The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

A Colloquium on The Bride of Lammermoor

*Talks given on Saturday 17th August 2019 at 12:00pm by **Eileen Dunlop and Prof. Peter Garside** to members of The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club at The New Club.*

Iain Torrance as Chairman welcomed Eileen Dunlop and Peter Garside with brief words of introduction about their many works and contributions to the study of Sir Walter Scott. The texts of the two talks as presented are given below:

1) Text of Eileen Dunlop's Talk

Professor Torrance, Ladies and Gentlemen
Despite the kind reception you gave me the last time I spoke to you, I feel that, once again, I should explain my credentials before daring to speak about such an iconic masterpiece as *The Bride of Lammermoor.* My first encounter with this book was when I was in my early teens, and I read it because it happened to be in our sitting-room bookcase. All I remember about it from then is that it was a sad story with a horrible ending - and it wasn't so much the death of Lucy Ashton that upset me as the death of Ravenswood's horse in the quicksand, and the grotesque detail of one sable feather floating on the tide.

Half a century and more passed, and I don't remember ever reading it again until a few years ago, when I was writing a biography of Scott. Then it occurred to me, not for the first time, how much we miss by reading adult books when we are children, and I was much moved by its richness of allusion and suspenseful unfolding of appalling events. I would have liked to write more about it then, but that wasn't possible within the constraints of a shortish book mainly concerned with Scott's life story. So it wasn't until a couple of years ago, when Ronnie Renton asked me to contribute a student guide to the Scotnotes series on Scottish literature, that I first had the challenge of analysing what, exactly, makes *The Bride of Lammermoor* so unbearably tragic and unsettling. My conclusion was that there are four main elements which contribute to the feelings of pity and horror which this story inspires.

The first is the in-depth exploration of the characters and their interaction. The second is the setting in a landscape of sharp contrasts, where bleak coastal light is suddenly blotted out by sinister forest darkness. The third is Scott's use of supernatural motifs in the creation of atmosphere, and the fourth is the period in our national history which underpins the action - a time in itself divisive and profoundly tragic.

Since Peter is going to speak about the historical context, I shall confine myself to mention of the first three, noting that my discussion of character is deliberately limited. Like all Scott's novels, *The Bride* has a huge cast of characters from all classes of society, and there is not space in a short introductory talk to explore them all. So at this point I'll confine my remarks to the five characters I think are the principals, although I shall mention others later, then turn to Scott's use of landscape, and finally his handling of the supernatural.

To begin with the characters who hold the narrative together - these seem to me to be Edgar Ravenswood and Lucy Ashton; Sir William Ashton and his wife; and Frank Hayston of Bucklaw, the hapless outsider who comes blundering into a tragedy where he is profoundly out of his depth.

Edgar, the Master of Ravenswood is a classic romantic hero, a type who owes much to Byron and to Gothic perceptions of good looks. He is brown-eyed, black-haired and with features described as 'dark, regular and full of majestic, though somewhat sullen expression'.

It quickly becomes clear that he has a lot to be sullen about, for his back story is as dark as his appearance suggests. The last of his line, he has seen his father stripped of his title for supporting the Jacobite cause, his lands confiscated and sold to a middle-class politician, Sir William Ashton. We first encounter him on the day of his father's funeral. It would be surprising if, at the age of twenty, Ravenswood was not an angry, haughty and vengeful young man, which he is, but he also has better qualities, and Scott shows him as high-minded, honourable, and capable of passionate but responsible love. He also has a sense of humour, and his amused exasperation with his absurd servant Caleb Balderstone, who keeps inventing cunning plans to hide his master's diminished status, provides occasional comic relief in a dark tale. Ravenswood's youth and inexperience, as well as his innate decency, show themselves most poignantly in his capacity to think the best of people, even of the man who has usurped his father and now occupies his ancestral home, Ravenswood Castle. Meanwhile, he is reduced to breadline poverty in tumbledown Wolf's Crag, which clings as precariously to the margin of the land as Ravenswood clings to the margin of his former life. He is in many ways a man of enlightened ideas, unadmiring of the modern Stuarts, aware that social change is inevitable, believing in free will and scorning the supernatural until the closing stages of the book. His personal tragedy is that pride in his heredity constrains his actions - he cannot break free without betraying his father and becoming a traitor to his class.

