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Digging up the Kirkyard: Death, Readership and Nation in the Writings of the *Blackwood's* Group 1817-1839.

Sarah Sharp

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I certify that this thesis has been composed by me, that the work is entirely my own, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Sarah Sharp

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The section on James Hogg's 'A Peasant's Funeral' beginning on P104 is based on an argument I made in my 2012 MSc thesis, and although the argument has progressed there is a minor overlap between the two accounts.

Abstract

This dissertation examines the use of images of graveyards and death in the writings of the '*Blackwood's* group', a coterie of authors and poets who published their writing either within the influential Tory periodical *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* or with the publisher William Blackwood and Sons in the early decades of the nineteenth century. I argue that Blackwoodian texts like *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* (1822) by John Wilson imagined the rural Scottish graveyard as a repository for the traditional values and social structures which appeared to be under threat in the rapidly modernising British nation. In these texts the kirkyard functions as a key symbolic space, creating an imagined national 'home' for British readers in the idealised Scottish village graveyard. This nostalgic pastoral image of the eternal kirkyard is however in opposition to *Blackwood's Magazine's* reputation for violent, urbane wit and sensational gothic stories. The *Noctes Ambrosianae* and Tales of Terror articulate a modern, masculine and elite image of the magazine which seem at odds with the domestic, pastoral Scottishness offered in the 'Scotch novels' and regional tales. William Blackwood's publishing house and magazine are at once synonymous with two apparently opposing world views and target readerships, and this tension is most strongly articulated in the tidy Scots graves and unburied corpses of the magazine's fiction.

I examine works published by John Wilson, J.G. Lockhart, James Hogg, D.M. Moir, Henry Thomson, Robert McNish, John Galt, Samuel Warren, James Montgomery and Thomas de Quincey, between the magazine's foundation in 1817 and the increasing defection of these original Blackwoodians to other periodicals and the retirement of the *Noctes Ambrosianae* series in the late 1830s. I identify a series of conventions associated with an idealised Blackwoodian rural death before examining the ways in which tales where the conventions of this 'good death' and burial are disrupted by crime, bodysnatching, epidemic disease and suicide challenge or reinforce the world view the rural texts articulated.

Chapter one focuses on eighteenth-century ideas about death and sociability. Looking at a group of texts which span from Robert Blair's *The Grave* (1746) to Edmund Burke's revolutionary period writings of the 1790s, it traces what Ester Schor has termed a 'transition from the "natural" sympathies of the Enlightenment to the "political"

sympathies of a revolutionary age' (75). I argue that in particular Edmund Burke's creation of a conservative image of nation based on tradition and ancestry acted as a foundation for the type of politicised engagement with the dead which characterised the work of the *Blackwood's* group. Chapter two builds upon recent identifications of a Blackwoodian regional tale tradition by highlighting the crucial role of death and the kirkyard in this provincial fiction. Placing John Wilson's highly popular story series *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* in relation to contemporary debates about Evangelical religion, readership and nation, reveals a series of ideas and conventions which can be identified in other rural writing by John Galt, J.G. Lockhart and James Hogg.

Having established an image of what a 'good death' might look like and stand for within the Blackwoodian imagination, I turn my attention to deaths which do not follow these conventions. Chapter three explores *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine's* well-documented fascination with spectacular violence in three of the magazine's signature Tales of Terror and Thomas De Quincey's 'On Murder' essays (1827, 1839). Chapter four looks at three stories from the magazine which feature bodysnatching, focusing on the role which doctors and provincial communities play within these texts. Chapter five compares responses to the 1832 cholera epidemic by James Montgomery and James Hogg. Finally, Chapter six argues for a reading of James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) which foregrounds the role of the suicide's body within the narrative based on the representations of suicide in contemporary discussion and in Galt's *Annals of the Parish* (1821).

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to Gandercleugh: Scott's *Tales of my Landlord* and the Scottish Regional Tale

In the opening pages of Walter Scott's 1816 novel *Old Mortality,* fictionalised editor Jedediah Cleishbotham, 'schoolmaster and Parish-clerk of Gandercleugh' asserts his imagined Parish's position in the world:

> Gandercleugh is, as it were, the central part- the navel (*si fas sit dicere*) of this our native realm of Scotland; so that men, from every corner thereof, when travelling on their concernments of business, either towards our metropolis of law, by which I mean Edinburgh, or towards our metropolis and mart of gain, whereby I insinuate Glasgow, are frequently led to make Gandercleugh their abiding stage and place of rest for the night. And it must be acknowledged by the most sceptical, that I, who have sat in the leathern armchair, on the left-hand side of the fire, in the common-room of the Wallace Inn, winter and summer, for every evening in my life, during forty years bypast, (the Christian Sabbaths only excepted,) must have seen more of the manners and customs of various tribes and people, than if I had sought them out by my own painful travel and bodily labour (52).

Gandercleugh, in Cleishbotham's world-view, typifies the nature of Scotland in a way that neither 'our metropolis of law' nor 'our metropolis and mart of gain' can. To sit by the fire of the Wallace Inn is to understand Scotland in a way that the mobile and metropolitan Scots of Glasgow and Edinburgh cannot. As Richard Cronin puts it, Scotland 'finds its true epitome in the entirely undistinguished village of Gandercleugh' (83). Cleishbotham subsequently comically supports his own ability to comment on the nation at large by asserting that he has visited Edinburgh twice and Glasgow thrice. This defence of the provincial is a playful pen portrait of Scott's ficitionalised editor, designed to amuse his increasingly urban and outward looking readership. Cleishbotham is a figure apparently marooned at an Inn fireside; his confidence in his own knowledge of the world evidence of his complete isolation from the rapid changes taking place around him. However, Cronin highlights the fact that by 1816 the publication of a Scott novel had an importance which extended far beyond Scotland. Gandercleugh, within the reading nation, did have the sort

of importance which Cleishbotham attributes to it: '*Tales of my Landlord* was a British rather than a Scottish publishing event: Gandercleugh established itself in the closing months of 1816, not at all ironically but as a fact amply borne out by the volume's sales figures, as the "navel" of the whole United Kingdom' (83).

Cleishbotham's panegyric on Gandercleugh introduces the second frame narrative of Scott's novel: the teacher, Peter Pattieson's, account of a meeting with the ancient Cameronian, Old Mortality, in Gandercleuch's abandoned cemetery. Pattieson describes his evening stroll to the quiet graveyard which lies 'up the narrow valley, and in a recess which seems scooped out of the side of the steep heathy bank' (60). Whilst upon leaving the school Pattieson's walk is interrupted by the life of the village- 'the first quarter of the mile, perhaps, I may be disturbed from my meditations, in order to return the scrape, or doffed bonnet, of such stragglers among my pupils as fish for trouts or minnows in the little brook, or seek rushes and wild-flowers by its margin'- this tableau of village life ceases as the school teacher approaches the old cemetery (60). The cemetery space is removed from the life and flow of the community, and also from the realities of recent death. The children are 'fearful' of the site, and no new burials take place there, allowing the cemetery to become a picturesque part of the landscape:

> It is a spot which possesses all the solemnity of feeling attached to a burial ground, without exciting those of a more unpleasing description. Having been very little used for many years, the few hillocks which rise above the level plain are covered with the same short velvet turf. The monuments, of which there are not above seven or eight, are half sunk in the ground, and overgrown with moss. No newly erected tomb disturbs the sober serenity of our reflections by reminding us of recent calamity, and no rank-springing grass forces upon our imagination the recollection, that it owes its dark luxuriance to the foul and festering remnants of mortality which ferment beneath…Those who sleep beneath are only connected with us by the reflection, that they have once been what we now are, and that, as their relics are now identified with their mother earth, ours shall, at some future period, undergo the same transformation (61) .

The burial ground provides a repository for a history which is no longer 'rank' or vital. The link between the living and the dead is only that of mortality. This sequestration of the past allows the peaceful bucolic village to exist in the present. The tombs of the knight, the bishop and the Covenanters are removed from the living reality of Scottish rural life, fading slowly back into obscurity along with the conflicts they represent.

This division of the living from the dead might appear to be disrupted by Old Morality's efforts to maintain the graves of the Covenanters, but this behaviour is not portrayed as indicative of a continued tradition. Old Mortality is himself old, a dying remnant of a dying tradition. He is a sort of last Covenanter, in the tradition of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1802), another final survivor of what Scott perceives to be a dying indigenous Scottish culture which must be recorded and preserved. After his death, the local people believe that the graves he maintained are supernaturally preserved, however Pattieson is quick to discard this belief as superstition: 'it is hardly necessary to say that this is fond imagination, and that, since the time of the pious pilgrim, the monuments that were the objects of his care are hastening, like all earthly memorials, into ruin or decay' (68). Although the local people feed and revere the ancient Cameronian during his pilgrimages, they do not take on his responsibilities after his death. The Covenanting past has become an object of cultural memory rather than a stimulus for action. Summarising the role which historic allegiances and enmities should play in modern Scotland, Pattieson famously closes his introduction by quoting John Home's *Douglas* (1756):

> We may safely hope, that the souls of the brave and sincere on either side have long looked down with surprise and pity upon the ill-appreciated motives which caused their mutual hatred and hostility, while in this valley of darkness, blood and tears. Peace to their memory! Let us think of them as the heroine of our only Scottish tragedy entreats her lord to think of her departed sire:- "O rake not up the ashes of our fathers!/ Implacable resentment was their crime/ And grievous has the expiation been" (70).

The loyalties of the past in *Old Mortality* are, like the abandoned graveyard, to be laid aside and left to fade from view. Scottish culture, like the graveyard, is to become an aesthetic and antiquarian object denuded of political threat and relevance.

Old Mortality was conceived as one of a four volume series to be titled *Tales of my Landlord* in which each volume was to contain a different Scottish regional tale. Whilst planning the series, Scott made the decision to defect from his previous publisher Archibald Constable, to Constable's rival William Blackwood. By 1816, in the wake of the publication of *Waverley, Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary*, Scott was arguably the single most successful English-language novelist of his day and his success had helped to place Edinburgh at the forefront of British publishing, outside of London (Duncan 21-22). His defection from Constable to Blackwood and Sons was a major victory for the ambitious publisher. However, William Blackwood's coup was to prove short-lived. Scott's tale of the South, *The Black Dwarf,* adhered to the agreed formula of a single volume tale but his tale of the West, *Old Mortality,* took on a life of its own, filling the three further agreed volumes. On the publication of these two novels, Scott, dissatisfied with his new publisher, chose to return to publishing his work with Constable, and the subsequent *Tales of my Landlord* were published with him. For a fleeting moment Scott had been a Blackwood author, but this moment was to have a powerful impact on the direction of the publishing house. In particular, the early graveyard scenes of *Old Mortality*, introduced by the virulently parochial Cleishbotham, were to plant the germ of a way of imagining Scotland, and her role in early nineteenth-century Britain, which would typify the tales and 'Scotch novels' published by Blackwood and Sons over the next two decades. As Ian Duncan has argued, Scott's *Tales of my Landlord* 'opened a path for the characteristically "Blackwoodian fiction" that followed' (34).

Regionalism and the burial of the dead were to sit at the very heart of this new set of Blackwoodian conventions. This thesis charts the role of the dead in the writings of the *Blackwood's* group, a group of writers who published their work in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and with the major Edinburgh-based publisher Blackwood and Sons during the early decades of the nineteenth century. It argues for a particular and sustained interest in the relationship between burial, place and society across these texts. The *Blackwood's* authors' depictions of graveyards display the dual interest in regionalism and history evinced in the opening chapters of *Old Mortality*, but also seek to articulate different, shifting relationships between Scotland, Britain and the past. A number of the tales published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* and the 'Scotch Novels' published by Blackwood and Sons, depict an idealised, characteristically provincial, image of death and

burial. The peaceful kirkyard is an emblem of the emotive, Tory political rhetoric adopted by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.* It functions to create a sense of group identity amongst readers who are encouraged to recognise the rural Scottish kirkyard as a fictionalised point of common origin for the imagined *Blackwood's* community.

However, the magazine's use of this motif is complicated by *Blackwood's* status as a modern monthly magazine addressed to a growing urban middle-class readership. The pre-enlightenment Parish state celebrated in *Blackwood's* regional writing comes into conflict with the magazine's post-enlightenment milieu, and literary form. Alongside the undisturbed kirkyards of the *Blackwood's* group's regional fiction, images of unquiet graves and unburied bodies register this tension. The displaced dead in the writings of the *Blackwood's* group can function to critique or reinforce the magazine's depictions of the kirkyard as an emblem of social order. In many instances they are ambiguous, opening up questions about social identity without offering solutions which will allow these issues to be neatly buried again. Where Scott, in his preface to *Old Mortality,* seems to advocate that we 'rake not up the ashes of our ancestors' and instead look reverentially at the mouldering tomb, the authors of the *Blackwood's* group are continually digging up the kirkyard.

Death in Romantic Scotland: Thinking about the *Blackwood's* Graveyard within Death Studies and Romantic Studies

The last four decades have seen major changes in the remit of Romantic Studies. Scholarship on the Romantic period has increasingly sought to challenge the dominance of the so-called big six: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Keats, Shelley and Byron, and a small sub-canon of connected authors and poets. This change in the parameters of the field has been led by two major developments; the recognition of alternative Romantic canons which take account of feminist, postcolonial and 'four nations' scholarship, and an increasing awareness of a romantic print culture which extends beyond novels and poetry collections to the sphere of magazines, periodicals, newspapers and street literature. As Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright argue, the field 'has moved away from the idea of a dominant 'Romanticism' that unifies the literary period as a coherent cultural moment, largely because…that unification proceeded through exclusion, -not only of kinds of writers, but also of kinds of literary production' (3).

Both of these changes have contributed to a reinvigorated critical interest in the influential Edinburgh periodical *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.* As the role of periodical culture in the formation of literary networks has begun to take a principle role in Romantic studies, and the concept of a specifically Scottish Romanticism has become an object of increasing study, the need to understand the role of *Blackwood's* in the formation of Romantic Edinburgh's literary networks has taken on new importance. The publication of Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts's edited collection *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine* in 2013 assembled a wide variety of scholars approaching *Blackwood's* from different perspectives; highlighting the breadth of the magazine's influence. The focuses of the collection's chapters highlight the areas of Romantic studies which have benefitted from renewed interest in *Blackwood's*, covering topics as various as book history and print culture, the medical humanities, Scottish literature, colonial studies and the particular careers of the authors James Hogg and John Wilson.

This collection was preceded by a wide field of studies which have recognised the importance of the influential periodical to different areas of Romantic-era research. In *Scott's Shadow* (2007), Ian Duncan places the magazine, alongside arch rival the *Edinburgh Review* and, of course, Walter Scott, at the heart of post-Enlightenment Edinburgh's literary boom. Studies such as Richard Cronin's *Paper Pellets* (2010), identify *Blackwood's* as a periodical with a particularly important role in the development of the magazine as a publishing medium in Britain. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick's 1995 collection, *Tales of Terror from Blackwood's Magazine,* brought the magazine's early sensation fiction together in a modern edition for the first time, highlighting the *Blackwood's* role in the genesis of the gothic short story. Tim Killick's *British Short Fiction in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Rise of the Tale* (2007) further notes *Blackwood's* important role in the evolution of modern short fiction. Finally, Megan Coyer's forthcoming monograph *Literature and Medicine in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1817-1858* will look at the way that the magazine engaged with contemporary medicine.

The motif which this thesis explores, the burial of the dead, has been recognised as prevalent within studies of the *Blackwood's* authors but has not as yet occasioned a book length study. However, the recent growth and expansion of nineteenth-century death studies as a field of research makes a re-examination of this trope particularly timely. Following the publication of Ruth Richardson's field defining study *Death, Dissection and*

the Destitute in 1987, the first publication to truly explore the historical context and influence of the 1832 anatomy act, several historical studies such as Helen MacDonald's *Possessing the Dead* (2010) and Michael Sappol's *A Traffic of Dead Bodies* (2002) have used her analysis of 'the function and meaning of death in nineteenth century Britain' to shed further light on the status of anatomy at the time, often expanding the scope of their work to wider international contexts (Richardson, *Death* 1). Within literary studies, books such as Tim Marshall's *Murdering to Dissect* (1995) A.W. Bates' *The Anatomy of Robert Knox* (2010) and Caroline McCracken-Flesher's *The Doctor Dissected* (2012) incorporate the historical data which has emerged from this increasing study of the relationship between nineteenth-century death culture and anatomy legislation into their studies of contemporary literature. Recent publications in English Romantic Studies have also increasingly looked at the way in which contemporary ideas about death inform English Romantic writing, in studies like Kurt Fosso's *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the Bonds of Mourning* (2003) and Mark Sandy's *Romanticism, Memory and Mourning* (2013). These texts have been important to the formation of my argument, which seeks to situate the *Blackwood's* group texts in the context of the last thirty years of death scholarship. What differentiates my own study from this field is that it focuses on representations of death written or published in Scotland during the Romantic period, whilst looking beyond the perennially fascinating figures of Burke and Hare. The West Port murders, of course, reoccur in the texts I will be looking at, functioning as cultural references in a wide range of conversations where the concept of burial is discussed. However, in using these murders as a point of reference rather than a structuring narrative for my study, I hope to build on the work which has already animated this field.

Critics have traditionally characterised *Blackwood's Magazine* through reference to the uncanny dead. In 1876 Robert Louis Stevenson was already drawing on metaphors of the grave in his review of the new edition of the collected *Noctes Ambrosianae:* 'Bygone personalities have an odd smack of the grave; and we feel moved to turn the tables on the high-stepping satirist, and remind him, with something of the irony of country headstones, that not only they, but he- not only the rejected Whiglings, but the redoubtable Kit North- point the moral of dust to dust' (230). In 1944 Ralph M. Wardle commented that: 'the *Noctes* succeeded in embalming conservative opinion in its own juice and incidentally, in preserving for later students a vivid likeness of contemporary men and manners' (9). More

recently Andrew Noble cruelly suggests that 'much of Wilson's prose is impregnated with the spirit of a Scottish graveyard on a wet Sunday' (126). Ian Duncan and John Barrell have identified the figure which Ian Duncan terms 'the upright corpse' as an important symbol in Scottish Romantic writing. In particular, within the writings of *Blackwood's* contributor James Hogg Duncan argues that: 'the botched revival of the past raises a lifeless body animated by an alien, unnatural, and inscrutable power' (207). Mark Parker titles the third chapter of *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism* 'The Burial of Romanticism: the first twenty instalments of the *Noctes Ambrosianae*'.

In this thesis I build upon previous scholars' acknowledgements of the importance of the unquiet dead to the *Blackwood's* group, contextualising the group's representations of disrupted deaths and burials within their depictions of the 'quiet' grave. I argue that the grave, and particularly the graveyard, are key representative spaces in the writings of the *Blackwood's* group. In fact, the group are to a certain extent characterised by their interest in using grave-space as a figure within their work. The prevalence of the rising bodies of the dead in *Blackwood's* and in books published by Blackwood and Sons cannot be fully understood without recognising the way in which Scottish rural kirkyards operate to articulate a Burkean vision of British society in Blackwoodian regional fiction. The meanings articulated through unburied bodies are therefore directly built upon the meaning of the undisturbed *Blackwood's* kirkyard.

Bringing together the *Blackwood's* group's gothic and regional fiction traditions and placing them alongside the broader character of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* reveals that death has a complex, figurative role across Blackwoodian writing. Examining the texts across genres also highlights the inter-generic interactions which characterised the periodical, and the way in which *Blackwood's* employed the magazine form to induce a sense of sociable conversation between articles and tales, and between readers and contributors. In my conclusions, I will look at the possible impact of engaging with the magazine's virtual sociability and inter-generic interaction on *Blackwood's* Studies and Scottish studies more generally.

The New Reading Public: Politics in the Periodicals and the Birth of *Blackwood's Magazine*

There are two particularly important contexts for thinking about the emergence of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, one political and the other commercial. In their introduction to *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine,* Robert Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts identify the Blackwoodians as members of the second generation of Romantic writers, a group whose work was informed by the political inheritance of the revolutionary era and the expansion of the British readership:

> The second generation of Romantic writers and critics were not only acutely conscious of the political, intellectual and social outcomes of the revolutionary era which ended with Waterloo, but clearly set out to fashion their cultural arena in ways that would, depending on their political predilection, retard or further the cause of social reformation ushered in by the revolution. At the same time the growing awareness of new sections of society that could be included within the notion of the reading public led to the differentiation of tones and registers adopted by the new professional journals, which catered to them (8).

These two influences converge in the increasingly crowded early nineteenth-century periodical marketplace. Issues of readership identity and political partisanship informed the character of the new magazines of the period as they jockeyed for position.

David Manderson has stated that 'the nineteenth-century Briton often referred to himself as living in "the age of periodicals"' (88). Periodicals had been a feature of British literary culture since the seventeenth-century and their numbers had been expanding throughout the eighteenth (Bowers and Keeran 118). The *Gentleman's Magazine,* founded in 1731, is recognised as the first English language periodical to bear the title 'Magazine' and became one of the most important periodicals of the eighteenth-century. However, David Finkelstein argues that the boom in periodical publication, which gave birth to *Blackwood's* and its rival the *Edinburgh Review*, only really began in the early nineteenth century with the publication of the *Edinburgh*: 'prior to the founding of the *Edinburgh Review*, there existed few substantial literary journals in Britain' (201). The subsequent growth of periodical culture in the early nineteenth century corresponded with expansion of the reading public and the growth of a professional publishing industry with access to increasingly sophisticated technology. As Richard Cronin summarises 'the new magazines

were products of what had become an increasingly mechanised publishing industry' and 'this newly mechanised industry of periodical publication was sustained by a newly created mass readership and written by a new class of professional periodical writers' (85-86).These changes brought with them an expansion in the publication of ephemeral magazines and periodicals for different readerships. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine's* emergence and sudden success took place in a rapidly changing literary culture where the nature of both readership and authorship was being revolutionised by new technology and increasing literacy.

This revolution within the literary marketplace corresponded with a period in which the structures of British society appeared to be changing rapidly, and actual political revolutions in France and American remained in recent memory. The appearance of the two great Edinburgh periodicals corresponded with a historical moment in which post-union Scotland was experiencing particularly marked changes in its social makeup. Gifford et al. characterise Scotland at this time as a country 'in a ferment of change' (194). Early nineteenth-century Scotland was rapidly becoming an urbanised nation:

> In 1801, 21 per cent of the Scottish population lived in towns with 5,000 or more inhabitants. By 1831 this had risen to nearly one-third of a national population was itself increasing more rapidly than in the later eighteenth-century (Devine 220).

This rate of urbanisation was amongst the most rapid in Western Europe, far outpacing change in England and Wales. Labouring-class Scots migrated from rural regions to the cities and towns, pulled by the growth of industry and pushed by agricultural improvement. This growing urban working-class was perceived by many, in the context of the revolutions of the 1790s, as a possible political threat to the existing social order; Andrew Noble argues that middle- and upper-class Scots feared a 'revolutionary backlash' from the unprecedented numbers of workers crowding the slum tenements of the expanding cities (135).

Just as the roles of lower classes Scots were in flux, so too was the identity of the middle-class. A growing British middle-class had been gaining power and influence during the eighteenth-century, effecting what Gary Kelly has characterised as a bourgeoisie

'cultural revolution' (3). Srinivas Aravamudan summarises this transformation of public values: 'sentimentalism and middle-class professional culture consolidated a new effort to separate from aristocratic dissipations and court society as well as the riotous tendencies of the mob and the working classes' (274). Although the landed classes retained formal political power, the middle-classes were growing in importance across Britain. Richard Cronin has argued that this professional-class dominance of cultural life was first noticeable in Edinburgh, where lawyers, doctors and ministers predominated within civic life by the early nineteenth century (147). The emergence of groundbreaking periodicals targeting this increasingly powerful audience in the city is therefore unsurprising. Early nineteenth-century Scotland was an increasingly urban nation where the lives of workers and the 'middling sort' were transforming at an arguably unprecedented rate. The new periodicals reflect this changing society: Jon Klancher has argued that 'nineteenth-century writers used the periodical to define, individuate, and expand audiences whose interpretations of the world seemed more and more to conflict' (184).

David Manderson describes how during the early years of the nineteenth century 'the *Edinburgh Review,* a Whig-leaning publication suffused with enlightenment values and regarded more highly than any other for its critical opinions, held sway' in Britain (88). The *Edinburgh Review,* founded in 1802, was published by Archibald Constable, Walter Scott's publisher, and edited by Francis Jeffrey. In a period of polarised political partisanship in Edinburgh, the *Edinburgh Review* promoted a Whig agenda, which was committed to sustaining what Ian Duncan terms 'an oligarchic and republican ideal of citizenship based on civic virtue, developed in the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment'(14). The *Edinburgh* has been described by George Pottinger as 'a refined distillation of Enlightenment spirit'; it was committed to the moral theories of the Scottish thinkers of the eighteenth-century, and favoured political economy, and modest reform of the franchise (6). Alongside reviews, the *Edinburgh* published 'articles on economics, travel, science, medicine and education', its content generally informative rather than overtly entertaining (Segerblad 6). This combination of discerning criticism and liberal politics placed the *Edinburgh* at the forefront of the British periodical marketplace; Pottinger asserts that 'the *Edinburgh* became the arbiter of the literary scene' (5). William Blackwood, a rival Edinburgh publisher, recognised a gap in the market for a Tory magazine capable of

competing with the *Edinburgh*[1]and Constable's failing monthly, the *Scot's Magazine.* Blackwood's first attempt at a rival publication was the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* which was launched in the Spring of 1817, under the editorship of Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn. This magazine failed to gain traction in the crowded periodical marketplace and by the end of the year Blackwood had fired his editors, taken editorial control of the publication and recruited contributors John Wilson, James Hogg and J.G. Lockhart to help relaunch the magazine.

Bursting onto the periodical market in October 1817, with an infamous first edition which featured libellous attacks on the Edinburgh Literary establishment (in the form of the 'Chaldee Manuscript') and famous London-based Romantic poets like Keats and Shelley ('The Cockney School of Poetry'), *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*[2] was an instant sensation. A simultaneously innovative, and virulently conservative, periodical, Richard Cronin argues that *Blackwood's* pushed the limits of the magazine form by placing different categories of writing conversationally alongside one another for the first time: 'the *Blackwood's* innovation was to refuse a decorous division of its various contents into different sections. The fun, the theology, and the thingumbob were allowed to jostle against one other' (155). Tim Killick argues that the magazine also employed fiction in new ways:

> from its start *Blackwood's* encouraged new ways of thinking about storytelling. No fragment, aside comment, or sketch was too insignificant for inclusion if it incorporated the germ of a tale… writers began to test the limits of genre and their tales crossed and recrossed the lines between fiction and non-fiction, cloaking themselves in multiple voices and blending form and mode (164).

Articles, reviews and tales mingled with one another in *Blackwood's* in a way that privileged style over information, the emotional over the rational.

Blackwood's was conceived as a Tory alternative to Constable's rival publications, and perhaps the defining feature of the new magazine from its first edition onwards was its

[1] George Pottinger notes that 'John Murray had brought out the *Quarterly Review* in 1809 in direct opposition to the *Edinburgh Review* but it had not so far challenged the supremacy of Jeffrey's journal' (168).
[2] Sometimes affectionately referred to as 'Maga'.

adversarial agenda. The magazine's tendency to employ personalities in its reviews drew contributors into high profile disagreements with other writers, most famously in the case of the war of words between J.G Lockhart and the editor of the *London Magazine,* James Scott, which ended in a deadly duel[3]. However, an aggressive and often libellous reviewing style was not the only aspect of the magazine which was oppositional. The very form and style of writing which the magazine adopted was designed to contrast with that employed by its Whig rival *The Edinburgh Review*. David Manderson asserts that: 'against the *Edinburgh's* Whig politics it was Tory, against the *Edinburgh's* controlled, balanced and rational voice it was provocative and sensual, a celebration of the appetites, especially in the *Noctes*' (92). *Blackwood's* is to a certain extent defined by what it is not and what it does not want to be, whether that antagonism is directed at the Whiggish *Edinburgh Review,* or the London-based *London Magazine* and 'Cockney poets'. Ian Duncan identifies a 'set of political, commercial, and generic antagonisms- Whig versus Tory, Blackwood versus Constable, review versus magazine, essay versus fiction, political economy versus national culture' which inspire the specific ethos of *Blackwood's Magazine* (27).

An article titled 'Is the *Edinburgh Review* a Religious and Patriotic Work?' published in *Blackwood's* in 1818 by major contributor John Wilson, casts the *Edinburgh* as an irreligious and unpatriotic publication, implicitly suggesting the orthodox and patriotic aspirations of *Blackwood's*. Wilson accuses the *Edinburgh* of damaging religious belief in Britain by perpetuating Enlightenment-era scepticism, and of unpatriotic criticism of the British Government during the Napoleonic Wars. The author launches an attack on 'the sceptical and too often infidel, character of the *Edinburgh Review*' which he argues has contributed to 'a shameful ignorance of the evinces of Christianity' that 'distinguishes secular men of education in Scotland' (228). He also cites the *Edinburgh's* criticisms of the high rates of tax imposed during the Continental Wars as treasonous, terming the Reviewers 'an angry, irritated, unpatriotic, despot-loving band of disappointed partisans, alike destitute of wisdom and of magnanimity' (232). Wilson holds up the example of 'the great statesmen of the elder times of England's glory' as the antithesis of the Whig reviewers:

[3] Tom Mole further discusses *Blackwood's* use of personalities in his chapter '*Blackwood's* "Personalities"' in *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine* 89-99.

> In dark and perilous days, they counselled resistance unto the death; submission was a thought that had no existence; and there was no difficulty--no danger—no suffering, that was not to be surmounted, faced, and endured, rather than that the bright name of England should be dimmed, or one inch shorn from her dominion. But if we turn to the recorded counsels and prophecies of our modern Whigs, we shall hear nothing but of disaster (233).

Wilson cites pre-Enlightenment heroism as the antithesis of the Whig approach to the nation. In making these criticisms of *The Edinburgh Review, Blackwood's* less describes the *Edinburgh* than defines itself. In finding fault with the 'sceptical', 'unpatriotic' *Edinburgh,* Wilson lays out the ground work for the ethos which would inform *Blackwood's*- one which was to be self-consciously patriotic, religious, and grounded in a Tory approach to history.

Central to this self-presentation was *Blackwood's* adoption of a specifically Scottish identity. Emphasising the magazine's Scottish roots might seem counterintuitive in combination with the magazine's avowed British patriotism, however the magazine employs an emotive form of cultural nationalism to place Scotland at the centre of a Tory Britain. Mark Schoenfield describes how '*Blackwood's* represents its own politics as emerging from the historical condition of Scotland as the trace of the medieval within Britain and an historical pageantry of customs, traditions and monuments' (*British* 102). The *Blackwood's* depiction of Scotland is designed specifically to counter the scepticism and lack of patriotism Wilson attributes to the *Edinburgh* by characterising Scotland as a repository for pre-enlightenment British values. In spite of Edinburgh's status as the avowed centre of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and the rapid pace of contemporary urbanisation north of the border, *Blackwood's* characterises its origins as rooted in the traditions of an older Scotland still visible in rural, labouring-class culture[4]. The Scotland of *Blackwood's* group fiction draws upon the regionalism of Scott's *Tales of my Landlord* whilst eschewing the sweep of stadial history often apparent in his novels. This opposition to stadial historiography was Anthony Jarrells has argued: 'part of the magazine's general opposition to the political economic stance that both marked the previous generation of literati in Scotland, and continued to provide the philosophical underpinnings for the most dominant periodical voice of the period, the *Edinburgh Review*'

[4] Although, as I will discuss in chapter two, this labouring-class culture was heavily censored and edited for *Blackwood's* middle-class audience.

(267). Against a vision of contemporary society which privileged free trade, improvement and the individual, *Blackwood's* presents an image of a regional and historic Scotland aiming 'not only to provide an oppositional view to the *Edinburgh Review's* whiggish embrace of commerce and sceptical philosophy, but also to revive a literary culture' (Jarrells 267).

This identity rooted in Scottish tradition was just one of the ways in which *Blackwood's* invoked tradition in its self-representation. The homosocial, conversational tone of the magazine was also inherently nostalgic, an extension of William Blackwood's attempt to revitalise 'the older Edinburgh tradition of the publishing house as literary gathering place' (Finkelstein 204). One of the places in which the magazine's self-fashioning is most apparent is in a series of vignettes which appeared in the magazine, known as the *Noctes Ambrosianae*. In these sketches the different aspects of the *Blackwood's* brand are brought together in a single representative scene: a small group of literary men gathered convivially in an Inn. The *Noctes were* a series of 71 sketches which were featured in the magazine between 1822 and 1835. A recurring and distinctive feature of the magazine, the *Noctes* were a series of topical, imaginary conversations between the alter-egos of key contributors to the magazine, characters from literature and contemporary figures of note. Mark Parker gives a useful summary of the series:

> the cast of the *Noctes* included North, the fictional editor of *Blackwood's,* Timothy Tickler, a waspish reviewer for the magazine, Sir Morgan O'Doherty, Maginn's alter-ego, a stereotypically irascible Irishman, and the Ettrick Shepherd, loosely based on James Hogg. The *Noctes* were presented as a transcript of an evening's talk and song- as well as a record of some truly epic drinking and eating- at a local Edinburgh tavern, Ambrose's' (11).

The reported conversations between the characters often referenced the subjects discussed in other articles and tales within the magazine, with the discursive format allowing for what Parker terms a 'dialogic critical style' (132). Early editions of the *Noctes* were authored collectively by William Maginn, John Gibson Lockhart, and John Wilson, but the sketches were increasingly authored by Wilson as the series progressed. The *Noctes* modelled a type of informal, homosocial discourse which was central to the magazine's brand. Reading the magazine was intended to give the sensation of joining an intimate

social gathering of raucous Edinburgh Tories. As Richard Cronin describes, the magazine 'worked to transform the anonymous consumer into a valued member of an exclusive, brilliant, and sparklingly entertaining social circle' (87). The masculine cast of this gathering was also central to *Blackwood's* self-fashioning: '*Blackwood's* was appealing to a new sense that men were a beleaguered sex, marooned in the feminised cultural modernity of the early nineteenth century, a modernity from which Ambrose's tavern represented an escape, as did the magazine that the frequenters of the tavern produced' (Cronin 219).

Alongside the magazine, William Blackwood's publishing house produced a characteristic type of novel. As Gillian Hughes notes: 'during the 1820s Blackwood promoted a surge of Edinburgh novel publication, producing works of "Scotch" fiction by authors associated with the magazine (including Gleig, Galt, Hamilton, Hogg, Lockhart, Moir, and Wilson) several of which had first been serialised there' (179). Capitalising on the popularity of Scottish subjects in the wake of the phenomenal success of Walter Scott's Waverley novels, Blackwood and Sons published a large number of novels by popular Scottish authors that focused on Scottish themes. Francis Jeffrey's 1823 article for the *Edinburgh Review* famously characterises a group of Blackwood published novels written by key *Blackwood's* writers (John Galt's *Annals of the Parish, The Ayrshire Legatees, Sir Andrew Wylie, The Steamboat, The Entail* and *Ringan Gilhaize:* J.G. Lockhart's *Valerius, Adam Blair and Reginald Dalton*; and John Wilson's *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* and *The Trials of Margaret Lindsay)* as 'Secondary Scottish Novels'. Jeffrey, writing for the *Edinburgh Review,* describes these works as 'imitations of the inimitable novels', emphasising the influence of Scott on Blackwood and Sons' premier novelists, and characterising their work as derivative and opportunistic (160).

Sarah Green's 1824 novel *Scotch Novel Reading; or, Modern Quakery, by a Cockney* also mocks the rash of Scottish writing overtaking the British marketplace in the early decades of the century. The novel attacks Walter Scott, but particularly homes in on his imitators: Ian Duncan comments that in *Scotch Novel Reading* 'the blame for the blizzard lies less with Scott himself…than with a proliferation of cheap knock-offs' (32). Green's adoption of the title 'a Cockney' is clearly aimed at the *Blackwood's* authors, referencing Lockhart's high profile attacks on the London literati in the 'Cockney School of Poetry' series. The novel charts the re-education and romantic trials of Alice Fennel, a born 'Cockney' with a ridiculous mania for all things 'Scotch'. Juliet Shields has argued that the

publication of the novel 'demonstrates that the "showers of Scotch novels" published during the first three decades of the nineteenth century constituted a literary phenomenon remarkable enough to warrant a three-volume warning against these novels' potentially pernicious effects on English readers' (919). *Scotch Novel Reading* documents a moment in literary history where the market for novels appeared to be flooded with new Scottish writing. What both Jeffrey's dismissive review and Green's censorious 'Cockney' novel illustrate is that the *Blackwood's* group authors were identified as writers at the forefront of this phenomenon, feeding the public's apparently insatiable appetite for Scottish tales.

A Conversation between Gentlemen: Defining the *Blackwood's* Group

As these two contemporary critiques indicate, there is a strong precedent for looking at the works of an identifiable *'Blackwood's* group' together, although consensus on which authors constitute the 'group' does vary depending on the focus of the study. George Douglas's 1897 book *The "Blackwood" Group* contains chapters on John Wilson, John Galt, D.M. Moir, Susan Ferrier, Michael Scott and Thomas Hamilton, and is intended as a companion to separate monographs in the 'Famous Scots' Series which look at John Gibson Lockhart and James Hogg. More recently Alvin Sullivan, in his summary of the history of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* identified John Gibson Lockhart, John Wilson and James Hogg as '*Blackwood's* three major contributors' (46). Robert Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts give a longer list of key contributors to the magazine during its early years: 'in the 1820s, *Blackwood's* went from strength to strength. Its key writers were Wilson, Lockhart, Maginn, Hogg, De Quincey, Moir and Felicia Hemans' (3). In *Scott's Shadow* Ian Duncan identifies a group of fiction writers who worked with the magazine and/or publisher: 'the chief fiction writers associated with Blackwood were Hogg, Galt, Lockhart, John Wilson, David Macbeth Moir, Thomas Hamilton and Susan Edmondstone Ferrier (the only one not also a contributor to the magazine)' (22). A core group of authors reoccur across these studies whilst others' inclusion depends on the focus of the particular author.

My own definition of the *Blackwood's* group tries to acknowledge the way in which *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* fostered an image of itself, and the Blackwood and Sons publishing house, as a convivial and conversational circle of contributors, rather than a

rigid, formalised professional hierarchy. I have therefore included texts written by universally acknowledged 'core Blackwoodians' like John Wilson and James Hogg, alongside writers who contributed to the conversation more sporadically. I am also looking specifically at authors who took part in a particular discussion within the magazine- one which engaged with the social role of the dead. The Blackwoodians discussed in this thesis are therefore: John Wilson, J.G. Lockhart, James Hogg, D.M. Moir, Henry Thomson, Robert McNish, John Galt, Samuel Warren, James Montgomery and Thomas de Quincey.

The majority of the texts examined are taken from authors who repeatedly published with Blackwood and whose reputations and careers were tied to those of the publishing house and its infamous magazine. A number of these authors also featured as characters in the *Noctes Ambrosianae.* At the heart of the magazine were a cohort of ambitious Tory writers who were regular contributors to the periodical, amongst them John Wilson, John Gibson Lockhart, D.M. Moir, James Hogg, William Maginn and John Galt. As these authors are also central to this thesis, I am going to introduce the figures who will play recurrent roles within my arguments.

Central to the early success of *Blackwood's* was major contributor and de-facto editor John Wilson. A reduced man of leisure, turned Edinburgh advocate, Wilson was recruited by William Blackwood in 1817 to help revive the publisher's relaunched periodical, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* and had a key role in selecting and producing content for the magazine. Sullivan has highlighted the scale of Wilson's contribution to *Blackwood's*: 'John Wilson contributed 500 articles over a thirty-five year period' (Sullivan 48). Alongside his own writing, Wilson assumed increasing editorial control of the magazine in the course of his career; George Pottinger argues that 'it was Wilson who selected, and often provided most of the contents' (175). Taking Christopher North as his Blackwoodian alter-ego, the author and essayist also had a decisive role in the authorship of the *Noctes.*

Wilson was at the time, and has remained, a divisive character. Ambitious and ruthless, Wilson 's career involved high profile disagreements with many of his peers, and a controversial, arguably nepotistic, appointment to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1820. Wilson's legacy as an author and poet is often characterised as negative, Andrew Noble damningly argues that 'Wilson was significantly responsible for setting back Scottish literature for over a century' (149). However,

dismissing Wilson as a purely regressive influence means simplifying the impact his work at *Blackwood's* had on the trajectory of Scottish writing. As the magazine has been increasingly recognised as a pioneering publication, scholars have been forced to reassess Wilson's influence on Scottish writing of the nineteenth century. Robert Morrison has highlighted that Wilson's 'impact on his era was various, profound and enduring' and that the author 'gave the immensely influential *Blackwood's* its tone, its range, and its fearlessness' ('Blackwood's Berserker' 1). *Blackwood's* is a reflection, primarily, of the interests and ideas of Wilson. It is Wilson who sets the agenda for the magazine, and *Blackwood's* 'party line' is thus to a certain extent a reflection of Wilson's aesthetic and political sensibilities. A more nuanced approach to Wilson's legacy is therefore required to fully understand the influence of his conservative, witty and violently contradictory magazine.

It's important to note here that whilst I will be thinking less about John Gibson Lockhart's writing, he was also a key contributor during his time at *Blackwood's.* Lockhart joined the magazine from 1817 with Wilson, and wrote for the magazine until assuming the role of editor at the London-based *Quarterly Review* in 1825. He shared the magazine's editorial responsibilities with Wilson- Pottinger cites letters written by Lockhart to contributors on behalf of *Blackwood's* which suggest that he 'saw himself in an editorial role' (175). Lockhart was the son of a minister of the Church of Scotland and had, like Wilson, trained for the Bar, making him another of the Blackwood Group's unwilling professionals with literary ambitions. During his years at *Blackwood's* he was a notorious satirist, involved in the 'Chaldee Manuscript' scandal and the author of the 'Cockney School of Poets' series. He also translated German romantic texts for publication in the magazine, contributing to *Blackwood's* reputation for German literature.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the rural focus of my argument, the figure of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, looms large within this thesis. Hogg published extensively in *Blackwood's* and with Blackwood and Sons. His stories featured in the magazine even prior to its relaunch as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817 and he took a hand in the creation of the infamous 'Chaldee Manuscript'. His fictionalised alter-ego The Ettrick Shepherd featured in almost every episode of the *Noctes Ambrosianae.* Hogg also had a very public, troubled relationship with the magazine and its publisher. However, examinations of Hogg's relationship with the Blackwoodian 'rural tale' within scholarship

have been, in the main, secondary to those which look at the way his writing interrogates the rapidly forming conventions of the Scottish 'historical novel', as exemplified in the works of Scott. Beyond 'Scott's Shadow', however, is a career-defining preoccupation with the ideations of rural Scotland which the *Blackwood's* group made currency in early nineteenth century literature. Hogg 's position as rural transplant into the world of Edinburgh letters, at once central and peripheral in the *Blackwood's* group, means that his engagements with these conventions are particularly ambivalent. Death and the graveyard feature again and again in Hogg's rural writing; he revisits these scenes throughout his career in prose fiction, at once reinforcing and deconstructing the emerging conventions of representation synonymous with *Blackwood's.*

Ayrshire author John Galt also published some of his most famous stories and novels with Blackwood*,* and characters from these texts made appearances in the *Noctes,* although Galt himself did not. Although Galt's writing featured many of the attributes characteristic of *Blackwood's Magazine's* narrative fiction, 'his settings, comic characters, subject matter, complicated nationalism and superb use of Scots ideally suited him to the *Blackwood's context',* Robert Morrison has commented that Galt was not always a natural fit within the *Blackwood's* group: 'Galt's moderate conservativism, light humour, and subtle sense of irony often put him decidedly out of step with *Blackwood's* celebration of extravagance, vitriol, buffoonery, and bellicose High Toryism' ('Angular Magizinity' 258, 257). Although he was undeniably a member of the *Blackwood's* group, Galt's writing, like Hogg's, often features a perspective which questions or modifies the magazine's 'party line'.

Alongside these generally acknowledged Blackwoodians, I have chosen to look at the writings of some authors whose association with the publisher and publication was more short-lived and some whose relationships with them were more complicated or problematic, such as Thomas De Quincey, James Montgomery, and Henry Thomson. I have also included Samuel Warren and Robert McNish, Blackwood published writers who were not part of the first cohort of *Blackwood's* contributors but who started to write for the periodical in the 1820s and 1830s as the magazine transitioned from its turbulent and

controversial beginnings to a more stable position as an established, establishment magazine[5].

Walter Scott is both a constant presence and a noticeable absence within this thesis. In *Scott's Shadow* Ian Duncan has traced the absolute ubiquity of Scott's influence on the world of Scottish letters at the turn of the nineteenth century, his 'unprecedented ascendency' (xi). The characterisation of Romantic Scotland as 'Scott's-land' is supported by numerous studies of the period: Douglas Gifford, Sarah Dunnigan and Alan McGillivray's guide to *Scottish Literature* refers to the early decades of the nineteenth century as 'The Age of Scott' (193). This thesis does not seek to dispute the importance of Scott's role in the formation of a Scottish Romanticism. However, as has often been the case with the works of Hogg, Scott's importance has tended to obscure the other relationships which informed Scottish Romantic writing. Whilst the influence of Scott's historicism and the localism of the *Tales of my Landlord* series form a foundation for the *Blackwood's* school of rural fiction, it is the rapid, personality-driven interaction between the different Blackwoodians, the recycling of images and themes to wildly different purposes, which I will be foregrounding within this dissertation.

The homosocial focus of this study means that I have also omitted the female writers who are sometimes classed as members of the *Blackwood's* group. A small number of women writers, amongst them Felicia Hemans, Susan Ferrier and Caroline Bowles, published their work within the magazine or through Blackwood and Sons during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Whilst these women's work does often represent death and burial as symbolic moments, I have made the difficult decision not to look at their contributions in this study. This decision was taken because women occupied a particularly complicated and fraught position on the very edge of the *Blackwood's* group. None of the female contributors were ever featured as characters in the *Noctes Ambrosianae* and, although their writing is discussed and reviewed in the magazine, they are not generally involved in the rivalries and exchanges which knit the male contributors

[5] Lawyer Samuel Warren's literary career was built upon the success of his serial *Diary of a Late Physician* which was published in *Blackwood's* between 1830 and 1837. Surgeon-Physician Robert McNish's first contribution to the magazine was published in 1825.

into a quasi-club. *Blackwood's* remained a homosocial context in which these authors are outsiders, unable to take part in the overarching maleness of the publication. Instead these female Blackwoodians often drew more heavily on the feminine traditions of the Scottish national tale and domestic novel. Although I will discuss issues of gender representation within the magazine extensively, *Blackwood's* overwhelmingly masculine ethos and gentlemen's club atmosphere means that this thesis will focus exclusively on male contributors and their conceptions of social connection. Looking at how women fit into this milieu is one of the ways in which I hope to extend the project in the future. For now, I will focus on *Blackwood's* dominant self-definition as a conversation between gentlemen.

This thesis is predicated on the idea that the men who wrote for the publisher William Blackwood formed a close-knit but fractious community of writers in which ideas and themes circulated, and that the relationships between these Blackwoodians had a pervasive influence on their work. The intimate club-like atmosphere which the editors sought to create within the pages of the magazine required a high level of inter-textual reference and interaction between contributors. The ephemerality of the publication also meant that authors could be highly reactive, responding to recent articles and tales almost immediately. I try not to view the *Blackwood's* group as an isolated and self-feeding circuit- where possible contextualising their interests and generic decisions within the context of wider print culture. The primary focus of the thesis is fiction and poetry although where helpful I have referenced newspaper articles and accounts taken from popular print culture to contextualise the language and images used within these literary sources. *Blackwood's* thrived on quotation and intertextuality and I have tried to reflect the diversity of influences. What I hope I have achieved is a sense of a multi-facetted, and often highly political conversation about death and nation concentrated around the Blackwood and Sons publishing house in Edinburgh.

Community: Home, Region, Nation, Readership

At the heart of my ideas about the *Blackwood's* kirkyard is the relationship between this space and ideas of home, locale, readership and nation. I identify the revolutionary-era writings of Edmund Burke as the most obvious and pervasive source of this overarching image. However, this does not mean that my own approach to the

Blackwood's grave is not influenced by more modern ideas about the ways in which we think about community and nation.

This thesis examines the conception of the nation as a relationship founded in the local and familial, and mediated through the dead. This understanding of the modern nation state is famously articulated in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities.* Anderson opens *Imagined Communities* by describing the 'Grave of the Unknown Soldier' as a symbol of the modern nation. Gopal Balakrishnan argues that Anderson's Grave acts as a site which brings together traditional conceptions of death and more modern ideas of nationhood: 'this strange civic deity is the object of a ghostly communion reminiscent of an ancestor cult, but here intimacy is crossed with the anonymity of modern society- it does not seem to matter that there is no one in the vault' (62). The 'Grave of the Unknown Soldier' is a symbolic site which replicates the interpersonal loyalties of a familial community on a grand scale for the 'imagined' national community.

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson conceives of the modern nation state as 'an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (6). Anderson likens the 'imagined community' of the modern nation state to the religious communities which had existed prior to the modern nation. He suggests that the nation borrows strategies of self-identification from pre-existing religious group identities like 'Christendom', one of which is the concept of immortality:

> In Western Europe the eighteenth-century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought. The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear…What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning….If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical', the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future (11-12).

Print culture also has a role to play in the birth of this 'imagined community'. Anderson argues that the modern nation has roots in the emergence of vernacular

literature and the fall of Latin as Europe's primary administrative language: 'print languages laid the bases for national consciousness' through the creation of 'unified fields of exchange and communication', the stabilisation of a standardised language which 'helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of a nation' and the creation of hierarchies of dialects which solidified power relations between different groups and regions (44). Speakers of English or French could through literature understand themselves as members of a group of contemporary readers and speakers, and as members of a group which stretched back into the past and thus could be imagined to stretch into the future. Print culture offered another image of an immortal nation of ancestors, contemporaries and progeny.

Anderson is already aware in the opening pages of his study, of the wider applicability of the concept of an 'imagined community': 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined' (6). This thesis is in a sense about the way that different 'imagined communities' are interlaced, and can operate in relation to one another. How the community of readers and writers who read and contribute to a specific magazine imagine themselves as a group by identifying with imagined clubs, villages and graveyards, and how these imagined communities are constructions of an imagined nation. The layering of imagined community upon imagined community creates a complex type of identification which is at times as contradictory as *Blackwood's Magazine* itself. To read the magazine is to join an imagined community of readers, but in *Blackwood's* this identification is complicated by the magazine's use of images of smaller communities to engender belonging, the village and the club, and the way in which these groups are explicitly cast as images of the Scottish and British nation. Anderson describes vernacular print culture as a space in which readers become aware of being part of a nation of speakers and readers. In the case of *Blackwood's* these roles are reversed as national patriotism is co-opted to engender a group identity for the *Blackwood's* readership. Understanding the 'language' of *Blackwood's* whether that is Scots, pseudonym or literary allusion allows readers to claim membership of a community- the *Blackwood's* readership.

Exploring the Imagined Kirkyard

This thesis divides into three parts: a brief pre-history contextualising the *Blackwood's* kirkyard within eighteenth century approaches to death and burial; an extended examination of the role of the kirkyard in Blackwoodian regional fiction; and a series of chapters which look at texts which feature disrupted burials and unburied bodies. The first chapter looks at the increasingly political symbolism of the graveyard in eighteenth-century writing. Looking at Robert Blair's 'The Grave' (1746), Adam Smith's *Theory of Modern Sentiments* (1759), Henry MacKenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) and Edmund Burke's revolutionary era writings, I trace what Ester Schor has termed 'a transition from the "natural" sympathies of the Enlightenment to the "political" sympathies of a revolutionary age' in representations of death and mourning (75). In particular, I identify the conservative British nationalism evinced in Burke's images of the dead and their graves as an important influence on the way in which death is represented by *Blackwood*'s group authors. Both Burke and the *Blackwood's* group use a dual image of undisturbed graves and the disinterred dead to comment on contemporary society; the emotive images of the disturbed and undisturbed dead act as an absolute, unquestionable symbol of chaos and order, countering the increasing scepticism and subjectivity of Enlightenment approaches to sympathetic connection and death.

