The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

Rob Roy

A colloquium given to members of The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club on Saturday 19th August 2017 by ***Professor Peter Garside*** *and* ***Professor David Hewitt.***

The 2017 annual colloquium was devoted to Scott's novel Rob Roy *(1818), anticipating the bicentenary of its first publication at the end of 1817 while also serving as the Club's annual commemoration of the author's birthday. Both speakers were involved in the* Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels [EEWN] *since its inception, David Hewitt as its Editor-in-Chief, Peter Garside as one of the General Editors, and both as editors of a number of individual volumes. David Hewitt's edition of* Rob Roy *came out in 2008, near the end of the completion of the series. A past President of the Club, he retired as Regius Chalmers Professor of English Literature at the University of Aberdeen. Peter Garside, currently the Club's Chairperson, was Professor of Bibliography at the University of Edinburgh. The main papers were followed by an animated discussion amongst those attending, and the event was expertly brought to a conclusion by Louise Gardiner, our Hon. Secretary. Below we are pleased to provide texts of the contributions of the two main speakers.*

Peter Garside's Text

Prior to this event David and I have had a few words about a division of labour, and the resulting idea is to offer a kind of three-part introduction, starting with myself mainly looking at the novel from the outside up to the completion of the first edition, with David then turning more directly to that first-edition text finishing with its transformation as part of the Magnum Opus collected edition, this being concluded by a short overview of the novel's afterlife, chiefly as drama and in film. For my own part I come to this event having just recently re-read *Rob Roy* in David's excellent first-edition-based Edinburgh edition, turning from the main text to the Explanatory Notes and occasionally to the Glossary while proceeding—to tell the truth, this representing first time that I've engaged with EEWN volume in a general readerly sort of way. One thing that struck me in the process of reading was how often the narrative, in analysing the 'contending feelings' of the characters, points to an admixture of 'selfish' and 'social' motives. Take for example, the young hero Frank Osbaldistone on his concern to retrieve information from the captured Rob Roy:

> I should do myself injustice did I not add, that my views were not merely selfish. I was too much interested in my singular acquaintance not to be desirous of rendering him such services as his unfortunate situation might demand, or admit of receiving.[1]

The question I would now like to put is whether this might in some ways also reflect Scott's own situation as a novelist at this point? With this in view, I'd like to look at two elements in the preliminaries to the first edition, which might be said to reflect these dual impulses or tendencies.

To begin let's look at the very start of the first edition with the motto on the title-page:

> For why? Because the good old rule
> Sufficeth them; the simple plan,
> That they should take, who have the power,
> And they should keep who can
> *Rob Roy's Grave*.—WORDSWORTH.

This comes from a longer poem by William Wordsworth, written in 1807, and is meant show the stark survivalist outlook of an outcast. Exactly the same extract had featured earlier in an advance notice for the novel in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* on 19 May 1817. It also appears in an undated letter from Scott to John Ballantyne, acting as his literary agent, in which Scott asks Ballantyne to 'copy over' the motto (a move necessary to preserve his anonymity) and announces that the 'The first two chapters go to James', that is John's brother the printer.[2] J. C. Corson dates this letter early June 1817,[3] but most probably it came earlier, and in the wake of a crucial meeting involving Scott, John Ballantyne, and the Edinburgh publisher Archibald Constable on 5 May to decide terms for the new novel, and at which meeting according to J. G. Lockhart's *Life of Scott* Constable was allowed to provide its title.[4] Granted Lockhart's account is accurate, Constable was very likely being offered a sop to ease what was in other respects a highly advantageous deal for Scott and his associates. The main terms of that deal were written down by John as a memorandum for Constable's firm on the same day:

> As Literary Agent for the Author of Waverley, I have to offer you on his part, a new Work in three Volumes, to be published in September & to be entitled Rob Roy on the following Conditions. // You shall print Six or Ten Thousand Copies as you find advisable, admitting to one third thereof Messrs Longman & Co, to another third John Ballantyne, on their coming under each a third of the total engagements. // You shall accept Four Hundred Pounds at four months presently to account of Authors Profits Longman & Co also accepting for the same sum, and John Ballantyne paying Four Hundred Pounds, being in all Twelve hundred Pounds to account of Authors Profits. // You shall accept at a years date Two Hundred Pounds for a third share of Six Hundred Pounds of the Stock of the late firm of John Ballantyne & Co, the other two parties accepting on the same terms, the value of the Stock to be rated in the same manner as in the Cases of Guy Mannering & Antiquary.[5]

