The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

John Gibson Lockhart and Sir Walter Scott

A talk given on Thursday 20th June 2019 at 7:00pm by ***Dr. Thomas Richardson*** *to members of The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club at The New Club, Edinburgh*

Thank you for the invitation to talk with you about my work on John Gibson Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott's son-in law and early biographer. One of the projects that I have begun working on during my sabbatical research this spring is a selection of Lockhart's letters, and of course Scott and the Scott family will play a major role in that edition. Like Scott, Lockhart was a prolific letter writer, and many of Lockhart's letters offer detailed insights into the literary and political activities of the time, as well as personal reports on the domestic lives of the extended Scott family. This evening I would like to present an overview of Lockhart's literary career, interweaving comments about the professional and personal relationships between Lockhart and Scott, especially as represented in their correspondence.

Lockhart was born in 1794, the son of a Church of Scotland minister, the Reverend Doctor John Lockhart, and his second wife, Elizabeth Gibson. Dr Lockhart was minister of the parish church of Cambusnethan in Lanarkshire at the time of Lockhart's birth but moved to the College Kirk of Blackfriars in Glasgow when Lockhart was two years old, so John grew up in Glasgow. Lockhart was a brilliant student, with a particular interest in languages. He enrolled in Glasgow University in 1805, at age eleven, and was awarded a Snell Exhibition to Balliol College at Oxford University in 1809, where he earned a first-class degree in Classics. He also learned modern languages—German, Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and 'dabbled'—to use his term—in 'Danish, Swedish, and Anglo-Saxon'. Lockhart described himself in his youth as 'language mad', and while still at Balliol, he tried unsuccessfully to interest the London publisher, John Murray, in publishing his literary translations.

Lockhart's early interest in writing extended to novels, and in 1814 he wrote to his friend Jonathan Christie about a novel in progress: 'I mean it chiefly as a receptacle of anecdotes and observations I have made concerning the state of the Scotch, chiefly their clergy and elders. It is to me wonderful how the Scottish character has been neglected'.[1] He again considered approaching Murray, but he wrote instead to the Edinburgh publisher, Archibald Constable, and again was unsuccessful. Very soon, though, Lockhart read Scott's *Waverley*, and he decided that it would be best to let his novel 'sleep a year or two' (Lang, I, pp. 74-75).

Lockhart went to Edinburgh in 1815 to study law. He spent a short time practicing law and served as an Advocate on the Highland circuit. Although his early literary pursuits faltered, he began a literary career in earnest in Edinburgh when he became connected with the publisher William Blackwood, who in 1817 sent him on a literary tour to Germany, where he met Goethe and other German literati. Lockhart's first book-length publication was the result of that tour, a two-volume translation of Frederick Schlegel's *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*.

Lockhart was a major contributor to Blackwood's new literary venture, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which was first published in April 1817 under the title *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine.* Lockhart wrote or had a hand in more than 200 works in *Blackwood's.* The vast majority of his works are significant, incisive works of literary criticism, consistently perceptive and authoritatively written, covering a broad range of topics, including Greek tragedy and poetry, German and American literature, and the major

contemporary poets. He wrote important essays about the genres of the novel and periodical criticism in general, and it could be argued that he set the standard for literary criticism of the Romantic period. His *Blackwood's* works also include a substantial body of both satirical and serious verse. Additionally, during his time with *Blackwood's*, he published a fictitious account of the Edinburgh and Glasgow literary, cultural, legal, political, and religious scenes, *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, and four novels, among other works.

In late 1825 Lockhart became editor of the *Quarterly Review* in London. He wrote nearly 120 articles for the *Quarterly*, in addition to directing the political, literary, and social focus of the *Quarterly* as an active editor. During his time with the John Murray firm, he also wrote a biography of Robert Burns (1828) for Archibald Constable's *Miscellany* series, and he served as editor of Murray's series of inexpensive publications, The Family Library, for which he wrote the first volumes, a two-volume life of Napoleon (1829). He oversaw the publication of Murray's Colonial and Home Library; he edited Sir Walter Scott's poetry with notes (1833-34) and Scott's miscellaneous prose works (1834-36), both published by Robert Cadell; and he contributed significantly to the notes for Murray's seventeen-volume edition of Byron's works (1833) and to the revisions of John Wilson Croker's edition of James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1839). He continued to write occasionally for *Blackwood's*, and he revised his novels for reissue in the Blackwood's Standard Novels series. His volume of translations of *Ancient Spanish Ballads* was republished by Murray in an elaborately illustrated edition (1841), one of the first examples of chromolithography in book publishing. He also published his most ambitious work at this time, his biography of Sir Walter Scott.

