in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755), with 'graphically' defined as 'In picturesque manner; with good description or delineation',² and 'prospect' defined as 'A picturesque representation of a landscape',³ though it is not itself accorded an alphabetical entry.

If the Picturesque flourished, as it is said to have, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, its original development, in Britain at least, might with some justification be traced back to the Treaties of Utrecht (1713-14). These brought to an end the War of the Spanish Succession, which had raged since 1701. Thereafter, prosperous young Englishmen were increasingly expected to complete their education with a trip to the Continent. This development was important in that it brought such Englishmen into contact with two landscapes. One was the real landscape: the Alps, over which they toiled, often at considerable personal risk, and the richer, gentler Italian countryside into

¹*Niece*. No—since there is room for Fancy in a Picture, I wou'd be drawn like the Amazon *Thalestris*, with a Spear in my Hand, and an Helmet on a Table before me— At a distance behind let there be a Dwarf, holding by the Bridle a Milk-white Palfrey,—

Captain Clerimont. Madam, the Thought is full of Spirit, and if you please, there shall be a *Cupid* stealing away your Helmet, to shew that Love shou'd have a Part in all gallant Actions.

Niece. That Circumstance may be very Picturesque.

The Plays of Richard Steele, ed. by Shirley Strum Kenny (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), IV, 2, 82.

²Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd edn, rev. by John Walker (London: Thomas White, 1828), p.321.

³*ibid.*, p.576.

which they subsequently emerged. The other was the pictorial representation of landscape produced by Salvator Rosa ⁴, Claude Lorraine⁵ and Nicolas Poussin ⁶. The respective styles of Rosa and Claude corresponded to those two different locales. Rosa frequently depicted savage mountain scenes composed of sheer rocks, tumbling cataracts, ruins, wind blasted vegetation, stunted trees placed beneath lowering skies and populated by ragged bandit figures. Claude, on the other hand, generally favoured scenes that were calm and idyllic, bathed in a vaguely obfuscating 'Italian light' and featuring swelling hills, profuse vegetation and placid lakes, though he also painted rushing streams and waterfalls. But in both cases the artist functioned as compositor, selecting and combining appropriate features, rather than faithfully recording actual locations.

Claude and Rosa were the products of a phase in continental landscape painting referred to by Christopher Hussey as 'Ideal Landscape'. The phrase was inspired by Aristotle and his view of nature as an immanent force that strove to achieve an ideal form of matter but was always finally deflected by 'accident'. The artist, by eliminating 'accident', or the vagaries of the real physical world, could realise nature's true aim in producing ideal, unblemished landscapes. A real landscape that was thought to come about as close as possible to the ideal was the Bay of Naples. Its amphitheatrical form, judged to create a perfect formal balance, was replicated in a number of Scott's fictive locations.

With the advent of the Grand Tour, more and more examples of Rosa's and Claude's work were imported to England by returning travellers and added to private

⁴Salvator Rosa (1615–1667). A Neapolitan who worked in Rome and Florence, he was not only a painter but a poet and actor. He became popular in England during the 18th century, partly through the enthusiasm of Horace Walpole. His reputation reached its height in the 1770's and 1780's but waned after Ruskin criticised the artificiality of his savage landscapes.

⁵Claude Lorraine (1600–1682). Born Claude Gélée, he worked mostly in Rome but was born in the French province of Lorraine. Examples of his work were first imported to England by travellers returning from the Grand Tour, after which he influenced, among others, the poets Thomas Gray and James Thomson, the latter alluding to his gentle landscapes, as opposed to Rosa's, in *The Castle of Indolence* (1748). Like Rosa's his reputation suffered eventually from the censure of Ruskin.

⁶Nicolas Poussin (1594/3–1665). Like Claude worked mostly in Rome, though born in France. The nobility of his landscapes was contrasted with the beauty of Claude's and the wildness of Rosa's. Among his English adherents were Sir Joshua Reynolds, James Thomson and Dryden. His son Gaspar (1613–1675) was also influential.

collections. Consequently they soon began to influence the aesthetic attitude not only of painters but also of poets, architects and gardeners, for one of the distinctive features of the Picturesque as a movement was that it gradually penetrated all these areas of endeavour, uniting them in a single mode of vision. As Hussey describes it:

The gardener sings in poetry (of a kind) his efforts to copy painters; the architect designs a building that a painter might have delineated in expressing a poetical conception. The painter illustrates episodes from the poets, in landscapes that a gardener would own to gladly. And so the ring tightens as the dance proceeds. It is this fusion of the arts in the warmth of enthusiasm for nature, as revealed by painters, that was the biggest achievement of the Picturesque.⁷

Another, parallel effect of the Grand Tour was that, having witnessed the landscapes of the Continent, and having seen them rendered even more perfect by Claude and Rosa, the returned traveller, pausing only long enough to hang his paintings, set off around the British Isles in the hope of discovering landscapes which approximated to those he had learned to venerate. In doing so he eventually came to explore parts of the country that had thus far welcomed few tourists, such as the Highlands of Scotland. There he found mountain ranges that seemed to emulate the Alps. Closer to home he found Claude-like fertility and undulating hills in the Wye Valley. The Lake District, parts of the West Country and the Peak District also received the stamp of picturesque approval.

Early travellers who theorized about the Picturesque included Dr. John Brown (1715–1776), graduate of St. John's College Cambridge and friend of Horace Walpole (1716–1797) and Thomas Gray (1716–1771). One of the first to explore and celebrate the scenery of the Lake District, Brown became widely known as author of *Manners and Principals of the Times* (1757). While vicar of Morland, near Penrith, he wrote a letter to another acquaintance, Lord Lyttleton⁸, which was widely circulated and represents, in

⁷Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), p. 96.

⁸Lord Lyttleton (1709–1773). Politician and patron of literature. James Thomson addressed his blank verse poem *The Seasons* (1726–1730) to him as one of his patrons.

Hussey's words, 'the earliest critical and comparative examination of romantic scenery.'⁹ A particularly interesting point of the letter is the specification, once again, of the amphitheatrical location as ideal.

Arthur Young,¹⁰ was more narrowly concerned with landscaping in three *Tours of England*, published between 1768 to 1771. Nevertheless he makes numerous artistic observations upon landscape and was 'nothing if not picturesque in his view of nature'¹¹ as Hussey puts it. At one point, for instance, he celebrates the impact of sudden contrast, the breaking of the scene upon the viewer:

After traversing a vast range of dreary waste, and shut up in a rocky hollow between two wild hills, you break at once upon a view which cannot fail to be astonishing: You look between the two hills on an immense plain, comprehending almost the whole of Cleveland, finely cultivated, the verdure beautiful; and the innumerable enclosures adding prodigiously to the view.'¹²

In *The Fair Maid of Perth*, the Wicks of Baiglie, referred to in the opening pages, similarly attained after 'a long stage from Kinross through a waste and uninteresting country,'¹³ functions in exactly the same way as the so-called 'station' or viewpoint, defined by Thomas West¹⁴ in *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire* (1778), as places from which a picturesque scene could be best appreciated.

Gray, another early theorist of the Picturesque, was one of the first to carry a 'Claude-glass' on his travels. This was a tinted, convex glass mounted on black foil and carried in a pocket book. The tourist selected a promising landscape, turned his back to it,

⁹Hussey, p. 99.

¹⁰Arthur Young (1741-1820). An influential agricultural theorist, but failed farmer from Suffolk. He published his *Tour of Southern England* (1768), *Tour of Northern England* (1770) and *Tour of Eastern England* (1771), but his most famous work was *Travels in France* (1792). Throughout his life he campaigned for agricultural reform.

¹¹Hussey, p. 102.

¹²*ibid.*, p. 103.

¹³Sir Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), I, 17.

¹⁴Father Thomas West (1716?- 1779). His *Guide...* first appeared in 1778 and went through ten editions by 1812. His identification of 'stations' was addressed principally to picturesque travellers, women in particular, who wished to sketch scenery for pleasure. He inspired Wordsworth, who read him at school, to produce his own *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes* (1822).

held up the glass and studied its reflection. It was useful for Gray in particular because it partially compensated for his lack of innate artistic ability (a shortcoming he shared with Scott) by framing the scene as if it were a picture. The result, as the device's name suggests, was to reflect the scene in such a way that it resembled the works of Claude Lorraine. It is referred to in *Redgauntlet* in a letter from Alan Fairford to Darsie Latimer: 'Didst ever see what artists call a Claude Lorraine glass, which spreads its own particular hue over the whole landscape which you see through it? – thou beholdest ordinary events just through such a medium.'¹⁵ Latimer may thus be identified as a kindred spirit to Edward Waverley, who, as we shall see, seems to possess a similar vision.

It has already been stated that the concept of the Picturesque was a topic of interest in several different areas of endeavour. One activity tightly bound up with its advent was landscape gardening. The Picturesque did not beget landscaping, but it did inaugurate a new phase in its development with the rejection of French and Dutch traditions of formal gardening (detectable in Mount Sharon, the abode of Quaker Joshua Geddes in *Redgauntlet*) and a new delight in freedom and irregularity. The painter William Kent (1685–1748), upon his return in 1719 from a nine year visit to Italy created landscape gardens directly influenced by Claude, Rosa and Poussin. In attempting to emulate Rosa he even planted dead, decayed trees in Kensington Gardens. Moreover, though picturesque theories were not fully elaborated until the final decade of the eighteenth century, the dramatist and architect Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1728) provided what is generally regarded as the first distinct articulation of the concept. Variety was the theme of Vanbrugh's work, which included Castle Howard and Blenheim Palace, – variety between old buildings and new plantings – a theme later to become one of the basic tenets of the Picturesque. This variety was sought partly through placing artificial ruins in natural settings. Hussey says of him, 'In the creative arts that were decisively affected by the picturesque, Vanbrugh stands out as the original innovator [...] At Castle Howard, at Eastbury, at Claremont, to take but the largest of Vanbrugh's schemes,

¹⁵Sir Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), 1, 58.

enough of his work survives to prove that it was he who first conceived the approximation of gardens to painted landscape, with lakes, vistas, temples, and woods, worked into a composed whole.¹⁶

A pre-eminent practitioner of picturesque landscaping in the mid-eighteenth century was the poet and essayist William Shenstone (1714–1763), owner of the Leasowes, a farm at Halesowen, Worcestershire. Shenstone employed obelisks, urns, cascades, pools, meandering walks and irregular groups of trees, not to mention prospect seats from which all these other features could be viewed, to create an early natural landscape garden – *ferme ornée* – turning his estate into what Hussey acknowledges as, ‘a shining example to the age of how well a small domain could be formed into a series of pictures.’¹⁷ On the other hand, the most famed and prolific creator of landscape gardens at the time, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1716–1783), was, according to Hussey, ‘unsuccessful, if he ever tried his hand, at turning countryside into pictures.’¹⁸ Rather than Salvatorian decay, Brown favoured smoothly expansive lawns, regular plantings and circular clumps of trees, fashioning his landscapes to evoke those of Claude. Such use of trees in particular Scott was later to anathematize. However, Brown’s conception of smoothness and rotundity as fundamental qualities of beauty, and the changes which he thus wrought upon his commissions, including the creation of a lake at Blenheim Palace, were inspired by Edmund Burke’s¹⁹ 1757 essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. In this work Burke analysed the qualities of the Sublime and the Beautiful and, in distinguishing them from one another, created room for a definition of the Picturesque. The basis of his definitions was an awareness of aesthetic emotion, in particular an awareness that the emotion of fear may be inspired by a particular kind of scene which he designated the Sublime. It

¹⁶Hussey, p. 128.

¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 132.

¹⁸*ibid.*, pp. 136–137.

¹⁹Edmund Burke (1729–1797). An Irishman, trained as a lawyer, he pursued both political and literary careers, publishing works on politics and aesthetics. *A Philosophical Enquiry...* was his principal work in the latter field and he was a friend of, among others, Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds and George Crabbe.

inspired this emotion by affecting the fundamental human instinct of self preservation. Scenes which affected what he saw as the other fundamental human instinct – self-propagation – were productive of sensual pleasure and designated Beautiful. According to Burke, the properties of the Sublime were Obscurity, Power, Privations, Vastness, especially height and depth, Infinity, which could be induced by Succession – an idea of progression beyond actual limits – and Uniformity, the absence of change presenting no check to the imagination. As we shall see, Scott's Highland landscapes share many qualities in common with the Sublime. The attributes of Beauty, meanwhile, were Smallness, Smoothness, Gradual Variation and Delicacy of Form and Colour. Of Burke's work, Hussey observes, 'Thus Burke had broken away from a moral conception of beauty, but only got so far as sensuous concepts. Moreover his theory did not touch objects that had neither the smoothness of beauty nor the overwhelmingness of the sublime. These were to be recognised later as forming a third category, the Picturesque.'²⁰

The principal picturesque theorists of the late eighteenth century were Uvedale Price (1747–1829) and William Payne Knight (1752–1818), both Herefordshire squires, the former of Foxely, near Hereford itself, the latter of Downton, near Ludlow, and William Gilpin (1724–1804), a schoolmaster and parson, educated at The Queen's College, Oxford, whose travels round the British Isles during vacations formed the basis of his views on landscape, expressed in a tripartite work which appeared in 1792 – *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscapes*.

Gilpin first alluded to the Picturesque in an explanation of terms added to his earlier work *Essay on Prints* (1768). In this he defined it simply as 'that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture.'²¹ However his work also contained an apparent confusion which led to the later, very publically opposed views of Price and Payne Knight. Put simply, the confusion lay in whether the Picturesque, as Gilpin viewed it,

²⁰Hussey, p. 60.

²¹ibid., p. 112.

was a quality inherent in an object which made it suitable for artistic rendition, or a quality which the artist imposed upon it in the act of rendition. The two ideas were viewed by the early nineteenth century as irreconcilable.

In the first of the 1792 Essays, Gilpin tried to distinguish between the Picturesque and the Beautiful. He did so by electing the rough, the rugged and the irregular as salient picturesque qualities, as opposed to the smoothness inherent in the Burkean conception of Beauty, though both categories did, he conceded, have in common Variety, Contrast and a certain inherent Simplicity. The other two Essays display a sensitivity to the particular character which landscape may acquire under various circumstances – in different qualities of light, for instance, or when obscured by mist or under snow. Gilpin also asserts that the artist should not confine himself to being a mere recorder, but, like Rosa and Claude, should select various features to form an Ideal landscape: 'exact copies [...] can scarcely ever be entirely beautiful, whilst he who works from imagination, culling a distance here and there a foreground, will probably make a much better landscape.'²² (This was a view to which Scott was opposed, at least in the area of *verbal* pictorial description). Moreover ruins were, for Gilpin, an integral part of the picturesque landscape, ideal as a principal element in the foreground. But he felt strongly that it was wrong to create artificial ruins, arguing that this compromised the natural appeal of the scene. Ruins could only be truly picturesque when the passage of time was the sole agent of their rough and irregular dilapidation.

The role of trees in a landscape was examined by Gilpin in another work, *Observations on Forest Scenery* (1791) inspired by many years observation in the New Forest. In it he determines the respective picturesque values of different types of tree, as Hussey records:

It was a relief to him that the Oak was as useful as picturesque. Of all trees it best fulfilled the character of any scene, adding new dignity to the ruined tower, new grandeur to the pastoral scene. The Ash, though equally useful, was less picturesque, the lightness of its foliage being its only redeeming feature. The Elm was far better adapted to receiving the grand

²² *ibid.*, p. 115.

masses of light and shade that were vital to picturesque effect. The Beech, he thought, a heavy tree, made up of littleness, and he oddly enough failed to notice how the Hornbeam beyond all other trees, grows gnarled with age. For Poplars he had nothing good to say [...] The chestnut on the other hand, was Salvator's tree, and the stem of Birch was particularly picturesque.²³

Gilpin states moreover that though trees are not inherently picturesque, they can achieve that condition in a state of decay – hollow trunks are ideal in foregrounds, withered top branches create irregular lines against the sky, as they do in Rosa's painting, and blasted trees, 'ragged scathed and leafless,'²⁴ inculcate appropriate sensations of wildness and desolation: 'what more suitable accompaniment can be imagined than the blasted oak [...] shooting its peeled white branches athwart the gathering blackness of some rising storm.'²⁵

Gilpin's *Three Essays* were closely followed, two years later in fact, by Uvedale Price's *Essay on the Picturesque*. It adopted Gilpin's view that the Picturesque was a quality dwelling in the object to be painted itself. It also endorsed his identification of the Picturesque with roughness and irregularity – 'intricacy' as Price called it. '“ The two opposite qualities of roughness and variation,” he wrote, “joined to that of irregularity, are the most efficient qualities of the picturesque.” ’²⁶ This resulted in certain objects being preferred to others as subjects for depiction: cows rather than horses, old buildings rather than new ones, cart tracks that had been marked with the wheels of passing vehicles rather than those which were unblemished.

Two years on again, William Payne Knight published *The Landscape*, a poem of twelve hundred lines divided into three books. Though the poem was addressed to Price, Payne Knight professed himself unhappy with his neighbour's view of the Picturesque as a quality inherent in artistic subjects. Rather it was, he countered, ‘ “ that kind of beauty that belongs exclusively to the sense of vision. ” ’²⁷ But, attacking the way the dead hand

²³ibid., p. 123

²⁴ibid., p. 122

²⁵ibid.

²⁶Watson, p. 20.

²⁷ibid.

of the improver had fallen over so many properties in the mid to late eighteenth century and anathematizing the way in which they stood – “Midst shaved lawns, that far around it creep/ In one eternal undulating sweep.”²⁸ – the majority of his bile was reserved for Lancelot Brown and Humphrey Repton.²⁹ So incensed was Payne Knight by Brown’s perimeter fences, fashioned after Burke’s concept of the beauty that resided in rotund forms, that he countenanced vandalism, enjoining local women to tear down the fences surrounding estates which had been unfortunate enough to experience his influence, and allow cattle to invade them, trampling the ground into a suitably rough and irregular state.

After the publication of *The Landscape*, the most forceful, and indeed at times vitriolic exposition of picturesque theory thus far, the entire debate degenerated into something of an undignified skirmish between Price and Payne Knight, with contributions from those who sought to defend the works of Brown and Repton. In 1801 Price’s *Dialogue on the Distinct Characters on the Picturesque and the Beautiful* appeared. It had been in preparation for several years, and in fact influenced Payne Knight during his writing of *The Landscape*. It served to further distinguish Price’s views from those of Gilpin, in particular disallowing the lake, “pure, limpid, smooth as the polished mirror”³⁰ from being considered truly picturesque and emphasising qualities of texture and form over those of colour and tonal distinction. Payne Knight’s own *Analytical Enquiry into the Principals of Taste* (1805) expressed again in characteristically robust form his disagreement with Price’s habit of “seeking for distinction in external objects, which only exist in the modes and habits of viewing and considering them.”³¹ So heated did the debate become that Shelley, in a letter from

²⁸ Malins, *English Landscaping and Literature, 1660–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 148.

²⁹ Humphrey Repton (1725–1818). An impoverished squire from Hertfordshire, he was the first professional designer to call himself a landscape gardener but often used ‘improver’ as an alternative title. He was the author of *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1795). Since the height of his career, from the publication of this work to the collapse of his health in 1815, coincided with the Napoleonic Wars, he was unable to work on as grand a scale as Brown but did have the opportunity to lay out a completely new estate at Sheringham, Norfolk.

³⁰ Malins, p. 151.

³¹ Watson, p. 20

Pisa dated 21st March 1821 to Thomas Love Peacock, with whose views on poetry he disagreed, sought to distinguish their dispute from that of Price and Payne Knight: 'But read & judge, & do not let us imitate the great founders of the picturesque Mr. Price & Payne Knight, who like two ill-trained beagles began snarling at each other when they could not catch the hare.'³²

II.

Discussion of the Picturesque was not however confined to Herefordshire, nor indeed to England. Price and Payne Knight were attacked some years later by Clydesdale landowner Sir Henry Steuart in *The Planter's Guide; or a Practical Essay on the best Method of giving immediate effect to Wood, by the removal of large Trees and Underwood*. (1828) As the title suggests, the guide was principally concerned with a system which Steuart had developed for transplanting trees upon his estate at Allanton — uprooting them, lashing them to a kind of horse-drawn gun carriage with a long pole on the centre of its axle, upon which the trunk rested, and transporting them to their new site. The purpose of the system was to circumvent what Scott, in his review of the work in the March 1828 edition of the *Quarterly Review* called, 'hitherto the main obstruction to the art of laying out ground, that no artist could hope to see the perfection of his own labours; nay, the pleasure of superintending that progress till the effect begins to appear, is granted but to those who live long, or who commence their improvements early in life.'³³ Scott gave Steuart's work a favourable review, but in the long preamble, while offering his own views on picturesque landscaping, defended Uvedale Price, for whom Steuart reserved particular contempt. He also had little respect for Steuart personally, recording in a Journal entry dated January 19th, 1829: 'We stopped at Allanton to see a tree transplanted, which was performed with great ease. Sir Henry is a sad coxcomb and lifted

³²*The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), II, 614.

³³*The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart*, 28 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1836), XXI, 112.

beyond the solid earth by the effects of his book's success. But the book well deserves it.³⁴

Steuart respected Scott. Indeed he praised the latter's activities at Abbotsford: "He is ardently, and [...] enthusiastically attached to the cultivation of Wood. Though possessed of the property only sixteen years, he has planted nearly five hundred acres of surface [...] few plantations are cultivated with the same skill, and none have grown with more luxuriance than the woods of Abbotsford."³⁵ But precisely the efforts which Steuart praised were deeply influenced by Price. The final revised edition of *Essays on the Picturesque* sat on one of Scott's library shelves and he corresponded with the author. In particular, Price's theories about the composition of plantings for dramatic effect, inspiring powerful emotions in the onlooker (the idea of aesthetic emotional response having been pioneered, as we have seen, by Burke) were brought to bear by Scott on his newly acquired property. To Joanna Baillie, in 1813, he wrote, 'I have been studying Price with all my eyes, [...] and I have only to beg a few years to see how my colours will come out of the canvas.'³⁶ His words here remind us that planting was for Scott, like verbal pictorial description, a compensation for his perceived failure as an artist, while a similar letter to Lady Abercorn³⁷, dated 23rd March 1813, demonstrates his inability to take the movement entirely seriously: 'I have been studying Price with all my eyes, and not without hope of converting an old gravel-pit into a bower. So you see, my dear Madam, how deeply I am bit with the madness of the Picturesque, and if your Ladyship hears that I have caught a rheumatic fever in the gravel-pit, or have been drowned in the quarry, I trust you will give me no credit for dying a martyr to taste.'³⁸ Yet, as Marcia Allentuck points out, Scott, in praising Steuart's innovation (ironically

³⁴*The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by W.E.K. Anderson (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 507.

³⁵Marcia Allentuck, 'Scott and the Picturesque: Afforestation and History,' in *Sir Walter Scott: Bicentenary Essays*, ed. by Alan Bell (Edinburgh: The Edina Press, 1973), 188–198 (p. 196).

³⁶*ibid.*, p. 195.

³⁷Anna Jane, Marchioness of Abercorn (1763–1827). She was the third wife of John James Hamilton, the first Marquis of Abercorn who retained first Scott's father, then his brother Tom Scott, as his factor in Scotland. Scott corresponded frequently with Lady Abercorn from 1806.

³⁸*The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1787–1807*, ed. by H.J.C. Grierson, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932), III, 240.

pioneered by the antipathetic Capability Brown, for whom Scott had little more affection than Payne Knight) is endorsing the acceleration, hence disruption, of the ordinarily unvaried process of time, the significance of which his novels examine so brilliantly in relation to human society: 'at Abbotsford he dwelt in a neo-Gothic baronial structure calculated to evoke resonances of a vanished past; in advocating and participating in active transplanting, and in advertising a machine that would accelerate its effects, Scott curved the future towards himself, and made an inverted historical present, by leaping over the slower processes of time and history.'³⁹

Upon first viewing the estate of Abbotsford, Scott was dismayed by the plantings executed by his predecessor, Dr. Douglas, in particular a line of firs which to him resembled nothing so much as a hair comb. Immediately he set about creating varied plantings that conformed to Price's ideals of intricacy and irregularity. This was achieved by thinning the existing ones and introducing, not only different types of tree, but also trees at different stages of development. Like Price, Scott was also captivated by the paintings of Salvator Rosa, as a letter to George Ellis (1753–1815)⁴⁰ in 1804 about proposed illustrations by John Flaxman⁴¹ for *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* indicates: '“ I should fear Flaxman's genius is too classic to stoop to body forth my Gothic Borderers. Would there not be some risk of their resembling the antique of Homer's heroes, rather than the iron race of Salvator's engravings? ”',⁴²

Though immersed in Price's work, Scott's admiration did not deter him from disagreeing with his mentor. Just such a division occurred in relation to the extent to which landscape gardeners should manipulate water – perhaps unsurprisingly, given the extent to which the liquid element exercised Scott and his characters in the *Waverley* novels, as demonstrated by my chapters One and Four. In the *Dialogue on the Distinct*

³⁹Allentuck, pp.188–198 (p. 197).

⁴⁰George Ellis (1753–1815). He was a retired English Diplomat and co-founder of the Tory satirical magazine the *Anti-Jacobin*. He shared Scott's interest in antiquarianism and they corresponded from 1801.

⁴¹John Flaxman (1755–1820). A sculptor and draughtsman, noted for his adherence to a linear, neo-Hellenic style influenced by Greek vases and classical reliefs. He created illustrations for the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

⁴²Allentuck, pp.188–198 (p. 190)

Characters of the Picturesque and Beautiful (1801), Price admits artificial fountains to the garden landscape, but does so, one senses, with misgivings, attempting to justify the admittance of such man-made features on the slightly tenuous pretext that natural geysers do exist. Scott is dissatisfied with such timidity and approaches the issue of water with characteristic gusto:

Water, even when disposed into the formal shapes of ponds, canals, and artificial fountains, although this may be considered as the greatest violence which can be perpetrated upon nature, affords effects beautiful in themselves, and congenial with the presence of ornamented architecture and artificial gardening. Our champion, Price himself, we presume to think, rather shrinks from his ground on this particular point, and may not be willing to follow his own banner so far as we are disposed to carry it. He justifies fountains only on the ground that natural *jets-d'eau*, though rare, do exist, and are among the most surprising exhibitions of nature: these, he thinks, must *therefore* be proper objects of imitation; and since art cannot emulate these natural fountains in greatness of style and execution, she is justified in compensating her weakness by symmetry, variety, and richness of effect. Now we are inclined, with all the devotion for Sir Uvedale Price, to dispute the ground of his doctrine on this subject, and to affirm, that whether the *geyser*, or any other natural *jet-d'eau* existed or no, the sight of a magnificent fountain, either flinging up its waters into the air and returning down in showers of mist, which make the ascending column resemble a giant in a shroud, or broken into other forms of importance and beauty, would still be a captivating spectacle; and the tasteful veteran argues, to our fancy, much more like himself when he manfully contends, that the element of water is as fitly at the disposal of the professor of hydraulics as the solid stone is at that of the architect.⁴³

One can appreciate Price's caution, as Scott perceives it, upon this point. Having established the principal of natural variety, uncultivated roughness and asymmetry, he no doubt feared that the importation of specially constructed fountains might be a short step away from the shaved lawns, neatly regimented trees and other 'improvements' of Brown and Repton. Scott, however, is not as scrupulous in his adherence to picturesque theory when confronted with the prospect of injecting, in this case literally, a quality of drama into the landscape garden. One only has to look at the relish with which he describes the

⁴³ *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* XXI, 85-86.

operation of the Baroque fountain and the comparison which he cannot help but evoke when describing its contents: 'flinging up its waters into the air and returning down in showers of mist, which make the ascending column resemble *a giant in a shroud*.' Ultimately, though Scott was a student of Price, the passion for landscape that inspired a sense of exaltation in him made him unwilling to subordinate that passion to codes of practice. It is indeed possible that it was the controversy attending the Picturesque that partly attracted him to it. He was, throughout his life, a frustrated campaigner, organising his household at times of local unrest along military lines, seeking compensatory adventures. The terms to which he has recourse in describing Price – 'Our champion [...] follow his banner [...] the tasteful veteran' – betray this frustration once again. _

Nevertheless, his overriding concern with the viewer's personality in appreciation of picturesque scenery, identified by Marcia Allentuck ('he would not dissociate pictorial elements from anthropocentric ones in contemplating a scene.'⁴⁴) did not prevent him from joining with Payne Knight in disparaging the formal excesses of Lancelot Brown and, particularly, William Kent:

Even the Nature whom he pretended to choose for his exclusive guide seemed to have most provokingly disappeared from him. By the time that spades, mattocks, and pickaxes had formed and sloped his declivities in the regular and undulating line which he required, – that the water's edge had been trimly bordered with that thin, lank grass, which grows on a new sown lawn, and has so little resemblance to the luxuriant vegetation of nature, – his meagre and unvaried slopes were deprived of all pretension to a natural appearance, as much as the toes which were pinched, squeezed, and pared, that they might be screwed into the little glass slipper, were different from the graceful fairy foot which it fitted without effort.⁴⁵

As this passage shows, if Scott actually had a personal theory of landscape design, it was that whatever changes were wrought should be informed by a sensitivity to the natural contours of the terrain. This explains his aversion to altering the lie of the land

⁴⁴ Allentuck, pp.188–198 (p. 191) .

⁴⁵ *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart*, XXI, 98–99.

but not his enthusiasm for including lakes, fountains and intentionally dilapidated Gothic well-fronts, such as the one he created at Abbotsford. He may have intensely disliked the work of the so-called 'improvers' but he was not totally averse to artificiality just for pleasing, rather than strictly picturesque, effect. He in fact, though even he did not realise it, occupied a position between the two extremes represented by Price and Brown, albeit far closer to the former. He was, in many respects, an 'adorners':

The three materials with which the rural designer must go to work — the colours, in other words, of which his landscape must be composed, are earth, water, and trees. Little change can be attempted, by means of digging away, or heaping together earth: the levelling of rising grounds, or the raising artificial hillocks, only serves to show that man has attempted what is beyond his powers. Water is more manageable, and there are places where artificial lakes and rivers have been formed with considerable effect. Of this our author, Sir Henry Steuart, has given a very pleasing instance in his own park. But, to speak generally, this alteration requires very considerable advantages in the previous situation of the ground, and has only been splendidly successful, where Nature herself had formerly designed a lake, [...] Trees, therefore, remain the proper and most manageable material of picturesque improvement; and as trees and bushes can be raised almost any where — as by their presence they not only delight the eye, with their various forms and colours, but benefit the soil by their falling leaves, and improve the climate by their shelter, there is scarcely any property fitted for human habitation so utterly hopeless, as not to be rendered agreeable by extensive and judicious plantations.⁴⁶

This passage sums up the principal components of Scott's attitude to landscape design. His choice of words in the first line remind us of its compensatory appeal for this frustrated artist. The second emphasises his belief in the superiority of nature's designs, as does the reference to the introduction of artificial lakes and rivers. This despite the fact that Scott was, he says, infinitely more enthusiastic about such innovations than about the creation of artificial hillocks. Respect for the immanent power of Nature overrode all his particular preferences. Finally, his meditation on the suitability of trees highlights his characteristic blend of romanticism and rationalism. He adores plantations of trees, and

⁴⁶ibid., XXI, 108–109.

wishes to see them instantly spring up almost everywhere, courtesy of Steuart's invention. The immediate enthusiasm is for the artistic and, consequently, the emotive effect which they achieve. But underlying this, as it underlies the passage, is a profound sense of utility: 'the proper and most *manageable* material of picturesque improvement... they not only *delight* the eye with their various forms, but *benefit* the soil by their falling leaves and *improve* the climate by their shelter.' And in these words Scott, perhaps inadvertently, gets to the heart of the contempt in which Payne Knight, Price and the others held the landscaping of their predecessors while busily pursuing their own designs: improvement was acceptable so long as it was improvement tempered by picturesque convention.

III.

The logical point of departure for an examination of the influence of aesthetic theories of landscape on Scott's fiction is *Waverley*, not only because it is the first of his novels, but because its titular character is, of all his protagonists, the one most sensitive to such theories, even though, in the context of the narrative, it is a subverted sensitivity, prompting him to pursue a mistaken Jacobite allegiance. *Waverley* is, to a great extent, about how, specifically, the Picturesque can mislead a certain kind of personality, as well as the danger of attempting to live aesthetics.

Edward Waverley cannot really be condemned for misapprehending the true nature of the Jacobite cause through an excess of romanticism. The environment in which he comes to consciousness renders his subsequent fate almost inescapable. It also provides the basis for a psychologically convincing plot. Edward is innately dreamy and imaginative; he is bombarded with 'the oft repeated tale of narrative old age'⁴⁷ by his aunt and uncle; he devours Milton, Shakespeare, Spenser, Drayton and 'other poets who have exercised themselves in romantic fiction'⁴⁸, not to mention Italian romances by Pulci and Boccaccio and 'many picturesque and interesting passages from our old

⁴⁷Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), I, 30.

⁴⁸*ibid.*

historical chronicles'⁴⁹; he inhabits Waverley Honour, an estate upon whose grounds Uvedale Price would have smiled approval:

As living in this ideal world became daily more delectable to our hero, interruption was disagreeable in proportion. The extensive domain that surrounded the Hall – which, far exceeding the dimensions of a park, was usually termed Waverley Chase – had originally been forest ground, and still, though broken by extensive glades, in which the young deer were sporting, retained its pristine and savage character. It was traversed by broad avenues, in many places half grown up with brushwood, where the beauties of former days used to take their stand to see the stag coursed with greyhounds, or to gain an aim with the crossbow. In one spot, distinguished by a moss-grown Gothic monument, which retained the name of Queen's Standing, Elizabeth herself was said to have pierced seven bucks with her own arrows. This was a very favourite haunt of Waverley. At other times, with his gun and his spaniel, which served as an apology to others, and with a book in his pocket, which served perhaps as an apology to himself, he used to pursue one of these long avenues, which, after an ascending sweep of four miles, gradually narrowed into a rude and contracted path through the cliffy and woody pass called Mirkwood Dingle, and opened suddenly upon a deep, dark and small lake, named, from the same cause, Mirkwood Mere. There stood, in former times, a solitary tower upon a rock almost surrounded by the water, which had acquired the name of the Strength of Waverley, because, in perilous times, it had often been the refuge of the family. [...] Through these scenes it was that Edward loved to "chew the cud of sweet and bitter fantasy", and, like a child among his toys, culled and arranged, from the splendid yet useless imagery and emblems with which his mind was stored, visions as brilliant and as fading as those of an evening sky. The effect of this indulgence upon his temper and character will appear in the next chapter.⁵⁰

Waverley-Honour is indeed presented here as a picturesque haven, the perfect location in which Edward's romantic imagination can flourish, unhampered by awkward, extraneous reality. It encourages him to be lulled into a reverie, sings to his attentive ears a kind of romantic lullaby, sending him into a somnambulant state which persists until the events around him attain a pitch of violence and horror (as in the death of Colonel Gardiner) sufficient to awaken him. Like Darsie Latimer, as upbraided by Alan Fairford in *Redgauntlet*, Edward initially views life not so much through rose coloured spectacles

⁴⁹ibid., I, 30–31.

⁵⁰ibid., I, 30–31.

than as if it were the reflection in a Claude glass. This fallacy would at first seem to endorse Payne Knight's identification of the Picturesque as residing in the eye of the beholder. But to be fair to Edward, the early scenes, events and characters of the novel do, predominantly, exercise an immense picturesque appeal in themselves (in accordance more with Price's sentiment). His formative environment, the Hall and its grounds, merges into the unadulterated countryside that surrounds it, where Nature exists in her true state, rough and uncompromising: 'The extensive domain [...] had *originally* been forest ground and *still*, though *broken* by extensive glades, in which the young deer were sporting, *retained* its *pristine and savage grandeur*.' There is an intimation here not only of the Picturesque but the Sublime. The reference to deer, though a qualification in the immediate context of the sentence, recalls Scott's views on those creatures and their habitat in the *Quarterly Review* article:

The space of ground set apart for a park of deer must, to answer its purpose, possess the picturesque qualities which afford the greatest scope for the artist: there ought to be a variety of broken ground, of copse-wood, and of growing timber – of land, and of water. The soil and the herbage must be left in its natural state; the long fern, amongst which the fawns delight to repose, must not be destroyed. In short, the stag, by nature one of the freest denizens of the forest, can only be kept under even comparative restraint, by taking care that all around him intimates a complete state of forest and wilderness.⁵¹

Again we see Scott's united concern with picturesque appeal and utility. The most truly picturesque for him was the providentially picturesque, rather than the deliberately contrived, though that was not to be dismissed out of hand. The ideal habitat for the deer happily coincides with many ideal picturesque qualities. We are reminded also of Payne Knight's desire that the destruction haphazardly performed by beasts should restore picturesque appeal.

To return specifically to *Waverley Honour*, everywhere there is a sense of encroaching nature. Wide avenues suggest an unvaried and expansive sweep at variance

⁵¹ *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, XXI, 91–92.

with the truly Picturesque, but they are redeemed from the taint of resembling too closely Brown or Repton's 'improvements' by the fact that they are overgrown with brushwood which necessarily interrupts their otherwise uniform progress. Similarly the monument covered in moss is naturally aged – a principle which Scott himself did not always observe at Abbotsford, as has been mentioned. Its mossy growth not only amplifies its picturesque appeal, but, for the author, communicates a sense of historical identity. Whereas many picturesque theorists would doubtless look no further than the formal properties of a scene, Scott was always searching for landscapes, picturesque or otherwise, that were also informed by historical meaning, as Chapter One demonstrated.

He clearly feels the same way about the tower in Mirkwood Mere. We are prepared for its emergence through conventional picturesque observations: it is reached through the tapering conclusion of one of the aforementioned avenues. The path may narrow with the gradualness of the Beautiful, but it is 'cliffy' and 'woody', thus introducing properties of roughness and variation, not to mention a Burkean sense of oppression, created by the sheer sides of rock which delimit the approach. As well as narrow, it is also 'rude' suggesting a retention of the natural state. Then there is the surprise, the sudden exchange of one condition for another, of gradual contraction for sudden expansion. But it is an expansiveness not of the Brown and Repton fashion, symmetrical, pruned, unenclosed. Rather it is that of a natural clearing, still irregular, still delimited, gloomy. The lake is not a wide sheet of water, shallow both literally and figuratively in its artificial introduction into the locale. Instead it is 'small', 'dark' and 'deep'. Its gloomy depth saves it from prettified blandness. But its flat, unvaried surface, which a strict interpretation of Gilpin or Price might prompt one to frown upon, is dramatically interrupted by the tower, the Strength of Waverley, which imposes itself upon the lake and is again, though this is not made explicit, presumably dilapidated, 'moss-grown' as well. Like Queen Elizabeth's monument, it renders an already pleasing scene perfect for Scott, supplementing it with historical significance. Indeed this is, in many respects, Scott's own Ideal Landscape – not, as the mid-seventeenth century continental view of Rosa, Claude and Poussin had it, a representation of Nature as it

might have been if able to express itself freely, fully, without compromise, but rather a scene in which the formal properties of the Picturesque are mingled with history, both sometimes dwelling in the same object. 'Historicised Picturesque', one might call it, to distinguish it from the attitude of other theorists who valued ruins only for their appearance.