This is the man who falls disastrously in love with Lucy Ashton, the seventeen-year old daughter of the new owner of Ravenswood Castle, a beautiful nouveau-riche girl who is sheltered and unsophisticated, of limited education and no meaningful occupation. Lucy has only ever encountered life at second-hand through reading legends and tales of knightly romance. Her father is fond of her, and we are told that she is loved by her brothers, the elder the confident and ambitious Sholto Douglas and the younger Henry, who must be one of the most annoying adolescents in the whole of literature. On the other hand, Lucy is controlled by her cold, unloving mother, who despises her and thinks her fit for nothing but to be married off to a dull country laird. Lucy's chief characteristic seems to be an abnormal passivity, but Scott points out that 'Lucy's sentiments seemed chill, because nothing had occurred to interest or awaken them'. It is her rescue by Ravenswood from a charging bull that provides that awakening, but her response is to cast him as the hero of a medieval romance, a role for which a man so burdened by more recent events is poorly suited. Ravenswood's love for Lucy Ashton arises from admiration for her beauty and compassion for her helplessness. He is well aware of the obstacles to their intimacy - his awkward position with her father, his own poverty, class difference and, as it turns out, the implacable hatred of her mother. But in Lucy's presence his resistance crumbles, and against his better judgement he follows his heart - from the scene at Wolf's Crag where, in a spectacular thunderstorm their cheeks first touch, to the crucial meeting at the sexually-symbolic Mermaiden's Fountain, where he tries to break free but is overwhelmed by Lucy's grief and ends up engaged to be married. From that point, everything goes downhill for this tragic couple until they are both driven to madness by the selfish machinations of other people, and death becomes their only release.

The Bride of Lammermoor has often been paired with *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's tragedy of doomed young love, and certain aspects of the story do invite comparison. The enmity of two families whose son and daughter are destined to fall in love, the determination of their parents to thwart them, the fact that all around them are driven by their own greed and ambition and see the young couple as pawns in a grown-up game - all of these give the two works a structural similarity. And of course there are deliberate Shakespearean echoes - three witches appear both in *Macbeth* and *The Bride*, and Ravenswood's encounter with the sexton Johnnie Mortsheugh recalls the meeting of the Prince with the two gravediggers in *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. At the same time, I feel this

association can be taken too far. In a stage play, actors have to rely on dialogue and physical interaction to evoke the characters' inner experience. The strength of the novel is the scope it gives for the exploration of thoughts, and Scott does this very thoroughly with Lucy Ashton and Edgar Ravenswood, probing the conflicts of their minds - their awareness of social position, their shifting loyalties and the unpromising incompatibility of their temperaments. For Romeo and Juliet, the tragedy lies in the fact that they are little more than children - whereas although Edgar and Lucy are young, Edgar is more mature than Romeo, and Lucy is not as dumb as she may at first seem. She is perfectly aware that Edgar despises her father's middle-class manners, and that the likelihood of receiving her mother's permission to marry a Ravenswood is remote. With so many insoluble problems, these young lovers' unconsummated passion is far too tortured to allow them even an illusion of 'happiness ever after'.

To some degree this is the story of two couples - Edgar and Lucy, and Lucy's parents, Sir William Ashton and his wife, a member of the aristocratic Douglas family and therefore socially a cut above her middle-class husband - a fact she never allows him to forget. Sir William is a politician, a member of the anti-Jacobite Whig party, whose ambition and self-promotion have led to his occupying the high office of Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland. He is surely one of Scott's most subtle creations, a crafty lawyer and a chancer who has grabbed every opportunity to enrich himself. He has moved into Ravenswood Castle and, when first encountered, seems to be the powerful and ruthless opponent of everything the Ravenswoods stand for - principally their Jacobite sympathies and their Episcopalian faith, which clashes with his own Presbyterian, and at that time politically expedient, practice. But he is also insecure, because he knows that Ravenswood still has powerful friends, and may be plotting to dispossess him. If and when the political wheel of fortune turns, he will have reason to be afraid. What makes him interesting is the skill with which Scott, who is the fairest and least judgmental of authors, tempers his bad qualities with better ones, and puts words into his mouth so convincing and apparently sincere that, like Ravenswood, we are sometimes disarmed by him. Sir William is a loving, if manipulative father, and he is not blind to young Ravenswood's good qualities. Indeed, he sees much to be gained from a marriage between Edgar and Lucy. But his awareness of his own social inferiority disturbs him, and his fatal weakness is a domestic one - he can't stand up to his domineering, aristocratic wife, to whose connections and political chicanery he owes his position, and whose enmity towards the Ravenswoods is unrelenting.

In fact, Lady Ashton is the most chilling and terrifying character in the book, a proud and manipulative woman so devoid of conscience and natural affection that she is willing to sacrifice her own daughter, just to spite her husband and promote the interests of her third-rate son Sholto Douglas - he being the child who bears her own name. Mostly absent from the earlier part of the book, it is the return of this evil woman from a visit to England which proves the catalyst for the tragic events which mark the denouement - the breaking of Lucy's resolve, her closely described descent into madness, her forced marriage and horrific wedding night.

