

# Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author: An Introduction

Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson

## Reimagining Romanticism and the Reappearance of James Hogg

The works of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, have experienced a remarkable revival in recent years and sustained attention to his works is long overdue. Although the journal of the James Hogg Society, *Studies in Hogg and his World*, has been thriving since 1990, many of Hogg's writings, and critical information on his life and context, were difficult to access until the twenty-first century. Two important new biographies of Hogg, by Gillian Hughes and Karl Miller, have only recently been released, and the Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of his entire body of works is only now nearing completion.<sup>1</sup> The volumes edited to date point to Hogg's aesthetic breadth, stylistic ingenuity, heteroglossic habit of thought, and social sophistication. Despite his status as a barely educated shepherd, Hogg's literary range is unmatched by most of his contemporaries, as is his ability to shift easily from one genre or mode to the next. Over a prolific, if sometimes uneven, career, Hogg produced epic and lyric poetry, songs, plays, tales, novels, sermons, treatises, journal articles, and his own periodical. For a rural peasant who literally walked his way onto the Edinburgh literary scene as a middle-aged man, his literary achievements are, quite simply, astonishing.

Literary historians of previous generations often overlooked the significance and influence of Hogg, who was generally excluded from anthologies and major works of literary criticism chiefly because of his Scottish working-class identity. However, Hogg's writing has lately become not only relevant but vital in light of recent developments in the field of Romanticism: the reframing of Scottish literature as a distinct cultural entity; the reclamation of working-class writers such as John Clare and Robert Bloomfield; the revaluation of literary practices that embrace subversion; and, most significantly, the replacement of Romanticism with Romanticisms by such scholars as Anne Mellor, Anne Janowitz, Jerome McGann, and Helen Thomas, whose reintroduction of neglected texts and authors into Romantic studies has changed the terms by which Romanticism is defined.<sup>2</sup> It

---

<sup>1</sup> Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh, 2007); Karl Miller *Electric Shepherd: A Likeness of James Hogg* (London, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Studies on re-imagined Romanticisms include Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York, 1993); Jerome McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility* (New York, 1996);

is the purpose of this collection to reconsider Hogg within this new critical context, emphasizing the relevance of current theories on labouring-class aesthetics and Scottish Romanticism to his diverse body of works

### The Working-Class Tradition

By the early nineteenth century, Britain had a long and rich tradition of working-class authorship. Writers such as Stephen Duck, Edward Ward, Robert Dodsley, Mary Collier, Robert Bloomfield, Ann Yearsley, John Clare, Robert Burns, and many others managed to gain a degree of literary success. Positioning himself in this rich literary heritage, Hogg gained relatively rapid admittance to the British cultural marketplace; yet, in the long term, defining himself solely within this tradition had its disadvantages.<sup>3</sup> John Goodridge explains that categories such as ‘peasant poets’ or ‘self-taught poets’

have been a hindrance to ... [labouring-class writers], and it has undoubtedly distorted their critical reception. They have been repeatedly invoked in cultural and political debate, whether as pawns in the game of patronly power-broking, literary novelty-acts, or as ‘natural’ homegrown versions of the ‘noble savage’.... Though not all...models of labouring-class poetry have necessarily undermined their independence, one thing these writers have rarely been allowed is simply to be *poets*.<sup>4</sup>

Identification as a ‘peasant poet’ typically threatened the social mobility of the labouring writer trying to establish a long-term career, which required acceptance into the class of independent, professional author. The inability to make such a shift was attributable, in part, to the system of patronage, whose demands for obligation and gratitude reinforced rather than diminished the class hierarchy. Moreover, the Scottish patronage system was particularly problematic given its distinct brand of status consciousness. It offered what appeared to be an intimate social connection alongside a rigid relationship of exchange in terms of the public presentation of

---

Alan Richardson, ‘British Romanticism as a Cognitive Category’, *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (November 1997); Anne Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge, 1998); Helen Thomas, *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies* (Cambridge, 2000); and Larry H. Peer and Diane Long Hoeveler (eds), *Romanticism: Comparative Discourses* (Aldershot, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, ‘James Hogg as Working-Class Autobiographer: Tactical Manoeuvres in a “Memoir of the Author’s Life”’, *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 17 (2006): 63–80.

<sup>4</sup> John Goodridge, General Editor’s Introduction, *Eighteenth-Century English Labouring-Class Poets, 1700–1800*, Volume I: 1700–1740, William Christmas (ed.) (London, 2003), pp. xiii–xv (p. xiii).

the work. Donna Landry theorizes this cultural difference in her comparison of the client-patron relations between Janet Little, the ‘Scotch Milkmaid’, and her patron Frances Dunlop, and that of the English working-class poet, Mary Leapor, and her patron, Bridget Freemantle. Landry describes the relationship of Little and Dunlop as ‘comparatively feudal’ in a ‘distinctive[ly]’ Scottish way.<sup>5</sup>

The patronage system also detracted from the merit of a working-class writer, placing more emphasis on the impressive act of producing literature with a labouring body than on the aesthetic value of the work itself. In this context, labouring-class poetry was purchased not for the pleasure of reading, but to help the meritorious working poor. This attitude towards plebian poetry in Robert Southey’s *Lives and Works of the Uneducated Poets* (1831) is representative of philanthropic paternalism, according to Goodridge, who explains that for Southey cultivating working-class poets ‘was a matter of charity, their publication an opportunity for readers to take pleasure at seeing how much intellectual enjoyment had been attained in humble life, and in very unfavourable circumstances’.<sup>6</sup>

This condescension to plebian writers was coupled with the expectation, given the fates of earlier impoverished poets, that the path of their literary careers, and possibly even their lives, would be one of descent, as Simon White explains,

The view that the quality of the poetry produced by self-taught poets always declines after an initial high point took root in the eighteenth century in response to the story of Stephen Duck....Later commentators took this trajectory of decline and applied it unquestioningly as a kind of pattern that would fit the lives and work of all self-taught poets.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, even if a labouring-class author achieved a measure of fame, this triumph would very often be situated within a tragic metanarrative.