Having described so carefully *Waverley-Honour*, and demonstrated the effect of such an environment, in conjunction with a faulty education and romantic nature upon Edward Waverley, Scott proceeds, in the beginning of the next chapter, to establish, as he unambiguously said he would, ('The effect of this indulgence upon his temper and character will appear in the next chapter.⁵²) his theme, of which many of the subsequent landscape descriptions will serve as an illustration:

From the minuteness with which I have traced Waverley's pursuits, and the bias which these unavoidably communicated to his imagination, the reader may perhaps anticipate, in the following tale, an imitation of the romance of Cervantes. But he will do my prudence injustice in the supposition. My intention is not to follow in the steps of that inimitable author in describing such total perversion of intellect as misconstrues the objects actually presented to the senses, but that more common aberration from sound judgement which apprehends occurrences indeed in their reality, but communicates to them a tincture of its own romantic tone and colouring.⁵³

Thus we are prepared, in reading the subsequent landscape passages, when they are presented through the eyes of Edward, to bear in mind that though the actual contours may be immutable, his perception of them is imperfect. Incidentally, it is also interesting to note that, unlike many men of his class and time, Edward does not venture abroad, where he might have witnessed the very landscapes that inspired Claude, Poussin and Rosa, but over the Border where he attempts to equate the Highland terrains with the work of those painters, especially the last.

⁵²Scott, *Waverley*, I, 31.

⁵³*ibid.*, I, 32.

As Alexander Ross observes, 'Edward is, when he joins Gardiner's Dragoons, a young man suffering from "a surfeit of idle reading" (Ch.4), one whose lack of experience leaves him open to the lure of surface impressions.'⁵⁴ Witness, for instance, his entrance into Tully Veolan. He is dismayed by the poverty and squalor of the village and the malnourished appearance of its inhabitants — so much so that he automatically searches for some element in the scene that looks as if it might not be out of place in a painting. He finds it in, 'Three or four village girls, returning from the well or brook with pitchers and pails upon their heads,' who, 'formed more pleasing objects, and, with their thin, short gowns and single petticoats, bare arms and legs and feet, uncovered heads, and braided hair, somewhat resembled Italian forms of landscape.'⁵⁵ By this he presumably means figures in an Italian landscape painting. Yet, though we can see that Waverley does indeed look at his surroundings as a series of pictures, we should be hesitant about calling him a true adherent of the Picturesque. The Picturesque in 1745 had not yet become as fully developed as it would be sixty years on with the work of Gilpin, Price or Payne Knight. Described by Scott from an early nineteenth century perspective, Waverley actually becomes a harbinger of many picturesque excesses of the author's time.

There is no doubt in this novel that the author is having fun at Edward's expense. But he is also having fun at the expense of the Picturesque's dilettante followers who wish everything to be not only as well-arranged and proper as in a painting, but also to be as sanitised as if actually composed of oil paints. However, with his approach to Tully Veolan, through its surrounding parks, Edward leaves those scenes behind, not without, one suspects, a tinge of relief. As Alexander Ross notes, 'Although some thought of the effect of poverty and indolence upon the dwellers in Tully Veolan may have entered Edward's mind, it finds no abiding place among the romantic illusions that flourish there.'

⁵⁴Alexander M. Ross, 'Waverley and the Picturesque,' in *Scott and His Influence*, ed. by J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983), pp. 99–108 (p. 102).

⁵⁵Scott, *Waverley*, I, 60.

Edward's search is for a landscape and society more in keeping with these same illusions.⁵⁶

The Park of Tully Veolan, with its arch, battlements, two eroded stone bears, avenue planted alternately on both sides with ancient horse chestnuts (Rosa's tree, as Gilpin stated) and sycamores, ivy and honeysuckle-clad walls, is, like Waverley-Honour before it, something of a Picturesque haven. Though the avenue is straight, it is, like its predecessor's, overgrown, 'excepting where a foot-path, worn by occasional passengers, tracked with a natural sweep the way from the upper to the lower gate.'⁵⁷ The straightness is further compensated for by the varied plantings that accompany its course. Once again for Scott 'natural' is the universal epithet of approval.

The architecture of the mansion itself is properly intricate, with small turrets that Price would have commended. Should the picturesque character of the approach have escaped any of his readers, Scott states, 'One of the folding leaves of the lower gate was open, and as the sun shone full into the court behind, a long line of brilliancy was flung upon the aperture up the dark and gloomy avenue. It was one of those effects that the painter loves to represent, and mingled well with the struggling light which found its way between the boughs of the shady arch that vaulted the broad green alley.'⁵⁸ Images such as these may be seen in retrospect as an implicit defence for Edward Waverley. When, later in the novel, he seems to stand accused in the narrator's eyes, his own, and hence the reader's of imperilling others in quest of his romantic delusion, we may look back to those events and landscapes which would have cast a spell over even the most aesthetically obtuse young man. 'The picturesqueness of the Bradwardine home,' Alexander Ross points out, 'elicits Edward's approval for we are told it "maintained the monastic illusion of his fancy." Nearly always, here and throughout the novel, the concrete qualities of Scott's description sustain a credible balance between the illusions that grip his hero and the reality that surrounds him.'⁵⁹ At such times he seems unusually

⁵⁶Ross, pp. 99-108 (p. 102).

⁵⁷Scott, *Waverley*, I, 63.

⁵⁸ibid.

⁵⁹Ross, pp. 99-108 (p. 102).

vulnerable, exposed helplessly, like an addict, to the scenes which he cannot resist, which will perpetuate his delusion, indeed reinforce it.

In a subsequent description of the Hall itself, several picturesque ideals combine within a single, relatively brief sentence: 'The southern side of the house, clothed with fruit trees, and having many evergreens trained upon its walls, extended its irregular yet venerable front along a terrace, partly paved, partly gravelled, partly bordered with flowers and choice shrubs.'⁶⁰ The intricacy inherent in the architecture, the texture created by age and vegetation, the variety of gravel, paving and differently planted borders conspire to create the perfect picturesque dwelling and setting. Most critics of *Waverley* characterise Tully Veolan as totally picturesque. However its garden is less happily laid out than we might be led to suspect, saved by the brook at its foot:

The garden, which seemed to be kept with great accuracy, abounded in fruit-trees, and exhibited a profusion of flowers and evergreens cut into grotesque forms. It was laid out in terraces, which descended rank by rank from the western wall to a large brook, which had a tranquil and smooth appearance where it served as a boundary to the garden, but near the extremity leaped in a tumult over a strong dam, or weir-head, the cause of its temporary tranquility, and there forming a cascade, was overlooked by an octangular summer-house, with a gilded bear on the top by way of a vane. After this feat, the brook, assuming its natural rapid and fierce character, escaped from the eye down a deep and wooded dell, from the copse of which rose a massive but ruinous tower, the former habitation of the Barons of Bradwardine. The margin of the brook, opposite to the garden, displayed a narrow meadow, or "haugh", as it was called, which formed a small washing green; the bank, which retired behind it, was covered by ancient trees.⁶¹

Elements from the previous description reappear – fruit trees, flowers, evergreens. Yet under the present circumstances, their picturesque potential cannot be realised. It is restricted by the 'grotesque forms' into which they are arranged – 'cut', in fact. Some might legitimately protest that the word 'grotesque' immediately conjur up picturesque associations of roughness and irregularity. But given the prevailing tone, the

⁶⁰Scott, *Waverley*, I, 68.

⁶¹*ibid.*, I, 68–69.

word is, I believe, being used here as simply a loose expression of obloquy, rather than a specifically descriptive term. The fact that these elements are 'cut' into such forms implies the violence which man must inflict to deter nature from its true purpose and perhaps the pain that the picturesquely sensitive onlooker must experience when viewing such artifice. It also demonstrates that such elements — trees, plants, shrubs — are not invariably picturesque; that quality may be encouraged or suppressed by context.

The formalism of the garden persists in its descent to the brook. It is an almost military formality, as witnessed by the phrase 'rank by rank'. There will be an echo of the martial domain, albeit a faint one, in the reference to the way in which the brook 'served' as a boundary. The section of the brook passing the regimented garden is 'tranquil and smooth'. But this is not a permanent tranquillity. The brook has been rendered still by the construction of a man-made 'dam or weir-head', which converts it into a condition appropriate to the prevailing character of the garden, as if the garden's subdued formality were being transmitted, rolling down the terraces to the water.

As the brook finally bids farewell to the constrictions of the garden, 'leaping in a tumult' over the dam, the cascade into which it reverts is overlooked by a building, 'an octangular summer house', whose formality, and geometrical regularity, represents a final reminder of the garden and serves as the true boundary before which all is calm and order and beyond which there is much disorder. Yet it is a natural disorder, and the water is described as having 'escaped' the garden, suggesting an eagerness for liberation from such a sterile environment with which the picturesque connoisseur might well sympathise.

The water is not now thrashed unintentionally into a foam where it was before intentionally quelled; rather it 'regains its natural rapid and fierce character.' Again 'natural' is the pre-eminent criterion of excellence. To underline the alteration that has taken place, Scott presents us with another tower, this one significantly different from its predecessor: 'massive', therefore Sublime, 'ruinous', therefore rough, varied and, in accordance with Price's edicts, naturally aged, with a personal historical significance for the owner of the estate, comparable to that of the Strength of Waverley. It is, moreover,

set in a dell that is deep, therefore, presumably, gloomy, with trees, some of them ancient, just as Price wished, perhaps admitting patches of light to create dappled variety on the rough earth. (The Picturesque is as much implicit as explicit in Scott, there to be detected by the appropriately erudite reader.) All in all, the brook enacts a flight from the artifice of the garden world of Repton and Brown to the natural world in a picturesque state.

This scene, and the previous ones described in Edward's entry into Tully Veolan, are encompassed in the view from Rose Bradwardine's turret balcony, the first panoramic vista in the novel and one properly framed by the window:

A projecting turret gave access to this Gothic balcony, which commanded a most beautiful prospect. The formal garden, with its high boundary walls, lay below, contracted, as it seemed, to a mere parterre; while the view extended beyond them down a wooded glen, where the small river was sometimes visible, sometimes hidden in copse. The eye might be delayed by a desire to rest on the rocks, which here and there rose from the dell with massive or spiry fronts, or it might dwell on the noble, though ruined tower, which was here beheld, in all its dignity, frowning from a promontory over the river. To the left were seen two or three cottages, — a part of the village; the brow of the hill concealed the others. The glen, or dell, was terminated by a sheet of water called Loch Veolan, into which the brook discharged itself, and which now glistened in the western sun. The distant country seemed open and varied in surface, though not wooded; and there was nothing to interrupt the view until the scene was bounded by a ridge of distant and blue hills, which formed the southern boundary of the strath or valley. To this pleasant station Miss Bradwardine had ordered coffee.⁶²

In its entirety, the scene presents a vision of past and present within the narrative. The immediate past resides in the few visible houses of the village, through which Edward passed to reach the Hall and its grounds, not to mention the more distant landscape, the hills beyond which lie England and Waverley Honour. The view, as he surveys it, therefore becomes a resume of what has occurred so far — a stock-taking. (This topographical representation of narrative will be seen to recur, albeit in more specific terms, in the next chapter.) It contains repeated examples of picturesque

⁶²ibid., I, 111–112.

variation: the river, now hidden, now seen, rocks protruding 'here and there' from the wood, in different shapes, some with 'massive' some with 'spiry' fronts; there is also the overhanging rock crowned with the tower, a frequent feature of Salvator's work, with its inherent sense of oppression. The reversion to a natural state of the brook described before, is recalled and elaborated in the self-determinacy accorded it by the phrase 'discharged itself'. Looking further afield, we see that scrupulous care is taken to maintain an appropriate lack of regularity: 'The distant country seemed *open* and *varied* in surface, though *not wooded*' – not wooded because even the variation provided by plantations can itself become the norm and thus demand interruption. Finally, in the far distance, with the declivity of the valley forming the side screens, are the hills, the conventional picturesque backdrop of continental landscape painting, pleasingly circumscribing it into a manageable whole. Finally the description is crowned with a reference to the approved method of enjoying such scenery.

The composition of this and similar scenes in Scott's fiction may be compared with the principles enunciated in the *Analysis of Romantic Scenery* from Gilpin's *Tour of the Lakes* (1772). In it the author divides every scene into three parts. In the foreground there are rocks, cascades, broken ground and ruins. At least three of these appear in the foreground of the view from Rose's balcony. Gilpin next alludes to the Off-skip (the middle-ground, in other words) comprising valleys, woods and rivers (the rivers perhaps supplying the foreground cascades). Tully Veolan is situated in a strath, or valley. In the background Gilpin places mountains and lakes. The scene does indeed terminate in mountains, but it would be wrong to over-emphasise the extent to which this passage corresponds with Gilpin's inventory. Though there certainly are similarities, Scott places his sheet of water in the middle distance rather than the background, and there is little allusion to Off-skip, concealed as it is by the immediate frame of the window. As Christopher Hussey notes, for Gilpin, 'Whereas the ruling character of the distance was tenderness, in the foreground this must give way "to what the painter calls force and richness, variety of parts and glowing tints."' The painter will easily find broken ground, a rough knoll, the sloping corner of a hill, perhaps worn by a mountain torrent, the winding

road winding through the chasm of a rifted promontory – or some other part of nature equally grand and picturesque.’⁶³

Bearing these views of Gilpin’s in mind, we turn away from the relative picturesque security of Tully Veolan, with blue mountains relegated to the distance, and penetrate the terrain to the north – wild, precipitous enough to merit representation by Rosa:

It was towards evening as they entered one of the tremendous passes which afford communication between high and low country. The path which was extremely steep and rugged, wound up a chasm between two tremendous rocks, following the passage which a foaming stream, that brawled far below, appeared to have worn for itself in the course of ages. A few slanting beams of sun, which was now setting, reached the water in its darksome bed, and showed it partially, chafed by a hundred rocks, and broken by a hundred falls. The descent from the path to the stream was a mere precipice, with here or there a projecting fragment of granite or a scathed tree which had warped its twisted roots into the fissures of the rock. On the right hand, the mountain rose above the path with almost equal inaccessibility; but the hill on the other side displayed a shroud of copsewood with which some pines were intermingled.⁶⁴

In many respects this locale exceeds the relatively modest proportions of the strictly picturesque and impinges upon the immensity of the Sublime. Burke stated that, ‘Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.’⁶⁵ Indeed the Highland landscape over which Edward is now being led is, more than any other, the one in which travellers who had experienced the peerless sublimity of the Alps discovered strong similarities to that region. Scott seems unambiguously to endorse the detection of this quality over the Highland line: it dwells not only in the physical reality of the locale but in the judgements which he passes upon it.

⁶³Hussey, p. 116.

⁶⁴*ibid.*, I, 145.

⁶⁵Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 2nd edn, rev. by J.T. Boulton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 39.

First of all then there are the inescapable facts. The pass is a 'chasm'. But Scott refers to it as 'tremendous' twice in the same sentence. This slight redundancy suggests a concern that the full amplitude of the locale's sublimity should not fail to impress itself upon the reader. The word 'tremendous' should instantly conjure up, among the informed, all those Burkean associations, both concrete and figurative, of depth and perpendicularity, danger and oppression. A sense of danger (and consequently of fear) was identified by Burke as the principal effect of the Sublime. It is certain that in this passage the danger could scarcely be more apparent. The path is 'extremely steep and rugged', and between it and the stream below there is 'a mere precipice'. Not only is there the potential of losing one's footing but the certainty of a fatal fall if one does so. Yet the ruggedness also embraces the familiar picturesque qualities of roughness and variation. The Sublime is the most immediate impression created by the scene but it is underpinned by the Picturesque. The 'hundred falls' experienced by the stream reflect the perilous geography of the terrain. But there is also variation in the way that the flow is 'chafed' by 'a hundred rocks' and made 'partially visible' by 'a few slanting beams of sun.' They are beams of the setting sun, shedding that evening light favoured by the Continental landscape painters. Similarly the perilous 'mere precipice' between path and stream is varied 'here and there' by 'a projecting fragment of granite' and decorated by Salvatorian blasted vegetation. Nevertheless, sublimity remains the prominent characteristic, with guide and traveller not only teetering on the edge of a precipice, but poised between it and a mountain (though with a hill on the other side, featuring a mingling of pines and copse-wood.)

In its entirety the passage, while re-emphasising the way in which Waverley's vision 'communicates a tincture of its own romantic colouring' to occurrences, also demonstrates that it is not so much the Highland landscape he misperceives as the motivations of its inhabitants: human nature rather than mother nature. As the passage quoted above demonstrates, the landscape is indeed, by most reasonable criteria, picturesque, sublime and, to use an adjective frequently favoured by Scott, romantic. But what exactly is romantic landscape? And how does it relate to sublime and picturesque

landscape? Both these questions, as well as the psychological role of landscape, are addressed to a certain extent in the following passage. It is primarily of interest because it demonstrates not just the author, but another character within the narrative, Flora Mac-Ivor, attempting to determine Edward's actions through the exploitation of his aesthetic sensibilities and romantic illusions:

It was up the course of this last stream that Waverley, like a knight of romance, was conducted by the fair Highland damsel, his silent guide. A small path, which had been rendered easy in many places for Flora's accommodation, led him through scenery of a very different description from that which he had just quitted. Around the castle all was cold, bare, and desolate, yet tame even in desolation; but this narrow glen, at so short a distance, seemed to open into a land of romance. The rocks assumed a thousand peculiar and varied forms. In one place a crag of huge size presented its gigantic bulk, as if to forbid the passenger's farther progress; and it was not until he approached its very base that Waverley discerned the sudden and acute turn by which the pathway wheeled its course around this formidable obstacle. In another spot, the projecting rocks from the opposite side of the chasm had approached so near to each other that two pine trees laid across, and covered with turf, formed a rustic bridge at the height of at least one hundred and fifty feet. It had no ledges, and was barely three feet in breadth.

While gazing at this pass of peril, which crossed, like a single black line, the small portion of blue sky not intercepted by the projecting rocks on either side, it was with a sensation of horror that Waverley beheld Flora and her attendant appear, like the inhabitants of another region, propped, as it were, in mid air, upon this trembling structure. She stopped upon observing him below, and with an air of graceful ease which made him shudder, waved her handkerchief to him by way of signal. He was unable, from the sense of dizziness which her situation conveyed, to return the salute; and was never more relieved than when the fair apparition passed on from the precarious eminence which she seemed to occupy with so much indifference, and disappeared on the other side.

Advancing a few yards, and passing under the bridge which he had viewed with so much terror, the path ascended rapidly from the edge of the brook, and the glen widened into a sylvan amphitheatre, waving with birch, young oaks, and hazels, with here and there a scattered yew-tree. The rocks now receded, but still showed their grey and shaggy crests rising among the copse-wood. Still higher rose eminences and peaks, some bare, some clothed with wood, some round and purple with heath, and others splintered into rocks and crags. At a short turning, the path which had for some furlongs lost sight of the brook, suddenly placed Waverley in front of a romantic waterfall. It was not so remarkable either for great height or quantity of water, as for the beautiful accompaniments which made the spot interesting. After a broken cataract of about twenty

feet, the stream was received in a large natural basin filled to the brim with water, which, when the bubbles of the fall subsided, was so exquisitely clear, that although it was of great depth, the eye could discern each pebble at the bottom. Eddying round this reservoir, the brook found its way as if over a broken part of the ledge, and formed a second fall, which seemed to seek the very abyss; then, wheeling out among the smooth dark rocks which it had polished for ages, it wandered murmuring down the glen, forming the stream up which Waverley had just ascended. The borders of this romantic reservoir corresponded in beauty; but it was beauty of a stern and commanding cast, as if in the act of expanding into grandeur. Mossy banks of turf were broken and interrupted by huge fragments of rock, and decorated with trees and shrubs, some of which had been planted under the direction of Flora, but so cautiously that they added to the grace without diminishing the romantic wildness of the scene.

Here, like one of those lovely forms which decorate the landscapes of Poussin, Waverley found Flora gazing on the waterfall. Two paces farther back stood Cathleen, holding a small Scottish harp, the use of which had been taught to Flora by Rory Dall, one of the last harpers of the western Highlands. The sun, now stooping in the west, gave a rich and varied tinge to all the objects which surrounded Waverley, and seemed to add more than human brilliancy to the full, expressive darkness of Flora's eye, exalted the richness and purity of her complexion, and enhanced the dignity and grace of her beautiful form. Edward thought he had never, even in his wildest dreams, imagined a figure of such exquisite and interesting loveliness. The wild beauty of the retreat, bursting upon him as if by magic, augmented the mingled feeling of delight and awe with which he approached her, like a fair enchantress of Boiardo or Ariosto, by whose nod the scenery around seemed to have been created – an Eden in the wilderness.⁶⁶

The characterisation of Edward in this passage mingles his self-delusion with the manipulation which he is in fact undergoing. To himself he is 'a knight of romance' and indeed, in the immediate geographical context, that may be his appearance. But this perception is immediately challenged by the reference to the way in which the path 'led him through the scenery.' This does not suggest an impressive degree of self-determination, particularly in contrast to that accorded the brook at Tully Veolan.

The distinction is drawn between Edward's previous landscape and this new one. The former, immediately surrounding Glennaquoich, was 'desolate', a word which hints at Salvatorian decay. But that desolation was also 'tame', tameness being anathema to

⁶⁶Scott, *Waverley*, I, 202–204.

either picturesque or romantic scenery. Once he sets forth, picturesque values quickly assert themselves. There is the explicit variety of the scene, 'The rocks assumed a thousand *peculiar* and *varied* forms'. There is the sudden exchange of narrow glen for a wider landscape, unambiguously designated a 'land of romance'. The pathway follows the approved convolutions: 'Waverley discerned a *sudden* and *acute turn* by which the pathway, wheeling its course.' (The motionless path is implicitly accorded the motion of a fast running stream by being described with a verb which Scott usually reserves for the latter, reminding us also of the way in which the path in the previous passage followed the course set by the stream.)

The scenery is not merely visually pleasing in unthreatening repose. In fact it imposes itself very startlingly upon the traveller: 'In one place a crag of huge size *presented* its gigantic bulk, *as if to forbid* the passengers' further path' The image of this crag thrusting itself in the way recalls the path's own self-determinacy, as do the 'projecting rocks', albeit to a lesser extent. The effect is to lend an ambiguously threatening cast to the terrain, capable of arousing unspoken fears in a manner akin to Burke's definition of the Sublime. Such devices save the pass from the blandly picturesque, a possibility that lurks in certain features, such as the 'rustic bridge'. The bridge is exactly the kind of object which the picturesque improver might have added to his employer's estate in the process of lavishing inordinate artifice upon it so as to contrive the effect of the uncultivated. The contrast between the truly Picturesque, spontaneously formed by nature, and such contrivance could perhaps be equated with the descent into bathos in literary terminology. Perhaps mindful of the bathetic possibilities of his rustic bridge, Scott strenuously emphasises the danger inherent in this 'pass of peril'. Edward shudders and suffers an attack of dizziness at the sight of Flora tripping across it, while trembling in a way that reflects her insecurity and further emphasises his fear on her behalf.

His fears allayed by her safe passage, he presses on, and the sense of his environment, suspended during his brief distress, returns. The path, doing all it can to avoid a level or linear course, makes a steep ascent, with echoes again of the pass of

Bally-Brough, and Edward enters an amphitheatrical scene, recalling in miniature that pre-eminent Ideal Landscape, the Bay of Naples. Here picturesque variation resides in the species of trees – ‘birch, young oaks and hazels, with here and there a scattered yew tree’ – varied in their turn by other objects – ‘The rocks [...] still showed their grey and shaggy crests among the copse-wood.’ The scene’s enclosing geography is crowned with the satisfyingly intricate skyline, so favoured by Rosa: ‘Still higher rose *eminences* and *peaks*, some bare, some clothed with wood, some round and purple with heath, and others splintered into rocks and crags.’ Splintered, that is, by the elements – the only hand that Scott will tolerate in the wilds being the hand of Nature.

Finally Edward reaches the object of his toils: the waterfall. Leading him to it, the path makes another attempt to compensate for its having been improved for the sake of convenience, with a picturesque final twist – ‘a short passage’ – that presents the waterfall before him with a proper lack of preparation. Or rather, presents *him* before *it*, since there is a resurgent sense of manipulation with our hero not so much a knight now as a pawn: ‘*suddenly placed* Waverley in front of a romantic waterfall.’

The word ‘romantic’ chimes in again, encouraging us to regard the subsequent description as an assessment of the scene’s romantic properties. As throughout the rest of the passage, an indication emerges of the extent to which what Scott identifies as Romantic, shares many qualities in common with the Sublime and Picturesque. Once again there is that fracturing productive of intricacy – ‘*broken* cataract [...] *broken* part of the ledge’ – the concern with variety and the texture of surfaces – ‘*Mossy* banks of turf were *broken* and *interrupted* by *huge* fragments of rocks’ – the Sublime emphasis on scale and on frightening depth – ‘seemed to seek the very *abyss*’ – not to mention a hint of the smooth contours of the Beautiful – ‘*smooth* dark rocks which it had *polished* for ages.’ (The last phrase also contributing Scott’s own particular preoccupation with the passage of time). That all these qualities add up to Romantic scenery is reiterated in the final sentence of the paragraph, as is the point that human alterations can never match and can perhaps sometimes imperil, the natural appeal of such a spot: ‘*decorated* with trees and shrubs, some of which had been planted under the direction of Flora, *but so*

cautiously, that they added to the grace, without diminishing *the romantic wildness* of the scene.'

When Edward actually comes upon Flora it is something of a disappointment. The natural beauty of the landscape, continually emphasised by Scott, is ultimately compromised by the obvious artistry of her pose, which does not partake of the discretion of her plantings. Though the author was an enthusiast about the Picturesque, he did not, I believe, want landscape everywhere to be suitable only for conversion into a painting. A tone of commendation is accorded Flora's tableau, but the fact that its artificiality distinguishes it from what has gone before is acknowledged in the reference to Nicolas Poussin, even though he is, as we have seen, one of the Continental forebears of the Picturesque movement in Britain. Before the narrator's point of view moved with Edward, not exchanging one scene for another like the visitor to an art gallery strolling past a series of pictures, but pursuing the smooth motion of a film camera. Here the camera has ground to a halt and a static image really is offered.

The positioning of the figures here is carefully measured: 'Two paces further back, stood Cathleen.' The scene is bathed in that angled, adorning light, so beloved of Claude and Poussin. Edward is too generally enthusiastic about romantic scenery and hence not scrupulous enough in his vision to notice that a change has occurred. It was a fact that did not escape Maria Edgeworth, however, who noted that, ' " The appearance of Flora and her harp was too like a common heroine; she should [...] be far above all stage effects or novelist's trick." ' ⁶⁷ The use of the word 'stage' is appropriate. Under Flora's influence the scene becomes like a painting, certainly – diminished to one dimension like the scenic backdrop of a theatrical production. There is still a breath of the Picturesque in the 'varied' tint of the sun. But Flora and Cathleen import artificiality not only in their poses but in the harp which the former carries. And, despite the authorial commendation already noted, there are other, subtle, criticisms of the sacrifices implicit in Flora's pseudo-romantic construct. The descending sun communicates to her eye a

⁶⁷Ross, pp. 99–108 (p. 104).

'more than human brilliancy'. More than human – exceeding the human, but nevertheless not human, not natural. Similarly she is compared to an 'enchantress', the possessor of supernatural powers. Thus, as Scott acknowledges, the delimited and amphitheatrical spot around her seems her *supernatural* creation – a real landscape perfected in the same way that Claude and Rosa perfected the scenes on their canvasses. For all the appropriate irregularity, roughness and variation it comprises, the description does not until the last instant and the discovery of Flora Mac-Ivor, become truly *Picture*-esque. Until then it has in fact been a fluid, quasi-cinematic evocation of romantic scenery.

As the novel progresses there are fewer intimations of picturesque influence upon Scott's descriptions. There are two main reasons for this. One is that the increased momentum of the narrative affords fewer opportunities for either author or protagonist to pause and admire the view. The other is that the latter half of the novel is, literally, a period of disillusionment for Edward: the romantic illusion inspired by the topography of Scotland which had also communicated itself to people and circumstances, is dispelled by the development of those very circumstances and the actions of the people. The landscape has not altered but it is no longer required to bear the burden of Edward's overt aesthetic sensibility – to receive his 'tincture', in other words. After the Jacobite rebellion fails, he returns to the property which appealed to that naive sensibility near the outset: Tully Veolan. It has been sacked by the King's troops:

The avenue was cruelly wasted. Several large trees were felled, and left lying across the path; and the cattle of the villagers and the more rude hoofs of dragoon horses had poached into black mud the verdant turf which Waverley had so much admired.⁶⁸

Upon this description Alexander Ross comments, 'These are ruins which time has had no chance to render picturesque.'⁶⁹ In fact they are ruins that have become too ruinous to be picturesque. On Waverley's first visit the avenue was neglected,

⁶⁸Scott, *Waverley*, II, 281.

⁶⁹Ross, pp. 99–108 (p. 106).

overgrown, 'clothed with grass of a deep and rich verdure,'⁷⁰ which, for Edward, amplified hugely its picturesque appeal. Now its dilapidation has gone beyond the Picturesque; it has become 'cruelly wasted'. It was characteristic of Edward at that stage in his journey to appreciate decay so long as it did not incommode the traveller. Now, however, trees lie across his path, felled, not by gales, not by the natural force of the elements, but as part of the general deprivations wrought by incursive human beings. The reference to hoof marks recalls Payne Knight's exhortation to rustic women to let their cattle roam Brown and Repton's creations. Once again, however, the process has gone too far with the turf not trodden into a picturesque state but 'obliterated.' The horses' hoofs may be 'rude', previously a term implying picturesque irregularity, but their effect is not what Payne Knight would wish. Edward's journey along the path is therefore a brief, late education in the limits of the Picturesque. He witnesses the point beyond which dilapidation becomes merely ugly.

Yet by the end of the novel, Tully Veolan has been restored to, indeed has exceeded, its former splendour:

Indeed, when he entered the court, excepting that the heavy stables, which had been burnt down, were replaced by buildings of a lighter and more picturesque appearance, all seemed as much as possible restored to the state in which he had left it when he assumed arms some months before [...] While these *minutiae* had been so heedfully attended to, it is scarce necessary to add that the house itself had been thoroughly repaired, as well as the gardens, with the strictest attention to maintain the original character of both, and to remove, as far as possible, all appearance of the ravage they had sustained.⁷¹

Repair alone is not enough. Simply to repair them would be to lose the picturesque dilapidation which they displayed at the beginning of the novel. This emphasises the fact that Tully Veolan represents a return to the status quo, an attempt to

⁷⁰Scott, *Waverley*, I, 63.

⁷¹*ibid.*, II, 353.

reproduce exactly the conditions which prevailed before the rebellion (See my earlier discussion pp.71 – 75).

Waverley's picturesque illusions now lie behind him and, since the presentation of landscape in the novel has been indissolubly bound up with his attitude to it, such theories are also abandoned by Scott. But there is one final flourish, which momentarily arrests the gradual ebbing of the picturesque in the later stages of the narrative. One new addition to the dining parlour is a picture:

It was a large and spirited painting, representing Fergus Mac-Ivor and Waverley in their Highland dress, the scene a wild, rocky, and mountainous pass, down which the clan were descending in the background. It was taken from a spirited sketch, drawn while they were in Edinburgh by a young man of high genius, and had been painted on a full-length scale by an eminent London artist. Raeburn himself (whose Highland chiefs do all but walk out of the canvas) could not have done more justice to the subject; and the ardent, fiery, and impetuous character of the unfortunate Chief of Glennaquoich was finely contrasted with the contemplative, fanciful, and enthusiastic expression of his happier friend.⁷²

James Kerr condemns this picture as, 'quite clearly a misrepresentation of the events and relationships depicted in the novel.'⁷³ It is clearly a misrepresentation of the eventual reality. But it is, on the other hand, a faithful depiction of the illusory construction which Waverley's consciousness originally imposed upon those events and relationships. This is how he thought it would be: he and Fergus, side by side, as brothers in arms, leading figures reminiscent of those in a painting by Rosa through a picturesque landscape with all the dangerous political currents which swirled around the rebellion suppressed by the pure aesthetic appeal of its participants and location, composed and framed along the lines of those paintings with which his imagination was stocked. It may be the case, as Kerr states, that, 'What we see through the eyes of the Baron is the past at a double remove, a painting rendered by a London artist from a sketch drawn by an artist

⁷²ibid., II, 359–360.

⁷³James Kerr, *Fiction Against History: Scott as Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 19.

in Edinburgh. The painting is a picture of a picture, a production of an earlier production which can only allow the viewer a mediated perception of the past.⁷⁴ But the image has really been created by Scott, and not for the Baron's eyes but for Waverley's and the reader's as a salutary reminder of his original, dangerous naivety, the disjunction between his delusions and reality, the danger of making pictures out of real landscapes.

Though *Waverley* is the key text for an explication of the role of aesthetic theory in Scott's fiction, descriptive passages in other novels do display similar influences. For instance, in *Guy Mannering*, Julia Mannering, in her correspondence with her friend Mathilda Marchmont, is revealed as something of a distaff Waverley, sharing his unreflective enthusiasm for the surface properties of the Picturesque:

"If India be the land of magic, this, my dearest Mathilda, is the country of romance. The scenery is such as Nature brings together in her sublimest moods, — sounding cataracts; hills which raise their scathed heads to the sky; lakes that, winding up the shadowy valleys, lead at every turn to yet more romantic recesses; rocks which catch the clouds of heaven. All the wildness of Salvator here, and there the fairy scenes of Claude."⁷⁵

If Scott adapts traditional picturesque theories to form his own vision of landscape, Julia is clearly enslaved by them. In one short passage we have the Sublime and the Picturesque and, hence, the Romantic. All the requisite elements are crowded in, but such is their concentration that the effect is irredeemably clichéd, despite the fact that it does feature Scott's customary emphasis on 'nature' as the supreme governing force. It is not the features themselves but the rapidity with which they are ticked off in a picturesque inventory that prevents us from taking Julia Mannering's exultative description quite seriously. The implication is that Scott was perfectly aware of the excesses possible in aesthetic movements. Edward Waverley and Julia Mannering are two of his least perceptive characters. Their picturesque vision is in fact a barrier to true perception. The irony with which Scott treats both of them, particularly the former, is the

⁷⁴ibid.

⁷⁵Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), I, 155.

measure of the clarity with which he viewed the flaws of prescriptivism in aesthetics. Viewing all landscapes in only one way could easily solidify into dogma, creating, as it were, an opacity before the eyes of the viewer that obscures the true individuality of the very scene in relation to which he had invoked the particular theory in trying to perceive.

But the presence of a character such as Edward Waverley or Julia Mannering is not absolutely necessary for a picturesque vision to assert itself in Scott's fiction. Witness, for instance, the opening pages of *The Fair Maid of Perth*. Having offered the preparatory observation that, 'The most picturesque, if not the highest hills, are also to be found in the county of Perth' (distinguishing between the Picturesque and the scale of the Sublime) and that, 'It is in such favoured regions that the traveller finds what the poet Gray, or someone else, called beauty lying in the lap of terror,' Scott describes the valley of the Tay as follows:

One of the most beautiful points of view which Britain, or perhaps the world, can afford, is, or rather we may say was, the prospect from a spot called the Wicks of Baiglie, being a species of niche at which the traveller arrived, after a long stage from Kinross, through a waste and uninteresting country, and from which, as forming a pass over the summit of a ridgy eminence which he had gradually surmounted, he beheld, stretching beneath him, the valley of the Tay, traversed by its ample and lordly stream; the town of Perth, with its two large meadows, or Inches, its steeples, and its towers; the hills of Moncrieff and Kinnoul faintly rising into picturesque rocks, partly clothed with woods; the rich margin of the river, studded with elegant mansions; and the distant view of the huge Grampian mountains, the northern screen of this exquisite landscape.⁷⁶

The eventual vista is accorded a gradual build-up before it bursts upon the viewer and reader in a suitably picturesque fashion. An appropriate contrast is established with reference to the initial surroundings of the 'waste and uninteresting country' which precedes it. The unspecified traveller may ascend the eminence 'gradually' but when he reaches the top the valley bursts upon him rather than being disclosed section by section. The vista itself, merely by virtue of being a valley and hence possessing natural

⁷⁶Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, I, 17-18.

sidescreens so beloved of the connoisseur would have appealed to Gilpin, and perhaps did, for whereas many of Scott's landscapes are composites, or adaptations of real locales, this one is described with a strict recorder's eye. The fact that, seen by a traveller from the 'station' of the Wicks of Baiglie, the valley is described as 'stretching beneath him' may seem suspect, conjuring up associations with Brown and Repton's expansive and denuded lawns. But the Tay which 'traversed' it would divide the expanse, thus interrupting it and, though it is not acknowledged, no doubt introducing the appropriate natural convolutions. The town of Perth itself, being an artificial construct, modifies, for Scott, the purely picturesque character of the surrounding landscape. Price did identify certain architectural styles as being picturesque. And in Rosa's paintings, man-made structures are countenanced so long as they exist in a proper state of decay. Perth on the other hand is composed of steeples, towers and mansions, all presumably well-maintained, given the air of prosperity which permeates the description and is implied in the images of fullness — 'ample and lordly stream' — and material wealth — 'the rich margin of the river, studded with elegant mansions.' Yet the different types of projecting structures — 'its steeples and towers' — will inevitably create a pleasingly varied skyline and this is perhaps the reason for Scott emphasising them. Meanwhile the fact that the adjacent landscape remains picturesque is never in doubt: 'the hills of Moncrieff and Kinnoul faintly rising into picturesque rocks, partly clothed with woods.' And Scott does round his description off with an indisputably picturesque final flourish: 'the huge Grampian mountains, the northern screen of this exquisite landscape.' The fact that he has made a picture out of the valley, framing and composing it in the approved style (although the physical reality of the Tay valley lends itself ideally to such a process) is explicitly acknowledged later in the same paragraph: 'the traveller, by quitting his horse or equipage, and walking a few hundred yards, may still compare the real landscape with the sketch which we have attempted to give.'⁷⁷ However the landscape does not now burst upon him with picturesque suddenness due to the new course of the road which

⁷⁷ibid.

eschews the station of the Wicks of Baiglie: 'The alteration of the road, greatly, it must be owned, to the improvement of general intercourse, avoids this magnificent point of view, and the landscape is introduced more gradually and partially to the eye, though the approach must still be considered as extremely beautiful.'⁷⁸ This sentence links qualities of gradualness and partial revelation with the Beautiful and contrasts them with the suddenness of the Picturesque, exactly as Burke contrasted the same qualities in relation to the Sublime and Beautiful. There is an ambiguity in the statement. Some might interpret 'still beautiful' as meaning 'still as beautiful as it was before', but, given the general context, it seems more likely that 'still' is a qualification standing in for 'nevertheless'. The approach, though no longer picturesque, is nevertheless beautiful. This would seem to accord better with the previous emphasis on picturesque values.