A number of salient points are worth quickly noting here. Firstly, the numbers for the first print run of a novel were exceptional for that time—even more so when Constable in August opted for the larger amount, confirming Scott in his opinion that he was a 'dashing dog worth the whole bunch for spirit & adventure'.[6] Much the same can be said about the sums being generated in the form of advances, here amounting to £1200 from the three interested parties, or £1800 if the purchase of John Ballantyne's old book stock (more on that later) is added—in present-day terms around £160,000. Lastly, a new ingredient in the arrangement is the inclusion of John Ballantyne as nominal holder of a one-third interest, along with Constable and the London firm of Longmans, though in the expectation that Ballantyne would immediately bargain with Constable to sell his share, allowing Constable the management and the lion's share of the impression, as well as generating further profit for Scott and a nice slice as commission for himself.

To return to that motto. Most obviously this relates to Rob Roy himself, a figure already well-known both in prose (e.g. *The Highland Rogue* [1723]) and drama. At the same time the Darwinian ethics attributed to him in the Wordsworth passage are not paralleled by Scott's novel, where the character if anything falls on the more favourable side of the selfish/social divide. Considering the exuberant post-contracting moment when the motto was decided on, might it not equally apply to Scott's triumph in another Darwinian situation, that of bookselling? It would be hard to think of more credit-based capitalist practice than bookselling in Scott's time. Equipped with a lawyer's training, Scott had mostly done well out of this, opting generally for large sums for copyright in the case of his major poems. When moving towards fiction, however, he was in an unusually impecunious situation, mainly as a result of the failure John Ballanytne & Co, the publishing firm he had set up and secretly co-owned. It was against a backdrop of near-bankruptcy that *Waverley* (1814) was bargained for, though Scott was astute enough to decline Constable's offer of a sum for outright copyright, insisting instead on receiving half profits, a system whereby profits calculated on the wholesale price minus production costs were shared between author

and publisher. For this to work in Scott's best interests two other ingredients were essential. Firstly Scott was careful to contract for a specific number of copies or editions, allowing him to negotiate freshly for subsequent editions, and if need be with a different publisher. Secondly, he was always insistent on receiving advance payment in anticipation of profits, in the form of accepted bills with a promise to pay up after certain length of time. In practice, this meant that Scott through an intermediary (usually John Ballantyne) could go to a bank to have acceptances discounted for cash (i.e. the banker would keep a percentage to compensate for the wait and risk, until able to receive the full amount as the holder of the bill). The system only worked fully, however, if the original bill was considered sound; if not, the banker might charge a larger discount, or, failing that, the bill might not be transferable at all, creating a crisis of confidence and the possible collapse of the issuing concern (as happened in 1825–26—or think recent banking crisis).

Scott's shifting between publishers prior to *Rob Roy* had largely been determined by two considerations: a desire to maximise sales, and the need to secure credit-worthy bills. In fact, it was news of a collapse in subsequent sales of *Tales on Landlord* (1816), published by the rival Edinburgh/London combination of Blackwood and Murray, which triggered his return to Constable with *Rob Roy*. Scott once more was under financial pressure, having embarked on building extensions at Abbotsford, intent too on redeeming a bond of £4000 for which the Duke of Buccleuch stood guarantor. To expedite the latter, he also entered into a bargain with Constable for a new series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, well before *Rob* was finished. Compounding difficulties, Scott became seriously ill in the Autumn with stomach cramps, driving Constable's partner Robert Cadell to distraction, desperate as he was to get the work out within the year (it just managed to squeeze in, though the imprint date is 1818). At no point arguably in Scott's career were the profits and risks so exaggerated. In one sanguine moment in October he calculated profits from publishing ventures of £13,800 (more than a million pounds in today's terms).[7] Behind the paper confidence, however, there were a number of disturbing cracks. What if Constable's bills, now issued in such large numbers, proved unsound? What if the novel (as Cadell feared) failed to match the success of its predecessors? What if Longmans refused to accept John Ballantyne's stock on the offered terms (as they finally did with the second *Tales*)? And lastly, would the stability looked for through the transfer of profits into land with Abbotsford actually work out?