Chapter two focuses on the role of death, burial and particularly kirkyards in Blackwoodian regional fiction. I look at the way in which John Wilson's story collection *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* (1822) draws upon contemporary conservative religious didacticism, and reactionary representations of the Scottish rural Lowlands, to create an idealised Burkean image of rural Scottish life, which casts the kirkyard as the symbolic heart of the rural community. I argue that just as the sepulchre, hearth, state and altar are synonymous with one another in Burke's treatise, in Wilson's rural fiction a similar allegiance between domestic and national space also exists, and is similarly mediated through images of death and the grave. I then briefly look at the ways in which J.G. Lockhart and James Hogg respond to, and modify, the *Blackwood's* kirkyard described in Wilson's writing.

The remaining four chapters all examine instances where burials are disrupted, and the *Blackwood's* kirkyard collides with contemporary social concerns. Each case-study looks at a different, contemporary issue which challenges or modifies the symbolic role of the grave, and examines *Blackwood's* group authors' responses to these topics in their poetry

and fiction. Chapter Three considers *Blackwood's* reputation for intra and extra textual violence. The first half of the chapter examines representations of violent death and spectatorship in three of the magazine's famous Tales of Terror; John Wilson's 'Extracts from Gosschen's Diary' (1818), Henry Thomson's 'La Revenant' (1827) and Robert McNish's 'An Execution in Paris' (1828). I then look at Thomas De Quincey's essays 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' (1827, 1839), arguing that these essays explore the fraught relationship between the magazine's self-presentation as exclusive club, and its ongoing commitment to depicting spectacular violence. Chapter four looks at the way in which three examples of bodysnatching tales published in *Blackwood's* (John Galt's 'The Buried Alive' (1821), D.M. Moir's *The Life of Mansie Waugh* (1824) and Samuel Warren's 'Gravedoings' (1830)) engage with the growth of anatomy-based medical training and research, and the increasing professionalisation of physicians and surgeons. It argues that in these tales the magazine's commitment to the 'traditional' society represented by the peaceful kirkyard has to be reconciled with its status as a publication associated with, and pandering to, the professional classes.

The fifth chapter looks at two texts published in response to the 1832 Cholera outbreak; James Montgomery's 'The Cholera Mount' (1832) and James Hogg's 'Some Strange Letters from Scotland' (1832). It links these texts to the ongoing politicised debates between contagionists and anticontagionists which raged during the outbreak, looking at the way in which each author uses the disease to map the social and economic connections which constitute the British nation. Finally, the sixth chapter explores representations of suicide in John Galt's *Annals of the Parish* (1821) and James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). In this chapter I look at the way in which the deaths of suicides became central to two debates about history and progress- one which sought to banish the punishment of suicides, through irregular burial, to the 'primitive' past, and another which characterised suicide as a symptom of unchecked progress and improvement. I then examine how Galt and Hogg's texts participate in these discussions, arguing that both authors use the suicide as a figure through which to complicate the concepts of both linear history and the Blackwoodian kirkyard.

Taken together these four case studies reveal the dynamism and flexibility of the kirkyard motif as it appeared in the writings of the *Blackwood's* group. My thesis points towards a more joined-up reading of death within the group's writings, countering

simplistic notions of a regressive proto-kailyard within the magazine's regional fiction in favour of an unsettled, evolving kirkyard which reoccurs across much of *Blackwood's* literary content. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* is the nucleus for this constant renegotiation. The magazine form allows engagements with contemporary issues to take place in real time, and for multiple authors to engage in conversation through their work. The graveyard mediates different levels of communal identity, at a time when these concepts were in a state of constant flux, and thus the unsettled graveyard becomes a potent figure for an unsettled public sphere.

Chapter One- Sympathy, Society and Death before *Blackwood's*

In his 1796 *Letter to a Noble Lord*, the Whig MP and political theorist, Edmund Burke returns to the criticism of the actions of the revolutionaries in France which had been a central theme in his political writing since the publication of *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in 1790. Imagining the Revolution through the prism of gothic imagery, Burke depicts the *sans-culottes* as grave-robbers who risk calling up a dangerous spectre through the disrespect they display toward the dead:

> Neither sex nor age- nor the sanctuary of the tomb is sacred to them. They have so determined a hatred to all the privileged orders, that they deny even to the departed the sad immunities of the grave . . . they unplumb the dead for bullets to assassinate the living. If all revolutionists were not proof against all caution, I should recommend it to their consideration, that no persons were ever known to history, either sacred or profane, to vex the sepulchure, and, by their sorceries, to call up the prophetic dead, with any other event, than the prediction of their own disastrous fate (5).

Burke's depiction of the revolutionaries functions to align the disturbed grave with political instability and national fragmentation, and to thereby implicitly associate the intact grave with social harmony. In this image each damaged 'sepulchre' becomes a small national monument which when unmolested serves to unite the nation with its history and the people with their ancestors. The destruction of these monuments represents a traumatic shattering of this relationship between past and present, a rending of the national social fabric which, Burke argues, will let loose a monster. As Sterrenburg comments, Burke utilises a common trope in anti-revolutionary writing which often described the insurrection of revolution as the invocation of a monster which would proceed to destroy the very parties who summoned it (147). Burke 'caustically warns these revolutionaries that their demonic nemesis is at hand. The prophetic dead will awaken, and turn upon the sorcerers of the revolutionary tribunal' (Sterrenburg 154). However, the fact that this monster is not just one of the revolutionaries' own making, but one that they have exhumed, creates an interesting alliance between the gothic and the conservative. As David McNally has argued: 'Burke's attack on the French Revolution is significant for mobilising plebeian anxieties about grave-robbing and dissection on behalf of a rhetorically charged

defence of the old order' (80). In this passage, then, Burke builds on the imagery of the gothic genre[6], altering it to fit his own politically conservative ends and combining it with popular concerns about bodysnatching: in effect creating a populist and conservative gothic idiom.

However, although it is perhaps one of the most heavily discussed influences on Burke's rhetoric, the gothic is not the only eighteenth-century discourse of the dead which underwrites his striking images of the graveyard under attack. The print culture of the eighteenth-century was crowded with graves. Paul Westover comments that from the mid-century, 'the Gothic was merely one important manifestation of a broader cultural phenomenon, signalled by a huge body of writing on death, the places of the dead, and the relation of both to literary creation and long-term reception' (6). In eighteenth-century writing the dead have an inherently social function. The graveyard poetry of the mid-century and Enlightenment theories of sympathy both used the dead to muse upon the relationship between the individual, society and the past. Graves and deathbeds also featured regularly in the sentimental fiction of the second half of the century, functioning as catalysts for sympathetic outpourings of grief and fellow-feeling. At a time of rapid social change and instability, the grave became a central motif for those interested in the relationship between the individual and society. By the late eighteenth-century, the grave in literature functioned as a multi-layered symbol which could be used to many different ends and which allowed almost unparalleled inter-textual reference. As Ruth Richardson has commented: 'on the one hand the so-called Graveyard Poets- Young, Blair, and Gray- pondered the human remains they took to be decently sleeping in the rural churchyard (1742-1745, 1743, and 1750 respectively) while on the other, the ghosts of the dead shrieked and gibbered through the fiction of the period in hundreds of Gothic novels' (*Death* 107).

In her 1995 book *Bearing the Dead,* Esther Schor traces what she describes as a 'transition from the "natural" sympathies of the Enlightenment to the "political" sympathies of a revolutionary age' through the representation of mourning within British texts during the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries (75). In Schor's reading the theories of sympathy of the eighteenth-century seek to identify a moral consensus which

[6] A genre described by Segerblad as 'infamous for its supposed radicalism' throughout the 1790s (48).

binds society together. She argues that 'in the Enlightenment, mourning and sympathy provide the discursive means by which morals could be conceptualised as a moving force in a complex, diversified, capitalist society' (6). Theories like those which David Hume puts forth in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) and which Adam Smith offers in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) therefore attempt to describe and prescribe rules which can govern virtuous social interconnection. However, Schor identifies the revolutionary controversy of the 1790s as a moment which traumatically shattered the possibility that sympathy could ever function as a truly unifying social force. Within the writings of both Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine it becomes apparent that sympathy can be used in the service of partisan politics: 'to speak of a "political sympathy", of course, is to have moved beyond the dream of a moral consensus that lies at the heart of moral theory' (Schor 75).

Writing about the dead in the early decades of the nineteenth century, *Blackwood's* writers enter an already crowded literary graveyard, where depicting death and the grave has become fundamentally tied to articulating ideas about social cohesion and identity. Influenced by the writings of the 1790s, and earlier images of the graveside, these writers renegotiate what the graves of the dead might mean within a rapidly evolving early nineteenth-century society. Who are the dead? What do we identify ourselves with when we commemorate them? What is their role within our understanding of nation? This chapter is intended to briefly set the scene for the *Blackwood's* literary moment by sketching the ways in which death and sociability were understood and connected in British, and particularly Scottish, discourse between the 1740s and 1800. I will look at the intersecting and sometimes competing visions of the graveyard described in the 'graveyard school' poet Robert Blair's most famous work *The Grave* (1743), Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), and those presented by Henry Mackenzie in his sentimental novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771). I will argue that between the publication of *The Grave* and that of *The Man of Feeling* the focus of representations of the grave shifts from a purely religious emphasis on the ephemerality of existence to one which examines the possibility of a secular posthumous survival through human memory and sympathy where, as Ruth Richardson suggests, 'reminders of mortality gave way to reminders of memory' (*Death* 110). I also identify an increasing scepticism about the possibilities of social connection in these texts; as their authors construct the sympathetic community they simultaneously grapple with its limits.

I will then trace the way in which these ideas are reconstituted by the British Revolutionary controversy of the 1790s, arguing that, with the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars, the gravesite acquired a more overt political importance. I focus, in particular, on Edmund Burke's revolutionary era writings as a precedent for the politicised engagement with the dead employed in *Blackwood's* group fiction. I argue that both Burke and the *Blackwoodians* rely on a dichotomy between the undisturbed grave, understood as a familial and national landmark, and the disturbed grave, which is subsequently understood as a symbol of social disruption.

The Great Leveller- Death and Society in Robert Blair's *The Grave*

The mid-eighteenth century saw the publication of several poems which would retrospectively be identified as examples of 'The Graveyard School' of poetry[7]. These poems, which generally focused on a narrator's reflections on visiting a burial ground, enjoyed enormous popularity throughout the second half of the eighteenth-century and their influence extended into the nineteenth century: William St Clair asserts that, following the *Donaldson* copyright decision in 1774, 'old canon' books were extensively reprinted in anthologies and school textbooks, meaning that the 'Graveyard School' poems remained widely circulated and popular texts in the Romantic period (135). In his introduction to the 1854 edition of *The Poetical Works of Beattie, Blair and Falconer,* the Reverend George Gilfillan emphasises the wide circulation which Robert Blair's poem *The Grave* had achieved:

> it became everybody's Grave. The poem was copied into all school collections. It lay along with *Robinson Crusoe* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in the windows of cottages, and on the tables of wayside inns — achieving thus what Coleridge predicated over that well-thumbed copy of Thomson's *Seasons*, in the Welsh ale-house — "true fame!" It pervaded America. It was translated into other languages, and in its own it now transmigrated into a tract, now

[7] There is some debate as to the precise literary works which can be included within the 'graveyard school' category, Eric Parisot states that: 'at its narrowest, the term refers to four individual poems; Thomas Parnell's "Night- Piece on Death" (1721); Robert Blair's *The Grave* (1743); Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742-45); and Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751). At its broadest, the "graveyard school" incorporates a veritable host of popular poetry and prose of the early to mid-eighteenth century' (Parisot 1).

> filled the page of a periodical, and now became a small separate book (Gilfillan 128).

Robert N. Essick and Morton D. Paley describe a typical example of the Graveyard School Poem as one where a narrator 'preoccupied with the thought of Death, wanders through the darkness of either an outdoor night scene or an indoor church vault in order to contemplate real, concretely described graves or tombs' and although 'the consideration is universal: the poet reflects on the mortal state in general and a number of types' (4). From the sight of the real graves, the narrating voice generally turns towards universalised themes of mortality and morality. The graves and tombs are simply a visual aid leading the narrator's thoughts towards a more generalised homily on the nature of death. The graveyard poem is therefore generally interested in the relationship between the individual and the universal, between man and the infinite.

The Grave follows this general rhetorical structure whilst simultaneously engaging with a specifically Scottish religious debate. An extended reflection on the grave, which is highly inflected by Blair's beliefs as a minister of the Church of Scotland, James Means has described the poem as the embodiment of Presbyterian pessimism: 'Religious gloom has rarely been so intensely painted as in *The Grave*' (Means 270). Focused on the importance of preparations for the next life, the poem is a grim picture of the inevitability of death. Blair graphically emphasises the horrors of the grave for the majority of the poem, in what Lorna Clymer has termed a 'sublime of putrification' (363). Only in the very final verses of the poem does Blair offer the conciliation of the afterlife, following his descriptions of mouldering material remains with the promise of a heavenly awakening after the 'long moonless night' spent in the ground (32).

Blair is particularly intent on emphasising the deletion of all worldly differentiation in the grave:

> When Self-Esteem, or others Adulation,
>
> Would cunningly persuade us we were something
>
> Above the common Level of our Kind;

The *Grave* gainsays the smooth-complexion'd Flatt'ry

And with blunt Truth acquaints us what we are (11).

The poet relies on a long-standing literary tradition which characterises death as 'the Great Leveller', a change which negates all social difference. Clymer comments that 'to dwell on the physical circumstances of death is, of course, a meditation in the long-standing Christian tradition of *contemptus mundi* and *moriendi*; keeping the thought of death constantly in mind was a practice designed to deepen devotion to God as one gained greater self-knowledge' (362). The poet devotes verses to different types of ambition before illustrating their impotence in comparison to religious devotion. Neither 'strong man', 'star-surveying sage', miser, nor, 'tongue-warrior' can spare himself his inevitable journey to 'the appointed place of rendezvous, where all/ These travellers meet' (12-15, 1). He is particularly scathing of a rich man's funeral featuring 'well plum'd hearse' and 'the whole sable tribe':

Why this ado in earthing up a carcase

That's fall'n into disgrace and in the nostril

Smells horrible? (8).

The materiality and corruptibility of the corpse turns all the accessories of the funeral into a vain façade. The 'carcase' is simply rotting meat, denuded of any spiritual presence, and the ceremony around its burial is therefore an act of idolatry.

This focus on the casting off of worldly possessions and connections is a product of contemporary religious and intellectual conflicts which would have deeply impacted Blair's worldview as a Church of Scotland minister in the mid-eighteenth century. As Eric Parisot has pointed out it is important to place Blair's poem within a framework of contemporary Scottish religious history (*Disinterring* 25). *The Grave* was written at the time of the British Evangelical revival when English non-conformism was gaining strength as an alternative to the Established Church. However, although Evangelicalism was also gaining in strength in Scotland, the situation of the country's Established Church was entirely different. The mid-eighteenth-century saw the rise of the Moderate Party within the Church of Scotland and a

counter group of ministers referred to as the Popular or Evangelical Party (C. Brown 30). The two groups both existed within the Established Church but disagreed fundamentally on its practices. This division within the Church, which would eventually be at the root of the Disruption of 1843, was the product of large-scale social and economic change in both rural and urban Scotland. The pre-industrial church had acted as both a place of worship and a source of small-scale government in Scotland since the reformation; the church was not only the source of the word of God but dispensed social welfare and community justice to members of each local Parish. However, the changes which the eighteenth-century brought to the traditions of Scottish life disrupted the dominance of the Kirk in matters of day to day life. Calum Brown argues that the forces which attempted to revolutionise economic productivity across Scotland also disrupted the social structures which had made the parish system such an effective mode of local governance: 'improvement, whether agricultural or industrial, was giving birth to a commercially-orientated society in which social competitiveness and differentiation was weakening the communal interdependence upon which the agrarian parish church had been founded' (101-102).

This alteration in the role of the church led to a split between two groups of ministers with diametrically opposed visions for the Kirk's future. The Moderate Party associated itself with the values of the new intellectual elite of eighteenth-century Edinburgh, focusing on humanism, sociability and moderation[8]. Although accusations of atheism against enlightenment figures like David Hume[9] remained sources of controversy, the church's role in the lives of educated urban Scots was changing, as Hugh McLeod comments: 'in the educated classes the prevailing style of religion tended to become rational, moralistic and cautious; the emotional temperature was low, and the level of commitment required was fairly low too' (McLeod 17). This restrained faith was problematic for many Church of Scotland adherents who instead wished to look back to the values of the Church at the height of its powers in the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth-

[8] John Dwyer in his introduction to *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* highlights the allegiance between key Enlightenment thinkers and the Moderate party: 'Hume and Smith were friends and allies of the Moderate clergy, with whom they engaged in the open and free discourse that they considered the *Sine qua non* of a cultivated community. At the same time, Hume and Smith regarded the ecclesiastical enemies of the Moderates, the Popular party clergy, as fanatics whose factious activities were harmful to social converse' (12).

[9] This controversy is discussed in detail in David Fate Norton's Introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Hume* (28).

century, when ordinary Scots were subject to what Devine has termed 'the Parish state' (84). The Popular Party offered an alternative to Moderate religion and instead 'stood for Calvinist orthodoxy, direct, emotional preaching, commitment to the Parish ministry and concern for Christian discipline' (S. Brown 5).

Perhaps most crucial to the division between the two factions was the issue of Patronage. The Church of Scotland had been committed to the election of ministers by their congregation since the Glorious Revolution, however, in 1711 an act was passed which allowed local landowners to appoint ministers through a system of Patronage. The Moderate Party, with their strong ties to the landowning classes, chose not to protest against the act. This was the greatest source of disquiet within the Popular Party, many of whom saw the act as an attempt to undermine the Kirk's authority and the rights of the congregation. Referencing Ned C. Landsman's research into members of the Popular Party during the eighteenth-century, Dwyer comments that 'above all, they were concerned that the Moderate emphasis on patronage represented an attempt to replace communal liberties with a species of despotism that shielded its true nature behind the "façade" of enlightenment' (13).

Blair himself was a member of the Popular Party and an advocate of the uncompromising Presbyterianism of previous generations. As Eric Parisot notes: 'by the time *The Grave* was published, Blair's Calvinist tenets were being subverted by Enlightenment moderation' (*Disinterring* 25). *The Grave* is therefore couched in terms which reject moderate doctrine in place of a more rigidly Presbyterian outlook. James Means' analysis further supports this reading of the text. Describing *The Grave as* 'an anti-enlightenment poem', he argues that in *The Grave* the poet rejects the values of the enlightenment moderates by emphasising an older message of human corruptibility (276):

> Blair is no Christian humanist who regards beauty, strength or intelligence as gifts of God. On the contrary, good Calvinist that he was, Blair treats all these possessions as positive evils, because, in his view they tend to alienate man from God by fostering an illusion of security. Blair is at pains to emphasise their ephemerality; like the monuments of antiquity, beauty, strength, and even an exalted mind, are equally subject to decay (278).

The way in which Blair conceptualises community and social bonds within the poem is also heavily influenced by his Evangelical project. Blair's focus on the grave, as at once universal and profoundly isolated, is in opposition to the concepts of virtuous sociability described in the writings of contemporary enlightenment figures. The pursuit of virtuous citizenship which interested the civic-minded literati is rejected in place of a complete focus on Calvinist faith. In *The Grave* the dead are both stripped of all worldly social bonds, 'invidious Grave! How dost thou render in sunder/Whom love has knit, and sympathy made one!', and forced into unnatural proximity with enemies, 'here friends and foes/ Lie close, unmindful of their former feuds' (4, 22). The grave is conceptualised as a territory where all former social relationships, positive or negative, are obliterated. The only possible sanctuary for the sinner is piety and a life devoted to the church; all other pursuits are distractions. In one particularly emphatic passage Blair describes the world as an extensive graveyard:

> …What is this world?
>
> What but a spacious burial-field unwall'd
>
> Strew'd with Death's spoils, the spoils of animals
>
> Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones! (21).

The unlimited chaotic 'burial-field' is a nightmarish image of dehumanisation and fragmentation. The world with its defined locations for living and dead, and rich and poor is transformed into an exploded charnel house of horrors. Individual identity is deconstructed as the body is broken down into undifferentiated 'bones' which will only be reunited at the resurrection:

> Sure the same power
>
> That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down
>
> Can reassemble the loose scatter'd parts
>
> And put them as they were (31).

This loss of differentiation is also apparent in the narrator's engagement with the graves around him. Although he composes his thoughts within a specific graveyard, the narrator makes no attempt to read or refer to specific epitaphs. The names of the dead and their positions in the graveyard are irrelevant: each grave uniformly represents the abstract concept of death, or a 'type' of person, rather than a specific social entity. When Blair describes the local gravedigger, who is able to identify the skeletal remains he excavates when digging graves, 'scarce a scull's cast up/But well he knew its owner and can tell/Some passage of his life', it is apparent that we are to view this character as inherently ignorant of the import of the remains he handles (20). The Sexton's attachment to worldly identity is tied by the poet to the man's attachment to worldly pleasures. He lives a life of laughter, carousal and smutty tales, ignoring the fact that he too will also join the remains he knows so well in the ground: 'Poor wretch! He minds not/That soon some trusty brother of the trade/ Shall do for him what he has done for thousands' (20). Remembering the dead as they lived, it seems, means forgetting that we will also die. To identify the corpse with the previously living and breathing person, as Blair's sexton does, is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of death. Just like the connections between the different body parts which strew Blair's 'extensive burial field', the social connections between the living do not extend into the grave and can only be reconstituted after the resurrection. Visiting the graveyard does not bring the narrator closer to those he has known and lost, instead it emphasises the ephemeral nature of all social relations. Ultimately, the absence of the dead at the gravesite highlights the constant presence of God.

Sympathy for the Dead? Adam Smith and the Limits of Sympathy

For the Enlightenment scholars, whom Blair critiques, the study of moral relations was a search for the bonds which held their rapidly diversifying society together, a mode of exploring 'the possible ways in which individual sympathies might provide the basis for public morality' (Schor 20). Much of the eighteenth-century interest in the relationship between morality and civil society was centred in Scotland, with 'Hutcheson, Hume and Smith…among the most influential moral philosophers in Europe' (Broadie 79). Christopher J. Berry describes the theorists of the Scottish Enlightenment in particular as 'a group of thinkers who, as social theorists, take the "social" seriously' (Berry 252). In the majority of Scottish Enlightenment theories of human development sociability was emphasised over individual initiative as central to the development of human civilisation. Scottish theorists

rejected the Hobbesian concept of a 'state of nature' and instead emphasised that man was inherently sociable and that the structures which govern human life emerged through human interactions. The concept of sympathy as the force which created these social connections and allowed humans to understand and prioritise the needs and feelings of others took a central role in eighteenth-century theories of morality. John Mullan attributes the intense interest in understanding the mechanisms of sociability which characterised the Scottish Enlightenment to the changes in the social and economic structures of eighteenth-century Britain: 'the compensatory assurance of a potential for social solidarity was required by a culture which was learning to describe the effects of competition and self-interest' ('Language' 275).

The position of Adam Smith within such debates is perhaps one of the most interesting and ambiguous of any eighteenth-century Scottish thinker. In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) Smith puts forward a detailed explanation of the mechanisms of sympathy within human society which builds on the earlier writings of Hutcheson and Hume. James Engell describes the publication of the *Theory* as a 'landmark in mid-century writings on sympathy' which 'opened the floodgate to a rising tide of interest in sympathetic imagination' (149). However, the *Theory* occupies a potentially ambiguous position when read alongside Smith's later work *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Where one attempts to connect society through bonds of sympathetic connection, the other was to become synonymous with the idea of a society made up of self-seeking individuals. As Richard Frederick Teichgraeber highlights 'in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* the notion of the individual which Smith defended in his moral theory—man as part of an easily knit, psychologically secure social order—had no apparent resemblance to the notion of the individual—the self-seeking, socially disinterested producer and property owner- which underlay Smith's theory of justice' (190). This apparently contradictory position on the social role of individual has been the source one of the central debates in studies of Smith's social theory, and is often referred to as 'Das Adam Smith Problem'. Smith scholars have come up with a wide variety of different approaches to the problem, seeking ways in which they can reconcile Smith's emphasis on 'sympathy' and 'self-interest'. In their 2006 article 'Das Adam Smith Problem: A Critical Realist Perspective', David Wilson and William Dixon argue that although, 'few today believe that Smith postulates two contradictory principles of human action: one in the *Wealth of Nations* and another in the *Theory of Moral*

Sentiments. Nevertheless, an Adam Smith problem of sorts endures: there is still no widely agreed version of how, if at all, Smith's postulation of self-interest as the organising principle of economic activity fits in with his wider moral-ethical concerns' (251). The following analysis will look at one aspect of Smith's apparently contradictory society by examining the way in which he portrays the relationship between the living and the dead in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments.* Smith's engagement with the dead in this text can be used to explore social cohesion, but also highlights the anxieties which plagued such assertions of sociability.

Whilst David Hume does not directly consider the question of sympathy for the dead in his writings on moral relations, in *A Treatise of Human Nature* he lays the groundwork for Adam Smith's treatment of sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In Hume, Mullan argues that sympathy allows for 'a sociability not explicable in terms of political or material necessity', instead 'sympathy with "another" is made congruent with sympathy with the interest of society' (*Sentiment* 30, 34). Hume's treatise is differentiated from previous theory by suggesting that it is possible for emotions to be communicated accurately and instantly between persons. This unmediated exchange, with its promiscuous and perhaps contagious overtones, is, however, qualified in Smith's analysis: 'Smith pictures a unanimity which involves not a direct and unmediated relation between "motions" but a generally "delightful harmony", an arena of possible "unison" and concord rather than an all-embracing overflowing of sentiments' (*Sentiment* 47). For Smith sympathy is not the spontaneous passing of passionate emotion between people but a conscious imaginative act undertaken by the spectator who witnesses another's passion. The spectator imagines himself in the place of the person he attempts to sympathise with. The spectator does not always naturally sympathise with the emotion of another but instead assesses the propriety of that emotion: 'if a spectator is in sympathy with the agent's emotion or passion, then he approves of that passion and judges it 'proper' or 'appropriate'. If he is out of sympathy with it, he disapproves of it and judges it improper or inappropriate' (Broadie 102). This process of judging the emotions and actions of others can also be turned inward, allowing the spectator to judge their own actions using what Smith termed the 'impartial spectator'. The person asks himself how an imagined external party might judge his response if they had access to all of the information he is aware of at

the time, this imagined external party, the 'impartial spectator', acts as an internalised check on our behaviour and emotions.

In this way, society is necessary to the formulation of personal morality in Smith's *Theory*. Smith argues that without a knowledge of the social morality of those around us we are unable to fit our own behaviour to moral norms: 'in a famous passage he likens society to a mirror. The force of this comparison is that moral judgements are generated by social interaction- learning how to behave through seeing how others react to our behaviour' (Berry 253). Without a sense of how other citizens might judge a certain action or emotion, the individual has no sense of the morality of his own behaviour. Morality is constituted through interaction with, and understanding of, the norms of a wider moral community. Inherent individual morality is rendered impossible.

Smith uses the dead as a key example in his discussions of the relationship between sympathy and social harmony. Mankind, he argues, understands death by imagining the experience of the dead person in the present moment, as if they, the sympathetic observer, were themselves both salient and in the grave:

> We sympathise even with the dead, and overlooking what is of real importance in their situation, that awful futurity which awaits them, we are chiefly affected by those circumstances which strike our senses, but can have no influence upon their happiness. It is miserable, we think, to be deprived of the light of the sun; to be shut out from life and conversation; to be laid in the cold grave, a prey to corruption and the reptiles of the earth; to be no more thought of in this world, but to be obliterated, in a little time, from the affections, and almost from the memory, of their dearest friends and relations. Surely, we imagine, we can never feel too much for those who have suffered so dreadful a calamity (13).

In simple terms, we extend our sympathy to the extent that we place 'our own living souls in their inanimated bodies' (13). According to Smith it is this ability to sympathise and identify with the dead which regulates society; 'from thence arises one of the most important principles in human nature, the dread of death, the great poison to the happiness, but the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind, which, while it afflicts and

mortifies the individual, guards and protects the society' (13). Each person's conduct is moderated by their individual sympathy for the dead and the resultant fear of also experiencing their fate. In Schor's reading of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* sympathy for the dead operates in a manner analogous with the way in which currency does in *The Wealth of Nations*, circulating and thus connecting members of society: 'Smith, by using economic metaphors to figure sympathy for the dead, revises Hume's conversation theory- itself a revision of Hutcheson's spectator theory- into a theory of moral *circulation*' (36). This drawing of a parallel between the model of economic circulation which connects society in *The Wealth of Nations* and the flow of imaginative sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is one which is supported by Emma Rothschild, who argues that in Smith's work 'sentiments were feelings of which one is conscious, and on which one reflects. They were also events that connected the individual to the larger relationships in which he or she lived (the society, or the family, or the state). The traffic or commerce of modern life was at the same time a traffic in opinions and sentiments' (9).

However, as Maureen Harkin has highlighted, it is important that we do not conflate the apparent desire for connection and community in Smith's writing and the success of such a project ('MacKenzie' 319). Smith is far from confident that sympathy is an uncomplicated agent of social connection and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is at times a study in the problems of interpersonal sympathy; as Mullan succinctly puts it, 'Smith does not trust in sociability' (*Sentiment* 56). Smith's scepticism becomes more pronounced in later editions of the *Theory:* Dwyer notes that: 'In the early editions of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* Smith located virtue in the norms of the average community, which he believed would always be compatible with prudence and propriety. In the final edition of that work, however, he evidently lost faith in communal ethics and discovered virtue only within the carefully cultivated conscience of the virtuous few' (3). Uncertainty about social morality is arguably apparent in Smith's perspective on the role of the dead from the earliest editions of the work. Elaborating on the idea of sympathy for the dead in a later part of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith describes how we might respond to murder, arguing that the urge for retribution is based on our sympathetic identification with the dead man:

> If the injured should perish in the quarrel, we not only sympathise with the real resentment of his friends and relations, but with the imaginary resentment which in fancy we lend to the dead, who is no longer capable of feeling that or

> any other human sentiment. But as we put ourselves in his situation, as we enter, as it were, into his body, and in our imaginations, in some measure, animate anew the deformed and mangled carcass of the slain, when we bring home in this manner his case to our own bosoms, we feel upon this, as upon many other occasions, an emotion which the person principally concerned is incapable of feeling, and which yet we feel by an illusive sympathy with him. The sympathetic tears which we shed for that immense and irretrievable loss, which in our fancy he appears to be sustained, seem to be but a small part of the duty which we owe him. The injury which he has suffered demands, we think, a principal part of our attention. We feel that resentment which we imagine we ought to feel, if in his cold and lifeless body there remained any consciousness of what passes upon earth. His blood, we think, calls aloud for vengeance. The very ashes of the dead seem to be disturbed at the thought that his injuries are to pass unrevenged. The horrors which are supposed to haunt the bed of the murderer, the ghosts which, superstition imagines, rise from their graves to demand vengeance upon those who brought them to an untimely end, all take their origin from this natural sympathy with the imaginary resentment of the slain (71).

Whilst Smith does not deny the power of this sympathetic response, declaring that 'Nature, antecedent to all reflections upon the utility of punishment, has in this manner stamped upon the human heart, in the strongest and most indelible characters, an immediate and instinctive approbation of the sacred and necessary law of retaliation', it is interesting to note that he allies these retributory urges with mere 'superstition' (71). If our desire for retributive justice against a murderer is based on our sympathy for what is in effect a corpse, on fantasies of 'disturbed ashes' and vengeful 'blood', then it is a justice based on an imaginative act which bears very little relation to material reality. The passage as a whole explores and expands upon something which is only implied in the earlier passage on sympathy for the dead. Although an ideal example of the way in which sympathy is an imaginative act, sympathy for the dead is also the illogical and fantastical *reductio-ad-absurdum* of imaginative sympathy. In this case study there is an obvious discrepancy between imagination and actual experience which throws all other imaginative sympathetic acts into question. If we can imagine a dead man's blood calling for vengeance then how

can we claim to have insight into the feelings of other living human beings, to experience true natural sympathy? If sympathy can imaginatively reanimate the dead, what other supernatural transfigurations might it effect?

'A Memorial to the Dead Man'- *The Man of Feeling* and the Dead as Sympathetic Educators

Interest in the relationship between society and sympathy extended beyond the moral philosophy of Enlightenment scholars, and was also the central concern of a highly popular genre of mid-century fiction; the sentimental novel. Like the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, the authors of sentimental novels were not only interested in depicting the mechanisms of social sympathy but also often saw themselves as capable of influencing and shaping public morality: 'in the mid-eighteenth-century, moral philosophy and narrative fiction engage in the description of forms of society…neither type of text simply reflects social conditions or relations both produce society; both seek to make society on the page' (Mullan, *Sentiment* 25). In the typical Sentimental Novel, theories of sentiment are explored in imagined scenarios designed to either showcase or challenge the possibilities of sympathetic connection. Authors often describe the aim of the novel in terms of reader education, imagining it as a handbook to sympathetic response.

Published in 1771, Henry Mackenzie's novel *The Man of Feeling* was his most popular work and is recognised as the final great achievement of the sentimental genre, however, like Smith's *Theory,* its ambivalent attitude towards sympathetic connection has been a subject of discussion amongst modern scholars. In her 2008 article Ildiko Csengei argues that *The Man of Feeling* 'enacts the process through which society becomes "versed in sentiment", as it happens through individual processes of reading and a text's appeal to the individual on an emotional level' (954). However, this identification of the novel as an apparatus of sentimental education goes against the growing consensus amongst scholars working on the text. Studies of the work have instead increasingly focused on the problems that such a project might encounter, arguing that Mackenzie's novel is less interested in educating its readership than in charting the impossibility of sympathetic exchange within eighteenth-century society. Maureen Harkin interprets the novel as an 'elaboration of the

limits of sympathy to reinforce communality' and a 'testimony to sympathy's tendency to produce an aesthetic pleasure rather than an ethical practice' ('MacKenzie' 319). Similarly, Bending and Bygrave identify the text as one characterised by an 'uncertainty over the moral nature of human relationships' (vii).

The role of death and the grave within the text goes some way towards explaining how these two perspectives intersect. The centrality of themes of death, decay and destruction within the novel has led many scholars to conclude that *The Man of Feeling* is a novel which primarily documents the insufficiency and ultimate failure of moral sentiments in a modern commercial world, as the reader witnesses the protagonist Harley's martyrdom to his own excessive sensibility. As Csengi summarises: 'the novel's melancholy tone, the inability of its hero, Harley to achieve his goals in the competitive context of his society, as well as his isolation and death are frequently interpreted as an allegory of the failure of the morals of sensibility to function within the social practice of the period' (953). The novel opens with a framing narrative where the editor and a curate come upon a deserted dwelling following an unsuccessful days hunting. The 'melancholy' ruin prompts the Curate to mention its previous inhabitant, Harley, and the 'bundle of papers' he has come into the possession of, which seem to offer a narrative of Harley's life (47-48). However, when the editor asks for these papers he finds that even they are also in ruins: '"How came it so torn?" "It is excellent wadding," said the Curate.' (48). Unable to find merit in the papers which are to make up the novel, the Curate has instead chosen to use them as wadding paper when shooting, just as the editor admits he has done with 'one of the great German Illustrissimi' (49). The books are exchanged and the message of each text is rescued from obscurity by being placed into the hands of its appropriate audience. Thus, the text itself is, as Harkin has commented, 'introduced as a memorial to the dead man', one which has been defaced and discarded ('MacKenzie' 322). This incident emphasises the ephemerality of the text as material object; the vulnerability of the written word to its audience. The value of Harley's sentimental story is constituted only in the ability of the reader to engage with it, and when sympathy fails the survival of his memory is also threatened.

The image of the curate who turns Harley's written memorial into wadding for his hunting rifle also chimes with that of Burke's revolutionaries who 'unplumb the dead to make bullets for the living'. In both cases, memorials to the dead are used in the pursuit of violent ends, their moral and meaning entirely missed in the search for a utilitarian purpose

for them as material objects. However, the meaning of the Curate's act of vandalism is more ambivalent than that of Burke's late-century resurrectionist revolutionaries. Whilst it is clear that the revolutionaries have despoiled sacred relics, in *The Man of Feeling* the narrator's twin act of desecration against the German 'Illustrissimi' complicates the morality of the Curate's actions. Which text is a sacred memorial and which simply wadding?

The narrative closes with 'The Conclusion', a short description of Harley's grave and the effect it has upon the thoughts of the narrator. This means that descriptions of a 'memorial to the dead man' bookend the text; we both open and close by pondering the material objects that are dedicated to Harley's memory:

> He had hinted that he should like to be buried in a certain spot near the grave of his mother. This is a weakness; but it is universally incident to humanity: 'tis at least a memorial for those who survive; for some indeed a slender memorial will serve; and the soft affections, when they are busy that way, will build their structures, were it but on a paring of a nail.
>
> He was buried in the place he had desired. It was shaded by an old tree, the only one in the church-yard, in which was a cavity worn by time. I have sat with him in it, and counted the tombs. The last time we passed there, methought he looked wistfully on that tree; there was a branch of it, that bent towards us, waving in the wind; he waved his hand, as if he mimicked its motion. There was something predictive in his look! perhaps it is foolish to remark it; but there are times and places when I am a child at those things.
>
> I sometimes visit his grave; I sit in the hollow of the tree. It is worth a thousand homilies! every nobler feeling rises within me! every beat of my heart awakens a virtue!- but it will make you hate the world—No: there is such an air of gentleness around, that I can hate nothing; but, as to the world—I pity the men of it (138-139).

The 'weakness' described in this passage is one which Smith had also highlighted; Harley has imagined himself sentient in the grave and aware of the proximity of his mother.

Although he will be unaware of his actual burial location, Harley has imagined the perpetuation of social existence beyond the grave. Interestingly, although this would seem the most excessive of sympathetic responses, it is not characterised as one unique to Harley but universal to mankind. A reader can understand this reaction to approaching death, they have also possibly imagined their own dissolution in these terms. Harley's desire to be by his mother in death is a desire which makes universal sympathy with his plight possible. Where other scenes in the novel might imply that Harley's standard of sympathy is impossible, perhaps this imagining of the self in death, far from revealing the limits of sympathy, actually provides a universal standard point of similarity.

Harley's choice of gravesite has created a 'memorial' on which the further imaginative acts of sympathy of his friends can be centred. The image of 'structures' of sympathy constructed on 'the paring of a nail' seems to suggest the relationship between pilgrims and the relics of saints. Just as pilgrims might travel to see or even touch the fragmentary relics of saints and thereby gain something of that saint's blessing for themselves, the grave of the man of feeling can operate as a place of textual or imaginative pilgrimage for the devotees of sentiment. Like the martyred saints' piety, Harley's sentiments are too pure for the material world. His death is an inevitable martyrdom to his own morbid levels of sensibility, just as the saint's otherworldly piety must inevitably lead to their destruction. In imagining the site of Harley's grave the reader might be said to undertake an imaginative journey which allows them to perhaps encounter an otherworldly level of sentiment and appropriate a small part of it to their own lives. Mackenzie's narrator imbues Harley's textual grave with the power to influence, educate and provoke identification in the reader- a relation reminiscent of those which Paul Westover describes in *Necromanticism,* between literary tourists and the graves of authors and poets[10]. In travelling imaginatively to the grave of the man of feeling Mackenzie's reader might seem to be brought into closer communion with the dead character. The narrator models the correct response to the grave describing its effect on his 'noble feelings' and 'virtue', educating the reader in appropriate graveside sympathy, in how to memorialise and internalise the influence of the virtuous dead.

[10] Westover argues that the literary tourism which emerged in Britain during the late-eighteenth century, in the form of both real journeys to graves and imagined ones created through reading, allowed readers to imaginatively commune with the both the literary dead and their works. As Westover puts it 'to read is to conjure the dead; to tour a gravesite is to read' (11).

However, the image of structures of sympathy built on 'the paring of a nail' also problematises the universalised sympathy which Harley's choice of gravesite might seem to have made possible. The fragment which facilitates the sympathetic play of the 'soft affections' is insubstantial and perhaps unworthy of sympathetic investment. Should the reader react as instructed to the monuments which Harley has left behind? In the opening pages of the novel even the narrator himself questions whether the text has the authority to command the reader's responses:

> I was a good deal affected with some very trifling passages in it; and had the name of a Marmontel, or a Richardson, been on the title page—'tis odds that I should have wept: But
>
> One is ashamed to be pleased with the works of one knows not whom (49).

Here the narrator profoundly questions the possibility of a universal sensibility, highlighting the dangers of the loss of social differentiation. Universal sympathy leads to a dangerous fluidity of emotion where relative value is lost. Instead, the narrator suggests it is best not to weep at the productions of 'one knows not whom' without first gaining some knowledge of their social identity.

The passage describing the grave is indicative of the way in which sympathy is increasingly problematised in *The Man of Feeling.* Although Harley's grave can act as a vector of sentiment, inspiring the 'noble feeling's and 'virtue' of the narrator, it also functions to emphasise the limits of sentiment. The grave operates here as a text, articulating a certain narrative to the onlooker 'reading' the grave and allowing them to construct a story. However, the grave is only intelligible to the reader of 'soft affections'. The depiction of Harley's grave fits into a pattern within sentimental fiction where:

> novelists were able to concede that habits of sociability were limited or exceptional, only just surviving in a world in which fellow-feeling was rare and malevolence prevailed; but they were able to position each private reader as the exceptional connoisseur of commendable sympathies (Mullan, *Sentiment* 13).

Harley's grave although 'worth a thousand homilies' is set apart from the 'world' and the 'men' of it. The grave is a sentimental text whose content can only be understood by a certain privileged reader capable of constructing the correct meaning from the memorial. Much like the fragmentary 'found text' we are reading, the lessons it contains are unintelligible to the average man of the world. Sympathetic connection with the dead and their stories is available only to the connoisseur.

Monumentalising Men- Edmund Burke and the National Dead

As we have seen, Esther Schor's assertion of a crisis in sentimentalism at the turn of the century is in fact predated by an earlier dissatisfaction with sympathy as a possible carrier for social connection in the writings of Smith and Mackenzie. Maureen Harkin comments that by the 1790s 'the dominance of sentimentalism as a literary form and as a mode of response was over' ('Introduction' 19). However, the context of the outbreak of Napoleonic Wars saw sentiment reborn and utilised in new ways. The dead became the objects used to engage a political sympathy designed to create social ties within the emerging British nation state. Schor describes this transition:

> in one sense, the Revolution controversy was a debacle for sentimentalism precisely because its proclivities for building a moral consensus were so easily exploited. But in another sense, the rhetoric of Burke and Paine ensured the endurance of sentimentalism by anticipating the two major rhetorical strategies for partisan politics in the post-Waterloo era: an appeal from the right, to the sympathies of 'moral nature' shared by a homogenous nation; and a contrary appeal, from the left, to the particular sympathies of class and creed, to the end of progressing toward reform (Schor 8).

This new emphasis on politically partisan sympathy was at odds with Smith's enlightenment concept of sympathetic connection, which emphasised individual, personal thought: 'in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* Smith argued that men were capable of a spontaneous concern for the welfare of their fellows. Any attempt to politically coerce such a concern, he insisted, undermined the instinctive psychological underpinnings of human morality and sociability' (Teichgraeber 188). Similarly, where Mackenzie's defaced manuscript is represented as but one text in a constellation of different books and different value

systems available to the reader (although admittedly a very superior one), the graves of Burke's 'unplum'd dead are clearly intended to impress the reader as symbols of a universal social standard and to thereby reinforce Burke's political message. After the increasing space for sympathetic subjectivity and scepticism apparent in Enlightenment era writing, texts like Burke's revert to a less negotiable sympathy, representing the dead as the absolutes of a definable and definite moral universe.

As I have already begun to explore, in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), and his further writings on the Revolution, the graves of the dead are monumentalised in order to dramatise an inherently conservative opposition to political Revolution. Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* are often cited as one of the touchstones of post-Enlightenment British conservative thought, and respond to the pro-revolutionary sermon *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* given by the dissenting minister Richard Price in November 1798. The *Reflections* enlist personal sympathy for the dead to nationalistic and anti-revolutionary ends.

In multiple publications, of which *Reflections* was perhaps the most important, Burke asserts that the fundamental nature of British society rests in the social structures which men have formed over generations. In *Reflections* he describes the formation of the British 'constitution':

> it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity—as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves a unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown, an inheritable peerage, and a House of Commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties from a long line of ancestors (33).

The laws and structures of government which exist in Britain are legitimised in Burke's argument by their antiquity. Burke compares the relationship between the British public and the structures of state to that between a person and their ancestors. The political is conceptualised as an extension of the familial:

> In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood, binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties, adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections, keeping inseparable and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars (34).

The state, hearth, sepulchre and altar are mirror images of one another in Burke's interconnected image of the British nation. Laws and legislatures are as much an inheritance and a memorial to our heritage as a family home or lair.

Burke imagines identification with the nation as an attachment built upon familial and local sympathies: 'To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed toward a love to our country and to mankind' (47). Sympathy for our 'little platoon' is represented both as the 'germ' of patriotic national identification and as a universal human response. Thus, patriotic identification with Burke's British state is characterised as an uncontroversial natural reaction based on more immediate and local ties. Describing patriotism, Benedict Anderson highlights how 'something of the nature of this political love can be deciphered from the ways in which languages describe its object: either in the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, Vaterland, patria) or that of home… Both idioms denote something to which one is naturally tied' (143). Burke's representation of patriotism adheres to this model. Love of the British nation is based upon, and as universal a response as, love of family and neighbours, and in particular, of our ancestors.

Burke famously conceptualises the nation as 'a permanent body composed of transitory parts', thus although individuals die and are born, generations renew the overall structure replacing one another and allowing a culture and social system to endure (120). The nation contains no permanent units but is itself permanent. This theory of social relations foregrounds the role of the dead in the development of human culture, Burke argues that 'society is indeed a contract…As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be

born' (195). Burke's perspective on community and inheritance explains why death and the grave are such central metaphors in his writing. If our very nature is contained within the social structures which we have inherited from our ancestors, then the graveyard contains the building blocks of ourselves, and of our nation.

Bromwich has further commented that in Burke's writings posthumous rituals represent a form of self-preservation: 'in the same gesture by which we honour people and things that have survived in memory, we make a possible place for the survival of something of ourselves' (52). In remembering the dead and placing them at the centre of our sense of social relations we not only build a sense of identity in the here and now but in some way attempt to prepare a posthumous identity for ourselves.

This enduring social structure is, however, disrupted in instances of rapid, uncontrolled social change. Burke's critique of the French Revolution is that in attempting to fundamentally alter the ways in which society is organised, the Revolutionaries disturb the foundations of civilisation itself, discarding the progress which previous generations have already effected. He argues that should a revolution in human affairs take place:

> no part of life would retain its acquisitions. Barbarism with regard to science and literature, unskilfulness with regard to arts and manufactures, would infallibly succeed to the want of steady education and settled principle; and thus the commonwealth itself would, in a few generations, crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality, and at length dispersed to all the winds of heaven (194).

Revolutionary thought, which aims to completely discard the institutions and structures of an existing society, represents, in the *Reflections,* the careless disposal and destruction of an inheritance bequeathed to the people by their ancestors.

In a later passage Burke uses the image of the dismembered body to argue for respect towards ancient patriarchal institutions, contending that that the virtuous citizen:

> should approach the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise prejudice we are taught to look with horror on those children of their country who are prompt rashly to hack that

> aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds, and wild incantations, they may regenerate the parental constitution and renovate their father's life (194).

Burke here compares revolutionary efforts to reconstitute national institutions to the murder of Pelias in the Greek legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece. The revolutionaries, in their efforts to radically alter society, show a naivity on the scale of Pelias' daughters, who dismembered their father after being persuaded by Jason's vengeful wife Medea that she could make him young again through witchcraft. Similarly, although they may believe themselves to be acting in the nation's interests the revolutionaries are, in fact, effecting its complete annihilation. Those, like Dr. Price, who preach revolution are conceptualised as manipulative and ambitious Medea figures, preying upon the credulity of the population to achieve their own ends. The nation, like an old man, cannot be reborn and any attempt to reconstitute it will only lead to its complete destruction.

The use of gender in this passage is particularly interesting in the context of French revolutionary iconography. In Burke's passage Britain is masculine, its traditions and structures patriarchal rather than matriarchal, whilst the preachers and revolutionaries intent on changing the nation are feminine. This assignment of gender roles is in opposition to those most prominent in French representations of the revolution which generally show the largely masculine citizens rallying around 'la France' characterised in the figure of Marianne[11]. This feminine figure represented a break with the monarchical system of governance symbolised by the kings of France: 'the king symbolised the old, paternal, despotic order, and Marianne, the new symbol of France, the revolutionary new world and a rejection of the old patriarchal regime' (Frey and Frey 38). Burke's casting of the body of Britain as an aging father reimposes the justness of monarchical patriarchy through the invocation of patriarchal familial bonds. The female relatives anatomising their ancient father are a gothic image of a society turned upside down.

Blackwood's Burke: Ancestors and the 'Unplum'd'

Burke's conservative argument against revolution, predicated on the yoking of the treatment of the dead with the state of the nation, sets an important precedent for the

[11] Most iconically in Eugene Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People* (1830).

symbolic role of the dead in the writings of the *Blackwood's* group. This importance is unsurprising when we consider the ongoing engagement with the Whig peer's ideas in both the magazine and the writings of the Blackwoodians. Matt Salyer has argued that the '*Blackwood's* circle advocated a kind of "traditionary" Romanticism' which was heavily indebted to the writings of Edmund Burke (100). Burke has been identified by numerous scholars as a fundamentally important progenitor of the form of conservative discourse adopted by *Blackwood's'*; Morrison and Baldick comment that '*Blackwood's* political rhetoric had its roots in Edmund Burke, but it was a good deal less discriminating and more vituperative' (*Terror* x). This ideological debt is reflected in *Blackwood's* content which often refers to or cites Burke. Anthony Jarrells notes that 'there are numerous references to Burke in Maga's early numbers' (272). Salyer has argued that during the 1820s *Blackwood's* 'reviewers placed the Anglo-Irish orator at the centre of a great *agon* of British responses to the revolution' (95). From 1833 the magazine ran a series of articles on the life and writings of Burke and in 1840 Blackwood and Sons published George Croly's *Memoir of the Political Life of Edmund Burke.* During the early decades of the nineteenth century Burke's influence on the magazine was sustained and obvious.

Burke's anti-revolutionary conservatism combined well with radical Toryism proposed by *Blackwood's.* In particular, Salyer argues, the aesthetic and polemical aspects of Burke's political writings accord with the type of political rhetoric which defined the magazine: 'Burke's ideological slipperiness, which endlessly frustrated his late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century critics, makes sense in the context of *Blackwood's* similarly poetic and contradictory Toryism' (107). Burke's decently interred dead uphold an image of society which is familial, local, stratified and patriarchal, whilst the unburied and mistreated bodies of the revolution represent the destruction of these values. The core ideas which Burke's dead stand for are also at the heart of *Blackwood's* Toryism which privileges the local, the traditionary, the hierarchical and the masculine. This use of the dead in both cases draws upon the emotional and the aesthetic rather than the logical. Burke, like the *Blackwood's* commentators who followed him, relies on an assumed concept of shared common-sense British values. The emotive images of intact and damaged graves which he deploys at moments of key rhetorical importance are designed to be unquestionable and unassailable. To disinter a body is to fundamentally sunder bonds of heritage and

sympathy, it is an image designed for almost universal emotional impact, provoking the type of natural patriotism described by Anderson.