A similar establishing description occurs in *A Legend of Montrose*. The example demonstrates how Scott will, like Claude and Poussin, occasionally use a certain quality of light to bestow a special atmosphere upon a scene. It is a useful expedient:

It was towards the close of a summer's evening, during the anxious period which we have commemorated, that a young gentleman of quality, well mounted and armed, and accompanied by two servants, one of whom led a sumpter horse, rode slowly up one of those steep passes, by which the Highlands are accessible from the Lowlands of Perthshire. The course had lain for some time along the banks of a lake, whose deep waters reflected the crimson beams of the western sun. The broken path which they pursued with some difficulty, was in some places shaded by ancient birches and oak trees, and in others overhung by fragments of huge rock. Elsewhere, the hill, which formed the northern side of this beautiful sheet of water, arose in steep, but less precipitous acclivity, and was arrayed in heath of the darkest purple. In present times, a scene so romantic would have been judged to possess the highest charms for the traveller; but those who journey in days of doubt and dread, pay little attention to picturesque scenery.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Sir Walter Scott, *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose*, ed. by J.H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 12-13.

The sun bathes the scene in a romantic glow. Its reflected 'beams' (pluralised, indicating separate entities) save the surface of the water ('smooth', therefore beautiful) from blank uniformity. This is the terrain beyond the 'northern screen' of the Tay valley, similar to the pass of Bally Brough and it recalls, albeit less uncompromisingly, the Burkean sublimities of the latter. There is the same intimation of the Sublime in the steepness of the pass, the depth of the lake and the overhanging rock, as well as of the Picturesque in the route pursued by the path, necessarily following the spontaneous contours of the lake, and the varied light and shade provided by the different trees. Yet there is an overall suggestion, at the same time, of these qualities suppressed, as evinced by the qualifications '*some* difficulty' and 'steep, *but less precipitous* acclivity'. This suggestion is resolved and confirmed in the final sentence, which, incidentally, also reaffirms Scott's implicit definition of the Romantic in scenery as a combination of the Sublime and Picturesque. The traveller is not a relatively carefree tourist like Edward Waverley, eager to absorb the atmosphere of the natural scene, both observing its components in detail and surrendering himself emotionally to its grandeur. Instead he is preoccupied by the 'doubt and dread' which characterizes his time. Appreciation of landscape must yield to other concerns. Not being foremost in his mind, it is not foremost in the passage which is confined to a comparatively bald statement of the scene's formal properties. Thus we have here, in a manner broadly similar to *Waverley*, the psychological determination of landscape description.

Picturesque theory can be regarded, particularly in the disputes of Price and Payne Knight, as the preserve of the amateur, the wealthy landowner with time on his hands in which to indulge in extensive meditations upon the relationship of landscape to Art. In Scott's fiction the Picturesque is often yoked to utility, an unsurprising conjunction given, as I have noted, the nature of his personality. Take the following passage from *Castle Dangerous* for instance. It refers to the dale of the river Douglas which forms an approach to Douglas Castle in Lanarkshire. The river, we have already been told, 'issues from an amphitheatre of mountains which bounds the valley to the southwest, from whose contributions, and the aid of sudden storms, it receives its scanty supplies.' :

Above all, it was war-time, and of necessity all circumstances of mere convenience were obliged to give way to a paramount sense of danger; the inhabitants, therefore, instead of trying to amend the paths which connected them with other districts, were thankful that the natural difficulties which surrounded them rendered it unnecessary to break up or to fortify the access from more open countries. Their wants, with very few exceptions, were completely supplied, as we have already said, by the rude and scanty produce of their own mountains and *holms*, the last of which served for the exercise of their limited agriculture, while the better part of the mountains and the forest glens produced pasture for their herds and flocks. The recesses of the unexplored depths of these sylvan retreats being seldom disturbed, especially since the lords of the district had laid aside, during this time of strife, their constant occupation of hunting, the various kinds of game had increased of late very considerably; so that not only in crossing the rougher parts of the hilly and desolate country we are describing, different varieties of deer were occasionally seen, but even the wild cattle peculiar to Scotland sometimes showed themselves, and other animals, which indicated the irregular and disordered state of the period. The wild cat was frequently surprised in the dark ravines or the swampy thickets; and the wolf, already a stranger to the more populous districts of the Lothians, here maintained his ground against the encroachments of man, and was still himself a terror to those by whom he was finally to be extirpated.⁸⁰

Here is a landscape viewed under conditions similar to those which prevailed in *A Legend of Montrose* – not climatic conditions, but political ones. Again there is widespread doubt and fear. But this time the Picturesque is not suppressed by the exigencies of the time; it is in fact, though never explicitly referred to, amplified. The circumstances of the time demand, for instance, that the paths be allowed to remain in a potentially picturesque state of disrepair, and that the general terrain should retain its ‘natural difficulties.’ These difficulties presumably include irregularity and steepness which are among the fundamental qualities of, respectively, the Picturesque and the Sublime and which, it is emphasised, ‘surround’ them, recalling the encircling, amphitheatrical geography of the spot, already mentioned, which provides the side-screens and backdrop for potential picture making. Thus the Picturesque becomes a

⁸⁰ Sir Walter Scott, *Castle Dangerous* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894) pp. 3–4.

means of defence. There is also a return to the concept of living creatures as agents of picturesque improvement, superior, for Scott at least, to the human improver because the changes which they produce are unintentional, hence natural. Cattle, deer, wild cats and wolves haunt, in increased numbers, the 'recesses of the unexplored depths', including the 'dark ravines' which, due to their depth and gloom, are already domains of the Sublime. The wolf in particular makes them even more so, contributing another danger that makes the spots in which they dwell even more forbidding. And it is interesting to note that in the course of describing this process, Scott refers, almost within a single line, to roughness, variation and irregularity, albeit in respect of three different entities, the landscape itself, the deer and the times, the final entity forging the link, implicit in the entire passage, between the state of the times and the state of the land: an irregular time creates a more irregular, hence more picturesque, landscape.

The length of the foregoing investigation confirms its original contention that the Picturesque is indeed the principal element of the connection between Scott's fictive landscapes and aesthetic theory. But the Sublime, as defined by Edmund Burke in a contrastive relationship with the Beautiful, is also significant. Moreover, though Scott was undoubtedly enthusiastic about picturesque theory, especially as enunciated by Uvedale Price, it was not an uncritical enthusiasm. He was not Edward Waverley — far from it. He had in fact a personal theory of the Picturesque which was an evolution of Price's, and, though he never explicitly stated it, it emerges in the landscape descriptions in his novels. His attitude to aesthetic theory can really be tied into two facts about his personality. One is his love for, and admiration of, nature, which informs his interest in the Picturesque, since, for him, its basic tenet was a restoration or, if necessary, cultivation of the natural in the landscape. The other was his youthful infirmity, dealt with in Chapter One, which compelled him to tackle the most massive and precipitous geographical features. He experienced a sense of drama, indeed fear in the process, which in turn allowed him to appreciate very well the associated qualities of the Sublime. These

two facts about his personality served to create the particular artistic vision which determined his creation of romantic scenery.

CHAPTER FOUR

LANDSCAPE AND CHARACTERISATION

I.

All of Scott's characters are associated with the landscape. Born and raised in it, many are demonstrably attached to it. Even urban characters dwell in cities that are founded upon it, constructed from materials furnished by it. The task before us is to discover the subtleties of this attachment and the way in which it manifests itself. The pastoral characters live not only in this landscape but off it, growing crops and tending cattle. Others simply traverse it, but in doing so engage in a temporary relationship with it – sometimes a relationship of imperilment as when they negotiate precipitous geographical features, sometimes a practical one, as when they seek concealment and shelter. The immediate question is how to pursue the investigation into these topics. It will perhaps be helpful to adopt, as an organising principle, the way in which different groups and sub-groups of characters are united and distinguished by particular responses to the landscape.

We begin, then, with two characters who in fact have no connection with the landscape, who are divorced from it. Both the unscrupulous lawyer Gilbert Glossin in *Guy Mannering* and the 'skilful fisher in the troubled waters of a state divided by factions.'¹ Sir William Ashton, also a lawyer, in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, have taken over patrimonial estates, terminating the line of succession and usurping the previous inhabitants through legal chicanery. But neither is accorded by the local populace the proper territorial name associated with his new acquisition – 'Ellangowan' and 'Ravenswood' respectively – precisely because it *is* an acquisition. In the absence of succession neither man can, however much he may wish to, form an acknowledged bond with the landscape: he is doomed to remain rootless. The only difference between the two is that Glossin, whose acquisitive machinations have been the more villainous, is, unlike Sir William, desperate for the territorial recognition and acceptance denied him by his social inferiors. In adopting the name 'Ellangowan', he wishes to share an identity with an area of the landscape, to be united with it:

¹Sir Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. by J.H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 15.

With the common people his reputation stood still worse. They would neither yield him the territorial appellation of Ellangowan, nor the usual compliment of *Mr. Glossin*, — with them he was bare Glossin and so incredibly was his vanity interested by this trifling circumstance, that he was known to give half-a-crown to a beggar because he had thrice called him Ellangowan in beseeching him for a penny.²

Not only has Glossin failed in his territorial aspirations, he has also, in abusing his professional status, forfeited the respect which it hitherto commanded. One might be tempted to adduce Glossin and Ashton's failed pretensions as evidence of Scott's High Toryism, the idea that such upstarts, even a titled upstart, should attempt to assume an hereditary title and usurp one half of a territorial relationship forged through the generations being presented as ludicrous. Yet did not he, a lawyer and baronet himself, create his own hereditary estate in Abbotsford? Though he was not a usurper, he certainly shared Glossin and Ashton's pretensions. His portrayal of them actually conceals a profound egalitarianism, inspired by and expressed through the landscape. He who succeeds to an hereditary estate is bound to it, to the physical contours of it, just as intimately as the tenants who have also been born and raised on it. He and they have it in common; it unites them. And though it can be handed down, the title associated with the territory must also be acknowledged by the common people. To a certain extent it is in their gift, as the passage quoted indicates: 'they would neither yield to him the territorial appellation of Ellangowan.' The locals in *Guy Mannering* preserve the name until the true heir emerges.

This equality of physical context is articulated in both *Guy Mannering* and *The Bride of Lammermoor* by two female characters who, as we shall see, compose part of a much larger second group: those who are indissolubly bound up with their native landscape. They are Meg Merrilies and old Alice.

The calamity of losing his estate, and the ensuing loss of identity which befalls the Laird of Ellangowan is immediately preceded by his failure to acknowledge and

²Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), II, 15.

preserve this connection between character and landscape which exists regardless of status. Elevated to the position of local magistrate, he enters the world of legal affairs, an artificial construct of man that Scott often, surprisingly, juxtaposes with the implicitly superior natural world. He evicts seven gypsy families from their own ancient territory of Derncleugh, a gloomy defile on his estate. It is richly ironic, within the framework of the novel, that he himself should subsequently be dispossessed through legal sophistry. As the gypsies depart from Derncleugh, Meg Merrilies, 'standing upon one of those high, precipitous banks'³, throws these words down upon the Laird:

"Ride your ways," said the gypsy, "ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan, ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram! This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths, — see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blyther for that. Ye have riven the thack off seven cottar-houses, — look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster [...] Ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram, — what do ye glower after our folk for? [...] Yes, there's thirty yonder, from the auld wife of an hundred to the babe that was born last week, that ye have turned out o' their bits o' bields, to sleep with the tod and the black-cock in the muirs! Ride your ways, Ellangowan. Our bairns are hinging at our weary backs: look that your braw cradle at hame be the fairer spread up, — not that I am wishing ill to little Harry, or to the babe that's yet to be born, — God forbid, — and make them kind to the poor, and better folk than their father! And now, ride e'en your ways; for these are the last words ye'll ever hear Meg Merrilies speak, and this is the last reise that I'll ever cut in the bonny woods of Ellangowan."

So saying, she broke the sapling she held in her hand, and flung it into the road.⁴

The subsequent uncertainty of Godfrey Bertram's status is foreshadowed here. In Meg's vituperation he oscillates between being known as the "Laird of Ellangowan", "Godfrey Bertram" and "Ellangowan." The last title reaffirms his bond with the landscape, the first loosens it slightly and the second dispossesses him entirely. Meg also emphasises the equality inherent in the landscape by repeatedly drawing comparisons between the material circumstances of the gypsy population and the Laird: "Seven smoking hearths [...] your ain parlour [...] the thack off seven cottar-houses — [...] your

³ibid., I, 71.

⁴ibid., I, 72.

ain roof-tree. ” ’ As the colloquial expression ‘ “ roof-tree ” ’ in particular serves to impress upon the Laird that the structure he occupies may be larger and more refined than the gypsies’ cottages but its components are the same as are its origins (not just the terrain, but the same section of the terrain). This, like his reiterated paternity, is a universal human condition. All men inhabit the face of the earth — its landscape — and all men make their homes out of it. This is the essence of Scott’s egalitarianism.

Though the gypsies are undoubtedly bound to their landscape, Meg draws the distinction between dwelling in a sheltered community, and being cast out upon the uncultivated wilderness: ‘ “ you have turned out o’ their bits o’ bields, to sleep with the tod and the black-cock on the muirs. ” ’ However rude and insubstantial the ‘ “ bits o’ bields ” ’ may be, they still protect from the elements. Deprived of such trappings, the outcasts become associated with animals, which Meg does not regard as a desirable fate. This interestingly reverses Scott’s usual practice of, as we shall see, invoking comparisons with animals and their dwellings to *positively* accentuate a character’s bond with his or her (mostly her) environment. Meanwhile, Meg’s rhetorically repeated injunction ‘ “ Ride your ways ” ’ exploits the image of travel across the landscape to convey the Laird’s mistaken self-determination that will finally lead him into disaster. Her final symbolic act of breaking the sapling can thus be interpreted as not only marking the disjunction of the Derncleugh community from their environment, but also foreshadowing the Laird’s own eventual ejection.

Similarly in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Old Alice, a tenant on the Ravenswood estate, impresses the same point, albeit more gently, upon Ashton, conveying to him the way in which her life has been passed in a certain place. Each specific incident binds her and it closer together:

“You are not, I should judge by your accent, of this country originally”
said Sir William in continuation.

“No; I am by birth an Englishwoman.”

“Yet you seem attached to this country as if it were your own.”

“It is here,” replied the blind woman, “that I have drank the cup of joy and of sorrow which Heaven destined for me — I was here the wife of an

upright and affectionate husband for more than twenty years — I was here the mother of six promising children — it was here that God deprived me of all these blessings — it was here they died, and yonder, by yon ruined chapel, they lie all buried — I had no country but theirs while they lived — I have none but theirs now they are no more.”⁵

The repetition of the adverb ‘ “ here ” ’ places Alice as firmly in this spot as a driven nail. Ashton, insensitive to the subtleties of such associations between human beings and their environment, and detecting the absence of a local accent, seems surprised that Alice should have any connection with the locality: ‘ “ Yet you seem attached to this country as if it were your own.” ’ His superficiality is thus exposed. In spite of his professional erudition, he cannot perceive the deeper bonds that subsist between an individual and the context in which the principal events of her life have occurred. He is part of the evolved social world of eighteenth century Scotland, automatically placing a person by virtue of an accent. As James Reed says of him: ‘for Ashton and his like, nationality is a political counter, a label without which the individual, whatever his ties, cannot really be said to exist.’⁶ In conversation with Alice he reveals what Reed calls ‘his alien spirit’. Reed also states that, in contrast, ‘For Alice, as for Meg, it is locality that counts; her land is defined by her family; where they lived and died, she belongs.’⁷ Moreover, though her family determined changes in her role, the context of all those different roles remained the same: she was ‘ “ the wife of an upstanding and affectionate husband ” ’, then she was ‘ “ the mother of six promising children ” ’, then she was a widow, ‘ “ deprived [...] of all those blessings. ” ’ But she was all those things ‘ “ here ” ’, and the context outlives, unchanged, all those roles and all those relations: ‘ “ I had no country but their’s while they lived — I have none but their’s now they are no more. ” ’

⁵Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. by J. H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 33.

⁶James Reed, *Sir Walter Scott: Landscape and Locality* (London: The Athlone Press, 1980), p. 130.

⁷*ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

II.

Alice's blindness emphasises the fact that the visible landscape does not have to be visible to bind an individual to it. The relationship is more tactile than visual: the textures of the landscape impress themselves upon its inhabitants. The point is reiterated in the character of Willie Ste'enson, colloquially known as Wandering Willie – “the best fiddler that ever kittled thairm with horse-hair”⁸ – in *Redgauntlet*. He is a member of a sub-group of those varied characters in the Scottish historical novels who all possess an intimate association with the landscape. Like Edie Ochiltree and Meg Merrilies, he is one of Scott's cicerones: an individual knowledgeable about the landscape, who leads other characters across it. Most often the other characters are the central protagonists – Darsie Latimer, Lovel, Harry Bertram – and most often the cicerones are leading them towards a successful conclusion, exploiting their knowledge of the quickest, safest paths. Meeting him for the first time, having escaped from the sterile artifice of Mount Sharon, Darsie Latimer repeats the same question that William Ashton addressed to Alice:

I asked him if he was of this country.

“*This country!*” replied the blind man – “I am of every country in broad Scotland, and a wee bit of England to the boot. But yet I am, in some sense, of this country; for I was born within hearing of the roar of Solway. Will I give your honour a touch of the auld bread-winner?”⁹

Willie confesses to a marginally divided life that reflects the far greater schism inherent in Darsie's character. Though Willie equivocates before admitting an attachment to the Border landscape, he repeats an orienting pronoun just as Alice repeated an adverb; “*This country! [...] every country [...] this country.*”⁹ While debating with himself his association, he is, like Alice, placing himself more firmly in a specific area. Even so, by his very trade, apparent in his title, he is more mobile than Alice and therefore less preoccupied by his roots. But he does acknowledge them and emphasises, as we would expect, aspects of them other than the purely visual: “I was born within hearing of the

⁸Sir Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), I, 139.

⁹*ibid.*

roar of the Solway. ” ’ In saying this, he is specified by the speech tag as ‘the blind man’. Moreover in a few simple words he deepens and elaborates the relationship between human beings and landscape, drawing a distinction between an association with the land one frequently traverses, and a more powerful association with one’s cradling environment. Though the latter is fundamental, the former can also exist without weakening it.

Edie Ochiltree in *The Antiquary* similarly ranges far and wide. In Chapter 7 of the novel, during the storm scene, he preserves Sir Arthur and Isabella Wardour from the encroaching waters of the North Sea on an opportune ledge of rock. This is an extreme example, both in the condition of the elements and the respective statuses of the participants, of the rapprochement that must occur between Scott’s cicerones and his *haute-bourgeois* characters in the face of an external threat. This relationship of inverted superiority and reliance is made explicit:

It is said that even the brute creation lay aside their animosities and antipathies when pressed by an instant and common danger. The beach under Halket-head, rapidly diminishing in extent by the encroachments of a spring-tide and a north-west wind, was in like manner a neutral field, where even a justice of peace and a strolling mendicant might meet upon terms of mutual forbearance. [...] Isabella, in silence, accepted from the old man the assistance which Sir Arthur was less able to afford her. The waves had now encroached so much upon the beach, that the firm and smooth footing which they had hitherto had upon the sand must be exchanged for a rougher path close to the foot of the precipice, and in some places even raised along its lowest ledge. It would have been utterly impossible for Sir Arthur Wardour or his daughter to have found their way along these shelves without the guidance and encouragement of the beggar, who had been there before in high tides, though never, he acknowledged, “in sae awesome a night as this.”¹⁰

In the first paragraph the concept of equality, at the very least, in adversity is established. Both the hereditary baron and the itinerant beggar are reduced by implication to the status of animals, as bereft of conscious thought as the sea that threatens them. The

¹⁰Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. by David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp.56–57.

device is one of similitude — ‘was in like manner’ — rather than the metaphorical identification of characters with particular creatures that, as we shall see, occurs elsewhere. The phrase ‘neutral field’ conveys overtones of armed conflict, though in this case it is strictly what would, after Scott’s time, be called the class war that is undergoing a temporary cease-fire. The final words emphasise further the prevailing relationship of equality with the participants being required to exercise the same tolerance of one another: ‘might meet upon terms of *mutual* forbearance.’

In the second paragraph the balance shifts in favour of the mendicant: ‘Isabella, in silence, accepted from the old man the assistance which Sir Arthur was less able to afford her.’ The figurative alteration in their circumstances is concretised in the new terrain which they must negotiate. Where before they walked easily on ‘firm and smooth sand’, now they must abandon this for a more irregular and effortful route, to which they are unaccustomed. They must, in other words, engage in a more real relationship with the landscape, like that experienced by the indigent beggar or the struggling fishermen, the Mucklebackits; must forsake the man-made routes which they customarily traverse in a *chaise*, for a journey on foot over a ‘rougher path close to the foot of the precipice, and in some places even raised along its lowest ledges’ In the final sentence an inverted superiority is established with Sir Arthur and Isabella relying completely on Edie to lead them through the imperilling conjunction of precipitous terrain and turbulent elements. The wealth and status which usually protect them against and divorce them from the destructive potential of the landscape is rendered useless now, as Edie’s subsequent refusal of a bribe from Sir Arthur indicates:

“Good man,” said Sir Arthur, “can you think of nothing? — of no help? — I’ll make you rich — I’ll give you a farm — I’ll ” —
 “Our riches will be soon equal,” said the beggar, looking out upon the strife of waters...¹¹

¹¹ibid., p. 58.

Again the landscape inspires Scott's fundamental egalitarianism. Ignorant of his environment in all its conditions, Sir Arthur imagines his wealth (of which, incidentally, there is no longer a great deal) can protect him against it. Ironically, he offers Edie a section of the landscape. In most circumstances it would be in his gift, but here it threatens him. All his status, financial and hereditary has been stripped away: he occupies a position not only vulnerable, hence inferior, to his environment, but inferior also to individuals whose relationship is more fundamental, hence resourceful, than his.

III.

Meg Merrilies is the only female cicerone in the Scottish historical novels. Tall and physically robust, but also wild in appearance, and intense in demeanour, she unites two sub groups within those characters bound to the landscape: agile and knowledgeable enough to guide Brown through a pathless, snow-clad wilderness, but as manifestly eccentric as Norna of the Fitful, Elspat MacTavish or Blind Alice, with similar pretensions to supernatural perception. Both aspects are on display in Chapter 28 of *Guy Mannering*:

Although the snow in many places hid the pathway and rendered the footing uncertain and unsafe, Meg proceeded with a firm and determined step, which indicated an intimate knowledge of the ground she traversed. At length they gained the top of the bank, though by a path so steep and intricate that Brown, though convinced it was the same by which he had descended on the night before, was not a little surprised how he had accomplished the task without breaking his neck. Above, the country opened wide and unenclosed for about a mile or two on the one hand, and on the other were thick plantations of considerable extent.

Meg, however, still led the way along the bank of the ravine out of which they had ascended, until she heard beneath the murmur of voices. She then pointed to a deep plantation of trees at some distance. "The road to Kippletringan," she said, "is on the other side of these enclosures. Make the speed ye can; there's mair rests on your life than other folks'. But you have lost all, — stay." She fumbled in an immense pocket, from which she produced a greasy purse. "Many's the awmous your house has gi'en Meg and hers; and she has lived to pay it back in a small degree;" and she placed the purse in his hand.

"The woman is insane," thought Brown; but it was no time to debate the point, for the sounds he heard in the ravine below probably proceeded from the banditti.¹²

At first the fall of snow conceals not only the contours of the landscape but the danger in which Brown was previously involved. Meg, like all characters bound to the landscape, is in touch with fundamentals, in this case the true fundamentals of the terrain beneath the snow. Brown, born in Border landscape, but forcibly separated from it since early youth, can see only the obscuring white mantle. It becomes a symbol of the intervening absence that has occluded his vision, alienating him from his native environment. His return to it, as an innocent abroad in his native land, endangers him in many ways: Glossin must arrange his death to retain ownership of Ellangowan and conceal his duplicitous association with Hatteraick. The insecurity of the obscured path reflects this vulnerable condition. But, as his successful descent of it the previous night indicates, fortune is on his side and that good fortune is now embodied in his guardian angel, Meg Merrilies: 'Brown [...] was not a little surprised how he had accomplished the task without breaking his neck.'

But Meg is not the unflappable, ironic cicerone that Edie Ochiltree was. Nor is she a humorous strolling player like Willie Ste'enson. Her fanaticism emerges in the second paragraph. It dwells principally in her being privy to information about Brown's identity that neither he nor the reader possess at that time, though the latter may strongly suspect it. At the time however, her obscure mutterings about Bertram family lore strike both parties as the ravings of, at best, a distracted intellect: ' " there's mair rests on your life than other folks' [...] Many's the awmous your house has gi'en Meg and hers. " ' These words, and other declarations similar to them — ' " I am not mad although I have enough to make me sae — [...] I know what I am asking, and I know it has been the will of God to preserve you in strange dangers. " ' ¹³ — lead Brown to the forgivable

¹²Scott, *Guy Mannering*, I, 256-257.

¹³ibid., I, 258.

conclusion that she is insane. But in Meg's case it is superior perception rather than diminished comprehension that makes her seem so.

The same is, to a certain extent true of Ulla Troil, 'Norna of the Fitful Head' in *The Pirate*. Her antic disposition can be traced partly to her belief that Mordaunt Mertoun is her illegitimate son. Unlike Meg's instincts about Brown, however, this is a misapprehension, reflecting the much deeper disturbance in her nature inculcated by Basil Mertoun's previous seduction of her. A salient quality they do nevertheless share is Scott's equation of them with animals, 'the brute creation' possessing, as it does, the most intimate association with the landscape, one which most human beings cannot seek to emulate. Thus, as she leads Brown and Dandie Dinmont over the terrain, the narrator says of Meg, 'Her tall figure moved across the wintry heath with steps so swift, so long, and so steady, that she appeared rather to glide than to walk. Her way was as straight, and nearly as swift, as that of a bird through the air.'¹⁴ Similarly Norna is identified as at one with her dwelling place and that dwelling place is distinguished by her kinsman Magnus Troil to his daughters in these words: ' " There is Norna's dwelling! Look up, Minna, my love; for if this does not make you laugh, nothing will. Saw you ever anything but an osprey that would have made such a nest for herself as that is? " ' ¹⁵ It is interesting that both are compared to creatures that inhabit the landscape but only alight upon it at certain times.

Both women offer a powerful statement of the bond between themselves and their environment. But Meg's remarks, appropriate to her clearer apprehension, are founded upon the observable truth that she has occupied a certain area all her life: ' " Do you see that blackit and broken end of a sheeling? — there my kettle boiled for forty years — there I bore twelve buirdly sons and daughters — where are they now? — where are the leaves that were on that auld ash — tree at Martinmas? — the west wind has made it bare — and I'm stripped too. " ' ¹⁶ As in Alice's words, the succession of the adverb

¹⁴ *ibid.*, I, 279.

¹⁵ Sir Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), II, 99.

¹⁶ Scott, *Guy Mannering*, II, 283.

' "there" ' followed by the adverb ' "where" ' conveys the extirpation of Meg from her traditional context, the first connoting entrenchment, the second rootlessness. She distinguishes the personal significance of the spot and equates her condition and that of her children with a particular feature. Yet she confines herself to similitude. This again is a measure of her fundamental acuteness. Characters in Scott may say that they or their circumstances are *like* the elements of the landscape without seeming irrational. It is only when they convey the impression, through metaphor, that they *are* such elements, even if they do not really mean it, that their sanity becomes questionable. Simile and metaphor thus indicate, in many cases, the distinction between Scott's true fanatics and the rest of his characters, since he himself exploits them to this end.

In the following passage Norna does not invoke metaphor to describe her bond with the particular topography of the Shetland Isles. However she does boast a relationship between her and it that transcends purely personal significance:

"I will be what I ought," she continued, starting up and extending her lean and withered arm, "the queen and protectress of these wild and neglected isles, — I will be her whose foot the wave wets not, save by her permission; ay, even though its rage be at its wildest madness — whose robe the whirlwind respects, when it rends the house-rigging from the roof-tree. Bear me witness, Mordaunt Mertoun, — you heard my words at Harfra — you saw the tempest sink before them — Speak, bear me witness!"¹⁷

Norna's sense of her own identity is bound up with the belief that she can control the elements. Yet her words are suffused with an unintentional irony that subverts, to a large extent, their own meaning. She accords herself a position of superiority over the natural world — ' " the queen and protectress. " ' Yet that superiority is expressed in a title that is a fabrication of the human world. She asserts a symbiotic relationship between herself and the elements: ' " whose foot the wave wets not [...] whose robe the whirlwind respects. " ' Yet the relationship is displayed in the elements avoiding contact with her. This confusion of overt and implicit meaning reflects Norna's essential derangement. Her

¹⁷Scott, *The Pirate*, I, 153.

beliefs are, needless to say, a delusion, and her emphasis upon tumult of wind and sea a reflection not only of the meteorological conditions prevalent in the Shetlands but also of her extremism. She in fact acknowledges this extremism in landscape imagery elsewhere, while reinforcing her putative supernatural influence:

"It cannot be. I must remain the dreaded — the mystical — the Reim-kennar — the controller of the elements, or I must be no more! I have no alternative, no middle station. My post must be high on yon lofty headland, where never stood human foot save mine, or I must sleep at the bottom of the unfathomable ocean, its white billows booming over my senseless corpse."¹⁸

There is a hint here of the self-consciousness that informs all her speechifying. Norna, deranged though she may be, is jealously protective of her status, and lends it a rhetorical build up that verges on the ridiculous: "the dreaded — the mystical — the Reim-Kennar". It is, in particular, her exclusivity with which she is most preoccupied, a quality represented by an inaccessible feature in the landscape: "high on yon lofty headland, where never stood human foot save mine." The key to her entire personality dwells here in the conjunction of natural imagery and the language of absolute necessity: "It *cannot* be — I *must* remain [...] the controller of the elements, or I *must* be no more [...] *no alternative, no middle station.*" She concedes her fanaticism in customary fanatical mode, concretising it in terms of her native landscape — one to which she is necessarily bound even more than Meg Merrilies or Alice, since it is isolated by the North Sea.

To return briefly to Norna's dwelling, as distinguished previously by Magnus Troil, the subsequent description of it serves to bind her even more closely than either her words or her acknowledged title, to the Fitful Head:

The dwelling of Norna, [...] was very small, and had been fabricated out of one of those dens which are called Burghs and Pict-houses in Zetland, and Duns on the mainland of Scotland and the Hebrides, and which seem to be

¹⁸ *ibid.*, II, 198.

the first effort at architecture -- the connecting link betwixt a fox's hole in a cairn of loose stones, and an attempt to construct a human habitation out of the same materials, without the use of lime or cement of any kind, without any timber, so far as can be seen from their remains, -- without any knowledge of the arch or of the stair [...] This singular habitation, built out of the loose stones which lay scattered around, and exposed for ages to the vicissitudes of the elements, was as grey, weather beaten, and wasted, as the rock on which it was founded, and from which it could not easily be distinguished, so completely did it resemble in colour, and so little did it differ in regularity of shape, from a pinnacle or fragment of the cliff.¹⁹

The description adopts and deepens Troil's observation. Norna's home remains the dwelling of an animal, in this case a fox, one bound more closely to the terrain, having, unlike an osprey, four feet planted firmly upon it. Norna becomes an intermediate being, not an animal, but more primal than the other characters. Her home is the most visible expression possible of the concept that all human habitations are raised out of the landscape, since it features no artifice to obscure its origins. Indeed it broadens the concept still further to embrace not just human beings of different social statuses, but all living creatures, even though the fox's hole is not created, like the bird's nest or the beaver's lodge, but fortuitously discovered in the cairn. Indeed, as the narrator concedes, Norna's home involves a good deal less ingenuity in its construction than a nest or lodge. He also traces the stages of elaboration by which human habitations distinguish themselves from those of animals: upon the loose stones are imposed lime and cement, from these are formed arches and stairs. In the case of Norna's home the fact that its materials 'lay scattered around' serves to emphasise not only the randomness of its construction, but also the bounty of the landscape, desolate as it may seem. Once erected, the structure gradually seems to be re-absorbed into its environment by the way the elements act upon both equally. By this process it becomes, visually, a correlative of Norna's intimate association with the Shetland Isles, and this section of them in particular.

¹⁹ibid., II, 100-101.

Norna's rich and intense landscape imagery, as we have seen, tends unintentionally to expose the delusive extremism of her personality. The same is substantially true of Scott's other principal female fanatic, Elspat MacTavish, as Graham Tulloch demonstrates. Just as Norna was identified as being 'of the Fitful Head', so Elspat is, at the outset of the story, denominated 'The Woman of the Tree'. She expresses herself violently, often invoking in her own words the characteristics of various animals that inhabit the landscape. The narrator ostensibly adopts this imagery, endorsing her particular world-view, but, upon closer examination, proves to be subverting it, just as Norna subverted herself. Thus, Elspat sees wild creatures as connoting the freedom which she feels her late husband exemplified and to which her son should aspire: ' "Ask why the hind comes back to the fawn," said Elspat; "why the cat of the mountain returns to her lodge and her young," ' ²⁰ (It is interesting to note, incidentally, that Elspat also equates the animal's habitation with that of human beings, employing a term appropriate to both.) Also: 'The brave and the terrible, she said, walk by night — their steps are heard in darkness, when all is silent save the whirlwind and the cataract, — the timid deer comes only forth when the sun is upon the mountain's peak; but the bold wolf walks in the red light of the harvest-moon.' ²¹

As Tulloch observes, 'All of this imagery, so forcefully expressed and so frequently used by Elspat, must begin to affect the reader's response to the events. The images reinforce Elspat's view that the old ways are freedom and the new ways thralldom since it is hard not to be at least somewhat swayed by the generally positive images of freedom and the very negative images of slavery.' ²² However, the female relatives of the Cameron soldier whom Hamish kills describe him and his mother thus: ' "There shall never be coronach cried or dirge played, for thee or thy bloody wolf-burd." ' ²³ In the light of these remarks, Elspat's natural imagery exposes instead a violent nature, free

²⁰Sir Walter Scott, *Chronicles of the Chronicles of the Canongate etc.* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), p.166.

²¹*ibid.*, p. 133.

²²Graham Tulloch, 'Imagery in *The Highland Widow*', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 21 (1986), 147-157 (pp.149-150).

²³Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate etc.*, p. 175.

certainly, but predatory upon the weak whom the rule of law which she so forcibly rejects has been created to protect.

The most obvious refutation of her self-image occurs not in relation to animals but in strict landscape imagery. Asked by her son if she would be prepared to leave her native territory, she retorts:

"Leave the country!" replied his mother, interrupting him. "And think you that I am like a bush, that is rooted to the soil where it grows, and must die if carried elsewhere? I have breathed other winds than these of Ben Cruachan — I have followed your father to the wilds of Ross, and the impenetrable deserts of Y Mac Y Mhor — Tush, man, my limbs, old as they are, will bear me as far as your young feet can trace the way."²⁴

The clue to the self-contradiction which will subsequently be seen to dwell in this statement lies in the way that Elspat invokes an element of the landscape in seeking to distinguish herself from it. Moreover, she expresses herself in a question which admits of a negative response, rather than an incontestable statement. Though she insists upon her mobility and exemplifies it, the ' " wilds of Ross, and the impenetrable deserts of Y Mac Y Mhor — " ' are territories not as distinct from her present context as she would like to pretend. The deserts referred to, for instance, are not true, distant, sub-tropical deserts. In her travels she has remained marginalised, outside the mainstream of Lowland society, confined rather to the Highland landscape among a common society of brigands and marauders.

More than this, however, Elspat's very denomination — 'Woman of the Tree' — belies her assertion of independence, as does the nature of her dwelling, which in several respects, recalls Norna's cliff-top eyrie:

The walls of sod, or *divot* as the Scotch call it, were not four feet high — the roof was of turf, repaired with reeds and sedges — the chimney was composed of clay, bound round by straw ropes — and the whole walls, roof and chimney, were alike covered with the vegetation of house-leck,

²⁴ibid., p. 136.

rye-grass, and moss common to decayed cottages formed of such materials.²⁵

It is a more complex structure than Norna's pile of loose stones, but it displays an even closer association with the landscape. Indeed, it elaborates to the fullest possible extent a colloquial phrase apparent in Meg's speech to Ellangowan and found frequently in Scott: 'roof-tree'. This conveys, in two simple words, the fact that human habitations are carved out of the landscape. Here the cottage is distinguished so little it almost seems, once again, as if the landscape were restraining it, re-absorbing it. In particular the walls of sod lend it the same appearance as the surrounding area. They even emulate the stratified composition of the ground: sod, or divot, topped off with turf, topped off with reed and sedges. The last two components are indicative of the ways in which, throughout the passage, natural features are piled atop one another, repeatedly emphasising its origins: sod plastered with 'house-leek, rye-grass and moss', turf mixed with 'reeds and sedges', clay tied with 'straw ropes'. But the materials, divorced from their natural relationship with their native soil, must constantly be renewed, patched up in a process that is a travesty of the natural cycle of rebirth. Thus, as her name and dwelling demonstrate, the reality of her existence belies her words, as do her actions and those of her son. Ultimately the narrator leaves us in no doubt, as with Norna, of the subversion of herself in Elspat's imagery.

Scott's other principal fanatic is John Balfour of Burley. The interconnected facts that he is male and that his fanaticism is operative in the political sphere rather than restricted to the private one distinguishes him from Norna and Elspat. However he shares with them an intensity of belief and demeanour conveyed often in terms of natural imagery. Indeed, as Jennifer B. Fleischner states: 'Scott identifies Burley so totally with nature that Burley becomes, by way of a kind of regression, a preternatural figure.'²⁶ His

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 111.

