

## 6

### **'Beyond the Dusky Barrier': Perceptions of the Highlands in the Waverley Novels**

ALISON LUMSDEN

It may in some ways seem foolhardy to choose to write about the Waverley Novels in a study of Lowland perceptions of the Highlands, for this is an area in which Walter Scott has not been regarded positively over recent years.<sup>1</sup> According to some critics, it might appear that he is single-handedly responsible for every negative perception of the region now in place. This prejudice perhaps makes it all the more necessary, however, to look again at some of the reasons why Scott is frequently criticised for his treatment of the Highlands—criticisms which seem to persist in spite of several reassessments of his work—and to consider ways in which the Waverley Novels may be re-read to offer a more richly suggestive construction of his fiction.

Common criticisms of the Waverley Novels in relation to the Highlands generally fall into two broad categories. The first of these sees in Scott's work the creation of a mythic identity for the Highlands; a series of signs or emblems which fixes the region somewhat artificially in readers' minds, so that the Highlands, as Charles Withers suggests, have become 'both real—an area of upland

<sup>1</sup>There have been significant developments in Scott criticism since this paper was originally delivered. The most significant critical work in relation to the present subject is Caroline McCracken-Flesher's *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow* (Oxford 2005), which offers a radical new interpretation of Scott's delineation of Scottish national identity. Since this paper was delivered 'The Highland Widow' has also been published as it was originally within *Chronicles of the Canongate*, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels [EEWN] vol. xx, ed. Claire Lamont (Edinburgh 2000). Set within the context of its original publication 'The Highland Widow' can be read as one of several tales on the subject of the negotiation of cultural and national values within this volume.

geologically largely distinct from the rest of Scotland'—and 'a myth, a set of ideologically laden signs and images'.<sup>2</sup>

This myth includes all the trappings of what may be referred to as the 'tourist board' image of Scotland—romantic scenery, heather, claymores, bagpipes and tartan-clad clansmen—and it is this image of the Highlands which commentators frequently suggest is inscribed in Scott's fiction, creating what Edwin Muir described famously as a Scotland of 'half flesh and blood and half pasteboard'.<sup>3</sup> Muir's criticisms have been pervasive, and were frequently reiterated throughout the twentieth century. Andrew Hook, for example, reinforces this view of Scott in *The History of Scottish Literature*, writing:<sup>4</sup>

Through Scott the aura of romance finally settled upon Scotland. Scotland's colourful and passionate history, her lochs and rivers and mountains, her loyal, valorous, and proud people, her tradition of poetry and song—all these aspects of Scotland that had already acquired considerable romantic appeal—now appeared in a new and totally irresistible form.

It is also a view of Scott's work embodied more recently in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery's *O Caledonia!* exhibition in 1999 where Scott and a romantic model of the Highlands were yet again portrayed as inescapably intertwined.<sup>5</sup> Read in this way Scott's work is held responsible for creating an identity for the Highlands which, while good for the tourist industry, creates a set of negative cultural inscriptions which modern Scotland may now wish to shake off.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Withers, 'The historical creation of the Scottish Highlands', in *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, edd. Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley (Edinburgh 1992), 143–56, at 143.

<sup>3</sup>Edwin Muir, *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (London 1936), 13.

<sup>4</sup>Andrew Hook, 'Scotland and Romanticism: the international scene' in *The History of Scottish Literature*, gen. ed. Cairns Craig, 4 vols. (Aberdeen 1987–8) ii, 1660–1800, ed. Andrew Hook (Aberdeen 1987), 307–21, at 319.

<sup>5</sup>*O Caledonia!: Sir Walter Scott and the Creation of Scotland*, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 7 May–17 October, 1999.

Hand in hand with this criticism goes a second and perhaps even more condemnatory reading of Scott's work. At the very moment when Scott is constructing this romantic image for the Highlands, we are told, he is simultaneously consigning its 'real' identity to the dustbin of history. 'Scott reduced Scottish history to a series of isolated narratives which could not be integrated into the fundamental dynamic of history'<sup>6</sup> writes Cairns Craig, and while he may suggest that by taking Scotland 'out of history' this leaves its writers free to explore 'the place where history encountered those forces which could not be made to submit to historical amelioration',<sup>7</sup> other writers have interpreted this aspect of Scott's work less favourably. David Richards, for example, writes:<sup>8</sup>

Scott's novels are about absent subjects; it is only when the Highlands are constructed as *historically* invisible that they can re-emerge as textually visible and capable of bearing the burden of a historical discourse from which they are excluded as an extinct species.

Read in this way, Scott's work is thus held to deprive the Highlands—and sometimes Scotland as a whole—of any progressive identity, for while the region is constructed romantically it is simultaneously consigned to the past, inevitably giving way to the forces of history which position it on the side of failure—most notably in the context of the Jacobite rebellions—somehow belonging to a lost or rapidly fading world. Within this model the Highlands can only be written of elegiacally, while the future belongs to Lowland commercial Scotland and ultimately to the success of the Union and the British Empire. 'In popularizing an idea

<sup>6</sup>Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh 1996), 39.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>8</sup>David Richards, *Masks of Difference: Cultural Representations in Literature, Anthropology and Art* (Cambridge 1994), 121.

of Scotland, it [Scott's writing] was unparalleled', suggests Murray Pittock:<sup>9</sup>

But it is that very idea which invented Scotland as a museum of history and culture, denuded of the political dynamic which must keep such culture alive and developing. Scott loved his country, but denied its contemporaneity.

The cultural markers of that 'museum of history and culture' which Scott is accused of having inscribed in our national identity arise, however, not only from the *Waverley Novels*, but also from his poetry, and, to an extent greater than usual for a writer, from the evidence of his life. Long before turning to novel writing Scott had already established himself as a poet, and many of the images associated with Scott and the Highlands may be attributed to works like *The Lady of the Lake* rather than to his fiction. Our modern perceptions of Scott's attitudes to the Highlands are also shaped by the construction of what may be seen, on the face of it, as a museum of antiquities at Abbotsford;<sup>10</sup> or, even more pertinently, to Scott's stage management of the visit of George IV to Edinburgh, which took place from 14 August to 29 August, 1822.