Much of this I would like to suggest is reflected in the novel itself, not upfront, but rather in the recesses of the plot. A number of commercial concerns are involved. In London there is Osbaldistone & Tresham, in which the chief clerk is Owen—a name reminiscent of Owen Rees, the partner in Longman & Co. in Scott's day who handled its Scottish interests. Then there is the Glasgow firm of McVittie, Macfin & Co., hitherto the main handlers of the Osbaldistone business in Scotland, who prove treacherous. In contrast stands the naturally 'selfish' but trustworthy Baillie Nicol Jarvie, who shares an element of rotundity with Archibald Constable, and may represent some kind of facetious compliment from author to publisher. It's Jarvie who at one point offers the fullest explanation of the underhand dealings which threaten the collapse of the house of Osbaldistone, and their interconnection with Jacobite rebellion. As David explains exhaustively in his Notes, Osbaldistone senior has bought woods and other goods from Highland chiefs, and paid them with promissory notes, dated to fall due on 12 September 1715. The payees (i.e. chiefs) on receipt had presented these bills to Glasgow bankers or merchants and received ready money at a discount. The villain Rashleigh has subsequently gone to Scotland with assets supposedly to pay off the bills held by the bankers, but has disappeared, threatening the collapse of Osbaldistone credit as the bills prove worthless. Taking this one step further the suggestion is that the Glasgow bankers will then seek repayment from the chiefs to whom they have advanced money, who in their impoverished state will break out in rebellion as the better option. Though the last element seems a bit stretched, this does point to an overall instability underlying the novel, notwithstanding counter assertions from both Osbaldistone senior and Jarvie regarding the liberalising effects of commercial endeavour. Nor does there

seem to be any steadying of the situation when, near the conclusion, Frank's father (mirroring Scott) decides to 'convert a great share of the large profits which had accrued from the rapid rise of the funds upon the suppression of the rebellion' (321) into land, in the form of supporting his son's inheritance of Osbaldistone Hall. On the contrary, Frank on taking up possession seems as lonely and vulnerable as anywhere else in the novel.

For the other dimension in the novel, let's turn again to its preliminaries, this time to the introductory 'Advertisement' in which Scott attempts to explain his decision to return to the genre after supposedly making his farewell at the end of *The Antiquary*. Having suggested that consistency cannot be expected from a phantom, he goes on to propose that 'A better apology may be found in imitating the confession of honest Benedict, that when he said he would die a bachelor, he did not think he should live to be married' (3). Notwithstanding a tendency since the Magnum to think of the Waverley novels as a homogenous body, one should not underestimate the relatively piecemeal and stop-and-start nature of Scott's early output. Even when launching *Guy Mannering* Scott was testing out the market with another long poem in the form of *The Lord of the Isles* (1815). If there was a main turning-point for 'the author of *Waverley*', in the sense of a no-going-back, then I think it can legitimately be claimed as *Rob Roy*. And as the analogy with Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing* might suggest, this came about at least partly as the result of a love affair, Scott having become wedded to a medium in which he found incalculable new freedoms. As much as any of the Waverley novels, *Rob Roy* offers a homage to the traditions of the novel: echoing among other things the first-person narratives of Defoe, the broad social caricatures of Fielding, Smollett's comic savagery (albeit softened), and the displaced and mystified central figures of Ann Radcliffe's gothic fiction. The novel was also still an especially malleable form, capable of absorbing other registers such as the language of picturesque tourism and serious economic analysis.

One difference compared with Scott's predecessors and other contemporary novelists might nevertheless be said to lie in the firmness and authority with which he maintains a two (or even three) dimensional historical narrative, taking in the mature Frank's vantage point circa 1763, the main events of the story immediately prior to the 1715 Rising, encompassing too the underlying political context from 1688. It was such characteristics which led reviewers at the time to declare Scott the inventor of a fully-fledged historical romance. Even more so, I think, he can be considered the creator of a new species of 'social' novel. *Rob Roy* in particular is filled with a hectic assortment of social types, all to a degree governed by 'selfish' instincts, though through interaction capable of producing a wider interdependent community. Nicol Jarvie and Rob Roy, partly through kinship though one also senses a wider sympathy, manage to communicate over the divide between 'primitive' and commercial societies. Political difference also fails to inhibit Diana and Sir Frederick Vernon's willingness to relieve Frank from the difficulties caused by Rashleigh's absconding, though in practical terms this would seem to lessen their hopes for a successful Rising. Much as this might reflect the moral sentimentalism of the Scottish Enlightenment, it is undoubtedly given an extra life and buoyancy by Scott's fiction, as the isolated 'man of feeling' becomes reshaped as a communally active 'man of sentiment', inhabiting a world where the whole can be considerably greater than the parts.