²⁶ Jennifer B. Fleischner, 'Class, Character and Landscape in *Old Mortality*', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 9 (1982), 21-36 (p. 29).

very features seem to be equated with the kind of landscape he inhabits and his mood with the elements that abrade it:

His brow was that of one in whom some strong o'er-mastering principle has overwhelmed all other passions and feeling, like the swell of a high spring-tide, when the usual cliffs and breakers vanish from the eye, and their existence is only indicated by the chafing fume of the waves that burst and wheel over them.²⁷

This an arresting simile. There is no empirical sense in which Burley's face resembles a storm lashed cliff. The comparison rather serves to indicate the forceful subjugation of rationality by passion in his nature. The solidity of the cliffs equated with his brow convey his implacability. Yet, curiously, the rushing water that represents his fanaticism is accorded a large degree of impermanency — it is only the spring-tide, cyclical, destined to recede, partially at least, even at its zenith, rather than the constant devotion which Burley displays to the Covenanting cause. The geographical feature at which Morton finally encounters Burley, years after the failure of the latter's plans, far better reflects his nature. He is discovered living in a cave beside a waterfall, communicable with the outside world only by means of a narrow log. Morton is led into the chasm by Peggy, the small grand-daughter of his landlady Mrs. MacLure:

Envyng for the moment the little bare feet which caught a safer hold of the rugged side of the oak than he could pretend to with his heavy boots, Morton nevertheless resolved to attempt the passage, and, fixing his eye firm on a stationary object on the other side, without allowing his head to become giddy, or his attention to be distracted by the flash, the foam, and the roar of the waters around him, he strode steadily and safely along the uncertain bridge, and reached the mouth of a small cavern on the farther side of the torrent. Here he paused; for a light, proceeding from a fire of red-hot charcoal, permitted him to see the interior of the cave, and enabled him to contemplate the appearance of its inhabitant, by whom he himself could not be so readily distinguished, being concealed by the shadow of the rock. What he observed would by no means have

²⁷Sir Walter Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, ed. by Douglas Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 42.

encouraged a less determined man to proceed with the task which he had undertaken.²⁸

The passage in fact emphasises the relationship with the landscape sustained by both men, but it also distinguishes between the two. Burley is bound up with his immediate environment to the extent of almost being devoured by it, as indicated by the personification 'the mouth of a small cavern'. This absorption is further suggested by the implicit merging of his voice with the noise of the waterfall and the reflection of his emotional state in its condition: 'a voice that rivalled the roar of the cataract'. It is a merging that is even more explicitly stated earlier in the chapter: 'Morton listened more attentively, and out of the very abyss into which the brook fell, and amidst the tumultuary sounds of the cataract, thought he could distinguish shouts, screams, and even articulate words, as if the tortured demon of the stream had been mingling his complaints with the roar of his broken waters.'²⁹ With this association, however, comes vulnerability. Being absorbed into the landscape, Burley becomes inferior, subordinated to it, in contrast to the way he and the other Covenanters asserted their will over it in the past, exploiting it to their advantage. Though in a display of strength and mastery he kicks away the log, its thundering descent enacts the peril inherent in his position. When he drowns his vulnerability is at last confirmed.

Morton, on the other hand, sustains a relationship of apparent invulnerability towards the landscape — precisely because he is not as intimately bound to it he cannot so readily be its potential victim. Indeed, though immobile and insensate, it almost seems to arrange circumstances to his advantage. He walks 'steadily and safely along the uncertain bridge', and, upon their encounter, has the advantage over Burley, 'being concealed by the shadow of the rock.' After their conversation comes Burley's potentially suicidal kicking away of the oak and Morton's escape:

So speaking, and ere Balfour was aware of his purpose, he sprung past him, and exerting the youthful agility of which he possessed an

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 336.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 335.

uncommon share, leaped clear across the fearful chasm which divided the mouth of the cave from the projecting rock on the opposite side, and stood there safe and free from his incensed enemy.³⁰

It is interesting to note that he is not at this point equated with any animal -- Scott would customarily invoke a deer. He is free, unencumbered by such associations, more buoyant and agile as a result. Burley's vulnerability and Morton's buoyancy are later reflected in their respective immersions in the Clyde, fatal to the former only.

IV.

Morton's self-preserving lack of an intimate connection with the fictive terrain is shared by other protagonists who prevail within the Scottish historical novels. Each one does still utter dialogue that contains natural imagery, indicating that his physical environment has impressed itself upon his consciousness. Brown traverses his native county of Galloway. But it is a native county from which circumstances have divorced him for many years, in explicit contrast to the lifelong connection with a single spot that Meg Merrilies expresses even in death: ' " Na, na, na! 'To the Kaim o' Derncleugh, -- the Kaim o' Derncleugh; the spirit will not free itself o' the flesh but there. " ' ³¹ Yet so abiding is the influence of the formative environment, as Scott himself knew in relation to Sandy Knowe, that it stirs indistinct recollections in the exile. Brown reveals this in a letter to his comrade Delaserre:

"Of the Scottish hills, though born among them, as I have always been assured, I have but an indistinct recollection. Indeed, my memory rather dwells upon the blank which my youthful mind experienced in gazing on the levels of the isle of Zealand, than on anything which preceded that feeling; but I am confident, from that sensation, as well as from the recollections which preceded it, that hills and rocks have been familiar to me from an early period, and that though now only remembered by contrast, and by the blank which I felt by gazing around for them in vain, they must have made an indelible impression on my infant imagination. I remember when we first mounted that celebrated pass in the Mysore country, while most of the others felt only awe and astonishment at the

³⁰ibid., p. 341.

³¹Scott, *Guy Mannering*, II, 297.

height and grandeur of the scenery, I rather shared your feelings and those of Cameron, whose admiration of such wild rocks was blended with familiar love, derived from early association. Despite my Dutch education, a blue hill to me is as a friend, and a roaring torrent like the sound of a domestic song that hath soothed my infancy. I never felt the impulse so strongly as in this land of lakes and mountains, and nothing grieves me so much as that duty prevents your being with me in my numerous excursions among its recesses.³²

The passage contains two messages, one overt, the other implicit, therefore possibly unintentional. The overt message is that the intuitive response to a person's native environment will dwell dormant in the subconscious during a period of absence, but may be reawakened by a similar terrain, no matter how distant. His mind ' " dwells " ' upon the memory of Denmark — it occupies part of his recollections of his life thus far. Yet, because the Zealand terrain was flat, ' " level " ', it produces a corresponding mental ' " blank " '. This is the implicit message. The passage seems to insinuate that only a landscape composed of blue hills and roaring torrents, ' " lakes and mountains " ', can properly engage an infant's attention, that only varied contours can leave an impression upon its malleable subconscious. This seems a strange position for Scott to adopt, given his defence of his attachment to the ostensibly uninspiring Border landscape and his belief that what tied people to their environment was its historical and personal associations. The latter preoccupation is in fact explored in Brown's recollection of the pass in the Mysore country. Brown, Delasserre and Cameron's reaction to the wild rocks of the pass, distinct from that of their compatriots, reiterates Scott's belief in the deeper, richer pleasures to be found in a terrain that also has, in this case, emotional resonance for the viewer, even if it only recalls his native land, the way the Lake of Avernus did Scott's, as recorded by Sir William Gell in Chapter One. In the final instance, moreover, the familiarity of a terrain, regardless of its appearance, lends it a comforting aspect, not flattening its features exactly, but certainly subtracting from them any sense of fear or intimidation that they might inspire. Elsewhere, Brown states that: ' " a blue hill to me is as a friend, and a roaring torrent like the sound of a domestic

³²ibid., I, 189-190.

song. " " It should therefore be possible to perceive a link between this taming of the landscape and the protagonists' infallible ability to prevail in it: 'At length they gained the top of the bank, though by a passage so steep and intricate, that Brown, though convinced it was the one by which he had descended the night before, was not a little surprised how he had accomplished the task without breaking his neck.'³³ Again here the landscape is not made flat and dull, rolled out for Brown's safety, but the danger inherent in it does seem to be averted.

Brown's success within the landscape is shared by Lovel in *The Antiquary*. He is also guided by a cicerone and also emerges secure from a testing episode with the landscape and the elements when saving the lives not only of Sir Arthur and Isabella Wardour, but also Edie Ochiltree:

Sir Arthur, who heard, but scarcely comprehended, his daughter's question, turned, nevertheless, instinctively and eagerly to the old man, as if their lives were in his gift. Ochiltree paused. "I was a bauld cragsman," he said, "ance in my life, and mony a kittywake's and lungie's nest hae I harried up amang thae very black rocks; but it's lang, lang syne, and nae mortal could speel them without a rope — and if I had ane, my ee-sight, and my foot-step, and my hand-grip, hae a' failed mony a day sin-syne — and then how could I save *you*? — But there was a path here ance, though maybe if we could see it ye wad rather bide where we are — His name be praised!" he suddenly ejaculated, "there's ane coming down the craig c'en now!" Then, exalting his voice, he hollowed out to the daring adventurer such instructions as his former practice, and the remembrance of local circumstances, suddenly forced upon his mind: — "Ye're right — ye're right — that gate, that gate — fasten the rape weel round Crummie's-horn, that's the muckle black stane — cast twa plies round it — that's it — now, weize yoursel a wee easel-ward — a wee mair yet to that ither stane — we ca'd it the Cat's-lug — there used to be the root o' an aik-tree there — that will do! — canny now, lad — canny now — tak tent and tak time — Lord bless ye, tak time. — Vera weel! — Now ye maun get to Bessy's Apron — that's the muckle braid flat blue stane — and than I think, wi' your help and the tow thegither, we'll be able to get up the young ledly and Sir Arthur."³⁴

³³ibid., 256–257.

³⁴Scott, *The Antiquary*, pp. 58–59.

The passage is an interesting development of the concept of the cicerone bound professionally to his native landscape and the protagonist who follows him. Here Edie Ochiltree is not so much bound to the terrain as trapped by it, threatened with drowning. The narrator's description of Sir Arthur's behaviour sustains the concept of Edie as one who can offer valuable knowledge of the area: 'as if their lives were in his gift.' As Edie's reminiscences demonstrate, this knowledge has been accumulated through many years' experience. In the course of them he binds his identity up with a specific geographical feature – ‘“ I was a bauld cragsman ”’ – in a manner redolent of Norna and Elspat. One might be tempted by the characters' plight to surmise that Edie's advanced age now jeopardises him in his capacity as cicerone: ‘“ ance in my life [...] hae I harried up thae very black rocks. ”’ However it is simultaneously emphasised that the features with which they are confronted are too great for any man, young or old, to surmount: ‘“ nae mortal could speel them without a rope.”’ This prepares us for the entrance of Lovel, suitably equipped with a rope. Edie has been allowed to retain sufficient dignity in his impotence with respect to the landscape to prosecute his role through the remainder of the narrative. Moreover, though Lovel is unambiguously presented as a secular saviour – ‘“ His name be praised! [...] There's ane coming down the crag e'en now! ”’ – and is repeatedly complimented by the narrator – ‘the daring adventurer’ – he prevails with the assistance of the instructions that the older man's experience enables him to offer, guiding the younger over features identified by proper names: ‘“ Fasten the rope weel round Crummie's-horn [...] Now ye maun get to Bessy's Apron.”’ Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is Lovel who possesses the agility to rescue the party, thus asserting his superiority over the landscape.

V.

We have thus far moved from characters who are divorced from the landscape at one extreme to characters who, in various ways and to various extents, are bound up with it, to those who occupy, as it were, the middle ground. Associated with this last group is another, composed of characters who romanticise the landscape, perceiving it mistakenly.

Some are educated out of their romanticism by circumstances and by other characters so that they might ultimately prevail. Others are not so fortunate. The former tend to be male, *vide* Edward Waverley and Darsie Latimer, the latter, interestingly, female: Lucy Ashton and Minna Troil.

Edward's romantic vision has already been chronicled in relation to artistic theory. Suffice it to say, then, that his personality does not so much impose romantic values upon inappropriate scenes as edit scenes which are, in themselves, romantic:

He had now time to give himself up to the full romance of his situation. Here he sat on the banks of an unknown lake, under the guidance of a wild native, whose language was unknown to him, on a visit to the den of some renowned outlaw, a second Robin Hood, perhaps, or Adam o' Gordon, and that at deep midnight, through scenes of difficulty and toil, separated from his attendant, left by his guide. What a variety of incidents for the exercise of a romantic imagination, and all enhanced by the solemn feeling of uncertainty, at least, if not of danger! The only circumstance which assorted ill with the rest was the cause of his journey, — the Baron's milch-cows! This degrading incident he kept in the background.³⁵

Here Edward revels in the romantic reality because most of its features conform to the circumstances found in the kind of romantic narrative he has absorbed from an early age: the alien landscape, its alien inhabitants, its perils, the time of night, his temporary solitude. Indeed these features would seem to challenge James Kerr's statement that, 'When Waverley tells himself that he is "actually in the land of military and romantic adventures," he is, in one sense, quite right. But he is there primarily by means of his own imaginative activity, rather than because of any objective properties of his environment.'³⁶ His exultation in fact provides the key to the true process of his romanticism. Whereas most mature readers of a narrative would judge it upon its approximation to the circumstances of real life, Scott's romantics, exposed to a certain type of narrative immaturity, cannot compare it with real experience which, due either to their youth or their sequestered upbringing, they do not possess. The roseate atmosphere

³⁵Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), I, 149.

³⁶James Kerr, *Fiction Against History: Scott As Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.25.

and improbable incidents of such a narrative therefore assert themselves in their imaginations as, in some sense, the norm. When viewing the real world and, in particular, real landscapes that constitute it, they indulge in the opposite strategy to most rational characters: they found their estimation of reality upon the ideal of the romantic fictive world with which they are most familiar, disregarding features and circumstances that do not conform to that ideal and are difficult, for that reason, to digest. Thus we see Edward Waverley smoothly demoting the fundamental reason for his being in such an unarguably romantic situation – ‘This degrading incident he kept in the background’ – while also equating his prospective host, who, bound to the landscape, inhabits a ‘den’ like a fox, with the folk heroes whose exploits have been edited and chronicled in the kinds of narratives by which his naive perception has been so profoundly influenced. Moreover, though Edward relishes the frisson of danger inherent in his position, both he and the reader are aware that it is not real danger: as precipitous and toilsome as the landscape is, he has a native to guide him through it; though he has been left alone on the banks of the lake, it is only a temporary abandonment, conveniently just long enough for Edward to indulge in his ruminations upon the scene. Nor has his guide gone so far away. He is not exactly one of Scott’s classic cicerones, but only one of many in the novel who divide up the task of leading Edward at last towards an awareness of his own romanticising folly and an appreciation of the true socio-political conditions (in this case Highland brigandage) that prevail around him and have precipitated him into such a substantially romantic environment.

Like Edward, Darsie Latimer also benefits, as we have seen, from opportune guidance. Like Edward he has to be educated out of an impractical perception of his physical circumstances. But subtle differences do exist between the two young men. Darsie, though introduced into the Fairford household in Edinburgh after ‘“ the solitude of my mother’s dwelling ” ’³⁷, subsequently explores the whole capital and, with the advent of financial independence, ranges even further afield as a young man. He is also,

³⁷Scott, *Redgauntlet*, I, 3.

unlike Edward (or Brown, or Lovel for that matter) associated symbolically with a very specific spot in the landscape – the Solway Firth. James Reed says of him, ‘Now forbidden to cross the border, his nature, like the Solway itself, flows uncertainly and treacherously between the two nations. And the Solway, which significantly is fed by both Scottish and English water (there is no River Solway), ebbs and flows through the novel between the bleak shores of Scotland and the glinting, inviting English hills, like a gilded mirror of Darsie’s fortunes.’³⁸ One might question the use of the word ‘treacherously’ but the statement is otherwise unexceptionable. Darsie first reacts to the Firth thus:

“When I reached the banks of the great estuary, which are here very bare and exposed, the waters had receded from the large and level space of sand, through which a stream, now feeble and fordable, found its way to the ocean. The whole was illuminated by the beams of the low and setting sun, who showed his ruddy front, like a warrior prepared for defence, over a huge battlemented and turreted wall of crimson and black clouds, which appeared like an immense Gothic fortress, into which the lord of day was descending.”³⁹

It is this florid description and others like it that prompt Alan Fairford’s telling accusation that his friend perceives life as if through the prism of a Claude-glass. Apart from his very early sequestered life with his mother, and the fact of his ancestry, there is no experiential reason for Darsie having adopted such an intensely romanticising perspective. It would rather appear to be a spontaneous expression of his innate exuberance. This is borne out not only by his remonstrations with the more cautious, diligent Alan, but also by the development of this particular passage. At the outset he describes, with some precision, the elements of the scene, locating each one in the process of creating a context for his eventual object, the reflective waters: ‘ “ the banks [...] bare and exposed [...] a large and level space of sand [...] a stream. ” ’ However, as the imaginative Darsie warms to his theme, a somewhat heavy handed imagery begins to

³⁸Reed, p. 153.

³⁹Scott, *Redgauntlet*, I, 35.

infest his words – heavy, literally, in the way it concretises insubstantial natural phenomena, rendering them not only solid but similar to the structures of man: ‘ “ a huge battlemented and turreted wall of crimson and black clouds. ” ’ It is a good rule of thumb with regard to landscape passages in Scott’s fiction that when a character invokes trappings of human domesticity to describe the natural world, it generally suggests, if not a failure of imagination, then at least a mundanity of imagination, however active it may be. Darsie’s similes, though vivid, are inconsistent, as befits his restless, distracted personality: ‘ “ the [...] low and setting sun, [...] like a warrior prepared for defence [...] into which the lord of day was descending. ” ’ Moreover, his use of simile rather than metaphor indicates that, though associated symbolically with the Solway itself, he is not bound to the landscape as a whole and, like Brown and Lovel, can therefore prevail within it. Being associated with the Solway he is imperilled by it, but is, with the aid of Redgauntlet, able to elude that peril.

It has been stated that Darsie’s romantic perspective, distinct from Alan Fairford’s, with whom he shared, for the most part, a formative environment, suggests that such a response to landscape can be accounted for, *pace* Edward Waverley, more by nature than nurture. The same may be applied, only even more so, to sisters Minna and Brenda Troil in *The Pirate*. Both are raised under exactly the same conditions, domestic and geographical. But it is the dark, intense, emotional Mina, rather than the fair, phlegmatic Brenda, who evinces a passionate attachment to her native soil when exhorted by the pirate Clement Cleveland to accompany him elsewhere:

“No Cleveland. My own rude country has charms for me, even desolate as you think it, and depressed as it surely is, which no other land on earth can offer me. I endeavour in vain to represent to myself those visions of trees, and of groves, which my eye never saw; but my imagination can conceive no sight in nature more sublime than these waves, when agitated by a storm, or more beautiful, than when they come, as they now do, rolling in calm tranquillity to the shore [...] Hialtland is the land of my deceased ancestors, and of my living father; and in Hialtland will I live and die”⁴⁰

⁴⁰Scott, *The Pirate*, II, 29.

Norna would approve of this, and indeed she subsequently takes a keen interest in Minna, perceiving her to be a kindred spirit and a potential votary in Norna's cult of herself. What is most interesting in Minna's words is the apparent contradiction that dwells in her personality. She is portrayed as possessing, like Norna, a powerful bond with her environment. She is also portrayed as richly imaginative. Yet here she confesses a failure of imagination; not only that but a failure that would seem to be contradicted by her own words: ' " I endeavour in vain to represent to myself those visions of trees and of groves. " ' In conveying her inability to envision other landscapes, she does in fact describe their components, however vaguely. The advantage that the Shetlands possess is not their physical beauty. Minna confesses this in a manner reminiscent, once again, of Scott's occasionally defensive attachment to the Borders. It is rather their familiarity, their immediacy, indicated by the pronouns employed: ' " these waves [...] when they come as they now do " ' — as opposed to — ' " those visions of trees and of groves. " ' Minna's emphasis upon the familiarity of Shetland is defensible given its isolation, manifest in her repeated reference to the encircling ocean: ' " these waves [...] beautiful [...] when they come [...] rolling in calm tranquillity. " ' But this isolation does prompt a hyperbole that is the natural mode of expression of all Scott's fanatics: ' " no other land on earth...no sight in nature more sublime. " ' Yet, once again, having said this, she depicts the waves ' " in calm tranquillity " ', at odds with the prevailing emphasis in the novel upon the tumult of the elements, expressed in the words of both narrator and characters, especially Norna. Nevertheless, her inchoate extremism, in explicit contrast to her sister, is elsewhere confessed by Minna herself: ' " Remember, Brenda, that when your foot loved the calm, smooth sea — beach of the summer sea, mine ever delighted in the summit of the precipice when the waves are in fury. " ' ⁴¹ Having observed the scheme of characterisation in the other novels, the informed reader will have little difficulty in anticipating Minna's fate. Being female, being dark, in opposition to a fair

⁴¹ibid., I, 318.

counterpart, she, unlike Rose Bradwardine, Rowena and her own sister Brenda, does not ultimately attain happiness with the hero. Like Flora Mac-Ivor and Rebecca, she remains single. Scott is at pains, adopting the elements of the scene in which she made her previous statement (and which she herself adopted), to assure us of her relative contentment, but within her personality, as within Norna's, there is again the contrast of extremes: 'But Minna — the *high* — minded and imaginative Minna — she, gifted with such *depth* of feeling and enthusiasm, yet doomed to see both blighted in early youth, because, with the inexperience of a disposition equally romantic and ignorant, she had built the fabric of her happiness on a quicksand instead of on a rock — was she, could she be happy? Reader, she *was* happy.'⁴²

Minna Troil at least survives with the consolation of duties performed. Her bond with the landscape is founded upon the reality of the Shetland Isles. Lucy Ashton in *The Bride of Lammermoor* is a distaff Edward Waverley, inhabiting an immature fantasy world to an even greater extent than he. Being female, without an opportunity to broaden, literally, her horizons, without any sagacious or experienced guide, she becomes the victim of a morbid, indeed terminal romanticism, and of the incursions made upon it by her parents' social and political ambitions:

Yet her passiveness of disposition was by no means owing to an indifferent or unfeeling mind. Left to the impulse of her own taste and feelings, Lucy Ashton was peculiarly accessible to those of a romantic cast. Her secret delight was in the old legendary tales of ardent devotion and unalterable affection, chequered as they so often are with strange adventures and supernatural horrors. This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aëriel palaces. But it was only in secret that she laboured at this delusive, but delightful architecture. In her retired chamber, or in the woodland bower which she had chosen for her own, and called after her name, she was in fancy distributing the prizes at the tournament, or raining down influence from her eyes on the valiant combatants, or she was wandering in the wilderness with Una, or she was identifying herself with the simple, yet noble-minded Miranda, in the isle of wonder and enchantment.⁴³

⁴²*ibid.*, II, 333–334.

⁴³Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, p. 25.

It is in the secret exercise of Lucy's romanticism that the danger dwells. Free, as the daughter of a wealthy man, to indulge it, she retreats into fictive landscapes then tries, like Edward, to impose them upon the real terrain of her father's estate. She is aided in this procedure by its insularity. A large section of the landscape, divorced from the rest by ownership, though not hereditary in this case, becomes a romantic playground for Lucy as Waverley-Chase did for Edward. It is an interesting socio-economic phenomenon that Scott's most romantic characters are all middle class. Only they can truly be intoxicated by romanticism since only they have access to certain literature and are able to avoid being confronted in youth with the harsher, utilitarian realities of man's relationship with the environment, as, for instance, Jeanie Deans and the Mucklebackits are. Members of the peasantry, Meg Merrilies and Willie Ste'enson, though bound to the landscape, do not view it from a lyrical, romantic perspective. The difference between Edward and Lucy is that while he leaves the playground and undergoes a process of maturation, Lucy cannot. Deprived of her fantasy world, she perishes. The tragic irony of her fate is that she is indeed precipitated into a romantic narrative that involves 'ardent devotion', 'unalterable affection' and 'supernatural horrors'. But it is a soured narrative and she, unable to control it in the role of romance author that she played in safety before, becomes its victim. Again, the intimacy of her relationship to her immediate environment leaves her vulnerable. Her father was, as we saw, divorced from it, but she is not. In fact she associates herself with it to an extent that provokes his scorn. When walking through the park she and her father encounter the park-keeper. Sir William asks if he originally served the Ravenswoods, adding, ' " I suppose you know Lucy, for you make it a point of conscience to record the special history of every boor about the castle." ' ⁴⁴ For all her outward calm, an insight into her private avocations yields evidence of similarities to Norna and Elspat, in particular her elevation of herself and the binding of her identity to a geographical feature: 'in the woodland bower which she had chosen for her own, and

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.29.

called after her name, she was in fancy distributing prizes at a tournament, or raining down influence from her eyes on the valiant combatants.' The phrase 'raining down' is especially interesting in that it contributes both natural imagery and a further emphasis upon her private exaltedness in the homophonic equivalence of 'rain' and 'reign'.

The intractable truth remains that though Lucy inhabits a physical space conducive to her fantasies, like Edward, and though she constructs 'ariel palaces' in the same way that Darsie transformed the clouds looming over the Irish sea into a fortress, she, unlike them, is female, a prisoner of her parent's ambitions. Her fantasy world is imposed upon their property. When they invade it, as they are free to do, its romantic purity is tainted. She is not so much removed from it as that it disintegrates around her. The same physical environment, though unchanged, is no longer a refuge. She cannot escape physically, nor can she turn inward, projecting herself into the narratives of *The Faerie Queen* or *The Tempest*. In the real world, without a noble beast or an omnipotent male parent to protect her, she is lost.

VI.

There is one final, subsidiary, aspect of the relationship between landscape and characterisation still to be addressed. It is a less sustained one, and brief, isolated instances of it are scattered throughout the Scottish historical novels, most often concerning minor rather than major characters. It is the metaphorical exploitation of landscape by characters who, unlike Meg or Norna, otherwise express no morbid bond with it. Rather they simply appropriate associated imagery in making their point about a subject.

For instance, in *The Monastery*, Eustace, one of the monks from the monastery of St. Mary's riding across the landscape, internally addresses an element of it:

The monk dropped into the natural train of pensive thought, which these autumnal emblems of mortal hopes are peculiarly calculated to inspire. "There," he said, looking at the leaves which lay strewed around, "lie the hopes of early youth, first formed that they may soonest wither, and loveliest in spring to become most contemptible in winter; but you, ye

lingerers," he added, looking to a knot of beeches which still bore their withered leaves, "you are the proud plans of adventurous manhood, formed later, and still clinging to the mind of age, although it acknowledges their inanity!"⁴⁵

The first sentence of narration obligingly specifies the symbolic role of the fallen leaves, evoking them wholly in terms of the human observer, subordinating them to him in advance as fodder for his reflections: 'these autumnal emblems of mortal hopes.' It having been established for him, the monk adopts their significance without hesitation. He contracts the span of human life into a single year. His conceit is not only pessimistic but highly selective: he neglects the vitality of summer to convey an impression of birth immediately followed by death, one which is tinged with disgust: ' "loveliest in spring to become most contemptible in winter." ' The conjunction ' " but " ' signals qualification, though not of the pervasive pessimism. The leaves still on the trees are offered as evidence of constancy. But they linger painfully, rather than contrasting positively with the transience of their fellows and offering hope of endurance. The entire passage places a tremendous metaphorical burden upon the landscape instilling a preconceived notion and manipulating the components to endorse it, whether they palpably do so or not.

A similar procedure is pursued by Morton towards the end of *Old Mortality*. Having survived rebellion and exile, he approaches Burley's hideaway, following a stream through a narrow dell and gloomily addressing it as he does so:

"Murmurer that thou art," said Morton, in the enthusiasm of his reverie, - "why chafe with the rocks that stop thy course for a moment? There is a sea to receive thee in its bosom, and an eternity for man when his fretful and hasty course through the vale of time shall be ceased and over. What thy petty foaming is to the deep and vast billows of a shoreless ocean, are our cares, hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows, to the objects which must occupy us through that awful and boundless succession of ages!"⁴⁶

⁴⁵Sir Walter Scott, *The Monastery*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), I, 81-82.

⁴⁶Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, p. 326.

Though no less pessimistic than the monk's reflections, this metaphor is at least scrupulously worked through in its extension. The second and third sentences of the passage contain the two halves that constitute it, and each sentence is perfectly balanced between the physical component and the concept which it represents: ' " There is a sea to receive thee [...] there is an eternity for man [...] What thy petty fuming is to [...] a shoreless ocean are our cares [...] to the [...] boundless succession of ages! " ' Even the physical context of the stream, the narrow dell, finds its metaphorical counterpart in the ' " vale of time. " ' Whereas the significance imposed upon the landscape by the monk did not really conform to the observable facts of cyclical growth and decay, Morton succeeds in establishing an equivalence between it and a conception of life that functions perfectly in every detail, whether or not one agrees with his sentiments.

Finally, in *Waverley*, Fergus Mac-Ivor's ambassador does not detect in the landscape symbols of the human condition, but craftily exploits natural imagery to seek rapprochement in the dispute between his lord and the Baron of Bradwardine while absolving the latter of blame:

"Fergus Mac-Ivor Vich Ian Vohr," said the ambassador, in good English, "greetes you well, Baron of Bradwardine and Tully-Veolan, and is sorry there has been a thick cloud interposed between you and him, which has kept you from seeing and considering the friendship and alliances that have been between your houses and forbears of old; and he prays you that the cloud may pass away, and that things may be as they have been heretofore between the clan Ivor and the house of Bradwardine, [...] And he expects you will also say you are sorry for the cloud, and no man shall hereafter ask whether it descended from the hill to the valley, or rose from the valley to the hill: for they never struck with the scabbard who did not receive with the sword, and woe to him who would loose his friend for the stormy cloud of a spring morning!"⁴⁷

Here we have landscape utilised to make a point and to establish the ascendancy of one party over another. The ' " thick cloud " ' represents the dispute consequent upon the theft of the Baron's cattle. Prudently, its formation is described in the passive mood

⁴⁷Scott, *Waverley*, I, 141.

— ‘ “ there *has been* a thick cloud between you and him ” ’ — in order to avoid the apportionment of blame. Moreover a cloud, occlusive as it may be, can always shift or evaporate, emphasising the fact that the dispute is open to negotiation: ‘ “ and he prays you that the cloud may pass away. ” ’ Such negotiations, it is implied, are the responsibility of the Baron. In the second section, the ambassador moves from politic omission of an agent, to a clearer expression of responsibility — ‘ “ And he expects you will also say, you are sorry for the cloud ” ’ — though again any verb that might convey an action on the Baron’s behalf is avoided. The final debate over the origin of the cloud accords it self-determination, maintaining the overt pretence that the dispute had no author, but firmly associating Mac- Ivor’s implied innocence and moral superiority with his geographical position: ‘ “ whether it descended from the hill to the valley, or rose from the valley to the hill. ” ’ By placing the two alternatives as he does, he leaves open the sense that the second, emphasising the Baron’s guilt, is the correct one.

The foregoing investigation reveals, therefore, that simply being bound to the Scottish landscape is not as simple, nor as wholly desirable, a condition as it may first appear. Characters who inhabit a single, circumscribed area develop a symbiotic relationship with it, manifest in their language. The obverse of this, however, is a lack of mobility. Instead they betray a certain morbidity — an appearance of being absorbed into their native soil that foreshadows their ultimate fate. Death is an inescapable fact for all Scott’s characters, as it is for all human beings, but it seems particularly so for those who must not only die, but die in *this* place. A character like Blind Alice seems confined to a living death, a specific area of the landscape ready to receive her. It is from this that the vulnerability displayed by certain characters arises. Far better to be not so much divorced from the landscape, as to occupy the middle ground. From such a perspective, one can appreciate the physical contours of the terrain, feel its resonance, while remaining mobile, indeed agile, avoiding, with infallible good fortune, the perils of precipice, bog and cataract. This, ultimately, is the situation of the successful Waverley hero.

CHAPTER FIVE

LANDSCAPE AND THE SUPERNATURAL

I.

Scott's interest in the supernatural and presentation of it in his fiction were the result of an acute sensitivity to the atmosphere of particular locations. With regard to landscape, this sensitivity manifested itself in a preoccupation with the folk superstitions attached to glens, moors, valleys, fountains and waterfalls. His own account of the 1814 cruise with the lighthouse commissioners illustrates this point. In describing the cave of Uamh Smowe, near Cape Wrath, he comments, 'A water kelpie, or an evil spirit of any aquatic propensities could not choose a fitter abode, and, to say the truth, I believe at our first entrance, and when all our feelings were afloat at the novelty of the scene, the unexpected plashing of a seal would have routed the whole dozen of us.'¹ This brief anecdote contains a number of the features displayed by Scott's fictional presentation of the supernatural: the basic geology of the setting inculcates foreboding in advance. As a result it is appropriate to the antipathetic creature whose resort it supposedly is. The visitors' fears (described also in terms appropriate to the setting, and to the actual experience of feeling brimful of fear) seem for an instant confirmed. Surprise prompts credulity because it leaves no time for rational reflection. Despite the cool vein of rationality, even scepticism, that runs through Scott's best presentations of the supernatural, he was also able to share in the emotions instinctively evoked by particularly extreme settings ('the *novelty* of the scene'). His personal response to a topographical feature was not always connected exclusively with the supernatural, but that, along with the historical, was often a component of it. Certainly supernatural and historical associations formed the most

¹John Gibson Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 5 vols (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1893) II, 406.

immediate impression of a scene for Scott, and often, as we shall see, they were blended together, the root of the superstition being an item of history — albeit folk history, spurious and localised.

Persisting with this biographical perspective, it is interesting to examine the similarities between the anecdotes of supernatural phenomena which were related to Scott, recorded in his Journal, and those with which he enlivened his fiction. For example, an entry dated 10th March 1828 runs thus:

Met the Sinclair family. Lady Sinclair told me a singular story of a decrepid man keeping a lonely toll at a place called the Rowan tree on the frontiers as I understood between Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire [Wigtonshire?]. It was a wild lonely spot and was formerly inhabited by robbers and assassins who murdered passengers [...] The present inhabitants Lady Sinclair described as interesting. The man's feet and legs had been frost-bitten while herding the cattle and never recovered the Strength of natural limbs [...] The daughter shewd Lady Sinclair a well in the midst of a small bog of great depth into which [...] they used to thrust the bodies of their victims till they had opportunity of burying them. Lady Sinclair stooped to taste the water but the young woman said with a strong expression of horror 'You would not drink it?' Such an impression had the tale probably two centuries old made upon the present inhabitants of this melancholy spot.²

Many of the aspects of supernatural manifestation detectable in the Scottish historical novels, at least in a rural environment, are apparent here. Firstly there is the nature of the location. Being isolated, secluded, on the border between two shires, neither one place nor wholly the other, it provides the ideal context for the commission of such crimes. Before they were discovered it was simply 'a wild and lonely spot'; the impression it conveyed consisted solely of its physical appearance. But the discovery and dissemination of the violent deeds prosecuted there alter

²*The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by W.E.K. Anderson (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 441-442.

people's perception of it. Just as the blood of the slain travellers might seep into the soil, so the location becomes infused by the reality of their deaths, becomes identified with them — 'this melancholy spot'. The melancholy it conveys is the melancholy inspired by the knowledge of their pain and suffering. Moreover the very qualities in the area that made it an appropriate sphere of operations for the robbers and assassins, would also enable it to induce foreboding, at least, in travellers aware of its associations, since isolation and wildness are two qualities of the sublime, as identified by Burke, that produce reactions very similar to that of superstitious fear. Many of Scott's fictive haunted landscapes are, as we shall see, similarly sublime: calculated to discompose when bereft of any supernatural associations, calculated to encourage credulity when they are.

The other most notable feature of the passage is the emphasis upon the distinction between deeds committed *then*, the root of the credulity, and the belief *now*. But the emphasis upon this interval displays a sensitivity to the way in which landscapes acquire supernatural associations. Scott's rationalism, the clear vision of a man educated in Edinburgh during the Scottish Enlightenment, whose early life overlapped with such figures as Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, who received lectures in Scots law from the nephew of David Hume, enabled him to perceive that supernatural belief had to spread, be disseminated, become accepted over a period of time, so that its location becomes inextricably linked to it, the linkage often solidified in the naming of a particular spot. He was always concerned with this process, which he sought to illuminate in his work, while simultaneously attempting to manufacture atmosphere that would discompose the reader as it did his characters, and remaining empathetic to that response. Though in this case the power exerted by the recollection

of the deed is presented as existing in spite of its remoteness, the customary impression in Scott is that the older the legend the more rooted it becomes, the more firmly attached to a specific location: 'Such an impression had the tale, probably two centuries old, made upon the present inhabitants of the spot.' Finally the specific nature of the legend here – that the disposal of corpses in a well has tainted its waters, not only provides a succinct image of the way in which the deed permeates the spot, but also recalls strongly the tale of the Mermaid's Well in *The Bride of Lammermoor*: 'All however agreed, that the spot was fatal to the Ravenswood family; and that to drink the waters of the well, or even approach its brink, was...ominous to a descendant of that house.'³ Thus all the components of the supernatural anecdote here, founded upon a real legend, will be seen to be reproduced in Scott's fiction. There as here a rational, though intrigued, author will demonstrate the procedure of supernatural delusions and attempt to explain their commencement with recourse to the location and its inhabitants. As Hobbie Elliot says, in *The Black Dwarf*: ' " It's just the nature o' the folk and the land. " ' ⁴

Other biographical information demonstrates not only the way in which Scott described recorded supernatural phenomena in terms similar to those in his fiction, but also the way he manufactured such legends, applying them to real as well as to his fictive landscapes. Captain Basil Hall, one of Scott's guests at Abbotsford from December 29th, 1824 – January 10th, 1825, records in his Journal another example of his host's preoccupation with the significance of the place. Scott was giving a guided tour of the landscape surrounding his estate for a party that included Hall. A salient

³Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. by J.H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 40.

⁴Walter Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, ed. by Peter D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 19.

feature of this landscape was the Rhymer's Glen, where Thomas the Rhymer purportedly encountered the Queen of Elf land.⁵ Before descending with them into the glen, Scott was careful to introduce the appropriate note of eeriness that would better enable them to appreciate it:

So that [...] our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground. And though the day was cold [...] I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant.⁶

Hall's use of the term 'classical ground' reminds us of the antiquity of many such legends, of their historical as well as supernatural component. The topography of the spot, specifically its oppressive narrowness, will be reflected in many of the fictive locales, while the emphasis upon 'wildness' in association with it and the previous anecdote will also be seen to recur. Meanwhile the process described here is exactly that occurring in the Scottish historical novels: the author is introducing folklore and conjuring up associations that conspire to inculcate a sense of uneasiness, even foreboding in the reader. Before leading us onto Meikle-stane Moor in *The Black Dwarf*, he pauses and fills our minds with the appropriate legends attached to the

⁵Somewhere about the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Henry of Winchester sat on the throne of England, and Alexander II bore the Scottish crown with all its perils, Thomas, destined to be known to future generations as the prophet-bard of his race, appears to have been born on the banks of Leader Water, where stands in sweet and rural beauty the Berwickshire village of Earlston [...] There is no evidence to show that Thomas himself assumed the character of a prophet, but it is certain that in a very few years from his death he was regarded as one possessed in no slight degree of a spirit of divination [...] The Rhymer is represented on a bright May morning reclining on Huntlee Bank near Eildon's triple height, when he suddenly descries a lady of exquisite beauty mounted on a dapple-grey palfrey, and most gorgeously habited. At first Thomas believes her to be the Virgin, but she assures him she is of "another countree". Soon he is lured away by the fair enchantress, and descending a secret passage at the Eildons, they journey on for three dark dreary days until they arrive at the court of Faery, where Thomas dwells for seven years. At the expiry of that period he is permitted to return to his native earth, and as proof of their friendship and intimacy, Thomas receives from his captivor the gift of prophecy-the tongue that could not lie. Henceforth he is True Thomas.' See W.S. Crockett, *The Scott Country* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1911), pp. 314-331.