It is worth pausing to remind ourselves of the circumstances surrounding this visit. When George IV came to Scotland in 1822 it was the first time that a monarch had stepped foot on Scottish soil since Charles II had taken refuge there during the Civil Wars of the mid-seventeenth century. Equally significantly, it was the first time that a member of the Hanoverian royal family had entered Scotland since the ill-renowned Butcher Cumberland. The visit was thus heavily loaded with cultural connotations. It was to Scott, who had attended the coronation the year before, and who had long been

<sup>9</sup>Murray Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland: The Stuart Myth and the Scottish Identity, 1638 to the Present* (London 1991), 87.

<sup>10</sup>An interesting perspective on how Scott regarded his antiquarian collections is offered in a manuscript in the possession of the Faculty of Advocates, published as *Reliquiae Totcosienses*, edd. Gerard Carruthers and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh 2004).

admired by George, that the task of stage-managing the event fell. The result, frequently parodied in the image of the corpulent King parading the High Street of Edinburgh in pink tights and a kilt, is well known; equally the visit, with its emphasis on Highlanders, tartan and bagpipes, is frequently held to have instigated all that we dislike in images of the Highlands which persist until today, and it has, indeed, even been held responsible for their economic demise. 'Scotland could not be the same again once it was over', writes John Prebble of the visit:<sup>11</sup>

A bogus tartan caricature of itself had been drawn and accepted, even by those who mocked it, and it would develop in perspective and colour ... Walter Scott's Celtification continued to seduce his countrymen, and thereby prepared them for political and industrial exploitation.

However, while there may have been aspects of the king's visit which were ill-advised or even unfortunate, it is worth looking again at the details of it before reaching such an extreme conclusion. For example, we might consider how Scott himself regarded the arrangements. In a letter to MacLeod of MacLeod, he writes:<sup>12</sup>

Do come and bring half-a-dozen or half-a-score of Clansmen, so as to look like an Island Chief as you are. Highlanders are what he will like best to see, and the masquerade of the Celtic Society will not do without some of the real stuff, to bear it out. Pray come and do not forget to bring the Bodyguard for the credit of Old Scotland and your own old house.

Clearly, whatever may have been the result, Scott's main motivation was that the visit should be for 'the credit of Old Scotland', and the good behaviour of the people of Edinburgh throughout the visit is a fact frequently mentioned in his letters written shortly afterwards. What is more significant is that, with this purpose in mind, Scott

<sup>11</sup>John Prebble, *The King's Jaunt: George IV in Scotland, August 1822* (London 1988), 364.

<sup>12</sup>*The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, edd. H. J. C. Grierson *et al.*, 12 vols. (London 1932–7) vii, 213–14.

seeks to emphasise the separate cultural identity of Scotland, and to do so, looks to those greatest markers of its difference, Highlanders and the Highlands, turning not only to those whom Scott perceived as genuine Highlanders such as MacLeod, but also to the Celtic Society of Edinburgh, an institution established mainly for the patronage of Highland manners and customs.

If Scott's intention was to portray Scotland in a good light, and to do so by establishing its own cultural identity, there can be no doubt that this was achieved. The poet Crabbe, for example, arrived unexpectedly to visit Scott in the midst of the celebrations, and Lockhart, Scott's biographer, writes that Crabbe was soon aware that he had landed in what appeared both geographically and symbolically another country:<sup>13</sup>

It seemed as if he had never for one moment conceived that the same island, in which his peaceful parsonage stood, contained actually a race of men, and gentlemen too, owning no affinity with Englishmen, either in blood or in speech, and still proud in wearing, whenever opportunity served, a national dress of their own.

The king clearly had similar views by the end of his visit, for even Scott was somewhat taken aback when, at a dinner given by the Magistrates of Edinburgh in the Parliament House, the King toasted, "*The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland*—and prosperity to the Land of Cakes". 'So completely had this hallucination taken possession', writes Lockhart, 'that nobody seems to have been startled at the time by language which thus distinctly conveyed his Majesty's impression that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains'.<sup>14</sup>

While at first glance it may be easy to mock the events of 1822, when looked at more closely much can be said in Scott's defence. The role of the Celtic Society of Edinburgh for example is complex; while their predilection for dressing up in tartans may have been

<sup>13</sup>J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 7 vols. (Edinburgh 1837–8) v, 197.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.* v, 206.

essentially antiquarian in impulse, mere 'masquerade' as Scott recognises, it nevertheless kept alive a provisional version of Highland identity which was available as a model upon which to construct a more vital paradigm of the Highlands in 1822. Moreover, its English counterpart, The Highland Society of London, founded in 1777, had largely been responsible for the repeal of the Disarming Act in 1782; again, whatever their intentions in doing so, this made it possible, only forty years later, for ranks of armed Highlanders to face a member of the Hanoverian dynasty. From this distance, it is easy to see this as an empty gesture, but Scott himself was aware of its potency, writing to Lady Abercorn of his anxieties about being in charge of these men 'armed to the teeth with sword and target pistol and dagger'.<sup>15</sup> Seen thus, the pageant, like the Celtic society itself, may contain potentially radical undertones so that it emerges not only as an empty charade but as a statement about how the role of the Highlander, so often perceived in negative terms by his English neighbour, may be renegotiated.

Also pertinent is the timescale on which the visit was planned. George IV had visited Ireland the year before and his original intention had been to continue that visit to Scotland. This, however, was postponed until the following year and as late as 23 June 1822 Scott writes to Lord Montagu: 'after the public expectation had been excited we learn he is not coming'.<sup>16</sup> On 29 June rumours of the visit were revived again, but by 16 July the King's plans are still described as 'very uncertain'.<sup>17</sup> Only on 22 July can Scott state, 'The King is coming after all',<sup>18</sup> and it is not until 31 July that we find him writing, 'the whole of this work has devolved on my shoulders'.<sup>19</sup> In effect, then, Scott was left with about two weeks to prepare the royal pageant and in these circumstances was forced to create tradition on his feet. What is significant is that, asked to create a cultural event at

<sup>15</sup> *Letters*, edd. Grierson *et al.* vii, 241–2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* vii, 191.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* vii, 212.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* vii, 213.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* vii, 215.

such short notice, Scott must surely have fallen back on images already well in place. Seen thus, the visit can be read not as the moment when a mythopoeic version of the Highlands came into place, but, rather, as a culmination of this process.<sup>20</sup>