In October 1818 Lockhart was invited by Scott to visit Abbotsford, a visit that ultimately led to life-altering events for both men. In January 1820 Lockhart paid his 'formal' visit to Mrs Scott, who, as Scott wrote to his son, Walter, 'would have liked a little more *stile* but she has no sort of objections' to the marriage of Lockhart and the elder Scott daughter, Sophia.[2] In a letter to Lady Abercorn of 15 March 1820 Scott announced the upcoming marriage and described Lockhart to her as 'a young man of uncommon talents—indeed of as promising a character as I know. He is highly accomplishd a beautiful poet & fine draughtsman & what is better of a most honourable & gentlemanlike disposition. He is handsome besides & I like everything about him except that he is more grave & retired than I […] like particularly but it is better than the opposite extreme' (Scott Letters, VI, p. 151). Lockhart at that time was also a volunteer with the militia that was engaged in putting down the Radical uprisings in the west of Scotland—another point in Lockhart's favour. Scott wrote to Lord Melville on 28 December 1819: 'Lockhart is turnd a zealous Yeoman in Lord Elchos troop which is a superb one. It is odd enough that under my personal disqualifications I began life by raising Light Dragoons & now in the autumn of my days am embodying sharp-shooters or at least arranging all matters to prepare such a force' (Scott Letters, VI, p. 84). Lockhart wrote several letters to Sophia about the exploits of the troops; for example, on Wednesday 12 April 1820, he wrote: 'There seems now to be no doubt that there had been a serious & well organized plan for a rising on Thursday last. On Wednesday Evening the greater part of the roads leading from Glasgow were in the hands of the Radicals for near two hours and various places of encampment in the neighbourhood were resorted to by the weavers &c from the village. The drum was beat, such was their audacity, within a mile of the Barracks—But on the whole the arrival of so many broadbacked farmers &c had the effect of chilling very much the ardour of all but the very hottest & seeing themselves not joined by so many as they had expected the spirit of all soon began to subside. In a hurt they returned home dispirited & many of them were immediately arrested.— Indeed the jails are all full now. […] I think it is likely we shall not be home till towards the end of the week but we are all kept in total darkness—for mystery is in all professions—but I see it is the essence of the Military' (National Library of Scotland (NLS) MS 1552, fols 9-10).

Lockhart did return to Edinburgh from his western campaign within a few days. On April 29th, 1820, John and Sophia married, and so Lockhart became connected with the literary and political circles of one of the most influential people of his time—and certainly received a boost to his literary interests. Scott, of course, gained a son-in-law, grandchildren, and his most ardent long-term promoter. Scott was pleased with the match, as already noted, but he also recognized in Lockhart, somewhat prophetically, Lockhart's usefulness in managing Scott's estate. Scott wrote to J. B. S. Morritt on 19 May 1820: 'Lockhart is a very handsome young man and remarkably clever well disposed and well principled. […] To me as it seems neither of my sons have a strong literary turn the society of a son in law possessed of learning and talent must be a very great acquisition and relieve me from some anxiety with respect to a valuable part of my fortune consisting of copyrights &c, which though advantageous in my lifetime might have been less so at my decease unless under the management of a person acquainted with the nature of such property' (Scott Letters, VI, pp. 188-89). Scott's only concern about Lockhart, which he would mention in several letters, was Lockhart's fondness for personal satire. He wrote to Sir James Russell about Lockhart's talents and character but added, 'I hope however he will abate his satirical vein which *entre nous* gives more pain to others than is worth the laurels which are won by it' (Scott Letters, VI, p. 182). And in another letter to Morritt, Scott wrote: Lockhart's 'powers of personal satire are what I most dread on his own account—it is an odious accomplishment and most dangerous and I trust I have prevaild on him to turn his mind to something better' (Scott Letters, VI, p. 227).