This as much as anything I would suggest helps explain the immediate and unprecedented success achieved by the novel, though Cadell reading it in proof had expressed doubts:

> a bad, bitter story …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.[8]

Regardless of this the uptake in Scotland was rapid, and early opinions good: 'the Book is greatly better liked by many good judges than I had anticipated'; 'Rob Roy moves off amazingly … the great drain is to Glasgow'.[9] As early as 21 January a 4th edition of 3000 was commissioned to meet demand. Working at full stretch, the press was turned at 5000 copies, the remaining half of the impression being used to create false 2nd and 3rd editions. Even then as early as 21 January a 4th edition of 3000 was being arranged to meet demand.[10] To achieve such staggering sales over such a short period a deeper than ever saturation of the fiction market must have taken place, and on a number of levels, in terms of geography, gender, and class. An idea of the scale of this, and the sense of unification that went with it, can be gathered from Thomas Love Peacock's 'Essay on Fashionable Literature', written that same year:

> On the arrival of Rob Roy … the scholar lays aside his Plato the statesman suspends his calculations the young lady deserts her harp the critic smiles as he trims his lamp the lounger thanks god for his good fortune & the weary artisan resigns his sleep for the refreshment of the magic page.[11]

Regarded by many as the definitive Scott title, *Rob Roy* continued at the forefront of sales, in the Victorian era constituting the largest impression in the Sixpenny Edition brought out by A. & C. Black (137,000 copies, followed by 131,000 for *Waverley*).[12] But this is to jump the gun rather, so over to David to cover the first-edition text more broadly and its interface with the Magnum Opus edition.

David Hewitt's Text

Peter has dealt with the circumstances of publication, and the oblique self-examination that underlies *Rob Roy*. I am dealing with the overt subject. Yes, Cadell was right: there isn't much of Rob Roy in *Rob Roy*; Scott had not written up to the name. So what is it really about?

It is normally described as a Jacobite novel, one of the series which begins with *The Tale of Old Mortality*, goes on to *The Black Dwarf*, *Rob Roy*, *Waverley*, 'The Highland Widow', and *Redgauntlet*, a series which deals with the religious and dynastic struggle for Britain from 1679 to 1765. Viewed in this way *Rob Roy* is Scott's study of the 1715 Rising, but unlike *Waverley*'s treatment of the '45 it does not deal with the military campaign, but analyses the underlying economic and social causes. In Osbaldistone Hall Scott depicts an utterly unproductive economy, and what it does to the people. Diana Vernon tells Frank that his cousins 'form a happy compound of sot, game-keeper, bully, horse-jockey, and fool' (45). Baillie Nicol Jarvie provides a brilliant analysis of Highland overpopulation, and the lack of opportunity for productive endeavour. Frank is led to exclaim 'In the name of God! … what do they do, Mr Jarvie? It makes one shudder to think of their situation' (210) to which Jarvie says that there are hundreds and thousands

> wi' gun and pistol, dirk and dourlach, ready to disturb the peace o' the kintra whenever the laird likes—and that's the grievance of the Hielands, whilk are, and hae been for this thousand years bye past, a bike o' the maist lawless unchristian limmers that ever disturbed a douce, quiet, Godfearing neighbourhood … (210)

He points out (211) that in the twenty-five years since the Revolution they have been kept quiet by subsidies, but as George I's government is about to withdrawn them Jarvie predicts a rising:

> Weel, but there's a new warld come up wi' this King George, (I say, God bless him for ane),—there's neither like to be siller nor pensions ganging amang them—they haena the means o' mainteening the clans that eat them up, as ye may guess frae what I hae said before—their credit's gane in the Lawlands, and a man that can whistle ye up a thousand or feifteen hundred linking lads to do his will, wad hardly get fifty punds on his band

> at the Cross o' Glasgow. This canna stand lang—there will be an outbreak for the Stuarts—there will be an outbreak— (213)

The *trigger* for the rising was to be Rashleigh's financial plot which specifically aimed to force Highland chiefs into rebellion by making them bankrupt. The *strategy* was to create a credit crisis which would bring down the British government.