This is a point well worth bearing in mind in any discussion of the Waverley Novels, for often critics write as if somehow, from a blank space, Scott single-handedly creates in his fiction the romantic package which we now perceive as the nineteenth-century model of the Highlands. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth, for as Peter Womack has argued so convincingly, Scott played only a very small part in the process of romanticising the region which took place roughly between the years 1746 and 1811. During this period, Womack argues, perceptions of the Highlands had manifested themselves in a number of sometimes conflicting identities, ranging from that of a lawless area peopled by savages and in need of improvement, to one inhabited by a pastoral, simple and sometimes lamented race; from a region inhabited by thieves and robbers to one containing a race imbued with natural warlike and noble qualities. This process, Womack suggests, was largely complete by 1811, only one year after the publication of Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*, to the extent that the poem, so persistently described as if it is the origin of the day trip to Loch Katrine, in fact rather refers to already established images by taking its readers along a route laid out in standard guide books for the area.<sup>21</sup>

Womack's study is significant, for it reminds us that a romantic construction of the Highlands was already well established by 1811—three years before the publication of *Waverley*—and by doing so provides us with an important context in which to reassess Scott's fiction; a context where, rather than creating stock notions of the Highlands, Scott can be seen as entering into negotiation with those models, reacting to sets of images already in place.

<sup>20</sup>See further T. M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War: the Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester 1994), 84–99.

<sup>21</sup>Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (London 1989), 156–8.

This view of what Scott was trying to achieve in his fiction is in part indicated by what he writes of it in the General Preface to what is known as the Magnum Opus edition of his fiction:<sup>22</sup>

Without being so presumptuous as to hope to emulate the rich humour, pathetic tenderness, and admirable tact, which pervade the works of my accomplished friend, I felt that something might be attempted for my own country, of the same kind with that which Miss Edgeworth so fortunately achieved for Ireland—something which might introduce her natives to those of the sister kingdom, in a more favourable light than they had been placed hitherto, and tend to procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles.

Here, as in his letters at the time of George IV's visit, Scott acknowledges a purpose of showing 'Old Scotland to good credit', reacting, in other words, against a set of prejudices already in place. That these prejudices bear particularly against the Highlands is also apparent, for Scott claims that he wishes to write of his early recollections of scenery and customs in that region. The precise nature of the prejudices which Scott had in mind is, of course, difficult to ascertain and is too large a topic to cover adequately here. Some indication of the preconceptions of the Highlands against which Scott was reacting may, however, be gauged by considering the contents of his library at Abbotsford. Here we find that sources for models of the region are many and various and include, for example, Thomas Pennant's *Tours in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1769 and 1772*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (1790), John Campbell's *Full and Particular Description of the Highlands of Scotland* (London 1750–2), John Knox's *Tour Through the Highlands* (London 1787) and Thomas, Earl of Selkirk's *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* (London 1805).<sup>23</sup> Some

<sup>22</sup>General Preface to the Waverley Novels in Magnum Opus edition of the Waverley Novels, 48 vols. (Edinburgh 1829–33) i, i–xcvi (at xiii).

<sup>23</sup>J. G. Cochrane, *A Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh 1838), 4, 16, 17. Scott also owned a copy of David Stewart of Garth's *Sketches of the Character*,

indication of the particular prejudices which he had in mind when writing the General Preface also become apparent if we consider an article contemporary with it, Scott's 1829 review of Joseph Ritson's *Annals of the Caledonians, Picts and Scots; and of Strathclyde, Cumberland, Galloway, and Murray*.<sup>24</sup> Here, Scott describes various attitudes to the Highlands, in particular those of John Pinkerton (1758–1826), and quotes Pinkerton's claim that 'The Celts of Ireland, Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland, are savages, have been savages since the world began, while a separate people, that is, while themselves and of unmixed blood'. Pinkerton states that the Highlanders have thus always been despised by their Lowland neighbours and continues: 'the Celts of Scotland always are, and continued to be, a dishonoured, timid, filthy, ignorant, and degraded race'.<sup>25</sup> To this Scott responds:<sup>26</sup>

The Highlanders of Scotland ... had long inherited a large share of the kindness and respect of their countrymen ... in a word, the whole nation was disposed—we think justly—to consider them the representatives of the ancient Scots, from whom the royal line was unquestionably descended, and who, by the admission of Mr Pinkerton himself, had given name to the whole nation.

Here, then, we can see examples of the kind of prejudices Scott has in mind when writing the General Preface and, indeed, his fiction. Scott, it seems, is reacting against such prejudice, and entering into a dialogue with those perceptions of the Highlands perpetuated by the previous generation. Notably, in doing so, as in 1822, he elides Scottish and Highland identities to suggest that in defending the

---

*Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland* (1822) (*ibid.*, 19), which possibly influenced his later Highland fiction.

<sup>24</sup>*Quarterly Review*, July 1829; reprinted in *The Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 28 vols. (Edinburgh 1834–6) xx, 301–76. The General Preface to the *Waverley* Novels was not written with the publication of *Waverley* but was added in 1829 as a general introduction to the Magnum Opus edition of Scott's fiction.

<sup>25</sup>Scott, *Prose Works* xx, 320–1.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.* xx, 321–2.

foibles of one region he is simultaneously promoting a more positive identity for the entire Scottish nation.

To state that in the *Waverley Novels* Scott is seeking to establish an identity for Scotland, and that that identity is intrinsically linked to that of the Highlands, is of course to say nothing new, for it could be argued that whatever good intentions Scott may have had, the result is that he unfortunately ties that Scottish identity to a set of empty romantic images, and simultaneously, as we have seen, consigns those images to a distant and disappearing past—lamented, but inevitably subsumed by the forces of history and progress. Such readings of Scott's work are basically variations on what became the standard twentieth-century reading expounded by Georg Lukács in his study *The Historical Novel*.<sup>27</sup> Lukács, of course, sees in Scott's work an essentially pragmatic view of society; one where oppositional conflict is resolved into a synthesis in order that society may move forward. Read thus, romance is subjugated to rationality and Highlands to Lowlands, in order that Britain may move forward into post-Union prosperity. Seen in this light, *Waverley*, for example, may be read within what has become a standard critique whereby the English hero, Edward Waverley, a youth brought up on reading too much romance, is briefly attracted to the romantic connotations of the Jacobite Highland cause (most notably encapsulated in his attraction to a woman) only to wake from this dream; to realise that the future lies with the government forces, the Hanoverian dynasty, and a more suitable woman; and to utter the much-quoted lines that 'the romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now commenced'.<sup>28</sup>

Lukács's reading is in many ways convincing, and it certainly played a significant role in attracting much-deserved critical attention to Scott in the second half of the twentieth century. It is,

<sup>27</sup>Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London 1962) (published originally in Russian in 1938).