Into this fearful story of hatred and revenge wanders Frank Hayston of Bucklaw, a not-very-bright young man who is socially on the fringe of the upper class, but whose boorishness grates on Ravenswood's nerves. Of course Bucklaw is ghastly - he is coarse and conceited, and can't wait for his aunt Lady Girnington to die, so that he can get his hands on her money. He is touchy and resentful of Ravenswood's superior manners, constantly drunk and under the influence of the even more vulgar Jacobite agent Captain Craigengelt. But yet again, Scott treats him fairly. He does not behave dishonourably in his doomed courtship of Lucy, and in grabbing the chance to become her husband, he is really no more than the victim of his own lack of self-knowledge, having failed to realise that he is Lady Ashton's stooge.

And when his dream unravels and he almost loses his life on his wedding night, he behaves with admirable dignity. Dismissing the unscrupulous Craigengelt and refusing to discuss his new wife's attempt to murder him, he goes abroad and thus passes from the scene.

The Bride of Lammermoor is one of those novels where the natural setting is so overwhelming that it almost becomes a character in the story - comparable to Hardy's Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native* or Emily Brontë's Yorkshire moors in *Wuthering Heights.* Scott, who had a very unmodern habit of telling his readers 'Where he got his Ideas', said that the origin of *The Bride* lay in a true story, heard at his mother's knee, of the thwarted 17th-century romance of Janet Dalrymple, daughter of Viscount Stair, and an impoverished aristocrat named Archibald, Lord Rutherfurd. Janet's parents opposed their marriage and forced her to marry one David Dunbar of Baldoon in Wigtownshire. Unhinged by grief, the bride sickened and died shortly afterwards. Thus Scott gave the impression that all he had to do was provide different names and retell the story, which was very modest of him, but also disingenuous. It was doubtless true that Janet Dalrymple's pathetic story provided the germ of an idea, for we have to get ideas from somewhere, but on it Scott built a novel that transcends pathos, and in its discussion of freewill and destiny contains echoes of more ancient tragedies. Moving the action from the west of Scotland to the east, he anchored it in a landscape recognisably belonging to the coast of East Lothian and Berwickshire, with its bleak winter cliffs, watery skies and waves thudding on the shore, but also a country of deep and haunting imagination. Here Scott placed the half-ruined stronghold of Wolf's Crag, describing it as a 'solitary and naked tower, situated on a projecting cliff that beetled on the German Ocean'. This was the last shelter of Edgar Ravenswood, dispossessed and without friends he could trust, alone but for his faithful steward Caleb, a grotesque but endearing figure as much at the mercy of the hostile elements as his master. By placing almost the entire narrative in this lonely, sea-washed region, contrasting it only with the better maintained but equally sinister Ravenswood Castle muffled in its cloak of trees, Scott had the perfect setting for his dreadful tale. For this is surely the kind of primeval yet claustrophobic environment, seething with evil intentions, that lurks in every fairy tale containing the words 'Deep in the forest'. As we are drawn into it, it is easy to believe that ancient superstitions infected minds in Ravenswood parish, where the landscape itself stands as a metaphor for nature's indifference to human pain.

Now, let us consider Scott's use of the supernatural to ratchet up the tension in this enclosed and sparsely inhabited place. It has been suggested that *The Bride of Lammermoor* is one of the Gothic novels fashionable in Scott's time, with their moldering ruins, screaming apparitions and scenes of dabbled blood - a notion given credence by the tradition that Scott was under the influence of narcotics when he wrote it. But to make such a comparison is surely to misunderstand Scott's mentality - he was a man of the later Enlightenment, and far too sophisticated to deal in the cruder aspects of Gothic horror. It is rather his subversion of Gothic material that makes reading *The Bride* such a powerful and emotionally draining experience.

I have myself written fiction, intended for a younger readership, which contained supernatural elements, giving rise to the assumption that I must believe in ghosts. I have had to try to explain that actually no, I don't believe in ghosts, if by that one means that spirits can have any embodiment outside the human mind. I don't believe in haunted houses either, but I do believe in haunted people, and for the purposes of fiction I've sometimes allowed my characters to be driven to the point where, due to extreme pressure on a disturbed imagination, ghosts of the mind temporarily overwhelm the rational impulse. This seems to me the territory that Scott explores in the *Bride,* with a dramatic yet subtle force of which I would of course be quite incapable.

So finally, let us return to characters, and look briefly at those in *The Bride* who represent magic and witchcraft, pausing first to observe that in primitive communities living in dark, lonely places, where belief in the Devil was as widespread as belief in God, there were few people immune to the allure of prophecy and superstition. On the face of it, Sir William Ashton seems an unlikely believer in the occult, yet he is severely rattled by blind Alice's warning of the danger of the Ravenswoods' ill-will towards him. Caleb Balderstone believes devoutly in the prophecy, enshrined in an ancient rhyme, that if his master goes to Ravenswood Castle, he will die in the Kelpie's Flow. It was the credulousness of people like Caleb that gave the self-declared possessors of occult powers easy influence over their frightened neighbours.

It has to be said that in recent years, Scott has taken a lot of stick from feminist critics on two points - first, his presentation of Lucy Ashton as weak, passive, easily influenced and far too dependent on Ravenswood's superior courage and manly resolve. Second that he makes the agents of evil old, ugly, embittered and poverty-stricken - and all women. My only response to these criticisms would be to point out that Scott was a man of his time who wouldn't have known what modern feminists were talking about, and that tragically the stereotype of the witch as female had been fixed since the beginning of time. And tragically, the evidence shows that the vast majority of those who were executed for witchcraft throughout Europe were women.

In *The Bride of Lammermoor*, then, there are five women reputed to be witches. Interestingly one of them is the wicked Lady Ashton, although she is protected from open accusation by her status and the power it gives her to strike down her enemies. Of the other four, the most ambivalent is Alice Gray, the blind prophetess who lives sequestered at some distance from the village - this last emphasising her vulnerability as an outsider. She is a widow of apparently exemplary life, champion of the Ravenswoods and bitterly opposed to young Ravenswood's liaison with the daughter of his father's sworn enemy. Whether her warning to him of the danger he is courting arises from occult power, or is a rational assessment of probability we are never sure, but it is Ravenswood's conviction that he has seen her ghost in the forest at the moment of her death that makes him abandon his belief in his own free will, and kick-starts the unravelling of his formerly sceptical mind.

Much more obviously witchy are three ancient women, stunted and ugly, shunned by their neighbours yet resorted to in times of crisis for their reputed healing powers. They also hang around graveyards, and are given the ghoulish task of preparing corpses for burial. As Scott makes clear, they are all three embittered by ostracism, injustice and oppression, but two of them are obviously no more than outcasts driven crazy by privation. It is the third, Ailsie Gourlay, who, in league with Lady Ashton, is the true embodiment of evil in the story. She is jealous, vengeful and without conscience, and adept in the only really dangerous aspect of witchcraft, the malign manipulation of human minds conditioned to believe. It is she who is overheard by Ravenswood in Alice's garden, repulsively forecasting his doom, with incantatory assurances to her acolytes that 'she has it from a sure hand'. It is this experience which finally tips him into madness. It is she who, egged on by Lady Ashton, turns Lucy from a good, trusting if overly romantic girl into the mad woman who marries Bucklaw and, confronted on her wedding night by the horror of loveless sex, tries to murder him.

At the heart of this book there is a perennially vexing question. Is there really such a force as predestination, or are life's events all random or coincidental? I think that most modern readers would see *The Bride of Lammermoor* in psychological terms, but that doesn't detract from the power of the supernatural elements to unsettle our imaginations - quite naturally, since they surface from the deep folk memory of our race. Witches stalk through Scottish nightmare, evil always has a human face and the power of symbol is widely

acknowledged. The bull killed by Ravenswood, the emblem of his family, is also a symbol of sex and fertility, both cruelly denied to the young lovers. The blood-drenched raven falling dead at their feet is a bird long associated with ill-fortune and an omen of pending disaster. We cannot avoid disquiet at such things. And yet, even as we are drawn imaginatively into this lurid world, we are pushed towards a sober conclusion - that the outcome of *The Bride of Lammermoor* has nothing to do with witchcraft. The tragedy is caused by historical enmity, human intransigence, lack of conscience, stony-heartedness and pride.

2) Text of Peter Garside's Talk

Union and *The Bride* Revisited

In planning today's presentation Eileen and I made an arrangement that she would talk first, on what she describes as the 'more homely themes' of character interplay, the influence of landscape on the narrative and Scott's use of supernatural in the novel, with myself subsequently attempting to point to some of the historical and political dimensions there. As a starter in this respect, I would like to turn to the story's original appearance as the first and larger of two tales in the third series of *Tales of My Landlord*, Scott at this time having a dual identity as author of this series and as 'the author of Waverley'. Up to this point, all the constituents of the *Tales of My Landlord* series had focused on significant moments in the history of Scotland: *The Black Dwarf* culminating with an abortive Jacobite uprising in 1708; the main narrative in *Old Mortality* hinging on events leading up to the defeat of the Covenanting army at Bothwell Brigg in 1679; *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* famously beginning with the Porteous riots of 1736, in a state of continuing dissatisfaction in Scotland with the Union with England of 1707. Compared with such clear markers the temporal setting of the *Bride* has tended to bemuse critics, some sensing a profoundly late seventeenth-century feel there, others pointing to the years immediately prior to the Union of 1707, yet others claiming a post-Union setting, centred on a brief Tory ascendancy in the British government in 1713-14. Such apparent indeterminacy has also encouraged the view that this represents an unusually *ahistorical* novel in the Waverley canon, characterised by its dominantly domestic focus; and beyond that to claims that it projects a dream-like landscape, the product of Scott's acute illness and taking of laudanum, necessitating his use of an amanuensis, though this latter is belied by the survival of the bulk of the manuscript in Scott's hand in the Signet Library.

A large number of these difficulties, however, are diminished if we turn from the version of the novel published in 1830 in the Magnum Opus edition of the Waverley Novels to the first edition of 1819 and its pre-Magnum successors. In this earlier state a setting between the accession of Queen Anne in 1702 and the Union between England and Scotland of 1707 is more palpable and much less compromised. Among a number of markers, Sir William Ashton, a member of the Scottish Privy Council (disbanded in 1708), is described by the Marquis of A-- as having sold out opportunistically just before the failure (in 1699) of the Darien scheme; while mention of the Marquis's own 'short-lived ascendency' 'in the Scottish councils of Queen Anne' most obviously refers to the Scottish parliaments of 1703-04.[1] A potentially discordant note might be claimed in Lady Ashton's ambition that her son Sholto should become a member of 'the British Parliament' (p. 173); but this is explainable in terms of Lady Ashton anticipating a situation in the future after the Union has taken place. By far the most prominent indicator of a pre-Union situation though is found in Ravenswood's intention, fuelled by the Marquis's scheming, to appeal to the Scottish Parliament against the

dispossession of his lands by Ashton. One of several key passages referring to this occurs in a speech in which Ravenswood passionately resists Ashton's initial attempts at appeasement:

> "No my lord", answered Ravenswood; "it is in the Estates of the nation, in the supreme Court of Parliament, that we must parley together. The belted lords and knights of Scotland, her ancient peers and baronage, must decide …. (p. 129)

As Scott's own narrative makes clear such appeals 'for remeid in law' to the Scottish estates had been made available by the Claim of Right of 1689; and there are instances of such protestations being launched, as Scott appears to affirm here (see p. 125). For the Magnum Opus edition, on the other hand, Scott consistently intervened in all such passages so that the appeal is to be made rather to the House of Lords in London, a right only made accessible to Scots from 1708. In the case of the passage quoted above this leads to:

> "No, my lord … it is in the House of the British Peers, whose honour must be equal to their rank—it in the court of last resort that we must parley together. The belted lords of Britain, her ancient peers, must decide … [2]

All in all, this has a devastating effect on the temporal stability of the novel, leading to a number of knock-on effects, intended or not, with among other things Ashton self-interestedly adopting the mantle a Scottish nationalist, protesting about the interference of an alien judicial system.

It is surely unusual that in none of the Waverley novels Scott should deal in a head-on way with the Union, though quite a number are concerned with its consequences. Such is by no means the case with his other writings, where the Union features as a vital turning-point in national history. To give one example, in his historical work *Tales of a Grandfather* Scott provides an unusually detailed and engaged account of the various factional manoeuvres in the Scottish parliament leading up to the (for him) in many ways unsatisfactory outcome of 1707, this providing the climax of the second series of that work. In writing this account a major source for Scott was the Jacobite George Lockhart of Carnwath's *Memoirs Concerning the Affairs of Scotland* (1714), a scathing account of the failings and skulduggery of Scottish politicians involved, published in extended form as *The Lockhart Papers* in 1817. Writing to his then publisher, Robert Cadell, in May 1829, Scott had implored: 'I wish you could get me the Lockhart Papers (use of them) … I have not brought them from the country and they are indispensible to copy of tales [of My Grandfather]'.[3] There is evidence that Scott's attention was also strongly attracted by publication of the extended version in 1817 shortly before embarking on *The Bride* (the Abbotsford Library contains both editions). In today's presentation, I would like to argue that the manoeuvrings in *The Bride of Lammermoor* are as much indebted to Lockhart of Carnwath as is the account in *Tales of Grandfather*, both works containing palpable echoes. Taking this one step further I wish now to reiterate and develop an earlier claim of mine that what we have here constitutes no less than Scott's Union novel.[4]

In this respect it is worth looking again at the three main intriguers in the novel. Not only do these reflect several of the 'portraits' which make up much of Carnwath's main account, but there is also a suggestion that Scott in their depiction is personifying what in *Grandfather* are represented as the main contending Scottish parties involved in the Union negotiations, viz. the Court and Country parties, and that more shifting entirety the 'Squadrone Volante'.

> i) *Sir William Ashton*. In his Magnum Introduction Scott somewhat easily dismisses the idea that his character was based on the James Dalrymple (1619-95), 1st Viscount

Stair, in whose family history of course a source story for the peculiar circumstances of Lucy Ashton's fatal marriage can be sought.[5] A likeness to his successor, John Dalrymple (1648-1707), 1st Earl of Stair, on the other hand, might be harder to deny. Here is some of Lockhart's excoriating appraisal:

> John Earl of Stair was the origine and principal instrument of all the misfortunes that befel either the King or kingdom of Scotland. … 'Twas he that first suffer'd … England arbitrarily and avowedly to rule over Scots affairs, invade her freedom, and ruin her trade. 'Twas he that was at the bottom of the Union … and so he may be stiled the Judas of his country.[6]

Compare Scott in his *Grandfather* account: '[he] contributed greatly to accomplish the Union, and gained on that account, for a great majority of his displeased countrymen, the popular nickname of the Curse of Scotland'.[7] His reputation previously tarnished by involvement in the Glencoe massacre, Stair also matches Ashton is his relatively low family origins, self-aggrandising career as a lawyer, and membership of the Scottish Privy Council. If in other respects Ashton might seem too hesitant a figure to have been instrumental in major upheavals, it is worth bearing in mind that it is only his eventual collusion with his overbearing wife that enables the fatal union which concludes the novel (of which more later). More generally one might also point to a similarity in his trimming to that of the Squadrone Volante, headed by the Marquis of Tweeddale, whose policy according to Scott in *Grandfather* was to wait and see 'what course of conduct would best serve their own interest'.[8]

ii) *The Marquis of A--*. Most readily interpretable as the Marquis of Athole, with 'our poor house of B---' (p. 73) representing Blair Athole—and as such the only fully historical character in the novel. John Murray (1660-1724), Marquis then first Duke of Athole, though commencing political life as a Whig, grew in prominence in the Scots Parliament of 1704 by becoming leader of the Country party, supported in some measure by the Cavaliers. In this and subsequent sessions, Athole protested strenuously against an incorporating union, through which in his eyes Scotland effectively would become absorbed into England, arguing instead for an arrangement which might 'satisfy the minds of the people, and create a good understanding betwixt the two kingdoms, by an Union upon honourable, just, and equal terms, … [and] unite them in affection and interest, the surest foundation of peace and tranquility in both kingdoms'.[9] Filtered through Lockhart of Carnwath's account, these words find a strong echo in Scott's statement in *Grandfather* that with a more 'federative' Union 'the two nations would have felt themselves united in interest and in affection also, soon after they had become nominally one people'.[10] Lockhart's appraisal of the Marquis in his *Memoirs* as 'endow'd with good natural parts, tho' by reason of his proud, imperious, haughty, passionate temper … no ways capable to be the leading man of a party, which he aim'd at',[11] is to large degree paralleled by Scott's characterisation in the novel (see e.g. pp. 70-71).

iii) *Lady Ashton*. Initially the hardest to locate in terms of an equivalent, on account of her gender. Yet it was from Queen Anne herself that the strongest directives from England concerning the Union originated. Moreover Lady Ashton's absence at the beginning of the plot is explained by her being in London in an effort to frustrate the Marquis's intrigues at court, where she 'stood high in favour with the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough' (p. 124), Anne's pushy Whig confidante. Closer to

home, and allowing an element of gender-crossing, James Douglas (1662-1711), 2nd Duke of Queensberry (a Douglas like Lady Ashton), was highly instrumental in the final session of the Scots Parliament in 1706 in carrying out Anne's instruction that only an incorporating Union was acceptable, without which parliament should be prorogued. Lockhart of Carnwath's summation in his portrait is withering even by his standard: 'he was altogether void of honour, loyalty, justice, religion, and ingenuity … the ruin and bane of his country, and the aversion of all loyal and true Scotsmen'.[12] Compare this with the closing sentences of the novel: 'In all external appearance, she bore the same bold, haughty, unbending character, which she had displayed before these unhappy events. A splendid marble monument records her name, titles, and virtues, while her victims remain undistinguished by tomb or epitaph' (p. 269). Queensberry was indeed greatly rewarded for managing the Union in Scotland, receiving a disproportionate amount of the English gold, while being created Duke of Dover and joint Keeper of the Privy Seal of Britain. There is also an ornate rococo tomb with sculptured effigies of himself and his wife, in Durisdeer Church close to Drumlanrig Castle, which Scott must have visited in his visits to the Buccleuch family, the present possessors of Drumlanrig.

In the short time remaining I wish to look at the two prospective marriages in the novel, arguing that in domestic terms they offer a microcosm of the competing models of a federal and incorporating Union. Here it is useful to be aware of the dual connotation of the word 'union' in Scott's time, referring equally well to a private marriage and a public settlement. More broadly, in contemporary debate and satire the metaphor of a marriage was frequently used to describe Anglo-Scottish relations. For example William Wright's *Comical History of the Marriage betwixt Fergusia and Heptarchus* (1706) shows Heptarchus hotly in pursuit of Fergusia ('a Lady of Venerable Antiquity'), intent on 'even such an Union as is betwixt man and Wife'.[13] In less salubrious terms Lockhart of Carnwath likened the Scots to 'many a poor girl who allows herself to be debauchd on promise of marriage: generally the men ridicule them for giving so much trust, then they become despised, and after common prostitute whores'.[14] Scott himself can be found continuing that convention in *Grandfather*: 'The English, in their superior wealth and importance, had for many years looked with great contempt on the Scottish nation, as compare[d] with themselves, and were prejudiced against the Union, as a man of wealth and importance might be against a match with a female in an inferior rank in society'.[15] Indeed, the tradition still seems to be alive and kicking, and more than once I have heard the expression from a Scottish perspective that being in cahoots with England is like being in bed with an elephant. And there must be endless opportunities in extending the parallel to include divorce.

Let's now look briefly now at the trajectories of the story's alternative marriages, one ideal and the other real. The first possibility is adumbrated in Wolf's Crag, with its sense of a moribund traditional Scotland, the second sealed in the showily refurbished Ravenswood Castle. In each case the narrative is flecked through with potentially analogous terms—'union', 'alliance', 'treaty', 'contract'—and even the most private moments can seem to convey a broader public meaning. An early pointer towards the potential of the relationship between Lucy Ashton and Edgar Ravenswood occurs near the end of Sir William's visit with his daughter to Wolf's Crag:

> Caleb [Balderstone] was present at this extraordinary scene, and he could conceive no other reason for a proceeding so extraordinary than an alliance betwixt the houses … Even the statesman [i.e. Sir William] was moved and affected by the fiery, unreserved, and generous self-abandonment with which the Master of Ravenswood

> renounced his feudal enmity … Then his daughter … seemed formed to live happy in union, with such a commanding spirit as Ravenswood … And it was not merely during a few moments that Sir William Ashton looked upon their marriage as a probable and even desirable event, for a full hour intervened ere his imagination was crossed by recollection of the Master's poverty, and the certain displeasure of Lady Ashton. (p. 136)

While on one level this might seem to project an accommodation with an older 'feudal' Scotland, there is also an element of modernity in Ravenswood, evident for instance in his wish to see the day when Whig and Tory become merely 'cant terms of idle spite and rancour' (p. 73). At the same time such prospects are undercut by a variety of countervailing devices, from thunder-claps to supernatural foreboding. Yet in practical terms it still requires the intervention of Lady Ashton, in a sequence beginning with her sudden return to Ravenswood, racing against the carriage of the Marquis of A--, to prevent this happening.

The second alliance, of course, is the one realised between Lucy and the laird of Bucklaw, which leads to the tragic stabbing at the end of the novel. News of such a prospect first emerges through Bucklaw, who recounts to his sidekick Craigengelt how such a match has already been set into motion by Lady Ashton and his kinswoman Lady Blenkinsop (herself 'a close confederate of Duchess Sarah'), the 'treaty' being well advanced by its 'negociators' as to 'terms of jointure, amount of fortune, and so forth' (pp. 169-71). Reinstated in Ravenswood Castle, having seen off the Marquis of A--, Lady Ashton firmly lays out the procedures:

> "against St. Jude's day, we must all be ready to *sign and seal*."
> "To sign and seal!" echoed Lucy, in a muttering tone, as the door of the apartment closed—"To sign and seal—to do and die!" (p. 232)[16]

While such ceremony is indicative of the dynastic marriages of the day, it should be noted that any sealing of such a contract after the sixteenth century would have been unusual. One document that was manifestly 'signed and sealed' however was the draft treaty of Union formally agreed on 22 July1706, both sets of Commissioners adding their seals to their signatures before presentation of the document to the Queen. Ratification by the Scottish parliament subsequently took place on 16 January 1707, the formal token of acceptance being Queensberry's touch with the Sceptre. The idea of a final signing is nevertheless part of legend, encouraged by a passage in Lockhart which Scott must have known by heart:

> and so the Union commenced on the first of May 1707, a day never to be forgot in Scotland; a day in which the Scots were stripped of … the independency and soveraignty of the kingdom, both of which the Earl of Seafield so little valued, that when he, as Chancellor, signed the engrossed exemplification of the Act of Union, he returned it to the clerk … with this despising and contemning remark, 'Now there's the end of ane old song'.[17]

An equivalent lack of respect is to be felt in Scott's account of the prenuptials as finally signed on St Jude's day [28 October], Lucy's last signature trailing off at the sight of Ravenswood's despairing appearance:

> The business of the day now went forward; Sir William Ashton signed the contract with legal solemnity and precision; his son with military *non-chalance*; and Bucklaw,

> having subscribed as rapidly as Craigengelt could turn the leaves, concluded by wiping his pen on that worthy's new laced cravat. (p. 246).

There are possible echoes too of the inauguration of the Union on 1 May at Edinburgh and Lucy's eventual bridal day, both events involving a procession, Presbyterian service, and distribution of largesse. In the surly observations of Ailslie Gourlay and her fellow-crones one might also trace a particularly dark equivalent of the 'sullen expression of discontent'[18] noted in *Grandfather* as universal in Scotland, leading in his view to a long period of stagnation and civil discontent which may well have been avoided granted a more positive settlement.