⁶Lockhart, IV, 194.

place, just as he did in Hall's account. The similarities are even more apparent in Scott's own candid description of and reaction to the same location in a letter to Daniel Terry, on Christmas Day, 1816:

And did I tell you that I have acquired a new glen near the lake? A quiet, invisible sort of dell where a witch might boil her kettle in happy seclusion among old thorn trees and scathed rocks in a deep ravine totally out of sight unless you fall on it by accident [...] I call it the Rhymer's Glen because it makes part of Huntly Wood where Thomas the Rhymer met the Queen of faeries. All this is but a sort of trash but it is what my head is just now most busy about.⁷

This passage confirms Hall's account. On his estate, as in his novels, he first finds an appropriate context for his spirit or legend: landscape invariably precedes the supernatural. This particular area has many of the appropriate features – it is secluded, isolation being an important condition of supernatural atmosphere; it features aspects, albeit in a small scale, of the sublime, being 'deep' with 'scattered' rocks. But Scott's attitude to it also displays another characteristic that pervades his fictional presentation of the supernatural – the alternation between credulity and scepticism, between affirmation and qualification: 'it makes part of Huntly Wood, where Thomas the Rhymer met the Queen of faeries. All this is but a sort of trash.' As Coleman O. Parsons notes in relation to *The Monastery*, which is set in the area immediately surrounding Scott's home: 'The soil is tradition-soaked, and the lore as a whole is indigenous. Much of this success is due to Scott's long practice in blending Scottish legends with the local sights for the benefit of Abbotsford guests.'⁸ The identification of Scott as tourist, or tour guide with Scott as author may also be applied to the actual

⁷*The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1787-1807*, ed. by H.J.C. Grierson, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932-37), IV, 328.

⁸Coleman O. Parsons, *Withcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), p. 127.

fabrication of supernatural associations. In the former capacity, he was wont to compensate for a deficiency of these in any place he visited. An example of this tendency occurs in J. B. S. Morritt's 'Memorandum' of Scott's visit to Rokeby Park in 1812, quoted by Lockhart. Unfailing in Scott's finest supernatural passages, the specific legend is acknowledged as something extraneous, manufactured and attached to a location, even if subconsciously:

From his boyish habits, he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery if he could not connect with it some local legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess, with the Knife grinder, "Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir" — he would laugh, and say, "then let us make one — nothing so easy as to make a tradition."⁹

Scott knew this process so well, and could analyse its evolution among the peasantry so clearly because he had carried it out himself. As a novelist, he combined, transplanted and fabricated all sorts of legends. For instance his most maligned apparition, the White Maid of Avenel, in *The Monastery* is a somewhat muddled mixture of elemental spirit, attendant spirit, castle spectre, goblin and brownie;¹⁰ the

⁹Lockhart, II, 233.

¹⁰Of all Scott's spirits the White Lady of Avenel is composed of the most disparate antecedents. She is, primarily, an elemental spirit. In creating this aspect of her Scott imports Paracelsus' notions about nymphs or undines of the water element, set forth in his treatise *Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris et de caeteris spiritibus* (1566). There are also such things as white ladies however. Scott's most resembles the Irish variety, which partakes of the character of the banshee, a spirit supposed by Irish and Highland superstition to wait under the windows of a house in which one of the inmates is about to die. Scott's White Lady also displays a particular connection with water, never apparent in either Irish or English types, more appropriate to a kelpie, a water spirit, frequent in Scottish folklore, which often takes the form of a horse and delights in drowning its rider or passers-by. To all this he adds the attendant spirit, which attaches itself to a particular family, aiding them in difficulties, for example over a particularly perilous landscape, as the White Lady guides Mary Avenel and her companions through a bog. There are also glimpses in the White Lady's caperings of the Goblin, mischievous, even malignant English relations of the equally hostile Scottish spirit the Bogle, and of the Brownie, a more good-natured spirit which often completes tasks left undone or done incorrectly by a human labourer, easily propitiated but quick to take offence. The White Lady resembles it only in her excavation of Sir Piercie Shafton's grave. Physically the common Brownie is markedly different though, being male, short of stature, with wrinkled features and curly brown hair, clad in a brown mantle or hood.

titular character of *The Black Dwarf* is based on the legend of the Brown Man of the Moors,¹¹ originally located in Northumberland but transplanted to Galloway and later removed again to Melrose in *The Monastery*.

II.

Scott's much documented sensitivity to the atmosphere of specific locations reaffirms the fact that the most fundamental aspect of the relationship between landscape and the supernatural in his work is that of haunted places. It is possible to identify quite clearly what the principal places are: Meikle-stane Moor in *The Black Dwarf*; Saint Leonard's Crag in *The Heart of Midlothian*; Glendearg in *The Monastery*; an unnamed glen in *The Highland Widow*; the Mermaiden's Well in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. With the notable exception of the last, all these are either enclosed and confining or waste and desolate. They are calculated, simply in their basic topography, to arouse feelings of solitude, oppression and general discomposure. As Parsons notes: 'The outdoor haunting in the Waverley novels is of narrow valleys, stone groups, moors and crags — confined, desolate and dangerous spots.'¹² Beginning, then, with Meikle-stane Moor,¹³ superstition concerning its spectral atmosphere is founded on two objects: the figure of Elshender the Recluse and the configuration of stones

¹¹Scott was informed about the ugly, stunted and malevolent supernatural being who inhabited the moors of Northumberland in a letter from Durham antiquarian Robert Surtees, author of *The History and Antiquities of County Palatine of Durham* (1816). Scott reacted with enthusiasm to the details of a near fatal confrontation with this creature, stating, 'Your "Brown Man of the Muirs" is a noble fellow'. The concept of the Brown Man also bears similarities to that of the common Brownie, sharing its physical characteristics if not its helpfulness.

See Grierson, II, 299.

¹²Parsons, p. 125.

¹³It means literally 'big stone moor'. Scott insisted that it had no distinct original, saying, in a Letter to John Skene on 31st July 1829 that it and the other locations in the novel were 'vox et praeterea nihil' [a voice and nothing more]. However there are, in nearby areas, locales with similar names, such as Meikledale in Dumfriesshire and Mickleton Moor outside Durham.

known as the Grey Geese. Unlike other supernatural beings like the Cloghtdearg, or the spirits which infest St. Leonard's Crag, they are both solid, observable, not at all elusive. The natives have invested them with supernatural qualities in order to account for the fear and uneasiness inspired, respectively, by the malevolent form of the dwarf and the unaccountable regularity of the stones. Thus, aversion to the unknown has been accounted for by an appeal to the irrational.

The process is, as we have seen, exactly the same as that carried out by Scott as tourist and author in relation to the landscape itself. Parsons states that, 'The spectral atmosphere of Mucklestane Moor [...] chiefly expresses the native grotesqueness of folk beliefs.'¹⁴ Hobbie Elliot says of the Moor ' " it's an unco bogilly bit " '¹⁵ because he has been exposed and attentive to folklore connected with it throughout his life. Various beliefs in the place's 'atmosphere' are ingrained and will express themselves on any occasion that the place seems to endorse them -- which it will at times do, having inspired them in the first place. This assertion, that supernatural folklore is promulgated verbally to enable people to contend with feelings of unease, is reinforced by the fact that spectres are often said to be more active at night, when a normally desolate or perilous location will, under cover of darkness, be even more so, and therefore calculated to provoke greater fear. (Hobbie notes that after sunset the Moor is ' " the ordinary resort of kelpies, spunkies and other demons. " ' '¹⁶ Also, in *The Highland Widow*: 'The brave and the terrible, she said, walk by night -- their steps are heard in darkness, when all is silent save the whirlwind

See Grierson, XI, 223.

¹⁴Parsons, p. 125.

¹⁵Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, p. 17.

¹⁶ibid.

and the cataract'¹⁷). What is indistinct most stimulates the imagination, what is indistinct offers the greatest latitude to its workings.

The way in which the Moor has been 'made' supernatural is shown in the following passage:

The cleugh, or wild ravine, into which Hobbie Elliot had followed the game, was already far behind him, and he was considerably advanced on his return homeward, when the night began to close upon him. This would have been a circumstance of great indifference to the experienced sportsman, [...] had it not happened near a spot, which, according to the traditions of the country, was in extremely bad fame as haunted by supernatural appearances. To tales of this kind Hobbie had, from his childhood, lent an attentive ear; and as no part of the country afforded such a variety of legends, so no man was more deeply read in their lore than Hobbie [...] it cost him no effort, therefore, to call to memory the terrific incidents connected with the extensive waste upon which he was now entering. In fact, they presented themselves with a readiness which he felt to be somewhat dismaying.¹⁸

The passage is more concerned with how belief in the supernatural is experienced than the nature of the belief itself. As Hobbie traverses the wilderness of the Moor, the night 'closes upon' him, a choice of words which suggests not just the fading of the daylight but the encroaching of a solid force. The spot generates a zone of foreboding around it. Within this zone natural phenomena acquire a claustrophobia that they would not otherwise possess. Thus oppressed, Hobbie is, in these circumstances, especially disposed to superstitious fears, as indicated by the double superlative: 'as *no* part of the country afforded *such* a variety of legends, so *no* man was *more* deeply read in their fearful lore.' Yet there are in his plight two competing kinds of experience – his knowledge of the terrain, which reduces its ominousness, contrasted with his knowledge of local legends. The phrase 'cost him no effort' hints

¹⁷Walter Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate etc.* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), p. 133

¹⁸Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, pp. 15-16.

that there is a perverse pleasure to be obtained from supernatural credulity and its consequent terror, one of which Scott himself was well aware, although the suggestion is not pursued to any great extent elsewhere. But there is a parallel presentation of Hobbie as victim, as one upon whom these fears are being imposed, rather than as one who is imposing them upon the landscape: 'the terrific incidents [...] *presented themselves*.' They are autonomous, one might almost say that they are preying upon him. Yet this impression is qualified again by other sections of the passage. A word like 'tradition', which would in most contexts connote the long-standing, and hence reliable, is here deprived of those qualities. Indeed it is subverted. It becomes that which falsifies, creating a spurious reputation for the Moor. (Remember what Scott said to Morritt: 'nothing so easy as to make a tradition.') The fact that this reputation, though it may arise from the locals' honest reaction to the topography of their natural environment, does not truly belong to that environment is emphasised by the word 'connected'. Connected suggests the linkage, possibly artificial, of two distinct entities – in this case the landscape and the spectral aspect which the locals have invented for it. The Moor thus has 'bad fame'. Such infamy may only be created and disseminated by the people. It is not a condition of the place itself.

As the chapter progresses, Scott presents us with the myth that actually lies behind much of Hobbie's apprehension:

The dreary common was called Meikle-stane-Moor, from a huge column of unhewn granite, which raised its massy head on a knoll near the centre of the heath, perhaps to tell of the mighty dead who slept beneath, or to preserve the memory of some bloody skirmish. The real cause of its existence had, however, passed away; and tradition, who is as frequently an inventor of fiction as a preserver of truth, had supplied its place with a supplementary legend of her own, which now came full upon Hobbie's memory. The ground about the pillar was strewed, or rather encumbered, with many large fragments of stone of the same consistence with the column, which, from their appearance as they lay

scattered on the waste, were popularly called the Grey Geese of Meikle-stane-Moor. The legend accounted for this name and appearance by the catastrophe of a noted and most formidable witch who frequented these hills in former days, causing the ewes to *keb*, and the kine to cast their calves, and performing all the feats of mischief ascribed to these evil beings. On this moor she used to hold her revels with her sister hags; and rings were still pointed out on which no grass nor heath ever grew, the turf being, as it were, calcined by the scorching hoofs of their diabolical partners.¹⁹

The way in which the stones²⁰ lend their name to the surrounding area is symbolic of the way in which that area is also informed by their supernatural identity – it is contemplated now from that perspective. Scott undermines in advance the supernatural explanation offered for the configuration of the stones by suggesting a more rational one: that it has been erected to commemorate the dead, or perhaps a military engagement. This strikes the objective reader as plausible and so encourages greater scepticism about the existence of the witch and her flock. The existence of everything must have a ‘real cause’ and, in the absence of such a cause, there must be a ‘legend’ – it displays both intelligence and gullibility: an enquiring mind must seek an explanation, but immediately has recourse to the irrational in the absence of a logical one – as the phrase ‘accounted for’ indicates. The fact that the ‘real cause’ is described as having ‘passed away’ emphasises the fact that it is impossible now to recall. It is wholly lost and superstition must be manufactured to take its place. Nevertheless, the parallel attitude of sympathy for such superstitions persists. Though

¹⁹ibid., p. 16.

²⁰There are numerous legends connected with stone circles throughout Britain, many even in Roxburghshire itself. The specific source for the Grey Geese and their mistress would appear, however, to be a stone formation at Addlestrop, Gloucestershire, which inspired a jocose ballad entitled “The Grey Geese of Addlestrop Hill.” It describes how a certain Dame Alice was, one Friday morning, driving her twenty grey geese to pasture on Addlestrop Hill when, having denied alms, in the form of one goose, to a hag, one of the Weird sisters, she was cursed and found her flock turned to stone when she awoke from a trance.

the first sentence is full of equivocation, Scott also in his vocabulary slyly offers hints of supernatural manifestation. The idea that the dead 'slept' beneath, for instance, retains the possibility that they might awake. Also the violence of the skirmish is expressed in the shedding of blood which soaks into the soil, conveying in this image precisely the way deed and spot become bound together. Scott notes that the column is 'dreary', and that it is 'unhewn'. The fact that it is 'unhewn', the absence of human agency, makes its appearance all the more disturbing: it cannot be ascribed to human influence. In the same way the absence of human company encourages dreadful fears. For the uneducated locals the supernatural may best be defined as that which cannot immediately be ascribed to human agency. In sympathy with them Scott also describes the column as raising 'its massy head'. This confers upon the immobile stone a sense of motion, as of a beast rearing up, and, in its anatomical detail, implicitly endorses the legend, otherwise discredited, of it having once been a human being. Scott's attitude shifts again, however, in the very next line, with the previously tentative subversion of the word 'tradition' made explicit: 'Tradition, who is as frequently an inventor of fiction as a preserver of truth, had supplied in its place a supplementary legend of her own.' It is interesting to note that tradition is granted a specific gender – female – perhaps to establish a link with the witch, probably because women are popularly, indeed traditionally, regarded as the disseminators of often fallacious information in the form of gossip.

It is not until the customary dependability of tradition is clearly refuted that Scott describes the tradition of the Grey Geese, which, by this time, we are conditioned to disbelieve. Supplementary evidence – the blackened rings of turf – may, in this context, therefore be dismissed as fraudulent: just another anomaly of the

landscape for which the locals attempt an explanation. It is interesting to notice, too, how that attempt is interrupted by the qualification 'as it were' – a phrase that recurs in such passages, indicative of the constant equivocation that Scott pursues in his presentation of the supernatural. The case of Elshender the Recluse²¹, who also inhabits the Moor, is similar to that of the Grey Geese. His grotesque form and misanthropic disposition are the result, respectively of genetics and bitter experience. But they combine to create so threatening and uncommon an impression that, again, some explanation must be sought. And, inevitably, given, as Hobbie puts it, "the nature o' the folk and the land," a supernatural one is found. As with the unusual features in the landscape, the fear which the Dwarf inculcates creates a myth around him and this myth has the effect of, in turn, making him seem even more frightening. A vicious circle is thus initiated, in the pursuance of which, with the passage of time, belief in the Dwarf's supernatural aspect and antipathy to human beings becomes more firmly held. By the final chapter we have come to know his past and seen him softened slightly by his affection for Isabella Vere, but the local superstitions, encouraged by ignorance, persist:

The sudden disappearance of Elshie from his extraordinary hermitage corroborated the reports which the common people had spread

²¹The most widely acknowledged original of Elshender the Recluse is David Ritchie (1740-1811), a dwarf. Scott met him in either 1796 or 1797 through the agency of Adam Ferguson, whose Peeblesshire retreat of Hallyards was a short distance from Ritchie's cottage on the farm of Woodhouse: 'On one of Scott's Hallyards days his host took him to see David Ritchie, known throughout the district as "Bowed Davie", and by those kindly disposed to and familiar with him as simply "Davie" or "Dauvit", or "Dauvit o' the Wuddus" (Woodhouse) [...] After grinning on him for a moment with a smile less bitter than his wont, the Dwarf passed to the door, double-locked it, and then coming up to the stranger, seized him by the wrist with one of his iron hands and said, 'Man, hae ye ony poo'er?' By this he meant magical power, to which he had himself some vague pretensions, or which, at least, he had studied and reflected upon till it had become with him a kind of monomania [...] Indeed, so deep and strong must have been the impression made upon Scott that from the Dwarf of fiction there is hardly missing a characteristic belonging to the original, with the exception that in the story the Recluse is a personage of birth and quality, and that his motive in bidding adieu to the world was a reverse in love.' See W.S. Crocket, *The Scott Originals: An Account of Notables and Worthies the Originals of Characters in the Waverley Novels*, 3rd ed., rev. (Edinburgh: Grant & Murray, 1932), pp. 147-149.

concerning him. Many believed that, having ventured to enter a consecrated building, contrary to his paction with the Evil One, he had been bodily carried off while on his return to his cottage; but most are of opinion that he only disappeared for a season, and continues to be seen from time to time among the hills. And retaining, according to custom, a more vivid recollection of his wild and desperate language, than of the benevolent tendency of most of his actions, he is usually identified with the malignant daemon called the Man of the Moors, whose feats were quoted by Mrs Elliot to her grandson; and, accordingly, is generally represented as bewitching the sheep, causing the ewes to *keb*, that is, to cast their lambs, or seen loosening the impending wreath of snow to precipitate down on such as take shelter, during the storm, beneath the bank of a torrent, or under the shelter of a steep glen. In short, the evils most dreaded and deprecated by the inhabitants of that pastoral country, are ascribed to the agency of the Black Dwarf.²²

The adjective 'extraordinary' attached to the Dwarf's dwelling reflects the locals' reaction to him. Since it does not appear 'ordinary' it must be 'extraordinary'. And equally, just because he does not appear 'natural', he must be 'supernatural'. In Chapter 3, Elshender was mistaken by Hobbie for the witch. By the final paragraph of the novel he is again identified with her, sharing her 'paction with the Evil One.' Indeed, he seems to have assumed almost all of her characteristics: both interfere with the birth of animals, both supposedly suffer the unfortunate consequences of forgetting their association with the Devil. These shared qualities reflect the preoccupations of the locals. Their livestock is their livelihood so any misfortunes which befall it must be accounted for. Similarly, the landscape remains dangerous under certain conditions. Injuries caused by it arouse yet more fear, which must also be dealt with in some way. The supernatural is as good an expedient as any, even though Scott emphasises, providing his periodic injection of rationality, that the injuries are bound to occur: 'the *impending* wreath of snow.' Moreover the phrase 'for

²²Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, p. 124.

a season' indicates the way in which, once again, supernatural manifestation, or the temporary absence of it is connected to circumstances of the natural world – seasons, days and nights, climatic conditions – since the locals who inhabit it are sensitive to them, and have their lives determined by them. In identifying Elshie with the Man of the Moors, the locals bind him indissolubly to the landscape. He is now understood exclusively in terms of his environment. The locals' superstitions have solidified him figuratively into myth, just as they solidified the witch and her flock literally into stone. 'Custom' is used here in the same way as 'tradition' – connoting unreliability, in particular partiality: 'a *more* vivid recollection of his wild and desperate language, *than* of the benevolent tendency of most of his actions'. In this uneducated, rural context there is no inherent reliability in what is customary or traditional. At the same time, however, credence is implicitly amplified by the choice of the word 'quoted' in relation to the deeds of the Man of the Moor, as well as other terms such as 'corroborated' and 'reports'. Yet again, mediation occurs between scepticism and sympathy.

The preceding passages have, hopefully, illustrated three fundamental aspects of the relationship between landscape and the supernatural. First is the process by which landscape 'becomes' supernatural. To recapitulate, a certain location, purely by virtue of its topography, inspires feelings of unease. To quell, or at least contend with these feelings, the solitary traveller must seek an explanation for them. By invoking the supernatural, he is in fact rationalising the unaccountable through an appeal to the irrational. Once established, the supernatural explanation is spread by word of mouth. As a result, subsequent travellers have it in mind when entering the location, which is now doubly foreboding – the gloom of its topography added to its new spectral

aspect. Any unexpected event or any vague sense of discomposure will henceforth be instantly and unreflectingly ascribed to the supernatural.

The other two points may be more briefly explained. Scott's dual perception in *The Black Dwarf* has been mentioned. In other words, while detailing how locals manufacture superstition, he retains a sympathy for them. Their environment is often such as would discompose even the most imperturbable person and when they carry out the process elucidated above they are mostly helpless, compelled to do so. Superstition, though it adds to the sum of their fears, is what enables them to go on living in the frequently forbidding and perilous landscape.

Finally, we see in *The Black Dwarf* that, as Parsons states, 'Scott is better at creating eeriness than at calling up eerie beings.'²³ In the case of the Grey Geese, the actual legend of the witch, 'not remembering the terms of the contract by which the fiend was bound to obey her commands for a certain space'²⁴ and accidentally turning herself and her errant flock into stone is frankly farcical. But the legend itself is not really the point. Scott's interest, and therefore our attention, is focused on the reaction of the local people to it and to the landscape in which it occurred. Not to mention the process by which landscape first inspires it then becomes identified with it.

III.

Another solitary traveller, Michael Tyrie, traverses another location, this time an enclosed, nameless glen, supposedly haunted by the *Cloght-dearg* or Redmantle in

²³Parsons, p. 263.

²⁴Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, p. 16.

The Highland Widow. This is the place where he tells Elspat MacTavish that her son has been killed by a firing squad and where he is cursed by her:

Confident in his knowledge of the country, the clergyman had left the main road, to seek one of those shorter paths which are only used by pedestrians, or by men, like the minister, mounted on the small but sure-footed, hardy, and sagacious horses of the country. The place which he now traversed was in itself gloomy and desolate, and tradition had added to it the terror of superstition, by affirming it was haunted by an evil spirit, termed *Cloght-dearg*, that is, Redmantle, who at all times, but especially at noon and at midnight, traversed the glen, in enmity both to man and the inferior creation, did such evil as her power was permitted to extend to, and afflicted with ghastly terrors those whom she had not licence otherwise to hurt [...]

As he looked round the scene of desolation, he could not but acknowledge, in his own mind, that it was not ill chosen for the haunt of those spirits which are said to delight in solitude and desolation. The glen was so steep and narrow that there was but just room for the meridian sun to dart a few scattered rays upon the gloomy and precarious stream which stole through its recesses, for the most part in silence, but occasionally murmuring sullenly against the rocks and large stones which seemed determined to bar its further progress. In the winter or in the rainy season this small stream was a foaming torrent of the most formidable magnitude, and it was at such periods that it had torn open and laid bare the broad-faced and huge fragments of rock which, at the season of which we speak, hid its course from the eye, and seemed disposed totally to interrupt its course. "Undoubtedly," thought the clergyman, "this mountain rivulet, suddenly swelled by a water-spout or thunder-storm, has often been the cause of those accidents which, happening in the glen called by her name, have been ascribed to the agency of the *Cloght-dearg*."²⁵

The landscape here is different but the process is the same. Tyrie not only shares Hobbie's solitude; like him, he is also toiling through a landscape that he knows well. As in the case of the Meikle-stane Moor and the Grey Geese, it is the atmosphere attendant upon the legend rather than the legend itself that is important. In *The Black Dwarf* it bordered on farce. Here the Redmantle's spectral machinations are so restricted as to be scarcely impressive in themselves. Tyrie is a clergyman, far

²⁵Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate etc.*, pp. 185-187.

better educated than Hobbie, capable of rationalising strange phenomena and an oppressive atmosphere, yet he finds himself, in spite of all this, prey to similar apprehensions. This denies the suspicion, planted by the novel previously discussed, that supernatural credulity is the preserve of the peasant class. Perhaps Scott is suggesting that the beliefs upon which the clergyman's own profession is founded constitute a similar superstition.

That a locale may create a sense of unease purely by virtue of its native geography is here explicitly acknowledged: 'the place which he now traversed was *in itself* gloomy and desolate.' Scott is equally clear that the supernatural is a phenomenon distinct from its setting. Once again 'the terror of superstition' is 'added' by 'tradition'. But to whatever extent the integrity of tradition is undermined, it is still sure of itself, it still 'affirms'.

Supernatural phenomena, however spurious, are attended by a complex web of circumstances that have been spun round them by the human inhabitants of the landscape. The *Cloght-dearg* does not operate aimlessly. Its appearances are most frequent at noon and midnight, seemingly regulated by an internal alarm clock. Its powers are strictly codified and demarcated. It haunts only those whom it has a 'licence' to trouble, and even then only so far as it has been 'permitted'. Such restrictions are testimony to the inventiveness of the locals. Superstition may be irrational, but in this case a great deal of thought has gone into the elaboration of its details. Often in Scott, as we have seen, rural inhabitants ascribe to supernatural agency depredations wrought by the periodic convulsions of the elements. This explains the different timetables conformed to by the spirits, a link implicitly forged

here, when one recalls the supposed operations of the Black Dwarf: 'In the winter or the rainy season...it was at such periods...at the season of which we speak.'

As Tyrie enters the glen, therefore, he is, like Hobbie, sensitive to all the myths with which the locals have filled its recesses. Like Hobbie, he finds that they come involuntarily to him: 'he *could not* but acknowledge in his own mind that it was not ill-chosen for the haunt of those spirits.' ('Chosen' again emphasising the conscious adoption of the supernatural.) As Parsons describes it: 'While tracing such superstition to days of Popery or even paganism, the minister *surrenders* to the gloomy setting.'²⁶ Seeing the glen through the traveller's eyes, we can pick out exactly the features that would discompose anyone. 'Steep' and 'narrow', its sides seem to close in upon him, creating a very real sense of oppression that is hard to dispel until he quits it. The lack of sunlight results in a gloom in which faintly discerned objects might take on disturbing resemblances. The sun, of course, illuminates – reveals things as they are – negates misconstruction. According to the narrator the stream 'stole' through the glen. Even the elements seem eager to depart swiftly and discreetly. When engorged the stream becomes a 'torrent' which leaves evidence of physical stress in the geography of the glen ('tore open [...] laid bare'). This stress communicates itself to the traveller in that the rougher and less compromising the 'broad faced and large fragments of rock', the greater his sense of the nature's imperilling harshness. Moreover the rock, usually presented as the most insensate of all matter, is also vivified in its combat with the water: 'the rocks and stones, which seemed *determined* to bar its further progress [...] hid its course from the eye and seemed *disposed* totally to interrupt its course.' The result is a location with an ominous heartbeat – implicitly sentient and thus, by

²⁶Parsons, p. 128.

extension, watchful. The delusion of being observed while alone is one which is widely acknowledged to inspire dread.

Michael Tyrie's final attempt at a rationalisation of the *Cloght-dearg* accords exactly with the previously identified process of landscape being made supernatural. But it is worth specifying. In this case a glen containing fast-running water can be dangerous; from time to time it can even cause death. The grief that follows death attempts to account for (and thus deny) the arbitrariness of fate. Unable (or unwilling) to find an explanation in this world, it must search for one in the next. The belief in a malignant spirit, once established, amplifies the fear which the danger of the glen's topography originally provoked. Thus the location is saturated with a combined fear of the real and the unreal.

But what Tyrie's passage through the glen tells us more than anything else is that discomposure generated by a landscape and a consequent sensitivity to supernatural myths are not the preserve of ignorant yokels. The irony is that in attempting to rationalise the superstitions connected with the glen, he pays particular attention to the circumstances which inspired them. As his reaction to Elspat shows, they have worked with comparable success upon his mind even as he has been attempting to meditate dispassionately upon them. Having meditated on the nature of the place, the clergyman is just as disturbed to hear his name called out as Hobbie was to encounter Elshender: ' " Michael Tyrie — Michael Tyrie! " ' He looked round in astonishment, and not without some fear. It seemed for an instant as if the Evil Being, whose existence he had disowned, was about to appear for the punishment of his incredulity.²⁷ Wild-eyed and clad in reddish tartan, Elspat is 'no inadequate

²⁷Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate etc.*, p. 187.

representative' of Redmantle, and this resemblance partly excuses his momentary weakness. But the fact remains that he was about to embark on exactly the process he had just identified of ascribing the alarming to the supernatural.

IV.

The maxim established in relation to *The Black Dwarf* and *The Highland Widow* – that desolate, enclosed or precipitous locations tend to be the ones most often associated with the supernatural – persists in *The Heart of Midlothian*. The meeting place of Jeanie Deans' fiancée, Reuben Butler, and her sister Effie's seducer, Robertson, is described thus:

The very place where he had met this singular person was desecrated, as it were, and unhallowed, owing to many violent deaths, both in duels and by suicide, which had in former times taken place there; and the place which he had named as a rendezvous at so late an hour, was held in general to be accursed, from a frightful and cruel murder which had been there committed by the wretch from whom the place took its name, upon the person of his own wife. It was in such places, according to the belief of that period (when laws against witchcraft were still in fresh observance, and had even lately been acted upon,) that evil spirits had power to make themselves visible to human eyes, and to practice upon the feelings and senses of mankind. Suspicions, founded on such circumstances, rushed on Butler's mind, unprepared as it was, by any previous course of reasoning, to deny that which all of his time, country, and profession, believed.²⁸

This passage endorses Parsons' assertion that, 'Scott makes the dark possession of forbidden places in *The Heart of Midlothian* and the deeds perpetrated in them horrifying in proportion to the guilt which he wishes to externalise. Spirits hovering over crags, valley and cairn both commemorate and personify bygone

²⁸Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), I, 161.

hate.²⁹ The deeds committed and the spot on which they were committed are bound together lexically – ‘violent deaths [...] had taken *place* there; and the *place* which he had named, [...] was held in general to be accursed.’ – to the extent that they are one and the same. The deed is the place and the place is deed. (This explains why, in *The Highland Widow*, Donald MacLeish tells Mrs. Bethune Baliol, ‘ “ But if your leddyship will just hae patience, and wait till we are by the place and out of the glen, I’ll tell ye all about it. There is no much luck in speaking of such things in the place they chanced in.” ’³⁰) Here again, as in *The Highland Widow*, though the nature and process of credulity is admirably conveyed, there is a sense that the phantoms in question have very limited powers: the evil spirits infesting St. Leonard’s Crag may practise upon mortal visitants, but only upon their, ‘feelings and senses’ – not upon their persons – to delude them in other words, as does the *Clocht-dearg*.

Scott seems so concerned in the above passage with stressing the evil of the place that he uses a number of somewhat otiose adjectives: ‘desecrated, as it were, and *unhallowed* [...] *frightful* and *cruel* murder.’ Nevertheless, Muschat’s Cairn and the surrounding topography work better than any other eerie location in Scott’s fiction, largely because he is free to manufacture atmosphere without having to place any spectre, like the White Lady of Avenel, at its centre. Bearing in mind Parson’s previous assertion about Scott’s superiority at creating eeriness rather than eerie beings, this is a great advantage.

The landscape which Butler occupies, then, is dense with legends, both obscure (‘many violent deaths, both in duels and suicides’) and specific (‘murder

²⁹Parsons, p. 124.

³⁰Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate etc.*, p. 110.

which had been there committed by a wretch from whom the place took its name, upon the person of his own wife'). There is an emphasis here, as elsewhere, upon positioning the events that are the basis of the superstitions in the past: 'in former times.' The description of them is invariably signalled by a regression into the pluperfect. Scott is conscious of the fact that the process by which an area acquires supernatural associations is akin to fermentation – it takes time, and the greater the time elapsed the stronger and more widely disseminated the beliefs will be. The dread which travellers feel upon stepping over this part of the landscape is therefore accorded a greater degree of credence and permanence, conveyed by the sense of debt – 'owing to many violent deaths' – and of a firm basis – 'founded upon such circumstances'. This is apparent also in the way that Nichol Muschat's name is not 'connected' to the spot; rather the process is reversed: 'the wretch from whom the place took its name.' That the beliefs are so deep rooted also, it appears, lends them even greater power – where others only presented themselves to Hobbie Elliot, these 'rushed on Butler's mind.' A 'course of reasoning' suggests an ineffective inoculation against credulity however.

What is more, they are not entirely based on unsubstantiated legends wreathed in the mists of time. Some of the events which inspired them occurred within living memory:

In latter times, as we have already noticed, the sequestered and broken character of the ground rendered it a fit theatre for duels and recontres among the fiery youth of the period. Two or three of these incidents, all sanguinary, and one of them fatal in its termination, had happened since Deans came to live in St. Leonards. His daughter's recollections, therefore, were of blood and horror as she pursued the small scarce-tracked solitary path, every step of which conveyed her to a greater

distance from help, and deeper into the ominous seclusion of those unhallowed precincts.³¹

The previous passage said much about the evil reputation of the place, but that reputation was seen more as a consequence of past deeds committed there than topography. Reading it, one might have been prompted to assume that in this case the location shared none of the features so foreboding in the nameless glen of *The Highland Widow*. However, the description of Jeanie's unease confirms that again wildness and seclusion are the distinguishing characteristics. But it also shows that the first stage of linkage between landscape and the supernatural occurs differently here. It is not danger inherent in St. Leonard's Crag that causes the tragedies which must be accounted for. Rather it is the place's utility — its particular appropriateness as a scene for duels — that encourages men, by their own volition, to confront one another there. A fatality occurs and the established process of, as it were, 'irrationalisation' proceeds. Incidentally, this subtle difference also enables Scott to maintain the indomitability of Jeanie Deans (a fundamental aspect of the novel) while showing her prey to the dread of a location. Unlike those of Hobbie Elliot, her fears are not inspired by unsubstantiated myth. It is fitting that the resolute, strong-minded, some might say unimaginative Jeanie is discomposed specifically by superstitions based upon recent recorded events of which, it is suggested, she is personally aware. Thus, in *The Highland Widow* and *The Heart of Midlothian* a movement is pursued from superstition associated with a non-existent phantom, to those based upon quite distant, often non-specific deeds to those inspired by violence committed within living memory — credulity becomes more comprehensible. There is also a particular concern

³¹Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, I, 215

apparent here, as so often when Scott is describing supernatural credulity, with temporal as well as geographical context – ‘in latter times [...] of the period [...] since Deans came to live in St. Leonard’s.’ Scott is sensitive to the fact that such delusions, though recent, still have time in which to ferment if they are to exert a powerful and pervasive influence; and the enclosed location associated with them is the crucible in which that fermentation occurs.

The ubiquity of belief is alluded to again in relation to Jeanie’s journey:

Witchcraft and demonology, as we have had already occasion to remark, were at this period believed in by almost all ranks, but more especially among the stricter classes of presbyterians, whose government, when their party were at the head of state, had been much sullied by their eagerness to enquire into, and persecute these imaginary crimes. Now, in this point of view, also, St. Leonard’s Crag and the adjacent Chase were a dreaded and ill-reputed district. Not only had witches held their meetings there, but even of very late years the enthusiast, or impostor, mentioned in the Pandemonium of Richard Bovet, (1) Gentleman, had, among the recesses of these romantic cliffs, found his way into the hidden retreats where the fairies revel in the bowels of the earth.³²

St. Leonard’s Crag, it is by now abundantly clear, is a very different place from Meikle-stane Moor. Scott remains at pains to place credulity in its geographical, temporal and social context. With each quotation the basis of superstition approaches closer and closer to the temporal context of the novel, without a consequent diminution of intensity, though the most recent one is more obviously fantastic than its predecessors – closer, in fact, to the visible manifestations of *The Monastery*, in particular Halbert Glendinning’s descent underground. Among the majority of society that holds these superstitions are the ‘stricter’ Presbyterians who occupy a pre-

³²Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, 1, 216.

eminent position in it. The word 'stricter' carries with it associations of taut impermeability which the Craggs' reputation and, it should be said, extreme geography, must be acute to breach. The implication of the word persists even when the sentence is ostensibly describing the sect's credulity. Their purity is also seen as compromised by their interest — 'sullied'. The supernatural beliefs here, being composed partly of matricide, have a sordid influence not hitherto seen. The implication is perhaps of a perverse pleasure being obtained from supernatural credulity — particularly to those as ostensibly puritan as the stricter Presbyterians. But the most notable feature of the passage as a whole is again Scott's duality of purpose, which on the one hand evokes the power of superstition while at the same time qualifying and subverting it. (The crimes are unequivocally stated to be 'imaginary'.) This is best demonstrated by the final sentence. The truth of the witches' meetings may be lost in antiquity. But 'of late years' a man has encountered fairies below the Craggs. There is no equivocation here — no 'as it were' or 'it is said'. His recent encounter cannot therefore be dismissed as a myth, misinterpreted or improvised over a long period. But the phrase 'or impostor' is slipped in to diminish his credibility. The absence of his name does the same. But his experience is granted some authority by being laid down in a text, the *Pandemonium* of Richard Bovett.³³ The sentence pursues a constant to and fro motion of statement and qualification which any attempt to analyse it reflects. Scott is perhaps attempting to be even handed. Then again, he may be unsure of his own attitude to the

³³ *Pandemonium, or the Devil's Cloyster; being a further blow to Modern Sadduceism.* by Richard Bovet, Gentleman (1604). The anecdote referred to occurs in the story entitled, "A remarkable passage of one named the Fairy Boy of Leith, in Scotland, given me by my worthy friend Captain George Burton, and attested under his hand." In it the aforementioned George Burton describes how his landlady introduces him to a boy of about ten or eleven. Upon investigation the boy reveals a gift for fortune-telling and describes how he consorts with spirits every Thursday night under the great hill between Edinburgh and Leith. Burton and some friends attempt to retain and distract the boy the following Thursday night, but he escapes, issues a cry in the street and vanishes for good.

supernatural. In attempting to determine which is true, one finds oneself pursuing a motion similar to that indulged in by the author.

What can be stated with confidence is that, setting aside the fact that recent death by combat is a more persuasive basis for superstition than a misanthropic dwarf, a stone circle or the effects of a swollen stream, the place has exactly the stock topography calculated to discompose and oppress:

It was situated in the depths of the valley behind Salisbury Crags, which has for a background the north-western shoulder of a mountain called Arthur's Seat, on whose descent still remain the ruins of what was once a chapel, or hermitage, dedicated to St. Anthony the Eremit. A better site for such a building could hardly have been selected; for the chapel, situated amongst the rude and pathless cliffs, lies in a desert, even in the immediate vicinity of a rich, populous, and tumultuous capital; and the hum of the city might mingle with the orisons of the recluses, conveying as little of worldly interest as if it had been the roar of the distant ocean.³⁴

All the anticipated features are present. Reference is made to the 'depth' of the valley. Again we have the supernatural and the sublime: landscape possessing qualities very similar to those designated as sublime by theorists such as Burke. (Sublime scenery tended to be remote, mountainous, with deep, shadowed gorges, irregular outcrops of 'scathed' rocks and blasted vegetation -- characterised, in other words, by extremity, and production of fear and oppression in the spectator.) Indeed emotions inspired by the sublime make one vulnerable to supernatural credulity -- it is a natural consequence of them. The location recalls the 'steep and narrow' glen of *The Highland Widow*. The cliffs are 'rude and pathless'. The second adjective implies the infrequent presence of human beings, hence, once again, solitude. The reference to a

³⁴Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, I, 219.

'desert' concurs with this implication. Scott acknowledges that the city is nearby, but he likens its hum to the roar of a distant ocean, a feature which, again, cuts people off from one another. Finally, the phrase 'worldly interest' can, in such a context, be read two ways. It can refer to the bustling, workaday world of the metropolis from which the hermit, like the Black Dwarf, has divorced himself. But it can also refer to the material, as opposed to the supernatural, world.