There was good reason for Scott to be concerned about Lockhart's skills in and fondness for personal satire, for Lockhart became embroiled in lawsuits and threatened lawsuits in the associations with the early issues of William Blackwood's new iteration of his magazine. Blackwood was dissatisfied with the direction of the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, and after only six issues he dismissed his editors, who went to work for Archibald Constable, and he renamed his magazine to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.* Personal satire was a prominent feature of Blackwood's revitalized magazine, most notably in the first number of October 1817 in 'The Chaldee Manuscript'. The 'Chaldee Manuscript', a satire on the publishing rivalry between Blackwood and Constable in the style of the Authorised Version of the Bible, was written by James Hogg as a humorous literary sport, but Hogg's original was revised and expanded with added venom, as Lockhart wrote to his friend Christie: 'The history of it is this: Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, sent up an attack on Constable the bookseller, respecting some private dealings of his with Blackwood. Wilson and I liked the idea of introducing the whole panorama of the town in that sort of dialect. We drank punch one night from eight till eight in the morning, Blackwood being by with anecdotes, and the rest is before you' (Lang, I, p. 157). In all 135 verses were added to Hogg's original 46, including those that were most offensive.[3] Two of the worst are characterisations of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe and John Grahame Dalzell. Sharpe, a clergyman and historian, had disagreed with Blackwood over editorial control over Sharpe's edition of James Kirkton's *Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland*, in which Sharpe provided unnecessarily disparaging views of the Covenanters and which Blackwood finally declined to publish. Here is how Sharpe is described in the 'Chaldee': 'But behold, while they were yet speaking, they heard a voice of one screeching at the gate, and the voice was a sharp voice, even like the voice of the unclean bird which buildeth its nest in the corner of the temple, and defileth the holy places.' Sharpe is described by Walter Scott in his *Journal*: 'He was bred a clergyman but did not take orders owing I believe to a particular effeminacy of voice which must have been unpleasant in reading prayers';[4] Sharpe's voice earned him the nickname of 'cheeping Charlie'.

The representation of Dalzell in the 'Chaldee' cost Blackwood £230 in a lawsuit. Dalzell, a lawyer and historian who wrote for Constable, had been permanently lamed from

an injury as an infant. His character in the 'Chaldee' is described as 'A beast of burden which [Constable] had in his courts to hew wood and carry water, and to do all manner of unclean things. His face was like unto the face of an ape, and he chattered continually, and his nether parts were uncomely. […] he skipped with the branch of a tree in his hand […] he is a sinful thing, and speaketh abominably, his doings are impure […] behold he was born of his mother before yet the months were fulfilled, and the substance of a living thing is not in him, and his bones are like the potsherd which is broken against any stone'.

In the alcohol-fueled enthusiasm for the 'Chaldee', Lockhart probably undermined his own character and reputation with the description of himself, coupled with the other scandalous articles in that October 1817 issue of which he was a part. In the original version Hogg described Lockhart as 'the dark wolf that delighted in the times of ancient days', which simply called attention to the dark features of his appearance and his classical education. However, Lockhart himself changed his 'Chaldee' description to: 'There came also, from a far country, the scorpion, which delighteth to sting the faces of men, that he might sting sorely the countenance of the man which is crafty [Constable], and of the two beasts' [Blackwood's former editors].

Lockhart's 'Scorpion' reputation has had a long life. It was also in this issue that the first of the series of articles 'On the Cockney School of Poetry' was published—a damning assessment of Leigh Hunt and other writers linked to Hunt's name. Lockhart is most commonly maligned and vilified by modern critics for his role in the *ad hominem* attacks in the Cockney School articles. Especially galling to many readers is the fourth article in the series, on the poetry of John Keats, which asserts that Keats was a talented young man whose training for a career in medicine had been disrupted by the 'poetical mania' of the age, resulting in the 'calm, settled, imperturbable driveling idiocy of "Endymion"', and which concludes, 'for Heaven's sake, young Sangrado, be a little more sparing of extenuatives and soporifics in your practice than you have been in your poetry'.[5] Lockhart offered advice to Blackwood following the outcry over the October 1817 issue: 'Get Scott & you get every thing. Be extremely cautious in giving even to him names or power *unnecessary*. […] Upon him everything depends for in any faculty meeting where literature is concerned who dare stand against Magrauby?' (NLS MS 4002, fols 182-83). Scott, of course, stayed out of the fray.