Why finally did Scott make his Magnum changes? Jane Millgate in an article of 1979 argued that his leading light was a concern for legal accuracy, more urgent for a Clerk of Session now when he was the known author.[19] However, this does not fully square with evidence that protestations 'for remeid in law' had been active in the years preceding the Union, which (as already suggested) Scott seems to affirm in the first-edition state.[20] A fuller explanation might well be found in Scott's broader circumstances in 1828-30. On 22 December 1828, shortly before returning revisions for the Magnum as far as the 3rd series of *Tales*, Scott sent Cadell copy of his Dedication of the whole set to George IV, a gesture expressive of larger British loyalties.[21] Scott at that time was also fully committed to the Tory administration of the Duke of Wellington, which was currently wrestling with the issue of Catholic Emancipation, while fending off calls for electoral reform. Not a time to rock the larger ship of state. Such was not always the case with Scott, however, and at other times there are signs of him narrowing his focus to a more Scottish sphere in order to satisfy an overriding craving for a sense of national 'union'. Something of this order arguably might have taken place in 1818-19, faced with emergencies on both personal and political level, with Scott aggravated over delays to his baronetcy, despairing at the ineptitude of Westminster politicians in dealing with a radical crisis, and driving himself workwise to the point of illness. Instead of engaging in arguments over whether Scott was a Unionist or proto-Scottish nationalist, as some have done, it is perhaps better to think in terms of an interchange between 'Scottish' and 'British' phases, as arguably evident in the textual history of this particular novel. And in case one sees this just as a thing of the past, it is worth reflecting on our own immediate situation, after three years of division and seemingly pointless negotiation, with the prospect of an outcome quite unlike that promised, and, in Scotland, growing aggravation at the heavy-handedness and remoteness of the British Parliament, the idea of independence there gaining fresh allure. Granted there is any measure of truth in the parallels I have claimed for this novel, it would be hard to find a timelier reminder of Scott's continuing relevance.

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[1] Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. J. H. Alexander, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, Vol. 7a (Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 203, 219. Subsequent references are given in the text, which is based on the first edition of 1819.

[2] Walter Scott, *Waverley Novels*, 48 vols (Edinburgh, 1829-33), Vol. 14, p. 108.

[3] *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. H.J.C. Grierson and others, 12 vols (London, 1932-37), Vol. 11, p. 185.

[4] Peter Dignus Garside, 'Union and *The Bride of Lammermoor*', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 19 (1984), 72-93.

[5] See *Waverley Novels*, Vol. 13, p. 254.

[6] *The Lockhart Papers*, ed. A. Aufrere, 2 vols. (London, 1817), Vol. 1, pp. 88-89. It is perhaps significant that the first edition of the *Bride* contains a rare extended footnote, describing the assassination (1689) in Edinburgh of Sir George Lockhart, Lockhart of Carnwath's father: 'a tragedy so deep and so recent', according to the main text, that it filled Sir William Ashton with apprehension (p. 35, 35n). There may also be a faint echo in the choice of the name Lockhard in the novel for Sir William's confidential servant.

[7] *Tales of a Grandfather*, 2nd series, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1829), Vol. 3, p. 283. Note also in the novel the presence of a portrait of 'Lord Stair' (p. 144) among the newly-installed pictures at Ravenswood Castle.
[8] *Tales of a Grandfather*, Vol. 3, p. 295.
[9] *Lockhart Papers*, Vol. 1, p. 218.
[10] *Tales of a Grandfather*, Vol. 3, p. 323.
[11] *Lockhart Papers*, Vol. 1, p. 73.
[12] *Lockhart Papers*, Vol. 1, p. 45.
[13] Rev. William Wright, *the Comical History of the Marriage betwixt Fergusia and Heptarchus* (Edinburgh?, 1706), pp. 3, 13.
[14] *Lockhart Papers*, Vol. 1, p. 283.
[15] *Tales of a Grandfather*, Vol. 3, pp. 268-69.
[16] In addition to the immediately contemporary ring in 'do and die' (as expressed by Prime Minister Johnson in relation to Brexit), it is worth bearing in mind that St Jude is the patron saint of desperate causes.
[17] *Lockhart Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 222-23. An echo of Seafield's derisory remark can perhaps be found in the novel in Bucklaw's 'half humming, half speaking the end of the old song', while discussing the marriage with Lady and Lucy Ashton (p. 230). There is also another possibly significant reference to an 'auld sang' at p. 68 and to an 'old song' at p. 74.
[18] *Tales of a Grandfather*, Vol. 3, p. 316.
[19] Jane Millgate, 'Text and Context: Dating the Events of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, 9 (1979), 200-13.
[20] For more recent authoritative accounts concerning appeals to Parliament, see J. D. Ford, 'Protestations to Parliament for Remeid of Law', *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 88 (2009), pp. 57-100; and C. Jackson and P. Glennie, 'The Advocates' Secession and Restoration Politics', *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 91 (2012), pp. 76-105. I am grateful to the Hon. Lord Stewart for drawing my attention to these.
[21] *Letters*, ed. Grierson, Vol. 11, pp. 74, 80.