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James Hogg: A Study in the Transition  
from Folk Tradition to Literature.

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## Introduction

In recent years the writings of James Hogg have attracted much critical interest. Illuminating work has been done, but so far scholarship has not successfully come to terms with Hogg's great debt to tradition, despite the fact that this debt has long been recognised. Sir George Douglas wrote in 1899 that in his better prose tales Hogg "has incorporated the whole body of the floating popular mythology of Scotland - a fact which, should the day ever come when the stories fail to charm as stories, will still command for them the regard of students of history and folk-lore".<sup>1</sup>

An understanding of the role and use of folk tradition in literature has been difficult to achieve because of the lack of proper critical tools to permit objective assessment. By literary standards folk tradition has been devalued to the status of "fairy tales" - something pleasant for children - and its workings often seem to smack of the irrational or highly coincidental. The fact that Hogg, or any other writer, uses folk tradition in his literary work should not be taken as some sort of aberration from literary convention but rather as a positive contribution. However, merely recognising its presence is not enough. The present work will therefore concern itself with the kinds of tradition Hogg uses, the status and meaning of these traditions and the way in which Hogg adapts and develops them to meet the needs of a new audience that is literary rather than traditional.

Any discussion of Hogg's relationship with folklore must first examine Hogg's upbringing and education and the nature of the Border community in which he grew up to try and discover something about the kind of traditional sources Hogg would have known, the kind of material available and the status it would have enjoyed. All these things governed Hogg's own attitude to different types of folk tradition and



therefore helped to determine the ways in which he presented his material and ideas.

It is helpful to begin a study of Hogg's work by way of his songs. Songwriting provides a natural and acceptable transition from folk tradition to literature as it has a well-developed tradition of its own. This stage of Hogg's work is very important in helping to establish an idea of the unity and homogeneity of his work. Hogg was able to compose songs with apparent ease and throughout his career he turned this to good account but his greatest achievements are to be measured in his narrative verse and prose. The narrative verse shows Hogg beginning to develop his own ideas more creatively, hammering out the themes that were eventually to dominate his work. From there it is then possible to make a deeper study of the key themes, principally superstition, the supernatural and religion, history and community.

The discussion will concentrate here on the wealth of short prose which forms the bulk of Hogg's work. This is partly to emphasise where the main force of Hogg's creativity lay for this concern seems always to have been with narrative or story. However, the dominance of the novel in literary tradition has led to critical emphasis on the Confessions at the expense of the other shorter works. The nature of the contemporary literary community with its proliferation of magazines, journals and annuals did foster Hogg's preoccupation with the short anecdotal form. Despite this, the preponderance of folk tradition in Hogg's works and the emphasis on a traditional tale telling context and on the sort of community environment in which this tradition survived is illuminating. It suggests that Hogg was not trying to write novels but to recreate in some way the traditional story telling experience through his tales. This can be seen on a larger scale in the Queen's Wake or the story-telling competition in the Three Perils of Man.

It is in the form and structure of Hogg's work that the most subtle links are to be found with folk tradition. In particular, by studying form and structure, it is possible to understand more clearly Hogg's exploitation of the narrator's role.

Taken over all, this thesis hopes to show the clear links in theme, idea, form and structure between the shortest of Hogg's pieces and longer, more sustained efforts such as the Brownie or the Confessions. An understanding of Hogg's use of folk tradition can therefore do much more than explain certain motifs or odd references. It shows that tradition is not an excuse for sloppy structure or improbable events but a real tool by which Hogg enlarged his creative capability. Thus tradition provides the reader with an important key to Hogg's work.

The concern with folk literature in the discussion which follows has necessitated the use of a number of terms drawn from the critical analysis of folklore. The meaning of these terms should be clear from the context but the following brief guide may be helpful. The name Märchen is employed when discussing the magic tale, the fullest and most elaborate form of folk narrative. Examples form types 300-749 in the Aarne-Thomson classification system<sup>2</sup> and the name is taken from Kinder- und Hausmärchen, the collection compiled by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm.<sup>3</sup> This term is used to avoid the idea of "fairy tales" which has rather dismissive overtones of the nursery. In a traditional community the folktale has a serious role in addition to its entertainment value and these distinctions are important to an understanding of Hogg's use of folklore. The term "informant", used in the discussion of Hogg's family, refers to a source or transmitter of items of folklore from whom material is recorded, learned or otherwise preserved.

## CHAPTER ONE : The Border Background.

The main studies of Hogg to date have all made cursory reference to the importance of the traditional folk background of the Borders and his mother's influence on Hogg. The early accounts in particular stressed the importance in his upbringing of ballad singing and folk lore transmitted by his mother.<sup>1</sup> Sir George Douglas, for instance, sets the tone by stating that, "Hogg the elder is described as a man of quite ordinary understanding; but his wife, Margaret Laidlaw, was remarkable not only for spirit and activity, but as a noted repository of ballad, legend, tradition, and the countless minor what-nots of rustic lore, so that probably the annals of genius - prolific as in this respect they are - present few more plausible instances of the influence of a notable mother upon a gifted son". (Douglas, p.14) Drawing heavily on Hogg's autobiographical accounts, Douglas says of his education:

The elder Hogg's reverses, happening before his gifted son had reached the age of six, seriously interfered with the boy's education. The fortunate accident that there was a school close to his father's door had enabled the child already to secure a short period of tuition, during which he had advanced to the head of a juvenile class who read the Shorter Catechism and the Book of Proverbs. But, at the Whitsunday following his father's failure, pressure of circumstance set young James, still in his seventh year, to the task of herding a few cows for a neighbouring farmer - a service for which he received the half-year's wage of a ewe-lamb and a pair of shoes. During the following winter-quarter he was again at school, where he received his first lessons in writing. And here, once and for all, his academic education terminated: whatever else he learnt was studied in the school of the world, and under that best of all possible masters - so he be willing for the task - himself.  
(Douglas, pp.17-18)

Most subsequent accounts have accepted this position and even amplified it slightly. Edith Batho combines the traditions about Margaret Laidlaw's excellence as a traditional informant with that of Hogg's supposed lack of education: "Then Hogg's mother and her

brother had between them an almost inexhaustible collection of old songs and stories, which united with the living legend and beliefs of the countryside to give him a complete education of one kind; and for the moment it was of comparatively small importance that he had forgotten how to write and could only read with great pains".<sup>2</sup> Louis Simpson restates the main episodes of Hogg's early life and does modify one aspect at least of the picture by suggesting that "in saying that he could not write, Hogg may only mean that he found it difficult to do so".<sup>3</sup> He too accepts the importance of tradition in Hogg's early development without questioning its nature or source, writing simply that "Hogg was apprenticed in the ballad" (Simpson, p.53). This twin insistence on the influence of a traditionary upbringing and the lack of formal education is moulded by Douglas Gifford into a clear division between the early Hogg, steeped in tradition, and the later Hogg, who vied with the sophisticated literary establishment of the day. He claims that, "There is the Ettrick Hogg and there is the Edinburgh Hogg"<sup>4</sup> and that this dualism, while helping to create The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, also "goes a long way to explaining many of Hogg's complete failures, like The Three Perils of Women" (Gifford, p.8). He too makes in passing the familiar claim that "...his mother [was] a shrewd, independent woman who was famed for her huge knowledge of Border Ballads and legends" (Gifford, p.9).

This approach has become an incontrovertible piece of received knowledge. It most probably owes its genesis to Hogg's account, widely quoted and reprinted, of his mother Margaret Laidlaw reciting or "chaunting" "Auld Maitland" for Scott and then berating him for printing the ballads and fossilising them. The fullest version of this story is that to be found in Hogg's reminiscences of Sir Walter

Scott.<sup>5</sup> It is on the basis of this (essentially one anecdote told by Hogg) that the picture of Hogg as a folk rooted poet has been built up. It is perhaps hardly surprising that older, nearly contemporary descriptions of Hogg and his family should unquestioningly accept this image. It is more disquieting that modern studies should so wholeheartedly subscribe to this view without providing supporting evidence. When the background is examined and the facts, as far as they are discernible, are set out, these traditional assumptions about Hogg and his background are shown to require modification. Lack of school attendance does not automatically prove lack of education and if Hogg's mother was such a profound influence why does Hogg not make more frequent reference to her as a source in the texts themselves?

A wide variety of traditional material has indeed been recorded on the Borders<sup>6</sup> but it is important to realise that this traditional heritage and Hogg's use of it was coloured both by Hogg's transition from shepherd to author and the fluid, transitional status of the community from which he came. The area with which Hogg is most closely associated is that area of Selkirkshire between the valleys of the rivers Ettrick and Yarrow and north of St. Mary's Loch, which he calls Ettrick Forest. Hogg was born in the small village of Ettrick and lived for most of his life in the Yarrow valley at the head of St. Mary's Loch. The period in which he lived, 1770-1835, is significant for the great changes effected on the physical structure of the area through the opening of better communication links and the use of new techniques in agriculture, all of which led to important changes in the social and economic framework of the area and its communities. James Hogg in one of his earlier essays into print describes the area, its character and amusements:

They delight greatly in poetry and music, in which sundry are considerable proficient. Burns's are the favourite songs, and the Scottish [sic] strathspeys the favourite music. Their more quiet and retired diversions are, cards, the damboard, and backgammon.

The manners of the common people are truly singular, from their simplicity: they have generally the musical ear; are passionately fond of songs; and, for variety, greatly excel their superiors. The goodman's library oft-times consists of a family Bible, Boston's four-fold state of Man, and a large sheaf or two of ballads. In no place are there so many old songs, tales, and anecdotes preserved by tradition; whilst the new ones are early introduced, being sought for with such avidity, each one being fond of something new to divert the social circle. Many of Burns's songs, and McNeil's, were sung and admired, long before we knew who were the authors; and with pride I relate it, many popular songs and tunes are indebted to the Forest for the first discovery of their excellence; yet we have not a noted composer of music amongst us, our best modern tunes being of Perthshire original.<sup>7</sup>

To supplement this characteristic view of the Borders it is not necessary here to discuss at length the Border Reiving period, although some knowledge of this time is essential to an understanding of the growth and development of the Border communities, explaining many of the intensely felt links that were often sustained in this area thinly populated by scattered communities.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it is a period which heavily coloured the Border Ballads, creating the raid ballads that were so important to Scott, Leyden and Hogg. It is worth noting that, partly due to their isolation, the Borders and Borderers were regarded from the time of the earliest accounts, as a different or special case. Bishop Jhone Leslie, writing in the sixteenth century, gives a colourful though contradictory account that owes its partiality to the Borderers' late adherence to Roman Catholicism in the face of the Reformation, even though this adherence was often nominal rather than actual. His account, which is probably based on the reiving families of Liddesdale, set the tone for most of the

descriptions which were to follow, including Hogg's. Leslie emphasises the independence and hardihood of the daily lives of the Borderers and also the violence:

Thay delyt mekle in thair awne musick and Harmonie in singing, quhilke of the actes of thair foirbearis thay haue leired, or quhat thame selfes haue inuented of ane ingenious policie to dryue a pray and say thair prayeris. The policie of dryueng a pray thay think be sa leiuesum and lawful to thame that neuir sa feruentlie thay say thair prayeris, and pray thair Beides, quhilkes rosarie we cal, nor with sick sollicitude and kair, as oft quhen thay haue xl or l myles to dryue a pray.

(Leslie, I, 101-2)

After the Union of the Crowns much was done to alter the independent character of the Borders. James VI made strenuous efforts, both symbolic and practical, to effect this and bring peace to that area:

The king, in pursuance of his favourite purpose of extinguishing all memory of past hostilities between his kingdoms, and, if possible, of the places that had been the principal scenes of these hostilities, prohibited the name of borders any longer to be used, substituting in its place that of the middle shires. He ordered all the places of strength in these parts to be demolished, except the habitations of noblemen and barons; their iron gates to be converted into plough-shares, and the inhabitants to betake themselves to agriculture, and other works of peace. In the same spirit he broke the garrisons of Berwick and Carlisle.

(Ridpath, p.706)

Ridpath, a true Unionist, adds that these measures were only partially successful and that it needed "the unspeakable advantages" of the political union "in the memorable year of 1707" to establish concord finally on both sides of the Cheviots. Nevertheless, the Union of the Crowns did much to encourage peace and make the Borders the kind of agricultural area we know today. This was accomplished in part by replacing the herds of black cattle so easily driven off in the days of the "hot trod" with the large flocks of sheep which eventually dominated the community way of life known by Hogg. It

would seem, however, that even before that time sheep were important to the area. Though the trees have now gone, Ettrick Forest was a Royal hunting forest popular from the time of Alexander III to that of Mary Queen of Scots, a state of affairs that is reflected for instance in "The Hunt of Eildon".<sup>9</sup> Hogg claims that in 1503, after the hunting rights had for some time fallen into abeyance, James IV once more took over the district, stocked it with 20,000 sheep, and endowed the whole revenues to his new bride, Margaret Tudor. "It is quite apparent", according to Hogg, who later quotes Pitscottie as an authority for some of his observations, "that before this period the forest was never occupied as a sheep country".<sup>10</sup> Hogg suggests that James IV introduced the blackface breed to the Borders at this time, the tradition being that he imported them from Fife ("Statistics", p.291). His inferences seem to be romantic rather than accurate. Michael Ryder in his study on the different breeds of sheep in Scotland states that the blackface came solely from England.<sup>11</sup> Besides even before the reign of James IV, the royal house had flocks of sheep in the farms such as Mountbenger, Catslack, Whitehope and Blackgrain, which it held in Yarrow in its own right.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Melrose Abbey, which held lands in Ettrick Forest, is recorded as exporting wool to Flanders in as early as 1225 (Craig-Brown, I, 560).

Thus the tradition of sheep farming was established early on, and with it the dependence on, and fondness for, the small black-faced breed that was to prove controversial when, under the vogue for improvement in the late eighteenth century, Border farmers tried to introduce their unwilling shepherds to the bigger Cheviot at the expense of the by now traditional breed. This controversy with its implications for the traditional ways is described by Hogg.<sup>13</sup> The annual pattern of the shepherding year and its natural conservatism



did much to consolidate and preserve the traditional lifestyle of the Border communities. Changes happened slowly and were often of degree rather than complete revolution so that many shepherding practices of today are recognisably the same of those of Hogg's day.<sup>14</sup> The various aspects of the herding year are reflected throughout Hogg's work and even his literary career was governed by the agricultural year, for it was in the quieter winter months that he had time to devote himself to writing. His literary creativity had to be suspended when the time for jobs such as smearing came round. Smearing the sheep with a home-made mixture of tar, butter and sometimes oil to waterproof the fleece and help prevent ticks was the fore-runner of sheep dipping. It was one of the most important tasks in the shepherd's year and great concern was exercised over the particular blend of tar and butter preferred by each shepherd or farmer. This is clearly reflected in the diary of a farming contemporary of Hogg's who was tenant of Branxholm Park, a large farm near Hawick:

It will be a considerable article of saving in expense to use about one fifth of oil in menging any Tar and I am convinced Noraway Tar is better than New England it makes the wool much sappier & does not so soon die upon it. That must add to the weight considerably & it will more effectually destroy vermin.

The oil it is agreed produces one effect which I should imagine a salutary one. In a Rymie morning there no ryme will ly upon a sheep that has been smeared with a mixture of oil - that bespeaks a greater degree of warmth occassioned by the oil.<sup>15</sup>

The business was messy, physically demanding and unpleasant which explains the gratitude felt by the men at Chapelhope when the Brownie of Bodsbeck saved them a job.<sup>16</sup> The extent to which smearing could impinge on Hogg's artistic endeavours and even his correspondence is made clear by a letter of his to Scott: "I am now engaged in the ardent and naseous business of smearing which continues every

lawfull night until a late hour and in a very few days always makes my hand that I can in nowise handle a pen consequently you will not hear from me again on a sudden."<sup>17</sup> Hogg uses his knowledge of herding methods and processes such as these throughout his work and displays an intimate acquaintance with the problems of animal husbandry that was natural to someone who had herded stock since his sixth year and had written a prize winning treatise on sheep diseases. It was so intricately bound up in his own life that it naturally becomes significant in his creative world where he betrays a certain romantic nostalgia in his concern for continuity and the preservation of old ways and traditions. Notwithstanding this, Hogg grew up in an age of agricultural experiment and he showed by his essay on sheep diseases and his contributions to journals such as the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture that he was keen to stay abreast of all the latest developments. His accounts of his tours through the Highlands show too an awareness of the methods and ways of other areas and a willingness to explore and compare them with his own environment. Moreover, even as he described it his own community had changed. Innovations such as the change in sheep breeds had gradually, if grudgingly, been accepted and others were in the process of being effected. The journals and diaries of local farmers show a steady stream of improvements, drainage, new steadings and new implements. This transitional mixture of old traditions and new ways that is discernible in the agriculture of the area was mirrored in the social life of the communities. It shows, too, the way in which Hogg is placed as an intermediary between the old and the new, recording and supporting traditional ways and attitudes on the one hand, in for instance the Shepherd's Calendar, and, on the other, becoming aligned with the new outlook. It was an attitude that carried through to his treatment of tradition in his literary work.

The very geography of the area had an important effect on the society that characterised and structured these Border communities. The Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys have always been isolated and difficult to reach, as indeed many areas of the Borders are. They are comparatively awkward to penetrate even in the present day. It was Scott himself who reputedly took the first carriage into nearby Liddesdale on his last raid there for ballad material for use in his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.<sup>18</sup> Suggesting that Liddesdale was particularly suited to the preservation of balladry W.E. Wilson points to the lack of roads and communications, showing the difference to the area and its character once these were provided:

The stage coach routes shunned it, and the absence of decent roads secured for it an isolation which conduced to the preservation of some of the less obnoxious characteristics of an earlier age, chief among them a sturdy independence. The same conditions helped also to retain in the memory of the inhabitants many of the old ballads which celebrated the exploits of their ancestors.

The making of good roads, bringing greater facilities of access, has made a wondrous change in Liddesdale. From being the most turbulent and lawless district in Scotland it is now the most peaceful. Crime is practically unknown, and the stranger may wander over its moors at any hour of the day or night and experience nothing more than the friendly salutation of some native delivered with a dialectal intonation peculiar to the district and pleasant to the ear. Its sole industry is sheep-farming, carried on by a shrewd, virile and kindly race.<sup>19</sup>

Much the same could be said about Ettrick Parish. Like Liddesdale it had remained cut off and isolated by a difficult road system. The Reverend Robert Russell, minister for the parish at the time of Hogg's infancy, described it for the first Statistical Account as a most beleaguered outpost:

This parish possesses no advantage. The nearest market town is 15 miles distant. The roads to all of them are almost impassable. The only road that looks like a turnpike is to

Selkirk; but even it in many places is so deep, as greatly to obstruct travelling. The distance is about 16 miles, and it requires four hours to ride it. The snow also, at times, is a great inconvenience; often for many months, we can have no intercourse with mankind. It often also obliges the farmers to fly with their flocks to Annandale for provision. Another great disadvantage is the want of bridges. For many hours the traveller is obstructed on his journey, when the waters are swelled.<sup>20</sup>

Some improvements were made to the main road system in the early decades of the nineteenth century, for instance, as Hogg notes, by Captain Napier ("Captain Napier", pp.176-77) but even then the routes chosen were not always the easiest or most direct. Most travelling would be done by foot or occasionally by horse so that the lack of formal roads did not prevent communications. Furthermore, there was also a criss-cross maze of paths across the hills. Some of these led to peat mosses and some were substantial enough to take carts. Others like the path over from St. Mary's Loch to Ettrick were the routes by which people went to kirk and parts of the old drove roads system also cut across the area, coming from the north from Peebles to Blackhouse and Dryhope and on south. (See Appendix 1). The parish of Ettrick is quite compact, extending ten miles in every direction. It is hilly and mountainous and though the soil in the haughs is deep and fertile the crops were rarely good in Russell's time, a phenomenon which he attributed to the height of the land above sea level and the frequent rains. The hills, therefore, being mossy, are good for peat and pasture but not, in the old days, for produce: "...in a square of 10 miles, there is not so much arable ground, as to maintain 400 people with its produce" (SA, III, 296). With the exception of some barley and oats all the meal had to be brought in. Russell estimated that there were some 30,000 sheep of the local breed which gave, he said, good meat but coarse wool. There were also 230 black cattle, 40 horses, 12 ploughs and 20 carts but no carriages or waggons which would confirm the limited opportunity for travel other than by foot. The population is given

as being 470, that is 222 men and 248 women, in 1790-91. This shows a rise from the figure of 397 given for 1775 but he claims that the population seems "to have been considerably greater in former times than at the present. In one place, about 50 years ago, there were 32 houses; but at present, there are only three" (SA, III, 296). However, this was an exception rather than the rule as the "one place" would have been Ettrickhouse which, as the Ordnance Survey maps of 1863 show, was the older site of the village of Ettrick.

The community of Ettrick, then, was small, forced by its situation to be fairly independent enjoying little influence from the outside world and therefore, in accordance with Wilson's interpretation, more likely to retain the old ways, customs and lore. It was also a community in decline and the Reverend Thomas Robertson of the neighbouring parish of Selkirk, seeing similar trends, attributed them to some of the new farming practices. Although he advocated the use of enclosure and crop rotation, he saw other policies as destructive factors, speaking of "the impolitic practice of adding farm to farm, and the fatal operation of the poors-rates". Of the practice of combining farms he added, "It is painful to see (as in this parish) one person rent a property, on which one hundred inhabitants were reared to the state, and found a comfortable subsistence" (SA, II, 435). . . . It is interesting to consider the experience of John Younger, the shoemaker-philosopher from St. Boswell's even though Ettrick is a hill community and St. Boswell's is in arable land. Describing his home area as it was in 1795 he says "Farming improvements were not then generally begun on our Border. Mr Low [a local factor] was just commencing land-doctor, projecting for the country gentry the improvement of laying six or

ten small farms into one".<sup>21</sup> As a result of this policy, Younger's family and four or five others were evicted from their homes and forced to rearrange their whole domestic economy which had formerly depended on the little that their croft could provide to eke out a living. Across the Borders communities were thus being eroded, with new farming methods ousting not only the older traditional way of life, but also the people themselves.

In some respects, it is true, there was still considerable stability in the Border communities. Rent rolls, for example, show that the same families held the same properties for many generations and indeed many continue to do so. Many of the families were connected by intricate bonds of kinship and often the workforce stayed attached to the same family in a tradition that can be seen as a domestication of the clan loyalties and the protection of the raiding days. In former times the Hogg family had claimed the patronage of the Scotts of Harden, calling on an old rhyme: "If ye reave the Hoggs of Fauldshop /Ye herry Harden's gear".<sup>22</sup> In more practical terms his mother's connection with the Laidlaw line in Craik probably facilitated Hogg's years in service with branches of this family, most notably with the Laidlaw family at Blackhouse on the Douglas Burn in Yarrow, to whom he was related and with whom he stayed ten years. In the light of the preference for the status quo that emerges in many of Hogg's tales it is interesting that Hogg felt in composing his memoirs that the numerous moves of his very early career might reflect badly on his character. He deemed it necessary to stress that they were due to his growing rapidly and therefore being fit for more demanding jobs with better wages (Memoir, p.6). The population in the area was essentially stable due to strong family ties but there was in addition to the overall decline in

population a certain amount of movement within the community. The younger single members of a family were put to service and were more able to move about but their movements were still governed by these ties of kinship and friendship. The completely nomadic members of the community were eyed with some suspicion. It is true that there were still some itinerant musicians who were entitled to good treatment from farmers and their workers but this welcome was reserved only for known regulars.<sup>23</sup> Hogg confirms this in recollecting the farm communities of his youth:

The itinerant fiddlers were a great source of amusement, and a blithesome sight to many a young eye; but every farmer acknowledged one only as his family musician, and the reception of interlopers was rather equivocal. The family musician, however, knew well when to make his appearances. These were at the sheep-shearing, when he got his choice fleece; at the end of harvest, to the kirn supper; at the end of the year for his cakes and cheese; and at the end of seed time for his lippie of oats.<sup>24</sup>

Mobility had not always been regarded as entirely suspicious, for some young men were forced to leave the area to establish themselves. In 1709 it was apparently respectable enough for John Beattie, then a shepherd for the Armstrongs in Sorbie, in the parish of Ewes, to go off to England as a packman to make enough money to marry his master's daughter<sup>25</sup>, a career reminiscent of that of Claud Walkinshaw, Galt's Laird of Grippy in The Entail. In connection with the role of itinerants in a community it is interesting to note that Linda Dégh, citing modern studies of tale-telling, suggests that mobility is linked with good storytelling, as this peripateticism introduces the informant to more varied traditions and tales:<sup>26</sup>

"The itinerant apprentice, the discharged soldier, and the peddler are typical folktale tellers" (Folklore and Society, p.72).

This may explain the frequency in Märchen of heroes and heroines compelled to seek their fortunes by wandering. The itinerant fiddlers

packmen and possibly even the cattle drovers taking stock south from the markets in Falkirk, were a potential source of more widespread traditional tales, folklore, songs and music. However, such itinerant trades fell into disrepute, a trend confirmed by the present-day status of the travelling people or tinkers, and this could in some measure affect the development and enrichment of tradition in a community, possibly affecting the more universal, non-local forms first. Interestingly, a number of Hogg's tales do have an itinerant of some description for their narrator<sup>27</sup> but his work shows a distinct preference for local history and legends as opposed to classical, non-specific forms such as Märchen.

A more likely prospect than hawking eventually presented itself to ambitious Border youths trained in shepherding. This was to move to the Highlands and try and set up as farmers and shepherds themselves. This is a course that Hogg entertained for a time as a means to restore the family fortunes. He visited the Highlands on several occasions and on three tours, in 1802, 1803 and 1804, wrote descriptions of his journeys which were published. He planned to take on a farm at Luskentyre in Harris, but despite his having paid £150 for a year's rent a legal wrangle developed which resulted in Hogg backing down (Memoir, pp.16-17). The fact that he spent the subsequent year or two in the North of England perhaps suggests embarrassment at having to return empty handed to his own small, close-knit community. Nonetheless, despite his own failure to emigrate, a fate which he may finally have accepted with equanimity as yet another kind of parallel with the career of Burns, Hogg's enthusiasm for the Highlands was a spur to many others. The best example is provided by George and James Laidlaw the sons of Hogg's former master



at Blackhouse. Like Hogg they were younger sons and freed from the task of supporting the parental family by the burden of having to establish themselves. Impressed by Hogg's descriptions of the north, they left Yarrow for the Highlands, where, in later years, they were joined by their older brother William. This type of piecemeal emigration going in only one direction and being permanent, is much more disruptive to traditions within a community and probably helped to weaken not only the traditional lifestyle, but also the traditional processes of transmission. It is certainly the case with the transplanted families themselves as Richard Dorson shows.<sup>28</sup>

The specialisation in farming methods not only caused families to leave the land but also brought about a change in the social structure of the community as the example of the Younger family shows. Here a small tenant family who combined a craft, soutering, with a smallholding, supporting a modest crop and stock, a few hens and a goat, were forced to become simple cottars, dependent entirely for their subsistence on the shoemaking which in its turn relied on prompt payment of bills from other families in as poor if not worse situations. The trade sometimes entailed the employment of a journeyman whose wages would have to be paid regardless of whether accounts were met regularly. As children of such families grew up some relief could be gained from sending them out as domestic servants or herds. This was the case for Hogg and for the Younger family: "...my three sisters were now fit for service, and two of them already engaged out to farm places, while the youngest was left to do our house-work, to let my mother remain diligent at her spinning" (Younger, p.59). Border society at the turn of the century was becoming less homogeneous and less settled. Landlords became more powerful and detached from the tenantry and tenant farmers worked on a larger

scale so that a gap began to grow in small townships like St. Boswells between the artisans and agricultural workers, promoting the growth of some sort of more defined class structure.

There were also important commercial changes at work in the towns. From the middle of the sixteenth century woollen manufacture was encouraged on the Borders and in 1581 there were two waulk mills in Galashiels. It was here that in 1666 a Weavers' Corporation was formed. Growth in the industry was slow at first but in 1727 a royal patent established a Board of Manufactures which established "a person skilled in sorting, stapling, and washing coarse tarred wool" in twelve places including Galashiels, Hawick, Jedburgh, Peebles and Lauder (Craig-Brown, I, 563). That was the beginning of major development. Hosiery manufacture was established in the last years of the eighteenth century and by the 1820's things were well under way. In 1824 a survey was carried out of twenty-one woollen establishments which the Board had recently helped to set up. There were "six in Hawick, two in Jedburgh, two in Selkirk, nine in Galashiels, one in Earlston, and one in Dalkeith. With a single exception, all the mills were found in good working order and fully employed, some of them night and day, owing to the demand for woollen yarn and for the plaidings, carpets, and coarse woollen cloths manufactured at those places" (Craig-Brown, I, 571). In the 1830's Tweed cloth became popular and business boomed. Hogg, however, seems in his writing to be uninterested in this aspect of Border life and the direct influences on his work all seem to have come rather from the agricultural community.

It must be remembered, too, that while the Borders agricultural communities were largely self-sufficient and certainly independent, relying on the sheep fairs to establish the economic and mercantile climate, there had always been some dealings with Edinburgh. While the market towns such as Moffat, Langholm, Hawick and St. Boswells could supply most purposes and the sheriff courts such as that at Jedburgh could settle most grievances, Edinburgh was the legal centre. The increasingly large land deals and money transactions were often handled by Edinburgh lawyers and it was an age in which litigation was quite common. Just as Scott's Dandie Dinmont made his way to the capital to seek advice in Guy Mannering, so real figures like Thomas Beattie of Muckledale often found themselves there on legal errands and even humbler figures like John Younger had occasion to go there in order to defend his family in a legal action. He remarked ruefully that, "To Edinburgh was a pretty day's walk, thirty-six miles - no stage-coaching in those days. The poor Jedburgh fly or diligence (or 'the roaring Dilly,' as they called her in a song of those days), to hold a pair of passengers had the old road by Lauder to herself. I was not fly furniture; so I trudged it before nightfall..." (Younger, pp.271-72). Edinburgh lay near enough, then, to exert a real influence on the Borders and indeed the sons and daughters of some of the better off farmers also received part of their education in Edinburgh.

By the early years of the nineteenth century, then, the Border communities had moved quite a distance away from the old closed traditional environments. The same trades and traditional professions still played a large part in regulating the way of life but the old balance was clearly upset. There was greater movement of population and an emended social structure which was to be reflected in the

internal structure of the communities on individual farms. The way of life was in a transitional state and this in turn affected the traditions which were preserved in that way of life. But before moving on to talk about Hogg's use of tradition it is necessary to examine these small farm communities more closely. Descriptions of these units can be found in the work of L.J. Saunders and T.C. Smout<sup>29</sup> and in the memoirs of Janet Bathgate whose family moved from Selkirk to Dryhope near Blackhouse around 1809.<sup>30</sup> With the exception of the market towns and especially in areas like Liddesdale and the parishes of Ettrick and Yarrow where Hogg spent his life, the population was distributed in scattered units rather than in townships. The monument that marks Hogg's birthplace in the centre of the village of Ettrick is not far from the kirk and manse, and this may suggest some access to a more conventional kind of community life in Hogg's earliest years. In the main, however, the "community" most common

on the Borders at this period would centre on the farmhouse. The farmer's family, any domestic servants they had and the herds and single shepherds who slept in the stable, would form the nucleus.

This type of tightly knit unit is described by L.J. Saunders:

There was then little distinction in dress, speech and manner between master and man, mistress and maid. They all lived together in the common kitchen and ate at the same table; the girls of the family slept with the servant in the kitchen, the master and mistress and the youngsters in the other room of the house; the growing boys were bedded in the attic. All shared a common and pervasive intimacy that was strengthened by a relative independence of the town and its shops.

(Saunders, p.45)

Saunders is specifically referring to the Lothians but this type of unit seems to have flourished very happily on the Borders as Hogg's career, factual accounts and fiction all show. It is the kind of household that is described in the Brownie of Bodsbeck or in the story of Marion's Jock in the Three Perils of Man.<sup>31</sup> Hogg describes this type of farmhouse community in his essay on the "Changes in the Life of the Scottish Peasantry" and sees it as an important element in holding Border society together:

Formerly every master sat at the head of his kitchen table, and shared the meal with his servants. The mistress, if there was one, did not sit down at all, but stood at the dresser behind, and assigned each his portion, or otherwise overlooked the board, and saw that every one got justice. The master asked a blessing, and returned thanks. There was no badinage or idle language in the farmer's hall in those days, but all was decency and order. Every night the master performed family worship, at which every member of the family was bound to be present, and every Sabbath morning at least, and the oldest male servant in his absence took that duty on him. The consequence of all this familiarity and exchange of kind offices was, that every individual family formed a little community of its own, of which each member was conscious of bearing an important part. And then the constant presence of the master and mistress preventing all ebullitions of untimely merriment, when the hours of relaxation came,

then the smothered glee burst out with a luxury of joy and animation, of which we may now look in vain for a single specimen.

("Scottish Peasantry", pp.258-59)

This concern with a homogeneous, well regulated community is important and, as will be shown in later chapters, it is a theme central to Hogg's literary works. However it has significance of another kind when taken in conjunction with the fact that for the performance of oral material such as songs or folk narrative some sort of social context, frequently one tied in with work activities, is generally necessary. The example that springs readily to mind is that of the Hebridean waulking songs where the songs and tales are transmitted by participation in performance rather than by being taught individually. An audience which is familiar with the material and critical of the performance is often one of the best aids to the performer. Thus Alan Bruford of the School of Scottish Studies describes how, when recording some Orkney informants, he found they were able to produce more in company: "...Jamesie and Jock started to prompt each other on the words of sea songs and others they had heard as boys... In the following years I recorded more...Jock remained most forthcoming when in Jamesie's company..."<sup>32</sup> Linda Dégh gives a clear indication of the type of activities that would most likely generate storytelling in small rural communities: "...we must state right from the start that fall and winter are the main seasons for storytelling, when the strenuous work in the fields is interrupted. There are two occasions for storytelling: (1) communal work connected with entertainment and (2) festive or regular get-togethers during the evening" (Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.76). The social community of the farmhouse with its extended family would therefore provide a good context for the fostering and performance of traditional song and narrative, as is amply evidenced by the growth

in the North-East of the so called "bothy ballads", generated by just such a community. Even discounting spontaneous informal gatherings and straightforward "crack", the outbursting of "smothered glee" that Hogg refers to, there were plenty of planned gatherings where the performance of music and song as well as the various narrative genres could be expected to play a part. These are the kirns, harvest suppers, weddings and sports days described by Hogg in many of his short prose pieces.<sup>33</sup> Indeed Hogg himself stresses the fact that in this way song at least was integral to the community of his youth:

In my young days, we had singing matches almost every night, and, if no other chance or opportunity offered, the young men attended at the ewe-bught or the cows milking, and listened and joined the girls in their melting lays. We had again our kirns at the end of harvest, and our lint-swinglings in almost every farm-house and cottage, which proved as a weekly bout for the greater part of the winter. And then, with the exception of Wads, and a little kissing and toying in consequence, song, song alone, was the sole amusement.

("Scottish Peasantry", pp.256-57)

It is perhaps understandable that Hogg looking back with the eye of retrospective nostalgia should wish to stress the decorum and probity of these occasions, particularly as it is a theme of his work that the simple country folk retain a purer, better regulated way of life. A contemporary account unfettered by the constraints of prospective publication suggests that these domestic gatherings were probably quite hearty affairs. James Grieve in October 1795 recorded in his diary that: "The servants here held Harvest Home last night 20th tho' the corn is not all come home yet - They had eight bottles of whiskie". Similarly, at the kirn held on the 27th September 1803, he gave his servants six bottles of whisky for making punch and "one bottle to take dry after supper by way of a Dram above their roasted mutton &c. &c. They dined till day".<sup>34</sup> Hogg only mentions

song but the gatherings were clearly festive and well calculated to elicit examples of many different genres of tradition such as "party games, dancing and singing, riddle telling, question and answer games, and the telling of anecdotes or scary stories" (Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.76). However, Hogg claims in his essay on the changing way of life that by the 1830's many of these amusements had died out.

It is clear then that at the period of Hogg's youth an environment conducive to the preservation and transmission of traditional folklore existed. It is likely too that even at that stage the traditional environment was neither so secure nor so untroubled by external influences as Hogg in retrospect may have thought. Despite Hogg's fears the traditional way of life did not just die out with the decline of the old-style farm communities and their amusements but with the entry of more external factors it becomes difficult to determine how they were preserved and passed on. Janet Bathgate for instance refers in her autobiography to several Border traditions including items which Hogg uses in his work namely the fact that Thomas Linton of Chapelhope laid out food and clothes for the Covenanters (Bathgate, pp.32-33); the tradition that the priest Binram was murdered for informing on Covenanters (Bathgate, pp.33-34); the story of the Reverend Thomas Boston laying the ghost of the packman slain at the mill (Bathgate, pp.67-68). However, despite certain small variations in testimony the reader cannot be sure if her account comes from tradition or directly or indirectly from Hogg's works. Just as Hogg's own work could eventually colour the traditional processes there were already in his day a number of influences which could influence the traditional transmission processes and even the meaning and significance of the traditions. The most notable examples are the Church, the schools and the prevalence of cheap chapbook literature.



One salient feature of many of the contemporary descriptions is the insistence on frequent communal religious observance. To the modern reader this stress on piety can become cloying and hard to swallow. However, religious controversy was very real on the Borders and the writings of Wodrow,<sup>35</sup> for example, as well as Hogg's own Brownie of Bodsbeck show that mode of worship had at one time physical as well as spiritual consequences. The way in which religion and superstition intertwine in tradition will be discussed in a later chapter, but it must be noted here in passing that the Church, particularly in the eighteenth century had a real effect on the daily lives of the people and that the slightest deviation was treated most severely. Craig-Brown notes a trivial case which received a stern reprimand and which shows that even elders were not above censure:

1701.- Compeared John Blackhall, elder, and laboured to excuse himself from breach of the Sabbath-day, alleging that he only walkit through the corn-fields after the sermon. The moderator informed him that this was a stumbling to others, and that he ought to spend the time much better on the Lord's Day at home, by reading and praying and examining his family, which he could not do by vaging abroad. He acknowledged that his walking abroad on the Lord's Day was a great fault, and promised never to do the like again.

(Craig-Brown, II, 77-78)

Despite the importance that organised religious observance grew to have it is significant to note that it appears to have become so in a relatively short period. According to the Reverend James Smith, minister for Ettrick Parish at the time of the New Statistical Account, there were only something like 57 communicants when the famous Reverend Thomas Boston took over the parish in 1707. He is reported to have said of his parishioners: "There had been little knowledge of religion among them ...till the time of confusion and persecution; so that John Anderson in Gamescleuch told me of a time when there was not a Bible in the church, except the minister's, his father's, and

another"<sup>36</sup>: This was much altered by Hogg's day and the activity which brought the household regularly together was not a recreational evening gathering, the kind connected with the transmission of folktales and folksongs, but instead the important ceremony of family worship. This activity is stressed by Hogg as a major and valuable aspect of what he regards as the old style of life just as much as the festive occasions. In many ways it took over part of the role of traditional gatherings by bringing the domestic community together and uniting them in a communal pursuit. Regular indoctrination in a strict moral code might also do much to restrict the nature of songs commonly sung, by introducing a kind of self imposed censorship. However, there are more positive transferences due to the meeting of formal religion and folk tradition and a complex relationship exists between song and tune, there being examples of folk-songs and hymns which are sung to variants of the same tune. According to Hogg his uncle Will Laidlaw "hath never had any tune whatsoever, saving that which he saith his prayer to".<sup>37</sup> The influence need not of course be entirely destructive and although the Church could suppress material, supplant the performance context or take over some of the tunes it could also provide materials for tradition, as for example in the traditional ballad "Dives and Lazarus" (Child 56).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the basic precepts of the Christian moral code colour the mentality and outlook of many of the longer traditional narrative forms, particularly Märchen, so that the positive qualities of virtue, honesty and obedience are generally celebrated by both. Only some of the shorter forms such as trickster tales, tall tales, jokes and anecdotes depart from the conventional moral pattern by praising quick wits and trickery.

The other great formal influence from outside on tradition was organised education.<sup>39</sup> At a deep level, as David Buchan suggests,<sup>40</sup>

the spread of literacy can alter not merely the attitude to traditional knowledge, but also the whole learning assimilative process. In a literate society, the written page is the absolute authority and traditional beliefs become regarded as literally "old wives' tales". Moreover, the concentration on text demands an absolute, authoritative version of any item. This encourages rote-learning where the aim is to be able to reproduce accurately, word-for-word, what is to be found on the printed page. It is an attitude of mind that is completely inimical to the processes of oral recreative performance, but it is this kind of literacy with its stress on reading skills and memorisation which predominated on the Borders at this period. It might appear that Hogg with his claim that he had almost no formal schooling could belong to the tradition of oral recreativity but it is clear that the traditional processes were already being eroded by the time of his birth and the attitudes expressed in his writing and in his collecting activities for Scott reveal many signs of the literate mind at work. It is true that he often stresses the superiority of traditional history over official written accounts, but he also uses such accounts on other occasions to support or amplify his traditions. Contradictions such as this are a sign of Hogg's transitional status as a man torn between belief in the old traditions and the will to be part of a more sophisticated "learned" approach.

It is clear that the Borders in the late eighteenth century were not strictly speaking an oral society for reading and writing and a certain amount of basic education were fairly accessible to most. The Reverend James Smith relates that at the time of the New Statistical Account there was only one parish school and that Mr John Beattie, who died seven years before the Account was compiled, and his father had taught the children of Ettrick for a total of a hundred and one

years: that is since some time in the early 1740's. It was here that Hogg received all the formal school education he ever had: "The school-house, however, being almost at our door, I had attended it for a short time, and had the honour of standing at the head of a juvenile class, who read the Shorter Catechism and the Proverbs of Solomon" (Memoir, p.5).

In a sparse community like Ettrick, it could hardly be expected that the parish school could do much more than cater for those families living in the actual village. Parents living in the outlying areas had to make their own arrangements for the education of their children. Better off families, such as the Beatties of Muckledale, could send their offspring as boarders to one of the Border towns or Edinburgh. Alternatively, they could employ a tutor, in some cases a college student, and the children of neighbouring families might also be permitted to study with the farmer's children. The Reverend James Smith indicates that this sort of home education was still quite common in Ettrick in the 1840's, though the teacher was not always very well qualified: "A woman may be seen sometimes giving lessons to a few small children. In the house of a shepherd may be found sometimes also, a boy or girl teaching the children of two or three families united. Our scattered population, indeed, is unfavourable to the education of the young; yet we believe, there is not one above the age of six years old who has not been taught the first lessons of reading and been instructed in the principles of religion" (NSA, III [Selkirk], 74). It was in this way that Hogg completed his formal education:

Next year [when Hogg was eight] my parents took me home during the winter quarter, and put me to school with a lad named Ker, who was teaching the children of a neighbouring farmer. Here I advanced so far as to get into the class who read in the Bible. I had likewise, for some time before my quarter was out, tried writing; and had horribly defiled

several sheets of paper with copy-lines, every letter of which was nearly an inch in length.

Thus terminated my education. After this I was never another day at any school whatever. In all I had spent about half a year at it. It is true, my former master denied this; and when I was only twenty years of age, said, if he was called on to make oath, he would swear I never was at his school. However, I know I was at it for two or three months; and I do not choose to be deprived of the honour of having attended the school of my native parish; nor yet that old John Beattie should lose the honour of such a scholar.

(Memoir, p.5)

As most of the children of shepherds could only be allowed, as Hogg was, to go to school in the winter time, when they were not able to earn their keep as herds, Hogg's education was probably no more deprived than that of many of his contemporaries. Indeed, John Clare and Thomas Holcroft had almost as little formal schooling and they also enjoyed some literary success.<sup>41</sup> However the want of formal teaching could be made up in many ways and Hogg was perhaps more fortunate than many in this respect for at least two of his masters, Mr Laidlaw of Willenslee and James Laidlaw of Blackhouse, had book collections which they permitted Hogg to use. The kind of education offered by most of the schools of the time seems in any case to have been of a simple enough nature. John Younger, who also left school in his ninth year, 1793, describes the kind of lessons he had in a mixed class of "three score young commoners of both sexes" who were taught at St. Boswells:

...what an exertion of judgement and memory takes place, between the time we can certainly distinguish the letter O, "round like the moon," till we have learnedly mastered the "Reading made easy." Here came to be committed to memory "The Shorter Catechism" of our Church of Scotland, at the rate of a question or two a day; first singly, then with scripture proofs attached; a psalm, a portion of one, repeated from memory every Monday morning; while our lesson reading was the Scriptures, first through

the New, then the Old Testament. And well I recollect the great interest excited in a class of about a score, standing all around reading "verse about," through a course of three or four chapters, with the full liberty of trapping the reader at every wrong expression, and taking his higher place; the same vigour and anxiety in spelling in classes words from memory, as given out by the teacher, and the emulation in every exercise, particularly in a fair-written copy....

Mason's spelling book, with eight rules for syllabic pronunciation, gave the high finish to my grand course of education.

(Younger, pp.5-7)

Both Hogg's and Younger's account show that their school education relied heavily on developing reading and memory skills, although Younger adds that his parents hoped he would be able to go back to school later, if things improved, to learn some arithmetic. On the whole it was the kind of education that could easily be undertaken at home. Moreover, the kind of Sabbath morning examinations that John Blackhall, the Selkirk elder, was advised to conduct would appear to be very similar in nature to the standard pedagogic practices as described here. This can be confirmed by Janet Bathgate's description of the Sabbath day observances in Yarrow (Bathgate, pp.24-30). Highly significant is the emphasis on rote learning and the literate skills of reading and writing in the form of the mere mechanical business of copy-writing rather than any form of creative composition. Above all one of the most significant features is the use of and the dependence on religious material. Both in the classroom and the home the children were encouraged to conform to a rigid code of belief and to adopt skills that were alien to the preservation of orally transmitted information. Thus it may be, for instance, that the vogue for keeping journals like Beattie's developed as a literate method of recording information that otherwise would have been preserved orally, creating in this way, a bridge between the oral and literate worlds. The reliance on the

written word to preserve this sort of domestic tradition must surely indicate a breakdown in the traditional method of transmission. The very fact that the writers do not even recognise oral transmission as a possible means of both recording and preserving is a symbol of this decline. By that stage the switch to literate transmission is complete. It is a process which the educational methods certainly encouraged.

In the school formal education was confirmed and supplemented by the emphasis on religious education. It was also extended in Hogg's case at least by a certain amount of independent reading. William Laidlaw of Blackhouse relates that he introduced Hogg to the "collecting library" of Mr Elder, bookseller at Peebles. Through this source he read Smollett and Fielding and accounts of travels and voyages such as Cook's.<sup>42</sup> As noted above, the farmers Hogg worked for often had a number of books of their own which they encouraged him to use. To begin with he read The Life and Adventures of Sir William Wallace and The Gentle Shepherd. The works Mrs Laidlaw of Willenslee loaned him were of a heavier, theological cast, such as Bishop Burnet's Theory of the Conflagration of the Earth (Memoir, pp.8-9). His other reading matter was the occasional newspaper and the Psalms of David. The Blackhouse collection offered more variety and included the works of Milton, Pope, Thomson and Young (Douglas, p.23) as well as the Edinburgh Magazine which Hogg read regularly while with the Laidlaws. L.J. Saunders, writing of rural society shows that some small collections of reading matter, albeit often of a restricted range of subject, did exist even among the farm workers: "The hinds were not intellectual; they were too hard-working to have leisure to read, and what books they had were small inherited collections of devotional classics and patriotic literature from Blind Harry's Wallace (in a simplified edition) to accounts of Covenanting and Jacobite wars"

(Saunders, p.52). The collection of the Bathgate family, simple farm-servants clearly reflects the widespread devotional influence. It also shows that the ballad sheets that marked the transition from oral to literate transmission were established: "'Boston's Works,' 'The Confessions of Faith,' 'The Solemn League and Covenant,' 'Life of Colonel Gardiner.' Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'The Marrow of Modern Divinity', Baxter's 'Saints' Rest,' Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress', 'Robinson Crusoe', 'Jack o' the Beanstalk', a few ball the big Bible, and the 'Shorter Catechism'" (Bathgate, p.48). Younger also gives an account of his favourite reading matter when young:

...I had marched over the hill-tops with "Jack the Giant Killer" in his seven-league boots; braved "the Graeme" with "Sir James the Rose;" wept with robin readbreast over the sweet little "Babes in the Wood;" and travelled in friendly sympathy with poor "little Whittington" by the side of his waggon! Yet none of all my early readings, not even the shepherd David mastering the blustering Goliah [sic] in the valley of Elah, had half the charm to my soul of the fable of the "Lion and the Mouse," one of the selections in our school-spelling book.

(Younger, p.28)

These titles clearly show the influence of the vigorous chap-book movement which testifies to the extent of popular literacy. As Leslie Shepard says, "...there can be no doubt that the chapbooks and ballad-sheets taught under-privileged people to read, and sustained the practice of literacy in people too poor to buy books. They also created a hunger for books".<sup>43</sup> However, there is a danger in claiming too much for the influence of chapbooks and Louis James' caveat should be repeated here. Speaking of the period between 1801 and 1831 he says, "...there was a rapid expansion in the reading public. There are no reliable statistics for this at this time: those that exist have no precise definition of what 'literacy' means, and too often equate reading with writing although, partly because many Sunday



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Schools taught only reading, this is not an accurate guide".<sup>44</sup> Moreover, increased reading ability does not automatically dispel the traditional way of thought or adherence to older, non-rational beliefs: "There had always been a popular readership for broadsheet and chapbook literature, and, most important, such literature accommodated the old superstitions and beliefs that reading is often assumed to exorcise" (James, p.18). These changes eventually came with, for example, the growth of a popular radical literature but the path was prepared by the widespread circulation of cheap, roughly produced chapbook texts of popular tales and ballads such as "Jack the Giant Killer" and "Babes in the Wood". While their material is essentially traditional their prevalence probably contributed in some measure to a transmutation or altering of the indigenous oral tradition. One of Hogg's tales at least, "The Long Pack" (itself a version of a traditional tale) appeared as a chapbook production in the North-East of England, Newcastle being the largest English centre of chapbook publishing after London. (See Ill. 1). The fact that this tale is a reworking of a standard folktale is a sign of the complicated relationship that existed between folk tradition and the literate world through the medium of chapbooks. Hogg's song "Donald McDonald" also appeared in at least one chapbook printed in Glasgow (See Ill. 2). Stirling and Falkirk were also flourishing centres for chapbook production. The fact that Falkirk was also one of the main cattle markets and the hub of some of the main drove roads argues for the wide dissemination of material printed there in particular.

In the Ettrick and Yarrow of Hogg's lifetime, then, the literate skills were quite well developed and though the community still relied essentially on traditional pursuits and outlooks, it had been to a great extent opened to new influences so that in some respects it was

quite a prosperous area and far from backward. Similarly, Hogg's education though officially negligible was quite sound and, unlike Saunders' hinds, he had the will to read as well as books at his disposal. His own picture of himself as an unlettered genius is based on the nostalgia of a man justifiably proud at having risen above his circumstances. Though his education was not as thorough as Burns' is now known to have been, the title of "heaven-taught" rustic sits just as uncomfortably. By nature and upbringing he was thoroughly a child of his native community but his sensibilities had been introduced to non-traditional influences and to thorough going literary approaches long before he became the man whom critics such as Douglas Gifford have dubbed the "Edinburgh Hogg".

In the Borders in particular a growing awareness of the curtailment of oral transmission brought about by the movement away from the traditional way of life led to a concern for the material that was being lost. This in turn led to interested individuals setting down on paper the vanishing traditions, tales and songs. This process culminated in personal collections like Thomas Wilkie's and Sophia Scott's<sup>45</sup> and in the published works of Robert Chambers.<sup>46</sup> The most influential of the published collections of traditional material was Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border which helped in many ways to promote an interest in and awareness of the ballad tradition in Scotland. Yet, the effect could be double-edged, and many ballad performers, well aware not only of the value but also the essence of the ballad, felt that this form of recording the ballads harmed them. Margaret Laidlaw's attack (Memoir, p.137) on Scott is famous but Hogg indicates that this feeling was more generally held. Recording wiped out the creative, spontaneous element and inaccuracies were added and perpetuated:

The publication of the Border Minstrelsy had a singular and unexpected effect in this respect. These songs had floated down on the stream of oral tradition, from generation to generation, and were

regarded as a precious treasure belonging to the country; but when Mr Scott's work appeared their arcanum was laid open, and a deadening blow was inflicted on our rural literature and principal enjoyment by the very means adopted for their preservation. I shall never forget with what amazement and dumb dismay the old songsters regarded these relics, calling out at every verse, "changed! changed!" though it never appeared to me that they could make out any material change, save in "Jamie Telfer o' the fair Dodhead." On reading that song, both my own parents were highly offended at the gallant rescue being taken from the Elliots and given to the Scots [sic].

("Scottish Peasantry", pp.257-58)

One interesting feature in this report is the way in which Hogg fails to understand where the changes that troubled the "old songsters" lay. He can only appreciate the more obvious alterations of function and story and this is perhaps as good an indication as any of his transitional status. Though familiar with the ballads he is not thoroughly imbued in their characteristic deep structures and can only spot surface changes.

The foregoing evidence shows, then, not simply that Hogg stood as an intermediary between traditional culture and the more cosmopolitan one, but also that the environment from which he came was in a state of flux. This double transitional influence is of great significance in determining the kind of material Hogg had at his disposal and it helps to explain the dearth of examples of classical Märchen in his work. A more detailed consideration of the content and significance of Hogg's work will form the subject of the following chapters but for the present it will be helpful to devote some consideration to Hogg's probable informants. It is indeed frustrating that the modern researcher cannot know the full repertoire of Hogg's informants or the actual songs and tales that Hogg was brought up with but one can look more closely at the people on whom he appears to have drawn most heavily for his material, particularly the local history and legends in

which he specialised. This will perhaps help to give a clearer picture of the kinds of traditions he was familiar with and the kind of status folklore enjoyed in his life. Clearly the most important influence came from his immediate family. It was noted above that critics have till now assumed with little or no inquiry that Margaret Laidlaw, Hogg's mother, was an unparalleled source of ballads in particular and that she therefore was Hogg's great mentor in all things traditional. A knowledge of the transitional state of the community must suggest a less clear cut state of affairs although Hogg's own writings make frequent reference to his family as sources for the traditional beliefs he uses. These references are more frequently to his father, uncles and grandfather than to his mother and he tells several anecdotes of other shepherds and local characters. Moreover, while Margaret Laidlaw clearly was familiar with a number of ballads and traditions, there is no clear evidence to suggest that she was an expert or practised performer and no clear indication of the size or nature of her repertoire. The following sections, therefore, will draw together all the evidence available, paying particular attention to Hogg's own comments in an effort to form a clearer idea of the transmission processes within Hogg's family.



Robert Hogg

According to the inscription on his gravestone, Robert Hogg was born at Bowhill in 1729 and died in his 93rd year. Hogg in his memoir gives the bare details of his career as tenant of Ettrick house and Ettrick Hall, as sheep dealer or drover and, finally, as shepherd to Mr Brydon of Crosslee. Little more is known of his background and family and because of this critical interest has perhaps tended to dwell on the influence on Hogg of the maternal line.

It is James Hogg's elder brother William who provides the most detailed account of their father Robert Hogg. Giving the family history in 1813 he mentions the ancient link with the Scotts of Oakwood and then turns to more immediate family history:

Our grandfather, William Hogg, is the next of whom any account can be had; and we find him in the neighbourhood of Fauldshope occupied as a common shepherd. He died at a middle age, leaving our grandmother with four sons and one daughter. She being a prudent, respectable woman, got the family foughten up. Our father was the oldest but one. None of them had any school education, yet our father is a correct and distinct reader of the Bible; and I apprehend that it is from him my brother James derives the seeds of poetry. My reasons for thinking this are the following:- Our father reads much in his Bible, and the passages he generally selects, are the transcendent sublimity of Isaiah, the plaintive strains of Jeremiah, or the magnificent imagery of Ezekiel; these he reads with delight, and I hope with advantage to his spiritual improvement. He reads also, and has sometimes caused me to read "Hervey's Meditations;" and, as this book is written in an elegant flowery style, it affects him much, and he will sometimes exclaim, "Oh! such a man as Hervey has been!" or "Oh! such a writer!" His judgement is sound, and his notions of men and the world tolerably correct, at least of those things of which he has had any experience; but by once engaging in a business, of which he had no previous knowledge, he involved his private affairs in confusion, and that at a time when his family were both small and helpless. He is now, in his eighty-third year, a solitary disconsolate man, deprived,

five months ago, of the company and assistance of our mother, a most worthy and respectable woman. His memory retains more faithfully what was communicated to it when about fifteen years of age, than what it received yesterday.<sup>47</sup>

It would appear, however, that Robert Hogg was something of a character in his own right. He was an elder at Ettrick Kirk, indeed according to the Reverend James Russell, he was the only one (Russell, p.17). Russell also says that Wordsworth reported to him a few anecdotes that Scott had regaled him with concerning Robert Hogg. He gives the following story as an example:

At the first Martinmas of my father's incumbency, Robin came to him and said: "Sir, Mr Potts used always to allow me five shillings from the collections in the kirk at this time for gathering the bawbees, in order to buy a pair o' shoon." But to his disappointment my father replied that he could not take it on him to make this application of the public money.

(Russell, pp.20-21)

Hogg himself recounts another anecdote relating to his father's position in the Kirk:

Owing to some misunderstanding between the minister of the parish and the session clerk, the precenting in church devolved on my father, who was the senior elder. Now, my father could have sung several of the old church tunes middling well, in his own family circle; but it so happened, that, when mounted in the desk, he never could command the starting notes of any but one (St Paul's), which were always in undue readiness at the root of his tongue, to the exclusion of every other semibreve in the whole range of sacred melody. The minister, giving out psalms four times in the course of every day's service, consequently, the congregation were treated with St Paul's, in the morning, at great length, twice in the course of the service, and then once again at the close. Nothing but St Paul's. And, it being of itself a monotonous tune, nothing could exceed the monotony that prevailed in the primitive church of Ettrick. Out of pure sympathy for my father alone, I was compelled



to take the precentorship in hand; and, having plenty of tunes, for a good while I came on as well as could be expected, as men say of their wives. 48

James Hogg's career as precentor was also cut short as his dog Hector insisted on joining in the singing. Oddly enough none of these traditions seem to have been passed down to the next generation, for Mrs Garden, whether out of ignorance or discretion, refers to her grandfather as "not a man in any way remarkable" (Garden, p.10). These stories about his father were obviously popular with Hogg and it is to be supposed that it was himself who first related them to Scott. But aside from Robert Hogg's excellence as a subject for personal narrative, he seems also to have been an important informant where local history and family tradition were concerned.

It was from his father that Hogg learned the various traditions relating to the ancient Hogg line that he uses. In a letter to Scott in 1805 he recounts this history:

I may likewise inform you of a circumstance which I never was acquainted with until this winter, namely, that my ancestors farmed the lands of Fauldshope &c. under the Scotts of Harden or Oakwood even so early as the time of their residence at Kirkhope, and for several ages, even until the family lost these lands. They were noted for strength, hardiness, and a turbulent disposition; and one of them named William was Hardens chief champion, and from his great strength and ferocity was nicknamed the Wild boar. My father adds, that the said william was greatly in favour with Harden until at last by his temerity he led him into a jeopardy that has nearly cost him his life. I readily concluded what the jeopardy was. 49

It is clear from the letter that Hogg, inspired by this family tradition, grafts it to another Border tale, the story of Muckle-Mou'd Meg Murray, a version of which Scott sent him, to create

"The Fray of Elibank". In the notes to this poem Hogg elaborates the Hogg tradition, including the fullest versions of some lines concerning the family:

And the rough Hoggs of Fauldshop,  
That wear both wool and hair;  
There's nae sic Hoggs as Fauldshop's  
In all Saint Boswell's fair.

And afterwards, near the end:-

But the hardy Hoggs of Fauldshop,  
For courage, blood, and bane;  
For the Wild Boar of Fauldshop,  
Like him was never nane.  
If ye reave the Hoggs of Fauldshop,  
Ye herry Harden's gear;  
But the poor Hoggs of Fauldshop  
Have had a stormy year. 50

Robert Hogg was probably also the source of the tradition that several of the wives of the Fauldshope Hoggs "were supposed to be rank witches" (Mountain Bard, p.66). Hogg uses anecdotes relating to this both in the notes to "The Fray of Elibank" and in the notes to The Queen's Wake.<sup>51</sup> Hannah Aitken includes the latter tale in her collection of Scots folk tales, saying that "the narrator would almost certainly be his mother".<sup>52</sup> However, as it is a Hogg family tradition and as Hogg, in the letter quoted above, clearly acknowledges his father as the source of related Hogg traditions, it seems reasonable to conclude that Robert Hogg was in fact the source for these anecdotes. Robert Hogg is also cited in an anecdote in the notes to "Kilmeny" (Queen's Wake, p.347). Furthermore, Hogg makes specific reference to his father in at least one of the major prose works - The Brownie of Bodsbeck. In an introduction which was added to the 1837 edition Hogg states that, "The general part is taken from Wodrow, and the local part from the relation of my own father, who had the best possible

traditional account of the incidents" (Brownie, p.170). Thus it is clear that Robert Hogg was regarded by his son as a good and reliable source for certain types of traditional narrative, particularly local history and legend. He does not appear to have been a performer of ballads and William Laidlaw of Blackhouse notes that when he and Scott visited Hogg's home they did not meet Robert Hogg, as he probably thought them "crazy fools".<sup>53</sup>

Will Laidlaw (Will o'Phaup)

Will Laidlaw, Hogg's maternal grandfather, was born at Craik in 1691. Craik was celebrated as a Laidlaw "stronghold". This character, described by Hogg as "far-famed", was obviously important in the Hogg/Laidlaw family tree, and a charismatic figure, on whom many stories centred. Most of the information to be had about Will Laidlaw is presented by Hogg as part of the piece on "Odd Characters" in the Shepherd's Calendar.<sup>54</sup> Will, according to Hogg, was famous for his athletic ability as both a leaper and a runner but he appears also to have enjoyed some sort of reputation as a ballad performer for it was apparently him that a Blackhouse serving girl remembered as the singer of "Auld Maitland" (Laidlaw, p.67). Hogg himself makes no reference in his article to Will as a singer or ballad performer but he does seem to think it important that Will was believed to have been the last man to meet and converse with the fairy people. In summing up Will's dealings with the supernatural, Hogg says, "...though Will was a man whose character had a deep tinge of the superstitions of his own country, he was besides a man of probity, truth, and honour, and never told that for the truth, which he did not believe to be so" ("General Anecdotes", p.445). It would seem from this statement and from the kinds of adventures which Hogg ascribes to Will o'Phaup in this piece that as a narrator he excelled in the shorter forms of narrative, the belief tale and the memorat or personal narrative. It is to be remembered too that Will o'Phaup is cited as the original source for the account of the Battle of Philliphaugh which appears in the story "Wat Pringle o' the Yair".<sup>55</sup> The type of narratives with which he is most commonly associated seem to fall comfortably into the categories which Linda De'gh proposes for the belief tales popular in Kakasd in Hungary: "The belief stories in Kakasd fall

mainly into two groups: (1) the recitals of extraordinary experiences and (2) the relation of unlucky happenings" (Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.138). This is confirmed by Hogg's stressing that Will only related things he believed to be true, for this is the key factor in differentiating between Märchen and legend or belief tales. Linda Dégh formulates it succinctly when she says that "the belief story is 'true', and the märchen is 'not true' " (Dégh Folklore and Society, p.139). Stith Thompson emphasises the importance of this and the fact that narrator (and audience) are aware which is which:

Traditional history and traditional science of the kind here suggested [notably aetiological legends and Biblical myths] seem to be a part of the folklore of peoples all over the world. But it is only in Europe and, to some extent, in western Asia that such tales are considered in a class to themselves. On the one hand stands the vast store of recognized fiction and on the other these tales which are related as undoubted facts. Most story-tellers are very clear about when they are speaking to command belief and when they are contriving a fiction. 56

Hogg's account of his grandfather makes it sound as if he knew him well and was accustomed to hear him relate his tales. In fact Will died in his eighty-fourth year which would be in 1774-75, when James Hogg was only four. Hogg says he remembers his grandfather well (Wars, III, 20), and it seems quite likely that Will o'Phaup lived with the Hogg family during the last years of his life as Margaret Laidlaw, his eldest daughter, reputedly brought up her brothers and sisters after the death of her mother. Hogg himself states that Will died in his father's house ("General Anecdotes", p.445). It is impossible, however, to guess how great an effect Will could have had in a direct way. What seems most likely is that the stories inherited from Will were transmitted by his children, principally Will and Margaret. This is

explicitly stated to be the case in "Wat Pringle": "Now, though I cannot say that I ever heard him [Will o'Phaup] 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 the very individual spots where the chief events happened" (Wars, III, 20). The same thing happened with "Auld Maitland" - both William and Margaret learned it from their father. What emerges, then, is a clear chain of transmission, evidence of a repertoire consisting of belief tales dealing with superstition and history and some indication of a singing repertoire. There is no evidence of any Märchen and no indication of his ability as a performer apart from Hogg's own phrase "far-famed", although this is to some extent confirmed by the evidence of the Blackhouse serving girl. Hogg clearly associates his grandfather with a bygone age and outlook and this is a telling sign of the transitional state of the community with its changing values and beliefs. Moreover, it illustrates neatly Hogg's own ambivalence as he is slightly apologetic for the belief in fairies while admiring and honouring his grandfather. Such beliefs were no longer relevant or necessary to the way of life and Hogg overcomes this by restating them in a context which will tolerate such "irrationality" without actually subscribing to it. Thus he reworks traditional folk motifs into his fictional narrative, relying on willing suspension of disbelief and stopping to point out traditions, such as those concerning local history, which he himself believes in openly.

Margaret Laidlaw

Important though Will o'Phaup was as a source for Hogg's repertoire, he was not the direct link and it is to William and Margaret Laidlaw that one must turn to complete the train of transmission. Of the two it is Margaret who has been most frequently celebrated as Hogg's greatest source and influence in matters of tradition. The reasons appear clear - Will o'Phaup was dead by Hogg's fifth birthday, and his mother is recorded as having performed "Auld Maitland" for Scott. It is not so clear whether this inference accurately reflects her status as a performer or informant.

Margaret Laidlaw was the eldest daughter of Will o'Phaup and was born in 1730, while her father was shepherd in Old Upper Phawhope (Phaup). She lived there till she was thirty when she married Robert Hogg. According to an anonymous article published in 1818 Margaret was responsible "while she was yet young" for the upbringing of her siblings, their mother having died.<sup>57</sup> The same writer says that, "The race of wandering minstrels was not then extinct in her native glens; and from the recitations of one of them, an old man of ninety, she stored her memory with many thousand lines of the old Border ballad, which he alone knew. To his knowledge she succeeded; and there is reason to fear that much of it died with her" ("Life and Writings", p.417). This reference, picked up later by "G" in "Some Particulars" (p.195), is the only one to such an occurrence and in view of other inaccuracies in the article it should perhaps not be taken at face value. It could perhaps be a misguided reference to Andrew Moore (Appendix IV) who is referred to both by Hogg and William Laidlaw of Blackhouse, as a source for traditional material passed on by Hogg's family. Hogg said of his mother when writing to Scott in 1803, "My mother is actually a living miscellany of old songs.

I never believed that she had half so many until I came to a trial: there are few in your collection of which she hath not a part" (NLS MS 3874 f.114). He adds that he would have written many of these down had he not discovered, "...a collection of songs in two volumes, published by I know not who, in which I recognised about half-a-score of my mothers best songs, almost word for word" (NLS MS 3874 f.114).

This unknown collection may simply have been Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs as Herd is referred to later in the letter.

It is perhaps more likely to have been the Poetical Museum, published by George Caw at Hawick in 1784, as Herd's versions appear to differ from Margaret Laidlaw's while the Caw collection was gathered in the Borders. It is worth noting that Caw, like Scott, relied heavily on the collection of Dr Elliot of Cleughhead in Liddesdale. Hogg does not say how he came by this collection, but it was presumably the first of such things he had seen, for he says that he is acquainted with "almost no collections of that sort" (NLS MS 3874 f.114).

It is furthermore clear from the letter that Hogg is engaged in writing down songs that he believes to be old and unprinted. Among the titles that he gives are "The Battle of Flodden" (Child 168), the "Battle of Bannockburn", "The Battle of the Boyne" (neither of which appears in Child) and "Young Bateman's Ghost" (Child 53 or 77). It appears at first as if he is still talking about his mother's repertoire but he says that he could have these texts "for a few miles travel". He was living with his parents at Ettrick house at the time and so his mother either did not have these ballads or only had them in a fragmented form. The same probably applies to the other two titles Hogg mentions, "May Colin" ("Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight", Child 22) and "Graham and Bewick" (Child 211) and indeed in a later note Hogg says it is impossible to have "Graham and Bewick", "the only person



who hath it being absent at a harvest" (NLS MS 877 f243).

However, his mother clearly did have some of the major ballads and Hogg shows himself to be thoroughly conversant with these sets.

He compares Herd's versions unfavourably with his mother's, even to the point of suspecting the integrity of Herd's texts, an example of the preference in a traditional community for the familiar way of telling a story or singing a song. He compares Margaret Laidlaw's versions of "Jamie Telfer" (Child 190), "Johny Armstrong of Guilnockie" (Child 169) sometimes called "Johnie Armstrong's Last Goodnight", "The Tale of Tomlin" ("Tomlin", Child 39), and "Clerk Saunders" (Child 69) with Herd's texts.

The only other potential record of her ballad repertoire lies in the MSS of the ballads and commentary which Hogg contributed to the Minstrelsy. He sent Scott texts, lines or background information for ten ballads, which are to be found in NLS MS 877. For only two of these ballads, "Auld Maitland" (not included in Child) and "Clerk Saunders", is Margaret Laidlaw specifically mentioned as a source. She is not mentioned on the manuscript of "Auld Maitland" but Hogg's description of her performing it for Scott (Memoir, p.136) confirms her as a source for the ballad. It must be noted that the "Clerk Saunders" text as presented in the Minstrelsy is not Margaret Laidlaw's and corresponds in fact to a combination of two songs which she knew. These are her version of "Clerk Saunders" and a variant she had of Child 77 ("Sweet William's Ghost"). Of the other ballads in NLS MS 877, only "The Battle of Otterburn" (Child 161) has any clear indication of provenance. This ballad did not come from Hogg's mother but from "a crazy old man and a woman deranged in her mind".<sup>58</sup> In the comments attached to "The Gay Goshawk" (Child 96) Hogg says, "I was very fond of this ballad ... from my childhood ...".<sup>59</sup> From this it might

reasonably be construed that his mother first introduced him to it. The notes to "Johnie Scot" (Child 99), on the other hand, speak of "the repeater". This probably means that the transmitter was not a member of the immediate Hogg family, particularly as the next item on the same sheet (NLS MS 877 f256) is "Clerk Saunders" in the notes to which Hogg speaks of "my mother". The only other text for which his mother is clearly cited as a source is the set of lines beginning "The heron flew east, the heron flew west" which appear in the notes to "Sir David Graeme" (Mountain Bard, pp.13-14) and which are adapted in "The Bridal of Polmood".<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note that Hogg often uses more than once items such as this and the traditions concerning the Hoggs of Fauldshope which he clearly ascribes to members of his immediate family.

If it is assumed that, where not attributed elsewhere, the texts and information which Hogg records derived from Margaret Laidlaw there are as many as twenty-one titles which could potentially be ascribed to her repertoire (See Appendix III). This is probably unlikely as Hogg cites other informants and there may have been some whom he did not credit however it is possible that Margaret Laidlaw could recite all or part of many of these ballads. No texts exist for many of these titles, some of the texts are fragments and others are meant simply as emendations, consisting only of a verse of two.

No evidence exists for the sort of narrative traditions she passed on to her family. Presumably many of the traditions regarding Will o'Phaup were kept alive by her as well as by her brother William. She is referred to in "The Marvellous Doctor"<sup>61</sup> where she relates some tales of mysterious attraction, including the story of Johnie Faa, the gipsy who beguiled Lord Cassilis' lady, most well known as

the song "The Gypsy Laddie" (Child 200). The only other illustration of her knowledge of traditional subjects comes in letters of her oldest son William. He wrote that:

... our mother to keep us boys quiet would often tell us tales of kings, giants, knights, fairies, kelpies, brownies, etc., etc. These stories fixed both our eyes and attention, and our mother got forward with her housewifery affairs in a more regular way. She also often repeated to us the metre psalms, and accustomed us to repeat them after her; and I think it was the 122nd which Jamie...could have said. I think this was before he knew any of the letters. I am certain before he could spell a word. 62

Our mother's mind was well fortified by a good system of Christian religion, which our grandfather with much care and diligence had given all his family; yet her mind was stored with tales and songs of spectres, ghosts, fairies, brownies, voices, &c. These had been both seen and heard in her time in the Glen of Phaup; and many a winter night to keep us boys steady, has she told us how the fairie would have tripped with much mirth and speed along the bottom of some lonely dell, how the dead-lights, or some shapeless appearance twisting and throwing itself, announced the death of some near relative; and not unfrequently, the spirit of the gathering storm was heard to shriek through the air. These tales arrested our attention, and filled our minds with the most dreadful apprehensions. It no sooner grew dark, than we durst no longer venture to the door without someone to protect us; and even this had to be one whom we supposed to be more powerful than the spirit whom we thought lingered without the walls of the house, and watched an opportunity to catch us. These songs and tales which were sung and told in a plaintive, melancholy air, had an influence on James's mind altogether unperceived at the time, and perhaps indescribable now.... It had been customary with our mother to repeat to us some of the Psalms of David, partly with a view, no doubt, to keep us quiet, and partly to form our minds to morality and goodness. Several of these James got by heart before he could read a word, and after he went to school he learned many more.

("Some Particulars", p.444)

The supernatural figures that William cites suggest an abundance of belief stories and local legend though it is possible that some examples of Märchen could have been included. Certainly there

appears to be a real link between the kind of material Margaret Laidlaw narrated and the content of Hogg's poetry, tales and notes. It must be noted, however, that the influence she exerted was by no means confined to fantasy and the supernatural. For every ballad sung in the Hogg household or for every tale told, there was just as likely to be one if not two psalms or Bible texts sung or expounded. William could apparently remember no story or ballad worth recounting, but he does cite a particular psalm. This may simply reflect the attitude with which these different topics were presented. In a traditional community the telling of folktales is a respected ability (see below) whereas Margaret Laidlaw's attitude, according to the picture drawn here by her son, was that traditional material was exclusively for amusement - to keep the bairns out of mischief. The psalms and texts, while giving enjoyment, were linked with instruction and would no doubt carry extra weight, being regarded as more important and more valuable than balladry or tales. It is to be remembered that William also wrote that in their home only devotional literature enjoyed any status at all: "Our parents thinking that reading too much would induce to a neglect of business, dissuaded him [James] powerfully from the perusal of every book that was not some religious tract or other; so that he had neither access to books, nor money to purchase them with..." ("Some Particulars", p.445). These attitudes are of the first importance in considering Hogg's literary work. They show very clearly the way in which, even at the simplest level, orthodox religious observance mixes with the transmission of traditional folklore, gradually taking over its role and place. The shifting attitude Hogg reveals in his presentation of traditional material and superstition and the way in which superstition and the reinforcement of orthodox morality are

fused in his work must have been influenced by this decline in prestige of traditional folklore in the Ettrick community, both at large and within the family circle.

One last point must be made in order to put Margaret Laidlaw's status as a performer of folk narrative into perspective. Despite the fact that a number of women performers such as the Grimm's Frau Viehmann, Linda Dégh's Zsuzsánna Palkó and Margaret Laidlaw herself have achieved a degree of fame due to the recording and publishing of their repertoire, it appears from comparing fieldwork studies that proficient storytelling and the attendant reputation within the community is usually the preserve of men, often because the storytelling occasions are linked with male communal work. Linda Dégh explains the situation carefully:

There is no doubt that the earliest notes in folktale literature mention wet nurses and old women. They are the old narrators, the fictitious and the real ones, of world literature, of whom poets revive their childhood memories in the magic tales ...

The main burden of proof, however, convinces us that storytelling is not a specific occupation for women. There are stories destined mainly for children which, of course, are told by women. It is the task of women to tell stories for children, but this does not mean that women are true storytellers, recognised by the community. It is quite possible that there were among these women some extremely gifted storytellers, but this cannot be stated with certainty today due to the scarcity and stylization of the available documentary evidence. Surely we are not dealing here with the true storyteller. The Hungarian documents show clearly that the household tales for children told by women were never taken seriously by adults. True storytelling is adult entertainment having an important social role. Sándor Pintér writes, "It would be a serious mistake to think that only children listened to tales; on the contrary, the tales were mostly told for the entertainment of adults."

(Dégh, Folklore and Society, pp.90-91)

Mrs Palkó's popularity until her death in 1965 equaled that of her father and her brother [both famous storytellers within the community]. Since both passed away she had been famous as a storyteller. She had told stories before, but then not so many people came to hear her; it is a long time before a woman can vie with the men, until the occasional storyteller in the family circle becomes a professional personality.

(Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.100)

Here we wish to add something about storytelling for children. With the Kakasd Szeklers, this is not considered collective entertainment but one of the duties of women. Yet it is of extreme importance for the transmission of the tale tradition. Nearly every mother tells her children stories, well or badly according to her ability and as she remembers them from her own childhood. As the children ask for stories, she usually refreshes her memory with a book of magic tales....

It does not matter whether the children's stories are told well or badly or whether they are read. They constitute for the children the first real encounter with the folktale, and it quite often happens that it is decided then and there who will become, sometimes after many decades, a good storyteller.

(Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.104)

These extensive references to Linda Dégh's work are important in giving the appropriate context against which to measure Margaret Laidlaw's probable status as a performer. From the lack of external evidence of her performing ability and the fact that her brother William is referred to several times by Hogg in ways which suggest he was a lively performer of material inherited from Will o'Phaup, it seems possible that Margaret Laidlaw was what is termed a passive informant, one not usually regarded as a performer but who nevertheless retained a good deal of material and who could, in the absence of a better performer, be drawn to recall material. The accounts show that she provided her children with a good grounding in traditional lore but that it was one coloured by the weakened position of traditional belief

in a transitional society. No mention is made of her having in her singing repertoire any class of song other than ballad, which would have done much to confirm her as a proficient traditional performer with a large, varied repertoire. However, it must be remembered that Hogg, encouraged by Scott in his researches, was looking for a particular type of song. They were intent on recording the "big" ballads, the classic historical and tragic ballads. No enquiry was made for humorous songs, nonsense songs or any of the sort of lyric songs Burns collected or Chambers recorded in his Songs of Scotland Prior to Burns. As a result, much may have slipped past and been lost. Yet, even so, the evidence for Margaret Laidlaw as an adept performer is not extensive. There is a report of her "chaunting" "Auld Maitland" to Scott and company and this, along with William's account of her "plaintive, melancholy air", is the only record of her performance. "Chaunting" of itself means very little and should not be taken as a sign that she was not a good singer. It may indicate nothing more than that she sang in a slow, incantatory style and ballad-singing, like traditional Gaelic music and song, obeys its own rules and does not always fit without violence into conventional, measured staff notation. Reference to recordings of traditional performers such as the Stewart family of Blairgowrie will do more to elucidate this point than lengthy description here can.

Apart from the "Auld Maitland" episode, her rebuke of Scott for printing the ballads where she talks of "her" songs and Hogg's discussion of her repertoire, we have no other evidence for Margaret Laidlaw's authority as a ballad singer. It is on "Auld Maitland" that her reputation has rested. It is interesting that Laidlaw, who introduced Hogg to Scott, did not first hear of the song from Hogg and he was not apparently aware of Margaret Laidlaw as an accomplished

singer as he did not approach her directly for material for the Minstrelsy. Instead his first intimation of "Auld Maitland" came from another unconnected informant who is unfortunately anonymous, "Meanwhile I heard from one of our servant girls, who had all the qualifications of these old women [ballad transmitters], whose deaths I deplored, part of a ballad called "Auld Maitland" that a grandfather of Hogg's could repeat, and from the girl herself I got several of the first stanzas, which I took note of, and find I have still the copy" (Laidlaw, p.67). Thus it emerges that the ballad was sung by Will o' Phaup and that he was known as a ballad singer outside the immediate family. Moreover, when Laidlaw describes the actual recording of the song, Margaret Laidlaw is still not the principal informant, "In a week or two I received this [Hogg's] reply with the ballad as he had copied it from the recitation of his Uncle Will of Phawhope, corroborated by his mother, and that both said they had learned it from their father (a still elder Will of Phawhope), and an old man called Andrew Muir, who had been servant to the famous Mr Boston of Ettrick" (Laidlaw, p.67).

The text, then, was derived from more than one version and indeed from more than one informant of whom Hogg's mother was the secondary source. Though the ballad has been regarded as her pièce de résistance, it would appear that Will Laidlaw was the initial source for the text which Scott actually printed. Why did Hogg not go straight to his mother for the ballad? Does this suggest that he did not consider her to be the best performer of the ballad? It is noticeable that even when telling Scott that his mother had a good collection of ballads, Hogg himself seems surprised by the extent of her knowledge: "I never believed that she had half so many till I came to a trial" (NLS MS 3874 f114). This probably indicates that she was not accustomed to perform the ballads frequently or in public. One



possible answer may be implied in the 1802 letter. Talking of tunes Hogg speaks of the difficulty of tracing and preserving them. He then discusses his mother and uncle in this capacity:

My uncle hath never had any tune whatsoever, saving that which he saith his prayer to: and my mothers is quite gone by reason of age and frailty, and as they have had a strong struggle with the world ever since I was born, in all which time having seldom or never repeated many of the songs, her memory of them is much impaired.

(NLS MS 3874 f.114)

This shows, then, that Margaret Laidlaw was not a practised performer even within her own family circle, far less recognised further afield as an accomplished performer. She certainly learned material from her father and could, if pressed, recall a number of songs, but in the common way of things she did not apparently sing. There could be several reasons for this - Hogg himself suggests age and adversity (by his reckoning she was 72 in 1802) - but perhaps she was overshadowed by the reputation of her father and brother. Lizzie Higgins for instance did not develop fully as a singer while her mother, Jeannie Robertson, was performing. Jimmie Scott, although he has a good repertoire of songs, including some learned direct from his grandmother which his father does not have, prefers to leave the singing to his father, Willie Scott. Perhaps also, as her husband was an elder and apparently not very interested in ballads, according to Laidlaw's assessment, and perhaps too because Margaret Laidlaw herself is always portrayed as devout and God-fearing, she felt the ballads were inappropriate. Nevertheless, Andrew Moore, who was the servant of Ettrick's most famous minister, was a famous balladeer and transmitter of folk traditions in which he was reputed to believe. Indeed, Hogg attributes a large portion of credulity and superstition to Thomas Boston himself ("General Anecdotes", p.445) but these men

lived one generation earlier. The fact that Hogg attributes such widespread belief in superstition to that period may suggest that the community retained at that point a strong, oral traditional culture. Margaret Laidlaw's passivity is a sign of the steady change or decline from a full traditional culture to a literate, more standardised culture.

Will Laidlaw

Hogg's maternal uncle Will was, like his father, a shepherd at Phawhope, about five miles from Ettrick Village. There is a stone (No 68) in Ettrick kirkyard just beyond those of Hogg's immediate family, dedicated to the memory of William Laidlaw, "late shepherd of Phauhope, who died at Yair 25th March 1829 aged ninety-four years".<sup>63</sup> This seems likely to be Hogg's uncle although Hogg states in "Wat Pringle" that his uncle was ninety-six years of age when he died (Wars, III, 20). The dates on the gravestone would mean that he was born in 1735 which is plausible, making him five years younger than his sister Margaret. The stone also relates that he was married to another Margaret Laidlaw who died, aged seventy-six, on 21 February 1822.

There is no need to emphasise the paucity of material available concerning Will Laidlaw yet he is an important figure for, as shown above, he is the main source for "Auld Maitland" and for traditions such as those concerning the Battle of Philliphaugh and letters such as one of 20 July 1801 show Hogg consulting his uncle about ballads.<sup>64</sup> Again the letter of 1802 is invaluable in providing what information there is. After the passage referring to his uncle's lack of tunes, Hogg continues:

My uncle said I! He is, Mr Scott, the most incorrigible man alive. I cannot help telling you this: he came one night professedly to see me and crack with me as he said: thinking this a fair opportunity, I treated him with the best the house could afford, gave him [a] hearty glass, and to humour him talked a little of religion, thus I [set] him onn, but good L—d! had you heard him, it was impossible to get him off again: in the course of his remarks he had occation to cite Ralp Ers[kine sun]dry times, he run to the dale where the books lay, got the sermons, and [read m]e every one of them from which he has a citation, what a deluge was poured on me of errors, sins, lusts, covenants broken burnt and buried, legal teachers, patronage, and what not! In short, my dram was lost

to my purpose; the mentioning of a song put him in a passion.

(NLS MS 3874 f.114)

It is reasonably common in field work to discover, as in this case, that informants or performers who have turned to religion reject the old songs and traditions as ungodly and profane.<sup>65</sup> Thus in a recent radio talk on American Blues music, Anthony Wall described a visit to Obie Paterson of Mississippi, once a well-known and powerful performer. Paterson refused to play at all, saying that, "Blues is the music of the Devil" and that, having turned to religion after an illness, he had prayed to the Lord "to move that guitar off my mind" so that he might be saved.<sup>66</sup> It is possible that it is Will Laidlaw to whom Scott refers in a letter to George Ellis, "One of our best reciters has turned religious in his later days, and finds out that old songs are unlawful. If so, then as Falstaff says, is many an acquaintance of mine damned".<sup>67</sup> By 1802 Will may have given up his interest in the expression and preservation of traditional song. Nevertheless he seems to have been a main informant of Hogg's and perhaps these visits for a "crack" were not unusual. The incident Hogg relates may simply mean that religious controversy was a hobby-horse of Will's not that he had entirely given up all traditional matters or even just songs. Perhaps Hogg's main link with Will o' Phaup was provided by his uncle rather than his mother. This was so in the transmission of "Auld Maitland" and the traditions about the Battle of Philliphaugh" and perhaps it was more generally the case. However, even this source was limited as far as songs were concerned by a lack of tunes and by intense religious fervour.

It is unfortunate that though there is some evidence to suggest two fine tradition bearers in Will o' Phaup and Will Laidlaw, there is little to indicate the nature and extent of their repertoire. If the

correspondence between Hogg and his uncle was indeed frequent and convivial, then the unassigned ballads discussed with reference to Margaret Laidlaw could perhaps be more appropriately attributed to her brother. It is probably that it was this uncle that Hogg cites as a source of a piece of weather lore in one of the Shepherds Calendar articles<sup>68</sup> and this gives some slight indication of the range of traditions in his repertoire, which would appear to have been extensive from what Hogg says at the end of his description of Will o' Phaup: "One of his sons is still alive, near to a hundred years of age, with all his faculties complete; and as he well remembered all his father's legends and traditions, what a living chronicle remains there of past ages!" ("General Anecdotes", p.445). The best that can be said is that the evidence for Hogg being brought up in a family with strong traditional resources is good although there are important reservations. His family did contain proficient performers of traditional material. Not only did their repertoire include classic ballads, but there were also a number of local legends and beliefs. However, by the stage at which they reached Hogg, the counterplay of a number of external social and economic factors had done much to erode the passing on and performing of traditional material. An increased interest in education, more extensive reading, increased mobility of population, the influence of Edinburgh, rendered more accessible by better road systems, and the growing influence of orthodox religious observance, all combined to weaken and remove the function folklore had within the community. As the communities changed so did the folk transmission processes. If the process is taken one step further and Mrs Garden's account of her father is consulted for the signs of this traditional inheritance it becomes clear that the literate culture with its mass application of common

standards has thoroughly taken over and Mrs Garden's sentiments are directed by the affectation of the age. She has inherited Hogg's sentimentality but none of the life and vigour, and seems to know nothing at all of the traditional song and narratives. Hogg himself, caught in the transition, teeters between the two sides, both intuitively and consciously, and this has a lot to do with the double-edged quality of much of his work.

## CHAPTER TWO : Song

One unfortunate result of the neglect of folk tradition in Hogg's work has been the fact that song and the business of song-writing have not been singled out for proper investigation. Because appropriate tools for such discussion have not been to hand, the songs have generally been lumped in with the poetry where the different demands in composition have led to unflattering comparisons. The repetition and strictly regular metre necessary to any song do not always work so well in poetry. This can only exacerbate the problem facing students of Hogg's verse, namely the fact that, as Douglas Mack freely allows, the quality of the work is patchy and uncertain. "The main reason", he suggests, "for the present neglect of Hogg's poetry is clear: he wrote far too much verse, and his best poems have long been submerged among his failures".<sup>1</sup> In a volume which he claims contains "as many as possible of Hogg's successful poems" (Selected Poems, p.xii) Mr Mack presents only forty-one items from the hundreds of pieces Hogg penned during his career. Three of the pieces included are extracts from a longer work, The Queen's Wake (1813),: "Kilmeny" and "The Witch of Fife" along with their introductions, and the conclusion of the poem. The lion's share, twenty-eight items out of the total, is devoted to a selection of songs, regrettably without tunes, and this is a reasonably fair assessment of where Hogg's talents lie.

It was perhaps natural that his first efforts at expression should be in the form of song although he quickly progressed to drama as early letters to Laidlaw show.<sup>2</sup> Hogg enjoyed convivial amusement and was extremely interested in the state of traditional folk song and in the kind of repertoire prevalent among singers on the Border. This more detached, intellectual approach to song was stimulated to a large

extent by the search for ballad texts for Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. This helped to develop a concern that traditional song was on the decline. Scott was prompted to reflect that, "Indeed as our old Sennachies are yearly dying out & as the present generation 'care little for these things' the sources of traditionary knowledge are fast drying up. Since my recollection Songs which I have often heard recited have been entirely forgotten".<sup>3</sup> Part of the problem was that Scott was particularly looking for ballad texts and the absence of ballad texts does not automatically mean that other types of folk song are in decline, merely that the tradition is in transition. Nevertheless, Hogg saw song as an important guide to the state of traditional culture on the Borders and when, in 1832, he came to write of the changes he detected in the way of life of the Scottish peasantry, he claimed to see a decline. He saw a change for the worse in the growing gap between farmer and servant, in the stringency of the game laws but most importantly in the decline in song: "On looking back, the first great falling off is in SONG. This, to me, is not only astonishing, but unaccountable. They have ten times more opportunities of learning songs, yet song-singing is at an end, or only kept up by a few migratory tailors".<sup>4</sup> This decline is not simply in the amount of singing done but also in the repertoire: "By dint of hard pressing, a blooming nymph will sometimes venture on a song of Moore's or Dibdin's (curse them!), and gagging, and half-choking, with a voice like a cracked kirk-bell, finish her song in notes resembling the agonies of a dying sow" ("Scottish Peasantry", p.257)

Hogg was concerned with song not simply in an intellectual way but also as a practitioner. If we are to judge from the coloured picture of the 'Noctes', Hogg's contemporaries regarded Hogg primarily as a songster. His songs frequently appeared there, some,



like "The Noctes Sang" and the O'Doherty songs,<sup>5</sup> being specially composed for the series. It must be remembered that these songs represented a fairly easy way of getting published, and therefore paid, when some of Hogg's more adventurous prose pieces were being repeatedly rejected for publication. A song was often introduced at the end of the 'Noctes' dialogues as a way of rounding off the evening's festivities in harmony after the discussions and drinking. Leaving aside the vexed issue of the accuracy of the 'Noctes' picture of Hogg, it seems clear that the received view of Hogg connected him with song. Mrs Garden quotes an undated article from the Scotsman describing the famous visitors to Tibby Shiels' Inn at St. Mary's Loch, which conveys this picture of Hogg. Despite the cloying refinement and precious sensibility oozed by the Scotsman writer, some hint of the atmosphere does still filter through:

The presence of the genial shepherd must have enhanced the attractions of sport for Wilson, Aytoun, and the rest of that brilliant circle, and rendered more frequent their visits to the romantic braes of Yarrow; and many doubtless were the nights and suppers of the gods, enlivened with wit and song, and breaking out, ever and anon, into boisterous fun and frolic, which these and other kindred spirits enjoyed in that humble cottage by the Loch....

...The veteran anglers can recall how Hogg would electrify the company with picturesque descriptions of fishing adventures, winding up, it might be, with the triumphant production of a large bull trout whose obsequies would thereafter be celebrated in a protracted 'gaudeamus'....

Although whisky-toddy was indulged in, as the beverage best suited to the mountain air, moderation and propriety were steadily insisted on. The occasional presence of the Shepherd tended to keep down rather than encourage any bacchanalian tendency; and if some of the guests, in spite of the worthy landlady's remonstrances, persisted in sitting late, this was rather to enjoy an extra glass for the sake of a lilt from the bard of 'Kilmeny,' The favourite songs of Hogg, which he invariably sung with a heartiness of expression that counterbalanced any deficiency in musical taste, were the spirited 'Cam' ye by Athol,' and the simple love lay 'When the kye comes hame.'<sup>6</sup>

This connection with performed song is important for it seems clear that while the tradition of recreative ballad performance might be in a transitional state, or even have disappeared, songs and dance tunes were kept alive at the kirns and penny weddings Hogg describes in his works. Indeed, lyric song seems to stand in a particularly fruitful relationship to folk tradition, even though the ballad tradition, from the complex richness and high quality of its material, has drawn more attention. The main characteristics of the shorter forms of traditional song are their fluidity and adaptability. This is particularly true of the tunes, as the same melodies appear time and time again put to different uses or to more than one set of words. They are completely resilient and happy to survive in any level of society or any social context as the eighteenth century vogue for what Francis Collinson calls "national song", show.<sup>7</sup> In many ways the singing tradition seems to have an infinite ability to feed off itself. Though at times it has been led into avenues that seem calculated in the end to stifle it, that has not proved to be the case. A growing sentimentality of taste and the popularity of drawing room ballads did lead to a particularly over-refined form of Art-song as a new genre developed. Examples can be found in Albyn's Anthology, where new songs are set to old, mainly Gaelic, tunes.<sup>8</sup> However, the move to the drawing room did not signal the end, for the composed works of gentle-folk such as Baroness Nairne and Sir Walter Scott himself, often found their way back into the living tradition. "Jock o' Hazledean", for instance, is perennially popular and it illustrates admirably the tortuous process by which a traditional fragment inspired a literary songsmith to create a graceful little piece where words and music intertwine to good effect.<sup>9</sup>

Alternatively the interworking of popular song and literary device can lead to two separate traditions marching on together in different directions. Thus Gay borrowed tunes and forms from popular, traditional, and contemporary song to add to his Beggars' Opera. His songs though, did not take over their originals in the way that Burns' so often did. In many cases the already very popular tunes Burns set his lyrics to have become much better known now by those rather than by their earlier settings. Gay's words have remained known and are still occasionally sung, but many of the original tunes and songs have remained more or less unaffected in the popular singing tradition. The tunes "The lass of Patie's Mill", "Lillibullero" and "Bessy Bell", which Gay used, have remained autonomous. Some, on the other hand, have faded from sight, either through disuse or by becoming so changed as to appear now to be distinct, different tunes.<sup>10</sup>

It is of great significance that much of Hogg's so-called poetry is in fact song, composed to certain well known tunes. The airs are often named but rarely are they printed in full with the words. Hogg explains that the tunes were so well known and accessible through the Gows' collections that it was unnecessary to reprint them, adding significantly that "one-half, at least, of the excellency of the song depends upon the tune to which it is sung".<sup>11</sup> The Jacobite Relics, though mainly an exercise in editorship, afford a special example of Hogg's reaction to song, particularly where some songs purport to be his translation, that is, his interpretation, of Gaelic originals. The song-making impulse then, appears to have been with him constantly, even when he formally renounced the business of writing poetry as such. This he did after the disappointing reception of Dramatic Tales (1817).<sup>12</sup> It may be that

he regarded song and poetry as entirely different, unconnected pursuits. Hogg was clearly always aware of technical and practical distinctions between verse for reading and what was to be sung as the notes to the 1831 collection of Songs show. He says of "Come Rowe the Boat", "It is a short cross measure, - one of those to which it is impossible to compose good or flowing verses, but, when sung, is very sweet".<sup>13</sup> Of "Bonny Mary" he says, "It is much too long for singing. Should it turn a favourite with any one, three verses are easily selected" (Songs, p.103).

Hogg's concern with the importance of the tune meant that, like Burns, he usually composed a song with a particular tune in mind. Fittingly, one of the first things he noted on the appearance of the Minstrelsy was the lack of tunes: "I formed a project of collecting all the tenors of the tunes to which these old songs were sung, and having them set to music: thinking this requisite as the book had the title of the Minstrelsy: but I find it impossible; I might compose kind of tunes to some of them and adapt others, but can in no wise learn the original ones; I find it was only the subject matter which the old people concerned themselves about, and any kind of tunes that th[ey] had they alwa[y]s make one to serve a great many songs".<sup>14</sup> In the introduction to the Jacobite Relics he again expresses his eagerness to preserve tunes although he depreciates his own ability as a musician:

With regard to the music, it is requisite for me to state, that though I am perhaps better acquainted with the Lowland melodies of Scotland, as sung by the peasantry, than any person now living, yet I am so little of a musician, that I can scarcely be said to understand the first principles of the art. But having been directed by the Society to preserve such of the Jacobite airs as are still extant, I set about it with great diligence and greater delight, but with very slender prospects of success; for I found that the people of every county in the eastern parts of Scotland sung them to their own favourite tunes.<sup>15</sup>

Hogg was adept enough as a musician to compose his own tunes for some of his songs, as he did for example in the case of "I'll No Wake Wi' Annie", "The Women Fo'k", "The Mermaid's Song" and "The Laird of Lamington", all of which appear in The Border Garland.<sup>16</sup> It is probably music theory that he is referring to when he disclaims all knowledge of "the first principles of the art" and it would seem possible that he was unable to notate tunes for performance in the way that Alexander Campbell did when collecting for Albyn's Anthology. Campbell talks of "pricking down" tunes<sup>17</sup> whereas Hogg, in compiling the Jacobite Relics, resorted in the end to MS collections of tunes, although as he says he did try to begin with live performance. Furthermore Hogg could play the fiddle, obtaining his first instrument by saving hard off his wages at the age of fourteen (Memoir, p.7). His last fiddle and music box are now in the possession of the School of Music in Edinburgh. Therefore, unlike Burns, who relied on others to sing tunes over to him (Ericson-Roos, p.12), Hogg was, as all accounts suggest, a confident performer himself and aware of the practical if not the technical requirements of the music.

It is extremely important to take account of the fact that Hogg was working within a specific tradition of which he was well aware when composing his songs. David Johnson gives an excellent summary of the development of the vogue for "Scotch Songs" encouraged by the interest in London that was stimulated and fed by the collections of men such as Thomas D'Urfey (Johnson, p.130-49). This technique of writing polite pastoral verses to old airs was eventually adopted in Edinburgh, the great exponent of this form being Allan Ramsay. Ramsay began, in imitation of D'Urfey and others, by publishing his own and other newly composed words to popular tunes in his Tea - Table Miscellany (1723) and Evergreen (1724), and his

play The Gentle Shepherd used popular tunes in the same way as Gay's Beggar's Opera. Hogg emulated this form in "The Bush aboon Traquair", a pastoral drama.<sup>18</sup> The tradition was influential and its growth and effects are well summed up by Cedric Thorpe Davie:

Ramsay had already begun publication of his Tea - Table Miscellany, in which he and others under his influence produced a large amount of mostly indifferent verse, designed to be sung to well-known folk-tunes. He thereby, in a sense, removed the tunes from the sphere of 'folk-art', founded what may be called 'national song' as distinct from 'folk song', and laid down the principles upon which collections like Thomson were later to be built. These principles, in a word, sought to lift Scottish folk-song out of the allegedly vulgar lower-class surroundings in which it had flourished, and to make it appear respectable and fit for the more refined ears of the middle and upper classes; and especially, as Thomson was forever insisting, for 'the ladies'. There is no doubt that Ramsay's songs were taken as models by Burns, who in his turn was emulated by such minor poets as Tannahill, and by a host of versifiers whose works the curious may sample in that couthy anthology, Whistle Binkie.<sup>19</sup>

What was in fact being developed was a school of sentimental song very different indeed from traditional folk song with its rather more matter-of-fact approach to life. Many of the new song lyrics became cluttered with gentle swains and shepherd lovers, classical allusions and apostrophes to beauties by the name of Diana and Chloris. David Johnson suggests the differences in nature between the "folk" song tradition and this more cultivated impulse by contrasting the straightforward tune titles with the artificiality of the new verse (Johnson, pp.136-40). The striking contrast between these two styles is even clearer when direct comparison is made between old and new verses, though this is made difficult by the disappearance of most of the original texts. One good example does remain. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe issued a collection of traditional ballads and songs "current in Annandale and other parts of Scotland"

in which appeared "The Twa Lasses", the song reproduced by Child as "Bessy Bell and Mary Gray" (Child 201).<sup>20</sup> The song tells of two girls killed by the plague:

O Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,  
 They war twa bonnie lasses!  
 They bigget a bower on yon burn brae,  
 And theekit it o'er wi' rashes  
 They theekit it o'er wi' rashes green,  
 They theekit it o'er wi' heather;  
 But the pest cam' frae the burrows town,  
 And slew them baith thegither!

They thought to lye in Methven Kirk yard,  
 Amang their noble kin,  
 But they maun lye in Stronach Haugh,  
 To biek forenent the sin.  
 And Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,  
 They war twa bonnie lasses!  
 The bigget a bower on yon burn brae,  
 And theekit it o'er wi' rashes.

Ramsay reworked the song, retaining nothing of the style and mood of the traditional verses, though he preserves the first quatrain of the traditional song. The new song is supposed to be sung by a lover who has lately transferred his allegiances from Bessy to Mary. It consists simply of a list of the girls' beauties. One stanza of this is enough to give the tone of Ramsay's work:

Now Bessy's hair's like a lint tap,  
 She smiles like a May morning,  
 When Phaebus starts Thetis' lap,  
 The hills with rays adorning.  
 White is her neck, soft is her hand,  
 Her waist and feet fu' genty;  
 With ilka grace she can command  
 Her lips; O wow! they're dainty.

(SMM 128: 134, st.2)

As Davie suggests, the new verse is not distinguished, nor is there anything particularly "Scottish" in the tone or content. The poetic diction and classical allusion are far removed from the more concrete imagery of the lines printed by Sharpe and Child. This did much to set the tone of song-writing at this period and David Buchan, quoting Ramsay's version of the song in full, says that "it illustrates very clearly that the language of the songs now sung by the

folk was in a very unsettled state"<sup>21</sup> This linguistic mix is a clear sign of the transitional state of the culture. Even Burns, following in the song writing tradition, adopts Ramsay's sentiment and formal diction from time to time. Examples of this style of song can be found throughout SMM, which was to be simply a collection of popular songs and not specifically aimed at the literati. Songs contributed by Burns such as "Cragie-burn Wood (SMM, 301:311), "Sensibility how charming" (SMM, 329:339) and "Bonie Bell" (SMM, 387:401) also display some of these characteristics to a greater or a lesser extent. The fault is not simply connected to language as in the following example from SMM, 279:288 which shows this artificiality in its most extreme form. Other songs may have more Scottish diction and still be colourless:

Thou ling'ring star with less'ning ray,  
 That lov'st to greet the early morn,  
 Again thou usher'st in the day  
 My Mary from my soul was torn.  
 O Mary! dear departed Shade!  
 Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
 Seest thou thy Lover-lowly laid?  
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?  
(SMM, 279:288,)

This prettifying of the folk idiom clearly did not affect only folk songs sung in the Edinburgh or London salons. It affected the very roots of folk tradition so that the new printed versions of songs took over from their traditional predecessors. This point is made by William Laidlaw when he describes how he set about gathering material for Scott for the Minstrelsy:

...I had begun to enquire, and write down from the repeating of old women, and the singing of the servant girls, everything I could hear of, and was constantly aroused by vexation at two circumstances, namely, finding how much the affectation and false taste of Allan Ramsay constantly annoyed me instead of what I wanted, and had superseded the many striking and beautiful old songs and ballads of all kinds that I got traces and remnants of; and again, in discovering how much Mr Scott had been too late - from the accounts I received of many men and women who had been the bards and depositories of the preceding generation.<sup>22</sup>



Folk song was for a time able to cross social barriers but the new inventive impulses were coming from outside folk tradition. Catarina Ericson-Roos points out that the songs written in the eighteenth century "reflect the blend of the folk and art-styles" (Ericson-Roos, p.9) because of the influence of classical and foreign music performed in Edinburgh and the fact that the new sets of words were often composed for Edinburgh upper class ladies to sing.<sup>23</sup> The example of Sophia Scott's song books shows both the popularity of the pastime and the extent to which traditional balladry and song co-existed for a time alongside a more refined repertoire. However, the situation which David Johnson describes as current at the beginning of the eighteenth century where "the leisured and professional classes of Scotland, who were responsible for the propagation of classical music, were also very much in touch with folk music" (Johnson, pp.15-16) was inevitably affected by this new hybrid form so that:

On the one hand were the antiquarians, wanting to excavate the layers of genteel deposit and unearth genuine oral folk-song, which was still widely current in Scotland; on the other hand there were undoubted opportunities for developing the national song repertory as it stood: hundreds of new reels and strathspeys had just been written which were crying out for words, and an affluent public was ready to buy new song books.

(Johnson, p.145)

This, then, is the composing tradition in which Hogg was writing and it is because of it that the religion and superstition that dominate his narrative works are less in evidence in the songs. The smaller compass of a two or three stanza lyric does not give him room to build up the texture required to express them. That Hogg clearly identifies himself with the new composing tradition is clear from the introduction to The Forest Minstrel. Here, in naming the two song-writers he admires most, he praises Burns, particularly for his skill in "adapting the cadence of the verse, as well as the sentiment, to

the peculiar melody of the music" (p.xii), making climaxes of words and music coincide. He also names Robert Tannahill, the Paisley weaver-poet, saying that his "natural flow of imagination and well-tuned ear fit him in a particular manner for song writing" (p.xiii). Furthermore, Hogg clearly states that his motivation in presenting this collection is the fact that no new song collections had appeared since Burns' and as a result they are all sung out and hackneyed, leading everyone to turn to English songs and "Italian tirlie-whirlies":

All our late collections of Scottish Songs are only selected from divers others, that have been published and republished in an hundred various ways and manners, with respect to size, shape and title; and, by some fatality, all the best songs of our best authors seem too soon to have become public property, and are already in every body's mouth and every body's hands. The consequence is, that a singer has little chance of pleasing the social circle by any means than singing better than others; the same song commonly forming a part of the entertainment of every night, in various families. When any of Burns's best songs are asked, the answer most commonly is, That is quite thread-bare now. In truth, a young lady cannot, without hesitatingly reluctance, sit down to her piano, and sing what every ballad - hawker in the street is singing at times.

(pp.vii-viii)

Thus, at this stage, Hogg's main audience is clearly not simply that of the country penny-wedding. However this was not always the case, even within the Forest Minstrel, for songs often reflect more domestic sources and intentions. Writing in retrospect of "Auld Ettrick John", "Doctor Munroe", "Sing on, sing on, my Bonny Bird", "Jock an' his Mother" and "On Ettrick Clear", Hogg said, in 1831, that they were "all compositions of my early youth, made for the sphere around the cottage hearth and the farmer's kitchen-ingle, without the most distant prospect of any higher distinction (Songs, p.174). The songs had enjoyed, moreover, a continued popularity "among the class for which they were framed". This indicates two

things about the nature of Hogg's songs: first, the influence of folk tradition and the "national song" movement reflects in his audience two different social classes, the "farmer's kitchen-ingle" and the city "social circle"; second, a large number of Hogg's songs have a domestic social intention which successfully unites these two disparate audiences. Thus the songs mainly concern love and marriage, often treating them in a humorous way, but often in a more sentimental, pathetic fashion, as when describing the results of illicit love, and its breach of the established social arrangements. These factors all contribute to the narrower range of expression in Hogg's songs. They also show something else that is of great significance in contradicting the old Ettrick versus Edinburgh paradigm. Even when Hogg is working at his closest to folk tradition, he is availing himself of materials which had already moved away from classical folk tradition and achieved a hybrid status. His earliest works, then, encouraged him to find a bridge between folk tradition and literature so that he did not work at first within the confines of folk tradition and then later on make a rather abrupt transition into the world of literary composition. There is indeed a much greater continuity in Hogg's work than has sometimes been allowed. The Forest Minstrel divides the songs in that collection into four categories: Pathetic Songs, Love Songs, Humorous Songs and National Songs. Two of these are divisions of tone or attitude, that is Pathetic Songs and Humorous Songs, while the other two suggest the importance to Hogg of the family bond and political stability. A blend of these themes and attitudes gradually becomes the hallmark of Hogg's work. What the short prose shows is the fuller expression of the themes which these first experiments in song and narrative verse began to deal with.

# DONALD M'DONALD,

A Favorite New Scots Song,

SET FOR THE

*Voice, Piano-Forte, and Ger. Flute.*

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WRITTEN BY JAMES HOG.

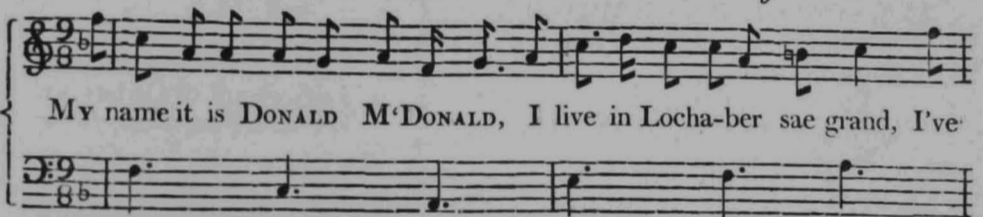
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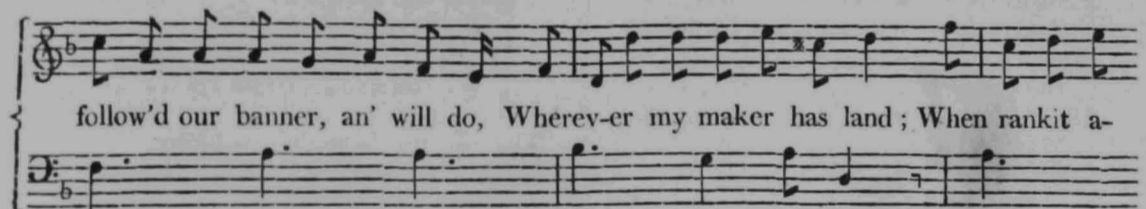
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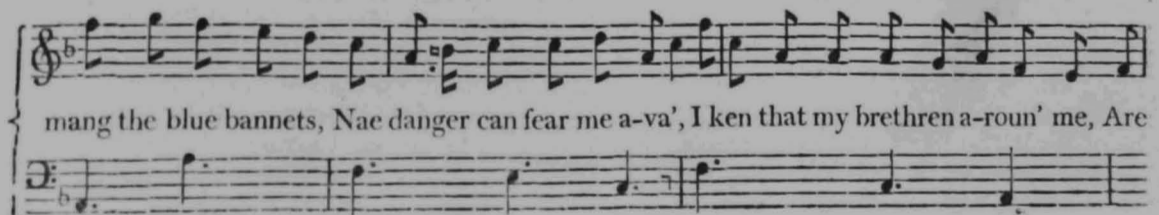
*Lively.*



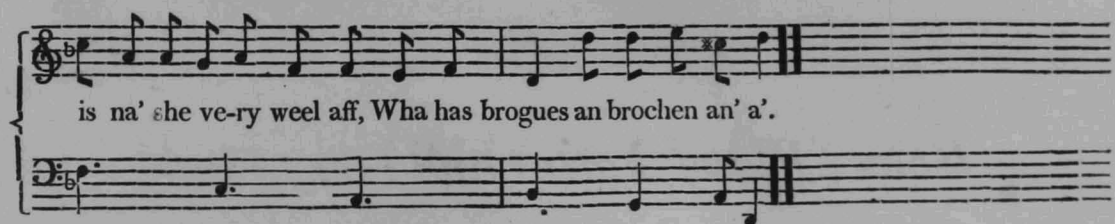
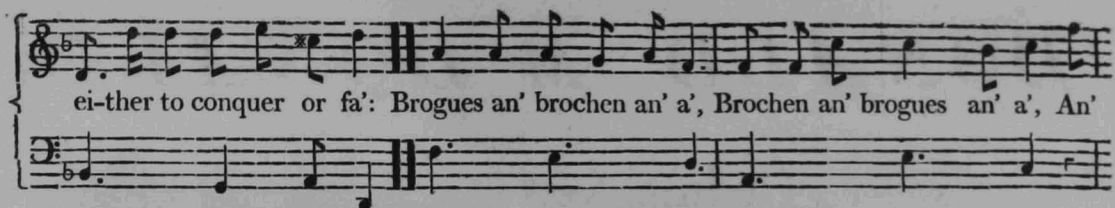
My name it is DONALD M'DONALD, I live in Locha-ber sae grand, I've



follow'd our banner, an' will do, Wherev-er my maker has land; When rankit a-



mang the blue bannets, Nae danger can fear me a-va', I ken that my brethren a-roun' me, Are



Last year we were wonderfu' canty,  
 Our frien's an' our country to see;  
 But since the proud CONSUL's grown vantie,  
 We'll meet him by land or by sea.  
 Whenever a clan is disloyal,  
 Wherever our king has a foe,  
 He'll quickly see DONALD M'DONALD,  
 Wi's highlandmen a' in a row.  
 Guns an' pistols an' a',  
 Pistols an' guns an' a',  
 He'll quickly see DONALD M'DONALD,  
 Wi' guns an' pistols an' a'.

What tho' we befriendit young CHARLEY,  
 To tell it I dinna think shame,  
 Poor lad he came to us but barely,  
 And reckon'd our mountains his hame;  
 'Tis true that our reason forbade us,  
 But tenderness carry'd the day,  
 Had GEORDY come friendless amang us,  
 Wi' him wi' had a' gane away.  
 Sword an' buckler an' a',  
 Buckler an' sword an' a';  
 For GEORGE we'll encounter the devil,  
 Wi' sword an' buckler an' a'.

An' O I wad cagerly press him,  
 The keys o' the East to retain;  
 For sude he gie up the possession,  
 We'll soon hae to force them again.  
 Than yield up ae inch wi' dishonour,  
 Tho' it were my finishing blow,

He ay may depend on M'DONALD,  
 Wi's highlandmen a' in a row.  
 Knees an' elba's an' a'  
 Elba's an' knees an' a',  
 Depend upon DONALD M'DONALD,  
 His knees an' elba's an' a',

If BONAPARTE land at Fort William,  
 Auld Europe nae langer sal grane,  
 I laugh when I think how we'll gall him,  
 Wi' bullet, wi' steel, an' wi' stane.  
 Wi' rocks o' the Nevis an' Gairy,  
 We'll rattle him aff frae our shore;  
 Or lull him asleep in a cairney,  
 An' sing him *Lochaber no more*.  
 Stanes an' bullets an' a',  
 Bullets an' stanes an' a',  
 We'll batter the Corsican callan,  
 Wi' stanes an' bullets an' a'.

The GORDON is gude in a hurry,  
 An' CAMPBELL is steel to the bane,  
 An' GRANT, an' M'KENZIE, an' MURRAY,  
 An' CAMERON will hurkle to nane.  
 The STUART is sturdy and wannel,  
 An' sae is M'LEOD an' M'KAY,  
 An' I, their gude-brither M'DONALD,  
 Sal ne'er be the last in the fray.  
 Brogues an' brochen an' a',  
 Brochen an' brogues an' a',  
 An' up wi' the bonny blue bannet,  
 The kilt, an' the feather, an' a'.

The narrower range of the songs could in fact act in some ways as a stimulus by helping to highlight his response to community in particular. David Johnson suggests that national song did in fact come to act as an expression of nationalism. Talking of the upper classes in the eighteenth century, he says that, "In folk music they found an expression of conservatism, of national identity, and of community with all social classes of fellow Scots..." (Johnson, p.188). This sense of community was particularly congenial to Hogg and this song mode offered him an almost ideal opportunity to express the positive values which he attributed to that rural community in a way acceptable to an outside audience. It was a very easy transition to make because of what might be called the democratic nature of the medium. Hogg responded to community on a number of different levels. It could take the form of straightforward nationalist jingoism and on this level he frequently caught the popular mood. His very first song to appear in print, "Donald McDonald" (later called "Donald MacDonald") is an example of this kind where Hogg achieved a high degree of popular success, albeit anonymously. A measure of the success of the song was that it eventually became adopted by the chapbook printers thus ensuring its widespread dissemination. It is a patriotic song set to the tune "Woo'd an' Married an' a", composed in 1800 as a counterblast to the threat of the invasion by Napoleon. It enjoyed its first performance in the Crown Tavern in Edinburgh, where the "party of social friends" present with Hogg insisted that it should be published. Consequently it first appeared along with its tune as a broadside. (See Ill. 3) Hogg recounts a number of anecdotes illustrating the song's popularity on street and on stage and laments all the while that "no one ever knew or enquired who was the author" (Songs, p.1).

The song shows Hogg using for the first time his attempts at rendering a Highland accent phonetically for some humorous effect, an accepted device in Scottish Literature.<sup>24</sup> It is lightly employed and after being introduced in the first stanza it is more or less allowed to slip out of view, thus avoiding some of the more irritating effects occasioned by its more prolonged use in some of Hogg's other works. The erroneous use of the feminine pronoun in: "An' is na' she very weel aff,/Wha has brogues an brochen an' a'?"<sup>25</sup> is all he employs for this effect. The Highland tone is amplified by the word "brochen" for brogan, the Gaelic for shoes, and by the salting of clan names in stanza 6. The reference to Charlie and George in stanza 3 indicates not only, as Douglas Mack rightly observes, "Hogg's very frequent use of Jacobite themes in his songs" (Selected Poems, p.171), but also his belief in the essential chivalry and honour of the Jacobites. It is a theme he restates in his introduction to the Jacobite Relics and it is illuminating to see it displayed at this early stage in his literary career. It is evident that he divorces the cause from his political implications and sees the whole as some sort of affair of honour. True, it is in his interest to affirm loyalty to George in this song with its jingoistic intentions, yet surely this would have been more convincingly achieved without any reference at all to the previous civil disturbances. For Hogg the political implications have been lost and his view of the Highlanders is a romantically coloured one of a proud people whose loyalty and instincts of chivalry, once spontaneously roused by a friendless refugee, are inalienable, even in the pursuit of a forlorn cause.

The song, on the whole, works quite well. Despite the muddled thinking behind it, the tone of humour induced by the fiery Highlanders of the song succeeds in reducing the entire Napoleonic war

machine to one overweening "Corsican callan" who is to be ignominiously rattled off frae our shore. The refrains help the humour and at the same time emphasise a certain patriotic determination - every weapon is to be brought to bear in the struggle; "guns an' pistols", "sword an' buckler", "stones an' bullets" and in the event of all these failing "knees an' elba's an' a'". The humour just saves this last from bathetic ridiculousness and yet, too, it is impossible to avoid feeling that, were things to reach a desperate pass, Hogg's Highlanders would indeed remain to the last straining every sinew to breaking point. On the other hand, the reader is stopped short by out of place diction such as that in line 3 of stanza 2: 'But since the proud Consul's grown vanty'. This whole stanza was removed from the 1831 edition successfully dispelling this effect.

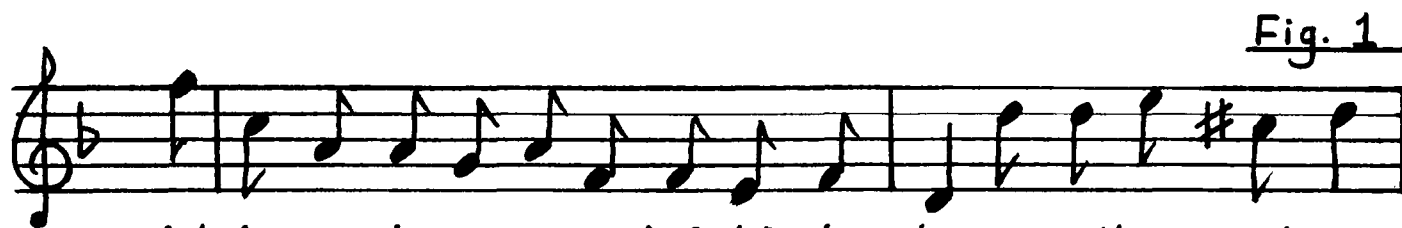
Much of the charm of the song must derive from the tune itself, lively and bright, and already linked to a set of lightly humorous words. The song as it is found in SMM (10:10) deals with an improvident bride who has much to do to get her bits and pieces together. The tune itself would appear to be very old and had already had more than one set of words put to it.<sup>26</sup> It first appeared in print some time before 1759 and words were first published in Ramsay's Tea - Table Miscellany in 1724. Hogg seems to have stuck fairly close to his model and, in a sense, his task has been parodic rather than entirely original:

The bride came out of the byre,  
 And O as she dighted her cheeks!  
 Sirs, I'm to be married the night,  
 And has neither blankets, nor sheets,  
 Has neither blankets, nor sheets,  
 Nor scarce a coverlet too.  
 The bride that has a' thing to borrow,  
 Has e'en right meikle ado.  
 Woo'd and married and a',  
 Woo'd and married and a',  
 An was nae she very weel aff,  
 That was woo'd and married and a.

(SMM, 10: 10-11)



Apart from that he makes quite good use of the tune, fitting his statements of assertion and defiance in the last two lines of the verse to a corresponding change in the music brought about in the last bar by the octave leap and C<sup>#</sup> (Fig. 1).



An' is na she very weel aff wha has brogues an' bracken an' a

This song was included in Hogg's first main collection of verse, The Mountain Bard (1807). Some sign of its continued popularity must also be in its reappearance in the next work The Forest Minstrel (1811).

Broadly speaking Hogg's "National Songs" view "community" on two main levels, the local and the fully national. Thus "Bucleuch's Birth-day" (Forest Minstrel, p.180), "Highland Harry Back Again" (Forest Minstrel, p.183) both celebrate Border events and as a result, the ordering of the local community. "By a Bush" (Forest Minstrel, p.194) is a more tender evocation of the Yarrow valley. "Donald McDonald" is a response to a particular national threat. "The British Tars" (Forest Minstrel, p.217) has a similarly jingoistic intention with prose patter that states that "British tars reign kings of the ocean", and that if it were not for Parliamentary dithering "we might...be kings of more places than we are..."(p.220). Other songs, like "The Emigrant" (Forest Minstrel, p.214) and "My Native Isle" (Forest Minstrel, p.204), state the sorrow of those forced to leave. The aggressive patriotism and the blatant imperialism that characterise these works do not strike the modern ear so happily. What all the songs do have, however, is a strongly asserted sense of belonging. It is perhaps this that will resolve an apparent contradiction arising from Hogg's frequent use of Jacobite themes. This can create a rather anomalous situation. Hogg clearly supports the status quo as he knows it and is a staunch upholder of the Hanoverian

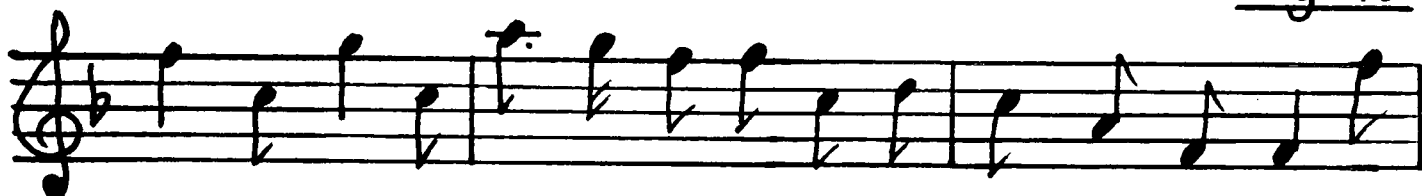
line. In the birthday song for Buccleuch (Forest Minstrel, p.180) he sees Buccleuch and King George as twin Pillars upholding the local and national community:

Then let us drink to brave Buccleuch,  
An' our auld honest Geordie;  
For, seek the country through an' through,  
We'll light on few sae worthy:  
The one protects our native land,  
And on the sea keeps order;  
The other guides the farmer's hand,  
And rules the Scottish Border.

(Forest Minstrel, p.181)

Despite this, many of his most popular songs, for example, "Cam Ye By Athol", celebrate the Jacobite viewpoint. Though now best known as "Cam Ye By Athol" this song appeared in Hogg's day both as "Charlie" and "Bonny Prince Charlie".<sup>27</sup> It was composed to a tune by Niel Gow and when the song is scrutinised it becomes apparent that there is no logical train of thought discernible in the whole. It was perhaps this that prompted Hogg to say in retrospect, "Is it not singular how this song should have been so popular? There can be no dispute that it is one of my worst" (Songs, p.13). The secret of its success must lie in the harmony of mood and tune. Hogg has mastered the art of using a few key phrases, names and images to evoke a whole flood of associations so that he does not have to rely on syntax or meaning. The clan names and river and place names blend so that they almost become equated. The effect is particularly successful in the chorus, while the repeated cry "Charlie, Charlie" with the first syllable gaining in pitch achieves a soaring climax as the tune mounts to a high B $\flat$  slowly resolving in triads to D. The effect is to turn the rhetorical question "Wha wadna follow thee?" into a ringing exhortation or some sort of battle cry. After that, the last line becomes a simple statement of fact as incontrovertible as the final resolution of the tune itself (Fig. 2).

## Fig. 2



Charlie, Charlie, wha wadna fdlow thee? Lang thou hast lov'd, an'



trusted us fairly Charlie, Charlie, wha wadna follow thee?



King of the highland hearts bonny Prince Charlie.

Hogg's response is not always martial and he is capable of a more reflective, nostalgic approach. He has a quick and ready response to the merest hint of sentiment of pathos and very often has no idea how to hold this in check. The song "Flora Macdonald's Farewell" (Songs, p.11), sometimes called "Flora Macdonald's Lament", achieves a delicate balance that is rare for Hogg. The tune, again composed by Niel Gow, contributes in great measure to the beauty of the song. The picture is frankly sentimental with the picture of the lone girl "the dew on her plaid, and the tear in her ee". The conventional language and imagery almost topples over into nonsense with its "heather sae green". However the discipline of composing to music here helps to hold Hogg in check and prevents him becoming too lax or diffuse and the plangent note of the repeated "Farewell" has a pleasing, echoing fall. The echo effect is compounded by the reiteration of the line "Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again".

On the whole the first stanza survives and even succeeds because song will tolerate a higher degree of sentimentality without appearing ridiculous. Besides this there is a passing nod to ballad formulae in the use of the phrase "sighing her lane" and the use of the long "ain" sound in the dominant rhyme words.<sup>28</sup> Paradoxically, part of the success is due to understatement. There is an air of acceptance and stillness that is preferable to dramatic outpourings. This harmony is carried on to the second stanza where Hogg breaks out into the superbly controlled, symbolic use of natural imagery that he often uses in his finest verse. He may not convey emotion well in terms of verbal utterance but he is on sure ground in expressing it through nature. This stanza employs alliteration, para-rhyme as well as metaphor and symbolism to create a highly textured verse that is, despite everything, extremely simple. He gives a list of birds all secure in their natural environment, even mentioning the moorcock, the female of which has been used as a Jacobite symbol in the song "The Bonny Moorhen" (Jacobite Relics, I, 129). The contrast is then made in the last quatrain with the landless, homeless refugee who cannot be named. Thus far, it is effective as a Jacobite song while it works, too, as a truly national song with Scotland first being embodied in the desolate girl of stanza 1 and then represented by the wildfowl of stanza 2. Unfortunately the effect is somewhat dispelled by the blatant images of the third stanza sometimes left out by later editors. Nonetheless, the song is at times moving and a fine example of Hogg blending his love of his immediate environment with a sentimental but nonetheless strong attachment to the concepts of national honour. As a song it is pleasant, but as an evocation of Jacobitism it is blatantly romantic.

Undoubtedly there was something of a vogue for a romanticised view of the Highlanders and the Jacobite cause. It was this that Scott was able to cultivate in Waverley (1814). For Hogg it was more than simply a question of romance - the Jacobites were showing ideal fidelity to traditional order by supporting the old monarchy but by Hogg's time the Hanoverian line was too well established for there to be any real conflict. Perhaps what he identified with most in the Highlanders was the fact that they too had a strongly realised sense of community and of inherited values and lore. Thus in Hogg's eyes it was not a question of individual self interest or commitment that drove various members and their supporters to rally to Prince Charles Edward, but the result of communally inherited custom and belief that compelled an unswerving support.

A subset of this nationalism is the regional chauvinism that is expressed in songs like "Lock the Door, Lariston" (Songs, p.198). Hogg said of the song in retrospect: "Although I look upon it as having no merit whatever, excepting a jingle of names, which Sir Walter's good taste rendered popular, and which in every other person's hand has been ludicrous, yet I hereby claim the song as one of my early productions, - mine only, mine solely, and mine for ever" (Songs, p.198). The assessment is just, for alliteration is one of the predominant aspects of the song and when it is linked to the pulsing dactylic rhythm there is a kind of hypnotic surging about the piece. It is in a sense Hogg's attempt at creating a Border raid ballad, or rather at taking the matter of the raid ballads and restating it in a new context in the modern style. For the present day critical reader of literature it has nothing to offer with its litany of Border names and its relentlessly regular metre. Yet these elements and the almost tangible energy seem to make it successful as a song,

even though the tune to which it is set is not particularly beautiful or easy to sing. It has been frequently anthologised and is one of Hogg's songs that have been accepted into the body of tradition so that it is still sung. What is most interesting is the way in which he treats his subject. The pride and chauvinism are still there but there is also a conscious romanticism just as there is in the Jacobite songs. There is an element of affectation behind the hale, boisterous exterior. Thus in stanza 1 he cannot resist the note of pathos: "Their widows are crying" while in stanza 3 Jock Elliot "grasped the sword with a nervous embrace". Phrases like "Saxon plumes", "scimitar", "wold", "welkin" and "joy-candles" and the self-conscious archaisms all testify to an over-working in language and vocabulary. This culminates in the somewhat over-refined diction of the last lines of stanza 4:

Scowl'd the broad sun o'er the links of green Liddisdale,  
 Red as the beacon-light tipp'd he the wold;  
                   Many a bold martial eye  
                   Mirror'd that morning sky,  
 Never more oped on his orbit of gold!

(Songs, p.200)

Part of the reason for this artificiality is that Hogg's preference for story, or narrative, is not being indulged. The song does not actually recount a raid but acts merely as a call to arms, something to stir the blood. As such it is static. It shows Hogg attempting to blend folk tradition and literature and through it he achieves a kind of one-dimensional success. The narrative poems on this subject, to be discussed in the next chapter, give him more scope.

Within the compass of song Hogg is perhaps more successful on the narrower, more domestic level. This is partly because the lyric nature of song is more suited to this topic but it is also an important clue to the nature of Hogg's concept of community. It shows, in a way, where his interests really lie and indicates that



This heavy language creates in one line at least a phrase that does not sit well with the music as printed in SMM, 66:67 (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3

Re - an - i - mate a - gain

Here the word "reanimate" is dragged out and although the sentiment may deserve highlighting in this way, the word itself is rather wooden and is awkwardly disjointed by the movement of the music in this phrase. The final stanza is rather more successful, contrasting the annual renewal of Nature with the final loss of the dead son.

Furthermore, Hogg creates a sort of refrain by slightly altering the first two lines of stanza one to "But thou art fled, my bonny boy, / An' left me here alane" and repeating them at the end of every stanza in a tolling lament (Fig. 4). Hogg is evidently highly affected by the disruption of continuity and breach of the natural order where parent precedes child to the grave.

Fig. 4

But thou art fled, my bonny boy, An' left me here alane

The song "My Peggy an' I" (Forest Minstrel, p.21) provides a slightly different approach to sentiment and the sanctity of family relationships. Although it is classified by Hogg as a "Pathetic Song", it is set to an Irish jig, "Paddy Whack" and is consequently a lively, humorous piece. Again Hogg emphasises the music and creates a chiming effect in the words by using a refrain. Lines 2 and 6 of the eight line stanzas go "My Peggy an' I, my Peggy an' I", set on an ascending run, while lines 4 and 8 run "An' wha's sae happy as Peggy an' I" (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5

My Peggy an' I— My Peggy an' I—We...  
(I.6 I'm...)

An' wha's sae happy as Peggy an' I?

This song is in a way Hogg's answer to Burns' "John Anderson, My Jo", for it portrays happy married life, with the couple "wagging" through life as best as they can. The foundations of this domestic contentment are the strength of the family bond, love and a simple trust in God: "Through life we will love, an' through life we will pray" (p.22). The philosophy is simple enough, portraying country folk as closer to the positive moral values: "Baith vices an' follies lie out o' our way" (p.22). They exemplify the "canty wi' little and happy wi' mair" philosophy and the enemy here is not physical decay, as in the Burns' song, but sexual licence. The first verse treats it lightly and humorously:

We hae a wee lassy will keep up our line,  
My Peggy an' I, my Peggy an' I;  
I'm sure she is hers, an' I think she is mine,  
An' wha's is sae happy as Peggy an' I?  
(p.21)

The words "sure" and "think", already set in opposition by the parallel structure of the line, receive added emphasis from coming at the start of bars. The uncertainty of "think", jocular though it is, is felt all the more for coming at the low point of a descending and ascending run (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6

I'm sure she is hers, an' I think she is mine—

The anxiety of the second stanza is more intensely voiced, and it requires all the vitality of the tune to save it from cloying. The fear is that their daughter may become the victim of a deceiving

man: "An' [may] nae wicked fellow our darling decoy". This is a commonly expressed theme in Hogg's work and one he reworks with alarming insistence. One of the flaws of Hogg's work is that he frequently portrays women as unnaturally idealised. At their best they are the seat of all virtue, and the images of virgin and more especially of mother are extremely potent. At the other extreme, his women are generally frail creatures, prey to the evil designs of man. Ila Moore in the long poem "Mador of the Moor" is a sort of blend of these. Essentially innocent, she is abused by Mador who deserts her. Even when she seeks him out and it becomes clear to the reader that "Mador" is in reality the king, the poem being in fact a reworking of "The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter" (Child 110). she makes no demur when she is hustled back off to the country with little explanation. She is apparently content with more promises once she is safely married, though the narrator does hint that she was subsequently well treated. Hogg's women, however, even when not insipid, are frequently colourless, that is to say, their personalities are rarely fully realised. This kind of approach is particularly a consequence of the sentimental tradition of literature.

This naive approach nevertheless gives some of the love songs a grace and simplicity. "My Blythe an' Bonny Lassie" (Forest Minstrel, p.51), set to "Neil Gow's Farewell to Whisky", and "Blythe an' Cheery" (Forest Minstrel, p.55), set to "Blythe, blythe, an' merry was she", are two straightforward songs celebrating love. The language is simply expressed Scots and the loved one, the girl, is described almost as part of the natural setting that she is part of. It is a common trick of Hogg's and it does not consist simply of describing the girls by reference to the natural world through similes, though this is part of it: "Her form is gracefu' as the pine" (p.52), or "Her cheek is like the woodland rose;/Her e'e the

violet set wi' dew" (p.55). Hogg's vision extends farther: he sees the girl embodied in the countryside and objects around him, and in a way they are so inextricably bound up that each expresses the other:

On Ettrick clear there grows a brier,  
An' mony a bonny bloomin' shaw;  
But Peggy's grown the fairest flower  
The braes o' Ettrick ever saw.

(p.55)

His songs are thus a double expression of his community. They are, firstly, based on music and song popular in the community and partly, thus, written for that community, but they also express the nature, physical and social, of that community as viewed by Hogg. He is encapsulating something of the views and values of that world and partly idealising them, perhaps out of a sense, not simply that they are valuable, but also that they are changing.

That is why the question of setting is so important in many of Hogg's works. The significance lies not in the fact that a familiar Border setting allows Hogg to draw on a body of traditional material. The result is merely a confusing clutter if the reader does not realise that is a way of preserving not just some accumulation of interesting facts, but the spirit of a community. This sense of community is perhaps the most valuable thing that he drew from his background. If the old contrast between Ettrick Hogg and Edinburgh Hogg is pursued, then perhaps it would be true to say that part of Hogg's difficulties in Edinburgh arose from the fact that the shared context was no longer there. Edinburgh thrived on a community ordered by social class where individual experience and inheritance and political opinion could vary greatly. The Ettrick community of the eighteenth century was far more homogeneous, for despite obvious financial differences between farmers and shepherds and so on, there was a shared cultural inheritance, reflected in the local stories,

the superstitions, the histories and beliefs. By Hogg's stage, though, the mechanism had begun to break down and Hogg's preoccupation with this sense of community is partly the natural expression of the inherited context and partly a wish to record it, knowing that the natural process of self-propagation was in decay. It is partly this that accounts for the rather conservative, one might say conventional, values that Hogg often proposes, for in some ways he is trying to conserve, though in others he is anxious to embrace the more progressive trends. This is the basic tension found in many of Hogg's themes and subjects.

The themes he expresses, then, are those which seek to preserve an order and a way of life. This can be seen, to some extent, from the subjects chosen in the Forest Minstrel. In these songs Hogg repeats that it is what is simple, unpretentious and familiar that is best. The song "How Foolish are Mankind" (Forest Minstrel, p.101) expresses this sentiment:

How foolish are mankind, to look for perfection  
 In any poor changling under the sun!  
 By nature, or habit, or want of reflection,  
 To vices or folly we heedlessly run.  
 The man who is modest and kind in his nature,  
 And open and cheerful in every degree;  
 Who feels for the woes of his own fellow-creature,  
 Though subject to failings, is dear unto me.

Far dearer to me is the humble ewe-gowan,  
 The sweet native violet, or bud of the broom,  
 Than fine foster'd flowers in the garden a-growing,  
 Though sweet be their savour and bonny their bloom.  
 Far dearer to me is the thrush or the linnet,  
 Than any fine bird from a far foreign tree;  
 And dearer my lad, with his plaid and blue bonnet,  
 Than all our rich nobles or lords that I see.

(pp.101-102)

The sentiment is quite neatly worked out. The original proposition is set out a little sententiously in the first stanza. The second stanza redeems this and complements the former by tracing the particular contrasts between the gaudy, and therefore, says Hogg,

shallow, and the simple, natural and familiar. There is an explicit opposition voiced between the natural and artificially cultivated.

This support for a natural order extends to the criticism of "unnatural" pairings in many of the "Humorous Songs" of the Forest Minstrel. Thus, songs like "Auld Ettrick John" (Forest Minstrel, p.119) and "Auld John Borthwick" (Forest Minstrel, p.157) both show old men who, though they should know better, determine on taking young wives. These old men present comic figures when dressed up as wooers. Ettrick John, for instance, is a most unlikely sight, his clothes moth-eaten and "threed-about wi' green". In this case the girl marries him because all the young men have gone for soldiers or will not come to the point of marriage. The result is immediately felt to be disastrous:

Wi' little say he wan the day,  
 She soon became his bonny bride;  
 But ilka joy is fled away  
 Fræ Johnnie's canty ingle side.  
 She frets, an' greets, an' visits aft,  
 In hopes some lad will see her hame;  
 But never ane will be sae daft  
 As tent auld Johnnie's flisky dame.  
 (p.122)

The moral is quite explicitly stated: let everyone marry all right, "But youth wi' youth gae hand in hand, / Or tine the sweetest joys o' life" (p.123). The natural order of things should be followed; the pursuit of gear and land as an alternative only brings misfortune. Similarly, Auld John Borthwick is temporarily freed from disaster when the girl he courts rejects him for another. In pique he straight-away marries the first he can find and although she "might weel be the joy o' his life" he frets needlessly with confusion and jealousy and now "curses the day he married a wife" (p.159). Certainly the May and December theme is a common literary one and here it is employed in a humorous fashion, the use of lively tunes showing that the

intention is primarily comic. The theme is broached again in the Confessions where the ill-assorted match of the old laird is treated in much the same way. It provides a certain amount of easy humour at the expense of the parties involved, but also helps to establish the enmities and jealousy through which the later action works.

This is not to say that the Forest Minstrel or Hogg's songs in general are a manifesto and that all the songs have a deeper intention than that which appears on the surface. Some are straightforward love songs, others like "The Maid of the Sea" (Songs, p.71), are written merely to play with a certain rhythm or stanza shape. His frequent and inventive use of refrain shows a wish to exploit the melody as much as the words. "The Sheep Sheering" (Forest Minstrel, p.98) seems to depend for its effect on catching the lightly ironic tone applied to the words in this song, an effect that is supported by the tune. The description of the young girl is a little precious and the diction in the first two verses is artificial as, for example, in the first line: "The morning was fair, and the firmament sheen", which is almost meaningless through compression. Despite this there is a certain novelty and freshness of approach to the theme of the virgin innocent wooed by a young man of lecherous intentions. The bonny Jean of this song seems disarmingly or perversely unaware of the dishonourable intentions of her suitor. He is constantly referred to as the "knight" which has the effect of undercutting his conventional advances, especially when linked to his hasty protestations of undying love and his surprise at Jeany's recounting his propositions to her father. The directness and artlessness of Jean's speech and actions contrast with the formal diction of the knight and the artificially worded phrases of the first two stanzas. The contrast is so strong as almost to be destructive, but the irony of the song just saves it. A large part of this ironic tension is

conveyed by the tune, "Bung your Eye in the Morning", which is quite lively and helps to undercut the overblown quality of some of the words. It is particularly effective in line 8 of stanza 3: "And I'll love you, my Jeany, for ever" where the octave leap and the sharpening of the F disrupts the knight's plausibility, making his empty phrase jar (Fig. 7).



In addition it may well be that the song derives ironic overtones by contrast with the words to which the tune is more usually set. Known in some collections as "The Cauldrife Wooer"<sup>30</sup>, it appears in SMM as "The brisk young lad" (SMM, 219:228). The words first appeared in print in 1776 in David Herd's collection of Scottish Songs.<sup>31</sup> The song deals with a comic courtship where the lover is more interested in the girl's scones and ale than her personal charms. The young man is shown the door, trips in some mud and causes great amusement for all the neighbours. The older words are thus much more anti-romantic than Hogg's. His approach is much more literary, as the language alone shows.

The songs, then, show a wide range of approach with the opposing influences of literature and tradition visible to varying degrees. What they show most clearly is the fact that the folk tradition was well advanced into the transitional stage and that it was both natural and necessary for Hogg to find a way of bridging the gap between the traditional and literary audiences. Hogg's songs, in their blending of folk and art influences, were following in a well-established tradition but it is precisely this genre, with its mixed influences that helped Hogg to make the transition from the

shepherds' ingle to the literary salon. However, although the songs represent an important element in Hogg's work, it is only by looking first at the narrative verse and then at the prose work that one can see properly the themes which Hogg developed and the way in which he made independent and creative modifications to folk tradition in presenting it for a new literary audience.



## CHAPTER THREE : Narrative Verse - The Thematic Foundations

The songs clearly show both that the tradition from which Hogg drew was in a mixed, transitional state and that, at the same time as he was drawing on tradition, Hogg was also seeking a wider view. It is through the early narrative verse that Hogg began most directly to borrow and extend the traditional inheritance. The Mountain Bard<sup>1</sup> mirrors very distinctly the particular Border community Hogg knew for it is redolent of the histories and beliefs of that area. It shows Hogg reconsidering his inheritance and in this process of reevaluation certain key themes and threads begin to appear. It is on these threads and themes that all of Hogg's mature work depends and these early works are in a real sense a foundation. The themes of the Mountain Bard are the themes that appear and reappear consistently in Hogg's work. This can be seen both by reference to later works and also by an examination of the ways the new edition of the Mountain Bard in 1821 stimulated him to re-examine his themes. His treatment of them may vary but they are his essential matter, even to an extent colouring his public image. It is at root because of this fundamental consistency that the image of the Ettrick Shepherd and the Hogg of the "Noctes" could be built.

The complexity of Hogg's relationship with tradition is illustrated by an early piece found in Scottish Pastorals<sup>2</sup>, a small collection, hastily produced in 1801 (Memoir, pp.15-17). "The death of Sir Niel and Donald McVane Esq." (pp.49-55) deals with a duel wrongly induced between McVane and Sir Niel Stuart his sister's lover. Sir Niel kills McVane and is in turn killed by Glengyle, his rival. The piece is subtitled "An Auld Tale Made New Again", perhaps suggesting a traditional source and indeed versions are to be found elsewhere, mainly in chapbook form.<sup>3</sup> The versions seem so

close that a common source of some description seems likely. An 1825 version from Falkirk (SUL collection) seems to follow Hogg's version verbatim. Hogg gives no information about the piece and Peter Buchan whose version drops the name "Stuart", suggests it may concern a certain Sir Neil Campbell, "who followed the fortunes of Sir William Wallace", and his clansman Campbell of Glengyle (Peter Buchan, II, 307).

Though Hogg suggests the piece is traditional, one should perhaps point out that other pieces of Hogg's did become very popular chapbook material and that Scottish Pastorals was Hogg's first published book, printed at his own expense, so that it might seem unlikely for him to include something he had not penned completely by himself. However, the originality may simply lie in the fact that it was his own version of an old or popular ballad. The significant thing is Hogg's familiarity with the chapbook style and mode of expression. This is reflected in the mixture of the bathetic and the unnecessarily artificial as in the rhyming of "mistaken"/"break them" and the line "Forbear, fond fool, tempt not thy fate". The piece has interesting implications for Hogg's later style. At all stages he concentrated on creating material from local traditions but this was especially so in the narrative poems of the Mountain Bard. It may be that a contributory factor to the patchy style of these pieces was Hogg's thorough immersion in the chapbook style. This seems particularly likely when one considers not only this piece but the evidence of chapbook influence in the titles he offered Scott for the Minstrelsy (See Appendix III).

The real stimulus to Hogg's creative awareness was his involvement in Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. Hogg contributed by collecting material for Scott and the collaboration was indeed fruitful. Not only did it establish an important friendship between Scott and Hogg that was to last till Scott's death, but it also turned Hogg's attention specifically towards the classic ballad

tradition. Keith Harry<sup>4</sup> suggests that contributions from Hogg were used in ten ballads which appeared in the Minstrelsy: "Auld Maitland", "The Battle of Otterburn" (Child 161), "Clerk Saunders" (Child 69), "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow" (Child 160), "The Duel of Wharton and Stuart", "Erlington" (Child 8), "The Gay Goshawk" (Child 96), "The Lament of the Border Widow" (See Child 106, "The Famous Flower of Serving Men"), "Lord William" (Child 68), "The Queen's Maries" (Child 173) and possibly "Young Benjie" (Child 86). (See Appendix III). For eight of these Hogg was the major or sole source. The excited letter of 30 June 1802 (NLS MS 3874 f.114) shows how seriously Hogg was now considering his family as tradition bearers. The letter also reveals that Hogg has only just begun to look at tradition in a systematic way. Moreover despite his praise, he saw room for improvement: "...yet, I confess, that I was not satisfied with many of the imitations of the ancients. I immediately chose a number of traditional facts, and set about imitating the different manners of the ancients myself" (1807, p.xx).

Thus he apparently set about composing new "ballads" himself, based on the remarkably fecund wealth of local stories and legends and histories he had at his disposal. However the reader would be sadly disappointed if he were to expect to find a set of ballads as if fresh from great informants like Anna Brown, James Nicol or Jeannie Robertson.<sup>5</sup> This is what Robin MacLachlan discovers when he compares the structure of the ballads recorded from Mrs Brown, the texts of which were used by Scott, with that of the so-called ballad imitations of the Mountain Bard.<sup>6</sup> The key lies in the phrase "the different manners of the ancients" and in the kind of work that inspired that collection. The "Imitations of the Ancient Ballads" included by Scott in the Minstrelsy give a much clearer idea of the models Hogg had in mind. It would be fairer to call these merely a collection of narrative poems on semi-historical or legendary themes. Some do not even fall into that category. John Marriot's effusion on the visit of the Countess of

Dalkeith to Melrose Abbey apparently gains entry to the later editions because of its Border subject.<sup>7</sup> Certainly its topic and form bear no relation to the traditional ballads of Scotland. However, even in the first edition the modern contributions such as Leyden's "Ode on Visiting Flodden",<sup>8</sup> are far removed from the ballad style. Even in the contributions, notably those by Scott and Leyden, with a better understanding of how to relate a verse narrative there is an ample salting of archaisms, affected diction and knights and ladies feasting in banner-decked halls. It was in this mould then that Hogg was casting his work. Plainly any attempt to show Hogg as developing gradually from a folk poet to a sophisticated writer influenced by the literary ideas of the day would have to be greatly qualified by the recognition that Hogg's influences, right from the start, were neither clear cut nor one-sided but a mixture of the traditional, literary, ancient and contemporary.

Although none of the Mountain Bard pieces is designed to be a "ballad" in the traditional or classical sense, four are clearly modelled on traditional balladry: "David Graeme", "Douglas, Lord of Liddisdale", "Lord Derwent" and "Lariston". The different approach employed in each of these poems shows that Hogg is not trying merely to reproduce old ballads but to go beyond that and recreate some of the tension and emotion of the ballad in a literary treatment. He may begin with some traditional original in mind but it is used to give only an initial situation. His poem has a separate identity even though it may incorporate traditional material or be directly inspired by a traditional ballad. This can easily be seen in "Sir David Graeme" (pp.3-14),<sup>9</sup> a piece which according to Hogg's notes (1807, pp.3-4), was inspired by "The Twa Corbies" in Scott's Minstrelsy. What Hogg's poem is, is an attempted realisation of the events beyond the one stark

and powerful scene in "The Twa Corbies". Hogg works from the lines; "And nae body kens that he lies there,/But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair" (Minstrelsy [1803], III, 241). These lines suggest that the lady fair was in fact responsible for the death. "The eery ballad" becomes a tale of duplicity and disloyalty as the dead knight is deserted, the prey of these sinister crows:

His hound is to the hunting gane,  
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,  
His lady's ta'en another mate,  
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

(Minstrelsy [1803], III, 241).

Hogg's poem makes Sir David Graeme the slain knight but his death is not revealed until late on in the poem. The discovery of his body by his lady fair who is innocent of all treachery is the climax of the piece. Both she and the hound remain faithful and for this Hogg has the authority of tradition as recorded in "The Three Ravens" (Child 26) which was printed in 1611 in Melismata: Musicall Phansies, Fitting the Court Citty, and Country Humours. The piece was reprinted by Joseph Ritson in his Ancient Songs (London, 1790) and by Scott alongside "The Twa Corbies" in the Minstrelsy. Here the dead knight's hounds and hawks protect his corpse from marauders till his lover comes to bury him. She herself dies thereafter. Thus Hogg's poem draws on a fascinating mix of traditional strains that includes the living tradition transmitted through his own family. The poem begins:

The dow flew east, the dow flew west,  
The dow flew far ayont the fell,  
An' sair at e'en she seem'd distrest,  
But what perplext her could not tell.

(1807, p.5)

In his notes Hogg says that he "borrowed" the first line "from a beautiful

old rhyme which I have often heard my mother repeat, but of which she knew no tradition; and from this introduction the part of the dove naturally arose" (1807, p.13). Several links between these lines, the lines of "The Lament of the Border Widow", contributed by Hogg to the Minstrelsy, and also the lines used in "The Bridal of Polmood" have already been examined at length by Edith Batho.<sup>10</sup> In the context of the present discussion it is more important to note the way in which Hogg builds up the texture of his own pieces by incorporating material from different levels of tradition and the ways in which this material is employed and altered to present a new independent artistic whole.

What Hogg does is to alter the bird's role in this involved reweaving of multiple traditional strands. It is transformed from the disloyal hawk of "The Twa Corbies" to the faithful, protective bird of both "The Three Ravens" and Margaret Laidlaw's lines. The hawk, belonging to the masculine world of chivalric honour, hunting and violent action, is replaced by a dove, a more feminine representative, which here significantly acts as a messenger rather than as an active hunter. The motif of the bird as a messenger is a common one and in balladry can be found in "The Gay Goshawk" (Child 96), a ballad which also appeared in the Minstrelsy. Hogg's notes make it clear that this was a favourite ballad with him.<sup>11</sup> Hogg's dove is a weakened form of this speaking hawk. It does not talk but it conveys presentiments of tragedy by its sad looks, its refusal to eat, and by its bringing tokens of the dead knight such as locks torn from his head and a diamond ring. All the while the lady does not understand but blames her lover's inconstancy in failing to carry her off. The dramatic irony of her ignorance of her knight's death recalls the bitter-sweet scenes in "Clerk Saunders" as the man lies murdered in his sleeping

lover's arms but instead of May Margaret's lyrical awakening the lady here rages in tears of anger and confusion and growing dread. The tale is brought to a climax by the hound appearing and persuading the lady to follow him to the rotting corpse of his master. Here Hogg's imagination has obviously been caught by the Gothic horror tradition as expressed in Lewis' Tales of Wonder (1801) and the vogue for what G. Malcolm Laws calls the "horror ballad",<sup>12</sup> for he gleefully describes the "loathsome carcass" in all its horror. The result is fairly repellent:

Wi' ae wound through his shoulder-bane,  
An' in his bosom twa or three;  
Wi' flies an' vermine sair o'ergane,  
An' ugsome to the sight was he.

His piercing een, that love did beet,  
Had now become the ravens' prey;  
His tongue, that had moved to accents sweet,  
Deep frae his throat was torn away.

Poor Reyno fawned, an' took his place,  
As glad to see the livid clay;  
Then licked his master's bloated face,  
An' kindly down beside him lay. -

(1807, p.11)

With the horror element well under way, Hogg sees fit to introduce the ghost of the dead Graeme and the ghost, bleeding and bruised, labours to impart some awful tale which, fortunately, the reader is spared as the poem ends abruptly thus:

Fain wad I tell what there befel,  
But its unmeet for mortal ear:  
The dismal deeds on yonder fell  
Wad shock a human heart to hear.

(1807, p.12)

The poem is, then, somewhat mixed in effect. The goriness of the last part is excessively explicit and the ghostly visitation adds nothing, merely encumbering the poem with ghoulerie and giving it a most unsatisfyingly limp conclusion. But, Hogg has to an extent

successfully transformed his traditional originals. He takes as a starting point the anonymous, unrealised lady of "The Twa Corbies" and transforms her from a shadowy, sinister presence into a more fully drawn, sympathetic character, who is casting about for a means of understanding what is happening, refusing to accept her lover's apparent deceit and blocking out all the signs that point to foul play.

Interestingly, Hogg himself was unhappy with the conclusion of the poem and used the opportunity of a new edition in 1821 to introduce considerable changes.<sup>13</sup> Some slight changes are made earlier on, which make the poem feel slightly more contrived and consciously medievalised. For instance "Lammas night" (1807, p.6, st.4, 1.3) becomes "St. Lambert's Night" (1821, p.4, st.4, 1.3), and stanza 9 describing nature becomes more strained:

The lambs were skipping on the brae,  
In airy notes the shepherd sung,  
The small birds hailed the jocund day,  
Till ilka thicket sweetly rung.

(1807, p.7)

The lambs were skipping on the brae,  
The laverock hiche attour them sung,  
An' aye she hailed the jocund day,  
Till the wee, wee tabors o' heaven rung.

(1821, p.5)

The changes often disrupt the regularly pursued simple iambic tetrameter that Hogg uses and the alterations seem to have been inspired by a desire to pad out. In many cases they do great violence to the simplicity that is the key feature of the original version. The greatest divergence is to be seen from stanza 28 onwards. In the 1807 version this contains the four stanzas describing the corpse and the six of the ghostly visitation. In the 1821 version text Hogg had the sense to cut out these episodes entirely. Instead he plays up the girl's journey to her lover's body, squeezing out every



last drop of the irony set up by the girl's continued inability to guess the real state of affairs. Really this adds very little to the poem and it would have been better to end the poem much sooner with the simple discovery of the corpse. The 1821 version, the version which is preserved in the collected works, proceeds with the girl fainting and being carried home by a shepherd. It concludes with three quite piquant little stanzas:

There's a lady has lived in Howswood tower,  
 'Tis seven years past on St. Lambert's day,  
 An' aye when comes the vesper hour  
 These words an' no more can she say.

"They slew my love on the wild Swaird green,  
 As he was on his way to me,  
 An' the ravens picked his bonnie blue e'en,  
 An' the tongue that was formed for courtesye.

"My brothers they slew my comely knight,  
 An' his grave is red blood to the brim  
 I thought to have slept out the lang, lang night  
 But they've wakened me, an' wakened not him!"

(1821, pp.13-14)

By contrast with Hogg's work elsewhere, these last lines are successful and evocative. They employ an understatement that is unusual in his work. The reader is left to piece out a background of family jealousy and the girl's broken mind. The two versions of "Sir David Graeme" show firstly Hogg's ability to adapt traditional motifs and stories and his initial happiness with a very simple rhythmic form in the ballad-like iambic, four foot quatrain, while his love of explicit ghoulish detail is replaced by a flaccid reworking of a worn theme. In neither version has he quite got everything right but he does manage to move from the ballad into a different area of narrative poetry with more fully explored character, retaining all the time a lot more of the rigour of the ballad. He has not yet fallen into the stifling, cloyingfake medievalism that he and some of the

later literary balladeers such as Keats or Tennyson were occasionally liable to.

The rest of the narrative works in the Mountain Bard show the same sort of characteristics: a vivid original conception, competent use of tradition in the form of superstition or local legend, occasional limpness and confusion due to inability to marshal material succinctly. Part of the problem is that he often just does not know where to stop. This is proved by the fact that the changes in the 1821 edition, though not usually as extensive as in "Sir David Graeme", tend to compound the awkward patches in his work rather than eliminate them. He frequently pads out the poems, often aiming at a higher, more "poetic" diction and in other cases, such as "The Death of Douglas, Lord of Liddisdale" he introduces a denser form of his fake Middle-Scots, presumably to suggest authenticity. This can lead to the kind of diffuseness that eventually mars "Douglas". Nevertheless the poem is significant for, perhaps even more than the rest, it can be seen as a bridge between the Hogg of the Minstrelsy, the recorder of tradition, and the creative writer of his own work. This poem is claimed to be an actual blend of traditional stanzas and original lines by Hogg. Hogg himself explains in his introductory note to the poem:<sup>14</sup>

The first stanza of this Song, as well as the history of the event to which it refers, is preserved by Hume of Godscroft in his history of the House of Douglas. The author having been successful in rescuing some excellent old songs from the very brink of oblivion, searched incessantly many years after the remains of this, until lately, by mere accident, he lighted upon a few scraps, which he firmly believes to have formed a part of that very ancient ballad. The reader may judge for himself. The first verse is from Hume; and all those printed within brackets are as near the original as rhyme and reason will permit. They are barely sufficient to distinguish the strain in which the old song hath preceded.

(1807, p.96)

In the poem of twenty-six stanzas which follows, 5 full and 2 half stanzas are bracketed (st. 2; st. 3, ll. 1-2; sts. 10-12; st. 14, ll. 1-2; st. 15). The original stanza, the one cited in Hume, is included by Child as "The Knight of Liddisdale" (160). He shows that the tradition that the Douglas was slain because of adulterous love is groundless, apparently arising exclusively from the old ballad which Hume quotes. He also notes Scott's failure to include in the Minstrelsy the fragments of the old ballad that he claimed were still current on the Borders. He suggests that it might be that "Sir Walter became convinced that these fragments were not genuine; at any rate, they do not appear in his collection".<sup>15</sup> It might be possible that the stanzas, which Scott refers to in a note in the Minstrelsy<sup>16</sup>, are the stanzas which Hogg claims to have unearthed. Does this then suggest that Hogg fabricated them to authenticate his own poem? The stanzas Hogg uses certainly lack the style and power of the balladry of say Mrs Brown, the source of some of Scott's best material. The following lines clang rather and suggest a literary touch-up: "It wasna rage for Ramsey slain/ That rais'd the deadly feid sae hie" (1807, p.100). The oral tradition that Hogg knew, however, was not the high tradition of Mrs Brown but a transitional one, perhaps more comparable with James Nicol's.<sup>17</sup> It is quite possible that some broadside influence may have helped to mould the original stanzas, thus causing Scott to reject them as corrupt and not representative of the "ancient minstrels". Stanza 12, moreover, seems to owe something to the standard description of the killing in "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow" which could be taken as evidence of either oral patterning or straightforward borrowing. However, Scott's note may only refer to his original sources and a further warning note is sounded by Hogg's 1821 introduction, where he makes much more modest claims: "The first verse is from Hume, and many other single lines and couplets that are ancient occur, which are

barely sufficient to distinguish the strain in which the old song hath proceeded" (1821, p.123).

It seems likely that Hogg has been engaged in the same sort of resculpturing as he performed in securing texts for the Minstrelsy. The process hinted at in these notes is highly reminiscent of the self-confessed stitching together of lines in the texts of "Auld Maitland" or "The Battle of Otterburn" where his concern is to create a usable, performable text rather than an accurate antiquarian record, his claim being that "no man will like an old song the worse of being somewhat harmonious".<sup>18</sup> It is this that leads him in 1821 to remove the brackets and present the whole as an integrated piece. Furthermore, he does not even quote the stanza from Hume accurately. It should appear in the following form:

The Countesse of Douglas out of her boure she came,  
And loudly there that she did call:  
'It is for the Lord of Liddesdale  
That I let all these teares downe fall.'

(Child, III, 288)

Hogg's alterations smooth up the verse and regularise the rhythm while preserving the sense, the rhyme scheme and general flow of the stanza:

The Lady Douglas left her bower,  
An' ay sae loud as she did call,  
"'Tis all for gude Lord Liddisdale  
That I do let these tears down fall."

(1807, p.97)

Similarly in 1821 when he decided to give the piece a more musty flavour by altering the orthography to make his fake "middle Scots", he does not exempt the traditional stanza. Clearly he has a flexible attitude towards his traditional materials:

The Ladye Douglas lefte hir bouir,  
And aye sae loud as scho did call,

"'Tis all for guid Lord Liddisdale  
 Thatte I do lette these tearis downe fall."

(1821, p.123)

Hogg has also altered the direction of the ballad original, just as he did with "Sir David Graeme". Again he is concerned with what happens to characters beyond the brief climactic space that the traditional ballad allows them. It shows a concern with causality, with lineal progression and with the wider canvas against which events happen that is not found in traditional balladry. In this example, for instance, Hume's synopsis, which is quoted by Child, shows that the original ballad dealt with the death of Liddisdale and the lady's attempt to forestall this by sending love-letters of warning, which the knight ignored. The main characters were thus the knight of Liddisdale, the lady and her husband. In Hogg's poem the action all takes place after the death and consists of the lady revealing her love for Liddisdale to her brother who kills her because of the disgrace to the family name. They are the only characters and the story is largely told by means of a dialogue between the two, much in the manner of many classic ballads. The key interest is the growing understanding of the brother, who first tries to calm his sister with platitudes about Liddisdale's bravery. Finally, realising the illicit connection, he rises to a murderous pitch of cold anger and kills her. It is the kind of action that is familiar in such ballads as "The Cruel Brother" (Child 11) or "Young Johnstone" (Child 88). The dying lady protests her innocence and her brother is instantly overcome with remorse but does not seek immediate death as the murderers in "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (Child 73) or "Young Johnstone" do. Instead, like Shakespeare's Henry IV he seeks to find expiation for his crime in a pilgrimage. There is a suggestion that, once he has done this, he will return to die: "An' syne come back an'

sleep wi' thee" (1807, p.102).

As it stands the work is not terribly memorable but it does show Hogg pushing beyond the ballad framework to achieve a new artistic end. He finds a completely new focus, the brother, and there is a real process of development in the poem. The brother at first sees only the martial aspects of the events and relates everything back to a notion of chivalric honour. Liddisdale is not to be mourned as he fought well; the family name is to be preserved at all costs. He does not understand the emotions he is confronted with and thus his reflex response is to combat them with violence. It is then an advance that he plans to seek forgiveness from the Christian faith.

This ending did not satisfy Hogg and he developed it extensively in the 1821 version so that this version is now thirty-five stanzas long. In this the character of the sister is worked up, making her a much stronger creation and yet again altering the focus of the poem. The lady is stabbed, as in the 1807 edition, but in a series of four very powerful stanzas she marks her brother "in hyr heartis bleide" and places a powerful "curse of chyldlynesse" on him, foretelling envy, pride and an early death for him. All of this comes to pass despite the brother's offer to "seike remissione in Italie" if the sister dies. The sister, however, recovers, and by this point she has assumed a sinister, almost supernatural, status. The rest of her life is spent in luring men to helpless love and causing their deaths:

And mony a lord in lofe did pyne,  
 Forre hyr eyne the heartis of all men drewe,  
 And mony a hosbande scho hathe slayne,  
 And evir and anon gotte new.

(1821, p.131)

The poem ends on two little stanzas which warn of the awful debilitating effect women have on men, finally declaring that "to

ane oulde and dotard wuchte, /Womyn is worse than helle beneathe" (1821, p.132). Though this trite caveat may not impress, it does help to indicate the extent to which the whole direction of the poem is thoroughly remoulded. The under-cutting of the brother is gone and the sister is changed from the earlier pale, lachrymose creature whose only action was to insist that Liddisdale died for love of her, to a sinister siren. The change is complete and effective for it works backwards and alters the effect of the earlier stanzas, making Liddisdale yet one more of her victims. It is a strange creation and works because of its power and weirdness rather than any coherent or comprehensible pattern.

It is natural to ask why Hogg recast the poem as dramatically as he did and why he added the lady's unexplained recovery over which the reader cannot but stumble incredulously. The answer would appear to be that Hogg had been reading or had been directed to some particulars of the history of the Douglas family at the time this ballad is supposed to refer to. The notes Hogg attaches to the poem state that the lady Douglas in question was married four times. Thus Hogg was anxious to conform to the bones of what he conceived to be the traditional or historical truth. In doing so he is led, as here, into some novel contortions, but at the same time his hands are not completely bound. It is on his own authority that he builds the lady into some Morgan Le Fay-like creation and introduces the spine-chilling maledictory baptism in blood. The poem shows Hogg dealing freely with his traditional material. He attempts to synthesise the traditionally sanctioned view of the events with the literate concept of "truth" but the result is not entirely convincing. It is for this reason that, in prose, he developed the technique of fluctuating support, where he seems at one moment to be supporting the traditional belief in, for

example, the supernatural, while at another, even within the same story, he deflates and debunks the whole thing by explaining it away rationally.

The stanzas he supposedly stitches together show themselves in no way greatly inferior in style or content to the original as preserved by Hume of Godscroft. The aim and intention on the other hand are entirely different. After the first verse the traditional source is a springboard to a new conception. Hogg's use of vivid concrete imagery suggests that he is caught by the ballads and drawn into them in such a way that he is obsessed by the story into pursuing the characters' lives in his own mind. It allows him to play up his love of feats of arms and to present a confusing collection of fallen heroes and hardy victors but it also allows him to flesh out the ballad characters and pursue the effects of their actions. Meanwhile, the starkness of the ballad example brings a rigour to his writing that is all too often lacking. Some of the songs, for instance, are desperately colourless, and derivatively artificial and even his best poems are often patchy with the flashes of primary colour being linked with rather diffuse and inflated verbiage.

"David Graeme" and "Douglas" both show Hogg working out from a ballad original. In the case of "Douglas", he actually builds on a traditional verse, while in "David Graeme" he is working on parallel lines with tradition rather than directly from it. In "Lord Derwent" and "The Laird of Laristan" Hogg is working in the opposite direction, as it were, starting with an original idea and blending tradition and technique to create a poem imitative of the ballad mode at some stage. "Lord Derwent" purports to be a "fragment" and seems at once very close to the classic ballad style and yet very



distinct from it. Part of the authenticity is achieved by the opening, with its question and answer sequence. This effect is consolidated by the slow realisation that the poem is dealing with a ghost visitation. Instead of letting the story lead up to the ghost, Hogg moves straight into the dialogue, allowing us only gradually to realise that the man is a ghost. The first hint comes in stanza 5 where the Knight explains that he got his horse and harness, "Where mortal ne'er got one" (1807, p.129). It is carefully employed dramatic irony of the kind seen in "Sir David Graeme". The poem, however, slows down with the page's description of the battle (sts. 17-20) and loses the dramatic quality that the earlier stanzas had built up. There seems to be no terribly good reason for the intrusion of this battle sequence, except perhaps Hogg's delight in such matters and in churning over Border names. It does however permit Hogg to display his erudition. The notes tell us that the poem refers to a particular battle in 1524 in Cumberland and that the page's account of the battle agrees with Holinshed from whom Hogg then quotes. Thus Hogg is creating a rich texture with tradition employed on many levels both in and outside the poem. He uses form, in the shape of the ballad, mode and technique, superstition and scraps of history, traditional and local, all of which are simplified and reinforced by received historical opinion.

The last of the ballad imitations in the Mountain Bard is "The Laird of Lairistan: or, The Three Champions of Liddisdale". This poem, however, has no claim at all to stand as a real "ballad" for it reads simply as a story put to verse. It is divided arbitrarily into three sections and the "hero", if there is one, seems to change as the direction and sympathies of the poem twist and turn. Hogg uses superstition to reveal a murderer through the agency of a stained cloak

which will not clean, thus awakening suspicion. However, the motif (D.1318)<sup>19</sup> is awkwardly employed and in the passing its power is hastily attributed to God. The questions of right, honour and justice are at issue and woven through this in a fairly arbitrary, clumsy fashion is the reference to the wider concerns of the state. All sorts of incidental characters clutter up the narrative and the coherence of the poem is sorely tried. For example, sympathy lies at first with Elliot of Lairistan who is secretly slain, thus leaving a gap in the Border armoury. Thus vulnerability is echoed in the second part by the threat of civil discord, causing a shepherd to lament that "The land is in a piteous case,/When subjects rise against the law" (1807, p.143). At this point the cloak is mentioned revealing Sundup as the slayer. His explanation which concludes the second part, vindicates himself and Jocky Armstrong o' Milburn who, it appears, was wronged by Elliot. Milburn's final reassessment comes in the last part where, fighting valiantly for the king at Edgehill, he is restored to power in the Border. The poem's concluding stanza teeters on the verge of exploring a much more demanding issue:

The king gave him his gay gold ring,  
And made him there a belted knight;  
But Milburn bled to save his king!  
The king to save his royal right!

(1807, p.150)

Hogg has shown in his poem that certain "rights", for example those of a cuckolded husband, outweigh certain "crimes", namely murder. In apposition to this Hogg sets up the king's rights, the Divine Right, and the right and duty of protecting his subjects. He does not, however, complete the metaphor and tell us the extent of the king's rights, he merely asserts, with his own ardent royalism, the kind displayed in the songs, that civil war is wrong.

He makes no attempt to examine the issues of the Civil War or indeed to take any account of the result and consequences. On the whole it is not a rewarding poem to read. Hogg does not actually condone the policy of expediency that frees Sundup so easily, but he accepts it and surely this sits uncomfortably with the fact that the preservation of the murder clue is attributed to God. In the end the poem reaffirms that right is only tenable when backed with might. The 1821 version does not alter this but does contrive to modify the attitude to the king, making Milburn's attitude more quixotic and recalling the chivalrous Highlanders of "Donald McDonald". This is done by the addition of the following stanzas where "a man of note" tells the king of Milburn:

"He says you're kind, but counselled ill,  
And sit unstable on your throne;  
But had he power unto his will,  
He swears he'd kill the dogs each one."

(1821, p.196)

Hogg uses tradition, then, to work through to a statement of moral worth and to pursue this he has to break away from a close dependence on ballad form. The true classical ballads do not dwell on the concept of culpability or on the question of right or wrong action, concerning themselves only with striking action, not its consequences. Hogg in trying to work beyond this has to free himself from too close formal imitation and rely on the working in of traditional motifs for effect and texture only. The areas of tradition he draws on most heavily are local history and legend and superstition. He does this in a number of ways, for example by dealing with episodes of local history and using the traditional views of the protagonists. Hogg then enlarges on the traditional elements, developing and interpreting them. This is the way he deals with tradition in "Gilmanscleuch" which opens strongly with a

question and answer dialogue between a girl, Peggy, and her father. They are both representatives of the Scott family of Harden and the poem deals with the downfall of a related family at Gilmanscleuch. The poem thus concerns itself with the great figures of the area, creating in a sense, a kind of local epic. The portrait of Old Harden at court sueing for reparation is very effective. Here Hogg draws Harden, "the cunning tod", as a giant, elemental figure. His entry into court is like that of the Green Knight's into Arthur's court or again like that of Lang Johnny More and his kinsmen into London (Child 251):

"And hee's awa to Holy Rood,  
Amang our nobles a',  
With bonnit lyke a girdel braid,  
And hayre like Craighop snaw;

"His coat was of the forest grene,  
Wi' buttons like the moon;  
His breeks war of the gude buck-skyne,  
Wi' a' the hayre aboon.

"His twa-hand sword hang round his neck,  
And rattled to his heel;  
The rowels of his silver spurs,  
Were of the Rippon steel;

"His hose were braced wi' chains of airn,  
And round wi' tassels hung,  
At ilka tramp of Harden's heel  
The royal arches rung.

(1807, p.46)

This passage, of which one of the first two verses may be by Scott,<sup>20</sup> stands out in the poem because of the vivid, concrete description. Save for his hair, it is only Harden's accoutrements that are described and they are massy, solid and for the most part metallic. The exceptions are likened instead to elemental natural phenomena, the snowy hills, the forests and the moon. He even takes on the mantle of the animal world with his fox's guile and his buck-skin breeches still covered in hair. He becomes a real figure of

power and the characterisation is far superior to the attempt earlier in the same poem to draw Jean, Young Harden's lover:

"Of fairest fashion was hir form,  
Hir skin the driven snaw,  
That's drifted by the wintery storm  
On lofty Gilman's-law.

"Hir face a smile perpetual wore,  
Her teeth were ivorie,  
Hir lips the little purple floure  
That blumes on Baillie-lee.

(1807, p.38)

This is merely poetic convention and has none of the striking appositeness of the Harden description. Even Peggy's description of the beggar is more evocative:

"His hair was like the thistle doune,  
His cheeks were furred wi' tyme,  
His beard was like a bush of lyng,  
When silvered o'er wi' ryme.

(1807, p.36)

"Thistle doune", "furred" and "bush" all suggest a ragged, dishevelled appearance, while "silvered o'er wi' ryme" and "thistle doune" suggest the grizzled whiteness of age. In this sort of way Hogg manages to root his tale even more firmly in its physical setting. He takes local figures and clothes them as it were in their own countryside. When he does so successfully it gives the characters a kind of power and nobility that is unparalleled except perhaps, when used to different ends, by Wordsworth.

In the conclusion of the poem the Harden Scotts restore the Gilmanscleuch family to their lands. Thus the disruptions in the community are finally healed and the family lines restored, a theme that is later pursued in Queen Hynde as well as in many of the short prose tales. It seems as if Hogg may have had "The Dowie Dens of

Yarrow" (Child 214) in mind when he composed the present piece. Hogg's note to "The Fray of Elibank" (1807, p.50) and Scott's notes to "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow"<sup>21</sup> both show that one tradition of this ballad was that the contenders were a Harden Scott and a Scott of Gilmanacleuch. As with "Sir David Graeme" and "The Twa Corbies", he has used the older piece merely as a starting point and has looked at the repercussions of the initial action. Before, the subject was the effect on the deserted lover, here Hogg is concerned with the family who wrongly brought about the death of the lovers. He casts them, not as black villains, but almost as pawns in a cycle of fate. The shepherd who announces that Harden is poaching and the "wudman" who kills him are as responsible for the action of the story as any of the protagonists, and these are mere anonymous ciphers who materialise as it were out of the hills and forest ("A shepherd frae our mountains hied"; "A wudman then sprang frae the brume"). They return there having set the cycle in motion. With the return of the Scotts of Gilmanacleuch the old elemental cycle is run and a new one can begin. Their line fell when this old age was at its height:

"But when the bush was in the flush,  
 And fairer there was nane,  
 Ae blast did all its honours crush,  
 And Gilmanacleuch is gane!"  
 (1807, p.38)

With this a gap was created in the community which is only to be healed now with a new age. Perhaps it is significant that a New Year has also just begun. Certainly the vision at the end of the poem anticipates a new more successful power in the community:

"A Scott shou'd ay support a Scott,  
 When sinking to decaye,  
 Till over a' the southlan' hills  
 We stretch our ample sway."  
 (1807, p.49)

However, these last two lines were given a more moral tone in 1821. Either this vast new Scott empire has to learn to be more modest or the lesser Scott seats such as Gilman's Cleuch must learn to acknowledge Harden:

"A Scott muste aye support ane Scott,  
When as he synketh low;  
But he that proudly lifts his heide  
Muste learne his place to knowe."

(1821, p.63)

The age of the violent, fighting Scotts, who even when expelled still lived by their swords, is perhaps to be replaced by a more benevolent age symbolised by Peggy. Despite this happy notion Hogg had more success in drawing the characters and affairs of the older age with the result that much of this kind of work is somewhat mixed in quality.

The concern with local tradition and history as the medium for an epic at local, if not national, level is clearly also felt in "Thirlstane: A Fragment". This poem creates a sort of epic context by once more dealing with the rise and fall of great families, although it takes the least significant part of a local history and describes the scene without revealing any of the background or implications, all of which Hogg does comprehensively in the notes. The fact that it is a "fragment" set once more in fake middle Scots, may be of some significance. When Matthew Arnold similarly created a supposed fragment in "Sohrab and Rostum", he used the term and its epic implications to give a wider resonance to the personal tragedy of his tale. Hogg seems elsewhere to have been trying to create a sort of national epic in, for instance, The Queen's Wake and to some extent Queen Hynde. In "Thirlstane" he may be trying to recreate imaginatively a suggestion of what this epic might have been, creating for it a new hero, Balwin. It is, too, a kind of glorious

parody of Scott's work in the Minstrelsy, with Hogg reversing Scott's processes to create the effect. Scott worked from such fragments, researching the background and writing learned notes, to supplement and explain the poetry. Hogg here has started with the notes and told the story, with all its twists and turns, in a succinct fashion. After that the reader is faced with unyielding fragment with its dreamlike vision of a castle hung in black, a river running red and fields with no crop in them.

Once again the subject of "Thirlstane" is the foundering of a dynasty and this concern with the great families and the epic dimensions of tradition may simply be due to the strong influence of Scott at this period, the poem's composition being discussed in their correspondence.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless it is a theme that Hogg goes on to develop in the short prose going beyond local history to a concern for continuity and community stability. This kind of harmony is already being tentatively sought in these early narratives. This can clearly be seen in "The Fray of Elibank" which teaches its characters to seek a mid-ground equilibrium, advocating pragmatism over idealism and representing this harmony with a marriage between two households traditionally at war. "The Fray of Elibank" is based on the "Muckle-Mou'd Meg" tale well-known on the Borders where Wat of Harden rides a raid on Juden Murray of Elibank and is captured by him. He is offered his life if he will marry Meg, Murray's rather plain daughter. It is a popular episode in the traditional history of the Scotts and is discussed in William Fraser's history of the family.<sup>23</sup> A wide mouth was thereafter held to be a common Scott characteristic and Fraser notes an anecdote concerning Hogg in connection with this tradition. When Hogg was caught staring at Lord Polwarth with whom he was dining, he is said to have blithely admitted that he was,



"just looking to see if ye had the feemly mou" (Fraser, I, lxxviii). As Gifford points out the poem is something of a compliment, humorously set, to Sir Walter Scott's family,<sup>24</sup> and indeed to Hogg's own, the Hoggs having been the Scotts' henchmen. The poem moves fairly briskly and more concisely than is usual with Hogg. He tells the tale simply and with humour and thus, successfully. Part of this liveliness is owing to the metre used, anapaestic tetrameter, the bouncing rhythm of Scott's "Young Lochinvar". Hogg's poem, however, has more variety of tone, more vigour and humour, and better realised characters. It refuses moreover to have anything to do with the chivalric romanticism of Scott's poem. Old Harden shakes his head over his lost son:

"If I lose him," quo' he, "I can soon get another,  
But never again wad I get such an estate."

(1807, p.58)

The fray was conceived as a sport by Wattie but as a result "mony a brave fellow, cut off in their bloom,/Lie rotting in cairns on the craig and the steele", (1807, p.58). This is a theme pointed out by Hogg in The Three Perils of Man<sup>25</sup> and it is a lesson that Wattie has to learn. His initial response to Murray's offer is scathing: "A Scott, ye maun mind, counts it naething to die" (1807, p.61). Faced with an empty coffin, a rope end and the imperturbable Murray, he is forced to reconsider, finding "that marriage to death was a different case" (1807, p.62). It is true that Meg is not beautiful, thus, says Gifford, emphasising the realism (Gifford, p.38), omitting to add that in accordance with a rather more moral kind of romanticism she is "a prudent, a virtuous, and sensible wife" and the couple are blest, growing to love each other well. What Gifford fails to note is that the poem is in fact a version of the "loathlie lady" story. One finds ballad versions of this in "King Henry" (Child 32) and "The Marriage of Sir Gawaine"

(Child 31) and a literary reworking of it in "The Wife of Bath's Tale" in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. In Hogg's poem the function of the tradition has become somewhat altered. In the older works when the man gives the loathlie lady her sovereignty or will, she is transformed into a beauty. Hogg is not so much of a feminist. There is no overnight transformation but a slow revelation of Meg's innate merits. Significantly it is on the insistence of a woman, Meg's mother, that the ultimatum is employed, so perhaps this function of the tale is merely altered and transferred in the literary recasting of the traditional motifs. The testing of the man remains but in an altered form. Young Harden has first to learn that life is more valuable than vague notions of honour and that the pragmatism his father and Murray employ is of more lasting value. In the long term he discovers the value that may lie behind an unattractive exterior.

There are several changes to be noted in the 1821 edition. The groom is now called Willie, which can only cause confusion as that is the name of Hogg of Fauldshope. However, the introductory note to the 1807 edition had already stated that Hogg was "only uncertain what was the name of HARDEN's son, who was taken prisoner" (1807, p.50). Hogg may therefore have acquired some new information to make him prefer "Willie" to "Wattie", a popular Scott name. More significant are the changes introduced in the later stanzas of the poem from the point where Wattie/Willie is given the ultimatum. The 1821 version, the version which Gifford uses, greatly polished up the compliment to the Scotts by making the hero a more gracious groom. In 1807 he kicked against his fortune right to the end:

But Wattie now fand he was fairly warang,  
 That marriage to death was a different case. -  
 "What matter," quo' he, "though her nose it be lang?  
 It will ae keep her ae bielder side of a face.

"To fondle, or kiss her, I'll never be fain,  
Or lie down beside her wi' nought but my sark;  
But the first, if I please, I can let it alane;  
And cats they are all alike grey in the dark.

"What though she has twa little winkling een?  
They're better than nane, and my life it is sweet:  
And what though her mou' be the maist I ha'e seen?  
Faith, muckle-mou'd fock ha'e a luck for their meat."

(1807, pp.62-63)

After this, Juden taunts his new son-in-law, casting his vaunts about a Scott scorning death back in his teeth. All in all, save for Juden's exultation, there is little joy and less romance at this wedding, thus confirming the anti-romantic trend in the poem. The 1821 edition, however, changes the tone considerably. The equivalent stanzas show the prospective groom far more charitable to his bride:

But Willie now found he was fairly i' the wrang,  
That marriage an' death were twa different things. -  
"What matter," quo' he, "though her nose it be lang?  
For noses bring luck, an' it's welcome that brings.

"There's something weel-faurd in her soncy grey een,  
But they're better than nane, an' ane's life is sae sweet;  
An', what though her mou' be the maist I hae seen?  
Faith, muckle-mou'd fock hae a luck for their meat."

(1821, p.80)

This alters the piece completely, giving a much "happier" ending. The stark reality of the coffin and the hangman's noose are forgotten and the black humour of Wattie's rationalisation of his situation is all palliated, so that Hogg has lost some of the bite of the poem by prettying up his compliment to the Scott house. Perhaps like the Hardens he decided it was more worthwhile to keep on the right side of those who could help in a practical way. What the piece as a whole shows is an intelligent reworking of traditional material in a way that preserves the important themes or functions of the tale, altering them subtly to reinforce a wider theme, here the importance

of a sensible, balanced, non-idealistic approach to life, a theme well suited to Hogg's natural conservatism.

In the tales discussed so far Hogg has used local history in his quest for order and stability and the approach to superstition and the supernatural that colours the remaining pieces shows something of the same progression, as "The Laird of Lairistan" incidentally shows, with the revelation of a murderer through the agency of the supernatural. This exploration of the function of the supernatural is exploited fully in "The Pedlar" and "Mess John" but Hogg does occasionally, as in "Willie Wilkin", use the supernatural without placing it in its functional context. "Willie Wilkin" plays on the superstitious fear of witchcraft and the Devil simply for ghoulerie and effect, making no effort to suggest the significance such superstition might have in helping to regulate the community. The poem makes extensive use of the traditional motifs of superstition: it has a warlock, a black mass and a liberal string of easily recognised traditional supernatural motifs such as the effect of the moon on supernatural activity (p.104, st. 2), the "dead bell" foretelling death to the hearer (p.104, st. 5), a dream vision (sts. 6-8), the power of the Bible against demons and spirits (p.105, st. 9; p.109, st. 30), the insubstantiality of spirits (p.110, 34-36) and so on. Hogg's imagination is given full rein and though he wisely leaves the actual rites to the reader to colour in, he spares no awful detail in the description of the old woman's sundered body. Elsewhere, in the conventional picture of the aged mother begging her erring son to shun his evil ways, Hogg's attempts at evoking pathos are heavy-footed. The mother's speech is a tedious lull in the poem rather than a lyrical, humane calm before the frenzy of the violent, supernatural storm. Again, the eponymous hero is made to outlive

his aesthetic usefulness, presumably out of loyalty to the "traditional" facts. Willie, instead of being consumed in the destruction that takes place in the kirk is made to survive without scathe: "And liv'd and died like other men, /For aught that could be seen" (1807, p.112). The effect is one of bathos after the furious crescendoes of the fiends and thunderbolts. The poem may record some legend of purely local significance but it does little more. There seems to be no discernible reason for the introduction of the supernatural other than a desire to play upon whatever superstitious proclivities the reader may have. It seems to provide nothing more than a general monitory cry against witchcraft. Other poems, however, such as "Mess John" and "The Pedlar" show a more imaginative and stimulating use of local legend and the supernatural blended together to suggest something of the significance and meaning of superstition in a traditional community.

"Mess John" is a sinister piece which allows Hogg to express anti-clericism and introduce sorcery and diablerie. Thus Hogg is here able to make use of several levels of tradition and superstition. In poems like "The Fray of Elibank" he uses only family history and certain kinds of proverb-like sayings as the framework for his narrative; here Hogg takes a whole range of superstitions and local legends and weaves them together, creating a much more impersonal work. The actors in the "Fray", though sparsely drawn, were characterised and had personalities of their own due to a dramatic quality in the tight narrative. The figures and actions in "Mess John" are more emblematic. Mess John himself is a priest of the old faith who becomes ensnared by his own decadence and sensuality into a league with the Devil. In the end it is two representatives of the new more ascetic, covenanting faith who destroy the evil, and with it the priest. Again we can see the traces of the same themes later

in Hogg's work. A glance at The Brownie of Bodsbeck,<sup>26</sup> which refers in passing to the tradition on which this poem is based, reveals the same distrust in the priesthood which is shown to be venal and treacherous. It also preserves the same solution, with redemption being placed in the hands of the hunted Cameronians.

This conflict is carried out by the agency of magic and the supernatural. The priest becomes embroiled in black magic and the Cameronians counter him by white magic. Thus when betrayed by his own pride and lust he is visited by the Devil in the form of May of Craigyburn, the object of his desires. The reader knows that it is the Devil even before the vision disintegrates (1807, p.76). To begin with the vision is preceded by various portents:

But first he heard the thunder roll,  
And then a laugh of malice keen;  
Fierce whirlwinds shook the mansion-walls,  
And grievous sobs were heard between:

(1807, p.74)

These shouts and tremors are similar to those that pursue Wringhim in the Inn when, despairing, he is about to become entirely the Devil's.<sup>27</sup> After this a simulacrum of May appears, "a silken mantle on her feet", for the Devil can appear in any guise but cannot conceal his cloven hooves. All this prepares the way for the sinister nature of the vision. Furthermore, as Thomas Wilkie's collection of superstitions shows, among the many forms the Devil could choose to appear in, that of "a tall woman dressed in white" was a common one.<sup>28</sup> The wax image, the fire and the influence of the moon are commonly linked with unpleasant supernatural activities and all combine to build a picture of what is sinister and awful. The crowing of the cock, signalling the end of the spirits' powers, again reinforces the supernatural imagery.

The Cameronians by contrast are "Armed with a gun, a rowan-tree rung, / A bible, and a scarlet twine" (1807, p.82). The power of the Bible, a cross, or the naming of God or Christ to combat evil is a commonplace of folklore. Most of the "Dracula" type of horror films rely on this. Hogg uses the motif again in "Willie Wilkin", where the presence of the Bible hidden under the saddle of a horse disrupts a black mass (1807, p.109). The power of the rowan is attested by Wilkie who notes that it is of particular significance for witches: "The Rowan-tree is dreaded more than all other woods, as if any witch or fairy is touched with it, by a christened person, that witch, etc. will be the kane one, which is paid to the devil at the end of every seven years " (Wilkie, p.96). In accordance with this the Devil's exultance at John's death would confirm that he had secured him. The scarlet twine is a similar sort of talisman and is particularly linked with the rowan in the traditional saying quoted elsewhere by Hogg:

Rown tree an' rede thread  
Pits the witches to their speed<sup>29</sup>

Hogg uses the red thread motif again in the story "Mary Burnet" where it is employed to protect a young man from the evil eye.<sup>30</sup> In this way, then, Hogg counters superstition with superstition, allowing the moral values within his work to be reinforced and fixed by the various emblems of good and bad witchcraft. The nature of the superstitions employed make it clear which actions are to be approved and which condemned but perhaps more significantly they clearly show that Hogg does not subscribe to the literate idea that the supernatural is itself naturally suspect. Instead of seeing it as diametrically opposed to rational thought or to Christian behaviour, Hogg binds it in with the religious conflict that is understood between Mess John and the Covenanters.

This constructive use of superstition is also employed in "The Pedlar" which is a similar blend of local history and superstition where the superstition reinforces a moral lesson. The original story was well known in local tradition. The notes state that, "This Ballad is founded on a fact, which has been magnified by popular credulity and superstition into the terrible story which follows. It is here related, according to the best informed old people about Ettrick, as nearly as is consistent with the method pursued in telling it" (1807, p.15). The poem introduces these superstitions at all levels. It begins with a dream presentiment of death,<sup>31</sup> given not to the doomed pedlar, but to the lady of Thirlstane who refused him shelter, thus indirectly causing his death. The simple motif thus permits Hogg to exercise his talent for ghoulerie by describing "the pedlar a' mangled", establishing a tone of horror. What it also does is to pose wider questions of culpability. It is curious that the ghost appears not to his murderer but to the Thirlstane family who had the means to be generous but refused. As a result and by a curiously apt turn they are forced thereafter to be generous to all:

The lady frae hame wad never mair budge,  
 From the time that the sun gaed over the hill;  
 An' now she had a' the poor bodies to lodge,  
 As nane durst gae on for the ghost o' the mill.

(1807, p.19)

In an attempt to lay the unhappy spirit, the minister exorcises the ghost in the name of the holy Trinity. It then transpires that the ghost is forced to wander till it can reveal "some crimes an' villanies", notably a theft he himself committed, the hiding place of the money and the fact that the miller murdered him for this money. It is a common motif that a spirit should reveal its murderer, as is the curfew imposed on the ghost by the cock's crowing. The tale ended here in its first form<sup>32</sup> but the 1807 version with



its theme of supernatural justice demands that the cycle of retribution be allowed to take its full course and the miller is pursued after many years by the new owner of the mill, a mason, who has a small bone from the pedlar's body. The mason tricks the miller into holding it by claiming, somewhat unfortunately, that "there were nane /Who in Britain had ever the marrow o't seen" (1807, p.22). Despite the unconscious pun the ruse has the desired effect and in complete accord with the well known tradition described by James VI + I the bone "fell a streamin wi' blood" as soon as it is touched by the murderer.<sup>33</sup> The miller is given summary justice, allowing Hogg to make use in the by-going of the old jibe at "Jeddart justice" where they hang first and ask questions later.

Thus the poem uses traditional motifs to look closely at the workings of justice and retribution. The lady who lacked heart is driven out of her mind and forced to give the bounty that it was her duty to give freely. The pedlar is doubly punished for the double crime of not simply stealing, but stealing from his own family. Thus not only does he not get to enjoy the money but he is murdered for the sake of it. Both the lady and the pedlar have sinned against human nature just as the miller does by committing the murder, and the forces of the supernatural are invoked to punish and compel the expiation of these crimes. Yet unlike the summary human "justice", which also operates somewhat erratically, this natural justice waits, forcing the sinner into revealing himself. The process is irrevocable, years may elapse but the repercussions, for murder in particular, are inevitable:

The thief may escape the lash an' the rape,  
 The liar an' swearer their leather may save,  
 The wrecker of unity pass with impunity,  
 But when gat the murd'rer in peace to the grave?

(1807, p.24)

The poem ends with Hogg asserting the truth of the tale, insisting that the facts were well known in Ettrick:

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

(1807, p.24)

Hogg is arguing, in this way, that although the truth of tradition may not be in accord with the rational idea of what is reasonable, plausible or likely, it is in harmony with a higher moral truth which regulates the community that adheres to it. What this also does is to emancipate superstition which, under the literate viewpoint, is regarded as a sign of backwardness and lack of education, showing here that it is not random but a regular system for the reinforcement of community-held moral values.

To summarise, then, the narrative poems of The Mountain Bard present a pretty varied approach to tradition. Some pieces are obviously meant to recall the style of some of the more "ancient" of Percy's Reliques, such as his versions of "Chevy-Chase" and "The Battle of Otterburn", rather than that of performers more nearly contemporaneous with Hogg. This is probably one of the reasons for the contrived "middle Scots" orthography. For the rest, the style varies between a fairly tight, dramatic form carried on mainly by dialogue, to a loose rhymed narrative told in the third person which leads naturally to the style of the later work. The content, for the most part, concerns the powerful nobility or Border dynasties though "The Pedlar", "Mess John" and "Willie Wilkin" provide three alternatives to this. Perhaps it is not entirely coincidental that the superstition element is, for the most part, more consistently worked out in these poems. The use of tradition in the Mountain Bard poems varies just as

dramatically. It can consist simply of folksay in the form of proverb-like statements such as that about Jeddart justice or it can be the full scale employment of a piece of local history or a legend. The most fruitful form of influence is to be found in the employment of superstition. It is so pervasively used and so obliquely hinted at that it presupposes in the reader a mind primed and receptive, and above all familiar with a wide range of superstition and folk belief. Hogg uses these superstition motifs without having to explain them yet the burden of meaning and interpretation rests upon the proper recognition and evaluation of these motifs. The reader has not only to understand them but also to accept them. As Jacqueline Simpson notes in her work on Charlotte and Emily Bronte, there is no attempt to reduce or minimise the folk element by reserving it for secondary or humorous characters.<sup>34</sup> Here at least it is an essential part of the protagonists' thought processes and it is used at climaxes and linked to the main themes. The writer gains through this a certain almost irrational compulsion in his work and this drive can be sensed in the best of Hogg's work just as it can be in Wuthering Heights. As a result the reader does not stop to ask if the characters' actions are rational by the standards of Reason for they conform to a different standard - one of shared traditional belief. Hogg is thus able by introducing the rationale of the traditional world into the literary context to achieve a new and potent imaginative world.

This innovation is responsible for the energy and drive that characterises these poems, even in the face of dreadful lapses into diffuseness and confusion. This happens because Hogg is so immersed in his material, a fact which the lengthy notes he supplies amply show. In fact the notes practically have a claim as a significant work in their own right. As in the case of "Thirlstane", they provide the succinctly arranged bones of a short story which is in a

sense an independent text in itself. The poem requires the notes whereas the notes can stand on their own. The notes frequently take up and expand themes just touched on in the poems, as in "Mess John" for instance, where the mention of the "dead bell" sparks Hogg into giving examples of that and other related superstitions and methods of augury. The notes, moreover, are precisely the type of material which Hogg was to present, perhaps rather more smoothly, in "The Shepherd's Calendar" and the essays on country ways and beliefs. Thus there is evidence that, even at this stage when Hogg was nominally concentrating on poetry and ballad tradition he was already being drawn to a wider expression of the inherited Border folk traditions and their significance within the community in which they originated. His concern was as much to record the ways, beliefs and stories of the culture around him as to make literary imitations of traditional forms. From a technical point of view, too, it makes it clear that his later apparent transition from poetry to short prose is not so much a real transition as a slight shift in emphasis. Hogg composed a considerable amount of prose at all stages of his career and the notes clearly show him eager to express traditional subject matter in a more discursive way than poetry of the kind he chose to write could permit. Right at this early stage it is possible to see a tension in the material between the wish to record and the creative impulse which pushed towards interpreting and recasting the material in a literary way. It is a tension to be seen not simply in the form and content of the pieces, but also in the attitude to the themes that they express.

Hogg's commitment to his material has been noted by all his critics. It leads Louis Simpson to say that, "when Hogg is writing of the life he knows, the Scottish peasants, their customs, beliefs and superstitions, his imagination is engaged".<sup>35</sup> This engagement,

it is suggested, generally produces Hogg's better work. Douglas Gifford supports this view: "Hogg's poetry is good when he draws on his Ballad and story-telling background, telling rousing, fast-moving tales of 'fierce loves and tender wars' on the Borders, or using his great love and knowledge of supernatural legends to create either racy, comic and earthy fantasies or haunting and occasionally lyrically beautiful descriptions of transitions from earth to heaven or fairyland. Out of these inspirations too come his best short verses and songs, whether they be dressed as Jacobite exhortations or simple, domestic, personal utterances" (Gifford, pp.32-33). This, then, is the Hogg that must be investigated, the Hogg of "Scottish peasants, their customs, beliefs and superstitions", or in the terms of the present work, superstition, religion and community. It is here that the tensions noted above, with the consequent shifting and blurring of attitude are most evident and most fruitful.

## CHAPTER FOUR : Themes (1) Superstition, the supernatural and religion.

In 1807, in the notes to the Mountain Bard, Hogg wrote that in Ettrick and Yarrow "the belief in wraiths, ghaists, and bogles, is little or nothing abated".<sup>1</sup> He goes further in "The Wool-Gatherer" where he describes the extent of supernatural belief and the hierarchy of the spirits. A young shepherd boy is questioned on the subject by a town bred girl:

The seriousness of Barnaby's manner made it evident to his fellow traveller that he believed in the reality of every word he had said; there was an inconceivable sublimity in the whole idea, and she fancied herself going to reside, perhaps for a season, in the regions of imagination and romance, and she asked him if his father and mother had faith in dreams an' apparitions?

"Aye, that they hae," answered he; "ye had need to tak care how ye dispute the existence of fairies, brownies, and apparitions there; ye may as weel dispute the gospel o' Sant Mathew. We dinna believe in a' the gomral fantastic bogles an' spirits that fley light-headed fock up an' down the country, but we believe in a' the apparitions that warn o' death, that save life, an' that discover guilt. I'll tell you what we believe, ye see.

"The deil an' his adgents, they fash nane but the gude fock, the Cameronians, an' the prayin' ministers, an' sic like. Then the bogles, they are a better kind o' spirits, they meddle wi' nane but the guilty; the murderer, an' the man-sworn, an' the cheater o' the widow an' fatherless, they do for them. Then the fairies, they're very harmless; they're keener o' fun an' frolic than aught else; but if fock neglect kirk ordinances, they see after them. Then the brownie, he's a kind o' half-spirit half-man; he'll drudge an' do a' the wark about the town for his meat, but then he'll no work but when he likes for a' the king's dominions. That's precisely what we a' believe here awa', auld an' young; an' I'll tell ye twa or three stories that we a' ken to be true, an' which I wadna misbelieve for a' that I'm worth".<sup>2</sup>

The use of superstition is an essential characteristic of Hogg's work and this list of spirits and their different spheres is largely borne out by his writing. Later editions acknowledge this

as a key theme as can be seen from the later subtitle of the Shepherd's Calendar, "Tales Illustrative of Pastoral Life, Occupations and Superstitions". Furthermore, and this is a common characteristic in a member of a rural community in a state of transition, superstition, belief in the supernatural and orthodox religious belief are interwoven, despite a conscious adherence to and approval of a Christian faith. Nonetheless Hogg's contemporaries saw him as the supreme exponent of the supernatural and, as can be seen from contemporary reviews, it was the straightforward gusto of "The Witch of Fife" and the "sublimity" of "Kilmeny" that defined Hogg for his audience. Writing after Hogg's death, the editor of Fraser's Magazine claimed not only that Hogg's "powers over the supernatural world" were natural and complete, but also that his facility in producing "ghost stories" was envied by Scott.<sup>3</sup> The writer continues to describe the particular benefits that Hogg's grasp of the supernatural brought to his fiction:

In such traditions his mind was educated; and it is by such traditions, vague and unphilosophical as they may seem, that the invisible world is revealed to the children of nature. But for them, the spiritual were clean gone for ever from the valleys and the streams. Nor would the schoolmaster prove a better teacher of these ghostly truths; he could not teach them with such life and power, from the dead letter of a printed book, and, unfortunately, he knows too little himself of the true philosophy of mind to give instruction in the higher and purified beliefs of the rationalised understanding, with that conviction and faith which ever accompanies the impressions of the sense. It must be granted that in his creed the peasant is superstitious; but let it not be forgotten that he never separates the ideal from his moral duties and the objects that surround his daily path. The schoolmaster, on the contrary, often exhibits the dry twigs of the latter, rent from the tree of life, and fit only for the fire. Be it that he is free from superstition; but is he not free from religion also? We are inclined to attribute James Hogg's excellence in passages of pure poetry, as it has been called, to the condition of the circumstances under which he grew up to the stature of manhood. His own mind

and nature were the two treasure-houses of his knowledge - nature not scientifically observed, but sensibly - and mind not sophisticatedly perverted, but naturally developed. Both he contemplated, but scarcely as distinct; and always as existing in harmonious union. To this it is owing that his supernatural fictions may boast of being clear at once of improbability and mysticism.

("Helen Crocket", p.428)

This discussion points to a number of key aspects in Hogg's work. "Yorke" notes first that in Hogg the use of the supernatural is more immediate and vivid than in other writers. The reason advanced for this is that Hogg was brought up in a rural world and that his education was one based on tradition, avoiding "the higher and purified beliefs of the rationalised understanding". But it is not simply the extent and depth of Hogg's knowledge, nor even the frequency with which items of supernatural belief occur in his work that make it so striking or important. The particular force of Hogg's supernatural world is that in many cases it is a real world. The beliefs Hogg illustrates in his tales are usually presented as perfectly reasonable and even admirable. However, more interesting is the occasional strange ambivalence in his dealings with the supernatural. The vividness and detail of presentation is unaffected but the whole effect is undercut either by humour or by the proposal of a "rational" explanation. It is indeed as if Hogg were faced with a direct conflict between traditional belief and rational philosophy and was trying to minimise the power of the former. Thus his work becomes an expression of the transition from traditional belief to the "literal"-minded rationalism of a literate society. Hogg appears completely torn between the two approaches and unable to endorse any one view completely. His stance shifts continually and it is this sort of tension that pushes him to experiment with narrative technique, multiplying the threads and expressing his dilemma in the ragged,



multi-strand forms. It is a head-on collision between an intuitive belief in the paraphernalia of the supernatural world and the acquired rational detachment that comes with intellectual sophistication.

The writer in Fraser's also made the important observation that while Hogg's peasants were undoubtedly superstitious, this in no way impaired their devotion to formal religion, or indeed the sincerity of their religious adherence. This hints at the interdependence of superstition and religion that is so clear in many of Hogg's works. Our problem is not to adjudicate for or against one at the expense of the other, for they are never in competition. If there is any opposition here it is between different shades of religious or philosophical persuasion: Catholic versus Protestant, Covenanting zealot versus humanist. Some degree of belief is taken for granted and the figure who denies the power or existence of God does not do so to embrace any pre-Christian faith. Quite the contrary, one character who rejects religion is the young laird in "On the Separate Existence of the Soul"<sup>4</sup> who tries to replace it with the pursuit of political economy. The only threat to religious belief is therefore not superstition but excessive adherence to modern, "scientific" thought, and even then it is shown as a ridiculous and unsuccessful alternative. Religion and superstition, far from being opposed, work through each other, an idea suggested in the  
early verse and is carried through and developed in the prose.

As the anonymous reviewer suggests, Hogg's approach is not a rigid rational one but a "natural philosophy". However, despite this apparent surface simplicity there is a deeper conflict and it is this that the present chapter will seek to examine. Unlike the obituarist in Fraser's, the present writer does not believe that

there is a constant "harmonious union" between mind and nature in Hogg's writing. Instead, there is very often a real opposition between the two; what seems "natural", like the intuitive response to the supernatural, often appears under a rigorously intellectual approach to be suspect or deficient in some way. This conflict reflects the confusion generated by the gradual transition, described in earlier chapters, from a small rural, traditional, agricultural community to a more commercial, urbanised society. Hogg himself was aware of merits on both sides and had to balance his natural, intuitive conservatism against the urge for experiment and sophistication. As a result, while he supports some traditions he does not adhere to them all without question. This conflict pervades his works, reflecting itself, for instance, in the debate over the merits of long and short sheep and old and new farming ways just as much as in opposing religious views or Hogg's personal uncertainty about his role in the community or his status in the literary world.

Modern studies in folklore serve to prove that Hogg's blending of orthodox religion and older superstition is a true reflection of the way in which a traditional community reacts. John C. Messenger, in his work on the Aran Islands off Ireland, has shown how a community which prides itself on the strength and purity of its Christian faith incorporates a high element of what we might call superstition.<sup>5</sup> Because of the islands' history as a great monastic centre it is believed, both on the mainland and more especially on the islands themselves, that the Catholic faith is extremely strong there: "The peasants today are very conscious of this venerable tradition and profess to be devout Catholics. In defending their way of life against those who denigrate their poverty and folk retentions, they stress the sanctity of Aran and the strength of Catholic belief with its concomitant morality; they are boastful of the fact that

crime is rare and police are not stationed on the two small islands" (Messenger, "Folk Religion", p.223). This much, whatever its theological validity, could be seen as an extension of the existing faith, but there are other elements that clearly come from outside the Christian faith. These can take the form of retentions of older ways or, alternatively, they can be absorbed into the Christian faith by a process of acculturation and reinterpretation. One finds examples of retentions in the battery of spirits who people the traditional prose narratives coming from the islands and, according to Messenger, the tellers believed implicitly in the pookah, changelings and fairy ships of their tales.<sup>6</sup> Evidence of reinterpretations can be found in the fact that the Christian cemeteries are often on the site of earlier pre-Christian holy places and graveyards. Similarly, the importance of saints such as Patrick and Brigid may be due to their having been conflated with older Celtic figures. Certainly, and this is true of Hogg's stories, the Christian religion has absorbed certain beneficial magic powers and can be used, for example, to counteract the evil eye.

Hogg's picture of a rural Border community, isolated, but with a strong tradition of religious involvement and an intense commitment to belief in the supernatural is thus an extremely valuable one. There is certainly no reason to dismiss his work as inferior or lacking in seriousness because of its use of superstition when, as one can see, it is in fact an accurate account of the coexistence of religion and superstition even in a relatively advanced economic and social framework. Moreover, despite the fact that Aran and early nineteenth century Ettrick and Yarrow were all relatively poor rural communities, one should not be misled into thinking of superstition as something that is the preserve of

backward, credulous, uneducated, peasant communities. Keith Thomas points out that magic is not the prerogative of agrarian communities as "crafts and simple manufacturing techniques can acquire a good deal of mystery for the uninitiated".<sup>7</sup> Jan Harold Brunvand makes a more detailed investigation of superstition in modern society, completely dismissing the supposition that superstition is incompatible with an enlightened, industrialised world: "Such an attitude is wrong on two counts. First, superstitions include not only belief, but also behaviour and experiences, sometimes equipment, and usually sayings or rhymes. Second, no one is immune from the assumptions that underlie superstition, nor from holding or practicing superstitions to some degree. People are superstitious, and that fact leads to observation of a wide range of beliefs, sayings, and practices..."<sup>8</sup> He emphasises the point by going on to show the amount and variety of superstitious belief it is possible to cull from the most highly educated communities such as university undergraduates.

Brunvand endorses the following definition of superstition proposed by Alan Dundes: "Superstitions are traditional expressions of one or more conditions and one or more results with some of the conditions, signs and other causes."<sup>9</sup> The kind of superstition that is meant here is the kind that fits into a sort of conditional formula: If you [spill salt]...you will... [have seven years' bad luck] ...unless you... [throw some of the spilt salt over your left shoulder]. But there are also as Brunvand notes, simple proverbial statements which do not fit into this pattern but which are nevertheless part of the body of traditional superstitious belief. Examples of this would be the belief that "lightning never strikes twice" or the idea that "bad luck comes in threes". However, this form or oral, proverbial belief is a kind more easily expressed in

conversation than on the written page. For that reason, perhaps, it is not so prevalent in Hogg's work as other types of folklore are. Interesting items of this sort do occur here and there in his work as, for example, in the notes to "The Pedlar" in the Mountain Bard where, in an effort to show the extent and variety of superstitions current in the Borders, he lists several examples, many of which are partly divination procedures (1807, pp.25-29). An example of this more complex conditional superstition is the belief that if a feather or some such object sticks on a dog's nose then a guest is about to arrive and the length of time the feather remains on the nose will give a clue as to how long the guest will stay. The size and shape of the object and the place it finally drops likewise give information about the size and sex of the guest and the place they will sit down (1807, p.27). It is a belief rather like that expressed by Coleridge in Frost at Midnight where a film of soot represents a stranger. Hogg also says that sneezing on getting out of bed also betokens visitors, with the number of sneezes signifying the number of guests. Another complex example is the belief that attends the sensation of hot ears. It is a common superstition that if your ears burn then someone is talking about you. Hogg adds that the sufferer should then repeat the formula, "Right lug, left lug, whilk lug glows?" to the nearest person. If they guess correctly the reply is "You love me better than they who talk of me," the opposite being the case if they guess wrongly (1807, p.27).

In this kind of example Hogg is doing no more than recording items, his aim being to show "people less conversant in the manners of the cottage" (1807, p.26) that superstition is widespread and implicitly believed in rural communities. Where Hogg's imagination is most fired so that he does not merely record is in beliefs connected with supernatural agencies. It is with these that, like

Messenger's seanchai Joe O'Donnel, Hogg brings his narrative storytelling talents to life. In Hogg's world, both his fictional world and the real one which it mirrors so accurately, superstition and the supernatural serve an important function. The "gross incantations" and remedies to protect valuable milk production that Hogg describes (1807, pp.28-29) represent an attempt to control the environment and to establish some sort of pattern of cause and effect and eliminate the apparent randomness of life. It is this that perhaps helps to explain the affinity between religion and superstition. Discussing exorcisms performed by the Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick and the Reverend Henry Davidson of Galashiels, Hogg realised not merely that superstition and religion co-exist but that, in a sense they condone and depend on each other. Hogg attempted to fathom the connection and decided that religion and superstition spring from a common desire:

Whether these traditions have taken their origin from a much earlier period, and have, by later generations, been brought down and ascribed to these well known characters; or, whether these worthy men, in commiseration of the ideal sufferings of their visionary parishioners, have really condescended to these sham watchings, it is not now easy to determine. But an age, singular as that was for devotion, would readily be as much so for superstition; for, even to this day, the country people, who have the deepest sense of religion, are always those who believe most firmly in supernatural agency.

(1807, p.33)

Here Hogg is pointing to a direct relationship between religion and supernatural agency. This link may be partly due to the conscious attempt by the early Christian Church to take over and assimilate as much as possible of the old religions but belief in a negative power is in a sense implied by strict religious belief. Keith Thomas has made a valuable study of the relationship of religion and magical or supernatural belief and in particular, the different attitudes fostered by Catholic and Protestant orthodox theology. As Thomas points

out, the belief in an omnipotent power for good immediately implies for some the existence of an opposed force: "Relatively unimportant in the Old Testament, Satan had been raised by later Judaism and Christianity to the status of God's grand cosmic antagonist. He was an omnipresent force, ever ready to prey upon man's weaker instincts and to tempt him away into paths of evil. He was also an instrument of God's judgement, for the sinners of this world constituted the members of Satan's kingdom after their death" (Thomas, Religion, p.469). Elsewhere he reinforces this idea: "So essential indeed was the belief in the personification of evil that the dogma was paradoxically elevated into one of the greatest arguments for the existence of God, so that to deny it was to lay oneself open to the charge of atheism" (Thomas, Religion, p.476). Thus Christianity and devout religious belief can be seen as directly conducive to supernatural belief and at all levels their values mirror each other. Lucy Mair emphasises that religion and supernatural belief are in a sense two sides of the same coin when, in her discussion of witchcraft, she defines witches as "those who reject the moral order"<sup>10</sup>, operating by denying the values of their community. Lucy Mair adds that, "The stronger the belief that the world ought to be a moral order, the greater the need for the idea of the witch" (Mair, p.230).

Hogg was clearly well aware of the fundamental significance and function of what he called superstition. The greater part of Hogg's narrative output could be described as "dramatised superstition", a phrase used by Karl Wehrmann to describe folk legend.<sup>11</sup> Certainly Hogg rarely, if ever, attempts to rework the material of the Märchen. On the whole he prefers local legend, as in the tale of the splitting of the Eildons (Three Perils of Man, pp.184-201), family histories, as in "The Frasers in the Correi" or the story of the Laidlaws and

the Scotts,<sup>12</sup> or stories of ghosts, apparitions and spirits. In trying to define legend, Linda Dégh says:

The legend, above all, is more local than the tale, more likely to develop local patterns in spite of its tendency to migrate and spread cross-culturally. It ranges from the simple communication of belief through various levels to the most intricate, multi-episodic narrative.  
...

Scrutinizing the form of the legend, one must agree with Leopold Schmidt who feels the legend has only content and no fixed form at all and depends on the nature of the message it communicates. The reason for telling a legend is basically not to entertain but to educate people, to inform them about an important fact, to arm them against danger within their own cultural environment.

(Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.73)

Hogg's tales fulfil many of the above conditions for the legend form, including the ancillary requisites of having for their characters men and women in familiar environments and of drawing on supportive facts as evidence for the truth of the narrative in question. This preference for legend can again be taken as indicative of the transitional state of the community in which Hogg developed, as it is the more complex, fixed forms which survive longest. Thus it may be possible that Hogg was not accustomed to hearing many examples of Märchen although one should be wary of arguing that the form did not exist merely because few texts have survived. Hogg's stories are presented not as imaginative flights conceived by an author, but as true events, folk history. Again we can turn to Dégh for an explanation of the function, both of Hogg's legendary tales and of the folk legend itself: "The legend explains an extraordinary phenomenon or a memorable event, it communicates traditional learning and knowledge to the young and the uninitiated, it advises people how to act in critical situations and warns them against doing the wrong thing (Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.74). Thus it is



fair to suggest that Hogg's narratives are in their original intention closely moulded on the folk legend genre with certain innovations, namely, that Hogg has written down a primarily oral genre and adapted it to the periodical literature of the day. Other than that Hogg introduces little change, preserving the traditional content dealing with the familiar way of life of the shepherds, drovers and farmers and making almost no apparent attempt to enlarge his subject to deal with the developing urban world. Despite his own familiarity with Edinburgh, and indeed, with the prosperous little market towns and tweed manufactories of the Borders, he seemed to feel that the supernatural world was more often felt in the isolated, rural way of life. In "The Border Chronicler" Charlie Dinmont is amazed that there should be no ghosts and bogles in the city as they are "the greatest of a' checks on human crimes" and Edinburgh, he humorously adds, is in much need of such checks.<sup>13</sup> Where Hogg does attempt to deal with town life the action is often situated in the past, generally at the time of the Jacobite and Covenanting risings. This is the case in the town scenes in the Confessions, "The Adventures of Captain John Lochy", "A Tale of an Old Highlander" and "Mary Montgomery".<sup>14</sup> Thus the picture we get is distanced and distorted by time and situation. When Hogg does present a contemporary view of town life, as he intended to do in The Spy, it is a satirical one, criticising the manners of the day in ironical letters and commentaries such as, "A Letter signed Alice Brand", "Jenny Lively's letter on the impropriety of the Ladies withdrawing from the Table" and "Satirical directions to every class in Edinburgh, in what manner to keep the Sabbath".<sup>15</sup> Apart from that early social campaigning, Hogg's commentary on contemporary affairs seems to be confined to his letters or to the expressions of the Ettrick Shepherd in the "Noctes Ambrosianae", which may or may not be taken as a true reflection of Hogg's

thoughts. The letter accounts of his tours to the north provide the only other attempt at looking at contemporary culture and life.<sup>16</sup>

Hogg's prose narratives illustrate, just as the verse did, a desire to approach literature by tempering innovation with conservatism. Moreover, his interest having been coloured by the vogue for anti-quarianism and folklore, he is able to find literary expression by treating the community and beliefs with which he grew up. In some ways his task is to preserve, to report what he heard and saw, but his role is also creative and he must interpret his material. Nor is he to be regarded simply as a collector for, while many of the tales are from tradition as his own notes and the presence of international tale types suggest, he was clearly also able to invent new tales in the traditional mood and style. However, even in his own creations he frequently expresses the traditions and values of the community in which he developed. In reworking tradition he is adapting older forms, such as traditional legendary narrative, to meet new literary ends but all the while sticking close to the traditional legendary content and setting. The function these narratives serves was twofold being, firstly, as Linda Dégh suggests, that of explaining the micro-cosmos to man, that is, coping with the inexplicable in life, and at the same time, that of cataloguing or preserving an approach to life that was on the brink of extinction. Hogg's narratives can be compared with the anecdotes that make up the memoirs and reminiscences of Peig Sayers and Tomás Ó Crohan<sup>17</sup>, where little episodes, sometimes apparently unfinished or incomplete in themselves, build up to an overall picture. Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands in 1926, explained the wish to record:

One day there will be none left in the Blasket of all I have mentioned in this book - and none to remember them. I am thankful to God, who has given me the chance to preserve

from forgetfulness those days that I have seen with my own eyes and have borne their burden, and that when I am gone men will know what life was like in my time and the neighbours that lived with me.

Since the first fire was kindled in this island none has written of his life and his world. I am proud to set down my story and the story of my neighbours. This writing will tell how the Islanders lived in the old days.

(Ó Crohan, pp.244-45)

This is the impulse behind Thomas Beattie's memoirs and it is the reason why many of Hogg's stories refer to real farms and to the families who actually inhabited them. Like Beattie and Tomás Ó Crohan, Hogg was trying to preserve some of the traditional knowledge that was his inheritance. When Hogg tells us, as he frequently does, that a story is true, or is vouched for by tradition, or that he was given the information by an old person, a neighbour or a member of his family, then it is likely that this is indeed the case, and that what is being transmitted is a genuine statement of Border folklore. What is happening is that the audience and context are being replaced. Instead of directly addressing a group of people in person round a fireside, or over a drink, Hogg is addressing the anonymous audience who will read Fraser's, or Blackwood's or the Annuals. In some ways the transition via poetry helped to facilitate this shift in direction for the form of The Queen's Wake, for instance, allowed him to create an imaginary context with the teller or, in this case, the several story tellers, and their audience replacing the real domestic or celidh setting within which such tales would normally be related. With much of the prose Hogg no longer feels it necessary to provide this contextual setting but is able to present his material direct without, for instance, hinting at the poet/narrator by reference to "the Harp of Caledon" and suchlike. This and the allied problems of distance and narrator role will be discussed more fully in a later chapter on form and structure.

There are three major ideas running through Hogg's work. They are namely: that there is a natural balance in the world where man is in harmony both with nature and with God: that Divine Authority is supreme but that there is a supernatural force also present which man can associate with at some risk but which can also be the agency by which Divine Order can be restored when man has disturbed the natural equilibrium: that as a result the boundaries between what is real, tangible and rationally explicable and what is irrational and supernatural are so grey and insubstantial that man is often deluded and uncertain as to whether appearances are a reliable guide to the truth. These ideas are the foundation of Hogg's prose narrative and it is in the light of these ideas that the motifs of the supernatural are used. As has already been stated, the different threads of superstition and belief are so completely wound in each other that they cannot strictly be separated. However to make it easier to deal with the different examples of Hogg's narrative it will be helpful to look at certain main motifs and the stories in which they are dominant. This will necessarily involve a certain amount of overlap but it does seem to offer a reasonable means of broaching a tangled topic. It is therefore proposed to consider Hogg's use of supernatural agencies such as witches, bogles, ghosts, wraiths and premonitions, and the attitude to magic, diablerie and organised religion.

Witches crop up frequently in Hogg's various descriptions of superstition and supernatural agency, causing Carey, for instance, to attribute to him an "everlasting phobia about old women" (Confessions, p.xvii). However, the introduction to the Mountain Bard shows that Hogg rather fondly cherished the notion that he had a good few witches in his ancestry (1807, p.66). Perhaps because

of this his witches are often not too frightening as they are simply humans who have special links with the supernatural which allow them to exercise their will over their fellow human beings. They are essentially ordinary and can be, like the wizard Michael Scott, quite weak in themselves when deprived of their power (Three Perils of Man, p.190). The most common modern view of witches, fostered by children's story books, now presents them as unsavoury old hags committed to toads, spells and evil, and many productions of Macbeth, for instance, have adhered to this view, encouraged by the malignant power of the weird sisters and the contents of their cauldron:

Round about the cauldron go;  
In the poison'd entrails throw.  
Toad, that under cold stone  
Days and nights has thirty-one  
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,  
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.<sup>18</sup>

In music Hector Berlioz was attracted by the theme of the Witches' Sabbath and in the 'Symphonie Fantastique' he creates a mixture of frenetic energy and carefully employed discords and flat notes to cheat the listener's expectations. The atmosphere of negative power is emphasised by the parodic perversion of the solemn "Dies irae" theme through the alteration of the tempo and by the flattening of the final note in the bell sequence. Burns, on the other hand, presents a slightly more complex picture. Tam O'Shanter stumbles on a kind of Witches' Sabbath which has a sort of manic jollity as well as the customary display of horrors testifying to the negative powers of the witches. Thus Tam notes the holy table mocked with a gory array of items including:

A murderer's banes, in gibbet airns;  
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;  
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape

The witches themselves are equally unsavoury: "...wither'd beldams, auld and droll, / Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal".<sup>19</sup> However there is

an important exception and Burns and Tam are much more taken up with Nannie who is young and soncy.

The records show that most of the people charged with witchcraft were indeed old women. Modern socio-anthropological research suggests that in many cases these old women were no longer able to be economically independent and that very often victims of sudden misfortune were led to believe their troubles had been caused by such old women because of the sufferer's own guilt at having recently refused charity or alms to the old woman.<sup>20</sup> Though this does not explain every charge of witchcraft, it does illustrate effectively the fact that within a small community belief in witchcraft had important functions and it would appear from the various ways in which Hogg presents witches that his picture draws heavily on an understanding of the functional importance of such beliefs in a community, confirming the idea that in his literary work he was attempting to express and perhaps explain that community way of life to an audience no longer familiar with the functional context which lends meaning to such beliefs. Significantly Hogg has relatively few presentations of black witches. Some appear in the Three Perils of Man but these women are made to appear ridiculous by the treatment the Devil gives them and the Witch of Fife is too lyrically bound up with nature for there to be any real sense of evil in her picture. We hear in the notes to the Mountain Bard of old women being suspected of jinxing milk so that it will not cream for butter, but the more common picture is of a much less malignant force. The figures are sometimes grotesque and often amusing but not usually horrifying or properly evil in a sinister way. Grizel Graham, in the story of that name, possesses mysterious powers, partly through the agency of her two familiars, Penny and Tit, yet Hogg seems unwilling to call her a witch:

In short, no one knows to this day what sort of being Grizel was; but there is little doubt that, had she lived a century earlier, she would have been burnt; and yet few people were said to live more cheerful and happy. She never was within the door of a church, for she mocked at our religious tenets; but it was supposed that she had a religion of her own, for she read much and sung more. But her death was the most mysterious event of all. She was found lying dead on her own cottage hearth, her body much mangled, and every bone out of joint. The legends that remain of her death-wake and funeral, are too extravagant even for my pen.<sup>21</sup>

The information about her death is significant for, with the possible exception of the familiars, there is no evidence in the story of Grizel being connected with the Devil. There may, however be a hint of it in her death and the mutilation of her body. In "Willie Wilkin", in the Mountain Bard, the mother's body is dismembered by the devils her son has summoned. Similarly, in the Three Perils of Man, Michael Scott's corpse is broken and mangled: "His teeth had severed his tongue in two and were clenched close together; his eyes were open and every bone of his body was broken" (Three Perils of Man, p.463). Michael Scott came by these injuries as the result of a spectacular fall from a dragon's grip during the course of his mortal contest with the Devil. It may be then, that Grizel, like Scott, drew her power from the Devil, but apart from this hint there is no other sign in her actions that she is evil. In the main her activities are harmless, being normally confined to revealing to young girls their future husbands. She also helps to restore stolen property to the laird, first playing on his gullibility and greed. Thus her "witchcraft" is in fact a source of good and when it is maliciously employed, as it very rarely is, it is then only directed at characters deserving of chastisement. There is an even-handed justice too in the fact that the laird who was formerly tricked by outward appearances, having been robbed by a kinsman he favoured, should now be frightened by supernatural

simulacra and illusions in the process of gaining his rights.

Grizel is also, in a way, the unconscious instrument of natural justice for it is when her cousin is galled into setting fire to her cottage that the ghost of the brother-in-law he had murdered is given the chance to appear and compel the murderer to confess. Thus it is not the witch but her aggressor who is truly in the power of evil and it is worth noting that his original crime was encouraged by the malicious hints of a strangely prescient "stranger" ("Grizel Graham", p.377) who is reminiscent of Wringhim's friend Gil-Martin. That Grizel's power is positive is confirmed by her status in the community: "Her's was an abode of song, of fortune-telling, and of good cheer; and every one, both old and young, was rather fond of visiting Grizel, and of listening to her answers in rhymes and chants, borrowed from books, as they supposed, of profound necromancy" ("Grizel Graham", pp.385-86). Her position is indeed rather like that of the community's seanchai, with the suggestion that most of the mystery and diablerie is in the imagination of her audience. When Grizel has power over human beings it is only because their own credulity or superstition gives them over to her as we can see in the following example: "She had some young people with her that night to have their fortunes read, with whom she and her imps were amusing themselves prodigiously, by working on their own terrors and superstitions; for the imps appeared to them in the persons of their various sweethearts, filling them with astonishment" ("Grizel Graham", p.376). It is almost as if Hogg is trying to suggest that the witchcraft lies all in the superstitious minds of the audience rather than in an actual supernatural power, thus undercutting the idea of spirits and apparitions. But in the end he cannot carry it through for he does present the imps as actually existing and being able to change shape from rabbits to birds to girls to



young men. What Hogg is in fact presenting is an example of the village wise woman, a kind of diviner-cum-savant, an important figure in the small traditional community. In general though the wise man or woman has supernatural powers they are not considered witches:

"Wise men were the sources for counteracting witches, as well as for their other traditional methods of locating lost or stolen goods, and curing animals, and also people".<sup>22</sup> Their power was so much respected that on occasions the mere knowledge that a victim was to consult a wise man prompted thieves to return stolen property (Smith, p.27).

Grizel is drawn in much this light, she is popular in the community and generally benevolent but she is nevertheless set apart from Christian religious observance and this and her strange end suggest that her magical power is as much a sinister liability as a gift for the good. The supernatural, then, is to be treated with circumspection. Present day travelling people retain a similar wary respect for the possession of psychic powers.<sup>23</sup>

Eppy Welch in "Helen Crocket" presents a similar case to that of Grizel Graham though Eppy's powers are strictly limited to that of a hypnotic ability to compel any living thing she looks at to stay still. She refuses to be considered a witch but similarly holds herself apart from her friend Nans Blake's canting form of religion: "I am no papist - no Christian of any denomination. I despise you all, and worship a God of my own choosing, whose name I do not choose to reveal to such as you. I am no witch; but I have a certain power of my own above human nature, from whom or from whence I do not know. I never prayed for it, never bargained for it, never asked for it, and yet I have it; and from whom no living being is ever likely to know" ("Helen Crocket", p.431). She also denies absolutely the existence of the Devil and refuses to allow that he has any power

over her for good or evil. She shows herself to be much more enlightened than Nans who is narrow and somewhat malicious, with a blind inveterate hatred of "papishes." Eppy's tolerance may, however, owe something to the fact that her natural daughter, Helen Crocket, is a practising Catholic. Eppy's "power of controlling nature" is manipulated by Nans into causing a number of coarsely humorous incidents but her powers are extended for her final act of self-sacrifice in saving her daughter. Thus when used under her own direction her skills are used in a beneficial way. Here as in "Grizel Graham" Hogg does not deny that supernatural powers may exist, though here their effect is diminished and undercut by their modest sway. He uses them to largely humorous effect before moving on to his main narrative. This presentation of supernatural power has travelled a long way from the horrors and diablerie that were popularly associated with witchcraft in earlier ages.<sup>24</sup>

Hogg does give one picture of supernatural powers employed to more sinister effect and that is the young Lady Elizabeth in "A Story of the Black Art".<sup>25</sup> This woman employs the Black Art purely to suit her own whims and she is in no way involved in the wider movings of a reparative justice. She is driven purely by her own gain or amusement. The abbess of the convent in which Elizabeth spent her youth says to her father, "...whatever you see of her, blame not our convent, where every thing has been done for her as far as human power extends; but the bonds of Satan are riveted upon her, and great is the woe she will bring upon thee" ("Black Art", p.396). It is interesting to note that it is "human power" that is set here in opposition to "Satan's bonds". It is possible, however, that the randomness and gratuitousness of Elizabeth's application of the "Black Art" is not entirely unconnected with her professed religion,

for one need only think back to "Mess John" of the Mountain Bard to see an example of a priest falling to prey to Satan and employing black magic. It would appear, though, that Elizabeth's case is not irredeemable as, rather like the Witch of Fife, "This lady, notwithstanding the mystery that hung over her art, proved a most exemplary wife, and mother of a fine family" ("Black Art", p.12).

Hogg provides a sort of intermediate ground between the popular view of witches that appears now in children's story books and the rational approach which denies them any power beyond the understanding of a few herbs. Even Michael Scott who is most clearly linked with the Devil, is treated with reductive humour and shown to be pitiable rather than terrifying. In the end, of course, the power of Christian faith is shown to be infinitely greater than his borrowed arts, but it is Bacon, the friar, who has to practise deception and sleight-of-hand tricks; Michael Scott, we are told, does actually cause the Eildons to be split. In The Three Perils of Man, particularly, Hogg presents us with a complete range of diablerie, witchcraft and magic and a great deal of interest lies in the way it is treated, even although, as Douglas Gifford points out, Hogg was driven to say in print that he, "mixed up with what might have been made one of the best historical tales our country ever produced, such a mass of diablerie as retarded the main story, and rendered the whole perfectly ludicrous".<sup>26</sup> The treatment of the supernatural is far from being so ludicrous as this retrospective account would have it for in the Devil, Michael Scott and Roger Bacon, the mysterious friar, we have three different treatments reflecting the characters' relative standing, but also showing a line of development in Hogg's reaction to supernatural agencies.

The Devil and his cohorts are presented in the traditional way and they are actually given a real physical presence. There is no question of their being an illusion or image conjured up by the subconscious as is often suggested with Gil-Martin in the Confessions. Michael Scott, for example, is almost dragged off, as Dr. Faustus is, by a devil, "a black being, that appeared to be half-man and half-beast" (Three Perils of Man, p.197). Hell and the Devil, then, are given a real substantial presence, closely based on the inherited images of tradition. Michael Scott represents an intermediate stage. When Charlie Scott first encounters him (Three Perils of Man, p.163), he is quite a prepossessing figure, dressed up for good measure in mystic symbols, a velvet turban, and red and gold. Like Dr. Faustus he has sold his soul for knowledge and power and he is indeed capable of having great tasks performed but notwithstanding this, his position is shown to be equivocal and uncertain, as his chosen masters "are jealous of their rights, and capricious beyond all conception" (Three Perils of Man, p.200). Moreover, the wizard himself is a victim of pride and jealousy and Hogg has to tread delicately to maintain a balance between Michael Scott's power and his weakness. He does not deny him supernatural abilities and has preserved the traditional image thus far, but he goes further and reminds us that Michael Scott is human with human failings, and therefore his end is both frightening and pitiable. Ultimately, however, he is not a Dr. Faustus; his is not the tragedy of a man betrayed by his own folly. Hogg can hint at the potential for this in the discussions between Michael Scott and the friar but that is as far as he allows himself to be led away from tradition. In the end it is the attitude of the king which establishes our impression of Michael Scott. He affirms that the events at Aikwood were "the plain and unvarnished truth" and says of the wizard that, "He has

not only kept the world in awe, but in dreadful agitation for the space of thirty years; let us, therefore, all go tomorrow and see him honourably interred" (Three Perils of Man, p.463). Thus it is the Michael Scott of tradition, the powerful necromancer, that finally triumphs in Hogg's account and the personal human tragedy is eclipsed.

The third stage is represented by Roger Bacon the friar who shares many characteristics with Michael Scott but who does not belong to Border tradition in the way that the wizard does. They are both men of skill and knowledge but, as Gifford notes Bacon's ability is strictly governed by science and an elementary knowledge of gunpowder which impress his audience because of their ignorance (Gifford, p.113). The power which vanquishes the fiends is not his, of course, but God's. Everything about him is rationalised and explained and his sanctity as a priest does not preclude him from manifesting such thoroughly human frailties as pride and anger. Thus the picture of the friar is kept strictly within the bounds of the knowable and familiar and he is a thorough representative of the rationalised world of humanity and science. In this way, the portrayals of these three powers in The Three Perils of Man exhibit at one and the same time not only the traditional opposition of good and evil in the shape of God's power versus that of the Devil, but also a range of approach and tone that moves from absolute straight forward acceptance of traditionally imagined witches and devils right through to a more detached standpoint where everything can be explained. Most significantly, the range in presentation is directly related to the amount of traditional material linked with each figure. It is this that prevents the central sections of the Three Perils of Man from being ridiculous. The visit to Aikwood may, strictly speaking, be a digression from the main action, but it does not feel like that when the book is being read.

Our interest never fails and it is precisely because these passages are lent an edge by being presented as actual occurrences to be believed. Moreover, these central events do have the sanction of traditional belief; if it were otherwise then the characters would indeed be only laughable and used for light relief. Like any of Hogg's traditional material these passages stand on their own but there is, too, a sliding attitude so that, as in Gulliver's Travels, One may sometimes be uncertain how to understand the events because the support of the narrative voice seems to have disappeared. Within the space of as little as a paragraph Hogg moves from hinting that one action is rationally explicable to presenting another as a feat of magic. He is able to adopt the detached, rational view about Bacon precisely because the friar, though a well-known figure, does not derive from Border tradition. Michael Scott, by contrast, though a real figure, is also the subject of a body of Border legends and Hogg tells us elsewhere of his dealings with one of Hogg's own ancestors (1807, p.66). Thus Hogg's literary approach is determined by the nature of the folk knowledge attached to his materials. Just as elsewhere he insists on the authority and veracity of the traditional basis for his picture, he cannot completely yield to the urge to show a detached, rationally acceptable portrait of a Scottish Dr. Faustus, driven by pride and ambition to wreck his own downfall.

Perhaps the most common manifestation of the supernatural in Hogg's work is the appearance of a ghost - usually to reveal a murder or to warn of an impending death. These warnings can be delivered in a dream as in "The Mountain Dew Men"<sup>27</sup> which in fact employs both methods of warning. He shows elsewhere that the

appearance of this spirit or wraith may be variously interpreted.

On consulting some of the old folk after the disappearance of Adam Bell, the inquirers learn "that when a wraith, or apparition of a living person appeared while the sun was up, instead of being a prelude of instant death, it prognosticated very long life".<sup>28</sup> It was added that ghosts "always choose the night season for making their visits". Nevertheless, the omen in the present tale is bad as the laird whose wraith appeared dies in a duel. As one can see from these examples and the passage in the "Wool-Gatherer", spirits were not essentially malignant but existed in conjunction with the normal moral and Christian tenets to maintain order and ethical stability in a community. They can only trouble man when he breaks the natural laws and murders or robs or, significantly, disobeys kirk authority. Thus, to return to Linda Dégh's comments on the role of legend, the function of the supernatural in the rural communities of the early nineteenth century is indeed that of educating and guiding behaviour and warning the listener "against doing the wrong thing" (Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.74). Hogg's supernatural world then, like its traditional sources, has a very real function and is not as we might mistakenly suppose, gratuitously employed for sensation or effect like the Gothic school of literature. Even Hogg's gory descriptions of ghosts and corpses is of a piece with this admonitory aim. The purpose in this case being to reinforce the warning against bloodshed. It is also due in part to his own energy of imagination which did lead him to offend contemporary taste on occasion, for instance, by too flagrant reference to illegitimate pregnancies.

A host of stories and tales confirm the role of ghosts not just as moral guides but also as implements of justice. Furthermore, it is a higher, "natural" justice they represent for the official legal

and church bodies do not always comprehend their workings. Thus, in "Ghost of Lochmaben", a woman is murdered by her husband who passes her death off as suicide. The ghost of the murdered woman informs her friend whose evidence puts the husband on trial but he is acquitted. However, so powerful is this supernatural evidence that the people of the town "assembled at his house; pulled him and his paramour from their den, and made them ride the stang through all the streets of the town, and then threw them into the loch..."<sup>29</sup> This tale with its description of the northern equivalent of the skimmity ride that appears in Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge, shows, as do many of Hardy's works, that there is a sort of Nemesis that pursues wrongdoers quite independently of the more conventional proceedings. So strong is this belief in a ghostly nemesis that in one story, "Aunt Susan"<sup>30</sup>, a girl is able to expose the crimes of her father and aunt, simply by dressing as a ghost and compelling confession.

In the same way, in "The Unearthly Witness", the ghost of William Tibbers actually appears to testify in court in order to prevent a miscarriage of justice - no doubt this is an act of reparation for the many crimes, including murder, which the living man perpetrated. Earlier in the tale one of Tibbers' servants describes the workings of the higher authority and the way in which all human deeds are brought to account: "Aye, aye, the grave's a good silencer for tell-tales, an' a deposite for secrets that winna keep; but a voice may come frae the grave, an' a lesson frae the depths o' the sea to teach the sinner his errors....The pains o' the body are naething, but it is an awfu' thing to hae the soul sawn asunder!"<sup>31</sup> In this way, the ghosts and spirits employed by Hogg in his work are shown to be directed by a higher agency that is tacitly equated with divine power - the penalties being explicitly connected with the



machinery of salvation and damnation. This is confirmed by an earlier story, "The Cameronian Preacher's Tale", where it is a servant of the Lord who, in conjunction with the supernatural, is used to bring about earthly restitution and reparation, once punishment has been exacted supernaturally for a murder committed. The comments of the preacher himself, who is the narrator, serve to set out clearly the relationship between God's agency in the episode, the function of the supernatural events, and the lesson to be learned:

I have preached and ye have profited; but what I am about to say is far better than man's preaching, it is one of those terrible sermons which God preaches to mankind, of blood unrighteously shed, and most wondrously avenged. The like has not happened in these our latter days. His presence is visible in it; and I reveal it that its burthen may be removed from my soul, so that I may die in peace; and I disclose it, that you may lay it up in your hearts and tell it soberly to your children, that the warning memory of a dispensation so marvellous may live and not perish.

He [the murderer] was apprehended and tried, and saved by the contradictory testimony of the witnesses against him, into whose hearts the spirit of falsehood seemed to have entered in order to perplex and confound the judgement of men - or rather that man might have no hand in the punishment, but that God should bring it about in his own good time and way. "Revenge is mine, saith the Lord," which meaneth not because it is too sweet a morsel for man, as the scoffer said, but because it is too dangerous.<sup>32</sup>

It is interesting to note that Hogg is aware of the generative role of folklore for though his story is a rational explanation of a local mystery, describing how the preacher restored the widow's rights and revealed the whereabouts of her husband's grave, a legend had grown up that a "Good Spirit" had performed these acts. Thus, in this story, Hogg first of all establishes the power of the supernatural for the maintenance of order and justice in the human world over and above the workings of a human legal service. He then goes on to show the curious way in which this divine justice works,

fortuitously availing itself of human events and actions in a curious blend of the natural and logical and the supernatural. In the end we can hardly be sure what has come out by chance and what is strictly supernatural. This fusion of fact and fiction and the related gap between appearance and reality makes the supernatural in Hogg difficult to handle while at the same time it forms an important theme in works like The Three Perils of Man, The Brownie of Bodsbeck, and the Confessions.

The supernatural material in Hogg's work clearly provides more than mere colour and part of the traditional function is transmitted to the literary context. Mary Ellen B. Lewis, discussing "Tam o' Shanter", suggests that Burns believed in the witch superstitions it describes and that therefore the poem, in addition to its literary effect, preserves some of the original functions connected with witch beliefs.<sup>33</sup> Belief cannot automatically be assumed in Hogg's case given the transitional nature of the culture in which he grew up. His approach is selective and while many of his comments on the supernatural are supportive, it must be noted that what he affirms is that these beliefs were held and adhered to by many of the older country folk, not that he himself subscribes to them. Supernatural beliefs were less widely held in Hogg's day than they were even a generation before. Far from expecting his readers to share all these beliefs, Hogg, by seeking a more sophisticated audience might expect to find himself under attack because of the cultural shift. As a defence there is frequently no sure implied editorial standpoint and in the Confessions readers cannot afford to trust even the reasonableness of the Editor or they will miss the bias and prejudice implicit in his Tory standpoint.

It is extremely difficult to try and place Hogg's conscious reaction to the role of ghosts and the business of telling ghost stories. While his attitude seems largely positive, he appears to cover himself against possible attacks of simple-mindedness, making sure that this traffic with the supernatural, like the use of the Scottish dialect, is generally confined to his country characters or lesser figures. Thus, in "The Wool-Gatherer" and its forerunner "The Country Laird"<sup>34</sup>, it is the local shepherd boy who advances all the beliefs in dreams and spirits; the girl, who it transpires was brought up in the town, the daughter of a formerly well-to-do merchant, is completely sceptical. Moreover, though she now forms part of the rural scene, she is set apart from her fellow farm workers by her correct English speech which links her rather with the laird. The path is thus well prepared for her eventually marrying the laird, as she subsequently does but it pushes the sphere of the supernatural into a subordinate role. Hogg, then, creates a tension within his work that cannot be resolved by saying that the supernatural serves a positive function. That it does so is undoubtedly the case but despite this Hogg very often undercuts the full value or effect of the supernatural or superstitious belief. In "The Wool-Gatherer" in all its various forms, the values of the cottage folk represented by the shepherd boy's parents are shown to be good and the boy's superstitions are confirmed. These people provide an unalloyed positive value in the story but they are nevertheless only a secondary thread. The main object of interest is the Wool-Gatherer herself, and her eventual justification and marriage to the laird. Here and elsewhere the supernatural is confirmed as being significant but its role is sometimes played down and held in check by being linked either with suspect characters who are plainly either eccentric or credulous, or else restricted

to the secondary level of characters or narrative. It is as if Hogg is frightened that his audience might think that he really does believe what he is writing and so he provides a way out for the sceptical by damping the supernatural in this way. He is caught again between the wish to record faithfully the kind of beliefs that had been current on the Borders and the need to adapt himself to a more sophisticated audience. He accomplished this in a number of ways. In "Duncan Campbell" for instance, the effect of Duncan's belief in ghosts is dispelled by the anonymous narrator who describes how Duncan once met a ghost and then proceeds to lament his friend's belief in such "false" illusions:

The superstitious ideas impressed upon Duncan's mind by this unfortunate encounter with the ghost of the piper, seems never to have been eradicated; a strong instance of the power of early impressions; and a warning how much caution is necessary in modelling the conceptions of the young and tender mind, for of all men I ever knew, he is the most afraid of meeting with apparitions. So deeply is his imagination tainted with this startling illusion, that even the calm disquisitions of reason have proved quite inadequate to the task of dispelling it.<sup>35</sup>

Elsewhere he lays the onus entirely on his informant as in the second part of The Shepherd's Calendar, "Deaths, Judgements and Providences", where, describing the escalation in superstition in the community, he excuses himself from all connection with the events by saying that "as it was credited in its fullest latitude by my informant, and always added by him as the summary of the tale, I am bound to mention the circumstances, though far from giving them as authentic".<sup>36</sup> Curiously, this is the sort of backup detail or "reality factor" that Linda Dégh describes as an integral part of the telling of a legend (Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.74). Here it serves a double function both as a credibility factor and also as a shield for Hogg to hide behind as it lays the weight of belief on

a third person. The same kind of evasive action is employed in many of Hogg's short tales and thus, paradoxically, a feature of traditional tale telling can be used by Hogg to emphasise his detachment from traditional belief.

This tension between supernatural belief and "the calm disquisitions of reason" is a product of the difficult transition from traditional, oral, folk literature to the demands of formal literature. The main difference was that the context was lost, and though Hogg could partly combat this by combining his stories with a record of life and thought in rural Border Scotland, that was only a part solution. He tackled the problem by trying to create internal contexts, by experimenting with form and by removing all exterior signposts as in the Confessions, where the reader is first lulled by the Editor's Narrative then thrown into Wringhim's account where he is taught to doubt the evidence of his own senses. Perhaps if the opposition had simply been that of town against country then the tension would not have arisen: the country would probably have had an outright victory. But this was not the case; the nation as a whole had been turning to its cities for a century by the time Hogg was writing, so it is proper that his ambitions should turn to urban cultural life and furthermore, the traditions he wrote of were themselves no longer so surely founded. Thus, for example, he laments the passing of the traditional practice of midwifery in his story "Seeking the Houdy", for the midwives and kimmers were a source of "capital stories and gossip": "But those days are over! and alack, and wo is me! no future old shepherd shall tell another tale of SEEKING THE HOUDY!"<sup>37</sup> The narrator's commentary in the introductory paragraphs of "The Fords of Callum" is significant: the shepherd protagonist of this tale "denied positively" the existence of fairies,

brownies, wraiths or water-kelpies, in short "bogles of all kinds". At this point the narrator voice adds in an admonitory tone, "But he was very far wrong in so doing, as will appear in the sequel".<sup>38</sup> In the end the weight of emphasis whether by direct implication or by energy of description falls on the side of superstition and the supernatural, thus solving Hogg's dilemma, almost by default.

At round about the same time as "The Fords of Callum" was written Mrs S.C. Hall, editor of a juvenile annual, complained to Hogg that the items he sent her were unsuitable for children, one item dealing with seduction and the other with fairies. She protested that Hogg could surely not wish her young readers to credit the supernatural: "I could not take it upon my conscience to send the little darlings tremblingly to bed after perusing the very perfection of ghost stories from your pen".<sup>39</sup> She asks instead for "a simple tale, telling about your own pure and immortal Scottish children - without love - or ghosts - or fairies" (Garden, p.199). Hogg's reply is interesting in more than one way, though what it does above all is to affirm the validity of the supernatural as a proper topic for narrative fiction: "I sent you a very good tale and one of those with which I delight to harrow up the little souls of my own family. I say it is a very good tale and exactly fit for children and nobody else;...As I think shame to put my name to such more common place things as you seem to want I have sent you a letter from an English widow".<sup>40</sup> It is intriguing to link this with his earlier comment on the impressionability of young minds in "The History of Duncan Campbell", quoted above, and to decide whether Hogg simply means that belief in the supernatural should be encouraged and that older audiences are not so suitable because they have been bred to scepticism, or whether there is a hint of the approach that felt that "Fairy Tales" were the preserve of children. The bulk of Hogg's work preserves the more

important functions of the supernatural and shows that it has a significance beyond mere ghoulerie. Hogg did this partly because he wished to show that cottage ways were not credulous but had a real framework of belief and partly because he himself was impressed by the power and mystery of the tales, even though he could not subscribe to all the superstitious beliefs they enshrined.

Hogg's ability to flit between supporting a whole-hearted belief in the supernatural and presenting a rational causality can be exploited by him to great effect. It suits very well with his love of the dramatic and the last minute twist in the tail and it is used in various ways in The Brownie of Bodsbeck and "The Bogle of the Brae". In the Brownie Hogg uses a real setting, choosing an existing farm, the name of the family who did in fact live there, and a well-known local legend attached to the area out of which to weave a story, building up characters and causality. For further "reality factors" he incorporates material, historical and traditional, from Wodrow, Shields and Renwick.<sup>41</sup> In this way he succeeds in giving the aura of a truthful account of a factual happening. It is against this background that the mysterious doings of the Brownie are narrated, to be accepted, apparently, at face value and it is only right at the very end of the work that it is revealed that it is the Covenanters in hiding who have actually done all the work. "The Bogle o' the Brae" in the same way makes great play of the appearance of a ghost, which is finally revealed to be no more than the projections of a "Magic Lanthorn". Hogg concludes his tale by announcing that he is rather sorry to have his good story of ghosts so easily dispelled: "And thus was I forced to draw out my fine ghost-story, from a palpable and simple deduction effected from natural and artificial causes, a conclusion which I have never hitherto reached, and with which I

was neither satisfied nor pleased".<sup>42</sup> Further discussion of Hogg's narrative technique and the effect of form and structure on his work will appear in a later chapter.

So far this chapter has considered the nature and scope of Hogg's treatment of superstition and the supernatural, looking at the way the material is used in the stories, the kind of material used, Hogg's attitude to the presentation of such items and the way religious belief combines with superstition to reinforce certain moral and social concepts. As Hogg's use of religion has already been ably discussed elsewhere, most notably by Douglas Mack<sup>43</sup> and Ian Campbell<sup>44</sup>, it is only necessary here to consider further ways Hogg's treatment of religion relates to the attitudes described above, particularly his striving for a reasonable mid-ground between old and new and his concern with the gap between appearance and reality.

Earlier, in discussing "Mess John" and "A Story of the Black Art" reference was made to the fact that, despite Hogg's general support of religious belief, non-Presbyterian faiths and especially Catholicism are often viewed with suspicion. In both these tales such faiths are linked with witchcraft and in "Helen Crocket" Eppy, who admittedly dismisses all religion, declares that confession and absolution "are the greatest flummery in the world, an' fit only to be practised by selfish knaves an' silly fools" ("Helen Crocket", p.436), her point being that if Helen had behaved more cannily beforehand there would be no need for this last ditch kind of repentance. It is Eppy's cohort Nans Blake who voices the most violent attack on Catholicism, declaring that its followers are "men of sin and sons of perdition - apostates springing from the bottomless pit, and given to the vilest blasphemy, error, and persecution - establishing their abominations by false miracles and lying



wonders" ("Helen Crocket", p.431). She has much more in the same gait, all culled she says from "the Scripture" but it is a view that is clearly extreme. Even though this is the case it is likely, given the nature and persuasion of the predominant faith on the Borders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that this reflects a prejudice, more moderately voiced, which was prevalent in the community. The Borders had indeed once been a last stronghold of Roman Catholicism and Bishop Jhone Leslie commended this allegiance in the face of the Reformation: "Nathir haue thay notwithstanding, now vanelie fallin frome the faith of the Catholik Kirk, as mony vthiris haue done". He did however, add that their prayers and rosaries redoubled "quhen thay haue xl or l myles to dryue a pray".<sup>45</sup> This late adherence was partly explained by the remoteness and the power and autonomy of the families there. When the Reformation did penetrate there it seems to have inspired an even greater fervour so that the Covenanting movement took strong root there. In the light of such commitment and the memory of sufferings undergone during the Covenanting Wars it would not be surprising to encounter a prejudice against Catholicism or Episcopalianism in the popular mind.

Hogg's tales do include characters who are Catholic and sympathetic such as the beggar, Patie, who is abused by Adamson of Laverhope, but when Adamson is struck dead in a stupendous thunderstorm, the local folk spread the rumour that it was the Devil who came in Patie's shape.<sup>46</sup> The same subtlety of mind which enabled the ancient Borderers to invent "ane ingenious policie to dryue a pray and say thair prayeris" (Leslie, I, 102) was often popularly attributed to Catholicism and the prelatic faiths in general, thus making it credible that behind a veneer of professed faith its adherents should be treacherous or particularly susceptible to the

practice of the Black Arts. The suspicion of priests can be seen in The Brownie of Bodsbeck where the curate Clerk is shown to be ready to betray the Laidlaw family and even to try to rape Katherine. Thus Marion Laidlaw who places all her faith in Clerk is made to appear silly and credulous. There is some evidence that, as Douglas Mack implies<sup>47</sup>, Clerk would represent the Episcopalian Church not Catholicism though it is generally Catholic priests that are attacked. This is the case in The Queen's Wake where the Abbot McKinnon is constantly accompanied by a girl disguised as a boy and in his absence the monks and neighbouring nuns also indulge in unhallowed pursuits. The Catholic Church in particular was often associated with corruption and with the Devil himself: "The truth is, that Popery was then on its last legs, and the Devil, finding it (as then exercised) a very convenient and profitable sort of religion, exerted himself beyond measure to give its motley hues a little more variety; and the plan of making witches and warlocks, and of holding nocturnal revels with them, where every sort of devilry was exercised, was at that time with him a favourite measure".<sup>48</sup>

Hogg does temper this argument by suggesting that though the dramatic rise in witchcraft is to be linked with Catholicism, the faith is "on its last legs", that is, already etiolated and in decline of its own accord. Thus it is not the Catholic Church itself but the decadent state which it had fallen into which caused the link. It must also be noted in passing that, as Linda Dégh and Thomas Davidson show, the folklorization of religion with its proliferation of religious legends and myths and the tenacious belief in witchcraft was encouraged, unwittingly perhaps, by the early Christian Church.<sup>49</sup> Davidson helps to explain why the Catholic Church in particular, despite its own violent condemnation of witchcraft, was so easily linked with it. He says that the Roman Church "made...the mistake of accommodation, that is, she tolerated and, in

a great many cases, incorporated some of the witches' magical rites into her own ceremonies and formularies, hoping by this adoption to strengthen her position in meeting charm with charm and spell with spell" (Davidson, p.2). Little wonder that to the rigidly reformed eye Catholicism was only one step removed from witchcraft. In accord with this, in "The Witches of Traquair", Colin Hyslop's early waywardness is attributed to the fact that although his father had been "a sincere adherent of the Reformers, and a good Christian", poor Colin was brought up "in the midst of Papists and witches" ("Fairies, Deils and Witches", p.512).

It is unlikely that Hogg favoured such an extreme position for some of his characters are recognised as worthy or attractive despite their adherence to the Catholic faith, for example, the old Marquess of Huntly and his daughter Jane in "Life of an Edinburgh Baillie".<sup>50</sup> The most usual example of positive virtue in Hogg's work is that of the devout, hard-working peasant who has undergone many trials but has stuck fast to his religion and been sustained by prayer and reading the Bible. Such a character is Tibbie Hyslop<sup>51</sup> or Andrew Burnet.<sup>52</sup> Tibbie for instance was "a good and sincere Christian, not in name and profession only, but in word and deed" ("Tibbie Hyslop", p.664), who read a portion of her Bible every day for forty years, causing the narrator to say "Would to God that all our brethren and sisters of the human race - the poor and comfortless as well as the great and wise, knew as well how to estimate these books as Tibbie Hyslop did!" ("Tibbie Hyslop", p.664).

In this Hogg is reflecting an attitude commonly found in much of the contemporary fiction but he usually just manages to stop short of the blind cloying tract-like approach of lesser works such as the Reverend Henry Duncan's The Young South Country Weaver which equates lack of faith with dangerous political radicalism and the ruin of

the country.<sup>53</sup> This celebration of devout peasantry has strong literary roots which stretch back to Burns' "The Cottar's Saturday Night" and the cult of sentiment advanced by MacKenzie. One of the things that saves Hogg, and indeed Burns, from going over the top completely, is his ability to treat devout belief humorously but not disrespectfully. He is an absolute master at parodying the Biblical style of prose and sermon writing and this makes the "Chaldee Manuscript" delightful.<sup>54</sup> The same parodic skill can be seen in the friar's tale (Three Perils of Man, pp.205-14) and it appears to somewhat different effect in "A Remarkable Egyptian Story".<sup>55</sup> In a slightly different way he exploits the conventions of prayer style in Davie Tait's prayer in The Brownie of Bodsbeck (pp.121-29) where Davie addresses his Lord in a very homely way. The same thing happens in The Three Perils of Women where Daniel Bell prays in dialect for the safety of his daughter, Gatty.<sup>56</sup>

In the end Hogg avoids the charge of being narrow and sectarian by the fact that he supports a qualified, moderate belief in his characters, a belief that often does not belong strictly to any one religious political standpoint. The true "heroes" in Hogg's work are not those who blindly support a strict party-line, even if it is a party which Hogg aligned himself with in his letters and commentaries. His real support is for characters who look beyond their own position and see merit and honour in the actions of their opponents. Thus Bauldy Sydeserf, the Edinburgh baillie, gains immensely in status when he opposes the narrow partisanship of his own side and sees that the Marquess of Huntly is saved (Wars, I, pp.109-20). In a similar way John Lochy realises that war is strange and inhuman and that the bond of humanity is much greater than the loyalty to kings and armies. It is in this spirit that he is driven to help a wounded enemy.<sup>57</sup>

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Sir Ringan Redhough's unwillingness to have his men killed unnecessarily to suit the whim of Princess Margaret and the Douglas also falls into this category (Three Perils of Man, pp.5-6). This idea of sensitive moderation is especially felt in the Brownie and the Confessions. The characters who emerge as good and honourable in the Brownie are not the Covenanters so much as Katherine and her father Walter who throughout their trials maintain their integrity and their concern for humanity first and religion and politics second. It is Walter who most keenly embodies this outlook. Despite his wife's credulous religious faith he is not actively associated with her point of view but neither is he a Covenanter himself though he helps them out of pure kindness. This is made clear when, on Katherine's actions being explained to him and the mystery of the Covenanters revealed, he declares support at once:

"Deil care what side they war on, Kate!" cried Walter, in the same vehement voice; "ye hae taen the side o' human nature; the suffering and the humble side, an' the side o' feeling, my woman, that bodes best in a young unexperienced thing to tak. It is better than to do like yon bits o' gillflirts about Edinburgh; poor shilly-shally milk-an'-water things! Gin ye but saw how they cock up their noses at a whig, an' thraw their bits o' gabs; an' downa bide to look at aught, or hear tell o' aught, that isna i' the top fashion. Ye hae done very right, my good lassie - od, I wadna gie ye for the hale o' them, an' they war a' hung in a strap like ingans."

(Brownie, p.163)

As Douglas Mack says of the book, it is "...not so much a tale of the Covenanters as a tale of Border life in the covenanting period" (Brownie, p.xv). This is another way of suggesting that Hogg's concern is with community rather than faction. However, it would be selling the work short to suggest that it is simply concerned with describing Border life. It is clearly a knowledgeable and affectionate picture of this but it also develops two important ideas. Firstly, it deals with the idea that a humanitarian,

charitable approach to life is more worthwhile and more productive than a blinding excessive commitment to any cause. Secondly, it explores the effect of superstition and the real power it has over people. This leads Hogg to consider the grey area between appearance, comprehension and reality. No character understands the situation but they all make various attempts to come to terms with it and this is the real test. Some merely close their eyes and retreat, some like Maron are thrown into blind panic, while others, like Walter, though they do not fully comprehend, hold fast to their own positive values like honour or love. Walter maintains his faith in his daughter and it is a faith that is ultimately justified. Katherine too, risks danger and ill-opinion and sticks to her compassionate care for the Covenanters. These acts of faith carry Walter and Katherine through their respective trials and establish them as a core of moral worth. This personal integrity also keeps Davie Tait from being ridiculous for he too, when faced with the unknown and irrational, is true to himself so that his prayer, though unusual, is direct and honest.

Similar issues are developed in the Confessions. As Ian Campbell notes the faith of the Wringhims is shown to be repellent as well as criminally and theologically dangerous. Their views are extreme and Robert becomes an easy prey for the Devil. But there are positives to be found in a less extreme, cannier approach: "The Church itself, in the form of the moderate preacher Blanchard in Glasgow, survives the attack unscathed. So does the easy-going common-sense view of good Christian living expressed by Colwan at the beginning of the book" (Campbell, "Hogg's Confessions", p.29). As Campbell does not fail to point out, the Colwans are shown up as "worldly and self-indulgent" but at least they are human whereas the Wringhims aspire to be sublime and end up as diabolic. As in the Brownie it is the

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moderate view that is advocated.

The Confessions goes on to examine the question of reliability of the senses when perceived reality is at war with what is rationally accepted as possible. Bell Calvert, telling how she saw a man exactly like Thomas Drummond help Robert Wringhim to murder George Colwan, states the completeness of our dependence on our senses: "We have nothing on earth but our senses to depend upon: if these deceive us, what are we to do. I own I cannot account for it [the doubles]; nor ever shall be able to account for it as long as I live" (Confessions, p.80). The evidence of the senses is all anyone has to go by and if this evidence clashes with what others perceive or with what it is reasonable to expect the effect can be devastating and unnerving. Robert Wringhim's career shows how easy it is to pervert the senses. His perception is coloured first by his adopted "father", "who, privately, (that is in a family capacity,) in his prayers, gave up my father and brother, according to the flesh, to Satan, making it plain to all my senses of perception, that they were beings given up of God, to be devoured by fiends or men, at their will and pleasure, and that whosoever should slay them, would do God good service" (Confessions, p.151). The process is continued by Gil-Martin who clearly has great power to confuse the senses both by suggestion and by physical appearance. Giving his own version of the murder of George Colwan, Robert Wringhim says, "My friend was equipped in the Highland garb, and so completely translated into another being, that, save by his speech all the senses of mankind could not have recognized him" (Confessions, p.169). In the pages that follow Wringhim recounts again and again instances where his "illustrious friend" pressed on him a view of matters that disagrees materially with his own. As a result of such attacks on his perceptive faculties, those



by which the human mind defines itself and registers its being, Wringhim's whole personality is eroded and he is finally destroyed.

This concern with the gap between appearance and reality, as later chapters will show, is essential to Hogg's writing. It is a powerful theme and one that has been particularly stimulating to twentieth century readers, especially because of its psychological presentation of evil and what Gide calls "the exteriorized development of our own desires, of our pride, of our most secret thoughts".<sup>58</sup> Gide adds that the fantastic is always psychologically explicable and it is almost as if Hogg, in trying to resolve the inherited dilemma of the tension between traditional belief and Enlightenment rationalism, had pushed through to a more figurative approach that was only to be fully explored a century after his death. The Confessions is, then, not so much a product of Hogg's knowledge of folk tradition as a logical development, by way of the Brownie and other works, of the split attitude towards superstition and the supernatural. This tension itself grew out of the wider movement away from traditional folk culture to the urban and commercial cultural centres: the combined effect of the Enlightenment and the Agrarian Revolution on the older structure which was based on rural communities. In this Hogg is perhaps best seen as a focal point, distilling, in one key figure, the effects of a movement to be felt throughout Scottish Literature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This can be seen by comparing Hogg with the two literary figures he admired most and was most consciously influenced by Burns and Scott.

Burns, perhaps more than anyone showed Hogg that traditional material was a valid mine for literary subject matter and his effect has already been touched on in relation to song. "Tam o'Shanter" showed Hogg that the impedimenta of witchcraft and superstition could

be reproduced straight from tradition and presented in a vivid, realistic way in poetry. In the end, however, despite the energy and vigour, it is enclosed within an ironic framework, the final "moral" being couched in humorous tones. The sneaking notion remains that the whole cantraip could simply be the production of Tammie's steaming noddle. Burns also shares Hogg's appreciation of witches and in among the withered beldames the soncy Nanniemay emerge as a distant cousin of the Witch of Fife or the Lady Elizabeth. Hogg extended this picture to include the "wise woman", the Eppy Welch/Grizel Graham figure of a lone woman, not strictly a witch, but with more than ordinary powers. Hogg's Devil has plenty of connections with the Auld Nick of "Tam o'Shanter" but Burns develops the Devil far more than Hogg does, seeing him satirically in the world around him. For Hogg the Devil remains strictly within traditional boundaries until the Confessions where he departs entirely from the literary and folk traditions to present a new, subtle picture, not of the old, brimstone tainted adversary, but of a persuasive, tricky-tongued ally who turns persecutor. In Burns too we see something of the split attitude to tradition. In a letter dated 2 August 1787 he described to Dr. John Moore the legion of supernatural spirits he was introduced to by his mother's maid, Betty Davidson, saying that it cultivated his poetical imagination. But, he adds, the effect was so strong that: "to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical in these matters than I, yet it often takes an effort of Philosophy to shake off these idle terrors".<sup>59</sup> This is an attitude that we can see expressed again and again in Hogg: intuitive belief qualified by professed rationalism.

Scott, too, testifies to the power of the supernatural as a topic for fiction. In the introductory paragraphs of an essay on the work of Hoffmann he said that: "No source of romantic fiction, and no mode of exciting the feelings of interest which the authors in that description of literature desire to produce, seems more directly accessible than the love of the supernatural. It is common to all classes of mankind, and perhaps is to none so familiar as to those who assume a certain degree of scepticism on the subject..."<sup>60</sup> Scott preferred to try and present the rational account of such matters as witchcraft and says that ghost tales are most effective in the young impressionable mind, being "out of date at forty years and upwards".<sup>61</sup> Coleman O. Parsons adds, however, that Scott's approach to the supernatural was full of contradictions, summing it up in the following way: "But on the whole Scott's wavering allegiance to imaginative and rationalistic values is a fair reflexion of the man and of his contemporaries. In both, receptivity was crossed by doubt and scepticism by glimmering conviction".<sup>62</sup> Hogg overcame this contradiction by developing the traditional function of superstition and the supernatural, fitting it into a literary framework.

Parsons also discusses Hogg's use of tradition and notes that despite Hogg's claims to be "king o' the mountain an' fairy school" (Memoir, p.118), Hogg himself did much "to banish the fairies by stripping them of their robust malice and leaving a Midsummer Night's Dream residue of 'the most delightful little spirits that ever haunted the Scottish dells' in their innocuous and 'tiny moonlight forms'" (Parsons, p.287). However, fairies almost never appear in the prose and it must be remembered that they had apparently dwindled in popular tradition. At one time they were to be seen and conversed with quite regularly but Hogg reports that his grandfather,

Will Laidlaw o' Phaup, "was the last man of this wild region, who heard, saw, and conversed with the fairies, and that not once or twice, but at sundry times and seasons" ("General Anecdotes", p.442). The anecdotes he goes on to give do hint at a rather more robust tradition than Parsons suggests but fairy-lore, it would appear, was in the decline and this may account for the more literary of Hogg's presentations of this group. The poetry contains rather more references to fairies and in "Superstition" Hogg says that "all these light unbodied forms are fled, /Or good or evil, save the ghost alone".<sup>63</sup> "The Origin of the Fairies"<sup>64</sup> describes how the Knight of Dumblane is seduced by the Seven Wierd Sisters, in the shape of one woman, their progeny being the first of the fairy race. These babies are to be able to play pranks on the "wicked and wild" but the virtuous are exempt until the dark days when "psalms and the prayers are nightly heard" and the Covenanting feuds bring bloodshed to the hills (Queer Book, p.278). Thus, with their traditional function lost, Hogg could attempt to construct a role for them but to little success and so his main treatment of superstition lies elsewhere. It might be possible to argue that Hogg's pure virgins who visit strange lands are connected with his view of fairies but of all his characters his brownies are perhaps truer to the older, indigenous traditions of supernatural inhabitants. They fit the role outlined by Robert Kirk<sup>65</sup> and are also reminiscent of the descriptions of the Pechts or Pechs, an ancient race (now extinct) of squat, powerful beings believed by some to be the Picts.<sup>66</sup>

To sum up, then, Hogg in his prose fiction draws especially on ghosts and apparitions and that these serve a particular function in tradition which Hogg has in turn incorporated into the literary tradition. Thus he can be seen to be leading ideas through from

tradition and using them to rehabilitate the use of superstition and the supernatural in literature, moving away from the policy of treating them as a Gothic backdrop. However, though capable of an almost uncontrolled descriptive delight in goriness, Hogg himself qualifies his material and limits its scope by keeping it in a subordinate role. His appreciation of superstition and the supernatural leads him to incorporate these with orthodox religion and create a combined moral code. Meanwhile, he reflects a movement in the opposite direction: religious controversy and prejudice lead in turn to the imputation of supernatural abilities to certain groups opposed to opinions that Hogg's work generally supports, thus the Catholics are linked with witchcraft and Clavers is linked with the Devil. Finally, the transition from strictly traditional material to a literary presentation created a tension within Hogg as he experimented with the most acceptable way to present his material. He thus exemplifies a problem felt in the wider tradition of Scottish literature. It led him to use a variety of forms and structures which will be discussed in a later chapter, and to a concern with man's relationship with the unknown and his imperfect ability to differentiate between truth and fiction, the real and imaginary. This last point is linked with the gap between appearance and reality that is explored in his treatment of war, chivalry and politics and it is a theme that is most clearly expressed in his attitude to community. It is the nature of this concern with community and the gap he detected between the ideal and what was possible that must now be considered.

## CHAPTER FIVE : Themes (2) History and Community

Hogg's concern with the beliefs and values of his own community led him to invest the ideas of community, inheritance and order with great power. The equivocal status of superstition and the supernatural and their complex inter-relationship with religion make them slippery ground for Hogg and his reader alike. Other aspects of community belief reveal a somewhat clearer approach. A community exists through a sense of shared belief and also through shared experience and these combine to make traditional local history very important indeed. This can be more clearly shown by reference to Linda Dégh's work on the Szekler community in Hungary. She describes how the members of a community, forced out of their native Hungary, lived for one hundred and sixty years in Roumania as small crofters or seasonal agricultural labourers and then transferred to another area of Hungary, all the time retaining a strong feeling of community identity and spirit.<sup>1</sup> She notes that, "The Szeklers themselves have preserved many legends regarding their origins, legends which, however, lack any historic foundation. Our informants from Andrásfalva are in complete accord, telling us that their ancestors were the Huns..." (Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.3). She cites various items of this traditional history and, in presenting the main story of the settling of Bucovina in Roumania, she points out, almost incidentally, the fact that the legend's essential function is that of preserving community identity: "In this legend is anchored the concept of Szekler unity and the explanation of the origin of the five Bucovina villages" (Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.8). Despite the range of influences and events that had assailed the community in its wanderings it still thought of itself as a community first and foremost with a shared history, shared traditions and shared belief.

This provided the framework and context within which other forms of tradition, for example, song and Märchen were preserved.

The communities Hogg was describing were not forced to move as the Szeklers were but they did face the problem of preserving tradition in a meaningful context while the very nature of the community around them changed. In this respect we may find the work of Richard Dorson with immigrant communities helpful for it shows the extent to which expatriates hold on to the sense of identity that inherited tradition gives.<sup>2</sup> As with the Border communities they represent communities in transition, and though the situation is perhaps writ large in the case of the immigrants, this still helps to highlight strands discernible in the more subtle Border transition. Dorson, dealing in 1968 with the European immigrants and coloured population of two Indiana townships, Gary and East Chicago, is able to suggest what happens when a strong traditional framework is transplanted into a less favourable situation, void of tradition. Dorson's conclusions were that conventional folklore, especially the classic ballads and Märchen were not to be found: "The old familiar genres of folklore, particularly the tale and song, do not seem abundant in the city. Even jokes, the modern folktale, are forbidden in the steel mills for fear their ethnic slurs may arouse hostility. One can of course find storytellers and folk-singers in the city, and in the country village not every soul is an active tradition carrier by a long shot. But genre folklore has become increasingly displaced by other kinds of oral tradition, which deserve the attention of collectors" (Dorson, "Folk in the City", p.207). Dorson is wise to caution against the too simple operation of the town/country, mass/traditional culture opposition but there remains enough evidence overall to suggest that, as long as traditional community feeling continues to be

preserved, it is done so by means of some traditional history, personal narratives, ethnic cooking, dancing and so forth and also bolstered by the possession of books and artefacts relating to the older traditional community. Hogg's work shows that, despite a certain familiarity with the classical ballad, his own preference is for the lyric and that similarly, his prose contains no examples of Märchen. On the other hand, his work is full of the less structured fluid forms such as belief legends and historical legends as well as nostalgic concern for community. Thus the content of his work seems to be similar to that of the Indiana immigrants. It is perhaps not completely satisfactory to compare Hogg and the culture of early nineteenth century Ettrick and Yarrow with the twentieth century immigrant communities in North America, but the situation is not entirely dissimilar. Both are communities in transit, for as the figures show, there was a great movement of population in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Scotland with people leaving the north and south for the central belt with its industries and well organised agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Dorson's work on transitional communities does a lot to confirm in folklore terms the assertion originally based on economic factors, that the traditional culture Hogg knew was a transitional one. It also helps perhaps to explain the nature of Hogg's folklore material and the reason why certain genres such as legend, superstition or folk history predominate in his work to the exclusion of more classical forms.

Traditional history is very important in Hogg's work and, whereas he sometimes distances his use of belief in the supernatural by lodging it with secondary or unreliable characters, he was always happy to expound the value and reliability of the testimony of the old shepherds, for example. The narrator persona



in the review of Captain Napier's study of farming in Ettrick reflects exactly this contrast. After expressing doubt in the reliability of "Mr Hogg's stories, the character, who professes himself to be "a rude illiterate shepherd", questions the accuracy of Napier's description of the losses in bad winters. He wishes that Napier "had consulted the memories of some old shepherds a little more sedulously - the best chronicles of such events".<sup>4</sup> He emphasises the accuracy of the traditional method of remembering events by their proximity to years of great storms.<sup>5</sup> In telling of the great storm of 24th January 1794, Hogg again prefers oral history (and also personal experience) to recorded sources: "Some registers that I have seen, place this storm on the 24th of December, a month too early, but that day was one of the finest winter days I ever saw" ("Storms", p.211). Hogg also claims that Thomas Beattie lost seventy-two scores of sheep ("Storms", p.77), and this account is confirmed by Beattie's own journal record of the events, which gives a long description of the storm. This emphasises the significance of the storm in the country at large and supports Hogg's testimony about the date of the storm and the fairness of the winter until the storm broke: "The Winter between 1793 & 1794 was uncommonly fine mild & warm from Martinmas 1793, to the 24th January 1794".<sup>6</sup> Beattie's account, by confirming Hogg's description, tends to give substance to Hogg's belief that folk or oral history is reliable. Vansina in his discussion of the methodology of oral history says that, "It goes without saying that official history is more subject to public distortions than private history, since the latter has few, if any, interests to defend. On the other hand, the informant seems to put a more marked individual stamp on the testimony in the case of private testimonies".<sup>7</sup> Talking in particular about personal recollections, Vansina adds that they are "transmitted without control",

being "simply preserved in the memory of the informant", Moreover: "Facts supplied by traditions of this kind are often astonishingly detailed... As falsification rarely occurs, they are extremely trustworthy" (Vansina, p.160). It should perhaps be pointed out here that this is referring to events like these storms, which took place within living memory usually and not to truly "historic" accounts from the distant past which, as Linda Dégh pointed out in the passage cited above concerning the Szeklers' migration legends, are less reliable, their main function being to provide a corporate social identity.

That Hogg believed in the general trustworthiness of oral testimony is clear from all his work, but his literary audience were harder to persuade and the altercations with Scott over the Brownie and the Three Perils of Man are the best examples both of Hogg's commitment to tradition and the scepticism of the literary approach. The Brownie was inevitably compared to Scott's Old Mortality and Hogg himself describes the outcome of this comparison in his Memoir of the Author's Life:

That same year [1818] I published "The Brownie of Bodsbeck," and other Tales, in two volumes. I suffered unjustly in the eyes of the world with regard to that tale, which was looked on as an imitation of the tale of "Old Mortality," and a counterpart to that; whereas it was written long ere the tale of "Old Mortality" was heard of, and I well remember my chagrin on finding the ground, which I thought clear, pre-occupied before I could appear publicly on it, and that by such a redoubted champion. It was wholly owing to Mr. Blackwood that this tale was not published a year sooner, which would effectually have freed me from the stigma of being an imitator, and brought in the author of the "Tales of My Landlord" as an imitator of me.

(Memoir, pp.44-45)

Douglas Mack, making a full examination of Hogg's claim that the Brownie was written before Old Mortality, suggests that the

Brownie may have been conceived and partly written as early as 1813 when a collection of "Rural and Traditionary Tales" was offered to Constable. He shows that Hogg's work was not originally inspired by Scott's work but by a "desire to capture in The Brownie the atmosphere of what he calls 'the evening tale round the fading embers' " (Brownie, p.xviii). However its proximity to Old Mortality in subject and characters forced Hogg to make many changes: "...having made the redoubted Burley the hero of my tale, I was obliged to go over it again, and alter all the traits in the character of the principal personage, substituting John Brown of Caldwell for John Balfour of Burley, greatly to the detriment of my story. I tried also to take out Clavers, but I found this impossible" (Memoir, p.46). The problem was not that Hogg had plagiarised in any sense but rather that his treatment of characters introduced by Scott was so much at odds with Scott's. It was the portrait of Claverhouse and the image of the Royalists as savage and cruel that proved the main stumbling block. Hogg reports that the following conversation took place between him and Scott the day after the publication of the Brownie. Hogg had called on Scott on the pretence of business in order to find out Scott's reaction:

"I have read through your new work Mr Hogg" said he <sup>[sic]</sup> 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 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. An' mair nor that there is not one single incident in the tale - not one - which I cannot prove from history to be literally and positively true. I was obliged sometimes to change the situations to make one part coalesce with another but in no one instance have I related a story of cruelty or a murder which is not literally true. An' that's

a great deal mair than you can say for your tale o' Auld Mortality."

[Scott denies any connection with Old Mortality and, while accepting that the Brownie may have been in MS form up to a year previously, suggests the tale may have been "greatly exhaggerated since".]

[Scott] Well well. As to its running counter to Old Mortality I have nothing to say. Nothing in the world. I only tell you that with the exception of Old Nanny the crop-eared Covenanter who is by far the best character you ever drew in your life I dislike the tale exceedingly and assure you it is a distorted a prejudiced and untrue picture of the Royal party.

It is a devilish deal truer than your's though; and on that ground I make my appeal to my country." And with that I rose and was going off in a great huff.

(Memoir, pp.106-07)

As Douglas Mack points out, Hogg's tale is not so imbalanced as Scott makes out (Brownie, p.xi). Hogg's key contention is that he is repeating faithfully the traditional account of the events and that he had "been bred up in the belief" of this history since birth. Furthermore, literary necessities and the demands of style have only a slight effect, being used mainly to preserve continuity: "I was obliged sometimes to change the situations to make one part coalesce with another..." An example of this sort of process can perhaps be seen in the treatment of Mess John Binram, a story which Hogg had used earlier in The Mountain Bard (1807). In the notes to the poem "Mess John" he gives the traditional background of the tale:

This is a very popular story about Ettrick Forest, as well as a part of Annandale and Tweeddale, and is always told with the least variation, both by young and old, of any legendary tale I ever heard. It seems, like many others, to be partly founded on facts, with a great deal of romance added; for, if tradition can be in aught believed, the murder of the priest seems well attested: but I do not know if any records mention it. His surname is said to have been Binram, though some suppose that it was only a nickname; and the mount, under which he was buried, still retains the name

of Binram's Corse....it is certain, that the two heroes, Dobson and Dun, whom everyone allows to have been the first who had the courage to lay hold on the lady, and to have slain the priest, skulked about the head of Moffat water during the heat of the persecution, which they both survived. And Andrew Moore, who died at Ettrick about 26 years ago, at a great age, often averred, that he had, in his youth, seen and conversed with many people, who remembered every circumstance of it, both as to the murder of the priest, and the road being laid waste by the woman running at night with a fire-pan, or, as some call it, a globe of fire, on her head....

If I may then venture a conjecture at the whole of this story, it is nowise improbable that the lass of Craigyburn was some enthusiast in religious matters, or perhaps a lunatic; and that, being troubled with a sense of guilt, and a squeamish conscience, she had, on that account, made several visits to St Mary's Chapel to obtain absolution: and it is well known, that many of the Mountain-men wanted only a hair to make a tether of. Might they not then frame this whole story about the sorcery, on purpose to justify their violent procedure in the eyes of their countrymen, as no bait was more likely to be swallowed at that time? But, however it was, the reader has the story, in the following ballad, much as I have it".

(1807, pp.68-69)

By the time he comes to use the tradition again in the Brownie, Hogg has rationalised the tale a stage further, accommodating it neatly into his narrative, but reminding the reader all the while of its traditional provenance. In this version Mess John acts as a spy, sending word to Clavers of the doings and movements of the Covenanters. The Covenanters retaliated:

They way-laid, and seized upon one of the priest's emissaries by night, a young female, who was running on a message to Grierson of Lag. Overcome with fear at being in custody of such frightful-looking fellows, with their sallow cheeks and long beards, she confessed the whole, and gave up her dispatches. They were of the most aggravated nature. Forthwith two or three of the most hardy of the whigs, without the concurrence or knowledge of their brethren, posted straight to the Virgin's chapel that very night, shot the chaplain, and buried him at a small distance from his own little solitary mansion; at the same time giving out to the country,

that he was a sorcerer, an adulterer, and a character every way evil. His name has accordingly been handed down to posterity as a most horrid necromancer.

(Brownie, pp.12-13)

This is clearly the better rationalisation of the tale and one that fits in logically with the main narrative as it initiates the train of events that require Clavers' presence in the area. Hogg takes his material a step further, weaving a number of the characteristics of the priest of the poem into the portrayal of Clerk, the curate favoured by Maron Laidlaw. Just as Mess John seduces the lass of Craigyburn, so Clerk attempts to seduce Katherine (Brownie, pp.87-91). In both tales the maid is rescued by Covenanters; but whereas Mess John was connected with magic, here it is the girl and her rescuers that are linked with the notion of the Brownie and supernatural events. In this way Hogg rearranges items and changes the emphasis here and there to suit the new context but retains all the while the essential elements of his traditional tale. Time and time again in the Brownie he invokes the authority of tradition, as for example his insistence on calling Claverhouse by the name "Clavers": "(I think it best to denominate him so, as he is always called by that name in the country)" (Brownie, p.14). In the same way he repeats that various incidents and the details of the tale are widely known: "There is scarcely a boy in the country who cannot recite scraps of Davie Tait's prayer ..." (Brownie, p.127); "Where is the cottager, dwelling between the Lowthers and Cheviot, who has not heard tell of the feats of the Brownie of Bodsbeck?" (Brownie, p.137).

He was prepared, then, to "restructure" traditional items and, despite an overall trust in tradition, he did not accept everything

at face value. He describes Clavers' headlong dash over the countryside and says that he "exerted himself that day in such a manner, galloping over precipices, and cheering on his dragoons, that all the country people who beheld him believed him to be a devil, or at least mounted on one. The marks of that infernal courser's feet are shewn to this day on a steep, nearly perpendicular, below the Bubbly Craig, along which he is said to have ridden at full speed..." (Brownie, p.75). Hogg goes on to reflect on the relationship between tradition and actual events:

Tradition has preserved the whole of his route that day with the utmost minuteness. It is not easy to account for this. These minute traditions are generally founded on truth; yet though two generations have scarcely passed away since the date of this tale, tradition, in this instance, relates things impossible, else Clavers must indeed have been one of the infernals. Often has the present relater of this tale stood over the deep green marks of that courser's hoof, plenty of which remain on that hill, in awe and astonishment, to think that he was actually standing looking at the traces made by the devil's foot, or at least by a horse that once belonged to him."

(Brownie, p.76)

Hogg, then, qualifies his belief in this tradition. He admits that it cannot literally be true and equates it with the innocent credulity of youth, implied in the nostalgic personal reminiscence. Even so, he does not dismiss it outright and it is perhaps only the persistence of superstition he cavils at, not the handing on of Clavers' supposed route. He discriminates between the traditions which he supports and those which he feels are unreliable, offsetting intuitive belief with an assumed scepticism. Perhaps he does this to show that he is not credulous and perhaps also because of the status of certain traditions within the community. What he objects to in the present example is clearly not the working of

tradition itself, for indeed the tone of the whole passage is one of regret and surprise that tradition should be found wanting. The real subject of his attack is the occasional simple-mindedness attributed to superstition. Thus, while he admits to an earlier belief in this tradition, his present, public, rational stance cannot permit the tradition to hold. Other stories, in particular "Wat Pringle o' the Yair", confirm Hogg's deeply felt belief in the veracity of traditional history.

Hogg often tries to "prove" or support traditional testimony, thereby giving it a more "respectable" cast. He does, for instance, use some written evidence to support his oral sources: "The narrator of this tale confesses that he has taken this account of his [Clavers'] raid through the vales of Esk and Annan solely from tradition, as well as the attack made on the two conventicles, where the Pringles, &c. were taken prisoners; but these traditions are descended from such a source, and by such a line, as amounts with him to veracity, while other incidents recorded by Wodrow and Huie fully corroborate them" (Brownie, p.105). The Brownie, in fact, draws quite substantially on the publications of the Covenanters and references to the writings of Robert Wodrow, James Renwick and Alexander Shiels in particular, frequently crop up in the text and in the footnotes supplied by Hogg. Douglas Mack shows that the reference to Wodrow and Huie, quoted above, was added in the 1837 edition.<sup>8</sup> It may be the case that in revising the work for publication at various stages, Hogg fortified his traditional narrative skeleton with written accounts. On the other hand, we must note that a number of the references to Shiels and Renwick, for example, are of an oral rather than literary source, that is, they have been passed down in an oral way, rather than in a book. Thus, one of Hogg's own



footnotes relates that, "One of the women baptized in the Linn of Riskinhope by Renwick that year, has several children yet alive, not very aged people" (Brownie, note, p.76). The strictly oral and the technically literate combine here to give the creative synthesis that makes up the Brownie.

Once again Dorson can provide an analogy from a modern transitional society with strong traditions. Talking about the role of the book in the Gary and East Chicago communities, he says: "If this is not a highly literate society, nevertheless it is a society that greatly values special book publications for their symbolic value. In one group after another I encountered references to, demonstration of, and sometimes even bestowal of a cherished tome. These books shared two common factors: they were far off the main stream of American publishing, often being issued with obscure imprints, and they served to reinforce cherished elements of the folk inheritance" (Dorson, "Folk in the City", p.209). The Covenanting pamphlets and records of religious persecution which Hogg uses in the Brownie would fall very happily into these categories, and they and the Brownie itself serve as reinforcers of tradition, a means of cementing community history and identity by relating the reaction to a common threat. The earlier emphasis on books of a religious nature in the small, domestic collections suggests that pamphlets such as these were readily available within the Border Covenanting community, so that this use of written accounts is a different technique from reference to other, recognised more generally accessible texts such as Holinshed. These, being widely available among educated circles, do not fulfil the first criterion Dorson gives, that of obscurity. The references made by Hogg to Holinshed in The Mountain Bard show him trying to

extend or complement his traditional knowledge and bridge the gap between tradition and official learning. The impulses are not mutually exclusive, for, as already suggested, Hogg was trying both to consolidate his community tradition and to present it to a new literary audience which would expect a more rigid historical account. This is illustrated in "A Story of Good Queen Bess" where Hogg concludes a story of a lost heiress and mysterious murders with the following declaration: "Now, although a small share of these incidents are traditionary, if any one suspects that the story is forged, out of malice to Queen Elizabeth, the greatest and vilest of her sex, let such turn to Lodge's Illustrations of British History, vol ii, p.123; ditto vol. iii p.178; Pennant's London p.259; and see, also, Grainger's Biographical History, and the Peerage of Scotland, vol.ii. p.98, and State Trials, vol.i. p.174 ..." <sup>9</sup> In this case the references are taken from official history, not to confirm a particular tradition, but to support something more general, a traditional attitude to Queen Elizabeth, that is, that she was evil or spiteful.

In the Brownie, Hogg's aim was to support and reinforce oral testimony with a variety of recorded sources and accounts. The density of this material may, of course, be due also to Scott's criticisms and his general complaints that Hogg was not scholarly or impartial enough. This attitude is expressed in his letter to Lord Montagu describing Hogg's work on the Jacobite Relics:

Hogg is here busy with his Jacobite songs. I wish he may get handsomely through, for he is profoundly ignorant of history, and it is an awkward thing to read in order that you may write. I give him all the help I can, but he sometimes poses me. For instance, he came yesterday, open mouth, inquiring what great dignified clergyman had distinguished himself at Killiecrankie - not exactly the scene where one would have expected a churchman to shine - and I found with some difficulty,

that he had mistaken Major-General Canon,  
called, in Kennedy's Latin Song, Canonicus  
Gallovidiensis, for the canon of a cathedral.  
Ex ungue leonem. 10

Scott's comments are rather patronising and Hogg's grasp of history is not nearly as slender or limited as Scott suggests. What does emerge clearly is that Hogg was prepared to extend his traditional history with more conventional researches, providing the kind of reinforcement or validating factors which would make it acceptable to a wider audience.

The best additional example of Scott's criticism of Hogg's adherence to tradition is the famous dispute over the Three Perils of Man which caused Hogg to alter his manuscript radically and was possibly also instrumental in his later decision to excise all the supernatural sub-plot and retain only the seige of Roxburgh. Scott's criticism, as reported by Hogg, lay apparently in two areas. His first objection was to Hogg's lack of stylistic and structural control: "Ah man what you might have made of that with a little more refinement care and patience! But it is always the same with you just hurrying on from one vagary to another without consistency or proper arrangement" (Memoir, p.101) Hogg's frequently quoted reply is a partial admission linked with an important rider: "When my tale is traditionary the work is easy as I then see my way before me though the tradition be ever so short but in all my prose works of imagination knowing little of the world I sail on without star or compass" (Memoir, p.101). The fuller implications of this confession can best be examined in the following chapter on form and structure. For the present it is enough to note Hogg's implied trust in tradition. Scott's second charge shows the way in which Hogg was perhaps often closer to an uncoloured, truly impartial account of historical characters and events than Scott who, despite all the advantages of formal antiquarian

study, was more tied by the social expectations of his audience. Scott objected to Hogg's portrayal of Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch (1st Baron Rankleburn) in the original proof version of the Three Perils, fearing that his inclusion as "the hero of this wild extravagant tale" would make his descendents, patrons to both Scott and Hogg, appear ridiculous. Hogg's reply is straightforward enough: "There's nae fears o' that ata' Mr Scott. The Sir Walter o' my tale is a complete hero throughout and is never made to do a thing or say a thing of which his descendant our present chief winna be proud" (Memoir, pp.101-02). Hogg shows a realistic grasp of the less romantic side of history, and human nature, by saying of the selfish trait in this character: "Oo ay but ye ken they were a' a little gi'en that gait else how could they hae gotten haud o' a' the South o' Scotland nae body kens how?" (Memoir, p.102).

This is Hogg's public account of the affair and it illustrates Vansina's point that official history is more liable to colour, whereas a more traditional or informal account, like Hogg's, is more straightforward or honest as it has no ends to serve. The letters show, however, that the affair went deeper and that Hogg was not quite so confident and made sweeping alterations to accommodate Scott. Despite Hogg's commonsense view, Scott's notions of propriety carried the day:

I have drawn Sir Walter as I suppose he existed. As a warrior and a chief I am sure of the justice done him and he still rises in estimation till the end. But then I have made him somewhat blunt and uncourtly uttering at times strong expressions of broad Scots and besides he is not a little superstitious. The character is a noble character and in any hands but those of one situated as I am would have done well and you may be sure I meant it well. Still I do not know. The slightest blot thrown upon the first

of a long line of noble ancestors would be a kittle cast and that line too terminating in my own master and benefactor. Not terminating. God forbid that it ever should terminate but existing and flourishing in him. 11

Hogg adds that he can change the name but not the character, though even to do that effectively is difficult and he proceeds to beg Scott to look over the proofs "and make the baron of Rankleburn what he should be". He also recognised Scott's right to have his own ancestor, Charlie Scott of Yardbire, "coloured" as he pleased. The next letter to Scott is much more cheerful and confident, stating that Sir Walter has been altered to Sir Ringan Redhough and thanking Scott for having "warned me in the very nick of time".<sup>12</sup> It emerges, then, that Hogg's attitude to history is a mixture of traditional belief and common sense, occasionally supported by formal written accounts and, in this way, less liable to certain types of distortion. History thus becomes a kind of absolute but honoured account. As Vansina indicates, Scott's attitude shows the "official" one of "interpretation", which recognises various interests and is therefore susceptible to subtle colouring. However, the important fact is not whether traditional history is more or less reliable than official history, but rather that Hogg's attitude, contrasting so markedly with Scott's, shows a real reliance on traditionally imparted historical evidence. (The phrase "traditionally imparted" may seem unnecessarily vague but it is to avoid an undesirable distinction between "oral" and "written" accounts in the light of Dorson's claim about the importance of certain specialised books.)

A clear instance of the operation of this traditional approach to history can be seen in "Wat Pringle o' the Yair", where he describes the battle of Philliphaugh, giving a traditional source and account and supporting the traditional version against the

account of the battle published by Chambers. First of all he states the authority of his informant and the train of transmission:

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 Philliphaugh. 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 the very individual spots where the chief events happened. 13

Similarly, in the Introduction of the 1837 edition of the Brownie Hogg says that the local part of the story is taken "from the relation of my own father, who had the best possible traditional account of the incidents" (Brownie, p.170). This helps to explain his loyalty to his material for, as he says, the information comes "frae them I was most bound to honour and believe" (Memoir, p.106). Furthermore, by these accounts, Hogg and his reading audience are established as part of the transmission process, the narration in the tales becoming the next step in the chain. Challenging Chambers who was, according to Hogg, "misled by the two Reverend Bishops, Guthrie and Wishart, on whose authority his narrative is principally founded" (Wars, III, 24). Hogg gives his view of the role of traditional history:

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 the tradition of only 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 when he sung "The Battle of Philliphaugh,"

which was generally every night during winter.  
I therefore believe that my account is perfectly  
correct, or very nearly so.

(Wars, pp.24-25)

Thus it is clear that in dealing with Border history Hogg prefers to follow the traditions handed down within the communities involved, believing that their localness and involvement in events, coupled with the continuity of tradition makes for reliable testimony. This is confirmed by an early disclosure in the letter descriptions of his journey to the Highlands, published in 1802-03 in the Scots Magazine. He records that: "On hearing the name Longcarty, I was desirous of learning if the inhabitants had any remembrance of that memorable battle, handed down to them by tradition, or if any traces of it remained on the ground occupied by the contending armies".<sup>14</sup> In the same passage he expresses surprise at the detailed accounts of the battle that he was given but nevertheless accepts them as reliable: "You will readily conclude, that the whole of them are purely ideal, and the creation of a fancy equally acquainted with the history and local situation of the place. I dare not say that this is not the case, but were I to venture an opinion, I would say, I rather think them real". Furthermore, as the information about the transmission of "The Battle of Philliphaugh" and the plethora of Covenanting history invoked in the Brownie show, this traditional history was very much alive in Hogg's community. It was fresh in the repertoire, available in detail and abundance and repeatedly retold. Therefore it seems likely that it still had an active function, namely that of uniting a community through shared bygone adversity, rather in the same way as the Szekler community is united and preserved by the rehearsing of its former wanderings. Hogg, then, takes this material and slightly alters the function so that its main aim is now entertainment with an element of information

attached. He also changes the performance context and the audience and reshapes the form, for example by taking topographical material, song, and short narrative items and reworking them into a rather more coherent, literarily acceptable narrative form. Thus he is able to replace, or rather adapt, the traditional processes of transmission, preserving the traditional values, while at the same time making them accessible in a new form to a wider audience.

These inherited, traditional values do much to explain the material and attitudes expressed in Hogg's work. By relating these back to the community context and to Hogg's idea of community it is often possible to understand more clearly their use in his work. In this context it will be useful to look now at Hogg's reaction to the society around him and the effect this had on his thought and outlook. Although much of his work is distanced in time he is not, in general, a straightforward social commentator in the way that many of the great eighteenth century writers were. On the other hand, the types of setting and character which he portrayed are a revealing indication of where his sentiments lay. As one might expect, given the interest he had in preserving community lore and attitudes, he frequently uses his own Border community as the setting. Sometimes it is merely a lightly sketched backdrop against which the tale deals with a particular incident in one family's life. Examples of this in the short prose are almost too frequent to require citing, but "The Turners",<sup>15</sup> provides a good example. However, there are often cases where Hogg is not presenting a narrative but merely giving a series of cameos with little or no narrative thread. In these cases it is the atmosphere of the Border setting or community itself which the real centre of interest. This is surely what we see in many of the Shepherd's Calendar pieces or in "Description of a peasant's



funeral".<sup>16</sup> In this last there is almost nothing that we could recognise as a narrative thread. Its only concern is to make us part of a country funeral, for Hogg's method is graphic and vivid, retailing every aspect of the event and not picking out key, dramatic moments as an over-riding narrative would demand. Thus he spends a considerable proportion of the time presenting a theological argument between the male guests in which they compare the respective merits of Jesus and Mahomet and discuss the question of patronage and ministers. Through this static presentation Hogg is able to convey the ideas and attitudes of these rural folk while transmitting certain items of cultural information such as the fact that the women keep apart or that the women, even in this case the widow, only accompany the coffin as far as the gate as they traditionally do not take part in the graveside stage of the activities. Here Hogg is recreating a community event, transmitting both the quality of the event and also cultural information about the traditional structure and habits of the community.

Hogg's work is more than a record of belief or superstition, it is in a real way an expression of Border community life. This can be seen in some of the more anecdotal pieces and, in the Shepherd's Calendar which later subtitles claim illustrates the "Pastoral Occupations, Country Life and Superstitions". He is trying to represent, that is "illustrate", the cultural life of the Ettrick and Yarrow shepherd community sometimes even by producing real characters and scenes from that community as well as their stories and superstitions. It will be helpful then to consider the way in which Hogg portrayed this community and the kind of opinions he expressed regarding it. Naturally his picture revolves around the farming world so that his information about the community is often conveyed as part of a

description of agricultural events or pastimes. The two are so interwoven by the nature of the community as to be almost synonymous and this clearly differentiates this type of testimony from superstition or song, which despite some idiosyncratic local variations could be found in other regions. The character or "way of life" of the community, then, will be more truly distinctive, a mixture of topographical necessity and inherited tradition. Hogg shows an interest in this from the time of his very first prose work and it may, of course, be partly due to the influence of Scott in teaching Hogg to view his native community in a more analytical light. Whatever the initial impulse, Hogg uses his early work as a means of highlighting his home community and traditions by contrast with other areas.

This is clearly seen in the first series of letters contributed to the Scots Magazine in 1802. He shows great interest in the traditions and history of the places visited. (See the episode at Longcarty, quoted above.) In addition, there is a general description of the topography, the state of agriculture and the quality and appearance of the local folk. However, before any of this, he takes the opportunity to think about and describe the Ettrick community in all its aspects. He moves from simple topography and toponymics to a description of the type of farming. The basic pattern is very like that of the entries in the Statistical Account. Hogg's account, though, develops into a very good, detailed account of the state of folk tradition in the community. It develops out of his comment that the life of the shepherds and store farmers is relatively easy, as in summer they look after and market their flocks and go fowling and fishing, while in winter they go curling and hunting and in the evenings "singing, dancing and drinking,

alternately ensue". The description (already noted above) continues: "They delight greatly in poetry and music, in which sundry are considerable proficient. Burns' are the favourite songs and the Scottish strathspeys the favourite music. Their more quiet and retired diversions are, cards, the damboard, and backgammon" ("Journey", 1802", p.815). After describing these pastimes, he discusses superstition at length, claiming that, "In no part of the south of Scotland hath the ancient superstitions so long kept their ground" ("Journey, 1802", p.816) and that, "I could tell you fifty stories of the causes of these apparitions [bogles], of their laying, and how vilely they have fooled some of our parsons" ("Journey 1802", p.817). He advances his own reasons for the strength and persistence of tradition in the area:

The fact is, the forest being surrounded by high mountains, remained long excluded from any intercourse with the more fertile districts surrounding these: even to this day, the cross roads are in a state of nature. The consequence of all this was, a later and more sudden emergence from barbarity; and so used have the people, even of this generation, been, to hear these stories told as authentic, by the very persons whom they were bound by nature to believe and obey, that you may as well think to argue them out of the belief of their own existence, as of their authenticity.

("Journey, 1802", p.187)

When we consider this with the defence made of traditional history in "Wat Pringle o' the Yair", we find firstly that Hogg insists at all times that the testimony is implicitly believed by its bearers. However, we also find a slight variance in Hogg's professed attitude to the beliefs. Whereas later, in "Wat Pringle", published in 1835, and in the altercation with Scott, described above, Hogg states that he believes in them and even identifies himself with

the transmission process, he is a great deal more detached in this early piece. His attitude is quite dismissive, or at the least, a little apologetic. This embarrassment causes him to repeat that the area "is but lately emerged from barbarity"<sup>17</sup> as if a traditional state is opposed to all concept of civilization and as if the traditions themselves were not community documents. It is clear from the way they are bound in with close family ties that part of their function must be concerned with preserving the homogeneity of the community. As Hogg points out, to doubt them is to reject the first principles of family and community bonding. The strength of these traditions, then, is an indication of the integrity of the family unit and of the wider social community in Ettrick, that is, it proves the existence of an active "traditional" community, otherwise the traditions would still perhaps have existed but would have lost the element of belief. The chronological order of Hogg's opinions here is perhaps surprising if we are to accept the usual view of Hogg's development from country poet, steeped in tradition, to accepted literary figure, conversant with literary tradition and heavily influenced by the sophisticated Edinburgh set. Douglas Gifford, for instance, believes that Hogg repeatedly deserts his own natural voice. Thus, writing of "Queen Hynde", published in 1825, Gifford says:

The most serious things in it are the author's remonstrances to his Edinburgh readers which occur at the end of each book, where he gives, without realising it, real clues to his love-hate relationship with his blue-stocking critics.

Maids 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....

This would have been an admirable stand at this point in Hogg's career, were it meant; but

within a few lines, after saying that he will follow his own impulse, whether it lead him to "the sea-maid's coral dome / or fairy's visionary home ... or raise up spirits of the hill," he capitulates once again, pleading for understanding on the grounds that his genius is untutored.

(Gifford, p.220)

Hogg's true reaction is indeed often obscured or contradicted by last minute reversals and dismissive phrases. Nevertheless, although one might expect to find a simple progression from early, naive belief to later confusion or outright retraction there is no evidence that Hogg ever rejected the value or significance of tradition. Here, in a comparatively late statement, Hogg is apparently much more forthright in its support of tradition than in the early Scots Magazine piece. One obvious reason for this may be the early influence of Scott and the fact that Hogg, appearing for the first time in print, was showing understandable caution. What it also suggests is that there was no clear cut blanket progression in Hogg's attitude and that he himself was more than a little confused on how far it was acceptable and desirable to depend on tradition. Moreover, perhaps owing to the transitional nature of the community in which he grew up, certain areas of belief were stronger or enjoyed a higher status than others. The function of superstition and the supernatural was perhaps already in a greater state of decline within the community than topographical legends or traditional history. This may help to explain the preference in Hogg's work for this kind of folk tradition over other forms. There are also the very real limitations imposed on Hogg by transferring traditional material to the literary context. Within the new context the need for belief in superstition is no longer there for the traditional function has

been removed and insistence on belief would only appear eccentric or affected. As Hogg already felt himself to be something of an outsider, he was not in a position strong enough to take that risk, especially when, unlike Tolkien say, he was dealing with a real, not a fantasy world. Traditional history offered a much safer opportunity for this synthesis of literature and folk tradition as it could incorporate literarily acceptable sources and thus meet the reader half way. Therefore by working on what the literary audience knew and already trusted, he was able to introduce traditional material without so many of the concessions and distortions he sometimes required when trying to present the supernatural in a realistic, convincing way. These "historical" tales, then, which mix traditional history with official records and real characters with fictional ones, provide a particularly good example of Hogg's adaptation of traditional material to a new literary context and show, moreover, an especially subtle interworking of modes and forms.

There are a series of pieces which deal particularly with country life which can be said to show Hogg attempting to give his audience something of the nature and spirit of the Ettrick /Yarrow community, perhaps in an attempt to replace the context that was lost in the transition from the oral or traditional context to the literary. Quite apart from this, they are also extremely good folklore records. Because of his distinctive contribution, Hogg could be counted as great a folklorist as Scott or Burns, and his work is perhaps more comprehensive not only because of a background in tradition, but because he gives such a full and varied testimony. He does not just provide us with traditional material, but with its context and provenance. The shepherd's funeral is an early example and along with similar pieces it shows the various methods by which Hogg

presents his material.

"Tales and Anecdotes of the Pastoral Life"<sup>18</sup> presents a wide range of material, including the state of the ministry and the inequality of the fishing laws which preserve the salmon for the wealthy. Hogg chooses a fictitious name for his parish and minister and his aim is to present a universal picture. Thus, giving a description of a shepherd's cottage, he says, "Though this is only an individual picture, I am told it may be viewed as a general one of almost every shepherd's dwelling in the south of Scotland; and it is only such pictures that, in the course of these tales, I mean to present to the public" ("Pastoral Life", p.143). He is intent, then, on presenting the life not of individuals, but of a community and his concern is therefore not highly dramatic or emotional incidents, but with a setting, an event or just the general ambience. In this piece, then, Hogg attempts to give some idea of the shepherd state through the medium of the character of Peter Plash. His only function is to represent a sort of standard shepherd and there is no need for him to establish a highly individual personality or moral character through action. He performs his function through his fairly dense use of broad Scots, his affinity with and treatment of his dogs and his comments on poaching. He is the representative of a different culture and existence: "He sung old songs, told us strange stories of witches and apparitions, and related many anecdotes of the pastoral life, which I think extremely curious, and wholly unknown to the literary part of the community" ("Pastoral Life", p.25). Apart from these hints at the typical - perhaps one should say ideal - shepherd, the traditional events and superstitions connected with the celebration of a wedding are transmitted accurately but in a dramatic way rather than in the clinical or stilted manner one might

expect in a non-literary description. Hogg records tradition and helps the reader to live it by putting him into the situation and using the visitor/narrator as his representative. He and the reader are the strangers: "All seemed to know exactly the parts they had to act, but every thing came on me like magic, and quite by surprise" ("Pastoral Life", p.146). The narrator stands on the outskirts of the events, a gentle parody of the amateur antiquarian, his phrases sounding slightly stiff against the good-natured energy and frankness of those he is scrutinising. Moreover, he plainly does not understand everything that is going on around him:

As soon as the marriage ceremony was over, all the company shook hands with the young couple, and wished them every kind of joy and felicity. The rusticity of their benisons amused me, and there were several of them that I have never, to this day, been able to comprehend. As, for instance - one wished them "thumpin luck and fat weans;" another, "a bien rannlebauks, and tight thack and rape o'er their heads;" a third gave them "a routh aumrie and a close nieve"; and the lasses wished them "as mony hiney moons as the family had fingers an' taes." I took notes of these at the time, and many more, and set them down precisely as they were spoken; all of them have doubtless meanings attached to them, but these are perhaps the least mystical.

("Pastoral Life" p.247)

This method of recording traditions has several advantages over the simple gathering together of a number of sayings and beliefs. One of the most important is that it gives a better idea of context and the organic link between items. Thus a wide range of material: games, customs, superstitions and so on, is held together in the proper relationship to each other, despite the disparity of form. This overcomes the bitty effect to be found in many of the regular collections of the time, for example, Robert Chambers' Popular Rhymes



of Scotland or Thomas Wilkie's MSS collection, one notoriously difficult to navigate through. Paradoxically, Hogg, by choosing to make his account a literary one and to avail himself of the conventions and formalities of the literary approach, has been able to present tradition in a direct way that maintains as much as possible of the spontaneity and coherence of the original form. It is true that Hogg is able to hide himself behind the devices of literary form but through the detachment he gains he is able to show that these traditions have a real value and interest. He is able, too, even while transmitting the material to a new audience, to suggest the original context by describing the community in which it originates. There is a danger that the outcome will be at best quaint and at the worst sentimental and, in this piece at least, Hogg avoids this by giving his country characters an edge over the town visitor, the meticulous observer out of his depth in the close community where the country folk are secure in the familiar order of things. These people are truly at home in their setting and it is the minister, his visitor, and the "grit fock" who are uncomfortable and out of place. The distinction is made explicit by the contrast between the minister, ignorant of everything except the identity of the main landowners and the value of their property and Peter Plash, the shepherd. When Peter is in the manse he may lack in conventional manners and seem to be out of place, but the energy and vitality connected with him and his dogs quickly takes over and asserts an authority for him.

The picture which Hogg presents is of a cohesive community, tightly bound by its own conventions, preferring them to any change: "it was the gude auld gate, and it would be a pity to alter it" ("Pastoral Life", p.248). To this conservatism in matters of

tradition is added an affinity with the land and with the stock connected with it. The people are above all simple - Peter's talk is "of sheep, of dogs and of the lasses" ("Pastoral Life", p.25)- but is the simplicity of harmony and content, says Hogg, not of grinding ignorance or rudeness: "And the more I consider the simplicity of the people of whom I am now writing - the scenes among which they have been bred - and their lonely and sequestered habits of life, where the workings and phenomena of nature alone appear to attract the eye or engage the attention, - the more I am convinced that the temperament of their minds would naturally dispose them to devotional feelings" ("Pastoral Life", p.143). One can now see how these attitudes are developed in his writings about the Border community and how they relate to some of the wider literary themes already touched on, such as the gap between appearance and reality. Among Hogg's most important discussions of Border life are the review of Captain Napier of Ettrick's work on store farming and the piece on the peasantry, contributed to the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture.

In the piece on Napier, formed as a letter from a shepherd, Hogg describes once again the traditional character of the community, introducing Ettrick as Scotland's "most sequestered wilderness":

... to which cultivation had approached with slow and indignant motion - where antiquated forms, customs, and adages, lingered with an obstinacy only to be accounted for in the patriarchal feelings of an intelligent and thinking people. But these rules and adages had been transmitted to them by their fathers - handed down from generation to generation, by those whom they were taught to consider as wiser and better men than themselves; and they could not yield them up without reluctance.

("Captain Napier", p.176)

Hogg emphasises the conservative nature of this community, showing at the same time the links between the farmers and the shepherds:

... every material change towards improvement was withstood as an innovation, till it could be withstood no longer - till the advanced rents compelled the farmers to adopt the measures that had apparently proved the most lucrative to others. Even after they had been suddenly adopted by the farmers, the old shepherds withstood them to the utmost of their power, and that with a virulence quite unexampled. These being a people that have great influence with their masters, contributed not a little to the retarding of these necessary improvements.

("Captain Napier", p.177)

Clearly, within the structure of a traditional community this conservatism has an essential function. It is the foundation stone of the common spirit that binds the community together. The older shepherds had reason in fearing the new methods on two counts: first, changes in the traditional farming methods of a community dependent for its structure on those methods will inevitably alter the composition and nature of that community; second, these attempts to change traditional ways are in fact a direct threat to the acknowledged standards with their suggestion of a higher authority than the arbiters of local tradition. Thus in two separate ways these apparently innocent improvements were bound to alter the familiar way of things and with it the harmony of idea and action that Hogg praises in the description of the country wedding. Hogg's stance with regard to these changes is confused, indicative of his transitional position and his role as mediator between the traditional and the literary. In this case he clearly sees a need for improvements and for men of energy and drive such as Napier. He praises many of Napier's improvements such as the better roads and drainage, even though these schemes were sometimes accompanied by

a good deal of bad planning and wasted energy ("Captain Napier", pp.176-77). Indeed, he holds Napier up as a positive example to other proprietors and attacks lack of interest and absenteeism in landlords ("Captain Napier", p.188). However, as with superstition, Hogg can not divorce himself completely from the traditional point of view and the bulk of the essay consists of illustrations of the shepherds' position and includes affirmations of the following kind: "It had been better for them all, not excluding the proprietor, that they [the Cheviots] had never been introduced into the high lying districts to this day. Every ground kept one-sixth of more stock than than it does at the present time" ("Captain Napier", p.180). The introduction of the Cheviots is ascribed solely to the wish to cash in on the high prices that Cheviot wool was making at the time. Hogg can express these opinions with impunity because the narrator is supposed to be a shepherd himself and therefore more likely to be a supporter of the traditional methods. Through this device Hogg is able to express views in support of the traditional lifestyle without laying himself open to the charge of being backward or reactionary.

Hogg adds to the confusion with the curious way in which he introduces himself into the piece. The reviewer complains at Captain Napier's reliance on Mr Hogg's stories, which, he says, "do not read very like" truth ("Captain Napier", p.183). He explicitly sets them against "the memories of some of old shepherds" so that although Hogg is the apologist for traditional culture, he is viewed as an outsider himself in many ways, because he has progressed towards other forms and a more literary approach. In this way Hogg has delicately expressed his own position which is, in a sense, unaligned, his transitional stature making him neither

one thing or another. He concedes that he has moved so far out of his inherited context as to be regarded with suspicion by the older or more fixed members of the community culture, but he is also a real link between the two approaches: that of the shepherds and that of the educated outsider such as Captain Napier or the reader. It is a role and a literary device that stands Hogg in good stead when it comes to the Confessions (1824) and it is worth noting the relative proximity of the publication dates.

Douglas Gifford makes a considerable point of Hogg's demoralisation at the hands of his contemporary critics, claiming that it led Hogg to turn his back on the areas in which he truly excelled: "The final sign of his demoralisation came when he was encouraged in 1832 to collect his work. It is an indication of the shallowness of contemporary criticism and of his own lack of self-confidence that he decided to savage The Three Perils of Man. He cut it to one third of its original length. He stripped away all the magnificent folk-lore and the colourful supernatural extravaganza, leaving merely the Border skirmish ..."<sup>19</sup> This attitude is a product of the Ettrick-Edinburgh contrast and it forgets that not only was Hogg himself in a state of transition, but that the culture which produced him was changing. Hogg's literary career and his personality were resilient enough to send him back after each knock with a new experiment in subject, style or structure. Confusion and depression undoubtedly beset him at times, but the answer could not lie in a simple retreat into folklore for that too was changing directions. If Hogg was indeed demoralised it was perhaps because he felt that he was trying to reform what he thought of as a decaying tradition for a literary audience which seemed stubbornly unprepared to accept a diet of the exotic, no matter how carefully disguised. His ceaseless experiment

with form is not just a desperate attempt to hit on the winning formula, although it would be pointless to ignore that the hack aspect of Hogg's work, due to the continual financial problems, was a contributory factor. There is more to it than that for Hogg's experimentation is a positive feature, a genuine attempt to extend form in order to accommodate pure story informally narrated in something approaching the manner of traditional narration. Above all it is an aspect of the problem of adapting tradition to literature in a way that does not merely pick up traditional folk material as subject matter, but also incorporates something of the traditional context and unity. These questions will be pursued in the next chapter which deals with form and structure.

The essay on the "Condition of the Scottish Peasantry", written in the later part of Hogg's career (1831), clearly reveals his concern at the visible changes in the nature and social structure of rural life. On the whole he speaks of a "falling off" or decline in the quality of life while at the same time realising that there have been material improvements: "'In as far,' said I, 'as it regards shepherds and farm-servants, they are not in my opinion deteriorated. They are better fed, better clothed, and better educated than the old shepherds and hinds of my first acquaintance; but they are less devout and decidedly less cheerful and happy'" ("Scottish Peasantry", p.256). This last phrase, emphasised as it is, may perhaps be a better guide of Hogg's own reaction to events than of the actual sentiments of the people in question. Whatever the case, Hogg does back up his argument by pointing to the areas of community culture where he sees these changes having most effect. He notes a great decline in singing, not just in performance but also in the repertoire and quantity, so that traditional song, he says, is now scarcely heard.

Sports, such as those which took place after the wedding described above, have only survived at all through the development of local sports meetings such as the St. Ronan's Games. Hogg states later that penny-weddings, kirns and family dances are now extinct ("Scottish Peasantry", p.262) so that we can see that the sports have undergone a forced change in context if not also of function. From being part of a community and personal celebration, they are now turned into an end in themselves and the emphasis now lies almost exclusively on personal competition.

Perhaps the real key to these changes lies in an alteration in one of the basic relationships of the old order: "But with regard to the intercourse between master and servant, there is a mighty change indeed, and to this I am disposed principally to attribute the manifest change in the buoyant spirit and gaiety of our peasantry" ("Scottish Peasantry", p.258). In the old system where servants and farmer lived and worked as one family, "every individual family formed a little community of its own, of which each member was conscious of bearing an important part" ("Scottish Peasantry", p.259). As in the wedding celebrations there was a recognised framework, a community element which Hogg obviously admired. As a result, he objects again to the introduction and enforcement of the game laws, which, as was suggested by Peter Plash, had only served to put a gap between the landowners and the rural community. These rules, claims Hogg, actually brought about poaching, of which he does not approve. He views it in a different light from the shepherds' trapping of an odd hare and sees the poachers as a set of professional rogues and interlopers who disrupt the symbiotic relationship that previously existed between landowner and shepherd. Gamekeepers for the same reason are little better

than the poachers and indeed are often more deserving of blame for they always miss the real poachers and nab the occasional shepherd who may have chanced to stray onto the prohibited land. In "The Poachers"<sup>20</sup> it is the gamekeepers who are the real villains as the poachers, father and son, are destitute and driven to it by poverty. It is clear from these examples that Hogg sees a disintegration in the traditional structure of the community so that its members are no longer sure of their position vis-à-vis it and the other constituent parts. These are the direct consequences of the loss of traditional pursuits. The forces he blames are economic, such as the boom in prices during the war which "made every farmer for the time a fine gentleman" ("Scottish Peasantry", p.259), thus breaking the circle of community dependence. The world which Hogg tries to preserve in his writing and in his efforts to promote song and sports is the older community with its recognised order. This order relates to his belief in a natural balance in the working of the supernatural and it also colours his political and social outlook. It helps to explain more clearly why he was at once the "Ettrick Shepherd", the poet of the peasant culture, and a staunch Tory.

The essential conservatism already noted in his attitude to tradition - the wish to preserve while recreating for a new context - can be seen to extend into his treatment of politics. Hogg was not a sophisticated political thinker and it is clear that he preferred the maintenance of the status quo or that order which had been sanctioned by history as for example in his contradictory support of both the Hanoverian succession and Jacobitism. He clarifies his personal loyalties when replying to the review of Jacobite Relics which appeared in the Edinburgh Review: "I and all my kindred have



always loved and honoured the protestant succession; and if you will look into my Brownie of Bodsbeck, you will perhaps see enough to satisfy you, that I am neither a papist, nor an approver of persecutions either civil or religious".<sup>21</sup> Thus, despite the numerous examples in his work which are sympathetic to Jacobitism, his response to it is qualified all the time by his own basic respect for established order. Hogg's preference for a middle stance and something of his confused thinking on the subject of Jacobitism can perhaps be gathered from the views expressed by one of his characters, John Lochy:

Drummond and I being of an age, soon found ourselves great friends; but he was a great party man, and an adherent of the banished Stuarts. I knew little about these matters, but was rather inclined to take the other side, owing to the sentiments I had imbibed with the Innes's; but there was so much enthusiasm and chivalry about this young officer in the cause of wronged royalty, and the lineal descendant of our ancient kings, that my heart joined with him, though my tongue said no.

(Altrive Tales, p.19)

The elements at war are upbringing and a love of chivalry and adventure, a dilemma similar to that facing Scott's Edward Waverley, and like Waverley, Lochy has to learn to look beyond the chivalric gloss and see where his true loyalties lie. What emerges strongly in this tale is that close personal links always outweigh more abstract concerns. Thus, just as in matters of tradition, belief is sustained by the relationship of the informant and the recipient either through shared community experience or actual consanguinity, so in other matters it is the personal bond that sways emotion. This extends to a straightforward belief in humanity over faction, so that we often admire Hogg's characters most at the

moment when they step outside the boundaries of their own religious or political allegiances and perform a gratuitous kindness. There are almost endless examples of this. Not only is it the final theme of The Brownie of Bodsbeck, with Katherine earning Walter's approval by taking "the side o' human nature; the suffering and the humble side, an' the side o' feeling" (Brownie, p.163) but Hogg is realistic enough to suggest that the motives for such action are not always as pure as Katherine's. Bauldy Sydeserf helps the Earl of Huntly simply because he has fallen in love with his daughter. Yet, just as his animosity, first towards Haggard and secondly towards Enzie, feeds on itself and becomes more demented, so his initial good action, despite its impure motive, grows in stature and leads on to a generous and real respect for the elder Huntly. Moreover, it augments and redoubles itself by leading him to make an unpopular stand to save Huntly. Thus a simple, intuitive human response leads to moral development.

This trust in the kinship of humanity often seems to regenerate itself and bring manifold blessings down on the head of the actor and in this respect it serves a function not unlike the performance of a set task or test in classic Märchen. For example in "Sgialachd Nan Cat (The Tale of the Cats)", a Gaelic version of the Kind and Unkind Girls Tale (AT 480), narrated by Anna Johnston in 1952, the kind girl intuitively responds to the test set her. Through her step-mother's jealousy she is sent to a hostile island:

The island was very beautiful, and the girl took great delight in everything that was there; and there was a little house there where she could live. At nightfall, when she was sitting at the doorway of the house, a little kitten came and jumped on her lap and began to miaow.

"You're very hungry poor creature," said the girl, "and though I only have provisions for one night, you shall have half" 22

As a result the kitten, a supernatural helper, saves the girl from being eaten alive and looks after and feeds her for a year so that she returns home "bigger and more beautiful than before". The conclusion is not quite so strong as Vladimir Propp's proposed final category for the denouement of Russian tales, namely that there should be a wedding and/or an accession to the throne<sup>23</sup> but it is recognisable as a positive reward. Kindness brings a reward and we can see a similar development in some of Hogg's work.

In "Wat Pringle o' the Yair", after the account of the battle of Philliphaugh, Hogg's narrative takes a completely new tack and we hear how Wat, a staunch supporter of the Covenanting movement and one of the key instruments in the victory, is driven to shelter a Royalist girl and her infant son, the only survivors of the battle: "Old Wat Pringle, who now repented grievously the hand he took in this ruthless business, kept his eye on the girl ..." (Wars, III, 44). He offers money which is refused so he is finally driven by compassion to offer practical help in the shape of a roof and a home: "Come, come! it's nonsense to sit hingin your head an' greetin there; my heart winna let me leave ye, an' if I did my conscience wad never win ower it a' my days" (Wars, III, 48). The story has a ragged time structure and many odd events take place with Julia Hay, the mother, dying through a kind of auto-suggestion at the very same moment as her husband is executed many miles away in Edinburgh. The final resolution of the tale is that the child is restored to his parents' lands and marries the grand-daughter of Wat Pringle. In this way the threads of the narrative are intricately woven and there is a complex interdependence of events but in the end it is the kindness of Wat and his daughter Jenny and the difficulties they have to endure by going against their Covenanting friends that is

able to restore harmony and bring mutual reward for both families. It is extremely interesting that Hogg should choose to represent this harmony by the traditional culmination in a wedding and succession to a great estate, another good example of the incorporation of traditional motifs into the literary form. The Pringles' kindness is, just as much as the kind girl's, a response to an unspoken test. In Hogg's tale there is no magic helper, this role being taken over by time and fortune or coincidence, but the basic pattern of test, virtuous response and reward is clearly there. Even without exactly reproducing a formal Märchen, Hogg is influenced by traditional technique theme and function. The theme both in AT 480 and in Hogg's tale is the necessity for compassion, extended by Hogg in the literary work so that it stands against narrow partisanship.

It is a theme that Hogg makes frequent use of in his work. The simplest form is shown in "Ewan McGabhar"<sup>24</sup> and "The country laird" or "The Wool-Gatherer". Both of these involve the adopting of threatened children and the subsequent befriending of their protectresses culminating in the traditional "happy ending" with weddings and restored estates. The plots can be quite complicated with the theme of kindness and reward being illustrated on several levels. The theme can also be extended to take on even more moral weight as in "Mary Montgomery" (Wars, III, 98-258), which tells of another orphaned child and the struggle for the possession of her, with each violent, evil or covetous action being offset by an impulse born of affection and honour. Another example of this theme is found in Charlie Scott's tale (Three Perils of Man, pp.233-52) where Charlie and Will Laidlaw by saving the child of their raid victim, win protection in a later battle. Hogg does not simply

retell a traditional story and transplant it; his aim is ultimately a literary and artistic one and so he develops and extends the theme, varying it and moving further and further away from the simple traditional form. For instance, he takes this theme of the mysterious orphan or deserted child with the portentous career from the other end, as in "Adventures of Captain John Lochy" (Altrive Tales, pp.1-142) and "The Adventures of Colonel Peter Aston" (Wars, II, 1-115), both of which, convert the lone orphan into an illegitimate young man, cast alone on the world. For John Lochy there is no befriending saviour, but he does have two mysterious helpers, one the devoted Finlayson and the other a beautiful lady who appears from time to time. The mystery of Lochy's birth is never revealed to him and these two characters take on the function usually attached to magical helpers in a Märchen. Finlayson's adeptness at disguise actually causes him to be taken for a devil (Altrive Tales, p.46), a fact which makes him appear even more like a brownie than ever. Peter Aston's tale is closer to the original model in that there is a moral test of character where magnanimous human kindness is set against vengeance and animosity and Peter's dubious parentage by now has very little effect on the development of the tale. Here, however, instead of the happy ending, wrath and pride win and human virtue, represented by Marsala, who seeks to effect a reconciliation between her father and Peter whom she loves, is tragically defeated. In these ways, then, Hogg starts with a basic theme and adapts traditional motifs and forms so that they suit a literary context. From there, using literary devices to enlarge and develop his theme, he is able to achieve a new, distinctive artistic creation.

The concern with humanity and the duty of one human to another is reflected, if not actually developed, by two important themes that

were discussed earlier in another context. They are the themes of social order and the gap between appearance and reality and they are both heavily influenced by a basic concern with community. The kind of spiritual order which Hogg depicts in a universe held in check by the workings of the supernatural is matched by a more tangible social order that is linked with the harmony Hogg points to in the fully developed traditional community which he likes to celebrate. This can be seen in the way he recognises a hierarchy in the agricultural community. A passage published in 1823 reflects not only this hierarchy, but also a malaise that Hogg or his informants felt was passing through the community. According to an old shepherd, this scourge which appears to be a curse of God, affected "our flocks and our hirds" in 1816 and 1817: "Then, in aughteen and nineteen, it fell on the weavers, they're the neist class, ye ken; then our merchants, they're the neist again; and last o' a' it has fallen on the farmers and the shepherds, they're the first and maist sterling class o' a country".<sup>25</sup>

This concern with a natural inherited order reflecting harmony in the community is used frequently in the prose work and in the stories concerning succession and lost or cheated heirs and heiresses.<sup>26</sup> It is a popular form with Hogg and one he frequently returns to; indeed, it overlaps in many cases with the theme outlined above where after a test the heir is reunited to his inheritance. The succession theme is often made to co-operate with the supernatural so that it is frequently a spirit or ghost that reveals some treachery or the lost inheritance, again suggesting a pattern similar to that suggested by Propp for Märchen, where the hero, in his quest to remedy an initial lack or villany, is given aid or information by a supernatural helper or donor.<sup>27</sup> In "The Unearthly Witness", it is

the ghost of the villain which appears and insists on truthful testimony being given to restore order and balance in the community. However this cannot be fully accomplished as the last lineal heir has disappeared in mysterious circumstances. The role of the hero is thus removed or transferred so that it is represented by order or justice. David McKie perhaps missed this point when he says that "The Unearthly Witness" does not reflect a "just universe". According to David McKie's analysis, "In "The Unearthly Witness" William Tibbers' daughters win their just case even though the apparition of their dead father is required to testify in their favour".<sup>28</sup> However, as suggested above, the Tibbers' family claim was not just and it may be this rupture in the natural order of things that causes the apparently gratuitous deaths of the innocent bystanders, an episode much lamented by David McKie. To argue, as he does, that this passage is "unfair" is the same as arguing that the God of Paradise Lost is unfair, for in both cases the point is that there is a higher law than the fallible one which human beings apply, a law which may appear harsh in the short term but which in the end is relentless and thorough. The real operation of justice does not come at the trial, but is slowly worked out afterwards.

The ending of the tale makes this clear for, despite the fact that Tibbers' daughters retain the estate, the family continue to pay a penalty for the bloodshed by which it was won: "His daughters gained the property, but I cannot say they have enjoyed it. The old adage seems to be realized in their case, that 'a narrow gathering gets ay a wide scattering,' for their great wealth appears to be melting away like snow from the dike" ("Unearthly Witness", p.178). Thus the disruption of the hereditary order upsets the structure of the community and leaves a permanent gap where only

dissolution can enter. It is a state which might be said to reflect the decay of the traditional community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and a symbol of the malaise sensed by Hogg's old shepherd. It is worth noting also the use of the proverbial axiom at the end, emphasising the moral, as it introduces yet another level of folk influence. The story thus draws from the body of the folk culture in a complex multi-level way, first, and most importantly on a supernatural level and secondly, through the medium of proverbial wisdom, to confirm the need for the maintenance of the traditional order in the country. Reference to the beginning of the tale, shows that this complements a contrast established in the first two paragraphs. Here, Hogg's narrator says that Tibbers, the corrupt factor, "had great influence with all the gentlemen of the county, and could have carried any public measure almost that he pleased among them, so purely disinterested did all his motives and arguments appear" ("Unearthly Witness", p.171). "But", he adds, "the sentiments of the common people relating to him differed widely from those of their superiors. They detested him; accounting him a hollow-hearted deceitful person; an extortioner, and one who stuck at no means, provided he could attain his own selfish purposes". Hogg is declaring a division between the "superior" classes and the "common people", as he did in the description of the country wedding, with the common people coming out best. Moreover, just as at the end the Tibbers family can be equated with a new anti-traditional age, so right at the beginning Tibbers is regarded as an enemy of the actual working community, his methods being those of self-aggrandisement rather than of the mutually supportive community way of life.

This opposition is confirmed throughout the story and Hogg, while hiding behind the persona of the narrator, is able to use tradition to



provide the matter for his tale and through it to colour the readers' perception of the subject. One could suggest that he equates the traditional way of life with the "common people" and that he recognises an economic split within rural society but he does not see this split between the gentlemen and the peasants as a simple "black and white", "evil and good" distinction. Hogg does not condemn the gentlemen for their shortsightedness, nor does he entirely equate Tibbers with this class. Tibbers is clearly anxious to impress them but, rather like the gamekeepers, he is a new link in the social chain and he stands in between, creating a barrier between the landowners and the tenant classes. It would be wise, all the same, to remember that the narrator of the tale purports to be a minister, a man supposed to deal with both classes, and that this frees Hogg from the burden of making any explicit political distinctions that might be regarded as in any way revolutionary. The device is at once a defence and a means of opting out. Nonetheless, the tale by itself suggests that an evil enters the community and is embraced by the upper classes who force it on the peasantry in a way that echoes the breakdown that Hogg detected in the community way of life. The medium through which this vanishing harmony is expressed is in the shared response of the shepherds to events and in the sense of continuation and order that is derived from such stable elements as hereditary succession.

Community culture, expressed through tradition and folk motifs, is seen as a positive and morally reliable way of regulating life and its break-up is much regretted by Hogg. It is this that leads him to support the country life as purer or more moral and although it would perhaps be tempting to try and cast him in a radical light, the facts do not really fit. He does not seek to attack the upper

classes and he is generally in favour of the landowners and hereditary succession. There are of course exceptions, as in "The Turners", where the direct line has become decadent and this again may be taken to reflect the spontaneous decay in the old ways of life. (The problem is solved here because a virtuous heir in the cadet branch of the family takes over.) The only constant centre of virtue is to be found in the poor country folk. Moreover Hogg throws up his hands in horror at Scott's adulation of titled men: "The only foible I ever could discover in the character of Sir Walter was a too strong leaning to the old aristocracy of the country. His devotion for titled rank was prodigious and in such an illustrious character altogether out of place. It amounted almost to adoration..." (Memoir, p.95). On the other hand, surely when one examines his apparent criticism of Scott, it is not the fact that Scott admires the aristocracy that is criticised but rather the degree to which Scott carried it and the fact that, in Hogg's eyes, Scott as a man of letters was more illustrious than an aristocrat and therefore it was unbecoming in him to compromise his own position with his adulation of others. However, Hogg was also prone to this foible (perhaps simply to keep on the right side of prospective patrons). He was indeed the Tory he proudly claimed to be and not a radical despite himself. This is only natural given the essential conservatism which colours his attitude both to the rural community and to tradition. His desire for ordered community life, developed by his experience of the traditional rural communities of Ettrick and Yarrow, is extended in his work so that he advocates a status quo where moderation and consideration prevail. A country housewife in one episode of the Noctes Ambrosianae, is made to say of Blackwood's that there is, "Naething ill in't, but a' gude -

supporting the kintra, and the King, and the kirk".<sup>29</sup> This attitude, though not directly Hogg's being most likely the work of John Wilson,<sup>30</sup> is clearly one that emerges in Hogg's work. It may have been finally crystallised by his association with Blackwood's and the Toryism of the Maga set, but its roots plainly lie in the attitudes generated in him by his own traditional upbringing.

Hogg's interest in "community" is also highly pertinent to the contrast between appearance and reality that is so important in his work. Its relationship with community is slightly different from that with superstition. When dealing with the supernatural, the reader is forced to realise man's complete dependence on his senses and his total isolation should these fail him. There the gap between appearance and reality is one of perception or comprehension. This is carried farther when it is set in a social or political context. On the one hand, it can reveal conscious, deceitful gaps between outward actions and inner intentions in the realm of politics or war and on the other, it shows the gap between ideal and actual by satirising the romantic view of history and war. The first approach can be seen in the history of the "Edinburgh Baillie" in the episode where Bauldy Sydeserf, now assistant to the Duke of Argyle and in the spearhead of the Covenanting movement, performs an action that appears magnanimous but which is in fact merely for show:

Finding that Lord Gordon, the Marquess's eldest son, had, either through choice or compulsion, joined his uncle Argyle, I got John Gordon, and before his face, Argyle's, and several others, consigned to the young lord his father's treasure that I had captured, for which I got great praise. I knew well enough Argyle would not suffer any part of it to revert to the Huntlys again. The brave young lord looked much dissatisfied; I was rather sorry for him, for our troops had wasted his father's lands very much.

(Wars, I, 242)

The machinations of party politics are thus revealed as empty and self-seeking. Similarly, at another time the baillie endures great embarrassment when he is swayed by Argyle into trying to have certain apparently innocent men excommunicated. The point is made that the workings of the church and its assembly have been perverted, being controlled by the military leaders through a network of influence and dependence (Wars, I, 204-12). As Hogg or his fictional editor says, "some of the Baillie's narratives, if copied, would be regarded as satires on the proceedings of the present age" (Wars, I, 145). Clearly, then, while availing himself of the distancing techniques of a historical setting and a detached narrator, he is able to give oblique commentary on contemporary affairs but his main target is politics in general, the universal rather than the particular. Though his comment here suggests particular contemporary dealings he is not specific and the whole tenor of the work indicates a wider aim for it emphasises the individual and the personal, compassionate response. It is the voice of the Brownie's Walter Laidlaw advocating "the side of human nature", When the Baillie is asked to condemn the eight men blindly, the unjustness of the act is emphasised by the fact that he is swayed into it because Argyle plays on his personal malevolence for Enzie in a way which aptly parallels Gil-Martin's plausible seduction of Robert Wringhim. Argyle obscures the human element of the excommunication question by representing the act as politically expedient and further blurs distinctions by effecting a politically expedient act, the securing of Sydeserf's presence on the campaign, by playing on personal, in this case bad, emotions. Values are completely inverted and it is a low point for Sydeserf who only begins to redeem himself when he starts to rely again on his own more human impulses.

One can see the gap between appearance and reality being treated in a comparable way in John Lochy's view of the world. As suggested above, he is a man on whom personal impressions work strongly. The point is made clear by his reaction to Marlborough (Altrive Tales, p.19). This stress on appearance makes it easy to exploit the gap between expectation and reality as in the episode where Lochy gives a lengthy description of King Charles of Sweden, the "meteor king" for whom he has engaged to act as a mercenary:

At the first look I really took him for an idiot; his head was of such a strange shape; it was by far too wide above; and his thin sandy hair stood all out in bristles; and that the man was a sort of half idiot I had no doubt then, nor have I any to this day. He had two buck teeth; that is, the two next to the foremost two protruded greatly from the semicircle; and of this peculiarity he either was ashamed, or had been so at some previous period, for he always covered them with his upper lip, so that when he laughed he was like one crying; and besides, it gave his mouth a twist, which was any thing but seemly. His eyes were hazel, with a shade of blue, and had considerable brilliance; but then the beams seemed to be thrown inward; there was no ray of general benevolence coruscant from them; they were the windows of a dark, indignant soul, through which one saw nothing but obstinacy, pride, and revenge. His form would have been good, had he dressed like any other gentleman, but he was a boor and a sloven; and I have even seen with my own eyes the vermin creeping on his blue surtout, which had always the appearance of a second-hand one, worn by an English horse-dealer. Such was the man who was at once the admiration and terror of Europe!

(Altrive Tales, pp.40-41)

Charles, the man who should be superhuman, the warrior monarch, leader of a highly trained efficient army is shown to be in effect sub-human, driven by base emotions and completely lacking in any of the attributes that make similar figures such as Marlowe's Tamburlaine, compelling. The "ideals" behind his conquest of Europe become no more than obstinacy, pride and revenge. This devalues the war

in the reader's eyes but Lochy still retains a chivalric idealism and a professional respect for the military ideals embodied in the well-trained army. His moral awakening is thus far from complete. Later on he is forced to realise the meaningless, brutalising nature of war when, lying wounded after a battle, he is driven out of humanity to help a wounded enemy. This prompts in him the following trite but significant reflection: "What a vain fuming creature is man! A few hours before this we two meeting would have cut each other's throats, and exulted in the deed; now equal misfortunes joined us in mutual sympathy" (Altrive Tales, p.59). By exploiting the gap between the adventurous ideals of war and the actuality of brutal and needless destruction, Hogg is able to make a satirical criticism of war through the medium of the ingenuous John Lochy.

In Lochy's case the question of appearance is given extra edge because of the lack of facts about his birth (he can never know what he actually is only what he seems to be) and because of the wealth of disguises used by Finlayson who uses his assumed appearances to manipulate the people they meet and further his own career. He is a strange goblin/brownie figure obsessed with gold and the meanness of human existence, thus offsetting Lochy's naivety. He says of women that they are all to be bought at the first meeting for money or jewels. Lochy eventually reconciles this to himself by reassuring himself that at least Scottish women had not behaved in this way (Altrive Tales, p.47). In the end the reader must realise that neither character has a truly accurate view of the world and that each is blinkered in some way as their actions show. The true positive that is left is the love and devotion shown by the lovers, the selfless Araby and the Russian prince. The other characters devalue

life by trying to buy and sell it and place a monetary value on existence and even Lochy errs because of his preoccupation with appearance at the expense of true worth. Hogg, then, wants the reader to get away from both the negative devaluing attitude to life and the kind of idealism that is open to distortion and perversion. It is for this reason that he holds up the peasant life elsewhere as a positive because its simplicity and stable order present fewer opportunities for the mistaken values that creep in where the concern is with the outward or ideal appearance of a thing or action.

The theme of the gap between the martial ideal and the reality of war is strongly felt in The Three Perils of Man where, as in Lochy's tale, it is expressed through shock contrasts. Gifford notes the "pattern of romance offset by realism" (Gifford, p.103) reflected in Ringan Redhough's scathing comments on Douglas and his "bonny bed-fellow" (Three Perils, pp.5-6), in the death of Sandy Yellowlees (Three Perils, p.57), in the description of the writhing mound of mangled bodies (Three Perils, p.393) and in the carnage and general brutalising of the human spirit that mark the campaign. When Michael Scott turns Charlie and friends into cattle and gives Ringan the idea of how to break the siege, he is only showing the men in an ironic way what it is they and their companions become in war. However, just as in Lochy's tale, Hogg does not dismiss everything to do with war and fighting as bad. He shows that the motives of the apparently great monarchs, be they the Scottish Stuarts or Charles of Sweden, are very bad indeed, but at the same time his heroes are also warriors. It is Charlie Scott who emerges as the real hero of the work and this may surprise as he appears at first to be a large, slow, dull-witted man whose only talent is his physical

strength. He completely subscribes to the code of battle but this code as exemplified by Charlie embraces a number of positives such as his unswerving loyalty, his deep love for family and friends and above all the generous human kindness that is noted above. The episodes he describes in his tale may appear to be no tale at all but they are crucial to the work and to Charlie's development. They show him facing a test when, new to battle, he has to choose between letting war brutalise him or maintaining his humanity and his caring spirit. He turns from booty and responds to the call of the human spirit and thus earns his position of honour in the work. This incidentally also shows that the themes of the Siege passages and those of the Aikwood episode are meaningfully linked. Taken over all, then, the Three Perils attacks the thoughtless dehumanisation of war and exposes the gap between ideal, chivalric romanticism and the actualities of warfare. But qualifying it all is a benign realistic acceptance of things as they are similar to that which colours Hogg's defence of the character of Ringan Redhough. As he tells Scott it would be ridiculous to pretend that the less attractive side of the human character does not exist but in the end he offers the hope that, despite human failings and the senseless wasteful way that the innocent bystander is made to suffer, there are those who hold fast to the human principle. He does not offer a change, merely a realistic understanding and perhaps acceptance. He forces the reader to see more clearly and does not say "this is how it should be" but rather "this is how it is", placing all his faith in the end on individuals and their humanity and on the strength and security they derive from the framework of a stable community structure.

Community, then, is a major theme in Hogg's work and it is the key to many themes and ideas that develop in his work. One



function of traditional folklore in a living oral community is the consolidation and preservation of that community. This can be seen at any level: in the historical legends of the Szeklers or Scottish Borderers, in the rites or passwords of clubs or gangs and in the chauvinism of ethnic jokes. Hogg faced the problem of trying to reinterpret this body of traditional material and something of its function for another audience at a time, moreover, when the familiar community structure was breaking down. For these two reasons the function of the traditions was bound to change when used in the literary work, in keeping with the shift in context. Hogg's answer was to provide a literary function but one which related wherever possible to the old context in an attempt to bridge the gap between the two cultures. It is as part of this process that the Border community is used not just as a positive symbol but also as the subject matter itself of Hogg's work. More important even than this, though, is the way in which this use of community, its characters and precepts, lends the all important functional context to the items used. "Tam o' Shanter" tells us about witches but the shepherd boy in "The Wool-Gatherer" and Charlie Dinmont, the Border Chronicler, tell us why belief in bogles and deils is maintained and why it is necessary.

Hogg believed in the value and importance of a stable community framework and he tried to embody this in his pictures of rural life. At the same time he was painfully aware that the old framework was changing and he was not always confident of the success of the new developments. His interest in stories of lost heirs and new successors expresses some of these anxieties. The tales are most happily resolved when, as in "The Turners" or perhaps "Welldean Hall" where a number of potential heirs exist, the succession moves to a

new, young and capable generation who are not in the direct, uninterrupted line but who have strong links with it. This compromise offers the bridge between the old and the new, the traditional and reformed that Hogg sought. In a wider perspective too the familiar values of the traditional community are important for they help the individual to regulate his life and save him from falling into the snares and over-turned values that party faction, politics and so forth can lead him into. For Hogg the individual human response is more powerful than the weight of armies.

## CHAPTER SIX : Form and Structure

Before looking at the forms employed by Hogg, it is wise to examine the "market" Hogg was working for and his attitude to the finished work as it is natural that the forms he chose would be governed by what was acceptable or fashionable with the reading public and with the publishers, the real arbiters of matters such as style, length and content. As the Blackwood correspondence shows, Hogg's literary career was not always entirely harmonious and he was frequently involved in altercations with Blackwood and Scott about his work. On the other hand he was quite happy to have his work edited and corrected by others. He was even content to have accepted works altered and corrected many years after their first appearance to suit the needs and preferences of a new edition and publisher. This was the case when in 1833 he was in correspondence with Blackie and Sons who were to publish a collection of his works. In a letter dated 11 November 1833, Hogg states that he is sending the Brownie of Bodsbeck for inclusion in the collection: He says that it has been corrected but that they may change it as they wish as, "I never will confine publishers who have such a stake on a work to any expression of mine who am notorious as a careless writer".<sup>1</sup> In most cases this meant simply that Hogg gave the publishers in question a free hand to regularise his spelling and punctuation to conform to the preferred house style, for he repeatedly stresses his carelessness as a writer. Thus he tells Archibald Fullerton, for whom he was engaged on the Edition of Burns, "Make your corrector of the press alter freely where any mistake appears as I am a careless writer and never read a page after it is penned".<sup>2</sup>

However, it is clear that the changes were sometimes of a more substantial nature. Douglas Mack in his work on the Brownie of

Bodsbeck<sup>3</sup>, shows that several important changes and omissions were carried out, apparently by an unknown editor. That Hogg seemed willing to accept even alterations of this more considerable nature is confirmed by a note to Lockhart. Again Hogg has sent proofs and here he says, "...though you have made me leave out the only parts I set a value upon yet in the counsel of a true friend there is safety".<sup>4</sup> Clearly, then, Hogg was in some cases prepared to accept critical judgements against his own preferences. This need not necessarily mean that he had no confidence in his own taste but perhaps rather that he was aware of certain areas where his own frankness and broad humour were out of step with the prevailing literary attitude. A letter to Blackwood concerning "The Marvellous Doctor" (Blackwood's, 22(1827), 349-61), confirms that Hogg accepted that his "carelessness" extended to more than punctuation and that in order for the work to be published these solecisms must be removed:

I should be very sorry to have The Marvellous Doctor rejected as I am sure it will afford great amusement to many of your readers and The Professor [Wilson] not least who knows the groundwork of the story. But as I never pretend to depend on my own taste in matters of modern delicacy if you have any suspicions on that head send the M.S. to Robert merely mentioning the division or divisions of the narrative about which you are scrupulous and you may depend on him that his slight alterations will completely obliterate any appearance of indelicacy Mr Lockhart has given me the same hint over and over again and in some instance I have found it fully verified.<sup>5</sup>

The tone of this letter does not appear to be querulous but seems rather to indicate a reasonably good-natured resignation and acceptance. An early letter to Scott makes a useful distinction about Hogg's attitude to corrections. It begins quite adamantly:

I received yours brimfull of Critiscisms, articles which I mortally abhor and have been taking them under consideration I must apprise you how much I hate alterations in any of my poetical pieces and that before I had the chain of my idea and story broken by them I

would rather consent to the exclusion of the piece altogether. You are by this time sensible that it never will be from correctness and equality that I am to depend on for my poetic character, but only from scattered expressive tints and from some little interest which the heart feels in them and it is only from a conviction that if one man in Britain have a proper discernment in that species of poetry it is you that I am induced to listen at all to them.<sup>6</sup>

Later in the same letter he does accept some of Scott's suggestions and wisely agrees to omit examples of his verse from his first autobiography, meant as an introduction to his work: "I think now that you were right in blotting out my early poetry from the preface which however I only meant to appear as an instance of the progress of genious. You are at liberty to make what alterations in the prose you please. Give Ballantyne orders to stick by the M.S. I positively will not have them printed without apostrophe's as yours and Leydens are" (NLS MS 3875, f.172). Contemporary letters show that Hogg welcomed ideas for material and plans for poems (for the Mountain Bard) but the above letter suggests that once he had completed a poem he regarded it as a complete and finished creation. Despite this claim he did accept changes in his poetry but even so he seems to have regarded prose as a more fluid form and apparently held that even the final product could be changed or altered.

Nevertheless, it must always be remembered that, particularly in later years when Hogg was dependent on literary work for the support of his family, practical considerations such as ensuring regular publication must have often seemed more important than the finer points of style. In a letter to Lockhart in 1831 he says, "I have taken the resolution of coming up to you forthwith and setting my tales agoing at least under your auspices. I find that I cannot subsist my family any longer without doing something and the Baillie will do nothing".<sup>7</sup> This may account to a great extent for his

willingness to accept the judgement of Lockhart and others. What is interesting is that these concerns, apart from prompting an element of hack work, do not seem to have made him change his style or his mode of composition. Had he done so he would not continually have had to submit his work to the editor's or censor's scissors. Perhaps his pragmatic attitude can best be summed up by his explicit instructions to S.C. Hall who, with his wife, published a number of the Annuals for which Hogg composed regularly:

...I have some charges to give you which I lay strictly on all editors. "Be sure to preserve such Mss, as do not suit your miscellany and return them" for I write all off hand and have no duplicates. And for the same reason "Take every liberty of pruning adding ~~or~~ diminishing" to suit the fastidious taste of the day for I am like Gallio I care for none of those things. You are sure to have something **rather** original from me but all of them will be no the worse of going over and I beg that you will give Mrs H. the same hint.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly Hogg is happy when a piece is accepted first time off as it stands, and his pieces were often composed for specific publications, but he was quite content to have his work altered or edited to make it suitable for inclusion. If all else should fail and the piece be rejected, his main concern was to have the manuscript returned so that it could be resubmitted elsewhere. Robin MacLachlan and Gill Hughes<sup>9</sup> both demonstrate particular instances of Hogg resubmitting rejected works. What is interesting in this is Hogg's flexible attitude to his prose work. He does not seem to have thought of his pieces as perfectly wrought and perfectly balanced finished forms and seems to have been untroubled by the thought of hands other than his rearranging his work. It is perhaps possible to argue that this viewpoint is a modification of the practice of traditional oral performers of ballad and folktale. For them every performance is different and the only constants are certain key elements of the narrative. This point is made

by Linda Dégh who shows, however, that different storytellers vary with respect to their attitude to their material. Some have what we might call a conservative attitude to tradition, deeming the tradition to be sacrosanct and therefore needful of verbatim reproduction: "Elli Zenker's Mrs. Pallanik felt herself responsible for the text which she had inherited from her parents; she did not consciously change one single word, because she would have considered any variation a falsification. Therefore she simply omitted everything she could not remember" (Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.166). This is an approach to tradition that Hogg voices with certain modifications as will be seen later in the present chapter. As this description suggests and as Linda Dégh herself goes on to emphasise, this kind of informant is not always the best performer of the material. These tend to be members of the second category of informants described by Linda Dégh and the attitude of these performers to their material, even when they insist on the veracity and uniformity of their performances, is much more fluid and creative. Speaking of this type of performer she says:

Our experiences and the proof recorded further on show, however, that faithfulness to the text here means a retaining of the märchen theme rather than a verbatim repetition of what was heard and what was thought to be an original version. This is the case with the illiterate narrator, Tobias Kern. Bunker recorded his tale of The Rich Miller's Daughter (AT 955) twice within ten years and stated that Kern was incredibly faithful to his text. However, the second version showed considerable variation. The distinguished master storyteller, Mihály Lacza, told Ortutay at their first meeting, in the late 'thirties: "You cannot change anything in a märchen; we have to tell it exactly the way we have learned it. How could you change it?" he asked. "It would no longer have its proper meaning." According to his statement, "he related the märchen just as, according to his best knowledge and memory, he once had heard them." This example shows the growth potential of an excellent storyteller. His ninety tales retold twenty years later do not correspond in the slightest to the forms

recited before. Elli Zenker, too, notes that her narrators, in striving for faithful rendering, embroider certain parts very carefully when they become aware that their listeners are paying them rapt attention.

(Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.167)

In such a performance, the core of the piece remains stable and it is the key elements or functions which are important. Hogg's attitude, while flexible, is not quite that of the traditional storyteller. He respects tradition, but partly because of the transitional state of Scottish tradition and culture in the period in which he learned his repertoire of tradition and partly because of his own transitional status, Hogg has a selective attitude. He insists on the authority of some pieces and seeks to convey them as accurately reported true accounts, but is clearly sceptical about the foundation or probability of other traditions. Furthermore, because of this transitional uncertainty there may not even be any clearly recognisable rationale behind his choice of acceptable and non-acceptable traditions although, as the previous chapter shows, he seems to have a high regard for what might be termed eye-witness accounts, particularly when these accounts have been passed down within one family or stable community who participated in or were permanently resident on or near the scene of the event. Thus he has at times a conservative attitude but it is a modified one due to his occasional ambivalence to certain types of material. On the other hand, as a creative writer he definitely puts his own stamp on the material and, as will be shown, adapted and amalgamated forms and structures changing the emphasis and direction of certain accounts. Like the creative informants, while preserving he is also reshaping. Moreover, he is conscious that he is adapting traditional material to a new audience and context where different critical standards are invoked and so two different kinds of modification at least are at



work. Hogg himself had already altered material considerably from its traditional form before sanctioning any additional editorial emendations. Because of this it is evident that Hogg cannot really be accounted a member of Linda Dégh's second category of creative performers as his attitude is much more flexible even than theirs. As noted above he seems to have been happy to pass even important changes which could, on occasion, alter the whole tone of a piece. One such example, despite his professed aversion to altering his poems, is "The Witch of Fife", the ending of which he reversed at Scott's insistence, completely removing the savegery of the ending in a way that belongs to the politer, literary tradition rather than the folk world. Robin MacLachlan suggests, however, that this change brought the poem in line with traditional versions of the same tale type from different areas of Britain (MacLachlan, p.71).

The true answer to Hogg's position probably lies somewhere in the mid ground. His primary concern always seems to have been with narrative or story and to that extent style and expression and sometimes even form itself are secondary. It is possible that being familiar with oral performances of tales and traditions he was used to the phenomena of a tale varying from performance to performance and yet still being the same tale, authentically and conscientiously told. This may help to explain what appears to be a rather cavalier or even insecure attitude to text, an attitude far removed from that of a purely literary craftsman for whom the way in which things are said can be of as great or even at times greater significance than what is actually said. Through lack of texts it is impossible to know if Hogg's informants, the people from whom he learned his traditions, were conservative or creative, though it is possible that he encountered both. Because of Hogg's status and the fact that at that date the literate, linear type of mind and thought had begun to

replace the oral, spatial approach,<sup>10</sup> it is possible that these distinctions in attitude were no longer so evident. Hogg may never have learned to distinguish between controlled recreation and ungoverned alteration and thus saw no difference in his own work between changes in the key functions and changes in the linking pieces, the background or simply in the grammar and orthography. This could perhaps add new significance both to his acceptance of changes imposed by others and to his apparent disregard of where these changes were imposed.

It should not be thought that Hogg was completely careless about the form and the fate of his work. The letter to Scott quoted above (NLS MS 3875 f.172) gives quite a fair assessment of Hogg's work so it is clear that he realised what he was about. Besides, as suggested in the last chapter, particularly where he was dealing with a tradition in which he firmly believed, Hogg held out vociferously against the very men, Scott and the Blackwood's set, whose literary judgement he most valued. Furthermore, as his use of superstition and the supernatural shows, when he wished to express or convey a motif or belief he felt his audience would balk at he was extremely adept at using form, ironic tone and the narrator persona to bamboozle the reader and slip the ideas across. Thus when he considered the matter important he had both the skill and the confidence to press his point. For the most part then he retained a flexible attitude that was due partly to reasons of economic necessity and partly to the traditional nature of much of the material he was dealing with and the tone he hoped to achieve. At the same time it is true that Hogg had reason to feel on occasion that he was carrying on an uneven battle against a literary conspiracy as the well documented wrangles with the Blackwood set eloquently show. Indeed, even before the double-dealing of characters like Wilson, Hogg expressed dissatisfaction with the Edinburgh literary scene. In the somewhat testy

character of the Spy he advises a young Nithsdale shepherd against trying to break through the literary closed shop that existed: "Works of literature are become much like bank notes, they must be issued by certain firms, else they will not pass current. These firms keep the reviews under controul; reviews are at present the rage, and magazines in disrepute..."<sup>11</sup> The whole business, he says, goes on mechanically and the problems of trying to publish at one's own expense are considerable. One should not entirely discount the effects of these difficulties on Hogg's work.

One further aspect of Hogg's attitude to the finished product remains to be noted and that is his awareness of his prospective audience and their needs. The particular nature of the periodical or more especially the annual for which he was writing did modify in some ways his offerings as is shown by the contributions to the children's annuals. The notes to the 1831 collected edition of songs indicate a change in Hogg's audience and in their standards that is to be gauged by his early songs. They are, he says:

...made for the sphere around the cottage hearth and farmer's kitchen-ingle, without the most distant prospect of any higher distinction. Therefore, with all the hankerings of early youth, even in my own estimation they are below par in poetical merit, and ought not to have been here. But they have been such general favourites among the class for which they were framed, for the last thirty years, that to them the leaving out of these songs would make a petrifying blank; it would be like a parent denying the first of his offspring. For the sakes, therefore, of the shepherds, cottagers, and rosy servant maids, these homely songs are preserved, while scores of more polished ones are left out...

(Songs, p.174)

It is clear from this that Hogg is highly aware of the effect of his material and the kind of audience it is successful with. It is significant too that he should choose to highlight works like this that were popular in the rural, domestic setting rather than those

perhaps more calculated to succeed with the maids and critics of Dunedin. It is interesting to note also that when recommending his tales to Blackie and Sons in 1833, Hogg had one important caveat to voice: "You shall publish them, say in monthly Nos, in what size and at what price you chuse, but I would not like the type so small that old people could not read them for old people are fondest of them".<sup>12</sup> In his next letter he assures the publishers that, next to Scott's, the tales "will be the most popular circulating Library work in Scotland".<sup>13</sup> His concern that the works should be accessible to old folk shows not only a charming blend of concern and pragmatism but also confirms that the main audience he had in mind for his works was not necessarily the Edinburgh literati. It seems much more the case that he was aiming for the domestic, ingle-neuk setting. As Douglas Mack suggests (Brownie, p.xvii) and as the title of collections such as Winter Evening Tales confirm, Hogg is aiming to recreate the atmosphere in which many of the traditions which he uses were transmitted. Hogg's concern was with restructuring and representing traditional material in a way that would preserve the variety and the vitality of the oral mode of transmission in a literary context. Many aspects of Hogg's style, notably his colloquial tone and apparent informality, even randomness of presentation contrive to create this illusion. He leads his readers to imagine almost that the tales are being transmitted to them as oral testimony rather than as highly worked up literary artefacts. Furthermore, he frequently uses devices such as framing to recreate the setting or context for his tales, outlining a kind of transmission experience. It is the use of these devices that must be examined in the present chapter.

The first thing to be noticed in any consideration of Hogg's use of form is that his main concern is with narrative. A substantial

part of his work takes the form of poetry it is true but even in poetry the emphasis is on story and narrative forms. One exception could be said to be found in the songs though even here his intuitive response to narrative is still clearly discernible and the notes to all his works in whatever genre are always replete with additional anecdotes and traditional accounts to amplify the texts. As G. Malcolm Laws shows<sup>14</sup>, ballad imitation in various modes enjoyed enormous and unparalleled popularity from the mid-eighteenth century onwards but Hogg's interest in poetry, though partaking of the ballad mania goes beyond simple imitation. It seems clear that in some ways, both the Queen's Wake (1813) and Queen Hynde (1825) were attempts at creating a kind of Scottish epic based to some extent on Scottish history and popular tradition. In Queen Hynde Hogg attempted to do this by narrating a heroic adventure of warring nations, employing traditional folk narrative structure, while in the Queen's Wake Hogg was trying a rather more novel approach to creating a national epic by trying to represent the different kinds of national song and poetry rather than celebrating any particular great event. The bards who appear here are meant in some cases to be the very ones who created many of the anonymous ballads and songs that tradition has handed on. Hogg's pieces are therefore supposed to complement the classic ballads, many of which he mentions by name as being sung during the competition: "Gilmorice" ("Child Maurice", Child 83), "Tam Lean" ("Tam Lin", Child 39), "Lochryan's hapless maid" ("The Lass of Roch Royal", Child 76) and "Fair Margaret" which is possibly a version of "Fair Margaret and Sweet William" (Child 74) or "Sweet William's Ghost" (Child 77). These references are used to build up a context or atmosphere against which Hogg's own poems are set.

The quality of his own poems is too mixed for the overall effect of the work to be successful in creating this national epic but the use of the elaborate framing to provide both context and continuity is of great interest. As in The Thousand and One Nights<sup>15</sup> the frame has an acceptable rationale of its own. While Shahrazad's tales, though unconnected with each other, are held together by the framing story of her efforts to save her life by preserving the Sultan's interest in her, Hogg uses the device of a competition. His frame has resonances even beyond the poem from the fact that it is Mary Queen of Scots who convenes the competition, and from the traditions and popular historical knowledge or romance connected with Mary. Citing John Knox, Dufresnoy and Holinshed he uses a tradition that Mary was serenaded on her first night in Scotland by native musicians<sup>16</sup> and gains an ironic poignance from the fact that the splendour and gaiety of the Wake is undercut by the knowledge the reader already has of the political and romantic disasters which dog Mary, culminating in her imprisonment and death. This is emphasised by the presence of a rather pettish Rizzio; his unpopularity, Mary's interest in him and the fact that the winning ballad is "Gil Morice" (Child. 83) a story of love and jealousy. All of these things hint forward to Mary's fate. Thus Hogg's dramatic frame holds tradition and history as a kind of cultural backdrop while at the same time it gives a continuity to his own poems. The frame also permits him to introduce varied styles, claiming that they reflect the cultures of different areas in the kingdom. The court audience, too, is utilised as a sort of chorus, often providing a relief of tension after the overstretched style of some of the pieces. Certainly their entry contrasts well with the introductions of the bards which are often hideously inflated and precious. The poems themselves are quite far removed from the traditional or even broadside ballad, being firmly in the ballad imitation mode. They

rely on simple rhythms and folklore motifs mixed with sentimental expression and poetic diction.

The use of a preliminary framing scene or cadre, as used later by Maupassant in his contes<sup>17</sup>, is a particularly useful structural device for the sort of short narratives Hogg was interested in. Hogg was able to expand it to bridge the gap between familiar traditional material implicitly believed by an audience familiar with its conventions and the selective presentation of sometimes unfamiliar material to a sceptical reading audience. The cadre can be used simply to provide the setting or context in which the tale was narrated thus helping to create the illusion that the tale is being transmitted directly to the reader as in the Queen's Wake. It can act as a validating or authority factor, often being reduced to a short paragraph at the beginning or end giving a source or stating that it is a true narration thus authenticating the tale. It can also act as an important distancing factor emphasising that the tale is a reported story which has already been told by someone else. By thus effectively removing Hogg from the role of author or creator it takes away the prop of narrator authority and thus has an obscuring effect, leaving the reader to make his own conclusions and freeing Hogg from responsibility for tales or motifs that might be considered either improbable or unacceptable or badly constructed. It is used to good effect where the supernatural and superstition are concerned and combines well with the use of an ironically self-exposed, unreliable narrator in, for example, the purported "autobiographies" or the Confessions. The simplest form of all is where the story is a directly presented third person relation with no intrusive narrator persona. The tale simply stands by itself placing all the weight of interpretation on the reader. These are the main patterns and their potential effects but

within these patterns there is an enormous amount of variation and overlap, particularly in the use of the narrator role. Indeed, it is perhaps through the narrator persona that Hogg's use of form can best be examined.

The simplest form has no intrusive narrator at all. The starkest example of this is "Katie Cheyne"<sup>18</sup> which has no third person narrative linking but is a series of three lengthy dialogues, one between Duncan Stewart and Katie Cheyne and two between Duncan and his mother. The form is clearly dramatic though the action is not but it is presented as a prose tale and not, as "The Bush Aboon Traquair" is, as a play. Most of the main events such as the breaking of the engagement with Katie and Duncan's subsequent courtship of his cousin Mattie take place "off-stage" as it were, so that there is nothing to suggest that the piece was actually intended to be acted rather than read. Robin MacLachlan suggests that it may be one of the pastoral dramas referred to in letters of 1826 and 1828 (MacLachlan, p.401) but it is clear from this text at least that Hogg was experimenting not so much with the play form but with new ways of presenting his short stories. The form allows Hogg to disappear completely from sight and leave his characters to speak for themselves. It is successful in that much at least. The mother is revealed as silly and prestige conscious, anxious that "the house of Knockhoolie" should repair its ailing fortunes by connecting itself with a lassie with a lump of land. Duncan, her son, is a feckless heedless youth who seems to have no concern for the effect of any of his actions. They are both exposed entirely by their own words but despite this technical accomplishment the piece is not one of Hogg's more successful stories. Perhaps it is because the reader's sympathy really lies with Katie Cheyne, who despite lending her name to the title, scarcely appears, the main



stream of the narrative dealing with Duncan. Besides, this undirected narrative can be a little confusing as the reader is forced in the early paragraphs of each section to scurry about trying to determine who the speakers are.

Hogg prefers on the whole to be able to direct his narrative more and to do this he uses the narrator as a conscious device, often building him up into a character himself. This narrator can either be anonymous or unspecified. Often the pieces are narrated in the first person and then the "I" can be Hogg, or some other specified persona or again an unidentified person, perhaps Hogg, but not necessarily or obviously so. The distinction between the Hogg/non-Hogg narrator is obscure because of the use of the nom-de-plume "The Ettrick Shepherd". It is a useful device, especially in the world of magazine writing, for many of the pieces published there appeared anonymously and this title guaranteed Hogg some recognition and perhaps also helped in the battle described by Carey, against the misappropriation of his name (Confessions, p.xix). Quite apart from this it was also a useful literary device, helping to establish something about the style, content and tone of the story or "letter" above which it appeared even before the first sentence had been read. It acts almost like the "Once upon a time..." formula opening because on seeing it the reader knows at once what kind of fictional world he is to enter and can suspend disbelief accordingly. The editor of Fraser's Magazine in his obituary notice prefaced to "Helen Crocket" says of the story: "This last tale of James Hogg is like the man. There is, too, one gross passage in it, through which we have been tempted to draw the pen - but we will not. Hogg knew no false delicacy; nor will we..." ("Helen Crocket", p.426). Thus Hogg and his fictional world were synonymous for his readers, mainly through the creation of the

"Ettrick Shepherd" title and there was a real sense that because of this slightly different rules of taste and literary convention were to be tolerated in this fictional world.

The name fixed him geographically, economically and thus socially. Besides this it allowed him to pay a tacit compliment to Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd" and the vernacular tradition in Scottish literature. All through his writing career Hogg encouraged the sense of detachment from contemporary society that the image of the "Ettrick Shepherd" lent him. He encouraged this shift partly because of a wish to follow in the "ploughman poet" mould attributed to Burns and his picture of peasant life could be said to fit in with the idea of the noble savage. His countryfolk were to be recognised as leading a more wholesome and moral life than their urban counterparts in spite of, or often because of their apparent economic and social handicaps. Hogg was happy then to have himself cast as the homely moralist, the rural philosopher, an observer of mankind conveniently detached from the exploitative world of financial speculation and industrial growth, and linked instead with the more straightforward pursuits of rural life, shepherding, fishing and so forth. This could, of course, be made to backfire as it sometimes did in Wilson's hands in the Noctes, where the rural philosopher became the Ettrick buffoon and little better than a misguided, bibulous, petulant fool. However, nearly every one of Hogg's periodical contributions appeared as "by the Ettrick Shepherd" and he is one of the few important literary figures who is probably as well or even better known by a by-name as by his own name. The title was not, like a pseudonym, designed to conceal Hogg's identity, but rather to heighten it.

An interesting comparison can be made with Woody Guthrie, the American singer who, like Hogg had strong roots in a traditional

culture but developed to become a performer popular with the intellectual urban audience as much as with the hillbillies and emigrant Okies whose traditions he used. Examining Woody Guthrie's heritage and use of folk tradition, Richard Reuss makes several points that are apposite in discussing Hogg's role and his relationship with his audience.<sup>19</sup> It is well known that the traditional performer adapts his material in the retelling to suit the demands of the audience at each performance. Linda Dégh confirms this in her work on Hungarian peasants:

Since the new creation which develops during storytelling and the telling performance itself (since folklore is not written down, both of them develop at the same time — re-creation and performance are simultaneous) can happen only publicly, the importance of the audience must not be overlooked. Functionally, both the individual telling the story and the listeners take part in the new creation. The structure of the community, its attitudes and moods, the nature and the time as well as the place of the gathering can influence the narrator fashioning his text in such a way that one and the same folktale, recorded under different conditions, often shows decisive modifications.

(Dégh, Folklore and Society, p.52)

This is the process within a traditional community, but when the context is changed as it is with Hogg and Woody Guthrie, the relationship between performer and audience changes slightly. The performer is still influenced by the feedback from the audience but his own perception of himself changes according to the attitude of the audience. This can be seen even where the performer is a traditional singer asked to perform his other normal repertoire to a sympathetic, often knowledgeable, but basically non-traditional audience. The event is no longer a community activity but a performance in a formal sense and the singer responds accordingly. Thus James Porter reports that Jeannie Robertson, once introduced to a wider public, began to see herself as a "folksinger" or "performer" as such and adapted

her performance to conform to her idea of what that was.<sup>20</sup> Guthrie was a traditional performer but, like Hogg, he was also a creative artist and one anxious to use the contemporary trends and resources available to him in a non-traditional environment. For him the pressure to provide what was asked for was so much greater and Richard Reuss shows the way in which Woody Guthrie's performing persona, perhaps more than the material, was adapted several times to fit the demands of his changing audience. In the early California period, playing to "Okie [Oklahoma] migrants and other transients" he was cast as "singer, yarnspinner, and down-home philosopher" (Reuss, p.277). He retained traditional forms and expression but the content was "altered to reflect contemporary experience". Later he was adopted by the radical left as a sort of Noble Savage, emphasising the humorist-philosopher aspect rather than the singer: "To his urban admirers Guthrie was as much a symbol of who the folk ought to be as who the folk really were. The Left lionized him as a 'People's Artist,' intellectuals regarded him as a folk John Steinbeck or Walt Whitman, while a few radicals saw him as the 'communist Shakespeare in overalls'" (Reuss, p.303).

These roles gave Woody Guthrie prominence and popularity but at the same time they were restrictive and often irritating. Nevertheless, through them he was able to find a means of directing his art until finally, while retaining the traditional forms and styles, "his themes moved further and further from his old folk cultures" (Reuss, p.302). The consciously adopted persona of the "Ettrick Shepherd" gave Hogg the same freedoms and restraints. Like Woody Guthrie, Hogg was faced with the problem of achieving a synthesis, using folk materials or forms and adapting them to more consciously intellectualised themes. The persona enabled this as it gave Hogg a status

within the literary environment thus allowing him to work despite the lack of formal education and position. At the same time it gave his audience a key as to how to react to him and how to assimilate material and belief which served no function within their community. It is more than an attempt to mould himself on the popular image of Burns, though it is true that this view of Burns as the "ploughman poet" arose out of similar circumstances. The "Ettrick Shepherd" persona is, then, a symbol of, and at the same time a way of dealing with, the difficulty of bridging the gap between two communities and finding an intellectual and artistic synthesis of ideas and form. This familiar tag means that in cases where there are no specific references to Hogg or his family, an otherwise undifferentiated "I" narrator will nevertheless be assumed to be Hogg in his guise as the "Ettrick Shepherd" storyteller. In this way he creates in his tale telling world not only something of the style and context of the "Winter Evening" fireside narration, but also the community storyteller, rather as Scott tries to suggest with his "Tales of a Grandfather" and "Tales of My Landlord".

There are many stages in the development of this fictional world and the simplest form of this type of narration is that where the narrator is identifiably Hogg. There are many incidental examples in the Shepherd's Calendar in particular where he includes personal recollections. The incidents most clearly recognisable as genuine accounts by Hogg are those which concern or make reference to his family, as in parts of the piece on "Storms". In his account of the storm of January 1794, Hogg refers to a visit to his parents ("Storms", p.77) and to his uncle ("Storms", p.78), who transmits an item of weather lore which Hogg records. He also reports his parents' reactions to the belief, current after the storm, that it had been caused by some shepherds, Hogg's brother William included, who had raised the devil

at Entertrony ("Storms", pp.214-25). This episode helps to capture the attitude and outlook of the Ettrick community and shows the prevalence of superstition. Hogg emphasised how deep these attitudes were inbred by admitting that, "to tell the truth, though I am ashamed to acknowledge it, I suspected that the allegation might be too true" ("Storms", p.214). Here the narrator is unequivocally defined as Hogg, the link between the traditional community and the literary sceptical one, in order to act as a validating factor, to confirm and support what might otherwise be rejected as "mere" superstition or fantasy. It is for this reason that he sometimes stresses in his introduction to a narrative that truth is stranger than fiction.<sup>21</sup>

His aim in such tales is to stress that the audience should lay aside any resistance to supernatural belief and accept Hogg's narrative. Other references by Hogg to his family are to be found in the description of Will o' Phaup ("General Anecdotes", pp.440-45), in the Brownie (p.170) which cites Hogg's father as a source and "The Marvellous Doctor" (pp.349-50, 360-61) which frames the Doctor's adventures by telling how he boarded for a time with Hogg's parents. This makes for a certain amount of colour and interest as Margaret Laidlaw and the Doctor discuss herbs and charms but the frame, with its use of real figures and circumstantial details helps to set off the tale. Hogg sums up the effect that the Doctor's stories had on him and his family: "All I can say about these adventures of his is, that when I heard them first, I received them as strictly true; my mother believed them most implicitly, and the Doctor related them, as if he had believed in the truth of them himself" ("Marvellous Doctor", p.361). Hogg goes on to modify this response to the Doctor, using the cadre and the authority lent by the intrusion of "real", tangible figures to substantiate his assertion that certain other traditions conveyed by his mother are true. This reference to

real life as a sort of touchstone, used so often in the frames and also throughout the Brownie of Bodsbeck, is similar to the use of what Linda Dégh calls "reality factors" in the structure of the legend: "What are the facts upon which the legend is built that renders the story credible and the message acceptable? There are two kinds of so-called reality factors. One is a verifiable fact commonly known to be true, for it has been experienced or preserved in memory, and may also be supported by physical evidence, by an object that commemorates a past event".<sup>22</sup> Hogg's use of the cadre can be seen as an extension of this common technique of traditional narration reapplied to a different genre.

This authority extends to the anonymous "I" narrator who becomes identified with the "Ettrick Shepherd". Confusion can occasionally arise when the narrator appears to be unspecified, tempting the assumption that he is to be equated with Hogg. On a few occasions it becomes clear as the tale advances that the narrator has a distinct persona of his own quite independent of Hogg. This is elaborately carried out in "The Unearthly Witness" which appears at first glance to be narrated by Hogg. It takes the form of a letter under the heading "The Unearthly Witness: by the Ettrick Shepherd", the usual format for Hogg's contributions. The narrator straightaway sets out the topic and his authority as storyteller: "With regard to the story which has reached you of the late consternation caused at Castle Gower, by the return of William Tibbers from the grave, and the events following on that phenomenon, I am without doubt enabled to write you at great length. And if a man is allowed to take the evidence of his own senses, I am entitled to vouch for the truth of a part of my narrative".<sup>23</sup> He continues throughout the piece to refer back to his own experience of the people and events: "...I

remember of your having met with him", "...I have heard them say they could prove them", "...I know six or seven very prominent instances of it as having occurred in my own remembrance" ("Unearthly Witness", p.171). A further, more potent reality factor is introduced: "But one day, as Tibbers was standing among his harvest workers, the young baronet and Mr. Alexander McGill, a friend of his, and a relation of my own, came briskly up to him on foot" ("Unearthly Witness", p.172). These young men disappear under mysterious circumstances, plainly murdered by Tibbers or by his agency. By this point it is clear that the narrator is not Hogg. This is confirmed on the fifth of the seven and a half pages that the tale occupies by the declaration that the narrator preached against the consternation aroused in the community by the appearance of the ghost. A footnote at the end of the piece dates the supposed event in 1749 and ascribes the letter to the Reverend R. Walker, an Episcopalian minister in a parish in Morayshire along with some plausible reasons for this attribution.

Despite the unnecessary confusion, the tale shows the way Hogg can build the cadre up so as to achieve a distance that obscures his authorial role. He builds up a good circumstantial context for the tale, engaging the reader's credibility. Just as he seems to vacillate in his support of the different kinds of superstition and the supernatural and to shift his confirmation of the different types of traditional belief and history so Hogg the author/narrator shifts between wholehearted authorial support and obscuring himself entirely behind a fictional narrator. Thus he makes the reader experience the dilemma of many of the characters in the works: the frightening responsibility of having to depend entirely on his own not entirely efficient senses in an alien and confusing environment, and having to make decisions when only part of the real situation has been revealed.



Elsewhere the use of a narrator other than Hogg can lend distance and detachment as in the description of Peter Plash and the shepherd's wedding where Hogg is better able to emphasise the coherent, close-knit quality of the shepherd community and the breadth and depth of its shared beliefs by setting opposite them a narrator from outside the community who, by the very fact of not belonging sets these qualities into relief. A narrator from the inside or even a non-dramatised description by Hogg as Hogg would not have functioned so clearly or so well. Furthermore it enables him to employ an ironic comparison of the lower rural classes and the wealthier classes, an opposition which is only just brought off by the colour and vitality of his country characters and one which would most certainly have lapsed into pure sentiment or special pleading had the narrator come from inside the community.

This distancing effect in Hogg's work is important, especially in the Confessions where it is linked to the gap between appearance and reality. The key to Gil-Martin's role is in his ability to change appearance. Robert appears to be the villain but becomes tragic in the final throes of his desperate and unwitting pilgrimage towards disaster. Bell Calvert, a prostitute and, in the eyes of human justice, a criminal, is in many ways the most reliable character, showing least bias. The Colwans appear to the Editor to be frank, bluff fellows but to Bell the squire is Mrs Logan's "old unnatural master" and George is the "young spark" (Confessions, p.60). The reader is constantly obliged to reassess his judgements. This is especially so in the case of the Editor who appears so reasonable and conscientious in presenting the "facts" thus almost concealing his strong Tory bias in favour of the Colwans and all they stand for. Furthermore his gentlemanly and scholarly diligence is found wanting:

"With regard to the work itself, I dare not venture a judgement, for I do not understand it" (Confessions, p.253).

The ambivalent double presentation that coloured Hogg's description of supernatural events is thus reflected in the Confessions. These contradictions and the consequent isolation of the reader are fostered and intensified by the narrative technique - the split form and the lack of a reliable narrator viewpoint. This careful balance of narrative and colouring allows the reader to feel sympathy for Robert while still objecting to the severity of the faith he espouses and the enormity of the crimes his subsequent simple-mindedness leads him into. The objectivity that Hogg wins, tied in as it is with his ideas of human compassion and moderation is more powerful for the reader being forced to work his own way through the information and the different kinds of "truth". The mystification of the reader is taken to the ultimate position when Hogg is separated completely from the text and introduced as a separate character. He is shown to be suspicious and unwilling to help and the suggestion is that he is an unreliable witness. This, as Carey implies, may well have been part of a ruse on Hogg's part to convince the public that the book, which was published anonymously, as if of Glasgow origin, was in no way connected with Hogg. (Confessions, p.xxv). The introduction of Hogg and the printing of the letter both act as "reality factors". Thus although in a sense removing the authorial voice, Hogg is able to make his work stand independently.

Hogg's introduction of himself into his work as an independent third person is not restricted to the Confessions. It is a device he uses in the "review" of Napier's treatise on store farming and in the account of David Dale's fantastic balloon voyage.<sup>24</sup> The review of Napier's work falls into the category of those pieces which have an

unspecified "I" narrator who is taken to be Hogg or his persona the "Ettrick Shepherd" until they are revealed late on as separate creations. This tardiness in clarifying matters is probably due to little more than carelessness on Hogg's part but the introduction of himself as a third person does have thematic significance within the context of his work. Given Hogg's fluctuating attitude to his material, devices such as third person references to himself permit him a distance that can, on one hand, give a paradoxical illusion of directness making the material appear as if it is being transmitted directly in the traditional manner. By contrast this detachment allows him to remove himself and hide his point of view when presenting material or motifs that might meet with resistance. Thus on occasions he appears to undermine his own authority as a creative writer by introducing attacks on his own reliability. He introduces his Lay Sermons as drawn in part "from a MS. translation of the works of an old French monk of the last century", continuing: "I have now given so many tales of perfect truth to the public, many of them with not one word of truth in them, that I know I shall not be believed in this, and people will say, 'Oho! this is a mere subterfuge of the Shepherd's to get off, in case of any unsound tenets or instances of bad taste'".<sup>25</sup>

The Balloon Voyage is introduced by the "real" Hogg as the story of an eccentric Dr. Dale who imagines that he has already met the Ettrick Shepherd some thirty years previously, describing him as an old white headed man of sixty years of age. He attacks Hogg's integrity as a writer in strong terms:

"As to his poetry, God mend it! If telling the most extravagant lies be poetry, we have a grand set of poets now-a-days! But I think, of them all, there have never any told so many confounded lies as that Jock Hogg. These are not all to go for nothing, Mr Smith. I dislike a character that entertains people with fables as if they were true stories. There is nothing like sticking by the genuine truth." Here Mr Smith tipped me the

wink, hinting to me to note whether or not the Doctor told the truth.

("Dr. David Dale", p.50)

In this way he personifies and renders amusing the hostility that traditional genres such as fable meet when removed from their context into the literary medium. In a sense he forestalls this kind of criticism by personifying it and while the effect is mainly humorous, Hogg is able, as in "Captain Napier" (p.183), to draw off the attack of inaccuracy onto Hogg the literary figure, while still asserting the integrity of certain types of traditional wisdom.

Because of the nature of much of his material - traditional narrative, legend and history - and the fact that his aim is to express the character of a community and its culture, it is frequently desirable for Hogg to minimise his part in the creative process. In this circumstance it is not for him to create the characters and settings as part of a fictional world of his own, his concern is to act as a spokesman. Hence, Hogg's tales, particularly those concerning country families, superstition, the supernatural or legendary matter, are presented as having been transmitted to Hogg by some other person. He generally claims to have made very few changes and his introductory comments to these tales should perhaps be compared with the claims of the traditional narrators cited by Linda Dégh above. His concern with a transmission context is great and in "Tibby Johnston's Wraith" for instance, although he opens with a dialogue between two characters, he breaks the continuity to establish this context by noting when and in what circumstances he heard the tale. He also gives some information about the narrator and his preferred type of narration:

David Proudfoot was a very old man, herding cows, when I was a tiny boy at the same occupation. He would often sit with the snuff-mill in his hand, and tell me old tales for hours

together; and this was one among the rest. He cared for no tales, unless he had some share in the transactions himself. The story might be told in few words, but it would spoil my early recollections, and I could not endure to see it otherwise than as David told it, with all its interpolations.<sup>26</sup>

A similar sort of declaration appears at the beginning of "The Bridal of Polmood", where Hogg in an introductory frame that was dropped from the later anthologies in which the tale appeared, describes how he shared a coach journey from Moffat to Edinburgh with "an old gentleman" whose local and traditional knowledge was extensive. This man, he claims, had a story connected with nearly every farm or mountain along the way. He tells Hogg the story of Norman Hunter of Polmood and his unfortunate marriage. The character of this informant is rather vaguely delineated and the reader is perhaps not as convinced as he is after David Proudfoot's tale that he has become part of the train of transmission. However, the cadre does give Hogg an opportunity to make some points about the transition from oral relation to literary account:

As soon as I reached Edinburgh I wrote it down; and waiting on the narrator, who is now one of my most intimate friends, I read it over to him, correcting and enlarging it, according to his directions. The general observations and reflections which occur, were all made by himself in course of the narration, and I regret my inability to deliver them in his short and impressive manner. He however testified his hearty approbation of them all, declaring that the ideas were better brought out than they would have been by himself. I have retained all his sentiments, and even his expressions, to a degree which the present taste for abstract composition will scarcely justify; and only regret the passive obedience exacted by modern critics to punctilious modes of expression, a conformity to which has obliged me to change others which I was inclined to preserve.<sup>27</sup>

These passages make explicit two facts about Hogg's attitude to traditional material and the way in which it has to change in order to sit happily in its new context. First of all he states not

that the tale in question is true but that he has been as true as possible to the narration of his informant. Secondly he explains that it is the shift to the literary context with its "passive obedience exacted by modern critics to punctilious modes of expression" that has compelled such changes as he did make. Thus Hogg himself is removing himself as far as possible from the responsibility for narration and by giving some information about the informant and his usual type of material and narration he suggests something of the missing context. This sort of editorial detachment becomes worked up into a formal device so that very often, instead of being transmitted by a traditional informant who tells the tale or anecdote to Hogg, the narration is conveyed to him in a letter. There are many examples of the formal device of the letter sent to Hogg and sometimes it even occurs within another narration as an extra level of transmission. There are "letters" in the Spy such as those from Fanny Lively and Alice Brand, which permit Hogg to make satirical comments on contemporary society. Alice Brand crops up again, towards the end of Hogg's career, when she appears as the signatory of a pathetic tale of childhood virtue and blighted adulthood.<sup>28</sup> These, the letters about the cholera victims<sup>29</sup> and the epistolary part of the Three Perils of Woman<sup>30</sup> all allow Hogg to express various characters in a fuller way than by a brief description. It may also be that the letter form itself acts as a "reality factor" when, as in the letter about Colonel Cloud<sup>31</sup>, printed in Blackwood's, the letter is directed not to the editor of the Magazine but to some other person. This letter is addressed to the Hon. Mrs A\_\_\_\_\_y and the circumstantial details and the phatic communion help to give the illusion that this is indeed a real letter and thus a true relation and not a fictional communication to Christopher North.

In a similar way he can detach himself from the material and lodge the ultimate responsibility for the ideas elsewhere by acting

as the "editor" of a newly discovered work. The piece is then usually autobiographical in form leaving Hogg free to employ irony and to comment in a detached way on the material. In the autobiographies it can seem as if it is the narrator and not his story that is really in question. This can be seen in the Confessions and in the accounts of John Lochy, Baillie Sydeserf, a Border Beauty,<sup>32</sup> and the Baron St. Gio.<sup>33</sup> The edited works are the logical and most extreme extension of the device of introducing Hogg simply as a mediator between traditional items and the literary context. Thus a device formulated to deal with short traditional material leads him to a sophisticated literary device that could be developed in his longer prose fictional work. The autobiographical form permits the work and its hero to achieve as it were a life of its own, especially where there is no authorial or editorial commentary and the characters reveal their weaknesses and defects by their own actions. There is clearly a long and illustrious line of literary models for this form and we must not forget that contemporaries such as Galt were making good use of it too but whatever the literary pedigree was, Hogg was able to adapt it to the task of overcoming the credibility gap encountered when presenting traditional items of folklore in a literary medium. The lessons he learned here enabled him to extend this ability to induce a willing suspension of disbelief in more ambitious fictional works.

Hogg has several experiments with the form and, as he seems to enjoy placing some sort of personal stamp on his works, he frequently uses an editor, in the way that Scott uses Jedediah Cleishbotham, to provide an introduction or an occasional commentary or notes. Presumably in Hogg's case the editor is often to be associated with Hogg himself, as the Ettrick Shepherd, in the absence of any indication

to the contrary. The role of editor provides a check on the autobiographer, emphasising Hogg's detachment from the text while consolidating his position of authority as he endeavours to present his "text" accurately, occasionally adding footnotes which make plausible conjectures at the identity of certain characters or which clarify obscure passages. Thus in John Lochy's memoir the editor adds a footnote to Lochy's passing reference to a Marshall Rennyson, asking "Can this be the celebrated Marshall General Renschild, whom the captain means?" (Altrive Tales, p.39). Now, instead of retailing an orally transmitted account to a new audience, Hogg is ostensibly doing the same for written accounts. Hogg's editorial introduction to Bauldy Sydeserf's account of his life and his comments about the memoirs of the Baron St. Gio can be compared to his proclaimed response to accounts of traditions quoted above:

Archibald's memoir, of which I have with much difficulty got possession, is insufferably tedious and egotistical; but I have abridged it more than one half, retaining only the things that appeared to me the most curious; for all relating to borough politics appeared to me so low and so despicable, that I cancelled them utterly, although they might have been amusing to some.

But the great and sanguine events in which the Baillie was so long engaged, - in which he took so deep an interest, and acted such a distinguished part, are well worth the keeping in record. Some of his personal adventures, certainly, bear tints of romance, but every part of his narrative relating to public events may implicitly be relied on. I have compared them with the general as well as local histories of that period, and with sundry family registers relating to marriages, &c., which one would often think were merely brought in for effect, yet which I have uniformly found correct; and his narrative throws a light on many events of that stirring age, hitherto but imperfectly known. These, with the simplicity of the narration, recommended the memoir to every candid and judicious reader. I pass over the two long chapters relating to his family and education, and begin transcribing where he commences his difficult career of public life.

(Wars, I, 3-4)



In this preamble Hogg devotes some concern, as he frequently does with the traditional texts, to the veracity of the relation but here he claims to permit himself more freedom with his notional text. The same attitude is to be found expressed in the editorial commentary on the Baron St. Gio's reminiscences where after a short quotation, Hogg comments on the style: "This is manifestly Scottish, and in the same style the best parts of the narrative are written; but for the sake of shortening it two thirds at least, I must take a style more concise" ("St. Gio", p.891). Although one must be aware that he is not dealing with real texts and that this device is the perfect way of explaining why all these diverse accounts are in the Hogg style, it is interesting to note an intuitive difference in the attitude he expresses to traditional material and written texts. In the traditional pieces Hogg's concern was with fidelity to the style and expression of his sources whereas in these literary works the accepted editorial stance seems to be that compression of style and narrative and other editorial emendation is acceptable, even desirable.

This editorial device was of course a useful technique for dealing with journal work for, as in "A Strange Secret", it leaves the way open for stitching together various elements. The tale appeared in a short form in Blackwood's in 1828<sup>34</sup> and in this form consisted of the account of a man called Thomas Henderson, of an unsolved mystery in some great family whom he had served. The narrator promises that he will try to resolve the mystery, thus preparing the way for a second piece. The later versions<sup>35</sup> continue with an account derived from a series of letters from a new correspondent, combined by the editor: "This detail was given me in a series of letters of different dates, and many of them at long intervals from each other, which I shall take the liberty of throwing into a

continuous narrative, retaining, however, the old gentleman's own way of telling the story" (Shepherd's Calendar, II, 65). Thus the ploy of "editing" contributions can allow Hogg to submit pieces in instalments, a useful practical consideration, while from an artistic point of view it facilitates the working of another favourite formal device of his, that of double narration - telling a story twice from different ends. The Confessions is an obvious example but the same device is to be found in the shorter prose as it is here in "A Strange Secret" which is an extreme case for in the second part Hogg is telling in a sense a new story with an independent structural unity and theme. This part is intricately involved with the workings of the supernatural expressed in a dream. However, this does not mean that the two pieces are not connected for it is only in the light of the second part that the first becomes clear. The link is one primarily of content and form, not of theme, though the first part does make some use of superstitious belief. The second part dispels the credulous superstition of the first part but adduces in its place a supernatural power that is not to be rationalised or dismissed. The editorial framework provides the main formal link but also sets Hogg at a distance from the content and ideas expressed.

This is an expression of the fluctuating support already displayed in Hogg's treatment of traditional folklore and in particular the supernatural. It can be used, moreover, to work in either direction. It can, for example, be used to provide a rational plausible explanation for supernatural or mysterious events, thus dismissing superstition. This is the main interest in "A Tale of Pentland"<sup>36</sup> where one man thinks he sees another being murdered and it is revealed later that he has witnessed a life-saving operation where the patient and surgeon are actually enemies. This device

holds the tale together while a more significant theme is being played out. The first account sets the scene as one of savage war, bloodshed and death, while the second part reveals an act of generosity and humane, selfless kindness that transcends the apparent barriers set up by the war. This theme has already been examined in the discussion of "Wat Pringle o' the Yair" in the previous chapter. Here, as there, this kindness brings its own reward - the young doctor is saved from hanging, but what is most significant here is that the internal theme is intertwined and mirrored in the formal device which shapes the tale. There are two narrations: one which accepts appearances and sees murder and unnatural crime and another which reveals that appearances have lied and shows that behind the party rivalry a higher duty to humanity is still able to operate. Thus the double narration reflects the two strands of the theme, leading in the end to the true or right way of seeing and thinking.

In a similar though less dramatic way one finds double narration in operation in Bauldy Sydeserf's memoirs. Here it is the editor who provides the counter view supplementing the picture when Bauldy glosses over a fight between an unknown man and the new husband of Lady Jane Gordon, to whom Bauldy Sydeserf is devoted. The editor's deliberately plodding conclusion that the unknown is probably Sydeserf only serves to highlight the intensity and poignant quality of the Baillie's devotion, which is especially significant for although she is unattainable, it is Lady Jane who inspires in Sydeserf the nobler emotion that leads to all his best actions. She and her brother Enzie represent in a sense the Baillie's good and bad angels. This double narration, then, can explain mysteries and can also, by presenting the supernatural, say, as the explanation, force the reader to accept or come to terms with it. An earlier chapter pointed to this sort of

approach in the Three Perils of Man, where Hogg provides rational explanations for Bacon's trickery which is supposed to be magic but resolutely presents only the Devil and the supernatural as the explanation for Michael Scott's acts. This is what happens in the Confessions and in the much slighter piece "Strange Letter of a Lunatic"<sup>37</sup>, where once again the reader is forced by the circumstantial evidence to accept some sort of irrational or supernatural explanation.

A similar double-vision technique is employed in the use of disguise, particularly when it is linked to the introduction of characters. Here, instead of the narrative being related twice, a key discovery reverses or changes the effect of what has gone before. Thus the use of disguise represents the altered vision that the double narration suggested. Finlayson, John Lochy's servant, is the master of disguise, and though he is loyal to Lochy, that appears to be his only virtue. His adeptness as a shape changer makes him appear a suspicious, unreliable character. It is to be remembered that Elizabeth in "A Story of the Black Art" has a similar mastery of shape changing which derives solely from an unhallowed and somewhat malicious use of the black arts. Similarly, many characters have their true nature disguised, especially in the lost heir stories and it seems possible, too, that there may be some connection between the use of disguise and the use of spirits and apparitions. Disguise certainly offers an effective rationalised representation of the supernatural. Finlayson in his disguises performs impossible, one might say magic tasks and is indeed mistaken at one point for a devil. He is a sort of rationalised presentation of a brownie for disguise is the human equivalent of supernatural manifestation. Thus Gil-Martin is the supreme shape changer and Wringhim's final

breakdown is accompanied by his frantic attempt to escape, during which he exchanges clothes with Gil-Martin (Confessions, pp.207-08). These miraculously disappear (p.215) and he attempts in the final stages to disguise himself as a shepherd (Confessions, p.236). His personality breakdown is mirrored by this external change of appearance and it replaces in a way the traditional appearance of wraiths and spirits. The function of those in disguise is generally different from the traditional functions of the supernatural as discussed in Chapter Four but it shows a modified use better suited to the literary context.

The range of effect is potentially wide, providing dramatic irony and sentiment as in "The Turners", where a young man long lost to his mother and sister returns from the Indies and forbears to reveal himself. It can have a certain amount of comic effect as in "The Watchmaker"<sup>38</sup>, where the protagonist swindles money for drink. It is possible to see areas in which the use of disguise and the workings of the supernatural overlap, thus encouraging the rationalisation process. This happens in "Aunt Susan" where Vere, a young girl assumes the role of ghost by dressing as her dead mother and forcing her murderers, Vere's aunt and father, to betray themselves. Here disguise offers an acceptable, rational substitution for ghostly visitations, adopting the traditional function in its place. This transition does not mean that Hogg used ghosts and spirits in his work only until he perfected a rationalisation more suitable for literary work. He was too well wedded to the traditional use of wraiths and revenants as well as to the Gothic relish in ghosts and corpses to have any wish to stop using them. What does emerge clearly is a cross-fertilisation of ideas and functions between the traditional and the literary approach, brought about by the attempt to adapt tradition to a literary context.

Despite the intricacy and complexity of these narrative devices it is true that many of Hogg's narratives appear to be inconsequential and undirected. Pieces open by purporting to tell one story, and end by going off at a tangent, bundling the denouement of the first part into a couple of hastily told sentences at the end. As we have already noted, Hogg's aim is sometimes to personify the Border community and express the attitudes and outlook of its members. Even when there is a story being related, this aim of highlighting traditional belief sometimes over-rides what one would regard as basic narrative coherence. Thus "The Fords of Callum" is more concerned with the fact that a couple miss saving their daughter by disregarding supernatural manifestations than with the loose ends that are left jangling all over the place by the mysterious circumstances of the girl's death and the introduction in the last paragraphs of a dark stranger who attends her funeral. "The Turners" has plenty of material for drawing out into a longer work but Hogg is content to jump back and fore in his narrative, gradually giving more life to some of the lively characters in the village community against which this tale of a family inheritance is set than to the actual "hero". In the "Life of an Edinburgh Baillie", the ending just fizzles out with the last episodes being hastily summarised by the editor. Bauldy's momentous dealings with the house of Gordon and the vendetta with Enzie, which is described in such large terms, lied unresolved. Instead Hogg ends with a tantalising tribute to irony and coincidence as Bauldy is buried at the feet of the Marquess of Huntly (Wars, I, p.297).

One example which works so well that one does not notice the tangential motion is the story of Rob Dodds. It is introduced after a general discussion of the economic state of the community and the gradual disappearance of the old farming families. Eventually

in his talk about the vicissitudes of sheep farming the narrator mentions the year the burn was dammed with carcasses, the year, he says, in which Rob Dodds was lost. Thus he naturally and easily enters into the story, providing a perfect example of the workings of the kind of folk mnemonic processes described in the Shepherd's Calendar ("Storms", p.75). The tale also, almost incidentally, describes how after this event the Linton family never prospered, a theme instituted in the earlier discursive part of the piece. As the story is told by an old shepherd it succeeds in conveying both the traditional content and the manner of narration. The piece works quite well despite the apparent imbalance and break in continuity that the narrator himself acknowledges: "That was the year, master, on which our burn was dammed wi' dead sheep; and in fixing the date you see, I hae been led into a lang story, and am juist nae further wi' the main point than when I began".<sup>39</sup>

Hogg often seems deliberately to be drawing attention to the narrator role. Not only does he occasionally dispense explicit and authoritative moral commentary on events and actions but he also comments on the author's job, pointing out his breaches of unity, time and so forth. In this manner a series of interpolations are dotted through the Brownie of Bodsbeck<sup>40</sup>, which all comment in some way on the order of events, their relative importance and the problems of unity. It does occasionally appear slack or careless such as the point where Walter suddenly reveals an extremely important detail which he had till then "forgot" to tell Katherine (Brownie, pp.155-56). However this does have a dramatic effect and is not simply the result of sloppy construction. It emphasises Katherine's strength of purpose in refusing to implicate her father until he is free from the threat of prosecution. Throughout the work Hogg has emphasised its traditional context and the fact that it is

essentially "the evening tale around the fading ambers" (Brownie, p.153) told by Walter (See Brownie, p.18). Thus the highlighting of the ways in which the exigencies of literary shape impinge on "the right onward progress of the tale" as told in its traditional context is a way of emphasising this traditional provenance and context. He offers this informal narrator voice as a more human, personable and attractive mediator between the oral taletelling event - a shared community event - and the coldness of bare literary presentation. It is a means of preserving the illusion of a tale told directly to the reader/listener rather than a simple straight-forward factual account. The Three Perils of Man highlights the narrator through using Isaac the curate as the source, whose narrative has to be compressed (pp.2, 192, 382, 383) and by reference to narration as a laden waggon led by a hard pressed waggoner (pp.159, 162, 352). The narrator is present throughout, especially at the opening and closing of chapters and in reference to "we" or "our heroes". The concern with providing a taletelling context leads to the creation of the story telling competition in Aikwood (Three Perils of Man, pp.203-319), a similar device to the ballad competition in the Queen's Wake. The technique is neatly summarised in the Three Perils of Woman which consists of two separate stories both with strange, disjointed structures.<sup>41</sup>

Introducing the first and longer of the two illustrations of feminine frailty, Hogg or his narrator describes his circular method of narration, explaining why the book is divided not into Chapters but into Circles:

And thus, by a retrograde motion round a small but complete circle, am I come again to the very beginning of my story.

I like that way of telling a story exceedingly. Just to go always round and round my hero, in the same way as the moon keeps moving round the sun; thus darkening my plot on the one side of him, and enlightening



it on the other, thereby displaying both the lights  
and shadows of Scottish life.

(Three Perils of Woman, I, 65-66)

This more than anything describes perfectly Hogg's way of beginning with a situation and then working backwards and forwards to a conclusion that is sometimes no conclusion at all. It is reminiscent of Sterne and the good inhabitants of Shandy Hall, but where Sterne is concerned with sentiment and literary artifice, Hogg has another concern, "the lights and shadows of Scottish life" as he says, conveying through context and function a description of the life, attitudes and culture of the Ettrick and Yarrow sheep farming community in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is confirmed by the frequent provision of a taletelling context, such as in the introductions and endings of tales like "An Old Soldier's Tale", "Amusing Story of Two Highlanders", "A Sea Story" and "The Barber of Duncow".<sup>42</sup> All of these give some indication of the kind of setting in which the tale could be or was told. The last is probably the most complex for the tale is told as a challenge to a young man who denies belief in ghosts. It is specially requested and its narrator, an old gypsy woman, prefaces it in this way: "'Ohon an' it's een lang sin"<sup>43</sup> I tried to tell that tale, Willie,' said old Raighel, with a grin and a snivel, 'but sin ye desyre me, I'll e'en try't. It has only ae ill clag till't"<sup>44</sup> that story, an' it's this: when any body hears it, an disna believe it, the murdered woman is sure to come in'" ("Barber of Duncow", p.174). Thus the reader is given not only a setting and within the tale a function for apparitions, but also a functional context for eliciting the tale. In literary terms a dramatic suspense is created at the end of the tale as the reader and characters wait for the promised ghostly visitation.

The position of the narrator and Hogg's presence in the work varies in connection with the selective commitment Hogg felt when

trying to restructure and adapt the material of a traditional community in transition to the demands of a literary medium. This varying attitude to the types of tradition and their form led him to work to achieve a variety of devices which would enclose the narratives in a kind of Chinese Box where a tale would be transmitted by another character, perhaps in a letter to the Ettrick Shepherd, a projection of Hogg, who in turn would submit it to a fictional editor, like Christopher North or Oliver Yorke. In an age where mysteries and literary aliases (The Great Unknown and so forth) abounded, Hogg used every technique at his disposal to create webs of illusion worthy of Michael Scott. While he could insist on the veracity of some oral traditions, he had no such faith in the literary world and could even, as the ultimate trick of literary device and artifice, call his own reliability as a writer into question. Hogg's narrative artistry consists then in taking certain themes and devices popular in tradition, adapting them and their functions to his literary ends and blending them with literary devices so that sometimes a function is transferred or rationalised in order to perfect the union of tradition and literature.

With these generalisations in mind it is now possible to consider what might be called the deep structure of some of these pieces, looking now not at the literary form and devices such as narrator persona, but at the structural and functional unity of the tales themselves, relating it to work done on the structure of the folktale by such writers as Vladímir Propp<sup>45</sup> and Eleaszar Meletinsky.<sup>46</sup> Hogg's early verse, particularly The Mountain Bard, indicates that because of Hogg's transitional status, the changing shape of the community and the fact that he is writing for a different audience, the reader should not look for the direct use of traditional forms in Hogg's

work. Instead, his poetry and prose, show widespread use of traditional motifs but no examples of ballads or Märchen, the "classical" traditional forms. However, as was suggested in the previous chapter, Hogg, like the North American immigrant communities studied by Richard M. Dorson, does make considerable use of the more fluid forms of tradition, like legend which depends on content rather than structure. In other words, as one might perhaps expect in a transitional community, the distinctive structure of the genres is the first thing to break down, leading to the use of mixed or hybrid forms. Thus Linda Dégh, citing Kurt Ranke, says that "mixed forms are becoming increasingly important for the student of tales in our day",<sup>47</sup> attributing these changes to "the degenerative and regenerative process that occurs as genres lose their old meaning and are reformulated to fit new social settings" (Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.78). It is thus significant that the main categories of Hogg's work seem to mirror Linda Dégh's tentative thematic grouping of these new mixed genres which often take the form of some sort of reminiscence. One only has to remind oneself of The Islandman and An Old Woman's Reflections to see that the autobiographical reminiscence is one of the most popular forms of transition from tradition to literature. Linda Dégh offers Labour Reminiscences, Autobiographical Stories and Emigrant/Immigrant Epics as useful categories (Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.79). Hogg's work provides numerous anecdotes of shepherding life, related by himself and others, notably in the Shepherd's Calendar, a frequent use of the autobiographical form as well as a marked willingness to recount his own life history. It is interesting to reflect further that his great and abiding interest in the Jacobites might represent a transferred or parallel form of Linda Dégh's Emigrant and Immigrant Epics. With the exception of the tale "Emigration"<sup>48</sup>, Hogg makes comparatively few direct references to emigration as such, or even

the Clearances, which after all were not directed against his own community, and Linda Dégh's category is much more relevant to the geographically displaced like the Szeklers. However, Hogg does express great concern for the social and cultural breakdown of the familiar community and perhaps the fugitive Covenanters, driven to the hills, represent a more direct parallel to the emigrants of other transitional communities.

Though there are no Märchen as such in Hogg's works, there are numerous uses of traditional motifs, particularly those concerning superstition and the Devil. Robin MacLachlan (pp.184-89) identifies a number of these to be found in the Three Perils of Man and gives their classification numbers in the Stith Thompson Motif Index.<sup>49</sup> There are also many examples of short forms like the tall tale or numbskull story ("General Anecdotes", p.44), but few tales where Hogg makes direct use of a recognised tale type and such examples are distributed across the genres. "The Long Pack"<sup>50</sup> combines aspects of 1958C "The Robber in the Shroud" and AT 956 B "The Clever Maiden", an example of the Novelle genre. It is slightly altered in Hogg's version where the boy Richard adopts some of the hero/heroine's function's by taking the initiative and killing the robbers. "Amusing Story of Two Highlanders" (Spy, pp.132-34) is a very close version of AT 169H "If the Wolf's Tail Breaks", which is linked in turn to AT 1229, which falls in the Jokes and Anecdotes group, although AT 169H is a story of Man and Wild Animals. Apparently the only example of an Animal Fable in Hogg's work comes in "Eastern Apologues" and is expressly didactic, told in the manner of Aesop or Henryson. "Eastern Apologues"<sup>51</sup> itself, with the poor man whose clever answers please the prince, is linked to AT 922 and its ballad equivalent Child 45 "The King and the Abbot", with the differences that the old man is not substituting for another and it is the jealousy of the nobles which forces the prince and him to realise among men of his own degree

rather than his own realistic modesty. There does not seem to be any pattern in these tales except perhaps that they deal with ingenuity and clever or witty responses to difficult situations. There is no way of distinguishing whether this reflects the kind of tale Hogg heard most of when young or whether it is merely the kind that appealed most to him. His own community is more directly reflected in the many examples of local legend and local history, referred to earlier on, which abound in his work.

Hogg, then, does not employ the full structural and functional design of any one of the better known Märchen. However, according to Propp, a tale belonging to the group classified as Märchen or Wonder Tales (AT 300-749) "...often attributed identical actions to various personages. This makes possible the study of the tale according to the functions of its dramatis personae" (Morphology, p.19). The characters themselves may vary but the functions remain constant for there is always, for example, a villainous action or a test of some kind. Thus, as Propp says, "Function is understood as an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action" (Morphology, p.21). The function, he says, is the stable element of the folktale and operates independently of how or by whom it is fulfilled and though any tale need not use all the possible range of functions, indeed some are mutually exclusive, the sequence of the functions will remain the same. This becomes clear when one is familiar with the basic patterns which often work in pairs so that Alan Dundes in his study of the folktales of the North American Indians reduces the essential forms of this type of folk narrative to two very simple paired functions which are the most important: "Folktales can consist simply of relating how abundance was lost or how a lack was liquidated"<sup>52</sup> the commonest form in North American Indian tales being that of telling

how a Lack (L) was overcome (Lack Liquidated - LL).

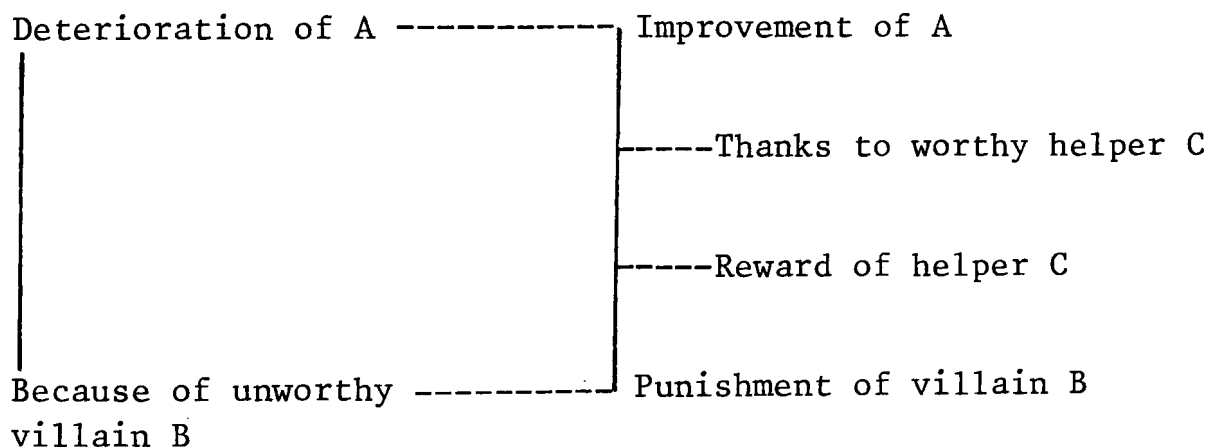
These techniques of folktale analysis can help to a better understanding of tales of Hogg's which appear difficult to classify or interpret by literary standards. It was suggested in an earlier chapter that the story of Rob Dodds' death appears to be a digression but that it seems to arise quite naturally out of its context. The basic narrative functions suggested here show how this technical feat is achieved. The tale is essentially an account of how in Dundes' terms, an initial abundance was lost, for one of the larger points that the shepherd is making is that the Linton family were very successful but eventually lost all their wealth. Thus the initial situation is one of abundance, but the "hero" or protagonist, Tam Linton, by violating important interdiction that were understood but not expressed, namely disregarding the sanctity of life by bringing about and concealing the death of Rob Dodds, incurs a series of disasters or punishments. The tale uses various traditional motifs as well as some tripling within the structure as Rob Dodds' father seeks for his son on three consecutive nights, finding him on the third ("Deaths, Judgements, and Providences, [Rob Dodds]", pp.318-19). The apparent digression thus serves a multiple function within the context of the article for it preserves the traditional method of "fixing the date" by events, illustrates the decline of certain Border families and thus the disintegration of the community, enshrines certain important moral values and, with its account of unnatural cruelty, confirms the fear expressed by its narrator in the opening sentence, of the article, that the country is under God's curse ("Deaths, Judgements, and Providences [Rob Dodds]", p.312). Thus a discursive piece, which seems to lack internal structure or unity, being held together only by the narrator persona and his mode of expression, is revealed to have all its

various strands worked together by the use of a traditional narrative form.

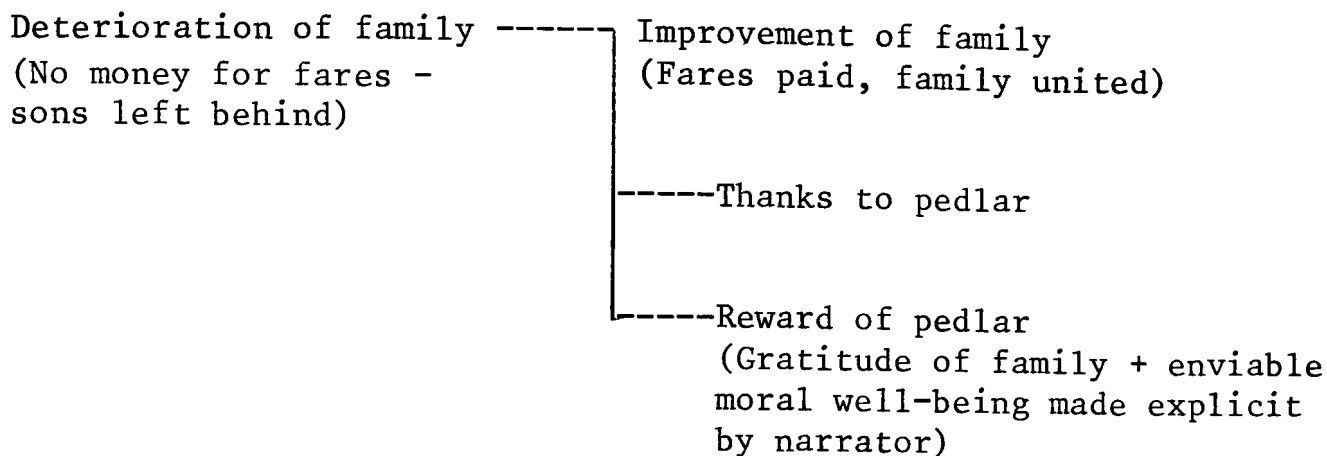
There are further examples to be found in Hogg's narration of the adaptation of traditional narrative structure and functions. Indeed the archetypal quality of the emotions and actions in his tales with their punishments for wrongdoing and their rewards for virtue, echo very clearly the key paired functions which Claud Brémond<sup>53</sup> delineates:

Deterioration ----- Improvement  
 Merit ----- Reward  
 Unworthiness ----- Punishment

These functions, he says, are applicable "...to every kind of morally edifying narrative which is governed by the optimistic requirement of a happy ending" (Brémond, p.49). Bremond gives a simple basic pattern:



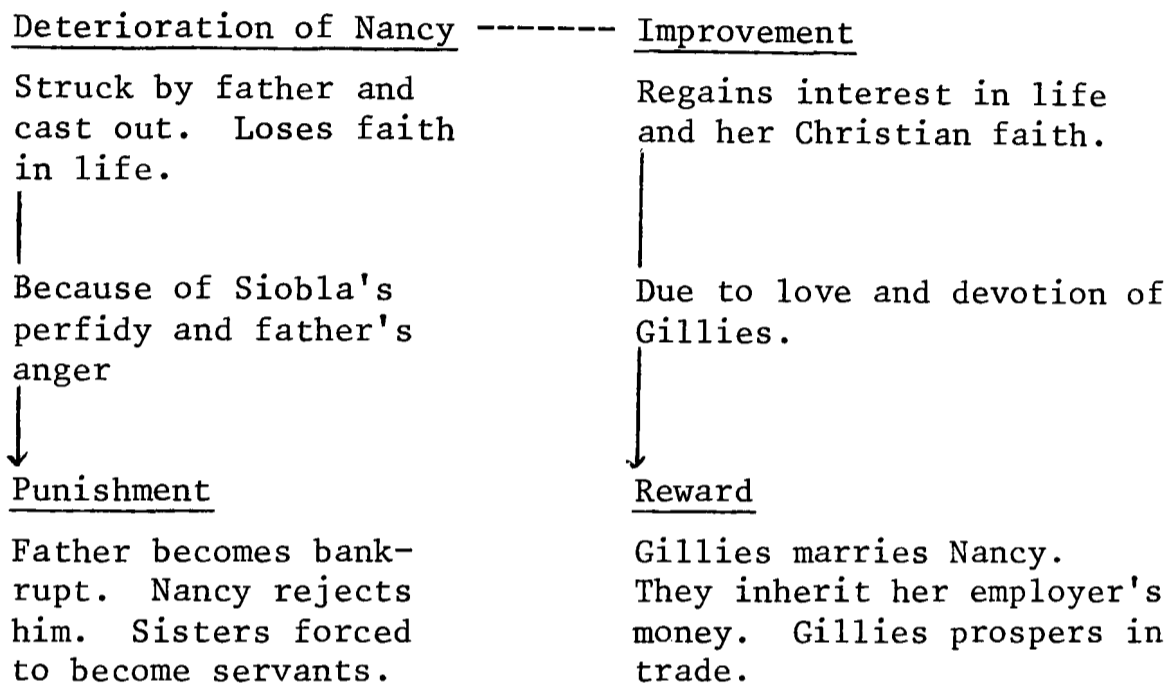
This basic shape can be seen behind much of Hogg's work, not always in the full form and sometimes with modifications but it shows that even where Hogg is not using traditional material like local history and even where he is being "creative" he is very often working within the tradition framework. An example can be found in "Emigration" which tells how a pedlar's generous gift allows two boys to remain with their family.



These schematic diagrams are rather far removed from the rambling informality of Hogg's narratives but they do have the virtue of highlighting the key movements behind a tale such as "Emigration" and showing too by their bareness how much Hogg does to give life to the basic patterns, making them much more than stark formulae. Even in this very simple tale there are modifications on the traditional structure. The anecdote is a simple one of spontaneous kindness, an important theme in Hogg's work. Through this act that other great positive in Hogg's world, family life, is saved. In Hogg's hands the tale is something more than a "Lack Liquidated" or the improvement of an unfortunate situation. This is ultimately made clear by the suppression of the reward function. It is true that in terms of the narrative, the family have nothing to offer the pedlar by way of material reward but, using not the deep structure of the narrative but the external form, the narrator voice, Hogg suggests a more intangible kind of reward and one in accord with the simple Christian morality that informs so much of his work. Thus the pedlar has taken, like Walter and Katherine of the Brownie, the way of human kindness but unlike Wat Pringle's family he will receive no great reward and at this point Hogg leaves the world of the folktale for that of orthodox Christian belief. This does not make the tale into one of Hogg's greatest but its simplicity makes it easier to see the kind of processes that are built upon and enlarge in more complex works.



"Nancy Chisolm", added to the Shepherd's Calendar<sup>54</sup> is also very useful in illustrating Hogg's basic allegiance to traditional structure. It is particularly interesting because it has none of the kind of traditional motifs connected with the supernatural that critics have tended to look for when pointing to Hogg's use of folk tradition and yet by examining the structure it can be shown that the tale has very close connections with traditional structure and function.



It is thus a truly "Cinderella"-like tale for there are indeed affinities with AT 510 with important modifications. Nancy's deterioration is a spiritual one as much as a physical one. Her first reaction is childish revenge and self-pity but the canker wrought by the break up of the family in this dramatic and apparently savage way lead her in effect to some sort of breakdown. She has to make the transition from child to adult for at the beginning of the tale she knows nothing of life, and, bound up in her own affairs, she treats the rumours of her father's difficulties lightly. Her test or penance is to spend some years caring for a cantankerous old man which helps to remedy her earlier lack of real understanding and eventually brings its own financial rewards. This is quite apposite as it was her father's lack of financial success that helped to bring matters to a

head. This does not yet account for her real recovery and spiritual growth which is prompted by Gillies who is in every real sense a donor. He gives her selfless love and devotion and apparently turns his back on the prospects he hoped to pursue in Edinburgh in order to do so. The "magical gift" that as it were he gives her is this love and a reawakened Christian faith, for, by playing on human frailty he is able to lead her into church where she comes back to life. Nancy faces several tests and surely she fails one when she rejects her father. It is only when she is brought back to an acknowledgement of Christian faith that she is able to forgive her father, which lends a new dimension to the traditional structure for it leads to the reversal of his punishment, a far cry from the classic folktale where the evil parent suffers a hideous fate. Once again it is Christian charity that is a key element in the remodelling of tradition. There are nonetheless some rather more worldly considerations for it is not just because of Gillies' devotion to Nancy that he succeeds - he also had the foresight to butter up the old man her employer. Hogg, then, has modified the traditional pattern and intensified it by adding extra layers of events and circumstances, yet in the end he does not trust the structure to do its job unaided and adds an explicit moral summary through the narrator voice, emphasising the didactic aim and attributing part of Nancy's tribulations to what he calls "youthful imprudence": "This is a true story, and it contains not one moral, but many, as every true portraiture of human life must do: it shows us the danger of youthful imprudence, of jealousy, and of unruly passions; but, above all, it shows, that without a due sense of religion there can be no true and disinterested love" (Shepherd's Calendar, II, p.253).

"Mary Melrose"<sup>55</sup> also shows the pattern of virtue rewarded with important variations as well as using religious faith to adapt a traditional structure. The story falls into two parts and in the first of these Mary, a good industrious lassie and a farmer's daughter, is trysted to meet the laird's son at Lucky McGaffie's, unaware that the young man with Mrs McGaffie's connivance plans to seduce her. Telling only half the truth to her father she gains his assent. This is a variation on the theme of an interdiction violated for she knows that she is doing something of which her father would not approve. Fortunately, as it transpires, she seeks help from an appropriate quarter: "And this night, what she could not tell her father, she on her knees confessed to her Maker, begging of him, that if in the simplicity of her heart she was going from the path of rectitude, he would pardon her, and take her under his fatherly protection that night and for ever" ("Mary Melrose", p.415). On her way to the appointment Mary meets with a spirit in the shape of her uncle who reveals the treachery and sends Mary home. Here too, then, religious faith assumes the functions of tester, helper and magical gift usually found in oral folktales. Mary herself does not appear to share these conclusions as she is piqued at the thought that her lover has divulged their appointment rather than shocked at his intentions. It is this naivety that leads her unawares into these scrapes. The story seems to bear some relation to AT 955, "The Robber Bridegroom", better known in Britain in the form of AT 955 C "Mr Fox"<sup>56</sup> (a new subtype assigned by Ernest W. Baughman). In this tale a girl sees her treacherous lover digging a grave for her and has him captured or punished, revealing to him her discovery. There are clear differences between this and "Mary Melrose", mainly because Hogg is building up to a different conclusion, but the element of forestalled treachery is there and we can also see that Hogg is combining and adapting his various strands of material, and enlarging them with the use of religious belief so that the whole

becomes one move in a more complicated tale.

The second part recounts the young laird's even more ambitious plans for compromising Mary. It is a more sophisticated account with the laird playing on Mary's virtues and innocence to lure her into going with him to a strange house. The familiar pattern reasserts itself when James' father, the old laird, driven by the knowledge of Mary's innate virtue and by the reproaches of her father, compels his son to do that which he most desires, marry Mary. Thus Mary's virtue is in the end rewarded by a good marriage and an estate to boot. The tale is perhaps not so satisfying to the modern reader who reacts unfavourably to the implied double standards, but James' character is brightened a little by the knowledge that the old laird was the real stumbling block as he would never have permitted his son to marry "beneath" him in this way. The reasons for his volte face are illuminating: "But you have turned that tables against me now. I could not have looked my own farmer nor his worthy brother in the face, knowing the injury they had received from my family. I found I could not even look my Maker in the face, nor ask his divine protection, while such a heinous injury remained unrepaired" ("Mary Melrose", p.419). Thus in a perverse way an intended evil was the only way of bringing about the desired happy ending. As the old laird is otherwise painted quite favourably there is no real suggestion that Hogg intends this to be a condemnation of class division and it must be accepted that once again the moral precepts of active Christian faith that act the part of "fairy godmother".

The pattern of virtue rewarded is one of the single most frequently recurring elements in Hogg's work. What Hogg continues to stress is that magnanimity in adversity and kindness to enemies is a higher and nobler form of virtue and in this way he modifies and

enlarges the basic folk paradigm. He is able to take the folk elements and make something more of them. He gives us Basil Lee<sup>57</sup> who, like the heroes of so many folktales, goes off to make his fortune, but unlike his folk predecessors he does not achieve a prestigious marriage to a princess and the heirdom to a great kingdom. Instead he weds an Inverness prostitute, albeit one of a superior character. Though she has acquired a fortune through the respectability lent her by Basil's pretending to be her brother, it expires when her son comes of age, leaving her and Basil addicted to leading a "uniformly irregular" life, subject to "a good deal or privation" (Winter Evening Tales, I, 97). They live more or less happily ever after, but not deliriously so, having achieved through experience a realistic and reasonably humane acceptance of the vicissitudes of an eventful life.

In a similar way "The Bridal of Polmood" is a disturbing tale for though Carmichael eventually succeeds in winning his Elizabeth and confounding the licentious Rothesay, neither of them is especially good and their liaison and Elizabeth's muddle-headed vanity and foolishness cause the disgrace, derangement and death of Norman Hunter whose fate is disproportionate to his only fault which was that he ventured "upon the married state, without due regard to congeniality of dispositions, feelings, and pursuits" (Winter Evening Tales, II, 135), thus abandoning himself to "unruly and misguided passions". Like some of Hardy's character, notably Farmer Boldwood whose situation is not dissimilar, Norman Hunter seems to be broken on the wheel of other people's fortunes. If Carmichael's is a successful quest for a mature marriage settlement, then Norman Hunter's tale is one of Beauty and the Beast (AT 425) where Beauty fails the tests and fails to save her husband thus delaying her own fulfilment. Elizabeth is so bound up in the exterior trappings of the quest for marriage that she fails to observe the tests of affection and compatibility that she must

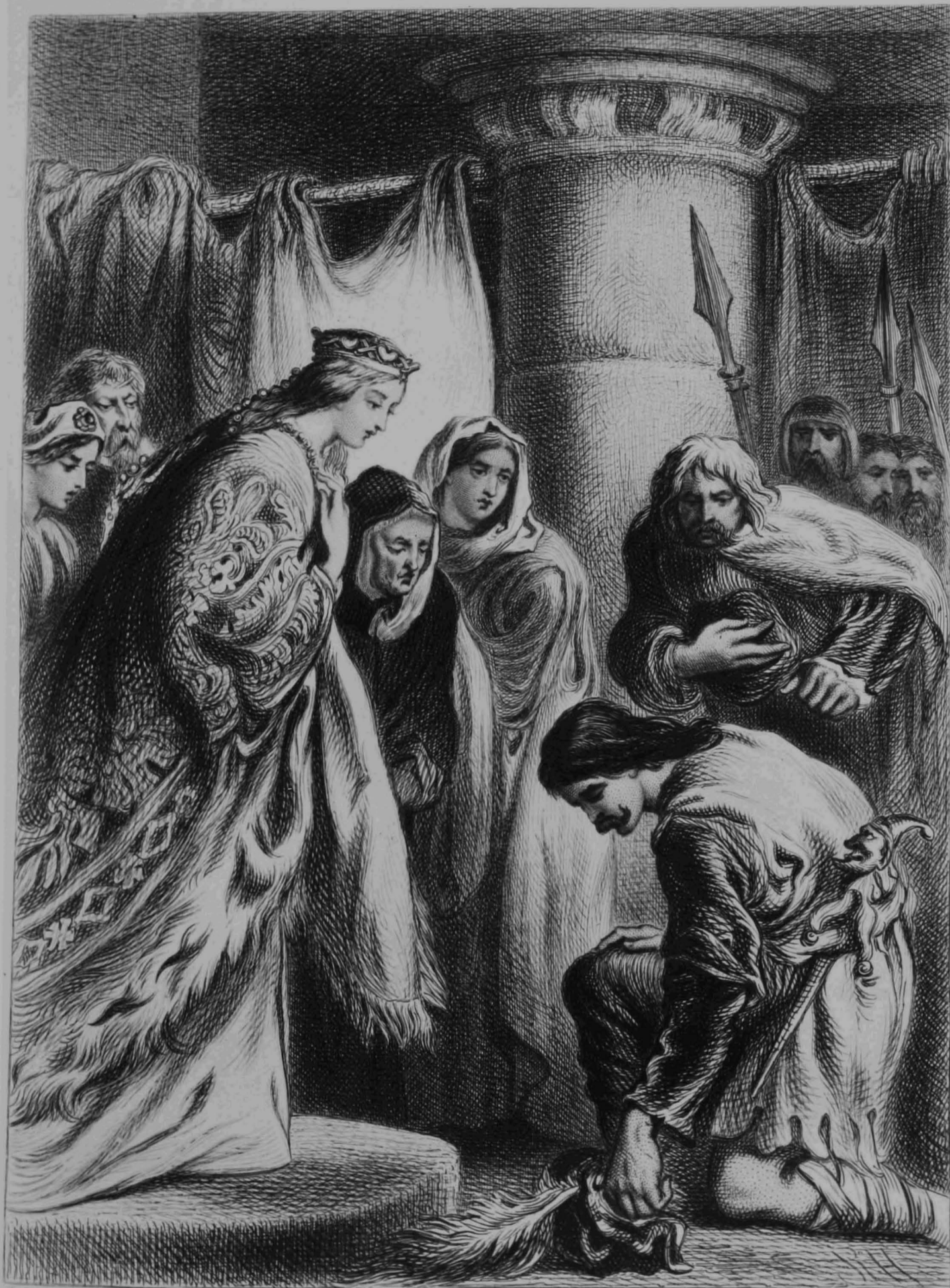
successfully pass before attaining the wealth that happy marriage is to bring. She achieves it at last after many fatal and appallingly expensive mistakes.

"Sound Morality"<sup>58</sup> is another example of the different ways in which Hogg extends the basic theme of virtue rewarded. It begins with an attack on the complacency and equivocation of those who think their sense of morality is sound incorporated in a discussion between two shepherds. The real tale is soon opened upon and it deals with a destitute mother and her daughter in a penny lodging house in a "bad" town. The landlady, Betty Rae, prods her other lodgers into taking an interest in the pair. She approaches the minister of the nearby "good" town for help but gets none and so Betty is left to care for them herself: "the singular act of benevolence raised her character so high among her motley customers, that they were proud of counting acquaintance with her; and her house became so well frequented, that she was obliged to take in an assistant, and raise the price of her lodgings" (p.745). True to the merit-reward theme, "the act of benevolence made Betty Rae's fortune" but it turns out that the couple's real benefactor was an old Highlander in no way connected with them, who took to begging in order to support them. The pattern is altered here for there is no reward for him as Betty receives all the credit though it is to be supposed that the recipients remember the kindness they received. As with "Emigration" the reader must assume that the reward for Christian benevolence is intangible but more profound than earthly wealth. Hogg uses the basic traditional pattern to set up and question anomalies of attitude and degrees of worth. Good works in themselves are not enough. There are three acts of kindness in the tale but which is the most significant? Betty takes a business risk by keeping the couple and does deserve credit, the old Highlander's extraordinary selflessness was purely inspired

by clan loyalty and the fact that the couple were from the Highlands though not actually related to him, otherwise he would have done nothing for them. In his own way the Irishman who takes the initiative by going out and finding bread and milk is just as important for he does what he is able to do without stopping to worry about his own position or whether the needy pair had any ties on him. The tale with its heartless minister and unlikely heroes works like a parable to illustrate the opening discussion. Despite the apparent transparency of the tale's structure and meaning there is a real subtlety of ideas beneath the surface.

It is perhaps in Queen Hynde,<sup>59</sup> usually regarded as a problem work,<sup>60</sup> that the use of folkloristic structural analysis proves most illuminating and stimulating. Although it is a verse piece it is also a narrative work and as such the Propp analytic model can successfully be applied to it. One of the clues to its Märchen - like status is to be found in its setting. As Gifford notes, the poem takes place "in 'that mythic period' when 'facts may be invented at pleasure,' and the result is a jumble of Norse berserkers, Celtic Christian priests, chivalrous knights, and very anachronistic, emancipated and wilful ladies" (Gifford, p.219). Linda Dégh points out that the Märchen "preserves traces of religious and social institutions of ancient society that affect the attitudes of the tale characters" (Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.64). She goes on to outline the typical setting:

The mythical Märchen - universe as briefly pictured here presents an atmosphere of the age of feudalism. It is a world of heroic virtues in which people acquire power by their good sword. Petty monarchs rule the world; they live at a day's horseback-ride from each other and can easily be upset by a valiant challenger. If one king declares war and attacks a neighbouring ruler, both mobilize their warriors and the two armies meet at a designated place, the "battle-field" where king fights against king, soldier against soldier, crossing swords in single combat. The royal entourage, the architecture



QUEEN HYNDIE.

III. 4. "Queen Hynde", The Works of the Ettrick Shepherd. (London, 1866), II, frontispiece.



of the palace, the garb of heroes and heroines, often skilfully depicted by story-book illustrators, evoke the spirit of the Middle Ages. (See Ill. 4)  
 (Dégh, "Folk Narrative", p.64)

This reflects the setting of Queen Hynde quite accurately, except that Hynde's challenger, Eric, comes from across the sea. Several of Hogg's tales employ this kind of indeterminate, "romantic" historical setting. He sometimes names some Stewart king, such as Robert II in the Three Perils of Man or James IV in "The Bridal of Polmood" and though the kings in "The Hunt of Eildon" and "Mador of the Moor" are unnamed, they are all in the same mould, for there is not really much attempt at giving a detailed historical background. Robin MacLachlan notes in discussing Robert II in the Three Perils that the figure, and indeed the period, is an amalgam (MacLachlan, p.182) and this is true of all of these tales. In short this historical background is an adaptation of the Märchen world of an unspecified age where the supernatural seems somehow more credible. The court of Mary Queen of Scots in the Queen's Wake would seem to be something of an exception for, as we noted earlier, there is more consideration of Mary's particular fate though much of the evidence is of a traditional nature rather than strict historical fact. Moreover, the court does not actually act as the setting for any of the tales and is therefore by definition only a background having no direct bearing on the action.

In Queen Hynde the overall sequence of the main plot seems to follow that described by Propp with the complication that the hero function appears to shift from Hynde to Eiden, the lost heir, half way through the action, making it one of the large group of tales in Hogg's work concerning disputed inheritances:

| <u>Functions</u>                                  | <u>Plot Summary</u>   |
|---|---|
| <u>Preparatory</u>                                |   |
| 1. $\alpha$ - initial situation                   | Hynde rules the entire kingdom of Scotland <sup>1</sup> (pp.3-5) which was left to her by her father on his death-  |
| 2. $\beta^2$ - death of parents                   | bed <sup>2</sup> (pp.5-11). She has a dream (pp.15-30) bidding her marry <sup>5</sup> and warning of danger from the Bull of Norway. <sup>3</sup>                               |
| 3. $\xi^2$ - information about the villain        | [Mediation/Linking: Hynde seeks help from Columba (pp.30-47)].  |
| 4. <u>A Villainy</u>                              | A hostile force is sighted. <sup>3</sup>  |
| A <sup>16</sup> - threat of forced matrimony      | Columba parleys with Eric who says he will wed Hynde or take the crown by force <sup>4</sup> (pp.92-98).  |
| A <sup>19</sup> - declaration of war              |   |
| 5. <u><math>\alpha</math> Lack, Insufficiency</u> | Hynde has no husband or obvious champion. <sup>5</sup> Columba is reminded in a dream of the lost heir to Scotland an an unkept promise to his father <sup>5</sup> (pp.143-48). |
| $\alpha^2$ - lack of helper                       |   |
| 6. <u>B Mediation</u>                             | Columba seeks the help of Prince Eiden and King Colmar <sup>6</sup> (pp.150-60).  |
| B <sup>1</sup> - call for help                    |   |
| 7. [C - consent to counteraction]                 | Eiden is eager <sup>7</sup> but Colmar forbids him to leave (pp.156-58).  |
| 8. [↑- departure of hero]                         | [Eiden sets out secretly <sup>8</sup> ].  |

D First Function of Donor

9. \*D<sup>7</sup> - request by donor in helpless situation
10. D<sup>1</sup> - test of hero
11. D<sup>10</sup> - offer of magical agent

Columba is driven off course in a gale<sup>9</sup> (p.161) and prays for help<sup>5</sup> to get him safely to Scotland.<sup>10</sup> McHouston appears (p.162) and saves the priests (pp.166-75). Columba tells McHouston about God and Jesus (p.177) and resolves to convert him (p.179)<sup>11</sup>.

12. E Reaction of the HeroE<sup>2</sup> - friendly response

McHouston is sympathetic<sup>12</sup> but it is not clear if he is actually converted<sup>13</sup> (pp.176-78).

13. F Acquisition/Receipt of Magical Agent

Possibly F neg (F-)-  
magical agent not transferred

14. G Transference to a Designated PlaceG<sup>3</sup> - the hero is led

Columba and Eiden hurry on to Hynde's court<sup>14</sup> (pp.179-80).

H Hero Struggles with Villain15. H<sup>2</sup> - contest, competition16. H<sup>1</sup> - fight in open field

Funeral games are held for Coulan Brande whom Eric kills. McHouston enters<sup>15</sup> and defeats Eric<sup>17</sup> on three occasions (pp.315-348).

I Victory Over Villain17. I<sup>2</sup> - victory in contest18. I<sup>1</sup> - victory in open fight

McHouston appears as Hynde's champion against Eric<sup>16</sup> and defeats him in single combat<sup>18</sup> (pp.392-400, pp.403-04).

19. K Liquidation of Misfortune or Lack  
 K<sup>4</sup> - liquidation of misfortune as direct result of previous actions
20. Q Recognition of Hero
21. W\* Wedding and Accession to Throne
- (Symbols used are those given by Propp in the order recorded by him.)
- Hynde chooses McHouston/Eiden as her husband<sup>21</sup> (pp.406-07) - thus re-establishing the true line and providing a leader to defeat the Norse army.<sup>19</sup>
- Some Scottish lords object to a peasant king (pp.410-11) but Eiden quells them and Colmar arrives, revealing Eiden's lineage<sup>20</sup> (pp.412-15) and offering aid to defeat the Norse who wish to avenge Eric's death.<sup>19</sup>
- (Note the repetition and altered order of functions compared with Propp.)

Thus the poem's key narrative relates in strict folktale form how Eiden regains his kingdom by his marriage with Hynde, attaining his own fully mature state re-establishing the old lineage and securing the Christianity of the kingdom all in this one key action. Because of the role transference and the shift of scene and action, it is not Eiden's parent but Hynde's whose death the reader witnesses in the Preparatory section. Eiden's situation is only revealed later and this is one way in which Hogg, as a literary writer amends the structure, compressing, altering and using dramatic irony. However, it is interesting to note that the first part which prepares for Eiden's arrival could and perhaps should be read as a parallel first move - a miniature tale the successful conclusion of which permits the action of the second part.

Preparatory

- |    |                                     |   |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | $\alpha$ - initial situation        | Columba's dream reveals that Eiden the true heir. <sup>1</sup> His kingdom was stolen <sup>6</sup> on his father's death <sup>2</sup> by Conran (Hynde's father). Colmar tells Eiden of Eric's attack <sup>5</sup> and forbids <sup>3</sup> him to go to Scotland. Eiden leaves <sup>4, 7</sup> secretly. |
| 2. | $\beta^2$ - death of parents        |   |
| 3. | $\gamma^1$ - interdiction           |   |
| 4. | $\delta^1$ - interdiction violated  |   |
| 5. | $\xi^2$ - information about villain |   |
| 6. | $\alpha$ - lack (of patrimony)      |   |
| 7. | $\uparrow$ - departure              |   |
|    |                                     |   |
| 8. | $D^1$ - test                        | Eiden has to save Columba <sup>8</sup> and is   |
| 9. | F - magical agent is transferred.   | converted to Christianity. <sup>9</sup>   |

In this analysis the main tale begins from here with  $B^1$  (call for help) and the understood functions  $B^5$  (transportation of banished hero) and  $\uparrow$  (departure) as Eiden leaves Ireland. These last two functions though implied are not actually stated because Hogg is employing dramatic irony with the last minute transfiguration of the hero when, as the Scots begin to grumble at being ruled by a peasant, Colmar enters and, recognising Eiden, reveals his royal status. The tale is thus perfectly resolved into the fullest and most satisfactory conclusion - ( $W^*$ ) marriage and a kingdom. With this double narrative it is interesting to note that it is a representative of God, the monk Columba, who acts in a double way as donor. This adds fresh significance to the interworking of religion and the supernatural in Hogg's work. Columba is consulted to solve a dream and is reminded of Eiden's existence in another. Eiden's success over Eric becomes possible partly because of Eric's growing superstitious fear that Eiden is a manifestation of Lok, "(Whom Scania's priests, a thing full odd!/ Hold both a demon and a god)" (p.343). Thus it is Eric's superstition that helps to advance the rightful cause. Moreover, though the text does

not make it very clear it would appear from the way Columba takes to the unknown McHouston, that the magical gift he as donor, gives the hero with which to conquer the villain is actually Christianity. Eiden, though impressed by Jesus (p.177), advances a countryman's case for the supremacy of the Sun (pp.177-78). Columba resolves to convert Eiden and we are told that:

When, in Dalrudhain's lonely bay,  
They render'd thanks to God that day,  
Than he, none show'd more humble frame,  
Nor lowlier bow'd at Jesus' name.  
(p.179)

This suggests that Eiden has accepted conversion or is at least sympathetic to Christianity. Later when fighting Eric at the moments when he asserts himself Eiden makes reference to God: "Ah! God forbid that king renown'd, / And head with sacred honours crown'd, / Should fall degraded to the ground!" (p.342) and "...I swear / By the great God whom I revere, / If proffer me thy royal throne, / The prize I'd have and that alone " (p.347). However, these do sound rather more like imprecations than affirmations of faith and it must be owned that, having won the coveted prize, the armour in which he meets Eric in battle, Eiden scampers off, "Loud jabbering something 'bout the Sun, / And kingly treasures fairly won" (p.348). But in the end it is he who begs Columba to pray to "Him, in whom my soul believes" (p.429) to destroy the pillaging Norsemen in Selma's tower who have sacrificed nine virgins at the order of the demented priest of Odin. The fight between the Norse and the Scots is not simply to determine supremacy but to establish Christianity against the sacrifices and savage rites of Odin. It is clear that Eiden is sent like an angel from God and in a real sense the poem with its joint insistence on the true inheritance and the compared religions, is as much a Christian epic as a national one. After all God is the supreme Donor and the poem ends with a show of God's might in the destruction

of Selma, not a celebration of earthly power and felicity.

The structure of traditional narrative is thus reshaped for literary use. There are ambiguities and disruptive devices as well as an intricate sub-plot, that of Haco and Wene which threads through, obscuring the main action. The whole is controlled by the narrator and his opening and closing remarks which are addressed to the maids of Dunedin. The traditional structure and the folktale element are subordinate to the Christian affirmation, in many senses providing simply an illustration of this theme. Douglas Gifford is right to say that despite some pedestrian and mundane passages the poem makes quite an enjoyable read: "But oddly enough, it entertains and is easy to read, probably because the plot is so simple to follow, though complex..." (Gifford, p.220). What makes the plot "simple to follow" is precisely its use of standard folk narrative structure, where the reader/audience, understanding the conventions of this form, knows precisely what to expect. The reader does not need Colmar's revelation to tell him that the mysterious saviour is Eiden, the true heir, but it is very satisfying when it comes as it ties the ends up in the way the folktale accustoms the reader to expect, giving the best kind of "happy ever after" ending. The poem is full of traditional resonances, including some of which Hogg may not have been consciously aware. This may be the case in the reference to the Bull of Norway, there being a folktale called the "Black Bull of Norroway", a version of AT 425A.

Thus although Hogg's primary sources are not available for comparison, it is still possible to show by the use of modern structural analysis techniques that Hogg's narratives follow the essential structure of traditional folk narrative quite closely. Queen Hynde gives perhaps the closest approximation to Märchen as a comparison with

Propp's functions shows. Important differences are nevertheless to be seen for although Propp claims that classic folktales display only a selection of functions these functions always follow the same order. Queen Hynde on the other hand has slight twists in the order with certain functions sometimes transposed or slightly out of order. Moreover, whereas folktales frequently have multiple heroes, where for instance two or more siblings go out into the world to seek their fortunes, Hogg's tale offers a slightly more complex variation. Hynde might be called the false hero in folkloristic terms but she fails no tests and intuitively seeks help from the only person with the key to the problem, namely Columba. In a sense Eiden is the "magic" discovery she needs to establish her safely on the throne. But the tale really belongs to Eiden who has to win back his patrimony as well as save Scotland and negotiate a successful and prestigious marriage. In Eiden's tale Hogg obscures functions in order to ensure the final grand transfiguration as the unknown hero becomes a prince. He has not done away with the traditional functions but merely expressed them in a covert way by changing the hero's designation. The device is obvious and the reader expects the outcome but tolerates it because of the conventions of the form, being quite pleased at the positive and tidy conclusion. The traditional model can win a certain amount of indulgence for Queen Hynde but it also invokes certain penalties. Although characters like Eric perhaps or Wene, who plays her part outside the traditional plot, are lively and colourful, there is no real development of character. Such distinctive features as there are seem to take place when Hogg departs from the bare bones of the traditional structure. The functions are almost too clear and exclusive and the outcome is too strictly predetermined, because of the logic of the folk structure, to allow for exploration or growth. Though Hogg breaks away from the traditional patterning in his



apostrophes to the reader at the beginning and end of each section, the intrusions add little apart from showing Hogg engaged in a one-way debate with his readership. Queen Hynde can succeed well as a story and perhaps also as an affirmation of Christianity but it fails to impress when subjected to the canons of high literature.

Perhaps because the fuller more intricate patterning was not available to him but also partly due to the demands of literature, Hogg had to move away from the strict form of the Märchen to concentrate on genres with more fluid texture. Thus his work has plenty of examples of legend, novelle, numskull stories and so forth. His concern in his fuller narratives was with function rather than structure, although he made varied use of the technical devices at his disposal, for reasons discussed above. Because of this the simpler schemata of Dundes and Brémond are useful, highlighting as they do the central areas around which the plot and meaning revolve. By these processes one can confirm Hogg's belief in the positive power of kindness, forgiveness and a pure spirit. These are abiding concerns of Hogg's and they are the interests which help to flesh out Hogg's characters and make them more tangible than the one-dimensional characters of the stricter forms of folk narrative.

## Conclusion

The evidence of the preceding chapters shows that traditional folklore played an extremely important role in the development of Hogg's work. Moreover its influence was felt on a number of levels. Traditional folklore provided a substantial part of the content of Hogg's work. It could take the form of actual folktales for which analogues can be found elsewhere and it undoubtedly included tales more or less accurately reported from the traditional tale tellers both of his family and of the community at large. In addition to this all Hogg's notes and even the simplest tale or prose discussion is coloured and enlivened by the inclusion of smaller, less easily classified items of folksay, such as proverbs and expressions, that show not only the detail and extent of Hogg's familiarity with folk tradition but also the naturalness and ease with which he expressed himself in its most characteristic idioms.

On a deeper level, traditional folklore provided him with forms through which to express himself. At the simplest, most unsophisticated stage of his work this meant parodying popular songs but this was soon extended. The nature of popular sentiment in Hogg's day meant that though he could contribute something original to the body of Scottish Song, the popular forms and their subject matter were too hackneyed and too restrictive to offer him any real challenge. The contemporary interest in folklore, revealed to Hogg primarily through the antiquarian enterprises of Scott, enabled him to channel his nascent literary abilities and to avail himself of his extensive knowledge of folk forms and folk culture. His literary and technical skill developed quickly so that there was no longer any need for him to stick rigidly to the traditional forms and he perfected a looser

structure which retained much of the original rationale of folk tradition while developing character, motive and setting in a way that none of the folk genres do.

In yet another even more subtle way the values of folk tradition and the particular folk community in which he grew up expressed themselves through the treatment of folk material and even by means of the system of values he celebrated throughout his work. Hogg was recording folk material and modifying it for presentation in a literary form. However, he did more than simply fossilise items of Border tradition, he preserved their context by relating how and in what circumstances various superstitions occurred and by describing the community and the way of life of the people to whom they mattered. Moreover he preserved the function accurately, showing what values and beliefs the superstitions and legends bolstered and supported. As a result the values Hogg supports are essentially Christian and conservative. He adheres to the idea of community, of a social equipoise in which family loyalty and a basic caring humanism are pre-eminent. One could seek to narrow this human sympathy by saying that it is the direct expression of Hogg's sympathies for Moderate Presbyterianism and it is certain that religious debate plays an important part in Hogg's work at all stages. Despite this, when one looks at the full range of Hogg's work one finds that while his greatest sympathy may lie with one particular view, many of his characters still draw support even when they hold no religious views or even views opposed to Hogg's own. Time and time again Hogg asks the reader's praise and support for the character who places human fellowship above the calls of party faction and he is even aware of the potential corruption and danger of the Protestant faith he reveres were it ever to be applied too rigidly or taken to extremes.

In these ways Hogg transcends the scope and vision of his traditional originals. He owes much to the colour and vigour of the folk material but most of the time he contributes a freshness of eye and a directness of expression that ensures success. This is not always so and there are occasions when he overworks an old theme, overburdens the action or clogs the characterisation with over-sentimentality. This is particularly true of his treatment of young women (frequently mothers of illegitimate infants) who are jilted by their lovers. It can also be sensed from time to time in his presentation of country folk. Much of this may be due to the problems of trying to ensure the regular appearance of his work in periodicals and annuals in order to receive the much needed fees. However he was not always in complete harmony with tradition. The community into which he was born had already reached a transitional state and the modern inquirer has no way of being able to tell how much or, more pertinently, in what ways this had affected the various genres of folk literature. Hogg himself received a reasonable education which he augmented by reading widely, so that while he had access to much traditional information, his own transitional development and the etiolated state of this tradition meant that he was somewhat contradictory in his attitude towards various aspects of folk tradition.

It is for this reason that he appears on some occasions to be whole-hearted in his support of tradition while at other times he undercuts its power and significance. This is especially true in matters of superstition where the received view among the well-educated literary set was perforce much at variance with the attitude of the traditional community for whom these beliefs still retained some echoes of their former significance. On the other hand, he seems always to have retained a great respect for the authenticity of local history

drawn from family sources. This personal equivocation played a large part in the adaptation and development of literary techniques to obscure authorship and confuse the issue of editorial bias. It is a useful means of undercutting or distancing traditional beliefs to which he does not subscribe and of showing his sophistication to his literary audience to avoid charges of credulousness. Perhaps more significantly, it helps him to exploit the gap between appearance and reality. Through this he can examine the brutality of war, the hollowness of social conventions and the terrifying dependence of man on the frail evidence of his senses.

Hogg's creative use of folk literature and tradition is a constant characteristic of his work and his reworking of themes and ideas means that the preoccupations of the Confessions for instance, are part of a natural progression. 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. Hogg always took a lively interest in the trends of contemporary literature as the parodies of the Poetic Mirror show. By applying his literary interest to his knowledge of folklore and folk literature he was able to develop in an original and fruitful way. The particular nature of Hogg's development was encouraged a good deal by the flourishing market for periodicals and annuals but it also has repercussions beyond its own immediate context. The interaction of folk tradition and literature is an important question in the study of literature and much that can be learned from Hogg's use of folk tradition could very usefully be applied to Emily Bronte's work or R.L. Stevenson's stories of the supernatural or Thomas Hardy's novels which, like Hogg's work, make suggestive use of folk motifs and the stark morality of the Märchen and ballads.

Appendix I



Detail from Ainslie's map of Selkirkshire, published, 1773.



## Appendix II

Hogg to Walter Scott

Ettrickhouse June 30 1802

Dear Sir. I have been perusing your minstrelsy very diligently for a while past, and it being the first book I ever perused which was written by a person I had seen and conversed with, the consequence hath been to me a most sensible pleasure: for in fact it is the remarks and modern pieces that I have delighted most in, being as it were personally acquainted with many of the antient pieces formerly. My mother is actually a living miscellany of old songs I never believed that she had half so many until I came to a trial: there are few in your collection of which she hath not a part, and I should by this time have had a great number written for your amusement, thinking them all of great antiquity and lost to posterity, had I not luckily lighted upon a collection of songs in two volumes, published by I know not who, in which I recognized about half-a-score of my mothers best songs, almost word for word. No doubt I was piqued but it saved me much trouble paper and ink; for I am carefully avoiding every thing which I have seen or heard of being in print, altho' I have no doubt that I shall err, being acquainted with almost no collections of that sort but I am not afraid that you too will mistake. I am still at a loss with respect to some: such as The Battle



of Flodden, beginning "From Spey to the border", a long poetical piece on the Battle of Bannockburn, I fear modern, the Battle of the Boyne, Young Bateman's Ghost, all of which; and others which I cannot mind I could mostly recover for a few miles travel were I certain they could be of any use; concerning the above, and I might have mentioned May Colin and a duel, between two friends, Graham an Bewick undoubtedly very old, you must give me information in your answer. I have already scraped together a considerable quantity.—Suspend your curiosity Mr Scott, you will see them when I see you, of which I am as impatient as you can be to see the songs for your life. 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 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 th[ink] you would despise a shepherds "humble cot an' hamely fare" as Burn 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 surprized to find that the songs in your collection differ so widely from my mothers. Is Mr Herds M.S. genuine? I suspect it. Jamie Telfer differs in many particulars. Johny Aarmstrong of Guilnockie [is] another song altogether. I have seen a verse of my mothers way, called Johny Armstrongs last goodnight, cited in the Spectator, and another in Boswels Journal it begins "Is there ne'er a man in fair Scotland?" do you know if this is in print Mr Scott? In the Tale of Tomlin, the whole of the interlude about the horse and the hawk is a distinct song altogether. Clerk Saunders is nearly the same with my mothers, until that stanza which ends, "was in the bowr last night wi' me", then with another verse or two which are not in yours she ends Clerk Saunders. All the rest of the song in your edition, is another song altogether, which my mother

hath mostly likewise and I am perswaded from the change in the stile that she is right, for it is scarce consistent with the forepart of the ballad. I have made several editions and variations out, to the printed songs for your inspection, but only when they could be inserted without disjointing the songs as they are at present; to have written all the variations would scarcely be possible and I thought would embarass you exceedingly. I have recovered another half verse of Old Maitlan and have rhymed it thus.

Remember piercy oft the Scot  
hath cour'd aneath thy hand  
For ilka drap o' Maitlens blood  
I'll gie thee riggs o' land

The two last lines only are original: you will easily percieve that they occur in the very place where we suspected a want. I am surprized to hear that this song is suspected by some to be a modern forgery; this will be best proven 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 place; it is but lately emerged from barbarity, and till this present age the poor illiterate people in these Glens knew of no other entertainment on the long winter nights than in repeating and listening to those feats of their ancestors, which I believe to be handed down inviolate, from father to son for many generations although no doubt, had a copy of them been taken of them at the end of every fifty years, there must have been some difference, which the repeaters would have insensibly fallen into merely by the change in terms in that period. I believe it is thus that many very antient songs have been modernized which yet to a connoissieur will bear visible marks of antiquity. The Maitlen for instance, exclusive of its mode of description, is all composed of words, which would mostly every one both spell and pronounc[e] in the very same dialect that was spoken some centuries ago.

I formed a project of collecting all the tenors of the tunes to which these old songs were sung, and having them set to music: thinking this requisite<sup>[e]</sup> as the book had the title of the Minstrelsy: but I find it impossible; I might compose kind of tunes to some of them and adapt others, but can in no wise learn the original ones; I find it was only the subject matter whic<sup>[h]</sup> the old people concerned themselves about; and any kind of tunes that th<sup>[ey]</sup> had they always make one to serve a great many songs.

My uncle hath never had any tune whatsoever, saving that which he saith his prayer to: and my mothers is quite gone by reason of age and frailty, and as they have had a strong struggle with the world ever since I was born, in all which time having seldom or never repeated many of the songs, her memory of them is much impaired. My uncle said I! He is, Mr Scott, the most incorrigible man alive. I cannot help telling you this: he came one night professedly to see me and crack with me as he said: thinking this a fair opportunity, I treated him with the best the house could afford, gave him <sup>[a]</sup> hearty glass, and to humour him talked a little of religion, thus I <sup>[set]</sup> him onn, but Good L—d! had you heard him, it was impossible t<sup>[o get]</sup> him off again; in the course of his remarks he had occation to cite Ralp Ersk<sup>[ine sun]</sup>dry times, he run to the dale where the books lay, got the sermons, and <sup>[read me]</sup> every one of them from which he has a citation, what a deluge was poured on me of errors, sins, lusts, covenants broken burnt and buried, legal teachers, patronage, and what not! In short, my dram was lost to my purpose; the mentioning of a song put him in a passion.

Give my kindest services to Mr Masser if you see him, and tell him I am very proud of the high encomiums he bestows on my Sandy Tod,

and much more so of his offers of friendship and assistance, in revising my insignificant pieces. I will write to him as soon as I get his direction which I will get as soon as I see Mr Laidlaw.

pardon my dear sir the freedom I have taken in addressing you, it is my nature; and I could not resist the impulse of writing to you any longer, let me hear from you as soon as this comes to your hand and tell me when you will be in Ettrick Forest, and suffer me to subscribe myself

Sir

Your most humble  
and affectionate servt.

James Hogg

Note: Andrew Mercer, editor of North British Magazine, first informed William Laidlaw of Scott's ballad searches. (See Laidlaw, pp.66-67, 73).

Ralph Erskine, (1685-1752) - Scottish seceding divine, many of whose poems and sermons were published. (See Dictionary of National Biography).

Review of the texts and sources of traditional ballads and songs collected by Hogg - 1801-1807

|    | <u>Hogg's Title</u>   | <u>Child Equivalent</u>                                      | <u>Location of MS</u>                | <u>State of Text</u> | <u>Source, contributor or additional commentary</u>  |
|----|---|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1  | The Death of Sir Niel Stuart and Donald McVane, Esq             | None   | <u>Scottish Pastorals</u> , pp.49-55 | 27 verses            | From a chapbook?   |
| 2  | The Battle of Flodden   | Child 168  | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              | "...all of which; and others which I cannot mind I could mostly recover for a few miles travel were I certain they could be of any use ..." (NLS MS 3874 f.114).   |
| 3  | The Battle of Bannockburn                                       | None   | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              |  |
| 4  | The Battle of the Boyne   | None   | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              |  |
| 5  | Young Bateman's Ghost   | Child 53 "Young Beichan" or Child 77 "Young William's Ghost" | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              |  |
| 6  | May Colin   | Child 22 "Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight"                    | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              | "... concerning the above and I might have mentioned <u>May Colin</u> and a duel between two friends, <u>Graham an Bewick</u> undoubtedly very old..." (NLS MS 3874 f.114).  |
| 7  | Graham an Bewick  | Child 211 "Bewick and Graham"                                | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              | "I cannot at this time have Grame and Bewick the only person who hath it being absent at a harvest ..." (Letter to Scott, 10 September 1801-03, NLS MS 877 f.243.) (This might suggest that this letter came after NLS MS 3874 f.114 and would therefore date it in 1802, as Vol. 3 of the <u>Minstrelsy</u> appeared in Spring 1803.) See <u>Addendum</u> .   |
| 8  | Jamie Telfer  | Child 190 "Jamie Telfer of the Fair of Dodhead"              | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              | "I am surprized to find that the songs in your collection differ so widely from my mothers .... Jamie Telfer differs in many particulars. <u>Johny Aarmstrong</u> of <u>Guilnockie</u> [is] another song altogether. I have seen a verse of my mothers way called <u>Johny Armstrong's last goodnight</u> , cited in <u>the Spectator</u> , and another in <u>Boswels Journal</u> it begins 'Is there ne'er a man in fair Scotland?'" (NLS MS 3874 f.114). |
| 9  | Johny Armstrong of Guilnockie/ Johny Armstrong's Last Goodnight | Child 169  | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              | "...ask him [Scott] if, in his researches, he hath lighted on that of <u>John Armstrong</u> of <u>Gilnockie Hall</u> , as I can procure him a copy of that. My Uncle says it happened in the same reign with that of <u>Murray</u> ..." (Letter to Laidlaw, 20 July 1801), "Abbotsford Notanda", p.117 and EUL La. III. 584).  |
| 10 | The Tale of Tomlin/   | Child 39 "Tam Lin"   | NLS MS 3874 f114                     | no text              | "In the Tale of Tomlin, the whole of the interlude about the horse and the hawk is a distinct song altogether" (NLS MS 3874 f.114).  |
| 11 | Another   | Child 43 "The Broomfield Hill"                               |                                      |                      | Scott adopted this advice and printed a full version of "The Broomfield Hill" with the borrowed stanzas in their proper place ( <u>Minstrelsy</u> [1803], III, 269-74).  |

| <u>Hogg's Title</u>                      | <u>Child Equivalent</u>          | <u>Location of MS</u>                            | <u>State of Text</u>                               | <u>Source, contributor or additional commentary</u>   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 12 Clerk Saunders/                       | Child 69                         | NLS MS 3874 f114                                 |  | "Clerk Saunders is nearly the same with my mothers until that stanza which ends, 'was in the bow'r last night wi' me,' then with another verse or two which are not in yours she ends Clerk Saunders. All the rest of the song in your edition, is another song altogether, which my mother hath mostly like wise..." (NLS MS 3874 f114).   |
| 13 Another                               | Child 77 "Sweet William's Ghost" | NLS MS 877 f256v                                 | 3 verses   | "...this ballad is mixed with another according to my mother's edition..." (NLS MS 877 f256v). Printing these three stanzas, Scott said: "The three concluding verses have been recovered since the first edition of this work; and I am informed by the reciter, that it was usual to separate from the rest, that part of the ballad which follows the death of the lovers, as belonging to another story. For this, however there seems no necessity, as other authorities give the whole as a complete tale" ( <u>Minstrelsy</u> [1803], II, 34). Hogg's MS gives these stanzas the title "Clerk Saunders" but Child includes them as variant of 77, "Sweet William's Ghost", which seems more appropriate. |
| 14 The Outlaw Murray                     | