

**The Author and the Shepherd: The Paratextual
Self-Representations of James Hogg (1807-1835)**

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Abstract
**The Author and the Shepherd: The Paratextual
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This project establishes a literary-cultural trajectory in the career of Scottish poet and author James Hogg (1770-1835) through the close reading of his self-representational paratextual material. It argues that these paratexts played an integral part in Hogg's writing career and, as such, should be considered among his most important works. Previous critics have drawn attention to Hogg's paratextual self-representations; this project, however, singles them out for comprehensive analysis as literary texts in their own right, comparing and contrasting how Hogg's use of such material differed from other writers of his period, as well as how his use of it changed and developed as his career progressed. Their wider cultural significance is also considered. Hogg not only used paratextual material to position himself strategically in his literary world but also to question, challenge and undermine some of the dominant socio-cultural paradigms and hierarchies of the early-nineteenth century, not least the role and position of 'peasant poets' (such as himself) in society.

Hogg utilised self-representational paratextual material throughout his literary career. Unlike other major writers of the period Hogg, a self-taught shepherd, had to justify and explain his position in society as 'an author' through these pseudo-autobiographical paratexts, which he attached to most of his works (in such forms as memoirs, introductions, dedications, notes and footnotes, and introductory paragraphs to stories). Via these liminal devices he created and propagated his authorial persona of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', whose main function was to draw attention to Hogg's preeminent place in the traditional world, and to his status as a 'peasant poet'. It was on the basis of this position that he argued for his place in the Scottish literary world of the early-nineteenth century and, ultimately, in literary history. His paratextual self-representations are thus a crucial element in his literary career.

Drawing on Gerard Genette's description of 'the paratext', the authorial theories of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault (along with more recent authorial criticism), as well as autobiographical theory, this project traces Hogg's changing use of self-representational paratexts throughout his career, from his first major work *The Mountain Bard* (1807) to his final book of stories *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835). By reading Hogg's paratexts closely, this project presents a unique view – from the inside out – of the specific literary world into which Hogg attempted to position himself as an author.

Introduction

‘The Death of the Author’, the ‘Author-Function’, the Paratext and Hogg

Hogg and ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’

James Hogg’s paratextual self-representations were an integral part of his career, and reveal much about the changing world within which he was seeking his literary fortune. Indeed, without these liminal inscriptions he may not have even broken into his contemporary literary world in the first place. The majority of Hogg’s books feature some form of paratextual self-representation. From title-pages, notes and footnotes, introductory paragraphs to stories (especially the ‘I heard this from...’ introduction), to his ‘appearance’ in the fictional paratext to *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* in 1824, Hogg made regular use of paratextual devices to strategically present various versions of his authorial and private selves at different points of his career. The three versions of his ‘Memoir’ are the most obvious examples of these strategic representations of ‘himself’. The first version prefaced his first major publication, *The Mountain Bard* in 1807, while the revised second version was attached to the second edition of *The Mountain Bard* in 1821 and the third to *Altrive Tales* in 1832. However, it was the 1807 version, ‘Memoir of the Life of James Hogg’,¹ which would ultimately have the biggest impact on his career and literary legacy, both for better and worse. The version of the past self depicted therein would become synonymous with Hogg’s other selves (with both Hogg-the-author and Hogg-the-private-individual), and would profoundly influence criticism of his work,

¹ The 1821 and 1832 editions were titled ‘Memoir of the Author’s Life’. From this point on the different versions of Hogg’s ‘Memoir’ will be identified by the year in which they were published i.e. 1807 ‘Memoir’, 1821 ‘Memoir’ and 1832 ‘Memoir’.

right down to our own time. This is the paratext he would never escape, and is thus a prime example of the cultural sway of authorial paratexts.

In his paratextual memoir Hogg, a self-taught shepherd, accentuated his rustic background in order to break into the notoriously class-conscious early-nineteenth century Scottish literary world. As Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson point out in their article ‘Hogg and Working-class Writing’ (2012),² ‘the [Edinburgh] literati positioned Hogg in a late eighteenth-century category of “peasant poet” that celebrated but also confined the work of working-class writers’ (Alker and Nelson 2012, 56). However, as Silvia Mergenthal, Valentina Bold, and Alker and Nelson (among others) have argued,³ Hogg also accentuated his pastoral credentials in order to exploit the contemporary vogue for ‘peasant-poets’ in the early nineteenth-century. This may have been the only path open to him from the rural community of Ettrick to Enlightenment Edinburgh, or, at least, the quickest and easiest. Therefore, Hogg created and propagated the figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ through the (semi) autobiographical paratexts he attached to most of his works. Laura Marcus suggests that the function of autobiography is to ‘structure an uncertain identity into purposive form’ (Marcus 1994, 24).⁴ This is certainly true of Hogg’s autobiographical paratexts, through which he organises the details of his past life into a specific form – presenting himself as a genuine ‘peasant-poet’, an autodidactic shepherd from within the oral tradition – in order to facilitate his entry into the literary marketplace by underpinning his authority in regard to traditional-type material. Alker and Nelson argue that Hogg

² *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, 55-63.

³ See Silvia Mergenthal, ‘Naturae Donum: Comments on Hogg’s Self-Image and Image’ (1990); Valentina Bold, *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature’s Making* (2007); Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, ‘James Hogg as Working-Class Autobiographer: Tactical Manoeuvres in a “Memoir of the Author’s Life”’ (2006); and *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author* (ed. by Alker and Nelson, 2009).

⁴ Marcus, Laura (1994). *Auto/biographical Discourses: Criticism, Theory, Practice*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

had to engage ‘in an arduous struggle to control his own authorial persona’ in order to ‘negotiate the complex Scottish, and later British, literary marketplace [which] was characterised by an uneasy blend of residual patron–client relations and emergent capitalistic professionalism’ (Alker and Nelson 2012, 56). In other words, he played the role expected of him by his ‘social superiors’ in literary Edinburgh, but for his own purposes.

In his article ‘Putting Down the Rising’ John Barrell suggests that

Early nineteenth century Edinburgh had a lot less time for James Hogg than for the “Ettrick Shepherd”, the literary persona created partly by Hogg himself, partly by the tight circle that ran *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*. Comic, bilious, full of naïve folk-wisdom, easy to patronise, the Ettrick Shepherd was invented as a souvenir of the pastoral lowlands, a survival whose presence among one of the Edinburgh literary elites could represent both the continuity of modern Scots culture and the impolite past it had left behind. (Barrell 2004, 130)⁵

Although Barrell is probably right about literary Edinburgh’s preference for the Shepherd, his description of the role of *Blackwood’s* in its creation is misleading. It would be more accurate to say that Hogg himself created and propagated the figure of the Shepherd at the beginning of his authorial career in order to help him break into the literary world, only for it then to be hijacked and distorted later by *Blackwood’s* for their own purposes (see Chapters Four and Five for a further discussion of this issue). The Ettrick Shepherd was, in the first instance at least, largely created by Hogg to help further his literary career; although other people, such as Walter Scott and Hogg’s publishers, also played a part in its propagation.

The negative effects of Hogg’s and his critics’ participation in the propagation of his public persona as a ‘peasant-poet’, especially later in his career and posthumously in his literary legacy, have been much discussed in recent critical debates about Hogg,

⁵ *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. by Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorensen, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 130-138.

especially in the wake of the Stirling/South Carolina Edition of his Collected Works.⁶ As a self-taught shepherd Hogg faced continuous condescension and discrimination from his social superiors, on whom his career depended. The supposedly naïve, rustic ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ was encouraged by the cultural elite of Edinburgh only so long as he remained within strictly proscribed literary boundaries, and criticism of his work was all-too often viewed through the narrow lens of his social origin. However, as Bold points out, peasant-poets such as Hogg ‘were often willing collaborators in their type-casting or role-playing’ as such ‘associations gave [them] a limited form of critical attention and the possibility of attracting patrons or, at least, a full subscription list’ (Bold 2007, 15).⁷ Bold discusses Hogg’s own contribution to his ‘critical typecasting as Scotland’s national autodidact’, arguing that ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ was crucial to his literary career, but was ultimately ‘a limiting label, stereotyping Hogg as a sociological “specimen” and leading to the neglect of his most experimental work’ (Bold 2007, 295). However, it could be argued that Hogg’s paratextual self-representations, through which he created and propagated ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’, are themselves highly experimental works. Poised somewhere between fiction and reality, these sophisticated literary devices deserve close critical analysis in their own right. This is not true only of the Memoirs; the vast majority of Hogg’s paratexts contain self-representational elements in one form or another.

⁶ See especially Mack’s editorial introduction to the Stirling/South Carolina editions ‘Hogg Rediscovered: A New Edition of a Major Writer’, Robin MacLachlan’s article ‘Hogg and the Art of Brand Management’ (2003), Alker’s and Nelson’s ‘Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author: An Introduction’ (2009) and ‘Hogg and Working-class Writing’ (2012), and Thomas Richardson’s ‘James Hogg and *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*: Buying and Selling the Ettrick Shepherd’ (2009). As Gilbert succinctly puts it in her article ‘Hogg’s Reception and Reputation’ (*The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 37-45): ‘After Hogg’s death in 1835 his reception continued to be shaped by legends and anecdotes – some of them self-constructed, others imposed’ (Gilbert 2012, 45).

⁷ Bold, Valentina (2007). *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature’s Making*, Oxford: Peter Lang.

As Gillian Hughes points out in her ‘Introduction’ to the Stirling/South Carolina edition of *Altrive Tales*, Douglas Mack’s work on his edition of Hogg’s *Memoirs*⁸ helped change the perception of Hogg’s autobiographical writings from ‘a quarry from which raw material could be extracted and processed by critics and biographers...[to] a work of art on a par with the prose tales’ (Hughes 2005, lvii). It should be remembered, however, that most of Hogg’s poems, tales and novels also contain paratextual self-representational elements; indeed, it was here that he reinforced and extended the autobiographical self he propagated in the prefacing *Memoirs*. The relationship between the *Memoirs* and Hogg’s other literary works is a fluid, interactive one. Hogg had to continually renew and reinforce his public persona through paratextual devices – be it through the *Memoirs*, or on title-pages, or in the few opening lines to a story. This is why all his paratextual framing devices deserve to be actively read, and not just the *Memoirs*. This, indeed, is the aim of this thesis.

Hogg’s autobiographical paratexts certainly reveal much, both in terms of his changing representations of himself, and in terms of his artistic development as a writer. Through them one can trace his move away from the use of paratexts for purely functional purposes (in the case of *The Mountain Bard* ‘Memoir’, to break into the literary marketplace) to his eventual merging of them into the fabric of his fictional worlds (most notably in *Confessions* with ‘The Editor’s Narrative’, which is, among other things, a satire of the functional nature of all paratexts). Later in his career he also begins using paratextual material to critique the socio-cultural paradigm which places him, as a ‘peasant poet’, at the bottom of the literary hierarchy of the early-nineteenth century Scottish literary world. In short, Hogg used his paratexts for functional, artistic and critical purposes. The wider aim of most of his paratextual

⁸ *Memoir of the Author’s Life and Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by Douglas Mack, Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1972.

material is to mediate the reception of his texts, as well as himself as ‘an author’, in the Edinburgh literary sphere, which was a most delicate task. Indeed, for the most part his literary fortunes lay in the hands of the socially-biased, and morally-fastidious, critics and readers of elite Edinburgh.

As Ian Duncan suggests, Edinburgh was a ‘literary boomtown’ (Duncan 2012, 1)⁹ in the early nineteenth century:

Scotch novels and Scotch reviewers were the most brilliant constellations in a northern literary galaxy which included—besides the historical romance and critical quarterly—a professionalised intellectual class, the entrepreneurial publisher, the nationalist ballad epic, and the monthly magazine. If not all absolutely original, here these genres and institutions acquired their definitive forms and associations, and a prestige they would bear throughout the nineteenth century. (Duncan 2007, 20)¹⁰

However, this ‘hothouse of literary innovation was stratified by emergent as well as traditional hierarchies of class and rank’ (Duncan 2012, 1). Peter Garside points out that ‘Hogg’s development as an author was not only made possible but also shaped by contemporary publishing conditions’:

He benefitted from two established kinds of support, already available to later eighteenth-century working-class writers: in the form of patronage, and through publication by the subscription method, whereby sponsors from the general public vouched to purchase copies of a book on publication.¹¹ [However] determined to

⁹ ‘Introduction: Hogg and his Worlds’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1-9.

¹⁰ Duncan, Ian (2007). *Scott’s Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. In his book, Duncan divides the post-Enlightenment Edinburgh publishing world into three distinct phases, which are roughly analogous to Hogg’s writing career:

the first stage (1802-13) is constituted by the wartime ascendancy of the *Edinburgh Review* and a vogue for national ballad collections and ballad-based metrical romances (from *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* to Hogg’s *The Queen’s Wake*) [...] the rise of Scottish prose fiction [Hogg followed Scott in his shift from poetry to prose in the late 1810s] and *Blackwood’s Magazine* [to which Hogg was a regular contributor] occupies the middle, postwar decade (1814-25) [...] The third stage lasted from the 1826 crash [including the failure of the Constable publishing firm, with which Scott was heavily involved], through the death of Scott, the Reform Bill, and the bankruptcy of the Edinburgh Town Council in the early 1830s. (Duncan 2007, 23)

After 1825 Hogg found it increasingly difficult to find publishers for his work (for instance, he struggled to secure a publisher for his proposed ‘collected works’ in the early 1830s), and relied heavily on the income he generated from periodical contributions (see chapters Four and Five of this study for more on these issues).

¹¹ Many of Hogg’s books, including his first major publication *The Mountain Bard* (1807), were published via this method.

surmount the elements of dependency inherent in both systems, Hogg in his middle career set out to achieve independence as a professional writer in a commercial situation. (Garside 2012, 21)¹²

Hogg never really achieved this kind of independence, nor did he ever fully escape his ‘peasant poet’ status in his own lifetime, meaning that he often had to satisfy the tastes and needs of patrons – both literary ones, most notably Sir Walter Scott, and aristocratic ones, such as the Duke of Buccleuch – as well as those of the literary marketplace.¹³

Hogg also had to cultivate the approbation of publishers such as William Blackwood (1776-1834) – who published several of his books and in whose periodical, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, many of his shorter works of poetry and prose first appeared in print – who quickly became highly influential figures in the relatively new market-driven literary world of Edinburgh. As William St Clair points out in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (2004), publishers such as Blackwood

had their own views about what would make a marketable book, proposing subjects to be written about, whether the work should be in prose or verse, and advising on the desirable length [...] Publishers and their advisors also had views about linguistic propriety, decency, Scotticisms, provincialisms, and other factors that might detract from sales, and often asked for changes [...] The rhetoric of romanticism, mainly devised and developed in Victorian times, stressed the uniqueness and autonomy of the “creative” author, and some writers who did not depend on their pens, notably Byron, fiercely defended their independence. In practice, however, most authors were obliged to operate within a commercial system in which they, their advisors, and their publishers attempted to judge what the market wanted and how best to supply it. (St Clair 2004, 160-161)¹⁴

¹² ‘Hogg and the Book Trade’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 21-30.

¹³ As critics such as Ian Watt (*The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1957)) and William Warner (*Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (1998)) have argued, the modern market-driven world of publishing has its roots in the shift away from the system of literary patronage in the eighteenth-century. Watt suggests that ‘the writer’s primary aim’ from this point on in literary history was ‘no longer to satisfy the standards of patrons and the literary elite’ (Watt 2000, 56), but to satisfy the needs of the literary marketplace. Hogg was, as Garside suggests, caught between these two worlds.

¹⁴ St Clair, William (2004). *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The literary output of a labouring-class writer such as Hogg – who relied heavily on his literary earnings, largely on account of the numerous failed farming ventures he engaged in throughout his lifetime – were even more strictly proscribed and controlled by market considerations. For instance, Hogg was often accused of ‘indelicacy’ by his publishers, critics and readers (it was amid claims of impropriety that his journal *The Spy* came to an end in 1811), and he was expected to write in the proper literary forms for a peasant-poet (namely, ballads and pastoral-style poetry).¹⁵

Moreover, his place in the Edinburgh literary marketplace depended largely on his place in the traditional world of oral Ettrick; however, by accentuating his place in the latter world he risked marginalising himself in the former. Hogg was thus both a victim and an exploiter of his perceived position in society and culture. For instance, through his Ettrick Shepherd persona, Hogg presented himself as a kind of ethnographic guide to his Edinburgh readers; that is, as an author who was yet able, as an Ettrick insider, to take them down into the traditional sphere of Ettrick and describe its beliefs and customs to them.¹⁶ However, he was simultaneously accepted into, and marginalised by, the literary world on account of his socio-cultural origins and ‘peasant poet’ status. His links to traditional culture, symbolised by his relationship with the Ettrick Shepherd, both helped and hindered his attempts to be accepted into the world of letters as a fully-fledged ‘author’. However, he continued to use his supposedly unique cultural position to further his literary career, sometimes accentuating his links to traditional and oral culture – as Bold and Gilbert argue in ‘Hogg, Ettrick and Oral Tradition’ (2012),¹⁷ Hogg’s ‘strategic deployment of tradition

¹⁵ See Bold (2007, 21) for a further discussion of the literary restraints placed upon Hogg’s writing during his lifetime.

¹⁶ See Bold’s unpublished MA dissertation *James Hogg and the Traditional Culture of the Scottish Borders* (1990) for more on Hogg as ethnographic guide.

¹⁷ *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 10-20.

is evident throughout his career' (Bold and Gilbert 2012, 14) – and at other times attempting to position himself among the literary celebrities of the day. As the self-proclaimed representative of Ettrick traditional culture Hogg presented himself as a unique member of his literary sphere; however, he also used his paratexts to suggest that he was just the same as – or, more to the point, just as 'good' as – writers such as Scott. This was especially important in an early nineteenth century Scottish literary context, when peasant poets such as Hogg were perceived as being submerged in the primitive world of tradition, and accordingly placed firmly at the bottom of the literary hierarchy. However, Hogg used his paratexts to question such cultural preconceptions, and to argue for his place alongside the leading writers of his day. This is why they should be considered among his most important texts.

Hogg's autobiographical paratexts – especially the *Memoirs* – could even be seen as marking an important transitional moment in the history of traditional transmission. They seem to tacitly enact the perceived shift away from the age of the anonymous oral mediator, who does not take credit for his narratives, to the era of the individual creative artist ('the author'), who most certainly does. Through his autobiographical act Hogg appears to be asserting that his individual life is worthy of record. He likewise names many of his oral informants, unlike most ballad editors of the time, thus challenging contemporary notions about the anonymity of folk art. All this implies a move away from the Enlightenment conception of the traditional world, in which the individual is always submerged in the community, into what was perceived in the early- nineteenth century as the modern sphere of history and literary ownership. However, Hogg's entry into this latter world was problematical. According to the Enlightenment 'stadial theory' of historical development, he would seem to have progressed beyond the (supposedly) pastoral world of Ettrick; however,

his enlightened critics continued to perceive him as being immersed in the ‘primitive’ age of tradition. As Maureen McLane explains,

Scottish Enlightenment historiography famously elaborated a “stadial theory” of history, variously modelled as a three or four-stage progression of societies through developmental epochs (e.g. barbarism-pastoralism-civilisation; hunting-pasturage-farming-commerce). This model of historical periodisation and plotting influenced the organisation of ballad materials and profoundly informed the historical and critical dissertations and notes of many collectors. (McLane 2008, 71)¹⁸

Scott broadly adheres to this model of historical progression in the editorial apparatus to *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, as well as in the Waverley Novels. Hogg, meanwhile, most often represents himself as being able to shift effortlessly between ‘pastoralism’ (Ettrick) and ‘civilisation’ (Edinburgh), as well as between the intersecting worlds of ‘farming’ and ‘commerce’.¹⁹ Hogg never completely abandoned his cultural roots in Ettrick, even though it was often used against him by critics in Edinburgh as proof of his primitivism. As Bold and Gilbert suggest, ‘beyond self-promotion, he sought to protect the traditional culture which he believed was under assault in the contemporary drive to modernity’ (Bold and Gilbert 2012, 14).

Although Hogg certainly did attempt to protect this culture he also used his traditional origins to help gain himself a foothold, albeit a precarious one, in the modern literary world. For Hogg ‘the traditional’ was not only symbolic of a way of life which was under threat, it also symbolised his socio-cultural difference from aristocratic writers such as Scott. It was on the basis of this difference that he attempted to carve out a niche in the literary marketplace for himself. This sense of difference, from Scott in particular (Hogg sought to increase his own prestige by contrasting himself favourably with Scott, who was the leading Scottish poet and

¹⁸ McLane, Maureen N. (2008). *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ See Chapters Three and Four for a further discussion of Hogg’s negotiations between these Enlightenment paradigms.

novelist at the time), is signaled by Hogg in a letter to him in 1802, the year they first met:

But as I suppose you have no personal acquaintance in this parish, it would be presumption in me to expect that you will visit my cottage, but I will attend you in any part of the [Ettrick] Forest if you will send me word. I am far from supposing that a person of your discernment. D—n it I'll blot out that word 'tis so like flattery. I say I don't think you would despise a shepherd's 'humble cot and hamely fare' as Burns hath it, yet though I would be extremely proud of the visit hang me if I would know what to do w'ye. I am surprised to find that the songs in your collection [*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*] differ so widely from my mother's. Is Mr Herd's M.S. genuine? I suspect it. [David Herd (1732-1810) had published *The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads etc* in 1776, from which Scott had drawn for his *Minstrelsy*]. (Hogg to Scott, dated Ettrickhouse, 30 June 1802)²⁰

Hogg here draws attention to Scott's outsider status in lower class Ettrick, not only though the reference to his lack of personal acquaintance in the parish, but also via the allusion to his 'discernment'. In spite of Hogg's playful circumlocution, the implication is clear: a man of Scott's social niceties is probably not in the habit of visiting the humble cottages of farm labourers. In this letter Hogg also privileges his mother's oral versions of ballads over Scott's written ones, which are taken mainly from printed sources such as Herd. Although Scott also included some oral versions in his *Minstrelsy*, he generally privileged written sources in the book. (See the discussion of Hogg's account of his mother's verbal rebuke of Scott for publishing oral ballads, which she argues were made 'for singing an' no for reading', in Chapter Two of this thesis). Hogg also clearly aligns himself with Robert Burns, the most famous peasant poet before himself, in the letter. Later in his career Hogg would suggest that he was the rightful successor to Burns (see Chapter Five for more on this issue). Thus, in his letter to Scott Hogg draws attention to his own place in the Ettrick oral tradition, as well as to his future social status as the leading peasant poet in Scotland. In short, he is establishing his poetic authority in regard to Ettrick traditional material and

²⁰ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 15.

marking out his niche in the literary marketplace. There is certainly a sense that Hogg is putting on a performance in this letter – that is, playing the part of the blunt, colloquial Ettrick Shepherd – for the benefit of Scott. This tendency is detectable in many of his letters, especially those to Scott, and to his publishers in Edinburgh. It seems that even in his private correspondence the voice of the Ettrick Shepherd – a figure who succinctly symbolised his social background and, in turn, his authority to pass on the traditional tales of Ettrick – had to remain to the fore.

As is suggested in his 1813 poem *The Queen's Wake* – in which Hogg disqualifies all but lower-class poets like himself from representing Ettrick traditional culture in the contemporary world – Hogg conceived of ‘the traditional’ very much along class lines. This was particularly important for Hogg as it was on the basis of his social background as an autodidactic shepherd and Ettrick insider that he argued for his poetic authority in regard to the traditional Ettrick material he routinely utilised in his writings. (Hogg reshaped and reused many of the oral tales and ballads he first heard from family members, friends and fellow agricultural workers in Ettrick in his published works throughout his literary life). And it was, in turn, on the basis of this authority – his suitability as a narrative middlemen between traditional Ettrick and modern Edinburgh – that he argued for his (albeit subordinated) place in the literary sphere. But Hogg also refused to conform to his assigned place in the socio-cultural hierarchy of his day – in which he, as a peasant poet, was placed firmly at the bottom – and continued to find cultural value in both traditional Ettrick and literary Edinburgh throughout his writing career.

Hogg's paratexts, taken together, provide a picture of his attempts to break into, and then secure, his place in his contemporary literary world (and, ultimately, in literary history) as ‘an Author’. They are thus fertile ground for critics of the author

and the paratext. This project will analyse Hogg's authorial self-representations, specifically in relation to his presentation of himself as 'The Ettrick Shepherd', through the close reading of his paratextual material in order to examine some of the strategies he employed to break into and consolidate his position in the early-nineteenth-century Scottish literary world. It will also consider some of the implications of Hogg's resolute refusal to conform to the social classifications and cultural hierarchies of the period, as well as discuss his artistic use of paratexts. Hogg not only used his paratextual material for functional purposes; indeed, as his career progresses he increasingly utilises them for artistic purposes, as well as to criticise his society's perceptions of him as a peasant poet.

'The Death and Return of the Author'

In spite of Roland Barthes' pronouncement of the death of the author in 1968 the figure of 'the Author' yet retains a prominent position in 21st century culture, not only in the wider cultural context, but also in the academic world. But while Barthes' 'The Death of the Author' did not presage the author's demise it did help to diminish the power of this figure, especially in academia. New Criticism, Derrida and deconstruction, along with Barthes and many other literary theories and theorists, all played a part in this process. However, the author has recently made a conditional return, with critics such as Sean Burke, in his book *The Death and Return of the Author* (2008), bringing the author back into the critical fold, albeit in new form.²¹ As Burke points out, Barthes himself did not intend to kill the author but merely to clip the wings of the entity he characterised as the 'Author-God' in order to curb the

²¹ Burke, Sean (2008). *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Third Edition), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. There have been several other book-length re-evaluations of Barthes' theory in recent years, including *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?* (ed. by William Irwin, 2002) and Andrew Bennett's *The Author* (2005).

interpretive sway of writers and thus devolve power onto readers. However, ‘the author’ remains a powerful figure, not only as an entity in society and a function of discourse, but also as a possible source of meaning and coherence in literary texts. As Burke suggests, authorial meanings should not be discounted out of hand: ‘observing light passing through a prism [...] we do not deny its effect upon the light, still less call for the death of the prism’ (Burke 2008, 26). Thus, the relationship between author and text should not be overlooked. This is especially relevant for a writer such as Hogg, whose authorial selves routinely infiltrated into, and contributed to, his work – a tendency which is most apparent in his paratexts.

Barthes himself recognised that the author could not be utterly done away with.

In ‘From Work to Text’ (1971) he argues that

It is not that the Author may not “come back” in the text, in his text, but he then does so as a “guest”. If he is a novelist, he is inscribed in the novel like one of his characters, figured in the carpet; no longer privileged, paternal [...] his life is no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work. (Barthes 2001a, 1473-74)²²

The author, he suggests, may return to his text, but ‘he’ is not any more real or ‘alive’ than any one of his characters. This relegation of the Author from his former privileged position, down to the level of one of his own fictional creations, is perhaps too extreme. Even if he is just another ‘fiction contributing to his work’, he is nevertheless the (perhaps unwitting) creator of this very fiction. He may not be the stable ‘origin of his fictions’, the ‘father to his child’ (Barthes 2001, 1468),²³ but he is nonetheless the origin of the fiction of the self which ultimately ‘contributes’ to his work. He is the creator of his authorial self, a self who comes into being the moment he writes about himself *as* an author. Hogg had to stage-manage this process in order

²² Barthes, Roland (2001). ‘From Work to Text’ (1971), in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, gen. ed. Vincent B. Leitch, New York and London: Norton, 1470-1475.

²³ Barthes, Roland (2001). ‘The Death of the Author’ (1968), in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, gen. ed. Vincent B. Leitch, New York and London: Norton, 1466-1470.

to give birth to a ‘fiction’ that would ‘contribute to his work’ in a positive way; that is, a fiction specifically designed to reinforce his position in relation to his books, as well as his position within his society. He created an ideal authorial self, in the shape of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’, through whom he mediated his entry into the literary world, and controlled relations between himself, his works, and his audience.

The birth of the author – or, in the case of Hogg, the author’s second self – may thus be a most expedient event. Aside from straightforward autobiographical writing (that is, writing that is specifically labelled as such), paratextual self-representations can be used to mediate this process. However, these authorial endeavours may only provide readers with yet another discourse to deconstruct. The author, it seems, should not only be perceived as a literary creation, ‘a fiction contributing to his work’, but also, and especially in the case of autobiographical inscriptions such as those routinely used by Hogg, as a decidedly unreliable narrator. The returning author may well be a fictional construct, but, if so, he is a highly functional one, and, as such, his characterisation of himself must remain open to (re)interpretation. Barthes helped to redefine the relationship between authors and readers by suggesting that interpretive duties must fall on to the latter, not only in terms of deconstructing and reconstructing the text, but also the author himself. This project will discuss Hogg’s paratextual self-representations from this theoretical viewpoint.

The ‘Author-Function’, the Author, and the Paratext

While Barthes’ work helped to realign power relations between authors and readers within texts, Michel Foucault’s work, especially his essay ‘What is an Author?’ (1969), clarifies the influence of the author in discourse and society, an influence which remains potent today. In this essay, Foucault is less directly concerned with the

interpretive sway that authors exert over their texts than with the privileged position assigned to them by society. He argues that the name of an author is ‘more than a gesture, a finger pointed at someone’, that it is instead ‘a description’ (Foucault 2001, 1626), a most functional way to ‘characterise the existence, circulation and operation of certain discourses within a society’ (Foucault 2001, 1628).²⁴ The naming of the author, on book covers and title-pages, reinforces the ‘singular relationship that holds between an author and a text’ by literally pointing to ‘this figure who is outside and precedes it’ (Foucault 2001, 1623). The name of an author also carries with it certain expectations. For instance, the name of Stephen Hawking not only gives a book on theoretical physics a certain cultural cache but also acts as an indicator of quality for the consumer, just as the name of George Eliot carries with it a kind of qualitative guarantee. The name of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’, meanwhile, acted as a stamp of authenticity in Hogg’s own time, an assurance that the text in question was produced by a peasant-poet, and a genuine member of the oral tradition. This short-hand rhetoric of value-enhancement is a key part of the ‘author-function’, which largely operates on the fringes of texts, in paratexts, where the cultural importance of the author is disseminated, and the significance of the ‘individual creator’ (Foucault 2001, 1629) underpinned.

The addition of supplementary paratextual material, especially prefaces, likewise adds cultural value to the text. For instance, prefaces often explain, and justify, why the text should ‘not be immediately consumed and forgotten’. In short, paratexts often help to underpin ‘the privileged position accorded to the author’ (Foucault 2001, 1624). However, as Gerard Genette argues in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997), these liminal devices aim to do so much more than merely reinforce the

²⁴ Foucault, Michel (2001). ‘What is an Author?’ (1969), in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, gen. ed. Vincent B. Leitch, New York and London: Norton, 1622-1636.

position of the author in society. In his book Genette examines the function of paratexts, that is, ‘all the liminal devices – title-pages, signs of authorship, dedications, epigraphs, prefaces, notes, epilogues and the like – that mediate the relations between text and reader’ (Macksey 1997, xi).²⁵ The paratext, argues Genette, is ‘an undefined zone between inside and outside’, a ‘fringe’, which is

Always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial [...] a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that – whether well or poorly understood and achieved – is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author). (Genette 1997, 2)²⁶

According to Genette then, paratexts are, first and foremost, functional authorial devices. They are used by authors to suggest to readers how their book should be read and interpreted, and are ‘characterised by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility’ (Genette 1997, 3). In this sense, they are extensions of the naming of the author: they provide supplementary information about the author and the intention of the book and thus (re)reinforce the relationship between author and text. But the paratextual author may also be an idealised or fictionalised version of the ‘real author’; the relationship between these two entities differs from author to author, and some paratextual authors are clearly more fictional than others. However, the fictionalised paratextual author may also be an integral part of the ‘authorial commentary’ which Genette suggests is at the ‘service of a better reception for the text’. This is certainly the case with Hogg’s paratextual author, ‘The Etrick Shepherd’, through whom Hogg filtered most of his work.

Prefatory material, in particular, is fertile ground in which to plant authorial hints, or even to ‘make known an intention, or an interpretation [...] give a word of advice,

²⁵ Macksey, Richard (1997). ‘Foreword’, in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, xi-xxii.

²⁶ Genette, Gerard (1997). *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1987), trans. by Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

or even issue a command’ – it is here where one may find the most obvious examples of the ‘peremptory potential of the paratext’ (Genette 1997, 11).²⁷ Hogg uses his prefatory material – most obviously the prefacing Memoirs, which, as Bold points out, ‘seek to foster and develop the character of the Ettrick Shepherd’ (Bold 2007, 67-68) – to reinforce the singular relationship between his (fictionalised) authorial self and his texts. Hogg’s background profoundly influenced how his books were read, especially in the early-nineteenth century. As Alker and Nelson suggest, his contemporaries often placed ‘more emphasis on the impressive act of producing literature with a labouring body than on the aesthetic value of the work [itself]’ (Alker and Nelson 2009, 3).²⁸ However, Hogg used his background to his own advantage, utilising autobiographical prefatory material to mediate relations between himself, his books and his readers. He and his publishers routinely used the supposed anomaly between his social origin and his literary talent as a selling-point for his work; indeed, this is one of the main functions of his whole autobiographical project.²⁹ Most of Hogg’s prefatory material has a clear paratextual function, namely, to further his literary career (although it also often has a dual fictional purpose). Thus, Hogg’s paratextual accounts of himself may be just as unreliable (or, at least, as culturally-loaded) as the narration of a Humbert Humbert, a Lockwood, a John Dowell, or the

²⁷ Genette notes that ‘the most important function of the preface is to provide the author’s interpretation of the text’, which, he asserts:

consists of forcing on the reader an indigenous theory defined by the author’s intention, which is presented as the most reliable interpretive key; in this respect the preface clearly constitutes one of the instruments of authorial control. (Genette 1997, 221-222)

²⁸ Alker, Sharon and Nelson, Holly Faith (2009). ‘Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author: An Introduction’, in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, ed. by Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, Farnham: Ashgate, 1-20. As Gilbert likewise points out, reviews of the first edition of *The Mountain Bard* ‘devote far more space to appraising Hogg’s life than to analysing his works. They dwell on the incongruity of a little-educated shepherd managing to produce such writing’ (Gilbert 2012, 38-39).

²⁹ The *Scots Magazine* letters of 1804-05, which are discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, are especially significant in this regard. See also George Goldie’s ‘Advertisement’ to the second edition of *The Queen’s Wake*, which is discussed in Chapter Three.

fictional ‘Editor’ of *Confessions*, but this does not make them any less valuable. On the contrary, Hogg’s fictionalised, paratextual self – whose function was to justify his place in the literary world – reveals much about his place in his society; or, more to the point, about the place in society he coveted for himself as ‘an Author’.

Functional and Fictional Paratexts

The paratext is not only a functional device. Although Genette may be right to assert that ‘the most essential of the paratext’s properties is functionality’, he may be wrong to downplay any ‘aesthetic intention[s]’ (Genette 1997, 407) inherent therein. Firstly, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between functionality and aesthetics in paratexts as these two things are often inseparable, especially in prefatory-type material. In his *Book of Prefaces*, Gray asserts that there are

few great writers [who] have not placed before one of their books a verbal doorstep to help readers leave the ground they usually walk on and allow them a glimpse of the interior. Prefaces are advertisements and challenges. They usually indicate the kind of reader the book was written to please, the kind of satisfaction it aims to give. (Gray 2000, 7)

Prefaces entice the reader into the fictional world of the book by allowing them a glimpse into its ‘interior’. They are key junctures in literary texts, revolving doors through which the reader enters fictional worlds. Poised between the exterior ‘real world’ of the author, and the interior fictional one of the text, they can reveal much about both. Authors not only use them to position their book and themselves as ‘authors’ in relation to the wider world, but also to position the reader in relation to the text itself. Gray goes on to argue that, aside from any beginning entitled ‘PREFACE, PROLOGUE, PROEM, INTRODUCTION etc’, one should also consider as prefatory any ‘opening lines or paragraphs which are not labeled [as such]

but [which yet] prepare the reader for the following without being essential to it' (Gray 2000, 7). Thus, narrative frames could also be considered as prefatory material. Hogg's narrative frames, unlike those of a writer such as Henry James (for instance, in *The Turn of the Screw*), generally serve an outward-looking paratextual function as well as an artistic inward-looking one. Hogg was more actively and consistently involved in his self-representation than most authors, and virtually all his writings contain self-representational elements. For instance, in his novel *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818) he not only uses them to prepare readers for the fictional world they are about to enter, but also to propagate the figure of the Ettrick Shepherd (in order to underpin his poetic authority in regard to orally-verified traditional material).³⁰

Genette also draws a clear distinction between paratexts engaged in the 'serious nature of transmitting' authorial aims and intentions, and fictional or playful ones, 'fictional in the sense that the reader is not expected to take them seriously' (Genette 1997, 278). However, this distinction is not always easy to decipher, not least because the use of paratexts, and the relationships between paratextual authors and their books, changes continually throughout literary history. The paratextual author, poised on the threshold of the book, is not simply the author-creator of that book, nor the private individual, nor the fictional narrator of the text, but another entity altogether, poised somewhere between fiction and reality, just like the paratext itself. However, the distinction between 'real' and 'fictional' authorial figures is more obvious in some cases than in others. For instance, Cervantes' dramatised version of himself in the Prologue to the first part of *Don Quixote* (1605), who receives some helpful advice on the 'art' of writing prefaces from a friendly interlocutor, is more obviously a fictional construct than, say, 'the Author' of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Prefaces to his Romances,

³⁰ See Chapter Four of this study for a further discussion of Hogg's use of paratextual devices in this novel.

who explains his artistic aims, and even categorises his work, for his readers. Clearly, this latter figure is closer to the ‘real’ author than the former, but no less a structure of discourse for all that. Likewise, although Hogg’s Ettrick Shepherd is closer to Hogg-the-private-individual than either Cervantes’ or Hawthorne’s paratextual authors are to their private selves, the Shepherd is also a literary creation with a clear function. Cervantes’, Hawthorne’s and Hogg’s paratextual authors are all mediating figures, whose function is to help position the work of the different authors within the specific literary worlds in which they were operating.

Cervantes was writing at a period in literary history when ‘authorities could censor and ban books’ (Rutherford 2000, viii),³¹ and when literary creation was yet a precarious business. In the ‘Dedication’ to his book Cervantes invokes the protection of his patron, the Duke of Bejar, asking him to take it

under the shelter of [his] most illustrious name...[and] receive it into your protection, in order that, under your shadow [...] it may venture in safety to face the opinion of those [...] who are accustomed to condemn the labours of others with more of vigour and less of justice. (2)³²

Cervantes needed a social superior to ratify the appearance of his book in print. The social position of ‘the author’ was not yet secure enough in the early seventeenth-century for him to send the book out into the world without this seal of social approval. By the mid eighteenth-century literature was no longer controlled by patronage but by the demands of the literary marketplace; however, the fact that Hogg, in the early-nineteenth-century, yet needed patrons to ratify his work shows the kinds of social constraints that he, as a peasant poet, was working under.³³

³¹ Rutherford, John (2000). ‘Introduction’, in *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. by John Rutherford, Penguin Classics, London: Penguin, vii-xxi.

³² Cervantes, Miguel de (1895). ‘The Author’s Dedication’, in *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* (1605), trans. by Henry Edward Watts, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1-2.

³³ See the discussions of Scott’s headnote to the 1807 version of the ‘Memoir’ (in Chapter Two of this study) and Hogg’s dedicatory poem to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales* (in Chapter Four) for more on this issue.

Cervantes also uses the fictional figure of the paratextual author to distance himself from the book, just as the fictional narrator, Cide Hamete Benengeli, is used to distance him from the inner narrative. In the Prologue he takes a clear step back from his book, arguing that although he may ‘seem like Don Quixote’s father’ he is really only ‘his stepfather’ (11). Hogg does quite the opposite in *The Mountain Bard* paratexts, in which he establishes his personal relationship to, and ethnographic knowledge of, the material in his book in order to justify and explain its publication (as a member of the labouring class this justification was essential).³⁴ In a letter to Scott he even describes the work as his ‘first born legitimate infant son’.³⁵ Hogg, unlike Cervantes, did not have to distance himself from his book in order to protect himself against accusations of immorality (although he would later be accused of moral ‘indelicacy’ in his works, see Chapter Two for more on this issue); the main aim of most of his early paratexts is to justify the appearance in print of the writings of a lowly shepherd. Cervantes, however, uses his Prologue to suggest that his book has a clear didactic purpose, namely, ‘to destroy the authority and influence that books of chivalry enjoy in the world and among the general public’ (16).³⁶ This argument is unconvincing and anachronistic;³⁷ however, it was a most expedient way

³⁴ See Chapters One and Two of this project for more on this paratextual process in *The Mountain Bard*.

³⁵ Hogg sent his manuscript for *The Mountain Bard* to Walter Scott in April 1806, describing it in the accompanying letter as ‘my first born legitimate infant son [...] whom I commit to your tuition with as sanguine hopes and joyful expectations as ever parent committed his heir to a preceptor and sent him abroad in quest of adventures’ (Hogg to Scott, dated 3 April 1806, *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 40). As Hughes points out in *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), Scott played an important role in the preparation and publication of the first edition of *The Mountain Bard*: he ‘suggested subjects for ballads to Hogg, revised the poems he wrote, organised the proposed contents of the volume, obtained a printer and a publisher as well as many subscribers for it, and was the person to whom it was dedicated’ (Hughes 2007, 67). For a further discussion of Scott’s role in *The Mountain Bard* see Chapter Two of this study.

³⁶ Cervantes, Miguel de (2001). *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605 & 1615), trans. by John Rutherford, Penguin Classics, London: Penguin. All quotes from this point on are taken from Rutherford’s translation.

³⁷ As Rutherford points out, romances of chivalry were no longer considered to be much of a threat by the time Cervantes wrote his novel (see Rutherford 2000, viii).

to justify his text. Responsibility for the text is ultimately passed on to the fictional narrator Cide Hamete, who, as a Moor, is certainly a convenient scapegoat in early seventeenth century Spain, leaving Cervantes free to describe himself as its ‘stepfather’.

Hawthorne was writing at a time when assuming sole responsibility as the ‘individual creator’ of a book was less troublesome, and when the mere prestige of being ‘an author’ superseded the need for patrons and moral justifications of literary creations. He could thus discuss his creation openly, and direct his readers as to the best way to read his work. The main aim of Hawthorne’s prefaces was to distinguish his ‘Romances’ from the ‘Novels’ of other writers. In the ‘Preface’ to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) he argues that a novel ‘is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable, and ordinary course of man’s experience’, while a Romance, which aims at ‘the truth of the human heart’ is freer to ‘present that truth under circumstances [...] of the writer’s choosing or creation’ (3).³⁸ Unlike Cervantes, Hawthorne does not need to deploy an elaborate fictional framework in order to distance himself from his work, nor does he need to establish his personal knowledge of the material in his book, as Hogg does with *The Mountain Bard* and many of his other works. On the contrary, he discusses his work from the point of view of a critic or literary theorist.

Cervantes, Hawthorne and Hogg each adopt specific authorial personas, and then carefully position these entities in relation to their work, in order to strategically place their books within their own literary-cultural worlds. Genette argues that ‘the ways and means of the paratext change continually, depending on period, culture, genre, author’, but the ends remain the same: to ‘get a better reception for the book’ (Genette

³⁸ Hawthorne, Nathaniel (1998). ‘Preface’ to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), ed. by Michael Davitt Bell, Oxford World’s Classics, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1997, 3). While Cervantes feels compelled to use his paratext in a defensive way, Hawthorne is free to use his to explain his artistic procedures and aims, a paratextual process which immediately enhances the cultural value of the text via its implied suggestion that his books deserve critical analysis. Hogg, meanwhile, as a consequence of his social origin, had to use his *Mountain Bard* paratexts to justify and explain his cultural rise from shepherd to author. Cervantes', Hawthorne's and Hogg's paratexts are all thus very functional, albeit in different ways. It seems then that what does not change in different periods and cultures is the fundamentally functional nature of all paratexts.

Reading Between the Lines of Hogg's Paratextual Self-Representations

Even the authorial paratext, the domain of the author, should be open to multiple readings, regardless of the 'authorial interpretations' and 'statements of intents' one finds therein. Genette's characterisation of the paratext as an authorial tool may provide the most pertinent motivation for doing just this. Authorial meanings must be challenged, wherever one finds them, and the paratext might be the best place to do it. This is not to suggest that authorial interpretations and statements should be completely set aside; they may contain valuable contextual information, or even one possible reading of the text. But even the most functional of paratexts – the authorial preface, which often purports to provide the best, or sometimes the only, possible interpretation of the text – should perhaps be treated as nothing more than another text to be actively read. The author of the paratext may not be any more reliable a source than the fictional narrator of the text, yet one may learn much about the literary world in which he/she is operating from these paratextual inscriptions.

Hogg's liberal use of paratextual devices suggests that he was all-too aware of what Genette refers to as the 'peremptory potential of the paratext'. His paratexts are, moreover, particularly revealing because of the sheer importance of his self-representation. As Marcus points out, since 'life-writings become the organisers of identity – the means of controlling both the written life and the life itself', one must be wary of the 'distorting effects of self-interest' (Marcus 1994, 24). This is especially the case when the 'life-writings' are part of an elaborate authorial paratext, as they so often are in the works of Hogg, whose authorial life depended on these kinds of representations, which are specific to himself and his own literary-cultural context. 'The Ettrick Shepherd' is very much a creature born out of Hogg's world. Although all autobiographical writings probably contain both biographical and fictional elements, the fact that Hogg, in order to break into and consolidate his place in the early nineteenth-century Scottish literary world, had to present himself in a certain 'form' (as the autodidactic Shepherd) suggests that his self-representations may be even more fictional than most.³⁹

As Foucault points out, the 'status and manner of reception' of a discourse which possess an author's name is 'regulated by the culture in which it circulates' (Foucault 2001, 1627). Thus, only in the early nineteenth-century – with the egalitarian principles propounded during The French Revolution of 1789 yet resounding throughout Europe, and the death of Scotland's most famous self-taught poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796), still fresh in the national consciousness, and the potentially democratising literary theories of Wordsworth's 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* (1801-

³⁹ In *The Forms of Autobiography: Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), William C. Spengeman differentiates between critics who 'insist that autobiography must employ biographical – which is to say historical rather than fictional materials', and those who 'assert the right of autobiographers to present themselves in whatever form they may find appropriate and necessary' (Spengemann 1980, xii). Although Hogg certainly employed historical and biographical materials in his autobiographical writings, he also made use of fictional techniques in order to reach his goal.

02) gaining credence – could the appellation of a fictionalised peasant-poet take on more importance than the proper name of the writer who created him. Although the likes of Wordsworth and Scott, along with many other British writers, critics and thinkers had reacted with horror to the excesses of the French Revolution, and consequently shifted to a more conservative position in regard to the problematic question of social equality, the vogue for peasant poets continued unabated during and after the Revolution, most notably through Burns and Hogg. Jean-Jacque Rousseau's privileging of man's natural state over civilisation, first propounded in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality Among Men* (1754), which influenced the revolution in France and reached Scotland through the likes of Henry Mackenzie and Burns, remained an important concept in the Romantic period and, as Bold notes (Bold 2007, 13-14), had a considerable impact on the cultural rise of the peasant poet in late eighteenth century Scottish culture. However, the social position and literary endeavours of peasant poets remained strictly prescribed, as Hogg's experiences in Enlightenment Edinburgh highlight.⁴⁰ In short, Hogg's autobiographical writings very much reflect the world from which they were being written.⁴¹

Thus, Hogg's self-representational authorial paratexts are unique, and must be read on their own terms. Burke points out that there is no one theory of the author which is applicable to all authors in all literary-historical periods:

The question of the author tends to vary from reading to reading, author to author.

⁴⁰ See Bold's discussions of the limited attention afforded to peasant poets such as Hogg and Burns (Bold 2007, 15 & 43-44 & 295).

⁴¹ In *The Changing Nature of Self: A Critical Study of the Autobiographic Discourse* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1988) Robert Elbaz argues that

the autobiographer always writes a novel, a fiction, about a third person. And the question is not whether that third person coincides with the writing "I" of the autobiographer [...] but rather: what does this third person (or series of third persons) which defies the myth of continuity tell us about the world? What subjectivity, what role, does it incarnate in its relationship to the world? (Elbaz 1988, 9)

This is a particularly apt question in relation to Hogg's paratextual self-representations.

There are greater and lesser degrees of authorial inscription, certain authors occupy vastly more significant positions than others in the history of influence, the attraction of the biographical referent varies from author to author, text to text, textual moment to textual moment. Each new act of reading itself presupposes a different or modified philosophy of the author. A theory of the author, or of the absence of the author, cannot withstand the practice of reading, for there is not an absolute *cogito* of which individual authors are the subalternant manifestations, but authors, many authors, and the differences (in gender, history, class, ethnology, in the nature of scientific, philosophical, and literary authorship, in the degree of authorship itself) that exists between authors – within authorship – defy reduction to any universalising aesthetic. (Burke 2008, 183)

However, the authorial paratext may be the best place to analyse the question of each individual manifestation of the author, or, at least, it may be a good place to start.

Certainly, through Hogg's paratexts one may examine the specific historical, ethnological and class constraints within which he was working. Paratexts can also provide attentive readers with a glimpse of both 'the biographical referent' and the author who is pulling the strings behind the curtain of these liminal authorial devices. But one must remember to take note of the strings themselves, and to read between the lines of the paratextual inscriptions of the author, especially when encountering an author as actively engaged in his own self-representation as Hogg undoubtedly was.

This project will attempt to trace Hogg's paratextual self-representations, from *The Mountain Bard* (1807) to *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835), in order to analyse how, and why, they changed and developed over the course of his literary career.

Chapter One will contextualise Hogg's paratextual self-representations by comparing and contrasting them with those of other writers from his era (namely, Scott, Pushkin and Goethe), before discussing some of the paratextual devices placed around his first major publication *The Mountain Bard*, focussing especially on the series of six letters sent to the *Scots Magazine* in 1804-05, through which cultural interest in 'The Ettrick Shepherd' was first generated. Chapter Two will analyse the other *Mountain Bard* paratexts (the 'Dedication', the 'Advertisement', the justificatory headnote to the

‘Memoir’, and the ‘Memoir’ itself), as well as consider some of the implications of Hogg’s autobiographical act, specifically in terms of his changing relationships to both oral and literary culture. Chapter Three will analyse Hogg’s attempts to consolidate and reinforce his position in the literary world as ‘an author’ through the paratexts attached to his long narrative poems of the 1810s – *The Queen’s Wake* (1813), *The Pilgrims of the Sun* (1814) and *Mador of the Moor* (1816) – and his book of poetic parodies, *The Poetic Mirror* (1816). Chapter Four will consider Hogg’s shift into prose fiction. In his early novels and story collections, especially *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818) and *Winter Evening Tales* (1820), Hogg began incorporating his paratextual self-representations more smoothly into his literary texts. He not only used ‘opening lines or paragraphs’ (Gray 2000, 7) to emphasise his position as a kind of narrative middleman between traditional Ettrick and literary Edinburgh, but also to prepare readers for the inner fictional worlds of his tales. Many of these paratexts have both functional and fictional purposes. The fourth chapter will also analyse the 1821 version of his ‘Memoir’, in which Hogg attempts to take control of his literary productions through the writing of his ‘literary life’, as well as discuss the impact of the ‘Noctes Ambrosianae’ (1822-1835) series of articles in *Blackwood’s*, in which the figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ was corrupted and routinely held up to ridicule. Chapter Five will focus on two of Hogg’s most experimental texts: *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and *Queen Hynde* (both published in 1824). In these books Hogg not only took back control of his Shepherd persona but also confounded his critics by writing in literary modes and genres not normally associated with ‘peasant poets’. This chapter will also discuss the ‘Shepherd’s Calendar’ stories, which were first published in *Blackwood’s* in the 1820s. In these pieces Hogg offers readers of *Blackwood’s* an alternative to the ‘Noctes’ version of

the Shepherd through the figure of his 'Ettrick Shepherd' narrator. The chapter will end by considering Hogg's final version of the 'Memoir', which prefaced *Altrive Tales* in 1832, and 'Wat Pringle o' the Yair', the concluding tale in his last tale collection *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835). In the former text Hogg attempts to place himself in literary history by arguing for his place among the leading poets of the day, while in the latter he consolidates his place as the most authentic representative of Ettrick traditional culture in the early nineteenth century Scottish literary world.

Chapter One

The (Induced) Birth of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’

Hogg’s Introduction to the Literary World

The functional nature of the paratextual apparatus attached to the 1807 edition of *The Mountain Bard*, especially the title-page, the paratextual ‘Memoir’, and the preparatory letters sent to the *Scots Magazine* in 1804-05, all provide ample evidence of Hogg’s acute awareness of the importance of his self-representation. But these devices also hint at the social constraints and prejudices within which he was working, and which largely dictated his careful paratextual presentation of himself as an ‘author’. The *Scots Magazine* letters are particularly significant in this regard. Hogg was writing at a time when severe restrictions were placed on autobiographical writing (in Hogg’s case, by reviewers and critics in Edinburgh). Writers often had to provide justifications for thrusting their life stories upon the reading public, especially so if they came from the lower classes. As Marcus explains, in the early-nineteenth-century

autobiography is perceived to be the right of very few individuals: those whose lives encompassed an aspect or image of the age suitable for transmission to posterity [...] The issue of autobiographical legitimacy is, [moreover], inseparable from the autobiographer’s status and public importance. (Marcus 1994, 31-32)¹

Hogg’s entry into the literary marketplace depended upon the story of his rise from uneducated shepherd to author; however, as a peasant poet, he first had to justify the publication of his Memoirs. In short, he had to publish his autobiography to gain acceptance in the literary sphere – as well as to satisfy readers’ curiosity – but, at the same time, risked censure for doing it.

¹ The main function of Walter Scott’s headnote to Hogg’s ‘Memoir’, which is more fully discussed in Chapter Two of this study, is to convince readers and critics that the story of Hogg’s rise from uneducated shepherd to published author is worthy of record.

The *Scots Magazine* letters appear to serve a justificatory function in regard to Hogg's autobiography, helping to pave the way and justify the need for the later 'Memoir' by stirring up interest in Scotland's latest peasant poet. Many of Hogg's more illustrious contemporaries, including Walter Scott (1771-1832), whose ballad collection *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-03) is an important literary predecessor to Hogg's *Mountain Bard*, did not have to rely so much on their biography in order to break into their literary world, at least, not in quite the same way as Hogg did. Scott's self-representations were important in that they helped increase his authorial prestige and antiquarian authority, but his literary career did not, at least in the first instance, depend upon these representations. Although his social background undoubtedly helped him enter the marketplace it did not determine the means of this entry. However, Hogg's background certainly influenced his admission into the literary sphere. The implied link between his origin, and the supposedly 'proper' literary forms pertaining to it (most obviously, ballads), profoundly informs his presentation to the public in *The Mountain Bard*. Hogg's presentation of himself as a 'natural-born-poet' from within the oral tradition reflects a desire, perhaps a need, to differentiate himself from the antiquarian figure of Scott-the-ballad-collector. The projected contrast between 'bard' and 'antiquarian' is certainly a recurring feature of Hogg's early paratexts. It is an important discourse, justifying his very existence as an 'author' in his society. Although Hogg mediated his entry into his literary world, the very means of this mediation was first dictated to him by his social, and supposed cultural, superiors. His presentation relied heavily on his 'otherness', his distinctness from establishment figures like Scott. This remained an important selling-point for his work throughout his literary career.

The paratexts of other writers of Hogg's era, including Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), likewise shed light on Hogg's early paratextual self-representations. For instance, in *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1820) and Part One of *Faust* (1808), both Pushkin and Goethe, like Hogg, draw heavily on traditional material, but their paratextual representations of themselves in relation to this material differs considerably from Hogg's. Like Scott, they each came from more privileged classes than Hogg, and, as a consequence, did not have to worry so much about positioning themselves within any specific literary niche in the marketplace. Likewise, they did not have to use their paratexts to justify their position in society as 'authors'. Instead, they could use their paratexts for more playful, artistic purposes, something Hogg would not be able to do until much later in his career. The literary, cultural and social restraints within which Hogg was working, and which largely account for his paratextual self-representations, seem to come into clearer focus when one reads the paratexts of his more privileged near-contemporaries, even those who, like him, incorporate traditional material into their writings. Put simply, they did not have to provide elaborate justifications for appearing in print, unlike Hogg, who had to use the only means open to him to get a 'better reception' for himself and his first major publication: he had to become 'The Ettrick Shepherd'.

Hogg, Pushkin and *Ossian*

As Genette points out, the author, sending his text out in the world – but more specifically out into the literary marketplace – is involved in a 'transaction' of sorts with his readership and critics. The positioning of one's book within the literary marketplace, as well as the positioning of oneself as an author in the literary world of one's own day, is a key part of this transaction. Hogg was not completely in control of

this transaction, at least not in terms of what he was selling, which was the most palatable version of his ‘self’: The Ettrick Shepherd (palatable, that is, to Edinburgh publishers, editors and readers). But although his literary presentation of himself was constrained by his social position, he also actively exploited it through the creation and propagation of his Shepherd persona. As Bold suggests, ‘Hogg, in comparison [to his ‘peasant poet’ predecessor Burns], was more willing to comply with autodidactic typecasting’ (Bold 2007, 21-22), but only for his own ends. He was thus both a victim and an exploiter of his social background. Although the paratexts placed around *The Mountain Bard* suggest that, as a direct result of his social position, he had to use the borders of his first major book to justify his very place in society as an author, he was also using them, just like any other writer, to get a better reception for himself and his book within his specific literary-cultural world.

As his first major work, Hogg’s paratextual representation of himself in *The Mountain Bard* is particularly important. He uses these paratexts to position himself and his work in the early-nineteenth-century literary marketplace. The main ‘function’ of this paratextual paraphernalia is to clearly and concisely present and propagate the figure of The Ettrick Shepherd. The title-page, the ‘Dedication’, the ‘Advertisement’, the introductory apology for the ‘Memoir’, the ‘Memoir’ itself, the introductory and end-notes to each of the ballads and songs, as well as the series of six letters sent to the *Scots Magazine* (1804-05) through which the public were first introduced to the Shepherd-poet all contribute to Hogg’s highly-sophisticated self-representation. Hogg’s interest in the precise details of both his own and his books’ paratextual presentation to the public is revealed in a letter he sent to William Blackwood in 1818 concerning the advertisement of his first book of prose tales, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales*. He asks Blackwood to announce the volume thusly:

Hogg's Cottage Tales containing *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* and *The Wool Gatherer*. These tales have been selected by him among the shepherds and peasantry of Scotland and are arranged so as to delineate the manners and superstitions of that class in ancient and modern times. (Hogg to Blackwood, dated Eltrieve Lake, 13 January 1818)²

Hogg was clearly aware of the importance of such minute supplementary biographical information being attached to his works (the function of such material being to underpin his ethnographic authority in regard to the traditional material he was passing on). Although Hogg's exact role in the publishing of each of his books is unknown, this letter certainly suggests that he had a considerable input into such things as the exact wording of advertisements and title-pages.

This kind of attention to detail is apparent on the title-page of *The Mountain Bard* where Hogg's authorial persona it is encoded in the very title of the book, which succinctly sets him up as a kind of successor to James Macpherson's Ossian. The Ossianic-like epigraph, which is conspicuously positioned in the centre of the title page of the 1807 edition of *The Mountain Bard*, reinforces this association:

Fain would I hear our mountains ring
 With blasts which former minstrels blew;
 Drive slumber hence on viewless wing,
 And tales of other times renew.³

As Gilbert points out, although these lines invoke the words of the Ossianic poem 'The Songs of Selma', they yet differ significantly from Macpherson's original, which read,

Such were the words of the bards in the days of song; when the king heard the music of the harps, the tales of other times! The chiefs gathered from all the hills, and heard the lovely sound. They praised the Voice of Cona! The first among a thousand bards!

² *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 326.

³ Hogg, James (2007). *The Mountain Bard* [including the 1807 and 1821 versions of the 'Memoir'] (1807 & 1821), ed. by Suzanne Gilbert, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

The ‘effect’ in these latter lines, argues Gilbert, ‘is one of nostalgia and past tense, recognition of bardship as lost’ (Gilbert 2007, xxxiii).⁴ In *Ossian* the ‘tales of *other* times’ are placed firmly in the past; these ‘*were* the words of bards in the days of song’. These days are clearly long gone.

In *The Protean Scot: The Crisis of Identity in Eighteenth Century Scottish Literature* (1988),⁵ Kenneth Simpson argues that writers such as Burns created specific voices and roles for themselves that suited the post-Union/Enlightenment Scottish cultural world; however, while this stimulated some great works, Simpson suggests that these identities were mostly founded upon an outdated, sentimentalised image of the past, which took little notice of the historical present. This description could certainly be applied to Macpherson’s *Ossian*, but while Hogg did something similar in the early nineteenth century with his Ettrick Shepherd persona, he nonetheless attempted to bring the (perceived) past into the present; it was only his critics who imagined him as being frozen in the lost world of the pastoral. Indeed, the Ossianic epigraph to *The Mountain Bard* makes it clear that he wants to ‘renew’ the ‘tales of other times’; as Gilbert points out, these lines ‘pull the past into the present, stressing the importance of those narratives for the current day’ (Gilbert 2007, xxxiii-xxxiv). The implication is that Hogg is a genuine modern-day bard from the mountains. He is apparently not merely a literary construct from a mythologized past, like Ossian, but a real living, breathing Bard who is plying his trade in the modern literary marketplace.

The role and function of ‘the bard’ in literary history and the contemporary literary world of the early nineteenth-century was much contested. In *Bardic Nationalism*:

⁴ Gilbert, Suzanne (2007). ‘Introduction’, in *The Mountain Bard*, ed. by Suzanne Gilbert, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xi-lxix.

⁵ Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988.

The Romantic Novel and the British Empire (1997)⁶ Katie Trumpener argues that in response to

Enlightenment dismissals of Gaelic oral traditions, Irish and Scottish antiquarians reconceive national history and literary history under the sign of the bard [...] A figure both of the traditional aristocratic culture that preceded English occupation, and of continued national resistance to that occupation, the bard symbolises the central role of literature in defining national identity. (Trumpener 1997, xii)

However, for Hogg ‘the bard’ was not only an important symbol of national identity, it was also an indicator of social origin, which was, in turn, an indicator of poetic authority in regard to traditional material. Through the poetic competition in *The Queen’s Wake* (1813), in which prizes are awarded to a bard from the Highlands and a bard from the Borders, Hogg brings two separate traditions together, paving the way for a new unified Scottish Bardic tradition. However, as Mack notes in his ‘Introduction’ to the Stirling/South Carolina edition of the poem, the prize harp awarded to the northern Bard, which symbolises ‘the aristocratic version of Scottish Bardic culture [...] is challenged by the non-elite version of that culture symbolised by the prize harp won by the Bard of Ettrick [an idealised version of Hogg]’ (Mack 2005, xxviii). As will be argued in Chapter Three of this thesis, Hogg’s discrimination between these two versions of Bardic culture stems from, and feeds into, his ongoing endeavour to distinguish himself from ‘aristocratic’ poets such as Scott.

Like Hogg, Alexander Pushkin makes use of Ossianic lines as an epigraph to his first major work, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1820). However, Pushkin does not use them to align himself with a specific Bardic tradition, but as an artistic device. The Ossianic poems had swept through Europe in the second half of the eighteenth-century and were still very popular and hugely influential in early-nineteenth-century Russia,

⁶ Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

when Pushkin began his literary career.⁷ As Roger Clarke reveals, as a schoolboy in 1814 Pushkin had ‘composed some Russian adaptations of Ossianic poetry’ (Clarke 2005, 204).⁸ This fascination with Ossian and other Scottish and Irish ballads reached its apotheosis in 1828 when he composed a Russian version of ‘The Twa Corbies’, taken from a French translation of Scott’s *Minstrelsy*. (Incidentally, Hogg tells his readers in the headnote to the opening ballad in his *Mountain Bard*, ‘Sir David Graeme’, that it ‘was suggested to [him] by reading [Scott’s version] of “The Twa Corbies”’ (21)). Pushkin, like most Russian writers of the first phase of ‘The Golden Age’ (Zhukovsky, Lermontov, Gogol) revered Scott, whose *Minstrelsy* had rapidly reached Russia in French translation. And, like his literary hero Scott, Pushkin’s incorporation of traditional material and motifs into his work was in stark contrast to Hogg’s. This is particularly apparent in his use of lines from *Ossian* in his first major poem.

Pushkin opens the first canto of *Ruslan*, and closes the sixth and final one, with two lines from *Ossian* in Russian translation,⁹ ‘A tale of the times of old! / The deeds of days of other years!’ (I.1-2 & VI.373-74).¹⁰ In their original context in Macpherson’s *Ossian* these lines functioned as a kind of framing refrain, enclosing the opening paragraph of ‘Carthon’. Like the lines from ‘The Songs of Selma’ quoted above, these lines, in their original context in *Ossian*, unambiguously place the ensuing Ossianic tale firmly in the distant past. The opening line of ‘Carthon’ reinforces this impression: ‘The murmur of thy streams, O Lora! brings back the memory of the

⁷ See *The Reception of Ossian in Europe*, ed. by Howard Gaskill, London: Thoemmes Continuum.

⁸ Clarke, Roger (2005). ‘Introduction’ and ‘Commentary’, in *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, trans. by Roger Clarke, London: Hesperus, xi-xviii & 201-212.

⁹ Pushkin probably read Ermil Ivanovich Kostrov’s (1755-96) Russian translation of 1792, which, as Peter France points out in his article ‘Fingal in Russia’ (*The Reception of Ossian in Europe*, 259-273), was itself based on the 1777 French translation of Pierre Le Tourneur (1736-88) (see France, pp 260-61).

¹⁰ Modern, scholarly English translations of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* are scarce. Quotations are taken from Roger Clarke’s 2005 modern English translation for Hesperus Classics, which is already out of print (an updated version of Clarke’s translation was published by Oneworld Classics in 2009).

past'. The tone here is one of reminiscence, nostalgia for a lost world that survives in the modern era only in the collective memory, and can only be invoked through nature, which is the touchstone for poetic reminiscences. The river becomes a physical symbol of the past, which triggers the memory of the poet-narrator. This past does not so much flow into the present as sweep the poet-narrator, and, in turn, his readers, down through the streams of human memory and back into 'the times of old'. Pushkin's use of the Ossianic epigraph at the beginning of *Ruslan* produces a similar effect in his poem. By the early nineteenth century the invocation of Ossianic poems had become a most efficacious way of evoking legendary worlds of the past. Herein lies the significance of Hogg's rewriting of Ossianic lines for his epigraph to *The Mountain Bard*. He clearly wants to pull the 'past into the present' (Gilbert 2007, xxxiii), whereas Pushkin uses his Ossianic lines to push his readers back into the past. (Of course, both Hogg and Pushkin were also taking advantage of the popularity of *Ossian* to help sell their own work). The epigraph to *Ruslan* is an artistic device, an expedient way to put the reader in the right frame of mind for the poem, which is set in a legendary, supernatural past. Thus, unlike Hogg, who refashions Ossianic lines to conform to the specific message he wants to send to his readers – that is, to present himself as part of what Gilbert refers to as a 'living tradition' (Gilbert 2007, xxvii) – Pushkin, who presents his Ossianic lines verbatim from Macpherson's original, uses them to create atmosphere for the following poem. He, unlike Hogg, is unconcerned about presenting himself as a reliable transmitter of tradition; he is merely using *Ossian* as a kind of co-text, an expedient way to throw a veil of mystique over the ensuing lines in order to draw readers into the fictional realm of his poem.

However, the Ossianic epigraph is not the first doorstep into the world of *Ruslan*. Pushkin places two other paratexts between his readers and the poem proper. Firstly, there is the decidedly playful ‘Dedication’:

Queens of my heart, you lovely girls,
 they’re for you – yes, for you alone –
 these fairy tales of bygone years.
 That chatterbox called Long-ago
 whispered me them, and in my precious
 leisure I wrote them down in full.
 My labour of fun, then, please accept.
 I covet no-one’s compliments –
 just cherish the delicious hope
 that one of you, though furtively,
 might peep at these mischievous pages
 And feel a fluttering of love. (‘Dedication’, lines 1-12)

These lines distance the poet-creator (a figure closer to the real Pushkin, that is, the artist-in-society, than the altogether more fictional poet-narrator of the ensuing ‘Prologue’ and poem proper) from the content of the poem by placing him firmly outside its world. It could be argued that Hogg’s editorial voice in the explanatory notes to the ballads in *The Mountain Bard* has a similar effect. However, it soon becomes apparent that the main function of the notes is not so much to place Hogg outside of the supernatural worlds of the ballads as to suggest that he is immersed in the real-life traditional world of the Borders from which most of them originate, which, in turn, highlights his poetic authority in regard to such material.¹¹ Pushkin’s poet-narrator, however, draws attention to his role as a creative artist reinterpreting the ‘fairy tales of bygone years’ for a modern audience – more specifically, for the ‘lovely girls’ of his own age. Through these lines Pushkin projects a certain image of himself as a poet: creative, ironic, flirtatious, and dandyish – in short, a decidedly

¹¹ See Chapter Two of this study for a further discussion of the explanatory and headnotes to *The Mountain Bard*.

worldly artist. This is the fiction of his authorial self – the ‘fiction contributing to his work’ (Barthes 2001, 1473-74) – that he is attempting to propagate.

In *The Mountain Bard*, and many of his other books, Hogg avoids presenting himself in such a form – indeed, in *The Queen’s Wake* he offers an implied contrast between the ‘vapid [and] artful’ (‘Night the First’, line 237) song of the dandyish Rizzio and the more natural one of the Bard of Ettrick (see Chapter Two for more on this comparison). Throughout his career – from *The Mountain Bard*, through the long narrative poems of the 1810s, and the novels and short stories of the 1820s and 30s – Hogg continues to present himself first and foremost as a reliable transmitter of traditional-type material, as oppose to a modern artist like Pushkin. And yet texts such as *Confessions* highlight the fact that Hogg’s art, not least his incorporation of traditional material into his work, was not quite as artless as these paratextual self-representations generally suggest. However, this was the most palatable version of his authorial self to those critics and publishers in Edinburgh who saw him as nothing more than a sociological specimen, and was consequently the fiction that best enabled him sell his work in the marketplace there.

Pushkin does not only use his Dedication to present his ideal authorial self to the public; it also prepares readers for the subsequent poem by getting them into the right mood for a fairy-tale. As Genette points out, ‘the paratext provides an airlock that helps the reader pass from one world to the other, a sometimes delicate task, especially when the second world is a fictional one’ (Genette 1997, 408). The ‘Dedication’ acts as the first airlock from the real world – from which he, as poet-creator, is speaking – into the fantastic fictional world of his poem. He is carefully acclimatising his readers to the rarefied atmosphere of ‘long ago’. This process is an important function of ‘the paratext’, which is ‘more than a boundary or a sealed

border, [it] is, rather, a *threshold* [...] a vestibule that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back' (Genette 1997, 2). Hogg's paratexts in *The Mountain Bard*, especially the notes, do not so much prepare readers for the ballads as evoke and reinforce the atmosphere of the traditional world of Ettrick where most of them are set. The prefacing Memoir, meanwhile, reinforces the fact that Hogg hails from this still-thriving community. They are, in short, authenticating paratexts, designed to establish the provenance of the ballads and Hogg's authority to pass on them. Later in his career, Hogg, like Pushkin in *Ruslan*, begins using paratexts to create atmosphere, and to prepare readers for the supernatural worlds they are about to enter in his texts (see the discussion of the dedicatory poem to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* in Chapter Four); however, at the outset of his career their main function was to establish his authority in regard to the material in his books (this is especially true of *The Mountain Bard*).

Thus, Pushkin not only uses the 'Dedication' to position himself outside of the poem – as the dandyish poet-creator – but also to prepare his readers for the inner fictional world. This latter paratextual function is taken up in the 'Prologue', which Pushkin wrote in 1824, and added to subsequent editions of *Ruslan*. These lines are strewn with references to Russian folk and fairy tales, most of which he heard as a child from his nurse, Arina Rodionovna, 'who was in possession of an unbroken oral tradition, richer and more fascinating and more Russian than the cold, rarefied, Frenchified world inhabited by his remote parents' (Toibin 2005, vii).¹² (Rodionovna thus played a similar role in Pushkin's life as Hogg's mother did in his: both were founts of traditional knowledge in the respective childhoods of the poets). Clarke argues that the 'function of Pushkin's new prologue [is] to repackage *Ruslan and*

¹² Toibin, Colm (2005). 'Foreword', in *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, trans. by Roger Clarke, London: Hesperus, vii-x.

Lyudmila for the future as just an entertaining fairy story' (Clarke 2005, xvi). Indeed, the first few lines evoke the opening of a fairytale through the use of incremental repetition, which is also a standard ballad device: 'By an arc of sea a green oak stands, / to the oak a chain of gold is tied, / and at the chain's end day and night a learned cat walks round and round. / Rightwards he goes, and sings a song / leftward, a fairytale he tells' (Prologue, 1-6).

Pushkin's introductory paratextual apparatus to *Ruslan* has two main functions: firstly, to position himself, as the poet-creator, outside, or, to be more precise, above, the inner fictional realm of his poem. The 'Dedication' draws attention to the poet's position outside of folkloric tradition, and to his sophisticated manipulation of traditional literary forms. However, the main function of the 'Prologue' is to get readers into the right frame of mind for the following poem, to prepare them for the supernatural world of the past that they are about to enter. This second paratext thus takes readers another step toward the fictional world. By the first lines of the poem proper Pushkin has deftly moved his readers from the modern sphere of the dandyish poet-narrator of the 'Dedication' back into the legendary land of 'Rus' via the airlock of the 'Prologue'. These paratexts provide stepping stones into the poem; they create a kind of gradation of fictional realities (see Borges 1960, 230)¹³ within the book, which help the reader to step from the 'real world' of early nineteenth century Russia back into the supernatural world of the past evoked in the poem. Hogg, on the other hand, uses the notes to his ballads in *The Mountain Bard* to emphasise that the kinds of worlds described therein – where supernatural beliefs and customs play an important role in the everyday lives of the people – still exists in the Borders, specifically in his native Ettrick. As will be discussed later in this thesis, establishing

¹³ Borges, Jorge Luis (2000). 'Partial Magic in the *Quixote*' (1960), in *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, trans. by James E. Irby, Penguin Classics, London: Penguin, 228-231.

the continued existence of ‘traditional Ettrick’, and his place therein, was a key part of Hogg’s self-representation as it was largely on the basis of his place in this community that he based his poetic authority in regard to Borders ballad material. (See Chapter Two for a further discussion of Hogg’s loaded evocations of a traditional, contemporary Ettrick).

Goethe’s Dedication to *Faust*

Goethe, like Pushkin, also translated sections of *Ossian* into his own tongue. His versions of Ossian’s ‘Songs of Selma’ appear at a crucial point in his tragic novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Towards the end of the novel Werther reads ‘his’ translations to Charlotte and they perceive ‘their own fate in the misfortunes of Ossian’s heroes’ (112).¹⁴ However, Goethe’s relationship to traditional-type material is, like Pushkin’s, somewhat stand-offish. The Dedication to the first part of *Faust* (1808) emphasises the distinction between the outer world of the poet-creator and the inner world of the dramatic poem.¹⁵ The poet-narrator of this paratext distances himself from the more traditional and supernatural content of the poem by drawing attention to the chronological gap between the writing of the *Urfaust*, which contains most of the fantastical, folkloric material, and the Dedication itself, in which he

¹⁴ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), trans. by Michael Hulse, Penguin Classics, London: Penguin.

¹⁵ Goethe employs two other prefatory doorsteps into his *Faust*. The ‘Prelude on the Stage’ light-heartedly draws attention to the relationship between art and business, to the fact that the play is an entertaining show whose aim, as the Director points out, is to ‘please the mob’ (line 37) and to make money. In the final one, the ‘Prologue in Heaven’, Goethe sets up a cosmic tableaux to symbolically represent the relationship between ‘the drama’ and its indifferent audience: the Lord and Mephistopheles look down from on high at the ‘terrestrial scene’ (line 295) of ‘mankind’s woes’ (line 280) and make a bet on the fate of Faust, and, by implication, on the outcome of Goethe’s drama. Each of the prefaces to Goethe’s *Faust* is highly self-reflexive: the Dedication draws attention to the drawn-out composition of the work, the Prelude presents it as a literary commodity, and the Prologue as a vicarious piece of dramatic art. Like Pushkin, Goethe distances himself from his book by emphasising its fictiveness, the fact that, whatever its other aims may be, it has ultimately been created to entertain and amaze its audience. They draw attention to the poet-creator, and to the author-in-society striving to earn a living. In short, Goethe’s paratexts contain the fantastical fictional world of his book within their relativising borders.

evokes the long lost world of the past in which the poem was written, and to which he is returning in order to finally complete what he started almost thirty years ago:

Uncertain shapes, visitors from the past
 At whom I darkly gazed so long ago,
 My heart's mad fleeting visions – now at last
 Shall I embrace you, must I let you go?
 Again you haunt me: come then, hold me fast!
 Out of the mist and murk you rise
 [...]
 You bring back memories of happier days
 And many a well-loved ghost again I greet;
 As when some old half-faded legend plays
 About our ears, lamenting strains repeat
 My journey through labyrinthine maze
 [...]
 And I am seized by long unwonted yearning
 For that still, solemn spirit-realm which then
 Was mine; these hovering lisping tones returning
 Sigh as from some Aeolian Harp, as when
 I sang them first... ('Dedication', 1-29)¹⁶

The world of the *Urfaust* appears to be rising from the past and enveloping him, and 'bringing back memories of happier days'. But there is little time to 'embrace' these 'uncertain shapes', these 'well-loved ghosts'; he 'must let them go' as it is finally time to send his poem out into the world. Beautiful and wistful as these lines are, they also serve as a kind of apology: they are a version of the *modesty topos* rhetorical device. Through them the poet-narrator of the Dedication reminds his readers that he is not the same being as the young poet whose 'heart's mad fleeting visions' they are about to encounter in the following poem. The Dedication thus acts as a kind of temporal barrier between the 'now' of the poet-narrator and the 'past' of his younger self.

This is in stark contrast to Hogg's presentation of the relationship between his past and present selves in his autobiographical paratexts. In the prefacing Memoir to *The*

¹⁶ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1998). *Faust: Part One*, trans. by David Luke, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mountain Bard – indeed, in all the versions of his autobiography – Hogg is careful to draw a clear line of connection between his past and present selves. This was particularly important as his literary success in Edinburgh rested largely on his place in traditional Ettrick culture; therefore he had to suggest that he had not left the latter world behind, despite his progress from uneducated shepherd to published author. Unlike Goethe, Hogg simply could not afford to leave his past self behind. The story of his early struggles in Ettrick – especially his lack of education – was a key part of his public image as a peasant poet. The figure of The Ettrick Shepherd would come to symbolise these struggles, providing Hogg with a literary persona which connected his past self (the shepherd) with his present one (the author). (See the discussion of ‘Storms’ in Chapter Four for more on Hogg’s negotiations between his past and present selves).

Scott’s Paratextual Framework to *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*

In *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-03) Walter Scott, like Goethe, places a temporal barrier between himself and the ancient ballads he is presenting to his readers. But, unlike Goethe and Pushkin, he does not attempt to place an artistic frame around the ballads in his collection. Via his paratexts – the ‘Introduction’, headnotes, footnotes, endnotes, commentaries, and the critical essay ‘Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry’, added in 1830 – his book becomes a massive explanatory display case, within which he places the ballads. Readers must look at them through the prism of his editorial framework, which transmutes them from pieces of art into ancient relics, which he has polished and put on display, as opposed to literary objects to be read or listened to on their own terms. (Hogg’s paratextual apparatus in *The Mountain Bard* is considerably less formal than Scott’s; for instance, most of the notes read less

like learned dissertations than as stories in their own right). As McLane points out, scholarly paratextual devices were vital components of antiquarian ballad collections such as Scott's in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century; however,

such apparatus, offering historical, topographical, linguistic, and political information, has the peculiar effect of distracting us (as it did perhaps its first readers) from the often sensational contents of the ballads. (McLane 2008, 45)

The complex paratextual framework placed around ballads by their editors often became more important than the ballads themselves, and the editorial subject more important than the object being examined. As McLane wryly notes, the editorial procedures and aims of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century ballad collectors bear a rather uncanny resemblance to the work of modern-day academics (see McLane 2008, 11-12). Scott and his brethren were, in a very real sense, early cultural theorists.

In *The Mountain Bard* paratexts, meanwhile, Hogg presents a very different type of persona to Scott's learned editor in *Minstrelsy*. Hogg is no mere theorist or collector but a practising proponent of the ballad form in the modern age. Although Scott had also produced ballad imitations for the *Minstrelsy* they are presented more as experiments – editorial re-creations of ancient poetry – as oppose to new ballads with relevance for the modern day, and are relegated to a subsidiary position in the collection. Hogg's *Mountain Bard*, on the other hand, is not a book of ancient ballads featuring some ballad imitations by an editor, but a book composed solely of ballad imitations and 'Songs Adapted to the Times' by a genuine member of the oral tradition (Hogg's cultural position is established in the prefacing Memoir). Unlike in Scott's collection, in *The Mountain Bard* Hogg's own ballads take centre stage.

In the *Minstrelsy* Scott was not merely attempting to re-produce edited, ‘definitive’ written versions of old ballads, although this was his stated aim;¹⁷ he was also historicising them, and placing them in their ‘correct’ cultural context, and, in the process, passing judgement on their cultural value. This process starts on the title-page, most obviously with the epigraph:

The songs, to savage virtue dear,
That won of yore the public ear
Ere Polity, sedate and sage,
Had quench’d the fires of feudal rage.¹⁸

Scott uses these lines, by the poet-antiquary and literary-historian Thomas Warton (1728-1790), to imply a temporal distinction between the ‘savage’ age of the ballads in his collection, ‘ere Polity had quenched the fires of feudal rage’, and his own more enlightened epoch. (Compare this epigraph to the one used in *The Mountain Bard*, which, as discussed earlier, suggests that Hogg wants to ‘renew’ the ‘tales of other times’ and pull the past into the present). In his ‘Introduction’ he goes on to warn his readers that they ‘must not expect to find, in the Border ballads, refined sentiment, and, far less, elegant expression; although the style of such compositions has, in modern hands, been found highly susceptible of both’ (63). The minstrels ‘of yore’ should not be judged by the improved standards of the present age. Here and elsewhere in his paratextual apparatus, Scott unabashedly adheres to the Enlightenment notion of the progressive development of civilisation and poetry, repeatedly apologising for the ‘rude’ ballads he is editing and presenting. Yet he also

¹⁷ It was this process that Hogg would later critique via the famous anecdote about his mother rebuking Scott after he heard her ‘chaunt’ the ballad ‘Auld Maitland’:

there war never ane o’ my sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursel [in the first volume of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*], an’ ye hae spoilt them awthegither. They were made for singing an’ no for reading; but ye hae broken the charm now, an’ they’ll never be sung mair. An’ the worst thing of a’, they’re nouter right spell’d nor right setten down. (see the 1832 version of Hogg’s ‘Memoir’, p.61).

¹⁸ Scott, Walter (1931). *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-03), ed. by Thomas Henderson, London: George G. Harrap.

suggests that it is a literary form which, ‘in modern hands’ could, and indeed has been, considerably refined and improved. This is a reference to the contemporary vogue for ballad imitation, the most famous attempts being those of Wordsworth and Coleridge in their *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798 (although the poems in this collection are not so much ballad imitations as modern variants of old ballad themes and forms), and Scott’s own more faithful (albeit overly polished and refined) imitations in the second and third volumes of *Minstrelsy*. (Hogg’s *Mountain Bard* ballads had not yet been published). Wordsworth, much like Hogg in the second part of *The Mountain Bard* (‘Songs Adapted to the Times’), adapts the ballad form to the times in which he is living, infusing it with ‘personal expression’ (Gilbert 2007, xxix) and thus making of them ‘lyrical ballads’. And he does not seem to share Scott’s view of the progression of poetry. In his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* he acknowledges his surprise at the relative success of his poems, considering they are ‘so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed’ (Wordsworth 2001, 648).¹⁹ However, he bewails the ‘multitude of causes, unknown to former times’ which are reducing the ‘powers of the mind [...] to a state of almost savage torpor’ (Wordsworth 2001, 652). To antiquarians like Warton and Scott it is the ancient past which is ‘savage’; to Wordsworth it is the present, in which the ‘degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation’ (Wordsworth 2001, 652) is threatening to engulf the early nineteenth-century world of letters. Scott clearly agrees with the sentiment of the speaker of Shakespeare’s Sonnet #32, who asks his addressee not to ‘compare [his poem, after he has died] with the bett’ring of the time’ when ‘poets better prove’; while Wordsworth would seem to favour the counter-sentiment expressed in #106, in

¹⁹ Wordsworth, William (2001). ‘Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*’, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, gen. ed. Vincent B. Leitch, New York and London: Norton, 648-68.

which the ‘antique pen’ is given ascendancy over ‘these present days, / [Which] have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise’.²⁰

Scott’s ‘progression of poetry’ argument closely follows Thomas Percy’s (1728-1811) in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), the most important antiquarian ballad collection before Scott’s *Minstrelsy*.²¹ In ‘The Preface’ Percy apologises for the ‘great simplicity’ of the manuscripts he is presenting, pointing out that most of them were ‘merely written for the people’ (xxxvii), and that he was thus ‘long in doubt, whether, in the present state of improved literature, they could be deemed worthy the attention of the public’ (xxxvii).²² Percy, like Scott, clearly distances himself from the reliques he is placing before the public. The title of the book alone conveys the sense of the ‘otherness’ of the material enclosed within. As Gilbert points out, Scott’s title also has this effect: ‘like his paratextual apparatus, [it] places him *outside* the tradition, as an observer examining the evidence’ (Gilbert 2007, xxvi-xxvii). (Although Hogg sometimes presents himself as an ‘observer’ in his *Mountain Bard* paratexts he is also careful to uphold his insider status in the Borders ballad tradition by repeatedly referring to his upbringing in the traditional community of Ettrick). Scott’s and Percy’s paratexts seem to suggest that although the compositions of the ancient ‘Bards and Minstrels’ are perhaps worthy of antiquarian attention they are not necessarily worthy of literary respect.

²⁰ Shakespeare, William (1995). *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1609), ed. by John Kerrigan, London: Penguin.

²¹ In ‘The Study of the Orally Transmitted Ballad: Past Paradigms and a New Poetics’ (1994), Teresa Catarella discusses ‘the four dominant paradigms of past ballad studies’ (Catarella 1994, 469). The first of these paradigms, ‘the ballad as relic, as an antique’, was clearly adhered to by antiquarians such as Percy and Scott, as was the third, ‘the ballad as an inferior adaptation and assimilation of “higher” culture’. Hogg, meanwhile, more often appeals to the ‘essential collectivity of oral poetry’ by routinely naming his informants (he also does this in his prose tales), and to the ‘variability’ of ballad material (see Catarella 1994, 469-72).

²² Percy, Thomas (1857). *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), ed. by Robert Aris Willmott, London: George Routledge & Sons.

Thus, Percy and Scott each put forward a historicist defence for their respective collections. Percy argues that the ‘specimens of ancient poetry’ in his book ‘display the peculiar manners and customs of former ages’ (xxxviii), while Scott assures his readers that ‘the curious picture of manners which [the ballads] frequently present, authorize them to claim some respect from the public’ (63). (In the head note to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* Scott likewise argues that ‘the poem is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland’ (1)). They clearly do not deserve attention on their own terms, as pieces of art; however, they do reveal much about the ‘peculiar’ and ‘curious’ age in which they were composed.²³ Percy, like Scott, also offers modern ballad imitations, ‘to atone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems’ (xxxviii). Like Scott, he clearly believes that these ‘modern attempts’ will be a marked improvement on the originals. (Hogg will later attempt his own ballad imitations in *The Mountain Bard*, in direct opposition to Scott’s in the *Minstrelsy*). Scott, like Percy before him, uses his paratexts to portray the ballads as ‘rude’ relics from a ‘savage’ past in order to distance himself – as the editor/antiquarian/curator – from the material in his collection.

Scott carries this notion about the inferiority of ancient poetry, as well as his apparent desire to distance himself from it, over into his first major original work, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). In the headnote to his poem he defends his use of the ‘Ancient Metrical Romance’, reasoning that since ‘the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the author than a combined and regular narrative’ this was clearly the best form to adopt as it ‘allows greater latitude [...] than would be

²³ As Catarella suggests, Percy only ‘appreciated the ballads as rare specimens of archaic poetry, which reflected earlier customs, language, and manners’ (Catarella 1994, 469).

consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem' (1).²⁴ Once again Scott's patronising attitude to 'ancient' poetry is made manifest in his paratextual material. In this same headnote he goes on to declare that, 'the machinery, also, adopted from traditional belief, would have seemed puerile in a poem which did not partake of the rudeness of an old Ballad, or Metrical Romance' (1). Scott here makes a clear link between traditional content and the proper literary forms in which to present this content. But he goes even further, arguing that 'for these reasons the poem was put into the mouth of an Ancient Minstrel, the last of the race' (1). Clearly, a modern antiquarian-poet like himself cannot voice these traditional beliefs; they must be filtered through a more suitable medium. (These types of concerns – about the proper literary forms in which to contain traditional material and the most suitable conduits for traditional beliefs – would later constrain the writings of Hogg. As Bold points out, Hogg's public role as an autodidact poet brought with it serious literary restraints: 'ballads, lyric, patriotic and pious poetry were considered acceptable; innovation was treated less tolerantly' (Bold 2007, 21)). Scott thus uses his headnote to the *Last Minstrel* simultaneously to apologise for the 'rudeness' of the ballad form and to defend his use of it, as well as to distance himself from the content of his poem by placing the 'last minstrel' between himself and it. Like Pushkin and Goethe, Scott clearly does not want to associate himself with traditional forms and beliefs. Hogg, on the other hand, attempts to present himself as being immersed in the cultural world of the Ettrick oral tradition via his paratextual self-representations. This process is particularly apparent early on in his literary career, even before the publication of *The Mountain Bard*.

²⁴ Scott, Walter (1904). *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), in *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by J. Logie Robertson, London: Henry Frowde, 1-88.

Hogg and the *Scots Magazine* Letters

Hogg, like Pushkin, Goethe and Scott, uses his paratexts to *The Mountain Bard* to control relations between himself and his readers, and between the real world and the fictional worlds of his ballads. However, the line between fiction and reality, and between ‘author’ and private individual, is blurred by Hogg’s paratexts. While the other three writers distance themselves from the content of their books by portraying themselves in a specific light (the former two as sophisticated poets manipulating traditional forms, the latter as the rather aloof antiquarian), Hogg sets out to do quite the opposite. His paratexts act as bridges between himself and his book, as opposed to the kinds of barriers erected by his three illustrious contemporaries. They are used to explain his (supposedly) personal relationship with the material therein. Hogg’s aim, the function of his paratexts, is to establish a clear link between the private individual, although this figure is itself a fictional construct, and the content of his book. His apparently straightforward paratextual authorial inscriptions, particularly those in relation to his traditional knowledge and supposed socio-literary position as a ‘peasant-poet’, are all highly functional. The paratextual apparatus erected around *The Mountain Bard* is designed specifically to reinforce the image of himself he wished to perpetuate in order to help him break into the literary marketplace. Later in his career he, like Pushkin and Goethe, also used paratexts for aesthetic purposes. However, at the beginning he had to use them to position himself, and to justify himself, as an author in society. Clearly differentiating himself from Scott was an important part of this process. As Fiona Wilson points out in ‘Hogg as Poet’,²⁵ both the *Minstrelsy* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* ‘deeply affected Hogg’s poetry, opening up creative possibilities but also provoking instinctive objections – a sense of difference that was

²⁵ *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 96-104.

to be critical to his notion of himself as a poet' (Wilson 2012, 97). This 'sense of difference' also profoundly affected his self-representations. At the outset of his career, he set out to present himself as an 'insider', as part of the Ettrick oral tradition. This was his unique selling-point, a good way to differentiate himself from Scott and thus establish his own specific niche in the literary marketplace. This careful characterisation of himself was begun well before the appearance of *The Mountain Bard* in 1807.

Between 1802 and 1807, Hogg himself helped accentuate his lowly social status, lack of education and coarse country manners in order to tap into the early nineteenth century's fascination for self-taught 'peasant-poets'. Hogg was attempting to position himself within the working-class tradition in literature (he would later declare himself as the natural successor to Robert Burns),²⁶ and thus exploit a specific niche in the literary marketplace – perhaps the only niche open to him at this time. As Alker and Nelson point out, Hogg was entering the '[literary] marketplace at a particularly opportune time' for 'peasant poets':

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. (Alker and Nelson 2009, 2-3)

Hogg's self-representations were highly expedient, not least in his strategic positioning of himself within this specific literary tradition. It was a fertile market; the reading public had developed a taste for genuine 'peasant poets'. Hogg was perhaps more proactive than most in propagating this image of himself. Certainly, in the

²⁶ See the discussion of the 1832 edition of his 'Memoir' in Chapter Five of this thesis for more on Hogg's positioning of himself alongside Burns.

‘autobiographical’ paratexts to *The Mountain Bard* he paints a vivid portrait of himself as the quintessential self-taught peasant-poet.

Hogg was entering an already crowded niche in the literary marketplace. As Alker and Nelson suggest, the ‘peasant-poet’ trend was already well-established by the early nineteenth-century. Thus, Hogg had to work hard on his public image in order to differentiate himself from the crowd of peasant-poets streaming into the literary marketplace. The liminal figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ was a crucial element in this process. Contemporary reviews suggest that Hogg’s acceptance into the literary world depended much more on the created figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ than on the ‘real’ author James Hogg. It could even be argued that had Hogg relied only on his proper name he may not have even broken into the literary marketplace in the first place.

Foucault argues that ‘the name of an author...is more than a gesture, a finger pointed at someone, it is a description’ (Foucault 2001, 1626). This is particularly true for Hogg, whose proper name is supplemented on the title page of *The Mountain Bard* – itself a loaded title, setting Hogg up as a genuine ‘bard’ from the mountains – by that of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’. The ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ tag is used here to give supplementary information about the author – indeed, it is loaded with significance. It is not only a ‘function of discourse’, but also a literal description of the author’s social background. The double naming of the author on Hogg’s title-page is thus even more ‘functional’ than Foucault’s characterisation of the ‘author-function’ suggests. In this case the author-function not only ‘characterises the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society’ (Foucault 2001, 1628) but also provides detailed additional information about the place of Hogg-the-author *within* his society, specifically within the literary world in which he is attempting to place

himself as an author. A cursory glance at the title-page will immediately alert even first-time readers of the book that the author is a shepherd from the isolated community of Ettrick. This succinct biographical information, reinforced by the Ossianic references in the title of the book and in the epigraph, must profoundly affect any reading of the book itself. The title page of *The Mountain Bard* thus quickly and efficiently establishes Hogg as a ‘peasant-poet’, and alerts readers to the poetic forms and traditional themes they can expect to encounter in the pages of the book.²⁷ The fiction of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ would continue to ‘contribute’, both positively and negatively, ‘to his work’ (Barthes) for the rest of his career.

The ‘supplementary naming’ of the author on the title-page of *The Mountain Bard* is thus a highly significant moment in the literary career of Hogg. However, the foundations for this self-representation had been laid well before the first edition of the book appeared in 1807, specifically through the series of six letters sent to, or perhaps planted in, the *Scots Magazine* between 1804 and 1805. As Silvia Mergenthal points out, these suspiciously-convenient correspondences could well have been ‘manufactured to raise interest in Hogg, and to create a responsive audience for [upcoming] *Mountain Bard* volume’ (Mergenthal 1990, 72).²⁸ These letters are more concerned with the figure of The Ettrick Shepherd than with Hogg himself. It is through the former figure that they ‘raise interest’ and ‘create a responsive audience’ for the book. They also foreshadow, and help pave the way for, the 1807 ‘Memoir’, in which the figure of the Shepherd is more fully delineated.

²⁷ There is little documentary evidence to indicate the respective roles of Hogg and his publisher in the exact wording of the title-page to *The Mountain Bard*, although Hogg was presumably responsible for the epigraph. However, publishers, like Hogg himself, clearly recognised the marketability of the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ persona. For instance, George Goldie, who published *The Queen’s Wake* (1813), attached an ‘Advertisement’ to the second edition of the book assuring readers that the author really was a shepherd (this ‘Advertisement’ is discussed more fully in Chapter Three of this study).

²⁸ Mergenthal, Silvia (1990). ‘Naturae Donum: Comments on Hogg’s Self-Image and Image’, in *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 1 (1990), 71-79.

The first of these correspondences, signed ‘J. Welch’, who remains unidentified, appeared in the August 1804 edition of the *Scots Magazine*.²⁹ It requests more information from the editor about the poet who contributes to his magazine under the appellation ‘a *Shepherd of Ettrick*’:³⁰

there is a curiosity inherent in almost every man who reads the works of an author to know something about the writer, which is increased in proportion as we are pleased with the productions of his genius [...] Now, Sir, you give us such and such ballads or poems *written by James Hogg*, as if the bare mention of his name were sufficient, not only to confirm the value of the pieces, but to make the author perfectly known; whereas notwithstanding every inquiry which I have been able to make amongst literary men, I can hear nothing of any such person. Now, dear Sir, would you, or any of your correspondents, through the channel of this magazine, inform me if there is such a person alive; and if there is, what rank does he hold in life? as the appellation of shepherd must be merely affected. (‘Inquiry Concerning the Ettrick Shepherd’, 123) [All quotes from the *Scots Magazine* letters are taken from Gilbert’s edition of *The Mountain Bard*].

J. Welch clearly attaches great importance to the ‘person’ of the author, that is, to the private individual. The ‘bare mention’ of Hogg’s name is not sufficient to ‘confirm the value of the pieces’; biographical information about him must also be provided if a proper assessment of his work is to be attempted. Unfortunately, this notion would plague Hogg for the remainder of his career.

This correspondent’s insistence on the importance of the link between ‘the man’ and his ‘work’ puts one in mind of Barthes’ description of the sway of the author in popular culture and literary history:

The image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life [...] while criticism still consists for the most part in saying that Baudelaire’s work is the failure of Baudelaire the man, Van Gogh’s his madness [...] The explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it. (Barthes 2001, 1466)

²⁹ In one of Hogg’s *Highland Journeys* letters, in which he describes his travels in the Highlands (1802-04), and which were first published in the *Scots Magazine* between October 1802 and June 1803, Hogg repeats an anecdote which he claims to have ‘often heard told by Mr J.s Welch’ (see *Highland Journeys* (2010), ed. by H.B. de Groot, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 104).

³⁰ As Gilbert points out, ‘by August 1804 Hogg had already made several appearances in the pages of the *Scots Magazine* [...] Many [of which] had been signed in such a way that indicated he was a shepherd from Ettrick’ (Gilbert 2007, 458-59). Hogg’s first published poem, ‘The Mistakes of a Night’, had appeared anonymously in the *Scots Magazine* for October 1794.

This obsession with the biography of artists, and the supposed correspondence or otherwise between their lives and their works, is still apparent today. But, as Welch's letter suggests, it was even more prevalent in the early nineteenth century; the 'explanation' of Hogg's work is here being sought in his social origins. Welch also inaugurates a recurring theme in contemporary discussions of Hogg's work: the apparent discrepancy between his 'rank' and his 'genius'. Surely, he reasons, the 'appellation of shepherd must be merely affected'? These kinds of doubts would follow Hogg throughout his career, right up to the publication of *Confessions* in 1824 when considerable doubt was raised as to whether Hogg, a common shepherd, could have singlehandedly composed such a complex narrative. His failures and successes were all too often traced back to his position as a shepherd. When he stuck to literary forms appropriate to one of his class he was applauded. However, when he attempted something that was apparently not appropriate to his social background – a literary form or poetic theme which was supposedly out of the intellectual reach of a self-taught shepherd – he was often lambasted. Yet at the outset of his career Hogg himself drew on the supposed incongruity between his life and his work to create the compelling progress narrative disseminated in his memoirs. Through these autobiographical texts Hogg himself accounts for the supposed 'anomaly' between his humble origins and his poetic talent (unlike Shakespeare who, to the great relief of Baconians, Oxfordians and Marlovians everywhere, did not account for the perceived discrepancy between his background and his literary genius). It is Welch's letter which laid the foundations for these later memoirs by stirring up public interest in the remarkable rise of 'The Ettrick Shepherd'.

This process becomes even more apparent in the editor's response to Welch's letter, in which he attests that he is 'entirely ignorant of any particulars respecting the

habitation, rank in life, or character of the Shepherd of Ettrick' and would thus be most 'obliged to any correspondent who will send any particulars respecting the Ettrick Shepherd' (124). This request on the part of the editor paves the way for more letters about Hogg's background. Once again, this all seems a little too convenient. One might even be tempted to suspect that J. Welch's letter was actually sent to the magazine by Hogg or one of his associates; that the whole mystery surrounding the 'person' of the shepherd is being stage-managed, much like a modern-day PR campaign. Although there is no direct documentary evidence to indicate Hogg's part (if any) in this process, he does have some form for planting letters in magazines. In August 1823 'A Scots Mummy' appeared in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*. This apparently non-fictional, documentary-style letter, which is signed James Hogg, was probably placed there in preparation for the publication of *Confessions* a few months later, in which it is reproduced, and becomes, in this new context, an important part of the plot. It is on the basis of the information included in this letter that the fictional Editor and his party set out to find the grave of Robert Wringhim in the vicinity of Ettrick, where they encounter a fictionalised version of James Hogg. The letter adds yet another layer of narrative ambiguity to the novel, particularly so for those readers who encountered it in its original 'non-fictional' context in *Blackwoods*.³¹ This does not prove that Hogg was directly involved with the writing and publication of the *Scots Magazine* letters in 1804-1805; however, it does show that he was adept at manipulating different forms of media to his own ends. And while his exact role in the *Scots Magazine* letters remains obscure, what is not in doubt is the crucial role they played in the cultural construction of 'The Ettrick Shepherd'.

³¹ See Chapter Five of this study for a further discussion of Hogg's appearances in *Confessions*.

A few months after the publication of the first letter in the *Scots Magazine*, in October 1804, another helpful correspondent answers the editor's plea, and the seeds of Hogg's official biography are sown. Like Welch, this correspondent, 'A.H.B.', has not been identified, but he assures the editor that he is well acquainted with the Ettrick Shepherd and has 'heard, from his own mouth, that he was bred a shepherd from his childhood' and that 'he was only one half year at school in his infancy, and, having few opportunities, made little progress until near twenty years of age' ('Some Information Respecting the Ettrick Shepherd', 124). Thus, the two main threads of Hogg's biography are inaugurated: his 'breeding' as a shepherd and his lack of education. This letter also hints at a third theme, which would later become the main narrative arc in his 'Memoir', namely, his 'progress' from uneducated rustic to author. In January 1805 a third letter was published in the magazine. Written from the 'Banks of Ettrick', this letter enlarges upon the themes introduced in the previous correspondence, and could thus be viewed as another stepping stone towards the 'Memoir'. Gilbert argues that 'the account given here of Hogg's family background and early life matches well with Hogg's own account in the "Memoir". One possibility is that the author may have been Hogg's friend John Grieve' (Gilbert 2007, 459). Another possibility is that Hogg himself had a hand in its composition. Hogg's lack of education is again emphasised by this new correspondent: 'our Shepherd', he declares, 'had not ten shillings laid out on his education' ('Biographical Sketches of the Ettrick Shepherd', 125). This letter also succinctly foreshadows the progress narrative that would later be exploited in the 'Memoir'. The anonymous correspondent reveals that Hogg rose 'from the mean and servile duties of a cow-herd [...] to the more honourable employment of a shepherd' (125). Hogg's restless ambition to 'rise' in the world is thus clearly and concisely established in this letter.

Another significant new strand is introduced in this third letter, one which would eventually develop into an important motif in Hogg's biography, namely, his supposedly innate 'predilection' for artistic pursuits. This is illustrated by the first version of the 'violin anecdote', which would later be reworked in the fifth of the *Scots Magazine* letters, before reappearing in its final form in the 'Memoir'. The writer of this letter reveals that even during

the several summers employed in herding cows...[he] discovered an invincible predilection for music and poetry; the former science he prosecuted with such diligence and unwearied eagerness, that he frequently spent whole nights in the study and learning in this most pleasant of arts; and is now among the best performers on the violin that I ever remember to have heard. (125)

These biographical details about Hogg learning the violin are extended into an anecdote in the fifth letter, dated June 8th 1805, and signed 'Z, Banks of Ettrick' ('Z' may well be a pseudonym for Hogg himself):

His constant employment for some years was herding cows, the lowest, and I believe the worst trade in several respects, in this part of the country. At the age of fourteen, finding himself in possession of five or six shillings, over and above was what necessary for covering his nakedness, he purchased an old violin, and assiduously applied himself to that branch of music [...] It will be readily perceived, that in such a situation he could make no very rapid advances in music, however high an opinion he might have of his own abilities. But while his self-taught ear was no doubt listening with pleasure to his supposed melodious notes, that they have at the same time produced sensations of a different nature on others, the following anecdote will bear testimony: His master coming home at a late hour one evening, and thinking all the servants gone to rest, resolved to put his horse into the stable himself, but upon opening the stable door, he was saluted with a voice which to his astonished ears was so unharmonious that he ran into the house with the greatest precipitation, crying that he believed the devil was in the stable; and was with considerable difficulty convinced of his mistake by some of his family better acquainted with our musician's inclination and abilities than he was. ('Further Particulars of the Life of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd', 130-31)

The detail about Hogg's employment 'herding cows', 'the lowest trade in the country', is carried over from the earlier letter, thus reinforcing Hogg's lowly position in preparation for the later 'rise narrative'. But this letter also provides more detailed biographical information, including Hogg's age when he took up the violin and how

much he paid for it, with an allusion to his lowly state at this time (he apparently only had ‘five or six shillings over and above was what necessary for covering his nakedness’). The reference to his ‘self-taught ear’ is also significant, foreshadowing the ‘self-taught’ strand of his narrative. The comic anecdote about his master mistaking the sound of his violin for the devil – which itself vividly places the young Hogg in a traditional community, in which even ‘masters’ apparently believe in the physical manifestation of the devil – is revised and retold in the 1807 ‘Memoir’ prefacing *The Mountain Bard*:

When serving with Mr Scott of Singlee, there happened to be a dance one evening [...] I being admitted into the room as a spectator, was all attention to the music; and, on the company breaking up, I retired to my stable-loft, and fell to essaying some of the tunes to which I had been listening: the musician, going out on some necessary business, and not being aware that another of the same craft was so near him, was not a little surprised when the tones of my old violin assailed his ears. At first, he took it for the late warbles of his own ringing through his head; but, on a little attention, he, to his mortification and astonishment, perceived that the sounds were real [...] Such a circumstance, at that dead hour of night [...] convinced him all at once that it was a delusion of the devil [...] he fled precipitately into the hall, with disordered garments, and in the utmost horror, to the no small mirth of Mr Scott, who declared, that he had lately been considerably stunned himself by the same discordant sounds. (‘Memoir’, 9-10)

There is much more narrative detail in this later account. The atmosphere of the scene is more vividly portrayed than in the earlier letters. The description of Hogg playing his violin in his lonesome ‘stable-loft [...] in the dead hour of night’ sets the scene for the mistaken supernatural encounter. The new character, in the shape of the musician, ‘precipitately fleeing into the hall with disordered garments in the utmost horror’, is well-drawn. And the ‘master’ of the earlier letter is not only named as Mr Scott but also given the semblance of a character through the description of his ‘mirth’ at the plight of the unfortunate musician. These are all nice little narrative details; they put meat on the bare bones of the earlier anecdote. The evolution of the ‘violin anecdote’ suggests that the *Scots Magazine* letters could be viewed as early drafts of the

‘Memoir’ – as preparatory paratexts. (The famous ‘poetic competition’ anecdote, first described in the sixth letter to the *Scots Magazine*, ‘Concluding Particulars of the Life of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd’ (see 133-34), goes through a similar process between its original version in the letter and its narration in the ‘Memoir’ (see 13-14)).

‘Hogg the autodidact’ is also introduced to the public in the third letter, perhaps for the first time. The reference to him having ‘made little progress [in education] until near twenty years of age’ (124) made by ‘A.H.B.’ in the previous letter is enlarged upon:

it being his good fortune to serve in a decent and respectable family [...] distinguished for their love of learning [the Laidlaws of Blackhouse farm] his constant reading [...] ripened apace the seeds of poetry with which his genius was so strongly impregnated. (126)

Hogg began reinforcing his ‘native genius’ with book-learning. This period of ‘constant reading’, suggests the letter, ultimately helped him to realise his artistic potential. The fact that Hogg is an autodidact, a biographical detail that was to become so integral to his future self-representations, is here established. More details about Hogg’s reading at the Laidlaws is given in the ‘Memoir’:

Mr Laidlaw [father of Hogg’s lifelong friend William Laidlaw], having a number of valuable books, which were all open to my perusal, I, about this time, began to read with considerable attention, and, no sooner did I begin to read so as to understand, than, rather prematurely, I began to write. The first thing that ever I attempted was a poetical epistle to a student of divinity, an acquaintance of mine. It was a piece of most fulsome flattery, mostly composed of borrowed lines and sentences from Dryden’s *Virgil*, and Harvey’s *Life of Bruce*. (11)

Once again there is considerably more narrative detail in the ‘Memoir’ version of the anecdote. There is also some authorial comment on his ‘premature’ transition from

reading to writing, and one even gets a glimpse of what he was reading at the time, and its influence on him as a poet.³²

The third letter also establishes Hogg in the ‘peasant-poet’ literary tradition. Mention is made of the ‘few pastorals’ (126) he published in Edinburgh in 1799. This is a reference to *Scottish Pastorals* (a book of poetry influenced by the pastoral literary tradition), which was published in 1801. Perhaps Hogg and/or Grieve are engaging in a little narrative misdirection here. The correspondent’s mistake about the date distances Hogg himself from any involvement in the composition of the letter, giving the impression that the correspondent may be getting his information second or third hand. At any rate, pastorals are the ideal poetic form for a self-taught shepherd. Hogg is thus depicted as conforming to the establishment’s rules governing the literary output of an autodidactic poet, right from the beginning of his career. He is presented as a good little peasant-poet, sticking to his proper field of poetic creation.

The correspondent then turns literary critic, comparing one of Hogg’s pastorals favourably with the work of two important poets in recent Scottish literary history. He declares that ‘Will and Kate [...] would even appear conspicuous among the writings of a Ferguson and a Burns’ (127). The mention of Hogg in relation to these poets, particularly to Burns, is anything but arbitrary. Robert Fergusson (1750-74) wrote many poems on rustic life, often in Scots vernacular (e.g. ‘The Farmer’s Ingle’),³³ which foreshadowed and considerably influenced the poetry of Robert Burns. Burns, of course, is the most notable example of the ‘peasant-poet’ fraternity in Scotland.

³² See Chapter Two of this project for a more in-depth discussion of Hogg’s descriptions of his early reading.

³³ Hogg used five lines from this poem (‘In rangles round afore the ingle’s lowe, / Frae Gudame’s mouth auld-warld Tales they hear, / O’ Warlocks loupin’ round the Wirrikow, / O’ Ghaists that won in glen and kirk-yearld drear, / Whilk tousles a’ their tap, an’ gars them shake wi’ fear’, ‘The Farmer’s Ingle’, lines 59-63) as the epigraph to his 1820 tale collection *Winter Evening Tales*.

The *Scots Magazine* correspondent places Hogg within this Scots vernacular literary tradition, he even goes so far as to assert that he ‘fancies’ that he

could trace several places where [Hogg] is fired by [these] other poets, his ideas seem the same, tho’ drest in a different garb; and how know I but the melody of ‘Ye Banks and Braes of bonny Doon’ [a song by Burns] may have awakened the beautiful air of ‘Flow, my Yarrow, down the howe’. (128)

Hogg’s song has apparently been brought into being (‘awakened’) by Burns’ song; he is, by this logic, the natural successor to Burns, the new, national peasant-poet of Scotland. As Kirsteen McCue asserts, ‘Hogg wished, planned and undertook a career to enable him to succeed Burns’ (McCue 2009, 136).³⁴ (Interestingly, Hogg himself does not openly make this claim in either the 1807 or the 1821 Memoirs. The famous ‘Burns anecdote’ does not appear until the *Altrive Tales* version of the ‘Memoir’, in 1832). The correspondent of the third letter suggests that Hogg may even be the most genuine representative of this poetic tradition yet to emerge, a bone-fide peasant-poet, even more so than Burns. A line could perhaps be drawn from the university-educated Fergusson, to the less well-educated, lower class Burns (who received considerably more formal education than Hogg) down to the genuinely autodidactic Hogg, who ‘had not ten shillings laid out upon his education [and] was employed in herding cows, the lowest and most servile of all employments in country life’ (125). Hogg, suggests the correspondent, may be the best specimen of a self-taught peasant-poet writing in vernacular yet discovered in Scotland. And, as such, he is peculiarly well-placed to compose traditional poetry, such as ballads and pastorals.

As if to emphasise this point the correspondent then provides some samples of Hogg’s pastoral poetry, the ‘grandeur and sublimity’ of which is even more remarkable when one remembers that they were ‘uttered by an illiterate shepherd, that

³⁴ McCue also points out that the popularity of both Burns’ and Hogg’s songs ‘throughout the nineteenth century [relied] heavily on the rural or pastoral element of their biography’ (McCue 2009, 135).

got barely as much education as to enable him to read his bible' (127). The supposed discrepancy between Hogg's social background and his seemingly innate poetic talent is thus once again emphasised in order to reinforce his status as a 'natural born poet'. As Ruth Finnegan notes in *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context* (1977), supposedly genuine members of the oral tradition, like Hogg, were useful examples of the theory of the natural-born-poet as they demonstrated 'a distinction between learned, consciously-composed literature' and the spontaneous effusions of traditional poetry, 'into which conscious choice, judgement and "art" [were supposed] not [to] enter' (Finnegan 1977, 36).³⁵

The fourth letter to the *Scots Magazine* in March 1805, 'Farther Inquiries Respecting the Ettrick Shepherd', is, like the first letter in the series, one which elicits, and thus justifies, more correspondences concerning the background of the mysterious shepherd. The letter, signed 'A Constant Reader', praises 'the mode of writing the life of a poet' (129) in the 'Biographical Sketches' published in the last number of the magazine. However, he declares himself 'more pleased than instructed by [the] intelligent biographer,' arguing that 'he can raise, but not gratify curiosity' (129). He therefore puts seven questions to the editor. In a footnote the editor reveals that this correspondent is 'a highly respectable gentleman, who is at present collecting materials for a history of Scottish poetry' (129), implying that this is someone whose questions must be answered. And if a 'highly respectable gentleman, who is currently working on a history of Scottish poetry' is interested in this mysterious Shepherd, then, it is implied, so should the readers of the magazine. The gentleman-scholar here occupies a similar role to that taken by Scott at the beginning of the 'Memoir' (in the introductory justification, which will be discussed in the following chapter of this

³⁵ Finnegan, Ruth (1977). *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

project): a kind of cultural arbiter, sanctioning the appearance in print of the life of the lowly shepherd. However, the editor can only provide answers to two of the questions (concerning the proper name of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ and his place of birth), as ‘for the rest’, he declares, ‘we must rely on our correspondent [presumably the writer of ‘Biographical Sketches’]’ (129). The editor thus paves the way for the publication of yet more biographical sketches.

In July 1805 a fifth letter regarding the Shepherd appeared in the magazine, entitled ‘Further Particulars of the Life of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd’. Gilbert argues that ‘these “Further Particulars”, and the subsequent “Concluding Particulars”, both signed “Z”, may well be by Hogg himself’ (Gilbert 2007, 460). But, as suggested above, one might be tempted to suspect Hogg of having a hand in all six of the *Scots Magazine* letters. There is certainly some evidence for this (at least, for the later letters) in the form of the letter Hogg wrote to Scott in December 1803, in which he sounds Scott out about a collection of songs he wished to publish. In this letter he asks Scott,

if [he thought] a graven image on the first leaf [was] any recommendation; and if we might front the songs with a letter to you, giving an impartial account of my manner of life and education, and, which, if you pleased to transcribe, putting He for I. (Hogg to Scott, dated ‘Ettrickhouse, 24 December, 1803’)³⁶

This letter shows that Hogg recognised, even as early as 1803, the importance of his social position – his ‘manner of life and education’ – to his literary pretensions, even considering a graven image of himself, a wish which finally come into fruition in *Altrive Tales* in 1832. (Significantly, it is not Hogg’s proper name that appears in this portrait but that of The Ettrick Shepherd. This hints at the trajectory back toward the Shepherd at the end of his career, the Shepherd remaining a more marketable

³⁶ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 40.

commodity than Hogg-the-author). This letter also highlights that Hogg may well have written some form of memoir by 1803 (well before the *Scots Magazine* letters), but recognised that he could not thrust it on to the public under his own name – he apparently needed a cultural and social superior to do it for him. Scott refused this proposal, but would later write the prefatory letter, which introduced and justified the ‘Memoir’.

In the fifth letter to the *Scots Magazine*, Hogg’s proper name is aligned with his supplementary one, as it is on the title page of *The Mountain Bard*. As mentioned earlier, this second name provides accompanying biographical information about his background. The obliging writer of this fifth letter (‘Z’) justifies thrusting these ‘Further Particulars of the Life of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd’ before the public by asserting that he is merely complying with ‘the wishes of [the] correspondent’ (130) of the previous letter (that is, ‘A Constant Reader’, or, ‘the gentleman-scholar’). In it he first provides more detail on Hogg’s lack of education:

his whole stock of learning at that time consisted in having been taught to read in the Proverbs of Solomon, and Shorter Catechism, by Mr Beattie, the parish schoolmaster. Next year he was put four months to a private school, kept by a young lad called William Ker [...] Here he learned to read and write, and here his education was *completed!* (130)

‘Z’ is evidently well-acquainted with the personal history of Hogg, right back to his childhood. He also reinforces the supposed discrepancy between Hogg’s lowly circumstances and his poetic talent:

Who could have thought, that one who, at the age of eighteen, had read little else than his bible, and could scarcely write a legible line with the pen, would with no other help than a few books, and no more leisure than what in the ordinary course of things falls to the lot of servants, have attained to considerable celebrity as a author before he reached his thirtieth year? (131)

The progress narrative encountered in the ‘Memoir’ – the narrative arc charting his rise from lowly shepherd to man of letters – is even more firmly established here. As

Bold notes, peasant poets ‘helped to define their own mythology [...] a standard tale was told: deprivation, minimal formal education, juvenile struggles and eventual triumphing over the creative odds’ (Bold 2007, 16). ‘Z’s’ letter helpfully nudges this process along.

This letter plants one more important seed, which will come to full bloom in the ‘Memoir’, by subtly drawing attention to Hogg’s position in the oral tradition. ‘Z’ discusses some of his early poems, specifically ‘Glengyle’ and ‘The Happy Swains’, revealing that ‘these were in part founded on some stories told him by an old woman of the name of Cameron, who had been interested in the rebellion of 1745’ (132). The naming of one of Hogg’s informants draws attention to his position within the oral tradition. He is apparently a genuine oral poet who privileges oral informants as sources for his poetry, unlike ballad antiquarians like Walter Scott, who generally do not name them. Although Hogg was not unique in this respect in the wider Scottish context – for instance, Allan Cunningham also named many of his lower class oral informants as peers – the implied message is that he is the only authentic member of the *Ettrick oral tradition* operating in the literary sphere at this time. Scott, as Hogg suggests in *The Queen’s Wake*, is certainly not part of this tradition, not least because he is an educated, aristocratic poet as oppose to an autodidactic, lower class poet of the people like himself. (See Chapter Three for a discussion of Hogg’s alternative cultural history in *The Queen’s Wake*, in which he dismisses all the educated poets who have tried to take their place at the head of the Ettrick oral tradition down the years). As McLane notes, in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*,

Scott typically named his polite, genteel informants (as he did his antiquarian correspondents) as opposed to the many unnamed workers (blacksmiths, dairymaids, gardeners etc) [who] did not matter as nameable individuals [but were] only significant as [members] of a class of persons: rural labourers in possession of oral tradition. (McLane 2008, 58 & 39).

Hogg's naming of the old woman is thus a culturally-loaded act, and yet another example of his ongoing endeavour to differentiate himself from Scott. The oral element of Hogg's early literary ventures is also emphasised by 'Z', who attests that his *Scots Gentleman*, a play in five acts, 'never fails to excite the most lively burst of laughter, when read to an Ettrick audience' (132). Aside from drawing attention to the close relationship between oral and written literature in the work of Hogg, this description succinctly evokes the atmosphere of traditional Ettrick, thus reinforcing the fact that Hogg hails from a traditional community.

However, the next letter (also by 'Z') rather complicates Hogg's relationship with the world of Ettrick, thus foreshadowing the ambiguous depiction of his relationship with traditional culture and beliefs, which Hogg himself cultivates to such good effect later in his career. 'Z' recounts the story of the stir caused in the neighbourhood by a supposedly serious illness suffered by Hogg:

One person was telling another that Hogg's ghost (or wraith, as we call that nonentity) had been seen, and from thence they inferred that he could not possibly live, and whispered something about sheets being got ready to lay him out in when dead. However, as he observed, by the help of an able physician, and strength of a good constitution, he disappointed both them and the ghost. (134)

Through his recovery, aided by modern medical science, Hogg quite literally confounds the traditional beliefs of Ettrick. This subtle undermining of traditional beliefs would later become a trademark of Hogg's narrative technique. This passage provides an early indication of Hogg's ability to see beyond the borders of his birthplace, something his enlightened critics, who generally viewed him as nothing more than a socio-cultural specimen, did not think him capable of.

'Z' ends the fifth letter by mentioning (or perhaps plugging) *The Mountain Bard*, the first of 'two publications of Mr Hogg's nearly ready for the press' (132). It certainly seems that he has been laying the foundations for Hogg's first major book,

but more specifically, for the prefacing ‘Memoir’. Readers of the *Scots Magazine* letters must, by this point, have been desperate for more information about the mysterious Ettrick Shepherd – ideally from his own mouth. At the end of the sixth and final letter, ‘Concluding Particulars of the Life of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd’, ‘Z’ invites Hogg himself to write an account of his life:

I have now, Mr Editor, given you a few particulars of Mr Hogg’s life, and as I have for the most part confined myself to a recital of such things as I have heard directly from him, or as have come under my own observation, I think they will be pretty correctly stated. If in any thing I am wrong, I hope Mr Hogg will be so good as to give a true statement, and that he will forgive the liberty I have thus taken with his character and writings. (136)

Just as each of the earlier letters elicited further responses from ‘readers’ of the magazine, so this final letter encourages Hogg himself to write an account of his life (or perhaps a revised, collated edition of the *Scots Magazine* letters). This final letter thus acts as a kind of invitation and a justification for the ‘Memoir’.

The *Scots Magazine* letters thus seem to rather conveniently open the way for Hogg to ‘give a true statement’ of his life, and thus correct any errors made by the ‘various’ correspondents. They justify the need for a memoir by the author himself, and this justification may well have been required. Certain conditions and limitations were placed on autobiographical writing in the early nineteenth century. As Marcus points out, ‘implicit provisos about what constitutes “valid” autobiography [...] based in part on the perceived cultural status of the autobiographer’ (Marcus 1994, 4) meant that a justification was often required for autobiographical writing, particularly if the subject came from the lower classes. The success of *The Mountain Bard* may well have depended largely on the prefacing ‘Memoir’, but the ‘Memoir’ itself emerged out of the interest generated in the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ through the *Scots Magazine* letters, which whetted the public’s appetite for information about the mysterious Shepherd-poet. This would appear to be the main function of the *Scots Magazine* letters.

The Legacy of 'The Ettrick Shepherd'

Unlike Pushkin and Goethe, who used their paratexts to distance themselves, as sophisticated modern poets, from the content of their books, and Scott, who distanced himself from the old ballads he was presenting through his antiquarian persona, Hogg had to use his paratexts to establish a clear association between himself, as a 'peasant-poet', and the material in his book. The best way to do this was to erect an elaborate autobiographical framework around his first major work. The apparent need for this highly functional paratextual apparatus was established through the *Scots Magazine* letters, in which interest in Hogg, but more specifically in the figure of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', is generated. These letters could even be read as early drafts of the 'Memoir'. Certainly, the themes, motifs and structures of the later progress narrative are all laid down in them (although Hogg may have merely appropriated and fleshed-out the contributions of the correspondents and incorporated them into his 'Memoir').

Foucault argues that 'the function of an author is to characterise the existence, circulation and operation of certain discourses in society [...] a discourse that possesses an author's name is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten'; however, 'its status and manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates' (Foucault 2001, 1627-28). The naming of Hogg on the title-page of *The Mountain Bard* fulfils the first of these functions, establishing Hogg as an 'author' and his text as a discourse 'not to be immediately consumed and forgotten'. However, it seems that this was not enough to justify the appearance of Hogg's text in the literary marketplace. His subsidiary naming as 'The Ettrick Shepherd' was also needed. The 'author-function' alone was not enough to reinforce 'the singular relationship that holds between [the] author and [the] text'; more detailed biographical information was required to help 'point to [the] figure who [was] outside and

preceded it' (Foucault 2001, 1623). The alignment of these two entities – Hogg and his Shepherd, one 'real', the other a literary construct – certainly helped Hogg break into the literary marketplace; however, this mode of paratextual self-representation would have severe repercussions. Hogg-the-Author has all-too often been lost behind the distorting shadow of the Shepherd, a paratextual entity he was compelled to give birth to at the outset of his career. This 'fiction contributing to his work' (Barthes 2001, 1473-74) – unlike those contributing to the work of Pushkin, Goethe and Scott – would often come to overshadow the author who had created it. The self-representational paratextual material attached to *The Mountain Bard* starkly demonstrates the 'peremptory potential of the paratext' (Genette 1997, 11).

Chapter Two

From Orality to Print: The Implications of Hogg's Autobiographical Act

The Mountain Bard Paratexts

The interest generated in the biography of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' through the *Scots Magazine* letters, in which the seeds of the 1807 'Memoir' are planted, provided Hogg with a clear justification for attaching a biographical sketch of 'himself' to *The Mountain Bard*. The 1807 edition of the book was published by Archibald Constable (1774-1827), who also owned the *Scots Magazine*. Constable was, at this time, becoming an increasingly powerful figure in the Edinburgh publishing world. As Duncan points out,

[He] played a key role in the institutional transformation of Scottish literature after 1800, in which it devolved from the academic infrastructure of the Lowland Enlightenment to an industrialising marketplace. As Edinburgh became the nation's main publishing center besides London, the curricular genres of moral and natural philosophy gave way to the booksellers' genres that would dominate the nineteenth-century trade—periodicals and novels. (Duncan 2007, 21)

As Duncan notes, Constable also financed the influential *Edinburgh Review*, had a share in Scott's *Minstrelsy* and remained 'the principal publisher of Scott's works until his own and Scott's ruin in 1826' (Duncan 2007, 20). Scott actually helped broker the deal for *The Mountain Bard* between Constable and Hogg. In a letter from 1803 a humble-sounding Hogg thanks Scott for introducing him to Constable:

I cannot express my gratitude for the deep interest you take in all the concerns of your poor Shepherd [...] I received a very flattering letter from Constable but am too sensible that it was wholly on account of the kindness you showed for me. (Hogg to Scott, dated 1 Jan 1803)¹

¹ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 31.

Thus, Scott's role in introducing Hogg into literary Edinburgh should not be underestimated; but neither should Hogg's willingness to play the part of the 'poor Shepherd' for the benefit of his literary benefactor. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Hogg and Scott had a complicated relationship.

Regardless of his own actual involvement in the *Scots Magazine* letters – Scott and Constable also probably played a part in their publication – Hogg now had a freer hand to use the paratexts to his first major work to flesh out the figure of the Shepherd (although the justificatory process is also carried over into the 'Memoir' itself). Hogg's sophisticated self-representation is apparent in every paratext in *The Mountain Bard*, including the 'Dedication', the 'Advertisement', the justificatory headnote to the 'Memoir', the 'Memoir' itself, and the head and explanatory notes to the ballads. Each of these paratextual devices feeds into, and reinforces, the specific version of 'the self' Hogg is attempting to present to his contemporary audience. However, this self-representation is a delicate task, and the underlying implications of it highly problematical in an Enlightenment context.

Hogg's autobiographical paratexts to *The Mountain Bard* seem to imply a move away from the Enlightenment conception of the traditional world, in which the individual is always submerged in the community, into what was perceived in the early- nineteenth century as the modern sphere of history and literary ownership. According to the Enlightenment stadial theory, he would seem to have progressed beyond the pastoral world of Ettrick; however, his enlightened critics continued to perceive him as being immersed in the 'primitive' age of tradition. Moreover, Hogg himself tacitly undermines Enlightenment ideas about the historicised polarisation between traditional and literary cultures. He narrates the story of his shift from traditional Ettrick into the literary marketplace (a story which he continues in the later

versions of the ‘Memoir’); however, since his entry into the literary sphere largely depended on his supposed place in the traditional one he also makes it clear that he has not really left the latter, or his past self, completely behind. While this past self was often used against him – as a way to marginalise him as nothing more than a living specimen from the age of pastoralism – it simultaneously helped him to justify his place in the literary marketplace. Through the *Mountain Bard* paratexts Hogg shapes a specific narrative out of his past life in order to make it conform to the message(s) he needs to send to his contemporary audience. From this point of view, ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ is a literary construct, a textual (re)creation of Hogg’s past and present selves designed specifically to get himself and his book a better reception in the literary-cultural world of 1807. The autobiographical paratextual framework erected around the book is, whatever else it may be, an elaborate fiction with a function.

The ‘Dedication’ and the ‘Advertisement’ to *The Mountain Bard*

The ‘Dedication’ and the ‘Advertisement’ each play an important part in Hogg’s self-representational paratextual production. The dedication of his book to ‘WALTER SCOTT, ESQ. SHERIFF OF ETTRICK FOREST, AND MINSTREL OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER’ succinctly establishes the importance of Scott’s *Minstrelsy* to Hogg’s own collection of ballad imitations. It sets it up as a kind of co-text, or, as Gilbert argues, ‘an answer to Scott’s project’ (Gilbert 2007, xx) by Hogg, who, working from inside the oral tradition, is seemingly better placed to present ballad material than the likes of Scott. However, the ‘Sheriff of Ettrick’ epithet is also highly significant (Scott was appointed Sheriff-Depute of Ettrick in 1799), lending as it does an air of authority to the book, with the establishment figure of Scott acting as Hogg’s literary patron. As

Garside suggests, while ‘Robert Burns was an important talismanic figure for Hogg in creative terms, Scott represented an essential conduit to the mainstream book trade and the world of polite letters in Edinburgh’ (Garside 2012, 22). It is interesting to note, however, that Hogg also declares himself Scott’s ‘FRIEND AND HUMBLE SERVANT’, a phrase which (unintentionally) foreshadows their rather complicated relations over the following few decades. Despite the difficulties inherent in their dual patron/friend relationship – Hogg often required the patronage of his friend, both in his literary and farming ventures – their friendship remained mostly warm and convivial. Hogg especially did not allow the fact that he and Scott came from different social backgrounds to impinge too much on their friendship, as this playful letter to him, from December 1803, suggests,

there is no publishing a book without a patron, and I have one of two in my eye [for a proposed collection of songs], and of which I will with my wonted assurance give you the most free choice. The first is Walter Scott esq. Adv. Sheriff depute of Ettrick Forest, which if permitted I will address you in a dedication singular enough [Hogg eventually dedicated *The Mountain Bard* to Scott]. (Hogg to Scott, dated ‘Ettrickhouse, 24 December, 1803’)²

Despite the importance of securing the patronage of Scott, the bantering tone of this letter suggests that Hogg viewed Scott as both his patron and his friend. However, the fact that Hogg requires the patronage of Scott hints at the kinds of constraints under which he was working. As Watt points out, literature had, by the early eighteenth-century, ‘largely passed from the control of patronage [to] the control of the marketplace’ (Watt 2000, 55-56), but Hogg, writing in the early nineteenth-century as a ‘peasant poet’, was not yet free to enter the marketplace on his own terms. He still needed the patronage of social superiors, be it aristocratic ones, such as the

² *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 40.

Buccleuchs,³ or literary ones such as Scott – not to mention the horde of publishers and editors in the literary marketplace of Edinburgh – to ratify his literary endeavours.

The other noteworthy detail in the ‘Dedication’ is the fact that Hogg signs it ‘THE AUTHOR’. This designation hints at the inherent irony at the heart of Hogg’s whole paratextual endeavour. His position in the literary world depended largely upon his supposed place within the traditional one. However, his act of autobiography, and his coming out as ‘an author’, could potentially have estranged him from the traditional world – or, at least, from the dominant Enlightenment conception of it. As McLane suggests, James Beattie’s *The Minstrel, or, The Progress of Genius* (1771) provides an interesting poetic model of Enlightenment preconceptions about the relationship between ‘modern’ literary-historical culture and the ‘ancient’ traditional world. *The Minstrel*, she explains, is as the title suggests,

a Progress Poem, a genre [which] flourished in the progress-minded eighteenth century, [it] follows the progress of the arts and sciences from antiquity onwards [...] In an influential innovation, [Beattie] encodes this trajectory via the development of a young minstrel-in-training, one shepherd Edwin, who after a childhood spent listening to a Beldame’s ballads and tales comes under the tutelage of a hermit-historian. Inspired in part by Percy’s *Reliques* and [Beattie’s] theory of “ancient minstrels”, *The Minstrel* ushers its hero from a “rude age” – in which Edwin imbibes “tradition hoar” from the Beldame – to Enlightenment, presided over by the hermit-historian and the “historic muse”. Just as the hermit supplants the Beldame as pedagogue, so too the hermit’s discourse, “History”, supersedes the Beldame’s discourse, “Tradition”. (McLane 2008, 26)

From an Enlightenment viewpoint, Hogg, like Beattie’s shepherd, risks leaving the traditional world behind by writing his ‘Memoir’ and thus stepping into modern literary-historical culture. According to stadial historical theory – which, as Duncan explains, ‘theorised cultural difference as the effect of historical difference articulated along a universal developmental axis—the set stages of social evolution from savage tribalism to commercial society’ (Duncan 2007, 101) – Hogg would seem to have

³ Hogg’s first story collection in prose, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales* (1818), features a dedicatory poem to Lady Anne Scott of Buccleuch (see Chapter Four of this study for a further discussion of this dedication and Hogg’s relationship with the Buccleuchs).

‘progressed’ beyond his former shepherd-poet self and become a professional writer, an author.

As Mack points out in ‘Hogg’s Politics and the Presbyterian Tradition’, the stadial theory of historical development

was deeply influenced by Adam Smith’s famous theory that there are four stages in the development of human society: nomadic hunting, shepherding, agriculture and commerce [...] This four-stage scheme encouraged the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment and their heirs to understand history in terms of the progress of society from one stage of development to another, more advanced stage [...] Enlightenment-influenced assumptions of this kind underlie the series of major novels in which Walter Scott explores the historical processes and events through which the Scotland of the Enlightenment era had arrived at its happy state of advanced modernity. (Mack 2012, 64-65)⁴

If one applies this historical theory to the person of Hogg then the writer who gains entry into the literary marketplace in 1807 is not necessarily the same individual whom he describes in the 1807 ‘Memoir’, and yet it is this amalgamated version of his past self upon which Hogg’s place in the literary world depended. However, although the ‘Memoir’ is undoubtedly a form of progress narrative there is no suggestion therein that Hogg has left traditional Ettrick or his ‘past self’ completely behind. Instead he brings the shepherd-poet along with him, not least to help him consolidate and justify his place in the literary sphere. But, paradoxically, it is on the basis of this entity that he was so often marginalised in Enlightenment Edinburgh. The cultural implications of Hogg’s autobiography were, in short, highly complex.

As is the case with Beattie’s poem, the story of Hogg’s rise from shepherd to author could be said to adhere to certain elements of stadial theory; however, by refusing to leave his past self behind he ultimately confounds this model of socio-historical progression. But then so did many of his Enlightened critics who, unlike Beattie with

⁴ *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, 64-72).

his fictional shepherd, refused to accept that Hogg had progressed beyond the supposedly ‘rude age of Tradition’. Historical progression was all very well in theory but not, it seems, in practice. When confronted with a living example of their theory – in the guise of the shepherd-turned-author – Enlightenment Edinburgh turned away: it could not, apparently, be applied to individual lives. However, as Mack notes, it continued to impinge upon Hogg’s literary career in a negative way:

Adam Smith’s four-stage theory of social development presented certain difficulties for someone like Hogg, who had grown up within the traditional oral culture of Ettrick Forest. Smith’s theory pigeonholed such a person as the product of a society at a comparatively primitive and backward stage of social development: a society so backward, indeed, that in the late eighteenth century it was still under the spell of absurd ancient superstitions about witchcraft, and still in awe of supernatural creatures such as ghosts and brownies. (Mack 2012, 65)

Hogg thus faced being trapped in the primitive past by Smith’s theory, as taken up by the post-Enlightenment world of Edinburgh. However, as Mack suggests, Hogg doggedly refused to adhere to ‘a simple binary distinction between the world of the Enlightenment (seen as straightforwardly true and valid), and pre-Enlightenment culture (seen as backward and deluded)’; but neither did he ‘adopt a strategy of establishing a simple binary distinction of his own, in which pre-Enlightenment culture would be presented entirely positively, and the Enlightenment [...] entirely negatively’ (Mack 2012, 65). Instead, he set out to challenge such assumptions by flitting between these worlds – quite literally, as he kept up his farming interests in Ettrick for the rest of life, while travelling, or writing, to Edinburgh to take care of his literary business – and by finding worth in both. As Alker and Nelson argue, ‘by the end of his life he had created a new model of the working-class author as self-made man, capable of making his way in the marketplace without renouncing his station in life’ (Alker and Nelson 2012, 57).

The ‘Advertisement’ to *The Mountain Bard*, which follows directly after the ‘Dedication’, highlights the continued importance of his social background, represented by the figure of ‘Ettrick Shepherd’, to Hogg. In this discreetly functional paratext he attempts to get back on message; that is, to distance himself from the professional sphere of authorship by shrewdly playing up his pastoral background. The ‘Advertisement’ reveals that the list of ‘*liberal and highly respectable Subscribers*’ has unfortunately not been attached to the book as ‘*the circumstances of the Author, detained by the duties of his situation in a remote part of the country, has prevented [him] collecting their names [original italics]*’⁵ The reference to the ‘circumstances of the Author’ is designed to remind readers that Hogg is a working shepherd, whose ‘duties’ take him to ‘remote parts of the country’ – a phrase which conjures up images of rugged, Romantic landscapes – where the Shepherd is supposedly plying his trade. Whether or not Hogg was actually engaged in such pursuits at this time is beside the point; all that matters is the implied message it sends about his background. However, once again, the epithet of ‘author’ muddles the imagery of the rustic shepherd in the lonely landscape. This implied clash – between the Shepherd and the author behind him – is a recurring feature of the ensuing ‘Memoir’.

Scott’s Headnote to the ‘Memoir’

The justificatory process begun in the *Scots Magazine* letters is taken up again in the book itself, in the introductory headnote to the ‘Memoir’, which was written

⁵ As Hogg reveals in the 1821 ‘Memoir’, his publisher Constable only agreed to publish *The Mountain Bard* if he could first ‘procure him 200 subscribers’ (205), a none too flattering proposition for a would-be author. Hogg notes that he ‘did not like the subscribers much; but, having no alternative, I accepted the conditions (205). As Hughes points out, ‘Publication by subscription was characteristic of peasant poets, displaying the author as a suppliant of the well-to-do rather than as a professional writer’ (Hughes 2007, 159). Also see Garside’s discussion of ‘publication by the subscription method’ in ‘Hogg and the Book Trade’ (Garside 2012, 21). In this article Garside draws attention to the conflicting aims of Hogg and Scott in relation to the first edition of *The Mountain Bard*, suggesting that ‘the project fell awkwardly between the one-off subscription volume that Scott had primarily in mind and the independent breakthrough to literary recognition that Hogg craved’ (Garside 2012, 23).

anonymously by Walter Scott, who refers to himself simply as ‘*the friend, to whom Mr Hogg made the following communication* [original italics]’ (7). In the guise of an editor-type figure, he sets out to defend and justify the appearance in print of the ensuing memoir. He argues that although ‘*the incidents are often trivial [...] the efforts of a strong mind, and vigorous imagination, to develop itself even under the most disadvantageous circumstances, may be always considered with pleasure, and often with profit*’ (7). Scott here reinforces the ‘triumph over the creative odds’ justification for the memoir, before going on to apologise for Hogg’s ‘*self complacency*’ in regard to his ‘*victory over difficulties*’, pointing out that the ‘*author’s scanty opportunities of [attaining] knowledge must be taken into account, after all, it is only with the full attainment of knowledge that we discover how little we really know*’ (7). The implication is that a better-educated person would not be as ‘self-complacent’ about their ‘victories over difficulties’ as the less well-bred Hogg seems to be.

Scott’s headnote is decidedly defensive; he is clearly anticipating adverse criticism. The fact that he chooses not to reveal his identity could even hint at his own uncertainty regarding the propriety of Hogg imposing his memoirs on the public. He was perhaps right to be worried, and to present his defence pre-emptively. The book was appearing at a time when ‘charges of vanity and egotism [were] regularly levelled against practitioners of autobiography [...] by reviewers and critics’ who frowned upon ‘the self-eulogising nature and function of self-biography’ (Marcus 1994, 13). This is perhaps why the ‘Memoir’ is presented in the form of a letter, a ‘communication’ sent to Scott who ‘*had some hesitation in committing it to the public*’ (7). It would be rather presumptuous for a shepherd to write a memoir of his life without prior encouragement (herein lies the significance of the *Scots Magazine* letters). Thus, in the opening sentence Hogg suggests that the letter has been solicited

by Scott, that he is merely responding to the latter's 'request, which [he can] never entirely disregard' (7). The form in which it is presented is designed specifically to fend off charges of 'vanity and egotism'; after all, he is merely responding to the request of Scott, his social superior. He even attempts to pre-empt accusations of 'vanity and egotism' by jokingly attesting that he 'find[s] it impossible to divest [himself] of an inherent vanity' (7) when writing about himself.

However, there were other constraints on autobiographical writing in the early-nineteenth century. As Marcus points out, many 'reviews [also] stressed the need for absolute distinctions between popular autobiography and the "seminal autobiographical texts" [in order to] consolidate the view that only certain lives were worthy of record' (Marcus 1994, 30). It seems that the function of Scott's headnote is to pre-emptively answer these kinds of criticisms, and to establish that Hogg's life, which represents 'the efforts of a strong mind, and vigorous imagination, to develop itself under the most disadvantageous circumstances', is 'worthy of record'. Hogg's own uneasiness about publishing a memoir of his life is suggested in an 1803 letter to Scott (about a proposed collection of songs) in which he not only asks him if he would 'transcribe' a letter which would give 'an impartial account of my manner of life and education', but also put 'He for I' (Hogg to Scott, dated 'Ettrickhouse, 24 December, 1803),⁶ thus making it appear that it was Scott, and not Hogg himself, who had written it. Scott refused to do this, but did later write the justificatory headnote to *The Mountain Bard*. This suggests that he was also aware of the potential pitfalls of Hogg publishing his own memoir without some form of socio-cultural justification. Indeed, Scott had already acted as a cultural arbiter for Hogg by passing on his *Highland Journeys* letters to the editor of the *Scots Magazine* in 1802. In his covering

⁶ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 40.

letter ('To the Editor of the Scots Magazine') – which was published in the October 1802 edition of the magazine, just above the first of Hogg's letters – Scott assures readers that Hogg was 'literally bred in the humble station of a shepherd' (3), and that the letters 'are really and unaffectedly the production of a shepherd of Etterick [sic] Forest' (4). He also provides a justification for the appearance in print of Hogg's letters, arguing that an uneducated individual such as Hogg might be able to 'discover beauties' (3) in things and places which would be neglected by more educated travellers (although he also concedes that he may 'mistake gewgaws and trinkets for real treasures' (3)).⁷

Scott's paratextual defence of the 1807 'Memoir' was largely successful, at least at first. However, as Garside points out, voices would later be raised against the perceived presumption of a person of Hogg's rank imposing his autobiography onto the public. As he notes, John Wilson's scathing review of the 1821 version of the 'Memoir' is 'very much conducted on class lines, with repeated assertions that an Ettrick swine-herd should not be writing biography at all' (Garside 2009, 31).⁸ Hogg's sardonic assertion at the beginning of the 1832 version, attached to *Altrive Tales*, that he 'like[s] to write about [him]self: in fact, there are few things which I like better' (11) is perhaps a barbed response to those critics who frowned upon his autobiographical writings.

Viewed in this light, Scott's rationalising headnote is an extremely important paratext. Towards the end of it he presents an anthropological justification for Hogg's

⁷ See *Highland Journeys* (2010), ed. by H.B. de Groot, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 3-4. As Hughes points out in *James Hogg: A Life*, the first in this series of letters 'concerns itself very much with the Edinburgh literary scene and Scott features prominently as its author's patron' (Hughes 2007, 48).

⁸ Garside, Peter (2009). 'Hogg and Scott's "First Meeting" and the Politics of Literary Friendship', in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, ed. by Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, Farnham: Ashgate, 21-41.

‘Memoir’, similar to the historicist justification he put forward for his *Minstrelsy*. He justifies his own ballad collection by arguing that even though the material therein may not have much inherent literary value in and of itself, the ballads yet afford a ‘curious picture of manners and customs’ from a long-gone age. This, he argues, is their real worth. Similarly, the value of Hogg’s ‘Memoir’, he suggests, lies in the ‘*pastoral scenes*’ depicted therein, especially for those unacquainted with such things. As he points out, ‘*it may afford some amusement to find real shepherds actually competing for a poetical prize, and to remark some other peculiarities in their habits and manners*’ (7). He is directly addressing the genteel readers of Enlightenment Edinburgh here, who he assumes know nothing of the pursuits of the labouring classes. Who would have thought shepherds would compete in poetic competitions? It is surprisingly delightful little details such as these which, according to Scott, justify the appearance of the memoir of a shepherd in print. It will provide, he suggests, the educated elite of Edinburgh with a window into a strange, new milieu, into the ‘peculiar habits and manners’ of ‘real shepherds’ who are actually living in the contemporary world of the early nineteenth-century Scottish borders. This rationalisation for the ‘Memoir’ could also be extended to the whole book, which is of interest precisely because it is written by an uneducated shepherd – presumably the winner of the ‘poetical prize’ referred to by Scott. According to this view, whatever one may think of its literary merit one cannot deny that it is a curious artefact.

Thus, judging by Scott’s headnote, the world of the Borders where shepherds compete for poetical prizes may be just as primitive, remote and ‘peculiar’ to genteel readers as the worlds depicted in the *Minstrelsy* ballads. As is the case with these ancient relics, it is the supposed otherness of the world described in the ‘Memoir’ which makes it worthy of perusal. This is the justification for publishing it. The

headnote ends with the following exclamatory statement, ‘*these Memoirs ascertain the authenticity of the publication, and are, therefore, entitled to be prefixed to it*’ (7). Here once again is the familiar argument that Hogg’s background, as described in the ‘Memoir’, entitles him to produce the traditional-type poems presented in his book; and, once again, ‘the explanation of [the] work is sought in the man who produced it’ (Barthes 2001, 1466). The final clause of the above sentence is also very revealing; that is, the assertion that the memoirs are ‘entitled to be prefixed to the book’. It sounds as if Scott, as a member of the literary establishment but more generally as Hogg’s social superior – the sheriff of Ettrick Forest no less – is here giving his seal of approval to them. He has read the shepherd’s account of himself and has judged it a ‘life worthy of record’. Scott could thus be said to have ratified Hogg’s whole autobiographical project via his headnote, the main argument of which centres on the relationship between Hogg’s biography and his work. The life, Scott’s headnote argues, authenticates the work. Hogg is therefore justified in attaching his ‘Memoir’ to his book of ballads.

Hogg’s Precarious Entry into the Literary World

In Enlightenment Edinburgh the worlds of oral tradition and literary culture were perceived as dichotomous; however, Hogg, unlike Edwin, the shepherd in Beattie’s *The Minstrel* – who progresses from oral culture and ‘tradition’ into the modern sphere of literary history – is keen to suggest that, despite his progress from shepherd to author, he is yet part of oral Ettrick. However, arguing for a place in the literary world on the basis of one’s place in an oral-traditionary one was a precarious, and potentially self-defeating, process at the time Hogg was writing. As Penny Fielding points out, in the Enlightenment construction of orality,

The oral is always something other: of writing (speech), of culture (the voice of nature), of the modern (a pre-modern past). This phenomenon is particularly marked in the nineteenth-century, when some traditional foes of orality – urbanization, manufacturing technology, science – dominated that century's sense of its own value systems. In order that orality can be contained and managed, it is usually located elsewhere than in the temporal centre. Orality, it seems, is something more valuable dead than alive. (Fielding 1996, 4)⁹

Hogg was thus treading a perilous tightrope. Even if his rationale was successful he would probably still find himself an 'outsider' in the literary world; at best a kind of self-declared curiosity, like one of Scott's ballad-relics.

Nonetheless, Hogg's 'Memoir' could be said to be performative in two distinct ways. Most obviously, Hogg is using words to bring 'The Ettrick Shepherd' into existence; however, via this process of inscription he is simultaneously bringing Hogg-the-author into being and thus entering the modern sphere of print culture. In *How to do Things with Words* (1962) J.L. Austin proposes a distinction between two broad types of language: 'constative' and 'performative'. The former refers to an utterance which names some existing state of affairs, which can be verified as true or false (for instance, "it is cold outside"), while the latter term refers to an utterance which is not merely descriptive, but which actually brings about the thing it names (such as a marriage vow). Performative language not only says something but also does, or performs, something at the same time. Although Austin excluded literature from his discussion of the performative some later critics have argued that all literary texts are performative in that they use words to bring new worlds into existence. For instance, as Abrams points out, 'a number of deconstructive theorists have proposed that the use of language in fictional literature [...] is in fact a prime instance of the performative, in that it [...] brings about, or brings into being, the characters, action, and world that it describes' (Abrams 2005, 302).

⁹ Fielding, Penny (1996). *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture, and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Thus, the mere writing and publishing of Hogg's 'Memoir' could be viewed as a highly performative act. He is using words to move himself, in the guise of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', from the anonymous world of oral mediation – anonymous, that is, according to interlinking Romantic and Enlightenment conceptions of orality, which, as Catarella suggests, draw attention to the supposed 'polarisation between Art and Nature' and emphasise the 'essential collectivity of oral poetry' (Catarella 1994, 470)¹⁰ – to the modern world of the professional author. Barthes argues that 'the author is a modern figure [...] emerging from the Middle Ages [which] discovered the prestige of the individual'; before this time, he suggests, 'the responsibility for a narrative is never assumed by a person but by a mediator, whose performance [...] may be admired but never his genius' (Barthes 2001, 1466). Through his paratexts Hogg is most certainly taking 'responsibility' for his book, as well as emphasising through the 'Memoir' his (albeit supposedly native) 'genius'. His paratexts also clearly 'point to the figure who is outside and precedes' (Foucault 2001, 1623) the book – specifically to the 'Ettrick Shepherd' but also, by implication, to the author behind the Shepherd. From an Enlightenment point of view, Hogg would seem to be leaving the world of oral tradition behind, even as he attests to his place within it, and entering the sphere of the 'Author-God' and the realm of the 'author-function'. But, as Fielding suggests, acceptance into this world on the basis of his oral-traditional credentials would have been a delicate manoeuvre for a supposedly 'oral poet' like Hogg, who risked being marginalised as a result of his socio-cultural position.

However, despite social obstacles and cultural prejudices, oral poets such as Hogg were increasingly penetrating the literary marketplace in the early-nineteenth century. (Burns was largely responsible for opening up this niche in the marketplace at the end

¹⁰ Catarella, Teresa (1994). 'The Study of the Orally Transmitted Ballad: Past Paradigms and a New Poetics', in *Oral Tradition*, 9/2 (1994), 468-478.

of the eighteenth-century). They were often viewed as representatives of a Romanticised ‘other’ world of artless spontaneity, which seemed to be rapidly disappearing in the early-nineteenth century in the face of professional authorship and the ever-burgeoning literary marketplace. Yet, as Fielding notes, despite the fashionable position of ‘orality’ in literature at this time, the two modes were often cast as binary opposites by contemporary critics:

There is a problem with speech and writing in this kind of cultural context: they tend to get locked into binary oppositions which frustrate their evaluation. To put it more simply: speech and writing can exist neither separately nor together. Value remains necessary as orality and literacy both constitute valuable assets, but because they are locked together, to value one results in the devaluation of the other. (Fielding 1996, 43)

Although this view is no longer prevalent – it is, of course, possible to value writing and orality equally in relation to one another – the increased intermingling of the two forms in the early-nineteenth century, a period when ‘literacy became a currency through which social criteria could be measured’ (Fielding 1996, 19-20), encouraged judgements on their respective cultural values. It is thus no surprise that more cultural value was generally attached to writing than to ‘orality’, or that ballad editors such as Scott used paratextual devices to contain the ballads they were presenting firmly in the past, and privileged written history over oral history.

However, in spite of these kinds of cultural value-judgements the idealised figure of the spontaneous oral poet became an important symbol in the Romantic period, as a kind of alternative to the sophisticated man-of-letters. As Finnegan notes, ‘for all the apparent contradiction, the feeling that through folk popular art one could reach back to the lost period of natural spontaneous literary utterance [...] was basic to the Romantic attitude’ (Finnegan 1977, 34). Yet, as McLane points out, reproducing a spontaneous oral performance in print is itself a highly artistic process; a traditionally-inclined poet can perhaps evoke the feel of an oral poem in print, through ‘a variety of

orality-effects', but this 'literary orality [is] not, of course, orality *per se*' (McLane 2008, 22). Without the performance aspect, and the variations among performers and performances which is a natural consequence of this mode of delivery, an oral poem cannot be fully actualised in print. This is perhaps what Hogg's mother was referring to when she told Scott that, by printing the ballads in his *Minstrelsy*, he had 'spoil't them awthegither [...] They were made for singing an' no for reading' (see 1832 version of Hogg's 'Memoir', p.61).¹¹ The literary poet may catch some of the feel of such a poem through 'orality effects', but the very process of transposition to the printed page will fundamentally change its very nature.¹² One could draw a parallel here between the attempt to transfer an oral poem into written form, and the attempts of oral poets to transfer themselves into print culture. A writer such as Hogg may endeavour to present himself as a traditional poet who simply happens to be operating in the literary world, but just as oral poetry cannot be wholly reproduced in print – it is always changed into something else – so the oral poet cannot cross over into the realm of print unscathed. This is especially true for Hogg, who was entering a literary world in which the demarcation between writing and 'orality', and the cultural-value attached to each, was considerably more sharply defined than it is today. He, too, must attempt to become something else: namely, an author. But this new designation brought with it a lot of cultural baggage, and left Hogg uncertainly poised between two (supposedly) different spheres.

However, as Scott's headnote to *The Mountain Bard* suggests, Hogg's rise from oral Ettrick to the literary marketplace of Enlightenment Edinburgh is a story which

¹¹ See Valentina Bold's 'Scott, Child and the Hogg Family Ballads', in *The Ballad in Scottish History*, ed. by Edward Cowan, Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press.

¹² However, as Finnegan suggests, this does not mean that 'writing is incompatible with, or even destructive of, oral literature [...] In practice, interaction between oral and written forms is extremely common, and the idea that the use of writing *automatically* deals a death blow to oral literary forms has nothing to support it' (Finnegan 1977, 160).

merits being told. Yet it is just that: a story. But more than this, it is a story with a clear function, which must stay in sync with its wider purpose if it is to achieve its aim. This means that the implications of the telling of the story, especially in regard to Hogg's uncertain position in both traditional and literary contexts, must remain unspoken. However, the linear narrative arc used to tell the story of Hogg's 'rise' from rustic-shepherd to author is too simplistic. It does not reflect on the implications of this rise in regard to the new position(s) he now occupies in society, nor on the fact that the exact nature and stability of them is uncertain and potentially insecure.

There has been much critical debate down the years about Hogg's uncertain position between Enlightenment Edinburgh and traditional Ettrick, both in terms of its effect on his fiction and its wider cultural ramifications. The notion, advanced by Mack, Duncan and others,¹³ that Hogg, for better or worse, had one foot in the literary world and one in the traditionary-oral one is both attractive and persuasive, especially from a modern critical perspective. In *James Hogg*¹⁴ Douglas Gifford argued that Hogg's position between these two worlds often had a negative effect on his literary output (see Gifford 1976, 8-9, 10-11 & 22-28); while Elaine Petrie later suggested that 'it would be completely wrong to try and separate Hogg the folklorist from Hogg the literary man, for the two interests were with him from the beginning and they blend and co-operate in an imaginative synthesis' (Petrie 1980, 293). The latter view probably best represents current critical thinking about Hogg's intermediate position between the very different cultural spheres of literary Edinburgh and oral Ettrick, especially in terms of its effect on his writing. However, the contemporary difficulties and prejudices faced by a writer like Hogg in his attempts to negotiate these two

¹³ Duncan (1994, 38 & 2004, xi-xli), Mack (2002, xi-xx & 2012, 64-67), Garside (2002, xxxiii-liv) and Alker and Nelson (2009, 10-12 & 2012, 55-63) all discuss Hogg's cultural negotiations between Edinburgh and Ettrick, as well as his subversions of the relationship between them.

¹⁴ Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1976.

cultural categories/worlds, which, as Fielding points out, were often perceived to be in ‘binary opposition’ to each other (Fielding 1996, 43), should not be underestimated. Hogg manages to bring the worlds of Ettrick and Edinburgh into some sort of alignment through the story of his progress from the former to the latter, but the unity and coherence of the ‘Memoir’ only serves to highlight the fact that it is a constructed narrative with a clear functional purpose (namely, to help ease and facilitate his movement between the traditional cultural world and the literary one). Moreover, the structural pattern imposed on the progress narrative is complicated, perhaps even contradicted, by the need to foreground his continued immersion in traditional Ettrick; after all, it is on the basis of his place in this latter world upon which his position in the literary marketplace depended.

Hogg, Ettrick and the Explanatory Notes to ‘The Pedlar’

The depiction of a contemporary Ettrick which remains steeped in traditional beliefs even in Hogg’s own day is apparent throughout the paratexts to the 1807 edition of *The Mountain Bard*. The atmosphere of this world permeates the pages of the entire book, not least through the many headnotes and explanatory notes that Hogg places around his ballads. The main function of this paratextual framework is to accentuate Hogg’s continued links to Ettrick oral culture, not only in order to assert his poetic authority in relation to the ballads, but also to imbue his book with the atmosphere of this still-thriving traditional community. The explanatory notes, in particular, provide a vivid sense of this world. Petrie argues that these notes

practically have a claim as a significant work in their own right. As in the case of “Thirlestane” [see pp. 77-80 of *The Mountain Bard*], they provide the succinctly-arranged bones of a short story which is in a sense an independent text in itself [...] The notes are precisely the type of material which Hogg was to present, perhaps rather more smoothly, in *The Shepherd’s Calendar* [his 1829 tale collection]. His later apparent transition from poetry to short prose is [thus] not so

much a real transition as a slight shift in emphasis. (Petrie 1980, 125)¹⁵

Edith Batho even suggests that ‘the most enjoyable things in *The Mountain Bard* are the footnotes, which contain some of Hogg’s best stories’ (Batho 1927, 58).¹⁶ Some of the notes to the ballads could certainly be read as stories in their own right (this is particularly true of the notes to ‘The Pedlar’); however, their paratextual purpose in relation to the rest of the book should not be underestimated. They are thus perhaps best-characterised as rough drafts of stories, or short documentary-style sketches, which, taken together, form the backbone of Hogg’s paratextual self-representation in the ballad section of his book (that is, they are used to underpin his self-representation in the prefacing ‘Memoir’).

One of the main functions of the notes attached to the ballads is to emphasise the survival of supernatural beliefs, and the continued existence of a flourishing traditional Ettrick, in early nineteenth-century Scotland. However, Hogg does not simply use these notes to endorse the traditional beliefs depicted in the ballads; on the contrary, he often takes a decidedly ambiguous position in regard to them, sometimes privileging the evidence of traditional informants, sometimes questioning it, in order to create a sense of narrative ambiguity. Although Hogg was not the first, nor the last, to use this technique in a Scottish literary context (Burns employed it to great effect in the late eighteenth-century, and Robert Louis Stevenson in the late nineteenth-century), his deployment of it in his paratextual material serves a specific function in terms of his self-representation. While Burns, for instance, creates a sense of ambiguity in a poem such as ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ in order to heighten its poetic effect, Hogg does it in his paratexts to further his public persona – to bolster his position as a kind of middleman between supernatural Ettrick and rational Edinburgh. In short,

¹⁵ Petrie, Elaine E. (1980). Unpublished PhD. Thesis, *James Hogg: A Study in the Transition from Folk Tradition to Literature* (University of Stirling).

¹⁶ *The Ettrick Shepherd* (1927), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hogg's ambiguous stance in relation to the supernatural is not only apparent *within* his poetry and prose, although he routinely deploys it there too; it is also used in his paratexts as a key indicator of his cultural position.

The notes attached to the second ballad, 'The Pedlar', attempt to evoke the atmosphere of 'supernatural Ettrick'. Through them Hogg infuses the ballad with a whiff of traditional Ettrick – the world from which he, as the 'Ettrick Shepherd', hails. In the headnote to 'The Pedlar' Hogg, or, to be more precise, a pseudo-version of Hogg (somewhere between the Shepherd and the Author), declares that 'this ballad is founded on a fact, which has been magnified by popular credulity and superstition into the terrible story which follows' (26). The clash here between 'fact' and 'popular credulity and superstition' is never fully resolved, either in the ballad itself or in the accompanying notes (although the final stanza argues that the 'facts' of the story are so well-attested that they must be true). The ballad certainly appears to have some foundation in history. The first explanatory note reveals that the female protagonist, Lady Thirlestane, is a real historical personage, and that her descendant, Lord Napier (1758-1823), currently resides in the 'baronial castle of the Scotts of Thirlestane' (31), which is the setting for the opening scene of the ballad. The note thus forms a kind of link between the current inhabitant of the castle and the one depicted in the ballad, which adds an air of historical authenticity to the story by suggesting that the fictional version of Lady Thirlestane in the ballad may have been just as 'real' as the living, breathing Lord Napier.

This note also provides topographical details about the location of the castle, which is 'situated high on the banks of the [river] Ettrick' (31), thus positioning the story firmly in the locale of Ettrick. It also makes it clear that the castle, like the mill (the other main setting), 'is still on the old site' (31), thus drawing attention to the fact that

the landscape and buildings which form the backdrop to the supernatural action of the ballad are still visible in present-day Ettrick. Hogg seems to be inviting readers to visit these scenes,¹⁷ as he would later do in a more macabre context with Robert Wringhim's grave, which in his article 'A Scots Mummy'¹⁸ he insists is situated on top of Cowan's Croft, right on the border of Lord Napier's land (although it turns out that this is a piece of narrative misdirection, perhaps intended to throw antiquarian-collectors, such as the Editor of *Confessions*, off the trail). This technique of using real places as backdrops for his stories – in order to create a sense of narrative ambiguity about where exactly the fictional world ends and the real one begins – would become a recurring feature of Hogg's fiction. Ettrick certainly contains many monuments to the supernatural worlds of Hogg's writings. The details about the location of the mill and the castle in the notes to 'The Pedlar' provide a solid connection between the Ettrick depicted in the ballad and contemporary Ettrick, where the supernatural past remains physically present, embedded in the very landscape. The area around the mill, a later note reveals, remains a proverbially unlucky and uncanny place, where 'few in the parish durst go to [...] after sunset' (34). However, the ghost of the pedlar has become a member of the community; he apparently 'once came so near two men in the twilight that they familiarly offered him snuff' (34). It appears that the living and the dead are neighbours in Ettrick, and that the supernatural cannot be contained in the past.¹⁹

¹⁷ In 1810 Hogg published 'Highland Adventures' in his magazine *The Spy* (the sketch also appeared in his story collection *Winter Evening Tales* in 1820), a satire on the vogue for literary tourism in the Trossachs, specifically around Loch Katrine, in the wake of Scott's poem *The Lady of the Lake* (1810).

¹⁸ Published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (August 1823) in preparation for the publication of *Confessions* the following year.

¹⁹ Bold discusses place and the supernatural – specifically, liminal places where the dead and the living are brought into sharp context – in relation to modern storytellers such as Stanley Robertson in 'Twenty-First Century Storytelling: Context, Performance, Renaissance', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. by Berthold Schoene, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 371-380.

This sense of continuity between the cultural environment depicted in the ballad and the contemporary world of Ettrick is also evoked by Hogg's reference in his headnote to his sources, and to his mode of retelling the tale, which, he attests, is 'here related, according to the best informed old people about Ettrick, as nearly as is consistent with the method pursued in telling it' (26). Hogg here foregrounds the fact that he received the tale from oral informants (old people, who were perceived as living links to a supposedly dying tradition, were considered particularly good sources for ballad material), and that even though he has had to accommodate their oral versions to the new printed context in which he is presenting them, he has tried to stay true to their oral recitations. His privileging of the oral over the written, even as he transposes the former into the latter, is here made manifest. Hogg ends the headnote by once again reinforcing the continued sway of traditional beliefs in Ettrick, informing his readers that his informants 'believed' that 'every part' of the story was the 'absolute truth' (26).

This eagerness to convey the idea to his readers that Ettrick remains a traditional community is even more apparent in the other explanatory notes. The second note's explanation of the meaning of the phrase 'dead bell', which Hogg explains signifies a 'tinkling in the ears, which our peasantry in the country regard as a secret intelligence of some friend's decease' (31), leads him into telling a story of his own personal experience with this belief, when two servant girls mistook the sound of him running his fingers around a glass for it. This 'trifling anecdote' (31) provides Hogg's readers with further evidence of the continued sway of 'superstitious awe' (31) among the peasantry of Ettrick. And, although Hogg suggests that he himself may not adhere to this superstition – it is, after all, he who makes the sound of the 'dead bell' – the anecdote yet places him firmly among the kind of people who do still adhere to these

types of beliefs, even though he does not necessarily share in all of them. However, he suggests that in his life in Ettrick he is completely surrounded by them:

Amongst people less conversant in the manners of the cottage than I have been, it may reasonably be suspected that I am prone to magnify these vulgar superstitions, in order to give countenance to several of them hinted at in the ballads. Therefore, as this book is designed solely for amusement, I hope I shall be excused for detailing a few more of them, *which still linger among the wilds of the country to this day, and which I have been eye-witness to a thousand times*; and from these the reader may judge what they must have been in the times to which these ballads refer [my italics]. (32)

He is keen to suggest that he is not exaggerating the supernatural beliefs of the people among whom he resides. As he attests here, they yet ‘linger’ among his fellow country people, even ‘to this day’, and he, as an insider ‘conversant in the manners of the cottage’, has ‘been eyewitness to them a thousand times’. Once again, he highlights his own immersion in this ‘other’ world of ‘vulgar superstition’. He does not endorse these types of beliefs, as the phrase ‘vulgar superstitions’ suggests; he simply flags up their continued influence in Ettrick, as well as his own personal experience of them. And, even though in the final clause of this statement about the continued sway of traditional beliefs in Ettrick he admits that they may not exercise quite the influence they would have had in the times when the ballads are set, in the very next paragraph he asserts that many ‘are still current’ and that ‘the belief in wraiths, ghaists, and bogles, is little or nothing abated’ (32). In short, Hogg’s Ettrick remains a traditional community, steeped in supernatural beliefs. And although he may be able to see beyond some of these beliefs, he yet remains a member of this community. He is both an Ettrick insider and an ‘eye-witness’ reporting on the strange customs and beliefs of his own community for the benefit of those not ‘conversant’ with such outlandish places.

In the following anecdote he discusses some of the supernatural beliefs of his fellow shepherds, assuring his readers that ‘there is scarcely a shepherd in the whole

country, who, if he gets one of his flock dead on the Sabbath, is not from thence certified that he will have two or three more in the course of the week' (32). Ettrick shepherds are also, he tells his readers, always careful to shut the 'bught [sheep pen] door' in the evening in order to keep the 'witches and fairies' from dancing 'in it all night long' (32). Hogg scoffs somewhat at this notion, wryly pointing out that 'the bught is commonly so foul [that] the witches could not find a more inconvenient spot for dancing on the whole farm' (32). However, he assures his readers that 'many [Ettrick shepherds] still adhere to the custom' and that he himself was 'once present when an old shoe was found in the bught that none of them would claim, and they gravely and rationally concluded that one of the witches had lost it, while dancing in the night' (32). Once again, the point of the anecdote is to establish the survival of such beliefs in Ettrick, as well as to position himself in the centre, albeit somehow 'above', this traditional community which yet believes in the existence of witches.²⁰ Hogg portrays himself as a peculiarly well-placed witness, able to report accurately on the beliefs of Ettrick (as he is part of the community and thus understands it as an outsider never could), but also as one able to see beyond it (and thus able to rationalise it for his educated audience). He is casting himself as decidedly reliable and well-informed eye-witness, part of an existing traditional community, but yet as someone who is also able to step outside of its bounds. One cannot help but relate this stance to the wider implications of Hogg's whole self-representation, which simultaneously relies on his supposed place in the traditional world even as it silently charts his shift from it to the literary one, and from oral to print, and from mediator to author. It could be argued that none of these transitions was ever fully achieved.

²⁰ In *The Terror That Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centred Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions* (1989), David Hufford analyses the communication of the folkloric belief in 'The Night Hag' (a form of incubus) within the Canadian province of Newfoundland.

However, the overt function of these notes is to embed the ballads in traditional Ettrick; to infuse the book with its beliefs and superstitions. It is worth noting, as Hogg points out, that these superstitions are not confined to the ‘vulgar’ (that is, the common) members of Ettrick society. In his next anecdote he tells his readers, though ‘it will scarcely be believed’, that

there are very many families in Ettrick and its vicinity, and some most respectable ones, who have, at some period in the present age, been driven to use very gross incantations for the removal of [a strange infection which affects cow’s milk, making it unfit for use], which they believe to proceed from witchcraft. (33)

According to this, superstitious beliefs are adhered to in almost every strata of Ettrick society; even respectable farmers are apparently subject to it. And even Hogg himself appears to believe in the efficacy of these cattle incantations, arguing that

the effects of these [incantations] are so apparent on the milk in future, and so *well attested*, that the circumstance is of itself sufficient to stagger the resolution of the most obstinate misbeliever in witchcraft, if not finally to convert him [my italics]. (33)

Hogg certainly did believe in the efficacy of some rather unconventional cures, as evidenced in his sheep-farming and veterinary manual *The Shepherd’s Guide*, published by Constable in 1807. For instance, as a cure for the ‘Broxy’, an affliction affecting young sheep, he recommends the following:

First, if the animal is found in time, let him give it a severe heat by running; if this do not cure it, nothing that I am acquainted with will. However unfavourable this may appear, let him hunt it well, and follow after it that it lie not immediately down on leaving it; or, if it will lie down, let it be in a house. Many shepherds have discovered this by chance, who yet are ashamed to be the first to acknowledge it. (39-40)²¹

Whether or not Hogg also believed in supernatural cures like the one described above in the passage about the cattle incantations is an open question; however, the phrase ‘well-attested’ from that passage puts one in mind of a strikingly similar phrase from the final stanza of ‘The Pedlar’, which, as Gilbert notes, ‘departs abruptly

²¹ Hogg, James (1807). *The Shepherd’s Guide*, Edinburgh: Constable.

from ballad narrative to address the reader directly' (Gilbert 2009, 99).²² In other words, it is a paratextual device. The poet-narrator attempts to influence his readers' interpretation of the ballad, particularly in regard to its supernatural content, by giving them a little 'word of advice' (Genette 1997, 11) on how it should be read:

Ca't not superstition; wi' reason you'll find it,
 Nor laugh at a story attestit sae weel;
 For lang ha'e the *facts* in the forest been mindit
 O' the ghaist an' the bane o' the pedlar's heel. (31)

The poet-narrator here employs a similar argument to that used by the writer of the notes in his anecdote about the cattle incantations, the efficacy of which, the latter argues, is 'so well attested' that there must be some truth in it. Likewise, the poet-narrator argues that the story of the ghost of the pedlar is 'attestit sae weel' that it cannot simply be dismissed as a vulgar superstition. On the contrary, it is a 'fact'. It has become such through its mere survival. It has been 'mindit' (remembered) and 'attestit sae weel' (repeated) so many times down the years that it can no longer be doubted. This, suggests the poet-narrator, is sufficient evidence to vouch for its authenticity, just as the evidence of the 'respectable' farmers should be sufficient proof of the efficacy of the cattle incantations – even for the 'most obstinate misbeliever in witchcraft'.²³

This argument is taken up, and perhaps slightly undermined, in the headnote to 'Mess John'. The pseudo-Hogg paratextual author tells his readers that this ballad is

²² Gilbert, Suzanne (2009). 'James Hogg and the Authority of Tradition', in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, ed. by Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, Farnham: Ashgate, 93-109.

²³ This claim is reminiscent of the one made in his 1803 account of his visit to St Mary's Isle in his *Highland Journeys* letters:

I had the superstition to go and drink of the holy well, so renowned in that country, among the vulgar and superstitious like me, for the cure of insanity in all its stages, and so *well authenticated* are the facts, the most stubborn of all proofs, that even people of the most polite and modern ways of thinking are obliged to allow of its efficacy in some instances. (*Highland Journeys* (1802-1804), ed. by H.B. de Groot, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 107)

based on a 'popular story' which is 'always told with the least variation, both by young and old, of any legendary tale I ever heard' (53). The comment about the 'lack of variation' in the tale is strange in an oral context, given that this is an integral part of oral transmission; however, the argument here is that the tale is more reliable on account of the fact that it has changed so little over the years. The next sentence complicates this argument by suggesting that the tale is 'founded on facts' but 'with a great deal of romance added' (53). Although this undermines the previous argument, it is more in synch with oral tradition, in which variation and addition play such a key role. The writer of the note then uses the same phrase he had earlier used in his note to 'The Pedlar'; however, he uses it in a more stand-offish way, suggesting that 'if tradition can be in aught believed, the murder of the priest seems well attested' (53). The tone and syntax is more cautious here than in the earlier note. He then further qualifies the reliability of oral transmission by revealing that he does 'not know if any records mention' (53) the incident, the implication being that the tale may need to be authenticated by written records. Despite the note of doubt detectable to the 'Mess John' headnote, in the 'The Pedlar' and its accompanying notes Hogg once again appears to be personally validating a superstitious belief, albeit rather ironically, with the phrase 'well authenticated' serving a similar linguistic function to the phrase 'well attested' in the later *Mountain Bard* defence of supernatural beliefs.

The remainder of the above 'Pedlar' note is then given over to a rather defensive defence of Ettrick's continued adherence to traditional beliefs. The writer of the note argues that although

many are apt to despise their poor illiterate countrymen for their weak and superstitious notions; I am still of the opinion, that, in the circumstance of their attaching credit to them there is as much to praise as to blame. Let it be considered that their means of information have not been adequate to the removal of these; while, on the other hand, they have been used to hearing them related, and attested as truths, by the very persons whom they were bound, by all the laws of nature and

gratitude, to reverence and believe. (33)

This note suggests to readers that most Ettrick people have received little or no education outside of the traditional lore passed down to them by their elders (aside perhaps from their religious/biblical education). It thus reinforces the wider paratextual depiction in *The Mountain Bard* of Ettrick as a closed, traditional community. Clearly, the characterisation of the people of Ettrick as ‘poor illiterate countrymen’ is exaggerated for effect as it clashes with the description of the ‘respectable farming families’ of Ettrick (presumably families like the Laidlaws), who were certainly not ‘illiterate’, but who yet also adhered to traditional beliefs such as the cattle incantations.

And yet this note does appear to tacitly question the reliability of oral transmission, of the supposedly ‘factual’ nature of ‘well-attested’ stories. The ‘illiterate countrymen’, it suggests, have not enough learning to question the stories ‘attested to them as truths’. This stance clashes somewhat with the staunch defence of oral transmission in the final stanza of ‘The Pedlar’, and in the anecdote of the cattle incantations, in which stories that are ‘well-attested’ become ‘fact’ simply through the process of repetition. However, the above note also draws attention to the power invested in traditional stories via the mere process of oral transmission.²⁴ This power, it suggests, is particularly palpable when the transmission occurs within the family unit; that is, when the stories are being passed on ‘by the very persons whom [one is]

²⁴ Later in the nineteenth-century, Thomas Hardy offers an apt description of the sway of oral storytelling in his short tale ‘A Tradition of Eighteen Hundred and Four’ (1882) (*Wessex Tales*, London: Wordsworth, pp. 23-28). After transcribing an oral tale about his informant’s late night encounter with Napoleon on the English coast in 1804, the narrator closes his frame by asserting that,

thanks to the incredulity of the age, his tale has been seldom repeated. But if anything short of the direct testimony of his own eyes could persuade an auditor that Bonaparte had examined these shores for himself with a view for a practicable landing-place, it would have been Solomon Selby’s manner of narrating the adventure which befell him on the down. (28)

Hardy’s narrator suggests here that if only his readers could *hear* Selby tell his tale they might believe it; that is, his mere ‘manner of narrating the adventure’ would convince them.

bound, by all the laws of nature and gratitude, to reverence and believe'. Later in his career Hogg himself admits to the influence of this type of domestic storytelling on his own life and writing. In his *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott* (1834) Hogg recalls his spirited response to Walter Scott's attack on his supposedly "exaggerated and unfair picture" (50) of the covenanters in his 1818 novel *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*: "I dinna ken Mr Scott. It is the picture I hae been bred up in the belief o' sin ever I was born and I had it frae them whom I was most bound to honour and believe" (50-51).²⁵ Hogg's use of the word 'bred' here is interesting, suggesting a family-based honouring of the past, specifically in relation to traditional beliefs and history. (Compare this to the assertion in the *Scots Magazine* letters that he was 'bred a shepherd'). It seems that Hogg's vocation, as well as his belief system, were bred into him from an early age, that he was born and raised to be a shepherd and to reverence the traditions passed down to him by his family. Thus, although Hogg may not be well-bred in a social sense like Scott, his breeding gives him more authority in regard to traditional material. Hogg clearly aligns himself with the 'poor illiterate countrymen' of Ettrick, as described in the note to 'The Pedlar', specifically in order to differentiate himself from the aristocratic 'outsider' Scott, who is neither part of oral culture nor the traditional community of the Borders.

Hogg's depiction of his relationship with these cultural worlds fluctuated throughout his career: sometimes it (quite literally) paid to present himself as being totally immersed in them; at other times it benefitted him to take a step back from them. In the following 'Pedlar' note there is a telling phrase which once again appears to undercut the reliability of oral transmission. In order to account for anomalies in stories the note suggests that tradition 'adapts' and 'adds' (33), that the original story

²⁵ Hogg, James (2004). *Anecdotes of Scott* (1834), ed. by Jill Rubenstein, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

is changed and adapted as it is passed along the oral chain, as in a game of Chinese whispers. This process is a recurring theme in many of Hogg's later stories. For instance, in 'John Gray o' Middleholm' (1820) the narrator describes how the story of John's madness 'had spread so rapidly, that it never could be recalled or again be assimilated to the truth, and it is frequently related as a fact over all the south of the country to this day' (238-39).²⁶ It also takes one back to the headnote to 'The Pedlar', which states that the ballad is 'founded on a fact, which has been magnified by popular credulity and superstition into the terrible story which follows' (26).

This process of adding, adapting and varying the content of stories is to be expected in a tradition in which variation plays such an integral role. As Gilbert points out, 'oral traditions *adapt*' (Gilbert 2007, xxv). However, in the final stanza of 'The Pedlar' and the accompanying notes the fundamentally artistic processes of adaptation and variation get confused with notions about empirical 'truth'. Sometimes the oral chain of transmission authenticates the 'facts' of the story; sometimes it complicates and adds to the bare facts of it. The telling of the tale either authenticates the 'facts' upon which it is based, or undermines them through the implied process of variation and addition. Hogg is playing around with notions about truth and what exactly constitutes reliable evidence. However, the argument that the mere repetition of a story, and the fact that it is 'well-attested', can somehow make it 'true' seems flimsy, as the above note's implied critique of the process suggests. Hughes has argued that Hogg's interest in history was 'that of a creative writer and not that of a historian' (Hughes 1997, 13).²⁷ Something similar could perhaps be argued of his interest in oral

²⁶ Hogg, James (2004). 'John Gray o' Middleholm', in *Winter Evening Tales* (1820), ed. by Ian Duncan, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 229-258.

²⁷ Hughes, Gillian (1997). 'Hogg's Use of History in *Tales of the Wars of Montrose*', in *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 8 (1997), 12-23.

transmission. It is often the process of variation, of adapting and adding to the bare ‘facts’ of a story, which is inherent in oral transmission, that interests him the most.

However, as Hawthorne suggests in his tale ‘Sir William Phips’ (1830), oral storytelling may even sometimes reveal more about the past than written history, especially in relation to historical figures:

Few of the personages of past times (except such as have gained renown in fire-side legends as well as in written history) are anything more than mere names to their successors [...] The knowledge, communicated by the historian and biographer, is analogous to that which we acquire of a country by the map – minute, perhaps, and accurate, but cold and naked, and wholly destitute of the mimic charm produced by landscape painting [...] Fancy must throw her reviving light on the faded incidents that indicate character, whence a ray will be reflected [...] on the person to be described. (7)²⁸

The narrator claims that ‘fire-side legends’ may thus tell us more about historical personages – ‘without an absolute violation of truth’ (7) – than written history.

Hogg’s characterisation of John Graham of Claverhouse in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* was largely based on such ‘fire-side legends’, while Scott’s in *Old Mortality* was drawn primarily on written history (see Chapter Four for a further discussion of these competing characterisations of this controversial historical figure).

Thus, far from undermining the authenticity of oral transmission, the process of adaption and addition may in fact be enlightening. Hogg, in his peculiar position as an ‘insider’ who can yet somehow see beyond the bounds of oral Ettrick (unlike some of his ‘illiterate countrymen’), presents himself as someone who can see both sides of the argument. Although stories which are submitted to the process of oral transmission do indeed change and adapt with each telling, this does not necessarily make them any less ‘truthful’. Goethe alludes to this fact in his description of oral storytelling in his novel *Elective Affinities* (1809):

The story-teller paused, or rather had already finished before he noticed that

²⁸ *Selected Tales and Sketches*, ed. by Michael J. Colacurcio, London: Penguin, 7-14),

Charlotte was greatly agitated; indeed, she rose and with a gesture of apology left the room. She knew the story. Those things had happened in reality to the Captain [...] not entirely as the Englishman had described them, it is true, but in the chief features there was no distortion, only in the details it had been developed and embellished, as is usually the case when stories of that kind pass from mouth to mouth and finally through the imagination of an intelligent and sensitive storyteller. In the end scarcely anything and almost everything is as it was. (194)²⁹

As this suggests, the role of individual storytellers in the oral chain, who each add their own idiosyncratic twists to tales, is also an integral part of oral transmission. The authenticity of oral storytelling stems from the process of transmission itself, which carries with it a kind of challenge to Enlightenment assumptions about the nature of truth. Hogg's story collection *Winter Evening Tales* (1820) ends with an oral informant, Davie Proudfoot, telling the pseudo-Hogg narrator that, should he ever tell the tale of Tibby Johnston's wraith, which is "sae aften spoken about in this country", to anyone and "they should misbelieve it, you may say you heard it from auld Davie Proudfoot's ain mouth, and that he was never kend for a liar" (508).³⁰ The book ends abruptly on this rather defiant note, which reads like a challenge to those who would question the reliability of oral transmission. Likewise, in the notes to 'The Pedlar', Hogg ultimately privileges traditional transmission; or, at the very least, is determined to give it a fair hearing.

The explanatory note on the minister who exorcises the ghost of the pedlar in the ballad, the Rev. Thomas Boston (1677-1732), introduces another historical personage into the fabric of the fictional world, once again blurring the line between history and fiction. This note comes down clearly on the side of oral transmission. It reveals that, even though it is well-known in Ettrick that 'the great and worthy Mr Boston...laid this ghost' to rest, the 'people of Ettrick are much disappointed at finding no mention made of it in his memoirs' even though there are 'some [people] yet alive, [who] have

²⁹ Trans. by David Constantine, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

³⁰ Hogg, James (2004). 'Tibby Johnston's Wraith', in *Winter Evening Tales* (1820), ed. by Ian Duncan, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 499-508.

heard John Corry, who was his servant, tell the following story [in which Boston's role in ridding Ettrick of the ghost is corroborated by Corry's eye-witness account]' (34). Corry's oral account, which people 'yet alive' (living witnesses) heard from his own mouth, clearly has considerably more currency in Ettrick than the written memoirs of Boston, in which his supernatural encounter with the ghost is not even mentioned. Embedded in the traditional account is an explanation of this omission: Boston did not want to be associated with such supernatural doings so he apparently told Corry that he "did not wish to be seen [at the mill]" and commanded him to "say nothing of it" (34). The real events have apparently been left out of the written records, and thus one must turn to the oral account for the 'truth'. Later in this same note Hogg tells the story of the *Bogle of Bell's Lakes*, which seems to corroborate the folk-belief that the bones of a murdered person must be found before their ghost can be laid to rest. In this instance Hogg places himself directly in the oral chain. The discovery of the bones happened 'in the author's remembrance' (35); he thus becomes one of the people 'yet alive' who can attest to the authenticity of the story. He ends by suggesting that this story provides empirical evidence of the folk-belief on which it is based; after all, ever 'since [the discovery of the bones] Bell's Lakes has been as free of bogles as any other place' (35). As with the story of the cattle incantations, physical evidence (the curing of the cows; the disappearance of the bogle) is used to corroborate supposedly supernatural beliefs (albeit it in a teasing, playful manner).

The Function of 'Traditional Ettrick' in *The Mountain Bard*

While the notes to 'The Pedlar' may not openly endorse traditional beliefs, neither do they dismiss them. On the contrary, in some instances evidence is produced to suggest that there may well be something in them. However, the main function of the notes is

not to investigate the value or reliability of such beliefs, but merely to argue for their continued sway in Ettrick, and to imbue the book with a sense of them. In this sense, they have a clear artistic function: to create the feel of a traditional world of superstition in order to get readers in the correct frame of mind for the ballads themselves. But Hogg's representation of Ettrick as a traditional community is also part of the wider self-representation of himself as a traditional poet. The importance of his social background is obviously integral to this self-representation, but no more important than the story of his rise from this background is to his progress narrative. As mentioned earlier, Hogg conceived of 'the traditional' very much along class lines. As he makes clear in *The Queen's Wake*, only autodidactic peasant poets like himself, who were born and raised in lower-class farming communities such as Ettrick, are fully qualified to pass on traditional material (see Chapter Three for more on this issue). Hogg thus needed Ettrick to be as traditional as possible (that is, as different from the worlds of most of his educated readers), not only to back up his presentation of himself as a rustic-shepherd-poet, but also to make the narrative arc of his life story appear even more astounding. But, as the notes suggest, it was also important for him to highlight that he had not simply left Ettrick behind, or turned his back on its beliefs and values, or its notions about what constituted historical truth.³¹ He thus had to perform a delicate balancing act by suggesting that although he may have progressed beyond the borders of traditional Ettrick, he yet remained immersed in its culture. In short, his new role in society as a professional author had not cut him off from his roots. But, moreover, his depiction of 'traditional Ettrick' had to conform to the wider message he wanted to send to his readers about the type of artist he was.

³¹ In the headnote to 'Thirlestane' he admits that he has not 'had access to [any] records for the purpose of ascertaining the facts' of the story, but is instead relying on what 'the old people tell us', which he believes is 'for the most part pretty correct' (79).

However, Ettrick was not quite as ‘traditional’ or cut-off from the rest of Scotland as Hogg’s picture of it suggests. Although it is a remote rural community, encircled by precipitous mountains, and difficult to reach in winter, as even present-day visitors must attest, it is not and never was quite so secluded from the outside world as is generally accepted. Just as the stereotypical view of the Bronte sisters’ apparently isolated Haworth background has been exploded by critics like Juliet Barker,³² so too assumptions about Hogg’s Ettrick must be scrutinised. Many early critics accepted Hogg’s depiction of Ettrick at face value. For instance, in her 1927 study of Hogg, Batho reinforces the significance of Hogg’s background to his writing:

[Hogg] was fortunate in the place of his birth, in the midst of that Border country which rings with history and romance, where every stream and hill has a tale to tell even to those whose knowledge comes too much from books [...] In these remote districts, almost cut off for most of the year from the outer world, there were still strange beasts and apparitions about.
(Batho 1927, 5-6)

Hogg apparently comes from a strange, supernatural world, cut off for most of the year from civilisation.³³ Batho’s highly romanticised view of Ettrick may be dated, yet it remains an important motif in popular conceptions about Hogg and the kind of traditional community from which he was supposed to hail. It was this version of Ettrick that Hogg himself accentuated in his writings, and which was so integral to his elaborate self-representations.

However, by the early nineteenth-century the bright lights of Enlightenment Edinburgh shone right down into remote Border communities like Ettrick, where they profoundly influenced the everyday lives of its inhabitants. The mountains of Ettrick could no more keep Edinburgh out than they could keep Hogg in. Border

³² Barker, Juliet (2001). *The Brontes* (1994), London: Phoenix Press.

³³ In *Centre and Periphery in Modern British Poetry* (2005), Andrew Duncan argues that, in spite of a cultural bias in favour of urban settings, many of the finest British poets of the second half of the twentieth-century have come from the fringes of the British Isles; that is, from rural communities which are perceived by urban cultural elites as being isolated. This kind of place-based cultural bias is detectable in Batho’s romanticised, and slightly patronising, view of Hogg’s Ettrick.

communities like Ettrick were in a state of flux at this period. As Petrie explains, the outside world was increasingly impinging on remote Border communities like Ettrick, which had already ‘moved quite a distance away from the old closed traditional environments’ (Petrie 1980, 17) by the time Hogg became an author. The fact that Edinburgh was the legal centre of the region suggests that Hogg was certainly not the only member of his community who was required to make regular journeys to the capital (as Petrie points out, ‘the sons and daughters of some of the better-off farmers received part of their education [there]’ (Petrie 1980, 17)). Moreover, the introduction of modern farming methods, the rise of manufacturing industries, and the spread of literacy and education, which was already having a huge impact on traditional culture, suggests that the ‘traditional environment was neither so secure nor as untroubled by external influences as Hogg in retrospect may have thought’ (Petrie 1980, 21). Hogg’s retrospective view of Ettrick may even be specifically tailored to fit in with his paratextual self-representation. Traditional Ettrick was more valuable to him than modernising Ettrick. It was very much in his interest to present Ettrick as a traditional community.

Thus, perhaps Hogg’s Ettrick should, first and foremost, be conceived of as a fictional construct³⁴ – that is, as yet another ‘fiction contributing to his work’ (Barthes 2001, 1473-74) – much like Hardy’s Wessex. In the ‘Preface’ to *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) Hardy describes his imaginary region of Wessex, which is

³⁴ In *Lectures on Literature* (ed. by Fredson Bowers, New York and London: Harcourt, 1980), Vladimir Nabokov asserts that

we should always remember that the work of art is invariably the creation of a new world, so that the first thing we should do is to study that new world as closely as possible, approaching it as something brand new, having no obvious connection with the worlds we already know. When this new world has been closely studied, then and only then let us examine its links with other worlds, with other branches of knowledge. (Nabokov 1980, 1)

based on his native Dorset, as ‘a partly real, partly dream country’ (393).³⁵ Michael Irwin argues that in Hardy’s ‘Wessex tales the detail may be accurate in terms of Dorset’s past, but the total effect is frequently larger and more intense than the everyday life of that country, as a dream may be larger and more intense than reality’ (Irwin 1999, xii).³⁶ Likewise, Thomas Crawford suggests that the worlds of the ballads in *The Mountain Bard* contain ‘elements of the real Borders of tradition and history, as absorbed from oral informants, [but] fused into what might be termed an ideal, metaphysical Borders forged in the smithy of the poet’s imagination’ (Crawford 1988, 90).³⁷ Perhaps this description should be extended to include the world of the Borders depicted in the paratexts of *The Mountain Bard*. Hogg’s depiction of traditional Ettrick therein certainly serves an artistic function, reinforcing the worlds of the ballads by suffusing an atmosphere of supernaturalism through the pages of the book. And while the version of Ettrick depicted in the paratexts may not be quite as fictional as the ones depicted in the ballads, neither is it a picture of the real Ettrick. It is, like the ‘ideal, metaphysical Borders’ of the ballads, a new version of a real place ‘forged in the smithy of the poet’s imagination’. But this world, poised somewhere between fiction and reality, has not merely been created for an artistic purpose, as is the case with the worlds of the ballads. The version of Ettrick propagated by Hogg in *The Mountain Bard* also serves a specific paratextual function. It feeds into, and reinforces, his highly functional representation of himself therein; and this self-representation is used to justify the appearance of his works in print.

³⁵ *Far From the Madding Crowd*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan, Penguin Classics, London: Penguin.

³⁶ ‘Introduction’ to *Wessex Tales*, London: Wordsworth.

³⁷ Crawford, Thomas (1988). ‘James Hogg: The Play of Region and Nation’, in *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 3*, ed. by Douglas Gifford, Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 89-106.

Hogg's Assertion of his Poetic Authority in the 'Memoir'

The foregrounding of his pastoral background, his lack of learning and his 'native genius' form the three most important strands in Hogg's self-representation in the 'Memoir'. All of these elements feed into his portrait of himself as a 'peasant-poet' and, in turn, reinforce his assertion of poetic authority in regard to traditional material. It is to this authority – his unique suitability to compose traditional-type material, which is itself based on his social background – that the paratextual material to *The Mountain Bard* appeals. This is the main justification for his writings appearing in print, and why the depiction of his social background is so crucial.

Thus, the 'Memoir' wastes no time in establishing the 'lack of education' thread of the life story. In the opening sentence, ironic reference is made to Hogg's '*extensive* [Hogg's italics] education' (7), which quickly and concisely backs up Scott's allusion in the headnote to the 'author's scanty opportunities of knowledge' (7). The later narration of his two short periods of education, each interrupted by being 'obliged to go to service' (8), and culminating in his first attempt at writing, is succinctly symbolised by the description of the 'horribly defiled sheets of paper with copy-lines, [with] every letter [...] nearly an inch in length' (8). He later relates that in his late teens, 'having never drawn a pen for such a number of years, I had actually forgotten how to make sundry of the letters of the alphabet' (11). This is the mountain the young poet had to climb, the 'victory over difficulties' (8) that the 'Memoir' describes.

But although Hogg had to teach himself how to read and write, the 'Memoir' suggests that his talent for composing poetry was innate; indeed, he claims therein that 'no sooner did I begin to read so as to understand, than, rather prematurely, I began to write [poetry]. The first thing that ever I attempted was a poetical epistle'

(11). Thus, the process of learning to read and write led naturally, if rather ‘prematurely’, to the composition of poetry. He did not have to learn to do this; it was apparently instinctive. The picturesque descriptions of how, where and when he wrote at this time reinforce this impression. The anecdote about the ‘singularity’ of the composition of *The Scotch Gentleman*, ‘a comedy in five long acts’ is a good example:

Having very little time to spare from my flock, which was unruly enough, I folded, and stitched a few sheets of paper, which I carried in my pocket. I had no inkhorn; but, in place of it, I borrowed a small vial, which I fixed in a hole in the breast of my waistcoat; and having a cork, affixed by a bit of twine, it answered the purpose full as well. Thus equipped, whenever a leisure minute or two offered, I had nothing ado but to sit down and write my thoughts as I found them. This is still my invariable practice in writing prose: I cannot make out one sentence by study, without the pen in my hand to catch the ideas as they arise. I seldom, or never, write two copies of the same thing. (12)

This depiction of his writing while tending his flock would immediately call up pastoral associations for most of his readers. The description of his mode of composition is also loaded with significance. He seemingly works on pure inspiration, writing down his ‘thoughts as he finds them’, when and where he can, using decidedly rustic tools. This method differs significantly from Wordsworth’s mode of poetic composition, as described in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. Although Wordsworth argues that ‘all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’, he suggests that these ‘powerful feelings’ can only give birth to poetry when they are ‘recollected in tranquillity’ (Wordsworth 2001, 661). Thus, according to Wordsworth, ‘good poetry’ is not composed, as it were, ‘on the spot’, but later, when the emotion can be more fully contemplated and examined. If his ‘Memoir’ is to be believed, this is most certainly not Hogg’s method, at least not when he is writing prose.

Hogg’s ‘Memoir’ also carefully distinguishes between processes of prose and poetic composition:

my manner of composing poetry is very different, and, I believe, much more singular. Let the piece be of what length it will, I compose and correct it wholly in my mind, ere I ever put pen to paper, when I write it down as fast as the A B C. When once it is written, it remains in that state; it being, as *you very well know* [this phrase reminds the reader that Hogg is apparently addressing Scott in a solicited letter] with the utmost difficulty that I can be brought to alter one line, which I think is owing to the above practice. (12-13)

Once again the notion that he is simply writing down verbatim, without garnish or correction, what he hears in his head reinforces the native-genius narrative. He apparently does not self-consciously craft his writing, but simply channels it; it comes to him fully-formed. He is thus not a modern artist, like a Pushkin or a Goethe, or even a Wordsworth, who carefully craft their literary products, but a folk artist. In discussing his mode of poetic composition he once again privileges the oral over the written, arguing that he first composes whole poems in his head before later writing them down ‘as fast as the A B C’. Writing is thus almost relegated to an afterthought. It plays no part in the composition of his poetry, as it does in his prose, during which he needs a ‘pen in his hand to catch the ideas as they arise’.

It is no coincidence that, as part of his presentation as an oral poet, he should relegate writing to a subsidiary role in the compositional process. But again his shift into print complicates his presentation of himself as a native genius and a traditional folk artist. During the Romantic period both these characterisations of artists were very much in vogue, especially in relation to lower-class poets. However, it was a highly proscribed designation. As Finnegan notes,

On the extreme view, “folklore” or “traditional poetry” [was perceived as] a “survival” from an earlier stage, a fossil preserved by unchanging tradition, not a part of functioning contemporary society or affected by conscious and individual actors. (Finnegan 1977, 39)

The contemporary folk artist’s art was viewed as artless and unconscious, meaning that poets such as Hogg did not always get as much credit as supposedly more self-conscious, educated artists invariably did. Such appellations as ‘natural-born-poet’,

‘native genius’, and ‘folk artist’ often carried with them little personal credit. These types of poets were often perceived simply as channels, through which traditional art flowed into the world, as it had done for hundreds of years. The art, if it was truly ‘art’, appeared almost in spite of the entity through whom it emerged.

And yet this perception about the miraculous spontaneity of the folk-artist’s art has much in common with perhaps the most influential conception of ‘the author’ in the Romantic period. As Andrew Bennett points out, the ‘idea that the genius is both himself and beyond himself is something of a commonplace in Romantic poetics [...] in the ideal author, in the genius, there is a mysterious disjunction of cause and effect’ (Bennett 2005, 60).³⁸ Great Romantic poets, it was argued, must somehow transcend themselves if they were to produce great poetry. And yet, as Bennett explains, the figure of the author remains crucial to this theory:

the discourse of the sublime puts the poet at the centre of aesthetic discussion while at the same time removing or annulling his or her autonomy and authority within an experience of divine afflatus, of inspiration [...] What this adds up to is the central paradox of Romantic authorship [...] while Romantic poetics focus on authorship, they also evacuate authorship of subjectivity. (Bennett 2005, 65-66)

The ideal Romantic author is both dead and alive: a ghostly presence, whose exact role in the compositional process is unclear and mysterious, but who yet remains central to the very theory that evacuates him. Therefore, the divinely-inspired Romantic poet ultimately receives credit for his divine inspiration unlike a folk-artist like Hogg, who was perceived as working within the confines of an age-old tradition, in which repetition is as important as invention.

Thus, the art of the folk-artist was supposed to be less individualistic, less original, and less inspired than that of the archetypal, divinely-inspired Romantic poet. This is perhaps why it is not just the *art* of the individual genius which is revered, as with

³⁸ Bennett, Andrew (2005). *The Author*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

spontaneous folk art, *but also the artist himself*. The individual genius, the owner of his literary products, was a privileged member of society in the early-nineteenth century, unlike the supposedly anonymous folk-artists of tradition, who, by Enlightenment and Romantic standards, were no more privileged than any other member of the traditional community from which they came. In his ‘Memoir’ Hogg is certainly attempting to present himself as a folk-artist from a traditional community, as well as a native genius, but through this very depiction of himself he is also seeking credit, recognition of his poetic powers and of his position in society as an individual artist and an ‘author’. He is thus challenging contemporary perceptions about the type of artist he should be. He is a native genius seeking out personal credit for his poetic creations in the world of professional authorship.

Although many of the core notions associated with the Scottish Enlightenment (stadial development, standardised English, scientific progress) seem to clash with some of the ideals of Romanticism (the veneration of primitive cultures and beliefs, the use of regional dialect, the importance of the isolated genius operating out with the confines of mainstream society), Murray Pittock argues that these two seemingly opposing theories were inextricably intertwined in early nineteenth-century Scottish literary culture:

The greatest works of Scottish Romanticism are so because they are in dialogue with the arguments of the Scottish Enlightenment [...] Macpherson’s Ossian poetry communicated the glories of ancient Scotland by speaking the teleological language of Enlightened civility [...] Similarly, Robert Burns presented himself [...] as both the collectivist voice of a traditional peasant community and the individuated spokesman of a radical and progressive poetry (Pittock 2011, 7-8)³⁹

Many of Hogg’s works could be read as being in dialogue with Enlightenment notions of truth – see, for instance, ‘Mr Adamson of Laverhope’ in *The Shepherd’s Calendar*,

³⁹ ‘Introduction: What is Scottish Romanticism?’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism*, ed. by Murray Pittock, 1-12.

in which the rational/scientific explanation of the narrator is undercut by the traditional/supernatural version of events in the tale – however, his mode of discourse was considered less delicate than the likes of Macpherson's. Although social snobbery played a part in contemporary perceptions about Hogg's supposed 'indelicate', his fiercely independent nature meant that his 'dialogues' with Enlightenment ideas, especially about notions of social propriety (see the discussion of 'Basil Lee' in Chapter Four), were perhaps less conciliatory than most other writers' of the period. He also failed to attain the kind of critical respect that Burns achieved in his own lifetime; however, he was more successful in his endeavour to establish himself as the preminent spokesman of his own specific community. Although contemporary criticisms of Burns were also coloured by his social background, his urbane mode of discourse – both in his personal relations with the Edinburgh literati, and in his poetry itself (Burns not only composed in Scots dialect but also in standardised English, and he was also adept at handling mainstream poetic forms such as the sonnet) – was generally more measured than Hogg's brand of irascible non-compliance. Hogg's refusal to kowtow to the Edinburgh literary elite is evidenced in the 1821 version of his 'Memoir', in which he openly criticises several of his editors and publishers (see the discussion of *Blackwood's* editor John Wilson's response to this in his review of the volume, discussed in Chapter Four).

Hogg's credibility in the literary sphere thus remained inextricably linked with his perceived social background, which he, in turn, actively used to establish his poetic authority with regard to traditional material. This was perhaps the most important part of Hogg's whole paratextual endeavour. McLane lists 'seven types of poetic authority circa 1800':

- 1 The authority of inspiration
- 2 The authority of anonymity

- 3 The authority of imitative authorship
- 4 Authoritative translation
- 5 Editorial authority
- 6 Ethnographic authority
- 7 Experiential authority (see McLane 2008, 185-196)

Aside from the ‘authority of inspiration’ (his ‘native genius’), Hogg also appeals to his ‘ethnographic’ and ‘experiential’ authority via his presentation of himself as a genuine member of the oral tradition, which, in turn, allows him to claim the authority of ‘imitative authorship’. At the beginning of the ‘Memoir’ he quickly establishes that all of his ‘progenitors were [...] shepherds of this country [Ettrick]’ (8), thus accentuating his ancestral heritage, and drawing attention to his ethnographic and experiential authority. He claims that he, like his father, was ‘bred to the occupation of a shepherd’ (8). He thus establishes himself in pastoral Ettrick, where he takes up his predestined role in the community. A few pages later he describes his method of gathering oral tales:

Being little conversant in books, and far less in men and manners, the local circumstances on which some of my pieces are founded, may not be unentertaining to you. It was from a conversation that I had with an old woman, from Lochaber, of the name of Cameron, on which I founded the story of *Glengyle*, a ballad; and likewise the ground-plot of *The Happy Swains*, a pastoral, in four parts. (12)

Here again Hogg accentuates his lack of reading, as well as the types of poems he was composing at this time (ballads and pastorals, the ‘correct’ poetic forms for an aspiring peasant-poet). But, more important than these details is the implied assertion of his ethnographic and experiential authority. As a shepherd of Ettrick he was well-placed to gather tales from oral informants such as Cameron; it was part of his everyday experience. Thus, as a result of his background, he is better placed than ballad-collectors such as Scott, who rely more on editorial authority, to gather material for ballads. The fact that the ‘Memoir’ is presented in the form of a letter to

Scott only reinforces the distinction Hogg is trying to establish between himself and his patron.

Likewise, the back-handed compliment he pays to Scott's *Minstrelsy* in his 'Memoir' highlights the line he is attempting to draw between himself and ballad editors:

I was astonished to find such exact copies of many old songs, which I had heard sung by people who never could read a song, but had them handed down by tradition; and likewise at the conformity of the notes, to the traditions and superstitions which are, even to this day, far from being eradicated from the minds of the people amongst our mountains. (15)

Hogg appreciates Scott's textual reproduction of 'exact copies' of 'old songs', and the 'conformity of the notes' he attaches to them, which explain the 'traditions and superstitions' depicted therein. He thinks that he is a good editor. However, unlike Hogg himself, he remains outside of a tradition in which ballads are 'handed down by tradition [...] by people who never could read a song'. Scott's editorial endeavour of attempting to find and transcribe definitive versions of old songs, and of surrounding them with contextualising notes, highlights the fact that he is not part of the traditional world of oral transmission – indeed, it suggests that he is disturbing the whole process by attempting to capture them in print. Whereas Hogg simply 'hears old songs' and stories in his everyday life, Scott has to hunt them out and only listens to them in order to transcribe and anatomise them. He thus does not understand oral tradition as Hogg himself does. This understanding means that he is better placed than the likes of Scott to imitate old ballads, as he suggests in the 'Memoir': 'I confess that I was not satisfied with many of the imitations of the ancients [in the *Minstrelsy*]. I immediately chose a number of traditional facts, and set about imitating the different manners of the ancients myself' (15-16). This comment comes towards the end of the 'Memoir', throughout which he has been reinforcing his ethnographic and experiential authority

through his description of his social background. These two forms of authority ultimately support this latter claim of ‘imitative’ authority. However, one must yet again note a slight discrepancy at the heart of Hogg’s self-representation as a genuine member of the oral tradition. As a direct consequence of his self-representation he can no longer appeal to the ‘authority of anonymity’, which is perhaps the very form of authority many of his contemporaries would have associated most with a folk-artist from the purportedly ‘anonymous’ world of tradition.

Hogg and Pseudo-Autobiography

One cannot help but notice that the means of Hogg’s self-representation clash somewhat with its ends. He is portraying himself as a ‘native genius’ who is immersed in the oral culture of Ettrick, but specifically in order to consolidate his place in the literary sphere, the world of the ‘individual artist’ and ‘the author’. This reminds one that Hogg’s ‘Memoir’ is a *fiction with a function*. Georges Gusdorf argues in his seminal essay ‘Conditions and Limits of Autobiography’ (1956) that all autobiographical works are works of ‘personal justification’ (Gusdorf 1980, 39).⁴⁰ This is particularly true for Hogg, who is reinterpreting his past life, ‘gathering up the fragments of a past self into a coherent, even teleological narrative’ (Burke 2008, 212). He is both the reader and the author of his own life. As such he is free to select only those details which fit into the narrative he is creating. As Northrop Frye argues in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), ‘most autobiographers are inspired by a creative, and therefore fictional, impulse to select only those events and experiences in the writer’s life that go to build up an integrated pattern’ (Frye 1957, 307).⁴¹ From this

⁴⁰ Gusdorf, Georges (1980). ‘Conditions and Limits of Autobiography’ (1956), trans. by James Olney, in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. by James Olney, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 28-48.

⁴¹ Frye, Northrop (1957). *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

point of view, it may often be rather difficult to distinguish clearly between autobiography and fiction. As Marcus explains, this uncertainty is reinforced by the breaking down of the generic barrier between the novel and autobiography in the eighteenth century as a result of novelists such as Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson incorporating ‘non-fictional literatures – conversion narratives, memoirs, biographies, histories, letters – into the novel form’ (Marcus 1994, 238).⁴²

It is perhaps significant that the ‘fictional memoir’ would become a favourite narrative form of Hogg’s, which he would return to again and again. He employed it in stories such as ‘The Renowned Adventures of Basil Lee’ (1820), ‘Love Adventures of George Cochrane (1820), ‘The Adventures of Captain John Lochy’ (1832), ‘Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of an Edinburgh Baillie’ (1835) and, of course, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), to name but a few. One is tempted to conclude that he learned about the fictional possibilities of this literary form after writing his own memoir, and that he recognised and exploited the thin line between these fictional memoirs and the memoirs of his own life. For instance, he sometimes inserts autobiographical details into the life stories of his fictional memoirists, thus blurring the distinction between the two even more. ‘Basil Lee’ and ‘George Cochrane’ certainly contain autobiographical elements. The ‘love adventures’ of the latter may even resemble those of the youthful Hogg; but he could not include ‘adventures’ such as these in his official biography. (In the 1832 version of the ‘Memoir’ prefacing *Altrive Tales*, however, he tells his readers that ‘those who desire to peruse my youthful love adventures will find some of the best of them in those of “George Cochrane”’ (55)). However, even more significant than the many

⁴² John Sturrock argues in his article ‘The New Model Autobiographer’ (*New Literary History*, vol. IX, 1 (Autumn 1977), 51-63) that ‘the near totality of all autobiographies can fairly be called pseudoautobiographies, formally distinct from their model by having “I” where it has “he” or “she”’ (Sturrock 1977, 51).

‘cross references from the literary life to the literary work’ (Hughes 2005, xliv)⁴³ are the generic and formal resemblances between Hogg’s non-fictional ‘Memoir’ and his fictional ones. Like Hogg, Basil, George and the other memoirists are each attempting to organise their past lives into a coherent narrative in an attempt to justify themselves in the present. This justificatory process is even more apparent when the autobiographical text is also a paratextual one, as is the case with Hogg’s own ‘Memoir’. And although this latter text is, officially at least, a piece of autobiographical non-fiction, the reflection cast back on to it by its fictional counterparts cannot be ignored. (This reflection is perhaps most apparent in *Altrive Tales*, in which ‘John Lochy’ follows directly on from the final version of the ‘Memoir’).

Thus, the line between autobiography and fiction, and between the paratextual self, the ‘real’ self, and the fictional selves of Hogg’s memoirists may not be as clear-cut as at first glance. However, recognition of the frayed border between these genres may open up the autobiographical text to a more active form of reading, to the kind of reading one employs as a matter of course in relation to more overtly fictional texts. Likewise, the fact that ‘the self’ Hogg creates in his ‘Memoir’ has a specific paratextual function may only encourage reading between the lines of it. And the best way to do this is to look for anomalies and suppressions in the life story, just as one would do in a fictional one.

Hogg’s Selective Description of his Early Reading

Hogg’s suppression of details that do not fit neatly into his narrative is exemplified in his highly selective description of his early reading. He reveals that when he was

⁴³ Hughes, Gillian (2005). ‘Introduction’, in *Altrive Tales*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xi-lxvii.

eighteen years old he first ‘got a perusal of [...] “The Gentle Shepherd”’ (10). This allusion to Allan Ramsay’s ‘The Gentle Shepherd’ (1725) is loaded with significance in terms of the literary niche into which he was attempting to place himself. As Bold points out, the hero of this idealistic pastoral comedy, Patie, ‘provides a prototype, national, peasant poet for Scotland [...] a neoclassical singing shepherd [and] a successful, self-taught scholar’ (Bold 2007, 28). This was thus highly appropriate reading material for a would-be ‘peasant-poet’. It is rather ironic that the inspiration for real flesh-and-blood Scottish peasant-poets like Hogg and Burns may well have been Ramsay’s fictional shepherd. Ramsay himself traded on his own ‘pastoral’ credentials through his literary output, encouraging autobiographical readings of his plays, and often playing down his education in order to present himself as ‘a genteel peasant poet [...] like his Gentle Shepherd’ (Bold 2007, 34), who is a cosy figure, the latest in a long line of pastoral poets.⁴⁴ This pastoral literary tradition dates back to the Greek poet Theocritus (c.308-c.240 BC), who wrote poems that evoked the life and rustic arts of Sicilian shepherds (‘pastoral: from the Latin *pastoralis* “relating to shepherd”, from *pastor* “shepherd”, *OED*). But even Theocritus himself was not part of this ‘poetical tribe’; he merely depicted them in his poetry. The ‘shepherd-poet’ was a poetic construct from the start, long before Ramsay, Burns and Hogg adapted it to a specifically Scottish context.

Despite the fundamentally fictional nature of the whole pastoral/peasant poet literary tradition, mention of Ramsay’s pastoral play would quickly and efficiently establish the correct associations in the minds of most of Hogg’s early readers.

⁴⁴ As Bold suggests,

Ramsay’s relatively humble background, and early career as a wig-maker, were enough to qualify him for consideration as an autodidact. [However] in the creation of a poetic myth Ramsay’s erudition [and parish school education] were, conveniently, forgotten [...] He was imagined, like his Gentle Shepherd [who, like Ramsay, had aristocratic descendents], as a pastoral aristocrat. (Bold 2007, 33-34)

Likewise, his reading of ‘The Life and Adventures of Sir William Wallace’, which, like ‘The Gentle Shepherd’, was readily available in cheap chapbook form, would emphasize his lowly social position at this time, just as his familiarity with Scott’s *Minstrelsy* would highlight his knowledge of ballad material. This reading list ties in nicely with the wider narrative of his early life. However, he does seem to go ‘off message’ when he mentions that the poetical epistle he wrote in 1793 ‘was mostly composed of borrowed lines and sentences from Dryden’s *Virgil*, and Harvey’s *Life of Bruce*’ (11). This double reference to Dryden’s *Virgil*, a conspicuously ‘high’ form of literature, and John Harvey’s popular poem, which was widely circulated in chapbook form, perhaps gives a more balanced view of Hogg’s early reading.

There is plenty of other evidence to suggest that Hogg may have been considerably better read at this time of his life than he cares to admit. As Hans de Groot points out, in his ‘Highland Journeys’ letters of 1802, 1803 and 1804, ‘Hogg quotes from *Don Quixote* once and from *Tristram Shandy* twice’ (de Groot 2009, 86).⁴⁵ There are also numerous allusions to the works of Shakespeare in these letters. In *James Hogg: A Life* (2007), Hughes points out that while working for the Laidlaws at Blackhouse between 1790-1800 Hogg was introduced (probably by William Laidlaw) to the circulating library in Peebles, which was ‘kept in the town by a local printer and bookseller Alexander Elder’ (Hughes 2007, 25). Elder’s circulating library, explains Hughes, ‘consisted of aged copies of the literature of the previous age’ – including *Don Quixote*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and the poetry of Pope and Goldsmith – as well as ‘translations of Greek and Latin classics [such as] Pope’s translation of the *Iliad* and Gavin Douglas’s translation of Virgil’s *Aeneid*’ (Hughes 2007, 25). It would not have been in Hogg’s interest to foreground this type of

⁴⁵ de Groot, Hans (2009). ‘The Labourer and Literary Tradition: James Hogg’s Early Reading and Its Impact on Him as a Writer’, *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, ed. by Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, Farnham: Ashgate, 81-92.

reading in the ‘Memoir’ itself. The uneducated Ettrick Shepherd could not be shown to be conversant with such texts as *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*, as this would have interfered with the picture of the ‘past self’ Hogg was attempting to propagate.

As Nigel Leask suggests, Burns also had to be careful with his use of literary illusions:

when Burns wrote “gie me ae spark o’ Nature’s fire, / That’s all the learning I desire” he himself contributed to the myth of his “Heaven-taught” genius; but he also knew that alert readers might notice submerged allusions to Pope and Sterne here. (Leask 2010, 2)⁴⁶

Hogg was certainly not as allusive as Burns; however, as a published author he could now perhaps tentatively begin to refer to his reading of classic texts. Indeed, towards the end of the ‘Memoir’ he quotes *Hamlet* (‘unhousel’d, unanointed, unaneal’d; with all their imperfections on their heads, 15), and in the notes to ‘Willie Wilkin’ he refers to *Tristram Shandy* (see 76). Yet he still had to be sparing with his references to books such as these as he was performing a balancing act between his present and past selves. Although he had to show that he has progressed from his humble roots (the allusions to canonical texts succinctly suggests how far he has come from his early reading), he also had to be careful not to alienate his present self from his past self. The success of Hogg’s present self – the self writing the ‘Memoir’ in 1807 – still depended heavily on the depiction of the past self *in* the ‘Memoir’. The latter remained more important to Hogg than the former. He still had to justify his appearance in the literary world, and to do this he had to align himself with the autodidactic Ettrick Shepherd as closely as possible. Thus, he selects the details and incidents from his past life which best suit the story he wants to tell. From this point of view, he is a decidedly unreliable narrator.

⁴⁶ Leask, Nigel (2010). *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reading Between the Lines of Hogg's 'Memoir'

The picture of himself and his social background that Hogg paints through the paratexts to *The Mountain Bard* is designed specifically to justify himself in society as an 'author'. The discrepancies, anomalies and suppressions in his account of himself and his background in the 'Memoir' alert one to its constructed nature. The story he tells therein about his rise from shepherd to author is suspiciously simplistic, the narrative arc too linear and neat. Hogg is evidently trying to impose form and meaning onto his life. As Gusdorf points out, 'the prerogative of autobiography consists in this: that it shows us not the objective stages of a career [...] but that it reveals instead the effort of a creator to give the meaning of his own mythic tale' (Gusdorf 1980, 48). This process has its parallel in the author's attempt to control the interpretation of his text through the paratext. In this sense, Hogg's 'Memoir', in conjunction with the other paratextual material attached to *The Mountain Bard*, could be said to serve a dual function: to impose meaning on to Hogg's life, and control the reception of his book. Hogg's 'Memoir' is not only an autobiographical sketch; it is also a carefully-structured and highly functional paratextual production.

However, even the autobiographical paratext is open to multiple readings, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau acknowledges in his seminal autobiographical work *Confessions* (1782-89). He tells his readers that they must 'assemble all the elements [of his character in order] to determine the being they constitute; the result must be [the reader's] own work, so that if he is mistaken, all the error is on his side' (170).⁴⁷ It is up to the reader, argues Rousseau, to 'assemble' the different 'elements' of the author's character into a unified being. But Rousseau does not abdicate to the reader completely. He suggests that there may well be a correct way to put the different parts

⁴⁷ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (2000). *Confessions* (1782-89), trans. by Angela Scholar, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

of his character together, and that the reader may be ‘mistaken’ in the ‘being’ they construct out of the materials he provides for them. So while he recognises the power of the reader, Rousseau yet believes that he, as the author of his life, can yet influence the process whereby they ‘assemble all the elements [of his character] to determine the being they constitute’. Rousseau’s recognition of the respective roles of the author and the reader in the interpretive process – a third way between the Author-God and the ‘death of the author’ – is a rather neat depiction of the fluctuating power relations between authors and readers. The author may attempt to impose meaning onto his texts, but the reader remains free to reject them, or even to read into the hidden purposes behind them. This is true of the autobiographical text, and even the paratextual autobiographical text, in which the sway of the author is even more potent.

In his ‘Preface to the Neuchtal Edition’ of his *Confessions* Rousseau argues that ‘under the cover of his life story [the autobiographer] presents himself as he wants to be seen, not at all as he is...[but] as an imaginary and fantastical being, whose aspect changes with each new book’ (644). In his ‘Memoir’ Hogg does not so much present himself as ‘he wants to be seen’ as how he had to be seen. The ‘imaginary and fantastical being’ he presents to the public therein – ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ – is very much a fiction with a function. But, as such, one can read between the lines of it. His ‘Memoir’ is an open text. And yet despite all this evidence pointing to the highly structured and fundamentally fictional nature of his self-representation, Hogg has only recently begun to emerge from the shadow of the Shepherd, and only in critical circles. In 1927 Batho chose to call her study of Hogg *The Ettrick Shepherd*, declaring in the opening sentence of her book that ‘James Hogg [is] more euphoniously known as the Ettrick Shepherd’ (Batho 1927, 3). Her word choice here is perhaps significant;

the latter appellation is apparently more ‘euphonious’, that is, more ‘pleasing to the ear’ (*OED*), than his proper name. This critical trend may now be a thing of the past; however, the sway of the Shepherd in Hogg criticism through the years should not be overlooked. And, even today, the enticingly romantic figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ remains more firmly ensconced in the popular imagination than the author who created him. As Gusdorf points out, ‘the self’ depicted in the autobiographical text may ‘turn back on the life and affect it by a kind of boomerang’ (Gusdorf 1980, 47). Indeed, the question as to whether it is ‘the life [that] produces the autobiography [or] the autobiographical project [that] produces and determines the life’ (Marcus 1994, 241) seems a particularly apt one in relation to Hogg.

Chapter Three

Breaking into the Literary Mainstream

The Author and the Shepherd in the Literary World

In his next two major literary undertakings the ‘imaginary and fantastical being’ that Hogg, along with his publishers, had so carefully propagated in *The Mountain Bard* paratexts slips somewhat into the shadows – or, at least, is utilised in a rather more understated and nuanced way. *The Forest Minstrel* (1810) and *The Spy* (1810-11) are more obviously the work of a ‘professional literary man’, attempting to find a profitable market for his writing in the competitive Edinburgh literary marketplace. However, Hogg does not completely abandon his Shepherd persona at this time; it yet remains an important branding device for him. But it is augmented by new paratextual voices and authorial personas, which are perhaps more specifically geared to his new context in Edinburgh: in *The Forest Minstrel* (a collection of songs) by the polite editor of the ‘Preface’ who is eager to please his genteel Edinburgh audience, and in *The Spy* (a weekly literary periodical) by a host of new urban voices and editorial personas. However, neither of these projects prospered.

In *The Queen’s Wake* (1813) Hogg returns to the ballad form (albeit couched within a complex new structure), and brings ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ back to the foreground of his self-representations through the twin figures of the poet-narrator and the ‘Bard of Ettrick’. The poet-narrator of the poem is clearly a version of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’: a fictionalised version of the ‘non-fictional’ self he presented in the 1807 ‘Memoir’. This figure operates in the paratextual sections of the poem, and is used by Hogg to control relations between his readers and the text, as well as to answer his critics. The ‘Bard of Ettrick’, meanwhile, is a character within the poem

(supposedly a poetic forebear of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', from the mid-sixteenth-century) and is, like the poet-narrator, an idealised version of Hogg. Through this figure Hogg presents a fictional rendering of his own recent experiences in Edinburgh (like Hogg, the rustic Bard seeks his poetic fortune in an aristocratic Edinburgh). However, Hogg also uses this figure to establish an alternative cultural history, in which he, as his Ettrick Shepherd self, appears as the latest in a long line of traditional Ettrick bards, specifically in order to set himself up as the rightful successor to the (fictional) Bard of Ettrick.

Thus, the main function of the paratextual apparatus placed around the poem is to reassert Hogg's poetic authority in regard to traditional material, and to establish his central place in oral cultural history. However, it is perhaps rather ironic that Hogg does this within the pages of his most successful publication. It soon becomes apparent that he is also attempting to place himself within the mainstream literary world of his day. Through the pages of his book Hogg not only brings the Bard of Ettrick but also himself into literary history. However, just as the paratexts to *The Mountain Bard* suggest that Hogg needed to emphasise his place in traditional culture in order to break into the literary marketplace, so the paratextual sections to *The Queen's Wake* suggest that his place in literary history may have depended on his supposed place in the alternative cultural history which is sketched out by his poet-narrator. His unique position as perhaps *the* preeminent representative of (Ettrick) traditional culture in the early-nineteenth century Scottish literary world is his main justification for appearing in print in the first place. But it was also perhaps the only way or, at least, the most expedient way, for him to secure his literary legacy. Therefore, Hogg himself continued to trade on his perceived 'otherness', redeploing the very argument that was so often used against him to his own advantage by arguing

for this place in the literary world, and ultimately, in literary history, on the basis of his ‘uniqueness’.

In his next three books – *The Pilgrims of the Sun* (1814), *Mador of the Moor* (1816), and *The Poetic Mirror* (1816) – Hogg begins to tentatively shift away from the traditional poetic forms associated with ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ in favour of more conspicuously ‘literary’ forms. However, he continues to use his paratexts to accentuate his traditional credentials, but only in order to establish himself more firmly among the leading poets of the day. But while the former endeavour sometimes helped him to secure the latter aim in the short term, it just as often hindered him from achieving the status of the likes of Scott, Wordsworth and Byron – at least, in his own lifetime. Unfortunately, the message all-too often got mixed-up in the transmission, and the ‘uniqueness’ which he so often used to justify his place in the literary world was used against him, transformed by his critics back into ‘otherness’, which was then used to once more exclude him from their world.

The Forest Minstrel and The Spy: Hogg in the Edinburgh Literary World

Hogg moved to Edinburgh in February 1810, in order to ‘push [his] fortune as a literary man’ (206), as he puts it in the 1821 version of his ‘Memoir’. As Hughes suggests, ‘Hogg was now no longer a Borders shepherd and farmer who also wrote poetry but a would-be metropolitan writer’ (Hughes 2007, 82). He began immersing himself in the literary world of Edinburgh, calling frequently at the bookseller’s shop of his publisher Constable in order ‘to hear the gossip, observe what books were sold, and to read in instalments the latest volumes of poetry or issues of the *Edinburgh Review*’ (Hughes 2007, 86). *The Forest Minstrel* was published by Constable in

August 1810.¹ As Bold points out, the ‘Ossianic, heaven-taught implications’ (Bold 1998, 33)² of the title of this book seem to underpin those suggested by the title of his previous work, *The Mountain Bard*. Likewise, the title-page attributes the book to ‘James Hogg, The Ettrick Shepherd, and Others’, thus immediately branding it as (largely) the work of the autodidactic shepherd, who was by this time a minor literary celebrity. It is worth noting that no clear distinction is made on this title-page between the proper name of the author and the name of his literary persona. The former name simply flows into the latter. James Hogg, suggests the title-page, *is* ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’. But ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ tag is also used once again to describe the author, to give extra information about him, in order to suggest to readers what kind of text they are about to encounter.

However, the book is not presented to the public by this figure; the voice in the ‘Preface’ is clearly not that of the Shepherd but of a genteel-sounding editor-figure. This editor – the first of many ‘editors’ (some more obviously fictional than others) employed by Hogg throughout his career – reveals that the main contributors to the collection are ‘James Hogg the Ettrick Shepherd, author of *The Mountain Bard* [and] Thomas Mouncey Cunningham of London, another self-taught genius, bred a common mechanic among the mountains of Nithsdale’ (4).³ The now familiar emphasis on Hogg’s ‘self-taught genius’ is apparent. It is suggested here through the description of Cunningham (one of Allan Cunningham’s elder brothers), which closely mirrors Hogg’s own descriptions of himself in his memoirs. Like Hogg, Allan

¹ As Garside points out, the book was ‘manufactured to look like a companion piece to *The Mountain Bard*’, but it ‘met with scant critical attention, and was a commercial failure’ (Garside 2012, 24).

² Bold, Valentina (1998). ‘The Mountain Bard: James Hogg and Macpherson’s Ossian’, in *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 9 (1998), 32-44.

³ Hogg, James (2006). *The Forest Minstrel* (1810) ed. by Peter Garside and Richard D. Jackson, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Hogg’s poem, ‘Epistle to Mr T.M.C. London’, had appeared in the 1807 edition of *The Mountain Bard*. As Gilbert points out, ‘Robert Burns had published various verse epistles to fellow poets [...] In ‘Epistle to Mr T.M.C. London’ Hogg follows this tradition’ (Gilbert 2007, 448).

Cunningham (1784-1842), who would soon eclipse his elder brother's fame as a peasant poet, identified himself strongly with Burns (later in their careers Hogg and Cunningham edited rival editions of Burns' poetry). Hogg commemorates, and, in the process positions himself against, Cunningham in the 'Reminiscences of Former Days' section of the 1832 version of his 'Memoir', attesting that in 1806 Cunningham, 'a young aspiring poet' (70), sought him out to express admiration for his poetry, which had been appearing alongside Thomas Mouncey Cunningham's in the *Scots Magazine*.⁴ He thus subtly establishes his seniority over Cunningham, the most famous Scottish peasant poet after Burns – aside, of course, from Hogg himself.

However, the reference in the 'Preface' to the fact that he is now also a published 'author' (of *The Mountain Bard*) is also significant, and puts one in mind of the progress narrative enacted in the earlier 'Memoir'. The implication is that Hogg has now accomplished his cultural move from autodidact to author. Of course, his prestige as an author depends on the story of this miraculous rise. His name(s) – which describes him, and indicates the type of author he is (see Foucault 2001, 1626) – had by this point in his career become particularly important to Hogg, who relied on the details of his biography to help explain, and justify, his place in society as an author. Hogg's own proper name, along with that of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', continued to serve a more descriptive function than the names of most other authors. These names (along with other such descriptive names applied to Hogg, such as 'The Mountain Bard') carried with them a whole host of associations and images, which, taken

⁴ After Cunningham and another of his brothers, James, find Hogg herding sheep 'on the great hill of Queensberry, in Nithsdale' he takes them into his bothy: '[And] thus began', says Hogg, 'a mutual attachment between two aspiring Scottish peasants, over which the shadow of a cloud has never yet passed' (70). Indeed, as Gilbert points out, despite their rivalry they remained close, 'even when the younger man's fortunes took him to London, where during the day he worked in a sculptor's studio and at night pursued his literary aspirations, a difficult sort of balance very familiar to Hogg' (Gilbert 2007, xiii).

together, served as both an explanation and a justification of Hogg's position in his society as an author.

Aside from those songs provided by Hogg's fellow peasant-poet Thomas Mouncey Cunningham, the 'Preface' reveals that a few other songs were 'supplied by gentlemen who all chuse to be anonymous' (xviii). As Garside explains, fifty-six of the eighty-three songs are by Hogg, fifteen by Cunningham, 'a native of Dumfriesshire who had gone to live in England, and whom Hogg evidently considered a true successor to Burns', and the remainder by 'William Laidlaw and John Grieve, who can be linked with Hogg's early Ettrick days, and James Gray and John Ballantyne, [who] belonged to the Edinburgh literary scene that Hogg had recently entered' (Garside 2006, xiv).⁵ This list of contributors is anything but arbitrary; each of them reflects a different side of Hogg's literary life at this time. Cunningham obviously provides a mirror-image of himself, while Hogg's Ettrick friends, Laidlaw and Grieve, reinforce connections to his native roots in the Borders. Gray and Ballantyne, meanwhile, tacitly reflect a new side of Hogg – that is, the Hogg struggling to make his literary fortune in Edinburgh. As Garside explains, *The Forest Minstrel* 'was brought together at a crucial moment in Hogg's career, when the "folk" culture that he had inherited from his upbringing in Ettrick Forest confronted fully for the first time the urban, genteel [...] culture of Edinburgh' (Garside 2006, xiv). In order to survive and prosper, Hogg's art would have to accommodate itself to this new context, as would his presentation of himself and his books. As Garside notes, the format of the first edition of *The Forest Minstrel* reflects this: 'in its original grey-blue boards [it] reveals a smart-looking volume, in small octavo, neatly printed

⁵ Garside, Peter (2006). 'Introduction', in *The Forest Minstrel*, ed. by Peter Garside and Richard D. Jackson, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xiii-lxi.

without cramping of text, and evidently aimed at the polite market' (Garside 2006, xiv). The book was thus something of a luxury commodity.⁶

Some of the editor's paratextual comments also suggest that the book was aimed squarely at the drawing rooms of Edinburgh. His assertion that all the songs in the collection were brand new, and thus would not have had time to filter down to lower levels of society, is the main recommendation he offers in his 'Preface' for the book appearing in print. As he points out, 'a young lady cannot, without hesitating reluctance, sit down to her piano, and sing what every ballad hawker in the street is singing' (5). This is a highly unusual statement for Hogg to utter, even in the guise of one of his editor-figures. However, it is an early example of his incorporation of genteel voices into his paratextual material. Sometimes these voices were used for functional purposes (that is, to help sell his work in the snobbish literary marketplace of Edinburgh), but sometimes he used them for more overtly fictional purposes. Clearly, in the case of *The Forest Minstrel*, the editor's role is to present the songs of the humble songster 'The Ettrick Shepherd' to the polite readership of Edinburgh. The editor-figure is purely a functional device; he acts as a bridge between the songs of the rustic Shepherd and the book's refined target market. And there is certainly nothing in the book to alarm the acutely sensitive sensibilities of this genteel audience, either in the paratextual material or in the songs themselves. Neither is there any sign that the Shepherd will ever venture outside of the 'proper' literary forms for a peasant-poet like himself (that is, songs and ballads). However, Hogg's next project would confound these expectations.

Unlike the purely functional 'editor' of *The Forest Minstrel*, the main editor-figure in Hogg's literary periodical *The Spy*, the rather forward 'Mr Spy', who openly admits

⁶ Although, as Garside points out, the volume lacked 'the accompanying musical notations found in more prestigious song collections of the period' (Garside 2012, 24).

to trying to push his way into the literary marketplace of Edinburgh, serves a more overtly fictional and satirical role. David Groves argues that *The Spy* was Hogg's 'vehicle for exploring, exaggerating, and satirising the self-indulgent, sentimental, *Mountain Bard* outlook demanded by most of his polite readers' (Groves 1988, 22).⁷ This is perhaps overstating the case somewhat. However, in *The Spy* Hogg does seem to take a step back from his Ettrick Shepherd persona, and from the traditional literary forms associated with this figure. The magazine is certainly not projected exclusively through 'The Ettrick Shepherd', as *The Mountain Bard* and *The Forest Minstrel* had been. (The editor of the latter is a mere middleman; the focaliser of the book is clearly the rustic Shepherd who wrote the majority of the songs). Although there are rural voices in the magazine – most notably that of 'John Miller, the Nithsdale Shepherd' who is the magazine's resident tradition-monger – it is the modern, urban voice of 'Mr Spy', albeit an outsider in polite Edinburgh himself, who more often than not dominates proceedings. The cautious paratextual structure encountered in *The Forest Minstrel* – in which the songs of the humble shepherd-poet are introduced to the polite readers of Edinburgh by the equally polite, and apparently non-fictional, 'editor' – is abandoned in favour of the more experimental and, as it turned out, more controversial paratextual voice of the more obviously fictional 'Mr Spy'. Likewise, the ballads and songs through which Hogg had made his name in his previous two works – that is, the 'proper' literary forms for a peasant-poet – appear alongside other forms of writing in *The Spy*, most notably short stories, many of which would end up in his 1820 story collection *Winter Evening Tales*.

Thus, *The Spy* could certainly be viewed as a pivotal moment in Hogg's career. In it he begins to throw off the safety blanket of his peasant-poet persona by

⁷ Groves, David (1988). *James Hogg: The Growth of a Writer*, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

incorporating new voices into his paratextual material, and by experimenting with new literary forms. From this point of view, the magazine could be said to foreshadow Hogg's prose experiments of the later 1810s and early 1820s. Unfortunately, like *The Forest Minstrel*, Hogg's periodical failed to find a substantial audience. However, as Hogg explains in the 1821 'Memoir', the magazine failed for rather different, and perhaps more specific, reasons:

on the publication of my third or fourth number [...] it was [considered] so indecorous, that no fewer than seventy-three subscribers gave up. This was a sad blow for me; but, as usual, I despised the fastidity and affectation of the people and continued my work. It proved a fatal oversight for the paper, for all those who had given in set themselves against it with the utmost inveteracy. The literary ladies, in particular, agreed, in full divan, that I would never write a sentence that deserved to be read. (208)

The polite ladies of Edinburgh, whom the editor of *The Forest Minstrel* was so eager to please, were not amused with the risqué stories they encountered in *The Spy*. 'Life of a Berwickshire Farmer', an early version of 'Basil Lee', with its frank portrayal of sex and pregnancy out of wedlock, may have especially offended these 'literary ladies'.⁸

But one must keep in mind that the above passage from the 1821 'Memoir' is part of Hogg's wider depiction of his past self. Although he was often castigated by polite Edinburgh for his supposed 'lack of delicacy', Hogg redeploys these sorts of details in his 'Memoir', where he makes them rebound to his own credit (at least, this was his aim). They feed into the 'outsider' thread of his story and make his progress narrative – his triumph over the odds – even more dramatic and astounding. But this narrative could also be viewed as somewhat of a crutch, a safe fall-back position for Hogg when his back was against the wall. A hint of this tendency can be detected in 'The Spy's Farewell to his Readers', which appeared in the final edition of Hogg's

⁸ In *Queen Hynde* (1824) Hogg gently mocks these rather easily-offended ladies through his numerous paratextual addresses to the 'Maids of Dunedin [Edinburgh]' (see Chapter Five of this study for further discussion of the paratextual elements in this poem).

magazine, and which he also quotes in the 1821 ‘Memoir’. He asserts that those people who supported the magazine

have [had], at all events, the honour of patronising an undertaking quite new in the records of literature; for, that a common shepherd, who never was at school; who went to service at seven years of age, and could neither read nor write with any degree of accuracy when twenty; yet who, smit with an unconquerable thirst after knowledge, should leave his native mountains, and his flocks to wander where they chose, come to the metropolis with his plaid wrapped about his shoulders, and all at once set up for a connoisseur in manners, taste, and genius – has much more the appearance of a romance than a matter of fact; yet a matter of fact it certainly is, and such a person is the editor of THE SPY. (1821 ‘Memoir’, 209 & *The Spy*, 515)⁹

Hogg provides here yet another version (in miniature) of his progress narrative. The complex syntax in this passage may even be intended as an illustration of how far he has come from the uneducated younger version of himself he is describing. His romanticised depiction of his ambitious attempt to rise from a ‘common mountain shepherd’ to an editor in the ‘metropolis’ is certainly defiant in tone. But it could also be argued that it rather plays into the hands of his critics. Like so many of his detractors both before and after this time, Hogg measures his achievement (and keeping the magazine going for a year was certainly an impressive achievement for a working-class writer like Hogg) against his social background.

But ‘The Spy’s Farewell to his Readers’ also acts as a kind of defence of the magazine as a whole, a version of what Genette calls a ‘later preface’ (Genette 1997, 240), through which an author responds to criticisms of his work. Here Hogg uses his biography to remind readers of his supposed naivety about such things as ‘manners’ and ‘taste’. Surely the rustic Shepherd cannot be blamed for offending the cultural tastes and moral standards of a world he is not really part of, and thus cannot be expected to understand? This is dangerous ground for Hogg, potentially reinforcing

⁹ Hogg, James (2000). *The Spy* (1810-11), ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

the ongoing process of his ‘othering’, which was so vociferously pursued by many of his contemporary critics.¹⁰ Yet it is also a reminder that his ‘outsider’ status was perhaps just as much cultivated by himself as it was thrust upon him from outside. But, be that as it may, the controversy over his ‘indelicate’ magazine in 1810-11 seems to have encouraged him into a kind of tactical retreat, not only back towards his Shepherd persona, but also back to the ballad form. However, in *The Queen’s Wake* (1813), his most successful work in his own lifetime,¹¹ Hogg does not simply revert to *The Mountain Bard* model. Ballads are now presented within a bold new structure, and his paratextual representation of the Shepherd is merged into the very fabric of the poem. Hogg begins to use the paratext as both a functional and a fictional device, and the line between fiction and reality begins to blur.

The Structure of *The Queen’s Wake*

The Queen’s Wake is structured around an imaginary poetic competition held in honour of the return of Mary, Queen of Scots to Scotland in 1561. The pseudo-Hogg poet-narrator introduces, presents, and comments on the ballads of each of the

¹⁰ Perhaps the most savage of these attacks was John Wilson’s ‘review’ of the 1821 version of Hogg’s ‘Memoir’ (written anonymously in the form of a letter to his *Blackwood’s* alter ego ‘Christopher North’), in which he declares that Hogg ‘is liker a swineherd in the Canongate, than a shepherd in Ettrick Forest’ (‘From an Old Friend with a New Face’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (1821), p. 43. Quoted by Gilbert 2007, liii). For a further discussion of Wilson’s critical reaction to Hogg’s 1821 ‘Memoir’ see Chapter Four of this study.

¹¹ As Garside explains,

It was after the failure of *The Spy* that Hogg achieved his one unmitigated literary success with *The Queen’s Wake*, a brilliant arrangement of shorter pieces which rose on the high tide of the popularity of the long narrative poem, ostensibly going through six editions in as many years, and placing Hogg for a while on a level close to Scott and Byron. (Garside 2012, 25)

This was also the first of Hogg’s books which was not published by the subscription method. He had originally approached Constable who only agreed to publish the book if Hogg first secured 200 subscribers. Hogg refused the terms, and instead turned to George Goldie, a relatively new Edinburgh publisher. As Garside suggests, ‘by now Hogg had had enough of the business of soliciting subscriptions, as well as waiting on Constable, and it was probably the less condescending terms that encouraged his turn to George Goldie’ (Garside 2012, 25). Hogg, for the first time, must have felt like a professional author, and not an amateurish ‘peasant poet’, forced to meekly seek out subscribers in order to get his works published.

competing bards. He also evokes the context of the tale-telling competition, depicting the competing bards nervously awaiting their turns, and reacting to the lays of their rivals, in an atmospheric Holyrood Palace. However, the tone is set before the poem even begins. The epigraph on the title-page – ‘Be mine to read the visions old, / Which thy awakening Bards have told; / And whilst they meet thy tranced view, / Hold each strange tale devoutly true’ – taken from William Collins’s *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects* (1747),¹² succinctly prepare readers for Hogg’s poem of supernatural tale-telling. As Mack notes, the structure of *The Queen’s Wake* is reminiscent of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, and the competitive element may be a response to the song competition enacted in Canto Sixth of Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (see Mack 2005, xxvi). But it also reminds one of the tale-telling sections in *Don Quixote*, one of Hogg’s favourite books, and looks forward to the macabre tale-telling competition in Hogg’s own novel, *The Three Perils of Man* (1822). Within this complex structure Hogg presents two versions of himself: the poet-narrator of the framing parts of the poem, who is a thinly-veiled version of his 1813 self (although he is closer to ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ than to the ‘real Hogg’); and the ‘bard of Ettrick’, one of the poets competing for the poetic prize within the poem-proper, supposedly a fictional poetic ancestor of Hogg, but also a mirror-image of him. The poet-narrator’s ‘interlinking passages’ (Bold 2007, 116) are both inward and outward-looking devices, and are perhaps best characterised as paratexts. As narrative frames, they help set the scene for the inner worlds of the ballad-poems, but they also act as ‘internal’ or ‘later prefaces’ through which Hogg answers his critics, and attempts to reassert his poetic authority in regard to traditional material.

¹² Hogg’s choice of Collins (1721-1759), who was in many ways an early forerunner of the Romantics, is interesting, and one wonders if he was aware of another one of his poems, ‘An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland’, which includes the lines, ‘There must thou wake perforce thy Doric quill; / ‘Tis fancy’s land to which thou sett’st thy feet; / Where still, ‘tis said, the fairy people meet’ (lines 18-20). These lines certainly would have appealed to Hogg.

The first hint that the Ettrick Shepherd is back as the main focaliser of Hogg's writing comes in the 'Dedication', in which 'a shepherd among the mountains of Scotland, dedicates [the] poem [...] to Princess Charlotte of Wales'. Hogg's, or, to be more precise, the Ettrick Shepherd's pursuit of an aristocratic patron (Hogg reveals in the 1821 'Memoir' that he sent a copy of the poem to her but received no reply) once again seems rather anachronistic in the market-driven literary world of the early-nineteenth century. However, it is yet another reminder of Hogg's reliance upon, and need for validation from, his social superiors – even perhaps just at the psychological level (Princess Charlotte's failure to respond clearly hurt him). His publisher, George Goldie, is equally keen to trade off the Shepherd persona, inserting the following 'Advertisement' into the second edition of *The Queen's Wake*:

The publisher having been favoured with letters from gentlemen in various parts of the United Kingdom respecting the Author of the QUEEN'S WAKE, and most of them expressing doubts of his being a Scotch Shepherd; he takes this opportunity of assuring the Public, that THE QUEEN'S WAKE is really and truly the production of JAMES HOGG, a common shepherd, bred among the mountains of Ettrick Forest, who went to service when only seven years of age; and since that period never received any education whatever. (Quoted in Mack's *The Queen's Wake*, 394)

This is reminiscent of the *Scots Magazine* letters, and suggests that the supposed anomaly between Hogg's social background and his literary talent remained an important selling point for his work. But while Hogg and his publisher still seem to feel the need to use the outer paratexts to the poem to disseminate a crude, abridged and rather paradoxical version of the progress narrative (in which the Shepherd remains a more important figure than the author he has supposedly metamorphosed into), Hogg's fictional representation of 'himself' and the Shepherd in the inner paratextual sections of the poem is defiant, complex and rather ironic, as is his presentation of his ongoing rivalry with Scott.

The Queen's Wake and Marmion: Autobiographical Paratexts and Poetic Authority

The opening two stanzas of the 'Introduction' to *The Queen's Wake* are clearly autobiographical (as are most of the paratextual sections of the poem). They represent a poetic rendering of Hogg's return to Ettrick and the oral tradition:

Now burst, ye Winter clouds that lower,
 Fling from your folds the piercing shower;
 Sing to the tower and leafless tree,
 Ye cold winds of adversity;
 Your blights, your chilling influence shed,
 On wareless heart, and houseless head;
 Your ruth or fury I disdain,
 I've found my Mountain Lyre again.
 Come to my heart, my only stay!
 Companion of a happier day!
 Thou gift of heaven! thou pledge of good!
 Harp of the mountain and the wood!
 I little thought, when first I tried
 Thy notes by lone Saint Mary's side;
 When in a deep untrodden den,
 I found thee in the braken glen,
 I little thought that idle toy
 Should e'er become my only joy! ('Introduction', lines 1-18)¹³

The 'Mountain Lyre' reference immediately sets up a link between this poem and *The Mountain Bard*. The poet-narrator is evidently announcing that Hogg's new book marks a triumphant return to the ballads and songs which made up that volume, which was his most commercially-successful literary venture up to that point. Likewise, the reference to 'Saint Mary's side', which lies at the very heart of Hogg's Ettrick (both topographically and metaphorically), suggests that he is once again turning to Ettrick's rich oral tradition for inspiration. Although these lines represent a beautiful evocation of Hogg's dual homecoming (to Ettrick and to the ballad tradition), there is also more than a tinge of regret and self-pity seeping through them. The 'cold winds of adversity' have blown him back to where he started; the experiments of *The Spy*

¹³ Hogg, James (2005). *The Queen's Wake* (1813 & 1819), ed. by Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

have failed, and he must now return to his ‘proper’ literary sphere, and to the figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’. The third stanza refers directly to his treatment in the snobbish literary world of Edinburgh: ‘jeered by lordly pride, / I flung my soothing harp aside; / With wayward fortune strove a while; / Wrecked in a world of self and guile’ (‘Introduction’, lines 31-34). The tone here is bitter. Rejected by the fastidiously polite readers of Edinburgh, after having ‘flung his soothing harp aside’ to experiment with other literary forms and personas, he must now take up his ‘Mountain Lyre’ again, and once more wrap himself up in the plaid of the Shepherd, perhaps the only garb acceptable to his social superiors.

However, Hogg does not merely use the internal paratextual sections to his poem to lick his wounds and to bewail his cruel treatment at the hands of the literary elite of Edinburgh. On the contrary, through these sections he presents his critics with a defiant picture of his unique place in literary history. Taken together, they offer a robust challenge to those poets whom Hogg perceived to be encroaching upon his own poetic territory, most obviously Scott. Through them Hogg turns the tables on the literary elite who had so successfully ‘othered’ him in Edinburgh; back on his own turf, he is now the ‘insider’ and they, represented by Scott, are the ‘outsiders’.

Hogg’s use of the autobiographical ‘I’ in the paratextual sections of the poem could well be a direct response to Scott’s own use of it in his Introductions to *Marmion* (1808). (As Mack notes, Hogg uses the same verse form in these sections, iambic tetrameter couplets, as Scott uses in his verse narratives, not least in the Introductions to *Marmion*).¹⁴ In *Marmion* Scott employs an autobiographical paratextual framework. This is the only time he used such a structure in any of his major poems, which were generally mediated by modern framing narrators, whose main function

¹⁴ Mack, Douglas (2005). ‘Editor’s Notes’, in *The Queen’s Wake*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 403.

was to contain the inner worlds of the poems, and place them firmly in the past. The poet-narrator encountered in the Introductions to the six cantos of *Marmion*, however, serves no such function. On the contrary, these Introductions, each of which is addressed to one of Scott's friends, describe the real world context in which the poem is being composed (in the Borders), and feature elegiac reflections on his early life and on his ballad-collecting around Ettrick. Indeed, Ettrick-related place names abound throughout each of the Introductions; Scott is apparently keen to emphasise his personal knowledge of the area. It is tempting to view these autobiographical paratexts as an answer to Hogg's in *The Mountain Bard* (which was published the year before Scott's poem). In them Scott describes his own connections to the Borders, and draws attention to his 'experiential authority' (McLane 2008, 194) in regard to the traditional material through which he first made his name in the literary world with his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

In the 'Introduction' to the first canto of *Marmion*, Scott's poet-narrator refers to his outsider 'experiential authority', imagining a personified Nature calling him away from his study:

Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
 And waste the solitary day,
 In plucking from yon fen the reed,
 And watch it floating down the Tweed;
 Or idly list the shrilling lay,
 With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
 [...]
 Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
 The ancient shepherd's tale to learn,
 Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
 Lest his old legends tire the ear
 Of one, who, in his simple mind,
 May boast of book-learn'd taste refin'd. ('Introduction to Canto First', lines 234-248)¹⁵

¹⁵ Scott, Walter (1904). *Marmion* (1808), in *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by J. Logie Robertson, London: Henry Frowde, 89-206.

These lines evoke Scott's ballad-collecting in the Borders. The image of the 'book-learn'd' poet-narrator listening first-hand to the 'shrilling lay' of the milkmaid, and to the 'ancient shepherd's tale', draws attention to Scott's fieldwork, to the fact that he has been among genuine members of the thriving oral culture of the Borders. This is where he drew the material for his *Minstrelsy*, and the source from which he continued to draw for many of his later poems and novels. By referring to the provenance of his ballads, Scott is attempting to underpin their authenticity and his own poetic authority in regard to such material. However, as a 'book-learn'd' gentleman he is not part of the community in which he collects his materials; he has only experienced it as an outsider. He maintains his editorial distance. In the Introduction to the second canto he presents an image of himself on a hunting trip, riding 'up pathless Ettrick' ('Introduction to Canto Second', line 54), where 'each memorable scene / [...] / had its legend or its song' ('Introduction to Canto Second', lines 68-71), which perhaps best characterises his relationship to traditional Ettrick. His vantage point always seems to be, as it were, somehow elevated above ground-level. He always enters the traditional cultural world of Ettrick and the Borders from 'above'.

In the headnote to 'Auld Maitland', which appeared in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Scott actually draws attention to Hogg's 'ethnographic authority', quoting from a letter he sent to him about the ballad in question. Scott introduces 'the following sensible observations' as coming from 'a person born in Ettrick Forest, in the humble situation of a shepherd' (106). Hogg is cited as an important native informant, who 'confirms' the ballad's authenticity by explaining the process of adaption and variation in oral transmission, specifically in order to account for the

modern-sounding language in this and other ancient ballads. In the letter Hogg attests that he was

surprised to hear that this song is suspected by some to be a modern forgery; the contrary will be best proved by most of the old people hereabouts having a great part of it by heart. Many, indeed, are not aware of the manners of this country [perhaps Hogg includes Scott among these people]: till this present age, the poor illiterate people in these glens knew of no other entertainment in the long winter nights than repeating and listening to the feats of their ancestors recorded in songs, which I believe to be handed down from father to son for many generations; although, no doubt, had a copy been taken at the end of fifty years there must have been some difference, occasioned by the gradual change of language. I believe it is thus that many very ancient songs have been gradually modernised to the common ear, while, to the connoisseur, they present marks of their genuine antiquity. (106-107)

Scott also reveals in this headnote that the ballad is ‘published as written down from the recitation of the mother of Mr James Hogg, who sings, or rather chants it, with great animation’ (102).

Scott’s poet-narrator’s description of ‘lone Saint Mary’s silent lake’ and its environs (‘Introduction to Canto Second’, lines 147-226) later in the Introduction to the second canto puts one in mind of Hogg’s poet-narrator’s highly symbolic description of the first time he played his ‘Mountain Lyre / [...] / by lone Saint Mary’s side’ (‘Introduction’, lines 1-18) at the beginning of *The Queen’s Wake* (quoted above). The latter’s description of his immersion in the Ettrick landscape, his familiarity with its ‘deep untrodden dens’ and ‘braken glens’, and the importance of other desolate places around Ettrick to his poetic awakening, contrasts sharply with the implied image Scott presents of himself as a Romantic outsider, who only visits such scenes to collect materials, or perhaps for poetic inspiration. The description of St Mary’s Lake in *Marmion* (‘Introduction to Canto Second’, lines 147-212) ends with the poet-narrator’s retreat to his cosy fireside, where he muses on the tales and lays associated with the scene he had earlier been contemplating:

Then, when against the driving hail

No longer might my plaid avail,
 Back to my lonely home retire,
 And light my lamp and trim my fire;
 There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
 Till the wild tale had all its sway,
 And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
 I heard unearthly voices speak. ('Introduction to Canto Second', lines 213-220)

The scene has certainly fired the imagination of the poet-narrator, but only when he recollects it in the tranquillity of his home – when he is out of the 'driving hail'. When he is safe by his fireside the feelings evoked by the lake, particularly the many traditional historical tales associated with it, triggers off the above reverie, and help inspire the ensuing canto, 'The Convent'. Indeed, the poet-narrator's viewing of the ruins of St Mary's chapel, described in lines 175-185 of the Introduction, is presumably the main inspiration for this third canto.

In her article 'Walter Scott's Romanticism: A Theory of Performance' (2011),¹⁶ Caroline McCracken-Flesher draws attention to the central role afforded to the poet in Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*:

Whatever the emphasis on ordinary men, in that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", the feelings are [nonetheless] those of the poet [...] who brings "a certain colouring of imagination" to reveal the "primary laws of nature". (McCracken-Flesher 2011, 140)

This notion of the sage-like individual genius, whose own idiosyncratic imagination lay at the heart of the creative process, is commonplace in Romantic poetics.

McCracken-Flesher argues that Scott played a key role in the 'presentation of [this] proto-Romantic poet', suggesting that 'Thomas the Rhymer (1802) and Michael Scott (in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*) stand as powerful manifestations of the Romantic poet and his illuminating gaze' (McCracken-Flesher 2011, 140). The poet-narrator in *Marmion*, meanwhile, could be interpreted as a manifestation of the Wordsworthian poet, 'recollecting in tranquillity'.

¹⁶ *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism*, ed. by Murray Pittock, 139-149.

Unlike the poet-narrator of Scott's poem, Hogg's poet-narrator in *The Queen's Wake* 'plays his Mountain Lyre' – that is, he composes his poetry – 'by lone Saint Mary's side', and certainly not beside a comfortable fire.¹⁷ Interestingly, in his biography of Scott, *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott* (1834),¹⁸ Hogg reveals that Scott read the section about Saint Mary's Lake from *Marmion* out loud to him before it was published:

he sought out a proof sheet and read me his description of my beloved St. Mary's Lake in one of his introductions I think to canto second to ask my opinion as he said of its correctness as he had never seen the scene but once. (55)

Like much of the *Anecdotes*, this passage is as much about Hogg's own relationship with Scott as it is about Scott himself. Hogg is here to be sending a message about their respective relationships with Ettrick and its traditional culture; he is, as it were, laying claim to his place of birth, and to the cultural forms and traditions associated with it. Scott-the-outsider, who has 'seen the scene but once', must defer to Hogg's opinion as to whether his description of Saint Mary's Lake – Hogg's own 'beloved St. Mary's Lake' – is accurate or not. Hogg is immersed in Ettrick culture; embedded in the very landscape. Scott, meanwhile, is merely a curious visitor. This all ties in with the different forms of poetic authority each of them were attempting to establish in *Marmion* and *The Queen's Wake* respectively. Hogg is intent on emphasising his 'ethnographic authority' against Scott's 'experiential authority'. This process becomes even more pronounced in later sections of the paratextual framework to Hogg's poem.

¹⁷ See Hogg's description of his composition of *The Scotch Gentleman* in the 1807 'Memoir', which he claims to have written while tending his flock (12).

¹⁸ There are two different versions of Hogg's 'anecdotes' of Scott. The first version, *Anecdotes of Sir W. Scott* (written in 1833), was not published in Hogg's lifetime, but is included in Jill Rubenstein's Stirling/South Carolina edition of *Anecdotes of Scott*, alongside the rewritten version, which was published in the United States in 1834 as *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*. All quotes are taken from this latter version, unless otherwise stated.

Later in the 'Introduction' to *The Queen's Wake* Hogg begins the careful depiction of his supposedly pivotal place in traditional literary-cultural history, which culminates in the 'Conclusion', in which he all-but excludes Scott from this newly amalgamated tradition. In one of his many paratextual asides, the poet-narrator bewails the decline in the Bardic tradition:

Alas! those lays of fire once more
 Are wrecked 'mid heaps of mouldering lore!
 And feeble he who dares presume
 That heavenly wake-light to relume.
 But, grieved the legendary lay
 Should perish from our land for ay,
 While sings the lark above the wold,
 And all his flocks rest in the fold,
 Fondly he strikes, beside the pen,
 The harp of Yarrow's braken glen. ('Introduction', lines 347-356)

Hogg's own role in the traditional world, his unique place at the head of what Gilbert calls a 'living tradition' (Gilbert 2007, xxvii), is here hinted at by the poet-narrator. Hogg is saving the songs of the lost bards by playing 'the harp of Yarrow's braken glen'. The harp is clearly not a relic to be preserved and presented to the public as a museum piece, as Scott and other antiquarians would do, but an instrument that must be played in order to keep the Bardic tradition alive in the present day. (The symbol of the harp had considerable personal resonance for Hogg; he also used it on his seal and his gravestone). Hogg, suggests these lines, is 'reluming' old ballads and songs, creating them anew, and thus saving them from the 'heaps of mouldering lore' beneath which they were so often overwhelmed in antiquarian ballad collections such as Scott's *Minstrelsy*. Scott certainly played an integral role in the revival/publicising of the Borders ballad tradition (as the poet-narrator admits in the 'Conclusion' to *The Queen's Wake*); however, as McLane points out, his 'lays [were] both romances and readings of romance, his minstrelsy both enmeshed in tradition (literary and oral) and a meditation on tradition' (McLane 2008, 160). Scott was both a participator in, and a

learned commentator on, a tradition that, to him at least, was only half-alive.¹⁹ Hogg is keen to highlight that he, unlike Scott, is not merely committed to saving the songs of the ancient bards for posterity, but also to continuing their tradition in the present and into the future.

In the ‘Conclusion’ to the poem the poet-narrator makes use of the *modesty topos* when describing his role in this process, ‘Woe’s me, that all my mountain lore / Has been unfit to rescue more! / And that my guideless rustic skill / Has told these ancient tales so ill’ (‘Conclusion’, lines 23-26). As Genette points out, the ‘rhetorical apparatus of persuasion [...] called the *captatio benevolentiae*’ (Genette 1997, 198) – that is, the rhetorical process of getting the audience on your side – is employed by many modern authors in their paratextual material. The technique has its roots in the ancient art of rhetoric. Quintilian argued that the orator should always open his speech ‘with a prologue or exordium, in which [he must] try to win the goodwill of [the] audience by representing his character in the best light’ (Richards 2008, 42),²⁰ which will then ensure a better reception for his speech. The *modesty topos*, pretending you are unfit to speak because you are humble and uneducated, and the related rhetorical figure of the *excusatio propter infirmitatem*, the excuse of mental weakness, is a most expedient way to do this. By referring to his ‘guideless rustic skill’, Hogg is once again alluding back to his biography, and making use of the supposed anomaly between his education and his literary talent in order to gain even more credit for himself and his book. Cicero argued it was ‘expedient for the orator to show submissiveness and humility’, particularly so in his ‘exordium’, in which it ‘behoved [him] to put his hearers in a favorable, attentive and tractable state of mind [...]

¹⁹ One is reminded here of the paratextual frame to Hogg’s story ‘The Mysterious Bride’ (1830), in which he criticises Scott’s decidedly non-committal depiction of the supernatural, arguing that most of his stories are ‘made-up of half-and-half’ (145). (See Chapter Five for a further discussion of this story).

²⁰ Richards, Jennifer (2008). *Rhetoric*, London and New York: Routledge.

through a modest presence' (Curtius 1953, 83).²¹ However, keeping up the pretence of a modest presence was, it seems fair to say, not something that Hogg could readily submit himself to, at least not for any length of time. In fact, it soon becomes apparent that Hogg is attempting to place himself firmly in literary history via the paratextual material attached to *The Queen's Wake*.

Hogg's 'Idealised Author-Figures' in *The Queen's Wake*

The main function of most of the paratextual material in *The Queen's Wake* is to present Hogg as a unique author who has successfully navigated his way from Ettrick traditional oral culture into the literary mainstream. Hogg uses the paratexts to his poem to suggest that he is a modern-day bard who just happens to be operating successfully within the contemporary literary marketplace. There is a significant stanza in relation to this notion in the paratextual section between the second bard's song, 'Young Kennedy', and the eighth bard's song, 'The Witch of Fife', in which the poet-narrator muses on the sad fact that the names of so many bards (not least the names of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh bards who performed at Queen Mary's wake) should be lost to posterity:

Woe that the bard, whose thrilling song
Has poured from age to age along,
Should perish from the lists of fame,
And lose his only boon, a name.
Yet many a song of wondrous power,
Well known in cot and green-wood bower,
Wherever swells the shepherd's reed
On Yarrow's banks and braes of Tweed;
Yes, many a song of olden time,
Of rude array, and air sublime,
Though long on time's dark whirlpool tossed,
The song is saved, the bard is lost. ('Night the First', lines 509-520)

²¹ Curtius, Ernst Robert (1953). *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948), trans. by Willard R. Trask, New York: Harper.

The importance of ‘a name’ to an author is clearly acknowledged here. The tragedy for the poet-narrator lies in the fact that, while the ‘thrilling song’ of the bard survives, and pours ‘from age to age along’, his name must invariably ‘perish from the lists of fame’. Hogg, through his poet-narrator, certainly seems to be reinforcing the significance of the ‘individual creator’ (Foucault 2001, 1629) in these lines. As Duncan suggests, ‘Hogg’s accounts of his career negotiate a compromise between the authenticity of pastoral origins and the obsolescence of oral tradition in a market economy, where the identity of an author is bound by copyright, the legal nexus of name, text and property’ (Duncan 2007, 148). In the age of print and the author-function it is much less likely that Hogg himself will suffer the fate of the lost bards of tradition. However, his paratextual representations of himself suggest that he is taking no chances, and recognises the ‘boon’ of having ‘a name’.

In *The Queen’s Wake* Hogg helpfully provides his audience with a supplementary description of his authorial self (cf. to Foucault’s assertion that the name of an author is a description in and of itself). The paratextual sections of the poem help reinforce the relationship between the author and the text by not only pointing to, but also carefully describing, the authorial figure outside it (see Foucault 2001, 1623). Once again Hogg can be seen stepping out of traditional culture and into the sphere of authorship, but on his own terms. As Fielding notes, the perceived ‘absence of a known author [in oral tradition] clears a space for the construction of an idealised author-figure who answers the wider Romantic desire for poetry to be an expression of unique creativity’ (Fielding 1996, 56). The fact that there is traditionally no single organising figure behind a ballad means that Hogg had rather a lot of scope to continue his propagation of the figure that had already contributed so much to his work, and helped him break into the literary world.

Thus, in *The Queen's Wake* he creates two 'idealised author-figures': one from the (fictionalised) present and one from the (fictional) past. Firstly, there is the contemporaneous paratextual poet-narrator, who is a version of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', and who operates on the borders of the text. Then there is the Bard of Ettrick, who is a character within the poem, and a past version (from the mid-sixteenth-century) of the latter-day Ettrick Shepherd. Each of them is an idealised representation of Hogg. But their real significance lies in their relationship to each other; that is, in the alternative cultural history Hogg presents in relation to them. The poet-narrator ultimately suggests in the 'Conclusion' that he himself is the latest in a long-line of Ettrick bards, and the rightful successor to the Bard of Ettrick.

The poet-narrator's description of his poetic forebear is thus loaded with significance. In his depiction of the Bard of Ettrick Hogg provides his readers with an updated, poetic version of his 'non-fictional' self-representation in the 1807 'Memoir'. (Several of the other bards are based on Hogg's friends and contemporaries: the Fourteenth Bard is his Ettrick friend John Grieve, who had supported him in his early days in Edinburgh, and to whom he dedicated *Mador of the Moor*; the Fifteenth Bard is James Gray, who had contributed essays to *The Spy*; and the Sixteenth Bard is Allan Cunningham). Once again it is apparent that he is acutely aware of how he must represent himself; that is, of the particular type of 'idealised author' he must propagate. The poet-narrator's description of the ancient bards' art – or, to be more precise, their lack of art – is telling in this regard; 'their's the strains that touch the heart, / Bold, rapid, wild, and void of art' ('Introduction', lines 373-374). Most of the idealised bards are presented as artless, natural-born-poets, but none more so than the Bard of Ettrick. Of course, this is also how Hogg wants, and perhaps needs, to be viewed by his contemporary audience, especially his critics. Thus, his

depiction of the twin ‘idealised authors’ in the poem follows pretty closely, but also expands upon, his earlier autobiographical representations.

For instance, his negative experiences in 1810-11 in the Edinburgh literary marketplace feed into his presentation of the Bard of Ettrick, especially in his introduction on ‘Night the Second’:

The next was named, the very sound
Excited merriment around.
But when the bard himself appeared,
The ladies smiled, the courtiers sneered;
For such a simple air and mien
Before a court had never been.
A clown he was, bred in the wild,
And late from native moors exiled,
In hopes his mellow mountain strain
High favour from the great would gain.
Poor wight! he never weened how hard
For poverty to earn regard!
Dejection o’er his visage ran,
His coat was bare, his colour wan,
His forest doublet darned and torn,
His shepherd plaid all rent and worn;
Yet dear the symbols to his eye,
Memorials of a time gone bye.

The bard on Ettrick’s mountains green
In nature’s bosom nursed had been. (‘Night the Second’, lines 241-260)

Like Hogg himself, the bard has travelled from rural Ettrick to aristocratic Edinburgh in order to seek his fortune, only to encounter social prejudice. The ‘dear symbols’ of his past life – his ‘bare coat’, his ‘forest doublet darned and torn’, his ‘shepherd plaid all rent and worn’ – are in this new context transformed into emblems of his lowly social station. He is judged solely on his physical appearance. Even before he has uttered a single word he has been branded, and all but dismissed, by his social superiors. By this point in his career (1813) Hogg had learnt all about the kind of social discrimination that the bard is here experiencing for the first time, and the difficulties ‘poverty’ must overcome to earn poetic ‘regard’. Hogg is probably ironically depicting his own experiences of social snobbery here. Certainly, the

autobiographical elements in these lines seem too obvious for one to pass over in silence. The courtiers' sneering attitude toward the rustic Bard puts one in mind of the poet-narrator's complaint in the 'Introduction' that he had had to 'fling his soothing harp aside' after being 'jeered by conceit and lordly pride' ('Introduction', lines 31-32). And the line in which the Bard is referred to as a 'clown' – and which, incidentally, reads rather like a piece of free indirect discourse, as if one of the disdainful courtiers has perhaps mistaken him for a jester – is particularly relevant to Hogg. Like the Bard at Mary's court, Hogg was often perceived as nothing more than a clownish oaf when he ventured out into (supposedly) polite Edinburgh society (this is how he would eventually come to be portrayed in the *Blackwoods* series of articles 'Noctes Ambrosianae', which began in 1822).

However, Hogg's self-representation in *The Queen's Wake* is decidedly oppositional, defiant even. In the paratextual sections of the poem, and through the voice of his poet-narrator, he very much goes on the offensive, contrasting himself favourably with aristocratic poets such as Scott, in order to once again lay claim to what he viewed to be his own 'poetic ground'. It is also suggested that he is a better representative of traditional culture than the other lower-class poets described in the poem; it is, after all, the Bard of Ettrick, and not the Sixteenth Bard (Allan Cunningham), who wins the prize at the end. But it is against Scott in particular – one of the leading poets of the day, who, to Hogg's mind, had strayed upon his poetic territory with his *Minstrelsy* and several of his long narrative poems (especially *Marmion*) – that Hogg attempts to position himself in the poem. Hogg, humble as ever, sets himself up as a rival to the most famous poet in Scotland, specifically by using Scott's social background against him, as a way of excluding him from traditional Ettrick culture. It is a bold piece of paratextual posturing on the part of the

peasant poet. Herein lies the significance of the competitive element in the poem, as

Mack explains:

The Bard of Ettrick (like Hogg himself, we are given to understand) turns out to be the embodiment of an ancient oral popular culture that speaks in and through those eloquent and powerful songs of the people, the traditional oral ballads of the Scottish Borders. *The Queen's Wake*, it begins to appear, revolves around a contest in which the aristocratic version of Scottish bardic culture symbolised by the prize harp won by Gardyn is challenged by the non-elite version of that culture symbolised by the prize harp won by the Bard of Ettrick. (Mack 2005, xxviii)²²

The discrimination between these two versions of bardic culture within the poem reflects Hogg's ongoing project to distinguish himself from modern-day 'aristocratic' poets like Scott, who, as McLane puts it, 'had the ambiguous privilege of representing – and not merely *being* – last or residual minstrels' (McLane 2008, 168). Hogg's self-representations in *The Queen's Wake*, and, before this, in *The Mountain Bard*, revolve around the notion that he is a modern-day bard of the people – a 'non-elite' autodidactic peasant-poet, just like his cultural predecessor, the Bard of Ettrick.

That the latter is a past version of the contemporary Ettrick Shepherd is made abundantly clear in the poet-narrator's description of his harp:

Instead of arms or golden crest,
His harp with mimic golden flowers was drest:
Around, in graceful streamers, fell
The briar-rose and the heather bell;
And there his learning deep to prove,
Naturae Donum graved above.
When o'er her mellow notes he ran,
And his wild mountain strain began;
Then first was noted in his eye,
A gleam of native energy. ('Night the Second', lines 297-306)

These lines do not describe the Caledonian Harp (the prize awarded to the Bard, and which, according to Hogg's poem, will eventually pass into the hands of The Ettrick Shepherd), but the harp upon which the Bard of Ettrick plays his song, 'Old David'.

²² Mack, Douglas (2005). 'Introduction', in *The Queen's Wake*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xi-lxxxvi.

The floral decorations on it, along with the Latin inscription, which means ‘the gift of nature’, clearly point to the fact that the Bard is a natural-born-poet. The reference to the ‘gleam of native energy’ in his eye further reinforces this. The contrast between the Bard of Ettrick and the first bard, Rizzio, the foppish Italian courtier of Mary (a real historical personage), is obvious: the former’s poetry is natural, the latter’s merely ‘vapid [and] artful’ (‘Night the First’, line 237). This contrast is an important strand in Hogg’s self-representation in the poem, and feeds into his wider depiction of the supposed superiority of ‘artless’ art over more self-consciously crafted forms of artistic creation. This elevation of the former over the latter form of poetic creation is significant. It represents an inversion of the argument that was so often used against him, in which ‘spontaneous folk art’ is perceived as being beneath supposedly more sophisticated forms of literary creation. The poem suggests that the artless art of the Bard of Ettrick is ‘better’ than the ‘artful’ art of Rizzio; the implication being that Hogg’s own artlessness is likewise superior to the sophisticated artistry of his poetic contemporaries. Hogg is using his poem to challenge accepted contemporary notions of cultural value in relation to poetic creativity.

It is worth noting that Hogg (albeit playfully, or perhaps just half-heartedly) attempts to suggest that his fictional creation, the Bard of Ettrick, was inspired by a real historical figure. But although he argues in one of his notes that ‘some notable bard flourished in Ettrick Forest in that age [as is] evident from the numerous ballads and songs which relate to places in that country’ (Note XXII, 190), it is clear that his idealised Bard is not so much based on any historical personage as on his own idealised authorial self, ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’. The poetic source Hogg cites as evidence for the possible existence of this mythical Ettrick bard, William Dunbar (c. 1465-c.1530) – who, the note tells us, ‘merely mentions [the Bard] by the title of

Etrick; more of him we know not' (Note XXII, 190) – clearly represents quite a fanciful leap of imagination on his part. As Mack notes, Dunbar's poem ('I that in heill was and gladnes'), 'does not contain a reference to a bard of Etrick in all its versions, but the Bannatyne Manuscript and the Maitland Folio Manuscript texts do mention "Etrik" in stanza 14' (Mack 2005, 446). However, this is clearly not a reference to any Etrick bard; as Meiko O'Halloran points out, most editors take 'Etrik' as 'a mistake in the manuscript for "And eik"' (quoted in Mack 2005, 446). Later in his career, however, Hogg draws attention to a real poetic forbear, his grandfather Will o' Phaup, whom he describes in 'General Anecdotes'. (See Chapter Five for a discussion of the significance of Hogg's positioning of himself alongside his grandfather).

Thus, the Bard of Etrick is very much Hogg's own creation, but it is a creation with a clear function, perhaps even with a wish-fulfilling function. The clownish-looking Bard manages to win over his hostile audience with his song. Poetic merit, it would seem, wins out over snobbish attitudes about social standing. However, the depiction of the Bard's victory over the social and cultural snobs at the wake is laced with a dose of socio-cultural criticism. The audience do not so much overcome their social prejudice in recognition of his poetic talent, as simply bow down to the opinion of their social superior, Queen Mary:

When ceased the shepherd's simple lay
 With careless mien he lounged away.
 No bow he deigned. Nor anxious looked
 How the gay throng their minstrel brooked.
 No doubt within his bosom grew,
 That to his skill the prize was due.
 Well might he hope, for while he sung,
 Louder and louder plaudits rung;
 And when he ceased his numbers wild,
 Fair royalty on him smiled.
 Long had the bard with hopes elate,
 Sung to the low, the gay, the great;

And once had dared, at flatterers call,
 To tune his harp at Branxholm hall;
 But, nor his notes of soothing sound,
 Nor zealous word of bard renowned,
 Might those persuade, that worth could be
 Inherent in such mean degree.
 But when the smile of Sovereign fair
 Attested genuine nature there,
 Throbb'd high with rapture every breast,
 And all his merit stood confest. ('Night the Second', lines 699-720)

The sheep-like audience at Mary's court are not so much interested in poetic merit as they are in the judgment of the Queen. It is significant that, unlike the audience, the Bard refuses to bow down to the opinion of his social superiors (with the possible exception of Mary herself). He refuses to court the audience or pander to their expectations ('No bow he deigned. Nor anxious looked / How the gay throng their minstrel brooked'). On the contrary, he is relying solely on his poetic talent to win them over. However, up to this point in his poetic career even the 'zealous words of renowned bards' had apparently failed to free his poetic talent from the bonds of social snobbery. Until Mary passes judgement the Bard's audience - just like his previous aristocratic audience at Branxholm Hall (a reference to Branksome Hall, the setting for Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*) – seemed set to refuse to acknowledge that 'worth could be / inherent in such mean degree'. This is despite the fact that some of them clearly enjoy the song while it is actually being performed ('while he sung, / Louder and louder the plaudits rung'). But at the end of his performance they would have once more been confronted with the displeasing physical form of the rustic, which would presumably have washed away any enjoyment they may have derived from it, just as had previously happened at Branxholm Hall. After all, a court audience may enjoy the gambolling of a jester, but this does not mean they will respect him anymore after he is finished than when he began. The Bard looks set to suffer a similar fate to this in Hogg's poem; that is, until

the ratifying approbation of Mary sets the tone for the others' approval of him. This approval of the Queen, which is based on her perception of 'genuine nature' in the Bard, is especially significant when one considers the fact that the Bard had apparently failed to find such appreciation at Branxholm Hall. There is clearly an element of one-upmanship going on here. While Scott's last minstrel finds favour among the aristocratic Scotts of Buccleuch at Branxholm, Hogg's Bard of Ettrick finds it at the royal court of Queen Mary. The Bard's failure to win over the former audience is wiped out by his success with the latter one. His poetry has been ratified by a higher power.

But there is no guarantee how long this approval will last, especially since the Bard's success does not derive from recognition of his innate poetic talent (only Mary is able to recognise this), but from fashionable opinion. (And the opinion of Mary would presumably not be much of a recommendation for too much longer considering her calamitous fall from grace over the next few years). Literary audiences, the poem suggests, can be swayed one way or the other for reasons that have nothing to do with literary merit. As the Bard's successful performance at Mary's wake suggests, factors such as historical situation, social convention and even peer pressure can profoundly influence the reception of cultural material. And, moreover, like the approval extended to Hogg himself in his literary world, that which is extended to the Bard in the poem may also be decidedly qualified. After all, it is based upon the performance of an appropriate song by a bard of his social position ('Old David' is a 'simple lay' about a conflict between men and fairies, set in Ettrick). His supernatural song would thus presumably meet the expectations of his audience; just as such a song would meet the expectations of Hogg's own audience. And although the Bard's song is not presented in the metrical form one might expect from a peasant-poet (it is in rhyming

couplets, as opposed to ballad quatrains), this only serves to align him even more closely with the Ettrick Shepherd poet-narrator (whose interlinking sections are also in couplets). The link between the two is made even more manifest by another of Hogg's notes, in which he reveals that he heard the story of 'Old David' from an old Ettrick man (see Note IX, 181-182).

Hogg's alignment of himself with the poet-narrator, and the poet-narrator with the Bard, serves a clear paratextual function. While the story of the bard represents an allegorical rendering of Hogg's own experiences in the literary world of his day, the poet-narrator's linking passages act as autobiographical paratextual responses to criticisms of his work, presumably aimed primarily at the Edinburgh literary elite that had so recently rejected him. The paratextual sections to *The Queen's Wake* are thus perhaps best characterised as later prefaces or incorporated paratexts (Genette 1997, 219). These forms of paratexts, argues Genette, provide authors with the opportunity to respond to outside criticism of their work. However, they are more usually encountered in serial publications, such as *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67), in which Sterne (through Tristram) responded to criticism of his book as each new volume appeared. But for Hogg this process was not contained to just one book: the need to not only answer criticism of his work, but also to justify himself as an author (something that the likes of a Sterne, or a Scott, or a Pushkin would not generally have to concern themselves with) was a continuing process that had to be taken up again with the appearance of each new book. Thus, taken together, the paratextual sections of *The Queen's Wake* could be read as a response to the negative criticism of *The Spy*, but, more generally, as part of Hogg's ongoing justification of himself as an author in his society.

However, ‘later paratexts’ are not only defensive devices. They may also be used to launch counter-attacks against the critics who attacked the book; or, in Hogg’s case, against those critics who questioned his very status as an author. The section of *The Queen’s Wake* describing the audience’s reaction to the Bard’s appearance at Queen Mary’s court may be a poetic exaggeration of Hogg’s own bitter experience of the cultural process whereby his poetic talent was routinely questioned, qualified, and ultimately tainted by knowledge of his social background. Just as the nobles at Mary’s court do with the Bard in the poem, critics of Hogg all too frequently based their criticism of his work solely on his social standing, and even perhaps, as in the poem, on his physical appearance, which signified this standing.²³ (In the early nineteenth century the former perhaps provided a more obvious indicator of the latter than it would do today). The relative success of the Bard within the poem sends a defiant message to Hogg’s critics. However, this is not the main function of the paratextual framework to the poem. Through the creation and propagation of the twin idealised author figures of the poet-narrator and the Bard of Ettrick, and the description of their supposed relationship to each other, Hogg answers and challenges the conceptions of a literary elite that routinely placed him at the bottom of what, in the early nineteenth century, remained a socially-biased cultural hierarchy. In the paratexts to *The Queen’s Wake* Hogg attempts to invert the dominant socio-cultural discourse that marginalises him as an author, and would perhaps even threaten to dismiss him from mainstream literary history. Hogg’s perceived ‘otherness’, which was so often used as a justification for excluding him from the literary mainstream, is redefined by Hogg as ‘uniqueness’, and it is on the basis of this ‘uniqueness’ that he argues for his place in

²³ See, for instance, John Wilson’s review of *The Three Perils of Woman* in which, as Duncan points out, ‘it is not long before the novel, the ostensible object of the review, is displaced by the body of its author’ (Duncan 2007, 174): ‘What with his genius, and what with his buck teeth; what with his fiddle, and what with his love-locks lolling over his shoulders as he gaed “up the Kirk”, tastily tied with a blue ribbon [etc, etc]’ (see *Blackwood’s* 14, October 1823, 428).

literary history. This process is nowhere more apparent than in the ‘Conclusion’ to the poem.

The ‘Conclusion’ to *The Queen’s Wake*: An Alternative Cultural History

Through the story of the Caledonian Harp, the harp won by the Bard of Ettrick at Mary’s wake, as told by the poet-narrator in the ‘Conclusion’, Hogg places himself in traditional-cultural history. The poet-narrator uses this tale to suggest that he, and by implication Hogg, is the rightful successor to the Bard of Ettrick, as well as the most genuine representative of traditional culture *within* the literary world of his own day.²⁴ He appears to be the only genuine representative of that culture to have appeared on the scene since the death of the Bard of Ettrick:

Long has that harp of magic tone
 To all the minstrel world be known:
 Who has not heard her witching lays,
 Of Ettrick banks and Yarrow braes?
 But that sweet bard, who sung and played
 Of many a feat and Border raid,
 Of many a knight and lovely maid,
 When forced to leave his harp behind,
 Did all her tuneful chords unwind;
 And many ages past and came
 Ere man so well could tune the same. (‘Conclusion’, lines 269-279)

Many poets have attempted to play the Caledonian Harp – which symbolises the ‘non-elite’ bardic tradition of Scotland, but also grass-roots traditional culture generally – since the time of the Bard of Ettrick, but none so well as he. The poet-narrator helpfully lists all these poets who have tried to take up the harp down the years:

William Hamilton of Bangour (1704-54), Allan Ramsay (1686-1758), John Langhorne (1735-1779), John Logan (1748-1788), and John Leyden (1775-1811).

Although all of these poets wrote or collected ballads and songs about, or set around,

²⁴ As Mack notes, ‘*The Queen’s Wake* debates with Scott’s *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* by asserting its own demotic understanding of the old ballad tradition of the Scottish borders’ (Mack 2005, xxxvi).

Ettrick, none of them were born and raised in the traditional ‘non-elite’ world of Hogg’s Ettrick. Nor are any of them genuine autodidactic peasant-poets. Thus, the harp they played, suggests the poet-narrator, may not have even been the Caledonian Harp at all.

Bangour was a landed aristocratic Jacobite poet from West Lothian (his family seat was in Ecclesmachan). His elevated social position would immediately seem to disqualify him from following the Bard of Ettrick as the rightful heir of the Harp. Likewise, Ramsay (born in Lanarkshire), although not university-educated – and who thus possessed, admits the poet-narrator, some ‘peasant skill’ (line 284) – was nonetheless, like Burns, considerably better educated than Hogg, and also moved in more polite circles. He, like Bangour, is consequently not an ideal candidate to take up the harp of the common people. Thus, the poet-narrator ultimately dismisses him, asserting that, ‘His was some lyre from lady’s hall, / And not the mountain harp at all’ (‘Conclusion’, lines 286-287). Langhorne (from Westmoreland, Cumbria) and Logan (born in Midlothian, and a minister in Leith) were erudite clergymen and poets. They were thus also unsuitable aspirants to the Caledonian Harp (the former’s harp was, according to the poet-narrator, ‘the modish lyre of art’ (‘Conclusion’, line 291)). Leyden, meanwhile, the only one of these poets who was actually ‘from Border land’ (‘Conclusion’, line 293) – Denholm, near Hawick, to be precise – would seem to have the strongest case for inheriting the Harp. His father, like Hogg’s, was a shepherd. However, he was no autodidact. A noted poet, physician and linguist, he attended Edinburgh University and, like Hogg, helped Scott collect material for his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. His privileged education would seem to disqualify him from inheriting the ‘non-elite’ Harp. Moreover, his association with the antiquarian Scott – the very poet from whom the poet-narrator is most keen on differentiating himself

from (in spite of the fact that Hogg himself, just five years earlier, had also helped Scott collect material for *Minstrelsy*) – would also seem to prohibit Leyden from taking up the Caledonian Harp. In fact, as the remainder of the ‘Conclusion’ suggests, Hogg’s self-representation in the poem relies largely on the contrast between his ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ self and Scott, the leading aristocratic antiquarian-poet of the day.

The final eighty lines or so of the ‘Conclusion’ are the most obviously autobiographical of the entire poem. However, they are not so much about Hogg himself as about his relationship with Scott. Anticipating his later biography, Hogg uses this section of the poem to position his ‘idealised authorial selves’ in relation to Scott and, by extension, to the other established/establishment poets of the early-nineteenth century Scottish literary world. The lines tell the tale of Hogg’s first meeting with Scott, a tale which he would go on to retell several times later in his career, most famously and imaginatively in *Confessions* (in the Editor’s journey to the suicide’s grave in Ettrick). He also produced several ‘non-fiction’ versions of the meeting, most notably in ‘Reminiscences of Former Days’ (which appeared in the same volume, *Altrive Tales*, as the 1832 version of the ‘Memoir’), as well as in *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*. The account of their meeting and early relationship in *The Queen’s Wake* is thus perhaps best characterised as a fictional version of the nominally ‘non-fictional’ ones presented in the later (auto)biographical accounts.

Rubenstein argues that, in his biography of him, Hogg ‘marginalises Scott by highlighting his status as an outsider in Ettrick Forest, the locus [for Hogg] of authenticity and value’ (Rubenstein 2004, xxiii).²⁵ This process is also apparent in the ‘Conclusion’ to *The Queen’s Wake*. The poet-narrator’s description of Scott’s arrival

²⁵ Rubenstein, Jill (2004). ‘Introduction’, in *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. by Jill Rubenstein, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xi-xxix.

in Ettrick on his ballad-collecting expedition brings the story of the ‘rightful heir to the Caledonian Harp’ right up to the present day (1813). Initially, Scott is presented as the ‘right’ poet to take up the Bard of Ettrick’s forsaken Harp:

The day arrived – blest be the day,
 Walter the abbot came that way! –
 The sacred relic met his view –
 Ah! well the pledge of heaven he knew!
 He screwed the chords, he tried a strain;
 ‘Twas wild – he tuned and tried again,
 Then poured out numbers bold and free,
 The simple magic melody.
 The land was charmed to list his lays;
 It knew the harp of ancient days. (‘Conclusion’, lines 308-317)

At first glance this all seems rather complimentary, that perhaps Scott is the poet that the Harp has been waiting for. However, the poet-narrator’s description of the Harp as a ‘sacred relic’ is unusual. It sounds more like the kind of language Scott the antiquarian-editor uses to describe the ancient ballads in the *Minstrelsy*. The paratexts to his famous ballad collection certainly suggest that Scott viewed the material therein as museum pieces, primarily valuable for what they revealed about the peculiar customs and manners of by-gone ages. However, the Caledonian Harp is, according to the poet-narrator, no mere museum piece. It is symbolic of a living tradition (as the list of all the poets who have attempted to play it down the years highlights), but one which requires the ‘right’ kind of poet to take it up in the present, in order for it to continue to flourish in the future. As the descriptions of the previous poets who have attempted to play it suggest, the most suitable poet for this task is a natural-born one, and certainly not a sophisticated antiquarian-poet and ballad editor like Scott.

Thus, the lines about Scott trying a ‘strain’ on the harp, only to find it too ‘wild’ and in need of retuning, are probably a symbolic representation of his editorial procedure of smoothing out the rough edges of ballads in his pursuit of the best, or least objectionable, versions of them – they may well be a sly depiction of Scott-the-

tampering-ballad-editor. This is the version of Scott which is presented to Hogg's readers in one of the notes to the Bard of Ettrick's song:

the best old witch tale that remains, is that which is related of the celebrated Michael Scott, Master of Oakwad. Mr Walter Scott has preserved it [in several of his notes to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*], but so altered from the original way, that it is not easy to recognise it. The old people tell it as follows [...] ('Note X', 183)

Hogg uses this note in *The Queen's Wake* to challenge Scott's notes in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Scott-the-outsider does not only meddle with the details of the tale of Michael Scott but also with the 'original way' that it was told by the 'old people' of Ettrick. It is thus up to Hogg-the-insider, who has a direct line to these people, to recount it in the 'original way'. Scott's apparent inability to retell a traditional tale properly – that is, as the old people tell it – is used here to once again underline his outsider status in Ettrick, as well as his lack of understanding of traditional forms of storytelling. He thus does not appear to be the ideal kind of poet to inherit the harp.

And yet it would seem that Scott could nonetheless play it considerably better than any of his predecessors – 'The land was charmed to list his lays; / It knew the harp of ancient days' – that is, since the Bard of Ettrick, and before 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. However, the poet-narrator argues that the appearance on the scene of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' (that is, himself) changed all this. The narration of Scott's role in encouraging Hogg to take up the Harp – that is, to take up poetry – makes it clear that it is Hogg, and not Scott, who is the rightful heir to the Caledonian Harp:

Blest be his generous heart for ay!
 He told me where the relic lay;
 Pointed my way with ready will,
 Afar on Ettrick's wildest hill;
 Watched my first notes with curious eye,
 And wondered at my minstrelsy:
 He little weened a parent's tongue
 Such strains had o'er my cradle sung.
 But when, to native feelings true,
 I struck upon a chord was new;
 When by myself I 'gan to play,

He tried to wile my harp away.
 Just when her notes began with skill,
 To sound beneath the southern hill,
 And twine around my bosom's core,
 How could we part for evermore?
 'Twas kindness all, I cannot blame,
 For bootless is the minstrel flame;
 But sure, a bard might well have known
 Another's feelings by his own! ('Conclusion', lines 326-345)

Although 'Walter-the-abbot' (a reference to Scott's home at Abbotsford, which he moved into in 1812) told the poet-narrator 'where the relic lay', it turns out that he already knows better than he how to play it. This is hardly surprising since he has known its 'strains' since infancy. He learnt them from his 'parent's tongue' (a reference to Hogg's mother). Unlike Scott he has been brought up, as it were, within earshot of the harp, which, as Mack notes, 'speaks for and from *all* the non-elite people of Scotland' (Mack 2005, xxxi). The poet-narrator presents himself as the representative of these people in the literary-cultural sphere of the early nineteenth-century, just as the Bard of Ettrick was their representative at Mary's court in the sixteenth-century. However, the harp is not only of symbolic importance to the Scottish poetic tradition. Hogg's poem makes it clear that it has represented grass-roots Ettrick traditional culture since the time the Bard of Ettrick won it at Mary's wake and brought it home with him. The poet-narrator first tried its notes 'by lone St Mary's side' ('Introduction', line 14), and it is in 'Ettrick's green and fairy dell' ('Introduction', line 48) where he seeks it out again at the beginning of the poem. It is, likewise, on 'Ettrick's wildest hill' that 'Walter-the-abbot' points it out to him. This is what makes the poet-narrator's case for ownership of the harp so strong. It is not so much a 'relic' to him as a family heirloom. Hogg is reminding his readers that Scott is an outsider in traditional Ettrick. He is once again asserting his poetic authority – specifically his ethnographic authority – in relation to traditional Ettrick ballad

material and suggesting that he is the rightful inheritor of the 'non-elite' Ettrick-based harp.

In *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott* Hogg explains the biographical details behind the lines about 'Walter-the-abbot' trying to 'wile [his] harp away'. Scott had engaged Hogg to one Lord Porchester as his chief shepherd, but, as Hogg explains, only with the 'proviso that "I was to put my poetical talent under lock and key for ever!"' (59). Hogg then quotes the above lines from *The Queen's Wake*. Putting the glaring paranoia to one side, Hogg is clearly trying to suggest that Scott was jealous of his natural proficiency on the harp, of the 'native feelings' which enabled him to play it so much better than he. But this is hardly surprising considering that this is supposedly the harp of the natural-born-poet (as the history of the poets who have tried to play it underlines). In this sense it could be compared to the Aeolian harp (a musical instrument that is 'played' by the wind), which became an important symbol in Romantic poetry, denoting the relationship between nature and poetic creation. The symbolic significance of the Aeolian harp to a natural-born-poet such as Hogg is obvious. In the final lines of the poem the poet-narrator seems to invoke it during his final address to his personified Caledonian harp when he vows to return to 'the aged thorn, / [to] the haunted wild and fairy ring, / Where oft thy [the harp's] erring numbers born / Have taught the wandering winds to sing' ('Conclusion', lines 390-393) in order to reclaim it later. The Caledonian harp is here transformed into a vessel through which nature creates music – just like 'The Ettrick Shepherd' of the 1807 'Memoir'. It is the wild harp of nature. It is perhaps significant that, unlike the Caledonian harp, which hangs on an 'aged thorn' upon 'Ettrick's wildest hill', as a symbol of the age-old Ettrick oral tradition, one would be more likely to find Aeolian harps, which become a fashionable domestic furnishing in the Romantic period,

perched by the open windows of genteel households. Hogg's Caledonian/Ettrick harp is the harp of the natural-born-poet; it thus resides in Nature, and not in cultured civilisation.

The image of the harp hanging on the thorn in Ettrick also feeds into the final argument against Scott being the rightful possessor of it. His shift into new literary territories after the *Minstrelsy* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, not only in terms of the setting of his poems but also in terms of their poetic form, is, according to the poet-narrator of Hogg's poem, an indicator of his increasing estrangement from traditional Border culture: 'Of change enamoured, woe the while! / He left our mountains, left the isle; / And far to other kingdoms bore / The Caledonian Harp of yore' ('Conclusion', lines 346-349). Scott's move away from what Mack calls 'the old minstrelsy of the Scottish border [...] from the old oral ballads that Hogg associates with "the Caledonian harp of yore"' (Mack 2005, 441) clearly disqualifies him from inheriting the harp (Scott's most recent poem, *Rokeby* (1813), was set in England). And his defection leaves the field even more open for the poet-narrator to claim his rightful place in the traditional cultural history of the Borders as the latest custodian of the harp. He asserts that, 'that harp [Scott] never more shall see, / Unless 'mong Scotland's hills with me' ('Conclusion', lines 352-353). The poem then ends where it had began, on the banks of St Mary's Loch, at the heart of Hogg's Ettrick. The harp clearly belongs to 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. To emphasize this point even further the form of the poem then shifts abruptly from the rhyming couplets which have been used throughout the paratextual sections of the poem into ballad quatrains. The poet-narrator signs off in the poetic form of the Border ballads.

Thus, Hogg uses the paratextual sections of *The Queen's Wake* to reassert his place as the preeminent representative of traditional Borders culture. He challenges his

social superior Scott by suggesting that those at the grass-roots of this culture understand it, and are thus better representatives of it, than those who approach it from 'above'. But Hogg is not merely attempting to place himself in traditional cultural history. He is also trying to secure his place within the literary mainstream. His supposed place at the head of the former culture, he suggests, entitles him to a place in the latter. He uses his perceived otherness, which was so often used to exclude him from the literary world, as a justification for his place within it. He is once more trading on his uniqueness by attempting to get inside on the basis of his outsider status; he is apparently part of, but also unique within, the Edinburgh literary world of his day. This process is actualised in the poem through the figures of the poet-narrator and the Bard of Ettrick. The former is a genuine member of the oral tradition who is yet operating successfully in the modern literary marketplace of the early nineteenth-century; while the latter is an exemplary model of the quintessential traditional oral poet, repackaged for the age of print. The modern-day poet-narrator brings the (albeit fictional) bard out of the obscurity of the anonymous world of oral tradition through the pages of his printed poem. In short, he brings him – and, in the process, brings himself – into literary history. This paratextual process will become a recurring pattern in Hogg's career from this point on. His desire to break into mainstream literary history – specifically on the basis of his unique place in Ettrick traditional cultural history – can be traced through the paratexts to many of his subsequent works, not least in those attached to his next three major books.

The Pilgrims of the Sun, The Poetic Mirror and Mador of the Moor: Paratexts and Literary History

Hogg attempted to build on the success of *The Queen's Wake* in his next book-length poem *The Pilgrims of the Sun* (1814). The title-page of the volume, like the title-pages

of many of his later works, announces that the work is ‘by James Hogg, the Author of *The Queen’s Wake*’ (Hogg’s publishers would have recognised the potential market value of this type of description). As this statement suggests, Hogg was now a famous author. He thus set about consolidating his position in the literary marketplace, as well as in literary history. This latter aim is apparent in the paratextual juxtaposition of his proper name with those of two of the leading poets of the day. The epigraph on the title-page (‘A pupil in the many-chambered school / Where Superstition weaves her airy dreams’) is taken from Wordsworth’s *The Excursion*, which had been published earlier in 1814, and the poem itself is dedicated to Lord Byron.²⁶ This ‘Dedication’ provides an interesting instance of Hogg’s ongoing endeavour to position himself among the literary elite, but on his own terms:

Not for thy crabbed state-creed, wayward wight,
 Thy noble lineage, nor thy virtues high,
 (God bless the mark!) do I this homage plight;
 No – ‘tis thy bold and native energy;
 Thy soul that dares each bound to overfly,
 Ranging through nature on erratic wing –
 These do I honour – and would fondly try
 With thee a wild aerial strain to sing:
 Then, O! round Shepherd’s head thy charmed
 mantle fling.²⁷

Hogg here carefully chooses which poetic traits in Byron to praise: namely, those which will rebound back upon himself, and validate his place in the literary hierarchy. He dismisses Byron’s political ‘creed’, his ‘noble lineage’, and his questionable moral

²⁶ As Hughes points out, following the success of *The Queen’s Wake*, lesser-known poets were beginning to align themselves with Hogg in their paratextual material around this time:

In his prefatory advertisement to *Tales in Verse, and Miscellaneous Poems*, published in April 1814, the Galloway pedlar-poet William Nicholson expressed his gratitude to “the celebrated Mr Hogg, for his generous and unwearied attention, since the Author came to Edinburgh, where he was almost friendless and unknown”. Nicholson’s title-page quoted “plain his garb and plain his lay” from the description of the Bard of Clyde in *The Queen’s Wake*. (Hughes 2007, 122)

Hogg’s friend James Gray’s poem *Cona, or the Vale of Chwyd* (1814) also included a title-page quotation from *The Queen’s Wake*’ (see Hughes 2007, 122).

²⁷ Hogg, James (1815). *The Pilgrims of the Sun* (1815), Edinburgh: William Blackwood.

character in order to highlight his ‘native energy’ – that is, his natural talent, which adheres to no rules and apparently refuses to stay within established ‘bounds’. The reference to ‘native energy’ puts one in mind of the description of the Bard of Ettrick in *The Queen’s Wake*, ‘then first was noted in his eye, / A gleam of native energy’ (‘Night the Second’, lines 305-306). Hogg, in praising Byron, is also praising himself. The poetic attributes he values in Byron are those he extols in himself through the idealised author figure he created in *The Queen’s Wake*. He sees in Byron a fellow natural-born-poet, despite the glaring disparity in their social backgrounds. The ‘Dedication’ ends with his imagining Byron and he singing a ‘wild aerial strain’ together. Hogg is suggesting here that, as he appears to possess some of the same qualities as Byron, he is entitled to take his place beside him among the great living poets of the day.

This desire becomes even more apparent with the anonymously-published *The Poetic Mirror; or, The Living Bards of Britain* (1816), a book consisting of parodies of the leading poets of the day. As Hogg explains in the 1821 ‘Memoir’, this book was not originally intended to be a book of parodies:

I took it into my head that I would collect a poem from every living author in Britain, and publish them in a neat and elegant volume, by which I calculated to make my fortune... [However] I began, with a heavy heart, to look over the pieces I had received, and lost all hope of my project succeeding. They were, indeed, all very well; but I did not see that they possessed such merit as could give celebrity to any work; and after considering them well, I fancied that I could write a better poem than any that had been sent or would be sent to me, and this so completely in the style of each poet, that it should not be known but for his own production. (221-222)

Although he downplays it in the ‘Memoir’ the main reason for the failure of his poetical repository in its original conception stemmed from the marked reluctance of the ‘living bards of Britain’ to furnish him with any poems in the first place. His brilliant book of parodies was thus perhaps not so much an artistic choice as Hogg

making the best of his failed venture. But it is also a rather courageous act of defiance on the part of a slighted autodidact. The book contains some of the best parodies of major Romantic poets ever written. And despite his failure to elicit material from his contemporaries, the book could still be perceived as a relative success in terms of his ongoing endeavour to position himself among the literary elite of the early nineteenth-century. Indeed, in the paratexts attached to the book he strategically places his name amongst the names of the poetic superstars of the age.

In the ‘Advertisement’ the pseudo-Editor (of course, Hogg is behind this editor) claims that his book is made up of original works by ‘the principal living Bards of Britain’.²⁸ These principal Bards are then listed on the contents page with Hogg’s name (he includes a parody of himself) placed prominently between those of Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. The fictional ‘editor’ is clearly making a value judgement about Hogg’s poetry here; it apparently deserves to appear alongside the poetry of these illustrious writers. (Despite the success of *The Queen’s Wake*, the appearance of Hogg’s name alongside those of the likes of Byron and Scott must yet have seemed rather incongruous to contemporary readers).²⁹ Hogg is not simply parodying his contemporary poets in *The Poetic Mirror*; he is also attempting to place himself among them, as their equal. He not only does this through the parodies themselves – in which he ‘proves’ that he can write just as well in the style of the leading poets of the day as they themselves – but also through the paratexts, in which he quite literally positions his name alongside the names of the poets he is parodying. The importance of this kind of alignment to his literary career, specifically in terms of forming working relationships with poets such as Byron, is made manifest in a letter

²⁸ Hogg, James (1816). *The Poetic Mirror; or, the living bards of Britain* (1816), London: Longman.

²⁹ Although *The Queen’s Wake* was an undoubted success for Hogg it never achieved the kind of sales enjoyed by the likes of Scott and Byron. As Garside notes, ‘Sales within the first year of publication can barely have exceeded 1000, with Hogg hardly achieving a Byronic standing among his own countrymen. Nor is there any evidence of any significant penetration in London’ (Garside 2012, 25).

to him about the original poetical repository, in which he states that unless he is ‘ascertained’ of Byron’s involvement in the project he will not begin it: ‘your name will so completely ensure me all the respectable correspondence in Britain that without this favour from you I must abandon the idea’ (Hogg to Byron, dated Westmoreland, 13 September 1814).³⁰

The other major poem from this period, *Mador of the Moor* (1816), also features elements which seem indicative of Hogg’s desire to enter the literary mainstream. In terms of content the poem is, as James Barcus points out, a ‘make over’ (‘Mador’ suggests ‘made o’er’) of Scott’s *The Lady of the Lake* (1810).³¹ For instance, although each poem features a heroine who enters into a relationship with an incognito Scottish king the respective poets’ depictions of these relationships are widely divergent. Scott’s aristocratic lady’s relationship with her King is chaste; while Hogg’s plucky peasant girl is impregnated during her encounter with the disguised King. However, she avoids the fate of the ‘fallen woman’ (this will become something of a recurring theme in Hogg’s later fiction). Viewed in this light, the poem could be seen as just another attempt on the part of Hogg to challenge and differentiate himself from Scott, and the moral codes of Edinburgh society.

However, the poem also marks a formal shift away from ‘the old minstrelsy of the Scottish border’ on the part of Hogg. Not only is the poem set in a new locale away from Ettrick (it is mainly set around the River Tay in Perthshire), it is also presented in a new poetic form (for Hogg), the Spenserian stanza. Hogg’s use of this most canonical of poetic forms – it was developed by Edmund Spenser for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590 & 1596) – represents quite a bold move for a poet of his

³⁰ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 201-202.

³¹ Barcus, James E. (2005). ‘Introduction’, in *Mador of the Moor*, ed. by James E. Barcus, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xi-xlii.

social standing. Up to this point in his career he had composed mainly oral-style poetry (ballads and songs), that is, the type of poetry expected of a peasant-poet like himself. The Spenserian stanza is, however, a complex literary form, which had come back into fashion in recent years: Wordsworth had used it in ‘The Female Vagrant’ (in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798), Scott in *Don Roderick* (1811), and Byron in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812-1818). Hogg was thus moving into new literary territory with *Mador*. He was making use of a long-established, and decidedly literary, poetic form. But this was not the first time Hogg had experimented with conspicuously literary forms. In his first book, *Scottish Pastorals* (1801), he had tried his hand at pastoral poetry, a long-established poetic mode. However, its associations with shepherds and rural life would presumably have cancelled out any sense of incongruity at a poet like Hogg composing in such an obviously literary form. But by the time of *Mador* Hogg’s public persona as a peasant-poet was well-established, and thus his use of such a ‘high’ poetic form as the Spenserian stanza would not have gone unnoticed.³² Via his adoption of this form, Hogg is announcing that he is now competing with the greatest poets of the epoch on their own literary ground. The poetic competition theme in *The Queen’s Wake*, in which the Bard of Ettrick competes against the leading poets of his day, is being actualised in Hogg’s own literary life. Hogg’s life is imitating his art, as it so often appeared to do. At any rate, it certainly seems that he was attempting to enter the lists of mainstream literary history at this time.

³² Barcus discusses some of the critical responses to Hogg’s use of the Spenserian stanza in his ‘Introduction’ to the Stirling/South Carolina edition of the poem:

Several reviewers, either explicitly or implicitly, set firm limits on the poetic ambitions appropriate for a self-educated Scottish farm-worker. Although the reviewer for the *Scots Magazine* praises Hogg’s “expression of genuine Scottish feeling”, even this critic believes Hogg is “attempting a style which appears to him higher than that which he was wont to cultivate” [*Scots Magazine*, 78 (June 1816), 448-51]. Even more condescending is the *Critical Review*, which asserts that Hogg “as a native of Scotland, [is] probably not very well acquainted with our literature” and “could not be supposed to possess that wide and perfect knowledge of the language which such a reduplication of sound requires” [*Critical Review*, 5th series (August 1816), 130-43]’. (Barcus 2005, xvii-xviii)

And yet he makes it clear in the paratexts to *Mador* that he is not abandoning the Borders ballad tradition – as he suggests Scott had done in the ‘Conclusion’ to *The Queen’s Wake* – but simply transplanting it into a different area of Scotland, and couching its themes and modes of storytelling within a new poetic form. These paradigm shifts are rationalised in the ‘Introduction’ to the poem, firstly, in the poet-narrator’s address to the River Tay:

Fain would a weary wanderer from his home,
The wayward Minstrel of a Southland dale
Sing of thy mountain birth, thy billowy tomb,
And legends old that linger in thy vale;
To friendship, and to thee, is due the simple tale. (‘Introduction’, 7.59-63)³³

The poet-narrator is clearly not operating on home ground. His reference to himself as ‘the wayward Minstrel of a Southland dale’ associates his identity with ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’. (Hogg may well be playing on the respective public personas of himself and Scott here: he is the anti-establishment ‘wayward Minstrel of the South’ while Scott is the rather more staid ‘Minstrel of the Scottish Border’, as he refers to him in the ‘Dedication’ to *The Mountain Bard*). The above lines helpfully explain why he has strayed away from his normal topographical literary territory in the first place. The poem has apparently been elicited by a personified River Tay and by ‘friendship’. The friend referred to here is Eliza Izett (1774-1842). It was apparently during a stay at her home in 1813 or 1814 – Kinnaird House in Atholl, which overlooks the Tay – that she encouraged him to write the poem (see pp. 216-17 of the 1821 version of the ‘Memoir’). Hogg uses his poet-narrator to suggest that he is merely obliging a lady-friend with this non-Ettrick poem. But even though he is far from home he will yet stick to the kind of material he knows best, namely, ‘legends’. And although he is

³³ Hogg, James (2005). *Mador of the Moor* (1816), ed. by James Barcus, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

embedding these legends within a complex new poetic form his story will be the kind of ‘simple tale’ one would expect from ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’. As he explains later in the ‘Introduction’, he will certainly not be writing an aristocratic poem of chivalry; that is, he will not ‘sing of battles lost and won; / Of royal obsequies, and halls of blood; / And daring deeds by warriors done’ (‘Introduction’, 9.74-76), as the likes of Scott would presumably do. As he points out, his ‘froward harp’ would ‘refuse to comply’ with such an undertaking, since he is ‘The nursling of the wild, the Mountain Bard’ (‘Introduction’, 80-81). Hogg is clearly attempting to reassure his audience that he has not completely abandoned the traditional literary ground of the Shepherd. He may have left Ettrick behind, but he has taken the Ettrick Shepherd (the ‘Mountain Bard’ is pretty much synonymous with the Shepherd), and his traditional modes of storytelling, with him on his new literary adventure.

Hogg’s apparent keenness to highlight his continued closeness to Ettrick culture is further reinforced by the other paratextual material placed around the poem. *Mador* is bookended by a ‘Dedication’ to his Ettrick friend John Grieve (no-one, asserts the ‘Dedication’, approves Hogg’s ‘wayward minstrelsy’ more than Grieve, or is so ‘prone to [his] rhyming lore’),³⁴ and by the ‘Conclusion’, in which the poet-narrator makes the highly symbolic return journey to Ettrick and, by implication, to the Border ballad tradition so associated with Hogg and his Shepherd:

Return, my harp, unto the Border dale,
 Thy native green hill, and thy fairy ring;
 No more thy murmurs on the Grampian gale
 May wake the hind in covert slumbering,
 Nor must thy proud and far outstretched string
 Presume to renovate the northern song,
 Wakening the echoes Ossian taught to sing;
 Their sleep of ages still they must prolong,
 Till son inspired is born their native hills among. (‘Conclusion’, 1-9)

³⁴ As Wilson points out, ‘the volume’s epigraph (from a poem by John Wilson: editor, Tory, frenemy) is placed in productive tension’ (Wilson 2012, 102) with this dedication to his Ettrick friend Grieve.

The poet-narrator's harp (which here symbolises his poetic capabilities and range) is specific to his own district. He thus cannot 'presume to renovate the northern song'; this Highland district must wait for an 'inspired son' of its own to be born among its 'native hills', it must await another Ossian. The poet-narrator is the 'wayward Minstrel of a Southland dale', and thus not the right poet to carry on the poetic tradition of the area, even though he has written a poem set there. He must thus return to his own specific cultural sphere. In short, he is still 'The Ettrick Shepherd', despite his poetic trip away from Ettrick, and his shift away from the traditional cultural forms associated with it.

Hogg's 'Unique' Position in the Literary World

Hogg's experimentation with new poetic forms and structures – from *The Spy*, through *The Queen's Wake*, up to *Mador of the Moor* and *The Poetic Mirror* – could be viewed as a kind of precursor to his shift from poetry to prose-fiction in the late 1810s (although one major book-length poem, *Queen Hynde* (1824), was yet to appear); the years 1810-1816 were certainly crucial to Hogg's development as a writer. However, they were also critical in terms of his self-representation. His fluctuating relationship with his second-self, 'The Ettrick Shepherd', throughout these years reflects the delicate task he faced in maintaining and justifying his place in the literary world. His introduction of new paratextual voices in *The Forest Minstrel* (the polite editor who introduces the songs of the rustic Shepherd) and *The Spy* (the worldly and 'indelicate' editor 'Mr Spy') suggests that he wanted to distance himself somewhat from the Shepherd in order to appeal to a cosmopolitan Edinburgh readership. However, these experiments failed; his audience still preferred his work to be filtered through the simplistic and instantly-recognisable figure of 'The Ettrick

Shepherd'. Thus, in *The Queen's Wake* the Shepherd is brought back to the fore of Hogg's paratextual material through the idealised author-figures of the poet-narrator and the Bard of Ettrick, and the alternative cultural history presented in relation to them. Through this paratextual apparatus Hogg attempts to reassert his place at the pinnacle of traditional culture, in opposition to the likes of Scott. Although the poem boasts a bold new structure, within which the paratextual material is merged into the main body of the text, the 'interlinking passages' are yet, first and foremost, functional devices. Although they are also used to tell the story of the poetic competition staged by Queen Mary, their main function is to answer Hogg's critics and to reassert his poetic authority in regard to traditional material. (The fictional and satirical possibilities opened up by the merging of paratext and text are not fully realised in Hogg's work until *Confessions*). This argument is used, in turn, to secure his place in literary history.

This latter aim is even more obviously pursued in his next three major works. His paratextual positioning of himself alongside the likes of Wordsworth, Scott and Byron in *The Pilgrims of the Sun* and *The Poetic Mirror*, and his use of a new poetic form and topographical setting in *Mador of the Moor*, suggests that he was attempting to branch out into the wider literary world at this time – that is, away from the Borders ballad tradition with which he was so associated. However, the mere fact that he had to use his paratexts in this way suggests that his place among the leading poets of the day was anything but secure. And, moreover, the 'Dedication' to *Pilgrims* and the autobiographical paratextual material in *Mador* suggests that he still needed the figure of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' to help sell his work in the marketplace and that his place in the literary world still depended largely on his associations with the traditional one. He therefore attempted to reconcile the two by arguing for his place in the former on

the basis of his supposedly preeminent place in the latter. However, successfully reconciling and negotiating between these disparate cultural categories in a society whose social and cultural borders yet remained so starkly demarcated was a tricky, and sometimes even a paradoxical, task. Social mobility was hard enough at this time, even without the kind of baggage Hogg had to take along with him. Nonetheless, Hogg's paratextual inversions of the very rationale that was so often used to exclude him from the literary sphere – namely, his 'otherness' – represents a potent challenge to the socially-constructed cultural judgements of the Scottish literary establishment of the early nineteenth-century. By suggesting that he is the most authentic representative of traditional culture operating *within* his literary world at this time he transforms himself from a mere 'outsider' into a 'unique' insider. He thus redeploys his 'otherness' as 'uniqueness', and uses this 'uniqueness' as a justification for his inclusion in the literary mainstream, and, ultimately, in literary history.

Hogg's paratexts – not least those discussed in this chapter, in which he not only attempts to position himself in his literary world, but also challenges contemporary cultural conceptions about the place and role of peasant poets in his society – provide windows into the world(s) in which he was operating as an author. This is why his paratextual material should be considered among his most important works, and analysed in their own right, as well as in relation to each other, as this thesis attempts to do.

Chapter Four

The Shift to Prose Fiction

The Author's Progress

Hogg's shift to prose fiction in the late 1810s¹ had a considerable effect on his paratextual self-representations, not only in terms of their content but also their form(s) and function(s). He began incorporating his self-representations more smoothly into his texts via the use of multi-functional paratextual narrative frames. These frames are far less intrusive than the 'interlinking passages' in *The Queen's Wake*. Although they generally have an outward-looking functional purpose, they also have an inward-looking fictional one; they not only send messages to Hogg's readers about the type of author he is, but also prepare them for his stories by giving them hints about the kinds of fictional worlds they are about to enter. For instance, the paratextual devices in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818) are not only used to underpin Hogg's authority in regard to the (seemingly) supernatural tale he is transmitting, but also to get his readers into the correct 'frame of mind' (Shaw 1983, 83)² for it. They thus have a fictional purpose, and are not merely used to propagate 'The Ettrick Shepherd' (although this remains one of their functions).

Although this figure remained a crucial part of his paratextual self-representations, Hogg also began to present versions of his 'literary man' authorial self to his readers in order to reinforce his perceived position as a narrative middleman between

¹ This shift to prose owed much to the popularity of Scott's Waverley Novels. As Duncan notes,

Scott's success fuelled the local takeoff in Edinburgh fiction publishing. Scotland had accounted for a mere 0.5 percent of all novels published in the British Isles in the first decade of the nineteenth century; this figure rose to 4.4 percent in the following decade and to 12 percent in the 1820s, reaching 15 percent, or 54 out of 359 titles, in the peak years 1822-25—a rate of growth far steeper than the national average. (Duncan 2007, 22)

² Shaw, Valerie (1983). *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction*, London and New York: Longman.

traditional Ettrick and literary Edinburgh. This tendency is perhaps best illustrated in *Winter Evening Tales* (1820). Some of the tales in this collection are clearly filtered through the figure of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', while others are presented by 'Hogg the author', and others still by composite figures, which reflect both these sides of Hogg. His self-representations were clearly becoming more nuanced as a direct result of his new, intermediate position in his cultural world(s).

However, the uncertain nature of this position is reflected in the contemporary critical reaction to the 1821 version of the 'Memoir', in which he attempts to take control of his literary productions through the writing of his 'literary life'. Hogg's effort to reconnect himself back to his works, which he had lost control of in the Edinburgh literary marketplace in the 1810s, met with a furious reaction from the literary elite (most notably from *Blackwood's* editor John Wilson), who did not view the 'peasant-poet' as an author in his own right so much as an intruder (or, at best, a guest) in the literary world. However, Hogg's experimentations with new literary forms (not least in his paratexts), his increased confidence as an author in society (which is reflected in his paratextual self-representations at this time), and his refusal to bow down meekly to the Edinburgh literary establishment (as evidenced by the 1821 'Memoir') set him on a collision course with the likes of Wilson. The 'Noctes Ambrosianae' (1822-1835) articles, in which Wilson hijacks and distorts Hogg's public persona (he transforms 'The Ettrick Shepherd' into little more than a 'boozing buffoon'), could well be a direct result of Hogg's attempts to take control of his authorial productions, a way to keep the upstart 'author' in his proper place.

The Function(s) of Hogg's Narrative Frames

Hogg often employs narrative frames in his stories and novels, which he generally uses to acclimatize his readers to the fictional realms they are about to enter.³ As Valerie Shaw explains, these types of frames 'establish mood economically and put the reader in a receptive frame of mind' (Shaw 1983, 83) for the ensuing narrative. Thus, these forms of paratext would appear to be very much inward-looking devices, helping readers move from the real world into the fictional world of the literary text. However, Hogg's narrative frames also often blur the distinction between reality and fiction. For instance, many of Hogg's tales use the 'I heard this from...' narrative structure in order to evoke the feel of an oral telling. This form of beginning is used to create atmosphere, and to get readers in the 'right frame of mind' for the following tale. However, the 'story of the story' – the narration by the narrator of where, and from whom, he heard the tale – also has the effect of widening the fictional realm of the story, not only beyond the bounds of the tale itself, but also beyond the borders of the frame narrative. The fact that the narrator has apparently heard the tale in the 'real world' from a 'real-life' informant (who generally swears to the authenticity of it) causes the paratextual border of the frame to break down, and the fictional world to spill-over into the (supposedly) real one. This, in turn, heightens the tale's effect by creating a sense of epistemological doubt in the reader, which is especially desirable if the tale is a supernatural one. But this blurring of the line between fiction and reality also serves a more outward-looking paratextual function. By creating the impression that the frame narrator is simply passing on a tale he has heard in the 'real world' Hogg suggests to readers that his narrators are immersed in oral tradition, that they are an important link in the chain of transmission. Indeed, their position in this chain is

³ As mentioned in the Introduction, Gray includes 'opening lines or paragraphs [which] prepare the reader for the following without being essential to it' (see Gray 2000, 7) in his definition of prefatory material.

unique and potentially revolutionary; after all, they are presenting old oral tales in a new printed context. Although Macpherson did something similar in *Ossian*, the implied link between Hogg's narrators and his (peasant poet) biographical self is much stronger in his texts, which is unsurprising considering his wider paratextual aim of presenting himself as the preeminent spokesman of the Ettrick oral tradition.

Thus, Hogg's narrative frames are not merely fictional devices. They also carry with them implied messages about the type of author Hogg is, and he often uses them to subtly further his propagation of 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. Although he continued to promote this figure through more obviously autobiographical paratexts, most notably the 1821 and 1832 versions of the 'Memoir', he also started incorporating it more into his fiction, often using the figure to tell the 'story of the story' in narrative frames, through which the provenance of the particular tale is established, and the authority of the Shepherd (and, by implication, Hogg) is reinforced. Most of the frame narrators of Hogg's tales – at least, of his 'traditionary' ones – are versions of 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. Through the implied evocation of the Shepherd-storyteller in his tales – a figure who has a direct line to oral Ettrick – Hogg once again reasserts his authority in regard to traditional material. His stories are authenticated by the implied presence of the Shepherd in the frame who is presented as a narrative middleman between the oral world and print culture. Sometimes this figure even describes the specific Ettrick context in which he first heard the tale he is now passing on. For instance, in 'Tibby Johnston's Wraith' the narrator reveals that he first heard the tale he is about to retell from 'David Proudfoot [who] was a very old man, herding cows, when I was a tiny boy at the same occupation' (500). (In the 1807 'Memoir' Hogg recounts how, as a result of his father's financial ruin, he was sent to service herding cows, despite 'being only seven years of age' (8)). In short, Hogg continues to trade off, as well as reassert,

his well-established public persona as a reliable representative of traditional culture in his narrative frames. Hogg's propagation of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' thus remained an important strand of his self-representation during the 'prose years' (1818-1835) of his literary career.

Multi-Functional Paratexts in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*: The Dedicatory Poem

However, at the outset of this period Hogg also continued to make use of clearly-labelled paratextual material. In his first major work of prose fiction, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales* (1818),⁴ he employs an obviously functional paratext in the shape of a dedicatory poem, 'To the Right Honourable Lady Anne Scott of Buccleuch'. Although this dedication is, first and foremost, a functional device, through which Hogg flatters his patron and propagates his public persona, it also serves a more fictional function, helping to prepare readers for the following tale by giving them a hint of the kind of fictional world that they are about to enter.

Conversely, in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* itself, Hogg not only makes use of opening lines and paragraphs to certain chapters to create atmosphere and set the scene for the tale, but also uses these narrative frames to help get his paratextual message across to his readers (this message revolves around 'The Ettrick Shepherd' and his authority in relation to traditional material). In his first tale collection Hogg begins using conventionally functional-type paratexts (the dedicatory poem) for fictional purposes, and seemingly fictional paratexts (narrative frames) for functional ones.

In his list of prefatory material in *The Book of Prefaces* Gray also includes 'dedicatory epistles that make a political statement' (Gray 2000, 7). Although Hogg's

⁴ The novel-length *Brownie of Bodsbeck* took up the whole first volume and the first part of the second volume of the 1818 version of this tale collection, with 'The Wool-Gatherer' and 'The Hunt of Eildon' making up the remainder. The book was co-published by Blackwood and John Murray (Byron's publisher).

dedicatory poem does not include an overt ‘political statement’, it is significant from a socio-literary-cultural point of view. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Hogg’s continued use of dedicatory material seems anachronistic in the market-driven literary world of the early- nineteenth-century. It suggests that he was yet reliant on the patronage and approbation of his social and cultural superiors. The addressee of the poem is Lady Anne Scott of Buccleuch (1796-1844). Unlike his dedication of *The Queen’s Wake* to Princess Charlotte of Wales, his choice of Lady Scott is no mere whim on the part of Hogg. As Hughes explains, it stems out of his real world situation at the time, Hogg having just ‘newly settled at Altrive in Yarrow, a small farm granted to him rent-free by Charles, 4th Duke of Buccleuch [Lady Scott’s father]’ (Hughes 2005, 192) at the time *The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales* was being planned and published. Thus, the Buccleuchs were not merely his literary patrons, and the dedicatory poem addressed to the daughter was also clearly aimed at the father.

However, the picture painted of Lady Anne in the poem, as the friend of the ‘Cottager’ and sometime Muse of the rural poet, suggests that his choice of patron has another purpose besides mere feudal-style flattery:

To her, whose bounty oft hath shed
 Joy round the peasant’s lowly bed,
 When trouble pressed and friends were few,
 And God and angels only knew;
 To her, who loves the board to cheer,
 And hearth of simple Cottager;
 Who loves the tale of rural hind,
 And wayward visions of his mind,
 I dedicate with high delight,
 The themes of many a winter night. (lines 1-10)⁵

Thus, according to the poem, Lady Scott does not only visit the homes of peasants (like the heroine of some Jane Austen novel), she also patronizes – and indeed ‘loves’,

⁵ Hogg, James (1976). *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818 version), ed. by Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

if the above lines are to be believed – their attempts at storytelling. Hogg is perhaps referring to his own relationship with Lady Scott here, whose implied approbation of his tales (she apparently ‘loves the tale of rural hind’) immediately gives them an air of cultural authority. It is no coincidence that this approval is mentioned in the dedication prefacing his first collection of such material. The implication is that Hogg’s tales have met the approval of a privileged member of society; they have apparently been ratified by Lady Scott, just as the song of the Bard of Ettrick was ratified by Mary in *The Queen’s Wake*. Thus, as the Ettrick Shepherd poet-narrator suggests, ‘What other name on Yarrow vale / Can Shepherd choose to grace his tale’ (lines 11-12) better than that of the (rustic-friendly) eldest daughter of this prominent aristocratic Borders family? The dedicatory lines are thus designed specifically to help get a better reception for Hogg’s first book of stories.⁶

Hogg also uses the poem to reacquaint his Ettrick Shepherd self with his readers in order to suggest that his ethnographic authority in relation to (metrical) ballad material, which he so carefully established in the paratexts to his earlier books, also extends to (non-metrical) supernatural-type tales.⁷ Hogg was no longer simply a peasant poet composing oral-style poetry; he was now also a writer of prose tales. This shift had to be accounted for, and his authority in regard to this new form of composition established.⁸ This was especially important in terms of the literary

⁶ The poem was also later re-used at the beginning of Hogg’s tale collection *Altrive Tales* (1832), which was originally conceived as the first part of a twelve-volume edition of his collected prose fiction.

⁷ Hughes argues that the line ‘The themes of many a winter night’ (line 10) provides ‘a generic description for many of Hogg’s tales, which sought to replicate in print the kind of stories told around the fire during the long winter evenings in the cottages and farmhouses of his childhood’ (Hughes 2005, 215).

⁸ Although the opening ten lines do not specifically refer to the telling of non-metrical tales, this is perhaps the form most readers would associate with such an evocation of familial storytelling around the fireplace (although Hogg’s mother certainly sang ballads to her family, as the famous anecdote of her meeting with Walter Scott, when she ‘chaunted the ballad of Auld Maitland’ to him’, suggests (see pp. 37-38 of *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*)). This evocation of rustic storytelling, coupled with the fact that the poem prefaces a book of prose tales, would probably have been enough to hint at

context within which he was operating. As Duncan explains, the distinction between these two types of author was particularly marked at this time, following ‘the Scottish Enlightenment history of cultural forms, according to which poetry originates in primitive societies close to nature, while prose is a later, commercial development’ (Duncan 2004, xxiii).⁹ Thus, Hogg sets out to highlight the importance of oral storytelling to his upbringing and life in Ettrick in order to underline his suitability as a narrative middleman in the transitional process of transposing such material into print.

This implied paratextual process is most evident in the following lines of the dedicatory poem, which are not only addressed to Lady Scott, but to Hogg’s entire readership:

Then thou, who lov’st the shepherd’s home,
And cherishest his lowly dome,
O list the mystic lore sublime
Of fairy tales of ancient time
I learn’d them in the lonely glen,
The last abodes of living men;
Where never stranger came our way
By summer night, or winter day;
Where neighbouring hind or cot was none,
Our converse was with heaven alone,
With voices through the cloud that sung,
And brooding storms that round us hung. (lines 45-56)

Hogg here foreshadows the types of tales his readers can expect to encounter in the book by referring to his own experiences growing up in the midst of a traditional storytelling environment in Ettrick (‘the lonely glen’), where he himself ‘learn’d’ all about ‘the mystic lore sublime’ and ‘fairy tales of ancient time’. This, in turn, draws attention to his peculiar suitability to pass on such tales to his readers. This all fits in

the shift in form, while at the same time reassuring readers that the content of the stories was not all that different from that encountered in Hogg’s ballads.

⁹ Duncan, Ian (2004). ‘Introduction’, in *Winter Evening Tales* (1820), ed. by Ian Duncan, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xi-xli.

quite nicely with the details of his official biography,¹⁰ but more especially with the message behind it. By this time ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ was an instantly-recognisable brand, carrying with it certain expectations and guarantees. The figure (and, by implication, Hogg) was perceived to be a most reliable and authentic transmitter of traditional-type material, largely on account of his personal background. This implied message was the main function of the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ tag. There is certainly an assumption running through the above lines that most readers will already be familiar with the story of Hogg’s Ettrick background, and with the impact of it on the form and content of his literary output. The name ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ immediately conjures up the story behind it, just as the story probably conjured up the name in the first place.

However, Hogg was now writing in a new literary form,¹¹ and thus had to reinforce the importance of traditional Ettrick oral sources and modes of storytelling to his art in order to reassure his readers that he was still ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’, just as he had done a few years earlier in the paratextual material to *Mador of the Moor*. It is thus no surprise that, as Rubenstein points out, ‘each of the three narratives [in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales*] deals with Hogg’s native Ettrick at a different stage of its development’ (Rubenstein 2004, 103), nor that the above lines refer to another quintessential trait of his Shepherd persona, namely, his status as a natural-born heaven-taught poet of nature, whose ‘converse was with heaven alone, / With voices through the cloud that sung, / And brooding storms that round [him] hung’.

The poem’s focus on Hogg’s traditional roots, along with its humble, feudal-like tone, may well account for its immediate popularity when it was first published. As

¹⁰ The self-representational nature of the poem may also help to explain its pivotal position in *Altrive Tales* (see note 6), where it appears just before the final version of the ‘Memoir’.

¹¹ Although, as Petrie points out, some of the notes to *The Mountain Bard* could perhaps be considered as short prose tales (albeit rather roughly-hewn ones) in their own right (see Petrie 1980, 125). However, unlike *The Brownie of Bodsbeck, and Other Tales* they are not distinctly labelled as such.

Hughes points out, it was especially well-received by *Blackwood's*, in which the entire poem was published before the book that it prefaced was even reviewed. The editor of the magazine, to which Hogg was a regular contributor, claims that

We have as yet, by accidental circumstances been prevented from laying before our readers any account of the Prose Tales lately published by MR HOGG [this despite the fact that the book was published by Blackwood]. In the meantime, we have great pleasure in extracting the following very beautiful Poetical Dedication to a Young Lady of the Noble Family whose enlightened patronage has been so liberally extended to the ETTRICK SHEPHERD. (*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Volume 4, p. 74; quoted by Hughes 2005, 192)¹²

The poem is beautiful in parts, especially the section evoking the oral storytelling in the lonely cottage in Ettrick (see below). However, one cannot help but conclude that what was perhaps most appealing about the poem to the conservative *Blackwood's* was its socio-political implications, the fact that the upstart Hogg was apparently bowing down meekly to his 'enlightened' aristocratic patrons.

However, in its original context in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck, and Other Tales* the poem is also used to set the scene for the first story (*The Brownie of Bodsbeck*) by evoking the sway of supernatural storytelling on rustic people:

O Lady, judge, if judge you may,
 How stern and ample was the sway
 Of themes like these, when darkness fell,
 And grey-hair'd sire the tales would tell!
 When the doors were barr'd, and eldron dame
 Plied at her task beside the flame,
 That through the smoke and gloom alone
 On dim and umber'd faces shone;
 The bleat of mountain goat on high,
 That from the cliff came wavering by;
 The echoing rock, the rushing flood,
 The cataract's swell, the moaning wood;
 That undefined and mingled hum –
 Voice of the desert, never dumb! (lines 57-70)

¹² Hughes, Gillian (2005). 'Note on the Text', in *Altrive Tales*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 191-211.

This lovingly-evoked tableau of an oral storytelling in a lonely cottage, isolated in the midst of a sublimely-imagined natural world, is probably a romanticised evocation of Hogg's own childhood home. In his 'Introduction' to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, which first appeared in Blackie and Son's *Tales and Sketches by The Ettrick Shepherd, Vol. 1* in 1837, Hogg reveals that he heard 'the local part [of the story of the Brownie of Bodsbeck] from the relation of [his] own father, who had the best possible traditionary account of the incidents' (1837 'Introduction' to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 3). The above lines could thus be taken as a description of the kind of context in which he first heard the story that he is now passing on to his readers. The effect on Hogg of such storytelling sessions is made clear in the following lines, 'All these have left within this heart / A feeling tongue can never impart; / A wilder'd and unearthly flame, / A something that's without a name' (lines 71-74).

Aside from underlining the importance of this early experience of oral storytelling on him later as a writer, these lines also serve a clear fictional function. Through the above description Hogg evokes the feel of an oral storytelling in a rustic household for the benefit of Lady Scott and the rest of his genteel audience, specifically in order to get them in the right mood for the supernatural fictional world of the Borders that they are about to encounter, which is far removed from the rational world of most of his educated Edinburgh readers.¹³ These lines carefully prepare the ground for the apparently supernatural tale that follows by transporting readers to the eerie fireside of the rustic family in the lone cottage in the mountains.

¹³ As Bold and Gilbert remark, the tale collection as a whole 'resembles an episodic, traditional oral storytelling session, privileging local and lowly, community and religious interests' (Bold and Gilbert 2012, 18).

The 1837 ‘Introduction’ to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*

The exclusion of the dedicatory poem in favour of the ‘Introduction’ in Blackie and Son’s 1837 edition (published two years after Hogg’s death) completely destroys this paratextual process, and has a profound and detrimental effect on one’s reading of the whole novel. The seeds of the posthumous Blackie collection were sown by Hogg after the collapse of his intended ‘collected works’ by the London publisher James Cochrane (see Chapter Five for more on this issue). As Garside explains, after the failure of Cochrane,

Hogg turned to the Edinburgh and Glasgow publisher Archibald Fullarton, with whom he had recently contracted to provide an edition of Burns’s work with a memoir. In so doing, Hogg was entering a distinctly different sphere of book production, that of “number” publication, a process involving the issue of titles in parts, allowing less wealthy readers to assemble larger works of literature as regular subscribers. Partly as a result of accident, the trail then led to the firm of Blackie and Son, Fullarton’s old associates, themselves then out-and-out specialists in that mode of publication, with a highly centralised base in Glasgow, encompassing the functions of printer, illustrator, publisher and marketing in one enterprise. Hogg was obviously attracted by the prospect of a radically enlarged sale, not only as a way of realising larger profits, but also as a means of making contact with a wider urban readership. (Garside 2012, 30)

However, as Garside notes, ‘the nature of [Blackie’s] operations left little or no space for authorial manoeuvrings, especially once copy had been handed over’ and the final published volumes (*Tales and Sketches by The Ettrick Shepherd* was shortly followed by his *Poetical Works*) ‘placed a restrictive clamp on Hogg’s output [which] distorted the nature of his original work and had the effect of holding back his literary standing for over a hundred years’ (Garside 2012, 30). The decision by Hogg and/or his publishers to include an ‘Introduction’ to the *Brownie* was probably influenced by Scott’s inclusion of retrospective introductions in the *magnum opus* editions of the *Waverley Novels*.

In the 1837 ‘Introduction’ Hogg not only sets the topographical and historical scene for the tale, he also all but reveals that ‘the legions of spiritual creatures’, whom the

country people in the novel imagine to dwell in the wilds of Ettrick, are actually Covenanters in hiding from the government forces of Claverhouse, thus dispersing any sense of narrative ambiguity about the existence of the brownie (a benevolent household sprite) before the tale even begins:

There is a range of high mountains that border on Annandale, Ettrick Forest, and Tweeddale, that are by many degrees the wildest, the most rugged, and inaccessible in the south of Scotland. They abound with precipitous rocks, caverns and waterfalls, besides interminable morasses, full of deep ruts, which are nevertheless often green and dry in the bottom, with perhaps a small rill tinkling along each of them. No superior hiding place can be conceived [...] To that desolate and unfrequented region did the shattered remains of the routed fugitives from the field of Bothwell Bridge, as well as the broken and persecuted whigs from all the western districts, ultimately flee as to their last refuge [...] They, being however, all Westland men, were consequently unacquainted with the inhabitants of the country in which they had taken shelter...[and thus] durst not trust them with the secret of their retreat [...] From the midst of that inhospitable wilderness the prayers of the persecuted race nightly rose to the throne of the Almighty [...] These hymns, always chanted with ardour and wild melody [...] were often heard at a great distance, causing no little consternation to the remote dwellers of that mountain region. The heart of the shepherd grew chill, and his hairs stood on end, as he hastened home to alarm the cottage circle with a tale of horror. For, besides the solemn and unearthly music, he perceived lights moving about by night in wilds and caverns where human thing had never resided, and where foot of man had never trod, and he deemed that legions of spirits had once more taken possession of his solitary dells. ('Introduction' to 1837 edition of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 1-2)

This section of the 1837 'Introduction' originally appeared in chapter two of the 1818 version of the novel. The passage is substantively the same in each edition (although the narrator of the 1818 version provides more detailed topographical information about the area in which the novel is set);¹⁴ however, the implied explanation about the

¹⁴ The original 1818 version reads as follows:

All the outer parts of the lands of Chapelhope are broken into thousands of deep black ruts, called by the country people *moss hags*. Each of the largest of these has a green stripe along its bottom; and in this place in particular they are so numerous, so intersected and complex in their lines, that, as a hiding place, they are unequalled [...] To these mountains, therefore, the shattered remains of the fugitives from the field of Bothwell Bridge, as well as the broken and persecuted whigs from all the western and southern counties, fled as to their last refuge [...] Being unacquainted, however, with the inhabitants of the country in which they had taken shelter...they durst not trust them with the secret of their retreat [...] From the midst of that inhospitable wilderness [...] the prayers of the persecuted race nightly rose to the throne of the Almighty [...] These psalms, always chanted with ardour and wild melody [...] were often heard at a great distance. The heart of the peasant grew chill, and his hairs stood on end, as he hastened home to alarm the cottage circle with a tale of horror.

hiding Covenanters somehow seems much more absolute and reliable in the context of the 1837 'Introduction'. The interpretive sway it exercises over the text from its new paratextual position is striking. This is perhaps because one generally expects the voice in a clearly demarcated authorial paratext, such as an 'Introduction', to be more reliable than the voice of a fictional narrator.

It is worth remembering that overall meaning is affected not only by *what* is said in books but also by *where* it is said. This is why Hogg's 1807 'Memoir', which prefaces his first major work, is such a key text. Through this paratext he establishes an authorial persona that would profoundly affect, both positively and negatively, his literary reputation for many years to come. Likewise, the editorial frameworks placed around posthumous Victorian editions of his work, such as the Blackie one – which went through several editions, the most notable being the 1869 one, which was edited and heavily revised by Thomas Thomson – had a huge impact on how his works were read and understood. For instance, the bowdlerised version of *Confessions*, which first appeared in the Blackie edition, is presented as a minor work – or, as Garside puts it 'one of the Shepherd's less interesting tales' (Garside 2002, xi) – in Victorian editions of his work (which also generally feature a condescending biography of 'the Shepherd'). This meant that the text was largely ignored until Andre Gide's rediscovery of it in the mid-twentieth-century. Gide wrote an enthusiastic Introduction for an unbawdlerised edition in 1947, which sparked a revival in Hogg criticism that

Lights were seen moving by night in wilds and caverns where human thing never resided, and where the foot of man seldom trode. The shepherds knew, or thought they knew, that no human being frequented these places; and they believed, as well they might, that whole hoardes of spirits had taken possession of their solitary dells. (10-11)

The detail about the country people referring to the deep ruts as '*moss hags*' suggests that the narrator of the 1818 text possesses more local knowledge of the area around Chapelhope, which is situated at the south end of St Mary's Loch, than the paratextual author of the 1837 'Introduction'. He may thus be closer to 'The Ettrick Shepherd' than the latter, who is perhaps closer to Hogg-the-author/editor.

continues today with the Stirling/South Carolina editions, through whose scholarly paratextual material Hogg's critical reputation is being rehabilitated.

The paratextual structure of most books reinforces the privileged position of authors (this is true of both authorial paratexts and scholarly ones). And, as Genette points out, the main purpose of prefacing material written by the author is to reinforce their interpretive authority over the text. However, the authority of the paratextual author of the 1837 'Introduction' to the *Brownie* is tacitly challenged by the voice of the fictional narrator, who is generally sympathetic to the beliefs of the country people in his narrative. This note of sympathy is only strengthened in the 1837 version of the novel, in which the rationalising, historical explanation of the supernatural occurrences is taken out of the narrator's mouth and put into that of the paratextual author of the 'Introduction'.¹⁵ Moreover, the narrator's voice is complemented and challenged in both versions of the text by numerous other voices, most notably by those of the rustic inhabitants of Chapelhope, who typically adhere to supernatural beliefs. For instance, the first chapter is dominated by the voices of Walter and Maron Linton. The novel begins *in medias res*, much like a ballad, dropping the reader directly into a lively conversation between the couple about the existence of the brownie. Most of the remainder of the chapter is taken up by their colloquy (this technique of using dialogue for narrative purposes is a quintessential ballad device). The chapter ends with Maron having all but convinced her initially sceptical husband of the existence of the brownie. Even the narrator, in his closing frame, seems to have been somewhat swayed by Maron's assertion of the "plain an' positive truth" (8),¹⁶

¹⁵ All that remains of the passage from chapter two of the 1818 version of the novel (quoted in the note above) in chapter two of the 1837 version is the line, 'The shepherds knew, or thought they knew, that no human being frequented these places [the wilds around Chapelhope]' (1837 version of chapter two, p.12), the rest of the background information having been moved into the 'Introduction'.

¹⁶ Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from this point on are taken from Mack's edition of the 1818 version of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*.

saying of Walter that, ‘he was superstitious but always affected to disbelieve the existence of the Brownie, though the evidences were so strong as not to admit of any doubt’ (8). Even if one accepts that the narrator is being ironic here, this first chapter nevertheless gives the supernatural beliefs of Maron a fair hearing, even to the point of ‘utterly confounding’ (8) the scepticism of Walter, who acts as a kind of bridge between the rustic beliefs of Maron and the rational beliefs of Hogg’s Edinburgh readership. The implication is that if the sceptical Walter can be swayed by Maron’s arguments, then so perhaps can Hogg’s readers.

It soon becomes apparent that this element of doubt generated in the opening chapter is structurally-important, especially so in the original 1818 version of the novel. In the subsequent chapter the narrator finally takes full control of the narrative in order to set the scene for the tale and reveal the crucial detail about the hiding Covenanters (it was this section that was extracted and reused in the 1837 ‘Introduction’). He and his readers now know more than Walter and Maron. However, it is not conclusively established that the brownie is really one of the Covenanters. And the supernatural interpretation of Maron remains, as it were, in play, not least because the reader is already familiar with it by this point, and has perhaps even been convinced by her arguments, just like Walter, whose judgment is particularly important considering his role as the focaliser of the opening chapter. Thus, the first two chapters are played off against each other in the 1818 volume; the respective interpretations of the strange phenomena around Chapelhope are given equal validity. This effect is lost by the inclusion of the ‘Introduction’ in the 1837 Blackie edition. Within the clearly demarcated borders of this paratext the voice of the rationalizing author goes unchallenged; the mere fact that it is labeled as an ‘introduction’ immediately gives it an air of authority. And its paratextual positioning before the first

chapter cannot help but affect how that chapter is read. In the original 1818 structure of the novel the opening chapter generates a sense of narrative ambiguity in preparation for the rational explanations of the second chapter; however, in the 1837 edition the Introduction's rational explanation forestalls this process. Thus, while the 1818 paratext (the dedicatory poem to Lady Scott) helps get readers in the right frame of mind for a supernatural tale, the 1837 'Introduction' has quite the opposite effect.

The differing effects of each of these paratexts on Hogg's novel lays bare the influence of all prefatory material on the texts which they introduce. As Roger Chartier notes in *The Order of Books* (1994):

the book always aims at installing an order, whether it is the order in which it is deciphered, [or] the order in which it is to be understood [...] Keen attention should [thus] be paid to the technical, visual, and physical devices that organise the reading of writing when writing becomes a book. (Chartier 1994, viii-ix)¹⁷

The use of prefatory material is perhaps the most practical way to 'install' this interpretive 'order' into the book. Certainly, the form of a book can profoundly affect its meaning. The paratext is both an inward and an outward-looking device, which can profoundly affect both the inner world of a book, as well as the outer one of the author and the reader. It can be used to prepare readers for the fictional world, as well as to send authorial messages out into the real one. Hogg was becoming particularly skilled at using the paratext for both these ends.

The 1837 'Introduction' is also an interesting instance of a 'later preface', and a most functional one at that. In it Hogg answers criticisms of his characterization of John Graham of Claverhouse (1648-1689), a most divisive historical figure who has gone down in infamy for his state-sponsored persecution of the Covenanters in South West Scotland during the religious and political unrest of the 1670s and 80s. Hogg

¹⁷ Chartier, Roger (1994). *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1992), trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane, Oxford: Polity Press.

claims that he was ‘grievously blamed by a certain party for having drawn an unfair character of Clavers’ (‘Introduction’ to 1837 edition, 3) in his novel. The ‘party’ alluded to here is Scott, whose characterization of Claverhouse in *Old Mortality* (1816) is more sympathetic than Hogg’s is in his novel. In their book *Bonnie Dundee: For King and Conscience* (1992) Marcus Linklater and Christian Hesketh interrogate Claverhouse’s reputation as a brutal persecutor of Covenanters, arguing that he probably never strayed beyond the provisions of martial law that were in force at the time. However, these laws were themselves brutal and draconian. Hogg’s account of Claverhouse may thus not be quite as exaggerated as Scott suggests. He argues in the 1837 ‘Introduction’ that his depiction of Clavers is based on the ‘character I had heard drawn of him all my life [...] since my earliest remembrance’ (3).¹⁸ Hogg is once again accentuating his Ettrick background to the detriment of Scott, whose characterization of Claverhouse, he suggests, does not correspond to the picture of him passed down by Ettrick oral history.¹⁹

Hogg also drew on Robert Wodrow’s *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution* (1720-21) as a historical source for his covenanting novel, albeit rather haphazardly (in one footnote he even wrongly attributes a quote to him, see p. 47 and Mack’s note on p. 147). Wodrow himself used first-hand oral accounts in his written history; however, Hogg generally privileges his

¹⁸ He presents a similar defence, in the form of an argument he claims to have had with Scott about the issue, in *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*:

“I have read your new work Mr Hogg” said he “and must tell you downright and plainly as I always do that I like it very ill – very ill indeed.”

“What for Mr Scott?”

“Because it is a false and unfair picture of the times and the existing characters altogether. An exhaggerated [sic] and unfair picture!”

“I dinna ken Mr Scott. It is the picture I hae been bred up in the belief o’ sin’ ever I was born and I had it frae them whom I was most bound to honour and believe”. (50-51)

¹⁹ In *Scott’s Shadow*, Duncan argues that, in response to Scott’s Waverly Novels, writers such as Hogg and John Galt (1777-1839) began ‘making regional identity (the traditions of their respective districts) the foundation for their own claims upon originality’ (Duncan 2007, 35) in their fiction.

own (family) sources. As was the case with Scott's written versions of oral ballads, Hogg did not seem to completely trust Wodrow's written versions of oral accounts of the period, as is suggested in the introductory paragraph to 'A Tale of Pentland' (1830): 'Wodrow mentions the following story, but in a manner so confused and indefinite, that it is impossible to comprehend either the connection of the incidents with one another, or what inference to draw from them' (85).²⁰

The Narrative Frame to Chapter Three of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*

The voice of oral Ettrick is also upheld in the novel itself. Most of chapter three is given over to Walter's oral narrative of his discovery of the Covenanters. The structure of this chapter puts one in mind of the structure of *Confessions*. Just as Robert's narration is framed by the Editor's in *Confessions*, so Walter's story is bookended by the voice of the narrator in chapter three of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*. However, in the former the 'Editor's Narrative' encloses Robert Wringhim's *written manuscript*, whereas in the latter the narrative frame is used to present the *oral recitation* of Walter. From this point of view, the structure of the latter more resembles that of the Auchtermuchty episode within Robert's manuscript, in which he passes on an oral tale recited to him by his servant Samuel Scrape (who heard it from some old country women), and which he 'noted down' (135) in Scrape's own idiom (although Robert's written version slips into standard English at certain points, see pp. 138-39).²¹ However, just as the enlightened editor falls back on his rational knowledge to 'explain' Robert's narrative, so Robert the 'justified sinner' uses his twisted theology to do the same with Scrape's, declaring that he would not take 'a

²⁰ 'A Tale of Pentland', in *The Works of The Ettrick Shepherd* (1869), rev. by Thomas Thomson, London and Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 85-91.

²¹ Hogg, James (2002). *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), ed. by Peter Garside, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

fool's idle tale [which stems from the country people's belief that Robert's companion, Gil-Martin, is the devil incarnate] as a counterbalance to divine revelation' (140).²²

The narrator of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* does not attempt to impose his own interpretation on to Walter's story in this way. He merely uses his frame to present it to his readers:

Things were precisely in this state, when the goodman of Chapelhope, taking his plaid and staff, went out to the heights one misty day in autumn to drive off a neighbour's flock from his pasture; but, as Walter was wont to relate the story himself, when any stranger came there on a winter's evening, as long as he lived, it may haply be acceptable to the curious, and the lovers of rustic simplicity, to read it in his own words, although he drew it out to inordinate length, and perhaps kept his own personal feelings and prowess too much in view for the fastidious or critical reader to approve. (18)

But this is not to say that this introductory paragraph does not serve a paratextual function. The narrator, by privileging Walter's oral account, is perhaps making an implied statement about the importance of oral sources. In the previous chapter, in which the narrator described the historical backdrop to the novel, he likewise uses an oral informant to zoom in on a certain incident. His narration of the murder of a Covenanter at the hands of Clavers' forces is based on the account of a guide who accompanied the soldiers and witnessed it, and 'was wont to relate the circumstances of [it]' (16) to anyone who would listen. The narrator leaves his readers in no doubt as to the importance of this oral account, declaring that 'if it had not been for the guide no such thing would ever have been known' (16).

The description of Walter's frequent retelling of the tale 'on winter evenings' is reminiscent of the storytelling tableau described in lines 57-70 of the dedicatory poem to Lady Scott. It likewise suggests that the narrator is an 'insider', that he himself has

²² However, it is perhaps significant that the supernatural explanation presented in the oral tale of Auchtermuchty is positioned right at the heart of the novel, embedded as it is in Robert Wringhim's manuscript, which is itself embedded in the Editor's Narrative.

heard Walter, with whom he appears to be on first name terms with, tell his tale. When he closes the frame at the end of the chapter he declares that ‘Walter never went further with his story straight onward than this [so] I must now proceed with the narrative as I gathered it from others’ (24). (Perhaps Walter always ended his narrative at this point because it was too traumatic for him to go on. See Alessandro Portelli’s book *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (1997), in which he discusses the connection between public history and personal trauma, specifically in relation to the inherent difficulty of recounting war narratives). Via this comment the *Brownie* narrator foregrounds his experiential authority, or perhaps even his ethnographic authority: he has actually heard Walter tell the tale himself. As in the dedicatory poem, Walter’s storytelling could even be based on that of Hogg’s father; after all, he is recounting ‘the local part [of the story]’, which, as Hogg asserts in the 1837 ‘Introduction’, he got ‘from the relation of [his] own father’ (3). Whether or not this is the case, the narrator is clearly displaying his ‘insider’ status, and asserting his authority to pass on the tale.

But this introductory paragraph has another function. Like the dedicatory poem, it prepares his genteel audience, all those ‘lovers of rustic simplicity’ in Edinburgh, for their entry into the strange (strange, that is, from their point of view) traditional world of the Borders. There may also be a hint of irony in the phrase ‘lovers of rustic simplicity’, a sly undercutting of the fashionable world’s fascination with such scenes and characters. By this time Hogg had probably learnt that his genteel audience only really appreciated rustic figures such as ‘The Etrick Shepherd’ from a respectable distance, and certainly not when they came tramping through their drawing rooms in their dirty boots. The narrator’s critique of Walter’s long-winded mode of storytelling may even be a reference to Hogg’s critics’ view of his own faults as a writer. The

accusation that he ‘kept his own personal feelings and [literary] prowess too much in view’ was certainly one that was leveled against him by his own ‘fastidious’ critics.

Thus, the dedicatory poem attached to the 1818 edition of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* is perhaps best characterized as an outward-looking paratext. It provides Hogg’s book with the socio-cultural ‘seal of approval’ of an aristocratic patron. However, it also has a subsidiary, inward-looking function, that is, to prepare readers for the fictional world of the novel. The narrative frame to chapter three of the novel, meanwhile, is an inward-looking fictional device, or ‘incorporated paratext’, which is used to introduce the oral tale of Walter. But it also has a covert outward-looking function, namely, to uphold the value of oral storytelling, and underpin Hogg’s reliability in regard to traditional Ettrick sources. Finally, the 1837 ‘Introduction’ is a ‘later preface’, through which Hogg answers criticisms of the first edition of the book. It also, intentionally or not, fulfils what Genette describes as the ‘main function’ of prefatory material by providing the ‘author’s interpretation of the text’ (Genette 1997, 11).

The Author and the Shepherd in *Winter Evening Tales*

Hogg regularly made use of incorporated paratextual narrative frames such as that used in chapter three of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* from 1818 onwards, especially in his prose fiction. For instance, the ‘I heard this from...’ frame is used in several stories in *Winter Evening Tales*, including ‘The Bridal of Polmood’, ‘The Wife of Lochmaben’ and ‘Tibby Johnston’s Wraith’. Through this kind of framing device he could succinctly set the scene for the inner fictional worlds of his tales, as well as send implied messages to his readers about the type of writer he was. Although he was now a relatively well-established author, writing in many different forms and styles, his position in the literary world yet depended, to a certain extent, upon his

supposedly unique cultural position between literary Edinburgh and oral Ettrick. Thus, his self-representations continued to revolve around the notion that, on account of his social background, he was a most reliable transmitter of traditional material. This message was by this time encoded in the very name of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’; he thus remained an important tool in Hogg’s self-representations. However, Hogg started incorporating this figure into his fiction in more subtle ways than previously. For instance, he increasingly began using him in the frames to his tales as a kind of narrative middleman, whose function was to pass on the oral tales of Ettrick to his literary audience. Through this paratextual structure Hogg’s tales were infused with a sense of ethnographic authority. This technique is apparent in many of the stories in his tale collection *Winter Evening Tales* (1820).²³

The title-page of this collection succinctly establishes Hogg’s suitability to be passing on rural tales to his educated audience, declaring that the ‘winter evening tales’ of the title were ‘COLLECTED AMONG THE COTTAGERS IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND, BY JAMES HOGG, AUTHOR OF “THE QUEEN’S WAKE” &c. &c’. This subsidiary information about the book and the author draws attention to Hogg’s intermediate position between metropolitan, literary Edinburgh and rural, oral Ettrick. The implied message is that Hogg, who was now a successful author (itself a good selling-point for the new book),²⁴ had not severed his links to Ettrick traditional culture. His role as narrative middleman had not, the title-page suggests, been compromised by his new status in society as an author. His rise in social status could

²³ As Garside explains, unhappy with the way *The Brownie of Bodsbeck, and Other Tales* had been handled by Blackwood (in the 1821 ‘Memoir’ Hogg suggests that Blackwood had held back the book so that Scott’s *Old Mortality*, also set in the covenanting period, could be published first (see 226)), Hogg secured a new publisher for this volume in the shape of Oliver & Boyd, who ‘had only managed two novels to date, [but] in the 1820s they were to become the third largest producers of new fiction in Scotland, after Blackwood and Constable’ (Garside 2012, 27).

²⁴ However, it is perhaps significant that Hogg and his publishers were still trading off the success of *The Queen’s Wake*, which had been published seven years earlier (although a new edition had appeared in 1819). The fact is that none of Hogg’s other book-length poems, nor his first tale collection, had been particularly successful (either in critical or commercial terms).

even have been perceived as being beneficial; with his wider knowledge of literary Edinburgh society he would perhaps be better equipped to tailor these rustic tales to the tastes of his polite audience. But, as ever, the correct balance between the Author and the Shepherd had to be maintained; neither Hogg nor his publishers could risk setting aside such a marketable commodity as ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’.

However, when Hogg first proposed publishing a book of ‘rural and traditionary tales’ to Constable in 1813 he suggested that he should drop his Shepherd authorial self altogether in favour of a completely new authorial persona. In a letter to Constable he argues that

the Ettrick Shepherd has become rather a hackneyed name, and [I] imagine that having gained a character as a bard is perhaps no commendation to a writer of prose tales I am determined to publish them under a fictitious title. The title-page will consequently be to this purpose: THE RURAL AND TRADITIONARY TALES OF SCOTLAND by J.H. Craig of Douglas Esq. (Hogg to Constable, 20 May 1813)²⁵

As Duncan notes, Hogg seems to have recognized the importance of ‘detaching the new project from his established persona as “The Ettrick Shepherd” [recognising] that different genres may require different types of author’ (Duncan 2004, xxii). However, Hogg did not, it would seem, receive a response to his suggestion from Constable (see Hogg’s follow-up letter to him, dated 12 July 1813)²⁶ – perhaps Constable, as a publisher, recognised the market value of the Ettrick Shepherd brand even more than Hogg did.

Although the words ‘Ettrick’ and ‘Shepherd’ are absent from the title-page of *Winter Evening Tales*, the conjunction of Hogg’s proper name, taken together with the reference to the fact that the tales ‘were collected among the cottagers in the South of Scotland’, would have been enough to conjure up the figure in the minds of most contemporary readers – as Duncan puts it, ‘the autoethnographic function remains

²⁵ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 145.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 153.

legible' (Duncan 2004, xxiv). However, the phrase 'collected among the cottagers' carries with it some antiquarian connotations. The collecting of materials was an important part of the literary antiquarian's research (one thinks of Scott's expedition to the south of Scotland to collect materials for *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*), and references to their 'fieldwork', through which they established their 'experiential authority', were common in early-nineteenth-century ballad collections (Hogg generally accentuates his 'ethnographic authority' in opposition to this, see McLane 2008, 44-45).

Hogg had to strike a delicate balance between author-collector and ethnographic insider, between Hogg-the-literary-man and Hogg-the Shepherd. The stories in *Winter Evening Tales* reflect the dual nature of Hogg's self-representations at this time. Some are more obviously 'literary', in terms of their structure and paratextual presentation, and are filtered through Defoe-like editor-figures, while others are presented as more traditional, and are mediated by different versions of the Shepherd. This incorporation of different paratextual voices into the book is reminiscent of Hogg's experiments in *The Spy*, which is hardly surprising given that eleven of the stories in *Winter Evening Tales*, including 'The Renowned Adventures of Basil Lee' and 'Adam Bell', were originally published there between 1810-11 (although Hogg considerably revised and expanded most of them for inclusion in his book).

'Basil Lee' and 'Adam Bell': Literary and Oral/Traditional Paratextual Frames

In *Winter Evening Tales* Hogg makes ironic use of 'Basil Lee's' publishing history to answer criticisms of the earlier version of the story. The reader is directed, via an asterisk attached to the title, to a footnote in which the pseudo-Hogg editor-figure claims that

the original of this extraordinary journal was lodged in my hands in the summer of 1810, by an old man, having the appearance of a decayed gentleman. It was when I commenced publishing *The Spy*, that it was given in to me, for the purpose of being revised and included in that paper. A small portion of it was published, but, owing to the freedom with which the writer expressed himself, it gave offence, and was therefore cut short and discontinued. (3)²⁷

At first glance, this would appear to be a defensive paratextual device. By suggesting that he is not creating a new fictional world but merely editing a real person's journal (the 'decayed old gentleman' is Basil Lee) Hogg distances himself from its contents (Basil, among other things, impregnates his housekeeper, marries an ex-prostitute and criticizes early-nineteenth-century society's treatment of 'fallen women'). Thus, according to this footnote, Hogg is not directly responsible for the offence that the story caused in its original context in *The Spy*; after all, he did not write it (although as editor he must presumably take some of the blame for publishing it). He even goes so far as to suggest that he has cut a 'large portion' (3) of Basil's narrative in deference to his polite readers, the implication being that Basil's journal contained even more shocking sexual content, which he has left out.

However, Hogg's tale about the provenance of Basil's journal only draws attention to its fictionality as most readers would presumably not be taken in by the claim that Hogg is merely the editor of it.²⁸ Moreover, by widening out the fictional world to include the Edinburgh literary scene of 1810, in which he had attempted to establish himself as an author and editor ten years earlier, Hogg superimposes the recognisably real world of his past life onto the tale. The paratextual footnote does not so much contain the inner fictional realm of the story as cause it to spillover into the real

²⁷ Hogg, James (2004). 'The Renowned Adventures of Basil Lee' in *Winter Evening Tales* (1820), ed. by Ian Duncan, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1-74. All subsequent quotes from the *Winter Evening Tales* stories are taken from Duncan's edition.

²⁸ The edited memoir was a familiar novelistic device by this point in literary history. For instance, Daniel Defoe uses it in *Moll Flanders* (1722) to (ironically) distance himself from the sexual content of the narrative, and to playfully impose a didactic defence onto his book. Interestingly, Basil also attaches a specific didactic purpose onto his memoir, namely to warn others against 'instability of mind' (4) (the first part of the original version of 'Basil Lee' was published in *The Spy* under the title 'The Danger of Changing Occupations – Verified in the Life of a Berwick-shire Farmer').

historical world. (The second part of the paratextual ‘Editor’s Narrative’ has a similar effect in *Confessions*). This, in turn, creates a kind of gradation of fictional realities in which the inner world of Basil’s narrative, from which he briefly emerges to pass on his journal to Hogg, is shown to be subordinate to the outer, paratextual world of literary Edinburgh in 1810. In other words, the world of *The Spy* evoked in the footnote, which Hogg will later describe more fully in the 1821 version of the ‘Memoir’, is clearly more ‘real’ than Basil and his fictional journal. (Hogg may have learnt this technique of placing fictional characters in real historical situations from Scott, who used it to such good effect in the *Waverley Novels*). Of course, the writer responsible for offending subscribers of *The Spy* is none other than Hogg himself.

The footnote could thus be read as a kind of ‘later preface’, in which Hogg responds to the polite readers who, as Duncan points out, had been so ‘offended by the sexual content of some of the stories’ in *The Spy* (not least the earlier version of ‘Basil Lee’) that they had ‘cancelled their subscriptions’ (Duncan 2004, xiv), which resulted in Hogg’s magazine folding at the end of August 1811. Thus, the footnote does not so much distance Hogg from the text as draw attention to the circumstances surrounding its original publication, specifically in relation to the controversy which caused not only it, but also *The Spy* itself, to be ‘cut short and discontinued’. He uses the footnote to ‘Basil Lee’ to answer the many critics of his earlier publication (presumably the fastidious ‘literary ladies’ he refers to in the 1821 version of the ‘Memoir’ (see p. 208) would be top of this list).

Viewed in this light, the final paragraph of the story, in which Basil openly challenges his society’s hypocritical stance in relation to ‘fallen women’, is perhaps significant. Basil declares that he

would gladly combat the ungenerous and cruel belief, that when a female once steps aside from the paths of rectitude, she is lost forever. Nothing can be more

ungracious than this; yet to act conformably with such a sentiment, is common in the manners of this volatile age, as notorious for its laxity of morals as for its false delicacy. (73)

Hogg aligns himself with Basil on this issue via the lines from *Mador of the Moor* attached to the end of the story, which likewise deal with the plight of ‘fallen women’, albeit in a romanticised way:

Oh fragile flower! That blossoms but to fade!
 One slip recovery or recall defies!
 Thou walk'st the dizzy verge with steps unstead,
 Fair as the habitants of yonder skies!
 Like them thou fallest never more to rise!
 Oh fragile flower! For thee my heart's in pain!
 Haply a world is hid from mortal eyes,
 Where thou may'st smile in purity again,
 And shine in virgin bloom that ever shall remain. (74, taken from Canto 2, stanza 7 of *Mador of the Moor*).

Although these lines are not as controversial or confrontational as Basil's diatribe against the ‘false delicacy of the age’ (they do not so much call for a change in attitudes to fallen women in society, as offer the solace of recompense in the after-life for their suffering in this one) they yet suggest that Hogg, or, at least, the author/editor of the story, sympathises with Basil's stance. Basil's attack on the ‘false delicacy’ inherent in his society's attitudes to sexual matters foreshadows Hogg's own assertion in the 1821 version of the ‘Memoir’ that he ‘despised the fastidiousness and affectation of the people’ who thought *The Spy* so ‘indecorous’ (208) that they withdraw their subscriptions. Later in the 1821 ‘Memoir’ he even suggests that the ‘false delicacy’ and ‘affectation’ exhibited by so many readers in regard to the sexual content in his stories may stem from the prurience of reviewers:

As to the indelicacies hinted at by some reviewers, I do declare such a thought never entered my mind, so that the public are indebted for these indelicacies to the acuteness of the discoverers. Woe to that reader who goes over a simple and interesting tale fishing for indelicacies, without calculating on what is natural for the characters with whom he is conversing, a practice, however, too common among people of the present age, especially if the author be not a blue-stocking. (230)

This critique of the process whereby reviewers focus on supposedly salacious sections from books, and analyze them out of their original context in order to inflame anger and excite the interest of readers, is quite prescient (one could be forgiven for thinking Hogg was describing the practice of the modern tabloid press here). However, this passage also highlights Hogg's sense of persecution at the hands of critics. And yet there is also a hint of pride at not being a genteel, or 'blue-stocking',²⁹ author. Hogg both resented, and reveled in, his position as an 'authorial other', as a troublesome outsider in the literary world.

This combination of resentment and pride is likewise detectable in the paratextual sections of 'Basil Lee', which are both confrontational and defiant. Hogg essentially uses the footnote to re-open the debate about his 'indelicate' journal, and the voice of Basil to (surreptitiously) criticize those readers and critics who brought about its failure. Hogg's place in society as an author was now more secure than it had been back in 1810-11, and 'the Author of *The Queen's Wake*' was perhaps better-placed to question (albeit playfully) the failure of *The Spy* than 'Mr Spy' had been ten years earlier. The footnote draws attention to this fact by inviting readers to compare Hogg's precarious position as a professional author in 1810-11, when *The Spy* failed miserably amid all the accusations of 'indelacy', with his current one in 1820. As a (relatively) successful author he was now in a position to critique the failure of *The Spy* from the pages of his latest publication (indeed, from a footnote attached to the very story that helped bring about the demise of his magazine).

Hogg's confidence as an author is likewise reflected in the use of the lines from *Mador of the Moor*. The paratextual structure of the story, which is bookended by the

²⁹ Garside suggests that with this term Hogg 'conflates the decorousness of literary ladies in Edinburgh with the increasing primness of public taste generally' (Garside 2002, 'Introduction', in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, ed. by Peter Garside, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. xxxiv).

reference to *The Spy* at the beginning and the lines from *Mador* at the end, highlights Hogg's progress from failed editor to published author of a long narrative poem in the vein of successful poets such as Scott. Intertextual references to his previous works are not unusual in Hogg. For instance, in 'George Cochrane', which also appears in *Winter Evening Tales*, one of the characters quotes 'Jamie the poyet's song [...] "He that prays is ne'er to trust"' (217), while in *The Three Perils of Woman* (1823) the narrator refers to *The Shepherd's Guide* (see p. 346), and in 'The Mysterious Bride' (1830) there is a quotation from *The Queen's Wake* (see p. 149). Hogg was clearly proud of his writings – as the list of all his published works included in the 1821 'Memoir' suggests (see discussion of this later in this chapter) – and enjoyed referencing them. It was a most expedient way to draw attention to his status as an established author, with a string of publications behind him, as well as a handy way to advertise these earlier works.

The 'Basil Lee' footnote, in which the fiction that the story is an 'edited memoir' is established, also places it in the literary tradition of 'pseudo-autobiography', a novelistic mode used by the likes of Defoe in the eighteenth-century (in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722)) and Dickens later in the nineteenth-century (in *David Copperfield* (1850)). Indeed, Hogg himself would go on to use it again in *Confessions* and numerous other stories, most notably 'John Lochy' (1832), 'An Edinburgh Baillie' (1835) and 'The Baron St. Gio' (1835). 'Basil Lee' could also be placed in the anti-heroic picaresque tradition alongside the likes of Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748) and Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749). 'Basil Lee' could thus be described as being 'literary', not only in terms of its implied paratextual evocation of Hogg's authorial status in the literary worlds of 1810-11 and 1820, but also in terms of its form, through which one can place it in several different mainstream literary

traditions. In short, the story draws attention to ‘Hogg-the-author’, who is the organizing figure behind it. However, many of the other stories in *Winter Evening Tales* are clearly filtered through the figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ (or, at least, some variation of this figure), which suggests that Hogg was attempting to strike a balance between his literary and ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ selves in the book.

The second story in the collection, ‘Adam Bell’, is introduced by a third-person narrator who declares that ‘this tale, which may be depended on as in every part true, is singular for the circumstance of its being insolvable either from the facts that have been discovered relating to it, or by reason’ (75). It deals with the disappearance of Adam Bell, ‘a gentleman of Annandale, in Dumfries-shire, in the south of Scotland’ (75), whose wraith, suggests the story, appeared to his housekeeper after his death in a duel in Edinburgh in 1745. The narrator’s insistence that ‘the causes which produced the events here related have never been accounted for in this world’ (75) suggests that he believes in the supernatural appearance of Adam Bell (or, at least, refuses to discount it). The Latin tag attached to the end of the tale, ‘Pluris est oculatus testis unus quam auriti decem [one eye-witness is worth more than ten who give hearsay evidence]’ (79) suggests that he implicitly trusts the eye-witness oral accounts of the housekeeper and M’Millan (the ‘respectable farmer’ (77), who claims to have witnessed Bell’s duel with his mystery assailant). The tale as a whole is presented as a kind of challenge to those who would seek to impose a rational explanation on to it. (As mentioned earlier, the final tale in the book, ‘Tibby Johnston’s Wraith’, ends with a similarly defiant challenge to those who would question the reliability of oral transmission via the informant’s bold assertion that if anybody should question the story “‘you may say you heard it from auld Davie Proudfoot’s ain mouth, and that he was never kend for a liar”’ (508)).

The narrator's implied endorsement of the supernatural and the oral in this tale, coupled with the fact that Adam Bell (which, as Duncan notes, 'was the name of an outlaw in the Border ballads' (Duncan 2004, 554))³⁰ hails from Annandale, which is not too far from Ettrick, suggests that he is 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. (Hogg had lived and worked on farms in the Dumfriesshire area between 1805-09. It was here that he first met Allan Cunningham, who came from Nithsdale, which borders Annandale). Thus, 'Adam Bell', which is filtered through Hogg's Shepherd-persona, who passes on the tale and tacitly endorses the supernatural beliefs of the rural Borders (or, at least, gives them a fair hearing), provides a contrast to the preceding tale 'Basil Lee', which is clearly more 'literary', both in terms of its form and its presentation. The paratextual elements in the former tale are used to evoke the rural, traditional sphere of the Borders, while those in the latter (especially the footnote) are used to evoke the urban, literary sphere of Edinburgh. These opening two stories in *Winter Evening Tales* thus present two very different kinds of paratextual pictures of 'the author', namely, a 'traditional Hogg' and a 'literary Hogg' (or, as Gifford termed these entities, 'Ettrick Hogg' and 'Edinburgh Hogg' (Gifford 1976, 8)).³¹ These two authorial figures are used in conjunction with each other to suggest that Hogg is perfectly placed to operate as a narrative middleman between oral Ettrick and literary Edinburgh.

'A Peasant's Funeral' and 'Storms': 'The Ettrick Shepherd' in *Winter Evening Tales*

Hogg also makes use of his (by now well-established) biographical links to the traditional/labouring class world of the Borders in documentary-style pieces such as

³⁰ See 'Adam Bell, Clym o' the Clough, and William of Cloudsely' in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, pp. 69-87.

³¹ Gifford, Douglas (1976). *James Hogg*, Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press.

‘A Peasant’s Funeral’, in which he acts as a kind of ethnographic guide to his educated readers. The narrator of this piece essentially takes these readers along with him (via his reminiscences of the day) to a rustic funeral, which was held in a ‘little hovel where the cows were wont to stand’ (140). He helpfully explains to his readers, who, he assumes, do not understand rustic customs, the reason why this was being used as the venue for the funeral: ‘although it was a pleasant day, and we would have been much more comfortable on the green, it is held highly indecorous to give the entertainment at a burial without doors, and no-one will submit to it’ (140). (Hogg’s use of the word ‘indecorous’ here may well be an ironic reference to the fact that these peasants are exercising their sense of social propriety in rather more important matters than those readers and critics who objected to his ‘indelicate’ stories in *The Spy*).

The narrator-guide also provides his readers with an extract of a dialogue he claims to have overheard at the funeral, which he describes as ‘the language of nature’ (142). Hogg may once again be implying a contrast here between the ‘natural’ language of the rustics at the funeral, and the kind of artificial language used by his sophisticated urban readers, through which, as Basil Lee suggests, they propound their ‘false delicacy’. This documentary-style sketch serves a similar function to the notes in *The Mountain Bard* by providing a contextualising Ettrick backdrop to the tale collection as a whole in order to evoke the atmosphere of this traditional community. It also draws attention to Hogg’s ethnographic authority, as well as to his ability to negotiate successfully between his home territory of traditional Ettrick and the enlightened Edinburgh sphere of his readers. This bridging of the perceived gulf between urban Edinburgh, where most of Hogg’s readers resided, and rural Ettrick is an important function of the Ettrick Shepherd. Through this non-threatening figure, who was a

‘genuine rustic’, Hogg could communicate with his Edinburgh readership, and take them, through his writing, into the social world of Ettrick.

This aim is also discernable in the memoir-style sketch ‘Storms’, which appears as the first two chapters of ‘The Shepherd’s Calendar’ in *Winter Evening Tales* (it had originally been published in *Blackwood’s* in 1819).³² This sketch is narrated by a version of the Ettrick Shepherd, who describes his own past experiences as a shepherd in the ‘memorable’ (375) snow-storm of 1794.³³ Through it Hogg furnishes his book with a clear biographical backdrop for his collection of tales. As Mack notes, ‘Storms’ presents

the reminiscences of the mature Ettrick Shepherd (now a famous literary celebrity) about his experiences as a young shepherd in Ettrick Forest [...] The narrative voice is therefore able to draw on direct personal experience in describing the pastoral life, while also able to achieve a detached, objective tone in its account of that life. (Mack 2002, xxi)³⁴

The narrative voice in ‘Storms’ is slightly more ‘detached’ from the past-self it is describing, as well as more ‘objective’ in its analysis of past events, than the voice in the 1807 ‘Memoir’. For instance, the narrator clearly distances himself from some of his former beliefs. At the end of the anecdote about the ‘literary society of young shepherds’ who had met on the night of the 1794 storm (minus Hogg himself, who had stayed away to tend his sheep), and who were subsequently blamed by local people for it, he admits that, at the time, ‘though I am ashamed to acknowledge it, I suspected that the allegation might be too true’ (388).³⁵ This is a clear indication that

³² The final three chapters of ‘The Shepherd’s Calendar’ are narrated by a gentleman-outsider, who is collecting ‘anecdotes of the country life’ (407). These three chapters were originally published in *Blackwood’s* in 1817.

³³ As the Shepherd-narrator explains to his readers, storms such as these ‘constitute the various aeras of the pastoral life. They are the red lines in the Shepherd’s manual – the remembrances of years and ages that are past’ (372).

³⁴ Mack, Douglas (2002). ‘Introduction’, in *The Shepherd’s Calendar*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, xi-xxvii.

³⁵ The narrator explains that

The storm was altogether an unusual convulsion of nature. Nothing like it had ever been seen or

he has 'progressed' beyond the kind of communal, supernatural beliefs that held sway over him as a younger man.

However, in his description of the visionary experience he had during the storm (while he was attempting to cross a burn), he is keen to suggest that an inherent belief in interventionist supernatural agency yet remains within him, albeit in a slightly moderated form:

I looked up toward Heaven, I shall not say for what cause, and to my utter amazement thought I beheld trees over my head flourishing abroad over the whole sky. I never had seen such an optical illusion before; it was so like enchantment, that I knew not what to think, but dreaded that some extraordinary thing was coming over me, and that I was deprived of my right senses. I remember I thought the storm was a great judgment sent on us for our sins, and that this strange phantasy was connected with it, an illusion effected by evil spirits. I stood a good while in this painful trance; at length, on making a bold exertion to escape from the fairy vision, I came all at once in contact with the old tower [...] I was not only all at once freed from the fairies, but also from the dangers of the gorged river. I had come over it on some mountain of snow, I knew not how or where, nor do I know to this day. So that, after all, they were trees that I saw, and trees of no great magnitude either; but their appearance to my eyes it is impossible to describe. I thought they flourished abroad, not for miles, but for hundreds of miles, to the utmost verges of the visible heavens. (381-382)

This passage offers readers both a supernatural and a rational explanation of the phenomenon: either he was 'freed from the fairies', or from the 'dangers of the gorged river', or from both. From the outset of his career Hogg trod a middle path between 'the supernatural' and 'the rational' in order to strengthen his position as a narrative middleman between Ettrick and Edinburgh. Sometimes he upheld supernatural beliefs (see, for instance, his sympathetic description of the 'cattle incantations' in the 1807 'Memoir', p. 33), while at others he seemed to undercut

heard of among us before; and it was enough of itself to arouse every spark of superstition that lingered among these mountains. It did so. It was universally viewed as a judgement sent by God for the punishment of some heinous offence, but what that offence was, could not for a while be ascertained; but when it came out, that so many men had been assembled in a lone unfrequented place, and busily engaged in some mysterious work at the very instant that the blast came on, no doubts were entertained that all had not been right there, and that some horrible rite, or correspondence with the powers of darkness, had been going on. (387)

them (see Z's letter to the *Scots Magazine*, in which Hogg's recovery from illness confounds Ettrick belief).

The description of the 'Storms' vision as an 'optical illusion' is reminiscent of the Editor's scientific explanation of George Colwan's vision in *Confessions*:

As he approached the swire at the head of the dell [...] he beheld to his astonishment, a bright halo in the cloud of haze, that rose in a semi-circle over his head like a pale rainbow. He was struck motionless at the view of the lovely vision [...] but he soon perceived the cause of the phenomena, and that it preceded from the rays of the sun from a pure unclouded morning sky striking upon this dense vapour which refracted them. (29)

However, while the Editor's precise, logical account of the phenomenon leaves little room for a supernatural explanation, the narrator of 'Storms' leaves his readers to decide for themselves. Although he explains how he made it over the river it yet remains a mystery to him, even to the present day, how he actually managed to stumble across the fantastical 'mountain of snow'. And although he reveals that the vision of the trees flourishing over his head had its correlation in material reality, he cannot account for the anomaly between the real trees and the visionary ones, which, he asserts, 'it is impossible to describe'. The narrator of 'Storms' does not attempt to explain away his visionary experience, unlike the Editor of *Confessions*, who condescendingly declares that 'the better all works of nature are understood, the more they will be admired' (29). The former is clearly more open to different explanations of natural phenomena than the rational Editor is. This is hardly surprising given that the 'Storms' narrator is a version of Hogg's own past-self. Hogg remained in the difficult position of having to emphasize the story of his cultural rise from (rustic) shepherd to (urban) author while simultaneously suggesting that he was yet part of the world from which he had seemingly 'progressed'. If the emphasis were to fall too heavily on the former progress narrative his position as a narrative middleman between Ettrick and Edinburgh would be compromised, and yet this sense of progress

was itself vital to his place in the ‘enlightened’ literary world of the latter. He therefore had to suggest that, in spite of his new position in society as an author, he still had at least one foot in traditional Ettrick.

Aside from his refusal to project an unequivocal rational explanation back on to his visionary experience in the storm (which would potentially alienate him from the people of Ettrick, who, like himself, believed that it was a judgment sent from heaven), the narrator also makes it clear that he still shares the sense of religious awe felt by the inhabitants of remote districts such as Ettrick. He asserts that he ‘knows of no scene so impressive as that of a family sequestered in a lone glen during the time of a winter storm’, where they are ‘left to the protection of Heaven [...] Throughout all the wild vicissitudes of nature they have no hope of assistance from man, but are conversant with the almighty alone’ (374-375).³⁶ It soon becomes apparent that Hogg is here describing his own family. The Hogg-narrator reveals that he himself has

often been a sharer in such scenes; and never, even in my youngest years, without having my heart deeply impressed by the circumstances. There is a sublimity in the very idea. There we lived, as it were, inmates of the cloud and the storm; but we stood in relationship to the Ruler of these that neither time nor eternity could ever cancel. (375)

This passage suggests that even though Hogg may now be able to poetically analyze the profound affect of such circumstances on religious (as well as supernatural) beliefs he yet remains subject to the kind of sublime awe felt by himself and his own family during past winter storms. As the Hogg-narrator suggests, these kinds of instinctual feelings cannot be cancelled by ‘time or eternity’.

There is thus a clear line drawn between Hogg’s past and present selves in ‘Storms’. Yet it is not only one of progression, but also one of connection, the

³⁶ Cf. to Hogg’s description of his childhood home in ‘To the Right Honourable Lady Anne Scott of Buccleuch’: ‘Where neighbouring hind or cot was none, / Our converse was with heaven alone, / With voices through the cloud that sung, / And brooding storms that round us hung’ (lines 53-56).

overriding implication being that he has not completely left his past-self behind. However, the piece ends with two paratextual references to his current authorial status, yet each evokes very different versions of Hogg's authorial-self. Firstly, the narrator compares the uproar in Ettrick about the literary society and the storm to the controversy caused by the 'Chaldee Manuscript' (see 388), a satire of the Edinburgh literary scene (written by Hogg, John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart), which had caused a huge scandal when it was published in *Blackwood's* in October 1817. This reference to Hogg's position in the Edinburgh literary world is then somewhat tempered by the inclusion of twelve stanzas from *The Queen's Wake* (from 'Glen-Avin, The Ninth Bard's Song'). These lines describe the progress of a personified storm as it makes its way from the Highlands down through 'Yarrow's fairy dale' (Hogg's home territory): 'The shepherd paused in dumb dismay; / And cries of the spirits in the gale / Lured many a pitying hind away' (391). These lines, with their frank portrayal of the supernatural, reconnect the narrator of 'Storms' back to Hogg's Ettrick Shepherd authorial-self (the popular 'peasant-poet' author of *The Queen's Wake*), after the earlier allusion to the sophisticated satirist of the Blackwoodian 'Chaldee Manuscript'. Hogg is once again putting his Ettrick and Edinburgh authorial selves on display.³⁷ However, he is careful to emphasise the interconnected relationship between these two entities as it is on the basis of this connection that his position as a narrative middleman between Ettrick and Edinburgh depended.

³⁷ The gentleman-narrator of the final three chapters of 'The Shepherd's Calendar' is another entity altogether, one of Hogg's 'enlightened' outsiders (the most famous example of which is the Editor of *Confessions*), who visits the 'pastoral world' to observe its inhabitants and to collect literary materials, much as Scott had done in 1802 for *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

Hogg as Narrative Middleman in ‘The Wife of Lochmaben’ and ‘The Bridal of Polmood’

Hogg makes use of his perceived position as narrative middleman between Ettrick and Edinburgh in ‘The Wife of Lochmaben’, which appears in the final section of *Winter Evening Tales* under the heading ‘Country Dreams and Apparitions’ (as this title suggest, all the tales in this section deal with the supernatural). In the opening frame the narrator sets the scene for the tale, and refers to the oral informant from whom he heard it:

Not many years ago, there lived in the ancient borough of Lochmaben, an amiable and good Christian woman, the wife of a blacksmith, named James Neil, whose death gave rise to a singular romantic story, and finally to a criminal trial at the Circuit-Court of Dumfries. The story was related to me by a strolling gipsy of the town of Lochmaben, pretty nearly as follows: (426)

This introductory paragraph evokes the aura of an oral telling; indeed, it sounds like the opening of a folk tale.³⁸ The narrator attests that he is passing on the tale ‘pretty nearly’ as he heard from his gipsy informant. The phrase ‘pretty nearly’ suggests that he is writing the tale down from memory, and that he has perhaps adapted it slightly for inclusion in his book (adaptation and variation are crucial elements in oral transmission). He also narrates the tale in a plain, conversational, and decidedly informal manner. At one point he even admits that he has ‘forgot to mention [a certain detail] in its proper place’ (431). His narration thus reflects the ‘gossipy’ nature of the tale (the folk tale could be said to descend into gossip).

The opening lines of the story-proper reflect this linguistic tendency, especially in terms of the implied moral-judgments on the (not so) private lives of others:

³⁸ In *Scottish Tradition: A Collection of Scottish Folk Literature* (1984) David Buchan discusses the importance of basic linguistic structures to the folk tale. As he points out, ‘the frequency of repetition, of words, of phrases, of sentences, and even of whole episodes’ (Buchan 1984, 8) is a characteristic trait of most folk tales. These linguistic indicators are perhaps most striking in the opening lines of such material (e.g. ‘there was once...’, ‘not many years ago...’). See also Axel Olrik’s ‘Epic Laws of Folk Narrative’ (1909), especially the ‘Law of Opening’, which states that folk narrative does not begin with sudden action; and Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), in which he analyses the basic structural patterns of Russian folk tales.

The smith's wife had been for several years in a state of great bodily suffering and debility, which she bore with all resignation, and even cheerfulness, although during the period of her illness, she had been utterly neglected by her husband, who was of a loose profligate character, and in everything the reverse of his wife. (426)

The relationship between the smith and his wife was evidently a popular piece of gossip among locals, even before the story of her death and ghostly reappearance to her friend begins to spread abroad (her ghost tells her friend that she was murdered by her husband). The narrator attests that this latter story 'was of a nature to take, among such a society as that of which the main bulk of the population of Lochmaben and its vicinity consists', and that despite the efforts of the magistrate and the minster to quell this fantastical tale 'it flew like wildfire' (429) among the people. The implied message seems to be that the oral transmission of such tales cannot be controlled by the authorities. The story of the ghost gains such currency that even when the smith is acquitted in a court of law (the jury return a rather apt verdict of 'not proven'), largely on account of the fact that the testimony given by the dead woman's friend is 'second hand' (as the sarcastic counsel for the defence argues it must thus be set aside until such a time as 'the ghost appeared personally [to make] a verbal accusation' (430)), the people of Lochmaben still believe that he is guilty of his wife's murder, and chase him out of town.

Thus, the story seeks to recreate the feel of the oral transmission of a gossipy-type story in a traditional community, but in a new printed context. The narrator of 'The Wife of Lochmaben' is not only a link in the chain of oral transmission (the link between the oral and the written), but also the chronicler of the process itself. The writing of the story could even be viewed as a challenge to the official story (as handed down by the court), and a valorization of the people's oral version of events. This suggests that the narrator is 'The Ettrick Shepherd' – that staunch defender of

oral culture.³⁹ The paratextual structure of the story, through which it is established that the narrator is passing on an oral tale he has heard in the ‘real world’ of the Borders, likewise points to this figure. Hogg is once again playing on his readers’ knowledge of his social background in order to underpin his reliability as a narrative middleman between traditional Ettrick and Enlightenment Edinburgh. However, the narrator’s privileging of ‘the supernatural’ and ‘the oral’ in the tale also represents a tacit challenge to the rational, literary world of the latter. And his written version of the oral tale need not be the final link in the chain of transmission; on the contrary, it may only encourage new oral accounts, which will, in turn, generate new written ones, and so on *ad infinitum*.

This potential for endless interplay between the oral and the written is brilliantly evoked in the paratextual frame to Nikolai Gogol’s story ‘St. John’s Eve’, which appeared in the first part of his tale collection *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*, in 1831. The frame narrator of this collection, Rudy Panko, a beekeeper from Dikanka, has much in common with Hogg’s Ettrick Shepherd. Like the latter, Rudy acts as a kind of narrative middleman, passing on the traditional oral tales of his rural village to the reading public of Petersburg (the Shepherd passes his from Ettrick to Edinburgh). In the frame to ‘St John’s Eve’ he begins reading a story back to the oral informant (the ‘sexton’ Foma Grigorievich), from whom a literary gentleman had heard it (before writing it down and publishing it). However, before Rudy has read two pages, the following dialogue ensues:

“Wait a minute: tell me what it is you are reading.”

“What am I reading, Foma Grigorievich? Your story, your own words.”

“Who told you it was my story?”

“What better proof do you want? It is printed here: ‘Told by the sexton of So-and-

³⁹ The narrator of the original version of the story, which was published in *The Spy* in 1810, was another of Hogg’s shepherd personas, John Miller, who narrated most of the traditional-type tales in his magazine. The distinction between these two figures is nominal, but most of Hogg’s contemporary readers would have been more familiar with the instantly-recognisable brand of the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’.

so.’ ”

“Hang the fellow who printed that! He’s lying, the dog! Is that how I told it? What is one to do when

a man has a screw loose in his head? Listen, I’ll tell it to you now.”

We moved up to the table and he began. (33-34)⁴⁰

It is safe to assume that Foma will not be any more enamoured of this latter written version than he was of the previous one, and that the whole storytelling process will begin again. Similarly, the ‘strolling gypsy’ who told Hogg’s Shepherd the tale of the wife of Lochmaben may also fail to recognise his own version in the written one of the Shepherd and want to tell it again, but in his own way. In short, the printing of oral tales may not mean the end of the process of adaption and variation, which are perhaps the most crucial elements in the oral tradition.

Hogg’s intermediate position between Ettrick and Edinburgh is also aptly reflected in the introductory chapter to ‘The Bridal of Polmood’, in which the narrator tells his readers that he heard the story he is introducing from a ‘loquacious old gentleman’ with whom he had travelled from Moffat to Edinburgh the previous autumn. During the coach journey the gentleman had recited stories and legends to him, each one connected with places they passed along the way. The narrator attests that these ‘narratives were fraught with traditionary knowledge, the information to which, of all others, my heart is most fondly attached’ (259). This admission would seem to indicate that he is the ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’, that staunch upholder of traditional culture. It also gives an indication of the type of story his readers can expect to encounter in the following pages, and of the kind of fictional world they are about to enter. The narrator then reveals that as they passed by Polmood the gentleman ‘instantly began the following tale, which, with few interruptions, served us for a topic of conversation during the rest of our journey’ (261). Polmood is about thirteen

⁴⁰ *The Collected Tales and Plays of Nikolai Gogol*, trans. by Constance Garnett, ed. by Leonard J. Kent, New York: Modern Library.

miles west of St Mary's Loch, which means that the narrator would have been passing through the vicinity of Ettrick when the gentleman began his narration,⁴¹ which apparently went on all the way to Edinburgh. In short, he quite literally travels from Ettrick to Edinburgh with this oral tale ringing in his ears. He then tells his readers that

as soon as he reached Edinburgh he wrote it down; and waiting upon the narrator, who is now one of [his] most intimate friends, [he] read it over to him, correcting and enlarging it, according to his directions. (261)

Thus, the frame to the 'The Bridal of Polmood' provides an allegory of Hogg's treatment of traditional material, and of the relationship between Ettrick and Edinburgh in his literary life: first he collects oral tales in Ettrick, before taking them to Edinburgh where he writes them down and publishes them. The narrator of this story could thus be said to reflect both sides of Hogg, each of which complements the other in this artistic process. Hogg describes this process in a letter to Constable in 1813, in which he first expresses his wish to publish a collection of stories:

I have for many years been collecting the rural and traditionary tales of Scotland and I have of late been writing them over again and new-modelling them, and have the vanity to suppose they will form a most interesting work. (Hogg to Constable, dated Deanhuagh, 20 May 1813)⁴²

Far from contradicting each other or generating what Gifford refers to as 'the crisis of identity and confidence [which] explains many of Hogg's complete failures' (Gifford 1976, 8), 'Ettrick Hogg' (the collector of 'traditionary' oral tales) and 'Edinburgh Hogg' (the 'remodeler' of these tales) each played a vital role in Hogg's creative process. Likewise, the stories in *Winter Evening Tales*, which fluctuate between the

⁴¹ As Duncan points out, 'the old Carlisle-Dumfries-Edinburgh coach road runs up through Moffat, across Erickstanebrae and along the upper reaches of the Tweed, before descending to Yarrow and St Mary's Loch' (Duncan 2004, 571). The narrator of 'The Bridal of Polmood' says that they 'crossed the heights of Erickstane, and were descending by the side of the Tweed [...] and, on proceeding a little farther, [he] observed on the opposite bank a decayed old house [Polmood]' (260).

⁴² *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 145.

paratextual foregrounding of Hogg-the-shepherd and Hogg-the-author, suggest that they were also crucial to his self-representation.

Hogg's 'Literary Life': The 1821 Version of the 'Memoir'

Hogg's next major publication was the 1821 (third) edition of *The Mountain Bard*, which was prefaced by a new, updated version of the 1807 'Memoir', renamed 'Memoir of the Author's Life' (an indication, perhaps, of Hogg's new position as a relatively successful author). The structure of this book reflects Hogg's desire to publish a collected edition of his poetry at this time.⁴³ As Hughes points out, 'Hogg made several attempts to achieve the established status of author of a collected edition for himself' (Hughes 2005, xxxiv) during his lifetime, and thus establish himself among the leading poets of the day (Scott's twelve-volume *Poetical Works* had been published in 1820, while Hogg's own four-volume *Poetical Works* came out in 1822). This desire to become a 'collected author' is reflected in the new version of the 'Memoir', in which Hogg-the-author seeks to take control of, and organise, his literary productions. At the end of it he quite literally lists all the works he has 'written and published [...] in the last seven years [totalling] twenty volumes in all' (see p. 231). It almost seems as if he is helpfully listing all the books that could appear in a 'collected edition' of his works for the benefit of prospective publishers.

⁴³ As Gilbert explains, 'In 1821 the section entitled "Songs Adapted to the Times" is dropped from *The Mountain Bard*, presumably because Hogg was planning to place his songs elsewhere in his Collected Works...[He] envisioned a revised and enlarged *Mountain Bard* as part of [this] projected collected works' (Gilbert 2007, xlix & xlvi). This projected edition was to be published by Oliver & Boyd (the publishers of his previous work *Winter Evening Tales*); however, in the end they only published the 1821 edition of *The Mountain Bard* (a four-volume edition of Hogg's *Poetical Works* was eventually published by Constable in 1822). In the 1821 'Memoir' Hogg explains that he meant the 1807 version of *The Mountain Bard* to be 'chiefly ballads and tales' but that he 'was obliged to eke [it] out with such things as [he] had' (231). However, he assures his readers that 'most of the miscellaneous matter is now [...] cancelled, and two or three ballads added in their place, to make the work somewhat more uniform' (231).

This list of all his published works is a fitting conclusion to the 1821 section of the ‘Memoir’, which deals almost exclusively with Hogg’s efforts to establish himself as an author in Edinburgh. While the 1807 section describes his early domestic life, his (lack of) education, and his rise from shepherd to published author, and is perhaps best characterised as a ‘progress narrative’, the new 1821 section deals with his subsequent life as a ‘literary man’ in Edinburgh, especially in the years between 1810-1821. This new focus is indicated near the beginning of the new section of the ‘Memoir’ via the highly romanticised description of Hogg’s enforced shift away from rural Ettrick to literary Edinburgh:

having appeared as a poet, and a speculative farmer beside, no one would now employ me as a shepherd [...] therefore, in February 1810, in utter desperation, I took my plaid about my shoulders, and marched away to Edinburgh, determined, since no better could be, to push my fortune as a literary man. (206)

Thus, it is towards ‘Hogg the literary man’ that the new 1821 section of the ‘Memoir’ turns its attention. It takes up Hogg’s life-story at the point the 1807 one ended (his failed venture as a sheep-farmer in Harris in 1803-04). The opening paragraph recounts Hogg’s efforts to get the first version of *The Mountain Bard* published: apparently Constable would only agree to it if Hogg could ‘procure him 200 subscribers’, in the event he claims to have ‘got above 500’ (205). This concern with the business side of his literary dealings is a recurring theme in the 1821 section of the ‘Memoir’ (he also reveals in the opening paragraph that he received £86 from Constable for ‘that celebrated work, *Hogg on Sheep*’ (205)),⁴⁴ and perhaps reflects Hogg’s desire to take back market control of his literary works at this time,

⁴⁴ This mania for minutely listing all the facts and figures connected with his ‘literary life’ (206) is apparent throughout the remainder of the ‘Memoir’: ‘Mr Ballantyne gave me credit for £10 worth of paper [for the first edition of *The Spy*]’ (207); ‘Finally [Mr Constable] told me that if I would procure him 200 subscribers to insure him from loss he would give me L.100 for liberty to print 1000 copies [of *The Queen’s Wake*]’ (212); ‘So we agreed on the price at one word, which was, I think, to be £80 for liberty to print 1000 copies [of *The Pilgrims of the Sun*]’ (219); ‘[*Pilgrims*] was reprinted in two different towns in America, and 10,000 copies of it sold in that country’ (221); ‘The first edition [of *The Poetic Mirror*] was sold in six weeks, and another 750 copies has since been sold’ (222). This theme reaches its apotheosis in the list of works appended to the end of the text.

specifically by reconnecting himself to them via his autobiographical text. Hogg's continued awareness of the importance of his life story to his literary career is reflected in a letter to Oliver & Boyd, the publishers of the 1821 edition of *The Mountain Bard*: 'The sooner you get on with [the publishing of the 'Memoir'] the better for both yourselves and me as it has been many years out of print and will raise curiosity very much' (Hogg to Oliver & Boyd, dated 6 November 1820).⁴⁵

Although the second paragraph of the new 1821 section very briefly describes his failed farming ventures between the years 1807-1809, it is soon made clear that Hogg's private life and non-literary business ventures will not be described in any great detail: as Hogg explains, 'it is only a short sketch of my *literary life* that I can extract into this introduction' (206).⁴⁶ Thus, it is quickly established that the new section of the 'Memoir' will focus on Hogg's 'literary life'. However, Hogg's social and cultural background remains an important backdrop to this narration. The story of his cultural rise (as told in the 1807 'Memoir') provides the foundation upon which the later story of his 'literary life' (as described in the 1821 'Memoir') is constructed. It is used to explain both his successes and his failures in the literary world of Edinburgh. But it is also used to reinforce the relationship between Hogg and his literary works.

⁴⁵ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume Two (1820-1831)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 57-58.

⁴⁶ Hughes suggests that Hogg must have 'kept a journal for many years', which he probably used as the basis for the various versions of the Memoir' (see Hughes 2005, 194-95). She also points out that the 'relationship of journal to published work' (Hughes 2005, 195) is described in the final passage of the 1821 'Memoir': 'In this short Memoir, which is composed of extracts from a larger detail, I have confined myself to such anecdotes only as relate to my progress as a writer, and these I intend to continue from year to year as long as I live' (231).

The Main Function(s) of the 1821 'Memoir'

In *Coleridge, Wordsworth and Romantic Autobiography* (1995) Sheila Kearns suggests that, in order to reaffirm authority over their texts in the age of 'print culture', Romantic authors began to 'represent themselves [...] through accounts of their writings [and to present] their textual productions, their books, as the events of their lives':

when the Romantics narrate the events of their lives, they focus on their lives in print and particularly on the way in which autobiographical discourse can provide the means of authenticating their textual productions. Whereas spiritual autobiography in the Augustinian tradition may be seen as a means by which its author takes possession of his life by interpreting its events, the autobiography as a literary life, the form that develops its currency in the eighteenth century, offers the means by which the writer seeks to take possession of his textual productions. (Kearns 1995, 30-31)⁴⁷

The 'authentication' of Hogg's 'textual productions' is one of the main functions of each of the different versions of Hogg's Memoirs. For instance, the 1807 'Memoir' is used to authenticate the first edition of *The Mountain Bard*. It acts as a kind of commemorative monument to the literary achievement of 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. This figure, a 'natural-born-poet', is the link which explains the supposed anomaly between Hogg-the-private individual and Hogg-the-published-author. He is used to explain and reinforce the relationship between the life (of the Borders shepherd) and the work (of the author). In this sense, 'The Ettrick Shepherd' is used to establish Hogg's authority over his literary production. The 1807 'Memoir' authenticates the work by providing evidence that it was really written by a shepherd from the Borders. As Scott declares in the head note, 'these memoirs ascertain the authenticity of the publication, and are, therefore, entitled to be prefixed to it' (7). (The publisher Goldie attempts to do something similar in the 'Advertisement' to the second edition of *The*

⁴⁷ Kearns, Sheila M. (1995). *Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Romantic Autobiography: Reading Strategies of Self-Representation*, London: Associated University Presses.

Queens Wake, albeit in a rather more crude way, when he assures his customers that the work ‘is really and truly the production of James Hogg, a common shepherd, bred among the mountains of Ettrick Forest’ (Quoted in Mack’s edition of *The Queen’s Wake*, 394)).

In the 1821 ‘Memoir’ this process of authentication is extended to include all of Hogg’s published works. The list of all the books he had published up to 1821 (quoted above) is prefaced by the following statement, in which Hogg once again ‘explains’ his work via the story of his early life:

the following list of works may appear trifling in the eyes of some, but when it is considered that they were produced by a man almost devoid of education, and in a great degree, in his early days, debarred from every advantage in life, and possessed only of a quick eye in observing the operations of nature, it is certainly a sufficient excuse for inserting them here. (230)

In this passage Hogg once again uses his autobiography to reconnect himself to his work. This tendency is clearly discernible throughout the rest of the text, and it could be argued that one of the main functions of the 1821 ‘Memoir’ is, as Kearns puts it, to ‘authenticate’ Hogg’s ‘textual productions’, so that he can formally (re)take possession of them in preparation for the proposed ‘collected works’.

Hogg’s frustration at his lack of publishing control over his books up to this point in his career is made manifest in the description of his attempts to get the third edition of *The Queen’s Wake* to the press. Goldie had published the first two editions, but on Hogg hearing that he was in financial difficulty he ‘went and offered [the third edition] to Mr Constable’, however, when ‘Goldie got notice of the transaction [he] induced [Constable] to give up the bargain’ (214). Hogg bewails that ‘it was in vain that I remonstrated, affirming that the work was my own, and I would give it to whom I pleased. I had no no-one to take my part, and I was browbeat out of it’ (214). It is probably experiences such as this that induced him to use his ‘Memoir’ to regain

some sort of control over his literary works, specifically by reestablishing the relationship between them and his autobiographical self.

This process is clearly discernible in the description of the early publishing history of *The Forest Minstrel*. Hogg reveals that in 1810 he had ‘applied to Mr Constable’ to publish ‘a volume of songs [*The Forest Minstrel*]’, but that although ‘he condescended on publishing an edition, and giving me half the profits [...] he never gave me anything; and as I feared the concern might not have proved a good one, I never asked any remuneration’ (207). He then apologises for ‘every ranting rhyme’ he had included in the book, before referring to his naivety about the literary world at this time: ‘I had never once been in any polished society [...] and knew no more of human life or manners than a child. I was a sort of natural songster, without another advantage on earth’ (207). This autobiographical reference to his status as a ‘natural songster’ reconnects him to the work (*The Forest Minstrel*). Much as the 1807 ‘Memoir’ explains his relationship to *The Mountain Bard*, allowing him to take responsibility as its sole creator, this statement allows him to reconnect himself to a book which he had apparently been estranged from after having handed it over to Constable to be published (as he points out, he did not even receive any ‘remuneration’ for it). Through the organising figure of ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’, whose naivety about the Edinburgh literary sphere is made manifest in the above passage (he apparently ‘knew no more of human life or manners than a child’ at the time), Hogg takes back ownership of his book, after all, he is the ‘natural songster’ (otherwise known as ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’) who wrote the majority of the songs in the collection – it is thus his book. Hogg, likewise, links his ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ self back to *The Spy* in the ‘Memoir’ via the inclusion of a section from ‘The Spy’s Farewell to his Readers’, which draws attention to the fact that the magazine was

written and produced by a ‘common shepherd, who was never at school’ (209). Hogg is reclaiming ownership of his works by once again pointing to the ‘figure that is outside and precedes [them]’ (Foucault 2001, 1623). The autobiographical text allows him to ‘authenticate his textual productions’, which will, in turn, enable him to take back market control of his works (at least, this appears to have been his aim).

By the early-nineteenth century, power relations between authors and readers had also shifted radically as a direct result of the rapid rise of the publishing industry in the previous century. In the Romantic era the book-buying public had largely usurped the place of patrons, the traditional arbiters of literary taste. A working-class writer such as Hogg may still have required a literary patron to authorise his ventures into the marketplace, but his ultimate success rested with the reading public (although, as Hogg suggests in his ‘Memoir’, critical reviews in magazines such as *Blackwood’s* also played an increasingly significant role in the reception of books). Kearns suggests this shift to what Foucault characterised as a ‘system of ownership’ (Foucault 2001, 1628) brought with it the risk of authors losing interpretive control of their work:

Once writing is no longer an act, but an object, the risk of alienation from or appropriation of this property becomes all the more prominent [...] A text that has entered into the system of exchange (been bought and paid for) is no longer subject to the authority of its producer, and in the system of linguistic exchange the author becomes subject to the reader (purchaser). (Kearns 1995, 26)

The shift in power relations between author and reader was thus, according to Kearns, already well under way over 150 years before Barthes’ ‘The Death of the Author’. At the time Hogg was writing authority may have already been slipping out of the hands of ‘the author’ and into those of the ‘reader-consumer’, who was increasingly taking on interpretive duties. However, this paradigm shift did not mean that authors had lost all control over their literary productions, nor did it preclude them from attempting to

wrestle back interpretive control of their texts through the use of paratextual devices and autobiographical writings, or, in the case of Hogg, through a combination of the two.

For instance, Hogg uses the 1821 'Memoir' to answer criticisms of *The Spy* in an attempt to take back interpretive control of his literary production. *The Spy* was perhaps Hogg's most ambitious, and certainly his most controversial, publication up to that date. He claims in the 'Memoir' that, after losing control of *The Forest Minstrel* project, he 'determined to push [his] own fortune independent of booksellers' by beginning a 'literary weekly paper [*The Spy*]' (207). He proceeds to narrate the reasons for the failure of the paper, namely, its perceived indelicacies, which so offended the 'fastidious literary ladies' (208) of Edinburgh. He then responds to these charges of 'indelucacy', firstly by deriding the 'affectation of the people' (208) who withdrew their subscriptions, then by attacking those arch instigators of the reading public, the reviewers, who, he asserts, were the actual 'discoverers' of the supposed 'indelucacies' in *The Spy/Winter Evening Tales* stories, which, he asserts, contained nothing but what is 'natural for the characters' (230) depicted therein.

The 1821 section of the 'Memoir' also takes up the two main threads of Hogg's earlier paratextual self-representations: namely, his projection of himself as a leading poet of the day, and his depiction of himself as a unique member of his literary world. In order to consolidate his position in the literary sphere Hogg not only had to project the notion that, as a peasant poet and the self-proclaimed representative of the Ettrick oral tradition, he was unique in the Edinburgh literary marketplace; he also had to suggest that he was the same as, or, more to the point, just as 'good' as, the likes of Scott. However, to do this he had to question the cultural paradigm which put him, as

a peasant poet and a (perceived) folk artist, at the bottom of the literary hierarchy. This is why so many of his texts and paratexts challenge cultural preconceptions about the position of peasant poets, as well as traditional writings and beliefs, in the modern world of Enlightenment Edinburgh. However, as ever, Hogg was treading a precarious tightrope by arguing that he was both different from, and yet the same and as good as, other writers of his era, especially as his critics routinely used his perceived otherness against him as a way to marginalise him. But these two intertwining, albeit potentially contradictory, narrative lines remained crucial elements in Hogg's ongoing endeavour to consolidate and strengthen his position as an author in his society. The 'Memoir' most obviously draws attention to Hogg's new status as a 'major author' through its description of the impact that *The Queen's Wake*, his most successful poem, had had on his life. Hogg reveals that it was 'the poetry of Mr Walter Scott and Lord Byron' that had inspired him to 'take to the field once more as a poet' (211) with this poem, and that, within a year of its publication, he had 'been introduced to most of the great literary characters in the metropolis, and lived with them on great terms of intimacy, finding [himself] more and more a welcome guest at all their houses' (214). A clear line is drawn here from the first conception of the poem (Hogg suggests that he set out to emulate the two most successful poets of the day) to the point at which he found himself intimately acquainted with 'the great literary characters in the metropolis' as a direct result of the success of it. In short, he had 'arrived' in the literary world, and was apparently accepted by his fellow literary men as one of their own.

However, the potentially negative impact of Hogg's new authorial status on his literary career in the capital, which was largely predicated on his peasant-poet status, is hinted at in the anecdote about the 'itinerant bard' who upstages a reading of the

manuscript of *The Queen's Wake* by his friend Mr Gray⁴⁸ (Gray and his wife had contributed essays to *The Spy*):

Mr Gray had not got through the third page, when he was told that an itinerant bard was come into the lobby, and repeating his poetry to the boarders. Mr Gray went out and joined them, leaving me alone with a young lady, to read, or not, as we liked. In about half an hour, he sent a request for me likewise to come: on which I went, and heard a poor crazy beggar repeating such miserable stuff as I had never heard before. I was terribly affronted; and putting my manuscript in my pocket, I jogged my way home in a very bad humour. (211)

Hogg, just on the verge of literary fame, is here upstaged by a lower class poet than even himself. The 'itinerant bard' has, essentially, out-Hogged him. He is apparently no longer a novelty to the likes of Gray; on the contrary, he is just another author with a manuscript. Although this is clearly a satire on the contemporary craze for 'peasant-poets', it also highlights the difficult position Hogg found himself in at this time. His increased immersion in the literary world as 'an author' brought with it the threat of estrangement from his 'peasant-poet' self, the very 'self' upon whom his place in this world largely depended. As his literary career progressed, so too did the prospect that readers and critics would no longer connect him to this earlier self.

This perhaps explains why he continues to emphasise his peasant-poet status so vehemently in the 1821 'Memoir', even as he attests to his place among the leading authors of the day. For instance, he chastises a reviewer who he attests

committed a most horrible blunder in classing Mr Tenant, the author of *Anster Fair*, and me together, as two self-taught geniuses; whereas there is not one point of resemblance – Tenant being a better educated man than the reviewer himself, was not a little affronted at being classed with me. (213)

Hogg defends his hard-earned niche in the literary marketplace here by reminding readers that he, unlike poets such as William Tenant (who attended St Andrews

⁴⁸ James Gray (1770-1830) was at this time a Classics master at the Edinburgh High School. As Duncan notes, Gray and his wife Mary 'had been close friends of Burns in his last years at Dumfries' (Duncan 2007, 156). This must have endeared them to Hogg, who would later declare himself the natural successor to his literary hero Burns (see Chapter Five for more on Hogg's positioning of himself alongside Burns).

University), is a genuine autodidactic peasant-poet. In his book *The Peasant Poets of Scotland* (1881), Henry Shanks is even more precise in his definition of peasant poets:

I have applied the strictest interpretation of the term [...] to those only who were known as poets while engaged in purely rural occupations, excluding all artisans and professional men [...] A not uncommon error into which many writers have fallen has been to classify such poets as Allan Ramsay, the wig-maker and book-seller, Fergusson, the writer, Allan Cunningham, the stone-mason [...] and many such others as peasants – who were not peasants in the strict sense. (Shanks 1881, 116)⁴⁹

Although Shanks mode of classification is perhaps a little idiosyncratic – he may be right to exclude Ramsay, but to do likewise with Cunningham, merely because he did not work in a specifically ‘rural occupation’, seems pedantic – it shows how hotly-contested the term ‘peasant poet’ was in the nineteenth century. This was especially true for writers like Hogg who traded off their reputations as peasant poets, and thus often drew attention the fact that they were the ‘real thing’.

In the 1821 ‘Memoir’ Hogg also draws attention to the fact that he remains an outsider in the Edinburgh literary scene, assuring his readers that he will never really be fully-accepted into this world:

I know that I have always been looked on, by the learned part of the community, as an intruder in the paths of literature, and every opprobrium has been thrown on me from that quarter. The truth is, that I am so. The walks of learning are occupied by a powerful aristocracy, who deem that province their own peculiar right, else, what would avail all their dear bought collegiate honours and degrees. No wonder that they should view an intruder, from the humbled and despised ranks of the community, with a jealous and indignant eye, and impede his progress by every means in their power. (227)

Hogg is not merely feeling sorry for himself here. His presentation of himself as an ‘intruder’ in the literary world, fighting against the odds to make it as an author in an unfamiliar environment, remained a crucial element in his official life-story, as did the notion that he was both part of, and yet also somehow separate from, the Edinburgh literary scene in which he was seeking his fortune.

⁴⁹ Shanks, Henry (1881). *The Peasant Poets of Scotland*, Edinburgh and Glasgow: John Menzies.

Hogg's strategic positioning of himself, just on the border of this latter world (with one foot in and one foot out, as it were), meant that he was perfectly-placed to critique the values and beliefs of Enlightenment Edinburgh, as well as take part in, and benefit from (not least financially), the thriving literary marketplace there. As Mack suggests, 'contact with the Edinburgh world of [John] Wilson and Scott [also] represented a liberating widening of horizons for Hogg as a writer' (Mack 2001, 22).⁵⁰ The statement about the 'powerful aristocracy' who excluded him also clashes somewhat with his earlier claim that he 'lived on great terms of intimacy [with] most of the great literary characters in the metropolis' (214). However, this latter claim feeds into the other main strand of his self-representation, that is, his presentation of himself as a leading writer of the day. Hogg certainly played up both these sides of his 'literary life' in the 1821 'Memoir', as he did throughout his career. However, these self-representations did not go unchallenged. The 'powerful aristocracy' referred to in the above passage – the editors, publishers and established/establishment authors of Edinburgh, not least Hogg's own colleagues at *Blackwood's* – generally only tolerated him as a 'peasant poet', and certainly not as the cultural chameleon, and the sophisticated manipulator of myriad literary forms, which he had become. (This tendency is reflected by *Blackwood's* clear preference for Hogg's dedicatory poem to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck, and Other Tales* over the tale collection itself. This preference for pastoral-style poetry, supposedly the 'proper' form for a peasant poet such as Hogg, would become a recurring pattern in criticism of Hogg's work for the remainder of his career). The Edinburgh literary elite often saw only one side of him: namely, his Ettrick Shepherd one. Hogg tried to present himself as a unique outsider

⁵⁰ However, Mack also points out that 'Hogg retained a deep loyalty to his native community. This prompted him to question and subvert aspects of the values of the Edinburgh intellectual world.' ('John Wilson, James Hogg, "Christopher North", and "The Ettrick Shepherd", in *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 12 (2001), 22)

operating *within* the literary world (an outsider on the inside); however, to the likes of John Wilson (1785-1854), the editor of *Blackwood's*, he remained firmly on the outside of this world, a marginalised figure who could never become a 'fully-fledged' author of prose fiction, let alone a member of the Edinburgh literary establishment. The kind of resentment and disdain described in the above passage would soon come bubbling to the surface in the wake of the 1821 version of 'Memoir'.

The Battle for Control of the Shepherd: The 1821 'Memoir', John Wilson and 'Noctes Ambrosianae'

In his review-letter of the 1821 'Memoir' Wilson declares that Hogg had now 'become a public nuisance':

This prodigy tires of the shepherd's life, and comes jogging into Edinburgh; he offers his ballads and balderdash, at sundry times, and in divers miners, to all the booksellers in Edinburgh, high and low, rich and poor, but they are all shy as trouts under thunder – not one will bite. No wonder. Only picture to yourself a stout country lout, with a bushel of hair on his shoulders that had not been raked for months, enveloped in a coarse plaid impregnated with tobacco, with a prodigious mouthful of immeasurable tusks, and a dialect that set all conjecture at defiance, lumbering suddenly in upon the elegant retirement of Mr Miller's backshop, or the dim seclusion of Mr John Ingle! Were these worthies to be blamed if they fainted upon the spot, or run out yelling into the street past the monster, or, in desperation, flung themselves into safety from a back window over ten stories? Mr Hogg speaks of his visits to booksellers' shops at this period with the utmost nonchalance. What would he himself have thought, if a large surly brown bear, or a huge baboon, had burst open his door when he was at breakfast, and helped himself to a chair and a mouthful of parritch? ('From an Old Friend with a New Face', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (1821), p. 44. Quoted by Gilbert 2007, liv)

Wilson's anger centres around Hogg's 'nonchalance' in discussing the Edinburgh literary scene, which in Wilson's mind Hogg does not properly belong, and is thus not qualified or entitled to discuss, especially not in public. That a low-born interloper such as Hogg should dare to lay bare the inner workings of the Edinburgh publishing world, and discuss, in the frankest of terms, the kind of shabby dealings that routinely

went on there, clearly infuriated establishment figures such as Wilson.⁵¹ His response to Hogg's impertinent 'Memoir' was to 'other' him in a most brutal fashion via the above 'review'. He describes Hogg in animalistic terms, as an ape-like intruder in the supposedly 'elegant' and refined world of the Edinburgh book trade.⁵² (As Hogg's 'Memoir' suggests, this world was just as cut-throat, mercenary and unscrupulous as any other capitalist marketplace). 'The Ettrick Shepherd' had clearly overstepped his permitted boundaries, and had to be put back in his place. It is ironic that the successful, prosperous and powerful Wilson – who exercised such power over Hogg's literary career – is now largely forgotten, whereas Hogg has been reclaimed as a great writer.

This, it seems, was one of the functions of the 'Noctes Ambrosianae' articles in *Blackwood's*. In this long-running series (1822-1835) of imaginary dialogues between regular *Blackwood's* contributors, which were mostly written by Wilson (Scott's son-in-law and official biographer John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854), the other main luminary at *Blackwood's*, also contributed to the series), Hogg's Ettrick Shepherd public persona is essentially hijacked, and routinely held up to ridicule. As Robin MacLachlan points out, 'Hogg's own personality, and the basis on which he had built his brand [...] became increasingly overtaken by that of the ['Noctes'] Shepherd – hard-drinking, excessively vain, tactless, ill-read and, frequently, clownish' (MacLachlan 2003, 9).⁵³ Duncan likewise argues that the *Noctes* Shepherd 'effectively replaced Hogg, the struggling author, in the public eye for the remainder

⁵¹ As Gilbert points out, 'the targets of [Hogg's] attack [in the 'Memoir'], and the social circles that supported them, were deeply offended and responded accordingly. Reviews of the volume focus almost obsessively on the grievances detailed in the 'Memoir', usually to the exclusion of talking about the poetry at all' (Gilbert 2012, 41). Gilbert cites David Laing's review in the *Edinburgh Monthly Review* for June 1821 as just one example of this kind of response to the 1821 edition of *The Mountain Bard*.

⁵² See Duncan's *Scott's Shadow* (Chapter Six, 'Hogg's Body' (pp.173-182)) for a further discussion of Wilson's obsessive animalising of Hogg.

⁵³ MacLachlan, Robin (2003). 'Hogg and the Art of Brand Management', in *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 14 (2003), 5-15.

of the century' (Duncan 2012, 2). As Gilbert suggests, Lockhart's characterisation of Hogg in his *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott (1837-38)* – which includes the famous anecdote of Hogg stretching out on Lady Scott's sofa in his dirty boots – also 'haunted Hogg's reception for well over a century' (Gilbert 2012, 43). In short, the loutish, coarse version of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' depicted in Wilson's earlier review-letter became a 'character in the ongoing fictions of the magazine, and a commodity for sale to *Blackwood's* consumers' (Richardson 2009, 186).⁵⁴ The former could thus be viewed as an early draft (albeit a crude one) of the 'Noctes' Shepherd.

As Garside suggests, Wilson's review-letter and 'Noctes' should perhaps be seen as 'part of a larger process [in *Blackwood's*], in evidence several years before the March 1822 commencement of the "Noctes Ambrosianae" series, of creating a gargoyle-like "Hogg" persona: one that is physical, rambunctious, instinctual, and above all non-intellectual' (Garside 2002, xxxix). Hogg's name had also already been getting assigned to material that was not his own in the magazine. In the 1821 'Memoir', Hogg lays the blame for these impositions squarely with Wilson, declaring that 'it was using too much freedom with any author, to print his name in full, to poems, letters, and essays, which he himself never saw' (229). Unfortunately, Hogg's endeavour to take back control of his literary productions through the writing of his 'literary life' may only have encouraged Wilson in his systematic attempt to wrestle control of this life away from him via his usurpation of the Shepherd character in 'Noctes'.

However, as Garside notes, Hogg also benefitted from his regular appearances in these articles: 'publicity in the "Noctes" was a mixed blessing, on the one hand severely threatening Hogg's claim to be treated seriously as a literary figure, yet at the same time offering personal publicity on a scale that could not be found elsewhere'

⁵⁴ Richardson, Thomas C. (2009). 'James Hogg and *Blackwoods*: Buying and Selling the Ettrick Shepherd', *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace: Scottish Romanticism and the Working-Class Author*, ed. by Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson, Farnham: Ashgate, 185-199.

(Garside 2002, lxviii). The works of *Blackwood's* writers were indeed often plugged in the 'Noctes' articles; however, Hogg's works, especially his novels, were more often than not ridiculed. (For instance, see Garside's analysis of the 'Noctes' for March 1823, in which the vernacular-speaking 'Hogg's' protests that his novel *The Three Perils of Man* has not been reviewed in the magazine only 'provide a spur for the other main occupants of Ambrose's Tavern [to] tumble out a variety of comic triadic alternatives for Hogg's sub-title' (Garside 2002, xliii)).

Hogg himself acknowledges that he both suffered and benefitted (financially) from his regular depiction in the 'Noctes'. However, based on his letters to William Blackwood about the series, it would seem that he felt that they did considerably more damage than good to his career. In 1825 he complained directly to him about the 'Noctes' for September 1825, in which the Noctean Hogg sings a terrible drinking song based on Burns' 'Auld Lang Syne'. This would have been especially offensive to Hogg who, as his career progressed, styled himself more and more as the successor to Burns: 'I did not think highly of last Maga [...] The Noctes is very good, my part abominable' (Hogg to Blackwood, dated Mount-Benger, 11 September 1825).⁵⁵ Hogg himself did contribute some songs to the 'Noctes' but his appearances therein were written by other, often mischievous, hands. He did try to contribute more of his songs and dialogues to the series but it seems that most were never published (see his letter to Blackwood of 19 March 1826, in which he complains about the many articles returned to him unpublished by the magazine).⁵⁶ Clearly, the editors at *Maga* preferred their own 'Hogg' contributions to the genuine article. Hogg's harsh treatment in the 'Noctes' continued throughout the 1820s and into the early 1830s. In 1829 he again writes to Blackwood, declaring that he is 'exceedingly disgusted with

⁵⁵ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume Two (1820-1831)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 237.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 243.

the last beastly Noctes, it is manifest that the old business of mockery and ridicule is again beginning' (Hogg to Blackwood, dated Mount-Benger, 28 March 1829),⁵⁷ while in 1830 he attests that his treatment in *Blackwood's* at the hands of Wilson has caused him the loss of '£100 a year by fairly keeping [him] out of the Royal Lit. society' (Hogg to William Blackwood, 6 April 1830).⁵⁸ Yet in an earlier letter, written in August 1827, he had admitted to Blackwood that he is 'perswaded that some things in *Maga* have operated singularly to my advantage, for the applications for contributors from my *highly gifted pen* have of late increased to a most laughable and puzzling extent' (Hogg to William Blackwood, 11 August 1827).⁵⁹

However, the success of Wilson's/*Blackwood's* 'attempt to take over and corrupt [Hogg's] brand' (MacLachlan 2003, 9) is illustrated in James Frederick Ferrier's (1808-64) 'Introduction' to his 1855 edition of John Wilson's *Noctes Ambrosianae*, in which he describes Wilson's creation of the Shepherd:

There was a homely heartiness of manner about Hogg, and a Doric simplicity in his address, which were exceedingly prepossessing [...] but his conversational powers were by no means pre-eminent. He never, indeed, attempted any colloquial display, although there was sometimes a quaintness in his remarks, a glimmering of drollery, a rural freshness, and a tinge of poetical colouring, which redeemed his discourse from commonplace, and supplied to the consummate artist [Wilson] who took in hand the hints out of which to construct a character at once original, extraordinary, and delightful – a character of which James Hogg undoubtedly furnished the gem, but which, under the hands of its artificer, acquired a breadth, a firmness, and a power to which the bard of Mount Benger had certainly no pretension [...] The Ettrick Shepherd of the *Noctes Ambrosianae* is one of the finest and most finished creations which dramatic genius ever called into existence. Out of very slender materials, an ideal infinitely greater, and more real, and more original from the prototype from which it was drawn, has been bodied forth. (Ferrier 1855, xvii)⁶⁰

Thus, according to Ferrier, Wilson (his father-in-law) took the unprepossessing figure of Hogg as his model – a simplistic, quaint being with less than pre-eminent

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 337.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 378-9.

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 276-77.

⁶⁰ Ferrier, James Frederick (1864). 'Preface', in *Noctes Ambrosianae*, Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, iv-xvii.

‘conversational powers’, just a ‘glimmering of drollery’, and a mere ‘tinge of poetical colouring’ – and created out of these ‘slender materials’ a great fictional character. If Ferrier is to be believed, the ‘Noctes’ Shepherd is even ‘more real, [and] more original, than the prototype [namely, Hogg himself] from which it was drawn’. According to Ferrier, Wilson has apparently smoothed out the edges of Hogg’s indelicate personality; the latter has merely ‘furnished the gem’, but it is only ‘under the hands of the great artificer’ that the literary character of the Shepherd acquires ‘breadth’ and ‘firmness’. Ferrier even suggests that it is only on the back of Wilson’s creative ingenuity that Hogg has a ‘chance of being known favourably to posterity’ (Ferrier 1855, xv-xvi).⁶¹ However, as Hughes argues in her biography of Hogg,

the *Noctes Ambrosinae* have often acted as a light that led astray both for Hogg’s contemporaries and for subsequent readers [...] In fact the Shepherd’s opinions can only be taken as those of James Hogg when they coincide with those expressed by Hogg in his letters or published writings or as repeated by reliable contemporaries. (Hughes 2007, 185)

Ferrier assumes that Wilson’s Shepherd is based on Hogg himself; however, it is also a corruption of Hogg’s own literary creation. Wilson and the other *Blackwood’s* contributors obviously drew on their own close personal knowledge of Hogg in their depictions of the *Noctes* Shepherd; however, this version relied heavily on the already well-established figure of Hogg’s ‘Ettrick Shepherd’. Wilson essentially stole Hogg’s Shepherd, and then distorted it, specifically in order to use it against its creator. However, Ferrier fails to recognise Hogg as a creative artist in his own right, merely viewing him as the raw material upon which Wilson drew when creating his great literary character. Ferrier thus ratifies Wilson’s theft of the Shepherd persona, and takes Hogg’s literary property (the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’) away from him all over again.

⁶¹ This is ironic considering that, as Richardson points out, ‘Hogg’s place in literary history was a frequent subject of ridicule within the pages of *Blackwood’s*’ (Richardson 2009, 198).

The Author's (Impeded) Progress

'The Ettrick Shepherd' clearly remained a crucial element in Hogg's self-representations between 1818 and 1821; however, his relationship with it changed and developed considerably over the course of these few years, both for better and worse. His shift to prose fiction brought with it the opportunity of experimenting with new, artistic forms of paratexts, through which he could incorporate his second-self more smoothly into his texts. Like Pushkin and Goethe, Hogg was now routinely using his paratexts for fictional as well as functional purposes. This trend is clearly discernible in the paratexts to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, not least in the dedicatory poem, which is not only used to get a 'better reception for the text' (Genette 1997, 2), but also to prepare readers for the ensuing narrative. The importance of this preparatory process is only emphasised by the new paratextual structure employed in the 1837 Blackie edition of the novel, in which the 'Introduction' provides 'an interpretation by the author' (Genette 1997, 11) which forestalls the sense of narrative anticipation and ambiguity created by the original 1818 paratexts. But these latter paratexts also have a functional purpose. 'The Ettrick Shepherd' is an implied presence within them, positioned just on the border of the text, where he is used to underpin Hogg's authority as a narrative middleman between the oral world and the literary one.

This position is also reinforced in many of the stories in *Winter Evening Tales*. Some of the tales in this collection are filtered through the Shepherd figure (e.g. 'Adam Bell'), others through Hogg's 'literary man' authorial-self ('Basil Lee'), and others again through a combination of the two ('The Bridal of Polmood'). In this story-collection Hogg was attempting to strike the right balance between 'Ettrick Hogg' and 'Edinburgh Hogg' in order to emphasise his suitability as a narrative middleman between these two cultural spheres. Even in autobiographical pieces, such

as ‘A Peasant’s Funeral’ and ‘Storms’, he carefully reinforces this position. In the former he acts as a guide to his educated readers, an intermediary who is conversant with both the rustic world he is describing and the genteel world of the readers to whom he is describing it, while in the latter he draws a clear line between his present and past selves, suggesting to his readers that although he has ‘progressed’ beyond some of the traditional beliefs adhered to by his past self he has not yet left this self completely behind. ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ is still very much a part of him, despite the fact that he is now a successful author in Edinburgh.

In the 1821 version of the ‘Memoir’ Hogg attempts to consolidate and build upon this new authorial status by (re)taking control of his literary productions through the writing of his ‘literary life’ (in order to prepare the ground for a proposed edition of his collected works). However, the story of his background, as told in the 1807 version of the ‘Memoir’, remained an important backdrop to this process. He uses his autobiographical ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ self to reconnect himself back to the works that he had lost control of in the Edinburgh literary marketplace (he had lost financial control of *The Forest Minstrel* to its publisher, and interpretive control of *The Spy* to its readers and reviewers). However, Hogg’s discussion of his ‘literary life’, and his frank depiction of his various dealings with the literary establishment in Edinburgh, prompted Wilson’s savage review in *Blackwood’s*, in which the seeds of the ‘Noctes’ version of the ‘Shepherd’ are sown. This latter entity – a corruption of Hogg’s original creation – was used by Wilson to ridicule, and ultimately undermine, Hogg’s whole autobiographical project. The impact of the ‘Noctes’ Shepherd, not only in Hogg’s own time, but also after his death, was considerable; it not only came to overshadow the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’, but even Hogg himself, who was often viewed as all but synonymous with Wilson’s creation (as Ferrier’s ‘Introduction’ to his edition

of *Noctes Ambrosianae* suggests). It effectively widened the gap between Hogg's 'biographical-self' and his literary works by making it increasingly difficult to reconcile the country-bumpkin 'Noctes' Shepherd with the sophisticated author Hogg had become. Hogg's 'Ettrick Shepherd' – the figure through whom he was attempting to re-establish control over his literary productions – was being used against him, as a means of keeping him in his 'proper place'. In the view of Wilson and his cohorts at *Blackwood's* the 'peasant poet' had progressed too far, both as a creative writer and as 'an author' in society, and this progress had to be impeded. However, despite these kinds of critical impediments Hogg would go on to produce, just a few years later, a work of prose fiction which would ultimately seal his place in literary history: *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824).

Chapter Five

The Rebirth of the Shepherd

The Author and his Shepherd

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner is probably Hogg's most brilliant literary achievement, an audacious *tour de force* of pioneering storytelling, and a fitting monument to his obstinate refusal to conform to the role expected of him as a 'peasant poet'. One of the most innovative elements of this most innovative of novels is its use of paratexts for purely fictional and satirical purposes. The opening three paratexts – the fac-simile, the title-page and the Dedication – are all used to conceal Hogg's identity as the author of the novel, as well as to widen its fictional world in order to create epistemological doubt about the relationship between fiction and reality. The 'Editor's Narrative', meanwhile, is used to draw attention to what Genette describes as the main function of most paratextual material, namely, the imposition of the author's (or in this case, the Editor's) interpretation on to the text. In his framing narrative the fictional Editor attempts to control the interpretation of Robert Wringhim's Memoir by imposing his own rational explanation on to it. However, this endeavour is undermined by the novel itself, in which numerous different viewpoints and interpretations abound. The 'Editor's Narrative', for instance, could well be read as a satire on the fundamentally functional nature of all such authorial paratexts. The novel does, however, contain self-representational elements, but they are incorporated into the main body of the text through the inclusion of Hogg's 'Scots Mummy' article, which was originally published in *Blackwood's*, as well as through his appearance in the novel in the guise of the suspicious and uncooperative Shepherd, who refuses to guide the Editor, who is a

fictionalised version of John Wilson, and his party, among whom is a fictionalised version of John Gibson Lockhart, to the suicide's grave in Ettrick. Hogg uses this version of his Shepherd, which would seem to be a response to the 'Noctes' Shepherd, along with the 'Scots Mummy' article, to differentiate himself from the 'enlightened' Editor and his party in order to underpin their 'outsider' status in Ettrick and reinforce his own authority in regard to traditional material.

The paratextual elements in *Queen Hynde* (1824), which was published a few months after *Confessions* and was Hogg's last book-length poem, are even more confrontational. In this most paratextual of poems Hogg, through his 'Ettrick Shepherd' narrator, responds to his critics and establishes his authorial independence from *Blackwood's* and the rest of literary Edinburgh by emphasising his own inherent qualities as a natural-born poet, and by suggesting that his own particular brand of inborn poetic talent cannot be bound by his society's expectations of him as a 'peasant poet'. Meanwhile, his characterisation of 'himself' in the 'Shepherd's Calendar' articles, which first appeared in *Blackwood's* between 1819 and 1829, represents an attempt on Hogg's part to take back control of the Shepherd brand by presenting the readers of *Blackwood's* with a positive depiction of his second-self, which had been corrupted in the magazine, especially in the 'Noctes'. Hogg also uses these articles to differentiate himself from other writers of his era. Through his Shepherd narrator's privileging of the supernatural and traditional modes of transmission in his tales, Hogg emphasises his position as 'the king o' the mountain and fairy school' (as he characterised himself in *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott* in 1834) in order to protect his niche in the literary marketplace.

In the 1832 version of the 'Memoir', which prefaces *Altrive Tales*, Hogg turns his attention to his literary legacy. *Altrive Tales* was intended as the first volume of a

collected edition of his prose fiction (much along the lines of Scott's *magnum opus* edition of his Waverley novels). The aim of the edition was to preserve his work and thus secure 'classic status' for it.¹ The main function of the prefacing 'Memoir', meanwhile, was to justify the need for such a collection by establishing Hogg's unique place in the literary world of the early nineteenth century. In the final version of his 'Memoir' Hogg not only draws attention to his position among the leading poets of the day but also suggests that he is the natural successor to Robert Burns, thus making a bold claim for his place in literary history on the very basis upon which he was so often excluded from the literary mainstream, namely, his supposedly subordinate cultural position as a 'peasant poet'. In 'Wat Pringle o' the Yair', the concluding story in Hogg's final tale collection *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835), Hogg makes an even more specific claim for his place in literary history by once again drawing attention to his pivotal cultural position between the traditional world of Ettrick and the literary world of Edinburgh. He suggests that he – or, to be more precise, 'The Ettrick Shepherd' – is not only the only the most reliable link between these two cultural spheres but also the most authentic representative of traditional culture in the early-nineteenth century Scottish literary world.

Hogg and the *Confessions* Paratexts

The opening three paratexts in *Confessions* are, first and foremost, artistic devices. The fac-simile, the title-page, and the dedication all complement, reinforce and extend the inner fictional world of the novel. Hogg had considerably more control over the form and content of the *Confessions* paratexts than he did over those in any of his

¹ The financial collapse of Hogg's London publisher, James Cochrane, meant that this proposed edition never came to fruition (only the first volume, *Altrive Tales*, made it to press). This failure eventually led Hogg to Blackie and Son, whose bowdlerised editions of his work, which were published after his death, had the effect of holding back his literary reputation for over a hundred years (see Garside 2012, pp. 29-30).

other books. As Garside points out, Hogg was heavily involved at every stage of the publishing process of the first edition of *Confessions*.² It was published by the London-based firm Longmans, who allowed their Scottish authors to employ Edinburgh printers. Although they pushed for Hogg to use James Ballantyne & Co. (the printer of most of Scott's poems and novels) Hogg, Garside explains, 'manoeuvred a situation where, in James Clarke, he effectively had the printer of his choice, near at hand in Edinburgh, and working under his own instructions' (Garside 2002, 195). Working with the less well-established Clarke not only allowed Hogg to take a more hands-on role in the production of his book (much as Robert Wringhim does with his *Memoirs* in the novel (see pp. 153-54)), but also meant that his text would not be exposed to the kind of editorial interference it would have been subject to in the hands of the likes of Ballantyne.³ Hogg thus had a freer hand to mould the text and the paratexts into a cohesive artistic whole. As Garside suggests, 'In perhaps no other major work, published in his lifetime, is it possible to sense Hogg's full presence in such an unimpeded way' (Garside 2002, 195).

And yet, paradoxically, one of the main purposes of the opening three paratexts is to distance Hogg from the book. His two previous works of fiction, *The Three Perils of Man* (1822) and *The Three Perils of Woman* (1823), also published by Longmans, had used the 'James Hogg, author of *The Queen's Wake*' tag on their title-pages.

There is insufficient space in this thesis to discuss these two novels at length;

² See Garside's 'Introduction' (lv-lxvi) and 'Note on the Text' (195-199) in the Stirling/South Carolina edition for a more detailed account of Hogg's involvement in the publishing of the 1824 edition of the novel. All quotes from the novel are taken from Garside's edition (*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), ed. by Peter Garside, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

³ As Garside explains,

The head of a then highly prestigious firm, James Ballantyne had a reputation as an interventionist printer, and his concern for public propriety could lead him into excising the slightest reference to female anatomy, even in Scott's novels. His compositors and copy editors were also unusually proactive, in regularising style and grammar, as well as in making more substantive changes. (Garside 2002, lviii)

however, they do contain some interesting paratextual elements, especially *The Three Perils of Man*, which is the only one of Hogg's four novels to make use of Scott-like chapter epigraphs. Through these epigraphs Hogg once again positions himself against Scott, as he had done earlier in his career, especially in *The Mountain Bard* paratexts, and more recently in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*. Hogg's epigraphs, which are all taken from 'traditionary' sources, could be read as a response to Scott's in his novels, which are generally taken from a wider range of sources, not least from canonical literary ones (e.g. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope and so on).

However, in *The Monastery* (1820), which was published two years before *The Three Perils of Man*, Scott also uses quotes from imaginary 'Old Plays' and from 'Auld Maitland', the ballad from his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* for which Hogg was a main source (Hogg's mother had also 'chaunted' it to Scott, see *Anecdotes of Scott*, p. 37). Hogg also uses quotes from 'Old Plays' as chapter epigraphs to his novel, as well as one from 'Auld Maitland' as the epigraph to chapter 11. Hogg's epigraphs would thus seem to be a direct response to Scott's in *The Monastery*, that is, an attempt on Hogg's part to reclaim the 'traditionary' ground that Scott had encroached upon in his novel. *The Three Perils of Woman*, meanwhile, is, arguably, the least paratextual of Hogg's novels. However, this genre-busting book – which includes a parody of Jane Austen's social satire in the opening section – displays Hogg's versatility as a writer, and his ability to write in different genres and modes. It is another example of Hogg's refusal to stay within the proper literary bounds for a peasant poet. Unsurprisingly, the book was both a critical (see Wilson's review in *Blackwood's* for October 1823) and commercial failure in his own time.

Unlike these two novels *Confessions* was published anonymously (although Longmans had tried to persuade Hogg to once again use 'the author of *The Queen's*

Wake' attribution). Although he was very quickly exposed as the author of the work, his desire to remain anonymous suggests that he attached great importance to the paratextual material, and wanted to avoid the kind of cultural baggage that the 'Hogg/Etrick Shepherd/author of *The Queen's Wake*' attributions brought with them. He was right to be cautious. As Garside notes, Hogg's naming as the author had a huge impact on early criticism of the novel. *The Literary Gazette*, for instance, described it as 'a work of irregular genius, such as we might have expected from Mr. Hogg, the Etrick Shepherd, whose it is' (*Literary Gazette*, 17 July 1824, 449; quoted by Garside 2002, lxviii). As ever, criticism of Hogg was coloured by his socio-cultural background.⁴ The reviewer, like so many before him, clearly thinks that 'Mr Hogg' and 'the Etrick Shepherd' are synonymous, and that the latter is an accurate description of the former. The review also makes it clear that an uneducated writer such as Hogg could not be deemed a 'regular' genius; on the contrary, his was a less polished, roughly-hewn and 'irregular' form of genius. Hogg almost certainly decided to publish *Confessions* anonymously in order to avoid these types of critical preconceptions.

One could compare Hogg's use of anonymity in relation to *Confessions* to various Victorian female novelists' use of male pseudonyms, for example, Marian Evans (George Eliot) and the Bronte sisters (Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell). Just as the latter writers used pseudonyms in order to get their books judged on their own merits, and not prejudged as the work of women, so Hogg was attempting to get his book judged as the work of an author, and not merely as that of an 'uneducated shepherd'. In the

⁴ As Graham Tulloch points out in his article 'Hogg and the Novel' (*The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 122-131), 'By contemporary standards [Hogg] was a failure as a novelist, and his contemporaries felt they understood why: for them he was a poet, even a peasant poet, the "Etrick Shepherd". The modern reader is not bound by these expectations. We are ignorant of, or indifferent to, the generic conventions of the time' (Tulloch 2012, 122).

nineteenth-century female and lower-class authors risked marginalisation, or at best critical condescension, unless they remained anonymous – not least because most writers and critics were men from the privileged classes. Severe restrictions, similar to those suffered by peasant poets such as Hogg, were certainly placed on Scottish female authors in the post-Enlightenment Edinburgh literary sphere.⁵ However, by this point in his career Hogg had learnt that the best way to avoid critical prejudgements based on his social background was simply not to attach his name(s) to his work. As Hughes points out, he was clearly aware of the propensity of readers and critics to judge authors on the basis of their public reputations as oppose to the content of their work:

In the final issue of *The Spy* Hogg revealed that he had presented papers by Samuel Johnson to his literary advisors as his own compositions, and his own compositions as “the productions of such and such gentlemen, famous for their literary abilities”. The papers were, alas, assessed according to the names attached to them, and Hogg appealed for a more accurate assessment to “the awards of posterity”. (Hughes 2007, 98)

As the *Literary Gazette* review (quoted above) suggests, Hogg failed in his endeavour to get *Confessions* judged on its own merits alone, that is, without reference to the social background of its author. He could not, it seems, escape the shadow cast by his Shepherd – at least, not in his own lifetime.

However, the first three paratexts in *Confessions* are, as a direct consequence of the attempt to remain anonymous, unlike any Hogg had ever produced before. Most of his earlier ones were, in way or another, self-representational. However, the *Confessions* paratexts are quite the opposite. Not only is his name left off the title-page, but the Dedication of the work by the fictional Editor ‘TO THE HON. WILLIAM SMITH, LORD

⁵ See Carol Anderson’s and Aileen Riddell’s article ‘The Other Great Unknowns: Women Fiction Writers of the Early Nineteenth Century’ (in *A History of Scottish Women’s Writing*, ed. by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 179-95) for more on this issue.

PROVOST OF GLASGOW' is designed specifically to distance Hogg from the work. In a letter to William Blackwood he even asks that their 'friends' at the magazine not give notice that the novel is his, but instead to play along with the fiction that it was 'written by a *Glasgow man*' by alluding 'to the dedication to the lord provost there', which 'will give [him and his book] excellent and delightful scope and freedom' (Hogg to Blackwood, dated Mount-Benger, 28 June 1824).⁶ In the event Hogg's novel was largely ignored by *Blackwood's*, which is hardly surprising given its experimental nature (Hogg had clearly not heeded Wilson's warning to stick to pastoral-type poetry).⁷ But this letter suggests that Hogg conceived the *Confessions* paratexts as an integral part of the overall fiction, and did not want his own literary persona(s) to interfere with their intended functions.

The opening three paratexts work on several different levels, intermingling elements of fiction and reality, just like the main text. They are, ostensibly, editorial paratexts, apparently placed there by the Editor as corroborating evidence of the actual 'existence' of Robert's Memoir. As Trumpener notes, by the Romantic period 'the British novel already had a long history of pseudodocumentary fictions framed, in their prefaces, by pseudoeditorial authenticating devices' (Trumpener 1997, 111). Scott employs such a structure in the novels collected under the title 'Tales of My Landlord' (*The Black Dwarf* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), and *A Legend of Montrose* (1819)). Jedediah Cleishbotham, the 'editor' of the tales of Mr Peter Pattieson, is obviously a fictional construct (as is Pattieson); however, by creating another layer of fiction in the novels Scott was able to distance himself from his books, thus helping preserve

⁶ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume Two (1820-1831)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 202.

⁷ As Garside points out, the novel was also a commercial failure: 'The record of sales suggests a near catastrophic situation from a publisher's point of view, with 515 of the print run of 1000 eventually being remaindered at a knockdown price of 9d. each' (Garside 2012, 28).

the anonymity of the ‘author of the Waverly Novels’ (although this paratextual paraphernalia was also used to stir up interest in the unknown author). However, Scott’s fictional editorial paratexts are not integral parts of his novels; they do not impact on one’s understanding of them in the way that Hogg’s ‘Editor’s Narrative’ does in *Confessions*.

The fac-simile, which reproduces a section of Robert’s handwritten Memoir, is conspicuously placed by the Editor on the left-hand page directly facing the title-page.⁸ He uses it to provide material evidence of his excavations at the suicide’s grave (he reveals at the end of his narrative that he ‘ordered the printer to procure [this] fac-simile, to be bound in with the volume’ (173-174)). He is, in essence, displaying the fruits of his fieldwork, like a good antiquarian-editor. However, his desire to provide such evidence has the effect of widening the fictional world of Hogg’s novel to include the Editor and his paratextual material, which has two main functions. Firstly, it creates a sense of epistemological doubt about the existence of the grave and the Memoir, and, more generally, about the relationship between fiction and reality in the novel. As in ‘Basil Lee’, the fiction is created that the editor is presenting his readers with a ‘real’ memoir, which he has apparently found in the grave of the ‘real’ Robert Wringhim. Presumably most readers will see through this age-old ‘found manuscript’ literary device. However, the fact that this fiction is placed against the backdrop of the recognisably real world of present-day Ettrick, which is carefully and accurately described by the Editor, creates a sense of uncertainty about where exactly the

⁸ It is tempting to take this fac-simile as a response to Wilson’s goading of Hogg in his review of the 1821 ‘Memoir’: ‘Let Hogg publish a fac-simile of his hand-writing and the world will be thunderstruck at the utter helplessness of his hand’ (‘From an Old Friend with a New Face’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (1821), p. 44; quoted by Gilbert 2007, liv). The fact that it is not Hogg’s own handwriting, but an imitation of Robert’s (perhaps written especially by Hogg as copy text for the engraver to reproduce for the frontispiece), only serves to confound Wilson’s denigration of Hogg’s handwriting all the more, the implication being that not only can Hogg write in his own hand but he can also imitate the handwriting of the early eighteenth-century. In *James Hogg: A Life* Hughes describes Hogg’s adult handwriting as ‘confident, plain, firm, and well-spaced, defying every conventional preconception about the writing of a peasant poet’ (Hughes 2007, 11).

fictional world ends and the real one begins. For instance, via his precise description of the location of the grave in Ettrick in his closing narrative the Editor all but invites his readers to go and view it for themselves.

The inclusion of Hogg's article about the suicide's grave ('A Scots Mummy', originally published in *Blackwood's* in August 1823), which appears to confirm the actual existence of the grave in the locale of Ettrick, only adds to these doubts, the implication being that if the grave really exists then perhaps Robert and his memoir do as well. Of course, Hogg has, essentially, placed a fictional character in a real grave, and sent another fictional character (the Editor) to dig him up. But the fluid interaction between these fictional characters and the 'real world', in which Hogg has placed them, remains epistemologically-unsettling. This is only reinforced by the fact that several members of the Editor's party who descend on Ettrick to dig up the grave are drawn from Hogg's own acquaintances, not least the Editor himself, who is loosely based on John Wilson (although the character is intended, more generally, as a satire of all such 'Enlightened' editors, as well as of antiquarian-collectors, such as Scott). The other two main members of the party reflect Hogg's Edinburgh and Ettrick backgrounds, namely, 'Mr. L—t of C—d' (John Gibson Lockhart, Wilson's *Blackwood's* editorial colleague) and 'Mr. L—w' (William Laidlaw, Hogg's closest Ettrick friend).⁹ The latter even procures a pony for the editor from none other than Walter Scott, who was Lockhart's real-life 'father-in-law' (see 169).¹⁰

⁹ There is an interesting exchange between these two towards the end of the 'Editor's Narrative'. After they discover Robert's Memoir a discussion immediately ensues about what to do with it. The Editor reveals that

[Mr. L—w] requested L—t to give it to me, as he had so many things of literature and law to attend to, that he would never think more of it. He replied, that either of us were heartily welcome to it, for that he had thought of returning it into the grave, if he could have made out but a line or two, to have seen its tendency. "Grave, man!" exclaimed L—w, who speaks excellent strong broad Scots [...] "I wad esteem the contents o' that spleuchan [a tobacco pouch, within which they found the Memoir] as the most precious treasure. I'll tell you what it is, sir; I hae often wondered how it was that this man's corpse has been miraculously preserved frae decay, a hunder times langer than any other

The widening of the fictional world to include the Editor's paratexts also serves a satirical purpose. At the end of his narrative the Editor provides his readers with the original title of Robert's Memoir, as written on the title-page of the 'printed pamphlet' (173) which they find in his grave (only the final section, in which Robert charts the last days of his life, is in manuscript form):

THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS
AND CONFESSIONS
OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER:

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

FIDELI CERTA MERCES.

He then reveals that in preparing Robert's text for publication he had 'altered the title to *A Self-justified Sinner*, but [his] booksellers did not approve of it; and there being a curse pronounced by the writer on him that should dare to alter or amend, [he has] let it stand as it is' (174).¹¹ However, despite this claim that he has not meddled with the text he does not reproduce the Latin tag, which translates as 'for the faithful, the reward is sure', on the title-page of his book (presumably this tag may have proved too controversial for his bookseller, just like the proposed new title). Thus, the Editor's claim that he has not altered or amended anything is clearly undermined by the title-page of his book. (It could even be argued that his potential for interference is also slyly alluded to in the fac-simile. The clearly displayed alteration of 'creature' to 'created' therein – the final three letters of the former are crossed-out and replaced

body's, or than even a tanner's. But now I could wager a guinea, it has been for the preservation o' that little book." (174)

This passage may be intended as a reflection on the likely reception of Hogg's own book among his friends and literary acquaintances. Read in this light, it is perhaps unsurprising that Lockhart wants to bury Robert's Memoir (as Garside notes, *Confessions* was all but 'ignored by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, not even featuring in its routine monthly lists of new publications' (Garside 2002, lxvii)), while Laidlaw (Hogg's Ettrick friend, and a staunch supporter of his work) wants to save it.

¹⁰ Scott himself made a fleeting appearance in Hogg's previous novel, *The Three Perils of Woman* (Gatty Bell spots him at the theatre in Edinburgh (see p. 40 of the Stirling/South Carolina edition)).

¹¹ Garside argues that Hogg is here drawing attention 'to the material conditions of [his book's] production, [by] fictionalising his dealings with Longmans' (Garside 2002, lxiv) who, like the Editor's fictional publishers, had objected to the title 'self justified sinner'.

with the final two of the latter, thus leaving the ‘e’ and the ‘d’, or, to put it another way, the ‘ed’, floating just above the alteration – may well be a sign that the editor has altered the text). Indeed, he even adds a new subtitle, which provides subsidiary information about his role in the text: ‘WITH A DETAIL OF CURIOUS TRADITIONAL FACTS, AND OTHER EVIDENCE, BY THE EDITOR’. Even if he did not amend any of Robert’s text his inclusion of the ‘curious traditional facts, and other evidence’ must impact on one’s reading of it. Therefore, Robert’s cursing of ‘he who trieth to alter or amend’ (165) his text may well be applicable to the Editor, who is very much part of Hogg’s wider fictional world, although he does not know it. Thus, although each of the opening three paratexts point away from him, Hogg’s shadowy presence remains discernible on the borders of *Confessions*, just behind that of his fictional Editor.

This presence is also discernible in the Editor’s use of the phrase ‘traditional facts’ in his subtitle, which is reminiscent of Hogg’s use of similar language at other points in his career, most obviously a few years earlier in ‘The Bridal of Polmood’ in which the ‘Hogg’ narrator declares that ‘traditional knowledge [is] the information to which, of all others, [his] heart is most fondly attached’ (259).¹² As mentioned earlier, Hogg used his intimate knowledge of traditional history and beliefs as an indicator of his social origin, specifically in order to differentiate himself from educated writers like Scott (most obviously in *The Queen’s Wake*) and, in turn, to reinforce his suitability to pass on traditional material. He does something similar with the Scott-like antiquarian Editor of *Confessions*. Although the latter, like Hogg, draws on traditional knowledge, his use of it is different, not least because he is from

¹² See also Hogg’s 1813 letter to Constable in which he attests that he has ‘for many years been collecting the rural and traditional tales of Scotland’ (*The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 145), as well as the 1837 ‘Introduction’ to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, in which he declares that he heard ‘the local part [of the story] from the relation of [his] own father, who had the best possible traditional account of the incidents’ (1837 ‘Introduction’ to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, 3).

outside the culture from which he is garnering his information. The genteel, educated Editor is not, it seems, particularly keen on traditional knowledge, although he reluctantly makes use of it. However, he generally privileges ‘history’ over ‘tradition’. For instance, in the opening paragraph of his narrative he makes it clear that he has, in the first instance, ‘gathered’ all that he could about the family history of the Dalcastles from ‘history’, and has only ‘appealed’ to ‘tradition [...] for the remainder’ (3). And although he declares that ‘he has no reason to complain [...] of the matter furnished by the latter of these powerful monitors’, it is not so much its inherent reliability that he values so much as its ‘unlimited abundance’ (3). Even the opening few words of his narrative, ‘It *appears* [my italics] from tradition’ (3), are noticeably circumspect and non-committal, and perhaps even contain within them an implied value judgement about the (un)reliability of traditional sources. His use of the adjective ‘curious’ on the title-page, with which he ironically qualifies the Hoggian phrase ‘traditionary facts’, also hints at his scepticism about such material.

In the final paragraph of the second part of his narrative he completely undermines the reliability of ‘traditionary facts’, arguing of Robert’s memoir that

were the relation at all consistent with reason, it corresponds so minutely with traditionary facts, that it could scarcely have missed to have been received as authentic; but in this day, and with the present generation, it will not go down, that a man should be daily tempted by the devil, in the semblance of a fellow creature. (175)

Thus, according to the Editor, although Robert’s memoir ‘corresponds with traditionary facts’ it is yet not ‘consistent with reason’ and thus cannot be ‘authentic’. This suggests that his use of the phrase ‘traditionary facts’ is ironic, after all, if these ‘facts’ are inconsistent with ‘reason’ they cannot be factual, especially not in the eyes of such an enlightened individual as the Editor. The story, he suggests, may well have

gained credence in the early eighteenth-century, when it is set, but certainly not in the enlightened world of the early nineteenth-century, when it is being published.

It is clear then that the Editor has only very reluctantly, and with severe qualifications, made use of tradition in his narrative. However, his dismissal of the kind of traditional knowledge to which Hogg himself, or at least Hogg's public-self, is 'most fondly attached' is challenged by the novel itself, in which such knowledge is given equal validity to the Editor's own brand of rational knowledge. The 'Editor's Narrative' is tacitly challenged by the other texts in the novel, most obviously by Hogg's 'Scots Mummy' article, in which he gives the 'the little traditionary history that remains of [Robert's suicide]' (166), as well as by Robert's Memoir, in which the supernatural is given free rein. Thus, traditional beliefs, especially supernatural ones, co-exist with the rational beliefs of the Editor within the pages of the novel as a whole, in spite of his attempts to undermine them in his narrative. Despite his ultimate dismissal of 'traditionary facts' (which for him would appear to be a contradiction in terms), and the supernatural incidents to which they pertain, they yet remain an important source of information within the novel itself (most of the Editor's own narrative is garnered from traditional sources). The Editor's close-mindedness about certain matters is belied by a novel which refuses to privilege one form of knowledge over another, or to provide any concrete answers for its readers (who should, incidentally, be distinguished from the Editor's intended readers: the 'enlightened' readership of early-nineteenth century Edinburgh). As Cairns Craig suggests, through his interventionist narrative the Editor seeks to project 'backwards, into the period about which [he] is writing of, the values [and beliefs] of his own culture' (Craig 1996, 73), and it soon becomes apparent that:

the purpose of the dual narrative is to show how the Editor controls the narrative he is relating – the narrative of Robert's loss of control over his own

life. What the editor does in his historical narration is identical with what the devil does in taking over Robert's personality, for both usurp the lives of human beings and fill them full of their own values. (Craig 1996, 78)¹³

The Editor's attempt to impose an authoritative interpretation onto Robert's text – to 'impose a limit on the text, [and] furnish it with a final signified' (Foucault 2001, 1469) – only draws attention to the fact that he is part of Hogg's satirical treatment of such limiting paratextual material.

The Role of 'Hogg' in the *Confessions*: The 'Scots Mummy' Article and 'the Shepherd's' Encounter with the 'Editor' at Thirlestane Cattle Market

It could be said then that Hogg is both anonymous, and yet also present, in the opening three paratexts in *Confessions*. However, his presence is more overt in the second part of the 'Editor's Narrative', not only in the scene in which he 'meets' the Editor and his party in Ettrick, but also in the extract from his 'Scots Mummy' article, which the Editor inserts into his narrative. Tulloch argues that

aspects of Hogg [also] appear in both the Editor and the Sinner. The Editor represents the Tory man of letters, a role to which Hogg in some ways aspired, although he never comfortably inhabited it, either in his own eyes or those of his contemporaries. The Sinner, though very different from Hogg, is like him steeped in Scottish Presbyterianism and biblical language, even if he interprets them quite differently. Furthermore, as he descends the social scale during his flight at the end of his life he reaches the point at which Hogg began, as an agricultural labourer of the lowliest kind. (Tulloch 2012, 130)

However, the Editor also represents the relic-hunting antiquarianism of Scott, which Hogg worked so hard to differentiate himself from throughout his career. And although Hogg was, like the Sinner, steeped in Scottish Presbyterianism he actually uses his intimate knowledge of it against him in the novel. The Sinner is very much the victim of Hogg's satire against the misuse of his religion by hypocrites like the Wringhims. In short, Hogg sets himself up against both the Editor and the Sinner; via

¹³ Craig, Cairns (1996). *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture*, Edinburgh: Polygon.

his novel he suggests that he can not only see beyond the narrow religious bigotry of the latter, but also the enlightened arrogance of the former.

The antiquarian Editor is keen to assure his readers that the extract from the ‘Scots Mummy’ is taken ‘from an authentic letter, published in *Blackwood’s Magazine for August, 1823*’ (165). It is, in his eyes, another piece of corroborating evidence of the actual existence of the suicide’s grave. However, the article, which really did appear in *Blackwood’s* in August 1823, is used by Hogg in this new context to differentiate himself from the enlightened Editor:

On the top of a wild height called Cowanscroft, where the lands of three proprietors meet all at one point, there has been for long and many years the grave of a suicide marked out by a stone standing at the head, and another at the feet. Often I have stood musing over it myself, when a shepherd on one of the farms, of which it formed the extreme boundary, and thinking what could induce a young man, who had scarcely reached the prime of life, to brave his Maker, and to rush into his presence by an act of his own erring hand, and one so unnatural and preposterous. But it never once occurred to me, as an object of curiosity, to dig up the mouldering bones of the culprit, which I considered as the most revolting of all objects. The thing was, however, done last month, and a discovery made of the greatest natural phenomena that I have heard of in this country. (165-66)

Hogg not only establishes his ethnographic authority here in preparation for his retelling of the tale (by highlighting that he actually worked near the supposed site of the suicide’s grave), he also draws an implied distinction between himself and the antiquarian-Editor by mischievously alluding to the fact that it had ‘never once occurred’ to him to dig up the grave. Hogg clearly takes the moral high-ground here: to him the grave-site is a place of spiritual contemplation, whereas to the likes of the materialistic Editor it is an ‘object of curiosity’. This implied comparison is one indication that the ‘Scots Mummy’ article, which appeared in *Blackwood’s* about eight months before the publication of *Confessions*, may well have been part of Hogg’s wider design for the novel all along.

The ‘Scots Mummy’ article is certainly an important structural device in the second part of the ‘Editor’s Narrative’. It is also used to establish Hogg’s and the Editor’s contrasting attitudes to the supernatural. Hogg’s open-mindedness about the supernatural content of Robert’s tale, as well as about the ‘little traditionary history’ (166) relating to his death in Ettrick, is made manifest in this article. For instance, although he provides a rational explanation for Robert’s death he refuses to disregard the traditional belief that Robert could not have killed himself without the help of the devil. According to oral tradition, the source of which is a lamb-drover who discovered the body, Robert ‘had hung himself in the hay rope that was tying down [a hay-rick]’ (167). However, as Hogg points out, this story – which has always been implicitly believed by the people of Ettrick (‘no one’, he claims, ‘ever disputed one jot of the disgusting oral tale [disgusting, that is, in terms of its content]’ (167) – was yet

accounted a great wonder; and every one said, if the devil had not assisted him it was impossible the thing could have been done; for, in general, these ropes are so brittle, being made of green hay, that they will scarcely bear to be bound over the rick [...] Now the fact is, that if you try all the ropes that are thrown over all the outfield hay-ricks in Scotland, there is not one among a thousand of them will hang a colley dog; so that the manner of this wretch’s death was rather a singular circumstance. (167)

Although Hogg is careful to leave the possibility open that the drover’s story may not be accurate, and despite his own personal knowledge of the frailty of the kind of hay ropes by which Robert apparently hung himself, he does not attempt to undermine the story which was handed down to him by oral tradition.¹⁴

However, the story is tacitly challenged by his description of the recent digging-up of the grave by two local men (the incident which apparently prompted Hogg’s article in the first place), in which it is revealed that the hay rope with which Robert hung

¹⁴ As Mack suggests, the novel ‘ensures that the voices and insights of non-elite people are heard and valued, for example when the powerful oral testimony of the prostitute Bell Calvert plays a crucial role in undermining the certainties of the Editor’s world view’ (Mack 2012, 67).

himself was actually ‘made of *risp*, a sort of long sword-grass that grows about the marshes and the sides of lakes’ (168). This would appear to account for the incomprehensible part of the tale; the rope was not, after all, made of ‘green hay’, which could not have taken Robert’s weight, but of ‘*risp*’, which perhaps could have (whether or not it could have is left an open question). However, this new information is immediately offset by the revelation that one of the young men ‘seized the rope and pulled by [sic] it, but the old enchantment of the devil remained, – it would not break’ (168). Thus, the reader is left with two interpretations: either the hay rope would not break because it was made of stronger stuff than that which it was said to be composed of in the original tale, or because the ‘old enchantment of the devil remained’. Hogg thus provides a new interpretation of the traditional tale by offering a possible explanation for the supposedly inexplicable, supernatural part of it; however, this new information does not negate the tale since the original interpretation remains, as it were, in play. (Even if one detects a note of irony in Hogg’s comment about the ‘old enchantment’ remaining there is no sense that he wants to totally disprove it, or that he wants to impose his own interpretation on to the tale).

This is all in stark contrast to the Editor, who at the end of his narrative summarily dismisses any supernatural interpretation of Robert’s story:

It was a bold theme for an allegory, and would have suited that age well had it been taken up by one fully qualified for the task, which this writer was not. In short, we must either conceive him not only the greatest fool, but the greatest wretch, on whom was ever stamped the form of humanity; or, that he was a religious maniac, who wrote and wrote about a deluded creature, till he arrived at he height of that madness, that he believed himself the very object whom he had been all along describing. And in order to escape from an ideal tormentor, committed that act for which, according to the tenets he embraced, there was no remission, and which consigned his memory and his name to everlasting detestation. (175)

The Editor here fulfils what Genette describes as the main function of paratextual material by offering readers his interpretation of the text. However, he not only interprets the text, he also offers an explanation for its very existence. It is either a failed attempt at religious allegory (Hogg may be pre-empting criticism of his own book here),¹⁵ or Robert was a ‘religious maniac’ who went mad and came to believe that he was the ‘deluded creature’ whom he was writing about. In short, Robert was either a failed author, or mad, or perhaps both. The possibility that the events described in his Memoir could be true is not even countenanced by the Editor. As he attests in his concluding paragraph, ‘in this day, and with the present generation, it will not go down, that a man should be daily tempted by the devil, in the semblance of a fellow creature’ (175). However, the Editor’s final, seemingly authoritative, interpretation of Robert’s Memoir is tacitly challenged by the rest of Hogg’s book, in which different interpretations and viewpoints abound. Of course, the Editor’s closing frame is part of the fiction. Hogg is once again drawing attention to the fundamentally functional nature of such material, and inviting readers to read between the lines of the Editor’s peremptory paratextual pronouncements.

The inclusion of the ‘Scots Mummy’ article also sets up another implied comparison in the novel, between the two young Ettrick working men who dig up the grave and the Editor and his party, who do likewise. Hogg’s description of the young rustics’ reopening of the grave is stark, disturbing, and uncanny:

It so happened that two young men, William Shiel and W.Sword, were out, on an adjoining height, this summer, casting peats, and it came into their heads to open this grave in the wilderness, and see if there were any of the bones of the suicide of former ages and centuries remaining [...] It was not long till they came upon the old blanket [...] They tore that open, and there was the hay rope lying stretched down alongst his breast [...] One of the young men seized the rope and pulled by it, but the old enchantment of the devil remained – it would not break; and so he

¹⁵ As Garside notes, ‘a fairly pervasive feeling [in early reviews of the novel] is that Hogg/the author cannot fully comprehend the [theological] issues, and should not have strayed on religious ground’ (see Garside 2002, lxix).

pulled and pulled at it, till behold the body came up into a sitting posture, with a broad blue bonnet on its head, and its plaid around it, all as fresh as that day it was laid in! I never heard of a preservation so wonderful, if it be true as was related to me, for still I have not had the curiosity to go and view the body myself. One of the lads gripped the face of the corpse with his finger and thumb, and the cheeks felt quite soft and fleshy, but the dimples did not spring out again. He had fine yellow hair, about nine inches long; but not a hair of it could they pull out till they cut part of it off with a knife. (168)

Shiel's and Sword's lack of reverence for the dead, as evidenced by their brutal treatment of the corpse, is made obvious here by Hogg's emotive language (they variously 'tore', 'seized', 'pulled', 'gripped' and 'cut' the corpse). Hogg distances himself from such activities by again pointing out that he did not even have the 'curiosity' to go and view it for himself, although he does admit to receiving a portion of the corpse's clothes, which he sends along with his letter to *Blackwood's*. (Hogg's reluctance to get involved is elucidated by W—m B—e, the shepherd whom the Editor and his party engage to direct them to the grave, after the fictionalised Hogg refuses to help them. The Editor reveals that this old shepherd 'asked no conditions but that we should not speak of it, because he did not wish it to come to his master's ears, that he had been engaged in *sic a profane thing*' (170)). One cannot help but draw a comparison between the young rustics' digging-up of the grave with the Editor's excavations there. Despite obvious differences in their attitude to, and treatment of, the corpse (the latter views it as a scientific specimen and describes it in minute detail, e.g. 'in the inside of one of the shoes there was a layer of cow's dung, about one eighth of an inch thick, and in the sole fully one fourth of an inch' (172)) both are nonetheless compelled into digging it up by 'curiosity' – the former by idle curiosity, the latter by scientific curiosity. They both, moreover, take items from the body, which makes them little better than grave-robbers (although from the Editor's point of view he is merely preserving relics). This perhaps explains why Hogg uses the 'Scots Mummy' article to clearly differentiate himself from both: he is neither a

rude, uncivilised rustic (this is how he was portrayed in the ‘Noctes’), nor an ‘enlightened’ relic-collector (the acquisitive Editor admits that he was ‘very anxious to possess the skull’ (172)). Yet a comparison could be drawn between Hogg – who was ‘dug up’ in Ettrick by Scott during his ballad-collecting in 1802 – and the Mummy itself, which was also dug up there by the antiquarian Editor. However, unlike the Mummy Hogg is no silent witness; on the contrary, he would become the embodiment of a revitalised Ettrick oral tradition.

It is ironic that it is Hogg’s own article, describing the digging-up of the suicide’s grave, which provides the impetus for the Editor’s own excavations there. In this sense he is, once again, playing the role of narrative middleman between Ettrick and Edinburgh. (Hogg draws on oral accounts for his short history of the suicide’s grave, right up to its recent digging-up by Shiel and Sword, while the editor uses Hogg’s written version of these oral accounts to direct him there. Hogg is thus the missing-link between the oral and the written). However, it turns out that Hogg gets some details wrong in his article, most notably about the location of the grave. W—m B—e, the shepherd-guide who agrees to take the Editor and his party to the grave site, reveals that ‘the grave was not on the hill of Cowan’s-Croft, nor yet on the point where three lairds’ lands met’, as Hogg had asserted in his article, ‘but on the top of a hill called the Faw-Law, where there was no land that was not the Duke of Buccleuch’s within a quarter of a mile’ (170). The old shepherd, continues the Editor, ‘added that it was a wonder how the poet [Hogg] could be mistaken there, who once herded the very ground where the grave is, and saw both hills from his own window’ (171). This is perhaps a hint that the Hogg who wrote the ‘Scots Mummy’ article was purposely trying to throw antiquarian relic-hunters off the trail by giving the wrong location for the suicide’s grave. Certainly, his reluctance to disturb the grave himself

would seem to back this up. The ‘Hogg’ who meets the Editor and his party at Thirlestane cattle market is similarly reluctant to direct these curious ‘outsiders’ to the grave; he is an extension of the Hogg who wrote the misleading ‘Scots Mummy’ article for *Blackwood’s*. The real life antagonism between Hogg and *Blackwood’s* is an important context for understanding Hogg’s depiction of himself in *Confessions*.¹⁶ His self-representation in the novel perhaps represents an attempt by him to take back control of his Shepherd persona, which had been hijacked by Wilson and Lockhart in the ‘Noctes Ambrosianae’ articles. It is worth noting that both the Editor and Mr L—t refer to Hogg as ‘the Shepherd’ (see 169); however, it soon becomes apparent that this Shepherd is, figuratively and literally, out with their control.

The *Confessions* Shepherd, like the ‘Noctes’ one, may speak in the vernacular, however, this is where any similarity between the two ends. The Shepherd of the *Confessions* categorically refuses to play the role assigned to him by the fictionalised Wilson and Lockhart, quite literally turning his back on them when the latter tries to introduce him to the former: ‘Mr. L—t introduced me to [Hogg] as a great wool-stapler’, the Editor reveals, but ‘he eyed me with distrust, and turning his back on us, answered, “I hae sell’d mine”’ (170). Even when they produce his letter and try to flatter him into accompanying them to the ‘singular remains he had so ingeniously described’ (170) he flatly refuses to engage with them. The Editor admits that

he spurned at the idea, saying, “Od bless ye, lad! I ha ithers matters to mind. I hae a’ thae paulies to sell, an’ a’ yon Highland stotts down on the green every ane; an’ then I hae ten scores o’ yowes to buy after, an’ if I canna first sell my ain stock, I canna buy nae ithers body’s. I hae mair ado than I can manage the day, foreby ganging to houk up hunder-year-auld banes.” (170)

¹⁶ In ‘*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Approaches*’ (*The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 132-139), Penny Fielding argues that Hogg’s ‘own self-performance as the faux-naif, the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’, his relations with the judgemental *Blackwood’s* set, his struggle to adapt to the changes in the literary field forged by Scott’s *Waverley Novels*, and his continual experimentation with different genres [...] all inform *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*’ (Fielding 2012, 136).

The fact that the *Confessions* Shepherd dismisses the Editor and his party in the vernacular is highly significant. In the ‘Noctes’ the supposedly coarse dialect of the Shepherd was a continual source of amusement to the other characters and was used to underpin Hogg’s ‘otherness’ from the polite world of Edinburgh. Hogg could thus be said to be reclaiming the voice of his Shepherd in the above passage, specifically in order to redeploy it against those who had so often used it against him.¹⁷ The clownish Shepherd of the ‘Noctes’ is reconfigured by Hogg in *Confessions* into a proud, independent entity who does not require the patronage of the likes of the Editor.¹⁸ Hogg’s appearance in the text is also used to draw attention to the outsider status of the Editor and Mr. L—t who, unlike the Ettrick ‘insiders’ W—m B—e, Mr. L—w and Hogg himself, speak a standardised form of English. This outsider status is further underscored by the Editor’s lack of knowledge about the rural community in which he finds himself. As Emma Letley points out, his misunderstanding of Hogg’s use of the term ‘*paulies*’ – by which he means underdeveloped lambs, but which the Editor takes to refer to a ‘species of stock’ (170) – is a clear indicator of the fact that he has entered a world that he does not fully understand.¹⁹

The Editor’s status as an enlightened outsider is further reinforced by a number of allusions to his antiquarianism, which is also used to differentiate him from Hogg (the

¹⁷ As MacLachlan points out, in 1828 Hogg tried to publish ‘his own versions of the Noctes in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* [and also] offered a Noctes to *Fraser’s Magazine* in 1833’ (MacLachlan 2003, 11).

¹⁸ As Hughes remarks in *James Hogg: A Life*, Hogg also attempts to reclaim his Shepherd in his later work *A Series of Lay Sermons* (1834), but this act of reclamation takes a rather different form:

In this highly personal and often autobiographical work, Hogg reclaims the Noctean Shepherd and portrays him as the Sage of Ettrick, a Man of the Mountains, the sober family man of Altrive, partly retired from his career as a poet but a firm advocate of both bodily and mental exercise to ensure a vigorous and happy old age [...] the naïve sincerity of the Shepherd is favourably contrasted with the affectation and falsehood all too common in polite society, and Hogg invites the reader to join him in an intimacy that is like a conversation. (Hughes 2007, 278)

¹⁹ See Emma Letley, ‘Some Literary Uses of Scots in Hogg’s *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*’, in *Papers Given at the First Conference of the James Hogg Society*, ed. by Gillian Hughes (Stirling: James Hogg Society, 1983), 29-39.

latter, unlike the former, does not go digging in graves for relics). In this sense, the Editor has much in common with Scott, whom Hogg tried so hard to distinguish himself from throughout his career.²⁰ There is even, perhaps, a sly reference to Scott's brand of antiquarianism in the text. After reading Hogg's letter the Editor attests that he immediately decided to set out to find the suicide's grave, reasoning that even if it did not exist he 'knew of more attractive metal [...] in the immediate vicinity of the scene [...] then the dilapidated remains of mouldering suicides' (169). This is strikingly similar to a passage in *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, in which Hogg describes an incident that apparently occurred during Scott's ballad-collecting trip to Ettrick in 1801.²¹ The day after Hogg's first meeting with Scott they set out with William Laidlaw (who not only accompanied Scott on his visit to Ettrick in 1801, but was also a member of the fictional Editor's party in 1824), and two others 'to see if, on the farms of Buccleuch and Mount Comyn, the original possessions of the Scotts, there were any relics of antiquity which could mark out the original residence of [the ancient Scott family]' (39). The search, Hogg recounts, proved fruitless, until they 'fell a turning over some loose stones' in 'a sort of recess in the eastern gable' of a ruined chapel, where they came across

one-half of a small pot encrusted thick with rust. Mr. Scott's eyes brightened and he swore it was part of an ancient consecrated helmet. Laidlaw, however, fell a picking and scratching with great patience until at last he came to a layer of pitch inside, and then, with a malicious sneer, he said, "The truth is Mr. Scott, it's nouter mair nor less than an auld tar-pot, that some of the farmers hae been

²⁰ As Bold and Gilbert suggest, Hogg, as his career progressed, had increasingly 'come to distrust the antiquarian search for the "real", original object of antiquity and the seeming disdain for practitioners of living tradition' (Bold and Gilbert 2012, 13).

²¹ In his article 'Hogg's and Scott's "First Meeting" and the Politics of Literary Friendship', Garside points out that

The final sequence in [*Confessions*], which involves the Editor taking a copy of the article ['A Scots Mummy'] with him to Ettrick in pursuit of the Sinner's grave bears a number of striking similarities to Hogg's record of the "First Meeting" with Scott, though in this case it is evidently Wilson and Lockhart, Scott's *soi-distant* literary heirs, who are the main pursuers of relics, with Laidlaw and Hogg being common to both accounts. (Garside 2009, 31-32)

buisting their sheep out o' i' the kirk lang syne". (40)

The Editor's expectations of finding 'attractive metal' in the vicinity of Ettrick may prove similarly fruitless, not least because he, like Scott, does not possess enough inside knowledge of the area. It may thus once more fall to the Ettrick 'insider' Mr. L—w to set him right, just as his real-life counterpart had done with Scott. Indeed, Laidlaw's role in both accounts is to provide local information to the enlightened visitors, as well as to draw attention to their 'outsider' status in Ettrick.

This outsider status is even more forcefully established by the appearance in the novel of Hogg's Shepherd who, unlike Laidlaw, categorically refuses to guide them to the grave. As noted earlier, Hogg uses the *Confessions* Shepherd to challenge, undermine and emphasise his difference from the 'enlightened' characters in the novel. This note of defiant independence probably stems from his real-life relations with the hierarchy at *Blackwood's* at this time, from his desire to break free from the distorting influence that the magazine seemed to exercise over his literary career. This perhaps explains why he once again highlights his ethnographic authority in the face of the likes of Scott, Wilson and Lockhart. The reluctance of the Shepherd to help these outsiders further their antiquarian pursuits in Ettrick suggests that Hogg jealously guarded this authority, which is unsurprising given that it was largely on the basis of this authority that he argued for his unique place in his literary world. However, Hogg could also be said to be declaring his creative independence as an author through the novel itself. There is an interesting exchange in this context between the Editor and Mr L—t (that is, between Wilson and Lockhart), in which it is slyly suggested that these 'characters' lack the critical acumen to fully understand Hogg's (that is, Hogg-the-Author's) artistic processes. After having read Hogg's

Blackwood's article the Editor reveals that he immediately decided to investigate the scene himself, but that he first

took the opportunity to pay a visit to my townsman and fellow collegian, Mr. L—t of C—d [Lockhart], advocate. I mentioned to him Hogg's letter, asking him if the statement was founded at all on truth. His answer was, "I suppose so. For my part I never doubted the thing, having been told that there had been a deal of talking about it up in the Forest for some time past. But, God knows! Hogg has imposed as ingenious lies on the public ere now". (169)

Lockhart's suspicion that Hogg may well be the source of the story, and that it thus cannot be completely relied upon to contain the whole 'truth', turns out to be largely accurate. However, encoded in this passage is a hint that he does not fully understand Hogg's artistic merging of fact and fiction, which is such a crucial element in his work (both in the novel itself, and in the articles and stories he regularly contributed to *Blackwood's*). The Editor and Mr. L—t only seem to care about the empirical truth; they are, rather ironically, unable to perceive the wider processes at work in Hogg's novel, in which they themselves are characters, and within which notions about 'the truth' are continually questioned and undermined.

Queen Hynde: A Paratextual Poem

In *Confessions* Hogg's paratextual presentation of himself is merged into the main body of the text where it profoundly affects the meaning(s) of the novel. However, Hogg also uses his appearances in the text to answer his critics. The self-representational paratextual elements in *Confessions* are thus both artistic and functional devices. This is also true of the paratextual elements in *Queen Hynde*, a peculiarly playful epic, which proved to be Hogg's last book-length poem.²²

²² Like *Confessions*, *Queen Hynde* was published by Longmans, but with William Blackwood taking on a half share in it. As Garside notes, Hogg 'found himself saddled with a debt to Blackwood on account of the poem, for reasons which he claimed never to fully understand' (Garside 2012, 29). This contested debt cast a shadow over Hogg's relationship with Blackwood for years to come. See his description of it in the 1832 version of the 'Memoir' (pp. 56-57).

However, in *Queen Hynde* he engages more directly with his critics, albeit in the most mischievous of manners. As Gilbert and Mack point out in their ‘Introduction’ to the Stirling/South Carolina edition of the poem, *Queen Hynde*, which is set in the remote, legendary past of Scotland, repeatedly refers to the contemporary world in which it is being written and into which Hogg is attempting to place it as a book:

In critical response to *Queen Hynde*, Hogg was aligned with Scott in his ‘Last Minstrel’ model; but though *Queen Hynde*, like Scott’s poem, foregrounds the bard’s telling of an ancient tale, it goes further in establishing a strong and unique central voice that opens two worlds to his audience: the modern, “enlightened” world of Edinburgh (Dunedin) and the mist-shrouded legendary world of ancient Beregon [the fictional capital city of Queen Hynde; a Scottish Camelot]. (Gilbert and Mack 1998, xxxviii)

It is, in short, an overtly paratextual poem. The paratextual sections in *Queen Hynde* are not as important to the overall structure of the poem as the interlinking passages in *The Queen’s Wake*, which, aside from their paratextual function, are also important narrative devices. In *Queen Hynde*, however, the poet-narrator’s asides are more clearly aimed at Hogg’s critics outside the text. Although they are also used to evoke the atmosphere of the poem, their main function is to respond to Hogg’s readers and critics: they are more outward-looking than inward-looking. The intrusive Ettrick Shepherd poet-narrator repeatedly interrupts his narration to engage with his readers (the poem is ostensibly addressed to the contemporaneous ‘Maids of Dunedin’), and to playfully bait Hogg’s critics, not least by commenting on his poetic endeavour. As Gilbert and Mack suggest, ‘in the addresses to the Maids of Dunedin, Hogg enjoys himself with self-mocking relish by foregrounding the fact that this epic is a performance by the Ettrick Shepherd’ (Gilbert and Mack 1998, xxx). Through these paratextual interventions by his Shepherd-narrator Hogg responds to his critics and reaffirms his place in the Edinburgh literary world, even as he highlights his independence from it.

This latter aim is most obviously pursued in the final section of Book First, which contains one of Hogg's most defiant declamations of his poetic independence:

Maid of Dunedin, thou may'st see,
 Though long I strove to pleasure thee,
 That now I've changed my timid tone,
 And sing to please myself alone;
 And thou wilt read, when, well I wot,
 I care not whether you do or not. (Book First, lines 1060-1071)²³

The Shepherd-narrator's assertion that he will no longer try to please the polite readership of early-nineteenth century Edinburgh (here represented by the 'Maid of Dunedin') is rather ironic considering that Hogg himself had never really managed to do this at any point in his career. He was not known for his 'timid tone', or for his success in 'pleasuring' the literary ladies of Edinburgh, who were more often than not turned-off by the 'indelicacies' in his writings. The narrator's avowed unconcern for the opinion of his polite readership is nothing new in the poetry of Hogg. In *The Queen's Wake*, for instance, the Bard of Etrick is utterly indifferent about how his performance has been received by the audience.²⁴ However, the Shepherd-narrator's declaration of his independence here is more confrontational, especially when viewed in the context of the poem's original publication in 1824. *Queen Hynde*, itself a highly original and audacious text, was published in the direct wake of *Confessions*, Hogg's most experimental work to date, which had reignited debates among contemporary critics and reviewers about his 'proper' place in the literary world, and about the 'proper' literary forms and genres for an uneducated writer like himself to be writing in. And, more specifically, his disputes with *Blackwood's* over ownership of the Shepherd brand were still ongoing. It is in these contexts that the Shepherd-narrator's

²³ Hogg, James (1998). *Queen Hynde* (1824), ed. by Suzanne Gilbert and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

²⁴ 'When ceased the shepherd's simple lay / With careless mien he lounged away./ No bow he deigned. Nor anxious looked / How the gay throng their minstrel brooked.' ('Night the Second', lines 699-702).

subsequent self-congratulatory description of his poetic identity should perhaps be read.

The first book of the poem ends with the poet-narrator's culturally-loaded, metaphorical representation of his authorial-self as a 'natural-born-poet' who, like the 'elemental energies' (line 1071) of Nature, cannot be controlled or bound down by social or literary conventions:

Say may the meteor of the wild
Nature's unstaidd erratick child,
That glimmers o'er the forest fen,
Or twinkles in the darksome glen,
Can that be bound? Can that be reined?
By cold ungenial rules restrained?
No! – leave it o'er its ample home
The boundless wilderness to roam!
To gleam, to tremble, and to die,
'Tis nature's error, so am I. (Book First, lines 1088-1097)

The poet-narrator suggests here that his poetic talent is above and beyond the control of human society, that it is a kind of natural phenomenon. Like the 'meteor of the wild', the origin and trajectory of which is mysterious and unpredictable, the poetry of the poet-narrator apparently comes into the world unbidden and cannot be checked or 'reined' in by human agency. It does not conform to any 'rules'; it is, by its very nature, unpredictable. Thus, his poetry cannot be judged by the same criteria as that applied to other writers; after all, his errors are nature's errors. Neither can his poetic talent be 'restrained' by the 'cold uncongenial rules' of the literary world, not least by those governing the 'proper' literary forms for a peasant-poet. Likewise, the poem itself suggests that the poet-narrator's innate talent cannot be made to conform to the accepted conventions of specific literary genres such as the epic. As Gilbert and Mack point out, although the poem is in the epic mode it has just as much in common with Byron's *Don Juan*, especially in terms of its self-reflexive narrative style, as it does with the epics of Homer, Virgil and Milton. Far from conforming to the rules

governing the epic, Hogg's Shepherd-narrator openly plays around with and comments on them, suggesting in the above lines that his poetic talent cannot be 'bound' by such literary forms and genres, and that it will always transcend such artificial boundaries and conventions.

This argument segues into an intersecting one about the supposed artlessness of the Shepherd-narrator's art, which is a recurring theme in Hogg's self-representations (most obviously in the different versions of the 'Memoir').²⁵ The narrator attempts to draw a clear distinction between his artless/unconscious form of poetic creation and the more artful/conscious compositional processes of other poets:

Let those who list, the garden chuse,
Where flowers are regular and profuse;
Come thou to dell and lonely lea,
And cull the mountain gems with me;
And sweeter blooms may be thine own,
By nature's hand at random sown;
And sweeter strains may touch thy heart
Than are producible by art.
The nightingale may give delight,
A while, 'mid silence of the night,
But th' lark lost in the heavens blue,
O her wild strain is ever new. (Book First, lines 1108-1119)

He also makes an implicit value judgement here by suggesting that his artless form of poetic composition is superior to the more artful art of his poetic rivals. According to the poet-narrator the poetry of the latter – which he compares to the 'regular and profuse' flowers one might find in a cultivated garden – is inferior to his poetry simply because it is less natural than his. He suggests that the 'sweeter blooms' randomly sown by 'nature's hand' create 'sweeter strains [...] / than are producible by art'. The poet of the 'dell and lonely lea' – that is, the poet of nature/the spontaneous natural-born-poet – is, in the poet-narrator's opinion, superior to the refined, less spontaneous poet of polite society. The poet-narrator alludes more specifically to the

²⁵ See especially pp. 12-13 of the 1807 version of the 'Memoir'.

restless spontaneity and originality of his poetry by remarking on his preference for the song of the lark, which sings during flight (and which, like the ‘meteor of the wild’, flits about the sky in erratic movements), over the more reposeful, contemplative singing of the nightingale, which does not sing while flying (the implication being that his poetry is more unpredictable and spontaneous than the more studied efforts of ‘refined’ poets).²⁶ Hogg may well be attempting to set himself up as a rival to John Keats (1795-1821) here, whose poem ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ was published in 1819. (It is worth noting also that Keats, like Hogg, was a victim of the socially and politically-biased vitriol which passed for reviewing at *Blackwood’s* in the late 1810s and early 1820s. For instance, in his infamous ‘review’ of Keats’s second published volume of poetry, *Endymion* (1818), which appeared in *Blackwood’s* in August 1818, John Gibson Lockhart makes frequent use of the derogatory term ‘Cockney School of Poetry’, which he himself had coined in the pages of the magazine the previous year).²⁷ Whether or not this is the case, Hogg

²⁶ In his popular song ‘The Skylark’ (or ‘The Lark, as it was originally titled), which was first published in the London-based composer John Clarke-Whitfield’s *Twelve Vocal Pieces* in 1817 and reprinted in *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd* in 1831, Hogg likewise celebrates his love of, and sympathy with, the lark:

Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless
Sweet be thy matin o’er moorland and lea!
[...]
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth
[...]
O to abide in the desert with thee. (*Songs of the Ettrick Shepherd*, pp. 15-16)

As McCue remarks, ‘Clarke-Whitfield’s inclusion of two of Hogg’s songs, amongst others by Walter Scott, Joanna Baillie and Lord Byron in his London collection meant that “James Hogg, The Scots Shepherd” was finally introduced to the wider British music-maker for the first time’ (McCue 2009a, ‘The Skylark’: The Popularity of Hogg’s “Bird of the Wilderness”’, *James Hogg: Research*: <http://www.jameshogg.stir.ac.uk>).

²⁷ Although the term ‘Cockney School’ is meant as a specific literary-political slur, as oppose to a more general social one (it was directed against Leigh Hunt and his radical literary circle in London, of which Keats was one), at the beginning of his review Lockhart rails against the contemporary trend for working-class poets such as Hogg and Keats (as well as against ‘unmarried’ female writers):

(through his poet-narrator) certainly uses many of the paratextual sections in *Queen Hynde* to reaffirm his position in the literary world. He does this in the above passage by emphasising his own specific strengths as a poet which, in turn, enables him to underpin his uniqueness and thus protect his niche in the marketplace.

Hogg also uses the poet-narrator's paratextual asides to directly confront his critics, especially reviewers, and those readers who unquestioningly accept their critical judgements. At the end of 'Book Fifth' he includes among the 'characters' that he playfully debars from reading his poem

[...] all those who sew
 Their faith unto some stale review;
 That ulcer of our mental store,
 The very dregs of manly lore;
 Bald, brangling, brutal, insincere;
 The bookman's venal gazetteer;
 Down with the trash, and every gull
 That gloats upon their garbage dull! (Book Fifth, lines 2222-2229)

This is reminiscent of the passage in the 1821 'Memoir' in which he rails against the influence of reviewers on the reading public (he wryly attests there that the 'indelicacies' in his work were actually discovered by the 'acuteness' of the reviewers (see p. 230)). However, in the above lines readers, too, are criticised for putting their 'faith' in such reviews, and allowing themselves to be 'gulled' into believing them.

He also 'debars all those who dare, / Whether with proud and pompous air, / With simpering frown or nose elate, / To name the word INDELICATE!' (Book Fifth, lines

Of all the manias of this mad age, the most incurable, as well as the most common, seems to be no other than the *Metromanie*. The just celebrity of Robert Burns and Miss Baillie has had the melancholy effect of turning the heads of we know not how many farm-servants [probably a direct reference to Hogg] and unmarried ladies; our very footmen [Keats's father was a head stableman] compose tragedies, and there is scarcely a superannuated governess in the island that does not leave a roll of lyrics behind her in her band-box...[Keats] appears to have received from nature talents of an excellent, perhaps even of a superior order – talents which, devoted to the purposes of any useful profession, must have rendered him a respectable, if not an eminent citizen. His friends, we understand, destined him to the career of medicine, and he was bound apprentice some years ago to a worthy apothecary in town. But all has been undone by a sudden attack of the malady to which we have alluded. (*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1818)

2260-2263). It soon becomes apparent that the implied targets here are the ‘literary ladies’ who helped bring about the demise of *The Spy* with their exaggerated sense of public modesty (see p. 208 of the 1821 version of the ‘Memoir’). The poet-narrator declares that ‘Such word or term should never be / In maiden’s mind of modesty’ (Book Fifth, lines 2268-2269), the implication being that truly modest minds would not have been capable of imagining the kinds of indelicacies that they have apparently discovered in his work. This anger at their hypocrisy explains the patronising tone the narrator adopts when addressing the Maids of Dunedin. But despite the literary ladies’ backhanded praise – ‘half compliment, half mock’, with which they turn the ‘minstrel’s name [into] a joke’ (Book Fifth, lines 2271 & 2274-75) – it is the reviewers (to whom, as Hogg suggests in his ‘Memoir’, the literary ladies may well be ‘indebted’ for the discovery of the ‘indelicacies’ in his writings in the first place) that the poet-narrator directs most of his mocking anger.

This irritation at reviewers generally is narrowed down later when he sets his sights against his (or, to be more precise, Hogg’s) colleagues at *Blackwood’s*:

Ah, how unlike art thou [his female readers] to those
 Warm friends profest, yet covert foes!
 Who witness’d, grinding with despite,
 A peasant’s soul assume its right,
 Rise from the dust, and, mounting o’er
 Their classic toils and boasted lore,
 Take its aerial seat on high
 Above their buckrum fulgency. (Book Fifth, lines 2286-2293)

These lines are reminiscent of the description in the 1821 ‘Memoir’ of the ‘powerful aristocracy’, with their ‘dear bought collegiate honours and degrees’, whom, according to Hogg, are continually trying ‘to impede his progress by every means in their power’ (227). This ‘powerful aristocracy’ are here identified specifically with his professed friends, ‘yet covert foes’, at *Blackwood’s*. Their supposed jealousy and suspicion about his social progress from shepherd to author is here laid bare by the

poet-narrator, who provides a concise poetic version of Hogg's whole rise narrative. (This rise is playfully reinforced by his use of the rather pompous-sounding phrase 'buckrum fulgency', through which the narrator apes the kind of snobbish language routinely used in the pages of *Blackwood's*). However, in the poet-narrator's idealistic version he imagines himself as having risen above those in the educated elite who have sought to hold him back.

He then goes on to suggest that Wilson, Lockhart and the other writers of the 'Noctes Ambrosianae' series have attempted to do just this:

Then lower stoop'd they for a fee
To poor and personal mockery;
The gait, the garb, the rustic speech,
All that could homely worth apeach,
Unweariedly, time after time,
In loathed and everlasting chime
They vented forth. Who would believe
There were such men? And who would not grieve
That they should stoop by ruthless game,
To stamp their own eternal shame?
While he, the butt of all their mocks,
Sits throned amid his native rocks
Above their reach, and grieves alone
For their unmanly malison. (Book Fifth, lines 2298-2311)

The narrator suggests here that, having failed to impede his progress as a writer, *Blackwood's* resorted to 'personal mockery' in an attempt to put him back in his 'proper' place in society. It is certainly true that in the 'Noctes' articles – in which 'the gait, the garb, [and] the rustic speech' of the 'Shepherd' was routinely mocked – the writers at *Blackwood's* were, among other things, attempting to 'other' Hogg and emphasise his 'outsider' status, and his supposedly subordinate position, in genteel Edinburgh society. However, the poet-narrator undermines this process by alluding to his preeminent place in the traditional world of Ettrick, thus using his 'outsider' status against those who would seek to use it against him by turning it into a positive thing. He imagines himself sitting securely 'throned amid his native rocks' (compare this to

Hogg's claim in *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott* that he is 'king o' the mountain and fairy school' (61)), beyond the reach of the socially-biased critical perspectives of the Edinburgh literati. From his elevated position in Ettrick he imagines himself looking down on them, thus inverting the cultural paradigm which places him, as a peasant-poet, at the bottom of the literary hierarchy. From this secure position he is able to critique and question the values of Enlightenment Edinburgh, and thus enter its literary world on his own terms as a critical observer, as opposed to the subordinate 'outsider' he was so often portrayed as in *Blackwood's*.

***Blackwood's* and the 'Shepherd's Calendar' Stories**

Hogg's appearances in *Blackwood's* in the 1820s were not confined to the 'Noctes'. He also continued to contribute many of his own articles and stories to the magazine, most notably those gathered under the title 'The Shepherd's Calendar', which appeared in *Blackwood's* between 1819 and 1828 (they were finally published together in book form by Blackwood in 1829 under the same title).²⁸ As the title suggests, these articles and stories draw heavily on Hogg's knowledge of the rural, traditional culture of Ettrick, and are mainly filtered through his Ettrick Shepherd persona. But in these pieces Hogg also played on the popularity of the 'Noctes' articles. Regular readers must have been eager to hear more from the rustic philosopher-clown of Ambrose's Tavern (the regular meeting-place of the 'Noctes' characters), meaning that any articles by 'the Shepherd', regardless from whose pen

²⁸ The 1829 edition of *The Shepherd's Calendar* was revised by Hogg's nephew Robert Hogg, who, as Hughes notes in her biography of Hogg, was 'a useful and willing intermediary between his uncle in Yarrow and the Edinburgh Book trade [in the 1820s]' (Hughes 2007, 201). As Mack notes in his 'Introduction' to the Stirling/South Carolina edition of *The Shepherd's Calendar*, Robert Hogg's cuts and revisions to the original *Blackwood's* versions have the effect of removing 'much of the vigour and vitality' of some of the stories, and destroying the 'conversational tone' of others (see Mack 2002, xvii-xviii). The stories analysed in this project will thus be taken from Mack's edition, which offers 'the first complete reprinting of the *Blackwood's* 'Shepherd's Calendar' articles as Hogg wrote them, without his nephew's cuts and revisions' (Mack 2002, xviii-xix).

they came, had a good chance of being published in the magazine.²⁹ This is particularly significant considering the strained relations between Hogg and William Blackwood at this time. As Hughes points out, ‘Blackwood was becoming more reluctant to publish [Hogg’s] ballads and prose fiction in the magazine’ (Hughes 2007, 217), preferring instead the songs he wrote for the *Noctes Ambrosinae* (these songs represent Hogg’s only original contributions to the *Noctes*). In a letter to Blackwood in June 1829 Hogg wryly declares that the enclosed poem ‘will only be the 13th article returned [to him] since the beginning of this present year which is as good encouragement for writing as can possibly be’ (Hogg to Blackwood, dated Mount-Benger, 3 June 1829).³⁰ Hogg’s financial situation, meanwhile, had worsened steadily throughout the 1820s (he had struggled to pay the rent on his Mount Benger farm since moving there in 1821). In the 1832 version of the ‘Memoir’ he even suggests that Blackwood had withheld payment for some of his works in the mid 1820s (see especially his discussion of the ‘wrangling’ between them over ‘a hundred pound bill’ advanced to him by Longmans for *Confessions* and *Queen Hynde*, pp. 56-57). Hogg was thus keen to secure a regular income from *Blackwood’s*; indeed, as Hughes suggests, after his marriage in 1820 he ‘became dependent for cash in hand on the regular monthly payments earned by [his *Blackwood’s* contributions], which were now specially written for, and tailored to, the concerns of the magazine’ (Hughes 2012, 34).³¹

²⁹ As Mack points out, ‘Much of the success of *Blackwood’s* depended on the ‘Noctes’; and much of the popularity of the ‘Noctes’ derived from the character of the Shepherd [...] Clearly, the Shepherd’s Calendar would have a strong appeal for both the publishers and the readers of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*’ (Mack 2002, xiii-xiv).

³⁰ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume Two (1820-1831)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 342.

³¹ Hughes, Gillian (2012). ‘Magazines, Annuals and the Press’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 31-36.

However, he was not merely cashing in on the popularity of the Shepherd in these articles (although, like Blackwood, he certainly recognised the market-potential of his second-self). They should also, perhaps, be viewed as part of his ongoing battle for control of the Shepherd brand. In them Hogg provides readers of *Blackwood's* with an alternative version of the loutish, culturally-subordinated Shepherd of the 'Noctes'. Mack argues that the 'Shepherd's Calendar' articles actually become 'a celebration of the worth to be found in the values of Ettrick, and a sophisticated subversion of some of the assumptions of Enlightenment Edinburgh' (Mack 2002, xii).³² Hogg's sly privileging of traditional values and supernatural beliefs is certainly a recurring feature of the tale collection as a whole, and is an integral part of his ongoing endeavour to maintain his authorial independence from literary Edinburgh.

The Function of Autobiography in *The Shepherd's Calendar*

Although all the stories in *The Shepherd's Calendar* employ self-representational paratextual devices (the intrusive Shepherd-narrator generally tells 'the story of the story' in the introductory frames to each of them, thus establishing Hogg's ethnographic authority in regard to the material therein), there are also four clearly autobiographical/documentary-style articles in the book: 'Storms', 'Dogs', 'The Lasses' and 'General Anecdotes'. These pieces provide the ethnographic backbone to the tale collection as a whole, and reinforce Hogg's/the Shepherd's authority in regard to the traditional Ettrick material he is passing on to his readers. It is significant that

³² Mack suggests that the story 'Mr Adamson of Laverhope' is perhaps the most obvious example of this tendency. This story, unlike most of the others in the collection, features a narrator who offers a rational explanation for the traditional story he has retold. After describing the death of Mr Adamson, who, according to the traditional account, was killed by lightning in requital of his cruel treatment of his neighbours, the narrator presents his readers with what Mack describes as a 'bland, sober, scientific account of the death by lightning of Adam Copland'. Mack argues that these two deaths are 'mirror images of each other. The story of the death of Copland is the modern, rational, scientific, enlightened version, while the story of the death of Adamson is the primitive and superstitious version: and the primitive and superstitious version wins hands down' (Mack 2002, xiii).

of the five chapters published under the title ‘The Shepherd’s Calendar’ in *Winter Evening Tales* (in 1821) only the two subtitled ‘Storms’ are included in *The Shepherd’s Calendar*. The fact that these latter two chapters are narrated by the Ettrick Shepherd (the other three are narrated by a gentleman-outsider) is a clear signal that the Shepherd is in narrative control of the book, and that it will thus describe rural Ettrick from ‘the inside’. Many of the stories are signed from ‘Altrive’, ‘Altrive Lake’ or ‘Mount-Benger’, which gives them a clear Ettrick provenance, thus reinforcing the fact that these stories are, quite literally, coming straight out of rural Ettrick, a world which is, according to the Shepherd-narrator, very different from the urban world of Edinburgh where they are being published and read.

At the beginning of ‘Dogs’, for instance, the Shepherd-narrator playfully alludes to the fact that the addressee of his article, Christopher North (the imaginary editor of *Blackwood’s*, that is, a fictionalised version of Wilson), along with the rest of the Edinburgh literati, most probably know very little about the rural pursuits of shepherds. The narrator surmises that North may well be surprised to learn that he is writing about ‘[sheep] dogs before the lasses’ (Hogg is here playing on his reputation as a ladies man). However, he asserts that ‘utility should always take precedency of pleasure’:

A shepherd may be a very able, trusty, and good shepherd, without a sweetheart—better, perhaps, than with one. But what is he without his dog? A mere post, sir—a nonentity as a shepherd—no better than one of the grey stones upon the side of his hill. A literary pedlar, such as yourself, Sir Christy, and all the thousands beside who deal in your small wares, will not believe, that a single shepherd and his dog will accomplish more in gathering a stock of sheep from a highland farm, than twenty shepherds could do without dogs. (57)

Although Hogg is clearly having a bit of fun at Wilson’s expense here (the term ‘pedlar’ would, of course, carry with it negative connotations, especially when applied to a ‘respectable’ member of society like Sir Christy/Wilson), he also uses this

passage to set up a clear distinction between himself, a genuine Shepherd who works on the land, and the literary elite of Edinburgh, those urban dealers in ‘small wares’. He establishes himself as an ‘insider’, and his sometime literary colleagues as ‘outsiders’ who do not understand the country way of life. (In the introductory section to ‘The Lassies’ the narrator once again draws attention to Wilson’s/North’s outsider status in Ettrick by slyly referring to his ‘annual visit’ (69) to the area, presumably to visit Scott at Abbotsford, the implication being that he is little more than a transitory visitor). He likewise assumes that some of his readers will be similarly uninformed about sheep-farming, and thus describes what a ‘kebbed ewe’ is, specifically for the benefit of the ‘town reader’ (64).

Most of the stories in the collection address themselves to an educated, urban audience. ‘Rob Dodds’ self-reflexively draws attention to this social group’s penchant for rustic storytelling. In this story the young gentleman-farmer all but admits to his shepherd Andrew that he only visits him to hear his ‘old traditions’ (27) and ‘lang stories’ (36). He views Andrew as little more than a repository of traditional tales. In fact, Andrew has to ‘promise to tell him a great many old anecdotes of the shepherd’s life’ in order to ‘induce’ (37) him into coming back to visit him at all. It could be argued that Hogg, likewise, had to revert to telling his ‘anecdotes of the shepherd’s life’ in his ‘Shepherd’s Calendar’ stories – that is, the kinds of traditional-type tales rehearsed by Andrew to his master – in order to get his work published in *Blackwood’s* and other magazines at this time.³³ Like Andrew, he often had to play the role assigned to him by his social and cultural superiors, that is, if he wanted to continue to profit from his writing in literary Edinburgh.

³³ In ‘Reminiscences of Former Days’ (the final section of the 1832 ‘Memoir’), Hogg admits that ‘having been so much discouraged by the failure of “Queen Hynde” I gave up all thoughts of ever writing another long poem, but continued for six years to write fairy tales, ghost stories, songs, and poems for periodicals of every description, sometimes receiving liberal payment, and sometimes none, just as the editor or proprietor felt disposed’ (58).

However, Hogg also exploits the contemporary vogue for traditional storytelling. He makes the best of his supposedly unique position between the worlds of tradition and print by suggesting that he is fulfilling a role that no other contemporary writer can fulfil, that he is providing his readers with material that they cannot find elsewhere. This is why the Shepherd-narrator constantly refers to his native informants, and to the fact that he grew up, and still lives, in the traditional community of Ettrick. In 'General Anecdotes' he even draws on his ancestral history in order to underline his position as the latest link in a long line of tradition-bearers. He reveals that his maternal grandfather, William Laidlaw (Will o' Phaup), was 'the last man of this wild region who heard, saw, and conversed with the fairies' (107), and that at the time of the first publication of these 'General Anecdotes' (in the April 1827 edition of *Blackwood's*) one of Will o' Phaup's sons was still living (Hogg's uncle Will Laidlaw, who died in 1829). He attests that this uncle 'well remembers all his father's legends and traditions' and is thus a remarkable 'living chronicle [...] of past ages!' (112). Hogg thus highlights the fact that he has a direct line back to his grandfather, perhaps the greatest of all the tradition-bearers of Ettrick. (It is no accident that he is buried next to him in Ettrick churchyard).

The narrator of the Shepherd's Calendar stories also sometimes casts himself in the role of a tale-collector; however, he is generally keen to draw attention to the fact that he is not merely a Scott-like ballad-collector, but an 'insider' who is part of, and intimately understands, the local area in which he has heard the tale, and in which it is generally set. For instance, while some of the framing material in 'Tibby Hyslop's Dream' would not be out of place in the paratexts of an antiquarian's ballad collection, the narrator also provides autobiographical details which make it clear that

he is personally acquainted with the area in which he has collected the tale. In the opening paragraph he tells the story of the story:

In the year 1807, when on a jaunt through the valleys of Nith and Annan, I learned the following story on the spot where the incidents occurred, and even went and visited all those [places] connected with it, so that there is no doubt with regard to its authenticity. (142)

This could certainly be mistaken for the voice of a ballad-collector referring to his fieldwork – that is, to his ‘experiential authority’ (McLane 2008, 194) – in his paratextual material. However, Hogg’s narrator later reveals that he heard the tale from his ‘friend, the worthy clergyman of that parish, to whom Tibby related it’ (152), and that he even met Tibby herself (‘She was living comfortably at Know-back when I saw her, a contented and happy old maiden (162)). He is not just a transitory visitor to the area in which he has collected the tale; he has clearly spent a good deal of time there (as Mack points out, Hogg had set himself up as a farmer in Nithsdale in 1807 with the profits from *The Mountain Bard* (see Mack 2002, 270)). And he is, moreover, friends with his main informant. However, like a ballad-collector, he is keen to establish the ‘authenticity’ of the tale. And yet, taken as a whole, the narrators in *The Shepherd’s Calendar* perform this antiquarian-like process of authentication in a very different way to the average ballad editor, and it soon becomes apparent that they are not only interested in the ‘authenticity’ of the tales themselves but also in their ‘veracity’.

‘Authenticating’ the ‘Shepherd’s Calendar’ Stories

McLane argues that Scott’s ballad paratexts are ‘simultaneously a site of authentication and an opportunity for the display of cultural capital’ (McLane 2008, 57-58). For editors like Scott, moreover, the process of authentication via the display of one’s research/fieldwork goes hand-in-hand with the cultural classification and

evaluation of the material being authenticated: the ballad is first authenticated as a genuine historical ‘relic’, before an implied cultural value is assigned to it. Discussion of its actual content is generally subordinated to these procedures. This is especially the case when the ballad contains supernatural elements. For instance, in his lengthy ‘Introduction’ to the ancient ballad ‘The Young Tamlane’ (which appears under the heading of ‘Romantic Ballads’ in the second part of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (see pp. 288-327)) Scott provides a history and some ‘general observations upon the Fairy superstition’ (325), before describing the supposed abduction of a poor man by Fairies, which is ‘said to have happened late in the last century [on] a hill not far from Carterhaugh [near Selkirk]’, in order to provide his readers with an example of the ‘vulgar credulity’ (326) of such beliefs:

That he had been carried off by the Fairies was implicitly believed by all [the people from the Selkirk area], who did not reflect that a man may have private reasons for leaving his own country and for disguising his having intentionally done so. (327)

Scott does not even countenance the possibility that the man may actually have been taken by the Fairies, nor does he even assign any worth to such beliefs. The main function of his ‘Introduction’ is merely to establish the authenticity of the ballad itself by describing its historical provenance.

Unlike Scott in the *Minstrelsy* paratexts, Hogg’s Shepherd’s Calendar narrator interests himself in the supernatural content of the ancient tales he is passing on. He not only discusses their ‘authenticity’ but also their ‘veracity’. Enlightened editors such as Scott would generally dismiss any supernatural elements in ballads as nothing more than popular superstition. For instance, in the main ‘Introduction’ to the first edition of the *Minstrelsy* Scott argues away the ‘popular belief’ in ghosts, spirits and wraiths:

The idea that the spirits of the deceased return to haunt the place where on earth

they have suffered or rejoiced, is, as Dr Johnson has observed [in *Rasselas*] common to the popular creed of all nations [...] Hence the popular belief that the soul haunts the spot where the murdered body is interred; that its appearances are directed to bring down vengeance on its murderers; or that, having left its terrestrial form in a distant clime, it glides before its former friends, a pale spectre, to warn them of its decease. Such tales, the foundation of which is an argument from our present feelings to those of the spiritual world, form the broad and universal basis of the popular superstition regarding departed spirits; against which reason has striven in vain, and universal experience has offered a disregarded testimony. These legends are peculiarly acceptable to barbarous tribes, and on the Borders they were received with most unbounded faith [...] The belief in ghosts, which has been well termed the last lingering phantom of superstition, still maintains its ground upon the Borders. (55-56)

Hogg, on the other hand, frankly adopts (or, at least, refuses to dismiss) such beliefs, both in his early poems and ballads as well as in later stories such as ‘The Wife of Lochmaben’, ‘Welldean Hall’, ‘Tibby Johnston’s Wraith’, ‘Mary Burnet and ‘The Laird of Cassway’, to name but a few. In the concluding paragraph of the latter story he even discusses whether or not ‘traditionary stories’ such as the one he has just related (in which the spirit of the laird of Cassway appears to his sons) are based on fact:

This will be viewed as a most romantic and unnatural story, as without doubt it is; but I have the strongest reasons for believing that it is founded on a literal fact [...] It was published in England in Dr Beattie’s [a character in the story] lifetime and by his acquiescence [...] It was again republished, with some miserable alterations, in a London collection of 1770, by J. Smith, at No. 15, Paternoster Row; and though I have seen none of these, but relate the story wholly from tradition, yet the assurance from a friend of the existence of these, is a curious and corroborative circumstance, and proves that, if the story was not true, the parties believed it to have been so. It is certainly little accordant with any principle of nature or reason, but so also are many other well authenticated traditionary stories; therefore, the best way is to admit their veracity without saying why or wherefore. (199)

The narrator here parodies the authentication process used by ballad collectors such as Scott by referring to the publishing history of the story.³⁴ However, he does not

³⁴ Scott provides such a history in the ‘Introduction’ to ‘The Young Tamlane’, specifically in order to suggest that his version is the most reliable and authentic that has yet been published:

The following ballad, still popular in Ettrick Forest where the scene is laid, is certainly of much greater antiquity than its phraseology, gradually modernised as transmitted by tradition, would seem to denote. The *Tale of Young Tamlane* is mentioned in the *Complaynt of Scotland* [this nationalistic

merely use this information to authenticate the tale itself (that is, to establish the fact that it really is an ancient tale that he is passing on), but also to suggest that there may well be some truth in it. He even slyly suggests that traditional tales like this one are often so ‘well authenticated’ that one should just ‘admit their veracity’ without asking too many questions (compare this claim to that made in ‘The Pedlar’ and its accompanying note in *The Mountain Bard*, discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis). He thus playfully redeploys the kind of authentication process pursued by ballad editors as a means of ‘proving’ the ‘veracity’ of his supernatural tale.

However, this is not to say that Hogg’s Shepherd-narrator adheres unquestioningly to supernatural beliefs. In ‘Mary Burnet’, for instance, he is slightly more circumspect in relation to such matters than he was in ‘The Laird of Cassway’.³⁵

As all my legends hitherto have been founded on facts, or are of themselves traditional tales that seem originally to have been founded on facts, I should never have thought of putting the antiquated and visionary tales of my friends, the Fairies and Brownies, among them, had it not been for the late advice of a highly valued friend, who held it as indispensable, that these most popular of all traditions by the shepherd’s ingle-side, should have a place in his Calendar. At all events, I pledge myself to relate nothing that has not been handed down to me by tradition. How these traditions have originated, I leave to the professors of moral philosophy, in their definitions of pneumatology [the study of spiritual beings], to determine. (202)

work of propaganda, which was published in 1549, was a response to Henry VIII’s attempts to unite the crowns of England and Scotland through the marriage of his son Edward to Mary Queen of Scots. It is also an important source of information for the ancient Border ballads]...In *Scottish Songs*, 1774, a part of the original tale was published under the title of *Kerton Ha’*...[And] In Johnson’s *Musical Museum*, a more complete copy occurs, under the title of *Tom Linn*, which, with some alterations, was reprinted in the *Tales of Wonder*. (325-26)

Scott uses this publishing history to argue that ‘the present edition is the most perfect which has yet appeared; being prepared from a collation of the printed copies with a very accurate one in Glenriddel’s MSS, and with several recitals from tradition’ (326).

³⁵ It should be noted, however, that Hogg assigns these stories to different ‘classes’: ‘The Laird of Cassway’ appears under the heading ‘Dreams and Apparitions’, while ‘Mary Burnet’ appears under ‘Fairies, Brownies, and Witches’. As the narrator of the latter tale points out, the stories in this class are for the most part set ‘a century earlier’ than the other tales in the collection, meaning that he must ‘describe a state of manners more primitive and visionary than any [he himself has] witnessed, simple and romantic as they have been; and [he] must likewise relate scenes so far out of the way of usual events, that the sophisticated gloss and polish thrown over the modern philosophic mind may feel tainted by such antiquated breathings of superstition’ (200). By setting stories such as ‘Mary Burnet’ in a remote past, Hogg is able to more freely adopt a supernatural view of the world, while at the same time distancing himself somewhat from the scenes his narrator is describing (although the narrator’s apparent dislike of the ‘modern philosophic mind’ should not be underestimated).

He cannot personally vouch for the ‘visionary tales’ of the Fairies (even though he jokingly refers to these spiritual beings as his ‘friends’), yet he will nonetheless pass on these tales about them exactly as they have been ‘handed down to him by tradition’ and leave it to others to determine their origin and import. (As in ‘Rob Dodds’ he also refers to the vogue for such stories in this passage through the reference to the friend who insisted he include ‘these most popular of traditions’ in his tale collection). He thus presents himself as a mere narrative middleman, who refuses to either endorse or undermine the supernatural tales he is passing on. And yet his very refusal to dismiss the tales as mere superstition suggests that he has a good deal of sympathy with them.

This sympathy is even more apparent in the opening paragraph to ‘The Witches of Traquair’, in which he openly admits his bias for the supernatural, regardless of what his enlightened audience may think:

The tale is a very old one, and sorry am I to say that I cannot vouch for the truth of it, which I have hitherto, for the most part, been accustomed to do, and which I feel greatly disposed to do at all times, provided the tale bears the marks of authenticity impressed on the leading events, whether I know of a verity that every individual incident related *did* happen or not. (223)

He here subordinates the antiquarian process of authentication to his own personal preference for supernatural storytelling. He clearly wants to believe, and will thus pass on even those tales that he cannot definitively verify, so long, that is, as they *seem* to be authentic. Hogg is here playing-up to his Ettrick Shepherd persona (that rustic teller of supernatural tales) in order to differentiate himself from his more enlightened rivals. The Ettrick Shepherd narrator of the ‘Shepherd’s Calendar’ stories is clearly not an enlightened collector of traditional tales and ballads, but very much a part of the ‘living tradition’ from which this kind of material is generated.

‘The Supernatural’ in the ‘The Mysterious Bride’ and ‘The Barber of Duncow’

Hogg’s desire to differentiate himself from ballad editors, tale collectors and those authors from outside the world of tradition who dabble in supernatural storytelling is made manifest in his story ‘The Mysterious Bride’, which was originally published in *Blackwood’s* in December 1830. Although not part of the ‘Shepherd’s Calendar’ this story has much in common with the tales in that series, not least in terms of its frank portrayal of the supernatural. However, perhaps the most noteworthy part of this story is the introductory paragraph, in which the narrator openly avows his preference for traditional-type tales, and criticises Scott’s depiction of the supernatural in his fiction:

A great number of people now a days are beginning broadly to insinuate that there are no such things as ghosts or spiritual beings visible to mortal sight. Even Sir Walter Scott is turned renegade with his stories made up of half-and-half like Nathaniel Gow’s toddy is trying to throw cold water on the most certain though most impalpable phenomena of human nature. (145)³⁶

Despite the fact that this is clearly a playful critique of Scott – after all, Hogg himself was also a master of the ‘half-and-half’ technique – it yet represents a challenge to Enlightenment beliefs about the supernatural, as well as a robust defence of Hogg’s niche in the literary market. Although Scott is not always entirely dismissive of the supernatural, he does generally come down on the side of the rational. For instance, in his story ‘The Two Drovers’, which appeared in *Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827), supernatural beliefs are certainly accepted by some of the characters; however, in the opening story of the collection, ‘The Highland Widow’, such beliefs are treated less tolerantly by the narrator:

On his return home an incident befell him, which he afterwards related as ominous, though probably his heated imagination, joined to the universal turn of his countrymen for the marvellous, exaggerated into superstitious importance some ordinary and accidental circumstance. (95)³⁷

³⁶ Hogg, James (1982). ‘The Mysterious Bride’ (1830), in *Selected Stories and Sketches*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 145-157.

³⁷ Scott, Walter (2003). *Chronicles of the Canongate*, ed. by Claire Lamont, London: Penguin.

This statement, coming directly from the narrator, seems more conclusive than some of the less dismissive references to the supernatural in the other stories in the book.

In ‘The Mysterious Bride’, however, the Hogg’s Shepherd-narrator draws attention to his own treatment of the supernatural through the telling of the ensuing tale, in which the actual existence of the ghost of the mysterious bride is seemingly corroborated by several different sources, not to mention by the discovery of her corpse on the exact site of the haunting. The narrator also defends his frank depiction of the supernatural in his other stories, arguing that they are not simply ‘made-up’ out of his own head, but are based on real historical events. He compares himself with the original teller of the tale of the mysterious bride, Marrion Haw, who he attests,

gave the parishioners a history of the Mysterious Bride so plausibly correct, but withal so romantic, that every body said of it (as is often said of my narratives with the same narrow-minded prejudice and injustice) that it was a *made story*. There was however strong testimonies of its veracity. (156)

The narrator (and by extension Hogg) here reproves the ‘narrow-minded prejudice’ of those who would seek to dismiss the supernatural out of hand. He challenges the enlightened assumptions of many of his readers and critics by once again suggesting that his supernatural tales are not only ‘authentic’ but also ‘true’. (These asseverations of truth are also used to heighten the impact of Hogg’s supernatural tales).

In ‘The Barber of Duncow’, one of his most brilliant short tales (first published in the London-based *Fraser’s Magazine* in March 1831),³⁸ Hogg playfully confounds Enlightenment scepticism about the existence of ghosts by presenting his readers with a tale in which the audience’s very disbelief becomes the catalyst for the supernatural.

³⁸ As Hughes points out, Hogg increasingly turned to London as a market for his periodical work in the 1830s: ‘*Fraser’s Magazine*, begun in 1830, became a real rival to the Edinburgh-based *Blackwood’s* in the final years of Hogg’s life, paying him as well and being less censorious of [his] more extravagant subjects: more than thirty articles by Hogg appeared in its pages in six years’ (Hughes 2012, 36). Hogg also contributed to numerous London-based literary annuals – hybrids ‘between the one-off anthology and magazines’ (Hughes 2012, 35) – during these years, including *The Amulet*, *Friendship’s Offering* and *The Anniversary*. See the Stirling/South Carolina edition *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books*, ed. by Janette Currie and Gillian Hughes.

Will Gordon convinces his wife Raighel to tell the tale of the barber of Duncow to their sceptical son-in-law Hobby, who had earlier ‘remarked that he wondered how any reasonable being could be so absurd as to entertain a dread of apparitions’ (169).³⁹ Raighel agrees to tell the tale, remarking however that ““it has only ae ill clag till’t [...] an’ it’s this: when any body hears it, an disna believe it, the murdered woman is sure to come in”” (169). Raighel proceeds to tell the story to her initially sceptical family, and the ghost of the murdered woman proceeds to move from her inner narrative into the storytelling frame, apparently knocking on the door of the Gordon’s cottage at the end of her recitation. It is thus one step closer to the outer real world of the rational reader, whose disbelief, just like Raighel’s audience’s in the frame, may only bring the ghost into being (at least, this is the implication).

Altrive Tales and the 1832 Version of the ‘Memoir’

Hogg uses many of his stories of the 1820s and early 1830s to question Enlightenment attitudes to traditional beliefs, especially supernatural ones, in order to differentiate himself from other writers, and thus protect his niche in the literary marketplace. The 1832 version of the ‘Memoir of the Author’s Life’ is likewise intended to further enhance his standing in his contemporary literary world; however, in the final version of his autobiography Hogg also turns his attention, once again, to his place in literary history – that is, to his literary legacy. The 1832 version of the ‘Memoir’ prefaces *Altrive Tales*, which was intended to be the first volume of a collected edition of Hogg’s prose fiction. Hogg had managed to get a collected edition of his poetry published in 1822; however, getting a collected edition of his prose to press was altogether a more problematic proposition. Until the appearance of Scott’s *magnum*

³⁹ Hogg, James (1982). ‘The Barber of Duncow’ (1831), in *Selected Stories and Sketches*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 169-179.

opus edition of the Waverley Novels in June 1829 collected editions were generally the preserve of the dead poets of antiquity. As Hughes points out, even Scott himself risked being ‘considered unduly egotistical’ by ‘implicitly [claiming] classic status for the work of a living rather than a dead author’ (Hughes 2005, xxxv). The huge success of Scott’s *magnum opus* edition was therefore an important milestone in the history of the novel. Viewed in this light, Hogg’s attempt to claim classic status for his own fiction through a collected edition was, to say the least, audacious.

Hogg’s prospective publisher’s awareness of this fact is revealed in the first part of the new section of the ‘Memoir’, ‘Reminiscences of Former Days’, in which he details his literary life between the years of 1821 and 1832, and describes the publishing history behind *Altrive Tales* itself:

In the spring of 1829 [that is, just before the appearance of the first volume of Scott’s collected edition] I first mentioned the plan of “Altrive Tales” to Mr. Blackwood in a letter [the volume was eventually published by the London publisher James Cochrane]. He said, in answer, that the publication of them would be playing a sure card, if Mr Lockhart would edit them. (59)⁴⁰

Blackwood clearly felt that such a volume would require the cultural ratification of a figure like Lockhart, who was now editor of the *Quarterly Review* in London. Hogg himself clearly recognised the importance of getting Lockhart involved in the project. In a letter to Blackwood in May 1830 he suggests that as his ‘good taste has been watched with a jealous eye by the literati [he] would have the work published under the sanction of Lockhart’ (Hogg to Blackwood, dated Altrive-Lake, 26 May 1830).⁴¹ In a letter to him in August 1831 he tells Lockhart himself that he is ‘still depending on [him] writing a preface for me and taking the responsibility of my new Scottish

⁴⁰ Hogg, James (2005). ‘Memoir of the Author’s Life’ & ‘Reminiscences of Former Days’, in *Altrive Tales* (1832), ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 11-52 & 53-78.

⁴¹ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume Two (1820-1831)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 384.

tales' (Hogg to Lockhart, dated Altrive-Lake, 11 August 1831).⁴² He made an even more desperate-sounding plea to him in another letter in December 1831: 'If you were to write a preface and publish it as your edition I would be sure of success or even a preface saying that you *advised* the publication would avail' (Hogg to Lockhart, dated Altrive-Lake, 14 December 1831).⁴³ It seems that Hogg was trying to get Lockhart to take over the role of cultural arbiter from Scott, who had earlier 'ratified' the inclusion of Hogg's 'Memoir' in *The Mountain Bard*. Hogg now needed Lockhart to help justify and endorse the proposed collected edition of his fiction.

The new opening section of the 1832 'Memoir' certainly suggests that Hogg was no longer so concerned about justifying the appearance in print of his life story as he was with justifying the proposed edition of his collected works. In the opening paragraph he playfully baits all those critics who had accused him of vanity and egotism in 1807 and 1821:

I like to write about myself: in fact, there are few things which I like better; it is so delightful to call up old reminiscences. Often have I been laughed at for what an Edinburgh editor styles my good-natured egotism, which is sometimes anything but that; and I am aware that I shall be laughed at again. But I care not: for in this *important* Memoir, now to be brought forward for the fourth time, at different periods of my life, I shall narrate with the same frankness as formerly; and in all, relating either to others or myself, speak fearlessly and unreservedly out. (11)⁴⁴

Hogg's tone here is defiant. Despite all the criticism and censure he received about the earlier versions of his 'Memoir' (not least Wilson's letter-review of the 1821 version), he will continue to speak with the 'same frankness as formerly'. His characterisation of the work as an '*important* Memoir' is also revealing. In the previous versions he had left it to Scott to argue that the 'Memoir' was an important

⁴² Ibid, p. 450.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 473.

⁴⁴ The 'Memoir' was only published three times in Hogg's lifetime: in 1807, 1821 and 1832. However, Hughes suggests that Hogg may be including in his count the article-letter 'Further Particulars of the Life of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd', which appeared under the initial Z in the *Scots Magazine* in July 1805 (see Hughes 2005, 216). (See Chapter One of this study for a further discussion of the relationship between the *Scots Magazine* letters and the first version of the 'Memoir').

document, which was worthy of notice. (In his justificatory head note Scott argues that ‘the efforts of a strong mind, and vigorous imagination, to develop itself even under the most disadvantageous circumstances, may be always considered with pleasure, and often with profit’). However, Hogg undermines the structure of the previous versions by placing the paragraph in which he declares that he ‘likes to write about himself’ *before* Scott’s justificatory head note, which he introduces at the end of his new opening paragraph (‘the following note was prefixed by SIR WALTER SCOTT to the first edition of the Memoir [in 1807]’). He thus forestalls the justificatory function of Scott’s headnote. Hogg no longer needs the ratification of Scott; he was now confident enough to introduce his ‘Memoir’ in his own inimitable way.⁴⁵ He is now in a position to fully assume sole responsibility for the story of his literary life.

However, he still had to use the latest version of his ‘Memoir’ to justify the need for the proposed collected edition of his fiction. As Hughes suggests, this is one of the main functions of the new ‘Reminiscences of Former Days’ section, through which he provides ‘evidence of association with major literary figures’ (Hughes 2005, xlii) in order to highlight his position among the leading writers of the day.⁴⁶ Hughes argues

⁴⁵ This confidence is also reflected in the inclusion of the portrait of Hogg by Charles Fox as a frontispiece to *Altrive Tales*. Hogg had long desired to have his portrait prefixed to one of his works (see, for instance, his 1803 letter to Scott about a collection of songs he was trying to get published, in which he asks if he thought ‘a graven image on the first leaf [was] any recommendation’ (*The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume One (1800-1819)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 40)).

⁴⁶ In his ‘reminiscences’ of Scott Hogg argues that ‘there are not above five people in the world who [...] know Sir Walter better, or understand his character better than I do; and if I outlive him, which is likely, as I am five months and ten days younger, I shall draw a mental portrait of him, the likeness of which shall not be disputed’ (64). Hogg fulfilled this promise with the two version of his *Anecdotes of Scott* in 1834. As Rubenstein points out in her ‘Introduction’ to the Stirling Edition of the *Anecdotes*, ‘Hogg writes about Scott [in this work] from the perspective of one man of letters recollecting another, [it] is an authorial self-image inextricably linked with the cultural conditions of his time’ (Rubenstein 2004, xi). As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Hogg’s *Anecdotes of Scott* are as much as about himself and his own position as an author as they are about Scott. Through them Hogg positions himself next to the one of the leading writers of the day, while also maintaining his authorial independence from his ‘best benefactor’, most obviously through his famous declaration that Scott was ‘the king of the school of chivalry’ and he was ‘the king o’ the mountain and fairy school, which is a far higher ane’ (61).

that Hogg's insecurity about his place among these writers is reflected by the fact that he 'almost always appears as a subordinate figure' in these reminiscences, the obvious example being Wordsworth's refusal to grant Hogg 'due recognition as a poet' (Hughes 2005, xlii) during his visit to Ryedale Mount in 1814. Hogg retells this famous anecdote in his reminiscences of Wordsworth: upon seeing a 'resplendent arch' in the sky he claims to have commented to Dorothy Wordsworth that it was 'a treeumphant airch, raised in honour of the meeting of the poets', to which Wordsworth apparently rejoined, "'Poets? Poets? What does the fellow mean? Where are the poets?'" (68). It is worth noting that Hogg does not let this remark pass without comment in his *Reminiscences*. He challenges Wordsworth's narrow preconceptions by pointing out that 'it is surely presumption in any man to circumscribe all human excellence within the narrow sphere of his own capacity' (68). The implication is clear: Hogg's own understanding of what it means to be 'a poet' may be every bit as relevant as Wordsworth's, perhaps even more so since Wordsworth's would seem to represent a biased view. Hogg's refusal to bow down meekly to the likes of Wordsworth is evident elsewhere in his *Reminiscences*, never more so than when he passes judgement on the work of his literary acquaintances. For instance, he describes Wordsworth's poem 'The Excursion' as 'ponderous' (67), asserts that Robert Southey 'is as elegant a writer as any in the kingdom' (66), compares Allan Cunningham's poetry to 'a rich garden overrun with weeds' (71), and characterises John Galt as 'a most original and most careless writer' (72). By placing himself on an equal footing with these leading writers – that is, as someone who is fully entitled to critique the work of his literary acquaintances – Hogg reinforces his prestige, and provides a justification for claiming 'classic status' for his work through the publication of the collected edition of his fiction.

Hogg, Byron and Burns in the 1832 'Memoir'

Hogg also draws attention to his prominent position in the literary world in the main section of the 'Memoir' itself, specifically through the famous 'Burns anecdote', in which he suggests that he is the natural successor to Burns, as well as in his discussion of his relationship with Byron, through which he underpins his place among the leading literary celebrities of the day. As Hughes points out, the 1832 'Memoir' is not merely a continuation of the earlier versions, Hogg also 'inserts sections of new material' into the main body of the earlier text(s), thus 'making it clear to the attentive reader that different portions of the narrative have been written at different times' (Hughes 2005, 197).⁴⁷ The new sections added in 1832 are clearly intended to secure Hogg's literary legacy. This is especially true of the newly-added Burns and Byron narrative strands. Hogg is certainly keen to draw attention to the fact that Byron and he corresponded with each other, mentioning, 'by way of advertising, that [he has] lost' the 'five letters [...] of two sheets each, and one of three' (39) that Byron sent to him (he claims that these letters 'have been stolen from [him] by some one or other of [his] tourist visitors'). Having first established his personal relations with Byron (the 'Dedication' to *The Pilgrims of the Sun* suggests that he felt a strong affinity with Byron), Hogg then goes on to tell an anecdote in which it is implied that he can write just as well as his illustrious literary acquaintance. He claims that after writing his Byron imitation for *The Poetic Mirror* he

contrived to get a large literary party together, on pretence, as I said, of giving them a literary treat. I had got the poem transcribed, and gave it to Mr Ballantyne to read, who did it ample justice [...] and before it was half done all pronounced it Byron's. (40)⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Douglas Mack brilliantly catalogues the various 'additions, deletions, and revisions' (Hughes 2005, lvii) which the 'Memoir' went through between 1807 and 1832 in his edition of *Memoir of the Author's Life and Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1972).

⁴⁸ Hogg reveals that Byron had told him (in one of the 'stolen' letters) that he 'was busy writing a poem' (38) for his proposed collection of poetry 'by the best living authors in Britain', which later

The implication is clear: Hogg can write just as well as Byron – the greatest literary celebrity of the age, no less – and should therefore be viewed as his equal. Of course, in order to secure his place in literary history he first had to establish himself among the leading poets of his own day. This was especially important for a writer like Hogg who was routinely marginalised on account of his cultural status as a self-taught peasant poet.

However, Hogg had by this point in his career become an expert at exploiting his perceived cultural position to his own advantage. While critics often used it as an excuse to disqualify him from the literary mainstream, Hogg used it to argue for his place therein. This strategy is pursued in the 1832 ‘Memoir’ through Hogg’s depiction of himself as ‘the new Robert Burns’. As McCue suggests, ‘by 1832 Hogg was aware of Burns’s developing role in Scottish culture and that there was much to be gained by positioning himself, [as] the Ettrick Shepherd, alongside the Ploughman poet’ (McCue 2009, 124). Hogg’s consciousness of this fact – even just in terms of selling his work – is revealed in an 1832 letter to his wife, written from London, where he was forwarding the publication of the first volume in his proposed collected works, whilst being feted as a literary lion:

You will see that a great literary dinner is to be given me on Wednesday, my birthday, for though the name of Burns is necessarily coupled with mine, the dinner has been set on foot solely to bring me forward and give me *éclat* in the eyes of the public, thereby to inspire an extensive sale of my forthcoming work [*Altrive Tales*]. (Hogg to Margaret Hogg, dated Waterloo Place, 21 January 1832).⁴⁹

Hogg here unashamedly admits to using Burns to help forward his own literary career (he had even changed the date of his birthday to coincide with Burns’).

became *The Poetic Mirror* (after the poor response to Hogg’s requests for material from said authors). Hogg goes on to claim that this poem was *Lara* (first published in 1814).

⁴⁹ *The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume Three (1832-1835)*, ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 14.

This tendency is reflected in the 1832 ‘Memoir’, near the beginning of which Hogg recounts the tale of his first encounter with the poetry of Burns. He claims that ‘the first time he ever heard of Burns was in 1797, the year after he died’ when ‘a half daft man, named John Scott, came to me on the hill, and to amuse me repeated Tam o’ Shanter’ (17-18). John Scott, he attests, also told him all about the life and works of Burns, ‘how he was born on the 25th January, bred a ploughman [cf to Hogg’s earlier description of himself as having been ‘bred to the occupation of a shepherd’ (12)] and that he had died last harvest, on the 21st of August’ as well as about the ‘many beautiful songs and poems he had composed’ (18). He then describes the life-changing affect this event had on him:

[It] formed a new epoch of my life. Every day I pondered on the genius and fate of Burns. I wept, and always thought with myself—what is to hinder me from succeeding Burns? I too was born on the 25th of January, and I have much more time to read and compose than any ploughman could have, and can sing more old songs than ever ploughman could in the world [...] But then I wept again because I could not write. However, I resolved to be a poet, and to follow in the steps of Burns. (18)

As Hughes notes, this reads like an episode from a spiritual autobiography (see Hughes 2005, 1). Hogg traces his poetic awakening, and the realisation that he should be a writer, back to this first contact with the poetry of Burns. This fits in neatly with his earlier representations of himself as a natural born poet. However, by distinctly linking himself with Burns – whose place in Scottish literary history was relatively secure by this time – Hogg makes a bold claim for his own place in that history. The Hogg of the 1832 ‘Memoir’ would thus seem to have come a long way from the Hogg of the 1807 one. He was no longer merely trying to justify his place in the contemporary literary world; he was now attempting to place himself in literary history.

However, the new Burns narrative strand alerts one to the potentially constructed nature of Hogg's 'Memoir'. Through his suspiciously-conventional description of his first encounter with Burns's poetry Hogg may well be attempting to impose meaning onto a past event in order to make it conform to the story he is trying to tell (that is, the story of his inheritance of Burns's 'peasant poet' crown). As Gusdorf argues,

this postulating of a meaning dictates the choice of the facts to be retained and of the details to bring out or dismiss according to the demands of the preconceived intelligibility. It is here that the failures, the gaps, and the deformations of memory find their origin; they are not due to purely physical cause or to chance, but on the contrary they are the result of an option of the writer who remembers and wants to gain acceptance for this or that revised and corrected version of his past [...] The illusion begins from the moment that the narrative confers a meaning on to an event which, when it actually occurred, no doubt had several meanings or perhaps none. (Gusdorf 1980, 41-42)

Autobiography is, in short, a highly selective process, as the various additions, deletions, and revisions that Hogg's 'Memoir' went through over its three editions clearly demonstrates. There is no way of knowing whether Hogg really did experience the moment of epiphany he describes when he first heard of Burns, or if he is simply projecting significance and meaning back on to this event, or indeed whether it even happened at all. However, one cannot help but wonder why this most important episode, which 'formed a new epoch in his life', was not mentioned in the earlier versions of the 'Memoir'.

The Burns narrative thread is the most obvious example of this process in Hogg's 1832 'Memoir'. Aside from changing the date of his birthday to the same day as Burns' (as Hughes notes, 'Hogg's baptism on 9 December 1770 probably means that he was in fact born towards the end of November 1770' (Hughes 2005, 216)), Hogg also adds several other new passages through which he attempts to strengthen his links to Burns, both on the personal and the professional level. For instance, he plays on Burns's reputation as a ladies man by referring to his own early predilection for

‘the lasses’: ‘It will scarcely be believed that at so early an age [six-years-old] I should have been an admirer of the other sex... [But] I have liked the women a good deal better than the men ever since I remember’ (13). He also places considerably more emphasis on his song-writing (the literary form most associated with Burns) in the 1832 ‘Memoir’, especially in his early career, than he did in the earlier versions:

For several years my compositions consisted wholly of songs and ballads made up for the lasses to sing in chorus; and a proud man I was when I first heard the rosy nymphs chaunting my uncouth strains, and jeering me by the still dear appellation of “Jamie the poeter”. (17)

He also points out that his ‘first published song was “Donald M’Donald”, which [he] composed [in] 1800’ (20). He attests that this ‘was perhaps the most popular song that ever was written’, before noting that it is included in a ‘collection of [his] songs published by Mr. Blackwood last year’ (20), thus highlighting the continued importance of song writing to his literary career.⁵⁰ *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd* (1831) is itself a significant book from a paratextual point of view. As Hughes points out, the volume employs a series of headnotes to introduce each song which provide ‘biographical information or some anecdote about the song’s composition, first publication, or reception’ (Hughes 2007, 223). Many contain references to his biography and have the effect of reconnecting Hogg back to his early years as a songwriter in Ettrick.⁵¹ For instance, in the headnote to ‘Donald M’Donald’ he reveals

⁵⁰ *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd* was published by Blackwood in January 1831, at a time when Hogg was still trying to convince him to publish the collected edition of his prose fiction. A one-volume collection of the Ettrick Shepherd’s best songs (one of the literary forms most associated with Hogg) clearly represented less of a risk for Blackwood than Hogg’s proposed collected edition of his fiction. Blackwood dragged his heels so much over the latter that Hogg, as he recounts in the ‘Reminiscences’ section of the ‘Memoir’ (see pp. 59-60), finally set off to London in order to find a publisher for the first volume of his collected works.

⁵¹ As McCue suggests in ‘Hogg and Music’ (*The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 90-95),

These headnotes add the “personal touch”, and, by giving the broader context for each song, they do a wonderful public relations job for Hogg. Without these notes the reader, while appreciating the wide-ranging patriotism, humour, tenderness and feistiness of the lyrics alone, would have little idea of just how important the genre of song was to Hogg’s developing career, or of his wider musical celebrity. (McCue 2012, 94)

that he wrote the song ‘when a barefooted lad herding lambs on the Blackhouse Heights’ (1), while in the headnote to ‘The Moon was A-Waning’ he attests that the following song was ‘written long ere I threw aside the shepherd’s plaid, and took farewell of my trusty colley, for the bard’s perilous and thankless occupation’ (253),⁵² thus reminding readers of his cultural shift from shepherd to author. In the ‘Reminiscences’ section of the ‘Memoir’ he also refers to his long-held ‘conviction that a heavenly gift, conferring the powers of immortal song, was inherent in [his] soul’ (55), thus reemphasising the main thread of his whole autobiographical project, and, in the process, aligning himself with Burns, Scotland’s most famous ‘natural born poet’, at least, before his own arrival on the literary scene.⁵³

Hogg’s Strategic Positioning of Himself in Literary History

Hogg uses the final version of his ‘Memoir’ to draw attention to his traditional roots, and to the fact that he is a self-taught peasant poet, just like Burns. However, he is also keen to highlight that he can compete with the likes of Byron on their own poetic ground. The function of these accounts of himself is to secure his position in the literary world (as a leading poet of the day, a contemporary of the likes of Byron) and in literary history (as the natural successor to Burns, the exemplary representative of the peasant poet tradition in the literary mainstream of the early nineteenth century). Taken together, they provide a picture of Hogg’s main strategy in most of his self-representations throughout his career, namely, to disseminate the idea that he is ‘different’ from (or, to use a less pejorative term, ‘unique’), but yet also ‘equal’ to, the

⁵² *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd* (1831), Edinburgh: William Blackwood.

⁵³ Hogg was also editing a new edition of the works of Burns around this time. His fellow peasant poet Allan Cunningham was doing likewise. Hughes argues that these rival editions each ‘sought to construct a poetic tradition leading from Burns to the present editors’ (Hughes 2007, 285).

leading writers of his day. It is on the basis of his ‘uniqueness’ that he most often argues for his place in the literary mainstream and, ultimately, in literary history.

This strategy is also discernible in his self-representation in ‘Wat Pringle o’ the Yair’, which was included in his final tale collection *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835), and which harks back to his traditional roots in Etrick. The story recounts Wat Pringle’s involvement in the battle of Philiphaugh.⁵⁴ This fictional part of the story, which provides a contemporary Etrick perspective on the battle, bookends Hogg’s/the Etrick Shepherd’s own recitation of the traditional history of the battle, which was handed down to him by his grandfather Will o’ Phaup, via his uncle William Laidlaw. (The story inverts the structure of *Confessions* by enclosing the voice of the organising, editorial figure between the two sections of the main narrative). Although Hogg’s narration of the local history of the battle is clearly demarcated from the tale itself, he also links himself back to the fictional Etrick characters in the surrounding narrative, one of whom is named Robin Hogg (Wat visits Robin on the morning of 11 September 1645 to tell him of the impending battle). It is tacitly suggested that Robin, who resides at the farm house of Fauldshope’ (191), may well be an ancestor of Hogg. (Hogg had earlier claimed in one of the notes to ‘The Fray of Elibank’ in *The Mountain Bard* that ‘the author’s progenitors [had] possessed the lands of Fauldshope, under the Scotts of Harden, for ages’ (52).⁵⁵ In ‘Wat Pringle’ Robin bewails the theft of his livestock by the Marquis of Montrose’s forces: “We’re ruined! What will Harden say to us?” (195)).⁵⁶ Hogg also filters several threads from his autobiographical writings into the tale (mainly

⁵⁴ The battle of Philiphaugh, at which the Marquis of Montrose’s Royalist army was routed by Sir David Leslie’s Covenanter army, took place on the 13 September 1645, near Selkirk.

⁵⁵ Hogg also uses this same *Mountain Bard* note to suggest that he may be the latest in a long line of Etrick poets: ‘it appears, also, that some of the Hoggs had been poets before now, as there is still part of an old song extant relating much to them’ (52).

⁵⁶ Hogg, James (2002). ‘Wat Pringle o’ the Yair’, in *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835), ed. by Gillian Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 191-222.

from ‘Dogs’ and ‘The Lassies’) through which he identifies himself with the Ettrick characters, most of whom are shepherds. For instance, Wat tells Robin that his sheep “‘might be rescued [from the plundering Royalist soldiers] by a good dog’”, and when he asks him where his son is Robin replies that he is most probably “‘after the hizzies’” (192). (Robin’s son, Will, later tells a story about how with the help of his dog Ruffler he managed to retrieve some of his father’s sheep from the soldiers: “‘I just gae my hand ae wave an’ a single whistle wi’ my mou’ to my dog Ruffler an’ off he sprang like an arrow out of a bow an’ soad did he reave the highlanders o’ their drove’ (196)).

However, the most important self-representational elements are contained in Hogg’s retelling of the traditional history of the battle. He interrupts his narration of Wat Pringle’s story to give his readers this important eye-witness account:

Now I must tell the result in my own way and my own words for though that luckless battle has often been shortly described it has never been truly so and no man living knows half so much about it as I do. My Grandfather who was born in 1691 and whom I well remember was personally acquainted with several persons about Selkirk who were eye witnesses of the battle of Philiphaugh. Now though I cannot say that I ever heard him recount the circumstances yet his son William my uncle who died lately at the age of ninety six has gone over them all to me times innumerable and pointed out to me the very individual spots where such and such things happened. (197)

Hogg claims that, via his family links back to his grandfather, he possesses more knowledge about the battle than any ‘man living’. (Compare this statement to the one made in the 1837 Introduction to *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* where Hogg asserts that he heard ‘the local part [of the story] from the relation of [his] own father, who had the best possible traditionary account of the incidents’ (3)). He also privileges oral, eye witness accounts over written histories in this passage. In fact he openly challenges written histories of the battle later in his recitation, taking issue with his main written sources, namely, Robert Chambers’s *History of the Rebellions in*

Scotland, under the Marquis of Montrose, and others, from 1638 till 1660 (1828), Henry Guthrie's *Memoirs* (first published in 1748), and George Wishart's *Montrose Redivivus* (Latin version 1647; English translation 1756). He attests that these texts are not as reliable as his oral history, despite what critics may say about the potential unreliability of traditional sources of historical information:

Mr Chambers who has written the far best and most spirited description of this battle that has ever been given has been someway misled by the two Revd Bishops Guthrie and Wishart on whose authority his narrative is principally founded. He insinuates nay if I remember aright avers boldly that Montrose reached his army in time and fought at their head with a part of his gentlemen cavaliers. No such thing. His army was to all intents and purposes annihilated ere ever he got in sight of it [...] It may be said and will be said that my account is only derived from tradition. True; but it is from the tradition of a people to whom every circumstance and every spot was so well known that the tradition could not possibly be incorrect and be it remembered that it is only the tradition of two generations of the same family. As I said my grandfather knew personally a number of eye-witnesses of the battle and I well remember him although it was his son my uncle who was my principal authority who pointed out all the spots to me and gave us the detail every night that he sung "The Battle of Philphaugh" [Hogg sent this ballad to Scott, who included it in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*] which was generally every night during winter. I therefore believe that my account is perfectly correct or very nearly so. (198-199)

Hogg, who, in many of his earlier stories and paratexts had questioned the reliability of oral transmission (for instance, in 'John Gray o' Middleholm' and several of the *Mountain Bard* notes), clearly privileges it over written history in this passage. Put simply, the Ettrick people, who witnessed the battle from the ground level, know more about it than the historians. Moreover, since he is recounting from a tradition that has been passed down by only 'two generations of the same family' there is less chance that it has been corrupted or changed. Later in his recitation he directly challenges those people who question tradition, declaring that '[people] may say the local traditions of a country are not to be depended on. I say they are.' (203). (Compare this declaration to Davie Proudfoot's defiant defence of traditional sources of information at the end of *Winter Evening Tales* (p. 508)).

Hogg even brings forward physical evidence as corroboration of one of the traditions relating to the battle. It was said that on the day of the battle the Earl of Traquair ‘set out over Minch-moor to visit Montrose’ at Selkirk with ‘a portmanteau of silver coin’ (202) for the payment of the Royalist forces. However, after being pursued by some of Leslie’s forces, the Earl apparently threw his bag of money into a small lake. Hogg attests that a hundred years later this lake ‘was drained for the purposes of agriculture’ and that ‘numbers of old silver coins are plowed up [there] to this day’ (205). He then claims that some of these coins, which were from the era ‘of Elizabeth and James’, were ‘put into his hand lately’ by a girl who found them while ‘she was hoeing potatoes’, and that he passed some of them on to ‘Sir Walter Scott shortly before his last illness [Scott died on 21 September 1832]’, who ‘did not value them further than as proof of the tradition relating to the Earl of Traquair’ (205). Thus, it would appear that even Scott was satisfied that this particular tradition is true, but only because Hogg presented him with empirical evidence. The implication is clear: Scott, unlike Hogg, does not trust oral accounts of history.⁵⁷ Although Hogg sometimes questions oral history he also understands that some traditions are reliable and worth preserving, regardless of whether there is any corroborating evidence to back them up. This is the viewpoint he exaggerates in ‘Wat Pringle’ in order to differentiate himself from likes of Scott.⁵⁸

In the second part of Wat Pringle’s story he also privileges the supernatural. After the battle Wat takes in a woman, who turns out to be an aristocratic Highland lady,

⁵⁷ An earlier version of the tradition, which Scott included in one of the notes to ‘The Battle of Philphaugh’ in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and which was ‘transmitted’ to him by Hogg, ends differently to the one in ‘Wat Pringle’: ‘some peasants began to drain [the lake], not long ago, in hopes of finding the golden prize, but were prevented, as they pretended, by supernatural interference’ (250).

⁵⁸ Hogg also distances himself from the kind of Romantic language used by Scott in his novels and stories by pointing out that he favours the more earthy language used by his uncle: ‘Jenny Pringle [was] a neat coarshish-made girl about thirty her hair hanging in what Sir Walter Scott would have called elf-locks but which old Will Laidlaw denominated pennyworths all round her cheeks and neck’ (208).

and her baby, apparently the only survivors from the Royalist side. She later dies by what is described as an 'ideal capitulation' (215) at the precise moment of her husband's beheading, whose last words, it turns out, 'were the very same words pronounced by Lady Julia before her marvellous execution' (218). (In an aside the Hogg-narrator refers to his own open-mindedness about such occurrence by declaring that there are 'many things in heaven and earth that are not dreamed of in man's philosophy' (217)). The Hogg-narrator then reveals that Wat later saw the headless ghost of Lady Julia and her baby in a lane near Hawick, resolutely declaring that this ghost story 'is no fiction but as true as I am writing it' (219). He then links himself directly with this supernatural part of his story by claiming that 'the apparition of the lady without the head pressing a baby to her breast continued to walk annually on the same night and on the same lane for at least 150 years [...] about forty of these within my own recollection', before asserting that 'a most respectable widow who was a servant to my parents and visits us once every two or three years told me that the lady without the head and pressing the baby to her bosom had again been seen of late years' (219-220). Hogg's privileging of the supernatural in the tale provides his readers with a clear indication of the type of writer he is (much as 'The Mysterious Bride' and the 'Shepherd's Calendar' stories had done), while his defence of oral sources of historical information in his account of the battle of Philiphaugh draws attention to his intimate knowledge of, and close relationship with, the traditional source material upon which he draws in his storytelling. The paratextual material in 'Wat Pringle o' the Yair' is used to reinforce his self-proclaimed position as the most reliable voice of traditional Ettrick culture in the early-nineteenth century Scottish literary world.

Hogg, 'the Authorial Paratext' and his Literary Legacy

The highly experimental works of the 1820s, especially *Confessions* and *Queen Hynde*, suggest that Hogg's creativity was not constricted by his cultural position as the voice of Ettrick, or by his public persona of 'The Ettrick Shepherd'. In *Queen Hynde* the 'Ettrick Shepherd' narrator audaciously confounds contemporary expectations about the proper literary genres for a 'peasant poet' via his playful experimentations with the epic genre, while in the shape of *Confessions* Hogg created a text that has ultimately transcended the cultural world(s) from which it first emerged. In the 1832 'Memoir', meanwhile, Hogg reminds his readers of his ability to mimic the leading mainstream poets of the day – as evidenced in his earlier book of parodies *The Poetic Mirror* – by suggesting that he can write just as well as the likes of Byron on their own poetic ground.

'The Ettrick Shepherd' was undoubtedly a valuable marketing tool for Hogg; however, its potentially subversive cultural significance should not be overlooked. Hogg's own version of the Shepherd – the vibrant, independent storyteller of *The Shepherd's Calendar* and 'Wat Pringle o' the Yair' – should not be confused with the subordinated Shepherd of the 'Noctes'. Although the 'Shepherd' tag was often used as a kind of scarlet letter by his critics, as a way to keep the 'peasant poet' within strictly demarcated literary boundaries, it was just as often redeployed by Hogg as a symbol of his authorial independence from the cultural mainstream of literary Edinburgh. (This independence is symbolically represented in *Confessions* via Hogg's Shepherd's refusal to guide the Enlightened Editor and his party to Robert Wringhim's grave in Ettrick). It was on the basis of this 'unique' cultural position that Hogg so often argued for his place among the leading writers of his day and, in the

final version of his 'Memoir', for his place in literary history, as the successor to Burns.

However, Hogg's literary reputation should not rest on this cultural position alone. It should also be remembered that it was Hogg himself who carved out this role for himself through his propagation of the 'Ettrick Shepherd' in his highly artistic paratextual material, and that, as the 'Editor's Narrative' in *Confessions* suggests, he was well aware of the powerful sway of authorial paratexts over readers and critics. His satirical treatment of such material in *Confessions* – that is, of the very devices through which he positioned himself in his literary world – is an apt indication of his penetrating socio-cultural awareness and his sophistication as a writer. As Alker and Nelson suggest, Hogg may not have been 'committed to political reform' but he was 'deeply invested in the radical transformation of culture, a less blatant but perhaps more enduring way to influence and promote social change' (Alker and Nelson 2012, 56). Hogg was not merely a victim of his perceived socio-cultural position, he was also an innovative artist who redeployed it in his paratextual material to his own advantage, using it to break out of the cultural shackles placed upon him by his Enlightened social superiors and, in the process, undermining the socio-cultural hierarchy of the early-nineteenth century world. This may well represent his most enduring literary-cultural legacy.

Conclusion

The Author's Shepherd

As a direct result of his socio-cultural origins, Hogg had to make use of self-representational paratextual material throughout his literary career in order to explain, justify and consolidate his position as 'an Author' in his society. Through the idealised authorial figure of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' – a most expedient paratextual creation – Hogg presented himself as an exemplary representative of traditional culture, and as a quintessential 'peasant poet'. It was largely on the basis of these self-representations that he entered the early-nineteenth-century Scottish literary world, carved out a niche in the marketplace for himself there, and ultimately argued for his place in literary history.

This process can be traced through the three versions of the 'Memoir'. The first version, which prefaced his first major publication *The Mountain Bard* in 1807, was used to authenticate Hogg's traditional background, thus providing a cultural justification for the appearance in print of his book of ballad imitations. Its main function was to facilitate Hogg's entry into the literary world: it was used to provide subsidiary autobiographical information in order to explain and justify his cultural shift from shepherd to author. It was in this first version of the 'Memoir' that his authorial persona as a 'natural born poet', embodied in the figure of 'The Ettrick Shepherd', was firmly established. In the second version of the 'Memoir', which prefaced the 1821 edition of *The Mountain Bard*, Hogg attempts to (re)take control of his literary productions in preparation for a proposed edition of his collected works. This aim is carried over into the final version, which was attached to *Altrive Tales* in 1832. The main function of this version of the 'Memoir' is to justify the need for a

collected edition of his works by arguing that he was one of the leading writers of the period (this latter aim is also one of the main functions of the paratextual material attached to *The Pilgrims of the Sun*, *Mador of the Moor* and *The Poetic Mirror*). Via this proposed collected works Hogg hoped to secure his literary legacy. The respective aims of the first and final versions of the ‘Memoir’ suggest the progress Hogg made between 1807 and 1832; however, the failure of the collected edition, as well as his inability to establish himself as a fully-fledged author in literary Edinburgh, indicate the kinds of cultural constraints he had to work within throughout his career.

Hogg (and his publishers) used the paratextual figure of the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ as a branding device, a way to authenticate and succinctly characterise his texts; however, it was also used by his critics to marginalise him as an intruder in the paths of literature. Indeed, by arguing for his place in the literary world on the basis of his supposedly preeminent place in the traditional one Hogg risked marginalising himself in the former world, where he continued to be perceived as a subordinate figure on account of his origins. However, Hogg used his paratexts to suggest that he was different from, yet also just the same as – or, more to the point, just as ‘good’ as – established/establishment writers such as Scott, and that he thus should be judged as their peer. This was a difficult task considering that mere folk artists, such as Hogg was considered to be by most of his contemporaries, were placed firmly at the bottom of the literary hierarchy in Enlightenment Edinburgh. Hogg challenged this cultural paradigm in his paratextual material, arguing that traditional forms, beliefs and customs were just as valuable as more mainstream, Enlightened ones.

Hogg continued to use his paratextual material to control relations between his authorial self and his readers as his career progressed. However, he began

incorporating his paratextual self-representations more smoothly into his texts, where they serve dual fictional and functional purposes, not only preparing readers for the inner fictional worlds of tales, but also reemphasising and celebrating his role as that most reliable transmitter of traditional material ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ (this is especially true of *The Queen’s Wake*, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, and many of his short tales). He presented himself as a kind of narrative middleman between Ettrick and Edinburgh, passing on traditional material from the former rural world to his urban readership in the latter (see especially ‘The Bridal of Polmood’). He also acted as an ethnographic guide to these genteel readers, taking them down into the traditional world of Ettrick with him via his writings (see, for instance, ‘Storms’ and ‘A Peasant’s Funeral’). Moreover, Hogg’s awareness of the wider artistic possibilities, as well as the peremptory potential, of ‘the paratext’ is made manifest in *Confessions*, in which he satirises the fundamentally functional nature of all authorial paratexts.

Hogg also began using his paratexts to respond to those critics who attempted to constrain his literary output and corrupt his ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ brand (most obviously in *Confessions* and *Queen Hynde*). His ability to see beyond the parameters of his own cultural situation is also reflected by his use of paratextual material which critiqued and questioned Enlightenment beliefs and assumptions about his own – and, more generally, traditional culture’s – place in early-nineteenth-century Scottish society (most of his works, from *The Spy* to *Tales of the Wars of Montrose*, do this at some level). For Hogg, ‘the traditional’ not only symbolised a way of life that was under threat in the post-Enlightenment drive to modernity, it was also an indicator of one’s social origins and cultural background. Authenticating his socio-cultural background was particularly important for Hogg, not least because he argued for his

authority in regard to traditional material on the basis of his upbringing in oral, traditional Ettrick.

Thus, Hogg used his paratexts in three distinct ways: to help him break into and consolidate his position in the literary world; to critique his society's preconceptions about peasant poets and traditional culture; and, finally, as artistic/satirical devices. His paratexts could thus be said to feature functional, critical and artistic aims and characteristics. The relative importance of these three different objectives changed and varied at different points of his literary career. At the outset his paratexts were mainly functional, especially *The Mountain Bard* ones, which he used to facilitate his entry into the literary sphere (although both the 'Memoir' and the explanatory notes to the ballads should also be considered as highly artistic pieces of writing). During the most fruitful period of his career (1813-1824) his paratextual material was more evenly balanced between the functional (consolidating his place in the literary marketplace in works such as *The Queen's Wake*, *The Poetic Mirror*, and the 1821 'Memoir'), the critical (questioning perceptions about peasant poets and traditional culture, for instance in *Queen Hynde*), and the artistic (narrative framing in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, *Confessions* and many of his shorter tales). Although most of his paratexts contain each of these elements, it was during this middle period that the critical and artistic functions came most obviously to the fore. Towards the end of his career his paratexts again became more functional as he argued for his place in literary history via his 1832 'Memoir', as well as in works such as 'Wat Pringle o' the Yair', in which he reemphasised his role as the preeminent representative of Ettrick oral culture in the literary world of his day. Hogg's paratexts were thus a crucial element in his career. They not only had a profound impact on his self-representations, but also on the form and structure of his books, as well as on his

interactions with his socio-cultural world. In short, they should be considered among his key texts, especially in terms of understanding his career as an author in the literary marketplace in Edinburgh.

Hogg's self-created public image – as a kind of cultural curiosity, shifting effortlessly between oral Ettrick and literary Edinburgh – was certainly a double-edged sword, but one which he often, although not always, managed to skilfully wield to his own advantage, in spite of his culture's perception of him as little more than what Bold describes as 'a sociological specimen' (Bold 2007, 295). Hogg's refusal to adhere to this role is reflected in an article from his magazine *The Spy*:

He whose confidence in his own merit invites him to meet, without any apparent sense of inferiority, those who flattered themselves with their own dignity, may justly be considered as an insolent leveller, impatient of the just prerogatives of rank and wealth, eager to usurp the station to which he has no right, and to confound the subordinations of society. (518)

Hogg often used his paratextual material to do this, specifically by inverting the early-nineteenth-century cultural paradigm which placed him, as a 'peasant poet', at the bottom of the literary hierarchy. His innovative use of paratexts to control relations between himself, his books and his readers is not only a testament to his sophistication as a writer but also a clear indication of his socio-cultural awareness. By analysing Hogg's authorial paratexts one not only garners a clearer picture of his own role in the creation, propagation and later redeployment of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' but also gets a better glimpse of the Author behind the Shepherd, that is, of the creative artist who refused to conform to the socially-biased cultural role assigned to him by his society.

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