V.

The above passage contains examples, as was stated, of the 'stock' supernatural topography. *The Monastery* features a location, in Glendearg³⁵, that is equally conventional: 'The hills which ascend on each side of this glen are very steep, and rise boldly over the stream, which is thus imprisoned within their barriers.'³⁶ Again it is deep, dark and oppressive, with an overwhelming sense of entrapment, forging a link with qualities of the sublime. But though, as before, Scott encourages a certain scepticism towards the minor superstitions, the principle spectre, the White Lady of Avenel, is allowed to stand unrationalised and fully formed. The whole supernatural

³⁵In the Introduction to the Magnus Opus edition, Scott states, 'It was not the purpose of the Author to present a landscape copied from nature, but a piece of composition, in which a real scene, with which he is familiar, had afforded him some leading outlines. Thus the resemblance of the imaginary Glendearg with the real vale of Allan is far from being minute, nor did the Author aim at identifying them. This must appear plain to all who know the actual character of the glen of Allan, and have taken the trouble to read the account of the imaginary Glendearg.' (*The Monastery*, p.ix.) The Allan water flows south, originating near Stow, passing through a ravine called the Fairy or Nameless Dean, to join the Tweed between Galashiels to the west and Melrose to the east. However Scott also states, 'Another, and even a more familiar, refuge of the elfin race (if tradition is to be trusted) is the glen of the river, or rather brook named the Allan, which falls into the Tweed from the northward, about a quarter of a mile above the present bridge. As the streamlet finds its way behind Lord Somerville's hunting-seat, called the Pavillion, its valley has been popularly termed the Fairy Dean, or rather the Nameless Dean, because of the supposed ill-luck attached by the popular faith of ancient times to anyone who might name or allude to the race whom our fathers distinguished as the Good Neighbours, and the Highlands called *Daoine Shie*, or Men of Peace.' (p.viii.) See Sir Walter Scott, *The Monastery* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1898).

³⁶Walter Scott, *The Monastery*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), I, 10.

apparatus of the novel is more fanciful. As Parsons states, 'A lighter atmosphere pervades *The Monastery*,' perhaps due to the fact that, as he goes on to state, 'the enchanted setting was taken freely, not slavishly, from the purlieus of Abbotsford.'³⁷ – an area which Scott knew so well and in which he was therefore unable to detect too much that seemed ominous. Nevertheless the fact remains that Glendearg though suffering, as Parsons rather facetiously puts it, an 'eerie infestation', shares much in common, topographically, with its predecessors:

As our Glendearg did not abound in mortal visitants, superstition, that it might not be absolutely destitute of inhabitants, had peopled its recesses with beings belonging to another world. The savage and capricious Brown Man of the Moors, a being which seems the genuine descendant of the northern dwarfs, was supposed to be seen there frequently, especially after the autumnal equinox, when the fogs were thick, and objects not easily distinguished. The Scottish fairies, too, a whimsical, irritable, and mischievous tribe, who, though at times capriciously benevolent, were more frequently adverse to mortals, were also supposed to have formed a residence in a particularly wild recess of the glen, of which the real name was, in honour to that circumstance, *Corrie nan Shian*, which, in corrupted Celtic, signifies the Hollow of the Fairies.³⁸

By now the operation of superstition – evolving legends to fill a lacuna – has become so familiar that it is presented as a force in itself, rather than an activity to which human beings have recourse. Glendearg and its evocation contain what have been established as the defining characteristics of supernatural landscape: sublimity, seclusion, absence of inhabitants, climatic conditions, regulated spectres. 'Our' underlines the familiarity of Glendearg, its similarity to the area inhabited by the narrator, the Author of *Waverley*, whom we know, from a modern perspective, to be Scott. The absence of 'mortal visitants' again underlines the point that solitude, and

³⁷Parsons, p. 126.

³⁸Scott, *The Monastery*, I, 12.

the sense of vulnerability that goes with it, are great fomenters of superstition. The mortal inhabitants of Scott's landscape seem to abhor the suspicion that any part of it might be totally empty. They would rather fall prey to superstitious fears when traversing a location than feel utterly destitute of company.

Almost all the other conventions of Scott's descriptions of landscape and the supernatural are present. There is the concurrent belief and scepticism in the phrase 'genuine descendant of the Northern dwarfs.' The end subverts the beginning. Dwarfs do exist, but the general tone of the passage, and the fact that in folklore, which Scott is here discussing, dwarfs supposedly possess magical powers, means that nothing relating to them can be truly 'genuine'. Scott's equivocation persists – he does not say that the Brown Man of the Moors was there but that he was 'supposed to be seen'. Again the spectres are always limited in their machinations, either by established routine or, in the case of the fairies who are present constantly ('formed a residence') by caprice. The phrase 'especially after the autumnal equinox' reminds us of the complex rules with which the locals ingeniously bolster irrational beliefs. The fact, often emphasised, that the supernatural inhabitants are not in constant attendance – 'there frequently [...] more frequently' – becomes clearly explicable when one considers that their apparitions are most often glimpsed under climatic conditions that are equally inconstant, or are bound up with the seasons. The reference to the fog reminds us of the gloom observed by Michael Tyrie in *The Highland Widow*. Here the process by which obscure objects may be mistaken in the discomposed mind for spectral forms is made more explicit. Just as the solitary traveller is compelled to reject the apparent vacancy of his surroundings to the extent

of populating it with spirits, so he is equally compelled to make some shape out of the indistinct, even if that shape seems malevolent.

As a result of the fears which all these topographical features and climatic circumstances inspire, the place is named after its putative supernatural inhabitants. This designation fixes the character of the spot forever in terms of the superstitions connected with it. Henceforth even those few who do not accept the belief that it is haunted cannot refer to it without each time acknowledging that belief and thus partly reinforcing it.

But for all Scott's cool rationalism (indicated by his reiteration of the word supposed: "*supposed* to have been seen there recently [...] *supposed* to have formed a residence.") he goes on to introduce the unrationalised White Maid of Avenel. The spot in which Halbert summons her is exactly calculated to inspire groundless fears:

Here Halbert stopt short, and cast a gloomy, and almost a frightened, glance around him. A huge rock rose in front, from a cleft of which grew a wild holly-tree, whose dark green branches rustled over the spring which arose beneath. The banks on either hand rose so high, and approached each other so closely, that it was only when the sun was at its meridian height, and during the summer solstice, that its rays could reach the bottom of the chasm in which he stood.³⁹

As the appearance of the spectre approaches the locale becomes even more claustrophobic and acquires a pervasive sense of motion, which before has only been incidental. The solid geography of the spot is described in verbs of movement: walls of rock rise and approach one another. The sense is of the whole chasm closing in upon Halbert. Thus we recognise the familiar sense of oppression, as well as the vivifying of insensate material and, again, the implications of observation which go

³⁹ibid., I, 137.

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³⁹ibid., I, 137.

with consciousness. Like the glen in which Michael Tyrie found himself, this spot is almost entirely cut off from the sun's rays, with all the associations of gloom and cold which such seclusion evokes. (Shivering, we need not be reminded, can be an indication of both cold and fear.) The reference to the 'summer solstice' recalls and elaborates the previous one concerning the 'autumnal equinox' reminding us that in the gloom of winter supernatural beings are more active because the landscape is less visible. Summer, on the other hand, sheds exposing light upon even the most secluded spots. In other words all the principal features of *Corrie-nan-Shian* are ones that we, as travellers led by Scott the tour guide through his fictive landscapes, have witnessed before. But the supernatural being we encounter here is not chimerical:

He drew his sword, undid the buskin from his foot, bowed three times
with deliberation towards the fountain, and as often towards the tree,
and repeated the same rhyme as formerly, —

"Thrice to the holly brake
Thrice to the well: —
I bid thee awake,
White Maid of Avenel!

Noon gleams on the lake —
Noon glows on the fell —
Wake thee, O wake,
White Maid of Avenel!"

His eye was on the holly bush as he spoke the last line; and it was not without an involuntary shuddering that he saw the air betwixt his eye and that object become more dim, and condense, as it were, into the faint appearance of a form, through which, however, so thin and transparent was the first appearance of the phantom, he could discern the outline of the bush, as through a veil of fine crape.⁴⁰

The verse which he uses to make her appear is full of allusions to his immediate surroundings. The objects to which he makes obeisance have no

⁴⁰ibid., I, 227.

supernatural properties themselves. Indeed it might be said that the conjuration itself has no meaning at all, that it is just an acknowledgement of the environment. But stylistically it is interesting and its structure may have some embedded meaning. The holly tree and the well are bound together by the repeated construction ‘ “ Thrice to the” ’ and both are connected by rhyme to the third and fourth lines which directly address the spirit. Thus, different elements of the landscape are reconciled in her presence. Similarly, in the second stanza, lake and fell are bound together with the recurring element of noon, though to a slightly lesser extent, given the variation in the verb: ‘ “ Noon gleams on the lake/ Noon glows on the fell. ” ’ Throughout the eight lines a process of consolidation is occurring. The White Maid’s sphere of operations encompasses all the features described, but at the same time she is limited to the area of the landscape in which they occur, despite her pretensions to universality: ‘ “The breeze that brought me hither now must sweep Egyptian ground,/ The fleecy cloud on which I ride for Araby is bound.” ’⁴¹ The breeze and cloud will travel on, but without her; she is only propelled and carried by them, respectively, on a temporary, local basis.

Though these words belie her relatively parochial nature, they do convey the sense in which she is, literally, an ethereal being. When she appears to Halbert she does so through the condensation of the air, and is at first so translucent that the surrounding topography is visible through her, thus underlining in an image that she is *of* the landscape, able not only to traverse it but to penetrate its depths. The description of her appearance does also suggest at least some attempt to rationalise her, in that, being formed from ‘ “ ether blue ” ’, as she puts it, rather than Halbert’s ‘ “ mud and

⁴¹ibid, I, 141.

dust” ’⁴², she presents herself as an other-wordly being composed of elements of this world. She utilises elements of this world in order to make herself manifest in it, saying also that, ‘ “ my blood is of the unfallen dew.” ’⁴³ However Halbert, the human, is in many senses bound more closely to the terrain than she, being composed of its raw materials. Her self-conscious statement of her own composition thus emphasises her mobility within the landscape more than her bond to it. It is this sense of her hovering over the landscape, the tenuity of her connection to it, in spite of Halbert’s summoning of her, that, in addition to the fact that she is unrationalised and speaks for herself, makes her unconvincing.

VI.

The haunted places in *The Black Dwarf*, *The Highland Widow*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Monastery* may therefore be seen as bearing, with variations, the same fundamental significance. What ties all these locales and manifestations together is the process by which they acquire reputations of supernatural dread. The variations centre around the nature of the topography and the roots of each superstition and are contrastive. Meikle-stane Moor does not display the sublimity of the other locations. But it shares with St. Leonard’s Crag a stone structure from which dread emanates – the Grey Geese compared to Muschat’s Cairn. The glen in *The Highland Widow* contains an imaginary spirit, never depicted, only referred to, which bears similarities to the fully realised White Maid of Avenel. Meanwhile Meikle-stane Moor is the only location whose atmosphere is also

⁴²ibid, I, 229.

⁴³ibid.

associated with a mortal being and St. Leonard's Crag the only one 'desecrated' by recorded deeds of violence, some within living memory. But *The Bride of Lammermoor* represents a departure from the tradition that throws an interesting contrastive light upon it. This departure centres around the structure of the Mermaid's Well:

He raised Lucy from the ground in his arms and, conveying her through the glades of the forest by paths with which he seemed well acquainted, stopped not until he laid her in safety by the side of a plentiful and pellucid fountain, which had been once covered in, screened and decorated in architectural ornaments of a gothic character. But now the vault which had covered it being broken down and riven, and the Gothic front ruined and demolished, the stream burst forth from the recesses of the earth in open day, and winded its way among the broken sculpture and moss grown stones which lay in confusion around its source. Tradition, always busy, at least in Scotland, to grace with a legendary tale a spot in itself interesting, had ascribed a cause of particular veneration to this fountain.⁴⁴

The location is secluded once again, but this time not by rugged and impermeable walls of rock, or tracts of desolate moor land, but by 'glades of the forest', which connote beauty and serenity. Like Hobbie Elliot and Michael Tyrie, Ravenswood knows this area well. But the knowledge is not, at this point, compromised by discomposure. Rather it enables him to swiftly tend to Lucy, his destination confirming the impression created by the surrounding area, being 'plentiful and pellucid.' But the Well's atmosphere has been partly altered by human influence. This influence has added gothic ornamentations to it, which carry with them all Gothicism's associations of gloom and foreboding.⁴⁵ These additions introduce a

⁴⁴Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. by J. H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 38-39.

⁴⁵Scott himself constructed an ornamentation very similar to this on his own estate at Abbotsford, as a letter dated 8th January 1813 to Lady Abercorn indicates: "There is a superb spring which I have covered with a little Gothic screen composed of stones which were taken down when the modern church was removed from Melrose Abbey. As I got an ingenious fellow to put my little fragments of columns

different note. Decayed, rough, covered in moss, with water pouring through their midst, they recall in miniature the topography of *Corrie nan Shian* and the *Cloch-dearg's* abode. Here we have a double imposition. Not only is the superstition connected to the spot but appropriate physical features, connoting stress and oppression, are also attached. Thus an innocuous location is first made suitable for superstitions which are then evolved. Nevertheless, the fundamental attractiveness rather than the fabricated sublimity of the spot prevails: 'burst forth from the recesses of the earth in open day.' The flow of water leads us towards light and calm here, rather than toiling onward through the gloom. The ornamentations may possess a sublime aspect in their dilapidation, but they have fallen nonetheless. The prevailing sense is of the sublime, albeit in miniature, having merged with the beautiful, through the agency of water, to create a picturesque appeal.

In the final sentence we see that, as always, 'tradition' has a meaning for Scott distinct from the one which it is usually accorded. In relation to the supernatural, it is superficial and fictitious – a false patina caused by long misinterpretation of the facts. However different, ultimately, is the topography, the process of acquisition is the same. What may be noted, however, is that, unlike in *The Black Dwarf* or *The Highland Widow*, 'tradition' is not 'added' or 'connected' to the Mermaid's Well. Instead the site is 'graced' by it. The choice of verb corresponds to the gentle, aesthetically pleasing atmosphere of the Well and its precincts, reaffirming also that the Gothic ornamentation has not succeeded in disguising its innate appeal. Scott is, as usual, at pains to point out that the inherent nature of the scene is the point of

and carving together, you would really think it was four hundred years old. It is covered with earth all around, above and behind, and my morning's occupation has been planting weeping willows and weeping birches about and above it.' See Grierson, III, 219.

departure for any myths with which the locals may distinguish it. In past cases there seemed a clear relationship between topography and superstition: foreboding spots inspired fearful tales. The Mermaiden's Well is bright and picturesque, but the superstition remains as fearful as ever.

But, having said this, perhaps there is a greater correspondence between the legend of the Nymph and the scene of its occurrence than might at first be apparent.

The essence of the legend is that:

A beautiful young lady met one of the Lords of Ravenswood while hunting near this spot, and, like a second Egeria, had captivated the affections of the feudal Numa.⁴⁶ They met frequently afterwards, and always at sunset, the charms of the nymph's mind completing the conquest which her beauty had begun, and the mystery of the intrigue adding zest to both.⁴⁷

A local hermit, disturbed by these assignations, advises the Lord of Ravenswood to determine the true nature of the nymph by allowing him to ring vespers half an hour late. The Lord agrees and at his next meeting with her:

No change took place upon the nymph's outward form, but as soon as the lengthening shadows made her aware that the usual hour of the vespers chime was past, she tore herself from her lover's arms with a shriek of despair, bid him adieu forever, and, plunging into the fountain, disappeared from his eyes. The bubbles occasioned by her descent were crimsoned with blood as they arose, leading the distracted Baron to infer, that his ill-judged curiosity had occasioned the death of this interesting and mysterious being.⁴⁸

The water nymph has a pleasing outward form, unlike Elshender the Recluse. But this outward form belies the final eruption of horror and tragedy. Though

⁴⁶'Egeria' can represent any female adviser, from the mythical adviser of Numa Pompilius, the legendary second king of Rome (715BC- 673BC), successor to Romulus and reputed as founder of nearly all their religious institutions.

⁴⁷Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, p. 39.

⁴⁸ibid, p. 40.

outwardly attractive, the nymph's manifestations are as circumscribed as any. Also the attraction of the nymph, a combination of what is seen (her beauty) and what is unseen (her mind), reflect that of her context – its appearance augmented by its associations. Beauty belies horror but not ugliness – 'No change took place upon the nymph's outward form.' In the same way the beauty of the spot is, as we have seen, fundamental. But its beauty conceals, from the uninformed eye, the sanguinary legend with which it is 'graced' and its supposed deadliness to the Ravenswood family. The stream may contribute to the ostensible atmosphere of peace, but its waters were once 'crimsoned with blood'. Thus the location does indeed reflect its supernatural associations, founded as they are on a legend in which beauty belies horror. It might alternatively be suggested that since the Well is fatal to only one family, it need not strike all as foreboding in the manner of Meikle-stane Moor or St. Leonard's Crag.

The preceding discussion has, then, hopefully demonstrated some interesting aspects of the principal connection between landscape and the supernatural – that of haunted places. These aspects include the process by which the supernatural becomes associated with a particular section of the landscape, Scott's often ambivalent attitude to these associations, and the variations in the nature of the legends at their centre. The supernatural represents one of the three principal types of association, alongside history and aesthetic theory, with which landscape was infused for Scott. This fact is apparent in biographical anecdotes relating to the subject, which display preoccupations very similar to those in fictive descriptions of haunted locales. When we examine such places, moreover, a certain stock topography emerges, albeit with variations – a topography which shares many qualities in common with the sublime.

These similarities, as well as the common reaction of characters to them, also enable us to discern the emergence of a particular process to which we might lend the inclegant but appropriate name of 'supernaturalisation.' As the last example shows, even in its specific vocabulary, the process can occur regardless of topography. Common also is Scott's ambivalence towards the entire topic, his fascination tempered by rationality, manifest in the qualifications and equivocations which periodically occur in his description of haunted places.

CHAPTER SIX

LANDSCAPE AND NARRATIVE

I.

In the Introductory section to *The Fair Maid of Perth*, the redoubtable Mrs. Bethune Baliol tells Chrystal Croftangry, the narrative persona in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, this:

"There are plenty of wildernesses in Scottish history, through which, unless I am greatly misinformed, no certain paths have been laid down from actual survey, but which are only described by imperfect tradition, which fills up with wonders and with legends the periods in which no real events are recognised to have taken place."¹

To which Croftangry replies:

"If such be your advice, my dear lady," [...] "the course of my story shall take its rise upon this occasion at a remote period of history, and in a province removed from my natural sphere of the Canongate."²

By invoking a metaphorical landscape, Mrs. Baliol offers a vision of the production of historical narratives in which the novelist is depicted as a kind of literary pioneer, one who pursues new routes through virgin historical territory. Chrystal Croftangry adopts her concept but lends it specificity, invoking the real Scottish landscape rather than a metaphorical one. He also identifies temporal context and physical context as the two fundamental components of his subsequent narrative, their connection underlined by orthographic similarity -- "at a *remote* period of history and in a province *removed* from my own" -- both words deriving from the same Latin root *removere*. Every narrative in the Scottish historical novels evolves in a way that necessitates journeys across the landscape. Narrative movement and physical movement thus often exist coterminously, for reasons that will be expanded upon in due course. Though the period settings of the other novels are not such 'wildernesses' as that of *The Fair Maid of Perth*, the basic procedure is the same: creating out of historical

¹ Sir Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, 2 vols (London, John C. Nimmo, 1894), I, 13.

² *ibid.*

circumstances a linear series of events, populated by characters who sometimes motivate them, but who are most often confined to the 'certain paths' laid out in the narrative.

However, before we examine the role played by the evocation of the Scottish landscape in the narrative discourse of Scott's novels, it is necessary first to determine the precise nature of that discourse. Of all theorists in this area, the one who offers the most thorough and flexible model of analysis is Gerard Genette (Indeed Jina Politi invokes his theories in her essay on *The Bride of Lammermoor*³). In the chapter of his book *Figures of Literary Discourse* entitled 'The Frontiers of Narrative', he recalls the Platonic division of lexis into mimesis and diegesis, the assumption of narrative persona by the author as opposed to narration in his own, unmediated voice. To these Plato added a mixed style, exemplified by the narratives of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in which there was alternation between the one and the other, with the poet both relating the action of characters in non-verbal events and recording their speeches.

Genette states that this mixed style is, 'the most common and universal mode of narration.'⁴ He goes on to observe that, 'In the case of a strictly faithful historical account, the historian narrator must certainly be aware of the change of manner when he passes from the narrative effort of relating completed actions to the mechanical transcription of spoken words, but in the case of a partially or totally fictitious narrative, fictional activity, which bears equally on the verbal and non-verbal elements, no doubt has the effect of concealing the difference that separates the two types of imitation.'⁵ Though Scott's narratives are often based upon recorded historical events, such as the Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745 and the lives of the Covenanters, he does not pretend that they are 'strictly faithful' accounts. The speech of his characters, be they John Grahame of Claverhouse or Prince Charles Edward, is entirely, and necessarily, fictitious. Scott is free therefore, though constructing narratives often out of true circumstances, to

³Jina Politi, 'Narrative and Historical Transformations in *The Bride of Lammermoor*,' *Scottish Literary Journal*, 15 (1988).

⁴Gerard Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 131.

⁵*ibid.*

emulate the movement of authors whose narratives are entirely fictitious, alternating seamlessly between mimesis and diegesis.

The fact that he does so might prompt us to suspect that his narrative technique is indeed an exemplum of the mixed 'epic' mode, particularly in view of Genette's assertion of its universality. This suspicion is endorsed by David Lodge. In his collection *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* he states that Scott, like Henry Fielding before him, distinguishes clearly between mimesis and diegesis: 'Fielding, unlike Johnson in *Rasselas*, does not make all the characters speak in the same register as himself – but the author's speech (and values) are quite clearly distinguished from the narrator's speech and values; mimesis and diegesis are never confused. The same is true of Scott, in whose work there is, notoriously, a stark distinction between the polite literary English of the narrator's discourse, and the richly textured colloquial dialect speech of the Scottish characters – a disparity that becomes particularly striking in the shift from direct to reported speech or thought.'⁶ This is indisputably true, observable in the texts. Even in the one Scottish historical novel with what is conventionally called a 'first-person' narrator, *Rob Roy*, the natural discourse of the middle-class aspiring poet Francis Osbaldistone is quite plausibly the same polite literary English favoured by Scott, though this is more a distinction between tones rather than an alternation of modes.

Nevertheless, with the 'colloquial' characters exempt from the task of relating the main, or, as Genette would put it, the 'first' narrative, it is the purposefully more accessible and elevated discourse of the diegesis, rather than the mimesis, to which we must look principally for the narrative significance of landscape description. Having done so, we should be able to see a number of aspects, identified by Genette, of the diegesis, the 'telling', (which, according to him is the only narrative discourse that really exists, mimesis being an aspect of it, rather than a true alternative, since, as he states: 'perfect imitation is no longer an imitation, it is the thing itself, and, in the end, the only imitation is an imperfect one'⁷) that may be related to that significance.

⁶David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1980), p. 31.

⁷Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, pp. 132-133.

II.

First of all there is Genette's distinction between narration and description which, as he notes, 'appears neither in Plato nor Aristotle.'⁸ Diegesis, for him, is composed of the representation of actions and events (narrative) and the representation of objects and characters (description). At the different stages in the course of the diegesis, one of these modes will be in the ascendant, occupying a superior position to the other. Genette points out that we may represent objects and characters, motionless, in a single moment and in their strict spatial relationships to one another, without the resultant description having any narrative component. Description can, if the author so wishes, be 'purely' description. On the other hand, however, it is difficult to relate actions and events without also describing. Genette offers, as an illustration, the sentence, 'The man went over to the table and picked up a knife.' Not only are the physical elements of the event specified – 'The man [...] the table [...] a knife.' – but so are the particular kinds of action – 'went over [...] picked up' – as opposed to, say, 'ran over [...] snatched up' which would substantially alter the reader's impression of the event. As Genette observes, 'It may be said, then, that description is more indispensable than narration, since it is easier to describe without relating than it is to relate without describing (perhaps because objects can exist without movement, but not movement without objects.)'⁹ Turning from this to a literary historical perspective, Genette specifies the classical role of description as purely ornamental. The narrative, in the mixed, 'epic' mode, traditionally pauses for the representation of an object or a character or – and this is where the significance for Scott comes in – a physical scene within the diegetic world. The onward movement of the narrative is suspended for the length of the description, then resumes, though, as we have seen, this resumption does not spell the demise of description. The peerless example of such ornamental description, offered by Genette, is that of Achilles' shield in Book XVIII of *The Iliad*.

⁸ibid., p. 134.

⁹ibid.

If, therefore, the 'epic' style alternates between mimesis and diegesis, and if that alternation is best exemplified among novelists by Fielding and Scott, we should also be able to detect in their works Genette's distinction between narration and description. Yet it is important at this stage to add a *caveat*. Genette's distinction between narrative and description is founded upon an analysis of epic prose. Scott and Fielding are writers of fictional prose. Thus, though they may, as Lodge asserts, emulate the criteria of the classical epic they cannot wholly fulfil its criteria since they are working in a different genre. Nevertheless, we should plausibly be able to find instances of ornamental description in their prose, particularly in that of Scott, who is popularly regarded, condemned even, as a writer given to immensely long-winded, static descriptive passages.

We begin, however, with Henry Fielding (1707–1754). A brief examination of his descriptive passages yields information not only about the degree to which they are ornamental in the epic tradition, but also about the presentation of landscape in the work of a major writer who preceded Scott and had a significant influence upon him. Topography in fact plays little part in Fielding's novels, particularly *Joseph Andrews* (1742), in which the only location distinctly identified is London. All settings outwith it are simply 'the countryside'. Moreover the brief landscape descriptions that Fielding does offer are dispiritingly conventionalised, bearing interesting similarities to those of Scott at his least original:

They came to one of the beautifullest spots of ground in the universe. It was a kind of natural amphitheatre formed by the winding of a small rivulet which as planted with thick woods, and the trees rose gradually above each other, by the natural ascent of the ground they stood on; which ascent as they hid with their boughs, they seemed to have been disposed by the design of the most skillful planter.¹⁰

Just as Fielding's locations lack particularity, so too do his natural descriptions, this one being generalised to the greatest possible extent: 'one of the beautifullest spots of

¹⁰Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (London: Penguin Classics, 1985), p. 222.

ground in the universe.' Again we have the amphitheatrical form which was favoured by devotees of Ideal Landscape, but which also connotes theatricality and artifice, in spite of the repeated emphasis upon the spot's lack of deliberate arrangement: 'natural amphitheatre...natural ascent of the ground.' The sense of compromise between the natural and the artificial persists throughout the rest of the passage. The amphitheatre appears constructed but is not; the trees that cover it convey the same impression. They are commended for the way in which they appear to have been planned, signifying that Fielding, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, was an adherent of earlier landscaping theories than Scott. Indeed the final phrase suggests that he conformed to the principles of 'Capability' Brown and Humphrey Repton: 'they seemed to have been disposed by the design of the most skillful planter.' But the most important aspect of the passage in this context is the extent to which it constitutes 'pure' description. The components of the scene, the rivulet aside, are static. No characters traverse it. And though Fielding instils in it a sense of motion based upon narratable actions that either have occurred ('formed by the winding of a small rivulet'), are metaphorical ('the trees *rose* gradually above each other...which ascent as they *hid* with their boughs'), or might have occurred ('they seemed to have been disposed by the design of the most skillful planter.'), the fact remains that the passage is devoid of overt narration – there is no visible event to be chronicled. There is, admittedly, greater topographical detail in *Tom Jones* (1749). Squire Allworthy's estate is firmly located at the beginning of the second chapter, in Somersetshire, and all the locations visited by Tom *en route* to London, such as Gloucester, Upton, St. Albans, are clearly distinguished. But the descriptions of landscape are no more particularised.

Before we go on to assess the purity of Scott's landscape descriptions compared to those of Fielding, it may be interesting to briefly examine the fiction of another of his predecessors, Tobias Smollett (1721–1771). It was in *Humphrey Clinker* (1771) in particular that landscape was promoted to the foreground, regarded not just as an expedient, in a vague backdrop for characters' actions, but as an important element, worthy of fidelity in its evocation. But, not being wholly integrated, its landscape

descriptions bear no thematic significance, nor do they illuminate character. Indeed they are similar to those in travel guides which became popular in the immediately subsequent period, such as *A Guide to the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire* (1784) by Arthur Young and the *Three Essays...* (1792) by William Gilpin, referred to in Chapter 3:

Lough-Lomond [...] is a surprising body of pure transparent water, unfathomably deep in many places, six or seven miles broad, four and twenty miles in length, displaying above twenty green islands, covered with wood; some of them cultivated with corn, and many of them stocked with red deer – They belong to different gentlemen, whose seats are scattered along the banks of the lakes, which are agreeably romantic beyond all conception.¹¹

The strict proportions of the location, its utility in furnishing crops and livestock, its ownership, are the principal qualities of the scene for the narrator. Romanticism is acknowledged but it is eclipsed by practicality, its exaltedness modified by the measured approbation inherent in 'agreeably'. Thus we can see that Smollett, through his various narrators, accorded landscape much greater particularity, but regarded it from a documentary perspective.

However, turning now to Scott, we see that even substantially ornamental description – a representation of the formal properties of the scene, unconnected to any greater significance, narrative, psychological or historical – is, if anything, rarer in his fiction than in Fielding's. If 'pure' description, or the closest approximation to it, occurs at all, it generally does so at the very beginning of the main narrative, after the prefatory materials, when it establishes the diegetic world, the physical context of a narrative which is yet to properly commence. The second paragraph of *The Pirate*, which possesses no narrative frame, is a description of Sumburgh Head, on the mainland of 'Zetland' (Shetland), upon which the narrative is principally set:

¹¹Tobias Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker* (London: Penguin Classics, 1985), p. 275.

On the land side, the promontory is covered with short grass, and slopes steeply down to a little isthmus, upon which the sea has encroached in creeks, which, advancing from either side of the island, gradually work their way forward, and seem as if in a short time they would form a junction and altogether insulate Sumburgh-Head, when what is now a cape will become a lonely mountain islet, severed from the mainland, of which it is at present the terminating extremity.¹²

An initial, cursory glance yields the information that this is a fairly straightforward descriptive passage offering basic information about the composition of the scene: 'shortgrass [...] slopes steeply [...] little isthmus [...] creeks [...] junction [...] mountain islet.' But it is suffused with a sense of motion. True ornamental description is of a motionless prospect, whose components maintain a constant spatial relationship to one another, like a mountain range or, indeed, the designs upon a shield. But part of what so distinguishes Scott's landscape descriptions is their sensitivity to the natural world as an animate, consequently shifting environment. Thus, in the above description, the objects represented are also participants engaged in a narratable action, one of erosion, with the isthmus as the patient and the notoriously tempestuous waters of Sumburgh Roost, where the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean meet, as the agent. The final result is that Sumburgh Head will become 'severed' from the mainland. Elements of the scene sustain an active as well as a passive relationship to one another. However the fact that the result is still in the future – the future, indeed, not just of the main narrative but of the narrating instance, the present time in which the act of narration is occurring – means that it is not an actual, fully completed narrative event. Rather it is a narrative *process*, its constant repetition determined by the nature of the sea, its resolution, thus its status as a narratable event, repeatedly and indefinitely postponed.

This is a very characteristic example of Scott's deceptively 'pure' landscape description. Another passage, which perhaps conforms more closely to the classical epic ideal, occurs in *The Monastery*. Again the physical environment of the 'first' narrative is

¹²Sir Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), I, 1-2.

being established. But this time there is no such obvious turmoil in the scene, suggesting that a mere inventory of features will suffice:

The mountains, as they would have been called in England, *Scotticé* the steep *braes*, rose abruptly over the little glen, here presenting the grey face of a rock, from which the turf had been peeled by the torrents, and there displaying patches of wood and copse, which had escaped the waste of the cattle and the sheep of the feuars, and which, feathering naturally up the beds of empty torrents, or occupying the concave recesses of the bank, gave at once beauty and variety to the landscape.¹³

The features are duly inventoried: 'mountains [...] braes [...] glen [...] turf [...] wood [...] copse' – and there is, as stated, no wild North Sea to inject motion into the scene. However, whereas before there was a narrative process not yet resolved, here there is a narrative event of a similar type which has been resolved, albeit far in the past – the past not just of the narrating instance but of the main narrative itself – with only the evidence of its occurrence on display: 'the turf *had been peeled* by the torrents.' Thus, even here, no completed event is occurring while the narrator's eye passes over the landscape. There is not even a narratable process provided by the torrents referred to since they have long since departed: 'the beds of the empty torrents.' It is fascinating to note how Scott, despite the fact that the locale he is describing is, strictly speaking, devoid of motion, still manages to import an implied narrative component by focusing upon evidence of past events and past agents, and even by referring to events which did not occur at all, in a manner reminiscent of Fielding but significantly more inventive: 'which *had* escaped the *waste* of cattle and the sheep of the feuars.' He makes the same attempt in *Rob Roy*, in a passage which would seem, immediately, to fulfil perfectly the main criterion of pure description:

To the left lay the valley, down which the Forth wandered on its easterly course, surrounding the beautiful detached hill, with all its garland of woods. On the right, amid a profusion of thickets, knolls, and crags, lay the bed of a broad mountain lake, lightly curled into tiny waves by the

¹³ Sir Walter Scott, *The Monastery*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), I, 10-11.

breath of the morning breeze, each glittering in its course under the influence of the sunbeams. High hills, rocks, and banks, waving with natural forests of birch and oak, formed the borders of this enchanting sheet of water, and, as their leaves rustled to the wind and twinkled in the sun, gave to the depth of solitude a sort of life and vivacity.¹⁴

Not only are the elements represented: 'valley [...] hill [...] wood[...] thickets, knolls and crags [...] lake [...] rocks, and banks.' – but spatial relationships within the scene are explicitly indicated: 'To the left [...] to the right.' There is also a hint of ornamentation in a phrase such as 'garlands of wood,' – a sense of the woods having a decorative function. However the hint does not develop into an explicit and sustained motif. There are similar, localised outbreaks of ornamentation elsewhere in Scott's fiction, with references to banks bearing a 'dark grey livery',¹⁵ or to 'a sunny recess, [...] carpeted with a bank of firm white sand'¹⁶ or, most arrestingly, 'Loch Tay [...] – an immense plate of polished silver, its dark heathy mountains and leafless thickets of oak, serving as an arabesque frame to a magnificent mirror.'¹⁷ These outbreaks often signal a temporary failure of Scott's descriptive powers, as the concluding chapter, "Aesthetic Achievement in Landscape Description", will demonstrate.

Yet still there is also evidence here of motion, provided by the slow and stately Forth, as it 'wandered on its easterly course.' Water this time does not carry out a narrative action, like the peeling of the turf or the gradual creation of an island. It simply flows onwards. Yet that flow, unvaried and uninterrupted, is still a kind of narratable process, albeit one with no result, nor any distinctive sequential stages. In this respect it is similar to another element of the scene, the 'waving' of the birch and oak with their rustling leaves. However, if we look more closely we can see that on the surface of the otherwise motionless lake there is a kind of narrative event taking place, one with an

¹⁴Sir Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1893), II, 180-181.

¹⁵Sir Walter Scott, *Castle Dangerous* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), p. 38.

¹⁶Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), I, 160.

¹⁷Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, II, 150-151.

agent, a patient and a result: 'the bed of a broad mountain lake, lightly curled into tiny waves, by the breath of the mountain breeze.' Breeze acts upon lake to produce waves.

Thus we can see that Scott never creates any landscape passage that is wholly devoid of animation. This is partly due, as was stated before, to the fact that his form is fiction rather than epic, in the diegesis of which Genette distinguished narration and description. But though he, of all novelists, appears to come closest in fictional prose to the epic, these examples demonstrate that even he strives to eschew 'pure', ornamental description. And with the animation that he injects, however discreet, however implicit it may be, comes narrative potential, and the necessity of narration to relate it adequately. Thus, though Genette is technically correct in stating that description can exist without narration, Scott is clearly loathe to countenance such an isolation, since, by doing so, he will be compelled to produce static descriptions of landscape that bring narrative momentum, both overt and implicit, grinding to a halt. By focusing, as he often does, upon narrative processes, the evidence of actions, actions that might have occurred but have not, he retains an implicit sense of momentum, when, strictly speaking, there is no event to relate.

III.

The three passages quoted in the preceding section are among the few involving landscape in Scott's fiction that even vaguely aspire to the status of 'pure' description. In almost all other cases the description is clearly, if you like, 'impure', tainted principally by the physical movement of characters through a natural scene, which demands narration, or by their sentiments with regard to that scene, which must also be related. We now therefore, come to the other half of Genette's statement, that narration cannot exist without description, one which Scott's landscape passages endorse far less equivocally. The following passages concern the event of travel across the Scottish countryside. As the travellers move forward, the narrative chronicles their actions, and, at the same time, the terrain is gradually disclosed to them and to the reader. This practice, the most common method of introducing landscape in Scott's fiction, may best be described as

Descriptive Narrative. A pre-eminent example occurs in *Waverley*. Edward and Evan Dhu are proceeding up the pass of Bally-Brough:

It issued in a narrow glen between two mountains, both very lofty, and covered with heath. The brook continued to be their companion, and they advanced up its mazes, crossing them now and then, on which occasions Evan Dhu uniformly offered the assistance of his attendants to carry over Edward; but our hero, who had been always a tolerable pedestrian, declined the accommodation, and obviously rose in his guide's opinion by showing that he did not fear wetting his feet. Indeed, he was anxious, so far as he could without affectation, to remove the opinion which Evan seemed to entertain of the effeminacy of the Lowlanders, and particularly of the English.

Through the gorge of this glen they found access to a black bog, of tremendous extent, full of large pit-holes, which they traversed, with great difficulty and some danger, by tracks which no one but a Highlander could have followed. The path itself, or rather the portion of more solid ground, on which the travellers half walked, half waded, was rough, broken, and in many places quaggy and unsound. Sometimes the ground was so completely unsafe that it was necessary to spring from one hillock to another, the space between being incapable of bearing human weight. This was an easy matter to the Highlanders, who wore thin-soled brogues fit for the purpose, and moved with a peculiar springing step; but Edward began to find the exercise to which he was unaccustomed, more fatiguing than he expected. The lingering twilight served to show them through this Serbonian bog, but deserted them almost totally at the bottom of a steep and very stony hill which it was the traveller's next toilsome task to ascend.¹⁸

Here, in contrast with the previous passage, the emphasis is less upon the elements of the scene than on the actions of the characters: 'advanced [...] crossing [...] carry [...] traversed [...] half walked, half waded [...] spring [...] ascend.' These actions occupy a superior, a more prominent position than the formal properties of the scene: 'glen [...] mountains [...] heath [...] brooks [...] bog.' Yet it is those properties, those unalterable facts about the landscape, that determine the actions of the travellers. It is because of the bog, not just his inexperience, that the Highland attendants are prepared to carry Edward across. It is the inconsistency of the path through the bog that compels a

¹⁸Scott, *Waverley*, I, 146-147.

varied advance, half walking, half wading. The fact that it degenerates at times to the extent that it is 'incapable of bearing human weight' results in the travellers springing across it. Moreover, in order to represent the progress of the travellers through the scene with any degree of accuracy, Scott must still establish the spatial relationships within it – the glen is between two mountains, the brook winds up the glen, through the gorge of the glen there is a bog, beyond the bog there is a steep and stony hill – relationships oriented around the position of the protagonist at different stages. First travellers must move up the glen, following the brook as it does the same. Then they must cross the bog. Then they must climb the hill. Different sections of the landscape relate to different sequential stages of the narrative.