Burke's writings co-opt the sympathetic dead of the earlier eighteenth-century to partisan ends. Faced with the fear of a British revolution, Burke uses the dead as a symbol which can demarcate an apparently unquestionable set of conservative national values. In the context of the periodical wars of the early nineteenth century, *Blackwood's* conservative contributors present the dead in a similar way. However, the community building function of these imagined ancestors is both employed to engender conservative patriotism *and* readership loyalty. In the next chapter I will argue that John Wilson and authors like him use their fiction to fabricate a moralised Scottish kirkyard, which builds upon the national role Burke had attributed to dead ancestors to create an imagined *Blackwood's* centred reading nation.

Chapter Two- The Good Death: *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* and Dying Well in Blackwoodian Regional Fiction.

'The Twins': Introducing the Good Death in John Wilson's *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life*

In the eleventh tale in John Wilson's story collection *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* (1822), a walk in the parish graveyard of Auchindown leads an elderly minster and his son to a grave with a particularly poignant history:

> We walked to the eastern corner, where, as we approached, I saw a monument standing almost by itself, and, even at that distance, appearing to have a somewhat different character from any other over all the burial ground. And now we stood close to, and before it.
>
> It was a low monument, of the purest white marble, simple, but perfectly elegant and graceful withal, and upon its unadorned slab lay the sculptured images of two children asleep in each other's arms. All around it was a small piece of greenest ground, without the protection of any rail, but obviously belonging to the monument. It shone, without offending them, among the simpler or ruder burial-beds round about it, and although the costliness of the materials, the affecting beauty of the design, and the delicacy of its execution, all showed that there slept the offspring neither of the poor nor low in life, yet so meekly and sadly did it lift its unstained little walls, and so well did its unusual elegance meet and blend with the character of the common tombs, that no heart could see it without sympathy, and without owning that it was a pathetic ornament of a place filled with the ruder memorials of the very humblest dead.
>
> "There lie two of the sweetest children," said the old man (147-148).

The minister then tells the pathetic tale of English twins who died of fever whilst under his care and far from their widowed mother. The gravestone acts as a physical marker of memory, a site which facilitates a certain kind of reminiscence or story-telling. The minister goes to the beautiful graveside to describe a beautiful death.

However, the gravestone and its situation within the 'burial ground, on a green hill' have already effected a type of storytelling before the minister starts his narrative (147). The graveyard's position at the heart of the living world of the village is indicated by the 'fruit-trees' from neighbouring gardens overhanging the graves, and the melodic sounds of the children who attend the nearby school, the local 'maidens going to the well' and the song birds that can be heard amongst the graves (147). The twins' deaths are therefore represented within a timeless rural cycle of seedtime and harvest, and youth and decline, and their graves are placed at the heart of a community where death and life co-exist organically. The stream which passes the graves acts as 'an emblem of time' uniting the living and the dead in this continuum (147).

Although the graveyard is at the heart of community life, the grave itself is differentiated and separated from those that stand around it, 'standing almost by itself' and displaying a 'somewhat different character' due to 'the costliness of the materials, the affecting beauty of the design, and the delicacy of its execution' (147). The grave may 'meet and blend with the character of the common tombs' but we as readers are already aware that those who lie in the grave are anything but 'common' (148). The differentiation of their tomb serves to highlight their class status, their position as incomers to the village and perhaps even the unusual 'goodness' of their death. The minute description of the grave and its situation has therefore already effected a form of social story-telling before the minister can begin the story of Edward and Henry Howard.

This detailed image of the grave and burial ground is typical of a text which consistently seeks to represent what a 'good death' might look like. There is an unusually high incidence of death in the twenty-four stories which make up *Lights and Shadows;* fourteen of the tales directly describe deaths whilst another three mention deaths which have already happened and a further three stories contain near death experiences. Wilson's obvious investment in representing death has been commented on in previous examinations of the collection but as yet has not been thoroughly explored. The following

analysis will argue that this focus on mortality and the final moments of life is key to Wilson's project within *Lights and Shadows*.

John Wilson was a powerful figure within the *Blackwood's* group; recruited by William Blackwood in 1817 following the failure of *The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, he was the magazine's principle contributor, and took on many of the editorial responsibilities at the periodical. He was also the author of one of the magazine's most popular, and now most overlooked, story series. *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* was first published in book form in 1822 and largely consisted of short stories which had been published as a series in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* between 1820 and 1821. The stories' sentimentality, and highly conservative moral messages, have led to them being largely ignored or discredited by modern scholars. Douglas S. Mack describes *Lights and Shadows* variously as 'a collection of short stories in which the characters tend to shed tears copiously' and 'a somewhat monotonous and unconvincing picture of humanity' ('John' 11, 'Lights' 15). However, at its time of publication and for a great deal of the nineteenth century the book was extremely commercially successful and popularly well-regarded; as Robert Morrsion comments 'Wilson's fiction has often been damned as insipid, but its contemporary impact was deep and pervasive' (10). Although it received mixed reviews in literary circles and the periodical press- Mack cites James Hogg's rather ambivalent response to the newly published book- *Lights and Shadows* sold well and went into a large number of editions over the nineteenth century ('Lights' 16). The editor of the 1846 edition emphasises the text's commercial success in his preface: 'no volume ever enjoyed a more extensive popularity, and it will ever continue an especial favourite with all classes of readers, for its natural expositions of the human character and its passions, beauty of description and delicious pathos' (Wilson 7). In complete opposition to Mack's analysis, the 1846 editor praises the author for 'moving the feelings, without indulging in extravagant and unnatural tropes and diction' (8).

The stories which make up *Lights and Shadows* were not only popular but genre-forming. Ian Campbell and Andrew Nash now identify the book as the progenitor of the oft-maligned Kailyard school of fiction which would dominate Scottish writing later in the century, Campbell comments that 'the themes of Wilson's fictions…startlingly prefigure familiar themes of the kailyard' (40). However, I would argue that we do not have to look so far into the future to chart the influence of Wilson's series on rural writing. Wilson's stories

can be understood as part of a characteristically Blackwoodian genre of regional writing. Published in *Blackwood's* magazine and with Blackwood and Sons, these stories and novels used rural Scottish settings to exemplify the magazine's ideological outlook.

Anthony Jarrells and Ian Duncan both identify a specifically Blackwoodian tale tradition which privileges local representation. Duncan argues for the existence of an identifiable 'Blackwoodian school of Scottish fiction in competition with [Walter] Scott's, characterised by comic and sentimental depictions of regional, especially rural or small town settings and manners' (22). The *Blackwood's* regional tale which both critics describe is characterised by a focus on provincial settings and on local events over national or international ones. This focus on provincial space functioned to reinforce a particular vision of society, Jarrells comments that 'against political economy's global-economic vision, *Blackwood's* championed local associations and traditional ties' (267).

What is interesting about these regional 'tales' is that they feature an unusually high recurrence of graveyard and burial scenes. Again and again, when reading the Scottish stories published in *Blackwood's* and through Blackwood and Sons during the first decades of the nineteenth century, the tale returns to the burial ground. In these tales, the village kirkyard provides an emblem of a local and traditional society. The kirkyard, I argue, functions as a key symbolic space within the '*Blackwood's* regional tale' creating an imagined national 'home' for British readers in the idealised Scottish village graveyard. For these writers the graveyard is a time capsule of insular rural British identity within a rapidly changing nation; it is a place of return and cultural preservation.

Blackwood's debt to Burkean thought is particularly relevant to the way we think about death and the grave in the magazine's regional fiction. As chapter one explored, Edmund Burke's vision of the nation is that of 'a permanent body composed of transitory parts'. The retention of traditions, and the legacy of the dead, is thus, in Burkean thought, essential to the survival of the nation. This focus on the 'traditionary' is exemplified in the way in which texts like *Lights and Shadows* depict the Scottish countryside, and in particular the Scottish rural graveyard. The kirkyard is a central motif within these narratives and is often used to muse upon the relationship between past and present, between tradition and the march of 'civilisation'. In these texts, the dead's constant presence, clustered around the moral heart of the community in the form of the kirk, has a specific symbolic function

uniting past, present, and future in continuity. As typified in 'The Twins', the dead sit at the heart of the *Blackwood's* village.

This image of the graveyard has a community building function for *Blackwood's* readers, as well as the fictional villagers who populate the text. *Blackwood's Magazine* emerged within a competitive periodical market, and differentiating itself from its competitors meant formulating a distinctive social vision which would appeal to readers. *Blackwood's* distinguished itself from the field through an emphasis on a particular type of historicised, arguably semi-Burkean, Scottishness. Where arch-Whig-rival *The Edinburgh Review* emphasised its roots in the Scottish Enlightenment, *Blackwood's* offered a competing vision of Scottishness rooted in tradition, pre-enlightenment history and the rural: 'If economics was the bedrock of the *Edinburgh*'s organisation of knowledge, history was Maga's foundational discourse' (Schoenfield, *British* 100). At a time of rapid socio-economic development across Britain, *Blackwood's* often cast Scotland as a surviving repository for the traditions of the past, a place where access to the authentic soul of the nation was more possible than in rapidly modernising England. Just as the graveyard might be seen as a symbol of the history and customs which hold up the present, Scotland, in particular rural Scotland, is represented as Britain's kirkyard; it is a static space outside of narratives of change or progress, which preserves the essential essence of the British nation. Like the kirkyard at the heart of the imagined village, Scotland's countryside keeps history and tradition forever in modern Britain's line of sight. *Blackwood's* attempts to claim this space through its representation in fiction is also a claim to authenticity and to national importance.

However, as Gillian Hughes has noted, this definition of self becomes somewhat contradictory when placed alongside *Blackwood's* other dominant mode of self-definition:

> *Blackwood's* proclaims itself urban, European, and cosmopolitan in opposition to suburban London and ridicules Constable's Whigs in a city satire, yet disapproves of the city-based internationalising Enlightenment and values the local and the rural, the specificities of the regional, of Scottish Presbyterianism, and the lower class characters of the Waverley novels. The folk not the urban is the nation (179).

The magazine is to be understood as both urban and rural, ultra-modern and yet traditonary. This problem of contradictory identification is only solved through the relegation of the rural to the past even as it exists in the present. Urban cosmopolitan *Blackwood's* is authenticated by its local and rural content. However, for the two registers to coexist, rural spaces must be temporally differentiated from the present day urban world of the *Noctes Ambrosianae.* Rural Scotland must operate as a static point of origin for modern *Blackwood's* and the ever-changing, yet unchanging village graveyard offers the perfect symbol for this role. The countryside is the kirkyard; the country-dweller is in a sense already an ancestor rather than a contemporary.

The kirkyard in *Blackwood's* is, thus, a repository of identity which unites the imagined communities of fictional village, nation and magazine. Wilson's role as a key member of the *Blackwood's* editorial team means that *Lights and Shadows* constitutes perhaps the most sustained and influential example of the *Blackwood's* approach to rural Scotland as a symbolic space. Focusing primarily on John Wilson's collection of didactic, rural short stories *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* (1822), this chapter will look at the ways in which the death of a morally upstanding country dweller within a cohesive and timeless rural community came to function in *Maga* as short-hand for an apparently endangered social and political harmony.

I argue that Wilson utilises the literary tradition of religiously inflected conservative didacticism, and the legacy of Burns, to encourage readers to view the rural Scottish graveyard as a symbolic point of origin for the *Blackwood's* community. Wilson co-opts key icons of Scottish rural labouring-class culture: Burns, Covenanting and the Bible. These authenticate the perspective of his modern, middle-class periodical. To illustrate this argument, I will first explore the relationship between Wilson's stories and the tales printed as exemplars in contemporary Evangelical tracts, arguing that between the tract and the elite periodical readership and authorial intention alter the meaning of similar themes and motifs as the education of working-class readers is superseded by the desire to reinforce conservative middle-class social values. I will then explore the Scottish aspect of Wilson's stories, examining the role of a mythologised 'Tory Burns' in the construction of Wilson's image of Scotland. In the case of both influences, Scottish Presbyterianism is co-opted to fulfil a conservative social function which denies the radical and democratic inheritance of Scotland's religious tradition. Finally, I will examine the vision of society which this series of

influences allows Wilson to articulate, before looking at the ways in which the graveyard motif is mirrored or altered by other key Blackwoodians.

Evangelical Faith and Writing the Good Death

One of the reasons Wilson relies so heavily on deathbed scenes in *Lights and Shadows* is that this allows him to draw upon a tradition of conservative religious didacticism in contemporary literature and print culture. In this tradition, the deaths of the pious rural poor function to articulate moral messages which emphasise religious and social conformity. Contemporary commentators noted the relationship between Wilson's prose fiction and religious educational writing. *The Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany's*[12] 1823 review of another of his novels, *The Trials of Margaret Lindsay,* compares Wilson's text to the most famous tract of the era, asserting that 'its greatest drawback is a certain methodistical air, which occasionally suggests to us the ideas of an overgrown tract- Leigh Richmond and the Dairyman's Daughter' ('Scottish Novels of the Second Class' 7). Ian Duncan touches on this relationship in *Scott's Shadow* when he comments that, in *Lights and Shadows*, Wilson seeks to 'neutralise Evangelical piety in the medium of conservative pathos' (172). Tracing the development of conservative didactic death narratives, from the Evangelical tract to Wilson's stories for *Blackwood's,* reveals a journey from uncomplicated religious exemplars to texts which are increasingly removed from this practical instructional function. In Wilson's stories the deaths of rural country dwellers function not to educate the actual rural poor but to entertain and shore up the political beliefs of the growing Evangelical middle-class. *Lights and Shadows* incorporates the archetypal death scenes of Evangelical publications into narratives where issues of memory and community reinforce a conservative political message. A good death, with the respectable burial which follows, serves not just to represent the dying party's religious adherence but also their adherence to the rules of a rural hierarchised society. Wilson co-opts the resignation to death espoused by Evangelicals like Robert Blair to politically conservative ends.

The growth of Evangelical Christianity that had taken place in Britain during the latter half of the eighteenth-century, which was discussed in chapter one, continued into the early decades of the next century. With this revival, came an expansion of Evangelical

[12] The retitled *Scots Magazine* published by Archibald Constable.

print culture that mirrored the gradual but sustained growth in interest in Evangelical Christianity and non-conformism across Britain between the 1790s and 1840s. In the early nineteenth century, D.W. Bebbington highlights the increasingly 'Romantic' nature of some sections of Evangelical faith, which, breaking away from Enlightenment rationalism, began to evince a greater interest in 'the place of feeling and intuition in human perception' (81). Nineteenth-century Evangelicalism increasingly focused on the personal aspects of Christian faith rather than the institutional practices of an established church, emphasising 'simple religion of the heart, an inner assurance of salvation through faith, and the expression of faith through good works' (Stewart J. Brown, 'Religion' 90).

In Scotland, Evangelicalism's emphasis on an emphatic and personal faith represented a real alternative to the dominant Moderate faction of the Church of Scotland and quickly gained popularity with those unhappy with a style of religion which McLeod has described as 'rational, moralistic and cautious' (17). This growth in Evangelical religion was encouraged by the rapid changes taking place within Scottish society. The Moderate establishment of the Church of Scotland was, as Callum G. Brown has commented, 'on a social level…the party of the landowners' and this focus on the values, tastes and interests of the landed classes alienated several emerging economic groups who had little or no investment in land-based social structures- independent rural workers such as weavers, urban industrial workers and the urban middle classes' (30). These three groups made up the bulk of Evangelical adherents both within the Established church and in the Evangelical dissenting congregations which grew up during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Evangelical faith in Scotland during the early nineteenth century was therefore not just religiously motivated but tied into on-going political tensions related to the rapid pace of urbanisation and land reform.

Scottish Evangelicalism's focus on personal religious experiences accessible to all adherents, alongside its anti-patron position within the patronage disputes between 1750 and 1850, meant that some sections of the movement could be allied with political radicalism. In the years around the Napoleonic Wars, Evangelical religion was viewed with deep suspicion by the religious and political establishment. Stewart J. Brown describes the way in which Evangelicalism appeared to the establishment: 'among the older landed, mercantile and professional elites of Scotland-those groups which had dominated the eighteenth-century Establishment- many were uncomfortable with the Evangelical regime in

the Church, which seemed to combine a seventeenth-century religious enthusiasm with the new spirit of democracy' ('Ten Years' 9). Evangelicalism, particularly working-class Evangelicalism, appeared to pose a new threat to political harmony: destabilising the hierarchies of the established church and creating a space for collective action.

However, in reality Evangelical religion in Scotland was a far more varied and internally conflicted body than these perspectives would suggest. The diversity of Evangelical adherents means that it is perhaps easier to speak of Evangelicalisms than a single unified Evangelicalism. Not only were early nineteenth-century Scottish Evangelicals split between the Established church and various non-conformist congregations but the particular emphasis of their own religious faith often varied according to class, occupation and geography. It's therefore helpful to make a rough differentiation between a radical Evangelicalism, the Evangelicalism of the ambitious new middle-classes, with its focus on self-improvement, and a more conservative faction committed to staving off political change entirely. The complexity and diversity of adherence within early nineteenth-century Scottish Evangelical faith both guaranteed the popularity and influence that the movement enjoyed within contemporary society, and made it unlikely to form the sort of unified nucleus for radical political change which some feared.

The renewed popularity of Evangelical religion had a pervasive impact on the way in which death was imagined and portrayed in British writing. The revival of popular Evangelicalism across Britain led to what Pat Jalland has described as the 'revitalisation' of 'the Christian ideal of the "good death"' (3). Drawing on the conventions of foundational seventeenth-century Protestant texts, such as Jeremy Taylor's *The Rules and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651)[13], collections of exemplary or terrible deaths such as Timothy East's *Death Bed Scenes; or the Christian's Companion on Entering the Dark Valley* (1825) and John Warton's *Death-Bed Scenes and Pastoral Conversations* (1830) were increasingly circulating across Britain and sought to prepare and instruct readers in how to die a Godly death. The London based Religious Tract Society and numerous similar Evangelical organisations also published inexpensive pamphlets containing simple and highly conventional accounts of 'good' deaths, which were designed to act as '"silent messengers" among the working classes' (Fyfe 1). Jalland has summarised the standard characteristics of such publications:

[13] Taylor's book, according to Drew Gilpin Faust, went through 'at least eight editions...in London in the first half of the nineteenth century' (504).

> The published Evangelical deathbed accounts in tracts, journals and biographies were intended…primarily for popular moral instruction, with the undesirable features edited out…Death ideally should take place at home, with the dying person making explicit farewells to each family member. There should be time, and physical and mental capacity for the completion of temporal and spiritual business…The dying person should be conscious and lucid until the end, resigned to God's will, able to beg forgiveness for past sins and to prove his or her worthiness for salvation. Pain and suffering should be borne with fortitude and even welcomed as a final test of fitness for Heaven and willingness to pay for past sins (26).

She also highlights the way in which emotion is expressed by the families of the dying, stating that 'Evangelism encouraged the expression of love, sorrow, and faith at the nineteenth-century deathbed' (27). There was a conventional series of features which the writer of a tract relied on when representing a Godly death- a set recipe for a good Evangelical death. Although they did not have all of the features which Jalland describes, most tracts resembled one another through their employment of the majority of these techniques.

The Edinburgh arm of the Religious Tract Society appears to have published a number of deathbed accounts in the early nineteenth century alongside sermons, religious poems and short prayer collections. *Anna Walsh: An Authentic Anecdote* and *Poor Joseph* both depict an impoverished protagonist whose spiritual salvation is effected through the influence of a middle-class educator or minister and assured by their humble position. They share this general narrative structure with *The Cottager's Wife,* a tract which was published independently in Glasgow in 1817. In all three texts a series of visits to the sickbed are used by the middle-class narrator to question the protagonist on the state of their soul and their hopes for the next world. The protagonists' conventional responses are cited as evidence of their Godly state and in *Anna Walsh* and *The Cottager's Wife* this state is further evidenced through the sick women's efforts in maintaining domestic cleanliness within the home. The Glasgow tract references the highly popular, and extremely similar, earlier English publication *The Dairyman's Daughter*. None of the tracts which I have cited contain

explicitly political material but their focus on the humble estate of their protagonists alongside assertions that 'God hath "chosen the poor of this world"' illustrate that the faith these texts offer is aimed at a popular audience.

In *The Cottager's Wife*, a new chaplain of a rural parish visits the bedside of a young and pious woman he has heard is 'in decline' and would like his religious counsel (3). Entering her home he is 'struck with the remarkable cleanliness and neatness of every part of it' and on conversing with her is further impressed by her acceptance of death and faith in God (4). Visiting her several times he is further convinced of her Godliness and learns the story of the exemplary death of her even more pious sister; whom the cottager's wife describes as having died of the same disease 'so peacefully, so happily, that nobody could doubt of her having gone to Heaven' (9). The cleric's analysis of the wife's state of Grace is confirmed in her last moments when it is made apparent that the dutiful and pious wife has experienced a good death:

> After I left her, she revived only for a few minutes, during which she faintly and delightfully repeated her faith and hope of salvation; and soon afterwards slept peacefully in the Lord; leaving on the minds of those who witnessed her departure, a lively impression of her extraordinary piety, and heavenly happiness (22).

The cottager's wife's death adheres to the patterns which Jalland identifies are typical of British Evangelical tracts, illustrating the continuity of these features between England and Scotland.

Instructional Texts and Working-class Readers

The conventional features of Evangelical texts would have been broadly recognisable to the literate public throughout Britain due to a distribution strategy which aimed to achieve the widest circulation possible[14]. Aileen Fyfe states that they were

[14] The Religious Tract Society specifically was also able to propagate its message widely because it took a broadly Evangelical position rather than being specifically allied to any one denomination. Fyfe highlights that following its foundation in 1799 'within its first year, the Tract Society's supporters already included lay and clerical members of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Secession Church, the Baptist, Methodist and Independent churches, and the

'distributed and sold by booksellers, hawkers, and home and foreign missionaries, as well as the volunteers in the auxiliary associations' guaranteeing their availability to a wide range of readers (16). Simple language and narrative content along with cheap printing methods were used to allow the publications to reach the greatest possible section of the newly expanded reading public. This tactic was central in the attempts of the Tract Society, and Evangelical publishers at large, to harness the potential of an emergent working-class readership.

William St Clair argues that from the late eighteenth-century a 'rapid expansion in reading occurred across all strata of society, whether categorised by income, by occupation, by educational attainment, by geographical location, by age, or by gender' in Britain (11). As literary education and access to printed books expanded, members of new demographics became regular readers. The birth of a mass reading public at a time when social structures were under significant scrutiny led to a widespread concern amongst traditional reading groups about what almost universal access to print culture might mean for British society. As St Clair comments a widened reading public held the potential to improve or subvert the existing political system:

> could reading help to bind the nation into a more secure cultural and political consensus, and so enable it to escape the violent revolutions which had engulfed France and other countries? Or, as others feared, would the spread of new ideas carried by print destabilise the precarious constructions of belief on which existing political, economic, social and gender relationships were founded? (12).

Many Evangelical religious publications were intended to answer these questions with a practical solution. Attempting to counter the 'immoral' messages propagated by novels, cheap penny fiction and the writings of political thinkers like Thomas Paine, tract societies

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Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. By 1807, there were also Lutherans and members of the Society of Friends' (23). This meant that although different evangelical sects disagreed on many points of theology (in fact these disagreements would lead to multiple religious schisms within Scottish Presbyterianism alone during the nineteenth century) they shared a common library of core popular publications, and therefore a shared vocabulary of literary imagery in relation to death.

and Evangelical writers produced alternative instructional reading material for the working-classes. The religious tract became an increasingly political document.

In particular, Hannah More's influential *Cheap Repository Tract* (1795-1798) series sets an important precedent for the conservative didacticism which Wilson employs in *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life.* Hannah More was a member of the Clapham Sect, a group of wealthy Evangelicals within the Church of England, committed to reforming the methods of the church. Producing simple, cheaply printed stories in conjunction with other members of the sect: 'More's general project, like that of other Evangelical and utilitarian literary reformers, was to provide wholesome reading in place of the textual poisons she saw everywhere in her culture' (Brantlinger 5). Her series of tracts was widely read and circulated, selling in their millions, and described the lives and deaths of pious or sinful rural workers. The stories within the collection were both Evangelical and politically conservative instructing their intended working-class audience in piety and self-reliance, Simon J. White has described them as 'conduct books for labouring people on the subject of self-sufficiency' (21). However, this self-sufficiency is always differentiated from the sort of independent thought which could be seen as politically radical. Characters are independent in the sense that they do not rely on the poor law for relief, but are generally uninterested in significant social advancement. More advocates hard-work, religious piety and familial affection as the means of achieving a respectable and 'good' death. To die peacefully in the arms of God is the reward for a life of religious and social conformity, an agonising and unrepentant death (like that of Black Giles in 'Black Giles the Poacher') a punishment for breaking the rules of More's Godly community.

It's perhaps easiest to illustrate the journey taken from the tract tradition to Wilson's stories by looking at one of Wilson's stories which mirrors the content of *The Cottager's Wife*. The story 'Consumption', from *Lights and Shadows,* contains a similar narrative of sickness, religious faith and beautiful premature death*:* a widow and three daughters, who inhabit a flower laden cottage, are killed one by one by tuberculosis. The story celebrates their resignation and faith in God as they anticipate their fate; after the death of their mother the orphans are described waiting to join her: 'they sat in their beauty within the shadow of death' (334). Like the pious young woman in *The Cottager's Wife,* the sisters do not forget their domestic and charitable duties in the face of their illness:

> They did not neglect their flower garden, although they well knew that their eyes were not to be gladdened by the blossoms of another spring. They strewed, as before, crumbs for the small birds that had built nests among the roses and honeysuckles on the wall of their cottage. They kept the weeds from overgrowing the walks that were soon to be trodden by their feet no more;… Nor did their higher cares lose any of the interest and charm which they had possessed during their years of health and hope. The old people whom their charity supported were received with as kind smiles as ever, when they came to receive their weekly dole. The children whom they clothed and sent to school met with the same sweet voices as before, when on Saturday evenings they visited the ladies at Calder Cottage (335).

The sisters are also visited by their pastor and the narrator comments that 'when the old minister visited them, he found them always cheerful and composed- during his stay they were joyful even in resignation' (336). This state of apparently joyful expectation is confirmed when each of the three experiences a good and aesthetically attractive death. The author comments of the youngest, Caroline, that 'with her the disease assumed its most beautiful show' and that 'no one was with her when she died, for she had risen earlier than her sisters, and was found by them, when they came down to the parlour, leaning back with a smiling face, on the sofa, with a few lilies in her hand, and never more to have her head lifted up in life' (337). Similarly Emma, the second daughter reaps the benefits of a god-fearing life: 'it seemed as if God, to reward a life of meekness, humility and wisdom, removed all fear from her soul, and showed her the loving, rather than the awful mysteries of the Redeemer. On her dead face there sat a smile, just as pleasant and serene as that which had lighted the countenance of Caroline' (339). Finally the eldest, Louisa, expires in the arms of her betrothed, gazing at the graves of her family.

Just as in *The Cottager's Wife* the signs of Godliness which the suffering women evince during their decline are confirmed by deaths which are used by those who witness them as evidence of their Godliness. In a pattern which the two texts share with many contemporary Evangelical deathbed narratives, a minister goes into a humble home to comfort and guide its inhabitant towards a happy and aesthetically attractive death, whilst

simultaneously acting as an observer; giving the reader access to this private domestic scene and the moral message it contains. The idealised depiction of Godly death is one whose conventions are repeated in the majority of Wilson's death scenes. As Tim Killick has commented ‘death, which occurs frequently in Wilson’s stories, is always accompanied by bedside familial reconciliations and affirmations of faith’ (143).

However, there are some obvious differences between the two texts which are perhaps indicative of the shift in intended audience between the tract and *Blackwood’s*. ‘Consumption’ is far more interested in the aesthetics of death than contemporary religious tracts. The ‘delightful’ness hinted at in *The Cottager’s Wife* is explored in detail in ‘Consumption’ where we spend more time contemplating the bodies of the dead women. Aesthetics seem to have caught up with instruction in terms of importance. The class status of the protagonist has also changed; although they live in a cottage, the widow and her daughters are gentlewomen living in reduced circumstances, not cottagers. The circumstances of their deaths are not exemplars for a rural working-class audience, instead they give middle-class readers a comforting image of godliness in their own likeness.

Perhaps most importantly, the aestheticisation of the story removes it from the current moment which readers inhabit into an idealised past. The text opens with an image of the ruins of the beautiful uninhabited cottage, invoking the abandoned cottage motif commonly employed across romantic poetry and art and perhaps most famously explored in Wordsworth’s *The Excursion* (1814). As well as offering a tasteful metaphor for the degenerating bodies of the beautiful dying sisters, this cottage indicates the place of this story outside of contemporary rural life. No-one occupies the cottage following the deaths of the women, nor is it demolished, instead it is a monument to the dead, abandoned but still bedecked by ‘the undecaying splendour’ of moss roses and alive with bees and birds. The countryside as imagined in the image of the cottage is a funerary monument abandoned to nature and the past. The cottage is not part of a real progressive economic space but a pastoral symbol of an idealised lost world. This image is indicative of the overall approach to rural space in Wilson’s text. The story of the consumptive sisters, like the other narratives of rural piety and idealised death in Wilson’s collection, is designed not to elicit action but pathos.

The 'Scotch Peasant' and National Character

In *Lights and Shadows,* this increasingly political religious publishing tradition is combined with another literary precedent, the mythologisation of the rural Parish society of Scotland's past. In his 1987 book *A Century of the Scottish People* T.C. Smout describes the way in which Scottish writers of the 1830s and 1840s associated the countryside with an idealised 'Scotch peasant':

> the country still stood for stability, as the town did for insecurity: many believed, with the great churchman Thomas Chalmers, that the salvation of Scotland would lie not merely in preserving traditional rural values but in somehow reintroducing them in the towns. There was a mythological 'Scotch peasant' who figured in much early Victorian writing on social problems: self-reliant, poor and pious, paradoxically at once too proud to accept charity from the rate-payers, and too respectful to question the ways either of Providence or his earthly superiors. He was the imaginary paragon against which real Scots of the lower classes were so often measured, and invariably found wanting (10).

The well-established figure of the virtuous 'Scotch peasant' had first emerged into the world of Scottish letters in this form sometime earlier, during the political controversies of the last decades of the eighteenth-century. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the virtuous Scottish cotter gained increasing ubiquity in writing about Scotland. Wilson and his colleagues at *Blackwood's* had a major role to play in the creation of this mythical figure, utilising the legacy of Robert Burns's 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' (1786) to support a version of Scottish identity which is both conservative and nostalgic.

The cottager was something of an endangered species across Britain by the end of the eighteenth-century and the Scottish cotter in particular faced imminent extinction. Cotters had formed the 'majority of the rural population' in the rural Lowlands during the seventeenth and early eighteenth-century (Devine 130). They subsisted by cultivating a small number of acres of agricultural land which they leased from the owner of a larger farm and often acted as additional labourers on this farm for an agreed number of days a year. However, by the early years of the nineteenth century, an entire way of life had

virtually disappeared from the Lowlands, with agricultural labour increasingly carried out by landless farm servants and labourers who worked all year for a wage. This change in the way in which farmers preferred to organise their labour force suited a new, modernised system of agriculture which was increasingly common across Scotland during the eighteenth-century. T.M. Devine states that 'perhaps the most visible effect of Improvement was the removal of the cottars' (147). Many previously rural workers relocated to Scotland's growing cities and industrial towns, becoming members of an emerging urban working-class. Scottish depictions of cottagers from this period are therefore necessarily about memory and passing traditions, and are rarely unambiguously on the side of the improver. Instead depictions of the cottage and its inhabitants allow writers to question the modern economic system and to bring morality, aesthetics, ancestry and community back into social debate.

Burns's Cotters and John Wilson's Rural Scotland

As Scotland's real cotters were facing the threat of rapid agricultural improvement, they were simultaneously becoming central to literary engagements with rural life. Robert Burns's ode to cottage life 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' was one of the most influential representations of the Scottish rural poor of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries. The poem consists of an idealised vignette where a family of cottage dwellers gather together for family prayers; Nigel Leask summarises: 'the cotter is shown, exhausted from his incessant toils, resting in the bosom of his family, in a household which is clean, frugal and sober to boot' (*Pastoral* 225). Much quoted and imitated, the poem's focus on domestic religious observance struck a chord with nineteenth-century Evangelical values, and 'The Cotter' proved to be one of Burns's best-loved works during the nineteenth century. By 1824 David Hill Radcliffe argues that 'imitations of the "Cotter" had become a recognised genre' (264).

This popularity might appear surprising when we consider the content of the later stanzas of the poem. The 'Cotter' concludes with a reflection on the Scottish nation which many commentators have identified as potentially 'radical and egalitarian' (Duncan and Mack 220). Burns represents Scotland's peasants as the defenders of Britain: 'Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,/ A virtuous populace may rise the while/ And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle' (91). He critiques the 'weak and vile' luxury of the

aristocracy lauding the moral purity of the Scottish cotter's way of life: 'Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,/"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"/And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,/The cottage leaves the palace far behind;' (91). However, whilst modern commentators have tended to read these statements as politically radical, early nineteenth-century conservative audiences responded to them differently, adopting the poem as their own.

This, I argue, is because the 'Cotter' doesn't need to be read as a radical text, but could just as easily function to shore up what Gary Kelly has termed the 'professional' and 'middle-class' 'cultural revolution' (4). From the late eighteenth-century an 'uncontroversial moral hegemony of the "middling sort"' was, according to Robert P. Irvine, taking a principal role in British formulations of self across party lines (Irvine 21). Advocating the commonly held middle-class moral values of 'polite manners and domestic virtue' to legitimate political ideas was a technique employed by Tory, Whig and Moderate Radical alike (Irvine 5). Irvine has argued that Burns was heavily invested in this project; 'this cultural revolution, with its anti-courtly slogans of "nature", "sincerity", and "feeling", had afforded Burns his literary authority' (21). It is possible to read the 'Cotter' as part of this emerging dominant middle-class culture.

In the opening lines of the 'Cotter' Burns not only dedicates the poem to his friend and benefactor the lawyer Robert Aiken, but flatteringly suggests that the poems content describes 'what Aiken in a cottage would have been' (Noble and Hogg 161). As Peter Zenzinger argues, in this dedication Burns 'rather than claiming a present, realistic portrait of a cotter's family…frames an idealistic model…connecting simplicity and happiness' (52). The cotter patriarch in this reading becomes a carrier for bourgeois ideals rather than an actual rural labourer; the realities of country life are subjugated to the representation of middle-class pastoral fantasy. Zenzinger has further argued for the need to divide our knowledge of Burns's own political beliefs from the content of the 'Cotter'; 'Burns, who experienced hard work, poverty and degradation as a farmer, does not speak in his own voice in this poem, but, for all his indignation, adopts the leisured classes' view of rural happiness' (52).

This argument is one which runs into problems in the final stanzas of the poem, which I quoted above, where Nigel Leask identifies a shift in tone from a relatively

conservative idealisation of cottage life to radical polemic ('Robert Burns' 77). However, the oft cited 'radical' stanzas avoid overtly inciting political insurrection, and could have also been read as exercises in middle-class myth building. Critiques of aristocratic values like those contained in these stanzas could function in didactic writing of the period to reinforce bourgeois values. Critiquing 'luxury' and 'tyranny' is not necessarily a radical act; there was a strong conservative tradition which critiqued luxury[15] and 'tyranny' was a subjective term used by radical writers to critique the monarchy and conservatives to critique the French revolutionary tribunal[16].

It's also worth noting that the firey wall of peasants are defending the British state in the event of monarchical collapse, not attacking state institutions. Thus, although this image lionises the rural labouring-classes it stops short of representing them as revolutionaries. The firey wall can be read as an image of rehabilitation which functions similarly to the 'thin red line' mythology surrounding Highland troops later in the century. Amidst fears of working-class insurrection, Burns perhaps champions the lowland cotters as loyal British subjects, just as Highland soldiers would be championed as brave and loyal warriors in the nineteenth century. Whether this reading was Burns's intention, the final stanzas of the 'Cotter' remain ambivalent enough in ideological import to allow a variety of readings. Many contemporary responses to the poem chose simply to ignore these passages; Nigel Leask notes that 'dozens of imitations of "The Cotter" appeared over the next few decades, usually picking up the "loyalist pastoral" strain of Burns's poem, while excluding the radicalism of the final stanzas' (*Pastoral* 231). For example, Hannah More republished the poem as a Cheap Repository Tract sterilised of all Scots phrases and possible radical import (*Pastoral* 231).

If the 'Cotter' can fit, or be made to fit, within a universally accepted middle-class moral outlook then it is perhaps easier to understand how a 'Tory Burns' might be constituted from its materials. Urbanisation and increasing concern about domestic popular political agency in the decades after the French revolution made the figure of the

[15] Exemplified in the works of mid-eighteenth-century Scottish author Tobias Smollett.

[16] The identification of tyranny was not limited to one political group. Lynn Hunt quotes the French revolutionary Theophile Berlier's statement that 'excessive power leads to tyranny' in support of the dethroning of the king of France (65). Alternatively, in a letter to Captain Mercer written in 1790 Edmund Burke, describing the French Revolution, states that 'the tyranny of the multitude is but a multiplied tyranny' (146).

contented Scottish cottager represented in the early stanzas of the 'Cotter' an attractive symbol for conservative commentators and writers. Elizabeth A. Bohls has argued that 'the conservative reaction during and after the French wars made Burns a mascot for a contented Scottish peasantry' and that this characterisation of the ploughman poet relied on a reactionary reading of the 'Cotter' (101). Patrick Scott Hogg and Andrew Noble, also, note that the poem's increasing ubiquity corresponded with the growth of urban industry:

> Whether they were properly reading its concluding stanzas, the "Cotter's Saturday Night" became the Ark of the Covenant for the Scottish upper and middle-classes as, increasingly anxious about the fetid, brutal potentially insurrectionary common life of the new emergent industry-based (coal, iron, tobacco, weaving) towns, they sought the politically calming notion of pastoral, god-fearing peace reigning in the Scottish countryside (161).

The 'Cotter' could thus operate as antidote to the more disturbing aspects of political and social change at the turn of the century. The Burns of the 'Cotter' became an icon for a certain type of nostalgic conservativism, with influential reviews and biographies, by Henry MacKenzie (1786) and Robert Heron (1797) respectively, propagating this image of the bard. Noble and Hogg comment of Heron's writings about the 'Cotter' that 'this kind of Mackenzie-initiated sentimentalism was the seminal language of nineteenth-century political pietism which would become, mainly through *Blackwood's,* the dominant mode of Scottish Toryism' (liii). Tory Burns began to hold a central position in Tory Scotland's self-fashioning; Elizabeth Hamilton's employment of quotations from the poem in the chapter headings of her anti-Jacobin novel *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800) typifies the conservative adoption of Burns and his 'cotter'. As Andrew Nash argues 'Burns was appropriated, and in a very strong way, by forces eager to impose their own patterns of cultural authority' ('Cotter' 181). Just such a 'Tory Burns' was to occupy a central role in John Wilson's imagined countryside, and consequently in the rural writings of the *Blackwood's* group.

In the February 1819 edition of *Blackwood's* Wilson published the first of two essays on Burns which foreshadowed the approach to rural subjects which would inform *Lights and Shadows*. In 'Some Observations on the Poetry of the Agricultural and that of the Pastoral Districts of Scotland, Illustrated by a Comparative View of the Genius of Burns and

Ettrick Shepherd', Wilson sets out to distinguish between Burns's 'agricultural' poetics and Hogg's 'pastoral' poetics, ascribing each a specific and fairly limited function within the arena of Scottish letters. Burns's function as agricultural poet is to catalogue 'the feelings and the passions of the heart of man' rather than the beauties of nature (524). Hogg as a shepherd should limit himself to 'the days of old' and 'the Court of Faery', and is warned against attempting 'any long poem in which a variety of characters are to be displayed acting on the theatre of the world' (528, 529). Wilson does not attribute the ability to move beyond this circumscribed role to either author, suggesting that the field in which 'peasant poets' can operate is limited (521). The 'peasant poets' are deemed incapable of the type of generic flexibility which was the hallmark of the major writers within the *Blackwood's* cohort, nor are they endowed with comparable wit and urbanity. Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack state that 'John Wilson (the leading figure of *Blackwood's*) tended to present Hogg (and Burns) as writers about pious peasants, peasants who keep up the good old traditions of the good old days, peasants presented by Wilson as the salt of the earth and the backbone of Britain' (Duncan and Mack 220). Wilson's attempted differentiation between the two writers, based on forms of rural labour, reveals his desire to isolate rural writing from the world of modern letters. However, it is his broader reflections on Scottish rural culture and the 'Cotter' which provide a glimpse of the approach to the countryside which would be explored in his short fiction.

The essay opens with some general thoughts on the character of Scotland's rural peasantry. Wilson argues that 'the lower orders of the Scotch seem always to have had deeper, calmer, purer, and more reflecting affections than those of any other people' and that this unique character 'is to be attributed to the spirit of their religion' (521). In the politically tense months which led up to the Peterloo Massacre in August 1819, Wilson casts Scotland's lowland peasantry as a docile, model working-class. Discounting the radical inheritance of Scottish Presbyterianism, Wilson suggests that it is their faith which makes the Scots law-abiding and submissive. This docility and piety means that Scotland's rural working-class are differentiated from their English counterparts:

> Of England, and of the character of her population, high and low, we think with exultation and with pride. Some virtues they perhaps possess in greater perfection than any other people. But we believe, that the most philosophical Englishmen acknowledge that there is a depth of moral and religious feeling in

> the peasantry of Scotland, not to be found among the best part of their own population (522).

The Scottish countryside is not merely an extension of the English countryside in Wilson's essay. Scottish cotters are set apart as a 'purer, simpler, more pious race' (523). The Scottish Kirk is given a central role in the maintenance of superior political order and continuity in Scotland; a characterisation which wilfully ignores both the Kirk's controversial history in relation to the Union, and the increasing division and disharmony between the moderate and Evangelical parties within the contemporary Church.

In line with this approach to the 'Scottish peasant', in 'Burns and the Ettrick Shepherd', Wilson first identifies the version of Burns's legacy which was to characterise his own approach to the rural life (522). Denouncing the satirical and bawdy Burns evinced in works like 'Holy Willie's Prayer', Wilson identifies 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' as the pinnacle of Burns's career, and as a work which reveals the true Burns:

> "The Cotter's Saturday Night" shews what he could have done- had he surveyed with a calm and untroubled eye, all the influences of our religion, carried as they are in the inmost heart of society by our simple and beautiful forms of worship –had marriage –baptism –that other more awful sacrament- death- and funeral- had these and the innumerable themes allied to them, sunk into the depths of his heart, and images of them reascended thence into living and imperishable light (526).

Wilson's reading of Burns not only praises the 'Cotter' in line with MacKenzie's conservative tradition, but lays out the 'Cotter'-inspired poems Wilson wishes Burns had written. Where the 'Cotter' focuses on worship and family, Wilson highlights the role that death and the funeral might have played in his alternative Burns canon, laying the groundwork for his own Scottish rural writings.

Later that year, Wilson's essay 'The Radical's Saturday Night' represented the author's first foray into reimagining the 'Cotter' in line with his own political and aesthetic ideas. In 'The Radical's Saturday Night' the 'Cotter' is re-envisioned in prose, through the prism of Post-Burkean conservative discourse. Wilson opens the essay by once again

reiterating the merits of the 'Cotter'. He describes Burns's poem in terms which cast it as a poem which documents the reality of cotter life:

> The picture which Burns has drawn of that hallowed scene, is felt by every one who has a human heart- but they alone can see its beauty, who have visited the fireplaces of the Scottish peasantry, and joined in their family worship. They who have done so, see in the poem nothing but the simple truth- truth so purified, refined, and elevated by devotion, as to become the highest poetry (267).

The reader is invited to claim allegiance with an imagined group of informed readers who have witnessed the 'true nature' of Scottish cottage life, and therefore Scotland. Wilson imagines the poem as a virtual invitation to visit the homes of Scotland's rural poor. In doing so, the reader is invited to experience the vision of Scotland which Wilson wishes to propagate. Andrew Nash succinctly summarises the rhetorical work which Wilson undertakes in these passages: 'to Wilson it's obvious: read Burns and you understand peasant Scotland, and, because peasant Scotland is unique, you understand what is unique to Scotland' ('Cotter' 185).

The author then sets about asserting his own authority to represent cottage life, and by extension Scottish culture. Although not a peasant poet himself, Wilson casts himself as an observer who has on multiple occasions witnessed similar scenes:

> Many a Saturday night has the writer of this joined in that simple service: more than once, when death had just visited the cottage- but at all times, whether those of joy or affliction- there was the same solemn resignation to the divine will- the same unquestioning, humble, wise, submission- the same perfect peace, and even lofty happiness- nor did he ever see one shudder, nor hear one sob that seemed to signify despair (258).

The observer's subsequent visit to a family of cotters functions as an update of Burns's 'Cotter's Saturday Night'. Returning to a cottage, which he 'had often visited when a boy', he comes across the 'gray-headed patriarch', who had lived there when he was young, and the cotter's daughter, now a wife and mother (258). This figure of the returning literary

man foreshadows the character who would narrate the stories of *Lights and Shadows*, a city professional with country roots, able to use his critical gaze to observe and document country-life. Where Burns assumes his readers are capable of sympathising with an apparently unmediated rural scene, Wilson inserts a middle-class conduit into the cottage whose knowledge of urban *and* country life allows him to translate for his readers. This substitution is perhaps indicative of Wilson's wider concerns about sympathetic engagement and 'low life'.

In a letter to William Wordsworth, dated 1802, the young John Wilson criticises the elder poet's choice of subject in 'The Idiot Boy'. He laments the difficulty he had in finding pleasure in reading the poem before arguing that:

> this inability to receive pleasure from descriptions such as that of "The Idiot Boy", is, I am convinced, founded upon established feelings of human nature, and the principle of it constitutes, as I dare say you recollect, the leading feature of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. I therefore think that, in the choice of this subject, you have committed an error (Dundas 114).

In Wilson's opinion, the idiot boy and his mother are so far removed from the readers' experience as to be removed from the possibility of sympathy. In expressing this sense of removal Wilson draws on conceptions of sympathy as an activity which rather than transcending all barriers of social class and position allows a limited section of society to conceive of one another's feelings. The young Wilson elaborates that 'I have seen a most excellent painting of an idiot, but it created in me inexpressible disgust. I admired the talents of the artist, but I had no other source of pleasure. The poem of "The Idiot Boy" produced upon me an effect in every respect similar' (Dundas 114). Andrew Noble has argued that 'by restricting the area of empathetic concern he found in Wordsworth's poetry, Wilson was making not only an aesthetic and moral decision but a political one' and that 'this early exchange with Wordsworth is seminal for understanding Wilson's subsequent career' (131). It is not possible to entirely discern Wilson's mature position on literary sympathy from this single, youthful exchange, however the letters do provide an interesting possible context for the way in which Wilson often mediates sentimental scenes for his middle-class readership.

Given that the essays, and *Lights and Shadows* stories, first appeared in print within the pages of *Blackwood's,* the author's choice of a middle-class urban narrator can be linked to the texts' intended readership and the ways in which Wilson imagined that sympathetic engagement operated. Where the author of *The Cottager's Wife* aimed to instruct a working-class readership in piety, Wilson aims to inspire sympathy in a socially conservative, middle-class audience of readers, who, like the young Wilson reading 'The Idiot Boy', might find it hard to feel a flow of fellow feeling between themselves and their extreme social inferiors. To combat this problem Wilson either employs a middle-class narrator who models an appropriate response, or focuses on middle-class subjects.

In *Lights and Shadows* the rigid social hierarchies which are so apparent within the stories are thus expanded beyond the narrative and written onto the relation between the reader and the story's subject. Just as personal relationships between characters of different social classes are forbidden within the scheme of the text[17], a flow of sympathetic emotion between the middle-class reader and a truly impoverished peasant is rarely attempted. Instead, impoverished characters are often upper or middle-class widows or orphans. Peasant characters are observed and lauded or denigrated by the observing narrator but are very rarely presented unmediated to the reader. Where Wilson does attempt to champion the cause of true peasant characters it also becomes important for their actions to showcase a sort of middle-class morality paired with a complete lack of ambition to become part of that class. The mediating narrator of 'The Radical's Saturday Night' anticipates one of the strategies which Wilson employs to write rural peasant tales for middle-class readers in *Lights and Shadows*.

Just as in his earlier essay, Wilson had confined the Ettrick Shepherd to a countryside of fairies and history, in 'The Radical's Saturday Night' he places the cotters in a sort of historical stasis; 'nothing had happened to them since I came to bid them farewell on that summer morning I left school' (258). Barring a marriage and the births of children, life in the cottage is a point of complete continuity compared to Wilson's narrator's own life 'led in foreign countries' (258). The 'secluded' cottage exists outside of the flow of time, sheltered from narratives of progress and change (259). The old man reads from the 'big

[17] For example, two of Wilson's *Lights and Shadows* stories 'The Lily of Liddisdale' and 'Helen Eyre' feature virtuous heroines who resist the temptation of marrying into wealth in order to maintain the social status quo.

ha' bible' and leads the family in psalms and prayers reiterating the scenes of the 'Cotter' but with the middle-class observer inserted into the group. Thirty-three years after the publication of Burns's original poem Wilson writes to reassure the reader that little has changed in the cottage.

These idealised scenes of continuity and stability are contrasted with the nightmare visions which Wilson suffers on retreating to the 'neatly furnished' guest bedroom of the cottage to sleep (259). He falls asleep musing with 'purest delight' on his evening with the cotters but 'though all these impressions were calm, peaceful, and blessed, yet was the dream itself which they occasioned distorted, hideous, and ghastly, as if hell itself were suddenly to glare out through a vision of heaven' (259). Wilson's nightmare features a gothic counter-image of the scenes around the 'big ha' bible'. In the dream sequence, Wilson stumbles from a storm into the cottage to find it utterly altered by the overturn of 'throne and altar' (259). The collapse of religion, the monarchy and the family are interconnected in 'The Radical's Saturday Night'; Wilson, like Burke, portrays God, the King and the father as interchangeable symbols of patriarchal order. In the dream, the domestic life of the cottagers has broken down and Wilson finds the 'patriarch' of the early part of the narrative abandoned by 'the dead ashes of a scanty fire' in a dilapidated house (259). On the return of the cotter family it becomes clear that the younger generation are now radical revolutionaries and have consequently lost their faith and their veneration for their elderly father.

The narrative places a great deal of emphasis on the relationship between the breakdown of the patriarchal family unit and the collapse of organised religion. The young cotters no longer believe in a heavenly father, and similarly have little interest in their earthly father. Wilson returns repeatedly to images of the destroyed kirk and its surrounding kirkyard to emphasise the break with tradition and ancestral understandings of family which an atheist radical revolution represents. The atheist son describes the destruction of the local kirk in terms which directly reference the revolutionary controversy of the 1790s:

> we have levelled the old crazy building with the ground- the pews, and lofts, and rafters- the pulpit too, with its sounding-board, where the old hypocrite used to preach salvation to our souls- by the bones of Thomas Paine, they

> made a glorious bonfire! And turned all the church-yard as bright as day- the manse itself looked red in the blaze. Had the ghosts leapt from their graves, they might have fancied it hell-fire (260).