However, the British state was financially too strong. The ability of the English and from 1707 the British government to fight wars was based on its ability to finance them through borrowing. In the year ending in Michaelmas 1716 (29 September), short-term government borrowing increased by about £1.2m (about 12½%) to finance army expenditure which itself increased from £924,000 in the year ending in 1715 to £2.151m in 1716. This money was raised by subscription (i.e. by inviting known investors to lend). In the fiction William Osbaldistone is one of these investors, and through him Scott exemplifies why the British state would predominate. Frank tells us that when they returned to London from Glasgow 'we immediately associated with those bankers and eminent merchants who agreed to support the credit of government, and to meet that run upon the Funds, on which the conspirators had greatly founded their hope of furthering their undertaking, by rendering the government, as it were, bankrupt' (317).

Rob Roy may be work of fiction but it is also an important contribution to the historiography of the '15, and in its day a new and a brilliant one. It is only in modern times that historians such as Bruce Lenman have got round to saying that the economic imbalance within Britain was a primary cause.[13]

Rob Roy is also the story of its hero and narrator, Francis Osbaldistone. Throughout his career Scott experimented with forms of narration, and these experiments were part of his exploration of the philosophical problem 'how does one know the past?'. In this case the past is retrieved through memorialising and reconstruction: this is a first-person retrospective narration.

Two points of time are represented in all retrospective first-person narratives: the time in which the narrative is set, and the time of writing. The one is 1715; Frank tells the story of a crucial year in history as he experienced it; it also happened to be the year in which he turns 21 and enters into manhood. The other is in his seventieth year, 1763. A footnote reads 'This seems to have been written about the time of Wilkes and Liberty' (32), and John Wilkes was arrested for seditious libel in 1763. At the beginning of the novel Frank talks (rather stiffly) about the time of writing: he says that in preparing his memoirs he is not motivated by vanity and egotism. He is not like the Duc de Sully, a man who dictated the events of his life to secretaries who then wrote them up as a third-person historical narrative and read them back to the Duke so that he could admire his own achievements (6–7). He hopes that some moral benefit might be obtained from considering 'the follies and headstrong impetuosity' (6) of his youth. The mood is moral and depressive. He has lost his beloved wife, but depression is his habitual outlook, as is clear from the way in which he thinks of his past. For instance, before entering the Laigh Kirk in Glasgow he contemplates the tombs of the churchyard:

> The contents of these sad records of mortality, the vain sorrows which they record, the stern lesson which they teach of the nothingness of humanity, the extent of ground which they so closely cover, and their uniform and melancholy tenor, reminded me of the roll of the prophet, which was "written within and without, and there were written therein lamentations and mourning and woe." (157)

The words he quotes come from Ezekiel and are apposite for they are the summation of the message that God requires Ezekiel to deliver to the children of Israel whom he describes as a 'rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted'.[14] The words that came into Frank's head in the church yard in Glasgow in 1715 were written in 1763. Frank does not change.

Rob Roy has been criticised because the Frank of 1763 does not seem to be wiser than he was in 1715; for instance A. O. J. Cockshut and Edgar Johnson[15] both comment that the act of writing does not

seem to be either cathartic or therapeutic. Yes, Frank does not develop, but this is not an artistic failure: Scott is depicting a man who is suffering from a kind of moral melancholy. But his gloom is not just constitutional; it is a response to the world in which he has lived.

As he writes he recognises that part of his opposition to his father arose from a priggish distaste for generating the prosperity whose benefits he enjoyed:

> I only saw in my father's proposal for my engaging in business, a desire that I should add to those heaps of wealth which he had himself acquired; and imagining myself the best judge of the path to my own happiness, I did not conceive that I should increase it by augmenting a fortune which I believed was already sufficient, and more than sufficient, for every use, comfort, and elegant enjoyment. (11)

This is a double-time-schemed utterance. The immature young man of 1715 may have rebelled against his father's obsession with the making of money, but it was 1763 when he wrote the phrase 'those heaps of wealth'. The dunghill image suggests a continuing distaste for mercantile wealth.