<sup>28</sup>Walter Scott, *Waverley*, Magnum Opus edition, vols. i and ii, at ii, 296; page numbers will hereafter be given in brackets after quotation.

however, as is well-recognised, oversimplistic, concerning itself with the broad narrative thrust of the novels at the expense of much of the detail. Scott's novels, in their first edition formats, consist, after all, of an average of three volumes with 330 pages per volume, and it seems valid to ask why Scott wrote such long fictions if writing to such a straightforward formula. The answer, of course, is that the structures of the novels as Lukács identifies them form only the skeletons of the fiction. What is at least equally interesting in the Waverley Novels is what occurs between these bare bones; the *excess* or *residue* between the spaces of narrative. It is to these we must look for a more complex and revealing reading of Scott's approach to the Highlands in his fiction.

This approach to Scott's novels is, surprisingly, frequently overlooked. Too often the novels are read as if they are merely an extension of Scott's public persona, or as if his actions as a public figure and his statements of belief in reviews and historical writings can be unquestioningly imported into any reading of his fictional texts. While, of course, it would be ridiculous to suggest that nothing of Scott the man made its way into his fiction, it seems a mistake to assume too much when reading the Waverley Novels. Perhaps even more significantly, while as historical novels the texts strain at generic boundaries, the Tales, Romances and Novels of the Author of *Waverley*, are ultimately fictional, not historical texts, something which seems forgotten when, for example, Murray Pittock describes Scott's fiction as having an unfortunate 'fictional slant' beneath 'his tempting claim to be writing history'.<sup>29</sup>

Yet to approach the Waverley Novels via their essentially fictional nature is supported by Scott himself and indeed implicit in the anonymous publication of them. By publishing in this way, Scott seems to be deliberately putting distance between his public self and the fictional space of the texts, a process continued in the 'Chinese box' effects of the layers of Introductions, Notes and Prefaces which eventually surround the novels. It is also an approach to fiction

<sup>29</sup>Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland*, 85.

implicit in Scott's own description of his creative methods. In the often quoted 'Introductory Epistle' to *The Fortunes of Nigel* the Author of *Waverley* comments:<sup>30</sup>

I think there is a dæmon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write, and leads it astray from the purpose ... If I resist the temptation, as you advise me ... I am no more the same author, than the dog in a wheel, condemned to go round and round for hours, is like the same dog merrily chasing his own tail, and gambolling in all the frolic of unrestrained freedom. In short, on such occasions, I think I am bewitched.

As David Hewitt has pointed out,<sup>31</sup> not only is this a wonderful metaphor for the workings of the Romantic imagination, it is a reminder to the reader that the Author of *Waverley* is not writing to fill up any pre-planned structure, but is, on the contrary, describing the act of creation as one of process; a site where the imagination is given free play.

This model of the fiction suggests that we are to see the *Waverley* Novels as a site of imaginative interaction where the various perceptions of the Highlands inherited by the Author of *Waverley* are put into play and exposed to the Romantic imagination, in order that these models of identity for both the Highlands and Scotland may be interrogated and re-examined. Read thus the *Waverley* Novels emerge, not as responsible for the creation of a Highlands which Womack describes as 'locked into an imperial sign-system',<sup>32</sup> but rather as an interrogation of that romantic, pastoral, barbarian or historically redundant package; as an exploration of its boundaries, and a negotiation of its place within any future construction of Scottish identity. If this is the case, we must ask what kinds of

<sup>30</sup>'Introductory Epistle' in Walter Scott, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, EEWN vol. xiii, ed. Frank Jordan (Edinburgh 2004), 10.

<sup>31</sup>David Hewitt, 'Walter Scott', in *The History of Scottish Literature* iii, *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Douglas Gifford (Aberdeen 1988), 65–87, at 71.

<sup>32</sup>Womack, *Improvement and Romance*, 47.

interrogation takes place in the novels, and what kind of identity, if any, is finally proposed.

This may be assessed by returning to the parent of the Waverley Novels, *Waverley* itself. As Lukács's model suggests, on the face of it this is a novel constructed around binary oppositions, the meeting places of history which recur in Scott's fiction between romance and realism, history and myth, Highlands and Lowlands, Jacobite and Hanoverian. However, a closer reading of the novel suggests that rather than being a model of the subjugation of these oppositions one to the other as part of the inevitable path of history, the novel is, rather, an interrogation of these oppositions as a relevant episteme in which to construct both personal and national identity; an interrogation, in short, of the rigid models for looking at the Highlands as described by Womack and inherited by Scott at the time when he came to write his fiction.

The first of these models is, as we might expect, closely linked to the kind of prejudices offered by John Pinkerton, and voiced throughout the *Waverley* texts by characters such as Henry Gow in *The Fair Maid*, prejudices which construct the Highlander only in terms of savage, robber, rogue or thief.<sup>33</sup> In *Waverley*, such a model is proposed by Colonel Talbot who, we are told, is a man 'strongly tinged ... with those prejudices which are peculiarly English' (ii, 214). To Talbot, the Highlanders are '“barren, barren, beggars all”' (ii, 247), and despite Waverley's attempts to persuade him otherwise, he refuses to acquaint himself with any of Edward's Highland friends. 'Indeed he went farther', the narrator tells us:

and characterised the Baron as the most intolerable formal pedant he had ever had the misfortune to meet with, and the Chief of Glennaquioch as a Frenchified Scotchman, possessing all the cunning and plausibility of the nation where he was educated, with the proud, vindictive, and turbulent humour of that of his birth. (ii, 214)

<sup>33</sup>Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, EEWN vol. xxi, edd. A. D. Hook and Donald Mackenzie (Edinburgh 1999).

These are precisely the kinds of images of the Highlands which we might expect Scott to counteract in his fiction, and in *Waverley* itself they are interrogated and found wanting by the relationships which Edward forms with the Mac-Ivors and the hosts of insights which the reader is given into the sophisticated social and political structures operating in the Highlands.

However, what is surely more problematic is the model of the Highlands which Scott posits in place of such Highland phobia and it is to this that we must turn to examine whether Scott does indeed simply construct an empty romantic edifice or if he offers a more complex framework within which to position the region. This may be assessed by a closer examination of Edward Waverley himself.