In this fanciful speech the bones of Thomas Paine replace the name of God and the churchyard is transformed into the pit of hell. This world-upside-down image is remarkably similar to the images used in Burke's anti-revolutionary writings of the 1790s. In particular, Wilson's focus on the mistreatment of the elderly father and the bones of his ancestors draws upon images of the destruction of the 'aged parent' in the *Reflections.* The father protests against the destruction of the graveyard:

> "James! You have scattered the stones of the house of God, over the grave of your mother. Where will you bury these bones when your old father dies?" holding up his hands as he spake, his withered hands clasped as it were in prayer or supplication (260).

The father characterises the destruction of the church and the family lair as actions which will divide him not just from worshipping God but from being laid to rest with his late wife. However, his son shows little interest in his plea. This dismissal of the family grave is symbolic of a wider rejection of the specifically Scottish values of piety and subservience to authority which Wilson attributes to the cotters:

> "A hole dug in the earth is a grave- but we have no laws, I believe, against burial-grounds- only we must not call them kirk-yards- for where now are the kirks? This has been a glorious day for Scotland. More than a thousand kirks have crumbled into ashes- and tomorrow, not a bell will be heard singing from Tintock to Cape Wrath!" (261).

The centrality of this destruction of kirk and kirkyard to Wilson's 'Radical's Saturday Night' emphasises the increasing importance which the writer would place the graveyard as a representative space within his rural writing. The kirkyard emblematises both religion and the patriarchal family in a single Burkean image, its destruction symbolising the destruction of a patriarchal order founded on church, throne and the father's hearth-side chair.

On awakening from this nightmare of radical revolution, however, Wilson finds himself in the orderly cottage of the night before, 'in a moment I recollected that I was reposing in the dwelling of peace, innocence, and piety' (261). He accompanies the family to church and is reassured by the worthy old minister that 'the RADICAL'S SATURDAY-NIGHT would never be in Scotland any thing more than- a dream' (262). Wilson's confident conclusion casts the Scottish lowlands as the repository of British political stability. This political stability is founded upon conservative patriotism, a patriarchal model of cultural inheritance and a depoliticised version of Scottish Presbyterianism all of which are mutually intertwined.

'A Certain Type of Scottishness': *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* and the Didactic Rural Scottish Story

The conservative Christianity of tracts like Hannah More's and the conservative Scottishness of Tory responses to Robert Burns's legacy are combined to create the obviously religiously inflected and exemplary stories of Scottish rural life in *Lights and Shadows*, but this combination also draws on previous domestic fiction which had synthesised these two influences to create what Pam Perkins terms 'a certain type of Scottishness' in British literature (33). A text like *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808) by Elizabeth Hamilton offers a bridge between these two traditions and Wilson's rural fiction. Published in 1808, *Glenburnie* has often been thought of as 'a Scottish version of Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts*', and shares a rural setting and didactic function with them (Perkins 5).

Lasting two chapters, the death of the cottager, Mr. MacClarty, forms a central episode in Hamilton's text. Mr. MacClarty's response to his rapid dissolution follows many of the patterns we've so far traced in Evangelical tracts. His response to the news that his child and wife are also dangerously ill is one of resignation and religious faith: 'he made no answer, than that they were in the hands of a merciful God, and his life and death be submitted to his will' (147). Even in his final moments he manages to communicates his state of grace to those who witness his death: 'he was now speechless, but his hands were lifted up in the attitude of prayer' (150). However, Hamilton utilises the conventions of the 'good death' to articulate her own political perspective on the life and death of the rural cottager.

Pamela Perkins in her introduction to the novella comments that 'the MacClartys begin with everything that…culture assumed would produce contented family life' (28). As semi-independent cottagers, the MacClartys are the standard fare of the political polemic. Simon J. White asserts that from the 1790s a convention had emerged within British letters where 'the cottager who relied on his common rights or customary practices for a semi-independent living would become a major figure in both polemical and literary writing about rural communities from the 1790s through to the beginning of the 1830s' (4). What the cottager (or cotter) stood for depended on the political objectives of the writer. Generally, however, whether a writer wished to return to paternalist systems of land management or desired a brave new world of independent cottage dwellers, the peasant and his cottage were emblems of rural change and the possibility of cultural loss. In conservative texts in particular, the virtuous cottager represented the benefits of a social system which seemed to be being pushed to the verge of annihilation by unchecked free-market economics and improvement.

The cottager could thus function as a political symbol, operating either as an emblem of the possibilities of an alternative new social order, in which all would have a stake in the future of the land, or of a traditional moral order founded on paternal relations between landowners and labourers. Given Hamilton's well-documented Anti-Jacobin stance one might expect that her portrayal of the MacClarty family would have more in common with the later perspective, however rather than representing a countryside peopled by virtuous cottagers, Hamilton populates her rural landscape with peasants in desperate need of moral and domestic reform. The MacClartys with their small but substantial cottage and handful of cows perfectly fit into the cottager economic group but they are cottagers gone wrong. Despite their semi-independent status and access to common pasture they are uneducated in the skills required to manage their domestic environment and largely unwilling to be educated. It is down to their relation Mrs. Mason to pass on the values she has learned as a servant to the feckless cottager family.

The constant refrain which the cottagers use to explain their desire not to improve things is that they 'cou'd no be fashed' and this desire to keep things as they are even when it is inconvenient becomes the obstacle against which Mrs. Mason must battle (118). The criticism of conserving practices because that is how they have always been is central to Hamilton's programme for small-scale, individual-focused reform. Hamilton's text although

often affectionate in its perspective on cottager culture is highly critical of those who indiscriminately follow custom. Instead the crusading Mrs. Mason advocates personal change for the MacClartys, believing that industry and discipline can modestly improve their standard of living without radically altering their social position. Mrs. Mason's recipe for a good cottage life combines piety with personal industry. The rewards associated with this good life, within the text, are not simply a good death but also a real improvement in material living standards, which can be experienced in the here and now. Although characters are not encouraged to transcend their own class identity, and where a character is perceived to 'over-reach' they are rapidly chastened, reform of the individual and their own immediate domestic environment can elevate the working-class through the inculcation of modernising, middle-class values. In this way Claire Grogan suggests that the novel is in its own small way committed to ideas of improvement as a solution to political and social instability: 'promoting the modernisation of her [Hamilton's] own part of Britain in order to eliminate social, cultural and economic disparities that threaten the unity of state and empire' (134).

Mr. MacClarty's death itself is occasioned by the indiscriminate following of custom. When he is struck by a severe fever after attempting to rescue his son from a press gang, Mrs. Mason suggests various modern approaches to treating Mr. MacClarty's symptoms but 'found that her opinions were looked upon with the eye of jealous prejudice' by Mrs. MacClarty and her neighbours (142). Instead Mr. MacClarty is placed in a hot, airless room, given whisky and bled by 'auld John Smith' with a 'rusty lancet' (142). By the time Mrs. Mason can gain control over the situation Mr. MacClarty is beyond help.

However, despite being the root cause of MacClarty's death, the cottager community and its culture is not presented as hopeless or inherently backward. Once the 'clart' of custom and superstition is washed away, the cottager's lifestyle is presented as one with an inherent value worthy of preservation. Mr. MacClarty's death and funeral are favourably compared with the deaths and funerals of the aristocracy several times. Hamilton describes how, when questioned by the minister, the dying man:

> strongly evinced the faith and hope of a Christian- that faith and that hope, which transforms the death-bed of the cottager into a scene of glory, on which kings and conquerors might look with

> envy, and in comparison of which, all the grandeur of the world is contemptible (148).

Watching from the cottage as the funerary procession passes (women traditionally could not attend the graveside at a Scottish funeral), Mrs. Mason again reflects on the contrast between the rituals she is watching and those of the MacClarty's social superiors, comparing the empty carriages sent by noble families to pay respect at her aristocratic Master's funeral to the group of genuinely grieving neighbours and friends who gather to mark Mr. MacClarty's death together:

> Casting her eyes upon the rustic train who followed, she could not help contrasting the outward circumstances of this solemnity, with those that had attended the last event of a similar nature in which she had been interested. She had seen her noble master conducted to the grave in all the splendour befitting his station…"Where now." Thought she "are the distinctions of rank? Where those barriers, which in this world separate man from man? Even here sorrow only embalms the memory of the righteous…Why then should those of lowly station envy the trappings of vanity, that are but the boast of the moment, when, by piety and virtue, they may attain a distinction so much more lasting and glorious? To the humble and the lowly are the gates of Paradise thrown open (154).

This extended reflection not only references the idea of death as leveller, but also sets out an advantage of the life of a peasant over those of their social superiors- the possibility of 'true' community. The 'good death' isn't just defined in Hamilton's text as one where the dying party's piety is confirmed through marks of Godliness but also as one where their position within their community is demonstrated. The respect and grief of Mr. MacClarty's friends and neighbours are as much a mark of his 'goodness' as his clasped hands and the words of piety he utters on his deathbed. This sense of social kinship and community is at odds with the social isolation of the aristocratic characters in the text who are invariably members of broken families prone to disagreement and estrangement. Mrs. Mason seems

to seek a middle way between the empty carriages of the aristocracy and the customary clart of the ferm toun.

Where the *Cheap Repository Tracts* are aimed at an almost exclusively working-class readership, the intended readership for *Glenburnie* is more difficult to identify. Although *Glenburnie* could clearly function as an instructional text for the working-classes, and Hamilton states this avowed aim in her epistle to Hector Macneill, the novel's length and the author's use of a more sophisticated structure and language suggest that it was not exclusively written for this market, as Claire Gorgan comments: 'the work is far more ambitious both in its genre and its target audience' (131). On first publication the novel was read by a wide range of readers- Walter Scott includes a reference to it in *Waverley* (1814), assuming that it will be a text which his own broad readership will be familiar with (494). This decision to shift the possible readership of the didactic rural tale to an audience removed from the realities of agricultural production or labour is an innovation which Wilson extends further with his decision to publish his own moralised stories within the pages of the Tory periodical *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.*

Pam Perkins asserts that the popularity and reach of *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* was so wide that 'the fictional village of Glenburnie became emblematic of a certain type of Scottishness for readers in the opening years of the nineteenth century' (33). This 'certain type of Scottishness' is one which is again invoked in *Lights and Shadows* where Wilson depicts a domestic, rural Scotland of small communities, kinship and warm hearths. However, where Hamilton follows her protagonist Mrs. Mason's quest for change and reform, Wilson's narrator is the son of a minister returned to his father's parish on a visit and his only role is to record what he sees and feels in picturesque vignettes. Although the stories are moral tales with religious and social messages, they are primarily nostalgic historical fictions which attempt to address a modern readership with stories of a beautiful and virtuous way of life which is almost extinct. Wilson's countryside is less an actual space than a realm of Tory pastoral fantasy. Where in 1808 Hamilton looked for ways to resuscitate Scottish cotter life, Wilson has arguably sent his narrator to record its funeral and devise a fittingly moving obituary.

'Moss-side': Poverty, Christian Resignation and Wilson's Good Death

This reading of Wilson's stories as didactic tales with little actual intention to instruct, or to solve economic and social problems, is reinforced by the way in which morality typically operates in the *Lights and Shadows* narratives. In the story 'Moss-Side', Wilson links the Christian resignation of the good death with the resignation to economic hardship which he sees as a defining feature of the good peasant. 'Moss-side' tells the story of the poor but morally upstanding Ainslie family as they nurse their youngest child through an almost fatal fever. Wilson describes the family as members of 'the blameless poor' (29). He argues that their economic status has nothing to do with the family's abilities or righteousness– although they work hard, live moral lives and are frugal the family are economically deprived – but neither does he suggest that the family are being oppressed by a man-made economic system; rather he suggests that theirs is a position which has been given to them by Providence:

> Gilbert Ainslie was a slave, but it was for them he loved with a sober and deep affection. The thraldom under which he lived God had imposed, and it only served to give his character a shade of gravity, but not austere; to make his smiles fewer, but heartfelt; to calm his soul at grace before and after meals; and to kindle it in morning and evening prayer (30).

Wilson interprets poverty as the necessary condition of a certain stratum of society, linked not to personal morality but providential will. The traditional social structure of rural Scotland with its peasantry, ministers and Lairds is presented by Wilson as God-given and thus within *Lights and Shadows* any attempt to transcend these structures and engender greater social fluidity leads to ruin. Instead, the stories champion complete resignation to personal economic hardship, interpreting poverty as a circumstance as inescapable as death.

The Ainslies are not strangers to the tragedy of childhood mortality, 'of ten children that had been born to them, they had lost three' (30), but in 'Moss-side' their resignation to the deaths of these children gives them dignity and spiritually elevates them, even as their material circumstances remain unchanged:

> Utter poverty often kills the affections; but a deep, constant and common feeling of this world's hardships, and an equal participation in all those struggles by which they may be softened, unite husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, in thoughtful and subdued tenderness, making them happy indeed, while the circle round the fire is unbroken, and yet preparing them every day to bear the separation, when some one or other is taken slowly or suddenly away…there is a wise moderation both in the joy and the grief of the intelligent poor, which keeps lasting trouble away from their earthly lot, and prepares them silently and unconsciously for Heaven (33).

To be poor in Wilson's text is not a punishment but simply God's will. To bear this will with resignation and tolerance is to be a 'good' peasant, just as bearing the suffering which will lead to one's eventual demise represents a route to a 'good' death in an Evangelical death tract. The relation between the two is made explicit at the close of the tale, where the miraculous recovery of the child is mirrored in the miraculous rescue of the family's finances by a bequest from the Will of a distant relative. In both cases the family have submitted themselves to what they perceive to be the will of God and it is only after this complete submission that they are providentially saved.

The burial which follows an exemplary death also functions to highlight the 'goodness' of the dead person and more importantly that of their living kin. Describing the moral rectitude of the Ainslie family, Wilson is careful to mention the way in which they marked the deaths of their three children:

> and as they had fed, clothed, and educated them respectably, so did they give them who died a respectable funeral. The living did not grudge to give up, for a while, some of their daily comforts, for the sake of the dead; and bought, with the little sums which their industry had saved, decent mournings, worn on Sabbath, and then carefully laid by (30)

The burials of the Ainslies' children are not morally exemplary *despite* their poverty but *because* of it. The family use their limited resources not to afford themselves materially better lives but to ensure that their dead can assume a 'respectable' position within the burial ground which accords with their respectable position within the community. Mrs. Ainslie makes this relationship explicit when she discusses the problems the family may have in affording a decent burial for their critically ill daughter- 'dear me, it is cruel to be put to it thus, when our bairn is dying, and when, if so it be the Lord's will, she should have a decent burial, poor innocent, like them that went before her' (36). Saved money isn't intended for material advancement but rather to maintain personal status beyond death and into the grave. A 'good death' is the prize of a life of virtuous rural poverty and it is therefore important to be able to be buried in the correct 'place'.

The representation of death in 'Moss-side' typifies Wilson's alignment of religious and social virtue in his stories. The cotters guarantee their own secular and spiritual immortality by accepting the will of God in the form of physical suffering and destitution. This approach both draws upon and rearranges the central message of the Evangelical tracts, and poetry like Robert Blair's. It suggests not only that humility and forbearance are the keys to the religious afterlife, but that social and political agitation are antithetical to religious virtue. By writing a version of Scottish religiosity which ignores the democratic traditions and internal debates of Scottish Presbyterian faith, Wilson portrays the Kirk's doctrines as agents of political and social passivity.

Rebels Without a (Political) Cause: Covenanting in *Lights and Shadows*

In *Lights and Shadows,* the deliberate depoliticisation of Scottish Presbyterianism's cultural legacy becomes most apparent in the three stories where Wilson attempts to reconcile the Covenanting history of Southern Scotland with the picture of pastoral life he has painted in the first two thirds of the collection. Presbyterian Evangelical dissent was often imaginatively allied with the Covenanting movement of the seventeenth-century- identifying itself with the puritanical values and commitment to voluntaryism which had characterised Covenanting. Covenanting had been a movement of the Presbyterian working-class, what Callum G. Brown describes as 'a focus and a means of social protest' (24). In nineteenth-century Scotland, the 'martyrdoms' of Covenanters were therefore often culturally aligned with radical politics. The inclusion of Covenanting tales seems

strange in a text as conservative as Wilson's. However, like his use of Evangelical death tract motifs and images of Scots cotters, the author's use of Covenanting mythology serves to appropriate a traditionally working-class popular narrative to his own ideological ends. In re-imagining the Covenanters Wilson writes a rival Covenanting myth.

The tales, 'Lilias Grieve', 'The Covenanter's Marriage-Day' and 'The Baptism' are all set in the 'Killing Time' (1660-1688)[18] and explore the troubled history of the region of Southern Scotland which Wilson has described in the fifteen stories which precede them within the collection. Surprisingly for stories about a religious rebellion, none of Wilson's stories depict the Covenanters' military defeats or triumphs; instead they all detail the local people's tragically thwarted attempts at domestic life. Baptisms, weddings and the repose of elderly are all disrupted by the violence of the persecutions. Wilson emphasises the people's exile from their churches and the faith of their parents, eliding the religious and political controversies at the heart of the Covenanting struggle. In foregrounding these aspects of Covenanting history Wilson domesticates Scotland's troubled religious history, highlighting the continuity between the 'Cotter' inspired peasants of his earlier stories and their rebellious ancestors, whilst denuding this legacy of political threat.

Graves and death are, of course, central to this project. Those who died during the repression of the Covenanters were popularly referred to as 'the Martyrs' in Scottish popular history. Wilson very much adheres to this representation of the dead, whilst simultaneously rendering their history palatable to a conservative readership. Where Scott had famously portrayed the Covenanters in *Old Mortality* (1816) as enemies of the state, conflating 'Presbyterian enthusiasm with an archetypal revolutionary fanaticism', Wilson awards his Covenanting peasants sentimentalised, good deaths which emphasise their forbearance and victimhood (Duncan 40).

[18] The restoration of Charles II in 1660 led to an escalation in the ongoing sovereignty dispute between the Stuart monarchy and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland which had been sparked in 1637 by Charles I's introduction of the *Common Book of Prayer* and the subsequent signing of the National Covenant by ministers of the Church in 1638. 'The Killing Times' refer to the period between Charles II's restoration and the 'Glorious Revolution' in 1688 when the Protestant William of Orange ascended the throne in a bloodless revolution. During this period supporters of the Covenant were heavily repressed. Sympathising ministers were ousted from their parishes to make way for Episcopalian Clergy loyal to the house of Stuart. Rebel ministers found to be preaching at 'conventicles' could be executed, and lay people who refused to attend the Episcopal churches were also regarded as rebels and could be fined or tortured. From 1678, armed troops from the Highlands were stationed in the southern regions of Scotland to repress the rebels. Known as the 'Highland Host' in popular histories, this occupying force were feared and reviled in the South-West.

In the second of Wilson's Covenanting stories, 'The Covenanter's Marriage-Day', two young Covenanters are wed in secret amidst the hags and return to the shieling where they will dwell as man and wife only to be massacred by a passing party of soldiers. The newly-weds are buried in their marriage clothes by the very minister and group of Covenanters who earlier attended their wedding. The killing of the newlyweds emphasises the desecration of domestic family life, and their burial far from either's native Parish serves to further emphasise the disruption of domestic life which the religious persecutions have effected:

> The party stood together in the lone burial-ground at the head St Mary's Loch. A grave was dug for them there, but that was not their own burial place. For Mark Kerr's father and mother lay in the church-yard of Melrose, and the parents of Christian Lindsay slept in that of Bothwell, near the flow of the beautiful Clyde (250).

The couple are buried together, but removed from familial and ancestral connection. The isolated burial ground at St Mary's Loch is 'not their own burial place', they are exiled from the kirkyard of their ancestors, just as their wedding amongst nature symbolised their exile from their home kirks. However, the grave-yard space retains the community building function it holds within Wilson's modern tales, as the mourners gather to discuss the departed: 'sitting down on the graves and on the grave-stones, they spoke of the virtues of the dead' (250). The Covenanting mourners exhibit all of the features of Wilson's contented peasantry responding to the violent deaths of the young couple with religious resignation: 'this would have been a perplexing day to those who had not faith in God's perfect holiness and mercy. But all who mourned now together were highly resigned to his dispensations, and soon all eyes were dried' (250).

Further to this point, in the first of his Covenanting stories, Wilson suggests that the deaths of the 'Killing Time' did not just test the inherent nature of the Scottish lowland peasantry but helped to form that character:

> The hidden powers of their souls were brought forth into the light, and they knew the strength that was in them for these days of trial. The thoughtless became sedate- the wild were tamed- the unfeeling made compassionate-

> hard hearts were softened, and the wicked saw the error of their ways. All deep passion purifies and strengthens the soul, and so was it now. Now was shown and put to proof, the stern, austere, impenetrable strength of men, that neither bend nor break- the calm, serene determination of matrons, who, with meek eyes and unblanched cheeks, met the scowl of the murderer- the silent beauty of the maidens, who with smiles received their death- and the mysterious courage of children who, in the inspiration of innocence and spotless nature, kneeled down among the dew-drops on the green sward, and died fearlessly by their parents sides' (228).

In Wilson's version of the Covenanting story, the Covenanting past is not a radical inherence for the rural workers of the South of Scotland, but an experience which makes the conservative idyll of the *Lights and Shadows* villages and glens possible. In facing death at the hands of soldiers the local peasantry acquire the endurance and forbearance which make them the custodians of Scottish, and British, cultural identity. The Covenanting legacy is, in Wilson's version of Scottish religious history, a pious and conservative rural Scotland.

Death, Social Place and Pastoral Space

The tragedy of being buried at a site that is not ones 'own burial place', which lends pathos to 'The Covenanter's Marriage-Day', reoccurs within *Lights and Shadows* articulating Wilson's sense of the relationship between social order and the kirkyard. In 'The Elder's Funeral', the story's narrator takes time to reflect on the place of the graveyard within the local community following the funeral of a pious and worthy elder of the Kirk:

> The Churchyard, to the inhabitants of a rural parish, is the place to which, as they grow older, all their thoughts and feelings turn. The young take a look of it every Sabbath-day, not always perhaps a careless look, but carry away from it, unconsciously, many salutary impressions. What is more pleasant than the meeting of a rural congregation in the churchyard before the minister appears? What is there to shudder at in lying down, sooner or later, in such a peaceful and sacred place, to be spoken of frequently on Sabbath among the groups of which we used to be one, and our low burial-spot to be visited, at such times, as long as there remains on earth any one to whom our face was dear! To

> those who mix in the strife and dangers of the world, the place is felt to be uncertain wherein they may finally rest. The soldier-the sailor-the traveller, can only see some dim grave dug for him, when he dies in some place obscure-nameless-and unfixed to the imagination. All he feels is that burial will be –on earth-or in the sea. But the peaceful dwellers who cultivate their paternal acres, or tilling at least the same small spot of soil, shift only from a cottage on the hillside to one on the plain, still within the bounds of one quiet parish, - they look to their bones at last in the burial-place of the kirk in which they were baptised, and with them it almost literally is a step from the cradle to the grave (144).

The rural graveyard is here used as an emblem for an idealised rural paternalism. The individual is located in a specific 'place' within both society and the material landscape and this location relies on their remaining in 'place' in both senses. The good death and gravesite are reserved for those who know their social place and remain within it. Similarly the unchanging but well-tended rural graveyard becomes in some way a guarantor of immortality. Wilson's rural graveyard acts as a site where the memories of local people can be incorporated into a larger communal narrative, where the dead are 'spoken of frequently on Sabbath' never truly dead but simply 'lying down'. In contrast urban and colonial environments foster anonymity and forgetting. The site of burial for the wanderer is 'obscure-nameless-and unfixed to the imagination' incorporated into no particular social narrative and therefore lost.

Family plays a central role in the majority of deaths and burials which Wilson describes and family unity is at the heart of the moral scheme of the text. In 'The Headstone' the act of burying their father reunites his two estranged sons. This reconciliation is imagined as one which reunites both living and dead members of the family: 'the brothers stood fervently, but composedly, grasping each other's hands, in the little hollow that lay between their mother, long since dead, and that of their father, whose shroud was haply not yet still from the fall of dust to dust' (60). 'The Elder's Death-Bed' and 'The Elder's Funeral' similarly stage the reunion of a rebellious husband with his wife and child at the bedside of his dying father and these events also effect his reconciliation with God. Death in these stories is ideally an event which reunites and reconciles rather than divides, they implicitly suggest that we achieve something like immortality through the

familial structures we create on earth. Just as God offers spiritual immortality to the righteous Christian through the possibility of Heaven, the text also postulates the possibility of earthly posthumous survival through the ties of love and kinship. These posthumous ties created through familial and local networks are similar to the ones proposed by Edmund Burke, uniting the dead and the living and giving the dead a tangible presence within contemporary society. When we consider the cultural nationalist project of *Blackwood's* the deaths and the graves of these Scottish peasants can operate on a similarly national scale to the ancestors whom Burke invokes. The family grave becomes a national monument, as the 'little platoon' comes to represent a wider set of imagined social ties.

In *Lights and Shadows* the greatest tragedy is therefore to be buried away from home, community, family and ancestors. The story of 'The Twins' which opened this chapter is given pathos by the children's burial far from England and the division of father, mother, and children in death: 'her husband lies buried near Granada, in Spain; she lies in the chancel of the Cathedral in Salisbury, in England; and there sleep her twins in the little burial-ground of Auchindown, a Scottish parish' (160). 'The Minister's Widow' charts a similar tragedy describing the response of a minister's widow in a small Scottish parish to the deaths of her three sons, all of whom die abroad serving as soldiers or sailors. The death of their socially and geographically static father follows the typical conventions of a good death 'to the dying man death had lost all his terrors…Accordingly when the hour was at hand in which he was to render up his spirit into the hand of God, he was like a grateful and wearied man falling into sleep' (85). In contrast their deaths are explicitly tied by the narrator to their restlessness, 'they knew that there was a world lying at a distance that called upon them to leave the fields, and woods, and streams, and lochs of Castle-Holm; and, born and bred in peace as they had been, their restless hearts were yet all on fire, and they burned to join a life of danger, strife, and tumult' (87). This need to escape the pastoral world of Castle-Holm proves to be fatal to the young men.

To the grieving mother what horrifies her most is that the death of her youngest son cannot be remembered by anyone and can therefore only be imagined. Whilst the second-hand accounts of where and how her two elder sons died console the widow, she is haunted by the unknowable last hours of her youngest whose body is found upon the sand a day after his ship is wrecked: 'who can know, although they may try to dream of it in horror, what the youngest of them, my sweet Harry, suffered, through that long dark

howling night of snow when the ship was going to pieces on the rocks!' (95). If the 'good death' relies on the ability to recount the last hours and moments of the dying, their last words and signs of Grace, then the death of the widow's youngest son becomes impossible to narrate or categorise. For all three children, their deaths and burials out of sight of their mother create an uncanny doubling where the miniature portraits she keeps of them are more real than their bodies and graves:

> Oh! Could you believe that they are all dead! Does not that smile on Willy's face seem immortal! Do not Edward's sparkling eyes look so bright as if the mists of death could never have overshadowed them! And think-oh! Think that ever Henry's golden hair should have been dragged in the brine, and filled full, full, I doubt not, of the soiling sand! (94).

It is in reading the Bible, in ritually cleaning her son's possessions and in passing out of the house and into the natural world that the mourning woman reconnects her sense of past and present. Although the tragedy at the heart of the story is the separation of the mother from her dead children, the widow is able to root her memories of her sons to some extent by remembering them in their native countryside and home.

Returning to 'Consumption', in the final scene of the tale Louisa, the last of her family to die of tuberculosis, describes, to her lover, her desire to be buried in the village graveyard:

> The thought is sweet to lay our bones within the bosom of our native soil. The verdure and the flowers I loved will brighten around my grave- the same trees whose pleasant murmurs cheered my living ear will hang their cool shadows over my dust, and the eyes that met mine in the light of affection will shed tears over the sod that covers me, keeping my memory green within their spirits!....After all, they are but fancies- Henry- but they cling to the heart from which they sprung- and to be buried in the sweet church-yard of Blantyre is now a thought most pleasant to my soul (340).

The use of images of the natural world in this passage draws upon the language of pastoral fantasy. Resisting the possibility of travelling to Italy in hope of a cure, Louisa chooses being

laid in her ‘native soil’ over the chance of life. The dying woman conceptualises burial in Blantyre graveyard as the sowing of a seed of memory which will be tended by those who remember her there. She is rooted within the world and society that she would rather die in her place than be transplanted, believing that in this way her memory will be kept ‘green’.

Immortality is therefore guaranteed in Wilson’s text through an interconnected series of behaviours and rewards. To be remembered allows the dying person to live through death, to be a member of the community visited on Sundays and ‘spoken of frequently’, but this effect can only be achieved by staying within the social and geographical space into which you are born. Only memories planted in ‘native soil’ stay ‘green’. Resignation to social place therefore leads to preservation in memory even as religious resignation to the will of God leads to a Heaven. However, this immortality is an increasingly inaccessible ideal for Wilson and his generation faced with the large-scale economic migrations of the early nineteenth century. The graveyard of their ancestors is barred to them, Wilson’s depiction of the deaths of cottagers perhaps a universalised symbol of that loss.

This sense of a passing or disappearing world lurks just beneath the surface in most of Wilson’s stories. In ‘The Elder’s Funeral’ the narrator describes the way that the graveyard operates on his memory: ‘each tombstone and grave over which I had often walked in boyhood, arose in my memory, as I looked steadfastly upon their long-forgotten inscriptions’ (142). The rural graveyard here acts as a memorial where the forgotten is remembered. The way in which memory and time operate in this passage is emblematic of the larger way in which memory functions across *Lights and Shadows.* Just as the narrator’s return to the graveyard brings back forgotten memories from his boyhood, Wilson’s stories describe the return of the modern urban Scot to his idealised rural origins. The graveyard depicted in the text is a site of memory both in the sense that it is a gathering point for the memories of local people but also, and perhaps more importantly, because it is a type of burial ground which was an increasingly unlikely resting place for more and more Scots. With an increasingly urban population, the odds of being buried amongst one’s ancestors, of one’s grave being frequently visited by neighbours and friends, was soon to become a pastoral fantasy for many rather than a real possibility. The graveyard which Wilson’s narrator visits is, like the community he describes, perhaps a relic of a past or passing age.

However, the graveyard, and the type of memory it is supposed to represent, is also perhaps designed to function as a point of commonality for an increasingly diffuse and politically unpredictable urban population. Douglas Mack in his article 'John Wilson, James Hogg, "Christopher North" and "The Ettrick Shepherd"' highlights that the representation of rural working-class life in *Lights and Shadows* is inexorably linked to the contemporary political climate, stating that 'fears about radical and revolutionary agitation…form part of the context in which *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* sets out its approving descriptions of a strikingly pious and docile Scottish peasantry, who are represented as being affectionately loyal and obedient to their social superiors' (12). In *Lights and Shadows* the endangered world of the cottagers is tied to the dangers which assail Britain's social and political stability. Remembering (or rather idealising, or even imagining) a shared, stable past like the one Wilson describes creates a sense of kinship across geographical space and social class. *Blackwood's* readers are not supposed to expect to be buried in a graveyard like the one Wilson describes, rather the graveyard of the cottagers is a symbolic memorial to a common, imagined past which is designed to create ties between Wilson's readers. *Blackwood's* readers can claim a sort of ownership over a virtual ancestral space which not only unites them, but represents a specific set of inherited values and ideas which can be carried from the imagined rural kirkyard into contemporary urban space and discourse.

Complicated Kirkyards: Rural Death Narratives in James Hogg's 'A Peasant's Funeral' and J.G. Lockhart's *Adam Blair*

The *Lights and Shadows* series offers the most sustained example of the *Blackwood's* interest in situating death and the grave in rural space, however Wilson's stories fitted into a wider group of kirkyard focused fictions. The regional tales written by the other members of the Blackwood's group also often rely on the symbol of an enduring rural kirkyard to articulate a model of social relations which is unchanging, hierarchised and inward-looking, even if this perspective is then subverted, complicated or rejected in the main narrative of the text.

James Hogg's sketch of a rural death in 'A Peasant's Funeral' (1820), published a year after Wilson's two Burns essays, on first inspection, provides another example of the idealisation of Scottish cottage culture. The narrator is invited to an event not unlike Mr. MacClarty's funeral in *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*: 'I went with my father to the funeral of

George Mouncie, who had been removed by a sudden death, from the head of a large family, now left in very narrow circumstances. As he had, however, during his life, been held in high estimation for honesty and simplicity of character, many attended to pay the last sad duty to the departed worthy' (141). An archaic traditional gathering is presented, complete with quaint and illogical customs which have to be rationalised to the urban educated reader. Hogg explains the location of the events: 'we would have been more comfortable on the green; but it is held highly indecorous to give the entertainment at a burial without doors, and no one will submit to it', and the segregation of the group: 'the women are not mixed with the men at these funerals' (141, 142). Parishioners discuss the parochial affairs of their own churches with great interest. The distraught widow of the eponymous peasant describes the sentimental last sermon her husband delivered to his children, remarking that 'he never complained of any thing. Since the time of our first great worldly misfortune happened, we two have set down to many a poor meal, but he was ever alike, and thankful to the Giver' (143). The scene appears to present an idealised image of rural poverty and piety and draws on similar tropes to those employed in Wilson's cottage writing.

However, Hogg uses the sketch to simultaneously construct and demolish the conventions of the rural 'good death'. The parishioners at the funeral may discuss the provincial workings of their church but they also engage in a highly politicised debate on the subject of patronage which clearly draws them out of the timeless idyll and into the tide of the contemporary political and social debates of the period. The widow's description of her husband's beautiful death also slowly dissolves into a nightmarish scene of confusion and fear. The image of the little boy so horrified by the sight of his father's 'altered visage' and last 'convulsive grasps' of his wife's hand that he runs into the fields naked in 'a frenzy of horror' undercuts the conventional image of beautiful death which the widow has previously attempted to present (144). The 'superstitious terror' which drives the widow's companion to abandon her post at the bedside, not only suggests that George Mouncie's death has not been the peaceful parting the widow described, but also leaves the widow alone without the support of family, minister or community (144). The last image of the story reinforces this sense of the widow's isolation- she cannot follow the coffin to the graveyard so instead 'she stood looking wistfully after it, while the tears flowed plentifully form her eyes- A turn in the wood soon hid it from her sight for ever- She gave one short look up to Heaven, and returned weeping into her cottage' (144). Community isn't formed

through death rather the little family of cottagers is broken as the widow returns to the family she will now raise alone. Death in Hogg's story isn't a lesson, punishment or reward; instead it is a devastating and confusing evedeatjt which refuses to form a conventional narrative.

J.G. Lockhart published his novel *Adam Blair* with Blackwood and Sons in 1822. Like Wilson's stories, *Adam Blair* has been recognised by modern critics as a proto-kailyard novel: Ian Campbell has written that the novel 'anticipates much in later nineteenth-century writing' (xvi). However, as with *Lights and Shadows,* I would argue that this reading ignores the text's place within a group of similarly themed Blackwoodian writing which put death and burial at the heart of understanding the countryside. *Adam Blair*'s opening chapters describe the death and funeral of the wife of the eponymous minister, Adam. These scenes expand upon the deathbed and burial sequences featured in *Lights and Shadows,* sharing many traits but also challenging some of their basic assumptions through a greater emphasis on individual psychology. Images of the graveyard reoccur throughout the novel emphasising the motivating role of death and interment in the plot.

Lockhart's novel starts with the funeral of the wife of the village minister rather than one of his congregation, and thus the minister's role in the action is altered from that of observer/narrator to observed participant. Where in *Lights and Shadows* we follow a minister into the home of a dying person, the first death in *Adam Blair* takes place in the minister's home. In Wilson's rural writing a middle-class narrator witnesses the deathbed scenes recounted, but in Lockhart's rural writing it is the servants and villagers around them who observe the Blairs' response to death, a shift of focus which emphasises the claustrophobia of village life as well as its sense of community. Isobel's life and death follow many of the conventions of the beautiful deaths of young women in *Lights and Shadows.* Having borne the deaths of three children, 'Mrs. Blair dried her tears and endeavoured as usual to attend to all the duties of her household' (1). However, she soon begins to waste away. Her death scene is a private domestic one. Blair gazes at the beautiful body of his wife which is described in conventional terms, 'he saw the pale, dead face; the black ringlets parted on the brow; the marble hand extended on the sheet; the unclosed glassy eyes and the little girl leaning towards her mother in a gaze of half-horrified bewilderment' (4). However, his response to the scene is somewhat different to those of the stoic peasants depicted in *Lights and Shadows:*

> He drew near to the couch- grasped the cold hand, and cried, "Oh God! Oh God!"- a shriek not a prayer; he closed the stiffening eyelids over the soft but ghastly orbs; kissed the brow, the cheek, the lips, the bosom, and then rushed down the stairs, and away out, bare-headed, into the fields, before any one could stop him, or ask whither he was going (4).

Adam's private grief is subsequently further explored in a scene where the minister lies on the forest floor communing with the spirits of the dead. Where in *Lights and Shadows* we largely only catch sight of the formal traditionary rites of death, in *Adam Blair* readers are able to mark the contrast between public official mourning and the private devastation of the bereaved husband.

In the description of Isobel's funeral Lockhart sketches the symbolic graveyard space which will play a primary role in the novel. The population of the parish gather to express their respect for the minister, in a scene reminiscent of the retirement scene which fellow contributor John Galt had used to open his novel *Annals of the Parish*[19] the year before:

> It was a touching spectacle to see the churchyard when the procession entered it. Old and young stood around unbonnetted, and few dry eyes were turned on Mr. Blair when he took his station at the head of the open grave. The clods, as they rattled down, sent a shudder to every bosom, and when the spade was heard clapping the replaced sod into its form, every one turned away his eyes, lest his presence should be felt as an intrusion on the anguish of the minister. He, on his part, endured it wonderfully; but the dead mother had been laid down by the side of her dead children, and perhaps, at that moment, he was too humble to repine at their reunion. He uncovered and bowed himself over the grave when the last turf was beat down, and then leaning on the arm of John Maxwell, walked back slowly through the silent rows of his people to the solitude of the manse (11).

The scene repeats the image of a pious community united in their desire to commemorate the dead that had been central to *Lights and Shadows.* Following Blair's return to the manse, the parishioners gossip, using the graves to position Isobel's death in local and

[19] This scene is discussed in chapter six, p. 203-204

familial history: ‘After he was out of sight, not a few of them drew near to contemplate the new-made grave, and the old were not slow to retrace the memory of the same family who had heretofore been committed to the same dust’ (12).

The graveyard functions as a physical record of history which the villagers draw upon to make sense of present events. Isobel’s grave is contextualised through reference to the graves of Adam Blair’s notable ancestors:

> On the wall of the church, immediately adjoining a large marble tablet had been affixed, to record the pious labours of Mr. Blair’s father, who had preceded him in the charge of that parish; and most of those who were present could still recall with distinctness the image of the good old man, and the grave tones of his voice in exhortation. But there was a green headstone there, rudely fashioned, and most rudely sculptured, to which their fingers were pointed with feelings of yet loftier veneration. That stone marked the spot where Mr. Blair’s grandfather was laid- a simple peasant of the parish- one whose time on earth had been abridged in consequence of what he had done and suffered in days when God’s chosen race, and the true patriots of our country, were hunted up and down like beasts of the field- when the citizen of a Christian land durst not sing a Pslam in the wilderness, without the risk of being hewn to pieces by the sword of s0ome godless slave. They who are acquainted with Scotland- above all, with the west of Scotland- cannot be ignorant of the reverence which is still cherished for the seed of the martyrs. Such feelings were more widely spread, and more intensely felt, in former times than, I am sorry to say, they are now. It was to them, in no small degree, that Adam Blair was indebted for the deep affection, with which his person and all his concerns were regarded by the people of the parish. To their love he had “titles manifold”, but not the least was his being the grandson and namesake of old Adam Blair, who had fought against bloody Clavers and the butcher Dalyell, at Bothwellbridge, and endured torture, without shrinking, in the presence of *false Lauderdale* (12).

Lockhart represents the Presbyterian rebellion of the Covenanters during the killing time as the legacy on which the stable rural community which Blair inhabits is built. The opening

chapter of the novel does not place its events in the historical past, yet Lockhart describes the world where people feel 'intensely' about the legacy of the Covenanters as an endangered and fast disappearing one. The effect is to create a rural space outside of the linear time which informs the modern world, the village is a repository for the Presbyterian past and the sense of community which this shared legacy engenders. That we as readers are invited to sympathise with the narrator's sorrow about the imminent extinction of this cultural memory suggests that it is an inheritance which the reader, who is assumed to already be versed in the lore of Claverhouse, Dalyell and Bothwellbridge, might choose to share.

Images of graves reoccur through *Adam Blair* at important junctures in the plot. Blair's connection with Charlotte Campbell, which will eventually lead to adultery, is first indicated in a moment of consolation between the two at Isobel's grave (50). Later following the sexual consummation of that connection, Blair's self-disgust is symbolised in a dark vision of the kirk-yard at Cross-Meikle:

> At one moment it seemed to him as if the churchyard of Cross-Meikle were the scene of his torments. He saw the tomb of his father, with filthy things crawling up and down upon the face of the marble; while he himself lying prostate upon the grave of his wife, heard the poisonous breath of fiends whistling his ear above her dust. He saw his living friends; old Maxwell was there, with fierce angry eyes. Little Sarah stood close by him pale and motionless; farther off, the whole of his congregation were crowded together about the door of the church, and he heard the voice of scornful curses muttered everywhere round about him, by lips that had never opened but to bless him (114).

The graveyard space is transformed in this vision much as it was in Wilson's 'The Radical's Saturday Night'. However, where Wilson's dream vision is deliberately unreal, designed to emphasise the godliness of the actual peasants of Scotland, Lockhart's dark kirkyard offers a nightmare vision of the space without reassuring readers that this image is a delusion. The symbolic possibilities of the graveyard space in Lockhart's novel are multiform. The kirkyard maintains the symbolic weight it carried in Wilson's writings but it is a symbolism which can be benign or malevolent. The ties of community and lineage do not purely protect and nurture; in Lockhart's country parish they can also constrain and imprison.

Kirkyards have a specific figurative purpose across *Blackwood's* regional fiction, allowing authors to consider social relationships and the nature of community. The village churchyard allows the *Blackwood's* group authors to configure different relationships between rural Scots, their ancestors, and the novels' and magazine's readers. Hogg and Lockhart were not alone in presenting a challenge or alternative to the idealised rural deaths and burials of Wilson's *Lights and Shadows,* and the image of community these images articulated. *Lights and Shadows* and other regional texts depicting the 'good death' flew in opposition to the magazine's reputation for intra and extra textual violence. In the next chapter I will look at the way in which violent deaths figure in *Blackwood's* famous Tales of Terror and De Quincey's satirical articles 'On Murder'.

Chapter Three- A Club of 'Murder-Fanciers': Violence, Sensation and Readership in 'Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' and the Tales of Terror

The February 1827 edition of *Blackwood's* saw the first publication of 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts', Thomas De Quincey's ironically inflected essay on violence and aesthetics which was to influence representations of crime in literature for the next century. Presented as a leaked monthly lecture from a meeting of the 'The Society of Connoisseurs in Murder' and submitted by scandalised contributor 'X.Y.Z', the essay gives a history of the 'art' of murder. De Quincey's chosen venue for his 'modest proposal on the aesthetics of murder' could not have been better selected (Burwick 83). As Mark Schoenfield has argued, De Quincey's first essay 'On Murder' engages with and reflects a decade of sustained preoccupation with violence and criminality within the magazine:

> Thomas De Quincey's decision to publish his essay "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* a decade after its founding shows an acute understanding of the dynamics of that journal. More than the quantity of references- more than 200 articles prior to De Quincey's essay use some form of either "criminal" or "murderer"- De Quincey recognises that *Blackwood's* organises issues of aesthetics through metaphors of violence, and confronts violence within a paradigm of aesthetics ('Taste' 187).

The following chapter seeks to situate De Quincey's 1827 essay 'On Murder' and its 1839 sequel within the context of a broader engagement with violent crime across *Blackwood's*. In particular, I will focus on the relationship between De Quincey's essays and *Blackwood's* signature Tales of Terror. I argue that De Quincey's essays explore *Blackwood's* problematic position as a publication with both elite pretensions and commercial aspirations; as a magazine where, as John C. Whale puts it, 'esoteric learning existed alongside "blatant sensationalism"' (39). With arguably more in common with street literature than contemporary novels and poetry, the Tales of Terror, gothic short stories which were a signature of *Blackwood's* fiction, exist at exactly this juncture between the sensational and the rarified. In the three Tales of Terror, which I will be looking at, authors use the concept of public violence to explore problems of display, audience and spectatorship.

The popularity of stories like these made *Blackwood's* an ideal environment for De Quincey's 'On Murder' essays which playfully engage with issues of death and display by inviting readers to listen in on the meeting of murder 'connoisseurs'. By exploring the parallels between De Quincey's description of the secret society and *Blackwood's* self-representation as elite club, I argue that the 'On Murder' series can function as a parody of readerly community in the context of the *Blackwood's* audience. If we interpret the *Blackwood's* readership as the club of 'murder-fanciers' De Quincey describes, then the Murder essays suggest that the real bodies which hold the *Blackwood's* community together are not the ones arranged and buried peacefully in an imagined rural kirkyard, but the bleeding, stiffening and sometimes not quite dead ones which litter the magazines nouveau-gothic narratives.

The *Blackwood's* Tales of Terror, the Intended Reader and the Monstrous Crowd

From its earliest editions *Blackwood's* was strongly associated with textual and physical acts of violence. Mark Schoenfield summarises that '*Blackwood's* editorial coterie understood its acts of representation as violent reconstructions of reality, its attacks on individuals as assassinations, and its competition with other periodicals as fights, battles, wars, and usurpation' (*British* 187). The scandal precipitated by the first edition of the new *Blackwood's,* following the failure of the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* in 1817, was largely due to the violent personal attacks contained in the Chaldee Manuscript, a review of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and the first 'Cockney School' article. Although the magazine temporarily backed off from such personal attacks following the wide-spread condemnation of the first edition, Tom Mole has argued that *Blackwood's* maintained a commitment to the publication of defamatory 'personalities': 'it quickly became apparent that the magazine's distinctive place among the periodicals of the day depended at least in part on its willingness to employ personalities in its reviews' (92). *Blackwood's* unique place within the literary marketplace relied on its aggressive, personal attacks. This tendency towards personal attack eventually led to a real scene of interpersonal violence when John Scott, the editor of *The London Magazine,* was killed in a duel with John Gibson Lockhart's agent Jonathan Henry Christie in 1821, following a war of words in the two periodicals. Incredibly within two months of Scott's death *Blackwood's* was crowing that Lockhart was 'wet with the blood of Cockneys' (Morrison and Roberts 3). Mark Schoenfield also highlights that the '*Noctes Ambrosianae,* the long-running series of fabricated dialogues

among the Blackwood elites, provides compelling instances of a preoccupation with violence as a mode of critical, literary and social engagement' ('Taste' 187).

Blackwood's commitment to violent imagery seeped its way into the fiction writing published in the periodical. In particular, the magazine's famous terror stories often have murder and violence at their heart. The group of texts which Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick identify as Tales of Terror were a defining feature of early issues of the magazine. Short and sensational, the stories detailed the terror and horror of a narrator undergoing an extreme experience. As Morrison and Baldick have commented, the classic Tale of Terror generally detailed 'the recorded "sensations" of a first-person narrator witnessing his own responses to extreme physical and psychological pressure' (*Terror* xiv). This focus on experience, where the reader's understanding of events is largely mediated through the perceptions of the protagonist, created remarkably disconcerting and unstable narratives. The reader's perspective on events in these texts rarely expands beyond the box, prison or bell in which the protagonist finds himself or herself and readers are therefore limited to their own subjective and extremely limited perspective. The reader feels himself or herself, for the period he or she is reading, to entirely inhabit the subjectivity of the protagonist. The signature style of *Blackwood's* terror fiction quickly became one dedicated to the minute description of extreme emotional response. Edgar Allan Poe's 1838 satirical essay 'How to Write a Blackwood Article' parodies this focus on personal accounts of extreme and often impossible events; describing aspirant author Signora Zenobia's attempts to gather material for such a tale by allowing herself to be decapitated by the hands of a gigantic clock.

Ludicrous and overblown as these effects could be, they marked a departure from the established norms of the genre which was to radically alter the trajectory of gothic writing. Hege Segerblad has characterised the tales as an innovation on the type of terror fiction typified by the eighteenth-century gothic novel, describing them as a group of writings typified by 'a change from the abstraction of the earlier gothic to a strong preoccupation with psychology and the power of the human mind' (48). Rather than the complex constructions of social power and oppression which characterised the novels of authors like Ann Radcliffe, *Blackwood's* tale writers constructed a gothic of the human mind. Alison Millbank attributes this new introspective focus in the *Blackwood's* terror writings to the conservative political outlook of the periodical:

> since an understanding of national developments as organic, a la Edmund Burke, precludes organised change, a conservative Gothic eschews an extensive symbolism of Britain as the prison that one finds in more radical writers. Instead the short stories in the Conservative periodical *Blackwood's Magazine* display a preoccupation with individual psychology (150).

By focusing on the individual in peril early *Blackwood's* Tales of Terror isolate their subject matter from any allusion to wider systematic social or political 'terrors'. This allows them to denude their terror tales of the Jacobin political associations which gothic writing had developed during the later decades of the eighteenth-century. This was particularly true of the way in which the Tales of Terror engaged with stories about crime and punishment. The criminal was a common subject for *Blackwood's* tales, however in contrast to overtly political gothic novels like William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), early examples of the Blackwoodian tales which featured criminality tended to focus on the individual psychology of the criminal rather than the injustices of the legal system.

Rather than earlier gothic novels, the magazine's criminal narratives often seem to have been inspired by contemporary crime reportage; in particular they have often been identified as texts which mirror the content of popular contemporary crime and execution broadsides. Morrison and Baldick comment that 'the more direct realism of *Blackwood's* terror fiction seems to be derived from the popular traditions of sensational "true crime" narrative often found in broadsheet, chapbook, and newspaper publications' (*Terror* xv). Crime Broadsides were a particularly popular subsection of contemporary street literature:

> in the eighteenth century, and well into the nineteenth century, narratives of crime offering details of the criminal, the crime, the confession and the consequent punishment most commonly appeared in broadsides: cheap, single sheets of paper printed on one side only and available to a wide and socially disparate audience (Worthington 2).

Heather Worthington has argued that crime broadsheets were written primarily with the intention of mass circulation and commercial success. They were deliberately sensational and emotive, emphasising the drama and horror of both crime and execution: 'broadsides made their appeal to the voyeuristic interests of the masses, exposing the gory and

sometimes salacious details of the crimes and making public what had been private' (7). Lurid and sexualised accounts of violent crime appear to have sold particularly well.

An 1830 account of 'that most heart-rending and cruel Rape, Robbery and Murder of Margaret Paterson at Gutterdike near Gilmerton' appears to typify this appetite for sex and violence. The copy of this broadside which I examined is advertised as the fourth edition, suggesting that the broadside has sold well previously. It vividly describes a brutal, sexually-motivated attack on a young woman by two coal carters:

> The two men forced her through a gap in the wall, on the left or east side of the road, into a field, and there by force, successively violated her person. After this, the ruffians abused their victim with the most shocking and brutal barbarity.
>
> They dreadfully lacerated her person with some sharp instrument, supposed to have been the bone of her corsets, which was afterwards found on the ground, stained with blood. Her scissors also, were stained with blood. The monsters then, with unparalleled barbarity, forced several rough stones into the body of the ill-fated woman, and also a wisp of straw, and a quantity of leaves, horse dung, and coal.

The explicitness of this description still has the power to shock now. The account of the attack is followed by a description of Margaret's sufferings in its aftermath, and the findings of a post-mortem investigation made after her death:

> On the body being opened, three more stones were found in it, together with the other substances we have mentioned. The stones were the ordinary rough motal put upon the roads; and one of them weighed three ounces. Mortification had taken place in the parts which were most injured; and it was found that the gall bladder had been ruptured.