Why? There are two very moving statements by Diana Vernon and Rob Roy in which they present themselves as victims. What they say suggests that the mercantile expansionism of the business community had real costs and created real pain. Die complains:

> I belong to an oppressed sect and antiquated religion, and, instead of getting credit for my devotion, as is due to all good girls beside, my kind friend, Justice Inglewood, may send me to the house of correction, merely for worshipping God in the way of my ancestors, and say, as old Pembroke did to the Abbess of Wilton, when he usurped her convent and establishment, 'Go spin, you jade,—go spin.' (79)

The penal laws against Roman Catholicism (as expounded in the novel by Jobson) were haphazard and incoherent, passed at sundry times between Elizabeth's accession in 1557 and George I's death in 1727, and they stayed in force until the Catholic Relief Act of 1778, the second Catholic Relief Act of 1791, and the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. Broadly speaking they were intended to prevent Catholics from practising their religion, and those who did not attend the Church of England were subjected to various penalties, of which the worst was the land tax: those who had not taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy had to pay double. Northern Catholics like Sir Hildebrand had been impoverished by the law.

The circumstances affecting Rob Roy were not the same. The MacGregors had been proscribed as a clan, but he himself was a respectable cattle dealer and landowner until he became bankrupt in 1712. In those days people unable to pay their debts were proclaimed outlaws, and so on 25 September 1712 letters of caption were issued authorising Rob Roy's capture and imprisonment until such time as he had satisfied his creditors. He owed money to the Duke of Montrose and for reasons that are not clear Montrose took the lead in trying to capture him. From this period Rob Roy considered himself to be a man unjustifiably persecuted by the Duke, and the legal processes by which debtors were criminalised turned Rob Roy into one of the Highland thieves whom Jarvie denounces. In the circumstances it is no wonder that Rob Roy protests against being 'hunted like an otter, or a sealgh, or a salmon upon the shallows, and that by my very friends and neighbours' (300). Three pages later he makes a more general protest about the treatment of the Highlanders:

> "You must think hardly of us, Mr Osbaldistone, and it is not natural that it should be otherwise. But remember, at least, we have not been unprovoked—we are a rude and an ignorant, and it may be a violent and passionate, but we are not a cruel people—the land might be at peace and in law for us, did they allow us to enjoy the blessings of peaceful law—But we have been a persecuted people."
>
> "And persecution," said the Baillie, "maketh wise men mad."
>
> "What must it do then to men like us, living as our fathers did a thousand years since, and possessing scarce more lights than they did?—can we view their bluidy edicts against us—their hanging, heading,

> hounding, and hunting down an ancient and honourable name, as deserving better treatment than that which enemies give to enemies? Here I stand, have been in twenty frays, and never hurt man but when I was in het bluid, and yet they wad betray me and hang me up like a masterless dog, at the gate of ony great man that has an ill will at me." (303)

In *Rob Roy* the Osbaldistones of Northumberland and the MacGregors of the Trossachs are victims of state oppression. They live at the margins, but they have also been forcibly marginalised, turned into victims by the laws which enforce the rule and mercantile ideology of the Hanoverian state. There is something magnificent in the energy of the risk taking of William Osbaldistone and Nicol Jarvie, but it is also costly. Frank may be of a depressive nature, but the need to express his melancholia comes, I suggest, from his perception of the costs of eighteenth-century capitalism.

Baillie Nicol Jarvie is the comic parallel to William Osbaldistone: he is not a large-scale player in the way that Osbaldistone is, but it is he who articulates most memorably the moral thrust of capitalism:

> But I maun hear naething about honour—we ken naething here but about credit. Honour is a homicide and a bloodspiller, that gangs about making frays in the street, but Credit is a decent, honest man, that sits at hame and makes the pat play. (206)

In other words trade generates peace, mutual trust, family life. It is marvellously positive until it is applied as a moral necessity. Jarvie's analysis of Highland demographics, and the lack of work and economic opportunity, is a brilliant piece of economic modelling, but he writes off half the population of the Highlands as lazy, under-employed, dishonest, disorderly and violent. It is genocide, not in fact but in attitude; it is the kind of nation-killing to which Sir Thomas Browne objects in *Religio Medici.*

It may seem extreme to draw this conclusion from the words of a character so wonderfully comic, but Frank objects to what he says, asking 'is it possible ... that this can be a just picture of so large a portion of the island of Britain' (209). The Baillie's argument is so theoretical, so extreme, so committed to a general conclusion, and so unadmitting of any variation or complexity, that we must reject what he says. And he is not an exceptional figure: the notes in the Edinburgh edition show that the characters quote eighteenth-century works on business and economics such as Bernard de Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, Malachy Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, Daniel Defoe's *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, and Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides MDCCLXXII.* Of course they are not meant to be quoting these works, every one of which was published after 1715, but giving them words from such works makes them the articulators of the eighteenth-century ideology of improvement via business and commerce.

