

**Walter Scott, James Hogg and Uncanny Testimony:  
Questions of Evidence and Authority**

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## Preface

### Note:

The dates cited in Grierson's edition of Scott's *Letters* have been checked against Corson's *Notes and Index to Sir Herbert Grierson's Edition of the Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 1979, and the *Millgate Union Catalogue of Walter Scott Correspondence*. See bibliography for further details.

### Referencing:

Quotations in the thesis from the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels and the Stirling/South Carolina Edition of James Hogg will be introduced with a shortened title of the work and page number e.g. (*Waverley* 23) or (*Spy* 44). A full list of these abbreviations is included below. Shortened titles for 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror', 'The Tapestry Chamber', and *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq.*, are also given.

### James Hogg:

( <i>Brownie</i> )	<i>The Brownie of Bodsbeck</i> , 1818
( <i>Confessions</i> )	<i>The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner</i> , 1824
( <i>Contributions</i> )	<i>Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books</i> , 2006
( <i>Perils</i> )	<i>The Three Perils of Man</i> , 1822
( <i>Spy</i> )	<i>The Spy</i> , 1810-11
( <i>Tales</i> )	<i>Winter Evening Tales</i> , 1820

### Walter Scott:

( <i>Bride</i> )	<i>The Bride of Lammermoor</i> , 1819
('Chamber')	'The Tapestry Chamber', 1828
( <i>Demonology</i> )	<i>Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq.</i> , 1830
( <i>Guy</i> )	<i>Guy Mannering</i> , 1815
( <i>Ivanhoe</i> )	<i>Ivanhoe</i> , 1819
( <i>Minstrelsy</i> )	<i>The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border</i> , 1802-3
('Mirror')	'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror', 1828
( <i>Monastery</i> )	<i>The Monastery</i> , 1820
( <i>Redgauntlet</i> )	<i>Redgauntlet</i> , 1824
( <i>Reliquiæ</i> )	<i>Reliquiæ Trotcosienses</i> , 2004
( <i>Waverley</i> )	<i>Waverley</i> , 1814

Endnotes are located at the end of each chapter.

## **Acknowledgements**

I should like to acknowledge my sincere appreciation of the kindly assistance given to me throughout my research by Professor Peter Garside and Professor Susan Manning of the University of Edinburgh. It was a privilege to work with two such outstanding scholars and I would like to thank them once again for sharing their knowledge and expertise so generously in all matters connected with Scott and Hogg.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis has been written by myself and is my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature:

## Abstract

This thesis investigates the representation of the supernatural in the literature of Walter Scott and James Hogg. In comparing both authors it takes advantage of two recent scholarly editions: the Stirling/South Carolina edition of Hogg and the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels. I trace the development of Scott's persistent interest in various categories of the supernatural: the uncanny; witchcraft; second sight; and astrology. His literary career began in 1796 with translations of German Romantic poetry. These were followed by publication of his collection of ballads and folklore, known as the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802-3, and by the longer poems such as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805. Subsequently, Scott's investigation of the supernatural would continue within a number of key novels and his shorter fiction. *The Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq.*, 1830, was one of his final attempts to establish how far the evidence of a credible witness might supply ineluctable testimony in accounts of the supernatural. Scott's legal training, and antiquarian skills, lent particular authority into his investigations of the possibilities of the existence, or otherwise, of the supernatural.

By way of contrast, James Hogg's lack of formal education, and scanty knowledge of the progressive advances of the Scottish Enlightenment, was associated with a ready credulity in matters of the supernatural. His literary work, such as *The Mountain Bard*, 1807, or his later collection of *Winter Evening Tales*, 1820, demonstrated a familiarity with ballads, and an unlettered folklore tradition, that appeared to confirm his position as a believer in superstitious and irrational practices. However, this thesis will argue that Hogg actually possesses a shrewd and sophisticated understanding of the authority of the supernatural. This is manifest in his literary efforts to record and investigate various types of uncanny testimony, when compared with those of Scott. Hogg's view of the supernatural is complex and essentially subversive. His final novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824, and his later contributions to the fashionable annuals and gift-books published between 1826 and 1834, reveal an author deeply engaged with demonstrating the unique role of the supernatural within Scottish society, particularly as a channel of dissent and discord.

The Ettrick Shepherd and the Author of Waverley founded their literary relationship upon a shared enthusiasm for the supernatural tales and traditions of the Scottish Borders. Their friendship was both competitive and complementary. Critics have generally tended to assume that Scott, rather than Hogg, was the sceptical party where belief in the existence of the supernatural is concerned. However, closer examination of their work reveals that such assumptions do not necessarily stand up. Ultimately, Hogg emerges as the author with greater resistance to an irrational belief in the supernatural. His position as an observer, and critic, of the antiquarian and enlightened literary establishment, with its dependence on the authority of printed texts, is developed through his literary investigation of the supernatural.

My choice of works to consider has been necessarily limited by questions of space. Where possible, I have selected those texts that seem to me to offer ready comparison between the two authors. Some novels such as Scott's *The Antiquary*, 1816, or *The Pirate*, 1822, might be regarded as worthy of inclusion in this study of the supernatural. However, there are no real equivalents of these in Hogg's work.

## Chapter One: Opening the Debate, 1790-1810

This thesis sets out to investigate the complex depiction of the supernatural, or uncanny, phenomena in the literature of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) and James Hogg (1770- 1835). ‘Supernatural’ and ‘uncanny’ are difficult terms in any project of literary analysis in that belief in the ‘supernatural’ is associated now with discredited, pre-Enlightenment ways of thinking, as well as ridiculous superstition. In the twenty-first century, the term ‘uncanny’ has also become routinely associated with Freud’s pioneering work on the principles of psychoanalysis rather than inexplicable mysteries. His essay ‘The Uncanny’, 1919, has attracted an extensive critical literature surveying aspects of the uncanny in considerable depth. Successive literary theorists have discussed narcissism and the motif of doubling; theories of creativity and repression; the existence of the occult as well as fantasy and the literature of subversion.<sup>1</sup> Harold Bloom has even suggested Freud’s essay could be considered as ‘the only major contribution that the twentieth century has made to the aesthetics of the sublime’<sup>2</sup>

However, neither Scott nor Hogg understood ‘supernatural’ or ‘uncanny’ in these ways. This thesis will examine their literary representation of these categories of belief commonly found in Scotland. Within a period of history that included the French Revolution, 1789, and the Napoleonic Wars, 1799-1815, Scott’s and Hogg’s poetry and fiction returned again and again to aspects of the supernatural associated with danger, prophecy, upheaval and injustice. It is perhaps insignificant but certainly striking that the American scholar Coleman O. Parsons began publishing a number of articles on Scott’s use of the supernatural in 1943, shortly before the end of the Second World War. His critical studies of various aspects of the supernatural – witchcraft, demonology and magic – began to appear at a time of immense cultural and national dislocation. Parsons would later publish his monograph *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott’s Fiction* in 1964. This study of Scott’s fiction did not neglect Hogg and seemed to me to offer a context for Scott’s and Hogg’s work that was both appropriate and one that had been overlooked.

The impetus behind my research grew from the realisation that current critical thinking, as well as previous scholarship, has generally assumed that Scott’s attitude

to the various constituents of the supernatural, whether witchcraft, second sight, astrology or ghosts, could be safely summarised as one of benign scepticism. In particular, Ian Duncan, in 'The Upright Corpse: Hogg, National Literature and the Uncanny' published in *Studies in Hogg and His World* in 1994 suggested that Scott's work might be characterised by an 'urbane and sceptical moderation.'<sup>3</sup> In this conventional view of Scott as a rational and enlightened author, Duncan echoes the earlier opinion of Sir Herbert Grierson, who published his biography of Scott in 1934. Grierson argues that

Scott was of the Age of Hume as his treatment of the supernatural, alike in the romances and the *Demonology and Witchcraft* clearly evidences. Any such adjustment of the relations between reason and imagination as Wordsworth and Coleridge speculated about was not dreamed of in his philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

However, Duncan comments later that it is possible to see how 'the continual return of his [Scott's] own critical reason upon the modern representation of the supernatural suggests a perplexed fascination with, rather than complacent dismissal of, ancestral superstition' (*SHW* 30). Duncan's article does not develop these thoughts further, focusing instead on James Hogg and the role of the uncanny in the construction of a national literature. I suggest that closer examination of Scott's and Hogg's work reveals that both authors adopt contrary and contradictory positions to what might be expected and that their attitudes often transgress familiar assumptions. One example of such assumptions can be found in comments by the early biographer of M. G. Lewis, Margaret Baron-Wilson, in 1839. She was critical of Gothic fiction such as *The Monk* and describes the Waverley Novels as having 'happily annihilated the class of works among which that of Lewis was so prominent'.<sup>5</sup> She suggests that Scott managed 'without the aid of the wild or supernatural' to return the reader to 'historical associations, and ... natural delineations of ordinary life' (Baron-Wilson 175). However, this thesis will argue that Scott and Hogg return again and again in their work to examples of the uncanny, or supernatural, and to how it can be represented, or challenged, through the weight of testimony associated with 'ordinary life.'

It will be seen that both men investigate the evidence for supernatural manifestations and that Scott, in particular, seeks to locate and establish either authoritative proof of the existence of the supernatural, or the means to disprove it. One early instance of this occurs in the *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott* by R. P. Gillies. Gillies reports Scott's conversation about ghosts and how

the most awkward circumstance about *well-authenticated* hobgoblins is, that they, for the most part, come and disappear without any intelligible object or purpose, except to frighten people; which, with all due deference, seems rather foolish! Very many persons have either seen a ghost, or something like one, and I am myself among the number; but my story is not a jot better than the others I have heard, which for the most part, were very inept. The *good* stories are sadly devoid of evidence; the *stupid* ones only are authentic.<sup>6</sup>

Scott continues by describing his meeting with a ghost on the high road near Ashestiel and in the middle of a forest. He is careful to point out that the location afforded 'no possible means of concealment ... in which any mortal being could conceal himself' (*Recollections* 171). Scott also comments that 'it was before dinner, and not long after sunset, so that I ran no risk either of *seeing double*, or wanting sufficient light for my observations' (*Recollections* 171). Here, Scott directly addresses any sceptical objections, offering the possible rational reasons for his apparition and rejecting them all. Eventually he returns home, having failed to solve the mystery. Scott's final remarks summarise his views of the incident and are particularly important in that he mentions Hogg specifically. He relates how

I did not soon forget the circumstance, because neither the state of the atmosphere, nor outline of the scenery, allowed of explanation by reference to any of those natural phenomena producing apparitions, which, however remarkable, are familiar not only to James Hogg as a poet, but to almost every shepherd in a mountainous district. (*Recollections* 172)

In discussing Scott, and his approach to the vexed question of the supernatural, I would suggest it is essential to consider James Hogg by way of comparison and contrast. Scott clearly felt that there were important parallels in their interest in the

various aspects of supernatural, judging by his pointed reference to Hogg above. There were, however, distinct differences in their approach too. It will be seen that where Scott seeks to investigate and ratify instances of the supernatural, Hogg looks beyond these measures, preferring to subvert questions of evidence and authority. Hogg's response to Scott's efforts often provides unexpected insights into the complex nature of their relationship. In their work, it is possible to trace their persistent interest in the presence of supernatural phenomena in Scottish life.

The structure and organisation of this thesis reflects the close connections between the two authors. Comparing and contrasting their work highlights certain similar interests shared by both writers and provides a context for understanding the development of their attitude to the supernatural. By surveying their individual publishing histories, it is possible to trace their continual investigation and interpretation of the supernatural from their earliest work to the final literary productions. Both men began with ballads and poetry, responding to the wealth of uncanny material located in the oral tales, folklore and legends familiar to Scots. Hogg's earliest poetry addressed the supernatural as well as pastoral themes. He chose to write in Scots dialect, and sometimes in stylised and formal English, in imitation of Gray, Pope and Milton for local literary periodicals such as the *Scots Magazine*. Scott's first publication of the translations of German Romantic poetry was typical of the contemporary and fashionable enthusiasm for German literature. Both men would become better acquainted through their shared interest in Border ballads. Their early correspondence reveals a mutual sympathy that persisted throughout a life-long friendship and one which overcame inherent difficulties of different social background, financial distress, and occasional personal animosity. Having established connections within, and through their knowledge of the folklore of the Borders, Scott and Hogg attempted to explore the Scottish Highlands in a similar manner. Hogg's letters from the Highlands are part of a literary apprenticeship served over several years and notable for Scott's initial description of him as an untutored observer and uniquely valuable.

My choice of the terms 'supernatural' and also 'uncanny' in connection with evidence and authority introduced a necessary focus for an abundance of material. Scott and Hogg published significant quantities of poetry and fiction often seemingly

in response to each other. However, following Hogg's death, his reputation suffered significant neglect and his work became bowdlerised and ignored. Scott's novels have only recently received belated publication in a scholarly edition. The recent publication of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, and the Stirling/South Carolina edition of Hogg, offers an opportunity to return to both authors and examine their work. Nonetheless, while this thesis has sought to be comprehensive in examining both authors, there is still scope for additional research. Several novels such as *The Antiquary*, 1816, or *The Heart of Midlothian*, 1818, would be appropriate for inclusion in this study, if space permitted. However, in order to establish a practical framework for discussion, this thesis has had to be deliberately selective. It was found necessary to consider their poetry only in limited depth, for example, in order to establish a basis for the early literary development of both authors before concentrating on their fiction. Within the genre of the novel, Scott and Hogg deployed some of their most complex negotiation on the subject of the supernatural.

Choosing to discuss questions of evidence for the existence of the supernatural by examining Scott's and Hogg's novels and tales may seem paradoxical in that both authors employed fiction to develop their arguments. Scott, in particular appeared to favour those genres associated with the Gothic: supernatural ballads; German poetry and drama; poetry and novels. However, he took care to maintain his distance from other authors, such as M. G. Lewis, when it seemed as if the notoriety attached to such works as *The Monk* might damage his own reputation. Other Gothic novelists were clearly familiar to him and he provided critical introductions to their work for *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*, 1821–24. While he valued the works of Walpole, Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe, he sought nonetheless to establish distinctions between their novels. In *Romanticism and the Gothic*, Michael Gamer argues that Scott's introductions 'show him carefully constructing a gendered hierarchy of gothic fiction and drama that privileges the "masculine" gothic of Walpole and Lewis over the "feminine" of Radcliffe and Reeve by allying the former with the masculine realms of imaginative autonomy and antiquarian history.'<sup>7</sup> Locating any investigation of the supernatural within the categories of fiction as well

as antiquarian history would enable Scott to re-define and investigate aspects of supernatural belief without fear of ridicule.

In this way, his adoption of fiction as the vehicle for such investigation can be understood as part of the process of transformation of the supernatural from its association with unmediated sensational spectacle to the respectable category of antiquarian enquiry. Scott's invention of another category of enquiry - historical fiction – would transform the novel as a genre, and recast it as the primary literary entertainment for nineteenth-century readers. Towards the end of his life, Scott published his final work on the supernatural, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq.*. This small volume represented the final attempt by Scott to collect and summarise evidence of the supernatural that might be debated after publication. He blended antiquarian research, anecdote, and fiction one last time.

The recent rediscovery of Hogg as one of the central figures of Scottish Romanticism, together with Scott, is in itself reason to pursue a study of both men and their interconnected careers. Certainly, Hogg considered himself to be important to Scott in their personal as well as literary relationship. He argues, in his 'Reminiscences of Former Days' that 'there are not above five people in the world who, I think, know Sir Walter better, or understand his character better than I do'.<sup>8</sup>

The first chapter will begin with some remarks on the lengthy friendship between Scott and Hogg and then discuss the context for belief in the supernatural in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scotland. In any study of such matters, some prior clarification of terms is essential. It should be pointed out that 'superstition' is best defined as 'an irrational awe or fear of the unknown; [or] belief in a religion considered false or pagan; [or] widely held but irrational or unfounded belief' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Certain aspects of superstitious belief can be regarded as subordinate to the realm of the supernatural. These would include the material objects often associated with superstition such as lucky charms, almanacs, and the potentially deceitful practice of fortune telling. By contrast, the supernatural is 'that [which] transcends or is above nature; of or pertaining to a supposed force or system above the laws of nature' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The supernatural, and its possible definitions, will be discussed more fully in conjunction with the uncanny

at a later point in the thesis but has had a significant and lengthy association with the spiritual mysteries of the established Christian religion. Tellingly, Scott and Hogg differentiate between the categories of superstition and the supernatural. They are concerned mainly with particular aspects of the supernatural in Scottish life such as its function in providing justice for weaker members of society (Hogg) or in researching the authority of the supernatural and the evidence for the same (Scott).

One additional distinction between the categories under discussion is the particular connection between interest in the supernatural and early modern science. There appeared to be new opportunities for gathering empirical data on supernatural phenomena. In this way, certain aspects of supernature, such as visions of the future, or second sight, could be subsequently measured and evaluated. This would serve to distinguish the supernatural further from belief in superstition. This interest in scientific experiment attracted a significant and attentive public curiosity. Some of these examples of new science, such as magic lantern displays, phantasmagoria (the production of ghosts and spectres among audiences in theatres) and demonstrations of electricity would reappear in Hogg's early work, such as *The Spy*, offering an example of literary representation of the characteristics of modern supernature. Magical spectacle could be recast in scientific guise.

Within any study of Scott, Hogg and the supernatural, it is clear that both authors persisted throughout their careers in addressing this subject. In *The Civilised Imagination*, Daniel Cottom discusses the Waverley novels. He suggests that

for every comment in these novels that portrays the supernatural as a projection of psychological processes upon the physical world, a simple confusion of the exterior and the interior, there is an event that dramatically confirms superstitious beliefs and so contradicts such narrative deliberations.<sup>9</sup>

This thesis will argue that Scott, and Hogg, were connected in many ways through their exploration of the supernatural within the vehicle of fiction and that uncanny testimony was of primary importance to them both.

### **1.1 Walter Scott, James Hogg and Literary Friendship**

Walter Scott (1771-1832) and James Hogg (1770-1835) were close contemporaries. Scott's relative wealth and connections enabled him to attend the High School and then the University of Edinburgh. His father could afford to pay for his continuing legal studies and Scott had ambition to become an advocate. These advantages were all unavailable to Hogg and it might have been expected that their relationship could hardly have been anything other than one of very distant acquaintance. Hogg's early life was one of poverty, hardship and privation with little chance of acquiring either an education or social polish. His reading material was small and his finances limited to the rudiments required for life as a shepherd in the Scottish Borders.<sup>10</sup>

However, this short section will seek to show that Scott and Hogg did strike up an unusual friendship and that while Hogg did take great pains to nurture his relationship with Scott, it cannot be said that Scott was unwilling to respond to overtures of friendship from Hogg. The heart of their connection might be said to lie in the Scottish Borders and Scott's fondness for the ballads and folklore of this area was the catalyst for the first meetings between himself and Hogg.<sup>11</sup> Another element of their relationship lay in an aspect of Scott's character that Hogg ridiculed but that nonetheless may have worked in Hogg's favour.<sup>12</sup> Scott, in particular, set great store by feudal relationships, and in his 'Ashiestiel Memoirs' he relates how his grandfather Robert Scott 'took for his shepherd an old man called Hogg who willingly lent him, out of respect to his family, his whole savings, about £30, to stock the new farm.'<sup>13</sup> There is no other indication that the Hogg mentioned here was closely related to James Hogg but it seems unlikely that Scott would not have been struck by the coincidence of his grandfather's encounter with a shepherd named Hogg and the subsequent relationship between earlier generations of two Border families. Scott goes on to describe how his grandfather built the family's subsequent prosperity on the generosity of that shepherd.

Scott's literary success and achievements has ensured that much of his work has remained in print. Hogg's reputation was never so high and suffered further through the unsympathetic editing and even erasure of material considered as 'low' or otherwise too sexually explicit for Victorian readers. The modern rediscovery of

James Hogg started with André Gide and the Cresset Press edition of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* in 1947. The recent resurgence of interest in his poetry and prose has been assisted by the re-issue of his work in the Stirling/South Carolina edition, published by Edinburgh University Press, which is nearing completion.

It is this availability of newly edited texts that has encouraged scholars to re-examine Hogg's work with greater depth than was previously possible. His literary achievements, particularly in the context of the development of Scottish Romanticism, have received renewed attention from scholars such as Peter Garside, Susan Manning, Penny Fielding, Gillian Hughes, Douglas Mack, Ian Duncan and others.<sup>14</sup> Their work has repositioned Hogg in literary history and their contributions to the relatively new field of Hogg studies have enabled the reassessment of his relationship with many writers of the period, such as Scott. It is one of the contentions of this thesis that Scott and Hogg enjoyed a remarkable friendship based not only on their shared affinity to place (the Borders) and feudal connections<sup>15</sup> but one that thrived on the similarities and differences in their approach to the supernatural. This subject was one of Scott's especial fascinations and his interest in Hogg was intensified and possibly also piqued by Hogg's extensive acquaintance with the supernatural tales and traditions of the Borders.

While Scott would be a patron of struggling writers throughout his life and was not averse to helping them indirectly through recommendation or directly with financial assistance, his relationship with Hogg, however, was more complex than that of patronage offered to a fellow writer. Scott's acute consciousness and approval of some aspects of the feudal clan system may have led him to support Hogg financially but there was also a sense of deeper kinship between them. If J.G. Lockhart is to be believed, Hogg's behaviour on occasion smacked of the indulged but cussedly independent family retainer especially when supposedly he put his feet up on the chintz sofa in the drawing room.<sup>16</sup> Their relationship would last until Scott's death, emerging intact from occasional serious quarrels. Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* supplies additional domestic details, particularly of Hogg's visits to the Scott family when he 'dined heartily and drank freely, and by

jest, anecdote, and song, afforded plentiful merriment to the more civilised part of the company' (*Life* 1: 408-09).

This thesis will compare some of their major works in order to explore those questions of evidence for the supernatural and the authority, or otherwise, of uncanny testimony that most interested Scott and Hogg. However, the term 'uncanny' requires some additional context and definition.

## **1.2 The Uncanny**

Freud's essay 'The Uncanny' or *Das Unheimlich* (literally 'the unhomely' or 'unfamiliar') was published in 1919 and its influence will be discussed briefly in this section.<sup>17</sup> Many literary scholars have explored the connotations of Freud's work since then to develop and apply his psychoanalytical theories to the interpretation of literary texts.<sup>18</sup> In 1947 it was André Gide's emphasis on the uncanny quality of Hogg's writing that initiated the rediscovery of Hogg as a major author. In Gide's introduction to *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, he suggests that Hogg's depiction of the devil 'is among the most ingenious ever invented, for the power that sets him in action is always of a psychological nature; in other words - always admissible, even by unbelievers.'<sup>19</sup> This reference to involuntary human involvement in the creation and activities of the devil implicates both believers and 'unbelievers' alike and Gide refers several times to the significance of Hogg's work for students of human psychology. Most recently, in *Scott's Shadow*, while discussing *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* and *Old Mortality*, Ian Duncan writes that 'psychoanalytic theory ...yield[s] the best instruments for interpreting Hogg's resistance to the narrative forms of historicism, socialization, and the ideology of modernity he found himself confronting in post-Enlightenment writing, above all in the novels of Scott.'<sup>20</sup> This 'resistance' is often seen in Hogg's subversive use of the supernatural.

Without denying the significance of Freudian insights, however, I would suggest that it is of equal importance to incorporate Hogg's own understanding of the terms 'uncanny' and 'supernatural' into the debate and to compare and contrast his use of such terms with contemporary authors such as Scott. In eighteenth-century Scotland, belief in the supernatural incorporated a religious dimension as well as

attracting early scientific attention. Philosophers and scientists as well as novelists were drawn by the apparent reality of the supernatural and the debate as to its existence. The emergence of Gothic literature and particularly the writings of Ann Radcliffe and M. G. Lewis, for example, would influence Scott and Hogg in their early work. This influence should not be overlooked; nor should the scandalous nature attached to some later Gothic writing. Scott was certainly aware of this in the early part of his career.

It could be argued that the terms ‘supernatural’ and ‘uncanny’ have become so widely used as to have lost their specific meanings and become interchangeable. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ‘supernatural’ as something ‘that is above nature; belonging to a higher realm or system than that of nature; transcending the powers or the ordinary course of nature’ and quotes two definitions from the eighteenth-century commentators on religion and philosophy: David Hartley and James Priestley. Their works enable the modern reader to absorb some of the context in which these terms were once commonly used. In Hartley’s ‘Of the Intellectual Faculties of Brutes’ in his *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations*, published in 1772, he refers to the ‘Inspiration of the sacred Writers [which] appears to be of a much higher Source, so as to be termed supernatural properly, in Contradistinction to all Knowledge resulting from the common Laws of Nature.’<sup>21</sup> In Priestley’s *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1782, he expounds on ‘the evidence of the divine mission of Christ which arises from the testimony to the reality of his *miracles*, by those who saw and conversed with him ... [which is] declared in supernatural voices from heaven.’<sup>22</sup> Testimony, miracles and the supernatural are thereby connected with a sense of religious awe and divine supremacy. There is also the possibility of witnessing the existence of the supernatural, ‘by those who saw and conversed with him’ (Christ).

In contrast, the term ‘uncanny’ is not associated so decidedly with religious belief or commentary. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that at different periods, the Scottish word has indicated ‘mischievous ... careless ...unreliable [people] ... [those] not quite safe to trust to, or have dealings with, as being associated with supernatural arts or powers’, and Hogg and Scott would have understood the term in this way. Interestingly, the possibilities of human association with ‘supernatural arts

and powers' recalls Gide's original characterisation of Hogg's devil as an 'ingenious' meddler of human as much as divine origin. The term also conveys an idea of discomfort and danger absent from other ideas of the supernatural. In support of their definitions, the editors of the OED quote from 'An Eclogue, To the Memory of Dr. William Wilkie, late Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews' in Robert Fergusson's *Poems*, first published in 1789 and prefiguring one of the constant themes of Hogg and Scott's writing:

For this some ca'd him an uncanny wight;  
The clash gaed round, "he had the second sight."<sup>23</sup>

It should be noted that Hogg owned a copy of the first edition, presented to him in April 1819 by Gavin Inglis of Strathindry and that his own use of the term 'uncanny' tended to follow Fergusson's example.<sup>24</sup>

Returning to Freud in discussion of possible definitions of the uncanny, it should be noted that Freud stresses the importance of the opposite meaning of the term. His essay begins by describing and analysing what is meant by 'unheimlich' or 'unhomely / unfamiliar / uncanny' and argues that the significance of 'heimlich' or 'homely / familiar' should not be overlooked. Freud writes that 'the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar' ("Uncanny" 220) and therefore derives its horror not from something unexpectedly new or unfamiliar but through distortion of what is otherwise experienced as recognisable and unremarkable.

Hogg's use of the uncanny prefigures Freud's observations of interdependent meaning. Freud describes how 'heimlich' actually incorporates two sets of ideas 'which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight' ("Uncanny" 224-25), and thereby incorporating slippages between what might be expected and what is actually experienced in an everyday context. The unexpected event produces a range of emotions from disquiet to anxiety and disorientation and then fear. The removal of certainty within a familiar or domestic setting carries a very real sense of disempowerment and both Scott and Hogg frequently return to this idea of disempowerment and shifting boundaries within their work.

Tzvetan Todorov, the structuralist critic, discusses the fantastic narrative in similar terms, recognising three categories: fantastic, marvellous and uncanny, within a single genre. He also describes the fantastic as located among unexpectedly unfamiliar happenings and without fixed borders. He explains that ‘at the very heart of the fantastic’ lies a familiar world, known to us and one ‘without devils, sylphides, or vampires’ or other incredible spectres, yet which presents us with an event ‘which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world.’<sup>25</sup> The reader has two choices: either to believe that there has been some trickery of the senses or imagination or to accept that laws of which we have no knowledge must control the familiar world. However, the fantastic narrative is necessarily limited by the reaction of the reader. Should the reader decide that no law has been transgressed or simply that new laws are needed, then Todorov considers that the fantastic becomes marvellous or uncanny. These last two categories are related but Todorov suggests that the marvellous is ‘the supernatural accepted’ and the uncanny is simply ‘the supernatural explained’ (*Fantastic* 41-42). Where the uncanny differs from the fantastic and marvellous, in Todorov’s view, is that the uncanny ‘is not a clearly delimited genre’ (*Fantastic* 46) and he refers back to Freud’s ideas whereby ‘the sense of the uncanny is linked to the appearance of an image which originates in the childhood of the individual or the race’ (*Fantastic* 46-47) or in other words as the external demonstration of unconscious desire.

While neither Scott nor Hogg can be readily labelled as possessing either strictly Enlightenment or Gothic loyalties in opposition to each other, Freud’s discussion and definition of the terms ‘heimlich’ and ‘unheimlich’ enables us to understand that the tensions created by two distinct models continue within their literary narratives to appear and disappear within the wider context of social, political and economic upheaval. Frontiers and boundaries of experience are continually under pressure. Freud’s essay refers to Hoffmann’s short story ‘The Sandman’ and Scott and Hogg both knew of Hoffmann’s work. In 1824 William Blackwood published *The Devil’s Elixir* (*Die Elixiere des Teufels*) having had it translated by R. P. Gillies, close friend of James Hogg. The similarities between Hoffmann’s story and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, also published in 1824, have been noted, not least in the scenes where one brother pushes or attempts

to push the other over a cliff<sup>26</sup> and in Hogg's use of doubles or *doppelgänger* devices as well as the general theme of murderous religious fanaticism.

The term 'Gothic' has attracted much debate. It has been associated with the primitive or barbaric mythical history of Western European civilisation. Within the late eighteenth-century, Gothic novels were particularly prevalent during periods of social and political upheaval such as the French Revolution, 1789. Ann Radcliffe, Friedrich Schiller, and Matthew Lewis are exemplars of the Gothic novel. Modern scholars have been equally interested in the Gothic as a site of psychological struggle. 'Gothic' and 'uncanny' fiction does share some similarities but their differences are equally important.

Ann Radcliffe linked poetry and the uncanny in her short work 'On the Supernatural in Poetry.' This work had been written as the prologue to *Glaston de Blondville*, 1826, published posthumously, but was published separately. Radcliffe defends her earlier work by explaining that 'terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them.'<sup>27</sup> While Radcliffe employed terror, Lewis' fiction is best described as characterised by horror. Her work has become associated with a school of writing known as the 'explained supernatural' and which was recognised as uncanny by Todorov. In his review of Maturin's *Fatal Revenge or the Family of Montorio*, 1807, Scott commented on Radcliffe's work, suggesting that when 'all the incidents appearing to partake of the mystic and marvellous are resolved by very simple and natural causes [it] must disgust the reader much more than if he were left under the delusion of ascribing the whole to supernatural agency.'<sup>28</sup> This comment might be taken to mean that Scott prefers the explicitly supernatural work of Lewis and Maturin to Radcliffe but it is also possible that he is simply expressing his disappointment or uncertainty, in 1810, as to the probability, or otherwise, of the existence of the supernatural.<sup>29</sup>

### **1.3 The Supernatural in Scotland**

The history of the supernatural in Scotland has attracted widespread attention from scholars.<sup>30</sup> Belief in the supernatural ranged from fear of witchcraft to acceptance of the existence of fairies. Ghosts and spectres were also rumoured to

exist in early modern Scotland and superstitious Scots had an armoury of charms to protect against bad fortune. In *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*, 2000, Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts make the point that ‘writing and narrative have particular significance in witchcraft studies’ because ‘accusations of witchcraft appear generally in the form of stories - of disagreements, suspicions, magical healing or harm, divination, and malefice.’<sup>31</sup> Clearly, Scott’s *Guy Mannering* and Hogg’s *The Three Perils of Man* are sophisticated examples of this strategy. Earlier stories, whether preserved as written documents or in oral form, become source material for later representation by literary lawyers or Borders shepherds. Stories of witchcraft tend to originate in local and domestic squabbles and are conveyed orally to the authorities, whether religious or legal, and become transformed into a collective strand of written narrative that both summarises and legitimates them. The narrative itself can be shaped by political or dynastic pressures to develop beyond small-scale concerns into matters of state. James VI became involved with the prosecution of witches in North Berwick because of the apparent threat of treason to himself. Thus fears of conspiracy, whether real or imaginary, batted on ideas of the existence of witchcraft and the possibility of associated demonic powers. These illicit powers encouraged belief in an authority other than that possessed by the King.

Normand and Roberts also suggest that this period between the late 1580s and 1590s was notable for the increasing pressure from religious authorities for conformity. Before the Scottish Reformation in 1560 fairies were generally regarded as mysterious creatures capable of both good and evil. After 1560, however, belief in fairies was akin to pagan superstition at best and characteristic of demonic illusion at worst. Presbyterian Scotland particularly objected to symbolic attention paid to the Fairy Queen and the possibilities of a connection to the worship of the Virgin Mary by devout Catholics.

There may well be a connection between Church authorities and one of the first printed tracts in Scotland, or England, about Scottish witches. This was *Newes from Scotland*, probably published in late 1591, and suspected to be by James Carmichael, minister of Haddington.<sup>32</sup> *Newes from Scotland* is essentially propaganda accusing the enemies of James VI of transferring their loyalties to the devil, committing treason against King and God. Remarkably, the *Newes* relates how

those accused of witchcraft actually repeat their performances of diabolic activity before James and his ministers (*Witchcraft* 304). Thus the suspects Geillis Duncan, John Fian and Agnes Sampson re-enact ‘what has supposedly happened’ (*Witchcraft* 305) through music and their display of demonic possession. These performances are taken as proof of witchcraft and evidence of the reality of the devil. In *Men in Women’s Clothing: Anti-theatricality and effeminization, 1579-1642*, Laura Levine suggests that such theatrical performances became a ‘means of authenticating testimony’ for both the legal authorities, and the King, who witness them. They are then recorded as ‘historical evidence’ of the supernatural within the text of the pamphlet of *Newes from Scotland*.<sup>33</sup>

*Newes from Scotland* followed the publication of *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, by Reginald Scot, 1584. His work was undertaken as a serious pursuit to challenge belief in witchcraft and he argues that such accusations could not rest on any actual basis of truth. Reginald Scot believed that the supernatural, specifically witchcraft, did not exist. He had been trained as a lawyer and set out to test supposed examples of the supernatural by ‘due prooffe and trial’ rather than accept such beliefs. He favoured practical methods of proof such as attempting to infiltrate daemonic circles with his own spies.

His work was followed by the publication of *Daemonologie, in Forme of a Dialogue, diuided into three Bookes*, 1597, by James VI who sought to prove Scot wrong. James attempted to destroy all copies of Scot’s book without complete success. However, interest in gathering evidence for the existence of *diablerie* in Scotland continued and the debate proceeded in written form.<sup>34</sup> Scot’s approach was challenged by George Sinclair in 1685 with his publication of *Satan’s Invisible World Discovered*. He attempted to gather evidence of the existence of diabolical enemies of mankind and presented various accounts of the supernatural in order to establish the reality of witchcraft and apparitions. Sinclair was professor of philosophy at Glasgow, as well as the author of several mathematical and engineering works.<sup>35</sup> His scientific achievements included the invention of a diving bell, the draining of coalmines and the use of a barometer to take measurements of heights and depths. That he should consider the subjects of witchcraft and

demonology as equally suitable for scientific investigation indicates an approach that persisted for two centuries in Scotland.

This link between science and the supernatural can be seen in the bibliographic collection of John Ferguson, 1837-1916, Regius Professor of Chemistry at Glasgow from 1874-1915. The *Catalogue of the Ferguson Collection of books mainly relating to alchemy, chemistry, witchcraft and Gipsies in the Library of the University of Glasgow*, 1943, describes Ferguson's rare copies of *Newes from Scotland*, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, *Daemonologie* and *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*. Ferguson also held copies of the first and second ever printed books on witchcraft: the *Fortalitium fidei* by Alphonsus de Spina, written 1458-60, and the *Formicarius*, published around 1484, by Johannes Nider.<sup>36</sup> Ferguson's collection was exhibited in 1985 as 'The Damned Art'<sup>37</sup> and several highlights included Joseph Glanvill's *Saducismus triumphatus*, 1681, Richard Boulton's *A compleat history of magick, sorcery, and witchcraft*, 1715-16, and *The history of witches, ghosts, and Highland seers*, 1803, published in Berwick for R. Taylor. Glanvill and Boulton were notable for their attempts to defend the supernatural and the practices of witchcraft as components of science and philosophy. Scott's library at Abbotsford holds another copy of Boulton's *A compleat history of ...witchcraft*, 1715-16, as well as Glanvill's *Blow at Modern Sadducism*, London 1668. These volumes can be traced in J. G. Cochrane's *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford*, 1838.<sup>38</sup> The Advocates Library, Edinburgh, is currently preparing an online and updated catalogue of Scott's library.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the written history of the supernatural in Scotland begins with the collection of information often highlighted by the authors as based on the evidence of witnesses. These formal records of the supernatural incorporate the oral tales of bystanders and rural communities as well as testimony collected under legal oath and even torture. The written records act as precedents for later investigation and remain as a standard, even if unreliable or misleading. Their character is one of infallible proof. For his library at Abbotsford, Scott had acquired a copy of the proceedings of the *Tryal of Philip Standsfield Son To Sir James Standsfield of New-Milns, For the Murder of his Father, and other Crimes Libel'd against him* dated 1688. This was the notorious trial of Philip Standsfield that based his guilt partly on the fact that his

father's corpse bled when touched by the son, after exhumation. Sir George Mackenzie acted for the prosecution and his speech to the Inquest recorded the details of the bleeding. Following the details of the verdict, Scott has added his comments at length, on the penultimate page of the proceedings, noting that there was 'a degree of uncertainty attending the conviction' and that 'the idea of the corpse bleeding is superstitious and absurd'. However, while dismissing the evidence in this way, Scott has nonetheless considered it at some length.<sup>40</sup>

Within this context of formal investigation of the evidence for the supernatural, interest in belief in the supernatural was not confined to scientists. W. H. Prescott, the nineteenth-century historian<sup>41</sup> and near contemporary of Scott and Hogg, suggests how supernatural belief arises and remains unchallenged:

The natural phenomena of a wild uncultivated country greatly conspire to promote the illusions of the fancy. The power of clouds to reflect, to distort, and to magnify objects, is well known; and on this principal, many of the preternatural appearances in the German mountains and the Scottish Highlands, whose lofty summits and unreclaimed valleys are shrouded in clouds and exhalations, have been ingeniously and philosophically explained. The solitary peasant, as the shades of evening close around him, witnesses with dismay the gathering phantoms, and hurrying home, retails his adventures with due amplification. What is easily believed is easily seen and the marvellous incident is soon placed beyond dispute by a multitude of testimonies.<sup>42</sup>

Prescott suggests here that the primitive and savage setting of the Highlands is inevitably responsible for 'illusions of the fancy' and that the frightened rural dweller, being superstitious and uneducated, is a ready believer in 'the gathering phantoms' or ghosts. 'What is easily believed is easily seen' according to Prescott. In terms of perception, he inverts our normal expectations of seeing before believing, and then notes how 'a multitude of testimonies' arises to provide ineluctable proof of the existence of spectres.

Prescott's observations on the supernatural are developed throughout his review of Allan Cunningham's 1825 edition of *Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern* and he is careful to suggest in 1826 that superstition 'circulate[s] through the

channels of rustic tradition' and becomes 'systematised into a science' (*Biographical ... Miscellanies* 513). He also draws on his own understanding of the advances in natural philosophy particularly associated with Scottish Enlightenment thinking to explain how such 'marvellous' events and many of the 'preternatural appearances' could be understood through the study of the physical properties of clouds. In this way, scientific enquiries that were firmly directed towards the collection of empirical evidence and were thus capable of proof through experimentation might answer the question of whether or not the supernatural really did exist. Interestingly, Prescott qualifies his own statement. Not all but 'many ... preternatural appearances' are caused by the movement of storm clouds. In this reservation (hesitation) he resembles Scott.

There have been several influential studies of Scott's interest in superstition and the supernatural including those by Coleman O. Parsons and Daniel Cottom,<sup>43</sup> and it has been assumed that Scott's approach to the supernatural was generally based on rational scepticism common to the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. Hogg, on the other hand, has been considered more of an uncritical believer in supernatural phenomena. This approach can be seen in the judgement of Edith C. Batho who was one of Hogg's earliest critics and often granted him an astute and sympathetic reading. Nonetheless, her depiction of him as a child of nature absorbing 'marvellous incidents' without question is almost interchangeable with W. H. Prescott's ideas of 'natural phenomena' promoting 'illusions of the fancy' and has generally gone unchallenged. In *The Ettrick Shepherd*, she notes how

the absence of regular schooling was compensated for by that education through tradition which is now almost unknown. He was fortunate in the place of his birth, in the midst of that Border country which rings with history and romance, where every stream and hill has a tale to tell even to us whose knowledge comes too much from books.<sup>44</sup>

Batho's description locates Hogg firmly within the confinements of that 'education through tradition'. The possibilities of later development are not explored nor does Batho expect that Hogg might refuse the knowledge handed down within the

constraints of ‘history and romance’ or challenge those ‘whose knowledge comes too much from books.’

#### **1.4 *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, 1802-3, The Lay of the Last Minstrel, 1805, and The Mountain Bard, 1807***

This section will trace some examples of Scott and Hogg’s early use of the supernatural traditions of rural Scotland with their emphasis on fairies, ghosts, second sight and demonology. These elements are not generally considered in assessments of Gothic literature in Scotland and are regarded more as motifs of folklore or simple superstition. Nonetheless, it is possible to see connections between folklore and the development of the Gothic in Scottish literature.

Ian Duncan suggests that the ‘history of Gothic proper in Scottish letters begins in 1788, when Henry Mackenzie, assiduous literary improver and author of *The Man of Feeling*, 1771, read a paper on the German drama to the Royal Society of Edinburgh.’<sup>45</sup> J. G. Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott*, includes Scott’s description of German literature and how the ‘fictitious narratives, their ballad poetry, and other branches of their literature, which are particularly apt to bear the stamp of the extravagant and the supernatural, began also to occupy the attention of the British literati’ (*Life* 1: 204). Scott and several friends began to study the language together in 1792 in order to read Schiller and Goethe in the original. Scott was then seventeen years old, and he turned with enthusiasm to German literature translating Gottfried Augustus Bürger’s ‘Der Wilde Jäger’ and ‘Lenore’ as ‘The Chase’ and ‘William and Helen’. These were published in Edinburgh, 1796, and Parsons comments that ‘horror, delight and excitement, with some release for pent-up sexual forces are at the core of such shockers as “William and Helen”’ (*Witchcraft* 49). The association of sex and violence with the uncanny were typical of German Gothic where the supernatural is equated with gruesome bridal and galloping corpses hell-bent on demonic savagery and bloody revenge. It is grisly, fantastical stuff and the very intensity of Scott’s youthful involvement might have been expected to lead to an early end of such interest in the sensational and supernatural. However, it will be seen that Scott’s earlier reading of Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* had prepared him for a ready immersion in Gothic tales and their themes of sudden and

brutal death or sexual depravity. Mackenzie had perhaps overlooked the existence of 'Gothic' style material, readily available in old ballads, and therefore much closer to home.

Lockhart relates how Scott, the inexperienced author, came to the attention of Matthew Lewis, author of the scandalous *The Monk: A Romance*, published in 1796, through William Erskine, Scott's friend and fellow member of the German language club. Lewis was in London in 1798 preparing his *Tales of Wonder* for publication and 'beating up in all quarters for contributions' (Lockhart, *Life* 1: 290) as Lockhart's *Life* rather drily puts it. Erskine showed Scott's versions of 'Lenore' and 'The Wild Huntsman' to Lewis and 'when he mentioned that his friend had other specimens of the German *diablerie* in his portfolio, the collector anxiously requested that Scott might be enlisted in his cause' (Lockhart, *Life* 1: 290). Lewis subsequently visited Scotland, meeting frequently with Scott, then twenty-seven years old, in Musselburgh and Kelso. They discussed publishing some short tales together. Lewis would eventually publish his *Tales of Wonder* in 1801 with Scott's contribution of five tales: 'The Fire-King'; 'Glenfinlas; or, Lord Ronald's Coronach'; 'The Eve of Saint John'; 'Frederick and Alice'; and 'The Wild Huntsmen.' When *Tales of Wonder* appeared at last in two volumes, Lewis had included many additional tales from Burns, Jonson, Allan Ramsay and Percy's *Reliques*, and was generally criticised because of the quantity of familiar ballads and disappointing lack of new material. However, the delay had produced an unexpected advantage for Scott. Lockhart writes that Scott's chance meeting with James Ballantyne, his former classmate and now editor and printer of the *Kelso Mail*, resulted in their discussion of some of Scott's 'recent pieces, designed to appear in Lewis's Collection' which were much admired by Ballantyne who then 'expressed his regret that Lewis's book was so long in appearing' (Lockhart, *Life* 1: 316). Scott suggested Ballantyne might publish these 'little ballads' and Lockhart describes how 'exactly twelve copies of William and Ellen, The Fire-King, The Chase, and a few more of those pieces, were thrown off accordingly, with the title (alluding to the long delay of Lewis's collection) of "Apology for Tales of Terror -1799"' (Lockhart, *Life* 1: 316-17).

While Lewis's influence on Scott has been documented through Scott's own reminiscences, it seems likely that Lewis may have taken Scott's suggestions or

advice in the preparation of *Tales of Wonder* because of the inclusion of four Scottish ballads. Louis Peck, in his *Life of M. G. Lewis* points out that three of them, ‘Clerk Colvin’, ‘Willy’s Lady’ and ‘King Henry’ came from ‘the so-called Brown MS, a collection of ballads belonging to Walter Scott’s friend Alexander Fraser Tytler.’<sup>46</sup>

This might suggest that Scott had recommended either Tytler or the ballads to Lewis.

Though Scott would remain a loyal friend to Lewis, his literary involvement ended with *Tales of Wonder*. Scott was appointed to the office of Sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire on 16 December 1799 and this date marks the point of his return to Scottish legend and history for inspiration, when his perennial interest in ballads and songs could be said to have outweighed his brief infatuation with gloomy German horror. In her discussion of Scott, Fiona Robertson notes that Lockhart would later describe the German influence on Scott at this early period of his life as one which was responsible for encouraging the weakest elements of his work, in common with ‘the practice of vulgar romancers.’<sup>47</sup> Such comments should be seen in their context of the late 1830s when the literary and social climate required authors to be both polite and genteel. Lockhart was himself an accomplished German scholar and had collaborated with R. P. Gillies for *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in their occasional series of ‘Horae Germanicae’, supernatural tales or ghost stories lightly disguised by their Latin title and putative antiquarian interest. Gillies would later publish a collection of these German tales in three volumes, including two of his translations of Hoffmann as well as two of M. G. Lewis’ ghost stories.<sup>48</sup>

One other possible explanation for Scott’s decision to work on his own with Ballantyne may be that the perceived excesses of ‘Monk’ Lewis’s German Gothic tales were attracting particular criticism and Scott was especially concerned to protect his reputation and character as a sheriff, lawyer and respectable Edinburgh gentleman. Reviews of *The Monk* such as the one published in *The British Critic* had objected strongly to the ‘lust, murder, incest, and every atrocity that can disgrace human nature, brought together, without the apology of probability, or even possibility, for their introduction’<sup>49</sup> and similar comments may have confirmed Scott in his decision to eschew the extremes of Gothic fiction and explore the potential of a new project, taking care to include such historical and other reference material as would be necessary to defeat such criticism.

Scott's encounter with James Ballantyne was to produce something more than a small collection of imaginative poetry. Lockhart recounts how in early 1800, Scott suggested to Ballantyne that 'I have been for years collecting old Borders ballads, and I think I could, with little trouble, put together such a selection from them as might make a neat little volume, to sell for four or five shillings' (Lockhart, *Life* 1: 317). Ballantyne readily accepted this proposal even though he could hardly have anticipated how successful it was to be.

There had been three notable national collections of ballads before Scott's enterprise. Thomas Percy published his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* in 1765 and was followed by Thomas Pinkerton in 1786 who published *Ancient Scottish Poems*; in 1789 Charlotte Brooke collected together the *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. Scott's initial success as a literary antiquarian also followed the publication of *The Antiquities of Scotland* in 1791 by Francis Grose, the diligent scholar recorded in his turn by Burns in his poem 'On the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations Thro' Scotland, Collecting The Antiquities of that Kingdom.'<sup>50</sup> While several of the most familiar lines of this poem would be used by Scott for his 'Tales of My Landlord' Series:

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,  
...  
A chield's amang you, taking notes,  
And, faith, he'll prent it:

Burns wrote a third verse that explicitly describes the antiquarian as someone actively seeking out the devil and the black arts:

By some auld, houlet-haunted, biggin,  
Or kirk deserted by its riggin,  
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in  
Some eldritch part,  
Wi' deils, they say, L--d safe's! colleaguin  
At some black art.

Investigation of the hidden 'eldritch' elements of Scotland's historical past by those who tried to recover and preserve such material inevitably associates them, in Burns' teasing view, with diablerie itself. The word 'colleaguin' neatly encapsulates the idea

of Grose with his devilish colleagues, collegians in witchcraft. Given Scott's social position, his fascination with the uncanny required the protection of antiquarianism even though that ambivalent disguise could never entirely mitigate the risks.

In his 'Ashestiel Memoirs', Scott describes his especial relish for Percy's *Reliques* and how he 'had been from infancy devoted to legendary lore of this nature and only reluctantly withdrew my attention from the scarcity of materials and the rudeness of those which I possessed' (Hewitt, *Scott on Himself* 27-28). When he succeeds in obtaining a copy of the *Reliques*, he finds 'pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination' (*Scott on Himself* 28). This candid reference to secrecy and the 'Delilahs' of Scott's imagination might seem unusual in connection with old ballads but the subject matter of Scott's early reading of the *Reliques* was almost exclusively violent and sexual, hence the reference to Delilah, with occasional pieces dealing with fairies, magic and witchcraft. Nick Groom, in *The Making of Percy's Reliques*, points out that the sensational content of the ballads appears to have been generally ignored or dismissed as 'a strange collection of trash' by Percy in favour of establishing the historical and antiquarian context of his work.<sup>51</sup> If Scott benefited from Percy's exploration of the history of minstrels and ballads, he also absorbed the heady delights of much explicitly lewd material. Groom sums up the *Reliques* as 'carnavalesque and bawdy, grotesque and violent; rude challenges to the traditional pomp of culture' (*Making* 40) and Scott graduated from the *Reliques* to translating his German Gothic tales without too much difficulty because his earliest imaginative reading had laid the foundations for his initial literary work. Scott observed that the 'Delilahs' had been made respectable by Percy, 'considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration by an editor who showed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of what his pious labour preserved' (*Scott on Himself* 28). This method of framing dubious ballad material enabled the editor and, by implication, the reader to peruse the ballads without scruple or hesitation on the grounds of morality or propriety. However, such justification carried its own ambiguity and even self-deceit and perhaps contributed to Scott's uneasy perception of what constituted forbidden material especially when he would attain the position of famous author. His efforts to render the uncanny

harmless, even faintly ridiculous, throughout his life and work would testify to his embarrassment over his early Gothic infatuation.

The natural antiquarian impulse in Scott was manifestly aware of the evanescence of such literary material and the precarious nature of its existence without some determined attempts to preserve it. In a letter to Percy dated 11 January 1801, Scott describes his motivation for publishing the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802-3, in terms of public duty as well as personal and aesthetic pleasure. He explains how his 'early partiality to the tales of my country, and an intimate acquaintance with its wildest recesses, acquired partly in the course of country sports, and partly in pursuit of antiquarian knowledge, will, I hope, enable me at least to preserve some of the most valuable traditions of the south of Scotland, both historical and romantic.'<sup>52</sup> There is a certain element of national and intellectual pride as well. Publication of his *Minstrelsy* would be both homage to Percy's efforts and his own scholarly contribution to the subject. Scott provided careful citations of source material, detailed explanations of events, quotes from authorities, precedents and appendices as well as many references to Latin or early English poetry. It was a scrupulous copy of Percy's example except that Scott's restriction of material to the southern counties of Scotland provided a sense of geographical and cultural unity absent in Percy. Millgate suggests that Scott was deeply affected by 'the emotional power' and romantic scenery of particular places, recalled through specifically local and traditional Scottish ballads.<sup>53</sup>

The first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy* were published in 1802, the third followed in 1803.<sup>54</sup> Scott clearly felt it necessary to prepare his readers for unexpected literary challenges and provided a lengthy introduction. He begins with a summary of the constant conflict experienced by the inhabitants of the Borders and the 'mixture of courage and rapacity by which they were distinguished' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: 1 - li). These feats were celebrated through the historical ballads commemorating popular heroes ('Auld Maitland') and victorious battles and reivers ('The Outlaw Murray' and 'Johnie Armstrang'). More interesting perhaps is his digression on the general nature of Borders superstition, such as 'the universal belief in spells' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: lxxvi) among the people. Scott quotes a comment from 'the learned Bishop Nicholson' describing 'the natural superstition of our

borderers at this day; who are much better acquainted with, and do more firmly believe, their old legendary stories of fairies and witches, than the articles of their creed' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: lxxvi). It is a comment which chimes with Burns' picture of a 'kirk deserted by its riggin', even though he omitted to specify the geographical location of the ruined Kirk.

Scott mentions that the inhabitants of the Borders also believed in 'sundry classes of subordinate spirits, to whom were assigned peculiar employments' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: lxxx). He lists Fairies, Brownies, the Bogle or Goblin and the Shellycoat (similar to the Kelpy but more malignant). These spirits were to be found in particular local settings, haunting rocks or ruined castles rather than being attached to clans or families, as would be the case in the Highlands of Scotland. The mixture of warfare, violence and the uncanny combined to produce an atmosphere of barbaric vitality and Scott warns that 'the reader must not expect to find, in the border ballads, refined sentiment, and, far less, elegant expression' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: xc). However, he reminds us that 'even where these graces are totally wanting, the interest of the stories themselves, and the curious picture of manners which they frequently present, authorise them to claim some respect from the public' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: xcvi). His own interest appears to lie as much in the cultural picture of the Borders as a region of primitive and lawless behaviour, peopled with noble rebels as well as rogues who adhere to their own codes of honour, as it does in the actual poetry.

In the Introduction, Scott also explains that the *Minstrelsy* contains three classes of poems: 'Historical Ballads'; 'Romantic'; and 'Imitations of These Compositions by Modern Authors.' The 'historical' ballads are self-explanatory and include some splendidly patriotic tales of battles against the English. The term 'romantic' describes, for Scott, 'such legends as are current upon the border, relating to fictitious and marvellous adventures' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: ciii). Of these, one of the most fascinating ballads is 'The Tale of Tamlane' which is accompanied by Scott's lengthy disquisition 'On the Fairies of Popular Superstition' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 2: 227). This section of the *Minstrelsy* is extraordinarily detailed about the various origins of the words 'elf' and 'fairy' and the characteristics of the different

spirits and superstitions related to them. Scott begins by almost deprecating his interest in such superstitious belief when he claims that

In a work, avowedly dedicated to the preservation of the poetry and traditions of the “olden time,” it would be unpardonable to omit this opportunity of making some observations upon so interesting an article of the popular creed, as that concerning the Elves, or Fairies. (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 2: 167)

However, the depth of Scott’s knowledge betrays a passionate enthusiasm for the subject and belies any idea of his isolation from ‘the popular creed.’ The breadth of his scholarship encompasses source material, quotes from other authorities, examples of common myth, references to Finnish poetry and other examples of folklore in early English, and, in common with the other notes and apparatus, the historical and academic framework is written in standard English, the language of historians and scholars, in sharp contrast to the ballad itself, written in Scots. However, the framework adds to rather than defuses the power of this ballad, partly because of its contrasting nature. The short stanzas contain elements of tension, passion and uncanny violence building towards a tender and successful resolution of the lovers’ difficulties.

Scott included more romantic ballads than historical ballads and this might also suggest that his interest in ‘marvellous’ adventures had not been greatly diminished by his early German Gothic reading. By 1802, however, the public interest in Gothic literature, such as *The Monk*, had been dampened considerably by the influence of virulent anti-Jacobin feeling and the distinctively Scottish setting of these ‘marvellous’ tales enabled Scott to reclaim ideas of the uncanny and continue to publish them unobtrusively and without loss of respectability. The significant commercial success of the *Minstrelsy* allowed him to continue his efforts. In a radical departure from Percy’s model, Scott published a third volume with the ‘Imitations’ of antique ballads by contemporary (‘modern’) authors. Much later, in his ‘Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad’, April 1830, Scott discussed his intentions behind the ‘Imitations’, suggesting that the ‘taste for popular poetry’ (‘Imitations’ 4: 2) had

not disappeared and championing the achievements of ‘Scottish ballad poetry, not to mention the names of Leyden, Hogg, and Allan Cunningham’ (‘Imitations’ 4: 16).<sup>55</sup>

Interestingly, Scott then proceeds to highlight one particular aspect of these three men which they all share but which apparently Scott does not. He continues to praise them in that they ‘have all three honoured their country, by arriving at distinction from a humble origin, and there is none of them under whose hand the ancient Scottish harp has not sounded a bold and distinguished tone’ (‘Imitations’ 4: 16). The question of their origin would perhaps seem irrelevant, were it not for the connection with the Scottish harp.

Scott associates their poetry with national (Scottish) honour and with merit, even repeating the idea of their being ‘distinguished’ through their association with the ancient Scottish harp. This might seem to hint at the possibility that their ancestors could have been minstrels, and, though humble, nonetheless belonging to an ancient ‘family’ of poets and musicians. Scott himself, as author, editor and compiler of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* has created a modern vehicle for the old ballads, reclaiming their particular and elevated lineage as well as according recognition for Leyden, Hogg and Cunningham.

Scott, as a seasoned reader of Percy, would have doubtless remembered that the *Reliques* had included ‘An Essay on the Ancient English Minstrels’ intended to establish for the reader some idea of the ancient and venerated ancestry of the Minstrel and the characteristics of their position in society. The question of the respectability, or otherwise, of minstrels was one of interest to Percy and the antiquarian Joseph Ritson. Ritson objected strongly to Percy’s characterisation of minstrels as venerable and suggested that their status was typically one of vagrancy. Nick Groom considers that in Saxon times, the Minstrels were revered to such an extent that they readily shared courtly society although this privileged position had steadily decayed. By Elizabethan times, it seems, the Minstrels’ status had diminished sharply and their role as intermediaries between the state and the arts had dwindled considerably (Groom, ‘*Reliques*’ 43). Both Scott and Hogg played with the idea of minstrelsy and the development from Percy’s *Reliques*, 1765, to Hogg’s *The Mountain Bard*, 1807, via the *Minstrelsy* 1802, can be seen as one which attempted to reclaim and revivify oral poetry for national purposes and reminded people of the

role of minstrels and bards as repositories of ancient belief and local history. These sources of knowledge had long been endangered and the philosophical ideals of Enlightenment thinking would tend to privilege science over tradition. In his reviews of George Ellis' *Specimens of early English Metrical Romances*, 1805, and Joseph Ritson's *Ancient English Metrical Romanceës*, 1802, Scott could be seen arguing that 'ancient history and regional poetry were mutually illuminatory':

To form a just idea of our ancient history, we cannot help thinking that these works of fancy should be read along with the labours of the professed historian.<sup>56</sup>

Percy had argued for the same idea in his essay 'On the Ancient Metrical Romances' which included his statement that 'as many of these contain a considerable portion of poetic merit, and throw great light on the manners and opinions of former times, it were to be wished that some of the best of them were rescued from oblivion.'<sup>57</sup>

Scott's promotion of ballads as a national treasury enabled other poets, particularly James Hogg, to follow his example. Hogg's response to the success of the *Minstrelsy* was his first significant collection of poetry, *The Mountain Bard; consisting of Ballads and Songs, founded on facts and legendary tales*, published by Constable in Edinburgh, 1807. He inscribed his work to 'Walter Scott, Esq. Sheriff of Ettrick Forest, and Minstrel of the Scottish Border' and he prefaces his ballads with a memoir of his life stating how, in 1802:

the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border came into my hands; and, though I was even astonished to find such exact copies of many old songs, which I had heard sung by people who never could read a song, but had them handed down by tradition; and likewise at the conformity of the notes, to the traditions and superstitions which are, even to this day, far from being eradicated from the minds of the people amongst our mountains, -yet I confess, that I was not satisfied with many of the imitations of the ancients.<sup>58</sup>

This statement sets out his effort to reclaim some of the literary attention directed at Scott and, more boldly, sets him at odds with Scott's achievement. Hogg was 'not satisfied' with the *Imitations* and 'immediately chose a number of traditional facts,

and set about imitating the different manners of the ancients myself' (*Mountain Bard* 15-16). His criticism might remind us of the reported comments of Margaret Hogg about Scott's *Minstrelsy* ('spoil them awthegither')<sup>59</sup> in Hogg's later *Anecdotes of Scott* and offers both aesthetic opinion and perhaps pointed comment on what Scott had allowed to be published under his name. Hogg may also have hoped that *The Mountain Bard* would appeal just as much to those readers who had contributed to the success of Scott's *Minstrelsy*.

In various ways, Hogg replicates the successful formula of the *Minstrelsy*, supplying notes, albeit rather shorter ones than Scott's examples, to accompany his ballads. *The Pedlar* is described as 'founded on a fact, which has been magnified by popular credulity and superstition into the terrible story which follows' (*Mountain Bard* 26). This particular insistence on 'fact' deliberately situates the ballad within the realms of the familiar and perhaps even recent memory before exploring the horrors of the 'terrible story.' Several of the ballads have distinctively uncanny elements such as the enticing demons and voodoo dolls of *Mess John* and the warlock *Willie Wilkin*. In this last ballad, there are similarities between the plight of the warlock and the goblin of Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805. Scott details the loss of a magic book as the cause of the troubles in his *Lay* while Hogg describes the 'book of psalms and pray'rs' (*Mountain Bard* 72) as defeating the spells of the warlock's heathen coven.

*The Mountain Bard* was published in a third edition in 1821 and contains a greater number of ballad material and notes than the earlier edition. *Mess John*, for example, is reprinted with extensive accompanying detail and Hogg claims that it is 'partly founded on facts, with a great deal of romance added' (*Mountain Bard* 269). The tale of *Mess John* retells the seduction of a country girl by a priest and is very much in the same mould as *The Monk*, 1796, although it is difficult to establish if Hogg had read the scandalous novel. However, what is more interesting, given the later *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, is that Hogg writes 'it is no wise improbable, that the lass of Craigieburn was some enthusiast in religious matters, or perhaps a lunatic; and that, being troubled with a sense of guilt, and a squeamish conscience, she had ... made several visits to St. Mary's Chapel to obtain absolution' (*Mountain Bard* 269). The origins of the events of Hogg's most famous

work can be discerned in ballads like *Mess John*. Hogg's later novel *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 1818, includes another corrupt cleric in the mould of Mess John. The ballad 'Mess John' is notable for the use of witchcraft to seduce the young woman and the cleric is killed after discovery of his satanic practices:

The Priest and Satan close engaged  
In hellish rites and orgies lewd. (*Mountain Bard* 259-60)

Hogg's ballads were often more explicitly supernatural than those of Scott's and the central characters such as the Pedlar, Mess John and Willie Wilkin were firmly located on the margins of their societies, much as the minstrels and bards had come to be. Scott proposed that reading ballads was necessary in order to understand history: Hogg understood even more clearly that minstrels, notwithstanding their shiftlessness, nonetheless were often the foils as well as the repositories of folk beliefs and traditions in ways that print culture was gradually overwhelming but would nonetheless incorporate.

Percy in his Dedication to the *Reliques* had been careful to delineate his choices as the 'rude songs of ancient minstrels' and 'barbarous productions of unpolished ages' (*Reliques* vi) but the creative energy and imagination of the ancient minstrels should be considered 'not as labours of art, but as effusions of nature, showing the first efforts of ancient genius, and exhibiting the customs and opinions of remote ages' (*Reliques* vi). Percy is arguing that the *Reliques* are doubly valuable in that they are both historical precedent and a record of original writing, in much the same terms as Scott would use.

The connections between these three collections of oral poetry can be understood in their attachment to the idea of a bard or minstrel and their former role in preliterate culture evolving to become an essential part of national literature. Minstrels were the repository of ballads and songs but came to occupy an uneasy social position, being transient wanderers. Hogg's interest in folk songs and affinity with the fringes of Scottish border society marked him out as an inheritor of the minstrel tradition with all its difficulties of patronage and servitude intact. However, it is possible to see that this early involvement with ballads, in terms of the violent and explicitly sexual content as well as the literary lineage would result in a store of

source material, especially for Scott, as well as opportunities to return to investigation of the uncanny.

### **1.5 Testimony, Evidence and Authority**

This chapter will conclude with some comments on the significance of the following terms: testimony, evidence and authority. I will also propose that Scott and Hogg were influenced in their representation of the supernatural by their interest in the Highlands as a region of undoubted association with various aspects of the supernatural. Tracing the limits of human powers, whether supernatural or not, received additional assistance in the early eighteenth century with the new discoveries in science and technology offering alternative methods of investigation of the supernatural. The appearance of magic lanterns and other mysterious visual displays seemed to offer new possibilities of conjuring ghosts through human ingenuity.

Walter Scott and James Hogg had cemented and extended their initial friendship through their interest in the supernatural and particularly its expression within the structure of ballads, whether ancient or modern. However, Scott's profession was that of a lawyer and the idea of a literary career seemed unlikely. His education and initial apprenticeship within his father's law practice had indicated that this would be his path to independence. Scott's legal education and training as a lawyer would have included the study of various types of admissible evidence and the legal methods of treating testimony. In *Redgauntlet*, Darsie Latimer recalls his education and lists some of the standard legal works such as Dirleton's *Some Doubts and Questions of the Law, especially of Scotland*, 1698, and Stewart's *Dirleton's Doubts and Questions In the Law of Scotland Resolved and Answered*, 1715. Erskine's *Principles of the Law of Scotland*, 1754, was another standard work for lawyers.<sup>60</sup> Matthew Wickman in *The Ruins of Experience* suggests that in the eighteenth-century ideas of what constituted 'evidence' were undergoing some changes and that the role of witnesses was becoming distinct from that of jurors.<sup>61</sup> Witnesses could be unreliable and untrustworthy particularly if they were neither educated nor male. Jurors were expected to reach judgement through the adversarial procedures of opposing parties. Wickman suggests that by 1800 the impact of such

changes was to clarify the position of evidence in that it ‘should measure up to the standards of plausibility, or probability, rather than absolute certainty’ (*Ruins* 26). With regards to the supernatural, proving its existence, or otherwise, became more feasible under such conditions.

Scott’s legal studies were also recalled in the ‘Ashestiel Memoirs’ with particular mention of David Hume’s ‘Scotch Law lectures’ at the University of Edinburgh (*Scott on Himself* 42). Typically, law students such as Scott would have read Hume’s *Commentaries on the law of Scotland, respecting the Description and Punishment of Crimes* 1797 and other standard works such as John Burnet’s *Treatise on the Various Branches of the Criminal Law of Scotland* 1811. Sir George Mackenzie of Rose-baugh, known as ‘Bluidy Mackenzie’, had earlier published *The Laws and Customes of Scotland, in Matters Criminal* in 1678. The following books, published later, would have reflected the practice of law as Scott understood it: Archibald Alison’s *Principles of the Criminal Law of Scotland*, 1832, and Alison’s *Practice of the Criminal Law of Scotland*, 1833.

Scott began his legal training in 1786 when he was first apprenticed to his father. Initially, he was expected to carry out the duties of a legal clerk. He returned to Edinburgh University in 1789, having enrolled in lectures on Civil Law, and qualified as an advocate in 1792. Having reached a certain point in his legal career, he began to indulge one of his other interests: antiquarian travel and discovery in the company of Robert Shortreed. These ‘Liddesdale Raids’ offered Scott the opportunity to search for ancient riding ballads and he also acquired a large Borders war horn (Lockhart, *Life* 1: 199).

John Sutherland, in his biography of Scott, suggests that Scott’s novels demonstrate a combination of practical antiquarian enthusiasm as well as his knowledge of the ‘philosophic history’ of the Scottish Enlightenment. However, he suggests that ‘the raw power in Scott’s fictions lies in their presentation of surfaces, textures of the past that Scott has felt in his hand, [or] heard in the accents of some old peasant or nobleman.’<sup>62</sup> Tumbling ruins, manuscripts and chapbooks, old coins, armour and weaponry, and the personal relics of historical figures as the physical embodiment of history represented the ‘textures’ of the past. Scott’s collection also included a toad stone and amulet said to have supernatural powers.<sup>63</sup>

This concern with authenticity can be seen in Scott's early efforts to construct his *Minstrelsy*. It was a concern shared by his editorial assistants John Leyden and William Laidlaw. Their reported suspicion of Hogg's contributions to their collection indicates perhaps that Hogg held less strict views about the authenticity of one particular version of a ballad or song over others. Hogg's own compositions would necessarily be excluded from such collections. Scott's raids into Liddesdale were designed in part to uncover the 'true' or original versions of ballads and record them on paper. While Scott's approach indicates his interest in questions of authenticity, nonetheless he discovers the limitations of a strictly empirical approach that excludes any possibility of imaginative invention. There is also the possibility of embarrassment and error. The *Antiquary* is full of such jokes about the blindness of antiquarian enthusiasm and the dangers of relying on supposed evidence. In *Reliquiæ Trotsosienses*, Scott describes the frantic bidding between antiquarians at auction for 'a gabion of great merit' which is considered by onlookers to be nothing other than an iron kail pot.<sup>64</sup> The unlikely possibility of discovering an ancient bronze pot, apparently in good repair and merely disguised by black-lead polish, is ignored by the aristocratic parties bidding at auction to secure it. In his last novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Hogg would satirise all such antiquarian pretension quite savagely even to the extent of appearing within the text as a rude shepherd with better things to do than 'howk up hunder-year-auld banes' (*Confessions* 170).

It is possible to trace Scott's attitudes to authenticity and authority through his opinion of Macpherson's *Ossian*. In his review of the 'Report of the Committee of the Highland Society on the Poems of Ossian', by Henry Mackenzie, for the *Edinburgh Review* in 1805,<sup>65</sup> Scott argues that 'no well-informed person will now pretend that Ossian is to be quoted as historical authority' (*Edinburgh Review* 429). Scott's assessments of the evidence are couched in legal terms and he reproduces part of a letter to Dr. Blair by David Hume in which Hume distinguishes between mere argument and testimony. Hume suggests that 'people's ears are fortified' (*Edinburgh Review* 434) against argument but that the production of a suitably old manuscript of part of 'Fingal' along with statements from respectable 'connections'

among the clergy or other Highlanders will serve as adequate testimonials to Macpherson's veracity.<sup>66</sup>

Scott's participation in this debate shows an early interest in such questions of proof. The review is anonymous, and this allows him to be candid, although the wide range of historical and literary reference might have prompted ideas of the true identity of the reviewer. Scott notes how Macpherson invented 'a new system of supernatural belief' which however only replicated 'the vulgar superstition concerning the spirits of the departed, common to the Highlanders with the ignorant in all nations' (*Edinburgh Review* 447). This reference to the possibilities of constructing a system of supernatural belief catches Scott's interest without satisfying it.

In *The Making of History*, 1986, Ian Haywood discusses the forgeries of literary documents and the vogue for 'literary archaeology' whereby Macpherson and Chatterton present seemingly ancient texts as genuine. Scott and Hogg were writing shortly after this period and Scott, especially, was sensitive to the controversy surrounding Macpherson and the poems of *Ossian*. Haywood investigates the development of methods intended to authenticate documents and the arguments posed by Locke and Hume, among others, with regard to the acceptance, or otherwise, of historical events necessarily transmitted through reportage or the 'testimony of others' experience.<sup>67</sup> Haywood points out the difficulties involved in oral as well as written transmission and cites Locke:

I think nothing more valuable than the records of antiquity; I wish we had more of them, and more uncorrupted. But this truth forces me to say, that no probability can rise higher than its first original. (*Making of History* 28)

In his pursuit of the supernatural, Scott was aware of the different types of authority that he might rely on. These might be summarised as antiquarian, legal, religious, and possibly scientific or medical methods of establishing proof. Hogg, on the other hand, might be expected to refer only to the authority of his acquaintance with folklore and the oral tradition of Borders story-telling. However, both authors were engaged by different means of authenticating testimony and Hogg especially would

become interested in the most recent developments in the new sciences of electricity and galvanism. In his periodical, *The Spy*, he records the use of some of these inventions.

It is noticeable that at this period both Scott and Hogg make excursions into the Highlands. Scott's sense of the power of the Highlands had been established early, having visited Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle, legal client of Walter Scott W.S., when he was less than fifteen years old. Scott described his first views of the Highland scenery of Perthshire in awestruck terms:

Since that hour, the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, while much that was influential on my own fortune has fled from my recollection.  
(Quoted in Lockhart, *Life* 1: 141)

Susan Stewart has suggested that there was a 'crisis of authenticity' in the eighteenth century<sup>68</sup> particularly with regard to ballads and ballad scholarship. She considers the efforts of Percy and Macpherson to create national epics and suggests that Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* is part of an extraordinary revival of ballads in literature. Scott's choice of Michael Scott and his magical book as central devices establish the supernatural as inhabiting both material and immaterial objects and this concern with the questions of uncanny testimony persists throughout his later poetry and novels. It will be seen that Hogg develops beyond his early profession of ballad minstrel and editor of *The Spy* to present readers with a different approach to the supernatural. The next chapter will examine this 'experimental' Hogg and his early works.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Forbes Morlock, 'Doubly Uncanny: An Introduction to "On the Psychology of the Uncanny,"' *Angelaki* 2:1 (1995): 19-21. This article's bibliography has examples of the breadth of discussion that has arisen in response to Freud's essay.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Bloom, 'Freud and the Sublime: A Catastrophe Theory of Creativity,' *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism* (New York: Oxford UP, 1982) 101.

<sup>3</sup> See Ian Duncan, 'The Upright Corpse: Hogg, National Literature and the Uncanny,' *Studies in Hogg and His World* 5 (1994) 30. Subsequent references will be in parentheses as (SHW).

<sup>4</sup> See Sir Herbert Grierson, *Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (London: Constable, 1938) 5.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Baron-Wilson, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis* (London, 1839) 1: 175.

Subsequent references will be in parenthesis.

<sup>6</sup> See R. P. Gillies, *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Fraser, 1837) 170. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 165.

<sup>8</sup> James Hogg, *Altrive Tales*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2003) 64.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Cottom, *The Civilised Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985) 151

<sup>10</sup> See Karl Miller, *Electric Shepherd* (London: Faber, 2003) 1-5 and Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007). Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>11</sup> See Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, 'James Hogg as Working-Class Autobiographer: Tactical Manoeuvres in a "Memoir of the Author's Life"', *Studies in Hogg and his World* 17 (2006): 63-80; and Richard D. Jackson, 'Sir Walter Scott's "First" Meeting with James Hogg', *Studies in Hogg and his World* 17 (2006): 5-18.

<sup>12</sup> See James Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. Jill Rubenstein (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999) 3. Here Hogg suggests that Scott's only 'foible ... [was] a too high devotion for titled rank.' However, Scott's respect for nobility especially the patriarchal structures and the principles of *noblesse oblige* could be seen in his own assistance to those less fortunate than himself. See also Robin W. MacLachlan, 'Scott and Hogg: Friendship and Literary Influence', J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt, eds., *Scott and his Influence: The Papers of the Aberdeen Scott Conference, 1982* (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983) 334-35.

<sup>13</sup> David Hewitt, ed., *Scott on Himself* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1981) 4.

<sup>14</sup> See also Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorensen, eds., *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> In the *Anecdotes of Scott*, Hogg repeats Scott's request to the Duke of Buccleuch to allow Hogg to sit at Scott's table in the following terms: 'If ye reave the Hoggs o' Fauldshop / Ye herry Harden's gear' (4). Wittily, Scott asserts his priority over the Duke's wishes by virtue of the ties between the Hardens, Scotts and Hoggs. Possibly the pleasantry also reveals Scott's social anxiety on behalf of his friend.

<sup>16</sup> Lockhart claims to have witnessed this. See J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 7 vols. (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1837-38) 1: 408. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>17</sup> See Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', 1919 trans. and ed. James Strachey, *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, vol. 17 (London: Vintage, 2001) 217-56. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>18</sup> See Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003) 329-33. This contains a recent bibliography of the uncanny.

<sup>19</sup> See André Gide, introduction, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, by James Hogg (London: Cresset P, 1947) xv.

<sup>20</sup> Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007) 187.

<sup>21</sup> David Hartley, *Observations on Man, his Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* 2 vols. (London, 1749) 1.3.7: 412.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Priestley, *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion* 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Birmingham, 1782) 1.2.2: 318-19.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Fergusson, *Poems on Various Subjects by R. Fergusson. In two parts* (Perth: R. Morison, Jr. 1788-89) 2: 8.

<sup>24</sup> See Alexander Law, 'Inscribed Copies of the First Edition (1773) of the Poems of Robert Fergusson', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 3 (1957): 125-35. Law states that Hogg's copy is in the British Museum and that the first blank page is inscribed 'To The pious & reverend Mr. Peter Miller Minister of the Gospel Dunbar from his most obliged Hum. Servant R. Fergusson.' On another page, there is the following 'Presented by Gavin Inglis, Strathindry B/D To Mr. Jas Hogg The Ettrick Shepherd 24th April 1819' and then in another hand, 'And presented to my young friend Mr John M. Crane by me James Hogg this 30th of Octr 1832.'

<sup>25</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland: P of Case Western Reserve University, 1973) 25. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>26</sup> See P. D. Garside, introduction, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2002) xlviii.

<sup>27</sup> Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 16.1 (1826): 149.

<sup>28</sup> Scott, *Quarterly Review* 3.6 (May 1810) 344.

<sup>29</sup> Later, Scott published a review of *Frankenstein* in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 12 (March 1818): 613-20. He also contributed an article, at the request of R. P. Gillies, 'On the Supernatural In Fictitious Composition; and particularly on the Works of Ernest Theodore William Hoffmann', *Foreign Quarterly Review* 1.1 (July 1827): 60-98. In this article, Scott surveyed the development of the supernatural in romantic fiction within European literary culture and suggested that Hoffmann's works owed much to the 'ideas produced by the immoderate use of opium' (97). Scott appears to consider that there is little correlation between his own interest in the supernatural and that of Hoffmann.

<sup>30</sup> See Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief* (Phantassie, East Linton: Tuckwell P, 2001) and P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's Conspiracy: Magic and Witchcraft in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (Phantassie, East Linton: Tuckwell P, 2001). See also Douglas Gifford, "'Nathaniel Gow's Toddy': The Supernatural in Lowland Scottish Literature from Burns and Scott to the Present

Day', *Fantastical Imaginations: The Supernatural in Scottish History and Culture*, ed. Lizanne Henderson (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009) 110-140.

<sup>31</sup> Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's 'Daemonology' and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: Exeter UP, 2000) 3. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>32</sup> Normand and Roberts discuss Carmichael's possible authorship of *Newes from Scotland*: 291-92.

<sup>33</sup> Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) 133.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth* is another example of scholarly interest in supernatural material particularly second sight. His unpublished manuscript is dated 1691 but the first edition of his work was published in 1815. His work will be considered at a later point in the thesis.

<sup>35</sup> These included the four volumes of *Tyrocinia mathematica* in 1661 and *The Hydrostaticks* in 1672. The title of this last volume describes an assortment of practical and theoretical physics dealing with 'the weight, force and pressure of fluid bodies, made evident by physical, and sensible experiments.'

<sup>36</sup> Alphonsus de Spina, *Fortalitium fidei* (Strassburg: Johann Mentelin, c. 1471) and Johannes Nider, *Formicarius* (Augsburg: Anton Sorg, c. 1484).

<sup>37</sup> See 'The Damned Art', An Exhibition Feb.-March 1985, Special Collections, University of Glasgow, 24 June 2006 <<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/damnedart/index.html>>.

<sup>38</sup> See Jane Millgate, "'Litera scripta manet": George Huntly Gordon and the Abbotsford Library Catalogue', *The Library* 6th ser. 20.2 (1998): 118-25 for attribution of Gordon rather than J. G. Cochrane as the main compiler of the catalogue.

<sup>39</sup> See Advocates Library Catalogue, Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh. <<http://www.advocates.org.uk/library/catalogue.html>>.

<sup>40</sup> Scott will actually include a similar incident in *The Fair Maid of Perth*, 1828. To discover the murderer of Oliver Proudfoot, the Town-Clerk suggests that they use the traditional practice of 'proof by *bier-right*' which involves potential suspects touching the corpse of a dead man and being condemned if the corpse bleeds. See Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, eds., A. D. Hook and Donald Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999) 217-19.

<sup>41</sup> William Hickling Prescott, 1796-1859, was an American literary historian. His best-known works are *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*, 1837, and *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*, 1843. He also wrote a series of critical essays for the *North American Review*.

<sup>42</sup> W. H. Prescott, *Biographical and Critical Miscellanies* (London: Bentley, 1845) 513. See the chapter on 'Scottish Song' (July 1826) 503-27. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>43</sup> See Coleman O. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964) and Daniel Cottom, 'Superstition and the Enchanted Reader', *The Civilised Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985) 148-70. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>44</sup> Edith C. Batho, *The Ettrick Shepherd* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1927) 5.

- <sup>45</sup> Ian Duncan, 'Walter Scott, James Hogg and Scottish Gothic', *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) 70-81.
- <sup>46</sup> Louis F. Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1961) 129. See also D. L. Macdonald, *Monk Lewis* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 2000).
- <sup>47</sup> Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 34.
- <sup>48</sup> R. P. Gillies, *German Stories: Selected from the Works of Hoffmann, De La Motte Fouque, Pichler, Kruse, And Others* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1826).
- <sup>49</sup> *The British Critic* 7 (1796): 677.
- <sup>50</sup> Robert Burns, *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, ed. James Kinsley, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1968) 1: 494.
- <sup>51</sup> Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's 'Reliques'* (Oxford: Oxford UP) 41. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.
- <sup>52</sup> *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott 1787-1832*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson, 12 vols. (London: Constable, 1932-37) 1: 108-09.
- <sup>53</sup> Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1984) 5.
- <sup>54</sup> Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1803). Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.
- <sup>55</sup> Reprinted in Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, ed. T. F. Henderson, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1932). Subsequent references will be given to this work in parentheses.
- <sup>56</sup> *Edinburgh Review* 7.14 (1805-1806): 388.
- <sup>57</sup> Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 3 vols. (London: Dodsley, 1765) 3: viii.
- <sup>58</sup> James Hogg, *The Mountain Bard*, ed. Suzanne Gilbert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) 15. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.
- <sup>59</sup> James Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. Jill Rubenstein (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999) 38.
- <sup>60</sup> See Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, eds., G. A. M. Wood and David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997) 447-48.
- <sup>61</sup> Matthew Wickman, *The Ruins of Experience* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007) 25. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.
- <sup>62</sup> John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 48.
- <sup>63</sup> See the *Catalogue of the Armour & Antiquities at Abbotsford*, ed. Mrs Maxwell-Scott (Edinburgh: Constable, 1888) and *Abbotsford: The Personal Relics and Antiquarian Treasures of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. Mary Monica Maxwell-Scott (London, 1893).
- <sup>64</sup> Walter Scott, *Reliquiæ Trotsosienses or the Gabions of the Late Jonathan Oldbuck Esq. Of Monkbarns*, eds. Gerard Carruthers and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004) 32-33.
- <sup>65</sup> Walter Scott, 'Report of the Committee of the Highland Society on the Poems of Ossian', *The Edinburgh Review* 6 (July 1805): 429-62. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>66</sup> See Susan Manning, 'Henry Mackenzie's *Report on Ossian*: Cultural Authority in Transition', *MLQ* 68: 4 (Dec. 2007) 517-39.

<sup>67</sup> Ian Haywood, *The Making of History: A Study of the Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Ideas of History and Fiction* (London: Associated UP, 1986) 26. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>68</sup> Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke UP, 1994) 103.

## Chapter Two: Experimental Hogg: Exploring the Field, 1810-1820

### 2.1 *The Highlands and Hogg: literary apprentice*

This chapter will examine three of Hogg's prose works published between 1810 and 1820. However, before considering their relevance to ideas of Hogg's treatment of the supernatural, it would be helpful to consider Hogg's early experience of the Highlands and its contribution to his development as an author with a particular interest in the supernatural. Hogg made frequent trips of which three separate accounts would be published. The *Scots Magazine* began to print a series of his letters of the journeys made in 1802 and 1804 while his letters of 1803 would be published posthumously in the *Scottish Review* before collection in a single volume.<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that his travels of 1802 and 1804 would be printed throughout fourteen parts of the *Scots Magazine* published between October 1802 and March 1809.

Hogg was employed as a shepherd in the service of James Laidlaw of Blackhouse, in 1790, and began from this date to make his first journeys to the Highlands, trading in sheep on his master's behalf. The initial impetus for these excursions was clearly financial rather than curiosity. However, Hogg appears to have become fascinated by those aspects of Highland society that complemented and contrasted with his knowledge of the Borders. Thus the forced dispossessions of Highland families came to resemble in his eyes the earlier flights of the unfortunate Covenanters while the rural tales, songs and poetry were not unfamiliar to him despite being chanted in Gaelic.

In her biography of Hogg, Gillian Hughes notes that he had begun to explore throughout Stirlingshire and Glenorchy in 1792. His early journeys appear to have been undertaken alone and in 1798, or 1799, he travelled through Invernesshire and Rosshire on horseback.<sup>2</sup> His chance discovery of a murdered man's body was reported to the local people of Tomintoul who refused any assistance. Hogg then fled back to the Lowlands in fear of being accused of the murder. This incident shocked and frightened him. Later, in 1802, he would again experience considerable fear near the Falls of Tummel in Highland Perthshire. Hogg recounts how he found himself

involved in a ‘disagreeable fracas’<sup>3</sup> with the other customers of a remote whisky house and then describes how he eventually managed to escape without harm. Similar examples of casual quarrels that result in bloodshed, or even murder, will reappear in *The Spy* and in Hogg’s later collection of fiction, *Winter Evening Tales*.

The previous encounter with the murdered man may have made him anxious to secure a companion before next setting off from Edinburgh in 1802, and in his letter published in December, Hogg describes how he had hoped to travel with friends such as William Laidlaw or Andrew Mercer. Instead, he laments

I had always flattered myself that I would find in Mr W— L—, a ready and entertaining associate in my journey, but being newly returned from an excursion of the same nature, he absolutely refused to accompany me; he however informed me, that Mr A— M— intended a jaunt through the Highlands, and even the very road which I then proposed taking ... He could not go!<sup>4</sup>

However, it is also possible that initially he might have expected Scott to accompany him on this journey, with the idea of their emulating Johnson and Boswell in the Highlands. Instead, Scott offered other practical assistance. He provided an introductory letter to the *Scots Magazine* designed to introduce and recommend Hogg’s work. This letter, signed ‘S.W.’, bolstered Hogg’s credentials and announced that Hogg’s series of letters would be intended as an informative guide to the Highlands. Scott’s comments on Hogg’s suitability as a conductor within the ‘fields of knowledge’<sup>5</sup> are at once supportive in terms of emphasising Hogg’s original qualities as an author while also dealing with those aspects of his character that might be regarded as difficulties. Scott draws on ideas of education gained through travel, such as the Grand Tours of Europe habitually undertaken by the eighteenth-century nobility, and suggests that the ‘uneducated and hardy intruder, whose natural strength of mind impels him to study, and to whose researches novelty gives all its charms, may ... discover beauties neglected by those who have been bred up among them’ (*Scots Magazine* 64: 812). Scott, in effect, is experimenting with the possibilities of an untutored observer, reliant mainly on his innate abilities. He suggests that such an observer might be an improvement on ‘those whose education

has commenced with the first opening of their ideas ... who have been as it were, “rocked and craddled (*sic*), and dandled” into men of literature ... denizens of the realms of taste and science’ (*Scots Magazine* 64: 812). Hogg’s account might be expected to be uniquely worthy.

Even before this venture, Hogg had already managed to publish an unsigned poem ‘The Mistakes of a Night’ in the *Scots Magazine* of October 1794. In 1801, his small collection of poetry, entitled *Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs & c., Mostly Written in the Dialect of the South* was published in Edinburgh, and largely ignored, except for ‘Willie an’ Keatie’. This was reprinted from the collection for the *Scots Magazine* of January 1801. Hogg’s early poetry is notable for its mixture of pastoral convention and lively naïvety. His reading of the poetry of Allan Ramsay, Robert Burns, Alexander Pope and Thomas Gray had clearly influenced him and his elegies on love, death and betrayal sought to conform to the conventions of the eighteenth-century poet. However, Hogg’s use of frank sexual imagery would have been considered indelicate and his verse in broad Borders Scots was a significant barrier to a wider readership.

The Highland letters would be very different. They were a development of his literary interests and technique in the sense of having to observe and record his surroundings for the benefit of his readers. The letters are filled with practical details about sheep pasture and the methods of farming that he saw on his travels. He makes notes on the customs of the Highlands and the characteristics of the people he meets. His practical eye for the opportunities in agriculture led him to consider the Highlands in the light of a potential destination for sheep farming yet he was not solely concerned with agriculture. His empathy with the rural tales of the Borders directed him to notice and describe anything of similar interest that struck him during his travels. In Hogg’s very first letter to Scott he discusses the supernatural at length, musing on its tenacity in Ettrick:

In no part of the south of Scotland hath the ancient superstitions so long kept their ground. The fairies have but lately and reluctantly quitted its green holms and flowery glens. Some yet alive have had intercourse with them; and the stories of their pranks and gambols are listened to with more attention, and as much faith annexed, as the gospel according

to Matthew... We are persuaded that they have not power to stay where the Protestant religion is so firmly established; but that, in the Papist countries, they are as thick as ever.<sup>6</sup>

Hogg is reporting here on superstition for Scott as an observer rather than as a believer. His grandfather, Will o' Phaup, was reputed to have conversed with fairies but it is telling that Hogg disassociates himself here from the family connection, omitting to inform Scott of it. He then continues to describe various bogles, witches and the existence of charms. Hogg assures Scott that the reason for such prevailing beliefs is due to the remote nature of the district. Travelling to the Highlands which was still partly under the influence of Roman Catholicism, and at least as equally remote, might be expected to yield evidence of similar beliefs.

The pursuit of exploring the unfamiliar regions of the Highlands to collect ballads or other material may well have been stimulated greatly by the controversy following the publication of Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland* in 1760. The extraordinary debate over the authenticity of the *Ossian* cycle had necessarily increased interest in the Highlands as a likely repository of traditional material whether tales or songs. Scott had been collecting ballads for many years from the Borders, before publishing his *Minstrelsy*, 1802-3, and may well have considered the Highlands as another possible source of such material and as a further publishing opportunity.<sup>7</sup> Hogg had been of assistance to him with the *Minstrelsy* and might well be expected to augment Scott's collection with additional examples of Highland ballads or tales of superstitious customs still surviving in the remote areas of Northern Scotland.

Scott had included some information on such matters in the *Minstrelsy*, discussing 'the fact ... that the character of the Scottish [*sic*] fairy is more harsh and terrific than that which is ascribed to the elves of our sister kingdom (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 2: 213-14).' He then adds that 'the fairies of Scotland are represented as a diminutive race of beings, of a mixed, or rather dubious nature, capricious in their dispositions, and mischievous in their resentment' (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 2: 214) in his disquisition 'On the Fairies of Popular Superstition' before the 'Tale of Tamlane.' Further examples of tales of second sight, banshees and other Highland superstitions would doubtless be welcome.

Following Ferguson and Adam, and their theories of the stadial systems of social development, the Highlands could be regarded as exemplifying the primitive stage of human existence and its inhabitants considered as hunter-gatherers living in a 'natural' and nomadic state of existence.<sup>8</sup> Their ancient customs had thus been preserved without dilution or contamination by the progressively modernised society of lowland Scotland. In *Improvement and Romance*, 1988, Peter Womack argues that one unintended consequence of this theory was that it encouraged ideas about the magical, even supernatural, qualities of the Highlands as an ancient and unspoilt region. Womack suggests that stadial theory thus 'inadvertently accorded the Highlands the special, numinous value of relics'<sup>9</sup> and this in turn magnified the value of Highland traditions of the supernatural. It also encouraged authors and antiquarians to search for further instances of belief.

The Highlands had attracted other travellers before Hogg or Scott. In 1703 Martin Martin produced his *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, published in London. His intention was to provide an account of the physical geography of the Islands as well as details of the 'Ancient and Modern Government, Religion and Customs of the Inhabitants, particularly of their Druids, Heathen Temples, Monasteries, Churches, Chappels, Antiquities, Monuments, Forts, Caves and other Curiosities of Art and Nature.'<sup>10</sup> Martin also included a section on second sight and describes his meeting with John Morison. Martin relates how Morison

lives in Bernera of Harries, wears the Plant call'd Fuga Demonum sew'd in the neck of his Coat, to prevent his seeing of visions, and says he never saw any since he first carried that plant about him. He suffer'd me to feel the Plant in the neck of his Coat, but would by no means let me open the seam, tho' I offer'd him a Reward to let me do it (*Western Islands* 334).

Martin then discusses the phenomenon of Brownies and describes how they were 'frequently seen in all the most Considerable Families in the Isles and North of Scotland, in the shape of a tall man, but within these twenty or thirty years past, he is seen but rarely' (*Western Islands* 334).<sup>11</sup> In making this distinction, Martin Martin observes that supernatural beliefs were not necessarily the sole domain of the impoverished and uneducated peasantry as might be expected. He mentions another

tale of banshees and remarks that ‘these accounts I had from Persons of as great Integrity as any are in the World’ (*Western Islands* 335).

The question of second sight also fascinated Dr. Johnson. Johnson’s *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* was published in 1775 and Boswell published his account of their travels in his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* in 1785. Johnson writes of his efforts to meet Highlanders who claim to be adepts. His eventual conclusion is that ‘second sight is only wonderful because it is rare ... it involves no more difficulty than dreams ... and that where we are unable to decide by antecedent reason, we must be content to yield to the force of testimony.’<sup>12</sup> Dr Johnson perhaps prefigures Scott’s later thinking with his final comment on the existence of second sight:

To collect sufficient testimonies for the satisfaction of the publick, or of ourselves, would have required more time than we could bestow. There is, against it, the seeming analogy of things confusedly seen, and little understood; and for it, the indistinct cry of national persuasion, which may be perhaps resolved at last into national prejudice and tradition. I never could advance my curiosity to conviction; but came away at last only willing to believe. (*Journey* 110)

One other significant work on the Highlands followed shortly after the publication of Hogg’s letters. This was the *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland*, 1805, by Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk (1771-1820). Selkirk’s introduction sets his interest in context. His ‘curiosity was strongly excited by the representations I had heard of the antient [*sic*] state of society, and the striking peculiarity of manners still remaining among them.’<sup>13</sup> However, Selkirk’s travels in 1792 seem more directed towards discussing the progress of Highland society and the necessity and effects of emigration. Selkirk notes early that ‘there is much more reason to be surprised at the progress that has been made by the inhabitants in these sixty years, [after 1745] than that they should not have accomplished to its full extent the change, which in other parts has been the work of many centuries’ (*Observations* 10). The influence of this work on *Waverley* has been noted by Peter Garside who suggests that Selkirk’s statement finds a clear echo in Scott’s title of *Waverley; Or, ‘Tis Sixty Years Since*.<sup>14</sup>

The strength of Scott's connection with Hogg is intriguingly represented in one of Hogg's early letters. Hogg describes his arrival at Dalnacardoch on 27 July 1802, having journeyed for less than a week. He is dismayed by the scenery, having passed from 'the most charming landscape to the most bleak sterility'<sup>15</sup> and describes how the banks of the river Garry 'exhibit a scene of the most naked desolation, and can create nothing in the mind but ideas dismal and gloomy' ('Journey' 1802: 382). His spirits fall further when he considers 'what profit can I ever expect from this journey? On the contrary, am I not going to throw away much hard-earned money for neither use nor end? And where is the pleasure?' ('Journey' 1802: 383). Having fallen asleep with these thoughts, he dreams that Scott appears to him in the room at Dalnacardoch and how Scott 'began to upbraid me for my irresolution, and wondered how I could so soon relinquish an enterprise of which I seemed so fond' ('Journey' 1802: 384). Hogg's dream ends with Scott 'telling me peremptorily to proceed, and depend on your promise that I never should repent it' ('Journey' 1802: 384).

Hogg does continue with his travels and he writes lengthy descriptions of the geography and climate of the area. His letters occasionally refer to other travellers and explorers and he remarks that the mountain Schehallion 'is famous for the experiments made on it by some of the most noted philosophers to ascertain the powers of attraction and gravity' ('Journey' 1802: 385). This ties in with Scott's earlier reference to 'fields of knowledge' and strengthens the impression that Hogg has been despatched on a mission to record and report his findings in a suitably scientific and objective manner. Hogg's success, or lack of it, is recorded in a later letter to Scott when he describes his theories of the formation of the Trossachs. He details his observations of the remaining geology and appearance of the mountains quite minutely but concludes rather defensively:

However, my dear sir, I have no hopes that you will treat this probable discovery with a greater share of approbation than you do all my natural and experimental philosophy, namely, by laughing at it.<sup>16</sup>

Nonetheless, Hogg continued, undeterred. His travels among the Trossachs were part of a later lengthy journey in the Highlands. He had set off again from Ettrick on foot

in May 1803 and spent the spring and summer in the Western Highlands and Islands. Hogg's simple honesty on one dangerous topic may have influenced Scott and confirmed the respectable Edinburgh lawyer in one of his more unlikely opinions. One of Hogg's letters from Lochaber in June 1803 contains the characteristic and impulsively romantic reference to heartfelt sympathy with the Jacobite rebels:

While traversing the scenes where the patient sufferings of the one party, and the cruelties of the other, were so affectingly displayed, I could not help being a bit of a Jacobite in my heart, and blessing myself that, in those days, I did not exist, or I should certainly have been hanged.<sup>17</sup>

Later in July 1813, Scott writes to Miss Margaret Clephane with similar treasonable thoughts and makes a bold confession of his own loyalty to the Stuart cause:

Seriously I am very glad I did not live in 1745 for though as a lawyer I could not have pleaded Charles's right and as a clergyman I could not have prayed for him yet as a soldier I would I am sure against the convictions of my better reason have fought for him even to the bottom of the gallows.<sup>18</sup>

There are other examples from Hogg's letters of the culture of the Highlands that will recur later in *Waverley*. Hogg describes his meeting with a family of McDonalds in Greenfield, Glengarry. One of the ladies is called Miss Flora and the family are Roman Catholic with a resident priest. He writes of their house which was 'built of earth, and the walls were all covered with a fine verdure ... the ladies ... were handsome and genteelly dressed, although unapprised of our arrival, unless by the second sight' (*Tour 1803*: 51). This description informs the reader of the blend of Highland civilisation (fine clothes and an elegant dwelling) with the continual presence of elements of the traditional supernatural (second sight). In his novel, Scott will endow Fergus Mac-Ivor with the blessing, or hindrance, of second sight.

Hogg's interest in the natural sciences was complemented by his ambition to discover the remaining ancient superstitions of the Highlands. In his letter from Letterewe on 16 June 1803, he describes his meeting with a Miss Downie 'who first inspired me with the resolution of visiting the remote country of the Lewis, by

describing it to me as the scene of the most original and hereditary modes and customs that were anywhere to be met with in the British Isles' (*Tour 1803*: 81). If Hogg was aware of the scientific and agricultural value of his observations, he was equally conscious of the cultural importance of his letters to Scott.

The final series of letters with details of his travels in 1804 were published in the *Scots Magazine* later in 1809. This time, he did have companions: William Laidlaw and John Grieve. Their journey was notable for its discomforts, whether seasickness or temporary starvation, and Hogg announced to Scott that he is 'resolved never more to take another journey, of such a nature, at my own expense.'<sup>19</sup> However, one of his last descriptions is of his visit to St. Fillan's pool. It was known locally as the Wisdom Pool; 'the inhabitants believe [it] to be supernaturally endowed with an extraordinary quality on a certain returning day each quarter of the year' ('Journey' 1804: 182). In the *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* Selkirk had drawn an analogy between the Highlands of the mid-eighteenth century and medieval Europe. One of the similarities between two such societies would necessarily be their reliance on a mixture of magic and religion for healing. Hogg's report confirms this view and relates how many people were 'tumbled into the pool over head and ears; then pulled out dropping wet; bound hand and foot with strong ropes, and locked up in the chapel, where they are suffered to remain until the sun rise next morning' ('Journey' 1804: 182). Immersion in water carries the suggestion of renewed baptism or cleansing and this is followed by actual confinement within the holy chapel. Two complementary systems of faith appear to co-exist.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the involuntary imprisonment of sufferers in damp clothing overnight in the chapel, Hogg's informant assures him that 'its good effects were so visible, that it was allowed, by the most sensible people of the place, to contribute much to the recovery of such as were thus affected' ('Journey' 1804: 183). Hogg's doubts on this score are also recorded. He remarks:

It is certainly not a little remarkable that this superstitious belief should prevail in an enlightened country, so late as the present day; and as no person can now have any interest in carrying it on as a trick, it can only be accounted for from

some experience of its efficacy. This then must certainly be accounted for in some more natural way than the supernal [*sic*] virtues of its water on such days; and if it is beneficial to persons thus afflicted, which is at least dubious, any day of the year, and any pool and chapel will do as well as these of St. Fillan; or otherwise it is a very well-contrived plan to work on the imagination.<sup>20</sup>

These comments indicate Hogg's rather sceptical views on superstitious beliefs. It is notable that Scott's use of the legendary haunted fountain in *The Bride of Lammermoor* could be said to be much more in accord with the views of those who commended the Wisdom Pool than the incredulous Hogg.

Hogg's travels in the Highlands seem to have attracted little attention when first published and may perhaps have been overshadowed by his other later literary efforts. His association with the project of collecting ballads for Scott's *Minstrelsy*, followed by his publication of the *Mountain Bard*, 1807, perhaps contributed to the general neglect of his Highland letters by contemporaries as well as by later scholars. The momentum of publication was lost through the eventual appearance of the letters over fourteen numbers of the *Scots Magazine* between 1802 and 1809 and resulted in less success for Hogg's experiment in journalism than he might have hoped to realise. Their diffuse presentation significantly reduced their impact.

However, the letters from the Highlands did allow him the opportunity to write about and reflect on the curious customs discovered throughout his travels. His eclectic choice of anecdotes and frequent reversion to one of his favourite topics, in the management and farming of sheep, may not have superseded Thomas Pennant's robustly detailed *A Tour in Scotland 1769*<sup>21</sup> as a guide book, but Hogg's sense of the importance of the Highlands developed through his frequent travels, often on foot. It is striking, however, that he reports on instances of the supernatural as a detached observer rather than as a believer. In this capacity of reporter, his paper *The Spy* is a natural development from these letters and offered him the considerable advantage of acting as his own editor and publisher. The next section will examine ideas of 'improvement', the importance of periodicals in nineteenth-century Edinburgh and the pitfalls of 'polite' society.

## **2.2 Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh: 'Improvement', Periodicals and 'Polite' Culture**

Between the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, and the beginnings of the nineteenth-century, Scotland was a nation bent on improvement.<sup>22</sup> The cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen were filled with ambitious citizens anxious to establish and consolidate practical improvements in various areas such as agriculture, industry and science. Literature, the art of polite conversation and mastery of the English language in speech and writing were also enthusiastically promoted. To this end, various societies sprung up to oversee the necessary advances, importing techniques and methods where necessary either from England or Europe. One such society was the Edinburgh Select Society, founded in 1754 by Allan Ramsay (1713-1784). Ramsay was the son of Allan Ramsay, poet and ballad-collector who had edited the *Tea-Table Miscellany: a Collection of Scots Songs*, published in three volumes in 1723, 1726 and 1727, as well as other works. Other notable founder members of the society included David Hume and Adam Smith. The aims of the Edinburgh Select Society (E. S. S.) were to encourage useful arts and manufactures in Scotland and 'the improvement of the members in the art of speaking.'<sup>23</sup> To this end, the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland was subsequently inaugurated in 1761. It lasted for three years but was bent on championing the idea of public and private advantage for Scots in their wider use of English. Reflecting on the drive to encourage spoken English, Samuel Johnson's opinion, given towards the end of his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1773, might have been unwelcome but reflected one particular aspect of what had come to be regarded as progress in polite society. He commented that 'the conversation of the Scots grows every day less displeasing to the English; their peculiarities wear fast away; their dialect is likely to become in half a century provincial and rustick ... the great, the learned, the ambitious, and the vain, all cultivate the English phrase, and the English pronunciation' (*Journey* 162).

In eighteenth-century Edinburgh, a variety of newspapers, periodicals and journals assisted in the project of improvement. Of these, and despite their small circulation, the *Mirror* and the *Lounger* were important vehicles in the promotion of a culture of politeness and decorum. They were produced by a relatively small but

influential circle of conservative lawyers that included Henry Mackenzie, leader of the Mirror Club.<sup>24</sup> The periodical essays of the *Mirror* and the *Lounger* have been considered Scottish imitations of the *Spectator* or the *Rambler*, particularly as the names of the Scottish periodicals appear to have been inspired by the English titles, but their especial concern was the regulation of private as well as public life. Other newspapers and journals available in Edinburgh included the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, the *Caledonian Mercury*, Ruddiman's *Weekly Mercury* and the *Scots Magazine*. They were all concerned with promoting and affirming improvement as a social objective. However, the Scottish periodicals made the conscious choice of publishing in English rather than Scots and their choice confirmed the position of Scots as inferior to English and therefore not fit for polite publication.

Johnson's approval of the progress of Scottish speech associated success in social mobility, education, and even fashion, with the use of English, both in speech and in writing. Lord Craig, in the *Mirror*, 1780, would explain Scottish difficulties with the language by noting that 'the Scottish dialect is our ordinary suit; the English is used only on solemn occasions.'<sup>25</sup> In the late eighteenth century, aspiring Scots understood the necessity of mastering conversational English. Using the correct form of language, however, was only one aspect of polite society. It was equally important that genteel style displayed the virtues of moderation, dignity and impartiality. Forms of conversation that prized reciprocity and deference rather than aggressive self-display or over-bearing competition were most suitable. In *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, first published in 1796, the Scottish author Elizabeth Hamilton describes the accomplished daughters of Mr Denbeigh and notes how 'in conversation, their sprightliness is free from the lightness of vanity, and their seriousness from the arrogance of self-conceit.'<sup>26</sup> It is a glimpse of what was considered acceptable as social conversation in polite society.

Public morality was another aspect of concern for polite society. In *Virtuous Discourse*, John Dwyer considers the formation and dissemination of those ideas that were held to constitute the essential components of a moral community.<sup>27</sup> He locates the growth and development of efforts to mould virtuous citizens through the activities of moderate Church of Scotland ministers (such as Hugh Blair) and the network of improving clubs and societies such as the Mirror Club or the Pantheon

Society. Dwyer also suggests that ‘the spirit of improvement ... represented new ways of looking at the world, founded upon deductive reason and empirical observation, rather than upon dogma or fossilized traditions’ (*Discourse 3*). With regard to belief in the supernatural, the influence of such new methods of discovery, whether applied in the Borders or the Highlands, affected both Scott and Hogg. Where Scott sought to uncover evidence of the supernatural through the testimony of reliable witnesses, in order to confirm or deny its existence, Hogg was more concerned to employ the supernatural for literary purposes without regard necessarily to questions of belief. He manages to distance himself from the supernatural in ways that Scott could not emulate.

Notwithstanding ideas of the credibility of the supernatural, this emphasis on the construction of an improved Scottish community, enjoying high standards of morality, conversing in correct English, and acknowledging the importance of politeness, had considerable implications for Hogg and the likely success of his poetry or prose. Without much formal education, he was largely self-taught, and had spent little time in the gatherings of polite company. Reflecting on his experiences, perhaps defensively, to Scott in one of his letters from the Highlands, Hogg had suggested that his preferred domain was the cottage:

I have sometimes been admitted to the company and tables of the great, and frequently to those who affect their manners: but the cottage, Sir! the cottage is my native element!<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, Hogg was a beneficiary of the drive for improvements in agriculture as well as literature. The Edinburgh Select Society had devised one method of encouraging progress through the distribution of prizes or premiums. These competitions were advertised in local papers and candidates were invited to submit essays. Other societies adopted the idea and James Hogg would submit at least two essays to the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, founded in 1787. He was awarded three guineas in 1802 for an essay on the diseases of sheep and a further gold medal, or plate, worth 10 guineas in 1803 for another essay on similar topics.<sup>29</sup>

From Hogg's point of view, winning prizes was welcome even if such success was infrequent. He could add these awards to the appearance of his poetry in the *Scots Magazine* in 1794 ('The Mistakes of a Night') and the publication of his *Scottish Pastorals* in 1801.<sup>30</sup> His chances of becoming a professional author were further strengthened by his experience of assisting Scott in collecting ballads for the *Minstrelsy* in 1802. Hogg had begun his literary career against a backdrop of Scottish societies concerned with consolidating social progress and had been able to take advantage of the limited opportunities for success available. The later publication of his weekly paper, *The Spy*, 1810, would be the logical and enterprising, if still unlikely, result of his experiences. Remarkably, he would write, edit and produce much of it by himself.

Hogg was aware that literary success might depend upon his ability to publish in the periodicals of the time. He had already found a vehicle in the *Scots Magazine* that seemed to promise opportunities of publication with a readership that did not exclusively represent the urban, professional and highly educated audience of Edinburgh. Ballads, in their original Scots, could be regarded as impolite unless presented to the reader as having been edited and thereby transformed for print. With Scott's example before him, Hogg continued to write poetry and ballad imitations. Publication of *The Mountain Bard; consisting of Ballads and Songs, founded on facts and legendary Tales*, 1807, included some short explanatory notes to accompany the ballads in the style of the *Minstrelsy*. The full title of Hogg's work directs the reader to his incorporation of fact and fiction. He is still more specific in his preface to 'The Pedlar' stating that 'this Ballad is founded on a fact, which has been magnified by popular credulity and superstition into the terrible story which follows ... I need not inform the reader, that every part of it is believed by them to be absolute truth.'<sup>31</sup> Hogg distances himself here from his informants: they are the 'best informed old people about Ettrick' (*Mountain Bard* 26). This practice recalls his omission of any acknowledgement of familial relationship with his grandfather, Will o' Phaup, in writing of the superstitions of Ettrick to Scott in Hogg's Highland letters.

Hogg's efforts to become an author were assisted by a network of friendships in Edinburgh. James Gray, classics master at Edinburgh High School, Eliza Izett, and John Grieve were supportive of him. Grieve had known Hogg in

Ettrick and was in partnership with Chalmers Izett, a manufacturer of hats, and husband of Eliza. These connections helped keep Hogg's literary dreams current even as he was in difficulties, having purchased a farm he could not afford in Locherben, Dumfriesshire. Grieve, Gray and Eliza Izett belonged to a thriving class of small-scale merchants and teachers with an interest in poetry and literature that was very congenial to Hogg even if his prospects as a literary man seemed to be rapidly disappearing. Later, in his 'Memoir of the Author's Life', Hogg would recall the financial disaster that forced him to seek shelter in Edinburgh rather than Dumfriesshire or the Borders:

I found myself fairly involved in business far above my capital ... so I got every day out of one strait and confusion into a worse. I blundered and struggled on for three years between these two places, giving up all thoughts of poetry or literature of any kind.<sup>32</sup>

Hogg's decision in 1810 to move to Edinburgh coincided with the emergence of what has been described as a 'new style of reviewing' by Barton Swaim. In 'Edinburgh is a Talking Town'<sup>33</sup> he describes how the ideal of polite conversation was giving way by 1800 to an enthusiasm for rhetorical display and boldly eloquent conversation. He links this development with the emergence of new periodicals such as the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802 and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817. Both the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's* would be distinguished by their innovative methods of reviewing which encouraged the anonymous reviewer to provide readers with rhetorical discussion of a wide range of subjects rather than limit them to a selection of abstracts with some additional commentary on the book in question.<sup>34</sup>

From Hogg's point of view, such changes initially offered him little encouragement. His social origins prevented his entry into the polite society of lawyers and gentlemen, except occasionally, and writing in Scots was of limited interest to publishers. However, he could seek to emulate those he could not join and in this he was assisted by the friendly encouragement of the Forum Debating Society of which he became secretary. The Forum was one of a number of sociable clubs formed for public debate and Hogg met a wide selection of enthusiastic participants

in this popular club which was first convened in April 1811.<sup>35</sup> In the same way that Mackenzie's Mirror Club provided content and inspiration for the *Mirror*, so later editions of *The Spy* benefited from Hogg's experiences in the Forum and his opportunities to meet, converse and exchange ideas with the other citizens of Edinburgh.

### **2.3 *The Spy*, 1810 –1811**

This section will describe *The Spy* briefly and suggest some of the methods that Hogg uses to unsettle the reader's expectations of an essay-periodical of 1810. Hogg's determination to produce his own periodical can be seen as an effort to counter the discouragement he received as an author from publishers as well as his method of obtaining some control over publication of his work. Hogg's initial reading matter was drawn from the Bible and the Book of Psalms and he progressed gradually to newspapers. In his 'Memoir of the Author's Life,' published in *Altrive Tales*, Hogg mentions that the wife of his employer, Mrs Laidlaw of Willenslee, passed on to him copies of newspapers which he read 'with great earnestness - beginning at the date, and reading straight on, through advertisements of houses and lands, balm of Gilead, and everything' (*Altrive Tales* 16). Newspapers and periodicals carried a variety of disparate material for the apprentice reader, accessible and readily available.

Hogg was not the first to decide on a title of *The Spy* for a newspaper or periodical. In London, Edward Ward's *The London Spy* (London: J. Nutt & J. How, 1698-9) was a guide to the 'low life' of the capital. There was also *The Town Spy; or, A View of London and Westminster ... Written by a Foreigner* (Gloucester, 1729); Anon, *The Country Spy; or, A Ramble thro' London* (London, 1750); Anon, *The Midnight Spy or London from 10 in the Evening to 5 in the Morning* (London: J. Cooke, 1766); R. King, *The Complete London Spy, for the present Year 1781* (London: Alex Hogg, 1781); Anon, *London Unmasked or the New Town Spy* (London, 1784); George Barrington, *Barrington's New London Spy for 1805, or the frauds of London detected, also a Treatise on the Art of Boxing by Mr. Belcher*, 4th edition (London: T. Tegg, 1805).<sup>36</sup>

These earlier English works often use the trope of the unwary visitor or, alternatively, the insider with particular knowledge of the hazards of urban life to warn others of the dangers they face. Hogg's title, however, refers more to the advantages of anonymity as well as teasing the reader with ideas of disguise. In his first number, he notes 'there is scarcely a single individual in Edinburgh who has not seen me, as have great numbers in the country besides, yet not one of a thousand amongst them know who I am, or what I am about.'<sup>37</sup> Hogg then describes his methods of observation which depend on his immersion in a study of the individual until he 'can ascertain the compass of their minds and thoughts' (*Spy* 4). This extraordinary suggestion is undercut by the result of one such attempt that ends in his rueful account of his falling into a pond and almost drowning. The sternness of his supposed observations on behaviour, appropriate to ideas of improvement for young people, especially women, for example, ends in comedy. The question of the reliability of such a *Spy* is moot and his authority is immediately undermined.

There were a number of advantages associated with a weekly periodical, from Hogg's point of view. He was able to write and publish a miscellaneous collection of articles, short tales, poetry, songs and letters without hindrance, once he had found a willing printer. His talents found a ready outlet in the variety and compressed length of his chosen format and he was able to reach customers directly, simply by delivering the newspaper to their homes and then collecting payment. *The Spy* was an extension of Hogg's literary apprenticeship in its inclusion of different genres. Hogg engaged in a very direct relationship with his readers as editor and *Spy*.

Given his public difficulties as a failed farmer in the Borders and his lack of literary prestige in Edinburgh, the position of anonymous author was understandably attractive. However, it will be seen that Hogg was not content simply with his role of observer and faithful reporter. He interrupted his readers' assumptions and expectations of what a weekly paper might include by incorporating different genres – biographical accounts of national life, moral tales, letters, poetry and reportage – while claiming to be an impartial observer, and spy, and thoroughly confusing the boundaries of fact and fiction. The reader becomes aware of multiple narrators as well as some characters in light disguise and clearly modelled on himself. Hogg, within the pages of his paper, collects and presents an assortment of local and

national society in order to amuse and instruct his readers. However, these readers must necessarily beware: Hogg points out in his first issue that ‘though I am bound to tell the truth, I am not bound to tell the whole truth’ (*Spy* 1). There is a suggestion that Hogg is not to be ‘bound’ by his printed text, no more so than might be the case with those listeners familiar with the shifting boundaries and fluid development of oral narratives. We are presented with individual accounts that do not readily lend themselves to clear categories. Hogg undermines our reliance on printed texts with the assistance of that very vehicle itself.

This editorial position conflicts with Scottish enlightenment modes of progress which were characterised by the dissemination of ideas through the authority of print and which constructed a relationship between trustworthiness and narrative authority. Confusing the boundaries between fact and fiction, or testimony and evidence, required readers to navigate between these modes without assuming that printed matter carried an innate quality of truth. Hogg’s candour in announcing himself as a hidden spy while yet being known to everyone is simply another part of the paradoxical and unsettling experience that is reading *The Spy*.

In his *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, Hogg relates how he consulted his mentor Scott about his proposed literary paper. Scott’s reaction was one of disapproval and doubt, pointing out that comparisons between Hogg’s magazine and other respected journals would most likely lead to Hogg’s discomfort:

“Do you not think it rather dangerous ground to take after Addison Johnson and Henry M, Kenzie?” said he.

“No a bit!” said I “I’m no the least feared for that. My papers may no be sae yelegant as their’s but I expect to make them mair original.”

“Yes they will certainly be original enough with a vengeance” said he.<sup>38</sup>

The ‘uneducated and hardy intruder’ described previously by Scott has slipped from consideration. Hogg defends his choice of the format of the essay-periodical on the grounds of original and superior content. While he does not expect credit for elegance in terms of sentiment or style, Hogg is convinced that his ‘papers’ will attract subscribers seeking novelty; ‘mair original’, and therefore as worthy of

attention as the rivals. Indeed, it is possible to argue that Hogg and Scott had entirely disparate ideas of originality. Any initial reading of the passage catches the mocking sarcasm of Scott's words but our understanding of Scott's wry acknowledgement of Hogg's proposal rests on what both men define as 'original'. Hogg's idea of originality, given the evidence of *The Spy*, could be understood to be upsetting or even resisting accepted ideas of fact and fiction. The enlightenment emphasis on the primacy of documentation over orality is undermined by a deliberate confusion of the *Spy*'s intentions within the papers.

Thus, in issue no. 18, published on 29 December 1810, Hogg describes the reception of his paper by the public in a reading room, in itself evidence of the increasing demand for ephemeral reading matter, and the reactions to his work. One of his readers suggests that *The Spy* should focus on 'the literary taste, the genius and manners of the various classes of people throughout the kingdom, and, as much as possible, to blend instruction with amusement' (*Spy* 187). This is the manifesto of the improving classes and the editor of the *Spy* is given additional advice. We hear how

Every moral virtue which he would inculcate, should be conveyed in some pleasant or interesting story, or illustrated by the relation of some coincident anecdote, or reference. By these means a proper sense of duty, or decorum, can sometimes be more effectually conveyed to the mind, than by the most elaborate declamations. He should laugh at our foibles; reprehend our vices; and, occasionally lead us to view their fatal consequences, by narratives of misery and woe. (*Spy* 187)

However, Hogg's tales do not altogether fit this prescription. He follows this discussion with the 'Story of the Ghost of Lochmaben.' This features the detection of a murder through the reappearance of the ghost of the victim and the subsequent trial of the suspected husband. He is acquitted 'in the eye of the law' (*Spy* 193) because there was 'no certain proof' (*Spy* 193). His defence counsel called for the ghost to reappear yet it failed to do so. The trial was postponed and the defendant dismissed. However, his neighbours deliver their own justice and drive him from his house into exile in Cumberland. This differentiation between the legal proof, which is

impossible to produce, and the acceptance of the villagers of the testimony of the ghost points up the conflict between testimony and evidence.

Scott did not expect Hogg's venture to flourish though he did supply him with ten pounds of credit for paper initially and persuaded several other subscribers to support Hogg's efforts. Nonetheless, Hogg describes how Scott then considered 'the extent of the sale' with 'a sneer which I never could forget', offering some idea of the grandeur of Hogg's ambition and perhaps also some genuine discomfort with the likelihood of failure (*Anecdotes* 58). Hogg's candour in relating this hurtful incident is curious but perhaps indicates an attempt to explain, defend and even vindicate Scott's doubts as well as his own cheerful heedlessness. *The Spy* did fail, but not before Hogg had spent a year producing assorted copy for his weekly literary paper in an unusual extension of his literary apprenticeship.

Hogg's presentation of the supernatural in *The Spy* links it to superstition but also to science and magic. The ready suspension of disbelief required by new methods of scientific experiments was similar to that required to read *The Spy*'s short tales and in some ways it could be argued that Hogg's easy acquaintance with superstition and the supernatural enabled him to re-write the traditional stories of mysterious deaths and supernatural intervention in human lives with a modern twist. Edinburgh was host to various shows based around the new and 'natural magic' displays of magic lanterns.<sup>39</sup> Hogg's interest in these is referred to in the first issue of *The Spy* with the mention of a Signor Belzoni who was notable for the vivid and enthusiastic promotion of his travelling shows culminating in performances of the magic lantern (*Spy* 5).

In the second issue of *The Spy*, Hogg introduces the literary magician Mr Giles Shuffleton who will demonstrate a 'very curious spectacle ... you will be apt to suppose, that it is accomplished by enchantment, or the black-art, but ... though it does appear a little mysterious, it is nevertheless brought about by an effort of ingenuity, and performed upon principles perfectly simple and natural' (*Spy* 13). Shuffleton uses a large mirror to call up images of various female muses, accompanied by music and identifiable by their dress and appearance as belonging to Scottish poets, including Scott, Campbell and Hogg. The presentation of such a classical and traditional device as the female literary muse is reworked in 'modern'

terms with the latest ‘effort of ingenuity’ and ‘natural’ principles. The language of science is invoked to dispel lingering doubts about the presence of the uncanny or any suggestion of an ancient magic, claiming instead that the show is able to represent or reconstruct the familiar magical world in ‘modern’ scientific terms. The links between magic and science are clear in that, to the layman or bystander, understanding the processes of one or the other is not necessary. To explain either scientific experiment or supernatural experience is not necessarily possible without a certain suspension of disbelief.

*The Spy* survived for a year. Hogg had included several tales with distinctive elements of the supernatural such as the ‘Dreadful Narrative of the Death of Major MacPherson’ and the ‘Story of the Ghost of Lochmaben, by John Miller’ and would return to these in his *Winter Evening Tales*, 1820. Hogg’s comments on the forced closure of his periodical do not implicate his use of the supernatural. Instead he blames the reaction of some of his audience. ‘The learned, the enlightened, and polite circles ... disdained either to be amused or instructed by the ebullitions of humble genius’ (*Spy* 514) and, according to Hogg, made continued publication impossible.

The publishers and Hogg intended that the weekly numbers of *The Spy* would be bound in volume form at the end of the run and the title page prepared for this describes *The Spy* as a ‘periodical paper of literary amusement and instruction’. However, Hogg’s next project, the *Queen’s Wake*, 1813, would be much more successful than *The Spy* and would bring his literary career into sharper focus. Throughout the decade, he continued to write tales as well as poetry and experimented with drama. However, the success of *Waverley* led him back to prose and *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 1818.

#### **2.4 *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 1818**

This section will consider the genesis and reception of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck* as well as its supernatural content. The *Brownie* is especially inventive in its presentation of the supernatural as a phenomenon that is capable of multiple interpretations. Hogg’s first work of fiction is particularly surprising in that Hogg might have been expected to reproduce the familiar idea of the Brownie as an anonymous and benign household fairy, given to assisting a Borders family in return

for a bowl of cream or brose.<sup>40</sup> However, Hogg overturns our expectations of the Scottish Brownie and presents the reader with a creature surprisingly dangerous and sinister.

Hogg's title for his work may have been influenced by an account published in 1810. In the *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, R. H. Cromek includes a section on the Scottish Brownie and notes that Liethin Hall in Dumfriesshire was the residence of one such Brownie.<sup>41</sup> The new Laird arrived at the Hall and offended the faithful Brownie so much that he left his master, crying out:

'Ca', cuttie, ca!  
A' the luck o' Liethin Ha'  
Gangs wi' me to Bodsbeck Ha. (*Remains* 333)

Cromek adds next that Liethin Ha subsequently fell into ruin and "'bonnie Bodsbeck"' flourished' (*Remains* 333). Possibly, Hogg had heard this tale during his time as a shepherd on Mitchelslacks farm in Closeburn, Dumfriesshire in 1806. Cromek also points out that 'some features of this story have been already laid before the public by Mr. Scott. The Editor hopes, however, that he may venture, without any violation of modesty, to assert, that the account here given, is in itself original, and to him it appears more complete than that in the *Minstrelsy*' (*Remains* 338).

Hogg's choice of title is drawn from a tradition of Brownie assistance that undergoes significant changes within his novel. He introduces the reader to a Brownie made powerful beyond the domestic sphere and capable of malignant activity. The novel opens with Walter Laidlaw of Chapelhope, brooding by his fire, and uttering the mysterious comment that 'it will be a bloody night in Gemsop this.'<sup>42</sup> There is no development of this statement. Instead, the subsequent conversation between Walter and his wife merely emphasises the peril faced by the family in that Auld John of the Muchrah, herd to Walter, has reported that he saw the Brownie with the couple's only daughter, Katharine, and that the Brownie was 'an unearthly thing, as shrinkit an' wan as he had lien seven years i' the grave' (*Brownie* 7). Hogg's Brownie is clearly different from the norm, being both visible and seeking company with a human. These elements will be part of the plot that reinvents the mysterious Brownie as an unexpectedly human subject, hiding from persecution, and

maintaining an alternative existence within the Scottish countryside through human help. Thus Hogg reverses the expectations of the reader and presents the Brownie as fallibly human, and relatively helpless, rather than as a supernatural creature.

The short period between the relative failure of *The Spy*, 1811, and the publication of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 1818, saw Hogg continue his attempts to construct a literary identity for himself. His difficulties with publishers did not lessen but he persisted, undaunted.<sup>43</sup> One of his undoubted strengths was his possession of ample resources of fictional material. Douglas Mack remarks, in his edition of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, published in 1976, that Hogg had been the beneficiary of his parents' extensive 'knowledge of the traditional tales, songs and ballads of the Borders' (*Brownie* ix). This apparent literary advantage led Hogg to write to Archibald Constable, in May 1813, in an attempt to persuade Constable to publish some of this material and his letter points out that he has 'for many years been collecting the rural and traditionary tales of Scotland and I have of late been writing them over again and new-modelling them, and have the vanity to suppose they will form a most interesting work.'<sup>44</sup>

Hogg must have felt that he could profitably contribute to the literary market with his collection of tales, and while he had little acquaintance with the sphere of novel writing, this belies his existing experience as a journalist, successful poet and author. Just as the dramatic success of *Waverley* should be seen in the context of an increasing demand for novels by an eager audience and a flourishing industry of aspiring authors meeting that demand, so it should be recognised that Hogg would seek to maximise what advantages and abilities he had in terms of publishing new work. Hogg's reference to re-writing and 'new-modelling' the tales might be compared to Scott's editorial practices in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders*, where he improved those ballads considered as sub-standard or weak. Clearly, Hogg thought he had to improve old tales to suit a modern audience and attract a publisher. In his attempt at the repackaging of his source material, Hogg realised that success might well hinge on an appropriate authorial name. He suggested therefore to Constable that 'the Ettrick Shepherd is rather become a hackneyed name, and imagine that having gained a character as a bard is perhaps no commendation to a writer of prose tales' (*Letters* 1: 145). Hogg wrote that he would now prefer to be

published as ‘J. H. Craig of Douglas Esq.’<sup>45</sup> His proposed pseudonym might suggest antiquarian collector rather than Borders shepherd and the intention was to market himself differently to an audience focused on prose narrative rather than poetry and possibly eager for fresh reading material.

Constable’s response was one of frustrating delay. Hogg tried again in January 1817, writing instead to William Blackwood, and offering a selection of tales entitled *Cottage Winter Nights*. These tales are now described as some “‘Rural and Traditionary Tales of Scotland’” They are simple carelessly and badly written but said to be very interesting’ (*Letters* 1: 289). Hogg’s choice of descriptive terms for his work as ‘simple carelessly and badly written’ is curious. His intention is perhaps to highlight ideas of authenticity and to equate lack of polish with sincerity. ‘Rural’ tales might be supposed to have a rough charm and rugged presentation. He then proposes to bargain with Blackwood that ‘as I want money very particularly I will give you the Copyright for £63-7 per vol. of 300 pages’ (*Letters* 1: 289).

In March 1818, Blackwood did eventually publish some of these tales. Two volumes appeared containing ‘The Brownie of Bodsbeck’, ‘The Wool-gatherer’ and ‘The Hunt of Eildon’, collected as *The Brownie of Bodsbeck: And Other Tales*. The *Brownie* was Hogg’s first full-length attempt at a novel but unfortunately his reputation as an author was not enhanced by the work. In his *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, Hogg later reviews his literary successes and failures and laments that

As long as Sir Walter Scott wrote poetry there was neither man nor woman ever thought of either reading or writing any thing but poetry. But the instant that he gave over writing poetry there was neither man nor woman ever read it more! All turned to tales and novels which I among others was reluctantly obliged to do. Yes I was obliged from ... the irresistible current that followed him to forego the talent which God had given me at my birth and enter into a new sphere with which I had no acquaintance. (*Anecdotes* 66)

Here, Hogg refers to the astonishing impact of *Waverley*, 1814, and the subsequent popularity of the ‘Scotch Novel’. Hogg indicates clearly that his reliance on poetry as the medium of communication in which he felt most secure was challenged by the defection of his audience and he makes plain the reluctant obligation and

apprehension that he felt in attempting to match Scott's achievements in prose. Hogg might wish to affirm the potency of the 'talent which God had given me at my birth', referring back to ideas of untaught genius and natural ability, but it was however impossible to ignore 'the irresistible current' of public demand, whether from publisher or potential reader.

By 1818, the Author of *Waverley* was considered as the primary Scottish novelist, especially where the genre of historical fiction was concerned, and other authors were considered as secondary contributors to the field. *The Brownie* received little critical attention, but one review, published in the *British Critic* for October, 1818, highlights and condemns Hogg's methods of incorporating oral sources into *The Brownie* thereby constructing and confusing dubious history with fiction, in effect belittling and even betraying both genres.<sup>46</sup> The reviewer complains that Hogg 'instead of reflecting upon fiction the semblance of history ... has reflected upon history the semblance of fiction' (*British Critic*: 406-07). The testimonies, otherwise 'hearsay among the shepherds and old wives of Eskdale and Ettrick' (*British Critic*: 406-07), were not considered reliable sources, especially without authentication by some recognised antiquarian or gentleman scholar such as Scott or Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. While, ironically, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* might have included quantities of 'hearsay', particularly with regard to belief in supernatural fairies, brownies and other sprites, the reader could be confident that the mediation of the editor necessarily added a layer of scholarly understanding and guaranteed the respectability of the text.<sup>47</sup>

Hogg had chosen to write of the Covenanters and their adversary, Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee. It was particularly unfortunate, in terms of timing and content, because Hogg's novel was assumed to be a poor attempt at an imitation of the success of *Old Mortality*, published previously in December 1816. Hogg always claimed that he had in fact written most of *The Brownie* before Scott's novel appeared and that he had no real intention of challenging Scott's version of events, though by his own account, he did defend *The Brownie* to Scott with blunt familiarity. Hogg describes how Scott upbraided him with painting 'a false and unfair picture of the times and the existing characters ... an exaggerated [*sic*] and unfair picture!' (*Anecdotes* 50). In reply, Hogg insisted that 'there is not one single

incident in the tale – not one – which I cannot prove from history to be literally and positively true ... An' that's a great deal mair than you can say for your tale o' Auld Mortality' (*Anecdotes* 51).

According to Hogg, their argument continued although not on the Royalists and Covenanters but on the supernatural tale of the *Hunt of Eildon*, published with the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*. Scott upbraids Hogg's treatment of the 'ridiculous' story and inquires whether Hogg had any 'tradition' or source for it. Scott then appears to muse that 'it struck me I had heard something of the same nature before ... I think it must have been when I was on the nurse's knee or lying in the cradle yet I was sure I had heard it' (*Anecdotes* 52). This moment sums up something of the strength of Scott's fascination with Hogg the poet and author. Hogg was a living embodiment of Scottish traditional tales, possessing direct links to a world which Scott had once visited 'on the nurse's knee or lying in the cradle' but had lost. Such fascination also contained elements of childish rivalry. Having established his own claim to the story, Scott continues to maintain that the *Hunt of Eildon* 'is a very ridiculous story ... The most ridiculous of any modern story I ever read. What a pity it is that you are not master of your own capabilities for that tale might have been made a good one' (*Anecdotes* 52).

It is clear to Hogg, and to his readers, that Scott believes he could have written a superior tale, if only he had had access to the same 'tradition.' However, Hogg defends himself with aplomb, reassuring the reader that:

It was always the same on the publication of any of my prose works. When *The Three Perils of Man* appeared he read me a long lecture on my extravagance in demonology and assured me I had ruined one of the best tales in the world. It is manifest however that the tale made no ordinary impression on him as he subsequently copied the whole of the main plot into his tale of *Castle Dangerous*. (*Anecdotes* 52)

Hogg's robust claim about Scott's plagiarism of his work may sound dubious but it is of a par with his insistence that he had indeed written *The Brownie* as an earlier work. While there is a superficial similarity with *Old Mortality*, in terms of the presence of Claverhouse and the vengeful battles between royalist and Covenanter,

Hogg's work is really much more concerned with investigating the role of the supernatural in Borders life. His emphasis is on the invasion of domestic peace and security by the sinister Brownie and Hogg's treatment of the struggle between opposing government forces and rebels is woven into the story of supposed witchcraft. Maron Laidlaw is afraid of her daughter and suspects her of being possessed by daemonic spirits. Katherine Laidlaw is the near-perfect young and beautiful heroine who appears both superior to and strangely outside her farmyard existence. Walter's eventual discovery of the truth behind his daughter's mysterious actions leads to tearful bewilderment on his part. He exclaims 'I daresay I never learned her ony ill, but I little wat where she has gotten a' the gude qualities ye brag sae muckle o', unless it hae been frae Heaven in gude earnest' (*Brownie* 165). Ultimately, Katherine can be seen as the supernatural, or divine, agent of assistance, more so possibly than the Brownie.

With reference to Hogg's use of the supernatural in the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*, there are several points to consider. Hogg creates expectations of the supernatural, appearing to present incidents as such but then undermines his narrative in several places. Thus, in chapter two, Hogg describes the persecution of the Covenanters and their hidden exile in the deep moss hags of the countryside. The reader learns of the 'wild melody' often heard 'at a great distance' (*Brownie* 11) that produces alarm, fear and terror. 'The heart of the peasant grew chill, and his hairs stood all on end, as he hasted home to alarm the cottage circle with a tale of horror' (*Brownie* 11). However, the reader already knows the origin of such supernatural sounds and mysterious lights. There is no real mystery.

Given the narrative structure of *The Brownie* with its layers of lightly connected tales, it is plausible that the genesis of the novel was one of a loose collection of ghostly and disturbing tales of the sort that might be told around a winter fireside. Hogg's frequent intervention as narrator is necessary to maintain momentum and the historical battles between Covenanter and Royalist seem to have only tenuous connection with the narrative plot. The history of the Borders was one of frequent invasion by external forces, and, while Hogg repeats some of the brutal scenes associated with the Royalist incursions into southern Scotland with lingering pathos, the actual labels of 'Covenanter' and 'Royalist' could easily be replaced by

other oppressor and victim titles, such as 'Border reiver' or 'Southron'. The short tales of irrational violence might be understood not as fiction but as actual accounts of Borders events. Hogg had experienced similar mishaps in his travels within the Highlands: inadvertently becoming a mysterious travelling stranger himself and encountering danger as well as murder and death.

Chapelhope and its inhabitants experience oppression and cruelty from the official government forces without much hope of redress unless through the exertion of communal strength against the foreign invaders. This happens through the chance discovery of clan relationships between Walter Laidlaw and Serjeant [*sic*] Roy Macpherson as well as his advice to appeal to Mr Hay of Drumelzier as the feudal chief. Their experience of the supernatural is mediated in similar ways. Individuality and isolation is dangerous; safety lies in the familial collective. Hogg's example of this is both comic and instructive. He describes how Davie Tait, herd of Whithope, is sheltering his family with other shepherds and servants on the large farm of Riskinhope, even after Claverhouse has sequestered the farmer's stock. The appearance of an unknown man, dressed in black, causes panic among the group and results in Tait's heartfelt prayer, in Scots, that they be rescued from the ghost.

Hogg's inclusion of such comic episodes whereby a frightened shepherd is emboldened to appeal to his God to protect his family with 'a strong energetic prayer as a fence against the invading ghost' (*Brownie* 126) is in stark contrast to the destruction wreaked in the district by the treacherous curate Clerk. Hogg's official figures of authority, whether religious or legal, are pitted against the unofficial representatives of Scotland, such as the Highlander Macpherson, Walter, and the Brownie, revealed eventually as the Covenanter John Brown. Claverhouse's officers find Maron Laidlaw, Walter's wife, reading her Bible and instruct her to burn it. She refuses, at first, but then does so willingly, explaining that 'ye ken, after a', that the beuk's naething but paper an' ink, an three shillings an' aughtpence will buy as good a ane frae Geordy Dabson' (*Brownie* 55).

Bibles can be replaced. Her actions attach no value to the printed book of the Bible and confound the representatives of the Royalist party. Hogg will later narrate how, following Walter's arrest, there is an exchange of letters between Katherine and her father, and then Katherine and the laird Drumelzier. Drumelzier sends a letter to

the Privy Council and ‘wrote to sundry other gentlemen’ but his efforts are fruitless. Walter’s release will be secured by the deposition of his defence lawyer and especially by his own testimony to the Court, not by letters.

The eventual resolution of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck* rests on the discovery of the human nature of the Brownie and the inclusion of the Highlands as a source of clan authority, strength and kinship that can be relevant even in the Borders. Macpherson prompts Walter to address the court in his own defence and recommends that Walter ‘will always look upon a Macpherson as a prhohter until te end of te world’ (*Brownie* 144). The Highlander is instrumental in saving Walter from death.

Earlier commentators such as Martin Martin and Cromek had described the Scottish tradition of the Brownie as a domestic and helpful creature. Scott, in the *Minstrelsy*, suggested that the Brownie was part of ‘a class of beings, distinct in habit and disposition from the freakish and mischievous elves ... [who] sedulously employed himself in discharging any laborious task which he thought might be acceptable to the family to whose service he had devoted himself’ (*Minstrelsy* [1802] 1: lxxxix). Hogg’s Brownie is rather an agent of instability and this mismatch between the two characterisations effects a distinctive change to that tradition. The reader is led to consider how supernatural beliefs might develop especially through Hogg’s use of the Covenanters as a symbol of those who are effectively beyond the norms of society. The *Brownie of Bodsbeck* casts the Covenanters as mysterious creatures, hidden within the Borders countryside, and dependent on others for assistance. In this way, the novel forces the reader to explore ideas of evidence for the supernatural, especially when presented in print by antiquarians or other interested parties, and will ultimately assert that there is an equivalent value in oral testimony as shown in the songs of Nanny Elshinder or the desperate appeal by Walter for his life before the Court in Edinburgh.

It is notable that Hogg concludes in the last chapter that ‘if there are any incidents in this Tale that may still appear a little mysterious, they will all be rendered obvious by turning to a pamphlet, entitled, A CAMERONIAN’S TALE, or The Life of John Brown, written by himself. But any reader of common ingenuity may very easily solve them all’ (*Brownie* 168). Hogg’s reference to this pamphlet is

puzzling because it does not appear to be available now and adds to the mystery rather than resolving it. John Brown, 1627-1685, did exist and was celebrated in a later chapbook of 1874 which contains a poem entitled 'The Cameronian's Vision' by James Hyslop, printed by J. Cumming, Fintray, Aberdeen. The prefatory note describes Hyslop as a shepherd, born in Dumfriesshire, and author supposed to have been known as the 'Muirkirk Shepherd', possibly in emulation of the Ettrick Shepherd. John Brown's story is one of martyrdom by Claverhouse and a monument to his life was erected in 1826. The chapbook also contains a reproduction of the engraving of this monument.

Throughout his novel, therefore, Hogg appears to suggest that supernatural beings, such as Brownies, might exist instead as human creatures, adopting a disguise of supernatural beings. In this, he appears to be questioning the presumptions behind supernatural beliefs in ways that Scott is assumed to do. Hogg's remorseless reductions of the mysterious elements of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck* can be seen in his direction to the reader to consult the 'CAMERONIAN'S TALE'. Hogg's sudden mention of John Brown returns the reader to considerations of what constitutes evidence of the uncanny. It recalls the review in the 'British Critic', cited earlier, which discussed the question of 'hearsay' versus history in critical terms and with some unease on the part of the reviewer.<sup>48</sup>

This last chapter might also be seen as part of the gradual development of Hogg's flexible approach to the supernatural and his suggestion of the unlikely existence of the supernatural even as he adopts it for narrative purposes. In his letter to Blackwood of 31 January 1818, about the ending of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*, Hogg amplifies his hesitation and writes how 'in copying it I have been greatly puzzled about leaving out or keeping in the last chapter which is wholly an explanatory one and of course not animated; or of still leaving some mysterious incidents unexplained' (*Letters* I: 329). To leave some events as seemingly supernatural might attract unfavourable comment from readers: however, to provide full explanations of mysterious events robs his novel of suspense and interest. It was a balance that Hogg would seek to revisit in his collection of *Winter Evening Tales*.

## 2.5 *Winter Evening Tales*, 1820

Oliver & Boyd first published Hogg's two volumes of *Winter Evening Tales* in Edinburgh, 1820. They had agreed to produce an edition of 1500 copies and sold half of this to the London firm of G. & W. B. Whittaker, partners of Oliver & Boyd. The *Tales* were popular among reviewers and readers and sold well, shortly reappearing in a second edition in 1821. This was unusual for Hogg's published prose and he was able to provide some additional corrections to the first volume. In general, reviewers commented on the lively depictions of traditional and supposedly typical incidents of rural life in Hogg's sympathetic depiction of homely Scots folk. In similar bucolic vein, John Wilson in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* reviewed the *Tales* in terms that attempted, rather misleadingly, to situate Hogg exclusively as a pleasantly simple shepherd and storyteller, content to live among an unsophisticated peasantry and publish 'these unvarnished tales ... of domestic economy'<sup>49</sup> and of rural life. Hogg's representation of the darker aspects of such existence – poverty, illegitimacy, even murder – is not mentioned. Wilson's review suggests, therefore, that Hogg's work belongs to that specific genre of prose writing that characterised such collections of tales as particularly suitable reading matter for children or servants. 'Tales' were expected to be shorter, simpler and generally didactic. The actual content of Hogg's tales will be discussed later in this section but will be found to differ significantly from other examples readily available, for example, in Edgeworth's *Moral Tales*, 1801, or her subsequent *Popular Tales*, 1804. Wilson continues by emphasising how *Winter Evening Tales* was written 'with the utmost simplicity' ('Hogg's Tales' 149) without the formal structure and plot typically found in novels, and finally compares Hogg's tales to those of Scott:

They ... will be read by everyone that has any love for Scotland, or any curiosity respecting the manners of her children – with an interest different, indeed, in kind, but scarcely inferior in degree to that with which they have all read the sketches of homely Scottish life in the works of the Ettrick Shepherd's best friend and patron, the author of *Waverley*. ('Hogg's Tales' 149)

This reference to ‘homely Scottish life’ links Hogg’s *Tales* to the three series of Scott’s *Tales of My Landlord*, 1816–19, even though Hogg’s work contains different treatment of similar material. Wilson connects the two authorial pseudonyms of the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ and the ‘author of Waverley’ and suggests that Hogg’s *Tales* might be expected to appeal to a different readership, characteristically less refined or knowledgeable, than that of the ‘author of Waverley.’

From Wilson’s review, it might be thought that his reading of Hogg’s *Tales* was fairly perfunctory given that he fails to notice or criticise examples of Hogg’s lack of refinement, and those other failings, that other reviewers noted and judged as unsuitable for polite readers. This section will examine some of the *Winter Evening Tales* that might illuminate Hogg’s treatment of the supernatural and which are published together again as part of the Stirling/South Carolina Edition of Hogg. The significance of this particular edition, edited by Ian Duncan, lies in the clarity of its presentation of the complex genesis of the *Tales* and the re-examination of their content within the literary context of the decade 1810–1820. Many of the *Tales* had been written and rewritten by Hogg throughout this period, appearing in other publications in different stages of development, before assuming their final form in *Winter Evening Tales*. Subsequently, after Hogg’s death, they would be re-edited and published in an incomplete and abridged form.

In his description of Hogg’s *Tales* as the ‘most successful work of prose fiction in his lifetime’<sup>50</sup> Duncan points out that *Winter Evening Tales* should be regarded as ‘the generic title for a loose, capacious, fluid stock of narratives that Hogg drew upon, reworked and recombined throughout his career as opportunity arose’ (*Tales* xxii). This idea of a ready ‘stock’ of narratives available to Hogg, and rewritten by him to suit circumstances, allows the reader to gauge the changes, if any, that Hogg made in his treatment and development of different narrative themes. I would argue that it possible to discern consistency in Hogg’s treatment of certain supernatural themes and that, while he does not obscure the horror or fear engendered by some of the reported experiences, there is nonetheless clear indication within the tales by the author that there are always alternative explanations for supernatural events.

Hogg made several attempts to interest publishers in his collections of tales. In 1813, as noted earlier, he had sent a letter to Constable in which he describes himself in terms of a diligent, even scholarly, researcher of antiquarian relics, rather than as an unlettered Ettrick Shepherd (Hogg, *Letters* 1: 145). His description suggests an author immersed in the folklore of his native country but also sufficiently removed from any rural setting to be able to improve them for a wider audience of readers. Hogg's words recall the practices of Scott in compiling his ballads for the *Minstrelsy* and suggest an author with a shrewd idea of the strengths and weaknesses of his offering. The title page of *Winter Evening Tales* carries the inscription that they were 'collected among the cottagers in the South of Scotland. By James Hogg, Author of "The Queen's Wake," &c. &c.' This continues this idea of traditional rural tales and offers Hogg as the mediator with the credentials of an accomplished and successful author.

The *Winter Evening Tales* are infused with constant references to the supernatural. There are only three tales and two ballads that do not allude to the existence of superstition or contain mention of Hogg's conjunction of love with spells and witchcraft. These include 'An Old Soldier's Tale', the 'Story of Two Highlanders', and 'Maria's Tale' are either comic or sentimental narratives. Hogg's two poems 'Halbert of Lyne' and 'King Gregory' recount the perils of courtship and chivalry.

The rest of the *Tales* mention the supernatural in various forms and can be loosely grouped into several categories of interest: eight of the tales refer to ghosts or other mysterious agents of evil whose appearance often results in the detection and punishment of crime. Those set in the south of Scotland include 'Adam Bell', 'The Long Pack', 'The Wife of Lochmaben' (Country Dreams and Apparitions No. III), 'Welldean Hall' (Country Dreams and Apparitions No. V), and 'Tibby Johnston's Wraith' (Country Dreams and Apparitions No. VI). Common to these tales are the incidents of crime and subsequent restitution through the assistance of restless or disturbed spirits. Other similar tales with ghosts are connected with the Highlands or Highlanders. Short tales such as 'Duncan Campbell', 'Highland Adventures', and the 'Dreadful Story of Macpherson', offer stories filled with sudden violence or episodes of fear and may have had their origin in some of Hogg's own adventures in the

Highlands, included previously in his Highland Letters. 'The Renowned Adventures of Basil Lee' also has several Highland incidents.

There are three tales that are concerned with dreams: the 'Singular Dream'; 'John Gray o' Middleholm' (Country Dreams and Apparitions No. I), and 'Cousin Mattie' (Country Dreams and Apparitions No. IV). Of these, 'Cousin Mattie' is unexpectedly odd. Hogg describes Mattie's tragedy whereby she dreams of her own death in childbirth. Mattie is seven years old and the short tale turns on the futile efforts made by her cousin Flora to thwart the tragedy. 'John Gray' and 'Singular Dream' are concerned with trusting in dreams to ensure future prosperity and Hogg blames a quarrel between friends on a 'Singular Dream.' Hogg's use of the trope of the dream allows him to comment on elements of his tale as a medical observer might. He describes falling into a dream: 'my ideas being wound up to the highest pitch of rueful horror, I fell into a profound reverie, and from thence into a sound sleep' (*Tales* 161). Such observations on the physical prelude to dreaming connect with the advances in enlightenment science. Hogg's tales of 'The Shepherd's Calendar' are also examples of close observation of different states of weather as well as human reaction to being caught in dangerous storms. Hogg writes of the mental confusion and strain suffered in snow-storms. His master was 'leading us quite wrong ...he did not seem to understand what I said, and, on getting a glimpse of his countenance, I perceived that it was quite altered' (*Tales* 380). Hogg also mentions later that his master lost his memory of what had happened to them under such conditions.

The *Tales* open with 'The Renowned Adventures of Basil Lee' which had appeared earlier in *The Spy* as 'The Danger of Changing Occupations, - verified in the Life of a Berwick-shire Farmer' and 'Story of the Berwick-shire Farmer, continued - Description of St. Mary's Lake - Of the War in America, - Of the people on the Western Shore of Lewis.' The Berwick-shire Farmer becomes the protagonist Basil Lee who describes his various adventures in Scotland and then his experiences in the struggles over the colonial conquest of America. Of particular interest in 'Basil Lee' is Hogg's development of his hero's experiences on the island of Lewis. Basil Lee relates how the islanders 'know all that is to happen by reason of a singular kind of divination called the second sight' (*Tales* 49). Lee claims that these islanders

‘have power over the elements ... and have no communication with the rest of the world; but with the beings of another state of existence ... I at first laughed at their stories of hobgoblins, and water spirits, but after witnessing a scene that I am going to describe, I never disbelieved an item of any thing I heard afterwards’ (*Tales* 49). This is the visit of MacTorcill Dhu and his regiment of ghosts who appear, walking in file towards the standing stones and then the graveyard. Lee claims to have fired on the procession without affecting the ghosts. However, he adds that ‘I make no pretensions to account for this extraordinary phenomenon, but the singular circumstance of its being visible only from one point, and no other, makes it look like something that might be accounted for’ (*Tales* 52). Here, Hogg is introducing his customary note of doubt where instances of the supernatural are presented.

One of the longer *Tales*, ‘The Bridal of Polmood,’ is filled with episodes of mental anguish which appear to lead to seemingly supernatural events. The central character, Elizabeth, initially appears morose, superficial, and even catatonic. However, as the narrative unfolds, the reader realises that Elizabeth’s strengths lie in her inertia. She adapts, overcoming her quiescence, and becomes the spine of the narrative. She is ‘singular for her cool unmoved temper and presence of mind’ (*Tales* 324) and it is these qualities which carry her through successfully. Her husband suspects her of infidelity and he attempts a murderous vengeance. Believed to be dead, he returns in bloody disguise to haunt the castle and threaten her. Hogg describes a second visit by the spectre to the castle. Unexpectedly, Elizabeth’s reaction is related to the reader in terms that suggest a scientific or enlightened mind. She ‘carefully observed and noted every thing that passed, which no one else had done; and the more she considered of it, the more fully was she convinced that the apparition was a mortal man, made up of flesh, blood, and bones, like other people’ (*Tales* 348).

Hogg’s collection of tales included several that were published earlier in *The Spy* and he changes titles, adding and extending his previous work.<sup>51</sup> Most of the *Winter Evening Tales* include some aspects of the uncanny in the narrative. However, Hogg maintains a consistent approach in presenting the standard tropes of the supernatural: second sight, ghosts and mysterious disappearances, while incorporating some of the suggested explanations for such events. Hogg’s interest in

scientific developments, physiology and optical illusion is extended by his accounts of the supernatural as if he were continually testing them against new developments. In this way, he continues to respond to such challenges and provoke his readers into considerations of rational explanations.

In conclusion to this chapter, it is possible to see how Hogg's writing between 1810 and 1820 shows the influence of the Highlands in his development as well as the increasing sophistication of his understanding of the possibilities of the supernatural in fiction. His position as a hidden observer enables him to report his experiences freely. He also moves between different genres of writing - ballads, epistolary discourse, poetry and short stories - and engages in certain aspects of re-writing. To some extent this follows the practice of oral storytelling where tales emerge, develop and change gradually through re-telling. Notably, Hogg's major success in 1813, *The Queen's Wake*, relied on his talent for playful engagement with the supernatural. However, his efforts to transfer such investigations to prose were overshadowed by those of Scott. The next chapter will consider three of his novels: *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering* and the *Bride of Lammermoor*.

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<sup>1</sup> Hogg's letters were published as follows:

'A Journey Through the Highlands of Scotland, in the Months of July and August 1802, in a Series of Letters to —, Esq.', *The Scots Magazine* 64 (1802): 813-18, 956-63; 65 (1803): 89-95, 251-54, 312-14, 382-86 and 'A Journey Through the Highlands and Western Isles, in the Summer of 1804. - In a Series of Letters to a Friend', *The Scots Magazine* 70 (1808): 423-26, 569-72, 672-74, 735-38, 809-11; 71 (1809): 14-17, 99-101, 181-84. Subsequent references will be given in shortened form.

The 'Unpublished Letters of James Hogg, The Ettrick Shepherd' which were an account of Hogg's Highland tour in 1803 were later published in *The Scottish Review* 12 (July and Oct. 1888) 1-66 by Alexander Gardner, Paisley. These have been subsequently reprinted in facsimile by The Mercat Press, Edinburgh, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> See Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) 35.

<sup>3</sup> James Hogg, 'A Journey Through the Highlands of Scotland, in the Months of July and August 1802, in a Series of Letters to —, Esq.', *Scots Magazine* 65 (May 1803): 313.

<sup>4</sup> Hogg, 'Journey Through the Highlands 1802', *Scots Magazine* 64 (Dec. 1802): 961.

<sup>5</sup> S.W., 'To the Editor of the Scots Magazine', *Scots Magazine* 64 (Oct. 1802): 812. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>6</sup> Hogg, 'Journey Through the Highlands 1802', *Scots Magazine* 64 (Oct. 1802): 816-17.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Jamieson (1772-1844) was another antiquarian interested in collecting ballads who corresponded with Scott. In 1806 he published two volumes of *Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts, and Scarce Editions; with Translations of Similar Pieces from the Ancient Danish Language, and a Few Originals by the Editor*. Several years later, Henry Weber, Jamieson and Scott would together edit *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* in 1814. Scott's contribution was an 'Abstract of the Eyrbiggia-Saga; being the early Annals of that District of Iceland lying around the Promontory called Snaefells': 475-513.

<sup>8</sup> See also Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976). He discusses the contributions of Scots thinkers to this field. See especially Chapter 4 'The Scottish Pioneers of the 1750s'.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988) 26.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (London: Andrew Bell, 1703). Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>11</sup> In Hogg's *Brownie of Bodsbeck*, the mysterious Brownie is associated with the 'considerable' family and extensive farm of Chapelhope. Walter Laidlaw, the farmer, is a wealthy man.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, ed. Mary Lascelles (New Haven: Yale UP, 1971) 109. Further references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Douglas, *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* (London: Longman, 1805) 2. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Scott, *Waverley*, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) 373.

<sup>15</sup> Hogg, 'Journey Through the Highlands 1802', *Scots Magazine* 65 (June 1803): 382. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>16</sup> James Hogg, *A Tour in the Highlands in 1803* (Edinburgh: Mercat P, 1986) 12. Subsequent references to this work will be given in shortened form or parentheses.

<sup>17</sup> Hogg, *Tour 1803*: 43. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>18</sup> *Letters of Scott*, ed. Grierson 3: 302.

<sup>19</sup> James Hogg, 'A Journey Through the Highlands and Western Isles, in the Summer of 1804, in a Series of Letters to a Friend', *Scots Magazine* 71 (1809): 184. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>20</sup> Hogg, 'Journey' 1804: 183.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland 1769* (Chester: John Monk, 1771) Pennant's work was very successful and had gone through five editions by 1790.

<sup>22</sup> See Davis D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement* (Washington: Washington State UP, 1969) and N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison, eds., *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1970).

<sup>23</sup>There is a description of the first meeting of the E. S. S. in McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement* 48-49.

<sup>24</sup> See William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) 572. He includes weekly publication figures of 'never more than 400 copies' for the *Mirror* in 1779, whereas John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2003) 12 suggests the circulation of the *Caledonian Mercury* was 1400 in 1739 and increased further. However, the true figure for the *Mirror's* circulation might well be higher – copies were probably passed from reader to reader.

<sup>25</sup> *The Mirror* 83 (Feb. 1780): 331.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, eds., Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell (Ontario: Broadview P, 1999) 289.

<sup>27</sup> John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2003). Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses.

<sup>28</sup> James Hogg, 'A Journey Through the Highlands and Western Isles, in the Summer of 1804, in a Series of Letters to a Friend', *Scots Magazine* 70 (1808): 571.

<sup>29</sup> See the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* (10 Feb. 1802) and the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* (29 Jan. 1803).

<sup>30</sup> 'The Mistakes of a Night' was printed with the following editorial advice: 'We are disposed to give the above a place to encourage a young poet. We hope he will improve, for which end we advise him to be at more pains to make his rhymes answer, and to attend more to grammatical accuracy.' *Scots Magazine* (Oct. 1794): 624. 'Willie an' Keatie, A Pastoral' was accompanied by the statement of the editor that 'we have inserted this as no unfavourable specimen of 'Scottish Pastorals, Poems, &c.' by James Hogg, Farmer at Ettrick, just published.' *Scots Magazine* (Jan. 1801): 54.

<sup>31</sup> James Hogg, *The Mountain Bard*, ed. Suzanne Gilbert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) 26.

<sup>32</sup> James Hogg, *Altrive Tales*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2003) 23. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>33</sup> Barton Swaim, 'Edinburgh is a Talking Town', *Prose Studies* 28.3 (Dec. 2006): 245-57.

<sup>34</sup> See Joanne Shattock, 'Reviews and Monthlies', *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, ed. Bill Bell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) 3: 343-57 for discussion of the model of the *Edinburgh Review* and its phenomenal success.

<sup>35</sup> See Gillian Hughes, 'James Hogg and the Forum', *Studies in Hogg and his World* 1(1990): 57-70.

<sup>36</sup> See Jane Rendall, *The Pursuit of Pleasure* (London: Athlone P, 2002) and John Mullan and Christopher Reid, eds., *Eighteenth-Century Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000).

<sup>37</sup> James Hogg, *The Spy*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000) 1. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>38</sup> James Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. Jill Rubenstein (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999) 58. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses. Hogg's *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*

was first published in April 1834 by Harper and Brothers, New York. By June 1834, John Reid & Co. of Glasgow had published a revised (pirated) edition of the work, re-titled *The Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott*. In the Stirling/South Carolina Edition, these works are collected as *Anecdotes of Scott* and include *Anecdotes of Sir W. Scott* and *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*. See 'Note on the Genesis of the Texts' xxxi-lvi.

<sup>39</sup> The term 'natural magic' is used by David Brewster, *Letters on Natural Magic, Addressed to Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (London, 1834) 80-82.

<sup>40</sup> Brose is pease meal or oatmeal mixed with boiling water. Milk or kale broth can also be used.

<sup>41</sup> See Appendix (H) 'Account of Billie Blin' in R. H. Cromek, *Remains of Nithdale and Galloway Song: With Historical and Traditional Notices Relative to the Manners and Customs of the Peasantry* (London: Cadell, 1810) 330-38. Cromek acknowledges the assistance of Allan Cunningham in preparing the *Remains* and Hogg had become friendly with Allan and James Cunningham while serving as a shepherd at Mitchelslacks, Dumfriesshire. The true extent of Cunningham's contribution to Cromek's *Remains* is discussed in Dennis M. Read, 'Cromek, Cunningham, and *Remains of Nithdale and Galloway Song*: A Case of Literary Duplicity', *Studies in Bibliography* 40 (1987): 175-87. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>42</sup> James Hogg, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, ed. Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P: 1976) 3. Further references will be in parentheses.

<sup>43</sup> Hogg's long poem *The Queen's Wake*, 1813, was his only truly successful publication of this decade.

<sup>44</sup> James Hogg, *The Collected Letters of James Hogg*, ed. Gillian Hughes, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP: 2004) 1: 145. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>45</sup> Several Hogg scholars have pointed out that this choice of pseudonym was derived from the name of his parent's home in Yarrow (Craig-Douglas) with his own initials. See Hughes, *James Hogg* 57.

<sup>46</sup> 'The Brownie of Bodsbeck', *The British Critic* 10 (Oct. 1818): 403-18. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>47</sup> Later, Hogg actually wrote an introduction for *The Brownie*, pointing out that 'the general part is taken from Wodrow' and thereby naming one of his sources. The *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, from the Restauration to the Revolution* was written by Rev. Robert Wodrow and published in Edinburgh in 1721-22. He was a staunch supporter of the Covenanter cause against Royalist forces. The introduction was published with *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* in Hogg's posthumous collected edition of *Tales and Sketches*, 6 vols. (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1836-37).

<sup>48</sup> *The British Critic* 10 (Oct. 1818): 403-18

<sup>49</sup> 'Hogg's Tales, &c.', *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* 7 (May 1820): 149. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>50</sup> James Hogg, *Winter Evening Tales*, ed. Ian Duncan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004) xxii. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>51</sup> Hogg had previously included the following tales in *The Spy*: ‘The Danger of Changing Occupations, -- Verified in the Life of a Berwick-Shire Farmer’ became ‘The Renowned Adventures of Basil Lee’; ‘Dangerous Consequences of the Love of Fame, When Ill-Directed – Exemplified by the Remarkable Story of Mr. Bell’ became ‘Adam Bell’; ‘History of the Life of Duncan Campbell, his Difficulties, Escapes, Rencounter with a Ghost and Other Adventures’ became ‘Duncan Campbell’; ‘Malise’s Journey to the Trossacks’ became ‘Highland Adventures’; ‘Description of a Peasant’s Funeral by John Miller’ became ‘A Peasant’s Funeral’; ‘Dreadful Narrative of the Death of Major MacPherson’ became ‘Dreadful Story of Macpherson’; ‘Story of Two Highlanders’ was reprinted as ‘Story of Two Highlanders’; ‘Maria’s Tale’ became ‘Maria’s Tale. Written by Herself’; ‘Evil Speaking Rediculed (*sic*) by an Allegorical Dream, &c.—Its Injurious Tendency – Character of Adam Bryden’ became ‘Singular Dream, from a Correspondent’; ‘Misery of an Old Batchelor – Happiness of the Married State - Two Stories of Love and Courtship’ became the ‘Love Adventures of Mr. George Cochrane’; ‘Story of the Ghost of Lochmaben’ became ‘Country Dreams and Apparitions. No. III. The Wife of Lochmaben.’

## Chapter Three: Scott and the Novel, 1810-1820

### 3.1 Before Novels: Poetry and the Supernatural

Scott was able to draw on an extensive tradition of the supernatural in Scotland and this chapter will explore three of his novels published before 1820 to establish the initial extent of his ideas of testimony, evidence and authority. He begins by employing three common elements of the supernatural: second sight in *Waverley*, astrology in *Guy Mannering*, and prophecy in the *Bride of Lammermoor*, in complex and subtle ways. Scott reflects on each of these three components of supernatural belief and considers them in connection with different types of written and oral testimony. Given that Scott's success with *Waverley* reinstated the novel itself as a genre of renewed significance, I will also discuss some of the author's anxieties about the nature of reading and romance and the implications for any association with the supernatural.

In developing our understanding of Scott's relationship to the supernatural, it is necessary to begin briefly with his poetry. His fascination with the possibilities of the existence of the supernatural was evident from the appearance of his very earliest published work; Scott began by translating some of the German Romantic poetry of Bürger and Goethe. His entry into the literary marketplace as an author of prose fiction will be discussed later in this section but it is worth noting that Scott's initial explorations of second sight, witchcraft and prophecy were part of his longer narrative poetry before becoming such significant elements of his novels. His earliest verse employed supernatural imagery in sensational ways. Coleman O. Parsons is one of the few scholars to have discussed Scott's translations of Bürger and notes his preference for grotesque phrases. In his judgement, 'subtle and symbolic touches are wanting' (Parsons, *Witchcraft* 50). Considering Scott's exploration of the 'impolite' topics of sexual passion, infidelity and murder, Parsons suggests that 'the criterion is the taut nerve, and the justification, or sop to conscience after an emotional orgy, is the moral that a despairing heart should not protest against Heaven's decrees' (*Witchcraft* 50).

Notwithstanding the need for some moral justification, Scott's enthusiasm for the supernatural motifs of German romance remained high. His translation of

'William and Helen' (Bürger's 'Lenore') was first circulated privately in Edinburgh and then published with 'The Chase' ('Der Wilde Jäger') in 1796 by Manners and Miller.<sup>1</sup> Following interest in his work from M. G. Lewis, Scott began to write several original ballads for publication in the projected volume of *Tales of Terror*, which would eventually be published by Lewis in 1801 as *Tales of Wonder*. These were 'The Fire-King', 'Glenfinlas, or Lord Ronald's Coronach' and 'The Eve of St. John'. While 'The Fire-King' is linked to the Crusades, the other two ballads draw heavily on Scottish supernatural themes. In 'Glenfinlas', for example, the mysterious seduction and death of a Highland huntsman are described with bizarre attention to the lurid detail of murder:

Next, dropp'd from high a mangled arm,  
The fingers strain'd an half-drawn blade:  
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,  
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.<sup>2</sup>

In 'Glenfinlas' Scott includes corpse-lights and as well as emblems of Rosicrucian belief such as the Lady of the Flood and the Monarch of the Mine as examples of supernatural phenomena. His ballad, 'The Eve of Saint John', describes the illicit romance of two lovers and prefigures in its highly wrought tragedy the relationship between Lucy Ashton and the Master of Ravenswood in the *Bride of Lammermoor*.<sup>3</sup>

'Glenfinlas' and 'The Eve of Saint John' were subsequently published again in the *Minstrelsy*, 1802, along with 'Clerk Saunders', (*Minstrelsy*, 1802, 2: 33-41) where the lover returns to earth as a ghost. The success of the *Minstrelsy* encouraged him to turn to longer narrative poetry and he published *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805, *Marmion*, 1808, and *The Lady of the Lake*, 1810.<sup>4</sup> The two romances of the *Lay* and the *Lady of the Lake* continued Scott's inclusion of supernatural imagery. The *Lady of the Lake* is particularly notable for its Highland setting and Hogg's letters to Scott from the Highlands may have been one of his poetical sources hitherto unacknowledged. Hogg's particular advantage as a correspondent and observer was that his social position enabled him to reach those rural informants likely to increase Scott's knowledge of the supernatural and less likely to be easily

available to Scott with regard to the investigation of the Highlands as a source of verifiable supernatural belief.

As this thesis argues, notwithstanding their mutual interest in the supernatural, Scott and Hogg differed markedly in their individual approaches to the difficulty of ascertaining the truth of such ideas. Hogg often displayed an openly sceptical approach to certain supernatural beliefs, referring in his letters from the Highlands, for example, to his doubts about the virtues of the pool of healing water at the chapel of St. Fillan's.<sup>5</sup> Scott's poetry, on the other hand, continued to make extensive use of supernatural motifs and imagery.

The reputation and influence of the Gothic novel had become distinctly tarnished by 1800, typified perhaps by the scandalous reputation of M. G. Lewis' *The Monk*, published in 1796. Before 1814, Scott's literary success was associated almost entirely with poetry and the publication of his first novel, *Waverley*, was an unexpected event in several ways. While the author chose to be published anonymously, Peter Garside and others have shown that the status of the novel at this period was at best unsteady and at worst denigrated. In particular, Garside notes that there was 'a conservative backlash against 'low' fiction.'<sup>6</sup> Scott's sensitivity to the lack of respectability of novels is alluded to in his 'Ashestiel Memoirs'. There, he describes his complex relationship with novels in terms that associate them with guilty pleasures enjoyed most keenly while neglecting his duties as a lawyer's clerk:

My desk usually contained a store of most miscellaneous volumes especially works of fiction of every kind which were my supreme delight. I might except novels unless those of the better and higher class ... but all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much discrimination and I really believe that I have read as much nonsense of this class as any man now living. (*Scott on Himself* 32)

Though Scott's background, education and familial traditions were markedly different to those of Hogg, they yet shared a similar enthusiasm for the printed word and the ambition to publish. While Hogg was experimenting with *The Spy*, and then following up that literary paper with his most successful work, *The Queen's Wake*, in 1813, Scott was continuing to write poetry and read novels. That there were

significant difficulties for a young man with a respectable career in being associated with the reading and writing of novels is evident from his spirited defence of his favourite pastime. Scott argued that his reading material, 'fiction of every kind', nonetheless included only those novels 'of the better and higher class'. However, given that we must rely on Scott's judgement here as to which novels he considered to be superior to others, this passage contains several interesting contradictions which highlight the difficulties faced by an enthusiastic reader of the early nineteenth-century aware of the potential criticism that might be attached to reading unsuitable works. Having assured the reader of his disdain for common novels, Scott forgets that his description of devouring 'all that was adventurous and romantic ... without much discrimination' can only mean that he was indeed one of those eager consumers of all kinds of novels. He even boasts of his prowess: 'I have read as much nonsense ... as any man now living.'

This paradoxical description of one young man's relationship to novels reveals how Scott managed to read significant quantities of them while believing that he was somehow immune to their charms. He is careful to add that he avoided 'the whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe' (*Scott on Himself* 32) of romantic novels, but Scott's uncertainty and faint embarrassment, shared by many of his contemporaries about the value of such reading, still sits oddly with the imaginative pleasure he confesses to have derived from this youthful pastime, remembered fondly as 'my supreme delight'. His later meeting with the Duke of Wellington would be another occasion for decrying his own achievements as the writer of 'a few *bits of novels*', of little interest to the supreme warrior and statesman in 1815.<sup>7</sup>

Scott's hesitation relates to his understanding of the perceived cultural value of novels (low) and the sense that novel writing and novel reading was unmanly compared to the physical glory of actual battle and victorious conquest. Scott would never achieve battlefield renown, not least because of his physically crippled leg, but his efforts to win the laurels and rewards of a literary career might be said to resemble those of military strategists. Peter Garside, in his article on 'Walter Scott and the "Common" Novel, 1808-1819' points out another, more commercially orientated side of Scott's enthusiasm for novels. Scott proposed to publish a new and extensive collected edition of novelists, in association with John Murray, in order to

take advantage of the public eagerness for reading material. In 1808, he asked Murray to send him the various catalogues of London's main circulating libraries as part of his marketing research as well as some of the novels themselves, considering those that were still in copyright as well as older examples. However, his plans would fail, partly as a result of difficulties between Murray and the Ballantyne brothers and because of the inopportune publication of Anna Barbauld's monumental edition of *British Novelists*, 1810, in fifty volumes. Scott had been outmanoeuvred.

Nonetheless his serious engagement with the possibilities of fiction had just begun. Scott's first real literary success had been achieved with publication of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in 1802/03<sup>8</sup> and he followed this with contributing occasional reviews to the *Edinburgh Review* from 1805 and to the *Quarterly Review* from its foundation in 1809. While novels were still associated with the less respectable elements of publishing, their attraction lay in much greater scope for invention as well as the possibilities of re-writing fictional tales with a renewed emphasis on the importance of the historical and didactic functions of fiction. Scott's predecessors such as Maria Edgeworth, Hannah More and Elizabeth Hamilton<sup>9</sup> had striven to exploit the novel as a vehicle for instruction and even philosophy instead of sensation and demonstrated that fiction could be respectable within different parameters. One thing that did not escape Scott was the nature, and potential extent, of his likely audience. In his edition of Dryden, 1808, Scott had observed that 'he, whose bread depends upon the success of his volume is compelled to study popularity.'<sup>10</sup>

Initially, therefore, Scott's choice of prose rather than poetry might seem to have restricted his opportunities for serious study of the supernatural. However, there were other factors in his decision to eschew poetry. These have been cited as his awareness that Byron's popularity might well eclipse his own, especially as his recent publications of *The Vision of Don Roderick*, 1811, *Rokeby*, 1813, and *The Bridal of Triermain*, 1813, were not so well received as his publisher of that time, John Ballantyne, might have hoped. The *British Review*, May 1813, suggested that *Rokeby* suffered from both repetition and a lack of originality:

Yet ... when we ascribed his success in great part to accident ... we are the more induced to maintain this opinion, by observing with how much tenacity he clings to the same system of manners, the same imagery, and the same scenes, in all his poems.<sup>11</sup>

Respectable as the pursuit of poetry might have been, Scott was not an author inclined to persist in a lost cause. His ambitions for Abbotsford required deep pockets, and, as Sutherland notes, Scott ‘was buying a house he could not afford, and staring bankruptcy in the face with the imminent collapse of John Ballantyne & Co.’ (*Life* 161). Much as he might seem to deplore novels, there was a commercial opportunity for an author with a ready stock of possible tales derived from ballads and other juvenile reading.

Ultimately, while ballads and minstrelsy had been an acceptable outlet for Scott’s gothic inclinations and antiquarian interests, they could only offer an uncertain literary future at best. The likely audience for ballads was limited and Scott had already reworked a great deal of interesting material in some of those later poems, such as *Rokeby* and *The Bridal of Triermain*, to dwindling critical appreciation. The continued emphasis on bloody battles, medieval imagery and the primitive area of the Scottish Highlands had begun to pall. In 1813, the *British Review* had also complained that ‘the Lay of the *last* Minstrel has, in truth, proved only the *first* of a series of songs, pretty much of the same burthen’ (Hayden, *Scott* 66). Earlier, and perhaps more woundingly, in 1808, Francis Jeffrey had attacked *Marmion* in unequivocal terms, pointing out Scott’s deficiencies such as ‘a broken narrative – a redundancy of minute description – bursts of unequal and energetic poetry ... unchastised by any great delicacy of taste, or elegance of fancy’ (Hayden, *Scott* 37). Jeffrey reserved special ire for Scott’s plot, particularly his use of Gothic imagery, comparing events in *Marmion* with ‘the machinery of a bad German novel’ and adding pointedly that ‘the public, we believe, has now supped full of this sort of horrors’ (Hayden, *Scott* 38-39).

The cumulative effect of such reviews was to contribute to a marked decline in Scott’s literary reputation, especially as a poet able to command large advances. In comparison with Byron and the two cantos of *Childe Harold*, published in March 1812, Scott appeared to some as second-rate. Constable was no longer so keen to

offer generous terms for his poetry and Scott's dilemma was that the very nature of ballads and romantic poetry was one of fixed representation of the past with little scope for radical creativity. His publishing project was one that carried its own particular obsolescence as well as inflexibility. There was no possibility of literary development in static accounts of past glories, medieval suffering or morality tales. However, novels offered greater opportunities for discussing questions of the authenticity of the supernatural, when compared to poetry, and novels had earlier served as popular vehicles for testing the limits of belief in superstition. It was against this background that *Waverley* was published in 1814, and the following sections will examine this novel and some of Scott's subsequent fiction with reference to his ideas of testimony and evidence and explore their role within those works. I will focus on aspects of the supernatural such as second sight, prophecy and witchcraft and trace their connections with testimony, oral tales and written proof.

### **3.2 Second Sight and Waverley, 1814**

It might be assumed that *Waverley* is one of Scott's novels that has very little interest in the supernatural, beyond several sightings of the mysterious 'bodach glas': the 'grey spectre' or apparition that appears as a warning of certain death to Fergus Mac-Ivor. However, the phenomenon of second sight is present throughout *Waverley*, and it will be seen that Scott is reluctant to commit himself to any rational explanation of this instance of the supernatural. Before discussing Scott's reluctance, it is clear that one of the more significant sources of anxiety for Scott was the practice of reading as well as the contemporary character of the reading public. His decision to publish anonymously was not inconsistent with his desire to escape possible censure and it is clear from the opening chapters of *Waverley* that Scott must address the difficulties associated with the status of novels before proceeding. He is particularly concerned with the question of the presentation of the supernatural in earlier and contemporary novels.

Thus the first chapters signal his concern with the nature of reading and the likely reception of the text itself. Scott takes particular pains to point out that the title of the novel, and incidentally the name of the hero, has been deliberately chosen to avoid any damaging association with those other novels trading in chivalry,

sentiment or fashion and otherwise notable only for their ‘pages of inanity.’<sup>12</sup> Scott proceeds to lament the possibility of readers expecting another Gothic tale, resembling Mrs Radcliffe’s most famous work:

Had I, for example, announced in my frontispiece, “Waverley, a Tale of other Days,” must not every novel-reader have anticipated a castle scarce less than that of Udolpho, of which the eastern wing had been long uninhabited, and the keys either lost or consigned to the care of some aged butler or housekeeper ... Would not the owl have shrieked and the cricket cried in my very title-page? (*Waverley* 3-4)

Having rejected the model of Gothic fiction associated with Ann Radcliffe, he continues to mock those other ‘stories of blood and horror ... heard in the servants’ hall’ (*Waverley* 4) and supposes that had he titled his novel

“Waverley, a Romance from the German,” what head so obtuse as not to image forth a profligate abbot, an oppressive duke, a secret and mysterious association of Rosycrucians and illuminati with all their properties of black cowls, caverns, daggers, electrical machines, trapdoors, and dark lanterns? (*Waverley* 4).

Scott clearly disclaims interest in the type of horror literature associated with M. G. Lewis as well as the discredited paraphernalia of Gothic writing. Instead, Scott ends his first chapter by announcing that he will be working ‘from the great book of Nature’ and that ‘some favourable opportunities of contrast have been afforded me, by the state of society in the northern part of the island at the period of my history’ (*Waverley* 6). Human nature, particularly ‘those passions common to men in all stages of society’ (*Waverley* 5) will be Scott’s object of study, particularly in association with the people of the Highlands of Scotland. That their beliefs might be accounted as relics of a more primitive age is all the more fascinating.

By contrast, the reader is introduced first to the youthful Edward Waverley, who is surrounded by privilege, comfort and a high degree of refined civilisation. Within this situation, he is poorly equipped to understand or question the role of the

supernatural in the events that follow. Scott points out how Waverley's early experiences of reading are contained within what Scott describes as a haphazard and 'desultory' (*Waverley* 12) education by Sir Everard's chaplain. Despite keen 'powers of apprehension' and 'brilliancy of fancy and vivacity of talent', Waverley's uncontrolled 'indolence' (*Waverley* 13) leads him into reading practices that are unsafe because

while he was thus permitted to read only for the gratification of his own amusement, he foresaw not that he was losing for ever the opportunity of acquiring habits of firm and incumbent application, of gaining the art of controuling, directing, and concentrating the powers of his own mind for earnest investigation. (*Waverley* 13)

By failing to gain the ability to focus and direct 'the powers of his own mind', Waverley will be at the mercy of those with a stronger cast of mind than his own. Subsequently, he is easily led to accept the romantic rebelliousness of Fergus's political activities, thereby encountering not only psychological but also physical danger to himself and his English followers.

The reader learns that Waverley's judgement is rarely to be trusted and he singularly fails to develop the forensic skills of 'earnest investigation.' Scott's apprehensions about the difficulties of acquiring knowledge, self-discipline and 'instruction through the medium of amusement' (*Waverley* 13) are evident. Waverley's most dangerous failings will be compounded by his reading style:

Edward would throw himself with spirit upon any classical author ... make himself master of the style so far as to understand the story, and if that pleased or interested him, he finished the volume. (*Waverley* 13)

This editing out of any stories which did not please or interest him or which were too difficult to understand readily must necessarily signify probable and dangerous gaps in his knowledge. In addition, Waverley's refusal, if not actual inability, to analyse textual material whether books, letters or seditious religious documents will leave him exposed to humiliation and failure.

Waverley's habits of selective reading have left him with an incomplete understanding of many issues. Where the supernatural is concerned, particularly encounters with the phenomenon of second sight, Scott's hero is generally sceptical, attempting to link his experiences with some rational, empirical explanation but without the ability to judge the evidence on its merits, having failed to develop sound techniques of interrogation of either written or oral testimony. In the reader's experience, Edward Waverley is consistently incorrect in his assumptions and endeavours and therefore his views cannot be trusted. In many ways Waverley himself is the enlightened subject under examination, and in his reaction to inexplicable events we see Scott testing the limits of 'modern' attitudes to the supernatural.

Turning to the main body of *Waverley*, and questions of evidence, the first mention of the supernatural occurs in connection with Waverley's commanding officer, Colonel Gardiner. Waverley is fascinated by reports of the Colonel's conversion from 'a very gay young man' to 'a serious and even enthusiastic turn of mind' (*Waverley* 33). Scott writes that 'it was whispered that a supernatural communication, of a nature obvious even to the exterior senses, had produced this wonderful change' (*Waverley* 33). Gardiner appears to have had some type of religious vision but there is no further explanation apart from the information that the newly devout Colonel restrains the indiscipline or rowdiness of a military mess. Gardiner will be connected to the supernatural again at a later point in the novel when his death is foretold by one of Fergus Mac-Ivor's soldiers (*Waverley* 236).

Waverley's subsequent encounter with the supernatural occurs when he travels to Perthshire in order to visit the Baron of Bradwardine. His customary habits of life in Waverley Hall are recalled during his stay in Tully-Veolan in that he listens to 'some family anecdotes and tales of Scottish chivalry' (*Waverley* 64). Rose Bradwardine sings a fragment of the poem 'St Swithin's Chair' with reference to the nearby 'scene of a peculiar superstition' (*Waverley* 64). 'St Swithin's Chair' is another example of a tragic love-story and is full of supernatural foreboding. The imagery is of Hallow-Mass Eve, Night-Hags and the mysterious spell of St Swithin. Waverley's interest is roused but the Baron is sceptical, describing the tale as 'one of those figments ... with which the early history of distinguished families was

deformed in the times of superstition' (*Waverley* 65). The Baron may appear to live in a castle resembling that of Orgoglio in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, 1590-96, but his views on the supernatural are entirely modern. Rose confirms this to Waverley, in describing the Baron's 'strange defiance of the marvellous ... [he] once stood firm when a whole synod of Presbyterian divines were put to the rout, by a sudden apparition of the foul fiend' (*Waverley* 65). Waverley discovers that the Baron had attended the Presbytery court to support the supposed witch Janet Gellatley before her accusers. Janet cried out suddenly 'Look to yourselves! Look to yourselves! I see the Evil One seated in the midst of ye' (*Waverley* 66). The terrified crowd rushes for the exit. However, the Baron stands firm and the case is subsequently dropped. This practical opposition to foolish fear of the supernatural gives way to discussion between the Baron and Waverley about the merits of

All those idle thoughts and phantasies,  
Devices, dreams, opinions unsound,  
Shows, visions, soothsays, and prophecies,  
And all that feigned is, as leasings, tales, and lies. (*Waverley*  
66)

Quoting the *Faerie Queene*, above, Scott introduces many types of the unstable and fantastical narratives associated with the supernatural. Their continued existence points to a parallel world in which such narratives continue to exist even as they are decried as 'leasings, tales and lies'. Waverley's difficulty in distinguishing between reality and romance is compounded by the multiple forms of documentary evidence available.

The most complex element of the supernatural in *Waverley* is the phenomenon of second sight. *Waverley* introduces one of the persistent themes mentioned by Highland travellers from Martin Martin to Hogg. Scott's investigation of second sight is embedded within the pages of his novel and is associated early on with Fergus Mac-Ivor. When Mac-Ivor meets Waverley in Edinburgh, he reminds him "Said the Highland prophet sooth? Or must second-sight go for nothing?" (*Waverley* 204). Later he remarks again to Waverley that "you do my second-sight too much honour" (*Waverley* 209).

Apart from second sight, the mysterious 'bodach glas' will accompany several of Scott's descriptions of Mac-Ivor. These two aspects of the supernatural are the main components of Scott's initial venture as a novelist. On the one hand, as noted earlier, he is determined to eschew the more ridiculous aspects of Gothic fiction. On the other, he is exploring the evidence for the supernatural as an aspiring lawyer and antiquarian might do.

Coleman O. Parsons discussed the probable sources of the 'bodach glas' in *Notes and Queries*,<sup>13</sup> highlighting several possible origins of the 'warning spirit' that might have attracted Scott's antiquarian interest. He pointed out that the 'bodach glas' of *Waverley* 'is unlike the proposed originals in being an enemy of the house [of the clan Mac-Ivor] which it warns, exults over, and even threatens' (*Notes and Queries* 95). This vengeful spirit appears to have retained certain human emotions such as anger and spite along with the functions of memory and wordless communication. Fergus describes its final visit to him in captivity within Carlisle castle. He challenges the 'bodach glas' when he accuses the spectre of being a 'False Spirit, ... art thou come to close thy walks on earth, and to enjoy thy triumph in the fall of the last descendant of thine enemy?' (*Waverley* 347-48).

The suggestion that the supernatural enemy is in some way a 'false spirit' may owe something to the Lowland origins of Halbert Hall, the original victim of Fergus Mac-Ivor's ancestor. Highland notions of honour or gentlemanly behaviour are offended by the vindictive and even unfair behaviour of the exultant spirit. Fergus is the last of the Mac-Ivors: the role of the 'bodach glas' will end with his death. Fergus adds, confidentially to Waverley, that 'the spectre seemed to beckon and to smile, as he faded from my sight' (*Waverley* 348). The final downfall of the clan is inevitable. It is notable that Fergus is now courageously resigned to death, having encountered the 'bodach glas' for the second time. Fergus asks Waverley for his opinion of the spirit: 'What do you think of it?' and Waverley avoids committing himself. "'Much as your confessor,'" said Waverley, willing to avoid dispute upon such a point at such a moment' (*Waverley* 348). Waverley has no possible explanation apart from his earlier exclamation of 'What, can the devil speak truth?' (*Waverley* 297), recalling Banquo's surprise in *Macbeth*. He hears Mac-Ivor's

account and still cannot truly believe that his friend has actually seen an unearthly spectre.

By changing the nature of the 'bodach glas', from benign to malignant, Scott undermines the reader's sympathetic association with Fergus as a hero, albeit a dangerous one, and seems to be acknowledging that the human mind is capable of accommodating both enlightened understanding of the ancient tradition of belief in the efficacy of supernatural agency and some susceptibility to belief notwithstanding. In this way, critical authority which points to Scott's disdain for Gothic excesses cannot entirely account for Scott's subtlety in its presentation, nor account for the difficulties of his continued inclusion of Gothic material other than as an ironic judgement by him on the fond credulity of earlier generations.<sup>14</sup> Fergus' belief in the spectre warning him of imminent death, for example, continues to puzzle Waverley. He searches for a plausible explanation, such as physical exhaustion, or despair, for Fergus' visions of the 'bodach glas'.

Scott avoids committing himself to explanation of the 'bodach glas' and actually associates the hard-headed Fergus with a romantic and superstitious susceptibility rather than Edward, as might have been expected. The initial visitation of the 'bodach glas' is described by Fergus in some detail to Edward who nonetheless 'had little doubt that this phantom was the operation of an exhausted frame, and depressed spirits, working upon the belief common to all Highlanders in such superstitions' (*Waverley* 295). The Jacobite army is in retreat and Fergus' appearance betrays his own situation of defeat. Waverley notices with surprise and shock how 'his eye had lost much of its fire; his cheek was hollow, his voice was languid, even his gait seemed less firm ... and his dress ... was now carelessly flung about him' (*Waverley* 292). His weary acceptance of his fate, 'dead or captive I must be before to-morrow', (*Waverley* 293) will be later transformed into proud defiance before Judge and court-room, but with Waverley, he can discuss the appearance of the 'bodach glas' with equanimity. Waverley is still uncertain even though he too has now both heard and discovered the truth of the Highland seer's prophetic words about the death of Colonel Gardiner.

Scott was familiar with various glosses on second sight and with the sceptical reactions that generally accompanied its discussion. In the notes to *The Lady of the*

*Lake*, 1810, he included a lengthy excerpt from Martin's *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, and introduces it by stating that if 'force of evidence could authorise us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of the Second-sight.'<sup>15</sup> He then quotes Martin at length, supplying just such material that might serve as actual evidence, especially where Martin claims to have witnessed 'more than once' the occasion of a seer experiencing visions of the future.

In this first novel, however, Scott is more cautious, even disparaging, in his depiction of Waverley's experience of general superstitious beliefs in the Highlands. These are recounted and given seemingly rational explanations. When Waverley is injured while stag-hunting, the surgeon who attends him 'appeared to unite the characters of a leach and a conjuror' (*Waverley* 124) and begins the treatment by walking around the patient 'three times, moving from east to west, according to the course of the sun' (*Waverley* 124). This custom is followed by bloodletting and the application of a herbal salve. Waverley listens to the healer, noting the 'prayers or spells ... *Gaspar-Melchior-Balthazar-max-prax-fax*, and similar gibberish' (*Waverley* 124). Scott adds that the 'fomentation had a speedy effect in alleviating the pain and swelling, which our hero imputed to the virtue of the herbs, or the effect of the chafing, but which was by the by-standers unanimously ascribed to the spells with which the operation had been accompanied' (*Waverley* 124). Later, Waverley is surprised to discover that 'even Fergus, notwithstanding his knowledge and education, seemed to fall in with the superstitious ideas of his countrymen' and it is suggested that this may be because it was 'impolitic to affect scepticism ... or ... like most men who do not think deeply or accurately on such subjects, he had in his mind a reserve of superstition which balanced the freedom of his expressions and practice upon other occasions' (*Waverley* 125).

Thus, with *Waverley*, Scott complicates his earlier interest in the supernatural, seeming to prefer rational and enlightened explanations for instances of miraculous healing, spectres and ghosts. While conscious of class differences in the cultural acceptance and belief in uncanny phenomena and reluctant to align himself as an author with those traditional tales 'heard in the servants' hall', he nevertheless

continues to undermine his official position by recording how the events predicted by seers do actually occur.

Waverley's adventures in the Highlands with Fergus and Flora end when Waverley rides to battle with Fergus in defence of the Jacobite claims and discovers that his old regiment and its commanding officer are drawn up against him. In an 'instant, ... he saw the wild dress and appearance of his Highland associates, heard their whispers in an uncouth and unknown language, looked upon his own dress, ... and wished to awake from what seemed at the moment a dream, strange, horrible, and unnatural' (*Waverley* 236). Even his own clothes, 'so unlike that which he had worn from his infancy' appear to condemn him as a traitor. He realises that he has become 'a traitor to my country, a renegade to my standard, and a foe ... to my native England!' (*Waverley* 236). This situation is abruptly emphasised by the approach of Waverley's English commander, unaware of personal risk at the hands of the rebels. However, Callum Beg is prevented from killing Colonel Gardiner by an old Highland seer who tells him to "'spare your shot ... but let him beware of tomorrow - I see his winding-sheet high upon his breast'" (*Waverley* 236). This prophecy causes Callum to turn pale, being 'penetrable to superstition' (*Waverley* 236); but the reader might note that the seer is proved right, despite Waverley's attempts to save his former commanding officer.

Thus Scott constructs a series of events that begin to recall Waverley to an understanding of his responsibilities as an English heir rather than romantic hero and a particular awareness of his present tricky position. The inclusion of an episode of second sight, which only Waverley discovers to be true, allows Scott to dismiss the prophecy as typical of Highland superstition but then ensure that it carries a message of actual and predictive truth which the author does not countermand. The reader is left without the actual condemnation of superstition that might have been expected and Scott follows this incident with another appearance of the 'bodach glas' in Carlisle Castle. The reader is left without further guidance by the author who had previously deplored the common tropes of gothic novels.

Scott's hesitation and final refusal to denounce ghosts as mere superstition are examples of an authorial decision to broaden the range of possibilities for the reader. Instances of ghostly apparitions are connected to the most politically astute

and rational character – Fergus – rather than Waverley. In common with Waverley, the reader is left to ponder the problem of second sight and its reported existence. The author appears to reserve judgement.

One of the functions of the ‘bodach glas’ appears to be the legitimisation of punishment. Mac-Ivor has rebelled against the Hanoverian ruling order and yet Scott appears deeply troubled by the basis of a legal and moral system of values that allows for the draconian punishment that will be inflicted on Fergus. The victim reflects on the penalty for treason that ‘I suppose one day or other ... they will blot it from their records, as levelling them with a nation of cannibals’ (*Waverley* 348). The English law of high treason is associated with the idea of uncivilised savagery. The persistence of senseless, legally sanctioned brutality and the occurrences of the ‘bodach glas’ are linked by Scott in *Waverley* without further comment except to observe that ‘the most romantic parts of this narrative are precisely those which have a foundation in fact’ (*Waverley* 363).

This last statement might be taken as the opening salvo in Scott’s armoury with regard to his efforts to separate ‘romantic’ apparitions from actual occurrences of second sight and other supernatural events. His next novel, *Guy Mannering*, would continue to explore the existence of the supernatural through the medium of text, seeking to prove whether the material act of writing could fix the elusive nature of an immaterial idea. His concern with reading and readers opened his first novel. His second would return again to printed authorities as sources for belief in the supernatural, this time with regard to astrology.

### **3.3 Astrology and Witchcraft in *Guy Mannering*, 1815**

Scott’s second novel appeared promptly in the wake of *Waverley*’s notable success: first published in February 1815, *Guy Mannering* was remarkable for its lively and extensive treatment of the supernatural. The title page of the novel, *Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer* proclaimed Scott’s continuing interest in ideas of predictions of the future, whether through astrology, prophecy or second sight, and reminds the reader of the mysterious appearances of the ‘bodach glas’ in *Waverley*. He concentrates his narrative on the influence of talismanic phenomena over the lives of a large cross-section of the inhabitants in southwest Scotland of the 1780s.

Having raised the question of second sight within *Waverley*, presented it as something of a challenge, and one that the author signally fails to resolve, this second novel might be considered as another attempt at marshalling resources in order to resume investigation.

The novel begins with the arrival of a mysterious traveller visiting monastic ruins in county Dumfries. He has been a student at the University of Oxford and his institution has a lingering association with the study of magic in the minds of the rural dwellers encountered in his travels. This association of forbidden knowledge with Oxford will be mentioned later in Hogg's novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824, when Robert Wringhim claims to be a student intending to study theology at Oxford. Hogg writes that Wringhim's listeners 'had some crude conceptions that nothing was taught at Oxford but the *black arts*, which ridiculous idea prevailed over all the south of Scotland' (*Confessions* 159). While the youthful Guy Mannering is scarcely a figure of menacing power comparable to the doomed character of Wringhim, he will later act as a jealous and near-destructive force in his relationship to the young Brown/Bertram.

Personal relationships rather than historical events or ethnographical studies of the Highlands familiar from *Waverley* provide the foundation for the narrative of *Guy Mannering*. Scott's letter to J. B. S. Morritt has been often quoted in which he referred to his novel as 'much more interesting than *Waverley*. It is a tale of private life' (Scott, *Letters* 4: 13). It might also be added that it is a tale with particular emphasis on investigating the role and influence of the supernatural in private life and the place of legal or other authentic documentation in ascertaining rightful identities and serving justice. With this in mind, John Sutherland has suggested that *Guy Mannering* is 'a novel hinged on the outcome of enigmatic prophecy and the dénouement of dark mystery as to identity' (*Life* 181).

Scott uses two types of prophecy: presenting examples of second sight such as the physical apparitions of the 'bodach glas', on the one hand, as well as the written predictions of astrology on the other. They are clearly complementary. However, there is a difference in the seemingly random nature of apparitions compared to the hierarchical structures and disciplined order of astrology. In *The Forgotten Sky: A Guide to Astrology in English Literature*, J. C. Eade suggests that

the language of astronomy and astrology ‘may appear to the layman as abstruse as the terminology of Galenic medicine or of alchemy; but a more proper comparison would be with the language of the law.’<sup>16</sup> This is because ‘astrology may sometimes be jargon-bound, a “mystery”; but it also has a precision of reference, a narrowness of application, that makes it amenable to those who understand its basic grammar’ (*Forgotten Sky* 1). Eade remarks that while ‘the basic tenets of astrology are entirely arbitrary and wholly irrational ... the system built on them is often elegant and rich in suggestion’ (*Forgotten Sky* 2). Mannering is initially attracted to the study of astrology, catching the ardour of his clergyman guardian for achieving the ‘predominating height to which an insight into futurity, by the power of consulting astral influences and conjunctions, afforded them over the rest of mankind.’<sup>17</sup> Mannering’s youthful ambition is driven by ideas of the superiority that astrology would confer upon him and he ‘laboured for a time to make himself master of the technical process of astrological research; and, before he became convinced of its absurdity, William Lilly himself would have allowed him “a curious fancy and piercing judgment upon resolving a question of nativity”’ (*Guy* 20). Ironically, Mannering’s refusal of belief in his own powers means that he fails to appreciate the accuracy of the two horoscopes that he does produce for Sophia Wellwood, his future wife, and the young Bertram. His inability to read the astrological evidence will compound his difficulties as a husband and father and by the end of the novel he retreats into relative isolation, refusing to return to ‘nocturnal contemplation of the celestial bodies’ (*Guy* 355).

Mannering is introduced to the gipsy Meg Merrilies by the Laird of Ellangowan and appears to be an unexpected and scholarly rival to her in telling fortunes. It becomes evident that Mannering’s possession of astrological powers is based on a glib acquaintance with a list of disparate classical and Arabic sources. He offers to calculate the nativity of young Bertram’s birth ‘according to the rule of the Triplicities, as recommended by Pythagoras, Hippocrates, Diocles and Avicenna. Or I will begin *ab hora questionis*, as Haly, Messahala, Ganivetus, and Guido Bonatus, have recommended’ (*Guy* 16).

If Meg is silenced by this register of various authorities, her other adversary Dominie Sampson is unimpressed by Mannering’s eloquence. Contemptuously,

Sampson aligns himself with the sceptical Sir Isaac Newton, remarking that ‘the (pretended) science of astrology is altogether vain, frivolous, and unsatisfactory’ (Guy 16). This dismissal of the ancients might seem uncharacteristic of Sampson but he does not go so far as to say it is a lie. He simply disputes the evidence and his objections are focused more on the inadequate nature of astrological study rather than its accuracy. Mannering continues to pile up his ‘grave and sonorous authorities of Dariot, Bonatus, Ptolemy, Haly, Etzler, Dieterick, Naibod, Hasfurt, Zael, Tanstettor, Agrippa, Duretus, Maginus, Origan, and Argol’ (Guy 16) before Sampson, the Laird and Meg partly in order to maintain his character but also to argue that his sources are legitimate. Garside notes that this list of authorities closely matches that of Scott’s source: William Lilly’s *Christian Astrology*, published in London in 1647, and recognised as the principal guide to horary astrology.<sup>18</sup>

J. M. Pinkerton’s brief guide to ‘Demonology in the library of Abbotsford’ notes that the earliest printed book in Scott’s collection is *Liber Physiognomiae*, 1477, by the astrologer Michael Scot.<sup>19</sup> Scott’s library at Abbotsford holds a substantial collection of works of astrological interest. These include early English almanacs, works on palmistry and physiognomy, as well as ephemerides or astrological tables. The variety and content of his collection can be seen in such titles as John Poole’s *Country astrology in three books. : Being the many years astrological experiments and painful collections of John Pool of the county of Gloucester, student in astrology and physick*, London 1650; John Partridge’s *Ekklesialogia; being, An almanack for the year of our Blessed Saviour’s incarnation, 1680. Calculated and referred to the meridian of London*, London 1680 and John Melton’s *Astrologaster, or, The figure-caster. : Rather the arraignment of artlesse astrologers, and fortune-tellers, that cheat many ignorant people vnder the pretence of foretelling things to come, of telling things that are past, finding out things that are lost, expounding dreames, calculating deaths and natiuities, once againe brought to the barre*, London, 1620.

Scott’s interest in astrology was tempered by his awareness of the lack of credibility associated with it and his cautious reluctance to espouse the cause of astrology takes the form of a dispute between Sampson and Mannering. When Mannering claims that astrology is ‘a general and well-grounded belief’ (Guy 16),

Sampson responds that 'it is the resource of cheaters, knaves, and cozeners' (*Guy* 17).<sup>20</sup> This neatly encapsulates one of the significant difficulties of belief in astrology even though Mannering replies that '*Abusus non tollit usum*. The abuse of any thing does not abrogate the lawful use thereof' (*Guy* 17). This remark could be applied to Scott's examination of the supernatural. Thus, Mannering, though 'convinced of its absurdity' (*Guy* 20), nevertheless ends up calculating the required horoscope of the heir of Ellangowan. The horoscope predicts the difficulties that Bertram will encounter in his fifth, tenth and twenty-first year, and the narrator adds that 'in mentioning this circumstance, we lay no weight whatever upon the pretended information thus conveyed' (*Guy* 20). Nonetheless, Scott, as novelist will ensure that the 'pretended information' is of course accurate. Discussing Mannering's difficulties with this horoscope and reluctance to believe that astrology could be in any way reliable, the narrator notes that 'such is our natural love for the marvellous, that we willingly contribute our own efforts to beguile our better judgments' (*Guy* 20).<sup>21</sup> This opposition between our 'natural' belief in the possibilities of astrology ('the marvellous') and our 'better' judgment raises questions that Scott does not fully answer. Instead, Mannering realizes that his earlier horoscope for Sophia Wellwood is somehow connected with Bertram's and is left confused and surprised. Knowing himself to be an amateur of astrology, he considers the distinction between the magical possibilities of astrology and the fraudulent practices of those who call themselves astrologers:

Does the devil mingle in the dance, to avenge himself for our trifling with an art said to be of magical origin? Or is it possible, as Bacon and Sir Thomas Browne admit, that there is some truth in a sober and related astrology, and that the influence of the stars is not to be denied, though the due application of it, by the knaves who pretend to practice the art, is greatly to be suspected? (*Guy* 21)

This is the question that Scott appears to be pursuing in *Guy Mannering* albeit with some understanding of the difficulties. Thus it is Mannering, rather than the narrator, who suggests above that Bacon's and Browne's views on astrology were 'only retained by these learned men, either because they durst not at once shock the

universal prejudices of their age, or because they themselves were not altogether freed from the contagious influence of a prevailing superstition' (*Guy* 21).

Mannering's abrupt departure from the early chapters of the novel prevents further debate on the possibilities of astrological prediction and cedes the field to Meg Merrilies. Her role in brokering the events of *Guy Mannering* subsumes that of Mannering and Counsellor Pleydell.

Scott had an interest in the history of the gypsies of Scotland.<sup>22</sup> His depiction of Meg Merrilies, often with members of her gypsy clan, allows him the opportunity to present a woman who combines the attributes of witch, sibyl and prophet. She remains defiantly outside the legal system of justice in Scotland but is faithful throughout to the fortunes of one of the oldest hereditary families of the county. This feudal sympathy appears to direct her private and public life as she interacts with most of the significant characters in the novel, determining the course of their fortunes as much through her actions as through her predictions. Thus, the eviction of the gypsies from Derncleugh is carried out by Frank Kennedy, the revenue officer, in his role of the active and modernising force of progress, against opposition from Meg. His death is subsequently attributed to her: 'Meg Merrilies, that was the maist powerful with the Enemy of Mankind' (*Guy* 65) and 'the most notorious witch in all Galloway and Dumfries-shire baith' (*Guy* 64). Godfrey Bertram of Ellangowan signed Kennedy's warrant of eviction as magistrate; Meg, nonetheless saves Ellangowan's heir from death at the hands of the smugglers.

The disappearance of Harry Bertram on his fifth birthday is investigated by the current sheriff-depute (Pleydell) whose 'first employment was to examine all witnesses whose evidence could throw light upon this mysterious event, and make up the written report ... which the practice of Scotland has substituted for a coroner's inquest' (*Guy* 53). Notwithstanding the detailed enquiries, and paper trail, no trace of the boy is found and Meg denies any involvement in his fate. However, over a period of seventeen years, several different versions of the boy's disappearance emerge, reconstituted as tales of local history by the Deacon and Skreigh (the precentor) among others. Meg Merrilies remains implicated by virtue of her being regarded as a witch. One of the other figures of local authority was the minister of the time and he suggested that 'the bairn was only conveyed to Fairy-land for a season' (*Guy* 66).

These remnants of the truth mix fact and fiction for the reader and are confided to Colonel Mannering on his return to Kippletringan. He is unable to resolve the mystery of Bertram's disappearance despite ready wealth, military prowess and personal authority.

In contrast, it is Meg who assists Bertram on his return to his native land. She first protects him from felons and ruffians and then assures him that

I am not mad, although I have had enough to make me sae - I am not mad, nor doating, nor drunken - I know what I am asking, and I know it has been the will of God to preserve you in strange dangers, and that I shall be the instrument to set ye in your father's seat again. (*Guy* 153)

This reference to God by Meg counteracts ideas of her witchcraft or allegiance to the devil. Her skills as an 'instrument' of restitution are those that seem mysterious to the reader but it becomes clear that they are actually based on knowledge derived from her immersion in a widespread network of underworld contacts, whether criminal or gypsy. Her nephew, Gabriel Faa, is her main source of information. Her methods are in stark contrast to those of the lawyer, Pleydell, whose skills are bound up with the legal world of written documents and evidence based on sworn testaments. Their authority rests on an agreed acceptance of what constitutes evidence. Meg is aligned with a pre-literate world that appears nonetheless to compete successfully with the modern legal world in terms of recognising and restoring lost heirs and reuniting families.

There is general distaste for the swindling lawyer Glossin who has usurped authority by deceitful methods. It falls to Meg to restore traditional social stability with her personal and individual influence. The powers of 'local' government are restored to those who have been the traditional rulers of communities rather than acceded to those whose efforts to attain such status are complicated by their willingness to cut corners and thereby satisfy hasty and greedy ambition. Pleydell is one example of a legal practitioner: Glossin is another and Pleydell remarks that Glossin 'would have been a pretty lawyer, had he not had such a turn to the roguish part of the profession' (*Guy* 348). Pleydell and Mac-Morlan, who acts as sheriff

substitute for the county, will finalise the success of Meg's plans, legally and officially, but they stand unable to initiate such activity without her assistance.

Pleydell and Mannering become involved with a series of complex games in which Meg is always ahead. Discussing, with Mannering, the baffling will and final testimony of Margaret Singleside in which the deceased woman declares that she '*was well assured that he [Bertram] was yet alive in foreign parts, and by the providence of heaven would be restored to the possessions of his ancestors*' (Guy 221), Pleydell remarks that Meg 'could tell us some more of the matter than she derives from astrology or second-sight' (Guy 234). He is thus motivated to begin writing to Mac-Morlan, as well as the Sheriff of Roxburghshire and the justice of the peace in Cumberland, in an effort to trace Kennedy's murderers and discover Bertram's fate.

However, Scott shows how relying on letters or other documentation leads to dangerous delay. The verbal communication between Meg and Gabriel appears to be similar to bush telegraph, more robust, easier, and quickly assimilated despite the distances that each person might be supposed to cover. Meg orchestrates the rescue of Bertram and Dinmont from Portanferry, and their return to Woodbourne, only to highlight the difficulties faced by Pleydell and Mac-Morlan in their requirement for proof of Bertram's identity. Mannering protests that Bertram is the physical double of his father, Godfrey Bertram, 'and he himself recollects all the very peculiar circumstances preceding his leaving this country – what else is necessary to conviction?' (Guy 320). Pleydell's answer is that this cannot be counted as 'legal proof [nor] evidence in his own favour' (Guy 320) and that 'we must have a distinct probation' (Guy 320).

Earlier, Harry Bertram's actual reappearance at the castle of Ellangowan staggered Glossin who stumbled 'as if he had received a sudden and deadly wound' (Guy 245). Bertram's power rests in his resemblance to his dead father:

His face, person, and voice, were so exactly those of his father in his best days, that Glossin, hearing his exclamation, and seeing such a sudden apparition in the shape of his patron, and on nearly the very spot where he had expired, almost thought the grave had given up its dead! (Guy 245)

This physical likeness is later acknowledged by Sampson and Pleydell who announces that 'he is the very image of his father' (*Guy* 305). Meg's final confirmation of Harry's true identity comes as she lies dying and is accompanied by another prophecy that goes unheeded. Meg swears that

if I lived to see the day o' his return, I would set him in his father's seat if every step was on a dead man. I have keepit that oath. I will be ae step mysell – He (pointing to Hattaraick) will soon be another, and there will be ane mair yet. (*Guy* 337)

These deaths will take place shortly but their significance is overlooked in the clamour surrounding Bertram. The final acceptance of Bertram's claim occurs when Jock Jabos, the postillion, recognises the heir of 'auld Ellangowan arisen from the dead!' (*Guy* 338). Scott writes that this 'public declaration of an unprejudiced witness, was just the spark wanted to give fire to the popular feeling' (*Guy* 338). Dinmont also contributes to the identification process of the heir and 'his testimony afforded an additional motive to the general enthusiasm' (*Guy* 339) because the bystanders already know Dinmont to be personally trustworthy.

Notwithstanding this emphasis on the physical appearance of Bertram, the 'strongest and most satisfactory evidence' (*Guy* 348) of identity is produced by the original astrological 'scheme of nativity' (*Guy* 348) acknowledged by Mannering as his own composition. At the examination of Bertram, Gabriel had already testified to the fact that 'his aunt had always said that Harry Bertram carried that around his neck which would ascertain his birth' (*Guy* 347). The final details of the restitution of Bertram to his inheritance are left to Pleydell and his brief report to Mannering at the end of the novel confirms this achievement. The legal procedures are reported in an unemotional and neutral manner almost as an afterthought and after their completion Mannering affirms to Pleydell that his astrological career will not be resumed: 'here ends THE ASTROLOGER' (*Guy* 355). In resolving the question of Bertram's identity, there appears to be a mutual support system of enquiry between astrology and the law in *Guy Mannering*.

*Waverley* had of course appeared anonymously<sup>23</sup> and Scott continued this practice to a certain extent with *Guy Mannering*, with 'By the Author of *Waverley*'

appearing on the title page. In effect, Scott had created an alternative narrative persona for himself and one that would allow him to begin to investigate a range of issues mostly supernatural in origin without necessarily conforming to established expectations.<sup>24</sup> It was this freedom that enabled him to incorporate the puzzling sequence of the appearances of the 'bodach glas' to Fergus Mac-Ivor without resolving the question of the reality, or otherwise, of second sight and then to continue to investigate the influence of prophecy, witchcraft and the supernatural in a Scottish context.

Scott's original decision to adopt anonymity as an author of novels could be understood then and now as based on various reasons but his insistence on maintaining such a position sparked comment from contemporary reviewers nonetheless. In July 1815, the *Augustan Review* discussed *Guy Mannering* at some length, describing the 'wild uncertainty about ... mysterious incidents' and suggesting that 'its moral might, in the time of Lord Hale, have subjected the printer to an indictment for supporting astrology and witchcraft' (Hayden 87-89).

This acknowledgement that the supernatural subject matter of *Guy Mannering* had once been and might still be unacceptable offers some explanation for Scott's refusal of authorial responsibility. The space granted by anonymity returned him to that freedom enjoyed by minstrels and other anonymous authors of traditional tales while nonetheless incorporating sufficient recognition by his peers of his probable authorship. Only the eventual unveiling of 'the Author of Waverley' removed this licence and forced Scott to temper his rebellious nonconformity and evidence of this can be seen in the new introduction to *Guy Mannering* for the Magnum Opus edition of the Waverley Novels. With some elaboration, Scott cites an old Highlander's tale as his source, much as might be expected from an accomplished author recognised also as an editor of antiquarian ballads. He describes 'the simple narrative on which *Guy Mannering* was originally founded'<sup>25</sup> and then how

the author of Waverley had imagined a possibility of framing an interesting, and perhaps not an unedifying, tale out of the incidents of the life of a doomed individual, whose efforts at good and virtuous conduct were to be for ever disappointed

by the intervention, as it were, of some malevolent being, and who was at last to come off victorious from the fearful struggle. (*Guy Mannering* 3: xiv-xv)

While Colonel Mannering may not completely fit the template ‘of a doomed individual,’ his difficulties and disappointments in love, whether romantic or paternal, and his struggles against the malevolent Glossin certainly resemble Scott’s characterisation of a man eventually victorious but not without extensive assistance in the ‘fearful struggle.’ This depiction of Mannering and the frustration in his various journeys that he experiences from the opening pages of the novel is counterbalanced by the adventures of the lost heir to Ellangowan. In the same Introduction Scott suggests to his readers that

the scheme projected may be traced in the three or four first chapters of the work, but farther consideration induced the author to lay his purpose aside. (*Guy Mannering* 3: xv)

Notwithstanding this explicit correction to the tenor of the novel, the reader’s dilemma lies in the actual text as originally written by Scott. There is no real change to the imaginative experience delivered by the novel which abounds with instances of the supernatural, often so closely woven into the narrative as to appear completely organic to the rural life and existence of Scott’s characters. Scott’s difficulties with astrology, pointedly revealed by this later attempt to excuse his interest belong to his later persona as successful, famous and very public author. The composition of his second novel has none of such restraint or muffling introduction and offers the experience of supernatural agency completely raw, unmitigated by enlightened sentiment and seemingly accepted even by pragmatic men of business such as Dandie Dinmont.

Much as Hogg would do with his multi-layered tale of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, Scott’s novel turned to the individual experience of the supernatural situated within a private and domestic Scottish context. Scott’s acknowledgement of his ‘tale of private life’ to John Morritt places *Guy Mannering* outside those constrictions that might apply to public authors with legal backgrounds and reputable education. Whereas, the word ‘tale’ is associated with communal ownership, and

therefore communal responsibility, rather than individual authorship, Scott complicates these ideas through returning to private, domestic life unfettered by public constriction. In his later novel, the *Bride of Lammermoor*, Scott would return to individual Scottish experiences set within a wider and more overtly political setting. Where *Guy Mannering* ends on an optimistic note, the *Bride of Lammermoor* is characterised instead by the failure of family loyalty and the subsequent distress and suffering caused to private individuals.

### **3.4 Prophecy and The Bride of Lammermoor, 1819**

In one of the most emotionally-charged of Waverley novels, Scott highlights one distinction between poetry and prose:

“This is poetry, Lucy,” said Ravenswood; “and in poetry there is always fallacy, and sometimes fiction.” “Believe me then, once more, in honest prose,” said Lucy.<sup>26</sup>

Misleading arguments, however, are equally characteristic of this particular novel. In Scott’s exploration of individual degrees of treachery and betrayal, whether on a personal or political level, he does not conform to such literary categories. Instead, in his analysis of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, Scott returns to the various and alternative types of testimony that best reveal the particular attributes associated with his characters. The downfall of Allan, Lord Ravenswood, through the manoeuvrings of the Lord Keeper, Sir William Ashton, is accomplished by the ‘extensive pecuniary transactions ... complicated affairs [and]... legal toils and pecuniary snares’ (*Bride* 16) associated then with the corruption of the administration of Scottish justice. “‘Show me the man, and I will show you the law,’” became as prevalent as it was scandalous’ (*Bride* 17). The Lord Keeper’s memoranda of events describing Lord Ravenswood’s funeral is an ‘account of the disorderly proceedings’ (*Bride* 23) and only one example of the type of flexible authority associated with legal testimony. For Sir William, ‘it was a point of delicacy to select such expressions as might infer [young Ravenswood’s] culpability, without seeming directly to urge it’ (*Bride* 24). This attack on the Master of Ravenswood is directed by a man who understands the damage he can inflict but prefers to see such revenge taken by the ‘civil and

ecclesiastical authorities' (*Bride* 23) rather than himself. Later, he will 'revise' his memoranda and 'soften' (*Bride* 45-46) his accusations of treasonable riot.

This indication of the perils surrounding the House of Ravenswood is developed further by the supernatural elements of the novel. These include the legends surrounding the haunted well, thought to be fatal to the Ravenswood family after the death there of an earlier 'beautiful maid' (*Bride* 40). 'From this period the house of Ravenswood was supposed to have dated its decay' (*Bride* 40). Thomas the Rhymer's supposed prophecy of the downfall of the Ravenswood family is recited by Caleb Balderstone:

When the last Laird of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall  
ride,  
And woee a dead maiden to be his bride,  
He shall stable his steed on the Kelpie's flow  
And his name shall be lost for evermoe! (*Bride* 139)

Old Alice also warns Ravenswood of his danger but uses arguments that suggest her understanding of his fraught situation as Lucy's lover in terms that reflect her understanding of the political and worldly perils as much as from her knowledge of the superstitious legends regarding him. Nonetheless, she blends her advice with the suggestion that 'it is most wonderful ... but the ways of Heaven are not like our ways, and its judgments are brought about by means far beyond our fathoming' (*Bride* 150).

Moving beyond these verbal warnings, and reminiscent of *Waverley's* 'bodach glas', Alice's fidelity to the House of Ravenswood is seen to outlast her death when the Master of Ravenswood is visited by her wraith. He attempts to understand the apparition in physiological terms:

can strong and earnest wishes, formed during the last agony  
of nature, survive its catastrophe, surmount the awful bounds  
of the spiritual world, and place before us its inhabitants in  
the hues and colouring of life? (*Bride* 190)

Ravenswood cannot determine the answer. However, this physical manifestation of Alice's testimony is succeeded by Scott's introduction of the arts of witchcraft, and

black magic, which appear in the novel following Alice's death. Scott describes another old woman, Ailsie Gourley, as 'the Wise Woman of Bowden' (*Bride* 238). She is also 'a partner and ally of the great enemy of mankind' (*Bride* 239). Gourley's role in the subjection of Lucy Ashton will be discussed later.

These complex and unpredictable testimonies, whether of legal interest or of prophecy, contrast strongly with the simple but binding love contracts exchanged between Lucy Ashton and Edgar, Master of Ravenswood. However, such documents do not survive the treachery experienced by the lovers. Lucy and Edgar die without leaving much trace and this is particularly emphasised by the eventual commemoration instead of the stony-hearted villain, Lady Ashton. The erection of her 'splendid marble monument' commemorates 'her name, titles, and virtues, while her victims remain undistinguished by tomb or epitaph' (*Bride* 269). They have been virtually erased, before being recalled to existence by an 'aged goodwife' for the benefit of Dick Tinto who hands over 'a parcel of loose scraps, partly scratched over with his pencil, partly with his pen' being the 'notes of the tale' (*Bride* 15) for the eventual narrator, Peter Pattieson.

*The Bride of Lammermoor* was published in 1819 after Scott had enjoyed tremendous success with both poetry and prose. While both Scott and Hogg began their literary careers as poets, they did not limit themselves to poetry and Hogg in particular experimented with a range of genres throughout his life. Notably, however, Scott's novel approached the vexed question of uncanny testimonies, witchcraft and the nature of authority through the portal of the imaginary narrator, Peter Pattieson, shifting the responsibility of the author for interpretation and judgment of these issues onto the reader. This was his eighth novel and appeared with *A Legend of Montrose*, composed as part of the third series of *Tales of My Landlord*.

His sources for the *Bride of Lammermoor* were both written and verbal. There were four versions of the legend of the marriage and subsequent death of Janet Dalrymple in 1669, daughter of Viscount Stair, and Scott had heard such tales of the tragedy of Janet Dalrymple from his great-aunt Margaret Swinton and from his mother.<sup>27</sup> Later additions to the tale such as those in Law's *Memorials* included an element of the diabolical supernatural and accusations of witchcraft on the part of Lady Stair.<sup>28</sup>

The impact of the tale on Scott may have been heightened by the unfortunate death of his great-aunt murdered by a faithful family retainer when Scott was nine years old. The familiar story of Janet Dalrymple became infused with additional levels of horror through the inclusion of witchcraft and prophecy. The tragic intensity of the *Bride of Lammermoor* is unique among the Waverley novels and may relate much more than has been considered to the personal shock experienced by Scott over his great-aunt's own violent demise at the hands of her servant, later judged as insane. Critical tradition has assigned the extraordinary power of *The Bride of Lammermoor* to its composition during Scott's bout of serious illness, widely reporting Lockhart's description of an author driven to write through pain, and the 'groan of torment'.<sup>29</sup> However, it is equally probable that the impact of the narrative owes as much to Scott's complex reaction to the imaginative power of a true tale, based on actual evidence, and related to him through the verbal witness of his mother and aunt. Subsequently he renders their testimony to us in written form. Lockhart claimed that Scott wrote not just *The Bride of Lammermoor* but also 'the whole of the Legend of Montrose - and almost the whole of *Ivanhoe*' in this state of exhausted animation, yet *Ivanhoe* is hardly comparable to *The Bride* in either its sense of despair or intensity and the reader might consider how Scott's acute receptivity to the possibilities of transforming our understanding of the supernatural through capturing genuine experiences in print infuses this work.

Notably, the passionate and brooding Master of Ravenswood is unlike other typical Scott heroes in that he is active, rather than passive, struggling to avert the fateful decline of his fortunes, aware of an inherited susceptibility to the malign forces of pride and revenge but finally unable to overcome the prophecy which literally sinks him from sight in the treacherous sands of the Kelpie's Flow.

The opening chapters of the narrative give little sense of the drama that lies ahead but describe the concerns of Peter Pattieson and Dick Tinto and their ineffectual squabble over the merits of different forms of communication. Painting is praised as an immediate visual narrative preferable to the difficulties of listening to or reading tedious and stilted dialogue. *The Bride of Lammermoor* will incorporate some of the characteristics of both drama and poetry, referring to the canvas of the stage as well as striking visual compositions normally associated more strongly with

the medium of painting. To begin with, however, Scott appears to be investigating how it is possible to transform Dick's untidy manuscript 'where outlines of caricatures ... disputed the ground with his written memoranda' (*Bride* 14) into a coherent narrative and the reader is hardly prepared for the stark introduction of *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Pattieson, the narrator, maintains a curious air of detachment in presenting what he describes as 'the substance of the manuscript' (*Bride* 14). By the abrupt end of chapter two, the decline of the House of Ravenswood and the death of Allan, Lord Ravenswood, has been set forth and the narrator supposes how 'on this fatal night the Master ... evoked some evil fiend, under whose malignant influence the future tissue of incidents was woven' (*Bride* 22). The civil and political difficulties of the family seem enmeshed with 'some evil fiend', itself beyond human control but not perhaps experience. Scott links the Ravenswood heir to a world of supernatural horror before then adding hastily 'Alas! What fiend can suggest more desperate counsels, than those adopted under the guidance of our own violent and unresisted passions?' (*Bride* 22). This eminently rational comment separates human frailty from fiendish responsibility and might seem to deprecate ideas of diabolical revenge, but does not entirely outweigh the expectation that violence and 'unresisted' passion might yet find assistance from some more unearthly forces.

Indeed, unconstrained passionate emotion is visible throughout with one exception: the character of Lucy Ashton, whose passivity is rewarded with disappointed love and murderous insanity. Her character of meek dependence does comply with the typically idealised feminine role of submissive behaviour, in stark contrast to her powerful mother; but Lucy's experience is tragic rather than rewarding. In *The Bride of Lammermoor* haughty temper is characteristic of aristocracy in general and is commented upon by many of the minor characters, increasingly so as the novel moves towards a climax. Lady Ashton is jealously proud of an eminence she suspects to be grudgingly accorded, resorting to her maiden name of Margaret Douglas, 'otherwise Ashton', in reply to Ravenswood's proposal of marriage to Lucy.

Interestingly, Scott's first deliberate inclusion of prophecy occurs as the Master of Ravenswood reverses ideas of rank and precedence and offers to attend the Lord Keeper and Lucy Ashton to their home and elects to return their visit. Caleb's

strongest protest is to quote from Thomas the Rhymer in due warning that Ravenswood's 'name shall be lost for evermoe!' This challenge to the accepted order of events and especially to expectation of the correct behaviour of the last of the Ravenswood family tears apart the fabric of social behaviour and convention, enabling the introduction of 'evil fiends' or witches to the narrative.

Blind Alice Gray had been originally described by Lucy Ashton as 'the very empress of old women, and queen of gossips, so far as legendary lore is concerned' (*Bride* 30), but her true nature encompasses more than this. She warns the Lord Keeper to beware the Master of Ravenswood and effectually frightens him away from her cottage more or less into the dangerous fields that contain the wild cattle. Her role appears to be one of reminder to the Lord Keeper that human strategy particularly when invested within the constructs of Scottish law is uncertain and can be overturned by alternative interpretation. Ashton protests that 'what has been between us has been the work of the law, not my doing; and to the law they must look, if they would impugn my proceedings' (*Bride* 35). This distinction carries more of guile than accuracy. Ashton describes his usurpation of Ravenswood as the 'work of the law', as if it were an independent third party beyond his control. He expects his opponents to 'impugn' or argue the situation with him whereas Alice points out that 'they may think otherwise, and take the law into their own hand, when they fail of other means of redress' (*Bride* 35).

To the legal mind, this suggestion of violence has an uncomfortable precedent. The Ravenswood ancestor, Malisius de Ravenswood, whose portrait and crest are still visible within the old Castle, succeeded in regaining his castle and lands by strength and the loyalty of his followers. His memory is particularly threatening to the Lord Keeper. In contrast to Malisius, Lord Ashton is a man whose power and influence are based not on physical prowess but on his ability to manipulate the presentation of events and thereby the 'truth' through the subtle and skilful composition of documents that make up the body of evidence against the Ravenswood family. As noted earlier, his initial report to the Privy Council of 'aggravated riot' at the interment of Lord Ravenswood will be later altered to suit his later mood of complacent relief after rescue from the undomesticated bull. The reader learns that having been 'bred to casuistry, and well accustomed to practise the

ambi-dexter ingenuity of the bar, it cost him little trouble to soften the features of the tumult which he had been at first so anxious to exaggerate' (*Bride* 46). The workings of the law are rather arbitrary than independent in the hands of the Lord Keeper.

Lady Ashton will resort to equally covert measures to resist Ravenswood's influence over her daughter. In the same way that the law fails to protect the tenants' rights in the transfer of landed properties in Scotland between different owners,<sup>30</sup> so it will be unable to protect Lucy Ashton from her domineering mother who initiates a campaign of 'constant and unceasing persecution' (*Bride* 235). She appoints Ailsie Gourley to nurse her failing daughter and to persuade her that 'an evil fate hung over her attachment ... the gloom of superstition darkened a mind, already sufficiently weakened by sorrow, distress, uncertainty, and an oppressive sense of desertion and desolation' (*Bride* 240).

Scott's depiction of Ailsie Gourley is very different to that of Meg Merrilies. Described as a traditional herbalist, Gourley has acquired 'a considerable reputation among the ignorant by the pretended cures' (*Bride* 238) of her profession, recalling Edward Waverley's equivocal experience of herbal remedies in the Highlands and the reverence in which both healer and healing potion were held. The narrator continues to relate that 'in private, however, she traded more deeply in the occult sciences ... "spaed fortunes", read dreams, composed philtres, discovered stolen goods, and made and dissolved matches as successfully as if ... she had been aided in these arts by Beelzebub himself' (*Bride* 239).

Lucky Gourley succeeds in her efforts through a combination of kindness to the friendless Lucy, 'attentive services and real skill' (*Bride* 240) in nursing the invalid, and through her knowledge of local legend concerning the Ravenswood family. The result is Lucy's final subjection to her mother's wishes. She announces her decision to resign her contract with the Master of Ravenswood, should he agree, and is freed from her attendant. The marriage articles are drawn up and await her signature. Her attempts to sign the papers meet only with partial success – notwithstanding pens which have dried up, the final signature is 'incomplete, defaced and blotted' (*Bride* 246). This inability to complete the documents however will only defer the resolution. At this point, Ravenswood appears as if summoned by supernatural force and Scott describes him as an 'unexpected apparition ...

Ravenswood had more the appearance of one returned from the dead, than of a living visitor' (*Bride* 247). The complete breakdown of his hopes is speedily accomplished through the intercession of the Presbyterian minister and 'the authority of Scripture itself' (*Bride* 251). Lady Ashton then confronts him, producing Lucy's letter asking for the surrender of the engagement, and the articles of marriage that have been signed by her. Throughout the scene, Lucy is unable to utter any word of protest or defence, seemingly stunned into acceptance of her fate. She is taken to her room 'where she remained for some time in a state of absolute stupor' (*Bride* 254) before recovering.

The wedding follows swiftly but takes place within earshot of the old women, Lucky Gourley and Annie Winnie. Dame Gourley recalls her services to Lady Ashton and comments that 'there's mair o' utter devilry in that woman ... than in a' the Scotch witches that ever flew by moon-light ower North-Berwick Law' (*Bride* 257). 'Devilry' clearly encompasses something more than the anger of a woman with political and dynastic ambitions for her family. Her reliance on the normal and external structures of social order, such as the law and the church, to influence behaviour is not limited to these but extended by her decision to engage Lucky Gourley in the struggle for possession of her daughter's mind and will. This ability to influence people and change the course of events, otherwise seen as probable, is described as devilry and skilful practitioners are inevitably witches. *The Bride of Lammermoor* is Scott's contribution to understanding the role and significance of the supernatural in daily life. It offers an explanation of events characterised by the disruption of domestic harmony and otherwise inexplicable before the development of the science of psychology. The supernatural thereby arouses heightened fear because of its gendered association with women and their assumption of unnatural power. Uncontrollable female fiends have recourse to inexplicable and bewildering forces, unmanning male structures. Protection of the weak within a family is apparently not possible, as Lucy Ashton will be betrayed by every other family member. The breakdown of Scottish society through incessant political changes is shown through the struggles between noble families and through the sufferings of their dependents. Mortsheugh, the sexton, and the old women have been driven to exist on the very margins of the Scottish society, commenting freely on the failings

of the Ravenswoods and other ‘grit folk.’ Mortsheugh complains that Sir William Ashton ‘just ruined me and a’ the puir creatures that had bite and soup at the castle’ (*Bride* 198). Dame Gourley remarks how ‘their gifts ... are dealt for nae love of us – nor for respect for whether we feed or starve’ (*Bride* 256). Annie Winnie adds her resentment at having to ‘wish joy to these hellicat quality, that lord it ower us like brute beasts’ (*Bride* 256-57).

Scott’s novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, was based on a true story and in conclusion, the narrator reminds us of this. He refers to his novel as ‘AN OWER TRUE TALE’ (*Bride* 262), defending himself from the accusation that it has been ‘composed by the wild imagination of an author, desirous of gratifying the popular appetite for the horrible’ (*Bride* 262). Instead Scott points to the connection of his novel with events in the ‘private family history of Scotland’ (*Bride* 262) and asserts that the supernatural events of the *Bride of Lammermoor* should be considered within this context. Finally, his stress on the unreliability of written documents in the novel is matched by the certainty of the prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer. The Master of Ravenswood rushes toward the Kelpie’s flow and sinks from sight in the quicksand. His enemy, Colonel Ashton, ‘rubbed his eyes, as if he had witnessed an apparition’ (*Bride* 268). The tale ends and Scott notes that ‘the family of Ashton did not long survive that of Ravenswood’ (*Bride* 268).

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Erl-King’, ‘The Chase’ and ‘William and Helen’ were also published by James Ballantyne in *An Apology for Tales of Terror* (Kelso, 1799). See also Walter Scott, *An Apology for Tales of Terror*, ed. Douglass H. Thomson, *The Walter Scott Digital Archive*, Comp. Paul Barnaby, Edinburgh University Library. <<http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/poetry/apology/home.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> M. G Lewis, *Tales of Wonder* (London, 1801) 135. In ‘Glenfinlas’ Scott also includes a comment on second sight: ‘I can only describe the second sight, by adopting Dr. Johnson’s definition, who calls it “An impression either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant and future are perceived and seen as if they were present.” To which I would only add, that the spectral appearances thus presented usually presage misfortune; that the faculty is painful to those who suppose they possess it; and that they usually acquire it while themselves under the pressure of melancholy.’ (*Tales of Wonder* 124)

<sup>3</sup> See J. Logie Robertson, ed., *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Froude, 1894) 637-67.

<sup>4</sup> See Nancy Moore Goslee, *Scott the Rhymer* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1988) 14. She observes how ‘Scott follows much medieval and Renaissance romance that links the realm and practice of

magic more often to women than to men, often associating such enchantresses or witches with the apprehension of nature as mystery, not as rational order.’ I would add that the familiar types of knight and witch can be traced throughout Scott’s poetry and continue to re-appear in the Waverley Novels.

<sup>5</sup> Hogg, ‘Journey’ 1804: 183.

<sup>6</sup> See P. D. Garside and Rainer Schöwerling, eds., *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, vol. 2: 1800-1829 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 44.

<sup>7</sup> See J. G. Lockhart, *Life* 3: 375. Scott had just returned from a continental tour to Waterloo, Brussels and Paris. Lockhart’s source of information is given as James Ballantyne.

<sup>8</sup> There were two volumes of the first edition of the *Minstrelsy* in 1802. The second edition in 1803 contained three volumes.

<sup>9</sup> Edgeworth published *Castle Rackrent* in 1800, *Belinda* and *Moral Tales for Young People* in 1801. Hamilton published *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* in 1800. Hannah More published *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* in 1808.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Scott, ed., *The Works of John Dryden* (Edinburgh, 1808. Revised George Saintsbury. Edinburgh: Constable, 1882-83) 1: 4.

<sup>11</sup> *British Review* 4 (May 1813): 126-33. Reprinted in John O. Hayden, *Scott: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1970) 62. Subsequent references to Hayden’s collection will be in parentheses.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Scott, *Waverley*, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) 3. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses. Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* 2 vols. (London: Andrew Millar, 1752) is an earlier example of fiction satirising the perils of romance-reading.

<sup>13</sup> Coleman O. Parsons, ‘The Bodach Glas in *Waverley*’, *Notes and Queries* 184.4 (13 Feb. 1943): 95-97. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>14</sup> See Cottom, *The Civilised Imagination* 148. He suggests that ‘superstition would be an entirely uncomplicated topic in Scott’s novels if the rational notice taken of it were allowed to pass unchallenged.’

<sup>15</sup> *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, ed. J. G. Lockhart (Edinburgh: Black, 1857) 232. Scott quotes from Martin’s *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716.

<sup>16</sup> J. C. Eade, *The Forgotten Sky: A Guide to Astrology in English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1984) 1. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999) 19. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>18</sup> See Scott, *Guy Mannering* 520 n.16.34 -35. P. D. Garside notes also that ‘little is now known about these authorities, who are perhaps meant here to read like an arbitrary and empty, if impressive-sounding, succession of names.’

<sup>19</sup> J. M. Pinkerton, ‘Demonology in the library of Abbotsford’, *Bulletin du bibliophile* 3 (1984): 315.

<sup>20</sup> Sampson's phrase echoes Reginald Scot's comment on astrologers that 'though there be many of them learned and godlie, yet lurke there in corners of the same profession, a great number of counterfets and couseners'. See Reginald Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584) 171.

<sup>21</sup> Shortly after 18 December 1828, Scott received a letter from an astrologer J. A. McWhirter of Edinburgh suggesting that "the 'Nativity' of Sir Walter Scott would be invaluable; as it would tend to prove either the truth, or the falsehood of the General Principles of that Science in which our forefathers reposed such implicit faith." See Walter Scott, *Letters to Walter Scott, 1796–1831*, Hugh Walpole, ms. 3907 f. 287, National Library of Scotland. Scott did not take up the offer but referred to the letter in the 1829 Magnum introduction to *Guy Mannering*. His refusal emphasised the absence of accurate information available about the exact time of his birth but he did not ridicule the suggestion as might have been expected.

<sup>22</sup> He was acquainted with William Smith, the Provost of Kelso, who compiled the 'Account of the Gypsies of Kirk Yetholm in 1815.' See John A. Fairley, *Bailie Smith of Kelso's Account of the Gypsies of Kirk Yetholm* (Hawick, 1907). Scott also provided some anonymous anecdotes for 'Notices Concerning the Scottish Gypsies', *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* 1 (April 1817).

<sup>23</sup> See Seamus Cooney, 'Scott's Anonymity – Its Motives and Consequences', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 10 (1973): 207-19. See also Thomas R. Dale, 'One Word More on Scott's Anonymity', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 14 (1979): 137-44.

<sup>24</sup> In Jane Millgate's *Walter Scott: The Making of The Novelist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1984) 60, she quotes a letter from Scott to Morritt in which, following *Waverley*'s anonymous publication, Scott defends this, arguing that he has secured 'only the freedom of writing trifles with less personal responsibility and perhaps more frequently than I might otherwise do.' (*Letters* 3: 480-1)

<sup>25</sup> Walter Scott, *Waverley Novels*, Magnum Opus ed. (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1829-33) 3: i. Subsequent references to this edition will be in parentheses.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. J. H. Alexander (Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP, 1995) 164. Future references will be in parentheses.

<sup>27</sup> See Coleman O. Parsons, 'The Dalrymple Legend in *The Bride of Lammermoor*', *Review of English Studies* 19 (1943): 51–58, and W. S. Crockett, *The Scott Originals* (London: Foulis, 1912).

<sup>28</sup> Law, *Memorialls; or, The Memorable Things that fell out within this island of Brittain from 1638 to 1684* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1818): 225-27.

<sup>29</sup> See Lockhart, *Life* 6: 67-8. Edgar Johnson also commented on Scott's suffering. See Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* 1: 670.

<sup>30</sup> Both Alice Gray and the sexton Johnny Mortsheugh refer to this. Alice has managed to secure her cottage rent-free in the sale of the Ravenswood estates while Mortsheugh criticises the failure of Lord Ravenswood, on his own account exclaiming 'ye winna persuade me that he did his duty ... he might hae gi'en us life-rent tacks of our bits o' houses and yards ... Ravenswood guided his gear like a fule' (*Bride* 199).

## Chapter Four: Medieval Material, 1819-1822

### 4.1 *The Medieval Supernatural: Politics, Religion and Magic*

This chapter will comment on three novels remarkable for their medieval setting and their exploration of the supernatural within that context. It is significant that, having experienced rather different degrees of success in publishing before 1819, both Scott and Hogg chose to set their next fiction in the Middle Ages, discussing aspects of the supernatural within three broad categories: politics, religion and magic. In this way their investigation and representation of ideas of the supernatural could continue freely against a background of medieval history that nonetheless offered opportunities of comparison with contemporary Scotland. Their success, or failure, can be measured to some extent by their depiction of the authority retained by the supernatural in human affairs and by the reaction of reviewers to their work. It will be seen that while *Ivanhoe*, for example, enjoyed significant commercial success, *The Monastery* and the *Three Perils of Man* were less appealing to readers. In the particular case of *The Monastery*, some reviewers delivered a verdict of serious disappointment.

Scott's enthusiasm for medieval settings and motifs reflects his interest in the honourable ideals of chivalry and nobility.<sup>1</sup> Through the medium of the quest, he presents challenges and competition where the struggles are not necessarily between knights alone but between class, gender and race paradoxically linked by a desire for order. Hogg's interpretation of medieval Scottish history with his emphasis on the destructive power of man rather than magic offers a more dispassionate perspective to that of Scott and his narrative of superstition within the ranks of English chivalry (*Ivanhoe*) and Scottish families (*The Monastery*). In all three novels there is a strong emphasis on the links between religion and the supernatural, and there is also a continual sense of violence as an inevitable though undesirable component of change.

*Ivanhoe*, 1820, was published in December 1819 only six months after one of Scott's bleakest novels had appeared. In the *Bride of Lammermoor* it is notable that the apparently predestined deaths of Lucy Ashton and Edgar Ravenswood break up families and communities rather than produce unity between the opposing forces of

the usurper and the usurped. Scott and Hogg's retreat to the medieval period suggests that the pattern of national reconciliation, familiar to readers of Lady Morgan, or Maria Edgeworth, does not appear to be entirely possible within a Scottish context. In *Waverley*, Scott had seemed confident that progress was attainable, depicting the reintegration of the traditions of a Baron Bradwardine with the innovations of *Waverley* even though the attempt at autonomous self-government through the violence of the Highland clans was rejected and the brutal execution of Fergus makes explicit Scott's specific objection to the medieval practices of torture. Instead, marriage between a wealthy Englishman and Bradwardine's heir Rose can and will restore the national estates of Scotland. This optimism shrinks and dies before the difficulties evident in the dealings between Lord Ashton and Ravenswood. Ashton takes refuge in the political and corrupt machinations of power to assert an authority based on subterfuge and the dubious manipulation of the law. This practice interestingly is seen to be unstable and damaging even within the Ashton domestic circle and is overruled by the more powerful will of Lady Ashton who resorts both to scripture, specifically the Biblical laws of Leviticus, as well as the supernatural oral tales of Lucky Gourley to ensure the alignment of her daughter's marital choice with her own wishes.

In terms of medieval ideals of chivalry, Scott began his literary career as a novelist by gently mocking *Waverley*'s juvenile posing with the sword of his ancestors in the library of *Waverley Hall* (*Waverley* 26) whereas Edgar Ravenswood is depicted as the actual and immediate inheritor of a tradition of violent dissent whereby power and influence is based on feudal family loyalty and the strength of the sword. It is anachronistic even for the time of the novel's setting. His redeeming feature initially appears to be his adherence to a romantic and chivalric code that results in his possibly involuntary initial assistance to Lucy Ashton and her father. His struggles to resolve the immense difficulties of his position, complicated by his ill-fated and illicit engagement, result in disaster even as the resources of chivalry fail him and the injustice of his position and straitened circumstances render him an object of mockery, rather than sympathy among his family's former tenants.

This rejection of the possibilities of the national tale for Scott's writing may be linked to political developments of the time. Scott's anxieties were both personal

and national. His fear of revolution was founded on a keen sense of the dangers of economic unrest for landed proprietors such as himself even though he was not necessarily averse to greater taxation of the rich. His strongest objections were to the demands for greater parliamentary reform and potential political representation by more radical citizens.

The traditional and established patterns of Scottish feudal government whereby lairds should protect their dependents were slipping into disarray. Scott did have a strong paternalistic streak and pride in his own position as a 'vassal' of Buccleuch. He observed the loosening of such feudal and tribal bonds with the shrewd suspicion that the replacements of lairds, dominies and clergy by manufacturing barons would not necessarily be to the advantage of the Scottish people. He was not alone in this view – Hogg's short story 'The Bridal of Polmood', published in *Winter Evening Tales*, 1820, makes much the same point.

The narrative path from *Waverley* to *The Bride of Lammermoor* thus ends abruptly with the rejection of possible unity between Scotland and England and it is within a context of political, social and historical change that the background to Scott's radical and unexpected choice of the medieval period lies. He chooses one of the most familiar of English folktales and historical heroes, Richard the Lionheart, as the basis for new writing and his decision appears to signal a point of retreat from relatively recent history to a distant and more settled period of time which nevertheless has certain similarities with the early nineteenth century.

Scott's ardent enthusiasm for medieval literature was evident in his 'Ashestiel Memoirs'. He records how he spent his youth reading avidly and remembers 'such books of history or poetry or voyages and travels as chance presented ... not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times the usual quantity of fairy tales, eastern stories, romances, &c' (*Scott on Himself* 25-26). Reading such quantities of romances provided an extensive acquaintance with medieval literature and he was also an eager and early collector of chapbooks. Scott managed to accumulate more than a hundred of them and he describes his collection in 1810:

This little collection of stall tracts and ballads was formed by me when a boy from the basket of the travelling pedlars. Until put into its present decent binding it had such charms

for the servants that it was repeatedly and with difficulty rescued from their clutches. It contains most of the pieces that were popular about 30 years since [c.1780] and I dare say many that could not now be purchased for any price.<sup>2</sup>

The content of these chapbooks would be ballads, ‘penny’ histories, songs and supernatural tales. His collection prefigures his later antiquarian interests as well as recognition of the broad attraction of chapbook material for all classes of reader. Typically included in chapbooks were ballads of Thomas the Rhymer and there are several connections between Scott’s interest in medieval literature, the legend of Thomas the Rhymer and the supernatural in Scotland.

One of these was the widespread folk tradition in which fairies were thought to steal healthy children and leave sickly ones in their place.<sup>3</sup> Without warning, one morning, in the tenement of College Wynd, the young Scott was discovered to be crippled with infantile paralysis and he was removed from his family in Edinburgh to his grandfather’s farm at Sandyknowe. He was returned to Edinburgh as a relatively healthy child after only five years. It was one of Scott’s earliest and involuntary experiences of accidental location within a Scottish tradition of supernatural beliefs. His recovery took place in the ‘haunted and historic ground’ of the Borders (Johnson 1: 9), within sight of the Eildon Hills, and thereby closely associated with both the wizard Michael Scott as well as with Thomas the Rhymer. This personal relationship with elements of supernatural folklore (Michael Scott was after all an ancestor) and the violent world of the Borders remained as a backdrop to his voracious reading of medieval romances and continued to exercise a fascination when Scott was an aspiring author and collector of ballads.

Chapbook ballads describe how the Queen of the Fairies imprisons Thomas for seven years and returns him to earth with the power of prophecy. Hogg was also aware of such legends, and in the beginning of the *Three Perils of Man*, Ringan Redhough refers to Thomas’ powers. In his second volume of the *Minstrelsy*, 1803, Scott included a ballad of ‘Thomas the Rhymer’ with discussion of the history and sources of the ballad. Scott’s introduction gathers the biographical information known to scholars and reviews it, mentioning that Thomas of Ercildoune was celebrated as a prophet and poet. He remarks that ‘whatever doubts, however, the

learned might have, as to the source of the Rhymer's prophetic skill, the vulgar had no hesitation to ascribe the whole to the intercourse between the bard and the queen of Faëry' (*Minstrelsy* [1803] 2: 266). While appearing to differentiate between the 'learned' and the 'vulgar', it is notable that Scott supplies an addition to the original tale described as 'Thomas the Rhymer Part Second Never Before Published - Altered from Ancient Prophecies.' This addition collects those very prophecies for the entertainment of the scholarly reader and indicates early recognition of the difference in attitudes towards the supernatural. This consists of a barrier whereby hesitation and 'doubts' divide the 'learned' and the 'vulgar' in their relationship to the supernatural. The relationship between the ordinary people and the fairy Queen instead has an attractive simplicity and sense of immediacy. This is subsequently evident within the stanzas of the ballad itself.

Thomas initially mistakes the grandly attired fairy for the Virgin Mary, the 'mighty queen of heav'n!' (*Minstrelsy* [1803] 2: 270). His choice of language suggests that the religious beliefs of medieval Christians accustomed them to expect visions and that the connections between supernatural heavenly visits and the faithful, for reward, guidance or warning, were accepted as normal. He is corrected at once but is nonetheless singled out for attention:

'O no, O no, Thomas,' she said;  
That name does not belong to me;  
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,  
That am hither come to visit thee. (*Minstrelsy* [1803] 2: 270)

The persistence of belief in the supernatural even as the Reformation attempted and generally succeeded in placing it outside the realms of acceptability is at the heart of both Scott's and Hogg's writing.

The ballad continues and Scott provides notes and appendix for the reader, including the 'undoubted original of Thomas the Rhymer's intrigue with the queen of Faëry' with a gloss on the traditional motifs and religious imagery of paradise and an apple pulled from the tree (*Minstrelsy* 1803: 274). Fairyland seems to be a third dimension where humans can experience temptation and salvation, even unearthly rewards before being returned to earth after seven years.

Scott's continuing fascination with 'Thomas the Rhymer' lay in his steadfast belief that the original author of the romance of *Sir Tristrem* must be that same Thomas of Ercildoune, and he used his editorial skills and the indefatigable assistance of John Leyden to promote this idea. Scott and Leyden committed several years of effort transcribing *Sir Tristrem* from the Auchinleck manuscript held by the Advocates Library, eventually publishing it with Constable in September 1804. Recent scholars have been rather severe about Scott's work, insisting that Scott's initial theory of attribution to Thomas caused him to create and subsequently argue for 'a mass of further ingenious error' (Sutherland 92), preferring to make the text meet his theories rather than the other way about. Scott's nationalist fervour about this matter has been criticised as excessive but his zeal might be excused in that he was a confirmed believer in the importance of romance in the understanding of history. His efforts with regard to the retrieval of *Sir Tristrem* from manuscript to greater national literary prominence offer practical application of his idea that 'works of fancy should be read along with the labours of the professed historian.'<sup>4</sup>

As noted earlier, this argument was offered up in a review of Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances* and Joseph Ritson's *Ancient English Metrical Romanceës* in the *Edinburgh Review*, and, while both volumes might appear to appeal to a limited antiquarian market, Scott championed their publication for a wider audience. He suggested that 'works of fancy' successfully teach 'what our ancestors thought; how they lived; upon what motives they acted, and what language they spoke; and having attained this intimate knowledge of their sentiments, manners and habits, we are certainly better prepared to learn from the other the actual particulars of their annals' (*Edinburgh Review* 7: 368). In this way, *Ivanhoe* can be read as Scott's interpretation of medieval history for a non-specialist audience and the original title pages of *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery* confirm them as 'romances.'

Scott's *Minstrelsy* was his collection of ballad poetry linked together through its imaginative reconstruction of Borders life, gathered from oral tales where possible. His medieval novels return to ideas of chivalry, the supernatural and history. They attempt a similar reconstruction of the medieval pasts of England and Scotland with the advantage of reflecting not only on the ancient world but also the

modern one of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century. That there were interesting and challenging connections between the two worlds is clear. Scott would have been aware of contemporary historians assessing the lengthy period of the Middle Ages and his response to such appraisals may have enabled him to recognise surprising similarities between the situation in Scotland in the early nineteenth-century and the Middle Ages. These similarities included ideas about the gradual transformation of societies from feudal to early modern and the strains that this imposed upon those same societies. The Crusades themselves can be seen as an early forerunner of modern Empire although the newly emerging British Empire would encourage loyal subjects to conquer overseas territory for economic rather than religious hegemony.

Alice Chandler has suggested that the prevailing emphasis on the colourful and ceremonial pageantry of Scott's medieval fiction such as *Ivanhoe* obscures the fact that events are often set 'on the far side of the border between the real and the unreal, in a world that sometimes verges on the mythic and allegorical.'<sup>5</sup> This world can contain both the stories of oral tradition, often recounted in terms of myth or allegory, as well as their subsequent evolution into an edited and written narrative. In the *Minstrelsy* of 1802/3, Scott collected and arranged what he considered as definitive examples of Borders ballads. His method suggests an idea of the limitations of written narrative as evidence without some input from oral culture. In the world of pre-Reformation and pre-Enlightenment, Christianity and superstition were both opposed and yet still closely aligned.

Edward Gibbon remarked that the medieval Christians were notable for their willingness to believe in 'miraculous powers' and points out that they 'perpetually trod on mystic ground, and their minds were exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary events.'<sup>6</sup> Therefore, events outside of their understanding were readily designated as miracles and accepted as natural elements of Christian belief. Gibbon suggests that our ancestors felt themselves 'incessantly assaulted by dæmons, comforted by visions, [and] instructed by prophecy' (*Decline and Fall* 475). He links their firm belief in these 'supernatural truths' to the practice and duties of faith itself, resulting in 'a state of mind described as the surest pledge of the divine favour and of

future felicity, and recommended as the first or perhaps the only merit of a Christian' (*Decline and Fall* 475).

Such links to the supernatural and this readiness to acknowledge the existence of saints and miracles persisted throughout the pre-Reformation Middle Ages and beyond the Reformation.<sup>7</sup> Chandler points to the revival of enthusiasm for the medieval period in Scott's time. The attraction of 'passion and mystery' ('Chivalry' 186) persisted within the locus of the Scottish Enlightenment and in the works of Scott and Hogg the links between the supernatural and established religion (whether Roman Catholicism or Protestantism) are presented as intertwined.

In *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848*, Eric Hobsbawm suggested that the essential attraction of the Middle Ages lies in its representation of an ideal: that of the lost harmony of man. In his view, medieval romance, whether poetry or fiction, charms the advocate of reactionary politics with an idealised depiction of how

the stable ordered society of feudal age, the slow organic product of the ages, coloured with heraldry, surrounded by the shadowy mystery of fairy tale forests and canopied by the unquestioned Christian heavens was the obvious lost paradise.<sup>8</sup>

While Hobsbawm may not have had the Scottish Highlands in mind, his imagery does not entirely exclude some suggestion of those remote mountains. The persistence of hierarchical clans, some with a history of Roman Catholicism, and their occupation, though not possession, of large tracts of underdeveloped land meant that there were clear associations between the primitive Highlands and medieval England. Though recognising the constrictions of this ideal, Scott and Hogg were in agreement about its attractions and set out to recover something of it. I suggest that both Scott and Hogg undertook to update medieval romance quite deliberately within the modern genre of the novel.

#### **4.2 *Ivanhoe*, 1820**

Scott's novel begins with a dedicatory epistle to the Rev. Dr Dryasdust, F.A.S. by Laurence Templeton. Jonas Dryasdust is representative of an England where 'civilisation has been so long complete, that the ideas of our ancestors are only

to be gleaned from musty records and chronicles.’<sup>9</sup> These records are incomplete, however, and so old that the antiquarian Dryasdust is unable to construct a national history from them. In contrast, Templeton suggests to Dryasdust that ‘the Scottish magician, you said, was like Lucan’s witch, at liberty to walk over the recent field of battle, and to select for the subject of resuscitation by his sorceries, a body whose limbs had recently quivered with existence, and whose throat had but just uttered the last note of agony’ (*Ivanhoe* 7).

This reference to ‘the Scottish magician’ by Templeton alludes to the composition and publication of *Waverley* and the supposed character of its anonymous author in terms that are particularly perplexing. Lucan’s witch, Erichtho, of the *Pharsalia*, was associated with collecting body parts from battle-fields and reviving corpses with black magic. That Scott could describe the ‘Author of *Waverley*’ in these terms as an appalling sorcerer, even through the layers of pretended disguise, aligns him more closely with the supernatural than might be expected. Templeton suggests that the difficulties of distinguishing truth from fiction are greater than expected. He considers how English readers are at a disadvantage when it comes to the Highlands of Scotland, given that the typical reader

had either never seen those remote districts at all, or he had wandered through those desolate regions in the course of a summer-tour, eating bad dinners, sleeping on truckle beds, stalking from desolation to desolation, and fully prepared to believe the strangest things that could be told him of a people wild and extravagant enough to be attached to scenery so extraordinary. (*Ivanhoe* 7)

On the one hand this appears to be an ironic summary of the many and various accounts of tours in the Highlands, such as Hogg’s for example, published for the imaginative reader to experience the ardours of travel in such remote areas. On the other, such reports of the manners and customs of Highland districts would be as genuinely remote to contemporary English readers as the medieval struggles in *Ivanhoe*.

The novel opens with the description of an England at the mercy of powerful feuding lords and in daily expectation of the ‘national convulsions’ (*Ivanhoe* 16) or

civil war that seemed inevitable in Richard's absence. Scott's emphasis is on the tyranny of the conquering Normans towards the vanquished Saxons and the lack of social cohesion as a result. It is not difficult to see some references to the position enjoyed by Scotland under English rule. Scott, in describing the clothing worn by Gurth remarks that his sandals 'left the knees bare, like those of a Scottish Highlander' (*Ivanhoe* 18) and his attitude is characterised as one in which 'there slumbered under the appearance of sullen despondency a sense of oppression, and a disposition to resistance' (*Ivanhoe* 20). The Saxon inhabitants of England have been subjugated by a stronger nation without surrendering completely. This mixture of repression and resistance is represented in the novel's setting. The unstable physical and psychological condition of the Saxon peasantry is echoed in their surroundings. Gurth and Wamba are introduced within a landscape in which

a considerable open space, in the midst of this glade, seemed formerly to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical superstition; for, on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of rough unhewn stones, of large dimensions. (*Ivanhoe* 17-18)

Significantly, the structure of the stone monument has begun to disintegrate. Several have been pulled down to lie on the ground and Wamba is sitting on one of these fallen monumental stones. The stone circle has clearly survived complete destruction because 'seven stood upright' (*Ivanhoe* 18), but there has been progressive and disruptive change. However, the persistence of these remnants of an earlier society indicates that certain religious customs survive. Druidical 'rites', though acknowledged here as superstition, are still part of the structure and inheritance of a Saxon society struggling to maintain its existence even if the connection appears to be between the lowest members of a social order and an anachronistic religious system based on superstition. Events of the novel will show that Gurth and Wamba persist doggedly and eventually deserve their recognition as loyal and faithful protagonists, fighting to preserve the lives of Cedric and Ivanhoe in spite of their condition as bondsmen, serf and thrall. However unrealistic this outcome might appear at the outset, the fantastical nature of the narrative is maintained by the arrival of the Prior Aymer and the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert who are announced as

possible visitors 'from Fairy-land with a message from King Oberon' (*Ivanhoe* 22). This image immediately suggests that there is a relationship between the Prior and the Templar to an other-worldly tradition of Christianity linked to the supernatural and entirely remote from the Protestant or Presbyterian experience. The attendants of Bois-Guilbert are described as 'wild and outlandish' (*Ivanhoe* 25) with 'dark visages, white turbans, and the oriental form of their garments' (*Ivanhoe* 25). Their appearance suggests that the older Druidical rites have been replaced by a different type of sorcery which is nonetheless accepted as the established religion (Christianity) with acolytes determined on conversion of the heathen, whether Jew or Muslim.

The novel will continue from this unsettling point to examine the themes of order and disorder in the case of an absentee monarch and Scott's suggestion appears to be that a viable alternative to popular emancipation, or Reform bills, existed in the state of benevolent monarchical rule. The character of Richard, however, is presented as one of chivalric excellence but lacking in practical politics. Criticism of the Crusades is strongly apparent when Cedric condemns the 'tales which dissolve crusaders, or hypocritical pilgrims, bring from that fatal land!' (*Ivanhoe* 39). These tales distract and cripple the next generation of nobles. Cedric refuses to acknowledge his disinherited son and classes him as one 'among the millions that ever shaped the cross on their shoulder, rushed into excess and blood-guiltiness, and called it an accomplishment of the will of God' (*Ivanhoe* 39). Richard's reappearance is central to any particular examination of Scott's attitude to chivalry and the medieval period. The final vignette of Richard is blunt:

In the lion-hearted King, the brilliant, but useless character, of a knight of romance, was in great measure realized ... his reign was like the course of a brilliant and rapid meteor ... shedding around an unnecessary and portentous light, which is instantly swallowed up by universal darkness; his feats of chivalry furnishing themes for bards and minstrels, but affording none of those solid benefits to his country on which history loves to pause and hold up as an example to posterity. (*Ivanhoe* 365)

That the epitome of chivalry should be designated as the ‘brilliant, but useless character, of a knight of romance’ indicates that Scott recognised the limitations of Kings moulded in the chivalric fantasies of medieval England. This critique of an English national hero is given added piquancy by its inclusion of Richard’s other qualities – good humour, tolerance and equanimity – which might otherwise have contributed to the shaping of good governance based on ‘a course of policy and wisdom’ (*Ivanhoe* 365).

Instead, *Ivanhoe* includes two very unlikely heroes, Gurth and Wamba, seemingly powerless to change or influence events in any real way except in serving their natural masters. In some ways their social condition and experience resembles that of the Jews, Isaac and Rebecca of York, who are equally subject to dangerously unpredictable and frequently lawless behaviour whether perpetrated by their noble patrons or by Robin Hood and followers. The Jews were nominally free to travel throughout England. However, their unprotected condition might be compared with the history of certain Highland clans such as the MacGregors who found themselves dispossessed even of their name.<sup>10</sup>

Further connections between religion (specifically Roman Catholicism) and the Saxons occur in their relationship to the supernatural. The appearance of a black dog before Cedric’s party outside the monastery of St. Withhold is greeted with fear. Scott describes this incident as being ‘somewhat alarming to the Saxons, who, of all people of Europe, were most addicted to a superstitious observance of omens, and to whose opinions can be traced most of those notions upon such subjects, still to be found among our popular antiquities’ (*Ivanhoe* 154). The black dog turns out to be Gurth’s Fang and it suffers injury at Cedric’s hands before escaping but not before recalling for the reader an earlier swarthy and aggressive figure associated with supernatural otherness. Previously, Scott had characterised Bois-Guilbert and his attendants as threatening by nature of their appearance and their Eastern dress. His face was of ‘Negro blackness’ with ‘keen, piercing, dark eyes’ together with ‘a deep scar on his brow ... and a sinister expression’ (*Ivanhoe* 24).

Rebecca is also darkly beautiful in contrast to the fair Saxon Rowena and possessed of as much spirit and obstinacy as Bois-Gilbert. At one point, Bois-Gilbert is astounded to recognise the similarity between them when he exclaims ‘Rebecca!

she who could prefer death to dishonour, must have a proud and a powerful soul. Mine thou must be!' (*Ivanhoe* 201). However it is Rebecca who refutes any idea of a connection between them and most clearly states the crucial differences between them. She accuses Bois-Guilbert of reading Scripture incorrectly in order to excuse or even justify evil. 'If thou readest the Scripture, said the Jewess, and the lives of the saints, only to justify thine own license and profligacy, thy crime is like that of him who extracts poison from the most healthful and necessary herbs' (*Ivanhoe* 198). Her accusation points up the wilful human tendency to misread religious texts such as the Bible in order to justify unlawful behaviour. Interestingly, Scott comments on literacy and the nobility. Neither Front-de-Bœuf nor De Bracy can read and one of the subtlest components of *Ivanhoe* is the contrast between the lettered and unlettered characters. Where Jews are acknowledged as possessing abundant language skills necessary to trade as well as the materials for writing to each other for assistance, crusaders such as De Bracy or Front-de-Bœuf are contemptuous of literacy and foreign languages.<sup>11</sup> They rely on others to interpret letters such as the challenge sent to them by Gurth, Wamba, Locksley and *Le Noir Faineant*, otherwise Richard.

While Bois-Gilbert, in his character of priest, is equipped to read out the challenge, De Bracy is unable to match him. 'It may be magic spells for aught I know, said De Bracy, who possessed his full proportion of the ignorance which characterized the chivalry of the period' (*Ivanhoe* 203). De Bracy extends the association between forbidden knowledge and literacy and Scott appears to add to his denunciation of the weaknesses of the ideal of chivalry among the nobility. The eventual failure of the rebellious plans of Front-de-Bœuf, De Bracy and Bois-Guilbert is brought about by their limited political strategies as well as reliance on brute force. The dangers of civil warfare are actively limited by the loyalties of Cedric's faithful servants and the outlaws of Robin Hood.

Written challenges such as these are not the only examples of authoritative resistance to Norman exploitation. The forgotten Saxon noble Ulrica is described as a witch and she reappears to Front-de-Bœuf as 'the voice of one of those demons, who, as the superstition of the times believed, beset the beds of dying men to distract their thoughts, and turn them from the meditations and duties which concerned their eternal welfare' (*Ivanhoe* 254-55). She acts as a vocal demon, taunting Front-de-

Bœuf whose death is accompanied by fiendish laughter and his ‘curses on himself, on mankind, and on Heaven itself’ (*Ivanhoe* 258). Her own death follows that of Front-de-Bœuf, and she resembles ‘one of the ancient Furies . . . one of the Fatal Sisters who spin and abridge the thread of human life’ (*Ivanhoe* 269). She becomes part of a supernatural collegiate of part human and part demon ancestry, setting fire to the castle as if anticipating the reported fires of Hell itself.

By contrast, Rebecca is the healer and white witch to the black witch Ulrica. Ulrica dies by fire, her body presumably charred to actual blackness, and her death prefigures the punishment that the Grand Master would impose on Rebecca. Notably, Rebecca accuses Bois-Guilbert of deliberate mis-interpretation or wilful mis-reading of scripture and compares him to a herbalist who would use otherwise healing herbs to injure or kill. Rebecca’s sensitivity to this possibility is doubly keen because her own character and existence are threatened by suspicion of her medicinal art as witchcraft and occult practice. The basis of her trial by the Grand Master of the Templars is that she has physically bewitched Bois-Guilbert and that ‘the noble knight was possessed by some evil demon, or influenced by some wicked spell’ (*Ivanhoe* 321). She has also treated the sick with medicines derived from the medical knowledge and training obtained from Miriam, her fellow Jewish mentor. The Hebrew characters on the salve given to Higg, son of Snell, are taken as cabbalistic characters, and ‘sure proof that the devil had stood apothecary’ (*Ivanhoe* 325).

While *Ivanhoe* and Rowena are clearly intended as the heroic characters, readers have been continually fascinated by the struggle between Rebecca and Bois-Guilbert for supremacy. Both characters possess something of superhuman power whether it is Rebecca’s uncanny ability to heal wounds or Bois-Guilbert’s apparent invincibility on the battlefield. Bois-Guilbert is a model of obsessive ambition, yet dies without the sacrament of confession, and having failed to win. During the trial of Rebecca, Bois-Guilbert actually appears unable to speak in his own defence. This involuntary dumbness is ascribed to the influence of the devil. The Grand Master, Beaumanoir, suggests that Bois-Guilbert is possessed and that ‘this is indeed testimony - the victim of her witcheries can only name the fatal scroll, which is, doubtless, the cause of his silence’ (*Ivanhoe* 329).

The inability to communicate with others, or refusal to do so, is particularly associated with the Norman occupiers. Isaac and Rebecca, however, can speak several languages. In line with his treatment of chivalry, Scott's depiction of Isaac is highly complex, offering criticism of both Jewish financial practices as well as those who would persecute them. Both Isaac and Rebecca are creatures of exile and persecuted on account of their religious beliefs. Scott, however, draws no parallel between their plight and that of the later Covenanter rebels.

*Ivanhoe* marks a significant point of departure for Scott, and in his 'Essay on the Text' in the Edinburgh edition of the novel, published in 1998, Graham Tulloch has suggested that 'it was a work that he had been preparing himself to write for years by his reading and research' (*Ivanhoe* 404). Scott's longstanding interest in the Middle Ages as well as his thoughts, reservations and doubts on the subjects of chivalry and national union between Scotland and England would emerge as unexpectedly topical fiction for a reading public more accustomed to associate the author with tales of Scotland than with English folktales and now caught up in some particularly stormy political change. In future, the majority of Scott's writing would be set in earlier history, often specifically before 1660 (the restoration of Charles Stuart to the thrones of England and Scotland) and no longer concentrated solely on Scotland or Scottish history.<sup>12</sup>

This delimiting of his *oeuvre* would meet some critical incomprehension and dismay. The anonymous reviewer who complained in 1820 about the novel's lack of authenticity and accuracy on historical grounds would easily appreciate the difficulties experienced by readers almost two hundred years later. The *Eclectic Review* warned that when 'the antiquary is at fault, the pseudo-historian is detected in his forgeries; every incongruity in the narrative, operates as an impeachment of his testimony ... no other impression is left on the mind, than that of a pageant or a masquerade' (Hayden 190). Later scholars, such as Ian Duncan are inclined to agree, considering that 'the historical dissertations and costume descriptions, the pastiche dialogue ... and facetious banter, all no doubt bore the juvenile reader now.'<sup>13</sup>

This concern with historical accuracy in *Ivanhoe*'s representation of the medieval ages was clearly not shared by Scott himself. While the novelist was certainly drawing on his own extensive acquaintance of the literature of the middle

ages, his emphasis was not on any simple reproduction of the fiction familiar from his early reading of romances. Scott's concern was vested in the vanishing elements of Scottish social order, whether reconstructed through antiquarian authority or other plausible evidence such as some supernatural event, whether spectral or future foretold.

Scott's personal religious tolerance was at odds with some of the reviews that he received at this time. While readers greeted *Ivanhoe* with enthusiasm, reviewers were growing particularly unhappy with the supernatural motifs and *The Monastery* would subsequently incur substantial criticism for its implausible White Lady of Avenel and particularly her associations with the reformed Church. One critic stated that 'there is something repugnant to our feelings in making a fairy, or phantom, whichever the Maid of Avenel may be designated, the guardian of the Bible, and we think it neither complimentary to the holy book itself, nor tending to preserve its sanctity in the eyes of the reader.'<sup>14</sup>

Though Scott devotees eagerly anticipated publication of *The Monastery*, it failed to arrest their attention in quite the same way as earlier novels such as *Waverley* or *Guy Mannering*. One contemporary reviewer suggested that the introductory epistle was 'too long ... young ladies will undoubtedly skip over most of those tedious pages' and thereby read only for pleasure rather than instruction.<sup>15</sup> This particular impediment, together with the specifically supernatural subject matter of the novel that Scott does not explain in rational terms, ensured the prickly reception of *The Monastery*.

*Ivanhoe* was immediately successful on publication and yet in his introduction to the Oxford edition of *Ivanhoe*, Ian Duncan charts the remarkable decline of Scott and the *Waverley* novels, commenting that 'the most popular novel of one of the best loved of British authors ... has come to represent the decay of an unfashionable literary monument' (*Ivanhoe* viii). In his treatment of crumbling ruins falling from attention, whether religious or architectural, in *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery*, Scott is recalling past splendours in both novels, seeking particularly to preserve notice of them through his own work.

Critical assessment of Scott and his representation of the Middle Ages has been generally foregrounded against discussion of his political allegiances and

beliefs. He has been supposed to have been an advocate of the medieval period as one of settled prosperity, social order and chivalric virtue. In “Scott, the Romantic Past and the Nineteenth Century”, Peter Garside has suggested that while there is evidence that Scott’s work did contribute to an idealized picture of early Britain this view is too simplistic and ignores Scott’s many criticisms of medieval barbarity, tyranny and superstition.<sup>16</sup>

#### **4.3 *The Monastery*, 1820**

The action of *The Monastery* is set close to the beginning of the Scottish Reformation in 1559. There are frequent references to the history and politics of the minority reign of Mary, 1542-1560, and the struggles between different Scottish factions anxious to secure support from either Catholic France or the Protestant English Crown. *The Monastery* begins with an exchange of letters between Captain Clutterbuck and ‘The Author of “Waverley”’ about some memoirs of the sixteenth century ‘compiled from authentic materials of that period’ by a Benedictine monk.<sup>17</sup> The contemporary reader is reminded that the romance of *Ivanhoe* was purportedly discovered in an Anglo-Norman manuscript preserved by Sir Arthur Wardour, the antiquary, and then subsequently published by Laurence Templeton. The final volume of *The Monastery* returns the reader to this fictional strategy and actually includes references to the historical inaccuracies of Templeton’s *Ivanhoe* with candid advice to the supposed author to ‘never tell more lies than are indispensably necessary’ (*Monastery* 354). In this way, Scott appears to be attempting to establish an authenticity for his narrative that depends on the authority of the recovered text and acknowledging the difficulties of constructing a truly accurate record.

Scott chooses to present a thoroughly supernatural tale using the framework of the recovered manuscript of a Benedictine monk. His library at Abbotsford contained a number of works that may also have influenced this novel. In his brief account of ‘Demonology in the library of Abbotsford’ J. M. Pinkerton suggests that Scott’s especial interest was in the ‘changing beliefs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the movement from credulous medieval thought to rational investigation of verifiable fact.’<sup>18</sup> Scott’s significant interest in pursuing evidence for the supernatural can be seen in his substantial collection of material. Thus, Pinkerton notes that the

library at Abbotsford held around 245 titles on *diablerie* dating from 1477 to 1832 and that Scott ‘appears to have been interested in political uses of accusations of sorcery, particularly in France in the later sixteenth century’ (‘Demonology’ 314). *The Monastery* does not employ such ideas overtly but it is significant that Scott’s dating of his novel to this historical period allows him to include the many appearances of the spectre of the White Lady as unexceptional occurrences of the period and even natural events. Abbotsford library held works such as *La Superstition du Temps reconnuë aux Talismans, figures Astrales, et Statues fatales* by François Placet, 1668. This work discussed the appearances of such spectres as part of contemporary superstition, and a novel set within the late sixteenth century might be expected to include such figures, whether talisman, Astral image or fatal effigy.

While the Church of Rome might have been roundly associated with superstition and corruption in 1820 and earlier, Scott connects his supernatural tale with the reformed religion instead. This is an unexpected development in an author now associated with scepticism of the supernatural rather than belief in such ideas. The novel opens with a brief historical description of the village of Kennaquhair<sup>19</sup> and the monastery of Saint Mary, before describing the situation more fully. There is a secluded glen nearby which appears to be haunted. The narrator states that ‘as our Glendearg did not abound in mortal visitants, superstition, that it might not be absolutely destitute of inhabitants, had peopled its recesses with beings belonging to another world’ (*Monastery* 37). Instances of the unexplained supernatural abound in *The Monastery*. The novel, despite its late medieval setting, refutes the idea of supernatural belief as something confined only to heated imagination or medical delirium. Scott appears less the sceptical antiquarian collecting examples of folk beliefs in order to provide scholarly interest than actual supporter. He describes ‘the savage and capricious Brown Man of the Moors’ (*Monastery* 37) in terms that recall Hogg’s *Brownie of Bodsbeck*. However, the difference is that Hogg provides a plausible explanation for his Brownie while Scott persists in describing ‘mysterious terror’ linked to ‘the Scottish Fairies ... a whimsical, irritable, and mischievous tribe ... frequently adverse to mortals’ (*Monastery* 37) as they were reputed to be.

The first appearance of the White Lady occurs before the six year old Mary of Avenel. It is Hallowe'en (31st October) and the Avenel family, and retainers, are in danger from English raiders. Their flight takes them through perilous boggy ground and they are rescued by a 'beautiful lady and her signals' (*Monastery* 47).<sup>20</sup> The reader learns that Mary had been born on Hallowe'en and that she has other visions. Some years later, she sees the ghost of her father, 'or something waur, in his likeness' (*Monastery* 53) in the Tower of Glendearg. These visions are associated with a mysterious book of the widowed Lady of Avenel. Dame Glendinning observes that 'it's nae wonder that her bairn sees bogles if she is aye reading on that thick black book wi' the silver clasps' (*Monastery* 55). The black book is discovered to be the Bible 'rendered into the vulgar tongue, and therefore, by the order of the Holy Catholic Church, unfit to be in the hands of any lay person' (*Monastery* 60). The Sacristan is emphatic that 'the Word - the mere Word slayeth' (*Monastery* 61) as he removes the book from Glendearg.

This emphasis on the necessary availability of the Bible is in line with Protestant teaching. It is notable, however, that it is associated rather with the nobility of the Lady of Avenel and her daughter rather than Elspet Glendinning, widow of a minor Laird. The Sacristan, Father Philip, reinforces this differentiation between social classes in his rebuff to Elspet's wish to read Holy Scripture.

The Sacristan's efforts to return the Bible to his monastery are comically thwarted by a mysterious maiden who retrieves the black book and vanishes. Following the disappearance of the book, Father Eustace and the Abbot discuss the possibility of the book being 'as it is, a heretical translation, [and] it is our thought that Satan may have power over it' (*Monastery* 76). This response links the unexplained supernatural (the White Lady) with the spiritual beliefs of Christianity. Father Eustace's attempts to return the book again to the Monastery also end in failure. He is rescued by the mysterious and angelic 'woman in white' (*Monastery* 99) who prevents his murder by Christie of the Clinthill.

Scott's tradition of the White Lady was drawn from several sources. Coleman Parsons suggests that Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine*, 1811, is 'the direct inspiration' for the White Lady (*Witchcraft* 159). However, Scott may equally have been aware of Paracelsus's treatise on elemental spirits *Liber de nymphis*,

*sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris et de caeteris spiritibus*, 1566, although it does not appear in the Abbotsford catalogue. The White Lady is both nymph and sylph, living in the elements of air, water and woodland.

One possible reason for Scott's emphasis on the historical nature of the supernatural throughout *The Monastery* is contained within the introductory epistle that discusses the production of history from the point of view of Captain Clutterbuck, self-appointed local historian of the ruined abbey. Clutterbuck decries the efforts and 'authority' of the Deputy Registrar of Scotland. He is 'a gentleman whose indefatigable research into the national records is like to destroy my trade, and that of all such local antiquaries, by substituting truth instead of legend and romance' (*Monastery* 11). Written records will erase 'legend and romance' even as the architectural evidence associated with druids, or castles haunted by spectres crumble into ruin. To prevent this, it is necessary to construct or replicate within this novel something of those beliefs in the supernatural that previously existed. Scott chooses to do this with *The Monastery*, though with significantly limited critical success partly because he associates the supernatural with the reformed Protestant religion rather than wholly with Roman Catholicism as might have been expected.

Clutterbuck laments the inevitable transformations of historical 'fact', pointing out 'that which was history yesterday becomes fable to-day, and the truth of to-day is hatched into a lie by to-morrow' (*Monastery* 11). The question of what 'truth' really is occurs towards the end of *The Monastery* where there is an important exchange between Abbot Eustace and the evangelical Protestant preacher Henry Warden before the arrival of the Earl of Moray's party. The two men argue over which religion is the 'true' one and the Abbot describes the destruction he may expect from Warden's 'demented and accursed sect' (*Monastery* 339). He accuses Warden of wishing 'to see the besom of destruction sweep away the pride of old religion - to deface our shrines - to mutilate and lay waste the bodies of our benefactors, as well as their sepulchres - to destroy the pinnacles and carved work of God's house, and Our Lady's' (*Monastery* 339). There is an echo here of the ruined fragments of druidism in *Ivanhoe* and the wrecking of Scottish Catholic churches by John Knox and his supporters.

The mention of Mary, Our Lady of the Sorrows, carries a compressed reference to Mary of Avenel and her ancestral spirit, the White Lady. The newly Protestant Mary of Avenel, converted to the reformed religion by the black book guarded by the White Lady, becomes part of the renewal of faith and religion itself, albeit an extremely violent renewal. The White Lady will appear to fade with the restoration of the rightful heir to Avenel though Scott hints that this is not certain.

That renewal may not be solely spiritual is suggested by Warden's defence of his party to the Abbot. While he would remove 'objects of foul idolatry' and blames 'bloody persecution' for the destruction of monasteries and churches, nonetheless he states that 'against such wanton destruction I lift my testimony' (*Monastery* 339). Warden is clearly intended as a spiritual role-model for the new religion especially in his understanding of the importance of testimony rather than relics. While great stress is laid on individual witnessing to the power of God's greatness, by evangelical preachers and their congregations, Scott's understanding of the limitations of such democratic freedom is embedded in the text from its first pages. The introductory epistle contains tantalising references to supernatural totems: the existence of the heart of an upright man preserved as a relic; Michael Scott's lamp and the book of magic power; as well as Agrippa's cabalistic manuscripts. The French Revolution is also mentioned in this context, presumably as another example of the destructive capabilities of autonomous power.

These items underpin Scott's extravagant combination of religion and superstition in the White Lady of Avenel, though his description of her appearance to Halbert Glendinning suggests that later medical discoveries can conjure similar spectres:

The eyes seemed to contract and become more fiery, and slight convulsions passed over the face, as if it was about to be transformed into something hideous. The whole appearance resembled those faces which the imagination summons up when it is disturbed by laudanum. (*Monastery* 166)

*The Monastery* appears to be Scott's attempt to investigate the supernatural elements within religion and therefore requires no rational explanation in much the same way

that medieval Christians expected miracles or other manifestations of spiritual existence as tokens of reward for faith in God. However, publishing this novel in 1820 exposed Scott instead to the wrath of reviewers and placed him unexpectedly alongside Hogg in experiencing scorn and disavowal. Offending those readers who were either Anglican or Protestant was unlikely to have been Scott's intention. It is more probable that his library at Abbotsford and his substantial collection of demonology material had supplied inspiration for *The Monastery*.

#### **4.4 *The Three Perils of Man, 1822***

Following publication of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck; and Other Tales*, Hogg's literary career had expanded though success remained tenuous. In the *Brownie*, he had suggested that occurrences of the supernatural might sometimes be rather more human in origin than expected. He highlights the natural isolation from the wider world commonly experienced by the Scottish peasant farmer as reason to expect instances of the supernatural rather than claiming actual proof of the existence of ghosts. His ingenious explanation therefore linked the appearances of the hunted Covenanters in the Borders to the widely accepted myth of the existence of brownies. This stance follows the Enlightenment view of the rational explanation of supernatural beliefs. However, Hogg later complicates this position by writing of other instances of the existence of the supernatural in the *Three Perils of Man* without finding it necessary to offer any similar explanation. Indeed, he includes scenes of such startling supernatural power that the original chivalric tale of Margaret and Douglas is almost forgotten.

Hogg's literary efforts were always caught up with his other commitments and he was accustomed to work on several projects at once. Publishers were sometimes reluctant to issue his work immediately and this led him to begin new work as well as revise older manuscripts while waiting. Thus, while completing the *Brownie*, he had begun work on the *Jacobite Relics of Scotland* and the *Winter Evening Tales* as well as a revised edition of the *Mountain Bard*. Two volumes of the *Jacobite Relics* had been published by February 1821 and were intended as a definitive collection of songs celebrating part of the rebellious history of Scotland.

His Border Romance had been first mentioned in a letter to William Blackwood dated November 1819 in which Hogg wrote that he planned ‘a romance in two volumes this spring coming, anonymously.’<sup>21</sup> It was originally titled ‘The Perilous Castles’, with reference to the siege of Roxburgh Castle and the adventures of Sir Michael Scott, the daemonic wizard of Aikwood Tower. The novel would have a Scottish rather than an English setting, unlike Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, though no description of Borders history could be complete without some reference to skirmishes between Scots and English marauding parties. However, the novel was not completed until 1821 and Hogg suffered serious disappointment when Oliver and Boyd declined to publish it, citing its inferiority to that of ‘the romances of the author of Waverly’ [*sic*] as one of the reasons.<sup>22</sup> Hogg was rescued by Longmans who eventually agreed to publish it in 1822. In contrast, by 1822, Scott had published both *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery* in rapid succession.

The reluctance of Hogg’s publishers to issue his work, thereby compounding his financial difficulties, may have been partly caused by the loose structure of his latest novel. Midway through the *Three Perils*, Tam Craik jumps in to condemn Charlie Scott’s rambling tale:

“It is nae worth the name of a story that,” said Tam Craik; “for, in the first place, it is a lang story; in the second place, it is a confused story; and, in the third place, it ends ower abruptly, and rather looks like half a dozen o’ stories linkit to ane anither’s tails.”<sup>23</sup>

Hogg appears to be defending his narrative by incorporating and defusing some of the possible criticism of his unconventional novel. Tam Craik’s opinion is formed as much by self-interest and fear as by literary sensitivity in this verdict on Charlie Scott’s history in which the latter describes his reaction to visions of the bereaved white lady of Ravensworth.

The other problem for cautious publishers would have been the extensive and unsettling supernatural content, which bore a decided resemblance to discredited modes of narrative such as the gothic. Though *The Three Perils of Man* begins with seeming historical authority almost in homage to Scott’s technique, the initial story of conventional chivalric adventure, recognisable from many medieval narratives

such as the *Morte D'Arthur* or *Sir Tristrem*, becomes almost entirely subsumed within the tale of Michael Scott and his supernatural powers. The extraordinary battles between the warlock and Friar overwhelm the reader with a vivid urgency and immediacy in Hogg's story-telling which is less apparent in his treatment of the struggles of Douglas.

Hogg creates a complex representation of the supernatural powers of Sir Michael Scott by including instances of 'modern' magic from the Friar such as his display of moving pictures (phantasmagoria) on the magic lantern as well as the tricks of optical illusion intended to convince everyone that the mountain of Cope-Law has been divided into three sections.<sup>24</sup> Most contemporary readers of the novel would have understood the 'magic' behind the Friar's powers as something within human practice and may even have already experienced something similar themselves. By linking modern and ancient 'magic' Hogg is suggesting that the nineteenth-century reader is not beyond a reciprocal understanding, if not immediate experience, of Michael Scott's powers, familiar to Borders inhabitants of the fourteenth-century. This association between Scott's daemonic powers of deception and the Friar's humbler human powers of 'magical' transformation marks out Hogg as an author seeking not simply to retell ghost stories and superstitious folk-lore of the Borders, but instead as someone aware of the possibility that human experience of the supernatural was potentially verifiable and on a more significant scale than that of simply being related to 'the far-famed Will o' Phaup', the last man to have spoken with the fairies.<sup>25</sup>

This interpretation of the supernatural world of Michael Scott was certainly challenging to reluctant publishers burdened with the length, confusion and abrupt ending of Hogg's various separate tales, all rather loosely connected, and too different from the standard set by the 'Author of "Waverley."' The novel was moderately successful and attracted attentive, if mixed, reviews. Interestingly, Hogg's inclusion of his own version of the White Lady of Avenel did not attract as much derision as *The Monastery* had. As previously indicated, the tale of Charlie Scott includes an appearance of the ghost of the Lady Ravensworth (*Perils* 242-45). Reviewers either missed the similarity of her appearance or accepted her presence in the narrative without complaint given the extravagance of Hogg's depiction of Sir

Michael Scott. Criticism was focused rather on the quantity of Scots dialect in the novel, with one reviewer confessing ‘that we are almost wearied out with Scotch novels; [with] phrases so entirely strange to a mere English reader, that a glossary seems absolutely requisite to enable us to understand them.’<sup>26</sup>

In comparison with *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery*, *The Three Perils of Man* appears to be arguing for a specifically Scottish viewpoint on medieval history that incorporates the supernatural as a credible and flexible defence against the usurpation of power. Where Scott could claim to have established an authoritative understanding of the medieval period through his own wide reading and antiquarian researches, and therefore undertook to recreate it within the framework of the novel, Hogg displays an imaginative felicity with similar material and sets out his own interpretation, while claiming equal validity of approach.

The first chapter repeats and then interprets Thomas the Rhymer’s prophecy of the Hart and the Deer which was of especial interest to the house of Sir Ringan Redhough, originally denominated in the novel as ‘Sir Walter Scott of Rankleburn’, as the ancestor of the Dukes of Buccleuch and namesake of Scott himself. That Hogg was later forced to substitute ‘Redhough’ for ‘Scott’ even as the novel’s proof-sheets were in his hands indicates the difficulties of an author often awkwardly dependent on influential patrons, and without the ready approbation of publishers, judging all such work by the standards of the ‘Author of “Waverley”’ as George Boyd had done.

Nonetheless, Hogg is claiming an authority for his novel based both on antiquarian knowledge and familiar folklore. It all turns on what may be admitted as evidence. Before the introduction of the Rhymer, who intervenes to predict the outcome of the novel, Hogg offers an historical survey of the Stuart rulers, warrior kings of Scotland and the conventions of Scottish chivalry. ‘In court and camp, feats of arms were the topic of conversation, and the only die that stamped the character of a man of renown, either with the fair, the monarch, or the chiefs of the land’ (*Perils* 1). It is an uncompromising statement of the importance of controlled warfare to the maintenance and preservation of Scottish society as well as national pride and also appears to align his work neatly with the historical emphasis of the Waverley novels.

However, the novel will not depict ‘history’ as such but instead provide an imaginative sweep of the effects of such chivalry on the different sections of Borders

society. The involvement of a host of active female characters in a tale of warfare involves a reassessment of the generally passive role played by conventionally chivalric heroines, such as Rowena in *Ivanhoe*, for example, and allows Hogg to undercut the reader's expectations of medieval romance. The introduction of multiple minor characters also allows Hogg to depict the extensive and often senseless violence meted out to those followers of 'the chiefs of the land.' When Sir Ringan Redhough objects to the Douglas's call for support, he sums up the likely fate that awaits them. 'What, man, are a' my brave lads to lie in bloody claes that the Douglas may lie i' snaw-white sheets wi' a bonny bedfellow?' (*Perils* 6). More evidence of the unpredictable violence suffered by followers, whether English or Scottish, is provided by the hanging of Edmund Heaton, accused of treachery. He protests angrily, 'Hang'd? I hang'd? and fogh whot? Domn your abswoghdtity! Hang ane mon fogh deying whot his meastegh beeds him?' (*Perils* 51)

While chivalry might be understood as the preserve of nobility, clearly its effects are not limited to this narrow social class. Hogg even extends its sphere of influence to children battling one another on their local village green. Children will feature again in the *Three Perils of Man* as lost heirs, mysteriously associated with fairyland before returning to claim their birthright. The young minstrel Colley Carol is discovered to be the heir to the castle of Ravensworth through his possession of the 'mark of the spur of Ravensworth' and Charlie Scott describes the child as having had 'a ghaist for its guardian, and a witch for its nurse' (*Perils* 251) though ghost and witch both protected the child from harm.<sup>27</sup>

In keeping with his attempt to establish an authoritative context for the supernatural marvels of the *Three Perils of Man*, Hogg's literary strategy involves the use of a narrator and editor. He suggests that this tale was originally given to him by old Isaac, the curate, perhaps in response to Scott's practice of including amateur historians such as Captain Clutterbuck familiar from *The Monastery*. An editor and multiple narrators will reappear later in the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and be more directly involved in the construction of that tale. However, in the *Three Perils*, Hogg's Isaac is soon forgotten, overtaken by other narrators including Hogg himself who reminds the reader of the difficulties faced by 'the writer of a true history such as this' (*Perils* 158).

Another connection between the *Three Perils* and the *Private Memoirs* is evident in the role of books and letters as means of communication. While these might be assumed to be the primary sources for Hogg's novel, it is made plain that they must share this distinction with oral and visual material. When Sir Ringan meets the 'auld carle' who mentions the prophecy of the Hart and the Deer which has been 'recorded in the book of fate', the warlock also explains to Redhough that it is his 'visions of the night' which confirm the truth of the prophecy and that he has 'seen it in the stars of heaven' (*Perils* 7).

Further instances of the difficulty of relying on written documents alone occur when the Lady Jane Howard appears in disguise but seemingly protected by 'a safe-conduct to the Scottish Court, signed by all the wardens of the marches, and every knight, yeoman, and vassal is obliged to give me furtherance' (*Perils* 24). These do not protect her. After discovery of her secret by Princess Margaret, Lady Jane Howard is delivered as a captive to Douglas. Margaret warns Douglas that the capture of Howard must be presented as 'a miracle, [achieved] by witchcraft, or by the power of a mighty magician' (*Perils* 41). Hogg, as narrator, suggests that witchcraft or magic can be associated with human ingenuity.

Finally, it is notable that the duel between the Friar and Sir Michael Scott is best characterised by their different books. Their respective abilities and allegiances are compared through the magic contained within these books. The Friar's 'auld-fashioned beuk' has nearly caused him to be hanged but the book turns out to be 'a small gilded copy of the Four Evangelists' (*Perils* 122, 140). Hogg balances the pious religious references with the daemonic spells practised by Michael Scott, while hinting that the Friar is actually Sir Roger Bacon. Interestingly, the Friar's mysterious powers have caused him to be suspected of necromancy and Scott clearly regards him as a worthy opponent. The eventual overthrow of Scott is achieved not by the Friar but by his falling to the earth from a dragon's clutches. He is buried with his book – 'the book of fate' - and his staff (*Perils* 462).<sup>28</sup> Hogg describes 'these dangerous relics' (*Perils* 463) as being laid to rest with the broken body in Melrose Abbey, recalling the events of Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and aligning one of the themes of the *Three Perils of Man* with that earlier poem.

In this novel, the supernatural is presented as a communal experience, witnessed at first-hand and subsequently related by seemingly independent narrators such as Isaac, the elderly curate. It is placed within history as it might have been experienced by a variety of participants, from the border barons to their followers, male as well as female. In his last major novel, Hogg will refine his narrative technique to produce a work in which the supernatural is fully embedded within the reader's experience of character and situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Scott's 'Essay on Chivalry' was first published in the Supplement to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1818. His 'Essay on Drama' and 'Essay on Romance' were published as similar Supplements in 1819 and 1824. See *Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1841) 525-616.

<sup>2</sup> See J. C. Corson, 'Scott's Boyhood Collection of Chapbooks', *Bibliothek* 3 (1962): 202-18. Cochrane's catalogue of the Library of Abbotsford describes them as 'Popular Ballads and Stories'. There are 114 chapbooks bound in 6 volumes.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Minstrelsy*, Scott writes that 'the most minute and authenticated account of an exchanged child, is to be found in Waldron's *Isle of Man*, a book from which I have derived much legendary information. "I was prevailed upon myself," says that author, "to go and see a child, who, they told me, was one of these changelings ... between five and six years old, and seemingly healthy, he was so far from being able to walk or stand, that he could not so much as move any one joint"' (*Minstrelsy* 2nd ed. 1803 2: 232-33). This edition contains an expanded *Introduction To the Tale Of Tamlane On the Fairies of Popular Superstition*. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>4</sup> *Edinburgh Review* 7 (1806): 368. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>5</sup> Alice Chandler, 'Chivalry and Romance: Scott's Medieval Novels', *Studies in Romanticism*, 14.2 (1975): 185. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. David Womersley, vol.1 (London: Penguin Classics, 2005) 475. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>7</sup> The debate about the existence of miracles continued into the nineteenth century. See John Badeley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Extraordinary Cure performed by Prince Alexander Hohenlohe on Miss Barbara O'Connor, a Nun, in the Convent of New Hall, near Chelmsford* (London, 1823). His account of the miracle was reviewed in the *Edinburgh Review* 39 (1823): 54-66 with interest and some scepticism.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution* (London: Abacus, 2003) 319.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, ed. Graham Tulloch (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998) 6-7. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>10</sup> See Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, ed. David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008) 475-77. *Rob Roy* was first published in 1818 and the MacGregors were proscribed three times in 1603, 1633 and 1693.

Hewitt draws attention to the connections between Rob Roy and Robin Hood citing Scott's introduction to the Magnum edition of *Rob Roy* which suggests that 'Rob Roy owed his fame in a great measure to his residing on the very verge of the Highlands, and playing such pranks in the beginning of the 18th century, as are usually ascribed to Robin Hood in the middle ages' (Walter Scott, *Waverley Novels*, 48 vols. Magnum ed. (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1829-33) 7: viii.). It might be argued that the MacGregors suffered in becoming social outcasts much as Jews did in England.

<sup>11</sup> Gurth addresses Isaac in Saxon and Isaac is able to reply 'in the same language, (for his traffic had rendered every tongue spoken in Britain familiar to him)' (*Ivanhoe* 98).

<sup>12</sup> Except for *Peveeril of the Peak*, set in 1678; *St. Ronan's Well*, set in early 1800s and *Redgauntlet*, set in 1765, as well as the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, First Series, variously set in late 17th and 18th centuries.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, ed. Ian Duncan (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) ix. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>14</sup> Unsigned review. *Ladies' Monthly Museum* 3rd ser. xi (May 1820): 273-80.

<sup>15</sup> *La Belle Assemblée*, ns 21 (April 1820): 186-88.

<sup>16</sup> P. D. Garside, 'Scott the Romantic Past and the Nineteenth Century', *The Review of English Studies* ns 23.90 (May 1972): 147-61.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Scott, *The Monastery*, ed. Penny Fielding (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000) 21. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>18</sup> J. M. Pinkerton, 'Demonology in the library of Abbotsford', *Bulletin du bibliophile* 3 (1984): 312. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>19</sup> It is tempting to read 'Kennaquhair' as 'I know not where', given Scott's constant teasing of his readers.

<sup>20</sup> In 'The Wool-gatherer' published with the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 1818, Hogg had also depicted an angelic female rescuer. He would develop the idea further in 'The White Lady of Glen-Tress' (*Contributions to Annuals and Gift-books* 21-22).

<sup>21</sup> *James Hogg: The Collected Letters of James Hogg*, ed. Gillian Hughes, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004) 423.

<sup>22</sup> Ironically, Hogg almost immediately writes to Scott for help, quoting from George Boyd's letter of rejection that the novel 'displays great originality of thought and a good deal of fancy [though] it is of that cast that must draw down comparisons with the romances of the author of Waverly and manifestly to its disadvantage these being made the criterion of judging of merit.' See *James Hogg: The Collected Letters of James Hogg*, ed. Gillian Hughes, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006) 91-92. Boyd's comments reflect both the extraordinary situation of Scott as pre-eminent literary model, albeit anonymous, and the difficulties faced by other authors in attempting to match him.

<sup>23</sup> James Hogg, *The Three Perils of Man*, ed. Douglas Gifford (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1989) 251. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>24</sup> See Valentina Bold, 'The Magic Lantern: Hogg and Science', *Studies in Hogg and his World* (7): 5-17.

<sup>25</sup> Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) 5.

<sup>26</sup> *La Belle Assemblée*, ns 26 (October 1822): 429-30.

<sup>27</sup> There are linguistic echoes of *Guy Mannering* and the *Bride of Lammermoor* here. In *Guy Mannering*, Meg Merrilies is associated with witchcraft and does nurse the young Harry Bertram. *The Bride of Lammermoor* is the story of the Master of Ravenswood. He sees the wraith of old Alice who is also supposed to be a witch.

<sup>28</sup> Allan Cunningham published *Sir Michael Scott, A Romance*, 3 vols. (London: Colburn, 1828). This is a very different treatment of Michael Scott, characterising him as a benevolent guiding spirit to the vanquished King James IV. James was supposed by 'traditionary testimony' (*Michael Scott* 1: viii) to have escaped after the battle of Flodden Field 1513 rather than been killed on the battlefield. Cunningham's novel serves to emphasise the radical nature of Hogg's work and his resistance to ideas of the supernatural as simply superstitious folk-tales.

## Chapter Five: Writing and Authority, 1822-1830

### 5.1 Divinity Matters: Election and the Supernatural

This chapter will examine the different forms of narrative authority associated with the supernatural in *Redgauntlet*, 1824, and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824. Previously, Scott had begun to play with ideas of historical testimony through his presentation of both *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery* as recovered manuscripts. The introduction of additional narrators and their ‘historical’ documents allowed him to portray medieval belief in the supernatural as an embedded part of ‘the opinions, habits of thinking, and actions’ (*Ivanhoe* 10) of that society. However, in thinking about the validity of using such examples, Scott suggests that human society is essentially unchanging and that ‘all ranks and conditions, all countries and ages ... bear a strong resemblance to each other’ (*Ivanhoe* 10). This allows him to consider the development of the supernatural beyond that medieval period and portray its influence within eighteenth-century Scotland. To some extent, Hogg’s *Three Perils of Man* follows this conceit by occasional references citing Isaac, the curator, as his narrative source, and by describing feats of contemporary magic (or modern supernatural powers) as practised by the Friar in competition with Michael Scott.

These references to the persistence of belief in the supernatural into contemporary Scotland can be found in another novel published anonymously and slightly earlier in 1822. This was *Adam Blair* by J. G. Lockhart. Adam Blair, Scots Presbyterian minister, is widowed young and subsequently visited by Mrs Charlotte Campbell, former friend of his dead wife. Charlotte visits the grave of Mrs Blair, late at night, and is discovered there by the minister. Blair’s glimpse of Charlotte, sitting on the tombstone, fills his mind with the possibility of ghostly resurrection. Lockhart writes that Blair ‘when he saw a female form clothed all in white, bent over his wife’s grave at that hour, and bent in motionless silence ... might be forgiven for allowing one superstitious dream to heave his bosom for a moment ... he stood quite rooted to the spot, as if he had been fascinated by the presence and vision of something not of this world.’<sup>1</sup> Charlotte’s impulsive visit to the grave recalls her early memories of friendship with Isobel Gray. Her subsequent feelings of

‘repentant misery’ (*Adam Blair* 51) overcome ‘even the supremacy of the deep stirrings of human superstition’ (*Adam Blair* 51) before giving way to grief for her friend and for herself.

Lockhart’s novel suggests the susceptibility of an educated and deeply religious man to ideas of the supernatural. Blair is also minister of a rural parish, and in one of Hogg’s short stories, published in *Blackwood’s Magazine* in June 1823, Hogg suggested that there were connections between divine judgement, the supernatural and human revenge within a society of artisan and peasant farmers. ‘Mr Adamson of Laverhope’ appeared as the second tale in a series titled ‘The Shepherd’s Calendar. Class Second. *Deaths, Judgements, and Providences.*’ and the tale describes the death of Mr Adamson, following his persecution of a poor neighbour, Irvine, for the repayment of a debt. Irvine’s widow predicts the outcome of the situation:

In the name of my destitute bairns I curse him; an’ does he think that a mother’s curse will sink fizenless to the ground? Na, na! I see an ee that’s lookin’ down here in pity and in anger; an’ I see a hand that’s gathering the bolts o’ Heaven thegither, for some purpose that I could divine, but darena utter. But that hand is unerring, and where it throws the bolt, there it will strike.<sup>2</sup>

While Adamson’s ill-judged eviction of his neighbour, Irvine, leads to his own eventual demise, it is suggested that it is his cruelty that makes him vulnerable to the withdrawal of providential protection. ‘He seemed altogether left to the influences of the wicked one (‘Adamson’ 41)’; and as the tale relates the subsequent judgement of his sins, and fatal punishment, revenge could be ascribed either to God or the devil. The curse of Mrs Irvine (above) appears to predict divine vengeance by thunderbolt and the text later describes Adamson’s shocking death, ‘struck dead by the lightning ... in the act of prayer’ (‘Adamson’ 53). Her words are amplified further by those of Patie Maxwell who claims to have his own connection to the supernatural. Hogg describes how the beggar’s ‘countenance was grim, haughty, and had something Satanic in its lines and deep wrinkles’ (‘Adamson’ 47). Maxwell says ‘Ye may think the like o’ me can hae nae power wi’ heaven; but an I hae power wi’ hell, it is sufficient to cow ony that’s here’ (‘Adamson’ 47). Mrs Irvine and Maxwell appear

to have a direct and personal relationship with some supernatural force, whether divine or satanic, that transcends the reality of their humble social positions.

An additional factor in this tale is that Hogg's unlettered shepherds wait for 'some visible testimony o' ... displeasure' ('Adamson' 43) as expectant bystanders, acting in their turn as verbal witnesses to the unfolding of Adamson's fate. Hogg's position as narrator is one of self-appointed Editor, responsible for recording the history of Mr Adamson for the readers of *Blackwood's Magazine*. It is his suggestion that 'one of those judgments that have made the deepest impression on the shepherd's minds for a century bygone, seems to have been the fate of Mr Adamson' ('Adamson' 38). Hogg's interjection serves to blur the boundaries between the fictional creation of Mr Adamson and the genuine existence of Borders shepherds in the minds of his readers. This subtle layering of truth and fiction will recur later in his novel of the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824, especially in Hogg's creation of an Editor responsible for mediating the personal testimony of the 'Justified Sinner.' Readers of the novel gradually discover that the Editor is unreliable, evasive and eventually fails to understand the Sinner's narrative.

'Mr Adamson of Laverhope' contains several themes such as transgression, loss, and revenge, aided by diabolical or divine assistance, that will recur at greater length in two novels which follow *The Shepherd's Calendar*: Scott's *Redgauntlet* and Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Each novel will examine much more deeply the connections between election and damnation, particularly the way in which both terms can be viewed as interchangeable. We see examples of both, whether in the destruction of Robert Wringhim after the Reverend Robert Wringhim makes the prophetic announcement of the young man's membership of the elect, or in Darsie Latimer's possession of the physical mark which confirms his Redgauntlet inheritance and potentially treasonable fate. Latimer eventually recognises and resists the election that his uncle would have him accept. Within these two contiguous texts, Hogg and Scott construct and present their evidence for the existence and influence of the supernatural most specifically through the authority of print.

Between 1819 and 1822, Scott and Hogg had explored certain aspects of the existence of magic within the framework of the Middle Ages in England and

Scotland. With the intention perhaps of engaging readers in modern rather than medieval matters, they now both returned to more recent historical periods to report on other possible evidence for supernatural influence over human life and activity. Scott's *Redgauntlet* is set in 1765 and depicts the final struggles of a fairly small Jacobite insurgency. While such events clearly had a significant historical and antiquarian interest for Scott, he introduces the supernatural in a curiously pessimistic way. It is notable that Darsie struggles to free himself from the influence of a family inheritance that incorporates the tragedies of the past in a physical and indelible way. When angry or worried, his forehead exhibits the image of a small horseshoe, peculiar to the Redgauntlet male line. In this way, Scott appears to be questioning whether Darsie can separate himself completely from the past and by implication acknowledges the continued influence of history, whether personal or national on our actions.

Hogg chose equally momentous historical periods for the *Confessions*, returning the reader to both the Revolution Settlement of 1689–1690 and the later Union of Scotland with England in 1707. It is notable that both authors reconsider ideas of a simple distinction or division between the historical past and the present. This is achieved in the presentation of certain aspects of history that are never quite settled but remain subject to debate, opposition and subsequent attempts to overturn their established position by such characters as Edward Hugh Redgauntlet. He is revealed as Darsie's uncle, and possessor of multiple social identities that enable him to move between otherwise segregated social classes and even between Jacobite and Hanoverian circles. He incorporates both the historical past and present while attempting to instigate his preferred version of the future with the assistance of his nephew.<sup>3</sup>

The publishing history of *Redgauntlet* and *Confessions* shows that both texts had been printed and shipped to booksellers within the first weeks of June 1824. Between 1823 and 1824 it appears that both Hogg and Scott were engaged in writing about the role of the supernatural in Scottish life and that Scott had originally been thinking about a novel called *The Witch*. In a letter of 9 September 1823 to Robert Cadell, Constable writes that 'St Ronans advances & the next after it is already chalked out – it is to contain *the Goblins* & to be called the '*Witch*' the materials for

which in his extraordinary head – are very abundant’.<sup>4</sup> The novel *St. Ronan’s Well* would be published in 1823.

Hogg was engaged at the same time on his novel, referred to by his publisher Owen Rees of Longman & Co. as ‘Memoirs of a Suiside’ in a letter to Hogg dated 25 Oct 1823.<sup>5</sup> Further correspondence from Longmans reveals that printing was underway by February 1824 and that they were planning to ‘advertise accordingly. We should be happy to see you in London either in your Bonnet & plaid or in our southern garb – hat & c[oat]. The former would certainly create more attention from the cocknies.’<sup>6</sup> This attention to the material authenticity of the author by Hogg’s publishers highlights another form of potential authority in Hogg’s actual dress. It could indicate that his publisher simply had a shrewd eye to the value of creating interest and sensation in displaying the unusual spectacle of an author wearing the clothes of a shepherd. Or, perhaps Hogg’s working clothes indicated a simplicity and authenticity likely to fascinate a metropolitan audience and augment the attraction of the novel otherwise known to Longmans as ‘*Confessions of a Sinner.*’

Both *Redgauntlet* and *Confessions* began life with different working titles. Scott had chosen ‘*Herries*’ and used this until April 1824 when he adopted James Ballantyne’s suggestion of *Redgauntlet*, in spite of his fear that this might suggest a tale of chivalry to potential readers. Scott had temporarily retreated from his earlier interest in the medieval period and it is notable that Constable and Cadell expected to receive a novel dealing with witchcraft and goblins rather than Scottish history. This impression was possibly derived from Scott’s earlier attempt to interest them in a collection of popular superstitions. In one of his letters to Constable, in 1823, Scott had written:

I am thinking of a thing in the way of a supernumerary exertion which is revising and putting together what I have had by me for some years—a dialogue on Popular Superstitions. An Essay was read on this subject in the royal Society which put me in mind that I had some sheets on the subject. There are a good many narratives in the work and the whole is in the fire-side stile. You may believe I do not mean an Eugenius & Philalethes kind of speakers but when I say a Dialogue I mean a conversation among persons sustaining

different characters and illustrating their opinions according to these characters.<sup>7</sup>

This 'dialogue' probably emerges later as part of Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, published in 1830, but it is clearly a topic of persistent interest. He refers to 'the fire-side stile', evoking the familiar and intimate manner of many oral tales, especially personal to Hogg. Both men had particular fondness for such tales and Hogg had earlier drawn on his extensive acquaintance with the oral tradition of the Borders in *The Spy* and *Winter Evening Tales*.

### **5.2 Redgauntlet, 1824**

*Redgauntlet* contains more than one of Scott's persistent interests. The novel describes the legal education and training of the youthful Alan Fairford, drawing to some extent on Scott's own experience, as well as exploring the difficult relationship between a son and his father especially when situated within their shared profession which is the practice of Scots Law. Alan Fairford is the sole heir and particular charge of Alexander Fairford, W.S., and Alan describes himself as 'the exclusive object of my father's anxious hopes, and his still more anxious and engrossing fears.'<sup>8</sup> While Alan stresses this position as his father's son and 'exclusive object', in his reply to Darsie's letter, nonetheless it becomes clear to the reader that Alexander Fairford has taken on additional responsibility for another young man, Darsie Latimer, and that there is in fact a triangular relationship between the father, natural son and 'adopted' child. This relationship necessarily constructs Alan and Darsie as brothers and again offers a further example of hierarchical male bonding where Alan plays both benevolent despot and impotent friend. Hogg's description of brothers who actually share a blood relationship in the *Confessions* is very different and this will be discussed later.

The autobiographical elements of *Redgauntlet* have attracted scholarly interest especially as Scott appears to be constructing a conventional picture of family life that centres on a devoted father and two sons. One son is older and dutiful whereas the younger one is careless and more rebellious by nature, though Darsie's actual rebellion will not be against the political status quo. Family life is almost exclusively male until the appearance of Greenmantle disturbs the triangular

structure. The narrative, initially in the form of letters, constructs our image of Fairford senior, the parent, and also allows the dutiful son, Alan, to inhabit the world of the challenging brother, initially in an imaginative context and then actually in experience as he attempts to track down the imprisoned Darsie. All three men are reconciled eventually and the sons and brothers variously rewarded whether through marriage or inheritance, recalling the earlier tradition of the national tale associated with Maria Edgeworth and Scott's *Waverley*.

Scott's rather abrupt conclusion of the novel takes the form of a letter from Dr Dryasdust to 'the Author of *Waverley*' in which Dryasdust reports his fruitless attempts to find further 'letters ... diaries, or other memoranda ... of the history of the Redgauntlet family' (*Redgauntlet* 378). The present scarcity of personal information is compensated for by his discovery of 'an old newspaper called the Whitehall Gazette' and 'a marriage contract in the family repositories' (*Redgauntlet* 378) as the only other sources of information. These documents represent the worldly and legal form of evidence and their value is necessarily derived from such status as written and witnessed records. There is no further reference to the curious physical mark of the Redgauntlet family, possession of which has transformed the fortunes of Darsie Latimer without recourse to documentation.

By contrast, Hogg's *Confessions* will depict another set of father and son/brother relationships. This novel, to be more fully considered shortly, explores familial identity under the pressures of jealousy and traces some of the possible developments within an atmosphere of competitive ambition complicated by the inheritance of religious or political difference. In Scott's novel, Darsie's search for the truth about his family leads him to discover an aristocratic fortune complicated by treasonable allegiances as well as an alternative identity, whereas Robert Wringhim's discovery of the existence of an 'elect' to which part of his family appear to belong leads only to destruction and a suicide's grave. His story is discovered only through a printed pamphlet wrapped in a leather case and miraculously preserved despite having been buried within the grave. Scott and Hogg might present different destinies within their writing but still emphasise the critical importance of documents in tracing the evidence for understanding the role of the supernatural in Scottish writing.

In this way, and thereby creating additional layers of documentary evidence, Hogg included 'the following extract from an authentic letter, published in *Blackwood's Magazine for August, 1823*'<sup>9</sup> describing the discovery of a suicide's grave in the Editor's concluding narrative in *Private Memoirs*. The letter is recorded as having been signed by 'JAMES HOGG, and dated from Altrive Lake, *August 1st, 1823*' (*Confessions* 169). Nonetheless, the Editor is sceptical about this written proof, remarking that the letter 'bears the stamp of authenticity in every line; yet, so often had I been hoaxed by the ingenious fancies displayed in that Magazine, that when this relation met my eye, I did not believe it' (*Confessions* 169). Hogg had of course actually contributed an article, titled 'A Scots Mummy' to the issue dated August 1823 of Blackwood's *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*. This playful provision of apparent sources for the edification, or bewilderment, of readers emphasises both the importance of written evidence and the potential difficulties of proof in the print culture of Edinburgh.

The exploration of different forms of narrative authority is evident within *Redgauntlet* which contains several distinct narrative forms as if also experimenting with alternative forms of experience. The novel begins with a series of letters from Darsie Latimer to Alan Fairford; rather to the annoyance of one reviewer, who complained, that in contrast with Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, 'we proceeded with something like discontent through the letters of 'Latimer to Fairford' and 'Fairford to Latimer;' and it was with real satisfaction that we discovered, on opening the second volume, that the author had abandoned the epistolary style.'<sup>10</sup> Given that Scott was working on his memoir of the life of Richardson for the volumes of *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* in 1823 it is possible that his choice of letters as medium for the first volume of *Redgauntlet* was influenced by Richardson's work.

In her *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters*, Mary Favret traces a connection with epistolary fiction and revolutionary politics. From the late eighteenth century, letters were often associated with subversion and radical activity and she describes how 'the epistolary form was acquiring a public voice: the stories of these fictional individuals and others were the topics of public debate.'<sup>11</sup> This movement of the letter from the private to the public sphere can be

seen in the *Confessions*. Hogg maximises the possibilities of public attention by first publishing a letter containing details of ‘A Scots Mummy’, addressed to Sir Christopher North, in *Blackwoods Magazine*, then reprints it in *Confessions*. It is accompanied by a reminder from the Editor that the letter was first published in ‘*Blackwood’s Magazine for August, 1823*’ (*Confessions* 165). This transforms the letter from being a private note, or even antiquarian record with restricted circulation, into a very public announcement.

Scott, on the other hand, having established the outline of his narrative, then abandons the epistolary format and introduces an independent third-party narrator in order to avoid the ‘various prolixities and redundancies ... which would only hang as a dead weight on the progress of the narrative’ (*Redgauntlet* 125). Ideas of ‘progress’ appear to dictate that the letter with its incomplete and selective narrative content, at once personal and partial, no longer has a primary role as historical record. His decision to end the correspondence between Darsie and Alan, in *Redgauntlet*, prefigures the failure of the nascent Jacobite revolt itself and the restitution of legitimacy. Letters, especially ‘vexatious’ letters<sup>12</sup> can be unexpectedly damaging unless confined to the private sphere. Such a letter finds its way into the brief for the defence of Peter Peebles by Alan Fairford and is responsible for Alan’s shameful flight from court. Favret concludes that in nineteenth-century fiction ‘we find the letter abandoned, burned, buried, silenced, sent home or submitted as legal evidence’ (*Romantic Correspondence* 200). In its format as initiator or medium of public debate, the letter was unable to surmount difficulties inherent in its role as a supremely personal record.

The second volume of *Redgauntlet* begins with a description of Alan’s first appearance at the bar for the case of ‘Peebles vs Plainstones’ as related by the third-person narrator. Scott’s delineation of events began with letters: he will shortly introduce another mode of narrative, Darsie’s journal, in order to construct a multi-faceted history which includes the supernatural legend of Alberick Redgauntlet as well as an episode of legal pleading before Justice Foxley, and some traditional music.

Darsie’s gradual introduction to the history of his family starts with ‘Wandering Willie’s Tale’. He records this tale for Alan Fairford as part of their

epistolary correspondence without realising its true significance, merely commenting to Alan that ‘as you know, I like tales of superstition and I begged to have a specimen’ (*Redgauntlet* 86). Darsie’s uncle will subsequently relate to him the legend of Alberick Redgauntlet and thus complete the partial history of the Redgauntlet family, begun earlier for Darsie by the blind fiddler, Wandering Willie. Scott composed ‘Wandering Willie’s Tale’ from a variety of sources including Wodrow’s *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* and Joseph Trains’s *Strains of the Mountain Muse*.<sup>13</sup> Several notable Scots were popularly supposed to be adherents of Satan such as Sir Robert Grierson of Lag (thought to be the original of Sir Robert Redgauntlet), John Graham of Claverhouse and Major Thomas Weir. Two of these men, Grierson and Graham, were relentless persecutors of the Covenanters and there were various tales of the wicked Laird’s temper and supposed mark of the Prince of Darkness.<sup>14</sup>

The tale emerges within the text shortly after Darsie receives letters from Alan and Saunders Fairford which offer conflicting advice. While father and son are concerned about his safety, Alan writes explicitly to offer Darsie the chance to return to respectable and enlightened social conformity in his urgent invitation to rejoin him in Edinburgh. Alan is writing from within the constraints of a legal, commercial and urban world, capable only of understanding the more remote and mysterious part of Scotland through the portal of medieval romance. While the invitation is tempered with some anxiety after Alan’s discovery of potential danger to his friend, nonetheless he can only begin to comprehend the nature of such danger in terms that recall the outlandish adventures of Don Quixote. Real peril takes on comical possibilities as Alan writes how ‘If you are Don Quixote enough to lay lance in rest, in defence of those of the net stake, and of the sad-coloured garment, I pronounce thee but a lost knight’ (*Redgauntlet* 71).

Alan’s anxiety is made plain. Darsie has descended into a society that operates on different, possibly subversive rules and where ancient and local loyalties take precedence over modes of government imposed on the inhabitants from outside. Alan describes how the ‘Black-fishers, poachers, and smugglers are a sort of gentry that will not be much checked, either by your Quaker’s texts, or by your chivalry’ (*Redgauntlet* 71). Neither religion, nor chivalry nor the law can be relied upon in this

remote part of Scotland. While these elements of civilised society might exist in familiar form, it is clear to Alan that there are local determinants that must be more influential in deciding the outcome of disputes exemplified by the battle over fishing-nets. He warns Darsie of the reality of local politics, insisting that ‘as I said before, I doubt if these potent redressers of wrongs, the justices and constables, will hold themselves warranted to interfere’ (*Redgauntlet* 71).

Alan’s letter is delivered with another from Saunders Fairford that appears to expect that Darsie will exclude himself from Edinburgh until the eventual conclusion of his rambling excursions. Saunders also suggests that Darsie has dangerous sympathies with other marginal groups such as Highlanders, Episcopalians and Quakers. He writes that ‘I have observed ye, Master Darsie, to be overly tinctured with the old leaven of prelacy ... ye have ever loved to hear the blawing, blazing stories which the Hieland gentlemen tell of these troublous times’ (*Redgauntlet* 73-74). Saunders’ letter describes a rootless young man, unfit for the polite company of Edinburgh lawyers.

That Darsie is congenitally restless, seemingly incapable of existing within an ordered world, is then almost immediately confirmed by his confession of boredom with the settled and civilised world of Joshua Geddes the Quaker. Geddes has intervened to prevent Darsie from losing his way in unfamiliar territory again and offered him hospitality. However, Darsie’s experience of Quaker life leads him to lament that ‘there was, in the whole routine, a uniformity, a want of interest, a helpless and hopeless languor, which rendered life insipid’ (*Redgauntlet* 77). Yet, Geddes has had to impose the stamp of order on his immediate surroundings by effacing traces of his ‘ancestors ... ravenous and bloodthirsty men’ (*Redgauntlet* 54) with either ‘hammer, or chisel, which had been employed to deface the shield and crest’ (*Redgauntlet* 53). His efforts, however, have been only partially successful and Darsie discovers that the house, Mount Sharon, was earlier known as ‘Sharing-Knowe’ in reference to its function as a centre for the distribution of plunder by one of Geddes’ ancestors. Darsie’s experience of modern life within Mount Sharon, now described as the ‘little temple of cleanliness and decorum’ (*Redgauntlet* 64) is one that has been made possible only by the forceful imposition of a new regime on top of the old. However, the rejection of violent struggle as a means of obtaining

primacy over one's neighbours and control over one's land appears to have resulted instead in an uneasy relationship between Geddes and his fellow men. There is still rivalry between the Quakers and their neighbours. Quaker pacifism seems to drive Darsie to reject 'the cultivated farm and ornamental grounds' (*Redgauntlet* 77) seeking instead to experience 'free and unconstrained nature' (*Redgauntlet* 77) with its possibilities of fear and danger requiring the exertion of energy rather than the acceptance of bland comfort. In this, he thinks of himself as 'a liberated captive ... like John Bunyan's Pilgrim' (*Redgauntlet* 78).

Scott's introduction of a member of the Quaker sect as another substitute father for Darsie is thus seen to fail. On 'a sudden whim' (*Redgauntlet* 82) Darsie finds himself in company with a strolling fiddler and he surrenders himself completely to dependence on this chance acquaintance. The man, though blind, possesses 'the confident air of an experienced pilot, heaving the lead when he has the soundings by heart' (*Redgauntlet* 84). This description, based on steering a boat through water by measuring its depth with a lead-weight, ensures that Willie is thus characterised as another authority figure, even displaying some of the habitual caution of a Saunders Fairford. His bluntness in seeking the truth about Darsie's true identity establishes the dangerous nature of Darsie's romantic wandering. He asks of Darsie whether he is 'in the wont of drawing up wi'all the gangrel bodies that ye meet on the high road ... I may be the Devil himsell for what ye ken; for he has power to come disguised like an angel of light; and besides, he is a prime fiddler' (*Redgauntlet* 86). In *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Robert Wringhim will meet the Devil in this way and find himself 'quite captivated' (*Confessions* 81) unable to effect an escape.

'Wandering Willie's Tale' will begin the reclamation of Darsie Latimer in ways that neither the education nor superficial legal training of his early manhood managed. Neither Quaker respectability, nor as it will turn out, Jacobite loyalty which is paradoxically also rebellion, will recover his title or estate. Instead, Scott appears to be suggesting that the minstrel provides a stronger link to Darsie's true inheritance though the power of family history preserved as an oral tale. Willie will be revealed later as a physical link to Darsie's lost father and as a loyal family

retainer though not a feudal retainer as in the medieval relationships between Wamba and Ivanhoe or Wamba and Cedric.

One of the most interesting elements of Willie's tale is the description of the rental book with its black cover and brass fastenings. This grandeur initially points to a resemblance with the family Bible though this idea is quickly dispelled by the 'book of sculdudry sangs ... [placed] betwixt the leaves, to keep it open at the place where it bore evidence against the Goodman of Primrose-Knowe, as behind the hand with his mails and duties' (*Redgauntlet* 89). The rental book is a formal record or 'evidence' of debts owed. Its official status, however, is compromised by the association with sexual immorality. When the Laird of Redgauntlet reaches out for the book, his death follows almost immediately. The seeming horrors of Hell conquer the Laird's body first. 'Terribly the Laird roared for cauld water to his feet, and wine to cool his throat; and, Hell, hell, hell, and its flames, was aye the word in his mouth ... the shrieks came faint and fainter ... the Laird was dead' (*Redgauntlet* 90). Steenie Steenson flees the chaos without obtaining his receipt.

Wandering Willie describes several further supernatural events surrounding the Laird's funeral and these prefigure Steenie's eventual descent into Hell in search of his receipt. The new Laird, Sir John, presses Steenie for proof of payment that he is unable to provide. In despair, Steenie rushes from the castle again and ends up proposing a toast to an unquiet grave for the former Laird and health to Satan. These toasts summon up the devil, described conventionally as a mysterious stranger, who suggests to Steenie that 'if ye daur venture to go to see him [the dead Laird], he will give you the receipt' (*Redgauntlet* 95).

The adventures of Steenie and his recovery of the receipt are described several times as a dream or strange vision rather than actual experience. However, the receipt itself appears genuine, rather than imaginary. It was 'fairly written and signed by the auld Laird; only the last letters of his name were a little disorderly, written like one seized with sudden pain' (*Redgauntlet* 98). The receipt is actual proof of payment by tenant to landlord though it is oddly indestructible, refusing to burn, escaping instead back to the elements 'wi' a lang train of sparks at its tail, and a hissing noise like a squib' (*Redgauntlet* 100). Its survival as evidence might be compared to the Editor's recovery of Wringhim's memoir in Hogg's *Confessions*,

which, it is suggested, 'will maybe reveal some mystery that mankind disna ken naething about yet' (*Confessions* 174). Here the 'mystery', particularly where the supernatural is concerned, may yet be explained though mankind's eventual accession to greater knowledge, as yet unavailable.

In 'Wandering Willie's Tale', it is suggested that the agent of all the misfortune was simply the 'filthy brute' of a jack-an-ape, 'that wanchancy creature, the Major, capering on the coffin; and ... blawing on the Laird's whistle' (*Redgauntlet* 101). However, while the Major may have been responsible for these supposedly supernatural happenings as well as stealing the rent-money, the ape cannot be connected with the receipt. There is no wholly rational explanation for the return of the receipt. It is another unfathomable mystery.

Wandering Willie finishes his tale with an injunction to Darsie to beware taking strangers as guides, but he has also informed Darsie of his birth, parentage and misfortune without either party realising this. This information is readily available but both men lack the skills of interpretation. Willie's physical blindness prevents his recognition of any Redgauntlet family resemblance in the young man: Darsie's depths of ignorance about his identity preclude any accidental discoveries.

In *Redgauntlet*, Scott draws on the significance of documents in the construction of identity and authority, whether actual or feigned. Their presence, or absence, is a cause of continual difficulty. The perilous existence of the rebel, Herries of Birrenswark, depends on the studied avoidance of certain legal documents by his tractable neighbours Justice Foxley and his legal clerk. However, once the rebel's former identity is stated openly before them by Peter Peebles, they are compelled to act. Faggot, the clerk, explains that 'Mr Justice Foxley cannot be answerable for letting you pass free, now your name and surname have been spoken plainly out' (*Redgauntlet* 182). Herries' identity, however, was plain to those who could decode the physical signs of inheritance. He possessed the 'extraordinary looks, by which he could contort so strangely the wrinkles on his forehead' (*Redgauntlet* 181) that revealed his true family. The inheritance of a horseshoe mark on the forehead is evidence of identity that affirms the heir of the Redgauntlets (Darsie) and testifies to the importance of the supernatural as a source of irrefutable authority.

### **5.3 *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, 1824***

I have now the pleasure of presenting my readers with an original document of a most singular nature, and preserved for their perusal in a still more singular manner. (*Confessions* 64)

This statement is the Editor's preface to Wringhim's tale and it emphasises that the 'original' tale is derived from genuine evidence, 'preserved' and then recovered from the Sinner's grave. One of the more subtle themes of Hogg's novel is the role of documentation in supporting the interpretation of events even while questioning the motives of those who are ultimately charged with that interpretation. Scholars have often mentioned the role of the Editor, for instance, who is initially responsible for introducing the Sinner's confession to readers, but whose authority comes to seem dubious if not entirely spurious. Documents clearly make it possible to establish or uncover identity, pronounce innocence or guilt, and judgement is inevitably predicated on the available evidence. In *Redgauntlet*, Scott's antiquarian alter ego, Dr Dryasdust, is the person responsible for concluding the novel, specifically with his letter to the 'Author of Waverley', which includes some detail of his 'anxious researches' about the subsequently limited history of the Redgauntlet family (*Redgauntlet* 378). That Dr Dryasdust should feel tension or stress about his efforts strikes an entirely unexpected note in the text but alludes to the importance of documents themselves in creating a verifiable reality. Without them, the narrative falters to a close and can only disappoint rather than instruct or entertain. *Redgauntlet* thus ends perfunctorily with a brief summary for the reader of the final years of Edward Hugh Redgauntlet which appear to have been spent in frustration, apparent disappointment and actual exile.

With this in mind, it is notable that the full title of Hogg's novel, published in first edition in 1824, reads as 'The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written by Himself: With a Detail of Curious Traditionary Facts, And Other Evidence, By The Editor'. This lengthy title notably includes two categories of information. There is sensational as well as sober, even scholarly, material included which differs from that of the original working title. In their early discussions of the manuscript, Owen Rees, of Longmans, had referred to the novel simply as 'Memoirs

of a Suiside', as previously noted, but Hogg's creative development of the narrative from the beginning was at odds with the idea of a tale of simple 'memoirs'. This can be seen from the inscription on the secondary title-page which introduces Wringham's narrative as the 'Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Sinner. Written by Himself.' Peter Garside has pointed out that from the bibliographic evidence, it is clear that the '[C]ollation of leaves show that this [the inscription] is printed on the last leaf of gathering K, and so forms an integral part of the text (there are no signs of a cancel)' (*Confessions* ixiii). It might seem plausible then that Hogg had already constructed the major elements of the title while writing the actual narrative.

One of the central themes of the novel is that of religion, explicitly indicated in the full title. Hogg had already written sympathetically of the struggles of the Covenanters in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* in 1818 and had employed some supernatural motifs to depict those struggles more succinctly. In the characters of Walter, Katharine and Nanny, true Christianity is seen to co-exist with supernatural spirits and there is even mutual assistance possible. Nanny declares that she is not afraid of evil spirits because 'If they be good spirits, they will do me nae ill; and if they be evil spirits, they have nae power here' (*Brownie* 97). In the *Confessions*, Hogg will tackle more radical ideas of justification through grace and the election of the righteous with attendant implications for these beliefs, in reference to Calvinist doctrine. Hogg's interest in such matters was of long-standing. He had reviewed Kirkton's *History of the Church of Scotland*, edited by C. K. Sharpe, in 1817 for *Blackwood's Magazine*.<sup>15</sup> Robert Wodrow's partisan *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* had also informed Hogg's early views on religion and Kirk. The provision of an Editor charged with relaying both the Sinner's confession and an explanatory framework for the reader interested in additional historical and antiquarian detail indicates the increasing subtlety of Hogg's literary work.

Memoirs and confessions are generally documents of a highly personal nature: subjective, possibly untrustworthy and often associated with error, transgression and repentance. That the 'Sinner' believes himself to be 'justified' adds an element of combative spiritual pride and possibly arrogance. In contrast, Hogg's inclusion of a third party described as 'the' Editor on the title page alerts us to the presence of a supposedly neutral observer with responsibilities for managing the text.

Just how neutral those editorial contributions might actually be relates in many ways to Hogg's own experience of an urban, 'enlightened' literary and print culture based in Edinburgh and exemplified by Scott, Lockhart and John Wilson. The *Confessions* are pertinent to Hogg's questioning of how 'evidence' can be defined and presented. The Editor may possibly have antiquarian skills, given that it is announced that the reader will find descriptions of traditional material, presumably sourced from research into Scottish national and cultural life. That the Editor intends to shape such material with 'traditional facts, and other evidence' points to a volume of prose with ambitions beyond those of a simple personal tale of sin and repentance. The language of religious tracts, with their simple stories of error and salvation, is here overlaid with something more complex: the reader absorbs ideas of duplicate narratives even before encountering the actual texts.

One particular aspect of the novel is the provision of an extract in facsimile of the Sinner's tale. David Groves discusses the frontispiece in some detail and describes a meeting between Hogg, his publisher and others in the engraver Robert Scott's workshop.<sup>16</sup> His son, William Bell Scott, described how Hogg particularly 'wanted an imitation of the writing of 1700 made as a frontispiece to a book ... [to be later published as] a pretended narrative of the Puritan times, intended to satirise the religion of the Kirk.'<sup>17</sup> Scott is here perhaps defending his father's innocent contribution to a novel that incurred Presbyterian displeasure.

Hogg thereby provides an important aspect of the documentary evidence of the novel that is nonetheless fictional. Furthermore, he draws attention to this creation through the auspices of the Editor who describes the actual commissioning process undertaken by Hogg himself. The Editor, in the final pages of the novel, tells us of the Sinner's 'fine old hand, extremely small and close' of which he has 'ordered the printer to procure a fac-simile of it to be bound in with the volume' (*Confessions* 174). The extract thus supplied is written by the hand of the Sinner and is both unusual and subversive. The handwriting itself confounds the neutrality of the printed text, offering an immediate connection between the reader and the anonymous author of the *Confessions*. The facsimile provided is clearly for the benefit of the sceptical reader, appearing to exist as proof of the veracity of the tale as well as providing an unsettling moment of stolen intimacy with a private and

hitherto secret diary. Reading such testimony might seem to implicate, rather than inform, the reader, made guilty by an irresistible intrusion into another's private business especially as the extract describes a moment near to the end of the Sinner's 'night of trial ... in this detested world' (*Confessions* 164). There is no mention of why the individual is on trial but there is a description of hellish tortures suffered by the Sinner. Intriguingly, the account of Wringhim's suffering is contradicted by his clear and steady hand, as evidenced by the facsimile itself. Hogg presents such conflicting evidence within a deliberate and contradictory framework of certainty and doubt.

Hogg's *Confessions*, published in 1824, could be described as an early and sophisticated contribution to the newly fashionable genre of confessional writing. Other significant contributions to this category included De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* in 1822 and Charles Lamb's musings or 'Confessions of a Drunkard', published first in the *Philanthropist* in 1813 and then later in the *London Magazine* in 1822. Often associated with the solipsistic authors of early romanticism, such writing in fact did have an older tradition. Earlier influential works included Rousseau's *Les Confessions de J.-J. Rousseau*, published in 1782, and the spiritual confessions of St. Augustine, AD 397-8, describing the sinful weaknesses of a young man and his eventual salvation. Interest in such works was increasing and, reflecting such tastes, *Blackwood's Magazine* had included several short 'confessional' pieces in 1823. These included Thomas Grattan's 'Confession of an English Glutton' and Henry Thomson's 'Confessions of a Footman.'<sup>18</sup> R. P. Gillies had published a novel of romantic love and loss entitled *Confessions of Sir Henry Longueville* as early as 1814. Hogg was a friend and associate of Gillies and had met De Quincey through the auspices of John Wilson and William Wordsworth. De Quincey also visited Edinburgh several times, having promised to write for *Blackwood's Magazine*.

While De Quincey and others were concerned with autobiography, Hogg's novel is different in scope, given that he was not describing his own spiritual experiences, though it is possible to suggest similarities between some of Wringhim's social blunderings and those of Hogg. In *The Romantic Art of Confession*, Susan Levin isolates three important elements in a confessional narrative

as opposed to plain autobiography: psychology, religion and language.<sup>19</sup> In Hogg's case, 'psychology' was not yet available as a definition for the workings of the mind, but he had extensive experience in describing fear, evil and retribution in terms of the supernatural. His complex depiction of the devil, in relation to Robert Wringhim's religious failings, is represented to us both through the apparent physical possession of Wringhim and through the language of his written confession.

In dealing with the subject of the supernatural, Hogg's reputation as a poet and author associated with magical and folkloric elements was both an advantage and a restriction. His later claim to have been 'king o' the mountain and fairy school a far higher ane nor your's' (*Anecdotes of Scott* 9) recognised Scott's persistent reluctance to support either the sceptical or the credulous school of belief in the supernatural. The *Confessions* show Hogg to be clear about the presence of evil, whether in human or diabolical form. By contrast, 'Wandering Willie's Tale' includes both rational explanation of the mysterious whistling and apparently irrefutable proof of Steenie Steenson's visit to Hell in his receipt. However, Hogg's construction of *Confessions* as a tale at once implausible and yet all too believable is beyond Scott.

The structure of Hogg's *Confessions* falls into two main parts: the 'Editor's Narrative' and the 'Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Sinner. Written by Himself.' After the 'Memoirs', the Editor returns to add a short account of his expedition to the grave of the suicide and describes the manner in which he obtained Wringhim's confession. His researches are spurred on by the 'extract from an authentic letter, published in *Blackwood's Magazine for August, 1823*' (*Confessions* 165) referred to earlier. Nonetheless, the Editor's judgement of the confession is still one of confusion and bewilderment. He writes 'Sure, you will say, it must be an allegory; or (as the writer calls it) a religious parable, showing the dreadful danger of self-righteousness?' (*Confessions* 165). This reasoning ignores the visceral presence of the supernatural in the shape of the devil, as well as the horrors such as multiple murder and probable rape, reported by and possibly perpetrated by Wringhim, focusing instead on the lesser human failing of an overbearing religious self-righteousness. The Editor then presents what he describes as a 'sequel' to the tale, assuring the reader that it 'is a thing so extraordinary, so unprecedented ... that if

there were not hundreds of living witnesses to attest the truth of it, I would not bid any rational being believe it' (*Confessions* 165). The reader shall find that the number of witnesses is a great deal smaller than 'hundreds' and that the archaeological excavation is not necessarily conclusive in uncovering the full explanation of the Sinner's plight. The Editor's unreliability has become obvious to the reader if not to himself.

Having failed, on behalf of the reader, to grasp the essence of the narrative, the Editor then admits defeat. 'With regard to the work itself, I dare not venture a judgement, for I do not understand it. I believe no person, man or woman, will ever peruse it with the same attention that I have done, and yet I do not comprehend the writer's drift' (*Confessions* 174). The reader must return to the text again to investigate more fully, and single-handedly, or otherwise accept the Editor's suggestion that Wringhim's tale is simply 'either dreaming or madness' (*Confessions* 175).

The difficulties encountered by the Editor are perhaps less evident to the reader. What might seem impenetrable to the Editor is possibly more familiar to the Sinner's audience especially in terms of the biblical language used from the outset of the narrative. Wringhim's early account of his life emphasises a devoutly religious upbringing, including his curious position as a son with two fathers, one of whom is unable to acknowledge him because to do so would invite moral disapproval from his Church and another who 'according to the flesh disclaimed all relation or connection with me, and all interest in me, save what the law compelled him to take' (*Confessions* 68). In this, Wringhim faintly resembles a Christ-like figure, in his enforced separation from his true father, God, and awkward upbringing in another man's family, that of his stepfather Joseph. He even describes himself as a 'minister of heaven' in the first paragraph of his 'private memoirs.' In this abundance of fathers, he is quite unlike Darsie Latimer of *Redgauntlet*.

The intimate details of Wringhim's early life are subsequently described in terms that admit no dissimulation. He reveals his earliest struggles with 'those days of depravity and corruption' (*Confessions* 69) at some length as if to do so negates them entirely. Whereas the sacrament of confession in the Roman Catholic faith does confer absolution, the only person who can grant this would be a priest. Interestingly,

Wringhim is confessing to lay readers and most probably to Protestant ones at that. Discussion of his early sins is followed by swift admission to the 'community of the just', or elected members of the Church and is just as bewildering to him as it appears to the reader: 'I was struck speechless, and could make no answer save by looks of surprise' (*Confessions* 79). Election, in Wringhim's case, confers everlasting redemption and acknowledgement of him as one of God's specially chosen people. To confirm his status, Wringhim emphasises that 'I was now a justified person ... my name written in the Lamb's book of life' (*Confessions* 79). Furthermore, this 'decree' cannot be altered. From the seeming security of being inscribed in the 'book of life', Wringhim almost immediately falls into the devil's actual possession in the following pages.

Wringhim makes no attempt to hide his troubled youthful and sinful self. In this, there are curious echoes of Rousseau in some of Wringhim's early confessional revelations, particularly in the candid avowals of error. At the very beginning of his *Confessions*, Rousseau announces 'Let the trumpet of judgement sound when it will, I will present myself with this book in my hand before the Supreme Judge. I will say boldly: Here is what I have done, what I have thought, what I was. I have told the good and the bad with equal frankness.'<sup>20</sup> With a degree of blinded self-awareness, Wringhim goes on to suggest after his reception into the elect that his 'tale ... must now be a relation of great and terrible actions, done in the might, and by the commission of heaven. Amen' (*Confessions* 78-9).

Having been elected through the workings of grace alone, Wringhim's next meeting is with a youth who resembles him in apparently every detail and who appears to acquiesce in Wringhim's spiritual superiority and 'exalted character' (*Confessions* 86). The ability of the mysterious youth to appear as an identical copy of Wringhim himself is explained in terms which recall Hogg's literary paper *The Spy*. There he described the process of becoming another by physical imitation and thereby 'ascertain the compass of their minds and thoughts' (*Spy* 4) of others. Adopting a physical likeness will guarantee an equal acquaintance with the mind of another person.

Wringhim's acquaintance with this youth will destroy him and his family as well as blight the community of Dalcastle. One of the final indications of the extent

to which evil has been allowed to multiply is in the introduction of Lawyer Linkum who unearths a forged charter granting full possession of various lands – Kipplerig and Easter Knockward – to Wringhim and thereby disinheriting Mrs Keeler and her daughters. Wringhim appears to be accompanied throughout by the youth, as a ‘friend and director’, though the friend is also believed to resemble Wringhim’s murdered brother. In attempting to uncover the facts behind the dispossession of the Keeler family, Wringhim discovers that he had ‘taken counsel, and got this supposed, old, false, and forged grant, raked up and new signed, to ruin the young lady’s family quite, so as to throw her entirely on myself for protection, and be wholly at my will’ (*Confessions* 125). Linkum’s behaviour shows how the corruption of justice may be achieved with apparent ease and the written word, though forged, is sufficient to counter all of Wringhim’s protestations. He states that ‘the evidences were against me, and of a nature not to be denied’ (*Confessions* 125).

It is also at this point that Wringhim realises that he has a physical double. He has been aware of this possibility before but he is now burdened by ‘heart-burnings, longings, and yearnings, that would not be satisfied ... I had a second self, who transacted business in my likeness, or else my body was at times possessed by a spirit over which it had no controul, and of whose actions my own soul was wholly unconscious’ (*Confessions* 125). His dissolution is accompanied by an inability to observe time passing. ‘I was under the greatest anxiety ... for of dates I could make nothing: one-half, or two-thirds of my time, seemed to me to be totally lost’ (*Confessions* 126).

Throughout the novel, the physical counterfeiting of Wringhim’s actual body is accompanied by Hogg’s presentation of various documents that are forged, as in the case of the legal deed, or otherwise unreliable. Initially, the Editor takes care to cite ‘tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant’ (*Confessions* 3) at the very beginning of his explanatory narrative and, in this way, conflates truth and error. Parish registers are genuine records whereas ‘tradition’ is unreliable. The Editor’s narrative very deliberately precedes ‘the private memoirs and confessions ... written by himself’ of the Sinner; such practices highlight the necessity for the reader to consider all the documents presented and produced in the literary publishing milieu of Edinburgh in the early nineteenth-century and to establish how far they may be

trusted. The failure of the novel to reach such readers in great numbers suggests that Hogg's approach was neither recognised nor necessarily reciprocated.<sup>21</sup>

In *Redgauntlet*, the reader gradually constructs an identity for Darsie Latimer based on the trail of information hidden in the text and slowly revealed through letters and oral tales such as 'Wandering Willie's Tale'. His identity is finally confirmed by a type of authority drawn from the supernatural rather than from written records. The male line of the Redgauntlet family is identified with an episode of 'legendary history' (*Redgauntlet* 299) which has blighted their fortunes and family. Neither is this curse confined to the male side. Lilius shows to Darsie 'five blood-specks' on her arm and describes them to him as 'a mark by which mysterious Nature has impressed, on an unborn infant, a record of its father's violent death and its mother's miseries' (*Redgauntlet* 299). In this way, Scott plays with the origin of authoritative identity and appears to privilege the type of authority exemplified by the supernatural inheritance of the Redgauntlet family.

In contrast, Hogg's *Confessions* questions our acceptance of the authority of documents without finding it necessary to superimpose an authority based on the supernatural. The Sinner begins his confession by stating that 'in the might of heaven I will sit down and write' (*Confessions* 67). His statement assumes that he is a member of the elect, confident in his righteous testimony without realizing that the reader has already assimilated the outline of his story in very different terms to those proposed by Wringhim.

A clear example of this follows in Wringhim's treatment of the minister's man, Barnet. Wringhim is accused by John Barnet of hypocrisy: 'he discovered some notorious lies that I had framed, and taxed me with them in such a manner that I could in nowise get off' (*Confessions* 69). Barnet laughs at Wringhim, describing his protests as 'sickan sublime and ridiculous sophistry' (*Confessions* 70). The struggle between Wringhim and Barnet ends with Barnet's dismissal from service and banishment. Barnet prefers to retain his freedom of thought. 'Auld John may dee a beggar in a hay barn, or at the back of a dike, but he sall aye be master o' his ain thoughts, an' gie them vent or no, as he likes' (*Confessions* 74). Oddly, this is a description of some of Wringhim's later miserable experiences except that Wringhim fails to save his own liberty of mind.<sup>22</sup>

Hogg made few comments on his novel *Confessions* but in his ‘Reminiscences of Former Days’ published in *Altrive Tales*, he describes it as ‘being a story replete with horrors, [and] after I had written it I durst not venture to put my name to it: so it was published anonymously, and of course did not sell very well’ (*Altrive Tales* 55). Hogg’s anonymously published novel was met with modest interest. Other works such as *Redgauntlet* and R.P. Gillies’ translation of Hoffmann’s *The Devil’s Elixir* were competing for attention and Hogg’s attempts to solicit Blackwood’s assistance in reviewing the novel were a failure even though his dedication to the Hon. William Smith, Lord Provost of Glasgow and magistrate might otherwise have sparked some interest. Perhaps perversely, Hogg wrote what he was not expected to write and neither the reviewers nor the Blackwoodians recognised the irony of the country boy explaining the supernatural in terms of religious fundamentalism and an obsession with election.

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<sup>1</sup> J. G. Lockhart, *Adam Blair* (Edinburgh: Mercat P, 1996) 55. Subsequent references will be in parentheses. Blair’s mistake is described in terms that recall the White Lady of Avenel from Scott’s *The Monastery*.

<sup>2</sup> James Hogg, ‘Mr Adamson of Laverhope’, *The Shepherd’s Calendar*, ed. Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995) 41. Subsequent references will be in parentheses as (‘Adamson’).

<sup>3</sup> See Sigmund Freud, ‘The Uncanny’, 1919, trans. and ed. James Strachey, *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, vol. 17 (London: Vintage, 2001) for further discussion of instability and the uncanny. See also Ian Duncan, *Scott’s Shadow* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007) 185-87. Duncan cites Freud in his analysis of disturbance and instability particularly with regard to Hogg and the uncanny. He suggests that ‘the cultural uncanny signifies the disruption of a temporality of development by the recurrence of a superseded stage’ rather as the Jacobites attempted to overthrow the established British government. Scott’s use of the bodach glas in *Waverley* would fit this description.

<sup>4</sup> P. D. Garside, J.E. Belanger, and S.A. Ragaz, *British Fiction, 1800-1829: A Database of Production, Circulation & Reception*, designer A.A. Mandal, <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk>> [4 Oct. 2007]. See letter from Archibald Constable to Robert Cadell, 9 Sept. 1823, National Library of Scotland, MS 320, f. 161; cited in ‘Publishing Papers’ for Walter Scott’s *Redgauntlet* (1824), DBF: 1824A083.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Owen Rees to James Hogg, 25 Oct. 1823, in Longman Archives, Longman I, 101, no. 388b; cited in ‘Publishing Papers’ for James Hogg’s *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), DBF: 1824A050.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Longman & Co. to James Hogg, 26 Feb. 1824, in Longman Archives, Longman I, 101, no. 429b; cited in ‘Publishing Papers’ for James Hogg’s *Confessions* (1824), DBF: 1824A050.

<sup>7</sup> Scott, *Letters*, ed. Grierson, 7: 357-58.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, eds., G. A. M. Wood and David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997)

11. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>9</sup> James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2001) 165. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>10</sup> *Monthly Review* 2nd ser. 104 (June 1824): 199.

<sup>11</sup> Mary A. Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 13. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>12</sup> The term is De Quincey's and describes letters that are best left unopened and certainly unread. See Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, ed. Grevel Lindop, vol. 2 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000) 160.

<sup>13</sup> The two volumes of the Rev. Robert Wodrow's work were first published in Edinburgh, 1721-22, and later used by Hogg as one of his sources for the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*.

<sup>14</sup> See *An Elegy in Memory of that Valiant Champion, Sir Robert Grierson, of Lag* (Glasgow, 1771). This is Satan's lament for the Laird of Lag: 'No man dare say he did repent/ Of the good service done to me; /For as he liv'd so did he die; /He bore my image on his brow, /My service he did still avow' (*Elegy* 4).

<sup>15</sup> James Hogg, 'A Letter to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq. on his Original Mode of editing Church History', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 2 (Dec. 1817): 305-09.

<sup>16</sup> David Groves, 'The Frontispiece to James Hogg's *Confessions*,' *Notes and Queries* ns 37.4 (Dec. 1990): 421-22.

<sup>17</sup> W. Minto, ed., *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*, 2 vols. (London: Osgood, 1892) 69.

<sup>18</sup> 'The Confessions of an English Glutton', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 13 (Jan. 1823): 86-93. 'The Confessions of a Footman', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (Nov. 1823): 590-600.

<sup>19</sup> Susan M. Levin, *The Romantic Art of Confession* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998) 2.

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, trans. Angela Scholar and ed. Patrick Coleman (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 5.

<sup>21</sup> Garside notes that the novel had sold only 326 copies by June 1825 and 5 further copies by June 1826. See Hogg, *Private Memoirs and Confessions* lxxv.

<sup>22</sup> Barnet's defence of himself is couched in legal terms. He declares at one point 'I wish to lead a proof' (*Confessions* 72). His audacity in co-opting the language and methods of the law fails to prevent the loss of his livelihood.

## Chapter Six: Scott: Reviewing the Fragments of Belief, 1824-1830

### 6.1 In Pursuit of the Supernatural

These final chapters will suggest that Scott and Hogg continue to explore the possibilities of the existence of the supernatural in some of their shorter tales and that Scott, in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq.*, 1830, publishes a selective survey of his library's material in order to establish some general explanations for belief in the supernatural. His conclusions, however, are not definitive and closer reading of the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* reveals several starting points for further debate.

In 1824, the publication of *Redgauntlet* by Scott and the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* by Hogg marked particular moments of personal achievement. While Hogg's novel sold poorly and was generally unappreciated at the time, *Redgauntlet* was rather more successful. John Sutherland, in his 1995 biography of Scott, considers that it was 'the last great novel Scott wrote ... [with] its rich vein of introspection and retrospection' (*Life* 270). To this judgement, it might be added that several circumstantial factors, not least the turmoil in the publishing world precipitated by the spectacular collapse of Hurst, Robinson and Co. in London, in January 1826, increased the likelihood of Scott's literary career ending in disappointment. The unexpected financial failure of Constable and James Ballantyne followed that of Hurst, Robinson and inevitably affected Scott as a co-partner of Ballantyne. Arguably, Scott's career as an author was also hampered.

In *Scott's Last Edition*, Jane Millgate remarks that towards 'the end of 1825 ... the whole of the British publishing industry was shaken by a crisis of faith and capital'.<sup>1</sup> This connection between 'faith' and 'capital' as one of interdependent collapse is an intriguing one. In the first stages of financial crisis, experimentation and risk-taking tend to vanish. Confidence, or faith, whether in public or private enterprise, is generally shaken. In the field of publishing, the remarkable success of decorative annuals and gift-books, despite financial constraints on the part of the book-buying public, indicated a retreat to poetry and prose best described as conventional in style rather than challenging. In the next chapter, I will discuss

Hogg's contributions to various annuals and suggest that the restrictions placed on his writing for this genre did not necessarily challenge his habitual use of the supernatural. He was able to construct a specific role for it within his tales where it functions as a vehicle for religious revelation as well as the restitution of justice, particularly when established and official structures such as the Church of Scotland, or law-courts, seem unable to provide such remedies.

Returning to Scott, it is my contention that periods of fracture also provide an opportunity for the discussion of alternative beliefs, particularly within print. Scott's later venture, the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, might not have been published without the opportunity provided by a different publishing market that emerged after the financial crash of 1826 and which became in some ways more receptive to belief in the supernatural as a significant part of recorded human experience. Scott's choice of supernatural material was largely derived from the antiquarian sources in his library. He cites examples of the supernatural from historical and legal documents as well as others based on personal witness in the *Letters on Demonology*. These categories of official and unofficial material of research into the supernatural are made to seem equally valid by virtue of Scott's alignment of them.

In keeping with ideas of disruption to the state of being, whether national or personal, Scott noted in his journal on 14 December 1825 that 'Affairs [are] very bad in the money market in London. It must come here and I have far too many engagements not to feel it.'<sup>2</sup> He records his premonitions of disaster if not outright ruin and such forebodings were borne out by the events that would damage Scott's career as anonymous and autonomous author. To resolve the crisis and retain his reputation as an honourable man, Scott eventually agreed to a deed of trust to repay the creditors in full. The various debts accrued were about £121,000.<sup>3</sup> In order to repay this, Scott opted to continue with various projects that had been under discussion or contract such as his *Life of Napoleon*, begun in 1825, as well as the ambitious plans for a collected edition of the Waverley Novels.

It was within this immensely difficult environment that proposals for a collected and annotated edition of the Waverley Novels, with the working title of Scott's *magnum opus*,<sup>4</sup> came to fruition under Cadell rather than Constable, who had

originally suggested such an idea to Scott as early as March 1823 (Millgate, *Scott's Last Edition* 4). Constable's bankruptcy had resulted in his usurpation by Cadell as Scott's publisher; and, in the circumstances, Scott thought that such an edition would be 'a mine of wealth' (*Journal* 398). Cadell expected that the eventual forty-eight volumes would pay off substantial debts through reaching a mass market of new buyers and he revised initial predictions for the print-run of the first volume from 7,000 to 20,000. Scott, whose commercial brain was still attuned to the prospects of finding additional potential readers, and the necessity of doing so, became an author renewed by these challenges. His potential market included those who had not been able to afford to buy the Waverley Novels in earlier years as well as those who were simply too young when his work was first published.

Seen in these terms, the literary context for both Scott's and Hogg's productions had changed substantially. While, as Millgate argues, the status of the novel in terms of genre was significantly enhanced by the publishing phenomenon of the Waverley Novels, in retrospect, the collected edition became something of a static monument to an earlier literary glory. Millgate writes:

What Scott could not have known was that in seeking to impose on his own career the order of the collected edition, and in providing that edition with its accompanying authorial commentary, he was both giving a new dignity to the novel as a genre and affecting the way subsequent novelists would conceive of their own works viewed as a cumulative sequence. (*Scott's Last Edition* 114)

I would also suggest that Scott's portrayal of the supernatural within the Waverley Novels was necessarily regularised, even defused, by his imposition of such 'order' and 'authorial commentary'. The result was that Scott's treatment of the supernatural became irrevocably associated with rational scepticism when in fact his writing frequently includes an acceptance of irrational events. Scholars have continued to assume that Scott consistently represents supernatural phenomena as part of an explicable and rational world.<sup>5</sup> In fact, as this thesis argues, the actual texts do not wholly bear this interpretation.

Scott's additional notes and apparatus transformed the Magnum project into something much more than a re-issued series of novels. It was the consummation of his earlier editorial career as an antiquarian intent on establishing the authority of particular ballads. His own work was now subject to the smoothing out of irregularity and difficulty. Without intervening noticeably in the texts to alter supernatural elements, he added explanations of supernatural events in his introductions and notes. These inevitably tone down the original effects.

The Waverley Novels came to print in an edition that had been influenced by the vogue for annuals and gift-books. Each novel had an engraved frontispiece and title vignette as well as additional material in the shape of Scott's notes to hook a substantial segment of the reading public whose tastes and sentiments had been informed by a very different style of writing. Scott's edition conformed to the expectations of a rather different audience, interested in reading for self-improvement as much as for simple amusement or entertainment. It included a significantly evangelical portion of readers, increasingly conscious of propriety and unlikely to consider the supernatural as suitable matter for discussion unless framed in terms that emphasised its obsolescence. It is difficult to appraise the extent of Cadell's influence in this except to note that his hostile response to Scott's two short stories, 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror' and 'The Tapestry Chamber' as unsuitable for the second series of *The Chronicles of the Canongate*, would prevent their appearance there. Cadell's difficulty with them may have been related to Scott's deployment of supernatural material without reflecting or fully conforming to enlightened ideas of progress in his depictions of ghosts and spectral visitors.

The financial crash changed Scott into an author willing to consider every favourable opportunity of publishing his material. Equally, Hogg's publication of the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and *Queen Hynde* in 1824 had met with little success and may even have prevented him from seeking to publish either novels or epic poetry again. Hogg returned to literary magazines as a possible new source of income just as the demand for such material was increasing and by 1831 he had amassed an impressive number of contributions to a variety of magazines, gift-books and annuals. This was in contrast to the difficulties of the established publishing industry, affected now by public unrest and political agitation

for the reform of Parliament, and exemplified by the delay in publishing Hogg's *A Queer Book*. Blackwood had printed this in 1831 but actually delayed publication until May 1832.<sup>6</sup> The years between 1824 and 1834<sup>7</sup> were filled with the struggle to renew success for two authors approaching the final years of their careers with increasingly heavier responsibilities and with the challenge of adjusting their material to the demands of new readers.

This chapter will now examine two of Scott's short tales, solicited for publication by the editor of *The Keepsake* for 1828. Their appearance in the pages of a relatively lightweight literary annual may have contributed to their subsequent critical neglect in contrast to 'Wandering Willie's Tale' or 'The Two Drovers' for example. However, closer examination of them reveals Scott's understanding of the supernatural to be rather more complex than has been generally allowed and suggests that he was far from confident that the supernatural, whether witchcraft or demonology, had been superseded by 'modern' thinking.

### **6.2 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror' and 'The Tapestry Chamber' in *The Keepsake*, 1828**

In his journal entry for 30 January 1828, Scott records a visit from Mr. Charles Heath, sole proprietor of *The Keepsake*, with Heath's proposal that Scott become editor of that annual, described in fulsome terms by its publishers Hurst Chance & Co. as both 'popular as well as splendid'.<sup>8</sup> Scott refused to do so on the financial terms outlined by Heath which he felt were too meagre and instead offered to contribute 'a trifle for nothing or ... an article for a round price' (*Journal* 421). Following the visit from Heath, Scott realised that he already had some work that might suit that annual and these were the several shorter tales originally written for publication in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*. Previously, on 27 August 1827, Scott had written to Cadell that 'I have as many small pieces as I think would make one or even two volumes of the *Chronicles* ... they may be printed as Second Series' (Scott, *Letters* 10: 272). However, these were not well received by Cadell or Ballantyne. Undaunted, Scott now considered that 'these rejected parts of the *Chronicles* which Cadell and Ballantyne criticized so severely ... might well enough make up a trifle' (*Journal* 421) for an annual. In the event, he would publish 'My Aunt Margaret's

Mirror', 'The Tapestryed Chamber' and 'The Death of the Laird's Jock' in *The Keepsake* for 1828 as well as 'A Highland Anecdote' in *The Keepsake* for 1832.

Scott's prestige and status is abundantly clear in *The Keepsake*. All of his tales in the annuals are accompanied by lavish illustrations and 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror' by the Author of Waverley, having been scorned by Cadell and Ballantyne, appears on page one as the most important of all the pieces selected. Other authors included Thomas Moore, Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Shelley and Lockhart as well as Mrs Hemans, Miss Landon and Mary Shelley, listed as 'the author of *Frankenstein*'. The 'polite' reading public of the early 1800s were accustomed to triple decker novels often with close print and minimal illustrations. Annuals, however, quickly came to be associated with expensive and highly decorative covers enclosing shorter miscellaneous reading material. Scott notes how he 'amused myself by converting the Tale of the Mysterious Mirror into "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror", design'd for Heath's What dye call it' [*sic*] on Sunday 13 April 1828 (*Journal* 457). It was relaxation rather than his customary literary work. Scott adds that the 'tale is a good one and is said actually to have happend [*sic*] to Lady Primrose, my great grandmother having attended her sister on the occasion' (*Journal* 457). This comment in Scott's *Journal* establishes a connection between his family history and supernatural visions, introducing the possibility that otherwise apocryphal events might actually be true.

This connection was developed more forcefully when the tale of 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror' was reprinted in the Magnum Opus edition of Scott's work.<sup>9</sup> He added a preface to the tale describing an appalling murder in Scott's immediate family. His aunt, Margaret Swinton, met her death unexpectedly when Scott was nine years old. She was attacked and killed by her 'female attendant who had been attached to her person for half a lifetime' (Magnum 292-93). The subsequent verdict was that of insanity but the horror and shock of such a crime were not necessarily lessened by the provision of a medical reason for it. Scott cannot relate this incident 'without a painful re-awakening of perhaps the first images of horror that the scenes of real life stamped on my mind' (Magnum 293). This perpetual connection between 'images of horror' and 'real life' is one that has been compounded by his aunt's actual murder and his memories of her supernatural tales.

To this effect, his other memories of her include one that is both disturbing and eerily apposite. In his introduction to the tale, Scott, clearly speaking as himself, relates how ‘this good spinster had in her composition a strong vein of the superstitious, and was pleased, among other fancies, to read alone in her chamber by a taper fixed in a candlestick which she had formed out of a human skull’ (Magnum 293). This raises several possibly unanswerable questions such as from where did Aunt Margaret get a skull? Were skulls so freely available that they might be used in this unexpected way? Scott’s later collections of the ephemera of witchcraft clearly owe something of their origin to the habits of his relations. Scott would be aware too that elderly women were at one time often commonly pursued as witches and that possessing a skull could then easily be misconstrued as witchcraft and lead to prosecution and death.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of Freud’s later definition of the uncanny, the earliest intrusion of supernatural horror into the domestic setting of Aunt Margaret’s home occurs through the young Scott’s memory of the human skull candlestick, alongside other ‘superstitious ... fancies,’ and this is then followed by the subsequent murder of his aunt. The irruption of evil into the otherwise secure and familiar setting of Aunt Margaret’s home perfectly encapsulates the sense of *unheimlich*, literally translated from the German as ‘unhomely’.

In Scott’s early experience, the supernatural could not be separated easily from human life. His memory of his aunt’s fate, in itself barely credible, may well have affected Scott’s attitude to the unfathomable nature of some of the supernatural stories he listened to, collected and preserved. The conventional view of Scott with regard to supernatural episodes in his work is that he always provides some rational explanation for mysterious events. An example of this is when Aunt Margaret’s skull candlestick is seen to spin around on the mantelpiece of the chimney, fall to the floor and then continue moving about in her apartment. Scott remarks that the reason for this was easily found. ‘Rats abounded in the ancient building ... and one of these had managed to ensconce itself within her favourite *memento mori*’ (Magnum 293). Nonetheless, the tale that follows is not given similar explanation.

In ‘My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror’, Aunt Margaret clearly belongs to an age when an acceptance of the supernatural was part of the fabric of life and after-life.

She explains how 'I have a sense of superstition about me, which I do not wish to part with. It is a feeling which separates me from this age, and links me with that to which I am hastening ... I do not love that it should be dispelled. It soothes my imagination, without influencing my reason or conduct.'<sup>11</sup> Aunt Margaret appears to be arguing for the importance of the supernatural as a vital link between generations and even families. Her comments are prompted by the discovery of a headstone bearing the name of 'Margaret Bothwell', an ancestor of hers buried over two hundred years ago. Significantly, the headstone has been disinterred by speculative builders, eager to develop the lands around the old chapel and thereby active despoilers of the past history of the Bothwell family.

Scott's own sentiments might seem to tally closely with the narrator, given his feeling of belonging to a previous age with different standards. The narrator and Aunt Margaret continue to discuss their position on the existence of the supernatural, comparing her fondness for 'the twilight of illusion' rather than 'the steady light of reason' ('Mirror' 53). Her nephew suggests, somewhat critically, that it is only 'imagination' that is responsible for confounding 'visions' with 'reality' ('Mirror' 53). Aunt Margaret, however, responds with a tale based on what mirrors can reveal to those unafraid to peer into the

blank black front of a large mirror in a room dimly lighted, and where the reflection of the candle seems rather to lose itself in the deep obscurity of the glass, than to be reflected back again into the apartment ('Mirror' 54).

In this way, mirrors may operate as a repository of images captured from otherwise hidden scenes of human existence and then display them on the command of an adept. This uncanny possibility is the basis for the following tale. Aunt Margaret describes how

that space of inky darkness seems to be a field for Fancy to play her revels in. She may call up other features to meet us, instead of the reflection of our own; or, as in the spells of Hallowe'en, which we learned in childhood, some unknown form may be seen peeping over our shoulder ('Mirror' 54).

Aunt Margaret's tale, it transpires, was handed down to her 'by tradition from [her] grandmother' ('Mirror' 54). Scott's version will be the first written account. The tale begins with a description of Lady Bothwell, and her younger sister Lady Forester, the unhappy wife of Sir Philip Forester. Through the portal of a mirror, they learn of the attempt of the faithless husband, Sir Philip, to commit bigamy while abroad in Rotterdam. This event will be relayed to them through the services of an adept and the narrator describes how Doctor Baptista Damiotti, reputedly from Padua, 'made use of charms and unlawful arts in order to obtain success in his practice' ('Mirror' 61). Damiotti specialises in telling fortunes for clients who visit his apartment in Edinburgh. His magical mirror is housed above an altar that also displays 'the usual implements of sorcery ... two naked swords laid crosswise; a large open book, which they conceived to be a copy of the Holy Scriptures, but in a language to them unknown; and ... a human skull' ('Mirror' 66-67). Holy and unholy relics are mingled here, compounding the unease of the spectators in the tale as they are forced to rely on a 'foreign fellow' ('Mirror' 70) for 'knowledge by mysterious means' ('Mirror' 69).

The mirror slowly reveals the gathering of a bridal party in a Protestant Church on the continent of Europe. Sir Philip is discovered attempting to marry another woman and is only prevented by a party of officers with swords drawn. The images disperse after seven minutes: 'the fumes again mixed together, and dissolved gradually from observation ... the front of the mirror reflected nothing save the blazing torches' that illuminate the Edinburgh apartment ('Mirror' 69).

Having re-told the story, the narrator and Aunt Margaret continue to discuss the possibility of trickery by Damiotti rather than supernatural agency in conjuring visions. The narrator suggests that it 'remained a possibility ... that by some secret and speedy communication the artist might have received early intelligence of that incident' and that Doctor Damiotti may have been skilled in staging 'a scene of phantasmagoria' ('Mirror' 72). These rational explanations are all possible. However, the narrator then proceeds to remark that nonetheless 'there were so many difficulties in assigning a natural explanation that, to the day of her death, she [Lady Bothwell] remained in great doubt on the subject, and much disposed to cut the Gordian knot by admitting the existence of supernatural agency' ('Mirror' 72). The

question is essentially left unanswered and Scott returns again to the same problem in another tale, 'The Tapestryed Chamber,' published within the same *Keepsake* for 1829.

In this tale, 'The Tapestryed Chamber, or the Lady in the Sacque'<sup>12</sup> Scott describes his tale as one of those 'particular class of stories which turns on the marvellous' ('Chamber' 76). This locates his ghost story within the tradition of Walpole and Lewis rather than Radcliffe. Scott emphasises the particular dramatic advantages enjoyed by the oral story-teller when compared to his situation as author of a 'narrative ... given from the pen' ('Chamber' 76) and suggests that the power and authority of his tale is rather more certain when related by a 'gifted narrator ... [with] a decaying taper, and amidst the solitude of a half-lighted apartment' ('Chamber' 76). These remarks conclude with the promise that the ghost story will be one 'of supernatural terror' ('Chamber' 76). However, Scott proceeds to introduce an unlikely victim, General Richard Browne, lately returned from the American War of Independence. That war was fought from 1775 to 1781 and places Scott's tale in recent history for his readers, rather than the distant past. Browne is described as a briskly energetic traveller and 'honest' soldier ('Chamber' 78). His experiences of the new world, however, have changed him greatly and his face is no longer immediately recognisable because 'war, with its fatigues and its wounds, had made a great alteration' ('Chamber' 79). This physical change in his appearance suggests that his body, and possibly his mind, have been weakened by warfare and are more susceptible to the intrusion of supernatural experience.

Scott describes Browne's travels through England and his eventual arrival at a picturesque English country town where he is able to renew his former friendship with an old school-friend, now in possession of Woodville Castle, resembling an 'ancient feudal fortress' with a 'modern gothic lodge' ('Chamber' 78). Frank, Lord Woodville, is the host who welcomes Browne eagerly and promises 'a comfortable old-fashioned room' ('Chamber' 79). General Browne is a distinguished guest and confers additional status and prestige to his host. It was 'the delight of Lord Woodville to conduce to the display of the high properties of his recovered friend ... every word marked alike the brave officer and the sensible man, who retained possession of his cool judgement under the most imminent dangers ... one who had

proved himself possessed of an uncommon portion of personal courage' ('Chamber' 80). Scott's own respect for military men was enthusiastic and long-standing. His eldest son, Walter, had been commissioned into the 18th Regiment of Hussars in 1819, at great expense, although Scott's description of Browne's military virtues might be thought to hint at the ideal rather than the actual experience of military life, given the existence of Scott's letters to his son that objected strongly to gaming and other regimental vices.<sup>13</sup> By contrast, Lord Woodville's entertainment of his guests is depicted in terms of the utmost sedate respectability. 'The hospitality stopped within the limits of good order: music, in which the young lord was a proficient, succeeded to the circulation of the bottle: cards and billiards ... were in readiness: but the exercise of the morning required early hours, and not long after eleven o'clock the guests began to retire to their several apartments' ('Chamber' 80). It is a picture of regulated and polite restraint with the emphasis on healthy pursuits rather than habits of vice or immorality.

General Browne is shown to a chamber that appears to exemplify life at Woodville Castle, containing both ancient furniture and opulent modern furnishings albeit with an 'air of gloom in the tapestry hangings' ('Chamber' 80). The General, however, interprets this only as 'venerable antiquity' ('Chamber' 81) and anticipates 'a luxurious night's rest' ('Chamber' 81). His experiences of that night, however, are not immediately revealed to the reader. The military hero suffers the indignity of being terrified by the 'horrible spectre' of an old woman and only eventually confesses as much to the younger Lord Woodville ('Chamber' 85). Browne is careful to stress that his experience is not that 'of a weak-minded, superstitious fool, who suffered his own imagination to delude and bewilder him' ('Chamber' 83). This distinction between himself and more credulous subjects is vital in order to establish his persona as a truthful witness to the reality of the threatening apparition whose appearance bore 'the fixed features of a corpse [retaining] the traces of the vilest and most hideous passions' ('Chamber' 84).

His host, Lord Woodville, is struck by the General's 'deep air of conviction' and 'never once asked him if he was sure he did not dream of the apparition, nor suggested any of the possibilities by which it is fashionable to explain apparitions into vagaries of the fancy, or deceptions of the optic nerves' ('Chamber' 86). Scott

appears here to be resisting rational explanations of his supernatural tale, rather to the contrary of what might be expected. General Browne also makes a sharp distinction between his first encounter with the 'fiendish hag' ('Chamber' 85) and his subsequent terrors in that he 'knew the last to be deceptions of my own fancy and over-excited nerves' as he waited anxiously for dawn ('Chamber' 85). This contrast is drawn specifically between the two types of supernatural experience, one of which is actual and the other fanciful or imaginary.

The solution to the puzzle is contained within Lord Woodville's family gallery where a portrait is discovered of an old lady in seventeenth-century dress. It is 'the picture of a wretched ancestress' of Woodville and 'there can remain no longer any doubt of the horrible reality of your apparition' ('Chamber' 88). Woodville verifies Browne's experience and is now convinced of his own error, announcing to Browne that he was until 'yesterday morning a complete sceptic on the subject of supernatural appearances' ('Chamber' 87). He will now give orders for the Tapestry Chamber 'to be unmantled and the door built up' after listening to the report of Browne's spectral visitor ('Chamber' 88).

This tale seeks to establish that while there might be rational explanations for some seemingly spectral visits, not all can be accounted for as fanciful dreams or optical illusions. Scott's initial emphasis on the manly bravery of General Browne is followed by descriptions of his distracted flight from the room, 'huddling on my clothes with the most careless haste ... to seek in the open air some relief to my nervous system, shaken as it was by this horrible rencounter ... from the other world' ('Chamber' 86).

Following from the tale of 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror', there are clearly connections between mirrors and portraits as potential portals to the past and Scott appears to be suggesting that traffic is not necessarily one-way. We may see ourselves reflected within mirrors or catch glimpses of family resemblances and even under certain circumstances relive events associated with those images. Notably, Scott's construction of this tale includes several possible explanations for the appearance of the wicked ancestor before General Browne without choosing any one of them. Instead, he appears to refuse any explanation other than the irrational one of actual supernatural horror.

There was an earlier and shorter version of 'The Tapestry Chamber' published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in September 1818, titled 'Story of An Apparition.'<sup>14</sup> It is different, in being more succinct with less detail. The *Blackwood's* house style was one of robust and pithy contributions and the author commends the tale in a wry manner to 'Mr Editor', pointing out that it will 'probably afford more amusement than the Welsh superstitions you published some time ago, which were rather heavy' ('Apparition' 705). The narrator begins with the promise of 'a very singular adventure' of a Colonel D. at a house party in the north of England. The tale is set in 1737 and the entertainment consists of several rounds of storytelling among the assembled company, with the narrator noting the gradual increase of 'superstitious impressions which were gaining force by each successive recital of prodigies' ('Apparition' 705). These 'prodigies' or spectacular events are not made explicit to the reader, however, and the narrator is rather off-hand with the conventions of his tale, despatching Colonel D. after supper '(as the reader will probably anticipate)' off to 'a chamber at a great distance ... which bore evident remarks of having been newly opened up, after remaining long unoccupied' ('Apparition' 706). He continues in this way, remarking that he 'had not heard whether there was tapestry in the room or not ... but one thing is certain, that the room looked as dreary as any tapestry could have made it, even if it had been worked on purpose by Mrs Ann Radcliffe herself' ('Apparition' 706).

The tone of the narrator is casual, even laconic, and relates how Colonel D. is then visited by a woman in 'ancient silk robes' in whose 'countenance ... some of the worst passions of the living were blended with the cadaverous appearance of the dead' ('Apparition' 706). The terrifying experience is followed on the next day by a visit to his host's 'gallery of pictures' ('Apparition' 707) where one of the oldest family portraits is of 'the detestable phantom that stared me out of my senses last night' ('Apparition' 707). The tale ends with the bare revelation that there was 'a certain tradition' ('Apparition' 707) of haunting associated with the chamber in which Colonel D. slept and omits the mention of any plausible reasons for the visit of the 'accursed spectre' ('Apparition' 706). 'The Tapestry Chamber' is the later version of the 'Story of An Apparition' and Scott expands this tale to include various rational possibilities that might explain supernatural experiences while appearing to

refuse all of them. This is quite contrary to what Scott is generally assumed to believe and represent.<sup>15</sup>

### **6.3 Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq., 1830**

In his conclusion to *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, Scott describes his experience as a guest ‘then past middle life’<sup>16</sup> in the haunted apartment of Dunvegan Castle. His weariness precludes any nervous wakefulness and he sleeps soundly. He draws a parallel between his own diminished vigour and the possible life-cycle of the supernatural in literature:

From this I am taught to infer that tales of ghosts and demonology are out of date at forty years and upwards ... the present fashion of the world seems to be ill suited for studies of this fantastic nature; and the most ordinary mechanic has learning sufficient to laugh at the figments which in former times were believed by persons far advanced in the deepest knowledge of the age. (*Demonology* 389)

Scott apologises here in the final pages of his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* for his continued interest in a subject – the supernatural – that has been superseded by both ‘fashion’ and advances in ‘learning.’ In keeping with ideas of Scott’s impervious attitude to the supernatural, the passage appears to condemn and ridicule superstition as well as belief in ‘ghosts and demonology.’ In his final statement, Scott writes of ‘the follies of our fathers’ and hopes that ‘the grosser faults of our ancestors are now out of date’ (*Demonology* 389-90). These sentiments have been understood to indicate that Scott was not a believer in the varied manifestations of the supernatural, unlike Hogg for example, and that his distaste with such ideas is expressed by his characterisation of such ‘grosser faults’ as primitive and objectionable. However, such interpretation can be misleading. Scott continues by condemning the violent persecution of supposed witches. He hopes that

whatever follies the present race may be guilty of, the sense of humanity is too universally spread to permit them to think

of tormenting witches till they confess what is impossible,  
and then burning them for their pains (*Demonology* 390)

His criticism refers equally to the cruelty with which they were pursued as to humanity's mistaken belief in witchcraft.

Scott's reference to 'present fashion of the world' however does indicate an author whose commercial acumen had not deserted him. While engaged in writing and editing the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, Scott was also preparing for his collected edition of the Waverley Novels and busily constructing an extensive apparatus of notes and comments on his use of the supernatural in those novels that would suit the expectation of 'the most ordinary mechanic' without the necessity of having to revise or excise the persistent supernatural motifs and incidents in his work. Thus the Waverley Novels with their newly sceptical editorial material came to be accepted as clear textual proof of Scott's rational treatment of the supernatural. This section will seek to review the development and progress of Scott's interest in all matters uncanny and suggest that the conception of Scott as an author with firm views on the impossibility of the existence of the supernatural is inadequate.

Evidence of Scott's obsession with the supernatural exists within the catalogue of the Library of Abbotsford, largely compiled by George Huntly Gordon, as noted earlier. Scott had amassed a substantial collection of material on witchcraft and demonology by the late 1820s. Some extent of the scale of Scott's collection can be gathered from the length of the section in the catalogue (Press O) which is titled 'Miscellanies, including Books on Witchcraft, Demonology, Apparitions, Astrology, and the Occult Sciences; Books of Drollery and Humour; Lives of Malefactors, Imposters &c. Real and Fictitious; with a few Works on History and Antiquities'. It extends to 33 pages and lists approximately 162 titles.<sup>17</sup> It should also be noted that the librarians of the Faculty of Advocates are currently preparing a revised edition of the catalogue of the books at Abbotsford and may uncover further material. The accumulation of this rich hoard of material alongside his early education, subsequent legal training and extensive correspondence with antiquarians and other scholarly editors contributed to an original approach to the supernatural. Publication of the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* can be seen as both a record of Scott's

interest in such matters over a lifetime and the vehicle by which he attempted to establish some grounds for belief, or otherwise, in the existence of the supernatural.

Scott referred to ‘the Witch corner of my library’ (Scott, *Letters* 10: 245) in correspondence with T. Crofton Croker. The second series of Croker’s edition of *The Fairy Legends*, 1828 was dedicated to Sir Walter Scott and Scott promised him ‘a great deal more’ (Scott, *Letters* 10: 245) of such matters if he should visit Abbotsford.

Near the end of his life, Scott compiled another shorter record of his library and antiquarian collections at Abbotsford. The manuscript has now been published in full as *Reliquiæ Troscosienses or the Gabions of the Late Jonathan Oldbuck Esq. of Monkbarns*. It is notable that Scott specifically included some of his collection of works of demonology. These included Bekker’s *Monde Enchanté*, 1699; *De La Lycanthropie, Transformation, Et Extase Des Sorciers* by J. De Nynauld, 1615; *The Discovery of Witches...now published by Mathew Hopkins Witchfinder*, London, 1647; *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits, Fully evinced by the unquestionable Histories of Apparitions... Written for the Conviction of Saducees & Infidels* by Richard Baxter, 1691 and *A defensative against the poyson of supposed Prophecies: Not hitherto confuted by the penne of any man, which being grounded, eyther uppon the warrant and authority of olde paynted bookes, expositions of Dreames, Oracles, Revelations, Invocations...or any other kinde of pretended knowledge... &c.*, by the Earl of Northampton, 1583.<sup>18</sup> In this last volume, cited by Scott, the Earl of Northampton associates ‘great disorder in the common wealth’ with unchallenged belief in the ‘warrant and authority’ of old books. The idea that authority might be vested in seemingly ancient printed sources (‘pretended knowledge’) illuminates Scott’s own interest in determining the possibilities of the existence of the supernatural through written evidence.

The actual compilation and publication of the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* was prompted by Scott’s illness. He suffered the first of several cerebral seizures on 15 February 1830. His father had died after a stroke on 12 April 1799, aged 69, and Scott did not disguise his apprehension that his life would be ended by illness in the same way.<sup>19</sup> At the time of his stroke he was preparing notes for the magnum edition of the Waverley Novels and writing *Count Robert of Paris*. In order

to relieve Scott from his anxieties, Lockhart suggested that Scott undertake the publication of a small edition on the subject of witchcraft for Murray's 'Family Library' from the abundance of material readily available to Scott in his library. It was to be a distraction from his more arduous literary work for Cadell and thought likely to prove an engaging project to assist Scott's recuperation.

Scott, however, appears to have found the volume more difficult to complete than expected and made various complaints in his letters and journal about it. The reasons for his difficulty could be related to his poor state of health but the subject matter itself was less straightforward than might have been expected. Scott's attitude towards the supernatural had long been one of persistent doubt about the possibilities of its existence combined with an inability, or refusal, to accept completely that witchcraft, second sight and necromancy were signs of human delusion rather than supernatural powers. To resolve the question, he sought again for definitive proof through the written testimony of witnesses by delving into the archives of his own construction at Abbotsford.

Editing some of his collection of material for publication in the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* would have necessarily required him to revisit his extensive and contradictory sources and settle on one belief or the other. His correspondence with Joanna Baillie illustrates his fascination with the literary possibilities of the supernatural and reveals his abiding interest in the most challenging aspects of supernatural belief. He wrote to Baillie on 21 July 1827 in response to her proposal for a new play with the title *Witchcraft: A Tragedy in Prose*:

You put me on the tenter hooks about your witchcraft story. Do you know I fear my Great Grandmother by the mothers side must have been a relation of Miss Christian Shaw who playd such devilry.<sup>20</sup> (Scott, *Letters* 10: 262)

In Baillie's preface to her play she states that her work was inspired by a scene in the *Bride of Lammermoor* where several old women complain about their limited share of the funeral meats after the burial of Lucy Ashton and call upon the devil for assistance. Her interest lies in the existence of confessions to the crime of witchcraft, given the penalties, and Baillie suggests that those accused of witchcraft and who

subsequently confessed were not necessarily delirious or even wished to escape a miserable existence on earth. Instead, 'it is more reasonable to suppose that some of those unhappy creatures, from the state of their minds, and from real circumstances leading to it, actually did believe themselves to have had intercourse with the Evil One, consequently to be witches.'<sup>21</sup> Baillie and Scott clearly shared a common interest in this 'curious condition of nature' (*Dramatic Works* 613) and Baillie had hoped that Scott would write on the subject.

Scott's reference to his great Grandmother appears to imply that his own family might have been implicated in some former witchcraft scandal. One such case was that of Christian Shaw. She was a young girl whose accusations of witchcraft ended in twenty prosecutions and five hangings of the women who came to be known as the Renfrew witches. Scott's brief description of the case would be included in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (*Demonology* 324); there is a report of this event, described as 'the celebrated case of *Bargarran's Daughter*' in Robert Chambers' *Domestic Annals of Scotland*<sup>22</sup> published later in 1861, in which it is treated as 'highly characteristic of the age and country [Renfrewshire] in which it happened' (*Annals* 167).

The child Christian Shaw had accused a servant, Catherine Campbell, of theft and was in turn cursed to hell by her. The child later exhibited symptoms of witchcraft, appearing to be possessed by spirits from August 1696 until March 1697 when her symptoms vanished. By that stage, however, inquiries were underway by a commission of the Privy Council and a trial ensued. Five supposed witches were hung and burnt. Robert Chambers adds that the case 'has usually, in recent times, been treated as one in which there were no other elements than a wicked imposture on her part, and some insane delusions on that of the confessing victims' (*Annals* 173). Chambers makes an interesting comparison between this earlier Scots society in which the existence of witchcraft was accepted, however unlikely such beliefs might appear, and the recent development of a modish belief in mesmerism among his own contemporaries. His assessment of the likely circumstances surrounding otherwise inexplicable events is assisted by his recognition of the current craze for mesmerism and feeds into his suggestion that 'in these times, when the phenomena of mesmerism have forced themselves upon the belief of a large and respectable

portion of society, it will be admitted as more likely that the maledictions of [Catherine] Campbell threw the child into an abnormal condition, in which the ordinary beliefs of her age made her sincerely consider herself as a victim of diabolic malice' (*Annals* 173-74).

Chambers then offers his summation of the difficulties involved in attempting to determine how far belief in the existence of the supernatural might be supported by the official documents of the state and judiciary. The parallels with his thinking and with Scott's earlier ideas are clear. Chambers states the problem in the following terms:

To those who regard the whole affair as imposture, an extremely interesting problem is presented for solution by the original documents, in which the depositions of witnesses are given – namely, how the fallaciousness of so much, and, to appearance, so good testimony on pure points of fact, is to be reconciled with any remaining value in testimony as the verifier of the great bulk of what we think we know. (*Annals* 174)

Scott's *Journal* entry for 22 July 1827 might be said to have anticipated Chambers' interest in 'what we think we know' and records his continued fascination with the possibilities of the supernatural. Baillie's proposal of a play about witchcraft had been intended to examine human susceptibility to suggestions of the existence of the supernatural, and Scott's response was to note that she 'is writing a tragedy on witchcraft. I shall be curious to see it – Will it be real Witch craft – the *Ipsissimus Diabolus*<sup>23</sup> – or an imposter – or the half crazed being who believes herself an ally of condemned spirits and desires to be so? That last is a sublime subject' (*Journal* 331). These comments suggest that Scott made a distinction between the phenomenon of 'real witchcraft' and simple insanity and that he did contemplate the possibility of the existence of the supernatural. Less than a week later, in his letter to John Richardson on 26 July 1827, Scott writes with regard to Baillie that

she talks of a drama on the subject of the Witches of Renfrew ... I puzzle myself with thinking whether she will bring old Satan on the stage I doubt that neither her religious principles nor her taste will permit her to give us a Scotch

Mephistophiles an incarnation of evil modified according to the peculiar ideas of the people of Scotland at the beginning of the 18th century. (Scott, *Letters* 10: 264)

These comments reflect Scott's interest in the literary presentation of the devil, incorporating the 'peculiar ideas of the people of Scotland' in 1700.

Scott's enthusiasm in discussing such subjects had long been one of his characteristic traits, and in his *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* Coleman O. Parsons describes Scott as having made a 'hobby of demonology [together with] "Monk" Lewis, C. K. Sharpe, Robert Surtees, R. P. Gillies, and Charles R. Maturin' (Parsons, *Witchcraft* 178). He characterises this group as a 'decadent' band of demonologists and associates their interest in this subject with the possession of an excess of imagination, exemplified by 'fits of moody melancholy', and capable of being indulged through the happy accident of birth and education. Parsons notes, for example, that throughout his lifetime, Gillies, in particular, was afflicted by the 'most formidable fiends' (Parsons, *Witchcraft* 179).

He contrasts this group with men who were less socially elevated such as John Leyden and James Hogg who came 'of vigorous common stock ... homespun geniuses who stood alone in their eccentric self-assurance' ((Parsons, *Witchcraft* 178). They were characterised as 'sturdy' ((Parsons, *Witchcraft* 178) demonologists, born with more limited financial resources but with equal determination. Parsons, however, sees Scott as one who managed to transcend both categories of 'decadent' and 'sturdy' demonology, combining aspects of both in his writing. In Parsons' judgement, demonology was a versatile element of the culture of antiquarian learning, incorporated by Scott into his historical fiction, and he suggests that 'Demonology serves many purposes in the Waverley Novels, from slight allusions to the embodiment of folklore, the passions of history, character contrasts, and moral values' ((Parsons, *Witchcraft* 179). In fact, it was something more than just a 'hobby' with Scott and his eager responses to Joanna Baillie's literary interest in witchcraft suggest an ardent interest in the recreation of supernatural experience whether on stage or on the page.

Baillie was not the only Scottish author to correspond readily with Scott on witchcraft and the supernatural. R. P. Gillies in his *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*,

1851, recalls their mutual interest in collecting books of the occult and describes the arrangements with Ballantyne:

It soon became an agreement ... that whenever there occurred a fresh arrival of old treasures, I should be present at the unpacking of the boxes, and make my own selection, only with this caveat, that if any 'witch-books' came in the way, these were to be put aside for Sir Walter Scott. Under this generic title he ranked all books and tracts, not only relating to witches, but to daemonology, ghosts, apparitions, warnings, prophecies, &c., having for a long time been sedulous to form a large collection ... with a view to compose, one day, an original work on the subject.<sup>24</sup>

The extent of Scott's interest is clear and appears to encompass all aspects of the supernatural from malign to benign. With such extensive resources, it is perhaps not surprising to find him writing to C. K. Sharpe as early as July 1812 to propose that they collaborate on an edition of supernatural material. Scott phrases his suggestion in a whimsical manner:

You know I have a fine collection of witch books & such like. Now what think you of a selection of the most striking and absurd stories of apparitions witchcraft demonology & so forth tacked together with ironical disquisitions and occasionally ornamented with historical and antiquarian anecdotes ... I would not confine ourselves to dry extracts but would abridge & select and ornament the narratives where that was judged more advisable. (Scott, *Letters* 3: 144-45)

Their collaboration went no further on this occasion. However, Scott continued to add to his collection and would later publish *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering* in 1814 and 1815. In *Waverley*, as we have seen, Scott's deployment of second sight in Fergus Mac-Ivor's failed rebellion is both subtle and powerful rather than 'absurd' or 'ironical'; *Guy Mannering* is particularly notable for Scott's enthusiastic display of the fictional possibilities of astrology and prophecy. His literary practice would appear to belie his earlier teasing of Sharpe. In his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* he would return again to ideas of reviewing the evidence for the existence

of the supernatural as well as recounting it in an effort to uncover reasons for such belief.

‘Demonology’ has been defined as that branch of knowledge that treats of demons, or of beliefs about demons, and the earliest recorded usage of the term noted in the Oxford English Dictionary is by James VI in 1597 in his book *Daemonologie*. James published this as an attack on the evils of witchcraft and with intent to justify his own persecution of witches. He was also motivated to attack Reginald Scot’s sceptical *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584. Scott draws on these and other sources such as *Magnalia Christi* by Cotton Mather for reference while interspersing these authorities with anecdotes and personal testimonies of the supernatural from a range of historical eras.

Scottish interest in demonology and witchcraft continued long after James VI and in 1815 Scott may well have assisted in the first publication from manuscript of the *Secret Commonwealth* by Reverend Robert Kirk as a limited edition of 100 copies.<sup>25</sup> The imprint of this edition reads as ‘Edinburgh: Reprinted by James Ballantyne & Co. for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, Paternoster-Row, London. 1815’, and there has been some subsequent confusion about the actual date of the first edition of the *Secret Commonwealth*, largely created by the anonymous editor (possibly Scott) himself. Millgate writes in *Scott’s Last Edition* that there was ‘an original 1691 publication of Kirk’s *Secret Commonwealth*’ (*Scott’s Last Edition* 87); her assertion presumably being based on the note by Scott in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* in which he writes that ‘it was printed with the author’s name in 1691, and reprinted, Edinburgh, 1815, for Longman and Co.’ (*Demonology* 159). However, in *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science and Second Sight in Late Seventeenth-Century Scotland* Michael Hunter has published a new edition of Kirk’s *Secret Commonwealth* and his introduction states that the first edition of this work was published only in 1815. The work appears to have existed solely in manuscript before 1815 and Hunter suggests that Scott was misled by the date of the unpublished manuscript (1691) which had been copied at various times but not published. Scott writes to Lady MacLeod in March 1815 with his promise ‘to send you in a few weeks a very curious treatise on the second sight, published (not for sale) from a manuscript in 1691 which fell into my hands’ (Scott, *Letters* 4: 38).

The text itself has been described by Christina Larner as ‘a remarkable mixture of neo-Platonic science, Highland mythology and fantasy which focused on fairyland [and which] bore only a slight relationship to the material coming up in the criminal courts.’<sup>26</sup> Later, Scott referred again to Kirk in the magnum edition of *Rob Roy* in which he includes a note on fairy superstition. He mentions Kirk’s *Secret Commonwealth* as a ‘work concerning the fairy people ... with the usual powers and qualities ascribed to such beings in Highland tradition’.<sup>27</sup> Scott also refers the reader to Graham’s *Sketches of Perthshire* for details of the ‘Superstitions of the Highlanders’ such as their belief in kelpies and fairies (*Daoine Shi* ‘or men of peace’).<sup>28</sup>

Larner’s reference to ‘material coming up in the criminal courts’ is particularly interesting in view of Scott’s efforts to establish some firm grounds for the investigation of the legal aspects of belief in the supernatural and his involvement with Robert Pitcairn in this respect is illuminating. Their collaboration had begun before the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* had been written. Pitcairn published his *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland* in 1833 covering the period of 1488 – 1624.<sup>29</sup> His preface states that

the present work was first suggested by the late lamented Sir Walter Scott ... the idea and plan of such a work as the present had, many years ago, occurred to that truly great man; and, at one period, he had himself contemplated the publication of the most remarkable of the ancient criminal cases of Scotland, combining the facts of each with all the correlative circumstances, worked up into a popular and narrative form. (*Trials* xvi).

With Scott’s encouragement, Pitcairn had begun by searching the legal records and manuscripts for trials associated with the reign and court of King James VI. These were the earliest available to him and he included ‘selections from the various Public Records, and especially those of the Privy Council, Great Seal, Privy Seal, Lord High Treasurer’s Accounts ... State Papers, Original Letters, and similar illustrative documents’ (*Trials* xx).<sup>30</sup> The lists of trials included crimes of High Treason and Intercommuning with the English as well as upwards of 43 cases of witchcraft. Scott later acknowledges the receipt of primary sources from Pitcairn for his own use in

the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*. These would be additional documents that might contribute to his enquiries and efforts to uncover reasons for belief in witchcraft.

Having reviewed other published work of this era, it is clear that Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* did not appear as an isolated volume on the subject of the supernatural but can be seen as belonging to a broad school of interest wherein legal and scientific writing by various authors was published. The extent of interest is shown by the following Scottish publications on the supernatural, which appeared either before Scott, or at a slightly later point after publication of *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*. In 1809, John Millar had edited *A History of the Witches of Renfrewshire* 'from authentic documents' on the case of Christian Shaw and had included 'Mackenzie's Treatise on Witchcraft' from his *Laws and Customs of Scotland, in Matters Criminal*, 1678. In 1806, the Rev. Dr. Grahame of Aberfoyle published *Sketches Descriptive of Picturesque Scenery, on the southern confines of Perthshire : including the Trosachs, Lochard, &c. together with notices of natural history* in Edinburgh. Scott described Dr. Grahame in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* as 'an excellent man, and good antiquary ... affording us some curious information on fairy superstition' (*Demonology* 162). In 1818, the *Memorialls* of Robert Law were edited from manuscript and published with a lengthy introduction by C. K. Sharpe on cases of witchcraft and other occult material. Scott had lent Sharpe various works on magic and lycanthropy from his own collection and Sharpe's introduction was later published again in his *Historical Account of the Belief in Witchcraft in Scotland* in 1884.

Pitcairn would eventually publish his records of Scottish criminal trials in 1833. His laborious transcriptions were taken from what he described as 'repulsive materials'<sup>31</sup> although Scott was typically enthusiastic in anticipating Pitcairn's 'curious collection of Trials [as] ... equally worth the attention of the historian, the antiquary, the philosopher and the poet' (*Demonology* 141). Scott's death in 1832 prevented his further appraisal of Pitcairn's achievement.

The *Darker Superstitions of Scotland Illustrated from History and Practice*, 1834, was published by J. G. Dalyell in Edinburgh and contained various chapters on the Evil Eye, Occult Infection, Amulets, Propitiatory Sacrifice, Prognostication,

Spectral Illusions, and Tongues as well as on the Tests, Trials, Conviction and Punishment of Sorcery. Dalyell, Pitcairn and Scott, the authors of these various works, were highly educated men, often trained and practising as lawyers and historians, intent on surveying the field of witchcraft, collecting source material from manuscripts and archives in an attempt to understand and explain the actions of earlier Scots.

Ironically, given Scott's longstanding critical interest in such matters, his eventual publication of *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq.*, was less scholarly than Pitcairn or Dalyell and is best described more as a survey or 'general account' (*Demonology* 3) of the history of witchcraft and magic. It was published in small octavo of approximately 400 pages intended as suitable for the Christmas market. First editions had a frontispiece engraving of Major Weir's house in Edinburgh drawn by James Skene, and engraved by W. H. Lizars. Some volumes of the second edition included *Twelve Sketches Illustrative of Sir Walter Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft* by George Cruikshank.

In spite of the book's title, each chapter resembles a short discursive essay rather than actual correspondence between Lockhart and Scott. It was divided into ten chapters. Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* were advertised as part of Murray's 'Family Library' designed as appropriate literature for 'family reading and the use of young persons.'<sup>32</sup> While the material of the supernatural might appear a curious choice, hardly suitable in the 1830s for the education or entertainment of young people, Scott's introductory paragraph suggests that he is simply representing some general details of 'the history of a dark chapter in human nature, which the increasing civilisation of all well-instructed countries has now almost blotted out' (*Demonology* 2). It is a general chronicle of social history and national folklore and arranged on approximately chronological terms. Scott's material ranges from references to antiquarian accounts of witchcraft in classical history to the comic anecdote of his own sadly uneventful night in a haunted room of Dunvegan Castle in 1814, of which Scott writes that 'it well deserved a less sleepy inhabitant' (*Demonology* 388).

The frontispiece engraving of the house of Major Weir and his sister Jean in the West Bow, Edinburgh, is described by Scott as comprising 'gloomy ruins' and

‘haunted’ (*Demonology* 322). Curiously, though, this description does not entirely tally with the actual engraving which depicts a tall handsome townhouse in good repair and one attracting the interested scrutiny of passers-by. There is even a woman, possibly Jean herself, shown as leaning out of one of the upper windows in conversation with several potential callers. It is a modernised and sanitised version of Major Weir’s house and bears little relation to Scott’s description of it in 1813. Then he had characterised the scandalous house as ‘a sort of receptacle for half-dressed flax but no person was then bold enough to visit it after sunset’ (Scott *Letters* 3: 215). It is possible that Scott had not the opportunity to see the actual engraving used in the edition taken from the original drawing by James Skene of Rubislaw. The inclusion of this notorious warlock’s home would have alerted the reader to one of the more remarkable tales of supposed necromancy readily recognisable to the popular mind. The Major was reputed to exercise his magical powers only when his walking stick was in his possession and Scott had managed to procure this stick for his own collection of curiosities at Abbotsford.

In keeping with his book’s appearance as part of Murray’s ‘Family Library’ series, Scott’s intention was to present ‘a popular miscellany’ (*Demonology* 3) for his reading public whose interest in the topic was not so rigorous as that of his antiquarian or legal associates but who required both instruction and amusement, even if leavened with fear and horror of the recent and undoubtedly barbarous past. The first *Letter* is in the form of an introduction to his subject and allows Scott to explain ‘the original cause of the almost universal belief in communication betwixt mortals and beings of a power superior to themselves’ (*Demonology* 3). He begins with some philosophical discussion of the human belief in the immortality of the soul and why this should give rise to a general belief in the existence of spirits. He illustrates this with some actual instances, remarking that without the advantage of the firmest religious belief, supported by actual ‘revelation’, ‘mere earthly reason [cannot] ... form any rational or precise conjecture concerning the destination of the soul when parted from the body’ (*Demonology* 4). Given that religious faith enjoys an implicit connection with miracles, then belief in the existence of spirits, whether good or bad, cannot be easily shaken in the general mass of mankind.

Scott describes how visions of deceased people, providing ‘ocular testimony’ (*Demonology* 5) of their supposed continued existence, or the disturbing dreams in which they appear to those left bereaved, may be readily explained by recourse to understanding the complex powers of the human mind. He asks ‘Who shall doubt that imagination, favoured by circumstances, has power to summon up to the organ of sight, spectres which only exist in the mind of those by whom their apparition seems to be witnessed?’ (*Demonology* 6).

Scott appears to be arguing here that spectres can exist in the mind, nurtured by imagination, but nonetheless appear entirely real to the sufferer. His correspondent R. P. Gillies had earlier claimed that ‘from my own experience I can affirm that there is a certain state of mind & body in which apparitions such as those which appear in the Highlands ... actually do present themselves to the eye with all the horrible reality of Supernatural Visitation.’<sup>33</sup> Gillies does not specify exactly what conditions are necessary to experience such visitations, but Scott suggests that ‘the excited imagination acting upon the half-waking senses’ (*Demonology* 9) must be a factor in such accounts.

This first letter is notably concerned with assessing the likely reasons for belief in the supernatural and Scott has recourse to medical knowledge and authority in his initial attempts to account rationally for irrational belief. Thus, ‘a disposition to see apparitions’ (*Demonology* 16) is adjudged as a typical symptom of some types of insanity as well as associated with *delirium tremens* or the ‘Blue Devils’ of dissipated living (*Demonology* 18). Habitual opium use is also likely to produce nervous disorder. Scott refers to the work of Dr. Ferriar and Dr. Hibbert, both of whom have ‘assumed Demonology as a subject’ (*Demonology* 21). Dr. Hibbert’s *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions; or, An attempt to trace such illusions to their physical causes* was published in 1824. Scott summarises Hibbert’s work in the following terms:

The visitation of spectral phenomena is described by this learned gentleman as incidental to sundry complaints; ... the symptom [is] often an associate of febrile and inflammatory disorders – frequently accompanying inflammation of the brain – a concomitant also of highly excited nervous irritability – equally connected with hypochondria – and finally, united in some cases with gout, and in others with the

effects of excitation produced by several gases. (*Demonology* 22)<sup>34</sup>

Scott's arguments against a supernatural explanation of such phenomena were also influenced by John Ferriars and Thomas Jackson. Ferriars published an essay about ancient belief in spectres in 'Of Popular Illusions, and particularly of Medical Demonology' in *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester* in 1790 as well as *An Essay Towards a Theory of Apparitions*, London 1813. Thomas Jackson's 'Treatise Containing the Originall of Unbeliefe, Misbeleife, or Misperswasions concerning the Veritie, Vnitie, and Attributes of the Deitie' is contained in his *Commentaries upon the Apostles Creed. Book 5*, published in London, 1625. Scott's copy of this was inscribed to him from 'his very sincere friend J. Leyden.' Scott can also cite other instances of how intense anxiety, collective stress and even 'excited exertion' (*Demonology* 10) can be held responsible for spectral horrors. Dr. Gregory of Edinburgh is mentioned as treating a patient who believes himself haunted by an old hag who attacks him daily with a staff. Scott describes the means of diagnosing the ailment and the verdict of apoplexy. These examples seem now to the modern reader as instances only of primitive ignorance but represented, in Scott's time, remarkable medical discoveries. Medical training throughout the eighteenth century was undergoing significant revision and these doctors were exemplars of the new type of professional, eager to describe and account for symptoms that previously were ascribed to supernatural causes. Scott is here assisted in his consideration of plausible explanations for supernatural incidents, made possible by the advancement of science and the greater understanding available to medical men.

However, Scott is unable to relinquish ideas of gathering 'direct evidence' (*Demonology* 33) of supernatural instances especially where phantoms have been 'personally witnessed by a man of sense and estimation' (*Demonology* 34). Having described the possible medical reasons that might lead to the appearance of phantoms, Scott proceeds to cite three further examples of mysterious apparitions that have occurred to an eminent professor, the military Captain of the Irish Brigade and the friend of a deceased poet. Having described in detail the various phantoms, Scott refers to them as possible instances of the deception of the senses, particularly

of eyesight and hearing. He concludes this letter with the suggestion that ‘the abstract possibility of apparitions must be admitted by every one who believes in a Deity’ (*Demonology* 46). He argues further that ‘very often both the mental delusion and the physical deception exist at the same time, and men’s belief ... is the firmer and more readily granted [because] the physical impression corresponded with the mental excitement’ (*Demonology* 47).

Scott’s second letter is a lengthy summary of the history of witchcraft within Christianity. He refers to its presence in the Bible and other religions. Scott also suggests that he will ‘endeavour to show that many of the particular articles of the popular belief respecting magic and witchcraft were derived from the opinions which the ancient Heathens entertained as part of their religion’ (*Demonology* 73). He refers the reader to the idea that ‘the tendency to belief in supernatural agencies is natural, and indeed seems connected with, and deduced from, the invaluable conviction of the certainty at a future state’ (*Demonology* 73). Scott also describes how churchmen profited from such beliefs ‘to extend their own authority over the human mind’ (*Demonology* 73).

Having established the scientific and religious bounds affecting belief in the supernatural, Scott then turns to early belief and customs among the Celts, Romans and Norsemen in his third and fourth letters. Scott’s familiarity with these areas of interest enabled him to write at length on the myths and legends of fairy superstition and he included some discussion of Thomas the Rhymer and his adventures in fairyland. In Letters 5 and 6, Scott continued his descriptions of ‘credulous’ humans anxious to hear their fortunes through the practice of white magic (*Demonology* 139). Soothsayers became readily confused with witches in the public mind and Scott traces the gradual erosion of belief in ‘fairy superstition’ (*Demonology* 167) and its replacement by the ‘horrid belief in witchcraft’ (*Demonology* 167).

Scott suggests that by the fifteenth century the progress of religion and knowledge had begun to usurp belief in fairies and that ‘popular preachers’, plentiful in Elizabethan England, ‘declaimed against the “splendid miracles” of the Church of Rome’ (*Demonology* 173) and succeeded in exorcising many illusions and ‘mystical fancies’ (*Demonology* 186). Letters 7, 8 and 9 contain various examples of witchcraft and the penal laws instigated by the authorities. These last three letters carry

extensive detail of cases in England and Scotland. For Scott, the main interest of such cases is that in his earlier examples of ‘fantastic allegations, the proof is necessarily transient and doubtful, depending on the inaccurate testimony of vague report and of doting tradition’ (*Demonology* 217). Trials of witchcraft however can provide ‘the recorded evidence upon which judge and jury acted, and [we] can form an opinion with some degree of certainty of the grounds, real or fanciful, on which they acquitted or condemned’ (*Demonology* 217). However, recital of the many instances of trials failed to produce anything other than disgust with the barbarity of proceedings and it is with relief that Scott begins to describe ‘the dawnings of sense and humanity’ (*Demonology* 323).

Scott’s final letter covers astrology and more modern instances of ghosts. The *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* are together a curious assortment of historical, religious and political reminiscences. However, it is also possible to see Scott’s empathy with those accused of witchcraft. He records their miseries with a great deal of sympathy, criticising the frequently self-appointed witch-finders as well as the legal disabilities under which those suspected of witchcraft suffered. The symptoms experienced by Scott as a victim of strokes such as the loss of speech and inability to move his limbs before being subjected to cupping and consequent loss of blood might be said to echo similar pains suffered by those who were accused of witchcraft, and subsequently imprisoned, often undergoing torture by leg-irons and pin-pricking with long needles.

Scott’s dual professions of law and literature offered him equal opportunity to revise the evidence he had possessed from an early age and subject it to close scrutiny. He was interested in determining the type of evidence available about witchcraft and the credulity of judges. His narrative initially offers physiological explanations for the experience of supernatural phenomena though becomes distracted by the suffering of those accused of witchcraft. His final account of the myriad manifestations of the supernatural falters in providing any wholly rational explanations for the appearances of uncanny events or experience. Coleman Parsons summed up Scott’s attitude to the supernatural as one which

varied throughout his life; in his youth he was susceptible to it; in middle age he valued superstition imaginatively as a reminder of the past; in his last years his attitude was more logical and critical. He remained unpredictable throughout his life and works in his relative evaluation of imaginative and rationalistic modes of judgment.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, one assessment of Scott's attitude to the supernatural can be found in the 'Memoir of Robert Surtees, Esq.' written by his friend George Taylor in May 1839. Taylor makes an interesting comparison between Scott and Surtees, the fellow antiquarian correspondent of Scott's based in Durham. He characterises Scott as one

who seems to have retained a lingering wish to believe, and to perpetuate the belief, in preternatural powers, and events produced by their agency; for, where such powers are given to his fictitious personages, he uniformly makes the event verify the prediction.<sup>36</sup>

It is this 'lingering wish' that permeates Scott's efforts to investigate evidence of the supernatural.

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Millgate, *Scott's Last Edition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1987) 3. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Scott, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1972) 37.

<sup>3</sup> According to <http://measuringworth.com>, £121,000 in 1826 would be equivalent in 2007 to £8,423,696.06 as measured by the retail price index or £94,065,138.47 in terms of average earnings.

<sup>4</sup> See Scott, *Letters* 11: 192. Scott writes to Lockhart on 30 May 1829 that 'My Magnum opus as Cadell calls it I mean the new edition of the Waverley novels gets on capitally – 12000 copies are disposed of & the demand increases.'

<sup>5</sup> See Claire Connolly, 'Prince Hohenlohe's Miracles: Supernaturalism and the Irish Public Sphere', *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic* eds. David Duff and Catherine Jones (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007) 249. She suggests 'Scott's novels serve as supreme examples of a fiction that gives cultural expression to supernatural manifestations while neutralizing their effects.'

<sup>6</sup> See 'Production and Reception' in James Hogg, *A Queer Book*, ed. P.D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995) xxi–xxvii.

<sup>7</sup> Scott died on 21 September 1832; Hogg continued to publish until 1834.

<sup>8</sup> The publishers of the *Keepsake* had sent a letter of introduction to Scott on 25 January 1828 in which these terms were used. See Walter Scott, *Letters to Walter Scott, 1828*, Hugh Walpole, ms. 3906 ff. 47-8, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Scott, 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror', *Magnum* ed., vol. 41 (Edinburgh: Cadell: 1832) 289-346. Subsequent references with prefix 'Magnum' will be given in parentheses.

<sup>10</sup> In his journal Scott notes that he was visited by John Swinton who 'brought me the skull [*sic*] of his ancestor Sir Alan Swinton who flourishd [*sic*] five hundred years ago. I will get a cast made of the stout old Carle' (*Journal* 439). The visit took place on 7 March 1828 and suggests to the reader that skulls were more commonly available then and the use of a human relic as candlestick less surprising. Scott's intention to procure a cast of the skull is typical of his enthusiasm for curios and reliques.

<sup>11</sup> Walter Scott, *The Shorter Fiction*, eds. Graham Tulloch and Judy King (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009): 51. Subsequent references to this edition will be in parentheses. Note that the text of this edition is based on the *Keepsake* and does not include the *Magnum* preface. (The Edinburgh edition will include the Introductions and Notes from the *Magnum* in later volumes.) I have therefore used two editions to discuss 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror'.

<sup>12</sup> Scott defines a 'sacque' as 'an old-fashioned gown ... gathered into broad plaits upon the neck and shoulders, which fall down to the ground, and terminate in a species of train' ('Chamber' 84). Scott's descriptions of clothing, especially the costume of earlier generations, often show close attention to detail.

<sup>13</sup> In this tale, Scott can create an idealised military persona in the fictitious 'General Browne'. In his correspondence to his son, however, Scott becomes an angry and disappointed parent faced with the reality of military behaviour. See Scott's *Letters* 6: 425-26 for his comments on the scandalous events associated with young Walter's regiment in 1821.

<sup>14</sup> 'Story of an Apparition', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 3 (Sept. 1818): 705-07. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>15</sup> See *The Shorter Fiction* (2009) 196-202. Tulloch discusses the similarities of both tales and raises some doubts as to Scott's authorship of the *Blackwood's* tale. There seems to be arguments on both sides. However, the version published in *Blackwood's* with its playful comment on the tedious Welsh superstitions does seem very characteristic of Scott. See *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 3 (Sept. 1818) 705.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart Esq.*, 2nd ed. (London: Murray, 1831) 386. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>17</sup> See J. G. Cochrane, *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1838) 122-54.

<sup>18</sup> See *Reliquiæ Troctosienses* eds., Gerard Carruthers and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004) 55-63.

<sup>19</sup> Edgar Johnston mentions five 'paralytic attacks': 15 February 1830 (1123-24); 19/20 November 1830 (1150); 17 April 1831 (1172) and between 22 and 29 May 1831(1179). The most serious one

occurred on 9 June 1832 (1250) at Nimeguen though there may have been at least one other in July 1832 (1267) before Scott's death on 21 September 1832.

<sup>20</sup> Scott was descended from the families of Rutherford and the Swintons of Swinton in Berwickshire on his maternal side. His great grandmother would have been Jean Sinclair who married Sir John Swinton of Swinton. In his *Journal* (439), Scott records the loan of a skull from John Swinton. I have found no other related incidents that might throw any further light on Scott's comment about Jean Swinton. See also Lockhart, *Life of Scott* 1: 62.

<sup>21</sup> Joanna Baillie, *The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie* (London: Longman, 1851) 613. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>22</sup> See Robert Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland from the Revolution to the Rebellion of 1745* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1861) 3: 167-74. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>23</sup> Translated as 'the very devil himself' by W. E. K. Anderson.

<sup>24</sup> See R. P. Gillies, *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, 3 vols. (London: Bentley, 1851) 2: 10-11.

<sup>25</sup> Opinions differ on this. Advocates of Scott's involvement include Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, vol. 4 (1923): 335a and Donald Maclean, 'The Life and Literary Labours of the Rev. Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 31 (1922-24) 1927: 328-66. See also Mario M. Rossi, 'Text-Criticism of Robert Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth*', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 3 (1957): 253-68.

<sup>26</sup> Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2000) 35.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1830) 2: 179.

<sup>28</sup> Patrick Graham, *Sketches Descriptive of Picturesque Scenery, on the Southern Confines of Perthshire* (Edinburgh, 1806) 103-27.

<sup>29</sup> See Robert Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland from 1488 to 1596*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1833). Subsequent references will be in parentheses. While the title of this work is listed in the catalogue of the National Library of Scotland as Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials in Scotland from 1488 to 1596*, the third volume contains material from 1615-1624 and includes an index.

<sup>30</sup> Pitcairn described his enormous task in terms approaching exasperation. He pointed out that 'it may be noticed here, once for all, that the 'Books of Adjournal and Minute Books of the Supreme Criminal Tribunal of Scotland, as well as the Records of the Justice-aires, & c. at these remote periods, were kept in an obscure forensic Latin' (*Trials* 1). This problem was compounded by 'the well-known difficulty of deciphering the ordinary MSS. of these centuries ... written with many contractions, and evidently during the hurry of the Court proceedings' resulting in 'a labour of a peculiarly irksome and repulsive kind' (*Trials* 1).

<sup>31</sup> See Pitcairn, *Trials* xv for a description of his further difficulties with deciphering early Scottish legal documents.

<sup>32</sup> An example of this reassurance of suitability for such readers, achieved 'by the omission of exceptionable passages', can be seen in the publisher advertisement for the dramatic works of Philip

Massinger in the Family Library' series bound with some copies of the second edition of Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*.

<sup>33</sup> See Walter Scott, Letters, 29 January 1812, Hugh Walpole, ms. 3882 ff. 41-42, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>34</sup> See Samuel Hibbert, *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions; or, An attempt to trace such illusions to their physical causes* (Edinburgh, 1824). Scott is referring here to nitrous oxide or the 'laughing gas' discovered in 1793 by Joseph Priestley. It was a popular attraction for customers of travelling shows and carnivals.

<sup>35</sup> Coleman Parsons, 'The Interest of Scott's Public in the Supernatural', *Notes and Queries* 185.4 (Aug. 1943) 98.

<sup>36</sup> G. Taylor, 'Memoir of Robert Surtees, Esq.', *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* by Robert Surtees, 4 vols. (London, 1816-40) 1: 70-71.

## Chapter Seven: Hogg and the Final Word, 1826-1834

### 7.1 *The Visible Supernatural*

In the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, Scott was compiling a mass of material relating to belief in the supernatural in order to review the evidence for the persistent existence of such belief. He was legally trained with a passion for antiquarian material as well as being a committed enthusiast and collector of occult objects. His *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* reflected his continual curiosity towards the material of other people, whether Pitcairn's transcriptions of trials, or assorted anecdotes from other educated and professional men. In some ways, the material of the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* resembled the collection of supernatural folk-lore readily familiar to Hogg; Scott acknowledges this in an aside on brownies. He reminds the reader of the Brownie of Bodsbeck, being 'the subject of an entertaining tale by Mr James Hogg, the self-instructed genius of Ettrick Forest' (*Demonology* 342). Legal material was clearly readily available to Scott and he had uncovered rich sources of supernatural tales in the fields of medicinal practice, occult sciences and even nautical adventure. Sea voyages, whether on official or on commercial business were of particular interest to writers and publishers, and it will be seen that Hogg managed to widen the context of his tales from beyond rural Scotland to include the experiences of men at sea.

Following the failure of his epic, *Queen Hynde*, 1824, Hogg returned again to his earlier literary practice of writing and rewriting tales for periodical publication. Seemingly undaunted by failure, his work continued to construct and engage with the role of the supernatural in Scottish life in an intrinsic and original manner. Some of these tales, particularly those later and less familiar tales from 1825-34, have now been collected in a single volume as part of the Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition, issued recently as *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books*, 2006. It is now possible to compare and contrast Scott and Hogg and their literary practice more fully. Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* can be read as a summary of other people's reported supernatural incidents, whereas Hogg continued to invent his own examples.

Literary annuals and gift books were newly fashionable and immensely popular throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and provided an outlet for Hogg's later work in which he was able to confirm and renew his ideas about the contribution of the supernatural to Scottish life. It is possible to trace some earlier evidence of his thinking, however, in one of Hogg's short tales, 'The Woolgatherer', published with *The Brownie Of Bodsbeck* in 1818. Here, Hogg illustrates his own testimony of belief in the supernatural through the character of Barnaby, a young shepherd given to 'dreams, visions, and apparitions.'<sup>1</sup> Barnaby's perspective is one of anticipation: the folk legends of superstition are as true as one of the Gospels and he feels equipped even to discriminate between the fantastical ('gomral fantastic bogles') and the serious ('apparitions') elements of belief:

ye had need to tak care how ye dispute the existence of fairies, brownies, and apparitions there; ye may as weel dispute the gospel o' Sant Mathew. We dinna believe in a' the gomral fantastic bogles an' spirits that fley light-headed fock up an' down the country, but we believe in a' the apparitions that warn o' death, that save life, an' that discover guilt. (*Brownie* 2:140)

Here Barnaby links two repositories of supernatural thought, only one of which, namely the Bible, is accessible in written form. However, it is part of the distinction of 'fairies, brownies, and apparitions' that their existence is as natural and believable as one of the Gospels. Their purpose is similar to those of the biblical prophets, concerned to warn believers of danger. This then elevates the status of such supernatural phantoms to that enjoyed by the Bible itself. It is also possible to regard the purely sensational tales likely to 'fley light-headed fock up an' down the country' as part of an oral tradition more open to doubt especially because of its association with those whose credentials were not affiliated to the religious, mainstream and respectable branch of literary production. Interestingly, there is an acknowledgement of this situation in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* in which William St. Clair analyses book production by literary genre. Notably, his statistics separate texts into 'the official supernatural', such as Bibles, psalters and prayer books and 'the tolerated illegitimate supernatural' comprising mainly of almanacs.<sup>2</sup>

Hogg's writing in 'The Woolgatherer' conveys the immediacy and apparent reality of the supernatural in ways that Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* strive to do but struggle to achieve. Despite Scott's best efforts, the *Letters* lack similar certainty and suffer from the loss of authenticity, perhaps inevitably given that Scott himself hesitates to affirm his own true position on the supernatural, providing an array of supernatural content while seeking to dismiss arguments for its validity.

Scott's literary career had suffered between the years of *Redgauntlet* and the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* and Hogg had also experienced several serious disappointments. The *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* failed to engage a large audience after publication in June 1824 and *Queen Hynde*, published shortly afterwards in December 1824, was a failure with the public. Both Wilson and Blackwood had admired the poem but of the fifteen hundred copies printed, less than five hundred were bought, and the unwanted copies were remaindered. Reviewers highlighted the deficiencies of the work in various ways. In *La Belle Assemblée* of February 1825, one wrote that 'the poem is sadly disfigured by quaintness and vulgarism, by a mixture of the pathetic and ludicrous, the sublime and the ridiculous' (*Belle Assemblée* 81-82).

The effect on Hogg was to return him to the genres of writing that appealed most to his readers and possibly suited him best. In his 'Reminiscences of Former Days', first published in *Altrive Tales*, 1832, he recalls his surprise and discouragement at the failure of *Queen Hynde*. The reader is informed that 'he gave up all thoughts of ever writing another long poem, but continued for six years to write fairy tales, ghost stories, songs, and poems for periodicals of every description, sometimes receiving liberal payment, and sometimes none, just as the editor or proprietor felt disposed' (*Altrive Tales* 58). Hogg in effect countermands ideas of failure by pointing out that he continued to write 'for periodicals of every description' and in return did receive his due as a prolific author whose work was undeniably popular.

It could be argued that the characteristics of Hogg's work that were criticised so heavily in *Queen Hynde* were actually an asset to periodical publishers such as Blackwood. Stories with a galaxy of quaintly old-fashioned characters mixed with

shrewd and outspoken manners were well received. Sentiment and humour were attractive qualities especially when constrained within a few pages. It is worth noting that the eminently successful Blackwood had earlier smoothed over one of his many disputes with Hogg by reinstating Hogg's career as a contributor to his *Magazine* with 'The Shepherd's Calendar' series in 1823. In this he was recognising some of Hogg's true strengths as an author as well as helping boost circulation of the *Magazine* itself.

This chapter will examine some of Hogg's final tales in which his ideas about the existence of the supernatural and his authoritative representation of it are conveyed through some of his most mature and accomplished writing. The supernatural in operation is shown to be closely allied to justice and morality, even acting occasionally as a catalyst for renewal and mutual forgiveness through miraculous intervention. It is noticeably removed from the static and third-hand documentation of Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* and is rooted rather in visible, even visceral experience.

## **7.2 Contributions to Annuals and Gift-books**

The emergence of literary annuals and gift-books as a significant element of the book trade of 1822-1830 has been analysed by Frederick W. Faxon, Anne Renier, Andrew Boyle and William St Clair among others.<sup>3</sup> Hogg's first opportunity to publish his tales and poetry was in the *Literary Souvenir* for 1825, published in November 1824. Between then and his death in November 1835, he would see a substantial amount of work published in this new genre, often accompanied by reviews which carried unusually respectful appreciation of his efforts. In the *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books*, the editors list eleven literary annuals that published Hogg's material.<sup>4</sup> One of these was aimed at children, titled *Ackerman's Juvenile Forget Me Not*, and another, *The Musical Bijou*, included printed music for genteel musical performances in drawing rooms. In addition to this, Hogg's prayers and hymns were solicited for gift-books intended for children. In all, more than sixty poems and twenty prose tales were eventually published in the annuals. Hogg's authorship was generally attributed to 'James Hogg', or 'the Ettrick Shepherd'. Occasionally, in the earliest publications he was 'James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd'

though twice he appears as ‘the Author of The Queen’s Wake’. It was as ‘the Ettrick Shepherd’, however, that he appears most frequently, possibly because of the ready association of Hogg’s best-known poetry with that particular *nom de plume*. Janette Currie’s introduction to the collection suggests that the subject-matter of many of the poems is markedly nostalgic for an unspoilt and vanishing way of Scottish rural life, as exemplified by the Shepherd’s own idealised experience, and includes a subtle critique of the political and economic changes forcing the loss of such rustic bliss (*Contributions* xxiii).

However, Hogg’s material was not confined to sentimental lament. The first editors of the annuals were keen to solicit and publish some of Hogg’s tales as well as poetry, though it is noticeable that some editors, such as Thomas Pringle of *Friendship’s Offering*, were aware of possibly upsetting a readership that might be repelled by allusions to sexual (mis)conduct, robust language and religious unorthodoxy. Hogg’s response tended to be blunt when advised as to how he should write or what he should write about. This chapter will examine later the reasons for the refusal of one of his tales, the ‘Account of the Singular Death of Walter Watson.’

The very first of Hogg’s contributions appeared in the *Literary Souvenir* for 1825, as previously indicated, and though consisting of poetry rather than prose it is worth mentioning because the subject and motifs set the tone for future publications. This was the ‘Invocation to the Queen of the Fairies’ and it had appeared also in slightly different guise in ‘Book Sixth’ of *Queen Hynde*, published in December 1824. This difficult situation caused Hogg to write to the editor, Alaric Watts, of the *Literary Souvenir* that the ‘Queen of the Fairies was so decidedly in my best stile that I could not help popping her into the last book of Queen Hynde, and I regretted that my work appeared so soon after yours’ (Hogg, *Collected Letters* 2: 224).

Nonetheless the poem appeared highly suitable for annual publication, allowing Hogg to revisit the success of ‘Kilmeny’ and emphasise those aspects of his literary work that were consistently popular such as the persona of Scottish shepherd-poet and references to music and nature.<sup>5</sup> These were elements of the softer side of Hogg’s fascination with the supernatural and included his adoration of the fairy queen as muse. Hogg’s poetical career had long emphasised his inspiration by fairies and the fairy queen and other reviewers had suggested as much. In *Blackwood’s*

*Edinburgh Magazine*, Wilson had once described him as ‘the poet laureate of the Court of Faëry.’<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting also that Hogg is aware of his potentially larger English audience and therefore careful to suggest his literary connection to the lineage of earlier English bards in order to emphasise his rightful place as their inheritor, albeit of Scottish birth. In the ‘Invocation to the Queen of the Fairies’ he mentions ‘old Edmund’s Lay’ in reference to Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in his mention of ‘the Bard of Avon’s theme/ To the visions of a midnight dream’ (*Contributions* 4).

Nonetheless, and perhaps surprisingly, the annuals provided Hogg with an outlet for some of his most radical tales and it is these, rather than his poetry, which should be compared to Scott’s later work, discussed earlier in chapter six. Hogg’s tales in the annuals are more significant in terms of his presentation of apparently certain evidence of the supernatural and its connection to difficult topics such as child murder, in ‘Scottish Haymakers’ or even incest in ‘The Fords of Callum’. Notably, Hogg did rewrite some of his earlier tales in part for publication in the newly fashionable and distinctively attractive format but he did not strive to adapt his subject matter to conform to his editor’s expectations in any serious way. The publishing milieu may have changed - Hogg’s literary practice did not necessarily follow.

### ***7.3 Hogg’s tales in the Literary Souvenir for 1826, the Anniversary for 1829, Friendship’s Offering for 1830 and Forget Me Not for 1830, 1831 and 1834***

There are certain themes that recur in these tales now collected within the *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books*. These can be summarised as the distinctive separation between rural and urban belief in the supernatural as well as the occasionally uneasy relationship between townspeople and country folk; the presence of children as frequent catalysts for the appearance of the supernatural; violence; crime, generally present as murder and its concealment; the perils of uncontrollable forces such as storms; journeys of discovery; and lastly, the restoration of justice after crimes have been committed and gone unpunished.

The following commentary will focus on some selected tales which best exemplify Hogg's narrative themes. These are 'The Border Chronicler' in the *Literary Souvenir*; 'The Cameronian Preacher's Tale' in the *Anniversary*; 'The Fords of Callum' in *Friendship's Offering* and 'Seeking the Houdy'; 'A Sea Story' and 'Scottish Haymakers' in *Forget Me Not*. All of these tales are notable for Hogg's portrayal of the presence of supernatural incident in Scottish daily life even of the early period of the nineteenth century. Contained within the fashionable annuals, they allowed him to reach a wider audience than he had done previously and were much in demand.

The popularity of the annual can be seen in the quantity of sales. Between 1825 and 1826, many thousands of copies were sold even though the established publishing business was struggling and had endured a serious slump along with the financial failure of Constable, James Ballantyne and Scott. Hogg clearly realised the potential of the new publishing phenomenon for his material and by April 1825 had written to the editor of the *Literary Souvenir*, Alaric Watts, with the offer of an extended version of a tale previously published in March 1817 in John Ballantyne's *The Sale-Room*.<sup>7</sup> This would allow him to follow up his earlier publication of the 'Invocation to the Queen of the Fairies' in the *Literary Souvenir* and his tale now titled 'The Border Chronicler' was subsequently published in the *Literary Souvenir* for 1826 and introduces a robust farmer, Charlie Dinmont o' the Waker-cleuch, from the Borders. Hogg's first version of this tale in *The Sale-Room* had been in the form of a letter to the editor discussing the habitual manners and characteristics of the townsman and the countryman and the perils for rural people associated with visiting the town. In an aside, the reader learns that Hogg's intention is to develop this theme, and he assures the editor that he will be sending 'another paper on the characters of the Scottish peasantry' (*Sale-Room* 73) at a later date. Sadly, Hogg's ambition remained unfulfilled. It should be noted that there are no mentions of the supernatural in this early version of the tale. In the *Sale-Room* Dinmont's countrified speech and appearance make up the bulk of the narrative whereas in the *Literary Souvenir* Hogg expands the tale to include particular description of supernatural apparitions and reasons for their existence. This change may reflect Hogg's later

confidence with the depiction and integration of aspects of the supernatural into rural and urban life.

Hogg's narrator, in the annual, begins by describing himself as an integral part of the Edinburgh urban and urbane milieu, 'sauntering about Prince's-street' (*Contributions* 10) until struck by the appearance of the outlandish farmer. The description of Charlie Dinmont's dress, characteristics and mannerisms emphasises both the distinctive nature of his person as well as the curiosity and ridicule that he attracts. Hogg follows him into the auction house and watches as Dinmont 'took some papers and prospectuses from the counter, and pretended to be reading their contents, but was all the while looking out at the corner of his eye at the clerk, as if he were a fellow of whom he had some jealousy, or with whom he wanted to pick a quarrel' (*Contributions* 11). Dinmont's aggressive glances betray his unease and insecurity as he toys with the various papers. These serve as the official medium of communication but feelings of inferiority are associated with them. Charlie Dinmont would prefer to deal directly with the clerk. His personal authority is grounded in direct contacts and relationships rather than reliant on written documents and Hogg's narrator suggests that Dinmont is worried that the clerk 'might not understand what was his business there' (*Contributions* 11). On being approached by another bystander to discuss business, Dinmont is transformed into a fluent and knowledgeable tenant farmer and names the various landed aristocrats with whom he intends to negotiate several leases.<sup>8</sup>

In conversation with this bystander, described by Hogg as 'a radical Whig ... the most discontented, ill-boding person in this city' (*Contributions* 14), Dinmont contrasts the comfort of his own life with the pinched faces and bodies of those he sees, suggesting that rather than being advanced in terms of material progress or cultural success, Edinburgh offers only instead a veneer of improvement. Physical security, comfort rather than luxury, as well as moral rectitude are associated with the country and the narrator is forced to defend his fellow townspeople from accusations of laxity. Hogg proceeds to develop this rivalry in his section of the tale headed 'Town and Country Apparitions' in which Dinmont questions the narrator on the probity of Edinburgh's citizens. He asks of Hogg 'how can it be that they're as upright an' conscientious men i' the city as thou hauds them up to be? - how can

there be ony conscience, or fear o' God, wi' focks that hae neither deils, ghosts, nor bogles amang them?' (*Contributions* 15).

This query echoes the point made by Barnaby in Hogg's earlier tale 'The Woolgatherer' and presents the author's point of view that one of the roles of the supernatural is that of the maintenance of social order and that ghosts and spirits are essential in establishing and preserving this. Dinmont argues that they 'are the greatest of a' checks on human crimes; an' I marvel that there are none o' them at Edinbroch, where heinous wickedness is so abundant' (*Contributions* 15).

In response, the narrator explores this theme with a degree of morbid humour, pointing out that there are spectral appearances on Edinburgh's streets but that they are the 'ghosts of fallen women' haunting the city. Hogg's introduction of such creatures creates several possibilities. These women have fallen beyond the boundaries of social respectability and now do exist on the margins, whether in living or spectral form. He describes how 'whenever they chance to look one in the face, their eyes have that dead stillness ... that white moveless opacity, that denotes them ... to be only the ghosts of what they were' (*Contributions* 16). The distinction between living matter and dead form scarcely matters and Dinmont is clearly horrified by the possibility: 'thou gars my flesh creep to hear thee!' (*Contributions* 16). This confusion between actual social outcasts (prostitutes) and lifeless spectres is skilfully maintained in Hogg's tale and the narrator continues to frighten Dinmont though with some knowing humour. 'There are sights to be seen here every night, Charlie ... that cannot fail of impressing every serious heart with the deepest awe, and would be enough to drive the inhabitants of a whole glen out of their senses' (*Contributions* 16).

That Hogg should introduce such topics into an annual destined for sale to a market of female readers is perhaps surprising but entirely consistent with what Franz Potter has identified in *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800-1835* as 'an increasingly prominent feature in the lower depths of the Gothic trade: the moralising rhetoric.'<sup>9</sup> Hogg was clearly not writing specifically for the 'lower depths of the Gothic trade'. His tales depict the intervention of the supernatural at moments of familial or social crisis and often link spectral appearances to providential care. In this way, Hogg and his editors of the various annuals were more able to escape the

restrictive influence of public taste and judgement, up to a point. Potter argues that one of the unexpected and surprisingly popular locations of Gothic fiction was in the annuals and that it 'did indeed prosper after 1820, specifically with a middle-class readership, reaching its pinnacle of popularity, in terms of readers, periodicals and in annuals such as *Friendship's Offering*, *Forget Me Not* and the *Literary Souvenir*' (*Gothic Publishing* 87). All three of these annuals included tales from Hogg.

In 'The Border Chronieler', the susceptibility of country people to apparent sights of horror is illustrated by Dinmont's description of the experience of a countryman and his sweetheart. After attending Church on a Sunday evening, they gradually make their way home. Dinmont describes how 'the rood grows aye eirier an' darker, an' they cling aye closer thegither' (*Contributions* 16). Suddenly, they are confronted by

a hideous figure wrapped up in sack-cloth; his head swathed in a white napkin with a cowl over it. This demon carries a dark lantern in its horrid paw, that only tends to make darkness visible, an' hideousness ten times more hideous; an' just as the couple are ready to sink into the earth, the horrid apparition cries out aloud- "Past twall o' clock!!!" (*Contributions* 16).

The apparition is the night watchman, transformed by the frightened imagination of his victims into a diabolical figure. Here, Hogg is presenting the supernatural in terms more commonly associated with Scott. The reader is given an example of a mysterious and threatening apparition that is then undermined entirely by rational explanation and humour. Scott tended instead to blur such stories with some instances of supernatural apparitions that were left unexplained. Examples of this particularly in his shorter fiction were discussed in chapter six.

While acknowledging the possibilities of hoaxes and other misunderstandings, such as the 'horrid apparition' of the Edinburgh watchman, Hogg's narrator and Charlie Dinmont discuss their belief in 'innumerable spirits, both good and evil' (*Contributions* 17). Charlie suggests that there is even a necessity for the devil, though 'we wad be muckle the better of a new deil now, for the auld ane is rather beginning to lose his effect' (*Contributions* 17). This comment

highlights the countryman's position in contrast to the 'bits o' prime weel-bred minister lads [who] think it shame now to bring him forward, an' seem rather inclined to mak a laughing-stock o' him' (*Contributions* 17). Dinmont suggests their confidence is misplaced: 'I wadna wonder should he play them a smirl by-and-by, though he is rather in the back ground just now' (*Contributions* 17).

Throughout this story, Hogg presents apparitions and spectres as an inescapable, even desirable presence in human society. His narrator adopts a semi-serious, even occasionally frivolous tone in remarking on the existence of 'the ghosts of hapless females, who have fallen prey to the selfish voluptuousness of the other sex' (*Contributions* 15). He confesses that 'I am a believer in apparitions myself ... and in the existence of fairies and witches; at least I believe that these did exist, and am never quite sure that the greater part of the women are not still witches to this day' (*Contributions* 17). It is in keeping with his role as facetious gallant and contrasts with the 'countryman setting hame his sweetheart on a Sunday evening' (*Contributions* 16) who may encounter nothing worse than the night watchman, transformed by suspicion and dark night into a hideous monster.

Dinmont's perspective on the supernatural is typically broader and suggests that man's existence is diminished without it. 'But wha wadna believe in spirits? – what a cauldrie, insignificant, matter-o'-fact world this wad be without hoards o' spirits bustling amang us?' (*Contributions* 17). He then recalls two instances of this for the narrator's benefit, remarking 'it makes a man of nae importance at a' when neither good nor ill spirits are looking after him, an' counteracting ane another on his account' (*Contributions* 17). Two examples of this are then given to the reader as proof.

Dinmont relates two short tales, 'Gillanbye's Ghost' and 'The White Lady of Glen-Tress,' in his general statement of belief about the importance of the supernatural, whether good or ill, in Scots life. In the first tale, human error – drunkenness – is punished by drowning. A mysterious 'stranger gentleman', later named as 'old Gillanbye, or rather the devil in his likeness' (*Contributions* 19), joins a party of riders, thereby increasing their number to thirteen and manages to drown one of them in the Solway firth. The rest of the party is led to safety by an enigmatic rider on a white horse. Horse and rider then disappear from view, having averted any

further disaster. Dinmont insists that their preserver was ‘an angel of mercy’ (*Contributions* 20) and that there is a system of checks and balances whereby ‘the interference of Providence’ (*Contributions* 21) intervenes. Dinmont is careful to disdain the idle tales of superstition but attests to a greater power of preservation. Echoing Barnaby’s earlier comments, he suggests that

I dinna believe in a’ the hallanshaker<sup>10</sup> spirits that are supposed to haunt every eiry spot through the hale country; I dinna believe that a ghost wad arise frae the dead, an’ stand up in its winding sheet, like a bog-stalker, merely to fright a body out o’ his judgement that was half crazed afore. But if there is human life or innocence to preserve, or guilt and murder to bring to light, an’ no earthly hand to help, I’ll trust to an over-ruling Providence yet, be the means as incomprehensible as they may. (*Contributions* 21)

This statement is an accurate summary of Dinmont’s position as the ‘Border Chronicler’, and his second tale, ‘The White Lady of Glen-Tress,’ is a very brief, sentimental description of domestic and rural virtue rewarded.<sup>11</sup> There is a short antecedent for the ‘White Lady’ in the tale of ‘The Wool-Gatherer’, published with Hogg’s earlier novel, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 1818. In ‘The Wool-Gatherer’ the young shepherd Barnaby describes how an angelic female rescuer intervenes to save the family of another shepherd with a wife and six children. They miraculously escape the destruction of their house at Glen-Tress, Tweeddale, through the arrival of ‘the grandest lady coming to the house that ever was seen in the world’ (*Brownie* 2: 143). Hogg rewrites this earlier tale for publication in an annual. He describes the Tait family who were ‘a douss, decent, pious family ... an’ suffered muckle for religion’s sake’ (*Contributions* 21). The family were assembled for evening prayers when a young child rushes in with a description of a lady who is ‘as bonny as an angel, an’ a’ clad in white!’ (*Contributions* 21). John Tait, holding his Bible, goes out with his ‘numerous’ family to meet her whereupon the farmhouse behind them falls in and crashes to earth. Everyone is ‘miraculously’ saved and there is some surprise when there is no further sign of the ‘benevolent apparition’ (*Contributions* 22). Dinmont ends the tale with an assurance for the reader that it was ‘the interference of a kind Providence’ (*Contributions* 22) that saved the ‘devout family’

from death and that family prayers were not neglected that night even if ‘poor Johnny Tait ... had e’en to sing his psalm, an’ kneel to his God, in the shieling ahind the kie’ (*Contributions* 22). The blending of official and unofficial supernatural is shown here in the emphasis on religious piety and psalms as well as the assistance of a ‘figure, as white as a meteor’ (*Contributions* 22) which ensures the family’s rescue and survival.

Hogg’s earlier version of this tale in the *Sale-Room* was intended to be the first of many dealing with the contrast between rural and urban manners but this did not ensue. However, he realised that the annuals would provide another opportunity of publishing such material, with the likely opportunity for the inclusion of the supernatural. He ends this latest version of narrative with a note that he has ‘a great many more of Charlie’s instances noted down, which shall be forthcoming in the next volume of the *Literary Souvenir*’ (*Contributions* 22). However, again, no further tales were to appear even though the editor Alaric Watts did request some.<sup>12</sup>

The second example of Hogg’s tales in the annuals is that of ‘The Cameronian Preacher’s Tale’ in *The Anniversary* for 1829. The editors of Hogg’s *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books* point out that there is an earlier version of this tale with the intriguing title of ‘The Two Drovers’. They note that the watermark date of the manuscript is dated 1823 which precedes the tale of similar name by Scott by several years. ‘The Two Drovers’ by Scott was published in 1827 in the first series of *The Chronicles of the Canongate*. This tale is quite different from Hogg’s in that the murder of one of the drovers by the other is foretold by the murderer’s aunt and the murderer quickly and willingly gives himself up to authority without attempting to escape justice. It is notable that Scott offers no explanation for the occurrence of second sight which he describes beyond that of acknowledging it as part of normal and accepted Highland practice.

Hogg’s manuscript of ‘The Two Drovers’ is recognisable as the ancestor of ‘The Cameronian Preacher’s Tale’ although the editors describe it as an ‘incomplete and entirely different telling of the same story.’<sup>13</sup> Hogg’s second version of the tale stresses the role of religion in bringing miscreants to justice and includes a spectral appearance by the deceased murderer to explain his actions. The earlier tale describes how a cattle dealer, Johnston, is murdered by his rival and how his wealth is restored

to his widow with the help of a Cameronian preacher, Rev. Mr. Macmillan by name. In this early version, the piper is not the minor comic character of the later tale but actually attempts to rob the widow a second time and is arraigned on trial. Hogg's rewriting of 'The Two Drovers' for the *Anniversary* would retain the emphasis on the supernatural.

The *Anniversary* was distinctively Scottish in tone and outlook. Contributors included Thomas Pringle, J. G. Lockhart and John Wilson as well as Hogg. It was edited by Allan Cunningham, and, though only one volume was eventually published, it was evidently intended as an annually recurring collection of the best of Scottish poetry and prose.<sup>14</sup> Hogg's choice of a Cameronian preacher as the intermediary of the tale results in the depiction of a characteristically evangelical blend of reformed religion composed in equal parts of salvation and damnation. There are also strong elements of ecstasy and repentance along with fear and horror. John Farley, ostensibly the narrator, begins his preaching with 'one of those terrible sermons which God preaches to mankind, of blood unrighteously shed, and most wondrously avenged' (*Contributions* 96). It is an introduction to a world where the supernatural exists to revenge crime and where many inhabitants of religious communities are accustomed as much to listening devoutly to the words of the Bible as to reading it themselves.

The tale is one of bitter rivalry between two men, Walter Johnstone and John Macmillan, 'extensive dealers in corn and cattle' (*Contributions* 96). The preacher Farley locates their tragedy as originating in a sordid financial struggle at market. When both men meet up, 'their natures were inflamed by liquor as well as by hatred' (*Contributions* 97), and their companions anticipate 'personal strife' (*Contributions* 97). A bloody physical struggle then follows for outright supremacy. Neither man is wholly innocent but the disappearance of Johnstone leads to the trial and acquittal of Macmillan for murder. Farley refers to the trial and points out to his listeners that it was the 'contradictory testimony of the witnesses against him' (*Contributions* 98) that saved Macmillan from conviction. The judge appeals to a higher source of authority and warns Macmillan that 'on the murderer, the most High will lay his hot right hand, visibly and before men, that we may know that blood unjustly shed will be avenged' (*Contributions* 99). This acquittal is presented as a serious fracture in

the methods of justice. Legal, earth-bound justice is seen to be weak, incapable of honest restitution owing to human fallibility. Divine justice, however, is not subject to the difficulties of weak evidence given by inconsistent witnesses and will be seen to take the form of an apparition or spectre before eventual resolution.

Restoration of justice begins with a mysterious voice. We learn that when Macmillan has been killed by a fall from his horse. Afterwards his companions remember that he was earlier summoned from their 'carousal' in a hostelry by a disembodied voice naming him (*Contributions* 99). Hogg describes how 'a voice called sharply, "John Macmillan." He started up, seemed alarmed, and exclaimed, "What in Heaven's name can he want with me?"' (*Contributions* 99). Later, one of the men suggests that 'if that was not the voice of Walter Johnstone, I never heard it in my life; he is either come back in the flesh or in the spirit' (*Contributions* 99). Macmillan's death, however, does not resolve the mystery of Johnstone's disappearance and the matter remains unsolved until the Cameronian preacher, Farley, intervenes. His sermon takes the text 'hath there been evil in the land and the Lord hath not known it?' and he expounds on 'the wisdom of Providence in guiding the affairs of men' (*Contributions* 101). His words puzzle Macmillan's son-in-law, Joseph Howatson, who calls on God to reveal what really happened. Macmillan's apparition then appears twice to describe the fatal battle between himself and Johnstone and to instruct Howatson to restore the corpse to the widow Johnstone as well as financial bills and bonds.

Hogg's tale ends with the discovery of the body of Johnstone which has been miraculously preserved from decay by the 'embalming nature of the morass' (*Contributions* 107). The Cameronian preacher is led to the burial point by a 'corse candle in Crake's Moss' (*Contributions* 105), initially witnessed by a piper who believes that such lights prophesy both a buried corpse and possibly the death of those who see them. 'Corse (corpse) lights', 'elf candles' and 'will-o'-wisps' are all mentioned as supernatural warnings. The widow Johnstone actually refutes the piper's account using scientific terms to decry his 'delusions of the eye or exhalations of nature' (*Contributions* 105).<sup>15</sup> However, while she may dismiss lights as minor elements of the natural (scientific) world, she confesses to trusting the preacher to reveal the meaning of the wraith-like reappearances of her dead husband.

‘O! could he but, by prayer or other means of lawful knowledge, tell me about my dear Walter Johnstone; thrice has he appeared to me in dream or vision with a sorrowful look’ (*Contributions* 107). She appeals to the preacher’s resources of divine contact with God (prayer) or other ‘lawful knowledge’ in understanding her experiences and is rewarded by the resolution of the mystery and the restoration of her husband’s body and wealth. The appearances of various voices, spectres, and magical lights are presented as merely stepping-stones to the truth, subordinate to religious belief and doctrine in a characteristically rational manner, and rather unlike the supposedly superstitious Borders poet, Hogg.

Another tale, ‘The Fords of Callum’ in *Friendship’s Offering* for 1830, is only one of the seven items that Hogg contributed to two issues of this annual. Six of the seven items were poetry: ‘The Fords of Callum’ was the sole tale that was accepted. Hogg and Thomas Pringle, the editor, were old friends but Pringle was extremely rigorous in his choice of suitable material and rejected all allusions to sexual matters or religious controversy. Hogg’s material was generally therefore unsuitable although Pringle’s acceptance of ‘The Fords of Callum’ may have been made possible by the inclusion of the seemingly strong moral tone of the tale’s ending.

The tale opens with an immediate discussion of the likelihood of the existence of the supernatural. Wat Douglas is an elderly hind, or farm-servant, with sceptical views on fabled spirits. He is described as ‘bold as a lion, fearing neither man nor beast; and as for bogles of all kinds, such as fairies, brownies, ghosts, wraiths, or water-kelpies, Wat denied positively that any such creatures had existence’ (*Contributions* 132). Unhappily for him, as he relates to his wife, he has had a ‘singular warning’ about some catastrophe that will happen to their daughter Annie. Shortly afterwards they hear the voice of Annie outside the walls of their cottage asking if Wat has visited the Fords o’ Callum on her behalf. To their horror and bewilderment, the girl, or ‘wraith’ as Wat now describes her, then vanishes. Subsequently, the couple seek their daughter at the fords, find her lying dead and must arrange to bury her.

In this short tale, there is no real explanation of Annie’s spectral appearance although Hogg hints at sexual immorality as the possible reason for the tragically

early death. Firstly, Wat's distress leads him to question his wife, Janet, as to the state of her soul and rather more guardedly as to whether Annie is actually his daughter, 'tell me just ae thing, an' tell me truly. Is Annie —?' (*Contributions* 133). The true identity of Annie's father is one of the more oblique issues of the text posed by Wat's unanswered question to his wife and the later attendance at the funeral of a 'gentleman quite unknown to every one who was present' (*Contributions* 137).

The unexpected and aristocratic stranger is rumoured to be 'the late Duke of Q —' (*Contributions* 137) and he attends the funeral ceremony with 'a page in full mourning' (*Contributions* 137) and appears to officiate as chief mourner. Annie had always been 'accounted particularly handsome' (*Contributions* 132) in any comparison of the three sisters, and her absence from home in service might seem to indicate moral and personal danger from her employer. More telling is her mother's description of her as 'a queer mysterious lassie' and that she 'had some heavy, heavy dreams about her afore she was born' (*Contributions* 133). Hogg in this tale does not invoke any providential spirits in her protection. After Janet and Wat are visited by the wraith of Annie, Wat confesses that he has had 'an encounter' (*Contributions* 134) with something which he describes as 'an unyirthly creature' (*Contributions* 134) and that 'what passed atween us is a secret that maunna an' canna be revealed' (*Contributions* 135).

This secret would seem to relate to the reasons for Annie's death and that the Duke presides over the funeral suggests the awful possibility that Annie Douglas was his mistress as well as unwitting half-sister. That they had both been children of the same father and therefore incestuous lovers is one of the possible explanations of the dreadful secret that is responsible for Wat's sudden illness and death which occurs shortly after the discovery of the body of Annie. The narrator describes how

Wat looked so ill that it was fearful to see him. He immediately betook himself to bed, from which he never arose again, but died a fortnight afterwards, having rarely ever spoken from that morning forward. (*Contributions* 137)

While the age of the Duke is not specified by Hogg, it seems less probable that Annie is his daughter. His behaviour at the funeral is that of an older brother and it appears

that he is unaware of the possible scandal of Annie's birth and the possibilities of his own relationship to her. He 'took upon himself ... the office of chief mourner ... so that all the people supposed the elegant stranger some near relation of the deceased, sent for, from a distance, to take the father's part ... with great decency and decorum, appearing to be deeply affected' (*Contributions* 137). While the Duke appears both respectful and honourable, the reader is left with the covert suggestion that a scandalous crime has been committed by two unwitting parties and then eventually revealed. Hogg ends this tale shortly with the claim that 'neither father nor mother of the deceased, nor [any] one present at the funeral knew any thing whatever of the gentleman' (*Contributions* 137). It is an abrupt ending for the 'Fords of Callum' that provides no real resolution but does reflect the restrictions that Hogg was subject to as an author writing for annuals.

With this in mind, it is instructive to consider one of his tales, 'The Death of Walter Watson,' that was sent and almost immediately rejected for publication in the annuals. In *Friendship's Offering* Anne Renier discusses the emergence of annuals and gift-books for children and notes that publishers were quick to expand into this new market. However, the literary model for the annuals was one of serious instruction rather than tales intended for the entertainment or amusement of children. Both such qualities might be associated with idleness or worse. Renier suggests that there was a noticeable effort to 'banish the insidious fairy-tale' in the manner of Maria Edgeworth's *Early Lessons*.<sup>16</sup>

Initially Hogg was an enthusiastic admirer of the work of Mrs Anna Maria Hall, editor of the *Juvenile Forget Me Not*, and had sent various contributions to her. These included 'A Child's Hymn for the Close of the Week' which appeared in the *Juvenile Forget Me Not* for 1831 and 'The Death of Walter Watson' that was returned to him. The tales that he sent were rejected because Mrs Hall felt that they were unsuitable for children and in her letter of rejection she summarised certain persistent themes of Hogg's work that made his work particularly unlikely to be accepted for children's reading and in danger of bowdlerisation for adult publication as well. Mrs Hall wrote:

I find it most singularly perplexing - that the first tale you sent me was one of Seduction – Your Second (a thing by the way of extraordinary spirit and beauty) – was a wanderer from fairy land ... it would be downright sacrilege to fill the heads of our nurselings with their by-gone exploits – Your last is a Ghost Story! – which kept even me awake half the night. (*Contributions* xxiv)<sup>17</sup>

Mrs Hall might be expected to refuse to include any material dealing with seduction, especially if the tale resembled ‘The Fords of Callum’ in any way with its hints of incest and murder and clearly she regarded fairies and folk-lore as irrelevant at best and next to profanity at worst. Their ‘by-gone exploits’ were dangerously associated with a superstitious and backward age, unsuitable for juveniles. In her letter, she asserted with some energy that ‘all the sparkling-glittering-airy beings are buried under their own green moss, and blue hare bells’ (*Contributions* xxiv). Hogg’s tale has now been published in *Studies in Hogg and his World*<sup>18</sup> and the ‘Account of the Singular Death of Walter Watson’ is actually one of his least terrifying ghost stories and might even be said to conform to expectations that children should be reconciled to the existence of death, frequently of their parents or siblings. Hogg’s inclusion, however, of the ghost of a young woman, ‘with pale and rueful features’ (‘Account’ 96) was unacceptable as the embodiment of sinful mortality.

Before his death, Walter Watson appears to have been a model husband and father, accustomed to take family worship and lead the prayers. After his death, despite the hints of ‘a strange story ... perhaps better untold’ (‘Account’ 95), his wife persists in maintaining an image of her late husband as ‘a guardian angel ... shedding the tears of heaven’ (‘Account’ 94) over his family. This worship of him as saint rather than sinner is entirely incongruous with the account of Walter’s death which takes place at twilight on 25 September and is accompanied by ‘mental agonies [yet] no disease no pain or sickness’ (‘Account’ 95). Mrs Watson appears to be talking to an adult rather than a child. She describes the arrival of the other woman within their cottage who proceeded to approach ‘my husband’s bed, and asked if he was ready, for his time was now come? According as I thought or as I recollect [*sic*] she went into the bed’ (‘Account’ 96). This re-enactment of possible adultery is the final act of Walter’s life. He makes ‘a violent spring upward and then all was silent and still ...

my husband was lying stretched in death with features considerably distorted and every muscle seemed to have been bent to cracking' ('Account' 96).

The tale of Walter Watson's early and 'singular' death is immersed within strands of religious imagery as if Hogg was pointing to the necessary framework of Christianity as a structure for the discussion and forgiveness of sin within human existence. Walter's wife's speeches are steeped in Biblical references and she resolutely resists understanding her husband's story. She informs her daughter:

Thus died your father in the flower of his age and the prime of life. But all else relating to his death and the foreknowledge of the dreadful event which he seemed to have possessed is to this day a profound mystery to me and I am glad that it is so although at one time I was on the very point of being entrusted with the whole secret. ('Account' 96)

It is a stance which manages to ignore the evidence of guilt presented to the reader and allows Mrs Watson to remember her husband with love and even gratitude because 'whatever were his errors his last prayers for us have been heard for we have been kindly and mercifully dealt with' ('Account' 96). She appears to defer to a heavenly authority of her own construction, composed largely of naivety along with a refusal to investigate or condemn her husband.

In the last part of this section, I should like to discuss three examples of Hogg's later tales published in the *Forget Me Not* annuals for 1830, 1831 and 1834. The *Forget Me Not* annuals were published from 1823 until 1847 and were a prestigious vehicle for Hogg's contributions. The publisher Ackerman and editor Frederic Shoberl would eventually publish ten of Hogg's pieces, four of which were tales.<sup>19</sup> The second of these, 'Seeking the Houdy', appeared in the *Forget Me Not* for 1830 and is a vibrant description of Robin the shepherd galloping through Meggatdale, Peeblesshire, at night in search of a midwife for his pregnant wife Jean. Robin's reckless ride and vicious treatment of his reluctant mare is eventually halted by the sudden and 'uncanny' appearance of an old woman. Robin believes her to be a gypsy, 'dressed in a coarse country garb, tall and erect' (*Contributions* 60), and thinks he sees her wrapping up a baby in a blanket. In his confusion, his first thought is of infanticide and he challenges the woman, discovering next that she is the houdy

that he seeks. In their conversation she also describes herself as his daughter, to his bewilderment, but he overlooks this revelation. Both parties mount the mare and Robin fears that his passenger is 'either a witch or a mermaid' (*Contributions* 62) because of the devilish speed of the mare. Eventually the mare plunges, falls on her nose and throws the houdy over a precipice. Robin clings on and arrives back to find that a daughter has been born and the midwife has disappeared, leaving no trace: 'there was neither body nor blood to be seen, nor any appearance of a person having been killed or hurt' (*Contributions* 63).

Hogg explicitly situates this work within country traditions and experiences, specifically those of the south of Scotland. He describes the terrain as 'remote' (*Contributions* 56) and there is a primitive savagery in the descriptions of Robin's violent struggles with the reluctant mare, recalcitrant because separated from her foal. The difficulties of dealing with the horse 'caused him inadvertently to utter some imprecations ... that he confessed he should not have uttered; but it also caused him to say some short prayers for preservation' (*Contributions* 59). In effect, Robin's curses mixed with prayers, invoking and combining the agencies of God and the devil, produce his vision of an old woman among the heather bushes with their subsequent adventures.

Hogg's tale is short and relatively light-hearted in spirit. Robin's predicament is easily resolved and no-one appears to suffer very greatly. Hogg ends by asserting that 'many are the traditions remaining in the country, relative to the seeking of midwives, or houdies ... and strange adventures are related as having happened in these precipitate excursions' (*Contributions* 64). That the outcomes were often uncertain is reflected in the extreme anxiety with which adults appeal to supernatural channels, hence Robin's cursing, or invest other unusual incidents with particular importance. Hogg reminds the reader that 'there hardly ever was a midwife brought, but some incident occurred indicative of the fate or fortunes of the little forthcoming stranger' (*Contributions* 64).<sup>20</sup> It is another example of the invasion of the supernatural into domestic territory.

Moving beyond the Borders, Hogg's next tale, 'A Sea Story,' blends lowlands history with nautical trading adventure. It was published after 'Seeking the Houdy' in the subsequent *Forget Me Not* annual for 1831 and begins by referring to

itinerant merchants dealing in yarn and travelling throughout the Scottish countryside in search of the essential material commodity. Hogg notes that the merchants would often exchange ‘long romantic stories of battles and perils by land and water’ as well as ‘ready money’ for supplies of yarn (*Contributions* 65). John Robson was one such merchant and describes one of his journeys on board ship. The sea captain rescues a boy spotted inside a wicker basket and adrift on the waves. On closer inspection, the boy is revealed as ‘a creature about four feet lang, wi’ an auld withered face, like a fairy, or some o’ thae half-earthly half-hellish beings’ (*Contributions* 65). In appearance, it resembles a brownie and is linked to the sudden arrival of a tremendous storm. The ship is tossed among the waves and Robson remembers that it ‘gaed sae deep at ae time that I heard our keel play rusk against the gravel and sludge in the bottom’ of the sea-bed (*Contributions* 66). One of the crew speaks plainly to the captain that ‘this is nae natural convulsion of the elements ... the creature we took out o’ the weltering waves ... is either a murderer, or a deil, or at the very least a water-kelpie’ (*Contributions* 66). The situation is rescued when the crew throw the creature and its basket back overboard. The storm abates and calm ensues until the return of the creature to the ship, now found perched on a cask, itself transformed as the ‘deil’s basket’ (*Contributions* 69). In response to this haunting of the ship, the captain throws himself overboard ‘with a maniac yell of the most dreadful horror’ and is followed by the ‘demoniac creature’ (*Contributions* 70). The tale ends with the discovery of a gruesome murder. Inside the cask left onboard is ‘the body of a young woman ... disembowelled, cut in twain, and stuffed into a barrel of pickle’ (*Contributions* 71).

It is a tale of revenge as well as justice. The narrator explains the ‘hellish visitant’ as evidence of ‘some great and crying sin’ (*Contributions* 71) perpetrated by the captain and uncovered by the ‘creature ... with [its] countenance of stern and fearless defiance’ (*Contributions* 69). Hogg’s tale ends with marked emphasis on the extraordinary moral warning served by such events. He addresses ‘a’ you young fo’ks wha hae the warld afore ye never to do ony dauring deed o’ wickedness in hopes that it will remain in darkness’ otherwise ‘shame and ruin’ will inevitably follow (*Contributions* 71). The exhortation is generally Christian in tone accompanied by the warning of a day of judgement and that ‘there is a day coming

when every foul deed done in the flesh shall be laid open and exposed to the derision of men and angels' (*Contributions* 71). However, it is noticeable that the supernatural agent of revenge, the brownie, is linked to a more immediate prosecution of the captain for past sins and that the religious day of reckoning is announced without necessarily arriving. Hogg's moral tone is over-shadowed by the extravagance of the events of the narrative.

The third and last tale, 'Scottish Haymakers', in *Forget Me Not* for 1834 is a remarkable example of the potential cruelties associated with belief in supernatural portents. The tale itself was composed to illustrate an engraving of some haymakers in a field, sent specially to Hogg by the editor Frederick Shoberl in early 1833.<sup>21</sup> The tale begins with an appreciation of the personal beauty of the farm maidens and the pleasures of 'working in a hay-field on a fine summer day' (*Contributions* 78). However, Hogg is careful to situate himself outside the rural society of haymakers, observing their practices with the company of two artists as well as a ventriloquist. In this way he is a bridge between the haymakers and their watchers. His role has changed from the cheerful city rogue, bantering with Charlie Dinmont, the Border Chronicler, to the uneasy even diffident author unable to prevent the awkward resolution which sees one of the haymakers driven to madness, having been tricked by one of Hogg's chosen companions.

The tale describes the antics of the celebrated Monsieur Alexandre who is introduced by Hogg as 'the most wonderful ventriloquist that I believe ever was born' (*Contributions* 78). His abilities are proven when he deceives 'a great burly Lothian peasant sitting upon the hay' (*Contributions* 81). Everyone seems to hear the cries of a child buried beneath the hay 'for it cried with a kind of half smothered breath ... I am sure there never was such a deception practised in this world' (*Contributions* 81). The hay cart is dismantled and stripped of its cargo but no child is found. M. Alexandre thus upsets both rural tranquillity and the essential work of the haymakers while demonstrating that it is surprisingly easy to deceive the senses of the entire group. The implications of this are not fully explored except to supply the reader with a set of dangerous possibilities which include infanticide as well as spectral haunting.

The Ettrick Shepherd's attempt to unravel the mystery centres on a discussion with the driver of the cart about the likely origins of the supposed child. The driver believes he is haunted, ruling out the other possibility of his being 'the cause o' any lasses murdering their bairns' (*Contributions* 82). The discussion points to the carter's belief that 'the creature among the hay was either a fairy or the ghaist of a bairn' (*Contributions* 82-83). The recurrence of the cries leads him to run away. Hogg adds that 'we were very sorry to hear afterwards that he fled all the way to the highlands of Perthshire, where he still lives in a deranged state of mind' (*Contributions* 83).

The exploits of the ventriloquist confuse the boundaries between the inexplicable accomplishments of the supernaturally gifted showman and the frightened and bewildered audience. Disbelief is suspended – the evidence of our senses, such as hearing or sight, must be treated with caution because it would appear to prove the existence of invisible crying children. The ventriloquist continues to amuse and baffle other parties, torn between 'astonishment and terror' (*Contributions* 83). In his way, Hogg's tale becomes a record of impossibilities, transcending debates about the existence of the supernatural in his preservation of the events of the tale. Nonetheless, he is concerned about 'the authenticity of this story' (*Contributions* 84) and describes actual people such as Patrick ('Peter') Nasmyth, the painter who appears in his tale.

Thus Hogg's later tales show how the supernatural is embedded within Scots life in an extensive and settled manner. It is associated with the 'official' supernatural, which is religion, while able to instigate extramural investigation and revelation to supplement and support the framework of justice and authority that already exists, albeit ineffectually or with limitations, necessarily so given that these structures are dependent on fallible human interaction.

In conclusion, this thesis considers the representation of uncanny testimony within the writing of Walter Scott and James Hogg. The recent publication of two editions (Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels and Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of the Collected Works of James Hogg) has made it possible to investigate their work, with its supernatural content, as it actually appeared to their

contemporaries. Paradoxically, within the context of the early nineteenth century, advances in philosophy, science and medicine had renewed interest in supernatural phenomena. The problem of the existence of the supernatural suddenly appeared closer to possible resolution. This thesis suggests that both Scott and Hogg challenged orthodox thinking on the supernatural in different ways.

The new scholarly editions are especially important because both authors, particularly Hogg, suffered from later attempts to 'improve' their work through the removal of contentious elements. Fiction that appeared to recognise the existence of the supernatural was difficult to accept, then and now. In Scott's case, the success of the *Magnum Opus* edition, in its 'almost suffocating guise',<sup>22</sup> meant that his later notes and commentary on matters supernatural have become overly influential in descriptions of his attitude towards the supernatural as one of rational scepticism. This thesis sets out to show that Scott's works, in their earlier editions, are a truer guide to his position. These encapsulate his persistent efforts to uncover evidence produced by credible witnesses that may, or may not, finally prove the truth, or otherwise, of accounts of the supernatural. The extent of his collection of primary materials in the library at Abbotsford is testament itself to the strength of his fascination, even obsession, with the supernatural.

One of his final works was the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft addressed to J. G. Lockhart Esq.*, 1830. In this text, Scott summarised some of the works on the occult that he owned and that were part of his extensive collection of daemonology. While described as 'letters' it is notable that Scott's work was more of a collection of short stories, filled with anecdotes and references to other investigators of the supernatural. It was a very public statement of his wish to discuss the various aspects of the supernatural, hitherto confined to novels and tales.

Scott's particular interest in imagery of the supernatural was evident from his earliest poetry, having published his translation of the fervid German romantic poetry of Bürger in 1796. In this he was not so different from other writers of the period notable for its enthusiasm for Goethe and Schiller. However, Scott's early reading of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* had given him a significant, possibly unique, context for appreciation of German romanticism. By way of contrast, Hogg did not have an equivalent immersion in literature comparable to that of Scott. Even

so, and without possessing such advantages, James Hogg managed to become one of Scott's literary rivals, largely through their shared engagement with the folklore of the Scottish Borders.

Their friendship originated in the hunt for Borders ballads, often supernatural in subject, and subsequently developed against a background of literary exchange. Hogg published his own account of their relationship, and while appearing largely unequal in terms of sales figures, critical attention or public popularity, their relationship was nevertheless enriched by their joint engagement with the supernatural. Scott's efforts to understand such phenomena were often at one remove from Hogg's ready access to the raw material of folklore and superstition. He may have envied Hogg.

With his seemingly intrinsic knowledge of fairies, witchcraft, spectres, brownies and prophecy, Hogg provided Scott with an umbilical link to the uncanny. Nonetheless, Hogg is the more sceptical author. He often undermines his own texts by providing the reader with the explanation of his supernatural material. Most obviously, there is a consistent role for the supernatural whereby it champions the weak, punishes crime, and overturns injustice. Scott was not so attracted by such simple practicality. His interest lay more in seeking actual evidence of the supernatural. I suggest that Scott's education among the rational philosophers and historians of Enlightenment Edinburgh, followed by his legal training, and subsequent enthusiasm for antiquarian research, all combined to establish a particular interest in categories of the supernatural that might bear closer scrutiny. By seeking actual evidence of witchcraft, astrology, second sight or the uncanny, it might be possible to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the supernatural did, or did not, exist. Through correspondence with Ferriars and Hibbert, among others, he was aware of the new medical theories surrounding supernatural spectres and illusions. Explanation of such phenomena might soon be possible.

Questions of evidence and authority occur throughout Scott's literary career. To this end, the preface to 'Phantasmagoria', one of Scott's short tales published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1818, is highly revealing. The narrator, 'Simon Shadow', suggests that

There are few things so much affected by the change of manners and circumstances, as the quality and the effect of evidence. Facts which our fathers were prepared to receive upon very slender and hearsay testimony, we are sometimes disposed to deny positively, even when fortified by all that the laws of evidence can do for them, by the confession of the perpetrator of wickedness, by the evidence of its victims, by the eye-sight and oath of impartial witnesses, and by all which could, in an ordinary case, “make faith,” to use a phrase of the civilians, betwixt man and man.<sup>23</sup>

Simon Shadow then describes an incident whereby a Highland soldier, lately dead in battle, returns to his widowed cousin to urge her to continue with her plans to allow her son to join the military profession. In spite of the unlikely truth of the tale, Shadow suggests that the reader ‘may place absolute reliance upon the statements which I may give concerning my authorities’ (‘Phantasmagoria’ 40).

This tale is an example of Scott’s approach. It is consistent with his interest in searching for authoritative evidence of the supernatural that might prove, or disprove such beliefs. Furthermore, in his historical note on the text, Tulloch remarks that ‘the ‘Phantasmagoria’ story was founded upon an account which Scott had himself heard and which he was happy to present to others as having been attached to real people’ (‘Phantasmagoria’ 182).

In contrast to Scott, as has been noted, Hogg suggests that the supernatural possesses an innate authority to uncover criminal behaviour and restore justice. Furthermore, he questions the reliance placed on printed texts, whether ballads, personal memoirs, confessions or antiquarian history, as exemplars of testimony. Documents commonly privilege one explanation or one single viewpoint. In Hogg’s experience of the publishing milieu of Edinburgh between 1802 (Scott’s *Minstrelsy*) and 1832 (Cunningham’s *Anniversary*) certain voices were more likely to be heard, or accurately transcribed, than others.

Scott’s death in 1832 ended his efforts to investigate the existence of the supernatural through researching the evidence available. Hogg continued to publish his short tales in the *Annuals* and *Gift-Books*, popular in 1826. His tales are often characterised by their extraordinarily subversive explanations of supernatural events while appearing to continue in the tradition of tales suitable for light reading. His

interest in the scientific developments of electricity is often mentioned and ‘galvanising’ his readers frequently takes place.

One of his characteristic tales published towards the end of his life is found in *The Club-Book*.<sup>24</sup> This was ‘The Laidlaws and the Scotts; a Border Tradition’ and it restates Hogg’s position with regard to the supernatural. The head of the Laidlaw clan kills a woman and her child in the heat of battle. They return to haunt Will Laidlaw and the murdered woman prophesies that ‘ere the fourth generation from himself [Will Laidlaw] pass away, there shall not be one of the name left in their present habitations’ (*Club-Book* 149).

Feuding and reiving continue. However, the Laidlaws do eventually find themselves banished from their territories. Hogg notes, however, that the clan had become so rich that banishment only served to increase their influence throughout ‘the neighbouring counties’ (*Club-Book* 162). He concludes his tale by pointing out that ‘it must, upon the whole, be allowed, that few prophecies have been more fully and satisfactorily unaccomplished’ (*Club-Book* 163). The difference between Hogg and Scott’s approach to uncanny testimony could not be clearer in the outcomes of these short stories. The re-issue of Hogg and Scott in these most recent editions will allow further reassessment of their interests and achievements in the portrayal of the supernatural.

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<sup>1</sup> James Hogg, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1818) 2: 136. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup> William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) 553. Scott’s library at Abbotsford contains a number of English almanacs as well as several books of palmistry.

<sup>3</sup> See Frederick F. Faxon, *Literary Annuals and Gift Books: A Bibliography 1823-1903* (Boston: Boston Book Co., 1912; repr. Pinner: Private Libraries Association, 1973); Anne Renier, *Friendship’s Offering: An Essay on the Annuals and Gift Books of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Private Libraries Association, 1964); Andrew Boyle, *An Index to the Annuals* (Worcester: Andrew Boyle Booksellers, 1967); William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> James Hogg, *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books*, eds., Janette Currie and Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006). Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Invocation to the Queen of the Fairies' begins 'No Muse was ever invoked by me, /But a harp uncouth of olden key' (*Contributions* 3). It continues by celebrating 'The smile where a thousand witcheries play, /And the eye that steals the soul away' (*Contributions* 4).

<sup>6</sup> John Wilson, '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 the Ettrick Shepherd', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 4 (Feb. 1819): 529.

<sup>7</sup> *The Sale-Room* was a short-lived weekly periodical issued from 4 January 1817 to 12 July 1817. It contained work by Scott, Hogg, John and James Ballantyne, R. P. Gillies, J. G. Lockhart, G. Thomson and Henry Mackenzie among others. Each of the 28 numbers was dated as 'Saturday'. In connection with the unusual title, the first number announced that 'as the Salesman's rooms contain articles the most inconsistent with each other, and yet arranged side by side, and all designed for the use of the public, our papers will, on the same principle, boast an equal variety; and as a Dutch grotesque may happen to be hung next to a scripture-piece, or a Chinese joss placed by the side of an Etruscan vase, we shall not hesitate to blend the ludicrous with the serious, or relieve historical dissertation by the more whimsical researches of the local antiquary' (*Sale-Room* 2). Further references will be in parentheses.

<sup>8</sup> Hogg's use of 'Dinmont' for his farmer recalls the bluff Dandie Dinmont of *Guy Mannering*. See Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999). Scott's farmer is depicted as an honest and worthy country dweller though with a weakness for litigation. His dealings with Mr Pleydell were conducted in person rather than through the usual 'memorial' or statement in writing to an advocate in order to request legal advice. Dandie Dinmont reminds Pleydell that 'ye liked best to hear us hill-folk tell their ain tale by word o' mouth' (*Guy Mannering* 207). It is possibly a reminder of rural suspicion of the potential duplicity in written records rather than simply a reference to rural difficulties with literacy.

<sup>9</sup> Franz J. Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800-1835* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005) 79. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>10</sup> Glossed in *Concise Scots Dictionary* as 'beggar, vagabond or tramp.'

<sup>11</sup> Scott's White Lady of Avenel in *The Monastery* is an earlier example of spiritual assistance.

<sup>12</sup> See his letter to Hogg on 18 July 1827 cited in *Contributions* 288. Alaric Watts, ms 2245 ff. 104-05, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>13</sup> See *Contributions* 306 for further information on the manuscript. James Hogg Collection, GEN MSS 61, Box 1, Folder 27, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

<sup>14</sup> See Allan Cunningham, *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry*, 2 vols. (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1822). In this earlier work he laments that 'the attachment of our peasantry to the recital or chant of chivalrous ballads or superstitious legends, has abated by the diffusion of printed

knowledge' (1: vii). He adds 'nothing is related but what is supported by popular evidence, and many stories might be collected involving more remarkable superstitions, and abounding with the chivalrous, the wild, and the supernatural' (1: ix-x). However, Cunningham is in fact complicit with the publishers of these oral tales while regretting their transformation into 'printed knowledge.'

<sup>15</sup> The *Edinburgh Evening Courant* carried an anonymous description of ignis fatuus or 'will o' the wisp' on 11 October 1834. It was reported that a 'fine specimen of this phenomenon was witnessed on the "Loch of Barbush", near Dunblane ... Here, during an hour and a half, apparently dancing along the whole surface of the marsh, "Jack wi' the Lantern," or rather "Will o' the Wisp," went through all the varieties of his nocturnal gambols, to the amusement of some, and the wonder and terror of others ... Two, three, four, and even six "glints" of blue light were frequently visible at the same instant, reeling and passing each other in the most fantastic manner imaginable. It was remarked that this phenomenon became extinct upon the fall of a heavy shower of rain, accompanied with a high wind; and that during the whole time of the phosphoric ignition, the air was perfectly calm and moist.' The report accounts for the mysterious lights (phosphoric activity in still and damp conditions) but notes the 'terror' nonetheless of some observers. This notice in the *Courant* appears not to have been previously noted by Hogg scholars.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Renier, *Friendship's Offering* (London: Private Libraries Association, 1964) 18.

<sup>17</sup> The letter quoted is in the James Hogg Collection, Special Collections, University of Otago Library. It is dated 2 April 1830.

<sup>18</sup> James Hogg, 'Account of the Singular Death of Walter Watson By The Ettrick Shepherd', ed. Gillian Hughes, *Studies in Hogg and His World* 18 (2007): 93-103. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses. (Hogg's manuscript of this tale has been discovered only very recently in the archives of W. & R. Chambers, the Edinburgh publishers. See W. & R. Chambers, Inventory, Deposit 341/64, National Library of Scotland).

<sup>19</sup> The first of Hogg's tales, 'Eastern Apologues', was published in the *Forget Me Not* for 1829 and is not discussed in this chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Meg Merrilies of *Guy Mannering* is the obvious point of reference here.

<sup>21</sup> 'Scottish Haymakers' was painted by William Kidd and then engraved for the annual by James Mitchell. Despite its title, the painting does not appear particularly Scottish and Hogg did criticise the design of the hay-rakes. See *Contributions* 302.

<sup>22</sup> David Daiches, foreword, *Guy Mannering*, by Walter Scott, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999).

<sup>23</sup> Walter Scott, 'Phantasmagoria', *The Shorter Fiction*, eds. Graham Tulloch and Judy King (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009) 38. Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

<sup>24</sup> James Hogg, 'The Laidlaws and the Scotts; A Border Tradition', *The Club-Book*, ed. Andrew Picken, vol. 3 (London: Cochrane, 1831). Subsequent references will be in parentheses.

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