The broadside is highly detailed in its description of the physical injuries sustained by the young woman, forcing the reader's gaze to rest upon the mutilated body for an uncomfortably long time. The combination of these scientifically accurate descriptions of

Margaret's physical injuries alongside information about murderers and victim seems designed to provoke an intense emotional response in the reader.

However, in her reading of the broadsides published following the Gilmerton murder, Kate Bates debates Worthington's analysis of the motivations behind the publication of violent and sexualised crime narratives. She first draws into question the common belief that the majority of crime broadsheets featured 'graphic and sensationalistic bloodshed' by highlighting the common use of euphemism and unspecified references to 'revolting spectacles of barbarity' in many broadsides (6). Where graphic content does occur, as in the story of Margaret Paterson, Bates has a different understanding of its intended purpose to that proposed by Worthington. She argues that broadsides, like those which covered the death of Margaret Paterson, were not designed to entertain but to morally inform: 'the overwhelming majority of broadsides include their violent content, not simply for sensationalistic entertainment but, more importantly, to provide factual information about a particular crime and to invoke emotional reaction and moral denunciation against violent behaviour' (8-9). Bates does not deny the emotiveness of these texts, but argues that public fascination was not motivated by 'pleasurable perversion' but a desire for justice (27).

What these two perspectives on the crime broadside raise are the ethical implications of reading about, and depicting, violence. What does a reader experience when they read about a violent crime? Who buys these texts and why do they do so? What is the attraction of a text which depicts an atrocity? What are the implications of presenting the details of a real or imagined act of violence to the public? This debate about the function and morality of the crime narrative is not just one which can be retrospectively applied to romantic-era depictions of violence; contemporary commentators also grappled with the implications of the popularity of 'gallows' literature with Britain's ever-expanding reading public.

Anxiety about the influence of 'gallows literature' on the new reading public was pervasive by the late eighteenth-century; V. A. C. Gatrell describes chronic 'concern about the quality of mass reading material of this kind' in contemporary commentary (161). This concern about the influence of criminal narratives led to the publication of religious tracts which aimed to compete with execution broadsides, and counter their dangerous moral

messages. Crime writing was one of the genres of popular literature which Evangelical-conservative Hannah More attacked in her Cheap Repository Tracts; 'in the supposedly antipoisonous, puritanical fiction of Mrs. Hannah More…the links between revolution, crime stories (always a staple of popular fiction), and the threat posed by mass literacy are especially vivid' (Brantlinger 5). In her pamphlet 'The History of Mr. Fantom, the New-Fashioned Philosopher, and His Man William' More writes her own version of the criminal confession, denuding it of the violent details of the crime and emphasising her own brand of Evangelical, conservative morality. Patrick Brantlinger has argued that in doing so More 'detoxifies the criminal text that she inscribes within her anticriminal text' (7).

This religiously motivated denunciation of popular criminal writing existed alongside, and interacted with, perspectives informed by more secular concerns about the moral and political effects of crime writing on the new reading public. Rosalind Crone suggests that, although they had been its main consumers during the eighteenth-century, by the early nineteenth century middle-class readers were increasingly unlikely to purchase the Newgate Calendar[20] and its readership shrank drastically as 'the deeds of criminals were now regarded by the respectable as inappropriate subjects for literature' (78). Instead, the trade in cheap crime broadsides flourished with the majority of these publications, certainly in London, purchased by working-class readers (96). At the same time it was becoming increasingly unfashionable for genteel people, particularly women, to attend executions (Gatrell 261). A class distinction was rapidly emerging in the way that the public engaged with, or wished to be seen to engage with, violence. Gatrell has commented that 'there was a significant shift in polite society towards the end of the eighteenth-century and certainly into the nineteenth. Taboos began to encase the scaffold, thus altering its relationship with civility irretrievably' (240). With a desirable death increasingly understood as a domestic or private event, the spectacle of public execution was increasingly seen as vulgar rather than morally instructive. In his journal entry for January 31st 1829 Walter Scott expresses his disgust at 'the eager curiosity with which the public have licked up all carrion details' of the Burke and Hare Anatomy Murders, illustrating the increasing association of the consumption of crime reportage with the vulgar, general population (227). The Newgate

[20] The Newgate Calendar was a highly popular compilation of criminal biographies and execution narratives published from the mid-eighteenth-century in Britain. See Bridget Walsh's chapter '"Mixed Motives and Mixed Morality": The Newgate Novel Debate' in *Domestic Murder in Nineteenth-century England* for a description of the publication and its readership.

Novel controversy of the 1840s, following the murder of Lord William Russell by a valet, who had allegedly been inspired by a dramatization of *Jack Sheppard,* was a key moment in the increasing association of violent literature with public disorder. By mid-century the association of the dangerously ill-informed reader and crime writing was firmly established. Kate Bates cites an 1856 article about the Seven Dials presses, which associates the purchase of broadsides with working-class ignorance and immorality: 'the fact that popular broadsides during this period mainly contained tales of 'barbarous' murders led many to speculate about the debased morals of those who wrote and read them, and this "gallows" literature was deemed a morbid curiosity produced purely for "the delectation of the mob"' (2).

Blackwood's was aimed at the elite and middle-class readership increasingly eschewing the *Newgate* and avoiding executions. However, the popular Tales of Terror which the magazine published were heavily influenced by popular criminal narratives, often detailing stories of murder, execution and dissection. How could *Blackwood's* readers be differentiated from the 'mob' as they 'licked up' these 'carrion details'?

The solution to this problem lies in the close identification between reader and protagonist which these texts fostered. The protagonist of a Tale of Terror is a cipher for the *Blackwood's* intended reader. He (or very occasionally she) is generally educated and middle-class but is otherwise rendered anonymous allowing readers to place themselves within his or her subjectivity. The reader is able to use the character, denuded of an appearance or context, as a proxy. This extreme identification between reader and fictional protagonist means that in describing the traits or attitudes of the protagonist the author by extension attributes these features to the reader. The stories can thus self-consciously model appropriate reading practices in relation to their content by directly addressing themselves to a specific intended audience.

One of the major ways in which this identification is indicated is through markers of shared education. Many of the Tales of Terror identify their readership is by addressing an imagined audience of informed readers, capable of an educated and distanced reading of the narratives' morally dubious content. The stories are often peppered with references to other texts and these references prompt the reader to place the text they are reading within a panoply of other texts taken both from the canon of classical literature and

contemporary print culture. Unlike the 'new reader', the *Blackwood's* reader is assumed to have read extensively, and to be in possession of cultural capital only accessible to those with an elite education and ample leisure time. The reader cannot just read, he or she is well *read*. These informed *Blackwood's* readers can use their experience as a reader to recognise allusion and parody. They employ sophisticated reading practices which allow them to appreciate irony, satire and dark humour, and which make them capable of suspending conventional morality whilst reading, in favour of entertainment. They do not read earnestly, believing everything they are told and searching for a didactic moral within the narrative, rather they enjoy identifying falsity and inversion.

The stories often also draw upon the emerging professions for their gothic potential, their implications of exclusivity, and perhaps most importantly their 'detached' perspective. Morrison and Baldick have commented that many *Blackwood's* Tales of Terror 'feed upon the unhealthy public curiosity provoked by the sequestration of madness, disease and criminality now penetrable only by such experts as the physician, the minister of religion or the executioner' (*Terror* xvi). Professionalisation in fields like medicine, mental health and law created a context in which these areas of life became increasingly sequestered from daily life. Codes of professional confidence in institutions like prisons and asylums turned events within their walls into potentially gothic secrets which fascinated the general public. We can see this popular curiosity evinced in the Gilmerton murder broadside's republication of the details of the autopsy on the brutalised young woman, which gives readers a glimpse of the opened body as viewed by the anatomist. However, *Blackwood's* authors often take this one step further. Where the broadside publishes the details of an autopsy, a *Blackwood's* tale on a similar subject might give the reader the thoughts and sensations of a professional witnessing or performing such an investigation.

Blackwood's tales also often adopt a register which David Macbeth Moir termed the 'medico-popular', in reference to *Blackwood's* tales and essays with a medical component, but which might be better termed professional-popular when looking at the Tales of Terror as a body of writing (Coyer 173). Privileged access to the prison cell, the confessional, or the asylum is offered through the stories' adoption of educated professional protagonists. The protagonists of these tales use the 'professional gaze' to focalise the reader's view of events, giving detailed clinical accounts of their experiences reminiscent of particularly salacious case studies or professional reports. These reports are not for the public at large

but for educated insiders. The reader is thus invited into the profession for the time they read the text. The employment of the 'professional' gaze means that the text models its own distanced reading. The reader is a professional witness employing clinical detachment to investigate or record a violent scene or act. Their concern is accurately describing physical sensations rather than ascribing moral meaning. This style of reading accords with the social class of the magazine's intended readership, and that of the magazine's contributors; Judith Van Oosterom-Pooley comments that *Blackwood's* consistently addressed a professional audience 'speaking very much to a professional male class of reader' (181) whilst Richard Cronin has highlighted that periodical writers themselves were increasingly members of the professional classes, writing for a living (227).

The authors of the Tales of Terror were highly aware of their own texts' problematic position within conversations about violence and readership. The execution scene provided many of these authors an opportunity to explore what it means to deliberately watch an act of violence. In John Wilson's 'Extracts from Gosschen's Diary' (1818), Henry Thomson's 'Le Revenant' (1827) and Robert McNish's 'An Execution in Paris' (1828) depictions of the public execution reveal the troubled relationship between mass readership, spectacular violence and the periodical press in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

John Wilson's 1818 *Blackwood's* story 'Extracts from Gosschen's Diary' is strikingly different in tone to his stories for the *Lights and Shadows* series, despite its employment of a similarly clerical narrator. It describes the visit of the eponymous Catholic clergyman, Rev. Dr. Gottlieb Michael Gosschen, to the cell of a condemned man preparing to be put to death for the murder of his young wife. Having requested the presence of the priest, the young man gives a vivid confession of his crime before committing suicide in front of the horrified Gosschen: 'In a moment he was dead at my feet. The stroke of the dagger was like lightening, and- * * * ** * * *' (598). The narrative closes with a series of asterisks which deny the reader the opportunity to witness the man's death, perhaps as his suicide has denied the waiting crowd the opportunity to witness his execution. Instead of dying on the gallows before a crowd of spectators, the murderer kills himself privately in his cell allowing only Gosschen, and the *Blackwood's* reader, to witness his last moments.

The young man's account of the murder is heavily focused on the materiality of his wife's corpse, and its overt sexualisation. The deranged murderer describes his wife's death in flagrantly erotic terms:

> "Do you think there was no pleasure in murdering her? I grasped her by that radiant, that golden hair, -I bared those snow-white breasts,- I dragged her sweet body towards me, and, as God is my witness, I stabbed her with this very dagger, ten, twenty, forty times, through and through her heart." (597).

The murderers repeated penetration of the woman's body with his knife is implicitly connected to the act of sexual penetration, as the madman draws parallels between his violent actions on the night of the murder and the previous consummation of their relationship:

> I took her into my arms- madly as I did on that night when first I robbed her of what fools called her innocence- but her innocence has gone with her to heaven- and there I lay with her bleeding breasts prest to my heart, and many were the thousand kisses that I gave those breasts, cold and bloody as they were, which I had many million times kissed in all the warmth of their loving loveliness, and which none were ever to kiss again but the husband who had murdered her (597).

The explicit description of the young woman's murder in the voice of her insane lover and husband, allows a certain level of voyeurism on the part of the reader. In describing the murder of his wife in erotic terms, the murderer ensures that the image of the dead woman is not only sexually available to 'the husband who had murdered her' but to the reader as well.

This sense of privileged access to the secret, of being drawn into private worlds, is one which is employed throughout the narrative to intrigue and excite. Wilson opens the story with an 'Editor's' note which explicitly engages with the sense of admission into the private or secret which characterises the story's content. Describing the 'diary' from which the story has supposedly been extracted the 'editor' notes that:

> Many a dark story, well fitted to the groundwork of romance, - many a tale of guilty love and repentance, - many a fearful monument of remorse and horror,- might we extract from this record of dungeons and confessionals. We shall from time to time do so, but sparingly, and what is more necessary, with selection (596).

The secrets of the confession, of the prison cell, of a woman's body and of the mad man's mind are uncovered in the course of the tale. The *Blackwood's* reader is invited to read a private diary, to hear confession, to visit a prison cell and to vicariously experience the erotic thrill of murder. However, this promise of revelation is paired with the 'editor's' assurances of sparing 'selection'. The editor's note implies the possibility of a sequel, perhaps Wilson intended to write a series of 'Gosschen' narratives at the time, but it also coyly teases the reader with further secrets withheld. Although the killer's description of the murder is vivid and explicit, the reader is left pondering what has been omitted, what other scenes are described within the 'diary'. Part of what makes the tale sensational is this implication of both censorship and privileged access. These assurances also maintain an illusion of propriety. Although the content of the story is obviously shocking, the reader is assured that they have only been shown 'what is necessary'.

The unburied body is repeatedly put on display in the course of the narrative. The murderer's focus on the physicality of his wife's body in the moments of death is accompanied by an equally vivid portrayal of her changing, stiffening corpse:

> I gazed upon her, and death had begun to change her into something most terrible. Her features were hardened and sharp, -her body stiff as a lump of clay,- her fingers rigid and clenched, -and the blood that was once so beautiful in her thin blue veins was now hideously coagulated all over her corpse (597).

The beautiful Maria von Richterstein is rapidly transmogrified into 'something most terrible' (597). The living woman is soft, curvaceous and yielding but her corpse is a 'stiff' 'sharp' and 'rigid' object which disturbs her murderous lover. Whilst the moments of death have an air of ecstatic crisis, the aftermath of this experience reveals the despoiled female body. Maria's unburied and mutilated body is a horrifying and uncanny object denuded of pliant femininity; unsexed and unnameable.

This transformation is mirrored in the one which takes place in the condemned man awaiting his fate in the prison cell. In the opening passage of the story Wilson describes the minister's initial horror on visiting the condemned man: 'I entered his cell, and the phantom struck me with terror. He stood erect in his irons, like a corpse that had risen from the grave' (596). The young man whom the reverend had previously known 'in all the beauty of youth, distinguished above his fellows for graceful accomplishments, and the last of a noble family' has been transformed into a monstrous undead creature (596). Wilson's representation of the killer as animated corpse emphasises the condemned man's anomalous position in relation to temporality; he is marooned between life and death; physically alive although his life has, in a sense, already ended. Although the murderer's death scene is elided from the narrative the reader has already had ample opportunity to view the corpse.

A similar representation of the condemned criminal as living dead man takes place in Henry Thomson's 'Le Revenant' (1827). 'Le Revenant' is a classic example of the Tale of Terror. Thomson employs many of the narrative strategies often employed in these texts. The narrative moves chronologically through time, with a limited perspective which allows the reader to only experience what the protagonist sees and feels. These experiences are conveyed to the reader through intensely rendered descriptions of physical sensation: 'a shudder like the shock of electricity – like a plunge into a bath of ice – ran through me' (414). The tale is narrated from the first-person perspective of Thomson's protagonist, a forger who faces the scaffold after being detected defrauding his employer to court a young woman. After undergoing the horrors of trial, imprisonment and scaffold the criminal clerk is miraculously resuscitated and finds himself a 'revenant': 'I am a living man; and I possess certificates of my death and birth' (416). The protagonist thereby ends the text both alive and dead, and certified.

This is not the only instance where the protagonist describes his own anomalous position in relation to life and death. Approaching the scaffold, in a spine-chilling moment of recognition, the narrator becomes aware that the pastor who walks ahead of him is reciting the order for the grave. His living body is being treated as one already dead:

> I heard the quick tolling of the bell, and the deep voice of the chaplain reading as he walked before us-

> "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead shall live. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God!"
>
> It was the funeral service – the order for the grave – the office for those that were senseless and dead – over us, the quick and the living (415).

This moment of revelation is designed to shock and excite the reader. The reader enjoys the illicit thrill of imagining his or her own response to the protagonist's uncanny situation. The narrator describes the way in which readers might experience his tale in the opening sentences of the narrative, commenting that, 'there are few men, perhaps, who have not a hundred times in the course of life, felt a curiosity to know what their sensations would be if they were compelled to lay life down' (409). By allowing the reader to experience an execution from the perspective of the condemned Thomson literalises a similar translation to that proposed when Adam Smith describes our sympathetic ability to place 'our own living souls in their inanimated bodies' (13). However, the type of socially cohering sympathy which Smith proposes seems, if present, only a secondary by-product of this technique in 'Le Revenant'. Instead the author seems intent on eliciting a voyeuristic thrill in the reader. We place ourselves in the body of the condemned man not to experience our common humanity but to enjoy the perverse thrill of imagining our own death.

This knowing interaction between narrator and reader, where the narrator explicitly refers to his own perception of his reader's expectations and responses, is one which continues throughout the tale. On the opening page of the story, Thomson positions his narrative in relation to execution sheets and other sensation writing of the time. The protagonist refers to his enjoyment of 'extraordinary narratives', before offering up his own:

> My greatest pleasure through life, has been the perusal of any extraordinary narratives of fact. An account of a shipwreck in which hundreds have perished; of a plague that has depopulated towns or cities; anecdotes and inquiries connected with the regulation of prisons, hospitals, or lunatic receptacles; nay, the very police reports of a common newspaper- as relative to matters of

> reality; have always excited a degree of interest in my mind which cannot be produced by the best invented tale of fiction (409).

What is interesting about this attempt to locate the narrative within the pantheon of 'extraordinary narratives' is the range of different sources which Thomson's narrator places within this category. His list reads like a miscellany of the extraordinary, a curated cabinet of literary curiosities. The protagonist's explicit references to the experience of reading these texts break down the boundary between reader and narrator. Our narrator is at once both the subject of a tale and, like us, a reader of such tales. This engagement with contemporary print culture is sustained throughout the text. Describing the final visit of his lover to the prison cell, the condemned man is able to compare his own emotional experiences with those he has read about *and* his own emotional response to such texts prior to his own incarceration: 'we hear curiously, and read every day, of the visits of friends and relatives to wretched criminals condemned to die. Those who read and hear of these things the most curiously, have little impression of the sadness of the reality' (412). This interaction between reading experience and actual experience reaches its zenith when the condemned man describes ascending the scaffold; unable to remember these events he refers to press accounts of his own experience: 'I read in the daily newspapers, an account of my behaviour at the scaffold' (416). News accounts substitute the condemned man's eyewitness account at the moment of greatest crisis. The narrator is the reader of his own story.

'Le Revenant' is, however, not just intertextually located in relation to contemporary street literature, newspapers and professional reports, near the close of the text the account is also placed in relation to a previous, famous Tales of Terror. Trying to make sense of his experiences, the protagonist describes a strange, half-remembered experience which he thinks may have taken place following his execution:

> after I knew the truth, I thought that I had an imperfect recollection, of having found, or fancied myself – as in a dream – in some strange place lying naked, and with a mass of figures floating about before me: but this idea certainly never presented itself to me until I was informed of the fact that it had occurred (416).

This 'imperfect recollection' is never expanded upon. We as readers are never told the 'truth' which the protagonist has learned. However, the scene echoes details of John Galt's famous Tale of Terror 'The Buried Alive' (1821) in which a man thought to have died remains sentient in the grave and, having been exhumed, finds himself on the dissection table[21]. Tales of Terror often featured references to one another, their authors highly aware of their story's position within a group of texts; Tim Killick describes the way in which 'when read chronologically' each Tale of Terror 'seems to strive to undo the last in brio and sensation, each ludicrously macabre situation…serves as a spur to the next writer in line' (25). The May 1826 edition of *Blackwood's* had also contained a story featuring an account of a man's revival in an anatomy theatre, Robert McNish's 'The Metempsychosis', and Megan Coyer has convincingly argued that this scene is clearly intended to parody Galt's tale (187). It therefore seems highly likely that the echo of 'The Buried Alive' in 'Le Revenant' is intentional. The 'imperfect recollection' of the naked body and the mass of figures is not just a vague memory for the tale's protagonist, but would have stirred a memory in a readership which had read something similar in that magazine six years previously. As I'll explore in Chapter four, 'The Buried Alive' is part of a sustained attempt within much of *Blackwood's* fiction to humanise and rehabilitate the professional medical man. In these tales the anatomist is often the hero of the tale, rescuing the undead man from his fate in an inversion of contemporary accounts of the dehumanised, detached surgeon. 'Le Revenant' shares this representation of the doctor as a preserver of life.

The year following the publication of 'Le Revenant' saw the publication of McNish's tale 'An Execution in Paris' (1828), which was published under the author's nom-de-plume of 'A Modern Pythagorean'. In his Tale of Terror, McNish returns to the enduring theme of public execution which Wilson and Thomson had previously explored, this time describing the execution of a Parisian child murderer from the point of view of a British visitor. As a British man and a Tory, McNish's narrator's expectations of the execution are coloured by the cultural memory of the French Revolution: 'when I thought of it, the overwhelming tragedy of the revolution was brought before my eyes – that Revolution which plunged Europe in seas of blood, and stamped an indelible impression upon the whole fabric of modern society' (785). He has in a way come to witness history, attempting to recreate the

[21] For a fuller description and analysis of 'The Buried Alive' see Chapter Four.

bloody scenes which Edmund Burke had emotively introduced to the British Tory consciousness some forty years before.

His impressions of the crowd are also coloured by this context. The narrator witnesses the execution from a 'proscribed area' in front of the guillotine, and this privileged perspective allows him to observe not just the execution but the reactions of the crowd who have gathered to watch (785). Rather than focusing too closely on the minute sensations of the condemned man, McNish's account describes those of the British narrator in tandem with those of the other spectators. The vast, foreign crowd is repeatedly described in the early passages as a force of nature or an amorphous monster:

> the Place de Grêve was literally paved with human beings…men, women and children, were clumped together into one dense aggregate of living matter; and as the huge multitude moved itself to and fro, it was as the incipient stirring of an earthquake, or the lazy floundering of the sea, when its waves, exhausted by a recent storm, tumble their huge sides about, like the indolent leviathan which floats upon their surface (785).

McNish's narrator imagines the French public as a threatening inhuman mob. Due to their recent political history, the Parisians become a symbol of the dangers of mob rule to the narrator, a terrifying image of the power of the masses. Removed from this threatening mass of human life by a wall of soldiers and gendarmes, the narrator sets himself up as a dispassionate and differentiated witness. Megan Coyer has observed that 'the narrator positions himself as a philosophical observer who is well aware of a certain voyeuristic barbarism accompanying the desire to witness a public execution, yet, nevertheless, is irresistibly drawn by an intense curiosity toward the uniquely French rendition of capital punishment (179).

However, the narrator's disassociation from the crowd is gradually eroded by his observations of the reactions of the crowd and his own sensations. McNish's narrator becomes caught up in the emotional responses of those around him. At some points he is able to sympathise with and describe the thoughts of the mob: 'every man held his breath with deep interest, and felt, in spite of himself, a solemn awe fell over his spirit' (787). At others their collective violence and emotion becomes terrifying to him as an outside

observer: 'it sprung up simultaneously, and as if those from whom it proceeded were animated with one soul, and felt one pervading vengeance thrilling through their hearts' (787). In the final moments before the fall of the blade, the crowd fall silent until 'the very stillness of the crowd had something appalling in it', and the narrator himself experiences an involuntary physical response to the scene at the guillotine: 'my respiration was almost totally suspended- my heart beat violently, and a feeling of intense anxiety and suffocation pervaded my frame' (787). This moment of collective anticipation is broken however by the swift drop of the guillotine:

> The momentary silence which pervaded the crowd previous to the axe's descent was now broken, and an instantaneous movement ensued among its before tranquil numbers. The windows were deserted by their occupants; the doors poured their population into the streets; and the house-tops and black Gothic towers of Notre Dame were rid of the crowds which sat perched like eagles upon their lofty summits (788).

The moment of collective emotional participation is broken, and when the observer looks up from gazing at the executed corpse he is surprised to see the crowd breaking apart, and the guillotine being efficiently packed away. He is once again distanced from the masses who disappear into the streets and houses of Paris.

McNish's narrator's almost scientific description of the body of the executed murderer marks another instance where the Tale of Terror asks the reader to contemplate the unburied corpse. McNish's background as a surgeon informs his gaze; the descriptions of the body are detailed and clinical. The narrator is first spell-bound by the corpse in the moments after the guillotine has fallen: 'I looked attentively to observe if there was any motion in the trunk- any convulsive start at the instant of decapitation, but there was none' (788). Moved by 'the same curiosity which led me to witness this revolting sight', McNish's narrator attends the dissection of the body the next day (788). His description is again highly analytical and this tone places him amongst the 'scientific men present':

> There was no portion whatever of the neck remaining attached to the trunk. It, as well as the head, had been severed from the body. The axe had struck at its very root, and even grazed the collar bone where it is fixed to the sternum.

> This is not in general the case, the neck being in most instances pretty accurately cut through the middle- one half of it adhering to the head, the other to the trunk (788).

Where earlier in the narrative the narrator is unable to maintain clinical distance from the crowd and the scene of violence he witnesses, here the body can be viewed with absolute emotional detachment. Where the crowd at the execution is threatening and terrifying, the dissection of the body within the anatomy theatre is not a gothic scene but a professional one. The vetted audience of 'scientific men' are capable of looking at the body with a professional eye, of resisting the emotional reaction which the corpse elicits.

The tale ends on an ambivalent note, as the narrator expresses his uncertainty about the appropriateness of his narrative for publication:

> I am not sure that I have done right in making such a scene as the above the subject of an article. There is something in the minute details of an execution, at which the mind shudders; and it is probable the reader may think that my impressions of the spectacle just related, should have been confined to my own bosom instead of being made public (788).

This comment means that the narrative is bookended with considerations of the appropriateness of the tale for publication. It opens with the narrator's admission that he wished to see the execution, 'to my shame be it spoken, I wished to see an execution by guillotine', and this shame resurfaces in the final paragraph of the text (785). On one hand this squeamishness about 'the minute details of an execution' signals the refinement of both reader and author. They have respectively read and written about an execution but they are not the kind of people who would regularly (admit to) producing or consuming such tales for entertainment.

However, there is perhaps another possible aspect to this squeamishness. The narrative takes little interest in the subjectivity of the criminal who is executed; the sensations and 'terror' we experience are not his, rather they are those of the spectators. The object of terror is not the guillotine, or the dissecting doctors, but the Parisian crowd and their effect on the author. Through participating in the emotional extremities of the

crowd, the narrator has been transformed into one of them, experiencing the terrifying ease with which one can become part of the mob. This is the true nightmare of McNish's Tory Tale of Terror.

'On Murder' and the *Blackwood's* Connoisseur

The *Blackwood's* of the 1810s, 20s and 30s, in which De Quincey published his first two essays 'On Murder', was a magazine characterised by an enduring and sustaining interest in violent crime and punishment. In particular, narratives which featured murders and executions had furnished the magazine with some of its most memorable examples of terror fiction, and as I have explored in the first part of this chapter, these fictions often shared a common preoccupation with reading audience and spectacle. In the 'On Murder' essays De Quincey reflects and expands upon this fascination, exploring the motivations and identities of the anonymous 'murder fanciers' who consumed these bloody narratives. In doing so he concocts texts which push the figure of the Blackwoodian informed reader to its most extreme conclusion.

The introductory letter to the editor, which opens the 1827 essay, raises issues of authorial intention and reader response which were to be at the heart of the 'On Murder' essays. The submitter, 'X.Y.Z', describes the society from which he has sourced the lecture as one which encourages murder: 'in tendency, it may be denominated a Society for the Encouragement of Murder; but, according to their own delicate ευφημισμοζ, it is styled – The Society of Connoisseurs in Murder' (8). However, the editor responds sceptically in his note, questioning the submitter's interpretation of the lecture: 'we cannot suppose the lecturer to be in earnest, any more than Erasmus in his Praise of Folly, or Dean Swift in his proposal for eating children' (9). From the earliest part of the narrative, its readers are faced with two possible ways in which to approach the text; on one hand the 'lecture' is an earnest challenge to moral order, which in describing and celebrating violent crime promotes further such acts; on the other it is a satire, a sophisticated play upon its subject matter to be read sceptically, in the tradition of fore-runners such as Swift's 'Modest Proposal' or Erasmus's 'In Praise of Folly'. Readers are split into those who like 'X.Y.Z' credulously take the essay at face value and sophisticated readers who are capable of identifying and appreciating its irony. Readers are 'in' on the joke or they are not; 'informed readers' or moralists.

The lecture itself reintroduces the problem of interpretation from a slightly different perspective: 'everything in this world has two handles. Murder, for instance, may be laid hold of by its moral handle, (as it generally is in the pulpit, and at the Old Bailey;) and *that,* I confess is its weak side; or it may be treated *aesthetically*, as the Germans call it, that is, in relation to good taste' (10-11). The lecturer suggests laying aside moral responses to murder and violence for an approach which looks at these subjects from an 'aesthetic' perspective; foregrounding pleasure over social sympathy: 'we dry up our tears, and have the satisfaction to discover, that a transaction which, morally considered, was shocking, and without a leg to stand upon, when tried by principles of Taste, turns out to be a very meritorious performance' (13). The murder after it has taken place becomes a work of art, and to be able to respond to its aesthetic merit becomes an indicator of good Taste. In their intellectual appreciation of crime the 'connoisseurs' are marked apart from those who never move beyond a 'moral' understanding of murder.

This rarified appreciation of murder, accessible only to the 'connoisseur', is supported by an attempt by the lecturer to give a history of the 'art'. His speech is thick with references to classical antiquity, and witty references to philosophers. The lecturer utilises French, Latin and Greek to create a language of shared cultural capital between the speaker and an implied audience of similarly educated 'connoisseurs'. The lecturer even seeks to differentiate the spectator of sensibility from the 'mob' of general readers: 'as to old women, and the mob of newspaper readers, they are pleased with anything, provided it is bloody enough. But the mind of sensibility requires something more' (31).

However, the contemporary murders which the lecturer lauds are not necessarily the sophisticated pieces of artistry we might expect. In fact, behind the screen of erudite phrases and classical references, the lecturer's accounts of modern murders have more in common with contemporary broadside and newspaper content and are full of blunt violence and sexualised language. For example, Frederick Burwick has described the account of the murder of the Mannheim baker as one laced with an 'erotic attraction'; the murderer describes his attraction to the baker as victim in sexualised terms: 'I "fancied" him, and resolved to commence business upon his throat, which by the way he always carried bare- a fashion which is very irritating to my desires' (Burwick 85) (De Quincey 27). This scene is followed by a ridiculous scene in which baker and amateur murderer engage in twenty-seven rounds of bare-knuckle boxing described as if it is being reported in a

newspaper sports column (27-28). This promiscuous integration of high and low culture was to typify the 'On Murder' series. Susan Oliver has described the essays in the 'On Murder' group as 'agents in a "catastrophe" of genre that, among other things, effaced boundaries between factual and fictional journalism, and informed the emergence of several new literary styles' (44). The murder connoisseurs are revealed to be not so removed from the 'mob'; two disparate areas of the public sphere mix and mingle, confounding differentiations between high and low culture.

This reading is supported by the 'Second Paper on Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts', which was published in *Blackwood's* in November 1839. The paper opens with a defence of the 1827 essay. The correspondent bemoans the hostility of 'public opinion' towards him following the publication of the essay, averring that it has led his neighbours to invent 'the most barbarous calumnies against' him (81). He then proceeds to humorously defend his reputation, denying either encouraging murder or murdering anyone himself: 'as to murder, I never committed one in my life. It's a well-known thing amongst all my friends. I can get a paper to certify as much, signed by lots of people' (82).

The narrator then details the proceedings of a dinner given by the 'Society of Connoisseurs in Murder' in celebration of the Indian Thugs in 1838[22]. The 'Paper' continues the carnivalesque combination of high and low culture which characterised the previous essay. The 'connoisseurs' sit down to a sumptuous banquet and begin to hold forth with educated speeches on the subject of historical murder like those of the previous lecture, describing famous murderers of the past including Rashid ad-Din Sinan, the twelfth-century assassin, Charles Martel, a Medieval military leader, and The Jewish Sicarii (88-89). However, as the wine begins to flow these toasts and speeches are disrupted by the unruly club members, who themselves increasingly morph into 'thugs'[23] in the modern sense:

[22] The 'Thugs' were mysterious gangs of Indian assassins thought by colonial administrators to have existed for centuries in India. They were particularly in the public eye during the 1820s and 1830s due to colonial efforts to repress their movements, and a flurry of publications which discussed their practices and habits, such as Phillip Meadow Taylor's novel *Confessions of a Thug* (1839). For more information on the Thugs and their role in contemporary British discourse about crime see Caroline Reitz, 'Thuggee and the Discovery of the English Detective' in *Detecting the Nation: Fictions of Detection and the Imperial Venture.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press. 2004. 22-42.

[23] The Oxford English Dictionary cites Thomas Carlyle's December 1839 pamphlet *Chartism* as the first use of the term 'thug' to refer to 'a cutthroat, ruffian, rough' in a British context when he refers to working-class political protest as 'Glasgow thuggery'. However, De Quincey's party's toast 'To

> The speeches attempted at this crisis of the Dinner were past all counting. But the applause was so furious, the music so stormy, and the crashing of glasses so incessant, from the general resolution to never again drink an inferior toast from the same glass, that my power is not equal to the task of reporting (94).

The pedantic narrator is forced to cease his homilies on classical murder in order to eject a member of the party who seems intent upon committing real murder upon his fellow 'connoisseurs':

> Toad-in-the-hole had become quite ungovernable. He kept firing pistols in every direction; sent his servant for a blunderbuss, and talked of loading with ball-cartridge. We conceived that his former madness had returned at the mention of Burke and Hare; or that being weary of life, he had resolved to go off in a general massacre. This we could not think of allowing (94).

As Susan Oliver puts it: 'the essay ends amidst a riot of pistol fire, in effect shooting to pieces all semblance of order and decorum' (46).

This narrative pattern in which learned discussion and discourse in a club-like environment descends into debauchery and humorous farce is similar to that which was often employed in the *Blackwood's Noctes Ambrosianae*. In fact, the 'Paper' with its dense Latin quotation, homo-social setting, heavy drinking and inset songs is remarkably similar in tone and style to a scene from the *Noctes*. Robert Morrison has even suggested that De Quincey may have borrowed his central conceit, the aesthetic appreciation of violence and suffering, from Wilson's April 1824 instalment of the *Noctes* (*Opium* 253). Further, just as De Quincey's sketches are described as leaked lectures, the *Noctes* 'purport to be records of conversations faithfully copied down by the journalist Gurney who is hiding in a cupboard during the whole series' (Manderson 89). If, as I have argued, the *Noctes* are designed to provoke feelings of inclusion and identification amongst the *Blackwood's* readership, articulating a sense of membership within a virtual literary club, then the series can be read as the minutes of this fictitious society. What differentiates the *Noctes* from the 'Paper' is only that where the *Noctes* detail the gathering of a semi-fictitious periodical

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thugdom in all its branches!'(93) suggests a movement towards this more generalised use of the term was already taking place by November.

staff and readership, De Quincey's 'Paper' describes the gathering of a fictitious murder appreciation society. If we're to read the content of the speeches and toasts as a parodic reflection of the content of the magazine then the 'Paper' becomes a parodic mirror held up to the *Noctes* and *Blackwood's* itself. The *Noctes* are cast as a thinly disguised murder appreciation society meeting.

This idea of a targeted parody, aimed at *Blackwood's'* editors and readers, is supported by De Quincey's representation of an execution scene in the 1827 essay which seems designed to interact with the benign resurrectionist figure of the Tales of Terror. Where *Blackwood's* stories often adopt the gentleman surgeon as narrator or hero, De Quincey's anatomist is significantly more sinister. A hanging highway man is cut down from the gallows early, not so that the anatomists can attempt to reanimate him, but to guarantee his 'uncommonly fine' body for an ambitious surgeon's dissection table:

> By the connivance of the under-sheriff he was cut down within the legal time, and instantly put in a chaise and four; so that, when he reached Cruikshank's, he was positively not dead. Mr.---, a young student at the time, had the honour of giving him the *coup-de-grace,-* and finishing the sentence of the law." This remarkable anecdote, which seemed to imply that all the gentlemen in the dissecting-room were amateurs of our class, struck me a good deal (25).

The professional anatomist is transformed into an amateur murderer confounding *Blackwood's* concept of the good doctor. Just as the readership have been revealed as glass-smashing thugs, the professional whose reading practices they have been asked to mimic is revealed to be a murderer.

The revelation of the true nature of Blackwoodian community throws the contradictory ideological forces at play within the magazine into sharp relief. However, De Quincey never conclusively rejects the patchwork of morality and violence, and street and salon which his essays identify. His rendering of the world of the murder connoisseurs is, in the words of Robert Morrison, 'both disturbing and seductive' (*Opium* 254). These are texts where the author plays constant intellectual games with his audience, romping through the history of murder with obvious iconoclastic relish. The most disturbing feature of these

texts is perhaps how entertaining they are and how easily the reader morphs into a chortling member of De Quincey's club.

De Quincey's intended perspective on the morbid fascination evinced in *Blackwood's* is hard to gauge. De Quincey's own journalistic career illustrates a personal fascination with the very types of crime which his connoisseurs pore over. Robert Morrison comments that 'during his editorship of the *Westmorland Gazette* (1818-1819) De Quincey filled the columns of the newspaper with assize reports and lurid murder stories' ('Introduction' ix). Following his dismissal from the paper, which Susan Oliver attributes to his 'excessive focus on cases on murder and sexual assault*',* De Quincey continues to write both fictional and non-fictional texts which constantly return to themes of human criminality and violence (46). A.S. Plumtree has argued that throughout his career 'De Quincey's works are littered with references to murder and display on overall preoccupation with violence' (141). If De Quincey is indeed attempting to critique a culture of violent voyeurism amongst *Blackwood's* readers and contributors then it is a culture which he himself is complicit in creating and feeding.

Even as he picked apart the members club conceit at the heart of *Blackwood's* self-presentation, De Quincey's perspective on the reading public was also elitist. He regularly referred to the expanding British readership as a 'mob' throughout his career. Robert Morrison notes that 'as early as 1822 he had complained of the "stupidity" of the reading public, and throughout his career his efforts to engage a wide audience put intense pressure on his conception of himself as 'a scholar and gentleman' although he 'typically wrote with one eye firmly fixed on pleasing the gallery' (*Opium* 348). De Quincey was thus himself a murder fancier. The incisiveness and ambivalence of his portrait of the 'connoisseurs' can perhaps be attributed to the fact that it is a critique of not just the magazine he was writing for but his own practices as man of letters.

Readership and the Dead

What De Quincey's essays perhaps also reveal is a broader contradiction within *Blackwood's* attempts to manufacture intimacy and identification across its wide-ranging readership. The model of readership offered by the 'rural kirkyard' with its fictionalised ideal ancestors is one which inculcates a sense of readerly community through the creation

of a shared ancestral myth. Readers of *Blackwood's,* whatever their real social background, are encouraged to locate themselves in terms of an idealised lost past which combines middle-class social morality with Burkean Conservativism. This myth of belonging is designed to inculcate a strong sense of community amongst readers, and of brand association with the magazine. However, this is not the only type of readerly community which *Blackwood's* seeks to manufacture. Alongside this myth of rural Scottish origin is the competing myth of the virtual gentlemen's club. Features like the *Noctes Ambrosianae* lend *Blackwood's* the air of an exclusive society and give readers a privileged sense of admittance into the world of the periodical's elite Tory contributors. This sophisticated, urban and often brutal social world is at odds with the rural, domesticated one found in the kirkyard tales. Two versions of *Blackwoodian* identity are offered alongside one another; one urbane, masculine and elite, the other rural, domestic and broadly middle-class in character.

In *Blackwood's* 'terror' and 'Kirkyard' fiction, death is used in two seemingly contradictory ways. Where *Blackwood's* rural fiction fetishises the eternal and unchanging cemetery, its terror fiction insists on looking at the corpse. These narratives focus on the unburied (and sometimes still living) body; ignoring the resting place in favour of the drama of the moment of death. They testify to a morbid curiosity about the final moments of life; a strange need to look at the body rather than bury it. This is the alternative *Blackwoodian* death of De Quincey's connoisseurs. The dead who hold the readership together are not moral ancestors entombed in a pastoral idyll, but the corpses of murder victims and criminals, whose spectacular deaths provoke a ghastly sort of communal sympathy in *Blackwood's* ghoulish collective of readers.

Chapter Four- *'Church Yard Pirates':* Anatomy, Community and the Medical Professional in *Blackwood's*

The Edinburgh of the early nineteenth century was a city ruled and defined by its professionals, and it was men of this class who spearheaded its famous periodicals. Richard Cronin, discussing the contributors who wrote for the *Edinburgh* and *Blackwood's*, argues that Edinburgh at this time was:

> the city in which the new professional class to which all these men belonged, the class which during the nineteenth century came increasingly to dominate the life of the whole nation, first came to prominence. The cultural, political, and intellectual life of the city was dominated by Edinburgh's lawyers, academics and divines (Cronin 147).

Many of *Blackwood's* most important contributors had trained for the professions. Both Wilson and Lockhart had taken the Bar, D.M. Moir and Robert McNish were both surgeon-physicians and Samuel Warren had attended Edinburgh University's medical school before training as a lawyer. Periodical writing itself was fast becoming a profession, rather than a gentlemanly pursuit; Cronin attributes to the periodical writers of the early century, 'a nervous sense of their emergent professional status. The production of literature was no longer securely a gentlemanly vocation: it had become an employment for which a writer expected and required payment' (Cronin 227). In addition to themselves belonging to the professional classes, the Blackwoodians wrote for a middle-class professional audience whom Andrew Noble characterises as 'middle-class and middle-brow' (135). This intended audience is particularly apparent in the way in which *Blackwood's* fiction often features a middle-class narrator and models clinical modes of reading and viewing. The magazine was, despite its apparent promotion of traditional social hierarchy, heavily committed to writing for and about the burgeoning nineteenth-century professional classes born of the very processes which seemed to be threatening rural life.

The magazine's reactionary conservativism and association with the emerging professions clash in tales which engage with the anatomy debates which were taking place during the early decades of the century. During these years the increasingly prestigious medical professions were under scrutiny for their association with the anti-social practice of

bodysnatching. As the medical schools and research hospitals of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Britain expanded and became ever more committed to hands-on dissection as a tool for training and investigation they required an ever-growing number of cadavers. However, the number of bodies they could officially access remained static. Prior to 1832, the only cadavers officially available for dissection in Great Britain were the bodies of recently executed felons which were included in The 1752 Murder Act.[24] Supply rarely met demand and ambitious anatomists were therefore increasingly likely to accept and pay for bodies which had been acquired from other unregulated sources. This problem was particularly marked in Edinburgh as the city's strong reputation for medical education attracted a huge number of medical students in relation to its population. The problem of cadaver supply was increased by the large number of extra-mural schools (medical schools which operated independently from the University) located in the city. Extra-mural schools competed with the other schools and the university for students who paid to attend their courses. A reliable supply of high quality anatomical subjects was one way in which a surgeon might attract these students to his classes. An advertisement for Dr. Robert Knox's classes, now held by the Royal College of Surgeon's in Edinburgh, promises students 'a full demonstration on fresh Anatomical Subjects'. Access to cadavers didn't just offer the possible financial rewards of a large class but could also give the surgeon access to unusual or interesting subjects to write papers on and to prepare as specimens for his collection, both of which could help him to gain further prominence within his profession. The demand for bodies was driven by the ambitions of the many surgeons competing for students and professional acclaim. Official sources simply could not keep up with the requirements of the booming medical sciences.

The gap between supply and demand was filled through the theft and importation of corpses. Body snatching, the practice of exhuming or otherwise co-opting the bodies of the recently deceased in order to sell them, was a wide-spread practice in early nineteenth-century Britain. The grave-robbers were often groups of professional resurrectionists, although students and anatomists also sometimes took matters into their own hands and collected the bodies themselves. They operated at night, exhuming recently interred bodies

[24] The 1752 Murder Act states that 'in no Case whatsoever the Body of any Murderer shall be suffered to be buried' (Richardson, *Death* 37).

secretly and delivering them to the schools under cover of darkness. Bodies were also covertly imported into Britain on board ships from Ireland and France.

In 1828 it was discovered that two Irish immigrants had been murdering the poor in the slum tenements of Edinburgh in order to sell their bodies to the anatomists. In response to the public outcry which these, and the subsequent London 'Italian Boy Murders' of 1831, generated, along with the conviction of two doctors for grave-robbing in 1828, an act made its way through the British parliament which radically altered the way anatomical subjects were sourced (Richardson, 'Trading' 77). Hildebrandt describes how the passing of the Warburton Anatomy Act in 1832 'provided the use of the poor and unclaimed for anatomical dissection, but excluded the use of the bodies of the executed' (Hildebrandt 7). The corpses of executed felons were no longer to be used by medical anatomists, instead the unclaimed bodies of those who died in charitable institutions could be given to the anatomists; the corpses of criminals were replaced with those of the very poor and the very isolated.

Bodysnatching in *Blackwood's*: The Kirkyard and the Anatomist

This chapter will explore responses to the bodysnatching period amongst the writings of the *Blackwood's* group. In chapter two, I argued that the graveyard in *Blackwood's* rural writing represented an imagined community of relative social continuity, and that inclusion in the burial ground in these narratives is therefore inclusion within a conservative vision of a stable society. In this chapter I will explore the ways in which the figure of the bodysnatcher in contemporary texts threatens this system of social signification, by taking those who have been buried and removing them from their 'place'. The grave robber becomes an agent of social deletion as bodies only retain legibility when placed within the narrative scheme of the graveyard. Social relationships between corpse and communal identity are lost when the body is decontextualized, and *somebody* in the grave becomes *something* to be sold. In examining the fate of the stolen corpse, bodysnatching texts negotiate confrontations between communities and the forces which threaten to disturb them. They argue for the sanctity of social relations and in the process dismiss those who are 'unclaimed'.

Blackwood's tales which feature bodysnatching are not just concerned with situating the corpse within contemporary social life, but also with negotiating the status of the doctor. As doctors, and particularly surgeons, gained increasing status within nineteenth-century Britain their relationship with anatomical medicine and the resurrectionists who supplied the anatomy theatres took on an increasing importance in contemporary discussions. If bodysnatching disrupted the social fabric of nineteenth-century Britain, then what position could anatomically trained doctors and surgeons take up within this society? As Tim Marshall comments 'the dead body business connection brought with it an unwelcome association with the unclean and the profane which inevitably made it next to impossible for the profession to present itself as properly scientific and in alliance with polite society' (20).

This tension between the grim realities of anatomy provision and the social aspiration of the professional medical practitioner is particularly apparent in *Blackwood's* bodysnatching stories where the magazine's commitment to 'traditional' social values, as embodied in the rural kirkyard, came up against its use of the modern professional (often medical) man as narrator. The use of the 'professional gaze' in *Blackwood's* Tales of Terror was, as I explored in the previous chapter, an established convention which both allowed for a depoliticised gothic of the human mind and appealed to a readership made up in large part from the professional classes. However, the associations between bodysnatching and medical professionals complicated this picture in tales which engaged with anatomy. The figure of the bodysnatcher revealed the ideological distance between the homely, couthy Scotland of the *Blackwood's* kirkyard and the Scotland of medical students and anatomy theatres which the magazine's professional protagonists and readers inhabited. The project of reconciling these two worlds can be seen as one which goes to the heart of *Blackwood's* contradictory self-representation: in exploring the needs of the imagined traditional community and the modern medical professional *Blackwood's* writers explored the fundamental split within the magazine's own personality.

Blackwood's response to the anatomical debates of the early century furnished the bodysnatching tale with one of its most canonical works, John Galt's 'The Buried Alive' (1821). However, Galt was far from the only *Blackwood's* fiction writer to engage with these issues. This chapter will look at three short stories about bodysnatching written for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* by D.M. Moir, John Galt, and Samuel Warren. Two of

these *Blackwood's* authors (Moir and Warren) had trained at the University of Edinburgh's Medical School and their knowledge of dissection and the anatomy schools complicates their response to grave robbing. In John Galt's 'The Buried Alive' the reader is given access to the fictional experiences of a man who remains conscious after his apparent death and throughout his burial and resurrection by bodysnatchers. The instalment of the 'Wonderful Passage in the Life of Mansie Wauch, Tailor' from the October 1824 edition of *Blackwood's* describes D.M. Moir's feckless hero's response to a spate of grave-robbing in his community, whilst in Samuel Warren's 'Gravedoings' (titled 'The Resurrectionist' in some collections) (1830) the reader experiences the botched resurrection of the body of a young woman through the eyes of a medical student. The shifting narrator perspectives and narrative circumstances of these three tales combine to give a complicated picture of the relationship between anatomy, community and the graveyard within the magazine.

The Terror of the Flesh: Anatomy as Gothic Transformation in Galt's 'The Buried Alive'

Public opinion was frequently hostile towards bodysnatching. Even those who argued for the need to further medical science through the expansion of anatomical investigation often took steps to secure their bodies and those of their loved ones from the bodysnatcher's grasp[25]. A variety of measures could be taken to protect the dead. Grave protecting devices such as the iron cages known as Mortsafes could be placed over newly filled graves to protect the bodies interred there until they had safely decomposed. In other instances relatives and members of the community watched over graves in the first days after burial and it is still possible to see watch towers in some nineteenth-century graveyards which were erected to allow local people to undertake these duties, such as the one in Callander, Perthshire. As Ruth Richardson has noted the existence of these practices indicates that fear of dissection was not an attitude limited to a superstitious rural working-class or the Catholic minority but extended across geographical and social boundaries into the urban upper and middle-classes:

> the financially fortunate would not have spent good money on multiple coffins, patent cast-iron coffins and other contraptions to protect their dead had they,

[25] Helen MacDonald quotes the surgeon George Guthrie's horror at the idea of dissecting a body which had been 'a beloved mother, wife or sister' (9). Whilst Ruth Richardson highlights that renowned anatomist and surgeon Astley Cooper was buried in a stone sarcophagus and multiple inner coffins to avoid being exhumed (1991, 82).

> too, not shared a similar disgust at the thought of being anatomised after death (*Death* 27).

Abhorrence of the practices of grave-robbers extended across different social groups, whatever their overall attitude to the necessity of medical anatomy itself.

There were riots in some Scottish cities when rumours of bodysnatching and anatomical malpractice came to public attention. Caroline McCracken-Flesher cites 'clashes' between 'citizens' and 'students and surgeons' in Glasgow throughout 1813 and 1814 following the discovery of a cargo of corpses hidden within 'rag bales at the city docks' (11)[26]. Anatomical science remained a contentious issue throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century, as the public maintained what Ruth Richardson terms 'a very brittle tolerance' of the anatomical schools, which could easily be damaged by the perceived overstepping of boundaries (*Death* 92). An 1823 broadsheet entitled *Riot in Stirling,* describes a disturbance in the town where 'two disturbers of the Dead were almost torn to pieces by the populace' and armed troops, drafted in to quell the enraged inhabitants of the city, shot upon the crowd. Richardson describes another incident in Aberdeen in January 1832 when a dog unearthed human remains in the yard behind an anatomy school:

> A crowd gathered swiftly, and before long the school was invaded, and the lecturer in surgery, Mr. Moir, chased out. Three mangled corpses were found on the premises…Members of the crowd covered the bodies with fragments of clothing, and carried them around the town, while those who remained began to burn the school down (*Death* 91).

[26] In *Gender and Modern Irish Drama*, Susan Cannon Harris describes how during the years prior to the anatomy act large quantities of cadavers were covertly imported from Ireland for dissection in mainland Britain, asserting that 'Irish graves supplied a disproportionate number of…illegal cadavers' (15). In his study of the topic, John Fleetwood argues that this Irish body trade was a developed and highly lucrative business in the early decades of the nineteenth century: 'the export trade was well organised and carried on quite openly' (66). Interestingly, he also mentions that the specific packaging in which bodies were smuggled often had a representative function: 'when bodies were exported the containers were labelled in accordance with the area of origin but at least one cask of 'Irish Cheddar' was intercepted at Liverpool and found to contain Irish bodies instead' (69). The trade in bodies which Scotland's medical men took part in was therefore not just a small-scale domestic one but a sophisticated international operation, where surgeons utilised the ports which were facilitating Britain's economic growth and colonial gains to facilitate their own scientific ambitions.

That these major public disturbances were fairly regular occurrences over the first three decades of the nineteenth century indicates how delicate the situation was.

The hostility of a large section of the public to the anatomists is commonly attributed to a combination of religious and social values. However, for nineteenth-century Scots the religious aspects of the crime are unlikely to have been the primary motivator of hostility, as there seem to have been a variety of beliefs about the relationship between the body and the afterlife circulating within society at the start of the nineteenth century. Mainstream Church of Scotland Presbyterianism taught that resurrection on the day of judgement was spiritual and that the physical body had no real role to play after death; Caroline McCracken-Flesher quotes a pamphlet written by a Doctor in 1819 advocating dissection which asserts that Scottish Presbyterians 'have all been told, on Divine Authority, and are all convinced, that not one drop of flesh or blood is ever to enter the kingdom of Heaven' (13). Megan Coyer notes that the influential Evangelical Thomas Chalmers describes a physical resurrection in his spiritual writings stating that 'there is reason for believing, that some of the matter of our present bodies may exist in these more glorified and transformed bodies which we are afterwards to occupy' (12). However, Chalmers' description of physical resurrection only asserts that 'some of the matter' of the body will enter heaven, and there is no suggestion that any dissection or desecration performed against the corpse would pass into the next life. There doesn't seem to be a consensus about the fate of the corpse after death amongst Presbyterians in Scotland during the early nineteenth century. Although we cannot write off the survival of pre-reformation beliefs and the influence of Scotland's growing Catholic minority, it therefore seems unlikely that concern about the afterlife would be enough to excite such widespread condemnation. Rather, I argue, a series of more secular concerns informed reactions to bodysnatching.

One of the issues which provoked this response was dissection's association with the posthumous punishment of criminals. However, this punishment was based on an even deeper sense that the dissection of the body was an act which annihilated the self and dehumanised the dead. Michael Sappol describes how many would have viewed dissection as 'the final and definitive annulment of their *social* being' (17 Italics mine). The use of the word 'social' is important here; whether the body lay in the grave, or not, the actual living, breathing person who had died was removed from their place within the community and could hardly be asserted to have an earthly 'self'. However, death did not have to represent

the absolute removal of their social presence, as the grave, and the placing of their body within that grave, could function as a legible shorthand for their perceived legacy. Appropriating the 'social corpse' and transforming it into a commodity was an act which therefore didn't just threaten the posthumous integrity of the dead individual but far more importantly operated as an attack on the community who had placed the corpse in the ground. As Sappol puts it 'the anatomist enclosed the cadavers of the poor, appropriating what had never been property for exclusively private purposes' and thereby 'removed the dead body from its communal surroundings' (20). If the graveyard constituted a repository for an approved community narrative then the bodysnatcher in disinterring the dead from their graves attacked the very identity of that community. If, as in the *Blackwood's* regional tales, the graveyard community metaphor functioned on a national scale then unchecked grave-robbing constituted an attack on the nation itself. The body of a person was (ideally) placed in a graveyard at the centre of their community with the story of their life over them in the form of their epitaph, whereas a cadaver was an object which was bought and dissected with little regard for its humanity. The body which had gone into the grave as a person and ancestor was transformed on the dissecting table into so much meat.

The gothic metamorphosis of the corpse in the dissecting room is described in Galt's short story 'The Buried Alive', which was published in *Blackwood's* in 1821 and describes a man's experience of his own death and exhumation. In the course of the tale the protagonist finds himself upon his deathbed but realises that although his body cannot move, he has retained full mental consciousness. Locked in and unable to communicate with those around him, he is mourned, prepared for the grave, and buried before being exhumed by a party of grave-robbers and transported to the dissecting table where a series of experiments are performed on his body for an audience of medical students. Only on the application of a scalpel to his chest does the protagonist revive. The story maintains a limited and almost claustrophobic focus on the sensations and interiority of the first person narrator: as his eyes are closed by a friend he comments that 'the world was then darkened, but I still could hear, and feel, and suffer' and this perhaps sums up the content of the story which never expands beyond the perspective of the 'hearing' 'feeling' and 'suffering' man trapped within his own body (262).

Galt's use of a first person narrator who witnesses his own transformation to cadaver highlights the disturbing transition from human to commercial object which the

sale of the corpse represented. Galt reattributes personhood to the body: literalising the fears of contemporary readers and relying on the retained humanity of the corpse to produce horror. This gothic description of anatomy forces the reader to confront their possible kinship with the anatomical subject. In the anatomy theatre an 'accent of awe and compassion' replaces the 'hustle' and cries of 'admiration' as the students recognise the 'good subject' as a person they have known (263). The dehumanised cadaver is revealed to be human, horrifying those who have come to watch the spectacle of its dissection.

The transformation of the middle-class male narrator into cadaver effects a complete reversal of power relations. The transition from self-determining man to incapacitated corpse represents a transformation from active agent to passive subject. The narrator is taken from his privileged position in society and transformed into an object. Andrew Mangham has argued that during the nineteenth century, 'the idea of being buried alive emerged as a ghastly emblem of knowing- *truly* knowing- what it was to be beleaguered, victimised and terrified' (10). Galt's narrator temporarily experiences the nightmare of absolute reification and social deletion.

Further, what disturbs the students in the auditorium is that they know the subject; they have socialised with him and he is of their social class. When they recognise him they do not wish there were no subject just that 'it had been some other' (263). Similarly, I argue, what is frightening to the educated reader of *Blackwood's* magazine is that the first person narrator is just like them- a middle-class man who knows doctors and students, can afford to employ undertakers to carry out his funeral and has a working understanding of galvanism. The cadaver is his double. Galt's protagonist is not an every-man but he is an attempt at a sort-of every –*Blackwood's*-reader. Relatively wealthy and socially respectable but otherwise unidentifiable, the man at the centre of Galt's text could be any one of *Blackwood's* intended readers. *Blackwood's* superficially cohesive readership identity means that 'The Buried Alive', and Tales of Terror like it, could use protagonists like Galt's unnamed narrator to produce a chilling sense of personal identification in the reader. In 'The Buried Alive', as in the Tales of Terror discussed in chapter three, the creation of a character who is at once anonymous and inherently similar to the *Blackwood's* reader creates an effect common in the tales where the reader feels almost synonymous with the protagonist.

Although the bodysnatchers are described as 'robbers who live by plundering the grave, and selling the bodies of parents, and children, and friends' and behave disrespectfully towards the narrator's body, they are also, inadvertently, the protagonist's rescuers from 'the worms and the reptiles of death' (37). Similarly, the role of the doctor in the final passages of the story is that of accidental hero. Although his intention in performing the 'galvanic experiment' and dissection is to give an anatomical demonstration, his actions actually precipitate the dead man's escape from his 'trance' (37-38). On noticing signs of life, the doctor is transformed from anatomist to lifesaver; 'the utmost exertions were made to restore me' (38). Thus although the story is a gothic one, the site of terror is not the anatomy theatre or the graveside but the body itself. It is the living-dead man's body which imprisons him and causes his interment and attempted dissection. Galt's story is a horrifying version of Adam Smith's individualised sympathy which places 'our own living souls in their inanimated bodies' (13). Although the tale touches upon the terrors of the bodysnatching era it does so without directly indicting a villain. It is an example of the deeply individualised and depoliticised type of gothic writing which Hege Segerblad and Alison Millbank identify as typical of the *Blackwood's* Tales of Terror. Galt's protagonist's gothic predicament is the result not of a dangerous flaw in British society but of his own body and mind.

The Resurrectionist in the Village: Bodysnatching, Broadsides and 'Mansie Wauch'

Galt's representation of bodysnatching in a sort of social vacuum is in direct contrast to popular responses to the crime; which generally characterise grave-robbing as a crime enacted against the surviving family and community rather than an individual corpse. Descriptions of bodysnatching in contemporary street writing highlight the impact of grave-robbing on social relations, and this can perhaps be most clearly seen by looking at one of several plagiarised broadside version of Galt's 'The Buried Alive'. Hege Segerblad has highlighted that the text from Galt's story finds its way almost unabridged into a contemporary broadsheet printed in Edinburgh (36). Entitled *Extraordinary Case!,* the broadsheet claims to contain:

> A Full and Wonderful Narrative of the Extraordinary Sufferings of Mrs. JANE TOMKINSON, who fell into a Trance, and was buried alive, a short time ago, in this vicinity—her observations and feelings- her extraordinary escape from the

> Grave- her wonderful recovery in the Dissecting-Room, in consequence of a galvanic experiment, and happy return to her family and friends.—All as related by Herself.

The story is however in reality Galt's 'The Buried Alive'. It is only differentiated from the *Blackwood's* version by the changing of the narrator's gender, some abridgement of the narrative which seems designed to make it shorter, and the insertion of a new concluding paragraph in which Mrs. Tomkinson primly attempts to shroud her modesty from the stunned medical men. The *Extraordinary Case!* is therefore an interesting mirror when held up to the original narrative which reveals the way that readership and publishing context inform Galt's text. The shifting of protagonist gender and publication context brings into sharper focus the way in which the identity of Galt's original narrator functions within the original 1821 text.

The cosy alliance between reader and protagonist central to Galt's text is broken when the story is removed from the members' club-like setting of *Blackwood's* and offered to the wider audience who consumed street literature. It is more difficult to tailor a narrator to the amorphous mass readership able to access street writing and a new technique must be employed to provoke a response in the reader. The new concluding paragraph of *Extraordinary Case!* alters the emphasis of the tale by foregrounding the sexual implications of the protagonist's altered gender, and explicitly placing the individual victim within a family unit:

> Notwithstanding the trials I had undergone, I found myself sufficiently strong to rise on my seat upon the table. Many of the students left the room precipitately; the demonstrator, with several others remained, watching, with the most profound attention, every movement I made. The power of speech had not yet returned, and efforts to speak were unavailing. Conscious of the indelicacy of my situation, being surrounded with men, and being only partly covered with my shroud, I got off the table, and walked towards the door, in hopes of meeting some female who might procure a decent covering. The students followed in silent amazement. I passed down a long lobby, and entered an apartment at the farther extremity, where some person was in bed; I approached and drew the curtain; at this moment I found myself again able to

> speak, and I implored the person, who proved to be a male servant of the house, to conduct me to a room where I might find the company of a woman, but the person was so petrified by fear as to be unable to answer; the demonstrator and the students, however, were in a body behind me and in a few minutes every necessary was procured, and the utmost exertions were made to fully to restore me. In the course of an hour I was again in the bosom of my family.

In replacing the male victim with a female, the author/editor invokes the gothic convention of the passive female body in jeopardy. As Segerblad describes: 'the unfortunate woman morphs into the typical gothic heroine in distress', and the invocation of this trope elicits a quite different response in the reader (37). This transformation plays into a power imbalance already at work in the relation between active anatomist and passive cadaver. Elizabeth Bronfen has argued that the corpse's relation to the living person who views it is always gendered: 'the dead body is in the passive horizontal position, cut down, fallen, while the survivor stands erect imbued with a feeling of superiority. By implication the corpse is feminine, the survivor masculine' (Bronfen 63). Whilst Galt's original story is animated by the inversion of power relations, where the active masculine party finds himself in a passive and arguably feminised position, here the power relation reinforces gendered expectations.

If the intact female corpse is a cipher for purity and chastity then the mutilation of a murdered woman's corpse or the anatomisation of a female cadaver becomes an act of defilement. The handling and uncovering of Mrs. Tomkinson's body acquires an erotic meaning in the *Extraordinary Case!* broadsheet and the anatomist's preparations to penetrate and mutilate the surfaces of her body imply the possibility of sexual violence. The physical penetration of the knife into the female body once again becomes an analogy for the act of rape. As I discussed in relation to John Wilson's 'Extracts from Gosschen's Diary' (1818) this symbolism was not limited to street literature but used across genres and readerships to simultaneously titillate and horrify readers. The reader can play the part of the voyeur and enjoy imagining the desecration of the woman's body whilst simultaneously experiencing his own disgust and anger at the crime committed against it.

In placing the victim within a recognisable social nexus the writer of *Extraordinary Case!* implies a violation of, not just the individual woman described, but of local domestic values. The broadsheet functions rather like a modern day tabloid newspaper, provoking indignation in the reader by describing a lurid and sexualised crime committed against a particularly emotive victim- a local wife. Mrs. Tomkinson's married status is important here because it implies that her body is already 'owned' by a party other than the anatomist- her husband. Her exhumation and her planned anatomisation are therefore not just acts committed against an individual woman but are also insults to her husband, a sort of posthumous cuckolding. Further to this point the mention of Mrs. Tomkinson's return to 'the bosom of my family' places her within a larger domestic group, whilst the assertion that the fictional crime took place 'in this vicinity' evokes her place within an even broader local community. Mrs. Tomkinson is defined by her implied relationship to her husband and her explicitly stated relationship to her family and the local area. The theft of her body therefore functions as what Michael Sappol would term 'an affront to family and community honour' (3). The author of the broadside expands the impact of bodysnatching from Galt's focus on the individual to the community, although the bodysnatchers' and doctors' positions as heroes or villains remain uncertain.

Another broadsheet titled *Another Church Yard Pirate* (1823), describing the arrest of two resurrectionists in Glasgow, also focuses on the effect which their crimes have on the living family and their community:

> It is surely a most lamentable and afflicting circumstance, that, after a poor family has involved itself in debt, (which often requires the greatest industry to extricate itself from) in order to get the object whom they loved decently interred, and, as they thought safe from the plundering hands of man, it adds a deeper wound to their feelings, and keeps the community in constant dread of their friends, after their departure, sharing a like fate.

For the author of *Another Church Yard Pirate*, like the writer who adapted *Extraordinary Case!*, Bodysnatching is an act which threatens social cohesion, destabilising the familial unit and wider social relations. The broadsheet is also hostile to anatomical practice itself, concluding by suggesting that advocates of the anatomists might volunteer their own bodies as cadavers:

> We would recommend it to those who pretend that it is for the good of Society that Subjects should be had, in order to treat on, the number in that line, being now very numerous, it would confer a favour, if they would bequeath their own bodies, at their death, for so laudable a purpose.

This angry response to those in favour of anatomical science references an inherent social double standard in the acquisition of cadavers. The professional anatomist belonged to the prosperous middle-class but the bodies he practised his trade on were rarely his social peers. The bodies most easily taken from graveyards were generally those of the poor- those who couldn't pay for the expensive coffins, deep graves and mort-safes which might deter the resurrection men. During the debates which led up to the 1832 Anatomy Act, Henry Hunt, the radical MP for Preston, 'suggested that a prerequisite for obtaining a surgical license or diploma should be an agreement by the newly qualified surgeon that his own body might be used for teaching purposes after death' (Fleetwood 22). Although the MP may have been 'ill-informed and ignorant' in his views on medical science as John Fleetwood asserts[27], his proposal reflects growing public frustration with the double-standard which allowed one social group to dissect bodies which belonged almost exclusively to another (22). This sense of an inherent inequality between rich and poor is repeatedly invoked in discussions of bodysnatching; Ruth Richardson cites a speech given by the radical William Cobbett in Manchester in 1831 which 'referred to the protection the game laws provided for the "property of the rich" and contrasted the position of the poor, endeavouring to protect their dead relatives' (*Death* 83).

Within the magazine, the resurrectionists did not just feature in the Tales of Terror but also in one of *Blackwood's* popular series of tales of local life, and their appearance in this genre occasioned a greater engagement with the social impact of grave robbing than Galt had attempted in 'The Buried Alive'. D.M. Moir's *The Life of Mansie Wauch Tailor in Dalkeith* series ran in *Blackwood's* from 1824 and 1827, before being collected and published as a book in 1828. The *Mansie* stories employed couthy Scots humour and a small town setting, following good-natured but naïve hero Mansie from an apprenticeship in

[27] Fleetwood cites another occasion when Hunt attempted to asset that the medical schools might use 'artificial bodies made in Paris' a product which would have been technologically impossible at the time (22).

Edinburgh to life as a successful tailor in Dalkeith. The stories very obviously fit in amongst the *Blackwood's* tales of rural life, in particular George Douglas noted that 'the autobiographical tailor, with his unconscious self-revelation, is obviously suggested by the Provosts and Micah Balwhidders' of Galt's rural writings and Moir, in fact, dedicated the single volume edition of the series to the Ayrshire author (106).

The stories are gentle and slow-paced; unlike the satirical writings of Thomas de Quincey and the witty *Noctes* they seem designed for a mixed, perhaps family, audience. The experience of reading *Mansie Waugh* is also quite different from reading a Tale of Terror: Douglas commented in his summary of the life and works of Moir that 'this book was never meant for closets and the midnight oil, but to be read aloud over the fire on winter's eves in the family circle' (107). T.F. Henderson's introduction to *The Life of Mansie Wauch* further asserts that 'in Scotland, there were districts where country clubs awaited impatiently for the Magazine, met monthly, as soon as it was issued, and had *Mansie* read aloud by one of their number amongst expressions of congregated laughter' (x). These images of the imagined consumption of the text indicate the social and often domestic reading experience associated with the *Mansie* series. Moir's farce is gently comedic, allowing a wide range of readers to join in the laughter. The stories are not designed to address an individual reader but a collection of listeners. Moir doesn't just describe a provincial community, the reading of his stories, written in broad Lowland Scots, seems designed to create one; to precipitate scenes of familial conviviality like those Burns and Wilson had described around 'the big ha' bible'.

Thus when bodysnatchers feature in the series, Moir brings them into direct confrontation with the rural idyll of *Blackwoodian* regional fiction. In the October 1824 instalment of the serial, the eponymous protagonist must take a turn guarding the graveyard in Dalkeith, after it is discovered that several bodies have been stolen from their graves. Although most of the story focuses on Mansie locking himself in the Session-house to protect himself from various imagined threats, the early passages of the story describe a resurrectionist scare in the town and Mansie's response to it. The tale opens with a description of the scene in the burial ground upon the discovery of the empty graves:

> About this time there arose a great sough and surmise, that some loons were playing false with the kirkyard, howking up the bodies from their damp graves,

> and harling them away to the College. Words canna describe the fear, and the dool, and the misery it caused. All flocked to the kirk yett (456).

One of the most noticeable features of the early passages of the tale is the focus on the effect of the grave-robbing on the local community. The citizens of Dalkeith rush to the Kirkyard as a dismayed group to inspect a crime which has been committed against them. In particular, Moir focuses on the case of one recently bereaved family:

> I'll never forget it. I was standing by when three young lads took shools, and, lifting up the truff, then proceeded to howk down the coffin, wherein they had laid the grey hairs of their mother. They looked wild and bewildered like, and the glance of their een was like that of folk out of a mad-house; and nane dared in the world to have spoken to them. They didna even speak to ane anither; but wrought on wi' a great hurry, till the spades struck on the coffin lid-which was broken. The death-claithes were there huddled a'the-gither in a nook but the dead was gane (456).

The choice of the elderly matriarch as the victim of the grave-robbers creates a particularly emotive scenario. The grey haired mother is symbolic of the safety and comfort of home and hearth, the theft of her body from the graveyard is therefore an action which attacks the family-centred community values of idealised small town Scotland. In Moir's story, urban bodysnatchers come to the rural Parish and disrupt the traditions and customs of that community.

Mansie's reflections on these scenes focus on the impact of bodysnatching on social relations:

> Tell me that doctors and graduates maun hae the dead; but tell it not to Mansie Wauch , that our hearts maun be trampled in the mire of scorn, and our best feelings laughed at, in order that a bruise may be properly plaistered up, or a sair head cured. Verily, the remedy is waur than the disease (456).

Moir himself was an Edinburgh-trained general practitioner, who looked after the practice of Musselburgh just east of Edinburgh. He therefore would have had direct experience of the necessity of anatomical training to medical progress, but would also have been aware

of the difficulties which body snatching could create for medical practitioners in the effected communities. In Mansie's encounter with the resurrectionists, the protagonist therefore argues primarily against the social effect of body snatching. Body snatching seems completely unrelated to the daily realities of bruises and sore heads to people like Mansie, a practice which, in its effects on the local community, causes far more damage than any disease. However, Moir avoids stating that anatomy itself is entirely unnecessary. If we follow Mansie's argument to its logical conclusion then if corpses were not part of a social matrix then their dissection would not be abhorrent. The issue is not the inherent morality of investigating the body through dissection, but the possible ill effects which appropriating bodies might have on the social harmony of the conservative rural idyll.

Dr. Knox and the Birth of the Monstrous Doctor

The uneasy status quo of the body snatching era was brought to an abrupt close in part due to the West Port Murders of 1828. The murderers, William Burke and William Hare were Irish immigrants who had migrated to Edinburgh to work as labourers during the construction of the Union Canal. The men stumbled upon a new income source when a tenant of Hare's wife's lodging house died without settling his debts and they sold his body to the assistant at an extra-mural anatomy school. Now aware of the profits to be made from flesh, Burke and Hare proceeded to prey on the most vulnerable citizens of Edinburgh- the elderly, the destitute, poor travellers, prostitutes and drunks. They would invite their victims into the Hares' lodging house and ply them with drugged drink before suffocating them by covering their mouths and nostrils and compressing their chests. The bodies were then sold to the assistant at Dr. Knox's anatomy school and dissected. The crimes were only detected when lodgers in the boarding house found the body of the elderly victim Mary Docherty under a bed. At trial William Hare turned Kings evidence and indicted William Burke for the murders. Burke was publically hanged in January 1829 and his body was subsequently dissected and displayed as a medical subject.

The murders shocked and fascinated the public far beyond Scotland's capital generating responses in the press, periodicals and popular fiction. Anger and blame was often directed at the figure of the professional surgeon in street literature which addressed the West Port Murders. Many broadsheets focused on the guilt of not just the murderers but their employer, Dr. Robert Knox. The sheet titled *Lines Supposed to Have Been Written*

by Mrs. Wilson, Daft Jamie's Mother begins in a sentimental vein, focusing on the disabled boy, but quickly changes its tone, becoming a harangue directed at the anatomist who purchased his body:

> Encouraged by those that bought them,
> Still to bring them plenty more;
> Never questioned how they got them,
> Though their hands were stained in gore.
>
> You who bought and used his body,
> Surely you was much to blame,
> In concealing thus a murder,
> For you must have known the same.
>
> If your conscience had allowed you,
> But for once the truth to tell,
> But the craft had been in danger,
> Had you stopped these imps of Hell.

Other broadsheets also highlighted the role of the surgeons in the West Port murders. In a later broadsheet, titled *Resurrection,* having briefly denounced the crimes of resurrectionists the anonymous author turns his attention to the West Port Murders, and the anatomists who buy bodies, suggesting that much of the guilt for the crimes of Burke and Hare lies with them:

> What induced that Monster, Burke, to Murder so many human beings? Nothing but the price offered to him by surgeons. And what can induce those infernal fiends to pillage churchyards? Nothing but the price paid them by the Lecturers on Anatomy! Are the public always to be tampered with in this manner?

The broadsheet's author differentiates the anatomists from the 'public' just as he differentiates 'that Monster, Burke,' from the 'human beings' who were his victims. Both murderer and anatomist are removed from the wider social community by their actions.

Blackwood's also joined the throng of voices berating the Edinburgh anatomist. In the *Noctes Ambrosianae* for March 1829 conversation turns to the recent execution of William Burke. After sketching unflattering portraits of the two murderers and their wives based on the principles of physiognomy, Christopher North, Timothy Tickler and the Ettrick Shepherd turn their attention to Dr. Knox and his anatomy school:

> Shepherd- But what o' Dr. Knox?
>
> North- The system established and acted on in the dissecting-rooms of that anatomist is manifestly of the most savage, brutal and dreadful character. It is allowed by all parties, that not a single question was ever put- or if ever, mere mockery- to the wretches who came week after week with uninterred bodies crammed into tea-chests- but that each corpse was eagerly received and fresh orders issued for more. Nor is there any reason to believe, but every reason to believe the contrary, that had the murderers brought sixty instead of sixteen murdered corpses, they would not have met an instant market.
>
> Shepherd- Fearsome-Fearsome! (387).

The exchange follows this pattern throughout, with either Tickler or North making long passionate speeches about the Doctor, prompted and concurred with by a servile and at times naïve Shepherd. The Shepherd makes a more lengthy exposition at the end of the discussion, vividly describing the haunting of the Burkers and doctors:

> Shepherd- Naebody believes in ghosts in touns, but every body believes in ghosts in the kintra. Let either Hare or Knox sleep in a lanely wood, wi' the wund roarin' in the tap branches o' the pines, and the cheepin' in the side anes, and by skreich o' day he will be seen flyin' wi' his hair on end, and his een jumpin' out o' their sockets, doon into the nearest toon, pursued, as he thinks, by saxteen ghaists a' in a row, wi' Daft Jamie at their head, caperin' like a paralytic as he was, and lauching like to split, we' a mouth drawn a' to the ae side, at the doctor or the doctor's man, distracted at the sicht o' sae mony spirits demandin' back their ain atomies (389).

By 1829 the *Noctes* were under the authorial control of John Wilson, and the way in which he chooses to represent the dialogue between the Scots speaking Shepherd and English speaking North and Tickler is indicative of the relationship between science and tradition which he wishes to present. The culpability of Dr. Knox is something which *Blackwood's* urban and rural characters can agree on. These murders for the purpose of anatomy combine professional ambition, unchecked modernisation and free-market greed in a single potent image. Knox represents the march of progress and personal ambition, without reference to interpersonal morality and respect for existing social structures, which *Blackwood's* so often identifies and condemns in contemporary society. However, in the *Noctes* conversation the ability to critique the workings of the laboratory and the law is given to the educated North and Tickler, whilst the Shepherd's area of expertise is in the province of the supernatural. *Blackwood's* urban and rural voices unite from their different perspectives to indict Knox. Together their voices form a damning Tory chorus which attacks the ambitious and unethical doctor.

The scandals of West Port have often been identified as the point of the origin for the monstrous or inhuman doctor who played an increasing role in gothic writing from the nineteenth century onwards. A.W. Bates comments that 'the sinister anatomist of early Victorian fiction was a stock character' and traces the popularity of this figure back to the West Port and Italian Boy murders (163). Tim Marshall supports this view, but dates the emergence of these ideas in literature prior to the detection of Burke and Hare's crimes, arguing that 'in the anatomy literature[28] there is much slippage between the surgeon, the dissector, the murderer' (13). The monstrous doctors of the nineteenth century tend to be characterised by two inter-related features which remove them from the wider social world: ambition and clinical detachment. Marie-Luise Kohlke explains that:

> as representatives of a "masculine" empiricist rationality, they acted as purveyors of scientific knowledge, social reform and progress; yet their expertise and practice often rendered them objects of fear as much as veneration, suspected of narcissistically abusing their powers over life and death for profit and other immoral even unhallowed pursuits (123).

[28] A group of texts which Marshall defines as 'essentially the literature that concerns the social ideologies which triumphed in 1832, the year of the Great Reform Bill' and traces back from this date to the latter half of the eighteenth-century.

In 1759, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* Adam Smith had already posited the idea that the practices of the surgeon might blunt or annihilate that most important tool of human connection, sympathy: 'some people faint and grow sick at the sight of a chirurgical operation…One who has been witness to a dozen dissections, and as many amputations sees, ever after, all operations of this kind with great indifference, and often with perfect insensibility' (30). In a theory which postulates sensibility as the premier mode of social connection 'insensibility' and 'indifference' place the surgeon outside of the webs of sympathetic connection which make human society possible.

Concern about the relationship between professionalism and social sympathy continued throughout the early nineteenth century. During these years, medical practitioners attempted to elevate their status within contemporary society through professionalisation and increasingly differentiated the modern science which they practised from the 'quackery' of untrained practitioners. Catherine Crawford has argued that in the medical periodicals of the period 'a common feature of the various perspectives on medical improvement was concern about the social status of the profession' (219). One of the ways in which the elevation of medical science was to be effected, Meegan Kennedy has argued, was through the banishment of emotion and 'the curious' from medical discourse. The physician of the early nineteenth century was 'more objective and more skeptical' than his predecessors and attempted to adopt a 'homogenous, professional medical discourse' in his case histories and other medical writings ('Ghost' 333, 342).

However, alongside the increasing drive towards professionalisation and social elevation, a parallel anxiety existed about the possible ways in which professional detachment and ambition might sever the professional from wider society. Caroline McCracken-Flesher quotes the response of that most famous of Edinburgh Tory professionals, Walter Scott[29], to the Burke and Hare trial:

> Scott declared his suspicion of a science divorced from human values, saying: "I am no great believer in the extreme degree of improvement to be derived from the advancement of science; for every pursuit of that nature tends, when

[29] Walter Scott studied law at the University of Edinburgh and qualified as a lawyer in 1792. During his career he practised as an advocate for a period and served as Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire and Principal Clerk of the Court Session.

> pushed to a certain extent, to harden the heart, and render the philosopher reckless of everything save the objects of his own pursuit" (*Letters.* 11:127). He questions his similar dedication to the courts, for "I have myself often wondered how I became so indifferent to the horrors of the criminal trial, if it involved a point of law" (Ibid) (43).

In Scott's account, the ambition and detachment required to practice law or medicine successfully also serve to threaten the sympathetic responses of the professional. Sympathy and professionalism mutually endanger one another. The professional is always at risk of losing his ties to the broader social world.

This concern about the blunting of feeling in medical professionals was one which Moir playfully engaged with in his fiction prior to the West Port Murders. In the episode of *Mansie Wauch* titled 'Benjie on the Curtain', published in *Blackwood's* in 1827, Mansie's wife Nanse suggests that their teenage son, having shown academic promise in school, might become a doctor:

> "Doctor!" answered I- "Keh, keh, let that flee stick to the wa'; it's a' ye ken about it. If ye was only aware of what doctors had to do and see, between dwining wains and crying wives, ye would have thought twice before ye let that out. How do ye think our callant has a heart within him to look at folk bluiding like sheep, or to sew up cutted throats with a silver needle and silk thread, as I would stitch a pair of trousers; or to trepan out pieces of cloured skulls, filling up the hole with an iron plate; and pull teeth, maybe the only ones left, out of aud women's heads, and so on, to say nothing of rampaging with dark lanterns and double-tweel dreadnoughts, about gousty kirkyards, among humlock and long nettles, the hail night over, like spunkie-shoving the dead corpses, winding-sheets and all, into corn-sacks, and boiling their bones, after they have dissected all the red flesh off them, into a big cauldron, to get the marrow to make drogs of?"
>
> "Eh, stop, stop, Mansie!" cried Nanse, holding up her hands.

> "Na," continued I, "but it's a true bill- it's as true as ye are sitting there. And do ye think that ay earthly compensation, either gowpins of gowd by way of fees, or yellow chariots to ride in, with a black servant sticking up behind, like a sign over a tobacconists door, can ever make up for the loss of a man's having all his feelings seared to iron, and his soul made into whinstone, yea into nether-mill-stone, by being art and part in sic dark and devilish abominations?" (41).

Mansie's knee-jerk reaction to the suggestion his son might become a doctor is meant to appear comedic to the *Blackwood's* reader, and forms the climax of a set piece in which Nance suggests a variety of socially respectable professions which Mansie uses his rather idiosyncratic logic to reject. Moir is having a little fun with the gothic reputation of his own profession here, and perhaps giving a playful wink to those readers who were in on the secret of the author's identity[30]. However, Mansie's comments also reflect a caricatured version of the image of the monstrous, detached doctor who was to loom large in responses to the West Port murders. Although Mansie's rant is supposed to appear overblown and preposterous it is built on a series of attitudes which already existed within public discourse. Just as the body became an object in the anatomy theatre, the anatomist appeared to transform himself, through the cultivation of detachment, into a monstrous machine 'his feelings seared to iron, and his soul made into whinstone'. If the dissected body was seen to be transformed from social being into object, a comparable transformation could be effected on the dissector. In texts which attack dissection, the doctor's actions and lack of sympathy have removed him from the human, social body.

'Gravedoings', the Anatomy Debates, and Mocking Terror

The West Port murders proved to be a key rhetorical tool in the passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act which would change the official sources of cadavers. Fear of another series of murders as terrible as those seen in Edinburgh motivated parliamentarians to agree to measures which had proven controversial prior to 1828. The Burke and Hare murders had shown the dark possibilities of reducing human bodies to their market value. Debates about possible strategies to curb the trade in cadavers acquired a growing intensity both in Parliament and the British press.

[30] Moir is generally referred to in the magazine by his pseudonym 'Delta' and marked his submissions to *Blackwoods* with the Greek letter in place of his name.

In 1819 John Abernethy had been the first British medical practitioner to publicly advocate 'the use of pauper's bodies for dissection' suggesting the possibility of such a measure during his *Hunterian Oration* (Marshall xiii). Support for the reform of anatomical legislation grew in strength within the medical community, and within the wider population, over the next 13 years. The proposed solution to the bodysnatching problem would have been particularly attractive to many within the increasingly influential middle-classes for a number of reasons:

> Such measures assured the "respectable' classes that their graves would not be plundered to provision the dissection table, while providing anatomists with a steady supply of free cadavers, and rescuing the profession from the taint of association with unsavoury lower-class body snatchers…Paupers could posthumously repay their debt to society, it was argued, by acquiescing in the dissection of their bodies: the resultant improvement in medical science and the general quality of medical practice would benefit everyone (Sappol 4).

However, a 'Bill for preventing the Unlawful Disinterment of Human Bodies and Regulating Schools of Anatomy' failed to make it through parliament in 1829 when 'some men in the House of Lords argued that such mutilation was no way to treat the institutionalised poor' (Sappol 10).

Written after the West Port murders, amidst growing calls for burial reform, Samuel Warren's *Blackwood's* tale 'Gravedoings' formed an episode in a fictional series entitled *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician* which ran from August 1830 to August 1837 in the magazine and described the episodic experiences of a gentleman doctor. 'Gravedoings' is an early story in the series and was published in June 1831 in the aftermath of the defeat of the 1829 Bill, as the debates around Anatomical reform gained in volume and intensity. The story describes a 'grotesque if not…ludicrous' attempt to exhume a body from a rural graveyard (Warren 960). The protagonist, two fellow medical students, and an Irish porter named Trip, travel to a graveyard in a village outside of London in pursuit of the body of 'a young and rather interesting female' patient whose family have refused to allow the doctors to carry out a post-mortem (Warren 960). Their inexperience and zeal are exposed as they find themselves the victims of a thunderstorm, a wayward ass and a farcical incident in which they mistake their own coachman for the deceased girl's enraged brothers.

The story is less a Tale of Terror than a parody of Tales of Terror- describing the protagonist's terrified responses to supposed horrors only to reveal each time that they have been founded on misapprehension. Early in the tale the narrator chides his readers for their concerns about medical dissection 'it is your own groundless fears, my fair trembler!- your own superstitious prejudices- that have driven me, and will drive others of my brethren, to such dreadful doings as those hereafter detailed' (960). The cod-Irish Trip ventriloquises possible arguments against dissection, rendering them ridiculous to a contemporary audience: 'och! By the mother that bore me, but 'tis a murtherous cruel thing, I'm thinking, to wake the poor cratur from her last sleep' 'Och, Tip, ye ould divel! Don't it sarve ye right, ye fool? Ye villainous ould coffin-robber! Won't ye burn for this hereafter, ye sinner?'(962, 965). It seems as if, just as the horrors which terrify the would be grave robbers are revealed to be imagined, so too are we as an audience being shown the misapprehension behind our terror of the bodysnatchers and anatomy theatres of modern medicine.

However, this reading is complicated by the conclusion of the text, as the protagonist becomes increasingly disenchanted with the work he must undertake. By the closing lines of the episode the protagonist's outlook on events seems to have undergone a radical shift and, although he does not retract his avowal of the need for bodysnatching, his opinions on undertaking the task coalesce with those of the previously ridiculous Irish man: 'I heartily resolved with him, on leaving the coach, that it should be "the divil's own dear self only that would timp me out agin *bodysnatching!*"' (967). In both Moir's *Mansie* stories and Warren's bodysnatching tale the voices of provincial dialect speaking characters are naïve and used to humorous effect, but also contain a grain of truth or morality. Mansie is ridiculous but also the emotional and moral heart of Moir's series, and in Warren's story Tip's responses to the exhumation of the body are hyperbolic but contain a sentiment which the English speaking Physician is eventually driven to echo. In effect, this technique allows the *Blackwood's* author to bring together the urbane and traditional parts of the magazine's character. Like the dialect speaking characters, the traditionary elements of the magazine operate as a moral heart or conscience for the modern, educated narrator and reader. They are the voice of an old father, out of touch with modern life, somewhat humorously so, but still capable of giving sound moral guidance to his sophisticated urban progeny.

The two perspectives, of narrator and unwilling Irish porter, are not exclusive. It is quite possible that Warren, who had spent some time at Edinburgh's medical college before training as a lawyer, could have both championed the necessity of anatomical education and simultaneously rejected bodysnatching as an effective strategy to feed the dissection table. The story instead seems designed to imply the need for a more systematic, and perhaps less 'ludicrous', mode of supplying the medical schools. Warren doesn't demonise the practices which have underpinned the development of modern medicine, rather he attempts to soften the reader's attitude to them through the deployment of humour. The comedic element of the farce in the graveyard negates the sinister aspect of the medical man's role in the exhumation.

The physician narrator's opening plea for clemency on the part of the reader in relation to his own actions implies a broader approach which the reader might employ in relation to medical anatomy's controversial history:

> My gentle reader-start not at learning that I have been, in my time, a RESURRECTIONIST. Let not this appalling word, this humiliating confession, conjure up in your fancy a throng of vampire-like images and associations or earn your "Physicians's" dismissal from your hearts and hearths (960).

In presenting the trip to the graveyard as an act of youthful folly, Warren personifies the progress of medicine, attributing the life-cycle of the doctor to his profession. Just as the young medical students will progress from excitable boys to respectable professionals, the story implies that bodysnatching is part of an anatomical science still in its adolescence which will mature into a more respectable profession. Bodysnatching is not the sinister systematic operation of tea-chests and imported cadavers the broadsheets would have us believe, rather the resurrection men represent the boisterous early steps of a profession in progress.

Warren's tale is then designed to both dismiss the gothic associations of anatomy and to reassert the respectability of the anatomically trained physician as a trustworthy professional and, more importantly, as a feeling man. The 'Late Physician' stories were an extremely popular feature of the magazine between 1830 and 1837, and they were often characterised by the sentimental or emotive tone of the physician's observations. Based on

this tendency towards emotion Meegan Kennedy has argued that the narrator 'endangers the professional standing of the physician by insisting on his subjective embodiment rather than his rational, distanced perspective' ('Ghost' 330). However, it seems to me that in a context where the doctor is characterised as a monster with a soul of 'iron' and 'whinstone', Warren's insistence on the subjectivity of his protagonist does quite the opposite. By June 1831, the fictional 'Physician' had been addressing the *Blackwood's* readership with passages from his diary every month for almost a year. They had witnessed his struggles as a fledging doctor, they had shared his terror in scenes of madness and violence similar to those depicted in the Tales of Terror, and they had watched him tend to the needy in sentimental scenes worthy of Wilson's *Lights and Shadows*. In short, just as readers of the magazine had grown to feel that they knew the bickering contributors depicted in the *Noctes Ambrosianae,* by the time that 'Gravedoings' was published they would have felt a certain intimacy with this 'Physician' who visited them each month. Warren's bodysnatching story domesticates the anatomically trained doctor, and occasional grave-robber, by making him a man with whom readers already held a great deal of fellow feeling. The story aims to return the monstrous doctor to the readers' 'hearts and hearths', using both humour and sympathy to remind the *Blackwood's* readership, in the wake of West Port, that doctors were not inhuman, gothic creatures but members of their social world.

Across Moir, Galt and Warren's bodysnatching narratives we encounter attempts to place the anatomically trained doctor within society. In Moir and Warren's texts in particular the medical practitioner is considered in relation to the traditionary Scotland represented by *Blackwood's* undisturbed graves. This effort is arguably indicative of a broader conflict within the magazine between its identification with an idealised Scottish heritage, and its appeal to the professional- and middle-classes, who had made *Blackwood's* stratospheric rise possible. To reconcile doctor and village was to attempt to reconcile these two parts of the magazine's contradictory personality.

The Anatomy Act and After

Burking hysteria was growing to be an important tool in emphasising the importance of legislative change to a previously sceptical parliament. The public's 'brittle tolerance' of the trade in bodies which facilitated anatomical research had finally broken and when 'Burkings' were identified in London in 1831 the way was open for the passing of

the Warburton Act. Less explicit than its predecessor in specifying the identity of those whose bodies would be dissected and more euphemistic in its description of 'anatomical examination' the 1832 act met with far less opposition in Parliament and was quickly passed (MacDonald 10).

The Warburton Anatomy Act of 1832 stated that the bodies of those who died in Government institutions such as hospitals, workhouses and insane asylums and those who died destitute could be passed to the anatomy schools if their bodies weren't claimed within forty-eight hours of their death. Individuals could only opt out of this arrangement if they expressed their negative wish formally before death. The aim of this act was to create an excess of cadavers and therefore reduce the financial incentive to exhume or murder for profit but it was a measure which left the poor and vulnerable little real choice in the fate of their bodies. As Helen MacDonald comments 'this too was snatching, for consent was neither requested nor obtained and officials in government and institutions deliberately subverted people's right to dissent' (12). However, the act might also be understood as the logical solution to the problems identified by D. M. Moir's Mansie. If the disturbance of social relations was the major problem which body snatching created, then dissecting unclaimed bodies was a way to neatly side-step this problem. The act chose the very same subjects for dissection whom Burke and Hare had also picked out as murder victims, those with no social ties or standing. Co-opting the bodies of those who were least valued in nineteenth-century society allowed medical science to continue to progress, disassociating itself from the criminal underworld, and leaving the social groups capable of voicing dissent unmolested.

However, the bodysnatchers didn't die off immediately; problems implementing the new laws meant that it would be some years before the resurrection men began to slip into memory. Burke and Hare and their bodysnatching colleagues continued to resurface every so often in Scottish writing, perhaps most intriguingly in street writing, where fictional news reports occasionally emerged claiming to have new information on the West Port case, long after Burke's hanging. The Scottish National Library holds one such text entitled *Burks Papers* which manages to combine the fascinating Burke and Hare with a new terror of the slum tenement- Cholera:

There was found on Monday, a tattered manuscript, supposed to have been written by the notorious Burke, from its having been found under a flagstone near the house of that cold-blooded murderer, while the men were employed cleaning out the rubbish and filth, (to prevent Cholera,) which abounded in stupendous quantities in that quarter of the city.

Chapter Five- 'Burking, Bill and Cholera'- Death, Mobility and the 1832 British Cholera Epidemic

The first outbreak of Asiatic Cholera struck Britain during the autumn of 1831 and continued to spread rapidly throughout 1832, killing an estimated 23,000, almost 10,000 of whom were Scottish (Marshall 242, Morrison and Baldick, *Vampyre* 266). The disease hit the country at a time when Burking hysteria and social tension related to the Great Reform Bill were both raised to the point of fever pitch. The three issues were debated and discussed in the press and periodicals of the time and the topics often cross over so that metaphors of infection might for example be found in articles about political reform. James Hogg's poem 'One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Thirty One', published in the issue of *Fraser's Magazine*[31] for February 1832, characterises the previous year as one defined by 'Burking, Bill and Cholera!' and presents all three as harbingers of social unrest (84). The three current issues cross-pollinate to create the impression of a society struggling with change and internal discord as 'the apparent volatility of society and its institutions was linked in the press to the mysterious threat of the new illness' (Gilbert 17).

One of the areas of contemporary life which was most severely disrupted by the Cholera outbreak of 1832 was the burial of the dead. Efforts to contain the outbreak effected burial practices on a national scale. In an attempt to stem the disease's progress, public health regulations were put in place which demanded that 'those who die of this disease should be buried as soon as possible, wrapped in cotton or linen cloth saturated with pitch, or coal tar, and be carried to the grave by the fewest possible number of persons. The funeral service to be performed in the open air' (Richardson, *Death* 105). These regulations disrupted many traditional mourning practices such as wakes, corpse-viewings and funeral processions. In many places cholera bodies were placed in mass graves away from traditional burial sites and family lairs. The disruption of these rites was deeply felt by the poor and working-class families effected. Members of these social groups were often more strongly attached to folk traditions but, more importantly, also saw burials which didn't include these components as undignified and socially shameful, resembling pauper's funerals. Cholera was a new and terrifying disease which encroached on traditional burial practices and sites. The disease's arrival in the UK and sudden disruption

[31] A periodical edited by long-term *Blackwood's* contributor William Maginn, who had left *Blackwood's* and founded rival monthly *Fraser's* in 1830.

of interment in the direct aftermath of the Burke and Hare anatomy murders led to fear and social unrest amongst the population, at its most extreme precipitating violent anatomy riots in Paisley.

In light of this impact, I want to think about how such an event might be represented by *Blackwood's* group writers. How might the disruptive force of cholera complicate the symbolism of *Blackwood's* grave and graveyard space? In James Montgomery's 'Cholera Mount' and James Hogg's 'Terrible Letters from Scotland' we encounter two contrasting responses to cholera and its victims. I am going to focus particularly on the way in which social and geographical mobility and connection are depicted within the two texts, looking at how cholera complicates the 'local associations and traditional ties' which Anthony Jarrells identified as central to *Blackwood's* regional tales (267). I will argue that where Montgomery uses the deaths to constitute a different, more national relationship between the dead and the living, Hogg uses his depictions of cholera deaths to place rural space within webs of national and international connection and contagion.

Contagion, Conservativism and the Colonies

One of the defining features of the *Blackwood's* kirkyard was the way in which it disregarded the increasing mobility of the British population in favour of an image of geographical stasis. Despite the increasing importance of urbanisation and colonisation to early nineteenth-century Scottish life, the *Blackwood's* village kirkyard is one whose inhabitants have, in the main, lived within the surrounding parish all of their lives. In chapter two I quoted from Wilson's story 'The Elder's Funeral' to illustrate the way in which local, provincial ties were privileged over those which extended across global space in Wilson's kirkyard images:

> To those who mix in the strife and dangers of the world, the place is felt to be uncertain wherein they may finally rest. The soldier-the sailor-the traveller, can only see some dim grave dug for him, when he dies in some place obscure-nameless-and unfixed to the imagination. All he feels is that burial will be –on earth-or in the sea. But the peaceful dwellers who cultivate their paternal acres, or tilling at least the same small spot of soil, shift only from a cottage on

> the hillside to one on the plain, still within the bounds of one quiet parish, - they look to their bones at last in the burial-place of the kirk in which they were baptised, and with them it almost literally is a step from the cradle to the grave' (144).

In this passage the kirkyard is immutable; a sort of immortality is guaranteed by the unchanging nature of local life. This characterisation of the rural graveyard as a repository of memory and tradition is fairly typical of the graveyards we encounter in the 'tales'. The soldier, sailor or traveller who moves between spaces cannot be incorporated into the kirkyard, their mobility banishes them from the static community of the dead, whilst the local cottager moving between cottages on the 'hillside' and 'plain' becomes part of the kirkyard and of local history. Wilson's commitment to continuity and the conservative countryside means that his idealised kirkyard cannot contain Britain's increasing army of colonial servants, military personnel and traders.

In his work on the representation of the British colonies in *Blackwood's* Anthony Jarrells has argued that Blackwoodian engagements with colonial space in the early issues of the magazine are designed to counter 'the liberal line on empire' which was 'reformist, universalist, and grounded in the stadial theory of Scottish Enlightenment political economy' (269). He argues that *Blackwood's* writers employed similar representative techniques to those used in its regional fiction when engaging with colonial contexts, often focusing on the specific regional features of 'so-called settler colonies (such as Upper Canada) and…India' (269). Just as it did in *Blackwood's* Scottish fiction, this approach counter-acts narratives of 'reform' and improvement by re-emphasising the importance of tradition, heritage and kinship: 'the provincial strain that finds its way into many of the magazine's foreign policy pieces can be understood as part of a more general distrust of liberal politics' (269).

Wilson's colonial servant free kirkyard and *Blackwood's* general counter-Whig approach to empire are both important when we think about Cholera in texts authored by Blackwoodians because of Cholera's strong associations with Britain's colonial territories in the East. The outbreak which reached Britain in 1831 was thought to have started in Jessore in the Ganges Delta and travelled to Britain across Asia and Europe (Bewell 244). The disease quickly acquired the moniker 'Indian' or 'Asiatic' Cholera in order to

differentiate the epidemic from a milder native infection referred to as 'English Cholera' or 'Cholera Morbus', although these names are sometimes confused in articles which are not written by medical men. Cholera was thus widely recognised as a disease which had issued from Britain's colonies in India and which had been conveyed back to Britain from these territories. As Alan Bewell describes it, 'an imperial age produced an imperial disease' (243). Cholera was often referred to as a dangerous, foreign agent which had invaded Britain; Thomas Siek refers to a contemporary British caricature which depicts John Bull grappling with the figure of King Cholera wearing a turban (27). This concept of a colonial attack on the centre of empire was profoundly disturbing; it suggested that just as wealth could pass back into Britain from her colonies so too could foreign disease. This conclusion could have profound implications for the commerce and conquest on which Britain increasingly depended for wealth, and consequently the Whig commitment to international trade.

The route which the disease had taken to the British Isles was well documented in contemporary coverage of the disease. Although the first confirmed reports of cholera in the UK were from Sunderland in October 1831, prior to this there had been a great deal of coverage of its movement across Europe from India in the British press. As the disease crept closer to Britain it provoked increasing concern in government, the press and amongst the public. Growing numbers of articles on cholera were published in British periodicals and newspapers during 1831 and the tone of these articles shifted as the threat of cholera moved ever closer to British shores. R.J. Morris summarises this shift in the tone of coverage, 'the riots in St Petersburg and Moscow, the deaths in the military camps of Poland, and the colourful accounts of disaster in distant Asiatic cities did little more than feed idle curiosity for news and perhaps a gothic taste for horror, but when cholera was a few days or hours away, such reports were the basis for all manner of fears' (Morris 27). Where early coverage consists of largely dispassionate announcements of the disease's impact on the war in Russia and Poland, some as brief as *The New Monthly Magazine's* comment from January 1831, which simply states 'Russia-The cholera rages', reports after the spread of cholera into the Polish population are increasingly concerned with the possibility of a British outbreak (273).

Once the disease arrived in Britain many medical practitioners sought to retrospectively sketch the route the disease had taken and these reports often chart the role which traders and the military had in propagating the infection. Alan Bewell quotes a

report in the Lancet medical journal from November 1831 which emphasises the role of military and trading connections in spreading the disease: 'the rise of British naval commerce with Bombay after 1815 is credited for the city's emergence as "a centre and point of departure for the itinerary lines, by which the cholera advanced to the Persian Gulf, to the Mediterranean, the Caspian and the Baltic; and we may now, unfortunately, add, to the German ocean and the river Wear"'(246). Cholera was a disease which could be clearly mapped onto Britain's global merchantile and military projects. Bewell describes the symbolic impact of this connectivity:

> spread along the main transportation and commercial arteries of the nineteenth century- by river, sea, road, and later by railway- cholera mapped the many lines of communication between Britain and its colonial possessions. Its spread thus demarcated the reach of empire, demonstrating that there were no longer any boundaries (244).

Cholera could thus be understood as a global epidemic propagated by Britain's global aspirations; the hyper-mobility of goods and troops between regions allowing the disease to easily travel from location to location.