Yet, despite the limitations of the labouring-class literary tradition and the problem of patronage, James Hogg entered the marketplace at a particularly opportune time. At the end of the eighteenth century, writers from the lower orders had some reason to believe that their voice was gaining cultural value as the genius of the peasant and the outsider was receiving growing admiration from the literary elite. William Wordsworth’s celebration of the (purified) language of ‘low and rustic life’, for example, seemed to validate the voice of the rural working class, and the poetry of Byron appeared to promote the marginalized outsider’s voice of

---

<sup>5</sup> Donna Landry, *The Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women’s Poetry in Britain, 1739–1796* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 223. For a detailed insightful discussion of the autodidactic tradition in Scotland, see Valentina Bold’s recent book, *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature’s Making* (Oxford, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Goodridge, General Editor’s Introduction, p. xiii.

<sup>7</sup> Simon White, Introduction, *Robert Bloomfield: Lyric, Class, and the Romantic Canon*, Simon White, John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan (eds) (Lewisburg, 2006), pp. 17–26 (p. 21).

‘artistic empowerment’.<sup>8</sup> However, such support was moderated when it came to considering the skill of actual working-class writers. Even those who valorized plebeian voices in their imaginative works frequently diminished the capabilities of their lower-class peers. In his private correspondence with R.P. Gillies, for example, Wordsworth criticizes Hogg’s works, which he viewed as misbegotten offspring ‘disfigured’ by their author’s ‘insupportable slovenliness and neglect of syntax and grammar’.<sup>9</sup> And Byron, in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire* (1809), explicitly singles out labouring-class poets as objects of mockery:

Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong,  
Compose at once a slipper and a song;  
So shall the fair your handywork peruse,  
Your sonnets sure shall please – perhaps your shoes.<sup>10</sup>

Wordsworth’s wise leech gatherers and Byron’s social outcasts clearly have no place in the actual world of publishing.

Although the literary elite often held works written by members of the working-class in contempt, the rapid development of the publishing industry in the eighteenth century facilitated the ascent of the literary marketplace as a distinct entity, permitting working-class writers to appeal to the general public on their own merits. This development may have had a particular resonance in Scotland, where the reading audience was potentially broader and more varied than in England.<sup>11</sup> As Jonathan Rose reminds us, ‘one of the highest literacy levels in the world had been attained in a belt across Lowlands Scotland and the far north of England’,

---

<sup>8</sup> William Wordsworth, Preface, *Lyrical Ballads: The Text of the 1798 Edition with the Additional 1800 Poems and the Prefaces*, R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones (eds) (London and New York, 1963), p. 245; on Byron and working-class writers, see Scott McEathron, Introduction, *Nineteenth-Century English Labouring-Class Poets, 1800–1900*, Volume I: 1800–1830 (London, 2005), pp. xvii–xxiv (p. xix).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Ian Duncan et al., Introduction, *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorensen (eds) (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 1–19 (p. 1).

<sup>10</sup> Here Byron ridicules, among others, Joseph Blackett, for whom he wrote a mock epitaph (‘Epitaph for Joseph Blackett, Late Poet and Shoemaker’) and whose patrons he blamed for supporting Blackett’s vocation as a poet rather than a shoemaker – *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron* (London, 1859), pp. 547, 432n7.

<sup>11</sup> An extensive analysis of literacy in Scotland can be found in R.A. Houston’s *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, 1985). Although Houston finds some claims about the superiority of the Scottish education system to be overblown, he does contend that that ‘[b]y the middle of the eighteenth century Scotland did have a lead [in literacy] over England as a whole’ (p. 256). On this subject, see also R.D. Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People 1750–1918* (Oxford, 1995). Anderson notes that by the turn of the century, ‘a minimal ability to read had become a normal part of the cultural expectations and everyday experience of the lowland population’ (pp. 16–17).

and working-class libraries and reading groups were scattered throughout the Lowlands.<sup>12</sup> Reading was common in a number of working-class professions and though the major holdings in Scottish working-class libraries were non-literary, there was also a keen interest in literature among lower-class readers.<sup>13</sup> William Thom, a weaver, writing in the 1840s, describes the pleasure that imaginative literature gave Scottish weavers earlier in the century:

The Wizard of Waverley had roused the world to wonders, and we wondered too. Byron was flinging around the terrible and beautiful of a distracted greatness. Moore was doing all he could for love-sick boys and girls, – yet they never had enough! Nearer and dearer to hearts like ours was the Ettrick Shepherd, then in his full tide of song and story; but nearer and dearer still than he, or any living songster – to us dearer – was our ill-fated fellow-craftsman, Tannahill, who had just then taken himself from a neglecting world... Oh! How they did ring above the rattling of a hundred shuttles! Let me again proclaim the debt we owe those Song Spirits, as they walked in melody from loom to loom.<sup>14</sup>

It is worth noting here that Thom and his colleagues had a keen interest specifically in Scottish literature, and were particularly attracted to the writings of lower-class Scottish authors like Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, and Tannahill, the Paisley weaver and songwriter. Although such readers failed to improve the marketability of their favourite works significantly because of the prohibitive cost of books, they helped to create new audiences by forming, for example, working-class libraries and literary societies that increased access to and engagement with texts. Rose finds these networks crucial to developing what we might call an emergent working-class intelligentsia, explaining that all sorts of additional imaginative techniques enhanced these new spaces for labouring-class readers.<sup>15</sup> The presence of such potential cultural consumers suggests that Scottish audiences might have a broader spectrum of taste than that envisioned by the Edinburgh and London critics who sought to moderate the boundaries of acceptable literary culture.

Given the radical shift in the publishing environment and the expanding reading public in the Romantic period, by the 1780s and 1790s, as Tim Burke explains, ‘labouring class poets were able to envisage alternative paths to

---

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London, 2001), p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Rose cites John Crawford’s findings that there were in Scotland ‘fifty-one... working class libraries founded by 1822, which charged annual subscriptions of 6s or less, and were governed democratically, mostly without interference by the middle classes’ (*Intellectual Life*, p. 59). Rose also notes that Scottish weavers, from one of the most literate working-class professions, frequently established reading societies (p. 59).