Scott did try to steer Lockhart away from the personal attacks in his writing and apparently had a positive influence on *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, which was first published in July 1819. Lockhart published excerpts from his work in progress in the February and March 1819 issues of *Blackwood's*; Scott was impressed especially by the characterisations of the members of the legal profession, but he was concerned about what direction Lockhart might take his sketches and wanted to meet with Lockhart to encourage restraint before he went further with book publication. As Scott wrote to James Ballantyne: 'In so small a society as Edinburgh there is great difficulty in speaking plain out respecting character and appearance', and this even more so in books than in magazines (Scott Letters, VI, p. 89). Scott seems to have had some influence on both the tone and subject matter of *Peter's Letters* and on receiving a copy of the published work, wrote to Lockhart: 'the Doctor has fully maintaind his high character for force of expression both serious and comic and for acuteness of observation […] and his scalpel has not been idle though his lenient hand has cut sharp and clean and pourd balm into the wound. […] When I think that at an age not much younger than yours I knew Black Fergusson Robertson Erskine Adam Smith John Home &c &c and at least saw Burns I can appretiate better than any one the value of a work which like yours would have handed them down to posterity in their living colours. Dr. Morris ought like Nourjahad to revive every half century to record the fleeting manner of the age and the interesting features of those who will be only known to posterity by their works' (Scott

Letters, V, 430-31). Even so, Lockhart and Blackwood faced a lawsuit from the Black Bull Inn in Edinburgh for the negative comments on it in *Peter's Letters*.

The controversies surrounding Lockhart and *Blackwood's Magazine* continued for several years and at one point turned violent. John Scott, editor of the *London Magazine*, persisted in saying that Lockhart was the Editor of *Blackwood's* and responsible for the magazine's meanness. Lockhart denied he was editor (Blackwood, in fact, was his own editor), but Scott would not believe him. Lockhart went to London to challenge Scott on the issue, including to a duel, but Scott wouldn't see him or accept his challenge. The conflict continued, and Lockhart's friend Christie, who was a lawyer in London, went to see Scott. Scott and Christie dueled, Christie shot Scott, and Scott died a few days later. Sir Walter Scott was in London at the time of this duel, meeting regularly with Christie and writing to Lockhart frequently with updates. This death was the last straw for Walter Scott and Lockhart's magazine mischief, and he wrote to Lockhart on 24 February 1821 to press him to give up *Blackwood's*: 'Christie and I talked over the matter anxiously: it is his opinion as well as mine and if either has weight with you you will not dally with this mother of mischief any more. I make this my most earnest entreaty to you and as it agrees with that of all your friends and well wishers I trust it will not be made in vain. Do not *promise* but *act* and act at once and with positive determination' (Scott Letters, VI, p. 363).

Although Lockhart did not immediately sever ties with *Blackwood's Magazine*, he directed most of his literary energies into other avenues, publishing his four novels in four years—*Valerius (1821), Adam Blair (1822), Reginald Dalton (1823), Matthew Wald (*1824)—a lengthy biographical essay on Daniel Defoe for an edition of *Robinson Crusoe*; an edition of *Don Quixote*, with his annotations and a biographical essay on Cervantes; and a book-length collection of his original translations of *Ancient Spanish Ballads*. Scott generally had a high opinion of Lockhart's work during this period. He praised the novels, and thought Lockhart's *Don Quixote* 'superseded' all other editions (Scott Letters, VI, p. 212). He called Lockhart's Spanish poetry 'beautiful translations which—to speak truth—are much finer than the originals' (Scott Letters, VI, p. 151). Scott's fondness for the Spanish Ballads, however, did not prevent him from a friendly parody of the work. The opening stanza of 'Zara's Ear-rings' from the collection runs:

"My ear-rings! My ear-rings! They've dropt into the well,
And what to say to Muça, I cannot, cannot tell."—
'Twas thus Grenada's fountain by, spoke Albuharez' daughter,
"The well is deep, far down they lie, beneath the cold blue water—
To me did Muça give them, when he spake his sad farewell,
And what to say when he comes back, alas! I cannot tell."

Scott wrote to Daniel Terry on 18 June 1823, waiting to receive the 'marbles and the chimney-grates' for Abbotsford:

My marbles! my marbles! O what must now be done?
My drawing-room is finish'd off, but marbles there are none.
My marbles! my marbles! I fancied them so fine,
The marbles of Lord Elgin were but a joke to mine. (Scott Letters, VIII, p. 17)

Lockhart moved to London late in 1825 to become editor of the *Quarterly Review;* after that Lockhart's letters to Scott became much more frequent, and the letters are full of domestic, literary, business, and political news and gossip. Lockhart corresponds with Scott about articles for the *Quarterly,* and Scott published eleven articles under Lockhart's editorship for which he was paid £60 to £100 each. Scott also wrote *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* for Murray's Family Library, which was under Lockhart's supervision.