The disease's origins in the East and its journey across Europe along trading routes also meant that it bore some likeness to the bubonic plagues which had decimated Europe up until the eighteenth-century, and newspapers and periodicals regularly referred to cholera as 'the new plague' (*Morning Chronicle* May 16 1831). Some newspapers even carried reports during the early months of 1831 that the disease experienced in Russian was not cholera at all but the return of bubonic plague to Europe: 'what we have hitherto imagined to be the "cholera morbus of India" is the Turkish plague, in its most destructive form' (*Caledonian Mercury* January 31 1831). Part of what seemed so terrifying about Cholera as it swept towards Britain was its plague-like unpredictability, the fact that it 'killed swiftly and randomly' apparently uneffected by the wealth or status of its victims (Devine 334). The disease therefore gained more attention in the press and periodicals than other diseases which would prove to be far more deadly in terms of annual death toll. Reports on the approach of cholera often focused on the disease's potential to spread throughout the social body, The *Englishman's Magazine* reports in May 1831 'Cholera is capricious in the selection of its victims. The infirm and debilitated are its favourite

subjects. Yet the best health will not ensure exemption' (158). Unlike diseases of the poor such as Typhus, Cholera appeared to have the potential to transcend barriers of rank and class; in those first tense months it was felt that no-one was safe from this plague. Once it had infiltrated the national body many feared it had the potential to circulate and infect all of its parts. Cholera could be understood as a crisis which revealed the porous, undifferentiated nature of the modern nation. Just as the disease could reveal the dangers of unrestrained movement between different colonial locations, it could also be used to indicate a lack of social boundaries at home.

Official and public dread were heightened by the fact that doctors were unable to come to a consensus on how the disease spread, and were divided between those who believed the disease was contagious and the anticontagionists who argued that it originated in miasmas caused by the break-down of rotting waste. A report from *The Eclectic Review* of March 1831 laments: 'we are too much in the dark ourselves, to undertake the business of enlightening others' and urges that 'no time ought to be lost in ascertaining the precise nature of the disease, and in settling the proper mode of treatment' (244, 246). The possibility of a catastrophic plague-like epidemic seemed a terrifying prospect for the British medical men and government officials who watched cholera's unpredictable advance towards Britain's shores but they also feared raising levels of alarm in a country whose economy relied heavily on imports and exports. The contest between contagionist and anticontagionist views of the disease became politically loaded as those with interests in trade resisted calls for quarantine[32]. A contagious epidemic would mean the need for limits on the movement of people and goods, measures which were highly unpopular with anyone with ties to trade, as Edwin H. Ackerknecht has argued: 'quarantines meant to the rapidly growing class of merchants and industrialists a source of losses, a limitation of expansion' (8). This meant that contagionism and anticontagionism became tied to different political outlooks; a contagionist approach was tied to the state and what Ackerknecht terms 'old bureaucratic power' whilst more liberal commentators favoured explanations which would allow trade and movement between locations within and beyond Britain to continue (8). Laura Otis summarises the political motivations behind the two perspectives on disease:

[32] For example, R..J. Morris looks closely at the debate surrounding imports of flax from cholera infected Eastern Europe in the second chapter of *Cholera 1832* (30).

> Anticontagonist reformers, largely liberals and radicals, fought for scientific, commercial, and individual freedom simultaneously, regarding the three as inseperable. While the middle class stood to benefit from free trade, the landed gentry and other traditionalists had nothing to fear from embargoes that favoured national interests. Contagionism consequently attracted conservatives, officers and bureaucrats who thought that centralised power structures, not individual citizens or local authorities, should control policies affecting public health (11).

Conceptions of the infection were therefore tied into the political tensions which dogged British society in the early 1830s. The decision to quarantine or impose sanitary regulations was tied not just to scientific research but to political conceptions of society. In the context of the *Blackwood's* group the graveyard was an ideal figure through which to engage with this debate.

'Desecrated graves' in James Montgomery's 'The Cholera Mount'

In the early verses of his elegy for the cholera victims of Sheffield in the November 1832 issue of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, the Ayrshire-born poet and hymn-writer James Montgomery characterises the movement of cholera from India across Europe in the preceding year as the march of a marauding army:

> Far east its race begun,
>
> Thence around the world pursued by the westering sun;
>
> The ghosts of millions following at its back
>
> Whose desecrated graves betray'd their track;
>
> On Albion shore, unseen, the invader stept;
>
> Secret, and swift, and terrible it crept (802).

For Montgomery the desecration of the grave that cholera effects is the inability of survivors to carry out traditional funerary customs for their relatives and the banishment of

cholera victims from established religious graveyards to burial sites which Tim Marshall has described as 'isolated mass graves' (261). Cholera is represented as a foreign invader disrupting community customs and traditions. The disease isn't carried to Britain by anyone, it is an anthropomorphised invader approaching British shores through its own volition.

The cholera victims are removed from the society they inhabited in life and forced to become part of a new form of 'sad community' characterised by fragmentation and the breaking of social ties:

> In death divided from their dearest kin,
>
> This is "a field to bury strangers in;"
>
> Fragments lie here of families bereft,
>
> Like limbs in battle-grounds by warriors left;
>
> A sad community! (802)

In these early lines, the cholera victim is removed from their previous position within their community and made a 'stranger' through their body's invasion by the disease. This sense of the breaking down of social relations continues throughout the main body of the poem as Montgomery focuses on the traumatic fracturing of domestic relations: 'many a home of them left desolate;/Once warm with love, and radiant with the smiles/Of woman, watching infants at their wiles' and of ancestral lineage: 'when they knock'd for entrance at the tomb,/Their fathers' bones refused to make them room' (803).

However, Montgomery's earlier references to battle-fragmented bodies and invasion have created a precedent for the themes that are introduced in the final verses of the elegy. The poet reconstructs the cholera pit as a form of national war memorial, re-appropriating the banished bodies of the dead by placing them within a culture of national remembrance- an image that bears a striking resemblance to 'The Grave of the Unknown Solider' which Benedict Anderson describes in *Imagined Communities.* The mothering body of Britain in the form of Nature claims the dead as part of a national family unit:

"Live!" to the slain she cried: "My children, live!

This for an heritage to you I give;

Had Death consumed you by common lot,

Ye, with the multitude, had been forgot;

Now through an age of ages ye shall *not.*" (803)

The last verse presents the resting place of the dead as *a memento-mori* within the eternal pastoral landscape of rural Britain. Rather than losing their own heritage, the cholera sufferers themselves become a shared heritage for future communities, functioning as a message to 'generations long to come' (803). Their influence extends beyond the familial and local ties they enjoyed in life and becomes one which creates national and human ties of fellowship.

This call for unity is particularly interesting when viewed alongside the account of the poet's political affiliations in his biography. Although politically radical in his early life (he was imprisoned twice for publishing inflammatory political material in the later decades of the eighteenth-century), by the time Montgomery wrote 'The Cholera Mount' it appears that he had adopted an increasingly less radicalised world-view. Although he remained concerned with the fate of the poor in Sheffield and was heavily involved in the foundation of a wide range of charitable schemes, particularly those related to religious and literary education, Montgomery was increasingly disassociated from calls for large-scale political reform. As his biographer J.W. King commented posthumously, 'he had seen the passing of the Reform Bill without any radical emotions in favour of the one step in advance towards that freedom for which he wrought so hard in his youth', a circumstance which King owes to Montgomery's horror at the 1832 Sheffield election riots (358). Montgomery's approach to the world around him and the inequality endemic within Sheffield at this time appears to have had more in common with the liberal perspectives of contemporary Evangelical sanitarians such as Edwin Chadwick, with their focus on personal morality and charity, than the radicals and Chartists who advocated large-scale social change (King 356).

The *Noctes* in the December 1825 issue of *Blackwood's* includes a brief discussion of Montgomery's retirement from *The Isis*, the Sheffield newspaper he had edited since 1794. The Shepherd and North debate whether Montgomery's retirement speech was overly long-winded for the editor of a provincial newspaper before raising a toast to him. They then turn their attention to Montgomery's politics. The Shepherd proposes a toast to Montgomery's politics but is challenged by North:

> North- James, do you know what you're saying? The man is a Whig. If we do drink his politics, let it be in empty glasses.
>
> Shepherd- Na, na. I'll drink no man's health, nor yet ony ither thing, out o' an empty glass. ..James Montgomery is, I verily believe, a true patriot. Gin he thinks himself a Whig, he has nae understanding whatever o' his ain character. I'll undertake to bring out the Toryism that's in him in the course o' a single *Noctes*. Toryism is an innate principle o' human nature- Whiggism but an evil habit (759).

This exchange highlights Montgomery's public reputation as a Whig in the early nineteenth century but also *Blackwood's* continued efforts to champion the poet despite his political allegiances. This slightly paradoxical situation can probably be attributed to the controversy which had surrounded the publication of Montgomery's early poem *The Wanderer of Switzerland* (1806). The *Edinburgh Review* had published such a brutal review of Montgomery's poem that it is mentioned in Byron's attack on the magazine in 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers' (1809). Thus in taking Montgomery under its wing *Blackwood's* differentiated itself from arch rival Constable's *Edinburgh Review.* This use of Montgomery in the Edinburgh periodical wars of the early century is evinced in an 1831 *Blackwood's* 'An Hour's Talk about Poetry' where John Wilson makes the difference between the two magazines' positions on the poet explicit: 'It was said by *the Edinburgh Review* that none but maudlin milliners and sentimental ensigns supposed that James Montgomery was a poet. Then is *Maga* a maudlin milliner- and Christopher North a sentimental ensign' (476). Montgomery is by 1832 a rare creature: an avowedly Whig poet with a strong association with the militantly Tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.*

Within this political context 'The Cholera Mount' functions as a call for social cohesion as an alternative to social change; as in a war, Montgomery envisions the 'invasion' of cholera as an opportunity for national unity across class divides. Although it engages with domestic paradigms, 'The Cholera Mount' rejects Blackwoodian localism in favour of a more obviously national and universalised role for the dead, and this allows Montgomery to side-step issues surrounding contagionism and colonialism. Montgomery's cholera isn't carried to Britain by anyone, it is an anthropomorphised invader approaching British shores through its own volition. He somewhat problematically sees the cholera pit as everyone's monument despite the socio-economic profile of those buried there. The mass grave does not express the individual identities of the deceased to their community, rather, it functions as a marker of identity for the civic or national community who define themselves as a group through their identification of cholera as an external aggressor and of the cholera victim as their own casualty or martyr. In Montgomery's elegy the identity of the individual cholera victim is subsumed by the larger cohesive function which their deaths are seen to serve within society. The poet avoids issues of local and colonial space, or British economic inequality, by characterising cholera as a simple instance of nation versus disease.

Radical Riots and Cholera Humbug

For more radical members of society the 'desecrated graves' of cholera victims had a different and more literal meaning than that Montgomery proposes. The mass graves of cholera victims functioned within the radical imagination not as nationally unifying monuments but as symbols of a deep-rooted social antagonism, knitting together the working-class as a community united through their shared experiences. When the Privy Council introduced the earlier discussed quarantine and burial regulations, these regulations seemed to these social groups to be attacks on their freedoms and civil liberties, invasions of their domestic lives by burking doctors. Where Montgomery saw cholera as a foreign invader, it seemed to many to be an attack on the poor which issued from within the nation's boundaries.

This disparity between the perceptions of different social groups alongside the perceived 'disrespect' shown to working-class bodies created an antagonism which was expressed in what now seems an incredible conspiracy theory propagated in radical

newspapers and pamphlets (Gilbert 58). A series of beliefs in relation to cholera and state which R.J. Morris refers to as 'cholera humbug' had strong currency amongst radical factions during the early months of the outbreak and this set of beliefs became widespread amongst the poor and the working-classes in many areas of Britain (96). Within the context of an already heightened political climate, and with anxieties regarding the medical profession at a particularly high level following the West Port Murders, a theory emerged which conceived of cholera as an 'anti-reform measure' designed to distract the poor and working-classes from political agitation, co-opt their bodies for dissection and medical science and thus reduce population excess (Morris 98).

This belief had its roots in a variety of additional cultural factors. Although Malthus's *Essay on the Principles of Population* had been published in 1798, discussion of its content was particularly widespread in the years leading up to the revision of the English Poor Law Act in 1834, and during the debates about the efficacy of the Scottish system of Poor Relief of the 1830s and 40s (Hamline and Gallagher-Kamper 128). The essay stated that population growth would always outstrip the possibilities of food production, describing what Malthus terms 'the constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it'(14). This growth could be controlled by either preventative or positive checks. Preventative checks reduced birth rate and are generally voluntary (for example abstinence) whereas positive checks increased death rate and might include famine, disease and war. Proponents of the new stricter Poor Law in England and supporters of the old church-based system of assessed aid in Scotland cited the essay as evidence that supporting the destitute led to the unchecked growth of population, therefore increasing levels of privation, and used this to support their policies. The raised profile of Malthusian logic[33] alongside concerns that the 1831 census had actually been a study into overpopulation proved a potent combination. Radical publications proposed that there was no cholera, in fact, it was just an elaborate tool of social coercion, an artificially created Malthusian 'positive check' (Malthus 15). Gilbert describes how widely spread these suspicions were: 'the readings that we can recapture from personal histories, broadsheets, radical newspapers, and so forth, suggest that many among the working-classes saw the cholera in terms of negative social control, providing an opportunity for the

[33] Christopher Hamline and Kathleen Gallagher-Kamper describe the early decades of the nineteenth century as characterised by a 'pervasive Malthusianism' (122).

upper-classes to seize working-class rights, voices and even bodies' (Gilbert 51). These fears led to the under-reporting of the disease in many working-class communities, sometimes violent resistance against the removal of cholera victims to hospitals and burial places and a series of riots across the country in the early months of the epidemic.

Morris comments that in relation to the cholera act 'opposition was more violent and widespread in Scotland than in England' (108). One of the largest and most well-known of the cholera riots occurred in Paisley during the spring of 1832. The fears of the populace were sparked by the discovery of tools employed by resurrectionists under a bridge, near the burial ground which had been set aside for cholera victims. The London *Morning Chronicle* for 30th March 1832 reports that 'the public mind was so excited by the supposition that those dying of cholera were thus transferred to the dissecting-table, that a crowd collected early this forenoon, and commenced opening the graves, in one of the first of which an empty coffin was found'. An angry mob descended on the town armed with fence staves and carrying the coffin. In the course of the day the crowd systematically broke the windows of all the medical practioners in the town except those of a doctor they believed to deny the existence of cholera. They also attacked the cholera hospital (killing one patient with a rogue stone), and destroyed the hospital's hearse. Order was only eventually restored when dragoons arrived- at which point the rioting crowd dispersed. Following these events 'the medical men of the town resigned from all public office, and the poor were refused the use of parish coffins and hearse' (Gilbert 59). The strangest of postscripts to these events was the death of one of the head rioters some days later. The colourful report carried in the March 30th edition of the Glasgow Chronicle on these events is worth quoting in full- it reports the death of:

> John Wright, West Croft Street, who caught the disease from being engaged opening the graves on Monday…After the riot this individual met one of the medical gentlemen near the Sneddon Bridge, and gave him a great deal of abusive language, which was only a few hours before he was seized by the fatal distemper, in which he was a nonbeliever. When visited by Mr. King, the district surgeon, Wright heaped every abusive epiphet on him likewise, and declared, that the trouble which carried him to his grave in a few hours after, was not cholera; and to complete the drama, the family buried him themselves, and then commenced to drink freely- to the alarm of the whole

> neighbourhood and the certain danger of the inhabitants of the town generally.

The acts of the family in the context of the Privy Council's quarantine regulations constitute acts of political resistance, the family ignore the diagnosis of cholera with its related legislation; they bury the man as they would any member of their family and hold what is possibly an approximation of the wake which the Privy Council had forbidden. The family attempt to remove the man's burial from the hands of medical authority and place it back within their own traditions of mourning.

Newspaper reports on the events in Paisley present the bodysnatchings which sparked the riots as crimes perpetrated on a small-scale and in a relatively arbitrary manner. The reports mention both the small percentage of burials effected- it is only coincidental that 'one of the first' exhumed has been robbed- and the messiness of the crimes: 'in going a short way into the next grave, on the South to the one in question, a resurrectionist's hook and a parcel of grave-clothes were found' (Morning Chronicle March 30th 1832). This presentation of the resurrections as petty, amateurish crimes rather than part of a larger and more disturbing medical conspiracy flies in direct opposition to the opinions of the crowd who, in systematically attacking the businesses of all Paisley's medical men, expressed their belief in the universal complicity of the medical establishment. The ability to regain social control relies on the possibility of convincing the public that the snatchings are the acts of a few bad men rather than symptoms of broader social conflict.

'When Fire Is Set to the Mountain'-James Hogg's 'Terrible Letters' and the Politics of National Epidemic

When James Hogg published his own cholera stories in April 1832, his approach to the social legacy of the cholera victims was considerably more ambivalent than Montgomery's. In the immediate aftermath of the riots in Paisley, James Hogg published a collection of three short fictional accounts of cholera 'Some Terrible Letters from Scotland' in the April 1832 edition Metropolitan Magazine[34]. Written and submitted to the London

[34] The Metropolitan Magazine was founded in 1831 by the publisher James Cochrane and edited by Thomas Campbell. The magazine was intended to replace the *Naval Chronicle* which had ceased

journal during Hogg's time in the city, the stories are unusual and mischievous in their gothic representation of a disease which was only beginning to be reported in London and had caused an atmosphere of some hysteria in the city during the first months of the year. Hogg's stories are most likely to be based on the sensational reports of the epidemic in Scotland which were appearing in the London papers at the time sparked by events like the riots at Paisley and the high death tolls in the small towns of East Lothian (McCausland 44). The stories utilise conflicting accounts of the disease current at the time to create a text which ambiguously combines competing registers of gothic horror and dark humour. Each letter appears to be the first person account of a witness who wishes to publish the 'truth' about the epidemic, however the increasingly obvious presence of vested interest, misunderstanding and supernatural explanation in their accounts challenges the reader's assumption of objective truth, complicating the experience of reading a first-hand account.

Although published in the libertarian and reform-minded *Metropolitan*[35], Hogg's cholera tales remain committed to exploring the problematic relationship between the contemporary world and rural Scotland which characterised *Blackwood's* representations of death and burial. Hogg's letters each describe contact between cholera and a Scottish provincial space. In two of the tales (Letters One and Three) the dead rise. A man sits up in his coffin, and flails grotesquely, his shroud obscuring his face. A mother and daughter are hideously transformed by the disease and then possibly buried alive. Two ghostly women rise from their grave in vengeance to take their mother to the tomb with them. These rising corpses, of course, reference the horrifying upright corpse figure which both John Barrell and Ian Duncan have identified as a central feature within Hogg's writing. However, in this text I argue that the uncertain status and position of the dead is tied to the uncertainty of social borders. Hogg's rural spaces are rendered permeable in the 'Terrible Letters' as goods and diseases move between locations, challenging the immutable, inward looking pastoral of the *Blackwood's* graveyard. I will elaborate on this argument, first by looking at

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publishing in 1819. However, the periodical was targeted at a wider readership than its predecessor and, according to Duncan Ingraham Hassell, it aimed to 'compete with more general-interest magazines like *Fraser's*' (147). Hogg was at the time, like many of the original Blackwoodians, increasingly offering his work to multiple periodicals rather than publishing exclusively with *Blackwood's* and the publisher of the *The Metropolitan*, James Cochrane, was Hogg's London publisher (Garside 29).

[35] Camlot describes the journal as 'libertarian' in outlook (60). Sullivan highlights that in its note 'To Our Readers' the first edition of the magazine described itself an 'unflinching advocate of a Reform in State and Church' (305).

the way in which corpses move in and out of graves in the stories, before exploring the way in which these displaced bodies are tied into wider webs of exchange and commercial connection.

The stories never overtly discuss the fears which had sparked the riots in Paisley, yet, particularly in the first and third letters, the author constantly brings together the ideas of cholera and resurrection. The stories play with these themes from so many perspectives that bodysnatching appears conspicuously absent. The first letter writer, Andrew Ker, introduces himself to the letter's recipient through reference to the West Port murders: 'I have wrought on your farm for some months with William Collins that summer that Burke was hanged' (99). Having introduced the narrator through the events of the West Port Murders, the author disappoints reader expectation by presenting us with a story where, instead of the dead being exhumed, the living are prepared for burial. Reminiscent of John Galt's classic Tale of Terror 'The Buried Alive', the letter describes the gothic adventures of Andrew Ker, a carter who appears to die from cholera only to sit up in his coffin wrapped in his winding sheet. The story is believed to have been a fictional response to published reports that during the January of 1832 a man suffering from cholera had been buried alive in Haddington (McCausland 44). In the letter, the protagonist, Ker, believes himself to have died from cholera but retains consciousness even though he cannot move or speak: 'all the while I had a sort of half- consciousness of what was going on, yet had not the power to move a muscle of my whole frame' (101).

Lines between life and death are also blurred in the third of the letters. Protagonist James McL-awakes from a dream in which his mother is spirited away by his reanimated sisters, who recently died from cholera. He sets out to visit the graves of his apparently risen sisters:

> I said nothing of what I had seen; but went straight to the churchyard, persuaded that I would find my sisters' graves open, and they out of them; but, behold! they were the same as I left them, and I have never seen mother and sisters more. I could almost persuaded myself that I had been in a dream, had it not been for the loss of my mother; but as she has not been seen or heard of since that night, I must believe all that I saw to have been real. I know it is suspected both here and in Edinburgh that she has been burked, as she was

> always running about by night; but I know what I saw, and must believe in it though I cannot comprehend it (112).

The ghostly presence of Burke is once again invoked, in a way which means that the letters are bookended by apparently casual references to him. These strange texts, full of opened graves and rising bodies, seem designed to gesture to the fears of the choleraphobic masses in obscure and unexpected ways. Although no bodies are overtly resurrected, the resurrection men and the Burkers lurk at the edges of the accounts casting long unexplained shadows.

The uncertain borders between life and death are mirrored in the porous borders between different places and groups of people in the stories. In each letter the connections between people and geographical locations function as channels for the spread of disease; in letter one a cart driver fatally brings cholera into the home of his sweetheart, in the second a dog escapes a trading ship docked in an isolated Highland village and in the third a woman's self-interested visits to the deathbeds of her neighbours lead to the infection of her own family. This tracing of ties is particularly relevant within contemporary debates about the transmission of cholera. Hogg's fascination with movement and connectivity within the 'letters' is part of the contemporary conversation about contagion, capital and nation which saw contagionist and anticontagonist perspectives clash along scientific *and* economic lines. Although writing for a libertarian journal Hogg in his 'Letters' seems committed to mapping a contagious outbreak onto rural Scotland. In his three letters, the spread of Cholera allows Hogg to trace the social and economic connections which tie the different parts of society in a mutually fatal embrace.

The title of the text references the conventional 'Letters from' the colonies or Europe which were a staple part of the content of many British periodicals of the period. However, Hogg's letters have apparently issued from within the British national body. Written during Hogg's first extended visit to London, a journey which had required an extended journey by steamer down the east coast of Britain, the letters speak of the sense of alienation between metropole and Scottish periphery which this geographical distance created, but which would have been heightened by the reports of the epidemic in Scotland.

At the opening of the first letter Ker fears for his own safety should he become infected with the disease, describing himself as a travelling cart-driver without family or friends and therefore outside of conventional local social structures: 'I often thought to myself, if I should take that terrible Cholera Morbus, what was to become of me, as I had no home to go to, and nobody would let me within their door' (99). Ker's profession both displaces him and allows him to circulate without regulation. He has no place within society: instead he is constantly in motion communicating and making connections between different people and locations. Later in the tale, following his miraculous resurrection, Ker comments upon the dangers of complacency in the face of the disease: 'it is amazing that the people of London should mock at the fears of their brethren for this terrible and anomalous plague; for though it begins with the hues and horrors of death, it is far more frightful than death itself; and it is impossible for any family or community to be too much on their guard against its baleful influence' (103). These words function as both warning and threat. If Ker as a cart-man represents the possibility of circulation and communication then his escape from East Lothian to the Borders in the disguise of a shepherd suggests the possibility that the disease could also travel invisibly from one site to another, that an invisible enemy can circulate within the nation. The Londoners who mock the disease from afar have forgotten the ties of national kinship and trade which bond them to the afflicted Scots.

The interdependency of different groups within the British population is perhaps most suggestively articulated in Hogg's second letter, which contains a darkly comic account of Oakum the captain's dog's escape from a cholera afflicted ship into a Highland village, where he is mistaken for the disease itself. The story is largely about miscommunication and misunderstanding; the largely Gaelic speaking villagers have heard of the 'Collara Mor' but have not understood what it is (107). They therefore interpret the dog as a physical embodiment of the cholera and flee the village when they see the black dog approaching. The Highlanders are as foreign to the story's narrator, a ship's mate, as any colonial people, and he takes a jarringly light-hearted approach to the narrative, depicting the villagers as simple-minded and credulous peasants whose speech is almost unintelligible 'peen raiter, and te raiter too heafy on te herring and pot-hato' (108).

The sailors may not be able to communicate effectively with the Highlanders but they are capable of communicating infection. The trading ship expressly disregards

quarantine regulations by docking in the highland village when the sailor 'cannot aver that…[the] ship was perfectly clean' (106). The sailor takes an ambiguous position in relation to his own personal responsibility for the outbreak suggesting that the transference of the disease might not be the result of contagion: 'whether the disease was communicated to them by the dog, by myself, by the fright or the heat they got in running I cannot determine; but it is certain the place suffered severely' (108). However, given the pattern of cholera transference across the three letters these alternative explanations have little power. Cholera, this text suggests, reaches the Highlands through the irresponsibility of British profiteering and free trade and from there is carried into the rest of the population. Although the Highlanders seem isolated and unrelated to the population of Britain they are vulnerable to infection and capable of infecting others.

This representation of the Highlands is typical of Hogg's later writings, which are increasingly interested in the place of the Highlands within the British nation. The author's first engagement with the Highlands was in his accounts of his *Highland Journeys* of 1802, 1803 and 1804. In these texts Hogg's perspective on events in the Highlands is one which lauds the efforts of Highland landlords to effect agricultural improvement through the introduction of large-scale sheep farming. However, by the 1820s and 30s Hogg offered a more critical perspective on the recent history of the region. H.B. de Groot in his introduction to the *Highland Journeys* describes the journeys as the first steps toward Hogg's 'powerful account of the destruction of Highland society after the battle of Culloden in *The Three Perils of Woman* in 1823' (p. xxix). By 1832, Hogg was an author with an obvious investment in not just challenging limiting notions of lowland Scotland as a living museum and repository for national tradition, but also similar perspectives on the Highlands. *Blackwood's* response to the Highlands could be often even more limiting than its representation of rural lowland life. David Manderson has characterised the representations of the Highlands within the *Noctes Ambrosianae* as ones which dismiss the contemporary Highlands in favour of fantasies of adventures and mythical creatures: 'in the world created in the *Noctes* by the new owners of empire…there was no place for the real Highlands, still less for the people who lived there' (102).If Lowland country dwellers were the Blackwoodian's direct ancestors, Highlanders existed as an Ossianic legend of their ancient origins. Hogg's third cholera 'Letter' in its critique of the ignorance and irresponsibility of the sailor narrator, and its insistence on the place of Highland villages in

the webs of connection which characterise modern Britain, challenges overwhelming contemporary rhetoric which presented the region as one trapped in a previous stage of 'civilisation'. Like much of his Lowland writing, it insists on the contemporaneity of rural Scottish life and its problems, refusing both narratives of improvement and the uncritical idealisation of Scottish rural life.

The relationship between economic exchanges and the circulation of disease is sketched again, this time in miniature, in the third letter of the trio. James McL- experiences a strange dream following the deaths of his two sisters from cholera. In this dream the girls lead their mother away to the graveyard, claiming that she has brought cholera into their home through her morbid delight in visiting and assisting families afflicted with the disease in return for 'drams and little presents', and she is never seen again (108). The narrator conceives of the mother's exchanges as the carriers of disease. 'ye winna leave aff rinning to infectit houses …. Do ye no consider that ye are exposing the whole o' your family to the most terrible of deaths; an' if ye should bring infection among us, an lose us a', how will ye answer to God for it?' (109). The mother's fondness for a dram makes her willing to visit the sick, and these visits eventually lead her to communicate disease into her own home. Greed drives the woman's journeys to the homes of her neighbours and leads to the spread of infection to her own children.

The exploration of social connection across the three letters suggests a wider critique of the impact that international trade and modernisation have on the traditions of rural life. At the close of the first letter Ker struggles to draw a moral conclusion from his experiences, alternating between belief in human autonomy and in fate. His conclusion, whilst partially based on the idea of an all-powerful old testament God, also draws on ideas of sub-Malthusian social selection, which were current at the time. Despite the fact that it has culled his sweetheart and her mother, he comments of the disease: 'it is as infectious as fire. But when fire is set to the mountain, it is only such parts of its surface as are covered with decaying garbage that is combustible, while over the green and healthy parts of the mountain the flame has no power; and any other reasoning than this is worse than insanity' (Hogg 105). Similarly, the narrator of the second letter also conceptualises the disease as an agent of social selection, commenting of the highlanders killed in the outbreak his ship causes: 'the glen being greatly overstocked, they were not much missed' (107). In both instances Hogg's narrators use dehumanising metaphors, reducing the cholera victim to so

much ‘decaying garbage’ or, even more suggestively, to livestock. The ‘overstocked’ glen within a context of contemporary Clearance and enforced emigration in the North and West of Scotland is a highly charged metaphor. Its use alludes to the improvement of the highland estates where the human population were compared in terms of profitability to sheep, disregarding their humanity and the paternal responsibilities traditionally attributed to the Highland gentry. The Glen’s stock problems and the clearing of areas of brush on the burning mountain both seem apt metaphors for the type of large scale social engineering which was taking place in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century rural Scotland rather than the outbreak of disease. These images present the largely poor victims of cholera as socially undesirable citizens who will be ‘not much missed’ and link the disease to processes of improvement. If we consider these images of social selection through disease in relation to the model of communication we have explored in the second letter, Hogg’s ‘Terrible Letters’ can be interpreted as a rebuttal of the concept of a self-regulating free society. Instead they imply that in their attempts to use free market forces to engineer an ideal society improvers create diseases which will eventually infect the entire national body. Motivated by profit they fail to protect their own lower classes, weakening the social body as a whole. The fire does not run out of garbage and die off, but proceeds to consume the green.

Hogg’s disturbed cholera graves represent the disturbed social relationships around them. The webs of local, national and international connection which Hogg weaves into the fabric of his three stories create dynamic, complicated and fragmented narratives *and rural spaces*. The economic and imperial decisions that have brought cholera to Scotland’s shores have created a context in which even the dead will not lie still, cholera perhaps operating as a Frankenstein’s monster of colonialism and free market economics. Where Montgomery represents the ‘story’ of cholera as one shared by a civic and national community, Hogg uses the restless graves of the cholera dead to depict an increasingly restless Scotland. In both texts, cholera complicates and challenges the national kirkyard metaphor revealing the continued impact of contemporary events on the national dead.

Chapter Six- The Suicide's Grave: Suicide, Civilisation and the Kirkyard

In what is perhaps the most famous example of an exhumation scene in Scottish Literature, James Hogg's *Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) depicts the exhumation of the miraculously preserved corpse of a suicide by a party of bounty hunting city antiquaries. In the suicide's pocket is found a printed tract containing the strange first-hand account of supernatural doubling and fratricide, which the reader retrospectively recognises as the account which has constituted one half of the novel they have just read. As I will explore later in the chapter, the meaning of this exhumation scene has been widely discussed within Hogg scholarship and studies of Scottish literature more generally. This chapter will progress toward a rereading of Hogg's most famous novel; foregrounding the role of the suicide in the author's symbolic scheme and focusing on a letter, 'A Scots Mummy', which Hogg published in *Blackwood's* in June 1823 then republished in an abridged form as part of his novel just over a year later. I will argue that Hogg deliberately uses the figure of the suicide's grave and corpse across both texts to radically critique the Blackwoodian approach to rural Scottish culture. In clustering meaning making around the perturbing figure of an outcast, unidentified and exhumed body, Hogg subverts the inclusive and immutable graveyard at the heart of idealised depictions of country life in *Blackwood's.* This argument is based on the way in which the suicide's body operates as a figure with particular symbolism in relation to historical narratives of Progress and improvement at the turn of the nineteenth century. The chapter begins by placing suicide within contemporary debates where the deaths and burials of suicides were simultaneously characterised as symptoms of the march of civilisation and symbols of primitivity. I argue that John Galt's novel *Annals of the Parish* complicates both of these narratives about self-murder, and holds the *Blackwood's* kirkyard up to scrutiny, by depicting three very different suicides in a rural Scottish parish. When Hogg wrote about his 'Scots Mummy' he did so in the context of a conversation about suicide which was taking place both within and beyond the pages of *Blackwood's,* as contemporary commentators attempted to place the suicide's grave within the modern nation.

Quoting the biographies of Byron and Goethe, A. Alvarez famously argued that 'the romantics thought of suicide when they went to bed at night, and thought of it again in the morning when they shaved' (231). Whilst this assertion of the centrality of suicide in the mental landscapes of romantic era writers is something of a generalisation, the late

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did see the figure of 'the suicide' gain an increasing ubiquity in contemporary texts. In Britain representations of this figure drew not only on pre-existing conceptions of self-harm but also took part in contemporary discussions of urbanisation, class conflict and nationhood. The latter half of the eighteenth-century saw increasing concern that suicide was becoming a social problem in Britain; concerns about textual contagion and urban degeneration found their outlet in texts which diagnosed a national suicide epidemic. Meanwhile, traditional burial practices used in cases of suicide were under growing scrutiny as they became associated with a primitive and superstitious past. Talking about suicide, thus, also meant talking about the rapid evolution of early nineteenth-century British society. Conceptions of suicide as a modern struggle with mental illness clashed, and sometimes mixed, with traditional conceptions of self-murder which foregrounded the religious and supernatural. Thinking about suicide became tied to thinking about society in broadly historiographical terms.

This chapter is not about the actual patterns of suicide and self-harm in Scotland or Britain during the early nineteenth century but rather about how suicide could be perceived and imagined; about the ways in which suicide was presented to the population through literature and mass media; in sum about what Olive Anderson terms 'suicide culture' (3). British writings on suicide tended to seek not patterns but moral messages and it is these messages that this chapter will identify and explore. In the works of the *Blackwood's* group the figure of the suicide would be used both to support and to interrogate ideas of idyllic rural harmony and urban loss, social cohesion and social change.

Burying the Past: The 1823 Burial Act

Before looking more closely at suicide within the works of Hogg and Galt it's important to think about the practical and legal framework in which suicides of the period took place. A major shift in legal sanctions against English suicides took place in 1823 and precipitated Britain-wide conversations about the interment of the victims of suicide. Prior to the introduction of the 1823 Burial Act, approaches to the interment of those believed to have ended their own lives varied between the Scottish and English legal systems:

> In both Scotland and England, suicides might be denied burial in a churchyard; some were allowed in the churchyard, but relegated to its less desirable north

> side; others were given a normal if discreet burial. In both countries some sort of profanation might be visited on the corpse. However England seems to have been unusual in staking the bodies of self-murderers. Scots did not stake suicides, and for a time the treatment of corpses in Scotland was more in line with continental practice than English. Punishments such as the dragging and gibbeting of suicides…were unusual in England. They had, however, long been enshrined in legal codes and practice in Europe, which is where many of the Scottish legal elite gained their education until well into the seventeenth century (Houston, *Punishing* 189-190).

Additionally, in both countries a person convicted of *felo-de-se (felon-of-himself*) forfeited their possessions to the crown. In some cases English suicides were buried at crossroads[36].

However, suspected suicides were increasingly identified as *non-compos-mentis* in enquiries into their deaths by the early nineteenth century, a verdict which meant that burial sanctions need not be imposed. The law had not changed but the way that it was put into practice had fundamentally altered. Although this change in attitudes is often referred to in terms of a secularisation or medicalisation of attitudes to suicide[37], R.A. Houston rejects:

> the supposedly characteristic early modern verdict on blameworthy suicides as a sign of traditional religious attitudes, which gave way in the eighteenth century to a more enlightened, secular, and "selectively medical" mindset, encapsulated in the increasingly routine verdict of "non compos mentis" arguing instead that the process was indicative of a more complex interaction between medicine and religion (*Punishing* 288).

Houston states that 'understandings of suicide did not become medicalized because there had always been a medical dimension, and they did not become secularized, for religion

[36] R.A. Houston emphasises that, although this practice did take place in some instances of suicide in England, records suggest it was far from a universal custom and that generally only 'social marginals received profane burial—notably servants and above all young single females—and references to staking are rare' (203). For a detailed analysis of the frequency of profane burial in England and Scotland between the early-modern period and early nineteenth century see Chapter 1.3 'Burial Practices' in *Punishing the Dead?: Suicide, Lordship, and Community in Britain, 1500-1830.*

[37] Michael MacDonald and Terence R. Murphy's *Sleepless Souls* identifies the softening of attitudes to suicide in the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries with a 'secularisation of suicide' (5).

itself changed to accommodate developments in other areas of thought' (*Punishing* 313). This effort to think about the changing status of suicide in contemporary culture as not a straightforward instance of secularisation but a shift in the relationship between religion and medicine is particularly productive, as I'll argue later in this chapter, because medical and literary discourse around suicide in Britain remains morally and religiously inflected even after 1823.

Dissatisfaction with sanctions against the dead in England grew in strength over the early decades of the nineteenth century until the 1823 Burial Act finally removed crossroads burial from English suicide legislation, although night-time burial, forfeiture and the with-holding of religious rites remained as sanctions. Barbara Gates asserts that:

> by the 1820s there was considerable support for liberalizing an antiquated law dating from the tenth century. In 1820, a letter writer to the London Times felt it necessary to contend that "a jury is fully warranted in bringing in a verdict of insanity in such cases, unless there be clear and decided proof to the contrary; and that to err on that side, if we are to err, is more just than on the other" (7).

Contemporary accounts of the last crossroads burial of a suicide in London in 1823, describe it as 'an odious and disgusting ceremony' and 'an act of malignant and brutal folly' (MacDonald and Murphy 348-9). The emphasis on disgust and brutality in these reactions is important because it indicates that disapproval of sanctions against the dead may have had more to do with perceptions of 'civilised' behaviour than secularisation. As this chapter will explore, punishing suicides was increasingly represented as an archaism in contemporary discourse, a fascinating and 'disgusting' survival from a less civilised time.

Discussion of these legal changes extended beyond England, and the Scottish press seems to have taken some interest in events South of the border. In the May edition of the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* a published letter, 'Bower's Letter to the Lord Provost on the Violation of the Sepulchres of the Dead', rejects the English approach to the burial of suicides suggesting that 'the severity of the law defeats its own operation' leading to an increasing tendency for jurors to 'return a verdict of insanity' (604). Later that year, the *Aberdeen Journal* for 6th August 1823 reports on the change in the English suicide laws with obvious approval: 'the offense of felo de se is still a violation of the law; but that part

of it which doomed the remains of the offender to the cross road, the stake and the mallet is repealed'.

The reason I look at this change in English burial law and the discourse it provoked is that these discussions turned sanctions against the bodies of suicides into a particularly historiographically inflected concept. In thinking about the punishment of suicides' bodies writers and commentators could also think about the relationship between past and present, between civilisation and the 'disgusting' barbarity that preceded it. The suicide's grave in this context becomes a place where the problematic aspects of the past can to some extent penetrate the present, revealing their continued relevance and survival.

A Prescription for Life: The English Malady, Civilisation and the 'Moral Treatment' in Scotland

Whilst the suicide's grave became a symbol of the past in contemporary discourse, in conversations about mental health, the act of suicide was increasingly characterised as a symptom of rapid modernisation. Kelly McGuire describes how in his treatise '*A Full Inquiry into the Subject of Suicide* (1790), Charles Moore sets out to "free this island from the imputation under which it has so long laboured, of producing more self-murder than any other nation"' (115). During the eighteenth-century Britain had developed an unenviable reputation abroad, so that 'by 1800, England had become known as the European centre of suicide' (Gates 23). Contemporary commentators used the term 'English Malady' to describe the perceived higher incidence of mental ill health in Britain[38]. However, examining statistics from the early years of the nineteenth century right up to the end of Victoria's reign Barbara Gates comments that 'although the incidence of suicide seems not to have risen considerably until near the end of the period, people chose to be alarmed that it had' (xiii).

As Elaine Showalter has shown 'since the eighteenth century, the links between the "English malady" and such aspects of the national experience as commerce, culture,

[38] It's important to note that although referred to as the 'English Malady', mental health problems are characterised as a symptom of British industrial development. The 'England' of the English Malady therefore seems to be synonymous with urban and 'improved' Britain rather than England as a finite geographical nation. Peripheral, less developed areas of Britain, like the Highlands and Welsh mountains, are understood to be uneffected by the epidemic.

climate and cuisine have been the subject of both scientific treatises and literary texts' (7). In his 1733 medical treatise *The English Malady; or, a treatise of Nervous Diseases of all kinds,* George Cheyne puts forward on argument which evinces nostalgia for a 'simpler' mode of living. Cheyne does not dispute the existence of a specifically 'English' malady, rather he reinforces this idea, stating in his preface that 'almost one third of the Complaints of the People of Condition in England' are 'nervous' in nature [39](ii). He identifies a series of different factors as causes for this apparent national epidemic, many of which might be thought of as features of modernisation, or in eighteenth-century terms 'civilisation'. He highlights the 'Humour of living in great, populous and consequently unhealthy towns' alongside climate, and diet as a crucial factor in encouraging mental ill-health (i). As Nigel Wood has commented Cheyne's interpretation of the causes of the 'English Malady' are rooted in a sense that society has lost beneficial features in the journey towards modernity: 'the problems that Cheyne identifies are prevalent in advanced societies, and this leads to the paradox that the search for physical security has led to psychic insecurity' (65).

Class also plays a vital role in the epidemic, according to Cheyne, who cites 'the inactivity and sedentary Occupations of the better sort' (I) as a risk factor for mental ill-health and instead champions:

> the diet and manner of Living of the middling rank, who are but moderate and temperate in Foods of the common and natural of the Country, to wit in animal foods plainly dress'd and Liquors purify'd by Fermentation only, without the Tortures of the Fire, or without being turned into Spirits, is that intended by the Author of Nature for this climate and Country, and consequently the most wholesome and fittest in general , for prolonging Life, and preventing Distempers (ii).

The middle-classes are physically and morally distinguished from both the poor *and* their debauched, and apparently 'insane', social superiors in Cheyne's discussion of the 'English malady'. As we'll explore throughout this chapter, the concept of retreat from an overly advanced 'civilisation' to a more 'wholesome' and 'natural' mode of existence was a central part of discussions of madness and suicide in the early years of the nineteenth century.

[39] A claim we must accept with caution given that reliable medical statistics were not yet available to commentators.

Within the nineteenth-century British imagination, urbanisation and high rates of suicide and violence became increasingly intertwined, as the cities came to be associated with a perceived moral decay within society. Kelly McGuire describes the pathologisation of urban life:

> As the city gained in size and influence, the countryside became increasingly romanticised as a fading emblem of community, kinship, health, and moral behaviour. Thus the twinning of suicide and the city was also a lament for a bygone era of harmonious, quieter life that, regardless of its historical 'accuracy' resonated with many nineteenth-century urban commentators (9).

Theorists also often argued that 'peasants' and 'savages' were immune to suicidal urges. Elaine Showalter quotes Andrew Halliday's 1828 book, *A General View of the Present State of Lunatics and Lunatic Asylums in Great Britain and Ireland,* which describes 'savages', 'slaves' and the residents of Britain's own 'wild' periphery as uneffected by mental ill health:

> we seldom meet with insanity among the savage tribes of men… Among the slaves in the West Indies it very rarely occurs and…the contented peasantry of the Welsh mountains, the Western Hebrides, and the wilds of Ireland are almost free from this complaint (24).

Mental illness is coupled with the stage of civilisation experienced by the residents of urban Britain. The colonies and peripheries are cast as ruder, simpler spaces where mental health is preserved. Quoting death statistics from late eighteenth-century France, the pioneering Scottish doctor W.A.F Brown makes a similar argument: 'the more primitive and illiterate the district, the smaller the proportion [of suicides]' (84).

The emergence of a new type of mental health care during the early nineteenth century was based on these ideas. Moral treatment offered a simple prescription for life: a return to the family and the fields. Moral treatment was first trialled in Britain with the foundation of the York Retreat in 1797 by the Quaker William Tuke, a facility which aimed to treat a small group of mentally ill patients through the provision of an ordered, family-like environment in a country house in Northern England. The retreat into rural space was

key to the approach: 'bound up with the "moral Treatment" was the belief, shared by French, British and American alienists, that removal of the insane from urban to rural settings provided powerful therapeutic benefits' (Kushner 2009 25). The asylum was designed to provide an environment reminiscent of a pious ordered home, employing 'paternal surveillance and religious ideals' (Kushner 8).

This approach to the treatment of the mentally ill gained great influence within the newly founded Scottish asylums. Scottish asylums were part of a different system from those in England and relied financially on a combination of pauper fees from Parish poor relief funds, charitable donations and the board paid by the families of those admitted to the asylum. Like infirmaries and orphanages, the asylums formed part of 'the institutional framework of Scottish charitable institutions' which relied on the financial and practical support of Scotland's growing urban, often Evangelical, middle-class (Walsh 183). As Lorraine Walsh comments 'a conviction of the benefits of moral reform fitted well with the belief systems of the early nineteenth century philanthropists' who supported Scotland's charitable institutions (184). The nature of these belief systems can be traced through the kind of discourse used in relation to the early century Scottish asylums. Walsh quotes the example of 'Alexander MackIntosh, who was employed at both Dundee and Glasgow "royals" in the course of his career' and 'favoured a regimen based largely on "moral and intellectual" treatment, whilst considering the value of medical treatment to be somewhat restricted' (185). He also quotes the reports of the Dundee Royal Lunatic Asylum which in 1842 'stressed the conviction that many of those cured were also improved in moral character' (184). Mental health treatment in Scotland was inherently tied to contemporary ideas about personal morality.

In his 1837 lecture series, published under the title, *What asylums were, are, and ought to be*, Scotland's most famous exponent of the Moral Treatment, William A. F. Brown summarised current concerns about the relationship between insanity and civilisation:

> the opinion has been hazarded, that as we recede, step by step, from the simple, that is, the savage manners of our ancestors, and advance in industry and knowledge and happiness, this malignant persecutor strides onward, signalising, by every era in the social progress, a new hecatomb, of victims. Is insanity an inseparable adjunct to civilisation? I spurn the supposition. The

> truth seems to be, that the barbarian escapes this scourge because he is exempt from many of the physical, and almost all the moral sources of mental excitement: and that members of civilised communities are subjected to it, because the enjoyments and blessings of augmented power are abused; because the mind is roused to exertion without being disciplined, it is stimulated without being strengthened; because our selfish propensities are cultivated while our moral nature is left barren, our pleasures becoming poisonous: and because, in the midst of a blaze of scientific light, and in the presence of a million temptations to multiply our immediate by a sacrifice of our ultimate gratifications, we remain in the darkest ignorance of our own mind, its true relations, its danger and its destiny (52).

Although, in this passage, Brown questions the central suppositions of theories which cast insanity and suicide as civilisation's inevitable shadow, he does not attempt to refute the idea that insanity is statistically less prevalent within communities which are less subject to modernisation. Instead, the physician suggests that those who inhabit 'civilised communities' fail to exercise moderation in their enjoyment of their advantages. The problem for Brown is not an unavoidable side effect of industrialisation, but one tied to individual moral will. He emphasises the importance of individual restraint in the face of the possible corruptions which civilisation offers, using a rhetorical style reminiscent of the minister's pulpit rather than the physician's lectern. Medical discourse about mental health in this instance remains surprisingly tied to ideas about morality, suggesting that we cannot make sweeping statements about 'medicalisation' and 'secularisation' when thinking about changes in attitude to mental health, instead thinking more carefully about the historical contingency of such concepts.

The relevance of contemporary attitudes to mental health and suicide to the concerns of the *Blackwood's* group become apparent when we look at the way that the deaths of suicides are used in two *Blackwood's* novels. The following analysis of John Galt's *Annals of the Parish* and James Hogg's *Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* looks at the way in which the suicides of characters in these texts are situated within discussions about changes in contemporary society. In placing the suicide's grave within rural space both authors explore the complexity of ideas of historical progress, coming to quite

different conclusions about the relationship between modernity, suicide and pastoral space which challenge both the Whig approach to history *and* the *Blackwood's* kirkyard.

It's important to note here that actual historical accounts of suicide burial in Scotland vary significantly from the version of suicide burial practices which Hogg in particular emphasises. R.A. Houston asserts that burial registers and contemporary press reports contain little evidence that Scottish suicides regularly faced dragging and isolated burial. Instead he suggests that the majority of folklorists who list these customs as common practices in rural Scotland were influenced by fictional texts like *Confessions*:

> Folklorists were not immune to literary influence and, while a valuable source, they are unreliable about how generalized particular practices were and, on occasion, about whether uses happened at all. Their accounts might be moulded around literary tropes such as the Scottish one originated (perhaps fabricated) by Walter Scott in the 1800s and perpetuated in James Hogg's 1824 *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: written by himself.* This involved dragging the corpse and a lonely burial (*Punishing* 193-194).

This observation is a timely reminder that the burials which take place in Hogg and Galt's novels are carefully rendered fictions, designed with affect rather than accuracy in mind. Although these stories almost certainly take part in the conversations around suicide and burial which were taking place in the public sphere they are not faithful accounts of their time but incidents designed to have a specific symbolic function within the novel. These fictions of suicide burial must therefore be seen as products of a specific cultural moment, inherently tied into real events but also deliberately fictionalised.

Death comes to Dalmailing: A Theoretical History of Suicide in Galt's *Annals of the Parish*

Although reportedly conceived in 1813[40], John Galt's *Annals of the Parish* were not published until 1821 and thus entered the arena at a time when the *Blackwoodian* tale of local life was at the peak of its popularity. Focusing on the life of a rural Ayrshire parish

[40] In his literary autobiography *The Literary Life and Miscellanies of John Galt*, Galt claims that he started work on *Annals* in 1813, but laid it aside 'as I was informed that Scottish novels would not succeed (Waverley was not then published)' (153). The *Literary Life* describes the manuscript's rediscovery 'years after' and subsequent submission to *Blackwood and Sons* (154).

between 1760 and 1810, the novel tracks the social and economic changes experienced by the community. My analysis will first look at the way in which Galt sets up an idealised Blackwoodian Graveyard space in the early pages of the novel, before exploring the way that the bodies of suicides are removed from, or incorporated into, this space in the text. I will argue that the way in which the novel's three instances of suicide are represented is tied into the novel's concern with the overarching meaning behind social and economic change. Galt uses suicide's position in recent discourse as a symbol of both the primitive and the modern to temporally situate recent rural history.

Galt's novel opens at its own conclusion; in the opening chapter of the narrative the Reverend Micah Balwhidder gives an account of his last sermon in the Parish Kirk of Dalmailing where he has ministered for fifty years. Facing his congregation for the last time the minister gives a sermon which describes the relationship between the living community of the Ayrshire village, their ancestors and God.

The minister exhorts the young people to look to the example of their parents and the Covenanting rebels of the seventeenth-century. He suggests that the historical legacy of the Covenanters should be a rural society which values moderate prosperity and peace. Balwhidder's generation he argues 'bore in mind the tribulation and persecution of their forefathers for righteousness' sake, and were thankful for the quiet and protection of the government in their day and generation' (4). Balwhidder thus highlights the radical inheritance of the rural West of Scotland and the Presbyterian faith through an acknowledgement of the Covenanting past, even as he neutralises its possible political resonances in the aftermath of the age of Revolutions. Balwhidder's expanding rural parish with 'the tree growing, and the plough going' is the reward which follows the strife of earlier generations (4). Like a tree 'growing', change in the Parish is understood as an organic, desirable and gradual process.