<sup>14</sup> William Thom, *Rhymes and Recollections of a Hand-Loom Weaver* (London, 1847), pp. 13–15, quoted in Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p. 60.

literary achievements and did not necessarily feel compelled to follow the route mapped by these predecessors'.<sup>16</sup> Robert Burns is a case in point. As Nicholas Roe has argued, despite a tendency of Romantic writers to position Burns 'as a self-destructive genius', thus placing him within the inevitable decline narrative associated with peasant poets, Burns, in fact, forestalls this 'myth', 'displaying a self-awareness which ... proved resilient to the numerous attempts to define his unique identity as a writer'. Burns, Roe continues, sought 'to set out the terms on which his poetry would be read, and his early critical reception shows how fully he succeeded'.<sup>17</sup> This shift in the literary marketplace also inspired some critics to view certain working-class writers in a more deferential light. Southey does not include Bloomfield, for example, in his collection of uneducated poets 'because his poems are worthy of preservation separately, and in general collections'.<sup>18</sup> Increasingly, then, the working class could be seen as a starting place, a point of origin for an ambitious writer, rather than a static space. It may not be surprising, given the reality of a solid multi-class readership north of the border, that this gradual awakening to the artistic skill of some labouring-class writers would be especially pronounced in Scotland.

Hogg's periodical, *The Spy*, certainly indicates an awareness of the fact that both producers and readers of literature were more complex and varied than the literati believed. Having arrived in Edinburgh in 1810, prepared to follow up on his earlier success as a literary man, Hogg struggled to market his work effectively. His solution was to establish his own periodical. Susan Manning has written of the remarkable nature of this periodical, which contains a variety of works that are not by 'lairds, lawyers and aristocrats' but rather by an array of 'professionals: printers, schoolteachers, physicians, working farmers' and 'women', as well as Hogg himself. For Manning, this work 'fleshes out a fascinating, dense alternative if not counter culture flourishing in early nineteenth-century Edinburgh'.<sup>19</sup> Although *The Spy* was only in print for a year, the fact that an obscure Scottish peasant poet was able to design, market, attract contributors, and maintain the periodical for this span of time confirms that the Scottish literary scene, both in relation to production and reception, was not as limited in taste as the contents of more prominent periodicals might suggest.

---

<sup>16</sup> Tim Burke, Introduction, *Eighteenth-Century English Labouring-Class Poets, 1700–1800*, Volume III: 1780–1800, Tim Burke (ed.) (London, 2003), pp. xvii–xxxiv (p. xvii).

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Roe, 'Authenticating Robert Burns', *Robert Burns and Cultural Authority*, Robert Crawford (ed.) (Iowa City, 1997), pp. 159–79 (pp. 161, 163).

<sup>18</sup> Robert Southey, *The Lives and Works of the Uneducated Poets*, J.S. Childers (ed.) (London, 1925), p. 163.

<sup>19</sup> Susan Manning, review of James Hogg's *The Spy*, Gillian Hughes (ed.), *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 11 (2000): 134–7 (135).

## Scottish Romanticism and the Edinburgh Publishing Trade

Theorists of Scottish Romanticism suggest that the inherently ideological literary activities of Hogg cannot simply be read in terms of a British labouring-class poetics, but must also be situated within a Scottish context with its own distinct Romantic cultural forms. As Murray Pittock reminds us, a ‘separate public sphere’ existed in Scotland ‘with its own national and local agenda’, which resulted in the production of distinct literary artifacts within its borders. Its national literature was composed of a ‘hybrid language and variable register’, shaped to promote a ‘national agenda of selfhood’, filled with symbols of national glory, and committed to a ‘reading of history as a continuous struggle for liberty’ in order to recover ‘the national past’.<sup>20</sup> Ian Duncan also finds that the works of Scottish and English Romantics are markedly different because ‘Classical’ and ‘Romantic’ aesthetic categories inhabit ‘the same historical moment and institutional base’ in Scotland. Duncan claims that ‘Macpherson’s *Fingal*, founding document of a global Romanticism’, for example, ‘is not just contemporary with the scientific projects of the Scottish Enlightenment but one of its typical inventions, in a contemporaneity that defies the English schema of a teleological development of Romanticism proper from Augustan Neoclassicism through a liminal “Pre-romanticism”’.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, a figure such as Walter Scott, indelibly associated with Scottish history and mythology, and thus Romanticism, can also be considered a representative of ‘the Enlightenment consensus’.<sup>22</sup>

The intersecting Scottish Enlightenment and Scottish Romantic traditions each had a place, albeit an unstable one, for the working-class writer. Scottish Enlightenment stadial theory allowed for the creative conflation of temporal and social concepts, placing the modern shepherd, for example, squarely in the distant past, the second in four stages of social development towards modernity. Scottish Romanticism complicated this conception with its privileging of antiquity, allowing the peasant poet to be celebrated nostalgically as a delightful but fading remnant of the past. Thus Duncan notes Hogg’s uncomfortable position at the intersection of these two models of the labouring poet, explaining that ‘[t]he affixing of a literary career to the bardic figure of the Ettrick Shepherd clarified the crux as one of cultural origins, already schematized in a historiography which at once valorized the poet as voice of primordial state of society close to nature and depreciated him as an uncouth relic doomed to extinction by the logic of economic and cultural improvement’.<sup>23</sup>

Hogg’s negotiation of an authorial identity was both eased and complicated by the particular strains of the nascent Scottish literary marketplace.<sup>24</sup> Scottish writers

---

<sup>20</sup> Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford, 2008), p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Duncan et al., Introduction, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Duncan, *Scott’s Shadow*, p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

such as Tobias Smollett and James Thomson had been successful participants in the British literary scene in the eighteenth century; yet they were, as John Gibson Lockhart's fictional Welsh traveller, Peter Morris, puts it, 'emigrants' who 'had no relation to their own country in particular, or its modes of feeling'.<sup>25</sup> While in a previous generation 'there was no such thing in Edinburgh as the great trade of Publishing', now, Morris declares,

[i]nstead of Scotch authors sending their works to be published by London booksellers, there is nothing more common now-a-days, than to hear of English authors sending down their books to Edinburgh ... [A]t this moment an Edinburgh title-page is better than almost any London one – and carries a greater authority along with it.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, as Pittock contends, a distinct Scottish cultural voice was materializing. Morris proposes that whereas past Scottish literary men relied on 'English models' and imitated 'English works', they could now emulate Walter Scott by responding to Scotland's 'own national character as a mine of intellectual wealth, which remains in great measure unexplored'.<sup>27</sup> As a friend and associate of Scott – who 'played a "Johnsonian" role in the cultural politics of early nineteenth-century Edinburgh' – Hogg strove to contribute to the intellectual enrichment of the Scottish nation through various textual media.<sup>28</sup>

Since Scotland was 'the richest region of Britain for labouring-class poets' and the Edinburgh publishing market was rapidly expanding, the 'boundaries' of the 'vibrant new cultural field' seemed particularly 'malleable – able to subsume artists and literati from various social spheres', as we have argued elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> However, 'centres of culture' tend to 'quickly establish themselves and increase their own powers of consecration by limiting access to the authority they possess'.<sup>30</sup> The powerful new Scottish periodicals worked to garner authority by defining gentility and taste and by harnessing 'the unruly spread of print'.<sup>31</sup> This quest was particularly important in a nation that was working to accumulate cultural capital, but the cost was a strong tendency towards exclusion as cultural institutions marked the boundaries of suitability. Mark Parker points to Hogg as

---

<sup>25</sup> John Gibson Lockhart, *Peter's Letters to his Kinfolk*, William Ruddick (ed.) (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 144.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 91.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 147.