Edward Waverley arrives in Scotland, and indeed the Highlands, ignorant of both its landscape and its inhabitants. Having had some vague hints from both his aunt and his Jacobite tutor that he must be wary of the Scottish people, his first impressions of the country are very much in the vein of what a contemporary Englishman might be expected to note; poverty and squalor. His first impression of Tully-veolan for instance, is one of cottages 'miserable in the extreme' and village girls of whom an Englishman:

might have wished the clothes less scanty, the feet and legs somewhat protected from the weather, the head and complexion shrouded from the sun, or perhaps might even have thought the whole person and dress considerably improved, by a plentiful application of spring water, with a *quantum sufficit* of soap. (i, 77)

On realising that Tully-veolan is on the edge of the Highlands, moreover, Waverley again very quickly adopts the standard set of responses to that region. The Highlands, he realises, constitute another country, a land beyond that which he has hitherto regarded as forming part of British identity. Learning of Fergus and Flora Mac-Ivor and of the Highland practice of blackmail we are told that 'Waverley could not help starting at a story which bore so much resemblance to one of his own day-dreams' (i, 159). Fascinated by what he hears of the region, he asks that he may make 'an excursion

into the neighbouring Highlands, whose dusky barrier of mountains had already excited his wish to penetrate beyond them' (i, 163).

Waverley, then, following a well-trodden path of post-1746 thought, is at first repulsed by the squalor of Scotland, and then attracted to what he perceives to be a land of myth and story lying tantalisingly beyond the dusky barrier of the Highland line. His impression, moreover, that he is entering the landscape of romance and story—a land constructed out of his own youthful reading, the kind of 'nonsensical trash' which the young Scott described as being the basis of his own education—seems initially confirmed as he meets with the romantic hero in the character of Fergus, and the romantic heroine *par excellence* in the form of the bejewelled, harp-playing Flora.

However, Waverley enters the Highlands not through the seemingly ephemeral dusky barrier of his imagination, but rather by a long and arduous journey through bog and quagmire, a circumstance which should alert both himself and the reader to the fact that he is entering not a fairy land, but a very real geographical space, while many of his experiences in the novel seem designed to deconstruct his own romantic perceptions of the region. This is indeed implicit from the outset, for while the narrator may tell us that Waverley believes he has found a fund of circumstances 'for the exercise of a romantic imagination'—a common perception of the Highlands by 1814—he also comments that 'the only circumstance which assorted ill with the rest, was the cause of his journey—the Baron's milk cows!' (i, 173).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Cairns Craig argues that this ironic commentary on the romantic forces within *Waverley* is a sign of 'the novelist of progressive history' finding himself 'inextricably bound into a conflict with the very medium of his writing' (Craig, *Out of History*, 71). While this reading is useful it again presupposes that Scott is writing to some pre-determined Lukácsian plan which is untenable in the face of the circumstances of Scotland's situation. I would suggest, rather, that the Waverley Novels are an imaginative site where the Author of Waverley allows apparently conflicting forces free play.

A similar deconstruction of the patina which Edward attempts to lay over his experiences in the Highlands is also implied in what on the face of it seems the quintessential romantic experience, his encounter with Flora by the waterfall. In *Waverley*, this provokes 'the wild feeling of romantic delight' which amounts 'almost to a sense of pain' (i, 237) but again the narrator simultaneously deconstructs such interpretations by reminding us that Flora's behaviour is not that of a noble savage, but rather has been artificially contrived to impress a young English officer. Flora, we are reminded, 'possessed excellent sense', and like all beautiful women is 'conscious of her own power'; and thus she 'gave the romance of the scene, and other accidental circumstances, full weight in appreciating the feelings with which *Waverley* seemed obviously to be impressed' (i, 236).

Scenes like these in the novel, and the relationship which is thus established between narrator and reader so that we are always held at a distance from *Waverley*, serve both to examine the ways in which a romantic image of the Highlands may be constructed, and simultaneously to interrogate such images, questioning their relevance as an appropriate grammar with which to negotiate one's way around the discourses brought into play within Scott's depictions of both the Highland experience and landscape. *Waverley*, like many of Scott's readers, persists in his own romantic construction of the region and it is this which ultimately results in his aligning himself with the Jacobite cause. Believing himself to be in a land of myth and story—a land denuded of all political or practical implications—*Waverley* fails to realise the full ideological ramifications of the events which surround him. On the eve of the rebellion Fergus reminds him that if he is not certain of his political convictions he should go to England, but *Waverley*, foolishly believing that it is his best hope of winning over Flora, decides to stay. ' "And is this your very sober earnest" ', asks Fergus with a shrewd insight into *Waverley*'s character, " "or are we in the land of romance and fiction?" ' (i, 285). *Waverley* may fail to recognise the

distinction, but Fergus is in full command of the severity of the situation.

Such incidents, along with Flora's repeated assertion that Waverley could never be happy with a woman such as herself, are reminders that the romantic construction through which events are viewed is one believed in by no-one but Waverley. It is this, in fact, which he discovers in the course of the novel, for as he fights in earnest, he realises that rebellion and battle cannot be safely contained within the bounds of story, but are grave and bloody events. Ultimately it is Fergus who makes this clear, for on the eve of Mac-Ivor's own capture he reminds Edward that the failure of the rebellion will have serious and damaging effects. ' "The vessel is going to pieces" ' he tells Waverley ' "and it is full time for all who can, to get into the long-boat and leave her" ' (ii, 278). ' "The Hanoverian ministers always deserved to be hanged for rascals" ', he continues, ' "but now, if they get the power in their hands ... they will deserve the gallows as fools, if they leave a single clan in the Highlands in a situation to be again troublesome to government" ' (ii, 279). Not only are Fergus's words prophetic, they are a reminder that while Waverley may have constructed the enterprise romantically, for Fergus it has always been both real and desperate.