Having held up the example of their 'plain, honest and devout' parents to the young residents of the village, Balwhidder turns to his own generation:

> As for you, my old companions, many changes have we seen in our day, but the changes we ourselves are soon to undergo will be the greatest of all. We have seen our bairns grow to manhood- we have seen the beauty of youth pass

> away- we have felt our backs become unable for the burthen, and our right hand forget its cunning- Our eyes have become dim, and our heads grey- we are now tottering with short and feckless steps towards the grave; and some, that should have been here this day, are bed-rid, lying, as it were, at the gates of death, like Lazarus at the threshold of the rich man's door, full of ails and sores, and having no enjoyment but in the hope that is in hereafter. What can I say to you but farewell! Our work is done- we are weary and worn out and in need of rest- may the rest of the blessed be our portion!- and, in the sleep which we all must sleep, beneath the cold blanket of the kirkyard grass, and on the clay pillow where we must shortly lay our heads, may we have pleasant dreams, till we are awakened to partake of the everlasting banquet of the saints in glory (226).

Loss in this passage is, like growth, conceptualised as necessary and organic. Death and the religious afterlife are imagined as inevitable parts of a continuous process. Interestingly, Balwhidder implicitly suggests that the 'changes' witnessed by the residents of Dalmailing and the 'changes' their bodies undergo are fundamentally similar. Thus gradual changes in society are understood in the same way in which the eyes 'become dim' and heads turn grey. Both are inevitable, if not always welcome. Balwhidder in this passage evinces a perspective on change which accepts gradual social change as inevitable but also refuses to relinquish the influence of past precedent or to cease mourning what is lost.

Having given this speech, the Minister leaves the pulpit and is faced by the spectacle of the real community and graveyard:

> in the church-yard all the congregation was assembled, young and old, and they made a lane for me to the back-yett that opened into the manse-garden- Some of them put out their hands and touched me as I passed, followed by the elders, and some of them wept. It was as if I was passing away, and to be no more- verily, it was the reward of ministry- a faithful account of which, year by year, I now sit down in the evening days, to make up (Galt 226).

It is apparent from these early images that the graveyard has a specific symbolic function within this text. Having made an explicit connection between the living congregation in

front of him and the graves which surround the church, Balwhidder steps outside to find the kirkyard thronged with those very living generations waiting to mark his retirement. The actions of the parishioners are reminiscent of those of mourners, and counter the minister's assertion that death is the end of life on Earth. Although Balwhidder's sermon has suggested a traditional ideation of death as followed only by the religious afterlife and remote posthumous example, this passage implies a dynamic relationship between the living community and the graveyard at the centre of their village. Rather than a space whose only function is to provide 'the cold blanket of kirkyard grass' and 'clay pillow', the graveyard becomes a space of living memory as the villagers gather amongst the gravestones of their ancestors to mark change and remember the past. This is a space which seems to hold a similar temporal status to that of Wilson's 'burial ground, on a green hill' (147). It is at once an unchanging memorial to the past and a space fully integrated into the life of the community, and this simultaneous status is achieved through the invocation of the idea of an enduring community constituted of changing parts, an ongoing cycle of birth, life and death. If we are to regard Balwhidder's introduction as his mission statement for the *Annals*, then the worldview represented in his account of the Parish is to be one which perches delicately between belief in progress and mourning for the past*,* insisting on the presence of both the power of a sovereign living community *and* its graveyard.

Discussions of *Annals of the Parish* have largely focused on the novel's ambiguous relationship with ideas of progress and loss. In her summary of his work, Regina Hewitt describes how Galt utilised the Enlightenment genre of theoretical or conjectural history as a template for fictional works like *Annals* and sister work *The Provost:* 'Galt self-consciously wrote fiction, drama, and biography based on his observations of lived and recorded behaviour, elaborating on his 'models' in ways associated with the 'theoretical' or 'conjectural' methods of Scottish Enlightenment historiographers' (1). Galt himself commented of his Scottish fictions that 'they would be properly characterised…as theoretical histories than either novels or romances' (quoted from Costain 343)[41]. Studies of

[41] Enlightenment conjectural histories, a group of writings which were retrospectively identified by Dugald Stewart in his 'Account of Adam Smith' in 1793, utilised information about contemporary 'primitive' societies in order to hypothesise about the nature of the prehistoric European past. The majority of Scottish examples are based on a stadial image of historical progress which sees historical change as a progressive journey from savagery to civilisation.

Annals have tended to examine the novel in terms of its relation to this tradition, tracing the way in which Galt's narrative critiques or advocates historical change.

In *Scott's Shadow*, Ian Duncan continues this critical tradition in his analysis of the novel, highlighting a dramatic suicide in the final chapters of the novel as a key turning point in Galt's engagement with ideas of social change. Duncan argues that through the majority of the text:

> the flow of sentiment…shows that modernisation entails no dehumanisation, no necessary loss of virtue, no fall into anomie, kindness and domestic virtue persist, indeed flourish, throughout these social convulsions. Balwhidder's chronicle thus bears witness to an essential continuity and stability in everyday life at the level of modern sentiment' (227).

In Duncan's argument, modernising forces do not damage the interpersonal connections characteristic of the rural community in the majority of Galt's novel; attachments between the villagers are largely undamaged by the incursions of mines and mills, bookshops and military recruiters. However, the deaths of Mr. Dwining and his wife in the final chapters of the novel challenge this asserted survival of local ties, representing the power of global forces over community relationships. Duncan sees the Dwining's deaths as exemplars of the influence of globalising forces on local and domestic spaces: 'with these victims the war has indeed come home, asserting its global presence in the innermost sanctum of domesticity, the marriage bed' (229). He therefore argues that these suicidal deaths bring the novel to a conclusion which critiques contemporary capitalism. Suicide in this reading is a symptom of modern social separation. This final major event within the narrative is, in Duncan's analysis, the crux of the elusive narrative arc within Galt's diffuse and ambivalent narrative.

Whilst this argument is convincing and persuasive, it isolates the Dwinings' deaths from other instances of suicide within the text. The following analysis looks at all three instances where characters end their own lives. I will argue that the variation in circumstance and mode of narration in the three instances are indicative of an ambivalent attitude to progress and its impact on community connections within the text. The burials of suicides come to represent neither the brutality of traditional custom, nor the tragedy of

modern social isolation. Through the representation of the deaths of Nanse Birrell, Meg Guffaw and the Dwinings, Galt interrogates simplistic notions of both human development and social degeneration, painting a complicated picture of a changing society.

At first glance the author's engagement with suicide might reinforce the idea that modernisation is the root cause of suicide, *Annals* contains three possible suicides which follow a pattern that accords with contemporary ideas about 'civilisation' as a cause of increasing suicide rates. In early entries the rural village is apparently a site largely free of suicide and the act's creeping presence is only truly felt within the community as it morphs into a working mill town. However, Galt's engagement with suicide and the graveyard space is far more nuanced than this summary would suggest. The novel calls into question the possibility that rural spaces can offer a 'cure' for the nation's malady by emphasising suicide's presence within pre-modern rural space, and oral and popular tradition, and the increasing penetration of modernising forces into rural spaces. *Annals* also reveals the fictiveness of the *Blackwood's* kirkyard, by exposing the minister and narrator's authorial role in the creation of an idealised kirkyard space. Balwhidder refuses to ritually banish suicides' bodies by denying and disguising the suicidal actions of those who die in his parish. In this way Balwhidder seems to attempt to rehabilitate the suicides' corpses by returning them to the community of the dead. This is a symbolic gesture which seeks to manufacture a countryside space denuded of 'superstition' and tradition; the moralised middle-class countryside elucidated in his own final sermon.

In the entry for 1766, an elderly healer Nanse Birrel is found dead in a well leading to speculation as to whether she fell or jumped. This is the first apparent mention of suicide within the text but its status as a suicide is never fully confirmed. Balwhidder suggests that the rumour that Nanse jumped into the well may be occasioned by the fact that 'Nanse was a curious discontented blear-eyed woman, and it was only with great ado that I could get the people keepit from calling her a witch wife' (247). The reference to witchcraft in the brief description of Nanse's death highlights marked differences between the belief systems of minister and congregation. Peter Maxwell-Stuart remarks that by the eighteenth-century magic and witchcraft were 'now firmly associated in the educated middle-class mind with popery and the middle ages' in Lowland Scotland (91). Although folk beliefs survived in many communities, records of church investigations into supernatural practices were dying out. The 1735 Witchcraft Act had made it impossible to be convicted

of witchcraft in an English or Scottish court, instead penalising those who pretended to have supernatural powers, a differentiation designed to highlight that belief in witchcraft was no longer part of British legal institutions. The age when belief in witchcraft was evenly distributed throughout the Scottish population was formally at an end, and superstition was increasingly attributed to the 'ignorant' and 'savage' (Maxwell-Stuart 82).

In keeping with this shift, Balwhidder appears to reject the reactions of the villagers to Nanse the 'witch-wife' as leavings from a savage, superstitious time. The allegations of suicide are treated in a similar manner to those of witchcraft. In life Nanse is called a witch and in death a suicide; the allegation of suicide is treated as an extension of a pre-existing witch-hunt designed to exclude Nanse from the community. Balwhidder refuses to characterise the healer's death as a suicide and thus allows her to be buried without sanction. In linking Nanse's death to her uncertain status within the community, Galt highlights that the origin of the custom of banishing the bodies of those accused of self-murder from the kirkyard is in traditional folk beliefs and systems of justice. Her death highlights the possible ways in which the identification of certain deaths as suicides can operate to police the borders of moral community within the traditional village; borders which Balwhidder as an educated, mid-eighteenth century minister seems unwilling to continue to enforce. Punishing suicides was rapidly going the way of burning witches and Balwhidder's response to the gossiping villagers can be identified as part of this movement.

The other two cases within the novel are clearly identified as instances of suicide and are both associated with modernisation in the form of the cotton mill, which is erected in Dalmailing in 1788. Meg Guffaw, the 'haverel lassie' features throughout the novel as a sort of idiot-savant character (308). Like Madge Wildfire in Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* or Watty Walkinshaw in Galt's *The Entail*, Meg is a mentally-handicapped character whose eccentricities might be interpreted as leavings from a previous age. Ann Roberts Divine describes Meg as 'a representative of an older age and a symbol of the old ways that are vanishing from the village'; her suicide in the dam of the modernising cotton mill is thus tied in this reading to the death of an older order (124). However Meg's relationship with the past and tradition is far more complicated than this interpretation suggests. Although Meg's actions are often reminiscent of the folk customs which are dying out in Dalmailing, the Reverend Balwhidder's descriptions of Meg's behaviours often cast them as an uncanny form of play-acting. Even her attempts to prepare her mother's body for burial are

described as ‘a wonderful and truthful semblance’ of a traditional laying out (286). Meg enacts the different rites traditionally practised by lowland Scots to mark a death and yet simultaneously burlesques them: ‘making the solemnity of death, by her strange mockery, a kind of merriment, that was more painful than sorrow’ (286). Meg’s actions are at once artificial and yet strangely more articulate than the actions of those around her. She seems to exist within the narrative almost entirely to complicate temporal distinctions and Balwhidder’s cherished ideas of ‘progress’; she is a child-like adult who confounds notions of past and present, authenticity and romance.

Meg’s own death is attributed to the arrival, and subsequent marriage, of the mill-owner’s nephew, Mr. Melcomb in the clachan. Meg develops a crush on the young man when he humours her fancies by allowing her to walk on his arm. Melcomb joins in Meg’s playful fantasies, responding to her flirtations and increasingly gaudy costume by handing her ‘over the kirk-stile, like a lady of high degree’ and ‘allemanding’ her out after church ‘in a manner that should not have been seen in any street out of a king’s court’ (309). However, when Melcomb’s betrothal is revealed in church it becomes apparent that Meg has not been playing. Following Melcomb’s marriage, despite the attempts of Balwhidder and the villagers to console her, Meg commits suicide:

> At last she gave a deep sigh, and the water coming into her eye, she said, “The worm- the worm is my bonny bridegroom, and Jenny with the many feet my bridal maid. The mill-dam water’s the wine o’ the wedding, and the clay and the clod shall be my bedding. A lang night is meet for a bridal, but none shall be longer than mine.” In saying which words she fled from among us, with heels like the wind. The servants pursued, but long before they could stop her, she was past redemption in the deepest plumb of the cotton-mill dam (310).

Meg’s poetic rendering of her own fate is the only time when Balwhidder does not cast her words or actions as unsettling instances of mimicry or whimsy; Meg is allowed to speak for herself without being cast as imitative.

However, her speech and suicide draw upon the standard tropes of the traditional ballad. The theme of ‘tragic love’ was so central to many Scottish ballads that James H. Jones has referred to it as a ‘commonplace’ (107). Ballads which describe suicide and

madness in the face of disappointed love or desertion seem to have been fairly popular during the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century, with titles like 'Bess of Bedlam', 'The Plymouth Tragedy' and 'The Sailor's Tragedy' reoccurring in different chapbooks published in Scotland during the period (229). The image of the bride transformed into a corpse is also a recurring theme in chapbooks and other street publications. The popular English ballad 'The Bride's Burial', which was in general circulation in Scotland from the seventeenth-century, laments the death of a bride who dies before her vows can be sexually consummated. In much the same way that Meg's speech in *Annals* relies for rhetorical effect on the replacement of standard wedding customs with those of burial, this is a technique which is heavily used in *The Bride's Burial:* 'Instead of music sweet,/ go ring my passing bell,/ And with the sweet flowers straw my grave,/ that in my chamber smell' (5). The bridal bed becomes a coffin, the laces of her stays can be used to bind the corpse's hands and feet. A similar reversal of imagery features in the Scottish ballad 'Andrew Lammie, or the Mill of Tiftie's Annie', in which a Miller's daughter, Annie, is falls in love with an unsuitable man and is beaten to death by her family for her betrayal: 'I will be true and constant too/ To thee my Andrew Lammie/ But my bridal-bed ere then'll be made/in the green church-yard of Fyvie' (5). In these texts the martyred virgin, dying for love but simultaneously untarnished by the act of love, is morally exalted for her constancy and purity, which is guaranteed by death.

The representation of Meg's suicide in the novel thus draws upon representational tropes that were common in popular literature and oral culture of the time: the deserted seduced woman and the martyred virgin bride. However, Galt's decision to use the local 'idiot woman' to enact these tropes disrupts their message. Meg's suicide is an at once ridiculous and tragic reproduction of a ballad heroine; she kills herself for a love that was ultimately only a playful imitation of its forms. Meg's death is grotesque because it implies a dangerous, ugly vitality to oral tradition; the idealised ballad heroine emerges from verse to take the form of a deranged young peasant woman. Rather than reinforcing an image of country life where the old ways fall victim to industrialisation, as Ann Roberts Divine suggested, Meg's suicide engages with narratives which associate progress with self-murder only to confuse and complicate them. By taking as her model the enduring rhetoric of the betrayed and suicidal lover Meg invokes a traditional precedent for her actions even as she throws herself into the workings of emerging industrialism. Meg's death complicates

notions of suicide as civilisation's shadow by emphasising her mimicry of existing traditional cultural forms.

As I summarised earlier, in *Scott's Shadow* Ian Duncan uses the double suicide/murder-suicide of Mr. Dwining, the failed mill overseer, and his wife in the final chapters of the novel to suggest that Galt's perspective on capitalist development is ultimately pessimistic, despite the survival of bonds of sentiment in the face of change earlier in the text. However, the cases of Meg and Nanse seem to delineate the limit of local sympathies earlier in the text. Whilst the majority of the community might be argued to be connected to one another, Meg and Nanse are outsiders and their cases illustrate the limits of community even before mills and mines encroach on the village. The idealised fantasy space of the rural community has always excluded some, and always contained a culture which, at least imaginatively, incorporated certain forms of suicide.

The Dwinings' deaths take place after the collapse of the Cayenneville cotton business. Having retreated to the village following the failure of his own cotton business in industrial Northern England, Mr. Dwining finds himself again ruined. Following the mill's financial collapse Dwining is not seen around the village, but it is noted that his door is open and his sons playing outside:

> I happened to pass when they were there, and I asked how their mother and father were. They said they were still in bed, and would not waken, and the innocent lambs took me by the hand, to waken their parents. I know not what was in it, but I trembled from head to foot, and I was led by the babies, as if I had not power to resist. Never shall I forget what I saw in that bed * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * (330).

This is the only instance within the novel where Balwhidder's confidence in his own ability to narrate what he witnesses breaks down and symbols replace words. Balwhidder also chooses not to reproduce the letter he finds on the table, stating only that it told him to send the children to an uncle and that 'it is a terrible tale, but the winding-sheet and the earth is over it' (330). The funeral itself is not a ritual designed to highlight the Dwinings' statuses as suicides; instead Balwhidder seems keen to disguise their cause of death from the wider community:

> Two coffins were got, and the bodies laid in them; and the next day, with one of the fatherless bairns in each hand, I followed them to the grave, which was dug in that part of the kirk-yard where unchristened babies are laid. We durst not take it upon us to do more, but few knew the reason, and some thought it was because the deceased were strangers, and had no regular lair (330).

In the same way that Balwhidder was unwilling to label Nanse's death as suicide he is here equally unwilling to publicly identify the Dwinings' deaths as such. Instead he buries the story, keeping the details of the Dwinings' deaths within the private spaces of their home and grave.

The deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Dwining emphasise the inevitable penetration of market forces and modern ills into rural Scottish space. However, reviewing the three suicide narratives contained within the novel as a group complicates any attempt to cast this moment as one which defines the outlook of the novel as whole. Looking at the three cases together a pattern becomes apparent. Meg and Nanse occupy uncertain social positions within the community whilst Mr. and Mrs. Dwining are economic migrants whose positions are entirely tied to the mill. The Dwinings represent a new type of social outsider in a community which has always excluded some. Dalmailing is thus not an Eden corrupted by the Cayenne mill's apple but a dynamic social space which can both include and exclude. What I think Galt's suicides suggest when viewed together is the complexity of rural development and the impossibility of imposing a progressive or degenerative narrative on these spaces. They read counter to Balwhidder's early need to create a unified and idealised image of the traditional community in his account of his own final sermon.

Balwhidder's modern discretion is incapable of preventing deaths, it is only capable of bringing the outcast into the graveyard. The living community are often impervious to Balwhidder's edicts and advice; his congregation ignore his attempts to limit the scale of local smuggling, his arguments for marriages, and in some cases even turn away from his church in the later part of the narrative. However, the graveyard is, like the annals themselves, a representation of Dalmailing which the minister can constitute for himself. His introductory sermon is therefore perhaps by the end of the novel laid open to greater scrutiny, and the communion between ancestor, living community and future generations which he describes is drawn into question as he is revealed to act as an author of both local

history and graveyard space. The incorporation of the bodies of Nanse Birrell and the Dwinings to the parish graveyard highlight Balwhidder's desire to manufacture a rural space denuded of both the superstitious traditions of the past and the modern negative influences of external capitalist forces. Meg's corpse, lost in the mill dam after a balladic act of martyrdom, symbolises the disruption of this project. Through *Annals'* three suicide scenes, Galt highlights that the nostalgia for true community evinced in the Blackwoodian graveyard image is actually a very modern fiction.

A 'Disgusting Oral Tale': Unpacking the Suicide's Grave in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*

The August 1823 edition of *Blackwood's* featured a curious letter from James Hogg to his *Noctes Ambrosianae* foil 'Christopher North'. Titled 'A Scott's Mummy', the letter opens by recounting a dialogue between Hogg and 'Sir Christy'. The exchange is typical of the *Noctes:* shepherd and editor meet in Ambrose's tavern and discuss their correspondence, revealing their opposing perspectives on writing about rural life. The Ettrick Shepherd was a character who made regular appearances in the *Noctes,* although Hogg only ever contributed poetry and songs to the series which meant his speeches were generally authored by one of the other contributors. However, in this instance the conversation is recounted from the point of view of the shepherd, and written by his real counterpart James Hogg. Given James Hogg's increasingly troubled relationship with the fictionalised representations of him as the 'Shepherd' in the *Noctes,* and Wilson's brutal review of Hogg's *Memoir* in 1821, one might read the letter as an instance in which Hogg has the opportunity to reply. In 'A Scots Mummy' the Shepherd writes back.

The exchange begins when North demands to know why the Shepherd rarely writes to him. When the Shepherd declares he has 'naething to write about', North enumerates the 'boundless phenomena of nature' which might furnish appropriate material for a letter from a shepherd: 'you should look less at lambs and rams, and he-goats, Hogg, and more at the grand phenomena of nature. You should drink less out of the toddy-jug, shepherd, and more at the perennial spring' (139).

This fictionalised exchange acts as the stimulus for the main content of the letter, an account that 'is the very thing for old Christy' (140). Teasingly Hogg describes the

sublime sights which come under the gaze of the Shepherd, the 'many bright and beautiful appearances on the face of the sky, and in the ever-varying hues of the mountains', the obvious subjects which 'old Christy' has had in mind, before having his protagonist reject them as 'they were, in fact, no phenomenons, if I understand that French word properly, nor ever were viewed as such by any of the country people' (140). The Shepherd's literal translation of 'phenomenon' serves to deflate North's bombast; Hogg's invocation of both folk knowledge and modern French in this passage serves to cast North as the less informed character. It is a deliberate misunderstanding designed to puncture the rhetoric of North's pastoral sublime.

What follows instead is the account of the exhumation of the 'Scot's Mummy'. Hogg recounts the 'traditionary history' of a suicide buried on a hill-top in Ettrick. The story features none of the sublime 'phenomena' North has demanded. It describes a poor outcast shepherd's suicide, after possibly stealing some cutlery, local rumours that the devil aided in his death which are largely fuelled by the fact that 'if you try all the ropes that are thrown over all the outfield hay rigs in Scotland, there is not one among a thousand of them will hang a colley dog' and the subsequent burial of the malefactor on the wild summit of Cowancroft (141). This is not the story North or Wilson would have desired, and Hogg is slyly aware of this:

> Well, you will be saying, that, excepting the small ornamental part of the devil and the hay-rope, there is nothing at all of what you wanted in this ugly traditional tale. Stop a wee bit, my dear Sir Christy. Dinna just cut afore the point. Ye ken auld fools an' young bairns shouldna see things that are half done. Stop just a wee bit, ye auld crusty, crippled, crabbit editor body, an' I'll let ye see that the grand *phenomena of Nature's* a' to come to yet' (142).

The grand phenomena turns out to be the exhumation of the suicide's corpse by two local youths bored of cutting peat near Cowanscroft summit. Just beneath the surface of his grave they find the miraculously preserved body of the suicide wrapped in a blanket and with the rope still around his neck. The young men proceed to partially raise, then handle and loot the corpse, actions which are described with close attention to their materiality:

> One of the lads gripped the face of the corpse with his finger and thumb, and the cheeks felt quite soft and fleshy, but the dimples remained, and did not spring out again. He had fine yellow hair about nine inches long, but not a hair of it could they pull out, till they cut part of it off with a knife. They also cut off some portions of his clothes, which were all quite fresh, and distributed them among their acquaintances' (143).

Throughout this account, the Shepherd undercuts the physicality of the description with repeated reiterations of his own distaste and disgust, emphasising that he himself has not visited the corpse: 'I never heard of a preservation so wonderful, if it be true as was related to me, for still I have not had the curiosity to go and view the body myself' (142). Like the 'disgusting oral tale' that preceded it, the account of the preserved corpse is the product of local oral culture. It is not the first hand account of 'the day dawn, and the sunshine; the dazzling splendours of noon, and the sombre hues that pervade the mountains' that North demanded, but a collection of second-hand rumours about the reopening of a grave. The Shepherd ignores the depopulated sublime landscape his editor requested. Instead, where North imagines an Edenic rural world, the Shepherd reinscribes the human traditions which exist on its surface. Where North would see a wild, majestic summit, the Shepherd identifies a grave and the jumble of 'ugly traditional tales' which cluster around it (142).

This resistant letter concludes with a note of defiance:

> These are all the particulars that I remember relating to this curious discovery; and I am sure you will confess that a very valuable receipt may be drawn from it for the preservation of dead bodies. If you should think of trying the experiment yourself, you have nothing more to do than hang yourself in a hay rope, which, by the by, is to be made of risp, and leave orders that you are to be buried in a wild height, and I will venture to predict, that though you repose there for ages an inmate of your mossy cell, of the cloud, and the storm, you shall set up your head at the last day as fresh as a moor cock. I remain, my worthy friend, yours very truly,
>
> James Hogg (143).

The real Ettrick Shepherd addresses North, and perhaps Wilson, with an elegant 'go hang yourself'. This sort of complex semi-fictionalised literary game-playing between contributors was not unusual within the pages of *Blackwood's* and read alone perhaps all we could take from this particular letter might be confirmation of the rising animosity between Hogg and senior figures at *Blackwood's* during the 1820s. However, June 1824 saw the publication of an anonymously published novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, whose closing pages contained an extended excerpt from this text, along with a second conflicting report of the exhumation of an Ettrick suicide. Read in relation to this text, the letter takes on new life.

The novel, and in particular its closing exhumation scene, have been interpreted in numerous ways by various different critics but have a habit of eluding any complete explanation; as Susan Manning commented 'in Hogg's multiple retellings of the suicide's post-mortem existence, the re-opening of the grave is a prominent and insistent, though unexplained, aspect of the narrative' (103). The following analysis proposes reading 'The Scots Mummy' as an interpretative key to *Confessions.* I argue that Hogg's rejection of the pastoral sublime in his letter to 'Old Christy' and his adoption of the comic grotesque of oral tradition signpost key ways of looking at the novel and in particular its engagement with the dead. Hogg's decision to use the exhumed body of a suicide as a symbol within this exchange is particularly subversive when considered alongside the fetishisation of idealised rural Scottish graveyards across the publications of the *Blackwood's* group, and particularly in Wilson's own *Blackwood's* stories of the early 1820s. In repeatedly disinterring the corpse of a suicide, Hogg subverts a fundamental convention of the Blackwoodian tale: the enduring Parish kirkyard.

Interpreting *Confessions*, and in particular Hogg's representation of the novel's 'Editor' figure, as explorations of the growing tensions between Hogg and the editorial team at *Blackwood's* is not unprecedented in Hogg scholarship. In his 'Introduction' to the 1969 Oxford University Press edition of *Confessions* John Carey traces the relationship between Wilson and Hogg during the early years of the 1820s, suggesting that 'Wringhim's divided attitude to his "elevated and dreaded friend" can, without much imagination, be paralleled in Hogg's relationship with Professor Wilson' (xx). Kelly E. Battles has argued that *Confessions* constitutes a response to the boorish, licentious images of Hogg which had become common currency within the magazine, where the writer was increasingly cast as

'a naturally talented but unschooled and undisciplined writer who, because of his coarse background, has no sense of propriety' (54). She argues that in *Confessions*, Hogg casts 'the editor', whom Battles identifies as a 'stand-in for John Wilson', as the one struggling with improper appetites (57). When the body of the suicide is uncovered, Battles contends that the Editor's necrophilic and homoerotic desires are revealed: 'the true nature of the Editor's appreciation rather than being the pure and disinterested aesthetic pleasure of the connoisseur or the similarly disinterested critical gaze of the scientist, is a sexualised, erotic pleasure directed at a doubly taboo object: a male corpse' (62). Similarly Ian Duncan suggest that when the James Hogg depicted at Thirlestane Market refuses to guide the party of antiquarians to the suicide's grave in the last pages of the novel, 'he takes back his folk identity from the *Blackwood's* wits to utter a gruff rejection of the unseemly business of exhuming the countryside for public amusement' although Duncan also notes that this is what 'as anonymous author of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner,* he has been doing all along' (173).

Finally, in an argument which perhaps bears the greatest likeness to my own, Mark Schoenfield interprets *Confessions* and 'A Scot's Mummy' as responses to the cruel manhandling of Hogg's *Memoir* in an 1821 review by John Wilson: '*Blackwood's* published a devastating review of Hogg's 1821 *Memoir.* Hogg covertly replied to that review with the short letter, 'A Scot's Mummy' and, more substantially the anonymous *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824)' (*British* 203). I extend this interpretation by arguing for a critique on Hogg's part which extends beyond authorial rivalries. I contend that 'A Scots Mummy' is not simply a supplementary text to *Confessions*, but a key to the author's intent throughout the text. Tracing the concerns which are played out in the typically Blackwoodian letter of 1823 through the novel reveals not just a personal antagonism between key figures in the *Blackwood's* group, but Hogg's radical critique of the Blackwoodian approach to rural subjects, and of the world view which this perspective articulates. This critique is embodied in the reoccurring figure of the shifting, degenerating 'scots mummy'.

Confessions features a tripartite structure: it opens with 'the editor's narrative' an editor's compilation of the 'traditional' account of the fall of the Lairds of Dalcastle, following the mysterious murder of the Dalcastle heir George Colwan, and the disappearance of his illegitimate brother Robert Wringhim; this is followed by the

'Confessions of a Sinner', a first-hand and somewhat conflicting account of these events, apparently authored by Wringhim; and finally the book concludes with the editor's account of the discovery of the 'Confessions' during the exhumation of a border suicide. These three accounts are close enough in content to convince the reader that they relate to the same events but feature disparities which make it impossible to furnish a cohesive narrative from the materials provided.

The identity of the 'Scots Mummy' is one of the many plot features of the novel which remains uncertain at the conclusion of the text. The corpse which is exhumed in the final pages is in possession of the partially handwritten pamphlet containing the *Confessions,* and is therefore generally assumed to be the body of the text's protagonist Robert Wringhim, however this identification remains tenuous at best. As Michael York Mason points out, in a text which is full of contradictory accounts, 'the strongest contradictions…seem to centre on the suicide's grave at Thirlestane Green' (17). Just as the novel is split into three inconsistent parts, the corpse also has three contradictory narratives assigned to it: 'each of the three lots of evidence about this burial (the editor's exhumation, the exhumation described in Hogg's letter, and the local tradition given in Hogg's letter and enlarged on by the guide) conflict with the other two in at least one important detail' (Mason 18). The contradictory nature of the different accounts of the suicide's grave make definitively identifying the 'remains' which the editor describes impossible. As Mason has illustrated the features of the three accounts are incompatible:

> The three versions are as follows: (1) a grave on Faw-Law of a morose peasant cowherd who hung himself with a hay rope on a Sunday in September in the second decade of the 18th century after being detected as a thief, those gains—a silver knife and fork—were buried with him and whose skull was crushed (the traditional grave); (2) a grave dug up by two peat-cutters in the summer of 1823 on Cowan's Croft, containing an old blanket, a hay rope, a broad blue bonnet, and a well-preserved fair-haired corpse, with three old coins in its pockets (the *Blackwood's* grave); (3) a grave on Faw-Law already half-opened, and reopened by the editor in September 1823, containing a dark-haired corpse, half decomposed, with an unusually round skull damaged by a spade, and a layer of fresh cow-dung on the sole of one foot; it was dressed in massive old-fashioned clothes, in the pockets of which were a sharp

> clasp knife, possibly silver, a comb, gimlet, vial, square board, plated knee-buckles, and samples of cloth; also in the grave was a leather tobacco pouch, containing the pamphlet The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (21).

There are a number of possible explanations for the inconsistencies between the narratives; first, we might argue, along with the majority of scholars who have looked at this text, that the three stories illustrate the inconsistency of human testimony as different story-tellers deliberately or accidentally alter key features of the narrative. Alternatively, there may be more than one suicide's grave in the vicinity of Thirlestane and their narratives have been conflated and confused over time. Finally, as Megan Coyer has suggested, the body itself may have changed between accounts: 'the implication may be that Gil-Martin's power over Wringhim's body continues beyond the grave- the flesh remains demonically shiftable' (13).

What all of these possible explanations have in common is that they completely disrupt the conventions of immutability and accurate memorialisation which characterise the tradition of the *Blackwood's* graveyard. Whether the identity of the suicide has been forgotten, confused or has changed within the grave, what is certain is that the grave space which Hogg repeatedly explores in *Confessions* and its associated letter is a complete counter-image of the country graves which Wilson celebrates in *Lights and Shadows,* and which Balwhidder valorises in his final sermon. Wilson's churchyard is a place where local people expect 'to be spoken of frequently on Sabbath among the groups of which we used to be one', and 'to be visited, at such times, as long as there remains on earth any one to whom our face was dear!' (144). There is no graveyard in Hogg's text and those who speak of and visit the suicide in *Confessions* are rather different from those depicted by Wilson or Balwhidder. Orality and superstition re-enter the cleanly symbolic historic graveyards of the *Blackwood's* group in the form of the suicide, suggesting that the past and the rural cannot be divorced from their more unpalatable and 'uncivilised' aspects.

Those who visit the grave of the suicide are not there to remember and have no attachment to the dead man's 'face', instead the young men who exhume the body in 'A Scot's Mummy' manipulate its face with their hands so roughly that they leave an impression in the flesh that 'did not spring out again'. The second group to disinter the

suicide are equally unattached to the body's identity; their search for the head has nothing to do with his face, and rather resembles the search for a depersonified scientific specimen for the editor relates that he was 'very anxious to possess the skull' (249). If the first men to resurrect the corpse are bored youths interested in the body only as a distraction from their labours which they can mindlessly manhandle and deface, the second exhumation party are urban voyeurs, come to exhume the body of an unknown suicide and to take away souvenirs. These scenes represent a complete inversion of the ancestral relationships between the dead, the living rural community and the urban literary class which Wilson had imagined. There are only mercenary connections based on capital between these parties in *Confessions*, as locals give up their traditions, their stories, and their dead with an almost iconoclastic zeal, exhuming the past for money, and allowing their gentlemanly visitors to loot the grave.

In the rural, oral tradition that Hogg describes, the suicide is not an individual memorialised across time but a subject for speculation and story-telling. Locals treat their history rather as the two young men treat the suicide's corpse, man-handling and defacing the past for entertainment. Orality in *Confessions* is subject to individual adaption and replete with superstition. There is no pure vein of poetry, and orality does not serve to cement a moral community with national application. The rural characters described in *Confessions* never inhabit a community with an obvious heart or centre, instead we encounter isolated castles and cottages in a menacingly depopulated border-land. Rumours and gossip swirl in this space, but their sources are shrouded. The Dalcastle estate appears to be at the heart of a host of rumours and traditions but the relationship between its inhabitants and those who live around it seems to be one of surveillance rather than community. Modern market forces and pre-modern superstition both inform the rural community's response to the dead. The final isolated and misremembered grave of the suicide refutes any attempt to cast rural Scottish spaces as repositories of true social connection or continuity through time.

Further, there is no modernising, moderate middle-class character there to right the wrongs of rural tradition and gossip. The benevolent minister figure, Mr. Blanchard, is unceremoniously shot at close-range early in the sinner's account and no further equivalent character emerges within the text. Instead religion in the majority of the text is a dangerous force which allows characters to ignore and defile social bonds. In the figure of the

Reverend Wringhim, Hogg paints a minister whose function within society is not to create ties but dissolve them. Where ministers like Balwhidder and those depicted in *Lights and Shadows* are moderate Evangelicals with a largely secular function, building a middle-class moral community, the Reverend Wringhim's main aim seems to be the creation of controversy and the destruction of family and community connections which fall outside of his own branch of Calvinist belief. Responding to Lady Dalcastle's complaints against her husband, the Reverend asserts not only the absolute relativity of moral codes, 'to the wicked all things are wicked; but to the just, all things are just and right', but the complete lack of interconnectivity between the 'just' and those around them: 'we have no more to do with the sins of the wicked and unconverted here, than with those of an infidel Turk; for all earthly bonds and fellowships are swallowed up in the holy community of the Reformed Church' (13). Robert Wringhim's own faith is about the differentiation of the individual from those around him: 'I deemed myself as an eagle among the children of men, soaring on high , and looking down with pity and contempt on the creatures below', and allows him, according to his own account, to commit fratricide, matricide and eventually suicide (116). Hogg reminds the reader of the divisiveness of religion within Scotland's recent past and its potential to ferment social fragmentation. Where Galt's Balwhidder tries to use an account of the undisturbed graves of Covenanters to neutralise the problematic and violent history of Scottish rural spaces, Hogg does quite the opposite exhuming a suicidal fanatic's corpse to reveal the fractures in Scotland's recent past.

Returning to the relationship between Hogg and his suicide, Mark Schoenfield argues that representations of Hogg within *Blackwood's* consistently imagined him as an artefact from the past, a static leaving from a previous time:

> Where Hogg recognised himself as a historiographic agent, constructing, through his works and public persona, interpretations of history, the editors of *Blackwood's* relegated him to historical object, subject to their interpretations. Like so many of the found items that permeate *Blackwood's,* the recurrences of Hogg, rooted to his Scottish ancestry and shepherding origins, enforced a nascent Tory historiography counterpoised to the *Edinburgh's* construction of historical progress (*British* 203).

In Schoenfield's reading, Hogg's role within the magazine's imaginative scheme was as a figure of that which was lost in the march of progress but this symbolic role denuded him of agency. The 'Ettrick Shepherd' was central to the *Blackwood's* brand, 'Hogg's significance to *Blackwood's…*is as a precursor, a legitimating figure, and a mode of exploring the uniqueness of Scottish culture' (*British* 205). However, the importance of Hogg as a symbolic figure also limited his possible roles as a writer within the magazine, as we saw in Wilson's essay 'Some Observations on the Poetry of the Agricultural and that of the Pastoral Districts of Scotland, Illustrated by a Comparative View of the Genius of Burns and Ettrick Shepherd' (1819). The shepherd could not, and should not, become an urbane literary wit but must remain in his role as rustic autodidact. The objectification which Schoenfield identifies is inherently linked to Hogg's status as rural labourer. Although the problematic exchanges between Hogg and his editors are personal controversies, the conflict between an imagined static peasant poet and the living author behind this mask gestures towards the way in which *Blackwood's* fiction writers utilise Scottish rural scenes. This is, I argue, the background which informs 'A Scots Mummy' and the exhumation scenes of *Confessions*. These scenes function to expose and question *Blackwood's* presentation of Hogg and the tradition he comes from as the modern Blackwoodian's buried ancestor. The personal and the abstract are inherently linked in Hogg's critique. In criticising his own treatment as rural Scottish writer, Hogg exposes a broader problem with the *Blackwood's* view of the countryside. Scottish rural space in *Blackwood's* is an imagined, rather than real, space, like Hogg it cannot change in any radical way because its primary function is symbolic. The Blackwoodian graveyard is at the heart of this project, a tangible image of *Blackwood's* ideological agenda. The shape-shifting, isolated corpse which Hogg describes in the closing chapter of his novel problematises these attempts to cure and preserve the countryside and those who inhabited it.

Conclusion

This thesis has made a case for the figurative role of the kirkyard and grave within the writings of the *Blackwood's* group. It has argued that the employment of images of a specifically Scottish, rural kirkyard was central to the Tory romantic cultural nationalism which differentiated *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* from contemporary rival publications, particularly the Whig periodicals published by Archibald Constable. The idealised, rural kirkyard operated to articulate a form of Scottish-British identity founded on a heavily sanitised version of the Scottish Parish state. In an expanding, intensely politicised periodical marketplace, *Blackwood's* used nostalgic images of sociability to engender a distinctly Tory readership identity in its urban professional-class audience. Readers were a club, a nation, professionals, insiders. At the heart of these layered corporate identities was an imagined shared heritage rooted in the language and customs of Scotland's endangered traditional culture; a heritage embodied in the idealised figure of the rural kirkyard.

The symbol of the kirkyard underwent a constant process of renegotiation within the magazine's pages, and beyond them, in the novels of the *Blackwood's* group writers. These renegotiations take place in narratives featuring bodies which cannot be incorporated into the idealised graveyard; bodies which have been stolen, murdered, executed, dissected or banished from these spaces. The heterogeneity and interpenetration of content within the magazine allows current affairs to mingle with the historicised parish. Images of the unquiet dead allow contributors to open nostalgic fantasy up to the debates and discussions current in the early nineteenth century in real time. The case-studies that have formed the last four chapters of this thesis showcase a range of approaches to thinking about the disrupted kirkyard amongst *Blackwood's* group authors. They interact with the concept of the dead in a variety of ways, often using similar motifs and stimuli to reach different conclusions and articulate different images of society. However, they are all unified, not just by their affiliation with a particular publisher, but by a shared interest in the social function of the dead, and a shared concern with defining collective identity.

In this conclusion I want to look at the broader implications of my study on approaches to the *Blackwood's* moment. How can the acknowledgement of a shared use of the figure of the grave across the *Blackwood's* group impact how we think about Romantic-

era Scottish literature? Further, how might this approach to *Blackwood's* challenge or reinforce prevailing narratives within the study of Scottish literature more generally?

The *Blackwood's* Conversation

The group of texts I have looked at in this thesis, although acknowledged as characteristically Blackwoodian, have often been examined as examples of quite different traditions. As I discussed in chapter two, *Blackwood's* regional fiction has been generally characterised as proto-kailyard writing. In the narratives of critics like Ian Campbell, *Lights and Shadows* directly foreshadows the nostalgic, moralised pastoral of J.M. Barrie's *A Window in Thrums* (1889) and S.R. Crockett's *The Lilac Sunbonnet* (1894). Liam McIlvanney describes Wilson's text as 'a baleful marker on the way to kailyard'(6). Texts like Galt's 'The Buried Alive' and Hogg's supernatural writing are placed within a separate tradition, that of the Scottish Gothic, as defined by David Punter, and Ian Duncan. Alongside these two separate critical routes, the study of the Scottish historical novel places *Blackwood's* novels, like *Annals of the Parish* and *Justified Sinner,* alongside the Scottish novels of Walter Scott. These groupings of Scottish Romantic era texts have furnished compelling narratives about the development of Scottish writing. However, reading across generic parameters and grouping the texts in terms of theme and cohort offers a different perspective on these texts and their possible afterlives.

In looking at the *Blackwood's* graves as a group rather than as examples of disparate traditions I employ the terms of the magazine's own self-definition as conversational club. Dividing the *Blackwood's* group texts by genre is, in a way, counterintuitive because it ignores the inter-generic conversations which take place within the group's writings. The *Blackwood's* group had at its nucleus *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* and the magazine form which this publication adopted offered an image of the conversational, sociable group identity central to Blackwoodian Conservativism. A.L. Strout has described *Blackwood's* as the 'most intimate of magazines' and this characterisation of the magazine encapsulates the way in which *Blackwood's* utilises different corporate identities to cast readers as 'insiders' (497). The crowded literary marketplace goes some way towards explaining *Blackwood's* adoption of local settings and intimate modes of address. The magazine uses images of both the village and the club to create a space removed from the wider contemporary literary sphere. Scots, pseudonym and allusion

articulate inclusion and readership identity. The Burkean dead operate as perhaps the strongest symbol of this modus operandi. This mode of address is also highly politicised; emotional social connections based on group identities oppose the individualised personal connections and depersonalised images of society characteristic of political economy. Mark Schoenfield has summarised the terms of *Blackwood's* self-identification:

> the success of *Blackwood's…* was staked on a multi-layered struggle for the public imaginary, for the terms that would constitute common sense and the norms of history, for the representation of the Scottish and the British national ideals, and for sales, calculated in hard subscription rates and booksellers accounts (Schoenfield 100).

In picking up a single thematic thread, this thesis has sketched the different connections and influences between texts written by the magazine's contributors. Bringing together the idealised kirkyards of the group's regional fiction and the horrifying corpses of their Gothic tales makes it possible to trace the national symbolism which is invested in these motifs across the *Blackwood's* group oeuvre in a way in which generic studies cannot.

Blackwoodian Afterlives

Disrupting the generic narratives which lead from specific *Blackwood's* group texts to later century Scottish writing also offers opportunities to reconsider how these later texts are categorised. Andrew Nash has identified two schools of fiction traditionally associated with the period: 'historical romance, typified by Robert Louis Stevenson, and nostalgic rural idylls epitomised by the so-called Kailyard fiction of J.M. Barrie and Ian Maclaren' (*Victorian* 145). This understanding of a Victorian Scottish literature consisting of two separate, depoliticised traditions has led to a tendency to characterise the nineteenth century as a period of national stagnation, or as Nash puts it 'the ascent of Victoria, it seemed, signalled the descent of Scottish culture' (145). In exploring the shared motifs and ideas which underpinned the progenitors of both of these schools this thesis contributes to the trend in recent scholarship which Nash asserts 'has proved this conclusion to be drastically oversimplified' (146).

The potential impact of this idea of a joined up *Blackwood's* group kirkyard on approaches to nineteenth-century Scottish literature is illustrated by briefly thinking about the implications of this motif on one of Robert Louis Stevenson's Scottish stories. Some sixty years after the heyday of the *Blackwood's* group, Robert Louis Stevenson authored a quintessentially Blackwoodian Tale of Terror. Drawing upon genre forming terror tales, like 'The Buried Alive', in 'The Bodysnatcher' (1884) Stevenson once again brings professional Edinburgh and rural Scotland into collision over the figure of the grave. Looking closely at the way in which Stevenson uses the rural kirkyard in this tale both illustrates the arguments about the role of death and the grave in the *Blackwood's* story which I have made in this thesis, and gestures towards the ways in which these arguments can be applied within nineteenth-century Scottish studies beyond *Blackwood's*. Placing Stevenson's *The Bodysnatcher* in relation to a *Blackwood's* kirkyard reveals a pervasive relationship between Stevenson's tale and the magazine. It also gestures towards the possibility of a particularly Scottish tradition of resistant Tory Romanticism founded on the virulent Conservativism of the early Blackwoodians.

Stevenson's tale opens with a confrontation between 'an old drunken Scotsman' Fettes and a respected surgeon Dr. Wolf MacFarlane in an almost contemporary English pub (probably sometime between 1870 and 1880 based on the ages of the two men) and this incident provides the frame for Fettes' account of the gruesome events which took place during the men's time as medical students in Edinburgh in the late 1820s. Working for the sinister Dr. K- a clear reference to the infamous Dr. Knox- the students accept deliveries of bodies for dissection from an Irish duo on his behalf despite increasing evidence that the victims did not die of natural causes. Events take a further dark turn when MacFarlane himself murders an acquaintance and disguises his crime by selling the body to the school as a specimen- a deception which Fettes helps to facilitate. However, the climactic horror of the tale is not, as we have perhaps come to expect, directly related to the crimes of Burke and Hare. Stevenson disappoints reader expectation by making no further reference to the West Port crimes and instead situates the narrative's crisis in a bodysnatching venture the two students make to a rural Parish, Glencorse near Penicuik, where the body of an old woman whom they have exhumed transforms into that of MacFarlane's long dissected victim.

At the opening of the tale the aging Fettes is described as a Cleishbotham-type figure: a benign feature of the cosy pub fireside which he habitually occupies, 'his blue camlet cloak was a local antiquity, like the church spire. His place in the parlour at the George, his absence from church, his old crapulous, disreputable vices, were all things of course in Debenham' (67). However, this entombment within the stasis of rural life is broken by the arrival of Dr. MacFarlane the mention of whose name jolts the drunk into sobriety: 'we were all startled by the transformation, as if a man had risen from the dead' (68).

This frame rehearses the larger collision described in the body of the story, which can perhaps be best illustrated by engaging with the author's extended description of the graveyard which Fettes and MacFarlane are to plunder:

> there came the news of a burial in the rustic graveyard of Glencorse. Time had little changed the place in question. It stood then, as now, upon a cross-road, out of call of human habitations, and buried fathoms deep in the foliage of six cedar-trees. ... once in seven days the voice of the bell and the old tunes of the precentor, were the only sounds that disturbed the silence around the rural church. The Resurrection Man- to use a by-name of the period- was not to be deterred by any of the sanctions of customary piety. It was part of his trade to despise and desecrate the scrolls and trumpets of old tombs, the paths worn by the feet of worshippers and mourners, and the offerings and the inscriptions of bereaved affection. To rustic neighbourhoods where love is more than commonly tenacious, and where some bonds of blood or fellowship unite the entire society of a parish, the body snatcher, far from being repelled by natural respect, was attracted by the ease and safety of the task. To bodies that had been laid in earth, in joyful expectation of the resurrection of a far different awakening, there came that hasty, lamp-lit, terror-haunted resurrection of the spade and mattock. The coffin was forced, the cerements torn, and the melancholy relics, clad in sackcloth, after being rattled for hours on moonless by-ways, were at length exposed to uttermost indignities before a class of gaping boys (80).

The image of a rural space in which one steps out of the narrative of linear time, which we encountered in the frame narrative, is again repeated in this description, with even the image of the reputable old church reprising its symbolic function. These rural spaces become allied with the grave (Glencorse's name itself contains an archaic form of the word for a dead body making it literally the valley of the corpse). Glencorse kirkyard is a space reminiscent of the *Blackwood's* kirkyards of the earlier century; a space which represents the pre-enlightenment social values attributed to rural spaces 'where love is more than commonly tenacious, and where some bonds of blood or fellowship unite the entire society of a parish'. The pervasive Blackwoodian image of the sentient body's journey to the dissection table is also indicated in the passage's final sentence which recaps a plot used in 'The Buried Alive', Thomson's 'Le Revenant' and Hogg's 'Terrible Letters'.

Stevenson was himself highly aware of the *Blackwood's* tradition. As I discussed in the introduction, he reviewed the new edition of the *Noctes* in 1876 for *The Academy*. Stevenson's review is favourable; he recognises Wilson's resistant, adversarial agenda, and suggests that the wild, shocking prose of the *Noctes* could stir up his own literary milieu:

> this book is not only welcome because it takes us on a visit to Wilson when he is in his best vein, but because Wilson in all his veins is the antidote or at least the antithesis of much contemporary cant. Here is a book full of the salt of youth; a red-hot shell of animal spirits calculated, if anybody reads it, to set up a fine conflagration among the dry heather of present-day Phariseeism. Touch it as you will, it gives out shrewd galvanic shocks, which may perhaps brighten and shake up this smoke-dried and punctilious generation (231).

Liam McIlvanney also indicates that Stevenson considered serialising the novel which would eventually be titled *Weir of Hermiston* in *Blackwood's* because of its history of publishing 'queer' 'scotch' writing: 'he reflected, there was one magazine worth trying: *"*It has occurred to me that there is one quarter in which the very Scotchness of the thing would be found a recommendation and where the queerness might possibly be stomached. I mean *Blackwood""*(6). This perception of the character of the magazine, which by late century was increasingly more staid and middlebrow, than 'queer' and 'Scotch', illustrates a familiarity with the history of the periodical and the reputation for scandal, Scottishness and the strange which had sealed its success during the early century. Stevenson's

invocation of Blackwoodian tropes is therefore traceable to a familiarity and identification with this tradition, and an awareness of the magazine's antagonistic ethos.

Stevenson's self-avowed project was aesthetically oppositional. In his 1882 essay a 'Gossip on Romance' he critiques the British public's appetite for novels of modern life, stating that 'English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate', and portrays his own writing as a 'romantic' antidote to this trend (143). His use of Blackwoodian figures and themes in 'The Bodysnatcher' gestures to the possibility of an ongoing tradition of resistant Romanticism in Scottish writing which is rooted not just in the example of Scott, whom Stevenson terms 'the king of the romantics', but which also seems to draw upon the adversarial early years of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (*Gossip* 147).

Such a reading complicates both narratives which characterise nineteenth-century Scottish writing as stagnant and dipartite, and those which cast that stagnated tradition as John Wilson's only legacy to Scottish literature. The *Blackwood's* group dead, in this reading, contribute to an understanding of the legacy of the Tory tradition within Scottish literature as complex and vital. Andrew Noble's largely negative Tory hegemony, characterised as regressive and stultifying, is potentially replaced with an influence which extends across political boundaries and periods, and which can resist or affirm the political and literary status quo. The unsettled kirkyards of the *Blackwood's* group offer opportunities to unsettle the boundaries of community and nation.

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