It is interesting to note that even if the advance of the characters were to be subtracted, the landscape that is the context of their actions would not, as is Scott's wont, become purely static and, hence, ornamental. The brook would still enact a narratable process, a motion through the glen, which, as it is, the characters emulate: 'The brook continued to be their companion as they advanced.' Moreover narration in the passage is not merely the relation of action; it is also the relation of thought processes inspired by the experience of traversing the landscape. Though it is debatable whether or not thought processes occur in sequential order, it is difficult to clearly represent them in any other way. And the primary fact remains that the narration of actions and sentiments in the passage is subordinate to the elements of the locale, since, however superior it may seem, it is reliant upon them.

The idea of landscape being disclosed concurrently with the temporal succession of events – the narrative/descriptive nexus we might call it – is even more apparent in the following two passages. The first is from *The Antiquary*:

Lovel, almost mechanically followed the beggar, who led the way with a hasty and sturdy pace, through bush and bramble, avoiding the beaten path, and often turning to listen whether there were any sounds of pursuit behind them. They sometimes descended into the very bed of the torrent, sometimes kept a narrow and precarious path that the sheep (which, with the sluttish negligence towards property of that sort universal in Scotland,

were allowed to stray in the copse) had made along the very verge of its overhanging banks. From time to time Lovel had a glance of the path he had traversed the day before in company with Sir Arthur, the Antiquary, and the young ladies. Dejected, embarrassed, and occupied by a thousand inquietudes as he then was, what would he now have given to regain the sense of innocence which alone can counterbalance a thousand evils? ¹⁹

Here an immediately previous narrative event compels the protagonist to become involved in a particular section of the landscape for the purposes of concealment, and to avoid another, clearer area. Indeed the fact that characters choose different varieties of terrain under different circumstances results in different locales acquiring symbolic significance. For Lovel and, consequently, for the reader, the undergrowth comes to represent the dangerous, fugitive state in which he has become embroiled. By implicit contrast, the path represents freedom, the absence of encumbrance which he enjoyed the day, and several chapters before, in spite of the mental turmoil which had then preoccupied him. He cannot regain the path now just as he cannot regain the same narrative circumstances that prevailed before.

As Lovel and Edie Ochiltree progress, the one conducting the other, each related action, each component of the narrative event, relates to a specific section of the landscape: 'They *sometimes* descended into the very bed of the torrent, *sometimes* kept a straight and narrow path [...] *From time to time* Lovel had a glimpse of the path.' Interestingly though, the lexical choice of 'sometimes' and 'from time to time' suggest an iterative component: repeated events, each kind – descending, keeping to the straight and narrow, glimpsing the other path – related to a single feature, or substantially similar features, in the landscape. What is in fact occurring is a procedure which Genette would define as the pseudo-iterative: narrating once, in each case, what happened *n* times. (He identifies four types of narration: narrating once what happened *n* times; narrating once what happened once; narrating *n* times what happened *n* times; narrating *n* times what happened once.) In this instance we may, in fact, develop the definition one stage further

¹⁹Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. by David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p. 164.

with regard to landscape and say that Scott, or rather, in the absence of a distinct narrative persona, the implied Author of *Waverley*, narrates once what happens n times in one type of location.

Another landscape passage which features a close succession of events, related to a distinct succession of geographical features, occurs in *The Fair Maid of Perth*:

We need not stop to describe the toil and terrors of such a journey, where the path was to be traced among wastes and mountains, now ascending precipitous ravines, now plunging into inextricable bogs, and often intersected with large brooks, and even rivers. But all these perils Simon Glover had before encountered in quest of honest gain; and it was not to be supposed that he shunned or feared them where liberty, and life itself, were at stake.²⁰

The first descriptive phrase 'among wastes and mountains' establishes the broad physical context of the immediately subsequent narrative. Then the narrator, extradiegetic (as Genette would have it, in a term that will be explained later) and therefore omniscient, focuses upon the specific events of the narrative and, in doing so, focuses on the specific geographical features which, again, determine the type of action occurring in each event – 'now ascending the precipitous ravines, now plunging into intractable bogs, and often intersected by large brooks and even rivers.' – with the path enacting the Glover's progress in advance. Here again we see the same type of narrative procedure – narrating once what happened n times in one type of location – despite the different lexical choice here and regardless of the lexical variation within one sentence: 'now...now...often.' Though the word 'now' suggests a single event, the plurals 'ravines' and 'bogs' indicate that it stands for single events repeated, as does, more clearly, 'often'.

But the most interesting aspect of the passage is the compression, which Scott acknowledges as occurring, when he narrates once what happened n times in n different, but essentially similar spots: 'we need not stop to describe the toil and terrors of such a journey.' This statement forms the link between the subject we have been discussing –

²⁰Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, II, 148-149.

Narration and Description – and another of Genette's categories, to which it relates: Narrative Duration.

IV.

By Narrative Duration, Genette means the tempo at which the narrative progresses, that tempo being affected by such devices as elision, expansion and summary of events. He identifies four basic types of narrative movement. The two most extreme, at either end of the scale, are Ellipsis, when an event is omitted altogether, and Pause, when the narrative comes to a halt for contemplation by a character or by the narrator, most often of a physical object or objects. Between these two extremes lies Scene, occupying a position far closer to pause than ellipsis, most often rendered in dialogue, when the tempo of the narrative most often matches the tempo of a speech or conversation as it would occur in real life – 'almost exactly' because real speech does not require speech tags which fractionally retard the progress of the representation. (This is very similar in operation to mimesis.) The other intermediate tempo is Summary, closer to ellipsis than pause, not eliminating an event altogether but compressing it. Moreover, since summary is free to compress to any greater or lesser extent, it can initiate any narrative tempo.

It is not difficult, with regard to these definitions, to recognise that the ideal of pure description, as elusive as it in fact proved to be in Scott's fiction, can be broadly associated with narrative pause, since if one solely describes, the narrative must be suspended for the duration, and if one suspends the narrative, the gap in the text must be filled somehow. Similarly, we can see that instances of descriptive narrative may also be regarded as examples of summary in their variable compression of the individual events forming a journey through the landscape.

There is, however, I believe a subtle difference between 'pure' ornamental description and narrative pause. Being ornamental, pure description tends to be unmotivated, extraneous – the narrative is gilded with it. But narrative pause, being motivated, most often, by a character's physical pause, will produce description that retains distinct traces of the character's personality, of his attitude to the scene described

– what Marcia Allentuck referred to, in a different context, as the ‘anthropocentric values’ inherent in Scott’s landscape passages. It could therefore be considered as constituting a digressive contribution to the narrative’s forward momentum. For instance, in *The Pirate*, the elder Mertoun, father of Mordaunt, walks from his dwelling of Jarlshof to the Kirk of St. Ringan:

As he entered the little bay, on the shore, and almost on the beach of which the ruins are situated, he could not help pausing for an instant, and becoming sensible that the scene, as calculated to operate on human feelings, had been selected with much judgement as the site of a religious house. In front lay the sea, into which two headlands, which formed the extremities of the bay, projected their gigantic causeways of dark and sable rocks, on the ledges of which the gulls, scouries and, other sea fowl appeared like flakes of snow; while, upon the lower ranges of the cliff, stood whole lines of cormorants, drawn up alongside of each other, like soldiers in their battle array, and other living thing was there none to see. The sea, although not in a tempestuous state, was disturbed enough to rush on these capes with a sound like distant thunder, and the billows, which rose in sheets of foam half way up these sable rocks, formed a contrast of colouring equally striking and awful.²¹

The brief cessation of narrative progress reflected in a cessation of the character’s physical progress, for the purposes of contemplation, is as explicit here as it is anywhere in Scott: ‘he could not help *pausing* for an instant.’ It is not surprising, since the character enables the description within the diegesis, that his presence should be felt in it, particularly at the outset – that it should be partially focalised through him psychologically and oriented to him physically. Thus the sea is described as lying ‘in front.’ This may seem like a simple statement of spatial relationships within the scene. But where ‘in front’ actually lies is determined by the position of Mertoun senior. But, more than this, the description is introduced via his sentiments concerning the suitability of the place as the site of a kirk. The representation of the features that comprise it: ‘sea [...] headlands [...] causeways [...] rocks [...] ledges [...] cliff,’ – is therefore subordinate to those sentiments, functioning as an illustration of them. Moreover the basis of this

²¹Scott, *The Pirate*, II, 77.

description is indeed truly 'anthropocentric' in that, although illustrative of one man's thoughts, those thoughts mainly concern the reaction of humankind as a whole to such locales and the effect which they can have upon the human psyche: 'calculated to operate on human feeling.' The remainder of the passage, therefore, as we have stated, introduces the formal properties which must create such a deep and lasting impression upon the human imagination. The headlands on either side, enclosing the scene, we are told 'projected their gigantic causeways of dark and sable rocks.' In this brief phrase are three repositories of potential awe. There is the implied motion accorded an inanimate object with the verb 'projected' conjuring up a sense of the landscape thrusting into the sea. As such it connotes power and participates in the task, usually reserved for water, of creating motion. Secondly, and more simply, there is the 'gigantic' size of the causeway, sure to overwhelm a spectator. Thirdly there is the oppressive 'dark and sable rock' likely to seem foreboding to him.

Although, as has been stated, there is a sense of implied outward thrusting by the rock, it is answered by a corresponding inward motion on behalf of the sea. Though Scott, as the Author of *Waverley*, concedes that it was 'not in a tempestuous state', this fact does not deter him from relating, in some detail, its action. It is also interesting to note that, despite the appearance of sequential order, unavoidable in continuous prose, Scott is careful to emphasise lexically the simultaneity of all the phenomena which he represents occurring in different areas of the physical scene and therefore to maintain its status as description (if not pure description) rather than narration: 'scouries and other sea fowl appeared like flakes of snow; *while*, upon the lower ranges of the cliff, stood whole lines of cormorants.'

From narrative pause we now move on to summary, another form of narrative tempo, and one that may be related to the previously examined category of descriptive narrative. Summary, according to Genette, 'remained, up to the end of the nineteenth century, the most usual transition between two scenes, the 'background' against which scenes stand out, and thus the connective tissue par excellence of novelistic narration,

whose fundamental rhythm is defined by the alternation of summary and scene.²² This statement is borne out by the narrative procedure of Scott's fiction. Just as the landscape most often lies in the physical background, so summary exists in the textual background. Very often it will be used by Scott, just as Genette states, to join together two occurrences of scene. For instance, in *The Antiquary*, Sir Arthur Wardour and his daughter are walking back along the shore from Monkbarns to Knockwinnock:

Appalled by this sudden change of weather, Miss Wardour drew close to her father, and held his arm fast. "I wish," at length she said, but almost in a whisper, as if ashamed to express her increasing apprehension, "I wish we had kept the road we intended, or waited at Monkbarns for the carriage."

Sir Arthur looked round, but did not see, or would not acknowledge, any signs of an immediate storm. They would reach Knockwinnock, he said, long before the tempest began. But the speed with which he walked, and with which Isabella could hardly keep pace, indicated a feeling that some exertion was necessary to accomplish his consolatory prediction.

They were now near the centre of a deep but narrow bay, or recess, formed by two projecting capes of high and inaccessible rock, which shot out into the sea like the horns of a crescent; and neither durst communicate the apprehension that both began to entertain, that, from the unusually rapid advance of the tide, they might be deprived of the power of proceeding by doubling the promontory which lay before them, or of retreating by the road which brought them hither.

As they thus pressed forward, longing doubtless to exchange the easy curving line which the sinuosities of the bay compelled them to adopt, for a straighter and more expeditious path, though less conformable to the line of beauty, Sir Arthur observed a human figure on the beach advancing to meet them. "Thank God," he exclaimed, "we shall get round Halket Head! that fellow must have passed it"; thus giving vent to the feeling of hope, though he had suppressed that of apprehension.²³

The passage begins in scene, the representation of direct speech, albeit with an interpolated speech tag of such elaboration that the act of recording the utterance takes significantly longer to read than the utterance would have taken to hear. Then the summary begins. In the first paragraph there is further reported speech, but not direct this

²²Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 97.

²³Scott, *The Antiquary*, pp. 55-56.

time. The narrative is no longer tied down to observing the real tempo of the speech event. But the reported speech would appear to function as a bridge between the deliberate pace of scene and the variable tempo of summary which develops. There is an intimation that the shift into summary is motivated by the exigencies of the situation, specifically the burgeoning storm: Sir Arthur and his daughter must reach home before it is really unleashed. They pick up speed and the narrative consequently picks up speed as well – ‘But the speed with which he walked [...] indicated a feeling that some exertion was necessary to accomplish this consolatory prediction’ – just as, at the opposite extreme, a pause on behalf of Mertoun senior resulted in a cessation of the narrative. But the fact remains that this relationship between acceleration of character and acceleration of narrative tempo can be traced back to a prior circumstance in the physical environment of the diegesis – the pace of the elements which inspires the characters’ exertions in the first place: ‘the unusually rapid advance of the tide.’ Given this fact it is interesting to notice that the outstretched arms of rock which form the bay, as in *The Pirate*, do not in this case only project into the sea, but ‘shot out’, in accordance with the greater sense of haste that prevails here.

The third paragraph, however discreetly, signals the change of gear, as it were, from summary back into scene. Its first word, ‘as’, conveys the sense of events related at a slower pace, closer to that at which they would be likely to occur in the story. (Story is used here in the sense of the Russian Formalist distinction between Story, the order in which the events would actually have occurred, and Plot, the order in which the narrator chooses to narrate them.) This contrasts with the urgency inherent in the opening phrase of the previous paragraph: ‘They were *now* near the centre.’ Moreover there is, curiously, an implicit retardation of the pair’s progress in spite of their exertions: ‘longing, doubtless, to exchange the easy curving line which the sinuosities of the bay compelled them to adopt for a straighter and more expeditious path.’ Suddenly, though they are walking faster almost than Isabella can manage, they are not travelling forward as swiftly as they might be. It is almost as if the tempo of the narrative is being deliberately slackened to allow it to slide, without any convulsions back into the unvaried forward

march of scene. The same was, as we noted, true of the second paragraph, which entered the phase of summary by accelerating discreetly with the retention of reported dialogue. It is the flexible nature of summary that enables this to occur.

Summary, in relation to landscape, is most often used by Scott, not, as Genette sees it, to connect two passages of scene, but to begin a new chapter, for instance, Chapter 36 of *Rob Roy*. Admittedly the mode with which Chapter 35 closes is scene, with the McGregor ordering the bagpipes to strike up. Nevertheless, that Chapter 36 does begin with summary is acknowledged by the narrator, Francis Osbaldistone:

Our route lay through a dreary, yet romantic country, which the distress of my own mind prevented me from remarking particularly, and which, therefore, I will not attempt to describe. The lofty peak of Ben Lomond, here the predominant monarch of the mountains, lay on our right hand, and served as a striking land mark. I was not awakened from my apathy until, after a long and toilsome walk, we emerged through a pass in the hills, and Loch Lomond opened before us. I will spare you the attempt to describe what you would hardly comprehend without going to see it. But certainly this noble lake, boasting innumerable beautiful islands, of every varying form and outline which fancy can frame, – its northern extremity narrowing until it is lost among dusky and retreating mountains, while, gradually widening as it extends to the southward, it spreads its base around the indentures and promontories of a fair and fertile land, – affords one of the most surprising, beautiful, and sublime spectacles in nature. The eastern side, peculiarly rough and rugged, was at this time the chief seat of MacGregor and his clan, to curb whom a small garrison had been stationed in a central position betwixt Loch Lomond, and another lake. The extreme strength of the country, however, with the numerous passes, marshes, caverns, and other places of concealment or defence, made the establishment of this little fort seem rather an acknowledgement of the danger than an effectual means of securing against it.²⁴

The very first sentence broadly signals the type of narrative procedure that will be pursued here. Though the narrator does in fact describe a great deal, he is essentially indicating that there will be no narrative pauses for pure description: the features of the landscape will be remarked upon in passing, both as the narrator passes them and, therefore, as the narrative of his journey progresses. To this end he represents, in the

²⁴Scott, *Rob Roy*, II, 285-286.

broadest possible terms, what will be the terrain of his journey and, therefore, of the stage of the diegesis: 'Our route lay through a dreary yet romantic country.' This however is followed by a kind of descriptive lacuna, ending with the appearance, through an anonymous 'pass in the hills' of the next distinctive landmark, Loch Lomond. This is therefore a psychologically determined elision reflecting the narrator's gloomy preoccupation, which only such notable features may penetrate. Such lacunae function to increase, suddenly and markedly, the tempo of the narrative in such a way that the time the events would be expected to take are compressed in the process of relation. I say 'a kind of lacuna', however, because the particular phase of the journey is not entirely omitted – it is not really ellipsis, rather it is the extreme compression possible in summary.

After the appearance of Loch Lomond, there is a further disclaimer of intention on the narrator's behalf to indulge in description: 'I will spare you' (Tresham, the narratee, the person addressed by the narrator within the diegetic world) 'the attempt to describe what you would hardly comprehend without going to see it.' However, despite this declaration, he makes a fairly good attempt at doing so. His description begins with what I have referred to elsewhere as non-descriptive adjectives: 'But certainly this *noble* lake, boasting innumerable *beautiful* islands, of every varying form and outline which fancy can frame.' The present tense of the verb indicates what is actually occurring, the reason for such non-descriptive description. In *The Figures of Literary Discourse*, Genette identifies, among others, the category of Narrative and Discourse. He states, referring to the work in this area of Emile Benveniste, that, 'certain grammatical forms, like the pronoun 'I' (and its implicit referent 'you'), the pronominal (certain demonstratives), or adverbial indicators (like 'here', 'now', 'yesterday', 'today', 'tomorrow', etc.) [...] are confined to discourse, whereas narrative in its strict form is marked by the exclusive use of the third person and such forms as the aorist (past definite) and the pluperfect [...] these differences amount clearly to an opposition between the objectivity of narrative and

the subjectivity of discourse.’²⁵ The first person pronoun and its second person referent occur throughout *Rob Roy* as a natural consequence of the narrator’s status. A first person narrator can more freely indulge in discursive meditations upon the appearance and significance of a landscape than an omniscient, ostensibly impartial one. Moreover, though Genette connects narrative and discourse, it has already been demonstrated by him that narrative cannot exist without description, and, in this investigation, that Scott’s description scarcely ever occurs without a narrative component. Thus Francis Osbaldistone’s non-descriptive adjectives here amount to a personal value judgement upon the Loch for Tresham’s benefit, characteristic of the discursive mode.

This is succeeded by a return to relatively ‘pure’ description, with its precise identification of spatial relationships, not this time oriented specifically to the characters, but geographically: ‘its northern extremity [...] to the southward [...] The eastern side.’ However the discursive present tense persists, as do the narrator’s judgements occurring in the moment of the narrating instance: ‘affords one of the most surprising, beautiful and sublime spectacles in nature.’ In the succeeding sentence there is the return to the narrative past tense, signalled explicitly by the phrase ‘at this time’. Nevertheless, the predominantly descriptive character of the passage persists, with the rapid inventory of ‘passes, marshes, caverns,’ further contradicting Francis Osbaldistone’s avowed intention not to describe, and retarding the pace of the narrative. Tracing the tempo of the narrative, therefore, we can see that it is at first greatly accelerated, the result of descriptive lacuna, then brought almost to a standstill with the representation of formal properties and the narrator’s sentiments towards them.

V.

There is a further role played by the Scottish landscape in the narrative of the Waverley novels which has not been examined, I believe, by any narrative theorist like Genette or indeed by any writer on Scott. It is a role which bears similarities with the concept,

²⁵Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, p. 138.

described in the chapter on History, of landscape being invoked to demonstrate how recorded, unalterable historical events occurred as they did. Here it functions as an agent of narrative plausibility. The events of the narrative are not carved in stone. They are susceptible to manipulation by the author. Thus the landscape does not unavoidably govern the outcome of an encounter between two forces. Rather it can, when it is anonymous, be fashioned in a particular way to render plausible the outcome and, hence, the elected plot development. This is manifest in Chapter 30 of *Rob Roy* when Government troops are ambushed by the followers of the MacGregor. The same forebodings about the imminence of such an episode, inspired by the nature of the landscape, that were expressed by the veteran cavalry officer Major Allan before the Covenanters' attack upon Claverhouse at Drumclog, are expressed here by the narrator himself:

The road, as we advanced, seemed to afford every facility for such an unpleasant interruption. At first it winded apart from the lake through marshy meadow ground overgrown with copse wood, now traversing dark and close thickets which would have admitted an ambuscade to be sheltered within a few yards of our line of march, and frequently crossing rough mountain torrents, some of which took the soldiers up to the knees, and ran with such violence that their force could only be stemmed by the strength of two or three men holding fast by each other's arms. It certainly appeared to me, though altogether unacquainted with military affairs, that a sort of half-savage warriors, as I heard the Highlanders asserted to be, might, in such passes as these, attack a party of regular forces with great advantage.²⁶

The 'facility' offered the Highlanders by this locale is the same facility which Scott as author offers himself in creating such a landscape. That they might more easily attack and defeat the Government forces enables Scott more plausibly to deliver Francis Osbaldistone into the hands of the MacGregor, just as Henry Morton was precipitated into those of the Covenanters.

²⁶Scott, *Rob Roy*, II, 183-184.

Its provident function aside, this passage is also, again, a perfect example of narrative descriptive summary. Interpolated adverbials establish the tempo of the narrative – ‘At first [...] now [...] frequently.’ – with a different section and type of landscape connected at each stage of the narrative episode: ‘At first...marshy meadow ground...now...darkling and close thickets [...] frequently [...] rough mountain torrents.’ It is interesting also to note that here, as is often the case on journeys across Scott’s fictive landscapes, the characters’ route follows a path, in this case a road. There is nothing terribly surprising about this, but the road also enacts in advance, the movement pursued by the travellers: ‘winded [...] traversing [...] crossing.’ Moreover, while these movements are related, and the terrain disclosed piece by piece, the threat of ambush, and, hence, the narrative potential, lurks, literally, only a short distance away, concealed by the terrain itself: ‘dark and close thickets, which would have admitted an ambuscade to be sheltered within a few yards of our line of march.’ This threat is also implicitly adumbrated in the lexical choice that accompanies the crossing of the mountain torrents: ‘violence [...] force [...] strength [...] holding fast.’ The last phrase is particularly subtle in its operation, conveying both the strength of the soldiers’ grip upon one another, hence their security, and the force exerted upon them by the swiftly flowing water. All these implicit threats are made explicit in the final line, which, as it were, clears the way, as obviously as possible for a significant narrative event, thus preventing it from seeming not only implausible but arbitrary. The potential threat, inherent in the nature of the landscape, is emphasised again only two pages later, by which point the sequel to the narrator’s fears is immediate:

Our commander appeared to take some alarm at the nature of the pass in which he was engaged, which displayed itself in repeated orders to his soldiers to be on the alert, and in many threats of instant death to Dougal if he should be found to have led them into danger. Dougal received these threats with an air of stupid impenetrability which might arise either from conscious innocence or from dogged resolution.

“If shentlemans were seeking ta Red Gregarach,” he said, “to be sure they couldna expect to find her without some wee danger.”

Just as the Highlander uttered these words, a halt was made by the corporal commanding the advance, who sent back one of the file who

formed it, to tell the captain that the path in front was occupied by Highlanders, stationed on a commanding point of particular difficulty. Almost at the same instant a soldier from the rear came to say that they heard the sound of a bagpipe in the woods through which we had just passed. Captain Thornton, a man of conduct as well as courage, instantly resolved to force the pass in front, without waiting till he was assailed from the rear; [...] He therefore ordered the rear-guard to join the centre, and both to close up to the advance, doubling his files, so as to occupy with his column the whole practicable part of the road, and to present such a front as its breadth admitted.²⁷

The first sentence is as clear as possible an identification of the landscape with the relation of actions, hence with narrative: 'alarm at the nature of the pass [...] displayed itself in repeated orders.' Furthermore the word 'engaged' here hints at subsequent events which the locale will inspire: engagement in the path leads ineluctably to military engagement. The stock metaphorical phrase 'led us into danger' thus acquires added significance, emphasising the landscape – narrative nexus, with danger, quite literally, being a place that one can indeed enter. Thus 'led us into danger' becomes a defused metaphor – one divested of its function by the physical reality of the landscape.

The passage is also interesting in terms of narrative description with its division of summary by a brief occurrence of scene, the transition from the latter back to the flexibility of the former being eased, 'oiled' we might say, by the initial construction 'Just as,' which serves to acknowledge, retrospectively, the approximate concurrence which exists between plot and story in scene. Once the summary is again underway, Scott attempts to doubly justify the narrative event through the use of landscape: 'the path in front was occupied by Highlanders, stationed on a commanding point of particular difficulty.' The word 'commanding' here functions in its adjectival form to represent the nature of the terrain in martial terms: just before it was used as a present participle to relate the actions of the corporal: 'commanding the advance.' Thus actions and the place in which they occur are again bound together lexically. Similarly, when Captain Thornton resolves upon a course of action it is the location, not the enemy forces, in

²⁷Scott, *Rob Roy*, II, 186-187.

keeping with martial terminology, that is said to form the obstacle, even the hazard: 'Captain Thornton, [...] instantly resolved to *force the path* in front.'

All these lexical phenomena serve to emphasise the way in which the characters' literal, but also the author's metaphorical latitude is restricted by the kind of terrain into which the latter places the former, a fact that becomes explicit in the final sentence: 'He therefore ordered the rear-guard to join the centre, [...] so as to occupy the whole practicable part of the road, and to present such a front as its breadth admitted.' By emphasising so much this restriction, Scott lends his characters' actions a quality not only of plausibility, but inevitability. At such moments, in such circumscribed locales, his characters seem almost like laboratory mice, negotiating a specially constructed maze, unable to go back, compelled, as is the nature of narrative, to go forward, embarking unavoidably upon new directions at certain preordained points in order, eventually, to arrive at a preordained conclusion

VI.

However, having said this, the narrative which landscape is often invoked to justify, is sometimes not wholly revealed to the reader. Scott often favoured characters with mysterious pasts and undisclosed relations to other characters, as in *The Antiquary*, and *Redgauntlet* and, most obviously, in *Guy Mannering*. In the final case the landscape even assumes the role of providing clues about an episode to which neither the reader nor the remaining characters have been privy – the abduction of the laird of Ellangowan's son, Harry Bertram, who will later re-emerge under the guise of Vanbeest Brown:

The magistrate then proceeded to the place where the corpse was first discovered, and made those who had found it give, upon the spot, a particular and detailed account of the manner in which it was lying. A large fragment of the rock appeared to have accompanied, or followed the fall of the victim from the cliff above [...] They then ascended the cliff and surveyed the place from whence the stony fragment had fallen. It seemed plain, from the appearance of the bed, that the mere weight of one man standing upon the projecting part of the fragment, supposing it in its original situation, could not have destroyed its balance and precipitated it, with himself, from the cliff. At the same time, it appeared to have lain so

loose that the use of a lever, or the combined strength of three or four men, might easily have hurled it from its position. The short turf about the brink of the precipice was much trampled, as if stamped by the heels of men in a mortal struggle or in the act of some violent exertion. Traces of the same kind, less visibly marked, guided the sagacious investigator to the verge of the copsewood, which, in that place, crept high up the bank towards the top of the precipice.

With patience and perseverance, they traced these marks into the thickest part of the copse, — a route which no person would have voluntarily adopted, unless for the purpose of concealment. Here they found plain vestiges of violence and struggling, from space to space. Small boughs were torn down, as if grasped by some resisting wretch who was dragged forcibly along; the ground, where in the least degree soft or marshy, showed the print of many feet; there were vestiges also, which might be those of human blood. At any rate, it was certain that several persons must have forced their passage among the oaks, hazels, and underwood, with which they were mingled; and in some places appeared traces, as if a sack full of grain, a dead body, or something of that heavy and solid description, had been dragged along the ground. In one part of the thicket there was a small swamp, the clay of which was whitish, being probably mixed with marl. The back of Kennedy's coat appeared besmeared with stains of the same colour.²⁸

The first thing to notice about the passage is the lexical choice and the continual recourse to the conditional tense which convey the prevailing mood of uncertainty and supposition: 'seemed [...] appeared [...] supposing [...] could [...] might [...] as if [...] would [...] probably [...] or.' As narrator, and given the absence of any prefatory material, there is no reason to assume that he is not the narrator, the Author of *Waverley*, known after 1827 to be Scott, does not wish to admit possession of narrative information that the investigators do not share. But it is important for narrative plausibility that there should be, in retrospect, some justification for the subsequent revelation of Vanbeest Brown/Harry Bertram's identity, particularly for his abduction, which precipitates almost all further plot developments, however outlandish his intervening career may seem. A systematic investigation is thus pursued, with the Magistrate pacing out the scene of the undisclosed events, while the narrator relates only his actions and suppositions and

²⁸Scott, *Guy Mannering*, I, 91.

scrupulously eschews any privileged intimation of what really occurred or any suggestion of whether or not the investigator is correct in those suppositions.

Thus the reader and the characters, united here in ignorance, occupying the same position with regard to the narrative, are left only with the facts in the landscape. It should be added that this passage is yet another excellent example of narrative descriptive summary, underlining the prevalence of the device in Scott's fiction, with the gradual stages of the investigation leading the party on through different areas of the coastal terrain. This implicit connection between narrative tempo and physical space that will persist throughout the passage is touched upon in the first line by the phrase 'on the spot'. It could, and probably does, mean in the place where Frank Kennedy's body was found. But it could also be interpreted more colloquially as meaning straightaway, promptly. This one phrase can thus conceivably refer to time and place, the two materials of which narrative and landscape, respectively, are made. Such an observation does not really lead us anywhere in particular, but it does establish the theme of constructing from the physical evidence in the terrain, all of which exists concurrently, a sequence of actions which together form a narrative event: 'Here they found plain vestiges of violence, *from space to space*.' And while the evidence provided by the landscape is far from conclusive and admits of alternative interpretations (indicated by the frequent occurrence of the coordinating conjunction 'or'), it is subtly characterised, on occasion, as almost attempting to aid the Magistrate itself, as a passive participant in the search, however contradictory such a phrase may seem: 'Traces of the same kind [...] *guided* the sagacious investigator to the verge of the wood-copse.' One might argue that this characterisation is so subtle as to be entirely incidental, but it does seem to tie in with other examples, identified elsewhere, of Scott attempting to lend animation to ostensibly motionless matter, most often to create a sense of oppression, as in the chapter on the supernatural.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there is evidence because the violence wrought upon the victim resulted in concomitant violence sustained by the landscape: 'Small boughs were torn down, as if grasped by some resisting wretch.' And the mood of supposition does briefly give away towards the end of the passage to a distinctly more

definite one – ‘At any rate, it was certain that several persons must have forced their passage among the oaks.’ – in acknowledgement of the fact that though the landscape cannot tell *exactly* what has happened, it can at least, amid all the dubiety, tell both the magistrate and the reader that *something* has happened, not only bearing the traces of a narrative event, but leaving corresponding traces on the victim, as the final line indicates: ‘Frank Kennedy’s coat appeared besmeared with stains of the same colour.’

VII.

There is one final aspect, so far unconsidered, of the connection that exists in the Scottish historical novels between landscape and narrative – one which recalls the exchange quoted at the very beginning between Chrystal Croftangry and Mrs. Bethune Baliol: use of the landscape as a metaphor for narrative structure and tempo.

It is demonstrated most clearly in the first chapter of ‘Narrative’ in *Redgauntlet*:

The advantage of laying before the reader, in the words of the actors themselves, the adventures which we must otherwise have narrated in our own, has given great popularity to the publication of epistolary correspondence, as practised by various great authors, and by ourselves in the preceding chapters. Nevertheless, [...] it must often happen that various prolixities and redundancies occur in the course of an interchange of letters, which must hang as a dead weight on the progress of the narrative. To avoid this dilemma, some biographers have used the letters of the personages concerned, or liberal extracts from them, to describe particular incidents, or express the sentiments which they entertained; while they connect them occasionally with such portions of narrative as may serve to carry on the thread of the story.

It is thus that the adventurous travellers who explore the summit of Mont Blanc now move on through the crumbling snow-drift so slowly that their progress is almost imperceptible, and anon abridge their journey by springing over the intervening chasms which cross their path, with the assistance of their pilgrim-staves [...] With this explanation, we shall proceed to narrate some circumstances which Alan Fairford did not, and could not, write to his correspondent.²⁹

²⁹Sir Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), I, 211-212.

What the narrator is referring to here is narrative duration and the ideal of sustaining a brisk tempo, retarded in this case by the interpolation of epistolary correspondence, between Alan Fairford and Darsie Latimer: 'it must often happen that various prolixities and redundancies occur in the progress of the narrative.' He also, in contrasting epistolary information with authorial narrative, once again draws, to a certain extent, the traditional distinction between description and narration. Having said this, the distinction is not quite *that* clear: letters do not only express the sentiments which correspondents entertain, they function also to 'describe particular incidents', though it is interesting that they 'describe' rather than narrate, and that the 'incidents' do not contribute to the 'thread of the story', only 'connecting' with the 'portions of the narrative' that actually perform this role. Scott therefore sees epistolary extracts as comparable, in function at least, to 'pure' description, being ornamental and serving no fundamental narrative purpose.

These meditations upon narrative duration are then concretised in terms of landscape. But it is not just a metaphorical landscape; it is a real one, the French Alps. The device is one of similitude. The journey of the intrepid travellers across the Alpine landscape is a compact and precise correlative of the reader's movement through a particular kind of text: a mixed narrative of interpolated epistolary material. The 'crumbling snow drifts' thus stand for the representation of objects and characters, or the analysis of emotional and mental states which retards the narrator's progress, and the traveller's act of 'springing over the intervening caverns' enacting the forward motion of pure narrative which draws the reader on until the next snow drift. It is a convulsive, stop/start vision of narrative discourse which admits of almost no variation and does little justice to the sensitivity he displays elsewhere in his work to the issue of narrative duration. For instance, in the opening paragraph of Chapter 12 of *The Antiquary*:

With our readers' permission we will outstep the slow though sturdy pace of the Antiquary, whose halts, as he turned round to his companion at every moment to point out something remarkable in the landscape, or to

enforce some favourite topic more emphatically than the exercise of walking permitted, delayed their progress considerably.³⁰

Here is a double acknowledgement of the phenomenon which serves to diminish the progress of the narrative. Moving across the landscape, the Antiquary represents objects (description) to his fellow characters in speech (scene). Knowing that description in recorded speech will cause any narrative momentum to be almost entirely dissipated, the author chooses to elide the Antiquary's words in order to hasten the narrative, leaping forward, as a result, across the fictive terrain to the traveller's destination, the home of Sir Arthur Wardour. However, it should at the same time be noted, that while the landscape here occasions a potential retardation of narrative progress, which the author succeeds in circumventing, there would, without the landscape, be no physical environment in which the narrative could occur: Narration cannot exist without Description.

Landscape and Narrative are not as immediately obvious a conjunction as Landscape and the Supernatural, or Landscape and History. There are relatively few landscape passages in Scott that carry any overt narrative significance. The few that do are quoted in the first and penultimate sections of this work. However, with the help of some appropriate theoretical terminology, it is possible to examine seemingly innocuous passages and tease out various kinds and degrees of significance: the rarity of 'pure' description, despite what one might expect, the pervasiveness, on the other hand, of descriptive narrative, the relation of these qualities to narrative duration, in particular pause and summary and the use of landscape in adumbrating and explaining fundamental narrative developments.

³⁰Scott, *The Antiquary*, p. 90.

CONCLUSION

AESTHETIC ACHIEVEMENT IN LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

I.

Thus far, there has been offered a broad survey of the manifold aspects of landscape in the Scottish historical novels and of the connections forged between it and other topics. Such an approach tends, necessarily, to eschew any rigorous critical evaluation of the landscape passages. Identifying the interpenetration featured in these passages between landscape and History, the Supernatural, Biography, Art, Narrative and Characterisation tends to imply that they are successful without exception, that they always aspire to and achieve a status beyond that of mere 'ornamental' description. Yet not all landscape passages in Scott are peerlessly significant; not all illuminate the topics listed above, or indeed any particular topic. There are those few that are relegated to being irremediably flat – simple inventories of a scene's components. There are others in which a connection is attempted but fails, leaving a sense of disjunction between the description and the subject which it probably sought to illuminate.

This point having been conceded, most Scott scholars might assume that the first place to search for such failures, of whatever extent, in landscape description is the 'apoplectic novels': the later works, written at speed for money after the financial crash of 1826. During the period of their composition, Scott suffered, at intervals, a series of strokes, thought to have impaired his creative faculties. These works are generally agreed to comprise *Woodstock* (1826), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829) and, in particular, *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous* (both 1831). Of these, only the second and the fifth are founded upon a Scottish theme.

Scott himself was troubled by the spectre of the novels being judged substandard. On 12th February 1826 he recorded these fears in his Journal, actually invoking landscape imagery to describe the process of composition:

Having ended the second volume of *Woodstock* last night, I have to begin the third this morning. Now I have not the slightest idea how the story is to be wound up to a catastrophe. I am just in the same

case as I used to be when I lost myself in former days in some country to which I was a stranger. I always pushed for the pleasantest road, and either found or made it the nearest. It is the same in writing, I never could lay down a plan – [...] This may be called in Spanish the *Dar donde diere* mode of composition, in English *hab nab at a venture*: it is a perilous style I grant, but I cannot help it. When I chain my mind to the ideas that are purely imaginative – for argument is a different thing – it seems to me that the sun leaves the landscape, that I think away the whole vivacity and spirit of my original conception, and that the results are cold, lame and spiritless.

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The passage recalls the topographical metaphors invoked by Mrs. Bethune Baliol and Crystal Croftangry in *The Fair Maid of Perth*. There is a sense of weary obligation in the first sentence – ‘I have to begin the third this morning’ – which recalls the financial necessity under which Scott laboured. The resultant confinement, described in the opening chapter, perhaps explains the way in which he equates writing with roaming free across an unfamiliar terrain. Yet it is strange that he should detect similarities between such circumstances and a narrative which, though historical, is entirely his creation. It is only the future of the narrative that is unfamiliar, and even then the future must evolve out of the present and past that the author has already set out. Nevertheless the remainder of the narrative may be pursued by various routes and Scott will, by his own admission, choose the nearest and most immediately attractive one, just as he would as a tourist. What he bemoans is his inability to plan his narratives. As a result he feels during the process of composition, and this is the true import of the passage, like a traveller toiling forward without a map.