Rob Roy himself is the absolute negation of Jarvie's thesis. He is a fixer, but he is also a shape-changer. He is a small Highland chief; he is also a lowland drover. He speaks Gaelic; he speaks lowland Scots. He is at ease in whatever company he is in, indicative of his knowledge and experience of the different social mores that pertain in different classes and different geographic areas of Great Britain. The variousness of Rob Roy is an ideal but he is classified as a highland outlaw. His humanity is reduced by the language used of him. And the same is true of Diana Vernon: Frank is initially scandalised that she should not behave like a nice young woman but conducts herself with the freedom of a man.

I suggest that Frank's melancholia is directly associated with his perception of the cultural costs of the expansion of trade (nowadays we would call it globalisation). In 1715 the Hanoverian government was consolidating the modern British state; Frank Osbaldistone is writing his memoirs in 1763 just as the British state was consolidating its imperial role. Britain had just won the Seven Years' War; it had initially set out to defeat France but the defeat of France created the empire in the treaty of Paris in 1763. The terms of the treaty were opposed by John Wilkes, writing in the forty-fifth issue of *The North Briton* on 23 April 1763, because they let France off too lightly. In the very next issue Wilkes begins by declaring: 'All of us who are Revolutioners are fully convinced that men were not made to be treated as if they were the

property of any individual, who partakes of the same nature with themselves'. That last phrase is the most telling: Wilkes only recognises as human those who are like himself, and that specifically excluded Highlanders, and, I assume, the black slaves of North America and the West Indies. The classification of people as other dehumanises them, which is what Frank objects to when listening to Jarvie's description of the Highland economy. Helen MacGregor says of her husband that 'he never exchanges the tartan for the braid cloth, but he runs himself into the miserable intrigues of the Lowlands, and becomes again, after all he has suffered, their agent—their tool—their slave' (269).

In a very important sense Rob Roy is the ideal figure in *Rob Roy*, although the original readers did not recognise the ways in which he is the hero, and criticised Scott accordingly. However, when he came to editing the novel for the Magnum Scott did write up to the name, for the introduction, at 135 pages the longest he wrote, focuses entirely upon the man Rob Roy. He does not base his account upon contemporary written documents as David Stevenson does in his excellent study *The Hunt for Rob Roy*,[16] but largely upon stories he had heard.[17] These are often not factual, as David Stevenson and Angus Stewart have shown, but are recollections that seem to fuse different incidents and to embroider others. Scott, accounting for the wealth and variety of the stories, suggests that Rob Roy

> owed his fame in a great measure to his residing on the very verge of the Highlands, and playing such pranks in the beginning of the 18th century, as are usually ascribed to Robin Hood in the middle ages,—and that within forty miles of Glasgow, a great commercial city, the seat of a learned university.[18]

It is a nice sentence, which neatly transforms the stories of a man's serial lawbreaking into matters worthy of chuckling admiration. The effect of this long and engaging introduction is to transform the novel into a work in which Rob Roy is the principal character.

I now hand back to Peter to give an account of the afterlife of *Rob Roy.*

Peter Garside: The Afterlife

Before concluding, it's worth taking a look at the Afterlife of *Rob Roy* as a multi-media phenomenon, one amply illustrated in the current exhibition at Abbotsford.[19] This relates chiefly to the dramatization of the novel, and most especially to the long-standing success of Isaac Pocock's operatic drama *Rob Roy MacGregor; or, Auld Lang Syne*, first performed at Covent Garden in March 1818, followed by a long run at the Theatre Royal Edinburgh in 1819.[20] Overall *Rob Roy* was the most dramatized of Scott's novels, with nearly 1000 productions during the nineteenth century, most of them based on Pocock's script. Pocock's version tends to truncate the plot, focusing on events in the second half of the novel, and ends not at Osbaldistone Hall but in Rob Roy's cave. Star actors normally played Rob Roy and Helen MacGregor, both arrayed in full Highland costume as directed by the stage instructions. At the same time, Pocock gives full voice to the story's comic characters, notably Nicol Jarvie, who was most commonly played in Scott's time by the actor Charles Mackay (this supposedly giving rise to the expression 'the real Mackay'—as demanded by audiences when a substitute appeared). Another feature was the inclusion of a number of 'national' songs, by Burns, Scott, and others. In Scotland especially the play was popular for benefit or command performances, most famously on the occasion of George IV's visit in 1822, where it was performed as a unifying 'national opera', and for which Scott wrote an additional verse to the concluding Royal Anthem.