Domestic news was an important, but not the dominant, subject of the correspondence. Lockhart wrote to Scott on January 1, 1828, when daughter Charlotte was born: 'I have the pleasure to inform you that Sophia has this morning presented me with a

new years gift of promise—to wit a very plump little girl. She had a short & easy time of it & both are doing as well as possible. […] This is a great relief: the doctor has slept here for three weeks & every day has been expectation and disappointment. […] Johnny when I asked him if he thought the baby pretty—answered shaking his head "not very." The womankind dissent from this authority however: and Walter has not yet declared to which opinion he inclines. I think newborn babes are all as like each other as so many oranges' (NLS MS 3906, fols 3-4). Much of the domestic correspondence, though, was more serious and was focused on the health of the older son, Johnny—his pain, his treatments, the travel for warm, dry weather—and Lockhart's efforts to put as positive a spin on his prognosis as possible. Lockhart wrote on July 9, 1828: 'This day Dr Farre, Dr Gooch, & Ferguson inspected & consulted about Johnny—the first-named is you probably know considered as quite the highest authority on diseases of the lungs & liver—he is the same who attended Mr Canning—& is solely a consulting physician. The result is he says Johnny's lungs are affected *superficially* so as to produce a discharge of mucus, but not *substantially* or, were they alone the seat of disease he wd say, dangerously. The liver he says *is* slightly affected & the original disease of the spine has so weakened all the mesenteric region that this must be considered as a most serious incident. He says he has seen children recover under circumstances of the same kind more aggravated—bids us not despair in short. Shd the child get worse again he wd recommend a trial of Hampstead Heath for air. He recommends *little* medicine; which I was glad to hear having always suspected Dr Yates of being too largely a pourer in of druggery. This is all I can say for the present' (NLS MS 3907, fols 13-14).

Lockhart writes, too, about a busy social life. He and Sophia are invited to visit the artist David Wilkie to see his new work, some Italian paintings and a set of Spanish subjects. Lockhart described the new work in detail and commented on their 'beauty & grace'—among the best of Wilkie's work. Lockhart also saw there Sir William Knighton, King George IV's personal secretary, who had gone to purchase works for the King (NLS MS 3907, fols 94-95). Lockhart also entertained James Hogg on his visit to London in early 1832: 'Here is James Hogg—he has come up to start if he can an Edition of his works *a lá Waverley* & as he has found a young raw bookseller I fancy he will succeed in his *start*. He seems likely to be a great Lion among the ten pound interest. He dined here yesterday w Theodore Hook who celebrated his advent in an extempore canticle of great fun & made the tears chase each other down the furrowed cheeks of the great Boar, & his grinders gape in a most picturesque agony of delight' (NLS MS 5317, fols 91-92). And Lockhart went to an Edward Irving service for the curiosity value, writing to Scott on 5 December 1831: 'This morning 3 horrid creatures are hanged for Burking in London & I had the satisfaction yesterday hearing the Revd E[dward] Irving announce from the pulpit his opinion that the worst of the three was as pure in the sight of God as the holiest of that congregation—more sane than the wisest of them I cd well believe. I went to hear the unknown tongues but was disappointed for the spirit moved none of the "Gifted Sisters 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5" as they are called in the pamphlets and as it is said the Kirk is to be shut up as a nuisance before next Sunday I fear I shall never witness what another pious pamphlet speaks of as "a glorious crash of *Tongue*." There were at least 3000 people present & the whole reminded me of the first outburst of Quakerism. I think it very likely these fools may found a new sect' (NLS MS 5317, fols 87-89).

It was the political news, though, that dominated Lockhart's letters for the last six years of Scott's life. The *Quarterly Review*, of course, was Tory oriented in its politics, and Lockhart had an enthusiastic interest in the political news. He seemed especially interested in being first to get news to Scott of parliamentary affairs and of the 'political talk' from among well placed sources. Lockhart had high connections as Scott's son-in-law, as editor of the *Quarterly Review*, and as a friend of John Wilson Croker's. On Lockhart's going to London, Scott had written to Sir William Knighton to introduce Lockhart to him; and Knighton, whom Lockhart referred to as *the Invisible*, or the Great Unseen, from time to time summoned

Lockhart to pass on information. Lockhart frequently attended parliamentary debates over major issues, especially the sessions leading up to the Reform Bill. At one point Lockhart himself briefly considered standing for parliament: He wrote to Scott on 17 May 1830: 'During the last twelvemonths I have one way & another cleared upwards of £5000; and do not perceive any reason that it shd be otherwise next. Under these circumstances do you think I shd be justified in aspiring to a seat in the next H[ouse] of Commons? One can hardly live so continually among those gamesters as I have been doing without wishing to take a hand sometimes. But I should feel no gratification in coming in otherwise than at liberty to play for myself' (NLS MS 3913, fols 112-15).