Read in this way *Waverley* may be seen not simply as a novel where a romantic model of the Highlands is either constructed or subjugated, but rather, one where not only Colonel Talbot's overt prejudices are discarded as unsuitable, but equally, the appropriateness of situating Highland experience in the category of romance, story and myth is interrogated and found wanting. For Waverley the experience of the rebellion has been one of learning the dangers of constructing a real geographical region in such terms. When he recognises that 'the romance of his life was ended' and 'its real history had now commenced' (ii, 296), this much-quoted phrase may be seen less as a comment on his foolishness in joining the rebellion, but rather as one on the inappropriateness of constructing such experiences within a romantic and mythopoeic discourse. *Waverley*, consequently, may be read less as a novel where the

Highlands are constructed in rigid and vacuous categories, than as one which concerns itself with the dangers of constructing identity—both national and personal—within such absolute models. It is this that necessitates ‘one addition’ to the ‘fine old apartment’ (ii, 412) at Tully-veolan, the portrait of Fergus and Edward. Placed at the heart of what is to be Waverley’s adult identity, the portrait is a reminder that such identity must contain within it a recognition of other possibilities, alternative models of the self which prevent rigid, final construction. Waverley’s path at the end of the novel has taken one direction, but this implies not a subjugation of one mode of experience by another but rather embraces within it—as his proposal to have Flora staying with them as a kind of sister would imply—other possibilities, other aspects of experience which refuse to be silenced. *Waverley*, I would suggest, emerges not as a site where Highland identity is defined, but rather one where both it and a wider Scottish sense of identity is deferred, the novel embracing within itself seemingly conflicting, but truly multiplistic, aspects of experience.

Similar interrogations of the received models for perceiving the Highlands are also found in Scott’s other Jacobite novels, *Rob Roy* (1818) and *Redgauntlet* (1824), which, like Scott’s first novel, negotiate the whole concept of positing identity in any straightforward form.<sup>35</sup> *Rob Roy*, like *Waverley*, is a novel which concerns itself with the appropriateness of rigid categories to describe Highland, or indeed any other form of experience, and it is this complex and ambiguous aspect of Rob himself which the Author of *Waverley* describes as the basis of his attraction to the historical figure:

It is this strong contrast betwixt the civilised and cultivated mode of life on the one side of the Highland line, and the wild and lawless

<sup>35</sup>Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, EEWN vol. xvii, edd. G. A. M. Wood with David Hewitt (Edinburgh 1997). Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, Magnum Opus edition vols. vii and viii; page numbers for both these novels will hereafter be given in brackets after quotation.

adventures which were habitually undertaken and achieved by one who dwelt on the opposite side of that ideal boundary, which creates the interest attached to his name. (vii, p. viii)

As in *Waverley*, then, it is the border lands which are of interest to Scott, the junctures where our received categories of experience begin to disintegrate. Frank Osbaldistone, like *Waverley*, arrives in Scotland with rather a low opinion of its inhabitants; a preconceived idea that they are not entirely to be trusted. Again, like Edward, he also brings to Scotland the notion that a sharp line may be drawn between the romance and poetry to which he is attracted, and the commercial life to which he is so opposed. Defining experience thus, Frank believes that his first impressions of Glasgow may be easily defined as an opposition between the commercial city, and those who live around its borders:

The dusky mountains of the Western Highlands often sent forth wilder tribes to frequent the marts of St Mungo's favourite city. Hordes of wild, shaggy, dwarfish cattle and ponies, conducted by Highlanders, as wild, as shaggy, and sometimes as dwarfish, as the animals they had in charge, often traversed the streets of Glasgow. Strangers gazed with surprise on the antique and fantastic dress, and listened to the unknown and dissonant sounds of their language. (viii, 24)

*Rob Roy*, however, is essentially a novel which deconstructs such rigid categories and what Frank learns is that while there may be an ideal boundary between Highlands and Lowlands, the regions are in fact intrinsically related to each other. This relationship emerges, in part at least, via the character of Rob Roy, sometimes Campbell, sometimes MacGregor, who crosses easily between what are initially posited as discrete arenas of experience.

The character of Rob Roy offers an interesting example of the way in which the Author of *Waverley* interrogates those models of Highland experience handed down to him. The title of the novel had been suggested by Scott's publisher, Archibald Constable, and Scott himself had been cautious, voicing an anxiety about 'having to write

up to a name' and about failing to meet the public expectations which such a name would inevitably raise.<sup>36</sup> The story of Rob Roy had been first introduced to the London public in 1723 by a pamphlet called *The Highland Rogue* where, as Peter Womack points out, the Rob portrayed conforms to one of the standard perceptions of Highlanders as part fool, part Robin Hood.<sup>37</sup> This, however, was not the kind of Rob to emerge in Scott's novel, a fact recognised by Constable's partner Robert Cadell as he writes to his senior:<sup>38</sup>

I have very great doubts of this being so good as *any* of the former novels, and altho the title is excellent I fear the public will meet with a severe disappointment—there is less variety in it than any of the former—a bad, bitter bad story—much of the same cast of character—And Rob far from what every one expects from him—the general expectation is that Rob is to be the most unbending villain—thief—robber—rascal—but *good* in him for all that—in the Novel he has some of these traits, but figures far less on the stage than the title leads the reader to expect, indeed he appears scarcely in any shape till towards the end of the second volume.

Luckily, Scott's readers were more discerning; the first edition of 10,000 was sold out in two weeks and the novel went on to sell 40,000 copies in Scott's lifetime. Yet Cadell's comments are revealing. Interestingly, too, as a reader he has been misled for Rob does appear early in the novel, although in his Campbell guise, thereby signalling that Scott is not creating the stock eighteenth-century image of a Highlander, but a figure altogether more subtle and complex. Similarly, by making his first appearance in this way, he is a reminder that the boundary Frank has drawn between romantic and commercial life is inadequate.

<sup>36</sup>See Lockhart, *Memoirs* iv, 68.

<sup>37</sup>Womack, *Improvement and Romance*, 12.

<sup>38</sup>Robert Cadell to Archibald Constable, 26 December 1817. National Library of Scotland MS 322, fo. 252 r/v. I am grateful to the National Library of Scotland for permission to quote from this document.