As late as 1962 the play was performed at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, to mark a state visit by the King of Norway in company with the British royal family, though by this time one senses it was being trotted out rather as a lame kind of expectation. By then, too, film versions had overtaken stage productions. There were a number of silent movies, some now lost, these being followed by Walt Disney's *Rob Roy, the Highland Rogue* (1953), in glorious/hideous Technicolor, shot on location in Aberfoyle, and

starring Richard Todd. As the second part of the title indicates, this involved a shift away from the original narrative towards the legendary Rob Roy, the absence of noticeable accreditation to Scott possibly reflecting a decline in his reputation in the modern era. A similar tendency is apparent in the 1995 blockbuster, starring Liam Neeson as Rob Roy, in which the Scott connection has almost entirely given way to Rob's feud with the Duke of Montrose, an entirely new villain being provided by Tim Roth's illegitimate beau-swordsman, and where the nearest equivalent to Jarvie is an unscrupulous land agent played by Brian Cox—whose costume is now at Abbotsford among the exhibits. A further offshoot might be claimed in the popular TV series *Outlander*, in which the Rob Roy figure becomes the Highland laddie Jamie Fraser, and the visitor from outside an actual time-traveller in the form of Claire, who zooms into the early 1740s from 1945. This dissipation of the original novel might also be seen as reflected in the paucity of paperback editions today. Of Everyman, Penguin, and World's Classics editions, all stemming from the 1990s and Magnum-based, only the World's Classics one edited by Ian Duncan now appears to be in print. Considering that we are now fast approaching the bicentenary of the original publication, it seems a shame that no publisher, especially Penguin, is apparently stepping up to the plate to provide an accessible first-edition-based and properly annotated version of this great novel.

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[1] Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, ed. David Hewitt, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels Vol. 5 (Edinburgh, 2008), pp. 211, 277. References for subsequent quotations are given in the text.
[2] *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson and others, 12 vols (London, 1932-37), Vol. 1, p. 521. Henceforth cited as *Letters*.
[3] *Notes and Index to Sir Herbert Grierson's Edition of the Letters of Sir Walter Scott* (Oxford, 1979), p. 36, note to 521 (b).
[4] *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 7 vols (Edinburgh, 1837-38), Vol. 4, pp. 67–68.
[5] National Library of Scotland [NLS], MS 21001, f. 251.
[6] *Letters*, Vol. 4, p. 499.
[7] See *Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 525.
[8] NLS, MS 322, f. 252.
[9] NLS, MS 322, ff. 264v, 266.
[10] NLS, MS 322, f. 290.
[11] See Nicholas A. Joukovsky (ed.), *Nightmare Abbey* (Cambridge, 2016), Appendix B, p. 110.
[12] See Peter Garside, '*Waverley* and the National Fiction Revolution', in *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 2007), ed. Bill Bell, p. 231.
[13] Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain1689–1746* (London, 1980), p. 118.
[14] Ezekiel Ch. 2, vv. 10, 3–4.
[15] A. O. J. Cockshut, *The Achievement of Walter Scott* (London, 1969), p. 164; Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: the Great Unknown*, 2 vols (London, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 604.
[16] David Stevenson, *The Hunt for Rob Roy: the Man and the Myths* (Edinburgh, 2004).
[17] Walter Scott, *The Waverley Novels*, 48 vols (Edinburgh 1829–33), Vol. 7, xlvi–lix.
[18] Scott, *The Waverley Novels*, Vol. 7, p. viii.
[19] 'Rob Roy on Stage and Screen', viewed by the present writer 2/08/17.
[20] For this, and other performances mentioned, see H. Philip Bolton, *Scott Dramatized* (London, 1992), pp.162-258.