I would like to give just two examples of Lockhart's letters related to the politics of Reform. Lockhart wrote to Scott on 5 March 1831 about their old friend but political and literary rival, Francis Jeffrey, former editor of the *Edinburgh Review,* who was then in parliament: 'Last night I witnessed Jeffrey's debut & shd hardly, except in one or two pretty paragraphs, have recognized our old acquaintance. He was feeble cold & powerless in manner, & not a bit of his voluble sarcasm of other days--examining into first principles like some professor & in short it was a *baddish* article not at all a speech. He was listened to at first w profound attention but at last wore out patience & was all but coughed down. Not having heard him for 5 or 6 years I cd not but be terribly struck with the contrast & coupling what everyone felt--viz an intolerable smell of ether--while he spoke, with the stories current, I must suspect there is reason to blame certain indulgences for this decay of the physique. Croker got up & dissected both Jeffrey & the bill, to a house at first unwilling & repulsive, with a force of sarcasm & also eloquence that presently told w prodigious effect. […] God knows how it is to end' (NLS MS 3917, fols 22-25).

Ten days later Lockhart wrote again, in terms that sound remarkably modern: 'I wd have written sooner had I had anything very comfortable to tell but on the contrary every day seems to render the *substantial* success of the bill more certain. Many who a week ago spoke the most vigorously on the side of opposition now intimate their belief that the only wise course is to let the scheme go to committee & reserve themselves for a petty war of paring and pruning. The truth is that in spite of all the efforts of the disinterested, the *three* parties of Tories, the Duke's, Peels, and Sir C[harles] Wetherell's remain in disunion—do not conceal their having ranged them for the nonce under one banner from wholly distinct motives—& even as to this business consult not together in private confidence—never was a man less adapted as to his *manners* than Peel for conciliating & winning back, where there was much to forgive on both sides. If *he* has really tried, he has failed: I think the Duke has been too proud to try at all; and *now—now* all I hear of is their having subscribed to set up a newspaper' (NLS MS 3917, fols 63-64).

Lockhart's letters also reveal a man who was generous and attentive to the needs of his friends and acquaintances. For example, he wrote to Scott about the financial difficulties of his literary friend, R. P. Gillies, and how he was frustrated by Gillies's debts and his lack of initiative; Lockhart expected Gillies to be arrested, but noted: 'When that occurs I shall of course take care of his wife & children *until* there is time for having an answer from Lord Gillies' (NLS MS 3907, fols 208-09). Lockhart did the same for William Maginn's wife and daughter when they were in financial difficulty, and advocated for James Hogg and a long list of other writers and artists for assistance from the Royal Society of Literature, as well as for government pensions. Thomas Carlyle would later describe Lockhart as 'a person of sense, goodbreeding, even kindness', a 'thoroughly honest, singularly intelligent, and also affectionate man, whom in the distance I esteemed more than perhaps he ever knew. Seldom did I speak to him; but hardly ever without learning and gaining something'.[6]

I would like to conclude with a few words about Lockhart's methods as a biographer and to comment particularly on the controversial conclusion to the *Life of Scott*. I know Peter Garside is working on an article about this, and I don't want to tread on his territory, but I

think it is important for the Lockhart-Scott relationship. Lockhart writes that four days before Scott's death, Scott rallied briefly and called for Lockhart: 'Lockhart,' Scott said, 'I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here'.[7] Modern critics have been dismissive of this scene, arguing that it was 'concocted' by Lockhart. Yet, I think it conveys a truth about Scott and Lockhart, even if it did not happen exactly as Lockhart represented it.

In reviewing Lockhart's *Burns* (1828), Thomas Carlyle argues that 'with *all its deficiencies*,' the work 'gives more insight […] into the true character of Burns than any prior biography'.[8] And on the *Life of Scott*, Carlyle writes: 'if Mr Lockhart is fairly chargeable with any radical defect, […] it seems even to be in this, that Scott is altogether lovely to him; that Scott's greatness spreads out for him on all hands beyond reach of eye; that his very faults become beautiful, […] and of his worth there is no measure'.[9]

Carlyle raises the issue of Lockhart's practice as a biographer—which was to *represent* a character. Lockhart's training as a biographer came, in part, as a fiction writer, and for Lockhart, in terms of form and style, there is little distinction between the purpose of biography and the purpose of the novel. Lockhart began his Burns in 1825, the year after he published his fourth novel, put it aside, returned to it in 1827, and then published it in 1828. Lockhart had published his four novels in the four years immediately before he began his Burns, and his novel titles read like titles of biographies: *Valerius, Adam Blair, Reginald Dalton, Matthew Wald*. In 1826 he published a review of Walter Scott's *Lives of the Novelists*, in which he argued that the task of the novelist is, above all, to excel in the 'conception and delineation of *character*'. 'We read no fiction twice', Lockhart continues, 'that merely heaps description upon description, and weaves incident with incident, however cleverly. The imitating romancer shrinks at once into his proper dimensions when we ask—what new character has he given us?'[10] Lockhart relied heavily on personal recollections and anecdotes from people who knew his subjects, and his image-making biography also meant that he did not write all he knew about his subject's character, especially if there were living relatives who might be hurt or offended by the disclosure of family secrets or negative images. For Lockhart, the 'conception and delineation of character' was the primary focus of biography, and the image was more important than strict accuracy in presenting facts. For example, in the *Life of Scott* Lockhart tells the story of William Menzies's looking towards North Castle Street from his residence in George Street and seeing a 'hand', 'unwearied', writing 'night after night', a hand that turns out to be Scott's at work on *Waverley* (*Life*, IV, p. 151). However, William Menzies wrote to Lockhart after reading the anecdote in the *Life of Scott*: 'I perfectly well recollect the incident of the "hand" tho' I am afraid you have embellished it a little. Some literary Grub, criticizing the works of Lockhart some 50 years hence, might accuse him of inaccuracy, & in support of his charge, prove that in 1812 W. M.'s only Uncle was in India, & that the said W. M. did not reside in George Street before Whitsunday 1818. In the summer of which year I imagine the "Hand" alluded to took place. The anecdote however is so well introduced where it stands, as to make the anachronism of no consequence' (NLS MS 935, fol. 12).

I recognise that this manipulation of facts to create an image is a touch ironic, given that after reading *Old Mortality* when it was first published Lockhart privately asserted that Scott had committed 'gross violations of historical truth' (Lockhart to Christie, Lang, I, pp. 114-15). But Scott had admonished Lockhart to be a good man from the time they first met, and it is not too far-fetched to accept that Scott's last words to Lockhart—*whenever* they might have occurred or in whatever form they took—would have been an encouragement to 'be a good man'. For Lockhart, though, I believe this representation of Scott's last words, ultimately, was intended as a *tribute* to Scott—a statement about the kind of man Scott was and, I think, under Scott's influence, the kind of man Lockhart became.

1. Quoted in Andrew Lang, *The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart*, 2 vols, (London: Nimmo, 1897), I, p. 72. Henceforth 'Lang'.
2. *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by H. J. C. Grierson, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932-37), VI, p. 120. Henceforth 'Scott Letters'.
3. For both versions of 'The Chaldee Manuscript', as well as a thorough discussion of the history of the work and the identification of the subjects parodied in it, see James Hogg, *Contributions to Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Volume 1, 1817-1828,* ed. by Thomas C. Richardson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).
4. *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 2.
5. 'On the Cockney School of Poetry. No. IV', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (August 1818), p. 524.
6. *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. by Ian Campbell, et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1970-); https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/11/lt-18390526-TC-JAC-01 and https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/14/lt-18420127-JWC-JOST-01.
7. John Gibson Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, Edinburgh Edition, 10 vols, (Edinburgh: Constable, 1903), X, p. 193. Henceforth '*Life*'.
8. Thomas Carlyle, 'Robert Burns', *Essays Scottish and Other Miscellanies* (London: Dent, 1915), p. 3.
9. Carlyle, 'Sir Walter Scott', *Essays Scottish*, p. 63.
10. *Quarterly Review*, 34 (September 1826), p. 378.

Thomas C. Richardson
Mississippi University for Women