<sup>28</sup> Duncan et al., Introduction, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Goodridge, General Editor's Introduction, p. x; Alker and Nelson, 'James Hogg as Working-Class Autobiographer', 76.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>31</sup> Kevis Goodman, review of 'The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830', by Clifford Siskin, in *Modern Language Quarterly*, 61/3 (2000): 545–51 (546).

a victim of the social regulations that emerged from this privileging of taste or respectability in the Edinburgh literary marketplace.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, working-class writers, particularly those who threatened to disturb moral and stylistic standards, were being carefully monitored by the literati at the very moment that Scottish literary authority was increasing, the marketplace was gradually shaking off the chains of patronage, and new audiences were becoming more receptive to a wider variety of literary genres and themes. The slippery Hogg was a frequent victim of their panoptic gaze.

### James Hogg: A Working-Class Writer in the Scottish Literary Marketplace

The attempted exclusion of Hogg from the literary cabal is transparent in his early efforts to edit a collection of poetry by figures of the Romantic establishment – including William Wordsworth. This project, which subsequently became *The Poetic Mirror*, was destined to fail as he originally envisioned it because few considered Hogg equipped for the task and fewer sought intellectual association with a brutish country fellow. While ‘Wordsworth, Southey, and a few others sent their promised contributions’, others ignored the request.<sup>33</sup> Byron failed to follow through on his undertaking to submit a poem, and even Sir Walter Scott, Hogg’s friend and sometime patron, was unwilling to supply any poetry.<sup>34</sup> In denying Hogg the mantle of gentility, members of the literary establishment sought to ‘shore up their own claims to such status by assuming the role of social arbiter’, leaving Hogg on the borders of respectability, his work censured publicly and privately.<sup>35</sup> In a review of the *Three Perils of Man*, for example, John Wilson, a prominent player in the *Blackwood’s* circle, dismissed Hogg as ‘a most unmannerly writer’, whose ‘coarse daubings’ could only be described as vulgar.<sup>36</sup>

Hogg’s innovations, however, did not derive from his inability to comprehend the discourse of civility or to understand the conventions of style, genre, and grammar. Indeed his response to *The Poetic Mirror* debacle, and his earlier innovations in *The Spy*, illustrate his adaptability and intense engagement with multiple poetic and prose styles. Barred from access to those invested with cultural capital, Hogg published *The Poetic Mirror* with his own imitations of the lyrics

---

<sup>32</sup> Alker and Nelson, ‘James Hogg as Working Class Autobiographer’, 63.

<sup>33</sup> Samantha Webb, ‘In-Appropriating the Literary: James Hogg’s *Poetic Mirror* Parodies of Scott and Wordsworth’, *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 13 (2002): 16–35 (17).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 20.

<sup>36</sup> This, despite the fact that years earlier, Wilson had asked Hogg for help introducing his poem, ‘The City of the Plague’ (Gillian Hughes, ‘“I think I shall soon be qualified to be my own editor”: Peasant Poets and the Control of Literary Production’, *The John Clare Society Journal*, 22 [2003]: 6–16). Wilson’s review was published in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (October 1823): 427–37 (437).

of the literati (though he was loathe to admit his deception) and this subversive tactic of the subaltern Hogg proved worthwhile as his adventure in mimicry was a critical and financial success, at least until the true nature of its authorship was revealed to the public.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, Hogg's *ability* to conform to the genteel expectations of the marketplace is not in question. It is his *desire* to do so that is at issue.<sup>38</sup> Conformity would have netted him a far greater rate of social and financial success, in the estimation of Gillian Hughes, who speculates that Hogg's 'fondness for literary experimentation and his refusal to repeat himself' contributed to his failure to maintain a 'high standing in the literary world of Edinburgh'.<sup>39</sup> Hogg elects at times to accommodate his works to the desires of the marketplace. After all, he was attempting to make a living by his pen. On the other hand, even Hogg's early work demonstrates a desire for something different, a need to generate genres, styles, and themes that reflect a broader lived experience than that promoted by the elite circles of Edinburgh. This sentiment is voiced in his *Lay Sermons*, where Hogg advises 'young men of imagination' intent on authoring great works to 'nourish' their 'inspiration', 'despite the cold rules of criticism', avoid 'a refinement in taste' characteristic of works of criticism, and remain true to their personal 'mental standard'.<sup>40</sup> All of Hogg's works are firmly rooted in the aesthetic standard of his own fiery mind rather than in the cold opinion of 'the schoolmen of taste', and it is this aesthetic standard in which he seeks to educate his readers.<sup>41</sup>

That his authentic voice cannot be silenced, even if it occasionally conforms to contemporary critical standards, is thematized in *The Queen's Wake*, his first great literary success. In this poetic masterpiece, Hogg tells the story of a bardic contest at the court of Mary Queen of Scots. Thirty Scottish bards from all walks of life – courtly and country, Highland and Lowland – compete for the prize: a magnificent harp. The winner is Gardyn, a bard with a highly respectable lineage, 'no man of mean degree'.<sup>42</sup> But the Queen, seeing that the other acclaimed singer, 'the poor Bard of Ettrick', 'stood / Like statue pale, in moveless mood', presents him with a 'harp of old renown...framed by wizard of the wild'.<sup>43</sup> Even at this early stage in his career, Hogg claims a distinct and distinguished place for the voice of the outsider. His later work courageously follows through on developing that voice, often at the cost of his reputation.

---

<sup>37</sup> Hughes, "I think I shall soon be qualified to be my own editor", 12.

<sup>38</sup> Tim Burke discusses the complex response of working-class poets to 'high culture' (Introduction, p. xxvii), distinguishing his view from that expressed by Paul Keen in *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> Hughes, "I think I shall soon be qualified to be my own editor", 10.

<sup>40</sup> 'Sermon X: Reviewers', in James Hogg, *A Series of Lay Sermons on Good Principles and Good Breeding*, Gillian Hughes (ed.) (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 103, 105.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>42</sup> James Hogg, *The Queen's Wake*, Douglas S. Mack (ed.) (Edinburgh, 2005), p. 222.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 366–7.

In particular, despite the risks that accompany literary experimentation, Hogg feels compelled to probe multiple discursive formations, embedded in overlapping and sometimes competing epistemic frameworks, and to dismantle and refashion literary forms, themes, and styles where they elide the voice of the common man. In the process, he interrogates existing social relations in patent, yet unexpected ways. When considering, for example, Hogg's reworking of the genre of the newly emerging national tale, John Barrell concludes that his singular position in the social and literary marketplace inspired him to write '[o]bsessive, experimental fictions which either satirized or ignored the decencies of polite letters'; so too, in examining the generic complexity of Hogg's most admired work of prose fiction, the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Ian Duncan explains that 'Hogg's novel presents us with a combination of effects' that appear 'unprecedented even in the era of radical literary innovation and experimentation we call Romanticism'.<sup>44</sup>

Hogg's defiance of contemporary literary conventions is not only rooted in his early immersion in dynamic oral texts, often the mainstay of the peasant poet, or in his distaste for a manufactured aesthetic, but rather in his role as a kind of bilingual author who, well removed from a particular set of cultural practices in his formative years, learned to speak and write in the language of the literary elite, thereby 'translating' his experience into a new discursive framework. In *Experiences in Translation*, Umberto Eco remarks, 'translation is always a shift, not between two languages, but between two cultures', and indeed as Hogg is translated or transposed from the environment of rural labour to that of urban gentility, he must translate linguistic – and thus cultural – habits of thought and expression.<sup>45</sup> Operating both inside and outside the coteries of power at various points in his career, Hogg's hybrid vantage point not only led to his attempt to bridge cultures, but to his recognition of and frustration at the limitations of both.

The role of Hogg in a reclaimed Scottish Romanticism, however, not only involves a purely Caledonian-centered renovation of literary forms, style and content. His interests were expansive and included subjects of national and global significance. The eighteenth century was an age of systemization, taxonomies and typologies, in which categories of individual, national, imperial, and historical

---

<sup>44</sup> John Barrell, 'Putting down the Rising', in Davis et al. (eds), *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, pp. 130–38 (p. 130); Ian Duncan, 'Authenticity Effects: The Works of Fiction in Romantic Scotland', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102/1 (2003): 93–116 (94). This aesthetic inventiveness is seen to a lesser extent and on a far more limited scale in the work of other labouring-class writers who wished to fashion an alternate literary tradition rooted in a new set of cultural values. As Donna Landry and William J. Christmas observe (drawing on the research of John Goodridge), working-class authors habitually strove 'to imbue traditional poetic vehicles with astonishing new content'; see their Introduction to *Criticism*, 47/4 (Fall 2005): 413–18 (417).

<sup>45</sup> Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, trans. Alastair McEwen (Toronto, 2001), p. 17.

identity were emerging. Hogg felt compelled to interrogate many of these categories from his unique perspective. Douglas Mack grants Hogg a significant role in the ‘vigorous contest over the Imperial elite’s power to narrate and to block other narratives from forming and emerging’.<sup>46</sup> The rich and varied poetry and prose of the Ettrick Shepherd – a ‘subaltern’ who insisted on a public voice – participated in the ‘remarkable and widely influential flowering of Scottish’ writing in ‘the British Imperial heyday’, according to Mack, interrogating and undermining ‘Imperial Britain’s assumptions’.<sup>47</sup> The writings of Hogg, therefore, not only speak to issues of class and literary taste but also to related matters of nationalism and empire. These were important subjects in late eighteenth-century ‘labouring class culture’, which Tim Burke describes as ‘often implacably racist, as well as profoundly nationalistic’, cultural positions that Hogg would once again complicate and challenge.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, Hogg’s significance in literary history is not simply rooted in his status as a peasant poet, the heir of Robert Burns and disciple of Sir Walter Scott. Writing in a particularly complex period in literary history, Hogg occupies a distinctly hybrid position. As a site of competing discourses and as an author of unconventional and highly dialogic texts, Hogg engages in cultural issues and develops literary strategies that speak to the intimate connection of literature and ideology in his own time and anticipate the concerns and practices of many writers and literary and cultural theorists in ours.

### **Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author**

The essays in this volume closely attend to the varied and experimental writings of Hogg to establish that these works deserve a central place in Romantic studies and to demonstrate that they anticipate and address many of the recent concerns voiced in contemporary discussions of literature.<sup>49</sup> While the essays privilege Hogg’s primary texts and read them closely in their immediate cultural context, the volume’s contributors also introduce relevant concepts of oral culture, nationalism, transnationalism, intertextuality, class, colonialism, empire, psychology, and aesthetics where they serve to illuminate Hogg’s literary ingenuity as a working-class writer in Romantic Scotland.

Donna Landry and William Christmas have cautioned that studies of labouring-class authors tend to overemphasize their ‘political awareness and critical capacities’, distracting readers from their aesthetic achievements, ‘the animating purpose of these writers’.<sup>50</sup> For this reason, although we have provided

---

<sup>46</sup> Mack, *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Burke, Introduction, p. xxx.

<sup>49</sup> Ian Duncan, ‘Re-Mapping Romanticism: The Scottish Question’, *Townsend Newsletter* (November 2006): 6–8.

<sup>50</sup> Landry and Christmas, Introduction, *Criticism*, 413.

a context in the introduction for the working-class tradition from which Hogg emerges and for the cultural reworking of Scottish Romanticism, the essays in the volume highlight Hogg's innovative aesthetic practices and consider him, first and foremost, a professional author.

The volume begins with a reconsideration of Hogg's association with Walter Scott. As earlier argued, patronage is a deeply problematic system for the labouring-class author and for this reason Hogg often carefully crafts the precise nature of his relationship with Scott in print. In 'Hogg and Scott's "First Meeting" and the Politics of Literary Friendship', Peter Garside relies on new biographical evidence to provide a more exact account of the initial meeting of Scott and Hogg, a critical social and literary connection for the Ettrick Shepherd. However, Garside insists that the existence of various accounts of the meeting is also significant, inasmuch as they imitate or deviate from the established literary convention of depicting the encounters of distinguished authors in Romantic and Victorian imaginative texts, which were often memorialized in visual, as well as textual, media. Garside pays particular attention to the role of Lockhart and Wilson in monitoring and possibly misrepresenting the relationship between Hogg and Scott to make their complex interactions conform to conventional notions of patronage, hoping in the process to undercut Hogg's depiction of his firm and dynamic literary alliance with Scott.

Despite a close connection between Hogg and Scott and a tendency to draw upon the same literary precedents and national traditions, their distinct expressions of Scottish Romanticism often led them to take the myths they inherited in opposing directions. In 'National Discourse or Discord? Transformations of *The Family Legend* by Baillie, Scott, and Hogg', Meiko O'Halloran highlights the different impressions of Scotland held by Scott and Hogg. She contrasts Scott's tendency to shape and contain the dark, repressive elements of the Scottish nation in his production of *The Family Legend*, Joanna Baillie's 'Highland Play', with the impulse in Hogg to release these forces in his reworking of the same disturbing legend of clan conflict in 'A Horrible Instance of the Effects of Clanship' and 'Julia M, Kenzie'. O'Halloran suggests that the working-class Hogg carefully restores the disturbing implications of Baillie's vision of Scotland because he firmly refuses to elide self-destructive impulses within Scottish communities that foster scapegoating and exclusion. For both Baillie and Hogg, O'Halloran infers, Scottish Romanticism runs the risk of ignoring social inequality and conflict when it is clouded by narratives of progress and notions of glorious Scoto-British alliances.

Hogg's intertextual encounters are not limited to the works of Scottish Romantic authors like Scott and Baillie. His works are highly allusive and display significant learning, despite the fact that, as a 'peasant poet,' Hogg downplayed his considerable knowledge of intellectual trends, philosophy, literary history, and related areas of knowledge. Gillian Hughes has demonstrated that while Hogg's bankruptcies often cost him his library, he continued to acquire books in considerable number, a visitor to his home near the end of his life observing that his library had 'a few volumes, not exceeding five hundred' and that 'engravings

and annuals' covered a table in the centre of the floor.<sup>51</sup> The essays of Ian Duncan, Gillian Hughes, and H.B. de Groot examine Hogg's response to the ideas expressed in printed texts circulating in Romantic Scotland.

In 'Fanaticism and Enlightenment in *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*', Duncan speculates that in criticizing Adam Smith's notion of sympathy in his gothic novel, Hogg endorses the philosophy of Dugald Stewart, who felt that Smith's privileging of the imagination could lead to fanaticism. Duncan shows that 'sympathetic imitation' in *Confessions* does indeed manifest in a frighteningly contagious and destructive religious enthusiasm (p. 68). Duncan detects in *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* a critique of modernity, as Hogg identifies 'factionalism, fanaticism and sympathetic contagion' in the novel as 'the all too modern byproduct of an Enlightenment ethics' that refuses to 'accommodate the stranger who belongs neither to a traditional community nor to the polite classes enfranchised within civil society' (p. 69).

Hughes's analysis marks a different intellectual encounter in *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, one rooted in developments in the field of psychology rather than philosophy. In 'Robert Wringham's Solitude', Hughes advances a compelling case for reading J.G. Zimmermann's *On Solitude*, a book Hogg was known to own, as a major influence on Hogg's haunting novel. Hughes maintains that the cases described by Zimmermann, alongside the description of his encounters with Russian nobility and Catherine the Great, prove that this psychology text was a critical source for *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, and attest to Hogg's fascination with newly emerging theories of personality and madness. A physician and psychologist, Zimmermann warned of the destructive effects of social isolation on the mind of the individual, which included a religious despair so intense that it inevitably ended in the suicide of the sufferer. While solitude was idealized by many English Romantics, who associated it with creative genius, the emphasis in Scottish Romanticism on the social or communal likely influenced Hogg to validate Zimmermann's findings.

In 'The Labourer and Literary Tradition: James Hogg's Early Reading and Its Impact on Him as a Writer', H.B. de Groot introduces the reader to the wide variety of literary texts with which Hogg was familiar, from Scripture and *Hamlet* to Ossian and Allan Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd*. De Groot then reveals an alternative literary tradition in which Hogg's seemingly eccentric novels can be placed, establishing a firm connection between the self-referentiality and metatextuality of *Don Quixote*, *Tristram Shandy*, and Hogg's novels, particularly *The Three Perils of Man* and the *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Thus Hogg, he asserts, deserves a central place in an alternative, more unconventional, tradition of the novel which begins with Rabelais and continues to flourish in the recent prose fiction of Flann O'Brien and Philip Roth.

---

<sup>51</sup> Gillian Hughes, 'Hogg's Personal Library', *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 19 (2008): 32–65.

Hogg's contribution to 'regional popular [oral] traditions' – a vital part of the attempt to 'reimagine Scottish identity in the conditions of imperial Union' – is even more transparent than his engagement with European printed literary traditions. This is not unexpected since labouring-class poets were often viewed as guardians of the oral tradition.<sup>52</sup> Focusing on the Enlightenment desire to identify and authenticate the oral culture of Scotland, Suzanne Gilbert argues in 'James Hogg and the Authority of Tradition' that Hogg amasses cultural capital by presenting himself as an intermediary between the oral tradition of the Scottish Borders and the print culture of the urban Edinburgh literati. Gilbert contrasts the ability of Hogg to retain the vitality of oral tradition in his printed works with the dismal failure of eighteenth-century antiquarians, whose metanarratives reduced oral tradition to static cultural artifacts. Gilbert finds, moreover, that the value Hogg invests in orality is connected to the broader Enlightenment debate on the relation between experience, memory and testimony as they pertain to the legal system.

Though song lay at the core of regional Scottish traditions, by the time Hogg claimed the position of both songwriter and collector, Scottish folk culture had been circulating throughout England in anthologies of literature published by such genteel antiquarian collectors as Joseph Ritson and Thomas Percy. Walter Scott participated in this enterprise with his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802), leading Penny Fielding to remark, 'Even Scott can fall victim to that growing middle class ideology which distrusted the bearers of oral narratives as socially inferior and morally suspect'.<sup>53</sup> Hogg, like Burns before him, wished to reframe Scottish oral culture to highlight its origins and to restore and renew 'the living song tradition of subaltern Lowland Scotland'.<sup>54</sup> The essays of Murray Pittock and Kirsteen McCue reflect on how he achieved these objectives.

In 'James Hogg: Scottish Romanticism, Song, and the Public Sphere', Murray Pittock examines Hogg's composition and collection of songs against the backdrop of an expanding and fluid culture of Scottish song which was not only firmly established in 'Scottish civil society', but also had a significant impact on 'the new British public sphere' (p. 111). The Scottish musical heritage was, Pittock explains, 'becoming hybridized and made polite on every level', given the impact of the bourgeoisie and gentility on the shaping of Scottish song tradition in the period. Pittock recognizes that financial need led Hogg on occasion to present the manufactured drawing-room songs of the middle classes as the voice of the people. Yet he reveals other instances in which the songs written and collected by Hogg offer a critique of Scott's representation of the Border; contain covert

---

<sup>52</sup> Duncan et al., Introduction, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Penny Fielding, 'Living and Life-Like: Stories and Things in the *Three Perils of Man*', *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 5 (1994): 70–81 (73).

<sup>54</sup> Introduction to James Hogg, *The Forest Minstrel*, Peter Garside and Richard D. Jackson (eds) (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. xiii–lx (p. xiv); Mack, *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire*, p. 125.

political references; speak in the language of ‘synthetic mediaeval Scots’; and interact with sources beyond the borders of Scotland.

In ‘Singing “more old songs than ever ploughman could”’: The Songs of James Hogg and Robert Burns in the Musical Marketplace’, McCue traces the way in which Hogg positions his relationship to song alongside that of Burns in order to enhance the standing of labouring-class poets at the heart of the history of the creation and dissemination of Scottish oral culture.<sup>55</sup> In editing, with William Motherwell, *The Works of Robert Burns*, Hogg shapes Burns’s narrative in a way that facilitates his role as the older poet’s successor. McCue contends that while Hogg wished to be viewed as the heir of Burns, he also sought to extend and develop the role of songwriter by composing his own airs and ensuring that his published song collections met the practical needs of musical performers. Hogg’s achievements in this area allowed him to publish not only within the confining limits of Edinburgh, but to make valuable connections in London and even on the Continent, ultimately leading to his establishment of a valuable network of associates outside the Scottish literary marketplace and to more rewarding projects, one factor in his ability to ward off the career decline associated with labouring-class authors.

Hogg’s role in the recovery and re-shaping of oral tradition is matched by his renovation of literary genres popular in Romantic Scotland. As earlier argued, Hogg strives to undo fashionable genres in contemporary Edinburgh, especially the epic, the historical novel, and the national tale, in order to render them inclusive and relevant to broader concerns. While the epic had long since passed its heyday, James Macpherson’s Ossianic verses had made the genre newly relevant to Scottish culture and beyond, and their influence was enduring. Indeed, Duncan has proposed that, despite the controversy over their legitimacy, the Ossianic poems played a critical role in Scottish identity formation and launched ‘European Romanticism’.<sup>56</sup> So too, as the novel rapidly increased in importance, Scottish novels emerged as an important national form, and the national tale surfacing in Ireland was, as Ina Ferris observes, a crucial element of imagining a reformulated nation. The epic, historical novel, and national tale were all engaged in creating, in Pittock’s terms, a ‘taxonomy of glory’ – ‘the symbolic organization of images (e.g. bards)’ – and in recovering ‘the national past’ by interpreting history as an ongoing battle for freedom.<sup>57</sup> Hogg’s attitude toward such a taxonomy and historical perspective in the epic, historical novel, and national tale, however, was complicated, as these genres often elided or parodied ordinary people, glorifying aristocrats and members of the gentility and excising the common voice. Douglas Mack, Graham Tulloch, and Caroline McCracken-Flesher document the ways

---

<sup>55</sup> On Burns and song, see Carol McQuirk, *Robert Burns and the Sentimental Era* (Athens, GA, 1985).

<sup>56</sup> Ian Duncan, ‘The Pathos of Abstraction: Adam Smith, Ossian, and Samuel Johnson’, in Davis et al. (eds), *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, pp. 38–56 (p. 51).

<sup>57</sup> Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p. 7.

in which Hogg destabilizes these genres in order to reformulate and question traditional celebratory symbols and national narratives.

In ‘Hogg’s Bardic Epic: *Queen Hynde* and Macpherson’s *Ossian*’, Mack outlines the strategies employed by Hogg to revision the epic form in *Queen Hynde*, emphasizing his reworking of Macpherson’s fragmentary Scottish verse. Mack finds that Hogg replaces the heavy melancholic nostalgia of the Ossianic works with a patently modern, vernacular and often raucous alternative. Adapting the version of the modern, witty bard devised by Byron (himself half Scottish) to suit his humble origins, Hogg creates an alternate Scottish epic that neither laments the imagined, irrecoverable past nor dwells only on the importance of noble aristocrats. Rather, as Mack discovers, Hogg designs the work in the tradition of the Miltonic religious epic, making use of the ‘radically egalitarian’ Scottish Presbyterian tradition to create a work that makes Scotland and its history relevant to pressing political debates on equality and liberty after the French Revolution (p. 154).

In ‘The Perilous Castle(s) of *The Three Perils of Man*’, Graham Tulloch considers Hogg’s distinct renovation of the novel. In keeping with the notion that cultural models associated with both Romanticism and the Enlightenment occupy the same moment, Tulloch suggests that the formal features of *The Three Perils of Man* generate an ideological tension between Enlightenment scepticism and the medieval belief in the magical and mystical. This tension is not only significant in relation to a particular brand of northern Romanticism, but is also related to issues of class. Critics have frequently suggested that Hogg grants folklore and magic a prominence and authority in his works to distinguish his voice from that of his cultured mentor, Walter Scott. In *Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, Hogg recalls that he told Scott, ‘ye can never suppose that I belong to your school o’chivalry? Ye are the king o’ that school but I’m the king o’ the mountain an’ fairy school which is a far higher ane nor yours’.<sup>58</sup> A Scottish nation purely grounded in a chivalric past is one with little place for those without claims to gentility. For Tulloch, Hogg’s destabilization of chivalry and his refusal to mitigate the supernatural elements of his narrative with the voice of scepticism, as he had done earlier in *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, leads to a version of Scottish culture in *The Three Perils of Man* that includes a space for lower-class voices in an ostensibly chivalric narrative.

McCracken-Flesher also aims to make sense of the uneasy structure of this Scottish prose romance, suggesting that in *The Three Perils of Man*, Hogg rejects the national tale, and its generic ancestor the romance, with its emphasis on defining and controlling the national narrative. The very elements in *The Three Perils of Man* that his contemporaries mocked – its mutability, loose structure and digressiveness – are the key to Hogg’s concept of Scotland, and his quest to decentre the aristocratic romance mode (characterized by self-interest and violence) on which the national tale is founded. In its place, he produces a medley of tales which are articulated by insignificant members of society and loosely woven together. Hogg’s refusal to generate a single coherent national tale is a

---

<sup>58</sup> James Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, Jill Rubenstein (ed.) (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 61.

result of his commitment to a Scotland that is not defined by one national narrative and in which the voices of ordinary citizens are relevant and valued.

Hogg's desire to contribute to and reconstitute every genre in Romantic Scotland carried over, as noted above with respect to *The Spy*, to the periodical, a major player in the establishment of Scottish literary culture. While this venue granted him access to a wider audience in the commercial marketplace, it was also used to contain him. Rather than assuming the role of commercial agent, Hogg found himself transformed into a commodity by magazine editors. Thomas C. Richardson's essay explores Hogg's complex role as both a contributor to and a product in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Richardson notes that the editors of *Blackwood's* often sought to limit Hogg to the role of peasant poet, either nostalgically or grotesquely, because this identity was financially lucrative to the magazine. While Hogg could not reconfigure a periodical over which he had limited input, he did offer a sustained critique of the genre from within. Richardson traces Hogg's resistance to commodification and his insistence on fighting many of his battles with *Blackwood's* and other publishing outlets, such as literary annuals, explicitly and publically – skillfully using verse and narrative to expose the limitations and misuse of these emergent genres.

While Hogg's distinctly Scottish identity as the Ettrick Shepherd was at issue in his representation in *Blackwood's* and elsewhere, and though he was frequently preoccupied with questions of Scottish nationalism and tradition, his writings also demonstrate an expansive interest in the nature of empire and, to borrow Murray Pittock's phrase, 'Scottishness abroad'.<sup>59</sup> In 'Empire and the "Brute Creation": The Limits of Language in Hogg's "The Pongos"', Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson examine Hogg's response to the intersecting discourses of literary taste, empire, and natural history in his short story 'The Pongos'. They maintain that Hogg reveals in this narrative the rigidity of a genteel language that cracks under the pressure of empire, demonstrating the limits of a discourse that eschews adaptability and fluidity, not to mention a colonial project that seeks to dominate a space it does not fully understand. Hogg populates his short story with British settlers, native tribes, and orangutans, Alker and Nelson contend, to expose the firmly entrenched relationship between language and power in the Edinburgh publishing world and the colonial landscapes of the Southern Hemisphere. Drawing on Pittock's recently developed concept of fratritism, Alker and Nelson determine that in his literary treatment of the pongo, colonized humans, and colonizers in an exotic foreign landscape, Hogg confronts the agenda and the tools of the imperial project both in Britain and abroad.

In the final essay in the collection, 'Hogg and the American Literary Marketplace', Janette Currie maps out the reception of Hogg's writings in a nation that had freed itself from the fetters of the British Empire during his lifetime. Removed from the evaluative discourse of the Edinburgh literati and British reviewers, Hogg's work was free to be judged on its own merits and

---

<sup>59</sup> Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p. 238.

greatly benefited from this new horizon of expectations. Currie claims that the democratizing impulse in Hogg's works that so unsettled the Edinburgh literati was the very force that gave his writings an appeal that transcended space and class. Drawing on translation theory, Currie details the range of meanings acquired by Hogg's works as they entered the American literary marketplace in new forms and contexts, and explains that the American reading public was less concerned with the gap between Hogg's origins and his skill than with his literary talent, which they believed was equal to Byron's.

This volume's examination of the literary experimentation and cultural interrogation of James Hogg, a working-class Scottish Romantic, has significant implications for writers in the postmodern age. Indeed, we can now see Hogg's radical writings as central to the tradition of working-class fiction in Britain that has had its latest revival in the work of James Kelman and Irvine Welsh. In his ground-breaking analysis of the modern Scottish novel, Cairns Craig records Kelman's frustrated response to the constrictions of the twentieth-century literary marketplace; Craig recalls, 'Kelman stated that the difficulty for working-class and regional writers is that they are told that "we can't write about certain subjects because we don't have the right voice! They obviously don't realise that language is culture – if you lose your language you've lost your culture, so if you've lost the way your family talk, the way your friends talk, then you've lost your culture, and you'd be divorced from it"''.<sup>60</sup> Kelman experiences many generic conventions as toxic for the working-class writer since they are often 'deliberately designed to deny reality'.<sup>61</sup>

Centuries earlier, Hogg voiced nearly identical concerns, forging literary strategies to combat the limitations of existing forms and conventional themes. Having made a compelling case for the vital role of the Ettrick Shepherd in Scottish studies, Douglas Mack concludes that Hogg must be granted a prominent position in Scottish literary Romanticism given his central role in developing the working-class or subaltern Scottish voice.<sup>62</sup> Valentina Bold has recently begun the process of identifying and examining Hogg's literary progeny, perceptively tracing the substantial influence of Hogg on many of the self-taught Scottish poets that followed him; these include Allan Cunningham, John Leyden, William Tennant, David Gray and David Wingate.<sup>63</sup> This volume seeks to further explore the scope of Hogg's influence, revealing the way in which he disturbed and transformed multiple genres and, building on Burns's example, created new space in his cultural milieu for authors who refused to adhere fully to the demands of a manufactured gentility. Thus, twentieth-century Scottish writers such as Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Neil Gunn, and William McIlvanney can be located in a rich literary tradition far

---

<sup>60</sup> Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 99–100.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>62</sup> Mack, *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire*, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> Bold, *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature's Making*; see chapters 9 to 12 in particular.

more demotic and dynamic than the exclusive literary tradition privileged until the last few decades.