Scott sees conscious planning as imposing a figurative confinement upon him to match the literal one he is experiencing. The spontaneous mode of composition was possibly therapeutic for him, even more so after 1826, providing some partial sense of liberation. Banished from the sunlit landscape to a large

¹*The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by W.E.K. Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p.117.

extent, he wishes his narratives to nonetheless be enlivened, indeed illuminated by the 'vivacity and spirit' which he could no longer so freely experience. This, aside from illness, possibly explains the increasingly erratic construction of his later fictions: he was in flight, mentally and emotionally, from all that was 'cold, lame and spiritless.'

Yet the true 'apoplectic' novels might, in fact, be said to include *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous* alone, since they were completed after 1830, by which time their author had already suffered the cumulative effect of three strokes, one in January 1826, one in February 1830, another in November of the same year, with two more to come in April 1831 and June 1832. (Although he had already been ill, with gallstones, in 1817 during the composition of *Rob Roy*, and in 1819 when he was completing *The Bride of Lammermoor*.) Scott's fears about his last two novels have been unequivocally, at times it would appear even reflexively, endorsed by subsequent critics. The observation of James Reed is typical. He dismisses *Castle Dangerous* utterly, not even according it the dignity of being named: 'The second volume of *Chronicles of the Canongate* which appeared in 1828 consists of a single Scottish fourteenth century tale, *The Fair Maid of Perth*. It is Scott's last novel of any consequence, an uneven work which makes no use of environment in depth.'² Scott himself confessed to William Gell in Italy his fears about *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*: 'I do not remember exactly on what day during his residence at Naples he came one morning rather early to my house to tell me he was sure I would be pleased at some good luck which had befallen him and of which he had just received notice. This was, he said, an account from his friends in England, stating that all his debts were paid, and that his last works, *Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*, had gone on to a second edition. I was fearful, said he, that these works would have smelt powerfully of the apoplexy, however the public thought otherwise.'³

²James Reed, *Sir Walter Scott: Landscape and Locality* (London: The Althone Press, 1980), p. 168.

³Sir William Gell, *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott's Residence in Italy, 1832* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1957), p. 34.

It is certainly true that a number of landscape descriptions in *Castle Dangerous* do betray a certain obscurity, as if the mists referred to so frequently in them have succeeded in penetrating the mind of the author. Alexander Welsh points out the confusion at times apparent in Scott's descriptions, as when Sir Aymer de Valence departs from the titular Douglas Castle accompanied by 'a horseman or two.' Welsh states: 'In the chapter that follows there are some forgiveable inconsistencies as to the number of Sir Aymer's retinue. The difficulty begins with the compound subject, "a horseman or two." From the very beginning Scott has no fixed number of horsemen in mind: he does not imagine the scene in complete graphic substance. The invention of the scene is tentative, and fails to confer even fictitious existence on the horsemen.'⁴ Such failure suggests an impaired ability to maintain a consistent mental focus upon all the elements of the scene. The result is ambiguity, displayed once again, albeit in a slightly different form, in the following passage. In the context of the chapter on Characterisation, we can detect here evidence of another character exploiting natural imagery to convey a point:

"Thou say'st well," answered the minstrel; "I have known life, I have known every stile, gap, pathway, and pass of this wilderness of ours for some thirty years; and he that cannot steer his course fairly through it like an able seaman, after having served such an apprenticeship, can hardly ever be taught, were a century to be given him to learn it in."

"Since thou art so expert a mariner," answered the archer Anthony, "thou hast, I warrant me, met in thy wanderings a potation called morning's draught, which they who are conducted by others, where they themselves lack experience, are used to bestow upon those who undertake the task of guide upon such an occasion?"

"I understand you, sir," quoth the minstrel; [...]

"Content," said the archer; "we now understand each other; and if difficulties arise on the road, thou shalt not want the countenance of Anthony to sail triumphantly through them."⁵

⁴Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels*, rev. edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 128.

⁵Sir Walter Scott, *Castle Dangerous* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1898), pp. 29-30.

It is customary for Scott's characters to express their bond with their environment through a landscape metaphor. It is even more customary for them to depict their course through life in a nautical metaphor. Here, however, landscape and ocean are combined in a strange manner that serves only to betray a certain contradiction in the archer's words and an uncertain sense of the nature of his identity, not to mention an absence of clarity in the author's perception. The archer essentially pours the ocean over the landscape, rather than maintaining a distinction between the two. His speech begins conventionally enough, particularizing his experience of his native landscape in terms of its common features: "every stile, gap, pathway and pass." The word "every" impresses upon the reader the fact that though each feature is referred to only once, it occurs within the landscape many times, (narrating once what happens *n* times as Genette would say) thus further emphasising and broadening the extent of the minstrel's knowledge and, hence, experience. But, having established this approximate equivalence between general experience ("I have known life") and experience of the landscape, as well as between the significant number of features ("every stile") and the significant length of time ("for some thirty years"), he then allows a nautical metaphor to unaccountably intrude and disrupt the relationship: "and he that cannot *steer his course* fairly through it."

The operation of metaphor allows, among other things, intangible concepts to be understood in concrete terms. It involves a transfer of lexical items from one semantic field to another. The two fields are often known as the donor (or source) field and the recipient (or target) field. As the word 'metaphor' (from the Greek 'metapherein', 'to transfer') suggests, the former exports words and concepts to the latter. When a transfer occurs, the recipient field is restructured – that is to say, we find a new way of understanding or conceptualising it. Since 'life' is an abstract noun, it admits of various conceptualisations; in other words, it may legitimately be concretized in many different ways. It would therefore be possible to describe oneself as steering a course through life, restructuring the recipient field of life in

nautical terms. One may say that 'life is an ocean, full of contending tides, through which each one of us must steer his own course, some of us foundering sooner than others'. But one cannot plausibly say that 'the land is the sea.' One concrete entity cannot be conceptualized in terms of another. The archer Anthony nevertheless adopts the concept and lends the simile that concluded his interlocutor's metaphor (' "like an able seaman" ') the firmness of metaphor as well: ' "Thou *art* so expert a mariner. " ' In spite of this, he soon reverts to the context and vocabulary of a land journey: ' "wanderings [...] conducted [...] guide." ' Moreover, the two become hopelessly entangled by the final sentence: ' "difficulties arise on the road...to sail triumphantly through them." ' The metaphor is doggedly extended, but it develops from an inappropriate premise – that land and sea may be oriented in terms of one another. Given the contradictions that arise, the pair's emphasis on mutual comprehension becomes, in respect of Scott's obvious confusion, poignantly ironic: ' "I understand you, sir," quoth the minstrel [...] "Content," said the archer; "we now understand each other." ' The overall impression is of one confused intellect transmitting an inconsistent sense of its own identity to another.

Similarly, though more succinctly, and to slightly less confusing effect, the smith Henry Gow in *The Fair Maid of Perth* offers the following expression of pleasure at returning to his native town of Perth:

"Thou hast had a long journey, son Henry," said Glover, who had always used that affectionate style of speech, though noways akin to the young artisan; "ay, and hast seen many a river besides Tay, and many a fair bigging besides St. Johnston."

"But none that I like half so well, and none that are half so much worth my liking," answered the smith. "I promise you, father, that, when I crossed the Wicks of Baiglic, and saw the bonny city lie stretched fairly before me like a fairy queen in romance, whom the knight finds asleep among a wilderness of flowers, I felt even as a bird, when it folds its weary wing to stoop down on its own nest."⁶

⁶Sir Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1894), I, 35-36.

He does not so much mingle two contradictory concepts, as place one immediately after the other, the first simile crowded out by the second before it has had time to create a lasting impression. He reorients not only the city but himself. It alters from being a slumbering fairy queen, to being a nest; he alters from being a knight to being a bird. Scott does retain a stricter control over his imagery here, as befits a novel written in 1827, some years before his final, irrevocable decline. The components of each simile – queen/ knight/ flowers – bird/nest -- do fit logically enough together. But the two images, satisfactory in themselves, are not granted sufficient space within the text, thus elbowing one another for room. Neither the knight and the bird, nor the queen in the bed of blossoms and the nest become confused, as did land and sea previously. But the two similes do not quite balance one another as they are perhaps intended to do. They are not exactly equivalent. The city of Perth in the second becomes, logically, a haven of repose. But in the first it reposes *itself* instead, in an inviting context that presumably represents the Tay valley, eulogized in the first chapter of the novel. This could conceivably reflect the traveller's increasing fatigue: the figure is dislodged so that he may occupy the haven, in whatever form it may occur, himself. In such a context, the figure may very possibly be Catherine. Given the title she holds, Gow's lexical choice (‘ “ the bonny city lie stretched fairly before me like a fairy queen in romance.” ’) certainly suggests this. The absence of an equivalent for the figure in the second simile, does indicate that the armourer's fatigue has temporarily banished thoughts of romance. However, the fact remains stylistically that to place two images, so similar in operation, in the same sentence does not so much emphasise the point they make as diminish each. Scott seems unable to choose between them, and so elects to use both, despite the rather baffling alternation.

As for *Castle Dangerous*, we can see evidence, not only of failed connections between landscape and certain subjects, principally Characterisation, but also of ‘flat’ descriptions: the superficial inventory of features, uninformed by any deeper significance, that Scott strove elsewhere to avoid. The following passage

is suffused with personification, but to little real avail. The emphasis is, as mentioned before, upon confusing mist which functions more eloquently as a symptom of Scott's declining powers than it does within the framework of the narrative:

The morning was indeed what the original Gaelic words implied, a drizzly, dark, moist day; the mist had settled upon the hills, and unrolled itself upon brook, glade and tarn, and the spring breeze was not powerful enough to raise the veil, though, from the wild sounds which were heard occasionally on the ridge, and through the glens, it might be supposed to wail at a sense of its own inability. The route of the travellers was directed by the course which the river had ploughed for itself down the valley, [...] Some ineffectual struggles of the sun shot a ray here and there to salute the peaks of the hills; yet these were unable to surmount the dulness of a March morning, and, at so early an hour, produced a variety of shades, rather than a gleam of brightness, upon the eastern horizon.⁷

This is clear enough. There is no sense here of Scott being actually unable to produce a lucid description of a scene, composed of distinct elements. In fact it endorses Philip Hobsbaum's observation about the novel that, 'The *leitmotiv* is winter — a "cold province" (Ch. 1), the "night colder" (Ch. 2.), "*Shotto Dhu Glass*" (dark grey man, a metaphor for the climate (Ch. 3.)) , and, applied to the relationship between two of the leading characters, "the ice [...] was fast freezing upon their intercourse" (Ch. 6.)'⁸ But the elements of the scene are not particularized. Generic, unmodified, they stand alone — 'hills [...] brook, glade and tarn [...] ridge [...] glens [...] valley [...] peaks' — possessing no individual existence. It is as if Scott merely wishes to move on, no longer having the patience or inclination to dwell upon the intricacies of the terrain. He is himself like a traveller keen to hurry towards his destination, as the Journal entry, quoted previously, confessed. The thread of personification runs thinly through the passage. Both the

⁷Scott, *Castle Dangerous*, p. 38.

⁸Philip Hobsbaum, 'Scott's 'Apoplectic' Novels,' *Scott and His Influence*, ed. by J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983), pp.149- 156 (p. 154).

mist and the river are accorded self-determination: 'unrolled itself [...] ploughed for itself.' To the spring breeze is reserved the possibility of specific emotions: 'might be supposed to wail at a sense of its own inability.' The sun's rays are also indifferently successful, but, though they possess a specific purpose – 'to salute the peaks of the hills,' – they do not seem conscious of, or perturbed by, their failure: 'unable to surmount the dullness of a March morning.' Yet all this implied sentence leads us nowhere except to an apprehension of the morning's impenetrable dullness. The motions of mist, breeze and sun are simply repetitive illustrations of the point made at the outset: 'The morning was indeed, [...] a drizzly, dark, moist day.' There appears, moreover, to be a certain absence of lexical variation: 'unrolled itself [...] its own inability [...] ploughed for itself [...] unable to surmount.' Towards the conclusion there is a minor efflorescence of picturesque values: 'a ray here and there [...] the peaks of the hills [...] produced a variety of shades...upon the eastern horizon.' Here, however, picturesqueness is simply an incidental effect, a respite from a scene that, as Scott concedes, 'was monotonous and depressing.' It might be argued that the apparent shortcomings of Scott's prose reflect this monotony, and therefore have some psychological relevance, but other, more barren locales are accorded a vivid presentation elsewhere, despite their uninspiring contours. The abiding impression is one of weariness, a disinclination on Scott's behalf to enrich his verbal picture or to vary his observation. This is apparent particularly in the reference to the mist as a 'veil'. Scott very often has recourse to metaphors from the quotidian domestic sphere at those moments when his landscape descriptions are not as rigorous as they might be, as has already been mentioned.

II.

These three examples would seem to endorse Reed's dismissal of the last two Scottish historical novels, and to justify the epithet 'apoplectic' applied to them. It would, however, be as wrong to suggest that they have nothing at all to commend them as it would be to suggest that the earliest Waverley novels, written at the

height of Scott's powers, never exhibit shortcomings. In his second novel, *Guy Mannering*, Brown/Bertram indulges in a nautical metaphor similar to that of the minstrel. Though Brown's metaphor is not actually mixed, most readers would probably concede that the terms in which it is expressed have the tincture of bathos at the very least:

"A wild and dim spectacle," said Bertram to himself, "like those crossing tides of fate which have tossed me about the world from my infancy upwards. When will this uncertainty cease, and how soon shall I be permitted to look out for a tranquil home, where I may cultivate in quiet, and without dread and perplexity, those arts of peace from which my cares have been hitherto so forcibly diverted? The ear of Fancy, it is said, can discover the voice of sea-nymphs and tritons amid the bursting murmurs of the ocean; would that I could do so, and that some siren or Proteus would arise from these billows, to unriddle for me the strange maze of fate in which I am so deeply entangled!"⁹

Brown's metaphor does certainly function more conventionally: ' "fate" ' being an abstract concept, and, in this case, the recipient field, conceptualized in terms of the sea, of tides in particular – the donor field. The metaphor ' "tides of fate" ' is also preceded by a simile, just as the minstrel mingled the two devices in his meditations: ' "steer his course fairly through it *like* an able seaman. " ' Both characterize themselves as mariners, though Brown is considerably more adrift in a considerably larger context: ' "tossed me about the world. " ' But Brown does not attempt to unite land and sea. After a rapid series of rhetorical questions in a single sentence, he introduces a new metaphor, specifically personification – ' "The ear of Fancy" ' – an ontological metaphor, enabling one to refer to or quantify a particular aspect of an experience by viewing it as an entity. ' "The ear of Fancy" ' succeeds ' "The tides of fate" ', thus subtracting the metaphorical burden from the ocean, which reverts to its literal role, albeit now densely populated with mythological creatures: ' "sea-nymphs and tritons [...] some siren or Proteus. " '

⁹Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892), II, 218.

However, the metaphor of the tides having been abandoned, Brown must have a new representation of his plight and therefore, having extricated himself from the ‘ “ tides of fate ” ’, places himself in the equivalent ‘ “ maze of fate ” ’ instead. Nevertheless, the context of land and sea, of ‘ “ tides ” ’ and ‘ “ maze ” ’ do at least remain distinct. Like Henry Gow, Brown does not contradict himself, but does court confusion by altering his image of himself in so short a space, particularly in the way that he repeats lexical items: ‘ “ tides of fate [...] maze of fate ” ’ And though land and sea are not united, an implicit connection is formed between them, with Brown invoking a sea god to remove him from a maze. At the conclusion of this speech, the author seems as entangled in his own imagery as Brown perceives himself to be in life. Moreover, though the meditation of the minstrel contained more actual contradiction, it was at least expressed in a manner not nearly as implausibly florid.

There are, in the early Waverley novels, admittedly few sustained ‘flat’ descriptions: passages in which landscape is uniformed by any thematic significance. However there are passages in which aesthetic theory, most often in the form of the Picturesque, is invoked merely to devise a visually pleasing spectacle, to illuminate the landscape alone, rather than any associated topic. In *The Antiquary*, for instance, a party comprising Sir Arthur Wardour, his daughter Isabella, Lovel, Jonathan Oldbuck, the Reverend Mr. Blattergowl, minister of Trocosey, Mary McIntyre, Mr. Dousterswivel, visit the ruins of St. Ruth’s Priory which occupy a quintessentially picturesque depression in the landscape:

They stood pretty high upon the side of the glen, which had suddenly opened into a sort of amphitheatre to give room for a pure and profound lake of a few acres extent, and a space of level ground around it. The banks then arose every where steeply, and in some places were varied by rocks – in others covered with the copse which run up, feathering their sides lightly and irregularly, and breaking the uniformity of the green pasture-ground. Beneath, the lake discharged itself into the huddling and tumultuous brook, which had been their companion since they had entered the glen. At the point at which it issued from “its parent lake,” stood the ruins which

they had come to visit. They were not of great extent; but the singular beauty, as well as the wild and sequestered character of the spot in which they were situated, gave them an interest and importance superior to that which attaches itself to architectural remains of greater consequence, but placed near to ordinary houses, and possessing less romantic accompaniments. [...] The whole scene had a repose, which was still and affecting without being monotonous. The dark, deep bason, in which the clear blue lake reposed, reflecting the water-lilies which grew on its surface, and the trees which here and there threw their arms from the banks, was finely contrasted with the haste and tumult of the brook which broke away from the outlet, as if escaping from confinement, and hurried down the glen, wheeling around the base of the rock on which the ruins were situated, and brawling in foam and fury with every shelf and stone which obstructed its passage. A similar contrast was seen between the level green meadow, in which the ruins were situated, and the large timber trees which were scattered over it, compared with the precipitous banks which arose at a short distance around, partly fringed with light and feathery underwood, partly rising in steeps clothed with purple heath, and partly more abruptly elevated into fronts of grey rock, chequered with lichen, and with those hardy plants which find root even in the most arid crevices of the crags.¹⁰

All the requisite components of the picturesque scene are present here, melded together to convey the desired effect, but remaining individually distinct nonetheless. Its general context, the amphitheatrical form, recalls again the ideal landscape of continental painting which Claude and Rosa sought to emulate and which the Bay of Naples was regarded as exemplifying. There is the emphasis upon unheralded changes in terrain, both in the introduction of the scene and within its precincts: '*suddenly* opened into a kind of amphitheatre [...] The banks then arose *everywhere steeply* [...] *precipitous* banks then arose *at a short distance around*.' This circumstance is partly productive of the picturesque 'contrast' very baldly identified at several stages: 'was finely contrasted [...] a similar contrast.' In addition to contrast there is, most pervasively, variation, perhaps the defining characteristic of the picturesque scene. Again it is explicitly referred to, sometimes doubly emphasised within the space of a single sentence: '*in some places* were

¹⁰Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. by David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 130-131.

varied by rocks, in *others* covered with copse which run up, feathering, *irregularly* [...] the trees [...] *here and there* threw their arms [...] *partly* fringed [...] *partly* rising...and *partly* more abruptly elevated...*chequered* with lichen.' Yet the components of the scene do not display the hegemony of the Picturesque – other, associated aesthetic theories are visible. There is a distinct, albeit moderate hint of the Sublime. It subsists in the gloomy waters of the lake, which are 'pure and profound', occupying a 'deep, dark basin', thus conveying at least an intimation of the awe and terror that the Sublime is supposed to inculcate. Conversely, features associated with the rounded placidity of the Beautiful also have their stake in the passage, if only to create a basic context which the picturesque features can then diversify: 'a space of level ground [...] breaking the uniformity of the green pasture ground [...] the singular beauty, as well as wild and sequestered character of the spot [...]possessing less romantic accompaniments [...] The whole scene had a repose that was still and affecting without being monotonous.'

The only deeper significance dwelling in the locale is reserved to the historical associations of St. Ruth's priory. It exists in a state of picturesque decay and 'had been occasionally turned to military purposes [...] and had been taken with great slaughter during Montrose's wars', though there is no overt suggestion that its decay is a concomitant of its historical role. The fact remains that 'providing romantic accompaniments' to the priory, the object of the spectators' interest, is the only function of aesthetic convention within the passage. It does nothing to illuminate their personalities, or their sentiments with regard to the scene. It is neither tempered nor underpinned by the utility which Scott customarily invoked to enrich his picturesque terrains. The steep sides of the 'amphitheatre', variously covered in 'rocks [...] copse [...] purple heath [...] lichen' are simply an intricate frame, minutely wrought, to amplify the confessedly modest appeal of the ruins and to redeem the immediately adjacent area from the threat of blandness, even if the picturesque features so diligently catalogued are so generic as to succumb to such a fate themselves: 'the trees, here and there, threw their arms from the bank.' There

are inadvertent hints of superficiality – ‘feathering their sides lightly’ – and of the artificiality that tends, as noted before, to creep into Scott’s less distinguished descriptions. Here the verbs, ‘fringed [...] clothed [...] chequered’, convey an impression of the fictive locale spun out by the author, as one might spin out, tuck and hem a square of material.

The one active component of the scene is the brook. It is focused upon before and after the account of the ruins. As always in Scott, it, literally, injects motion into an otherwise static scene. But that is its only purpose. It neither symbolises historical process, nor reflects turbulent emotions, as, for instance, in *Old Mortality*. Indeed, for all its ‘haste and tumult’ it seems to be making little real progress. It is referred to as ‘the huddling and tumultuous brook’ which ‘issued from its parent lake’ in the first section. But in the second section it is still in the process of issuing from the lake: ‘broke away from the outlet as if escaping from confinement’. Finally liberated, it encounters varied obstacles – ‘every shelf and stone’ – which serve again to distinguish it picturesquely from its smooth parent lake.

Similar redundancy is apparent elsewhere, suggesting, once again, a vaguely slovenly lack of concentration, normally supposed to be the domain of the final novels. There is, in particular, a good deal of random repetition, both between the two sections and within each one. For instance, the copse is first described as ‘feathering their [the banks’] sides lightly and irregularly.’ But later the same banks are ‘partly fringed with light and feathery underwood.’ There is a reference to ‘the spot on which they [the ruins] were situated’ and later to ‘the base of the rock on which the ruins were situated’, and, yet again, to ‘the level green meadow in which the ruins were situated.’ In the space of a single sentence the scene has ‘a repose’ and the lake is ‘reposed’ in the ‘deep, dark basin’. Scott would seem, in the space of turning his attention from the setting to the priory, to have forgotten, when he turns back to it, the phrases he previously employed, and, later, to have neglected to reread his text with sufficient assiduity.

The use of stock picturesque effects for the purpose of simple adornment is not confined to this one passage. In Chapter IV of *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose*, for instance, the first sentence runs thus: 'A hill was now before the travellers, covered with an ancient forest of Scottish firs, the topmost of which, flinging their scathed branches across the western horizon, gleamed ruddy in the setting sun.'¹¹ Here the Picturesque is not only invoked for its own sake, but adheres precisely to the terms of Gilpin's precepts and even vocabulary, not to mention the technique of the painters favoured by him. Firs were approved of, adorning the Alpine scenes that Rosa loved to depict. Gilpin particularly approved of trees that had undergone a process of decay, thus increasing the variety of their form and texture, instilling roughness in both. Scott here adopts one of Gilpin's favourite images and, in doing so, one of his favourite terms of approbation – 'scathed' – meaning injured by fire or lightning: 'flinging their scathed branches across the western horizon.' The whole scene is, moreover, suffused with that roseate tint that both Rosa and Claude communicated to their canvasses.

III.

Thus far it has been established that Scott's aesthetic achievement in landscape description could at times be inconsistent, this inconsistency being manifest at both the beginning and end of his career. If such an observation seems to add a negative coda to a hopefully positive survey of landscape's abundant significance in the Scottish historical novels, it should be noted that the 'apoplectic' novels, far from being the only ones to feature indifferent description, also contain landscape passages that boast a clarity comparable to those in the early works.

The descriptive passages in *Castle Dangerous* have been condemned by John Sutherland for their interminable, meandering obscurity. Yet the opening pages

¹¹Sir Walter Scott, *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose*, ed. by J. H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p. 25.

contain the following passage, which confutes the imputation, being not only lucid, but succinct and informative:

The Douglas issues from an amphitheatre of mountains which bounds the valley to the south-west, from whose contributions, and the aid of sudden storms, it receives its scanty supplies. The general aspect of the country is that of the pastoral hills of the south of Scotland, forming, as is usual, bleak and wild farms, many of which had, at no great length of time from the date of the story, been covered with trees; as some of them still attest by bearing the name of *shaw* – that is, wild natural wood. The neighbourhood of the Douglas water itself was flat land, capable of bearing strong crops of oats and rye, supplying the inhabitants with what they required of these productions. At no great distance from the edge of the river, a few special spots excepted, the soil capable of agriculture was more and more mixed with the pastoral and woodland country, till both terminated in desolate and partly inaccessible moorlands.¹²

Topographically, the same encircling hollow recurs here, albeit on a much larger scale. Water flows through it also, presumably in an intermittent state of tumult, given the 'sudden storms' that are its provenance. Yet here it does not hasten on in a purposeless, visually pleasing frenzy towards an undisclosed destination. Instead the emphasis is upon its, admittedly modest, function: 'it receives its scanty supplies.' Scott then withdraws from the particular to, if not the universal, then at least the regional, placing the Douglas vale in geographical context: 'The general aspect of the country [...] as is usual.' He places it also in temporal context, evoking not only how it looks at the time of the narrative, but how it *had* looked, thus both expanding and deepening the reader's perception of it: 'at no great length of time from the date of the story.' Bound up with this is the cultural interest of the farms being identified lexically by their physical appearance: 'as some of them still attest by bearing the name of *shaw* – that is, wild natural wood.' As in the area of the priory at St. Ruth, the terrain around the water is flat. But the absence of undulation does not connote the vapid, superficially pastoral, since it enables crops, supportive

¹²Scott, *Castle Dangerous*, pp. 2-3.

of life, to be cultivated. Indeed the whole passage is typified by the lexicon of utility, to which, as the disappearance of the trees indicates, the Picturesque must concede: 'contributions [...] supplies [...] supplying [...] productions.' In opposition, moreover, to the sudden contrast inherent in the Picturesque, there is the gradual exchange of one type of terrain for another – 'more and more mixed with the pastoral and woodland country' – the two in fact becoming united and giving way to a third: 'both terminated in desolate and partly inaccessible moorlands.' In the Douglas vale, diligently anatomised and contextualized by Scott, the practical benefits to its inhabitants are paramount, as they are in real life, and aesthetic pleasures are subordinated to these; they do not perish, but they are incidental. It is a far more successful description than that in *The Antiquary*. Instead of clumsily repeating information, Scott presents the two types of terrain – tree covered hills, flat pasture land – , scrupulously distinguishes them, then draws them together.

Similar, localised successes are exhibited by the author in *The Fair Maid of Perth*. Having travelled north across the Highland line to visit his erstwhile apprentice Conachar, now Ian Each-Maclan, chief of the clan Quhele, upon the death of his father, Simon Glover climbs the summit of a hill called 'Tom-an-Lonach', or the Knoll of the Yew Trees:

A few aged and scattered yew-trees, of great size, still vindicated for the beautiful green hill the name attached to it. But a far greater number had fallen sacrifice to the general demand for bow-staves in that warlike age, the bow being a weapon much used by the mountaineers, [...] The dark and shattered individual yews which remained were like veterans of a broken host, occupying in disorder some post of advantage, with the stern purpose of resisting to the last. Behind this eminence, but detached from it, arose a higher hill, partly covered in copse-wood, partly opening into glades of pasture, where the cattle strayed, finding, at this season of the year, a scanty sustenance among the spring-heads and marshy places, where the fresh grass began first to arise.¹³

¹³Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, II, 158.

Again the description is bolstered with cultural and temporal significance. The title 'attached' to the hill elaborates the previous definition of the term '*shaw*' by this time characterising a topographical feature wholly in terms of its surface appearance, its mantle – 'Knoll of the Yew Trees'. Also, the denuding of the hill is associated with the prevailing historical and political conditions – 'in that war-like age' – while, at an even more specific level, the time of year is also invoked with regard to the appearance and, hence, the utility of the terrain: 'finding, at this season of the year, a scanty sustenance.' But the primary significance of the passage is the way in which picturesque values, sacrificed in the previous passage to the exigencies of basic sustenance, are here amplified by utility – the need for weapons. There are only a few left. They are 'scattered', hence random, hence generating picturesque variety. They are also, in themselves, 'aged [...] dark and shattered', age and decay tending, as Gilpin asserted, and Scott, as we have seen, believed, to grant a picturesque aspect to even the most unpromising subjects. The most arresting and interesting aspect of the passage, however, is the terms in which the deforestation is conveyed. Plundered to be converted from one hyphenated object into another, from 'yew-trees' into 'bow-staves', they are implicitly likened to the victims of precisely the kind of armed conflict in which they are destined to be used, since the remainder are 'like the veterans of a broken host.' Thus picturesque values are not only underpinned by utility, but associated symbolically with the specific nature of that utility. The point is re-emphasised through the contrast with the hill behind 'Tom-an-Lonach'. It is also picturesque, but less meaningfully so, saved from the threat of superficiality by its more mundane function, but assuming none of the symbolic burden of its ostensibly less fertile companion: '*partly* covered in copse-wood, *partly* opening into glades of pasture, where cattle strayed, finding sustenance [...] where the fresh grass began first to arise.' 'Tom-an-Lonach' displays a succinct and expressive simile: the equivalence of the yew-trees, subject to the depredations of the axe but still standing, and the 'veterans' of a decimated army, similarly persisting in spite of their wounds. Thus, in this passage, Scott succeeds in forming

a net of related conjunctions, not only between Landscape and the Picturesque, but between the Picturesque and the utility that tempers it, as well as between the Picturesque and historical circumstances. On the desolated hillside aesthetic theory, utility and history are all bound together.

Even that most subtle of all conjunctions in the foregoing account, Landscape and Narrative, which, unlike Landscape and Characterisation, rarely finds clear expression in the words of either Scott's characters or narrators, can be detected in the last, and, to many, irredeemably the least, of his works, with landscape again being exploited for narrative potential:

He proceeded at a slower rate, until they seemed to be on the brink of a ravine, being one of many irregularities on the surface of the ground, effected by the sudden torrents peculiar to that country, and which, winding among the trees and copse-wood, formed, as it were, a net of places of concealment, opening into each other, so that there was perhaps no place in the world so fit for the purpose of ambuscade. The spot where the borderer Turnbull had made his escape at the hunting match was one specimen of this broken country, and perhaps connected itself with the various thickets and passes through which the knight and pilgrim seemed occasionally to take their way, though that ravine was at a considerable distance from their present route.¹⁴

The particular terrain here has two purposes, one retrospective, the other prospective. Firstly it renders more plausible a previous event – Turnbull's escape from De Walton and the English forces: 'where Turnbull had made the spring, there yawned a steep ravine, into which he plunged, and descended by the assistance of branches, bushes, and copsewood, through which he made his escape.'¹⁵ Then, the obligingly chasmal ravine seemed almost to have gaped open at that precise moment for the single purpose of receiving the fugitive Turnbull, too opportune to be altogether credible, since it appeared then to be the only such escape route in the surrounding landscape. Now, however, Scott judiciously riddles it with similar

¹⁴Scott, *Castle Dangerous*, p. 224.

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 76.

features, thus, as it were, shortening the narrative odds against Turnbull's escape, since they must dwell in inverse proportion to the number of routes available, not to mention his knowledge of them as a native of the area. Not only this, but the very existence of the 'net of places' is itself rendered more plausible by the allusion to the 'sudden torrents peculiar to that country', which create so many opportune 'irregularities in the surface of the ground' here but nowhere else.

The second purpose of the terrain is that it creates further possibilities for Scott. Each place of concealment opening onto others represents a corresponding expansion of narrative potential: a place for protagonists to hide from attackers or a place from which concealed attackers can set upon protagonists, as Scott himself concedes, further emphasising the inimitability of the area: '*no place in the world so fit for the purpose of ambuscade.*' (Again, therefore, the landscape is informed by a kind of utility.) Yet Scott astutely maintains a sense of total potential, avoids pinning himself down, creating firm expectations, as the persistently conditional aspect of the passage indicates: 'seemed [...] perhaps no place [...] perhaps connected itself [...] seemed to take their way.' Such a concern with allaying any lingering doubts in the reader's mind about the plausibility of the previous narrative and excavating, literally and figuratively, a network of prospective paths, without yet choosing any one direction, hardly suggests a tired, confused author, blithely disregarding, the need for conscious organisation of narrative.

Nor does the final example from *Castle Dangerous*, which brings us round full circle, recalling the speech of the minstrel Bertram and, to a large extent, redeeming it with a succinct and plausible metaphor:

"Nay, the foul fiend take me if I do," answered the Scottish husbandman. "I know not what the lads of this day are made of – not of the same clay as their fathers to be sure – not sprung from the heather, which fears neither wind nor rain, but from some delicate plant of a foreign country, which will not thrive unless it be nourished under glass, with a murrain to it."¹⁶

¹⁶ibid., p. 19.

It begins conventionally, the idea of men being formed out of the landscape they inhabit having Biblical connotations. But it rapidly develops, acquiring a more vivid and particularly Scottish aspect. In its elaboration it does not, however, contradict itself, nor does it attempt to substitute one image for another. Rather it remains consistent but acquires specificity. The universal ' " clay " ' from which all men are formed becomes the nationally characteristic ' " heather " ', from which all Scotsmen are formed – or rather were formed in the past. The invulnerability of erstwhile patriots is also evoked in natural imagery. ' " Wind and rain " ' soak and pummel both the human frame and the equivalent vegetation, thus reinforcing national identity. Nationalism remains paramount in a contrastive relationship with other countries, similarly identified with the vegetation of their lands (' " some delicate plant of a foreign country " ') in a manner that continues to preserve the basic components of the imagery. The final words present Scotsmen as most fundamentally Scottish when unsheltered, exposed to their native elements, and fixed to their native soil, the image of anathematized protective structures conforming yet again to the metaphorical context: ' " nourished under a glass. " '

Landscape in the Scottish historical novels is, as was stated at the outset, fundamentally context. Though the richness of that context was evoked, this study has, I hope, demonstrated at length its range and diversity. In doing so it has applied a fresh perspective to established aspects of the topic and unearthed new ones

The chronological account of secondary material demonstrates a development over the past two hundred years from simple tour guides, to works of which landscape was an incidental aspect, to a series of recent papers and journal articles in which it was established as the principal subject. From this emerges certain common critical themes, most consistently the influence of aesthetic theories upon natural description and the use of topographic metaphors to illuminate characterisation, class and history.

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The chapter on Biography offers, for the first time, an account of Scott's life from the perspective of his experiences of landscape. In particular it demonstrates how the Border terrain and folklore to which he was exposed as an infant formed his taste for historicised landscape, how his apprenticeship to his father necessitated journeys into the Highlands, how his failed attempts as an artist prompted his achievement in verbal pictorial description, how his lifelong infirmity galvanised his characters as they performed compensatory feats of agility, and, over and above all this, how his early autobiographical writings presaged the methods by which he would later describe landscape in his fiction.

The chapter on Aesthetic Theory has illustrated the evolution of those theories and Scott's attitude to them, influenced principally by Sir Uvedale Price, as well as to landscape design, in particular the work of Sir Henry Steuart. His descriptions in *Waverley*, informed by the cults of the Sublime, the Picturesque and the Beautiful, conspire to create a romantic landscape, possess an historical import and illuminate the personality of the titular character. But later descriptions, especially in the neglected *Castle Dangerous*, are underpinned by a profound sense of utility that may even amplify their picturesque appeal.

The chapter on History addresses familiar issues such as the timelessness of landscape as opposed to the mutability of human affairs, the metaphorical significance of natural phenomena and pastoral havens such as Mount Sharon in *Redgauntlet*, Roseneath in *The Heart of Midlothian* and Liddesdale in *Guy Mannering*. But it also identifies and elaborates previously undiscussed topics such as the irruption of historical forces displayed by Tully Veolan in *Waverley* and the way in which the contours of a terrain can render historical events more explicable, as the encounter at Drumclog in *Old Mortality* and the Battle of Inverlochy in *A Legend of Montrose* demonstrate.

The chapter on Characterisation examines the varying degrees of attachment to the landscape manifested by characters of different social status, such attachments belying a profound egalitarianism. An attempt is also made to discern similarities

between the characters, gaining a fresh understanding of them by placing them in particular categories: those alienated from the landscape, such as the indifferent Sir William Ashton in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the neglectful Laird of Ellangowan and his successor, the upstart Glossin in *Guy Mannering*; those who function as cicerones, intimately connected to the landscape but mobile within it, such as Willie Ste'enson in *Redgauntlet*, Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering*, Edie Ochiltree in *The Antiquary*; those deeply and obsessively bound to the landscape, to the point of symbolic absorption, such as Ulla Troil in *The Pirate*, Elspat MacTavish in *The Highland Widow*, Blind Alice in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, John Balfour of Burley in *Old Mortality*; those who romanticise the landscape, such as Edward Waverley, Darsie Latimer in *Redgauntlet*, Lucy Ashton in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Minna Troil in *The Pirate*. From all this emerges the situation of the Waverley hero, exemplified by Harry Bertram in *Guy Mannering* and Lovel in *The Antiquary*, as one who, often relying upon a cicerone, prevails within the landscape, asserting his authority over it.

The chapter on the Supernatural scrutinizes Scott's attitude to the topic and accords a deeper analysis to locations already identified – Meikle-stane Moor in *The Black Dwarf*, Salisbury Crags in *The Heart of Midlothian*, Glendearg in *The Monastery*, an unnamed glen in *The Highland Widow* – seeking to forge new connections between them. What binds these disparate locales together is the process by which their topography, often informed by qualities of the sublime, provokes supernatural credulity. But the ostensibly different appearance of the Mermaid's Well in *The Bride of Lammermoor* suggests that the process can occur regardless of topography, while the terms in which Scott describes all his haunted places indicates the rationalism which tempers his fascination with the supernatural.

The last chapter, on Narrative, invokes, for the first time, the theoretical approach of Gerard Genette to examine Scott's landscape descriptions: the extent to which they are purely ornamental, the idea of a fictive landscape being disclosed concurrently with the temporal succession of events, the way in which they can

hasten or retard narrative tempo. Two entirely new topics – landscape as an agent of narrative plausibility, recalling its function in relation to history, and landscape as a metaphor for narrative structure and tempo – are also introduced and analysed.

The conclusion, rather than offering a representation of all these themes, assesses the consistency of Scott's achievement in landscape decription. It demonstrates that passages in his later novels, particularly *Castle Dangerous* and *The Fair Maid of Perth* could at times achieve a clarity and significance comparable to those in his earlier work which did not in fact always boast such qualities. In doing so, it touches upon the majority of subjects previously discussed: Biography, History, Aesthetic Theory, Characterisation and Narrative.

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