This deconstruction of Frank's boundary between the commercial life of his father and his own romantic impulses is in fact at the heart of the novel, and at the heart of any construction of Scottish identity posited within it. Frank has travelled north to escape the business life which his father has him destined for. Somewhat ironically, however, it is in Scotland that he discovers himself to be the agent by which his father's commercial concerns will be salvaged. The description of Glasgow continues:

Yet even then the mountain glens were over-peopled although thinned occasionally by famine or by the sword, and many of their inhabitants strayed down to Glasgow—there formed settlements—there sought and found employment, although different, indeed, from that of their native hills. This supply of a hardy and useful population was of consequence to the prosperity of the place, furnished the means of carrying on the few manufactures which the town already boasted, and laid the foundation of its future prosperity. (viii, 25)

This is a shrewd analysis of the relationship between Highlands and Lowlands in post-Union Scotland, but it is also a reminder that the boundaries between the Highlands—ostensibly the land of romance—and the commercial life of Lowland Scotland are not discrete. On the contrary, what Frank discovers is the Highlands are intrinsically linked to his father's commercial enterprises. The Highlands, Bailie Jarvie points out, have been 'keepit quiet' by 'siller', by an economic policy that recognises that economic hardship in the Highlands will lead to disquiet (viii, 135). 'I do not see how this concerns Mr Campbell, much less my father's affairs', says Frank (viii, 136), but Jarvie chides his naivety:

'Why', said he, 'if these bills are not paid, the Glasgow merchant comes on the Hieland lairds, whae hae deil a boddle o' siller, and will like ill to spew up what is item a' spent—They will turn desperate—five hundred will rise that might hae sitten at hame—the deil will gae ower Jack Wabster—and the stopping of your father's house will hasten the outbreak that's been sae lang biding us'. (viii, 137)

The outbreak of the 1715 Rebellion was of course much more complex, but Bailie Jarvie's words are a timely reminder to Frank that, just as Rob Roy cannot be categorised in any simple construction—'ower bad for blessing, and ower gude for banning' (viii, 380) as Andrew Fairservice describes him—so too the boundaries between Highlands and Lowlands, poetry and commerce can only ever be ideal. Frank's recognition of this is part of his journey from boyhood to learning 'to live like a man' (vii, 20) as his father describes it, and it is a journey which, like that of Edward Waverley, involves not a renunciation of the Highlands, but, rather, a recognition of the inappropriateness of constructing them within the rigid terms of romance and story; a recognition that categories of experience are, of course, intrinsically confluent, the distinctions between them eliding in any genuine construction of identity.

This notion of elision is, indeed, built into the very structure of Scott's last Jacobite novel, *Redgauntlet*. More than any other of Scott's fictions, *Redgauntlet* is an examination of the construction of identity as process. Taking the form of a developmental text, the novel explores the coming to manhood of its protagonists Alan Fairford and Darsie Latimer. Beginning in epistolary form, the novel seemingly juxtaposes the young men, Alan on the side of rationality and Enlightenment Edinburgh, Darsie as a dreamer, a romancer, full of 'Quixotical expectation' (xvii, 12) and 'waggish, over waggish' (xvii, 9) as Fairford senior describes him. However, just as the two men discover that such absolute constructions of identity are inadequate, so too the dual construction of the novel collapses in on itself, suggesting that such binary epistemes offer no valid construction of identity. For Darsie, moreover, the discovery of identity emerges as fundamentally linked to that of the Jacobite Rebellions and of the Highlands, for while, like so many of Scott's young men, he believes Jacobitism to be consigned to the realms of story and the past, his road to adulthood involves a recognition that not only is Jacobitism alive and well and living on the Solway, but that his own identity is intrinsically bound up with his family's Jacobite history. Wandering Willie's Tale contains the secret of

Darsie's identity—the horseshoe mark on his forehead—and as Latimer recognises it as he turns to the mirror, it is to learn that any renewed rebellion depends on his participation as the representative of the family of Herries.

What distinguishes *Redgauntlet* from *Waverley* and *Rob Roy* is, of course, the fact that while these novels are based on historical events, *Redgauntlet* deals with an entirely fictional Jacobite rebellion. While there is evidence that Charles Edward visited Britain after 1746, there is no evidence for an historical event such as that described in the novel.<sup>39</sup> The reader, therefore, is asked to reflect on why Scott chose this material and, if he is writing about Scottish identity, what such a choice might imply. What it suggests is that in *Redgauntlet* Scott is writing about the emotional residue of Jacobitism, and the negotiation of the place of this residue or excess—something which cannot be accounted for in any reading of his work based simply on subjugation—in any construction of Scottish identity. This becomes apparent at the close of the novel, for while *Redgauntlet* must admit, as General Campbell allows the prince to leave, that 'the cause is lost forever' (xvii, 373), the gentlemen present are also 'stung with feelings which almost overpowered the better reasons under which they had acted' (xvii, 374), 'their feelings struggling against the dictates of their reason' (xvii, 375). Jacobitism is thus positioned within the novel's construction of identity not as a defeated cause, but rather, as an excess or residue which like the painting of Fergus and Edward, disrupts any final or absolute construction of self; an emotional force which cannot be easily silenced, but which must be given space in any future construction of identity. Moreover, lest any reader should object that this excess is insignificant, in that it is consigned to the realms of emotion, they would do well to remember that the very construction of the novel, as well as Darsie and Alan's journey into

<sup>39</sup>For the historical background to the events presented in the novel see 'Historical Note', *Redgauntlet*, 442.

manhood, has been based upon the inadequacy of constructing experience in such binary terms.

Read in this way, *Redgauntlet* is a reminder of the dangers of constructing identity, both personal and national, within fixed epistemic frameworks. As the last word by the Author of *Waverley* on the Jacobite rebellions of the eighteenth century, it is also a reminder that if the General Preface to the *Waverley Novels* suggests that Scottish identity could be straightforwardly constructed, the novels themselves suggest something far more complex, offering an alternative to the models of the Highlands which Scott had inherited in their own refusal to posit the region in any fixed or final terms.

These texts imply that the *Waverley Novels* emerge not as a site where Scott constructs a romantic, empty image for the Highlands, but rather, one where he explores the dangers of constructing identity in these or any other rigid terms. These dangers are, moreover, frequently signalled throughout Scott's fiction, becoming apparent when we consider the fate of those in the *Waverley* texts who fail to accommodate such a fluid or flexible sense of self; one thinks of Connachar in the *Fair Maid*, for example, or of Allan MacAulay in *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose*,<sup>40</sup> characters who, as they fail to develop from the models of the Highlander they have set for themselves, simply disappear from the text. Most pertinently, however, we should consider the fate of Elspat MacTavish, the Highland widow of one of Scott's later fictions.

Written immediately after his own financial crash, 'The Highland Widow' is undoubtedly one of Scott's bleakest meditations on the Highlands.<sup>41</sup> The story of the relationship between a Highland mother and her son, it can be read as a metaphor for the dangers of failing to construct identity in fluid terms, of insisting that Highland identity must be unchanging or fixed. Elspat, we are told, was the

<sup>40</sup>Walter Scott, *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose*, EEWN vol. viib, ed. J. H. Alexander (Edinburgh 1995).

<sup>41</sup>Walter Scott, 'The Highland Widow', in *Chronicles of the Canongate*, EEWN vol. xx, ed. Lamont; page numbers will hereafter be given in brackets after quotation.

wife of Hamish MacTavish, whose habits were 'of the old Highland stamp' (76-7). The morality of the old couple, similarly, 'was of the old Highland cast, faithful friends and fierce enemies' (77). Constructed thus, these Highlanders are in the image of common perceptions of the Highlands; the models inherited by the Author of *Waverley* as he began to write the novels. However, 'those days of perilous, though frequently successful depredation, began to be abridged after the failure of the expedition of Prince Charles Edward' (77), the narrator tells us; garrisons are settled in the Highlands, MacTavish is surprised by redcoats, captured and slain. Elspat, however, continues to live somehow in the Highlands where, 'She had not forgotten she was the widow of MacTavish Mhor, or that the child who trotted by her knee might, such were her imaginations, emulate one day the fame of his father' (78). Time passes, the child grows, and while Elspat may wish to construct him in the image of his father, Hamish Bean knows that this is not possible. 'The young', the narrator tells us, 'see the present state of this changeful world more keenly than the old:

Much attached to his mother, and disposed to do all in his power for her support, Hamish yet perceived, when he mixed with the world, that the trade of the cateran was now alike dangerous and discreditable, and that if he were to emulate his father's prowess, it must be in some other line of warfare, more consonant to the opinions of the present day. (79)

Chided by his mother for his failure to conform to her image of what a Highlander should be, Hamish leaves home and is absent for many days. During this time Elspat imagines him returning 'at the head of a daring band, with pipes playing, and banners flying' (84). When Hamish does return, however, it is to tell her that he is 'enlisted in one of the new regiments' (88) and about to leave to fight the French in America. "Dearest mother", he tells Elspat:

'how shall I convince you that you live in this land of our fathers, as if our fathers were yet living? You walk as it were in a dream,

surrounded by the phantoms of those who have been long with the dead'. (89)

Elspat, however, refuses to be convinced, and while she 'seemed to be reconciled' (93), she constructs a plan to keep Hamish from leaving. Drugging his parting cup, Elspat ensures that Hamish will sleep beyond the time appointed to meet his regiment, and as she watches him sleep, she says:

'They say the Highlands are changed; but I see Ben Cruachan rear his crest as high as ever into the evening sky—no one hath yet herded his kine on the depth of Loch Awe—and yonder oak does not yet bend like a willow. The children of the mountains will be such as their fathers, until the mountains themselves shall be levelled with the strath'. (97)

It is not hard to guess the denouement. A party of soldiers are sent to look for Hamish, urged by his mother he resists arrest, the commander approaches and as Elspat cries 'Now, spare not your father's blood to defend your father's hearth!' he shoots, killing the commanding officer dead (110). Inevitably, Hamish is taken prisoner and condemned to death. Elspat, as we find her at the opening of the story, is left to despair and madness.

'The Highland Widow' tells a salutary lesson, interrogating as it does the dangers of constructing Highland identity in static romantic or nostalgic terms, in the categories inherited by Scott as he began to write. To do so, the story suggests, can only lead to misery and despair, for the Highlands, as we have seen them in the Waverley texts, are infinitely more flexible; irreducible to any final or absolute form of identity. In his review of Duncan Forbes's *Culloden Papers*, Scott suggests that if cleared of its people by a brutal economic policy the Highlands could become 'the fairy ground for romance and poetry and the subject of experiment for the professors of speculation, political and economical'.<sup>42</sup> But if this was to happen, he

<sup>42</sup>Walter Scott, 'On Culloden Papers; comprising an extensive and interesting Correspondence from the Year 1625 to 1748', *Quarterly Review*, January 1816; reprinted in Scott, *Prose Works* xx, 1–93, at 93.

suggests, it would be to clear the region too of all that was both 'good and evil' in it; to strip it, in short, of any kind of vibrant identity.

A resistance to such constructions of the Highlands is, I would suggest, at the very heart of Scott's fiction. Scott does not create an image for either the region or the Scottish nation that is simply a 'museum of history and culture, denuded of the political dynamic which [keeps] culture alive and developing', as Murray Pittock suggests,<sup>43</sup> for such an identity is by implication static. On the contrary, what takes place in the Waverley texts is rather an interrogation of a range of preconceived notions of the Highlands—both negative and romantic—and the conclusion that such models are each in turn inadequate. Identity in the Waverley Novels, essentially a site of imaginative play, is continuously posited as complex and fluid, consisting not of fixed epistemic models, but rather of residue and excess, constantly resisting closure. If the Highlands are inscribed within a romantic lexis, it is only that the very terms of romanticism may be ironically undercut in the next paragraph; if they are condemned as barbarian by Gow or Talbot, it is only that we might soon be shown what is good in them; if the Jacobite cause is defeated, it is only that it might re-emerge in the next novel; if identity ever appears cut and dried, it is that it might be deconstructed, as Darsie Latimer learns, by a glance in the mirror, a chance twist of the forehead.<sup>44</sup> If, indeed, the Author of *Waverley* is forced to reveal his own self, it is that he might construct yet another identity in the notes and paraphernalia which surround the Magnum edition.<sup>45</sup>

Read thus, the Waverley Novels emerge not as a site where Scottish identity is constructed in elegiac or in glossy romantic packages; they are rather one where these very images of the Highlands may be reinterrogated and found wanting. The act of

<sup>43</sup>Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland*, 87.

<sup>44</sup>For an interesting view of Scott's reasons for revisiting the Jacobite rebellions in his fiction see Craig, *Out Of History*, 69–72.

<sup>45</sup>For an interesting commentary on the significance of the Magnum notes and prefaces see David Hewitt, 'Walter Scott', 69.

writing the Waverley Novels thus emerges as one not of creating Highland identity, but of deconstructing it; essentially an act of deferral. Scott may have believed that in 1814 Scotland and the Highlands needed some kind of fictional identity if they were to maintain any kind of separate status in what was emerging as a very successful British Union. The Author of *Waverley*, it seems, also knew the pitfalls of constructing that identity in inflexible terms. It is this interrogation of the notion of identity itself, rather than Scott's defining of it in absolute romantic categories, which allows us still to be debating his role in the creation of modern perceptions of the Highlands.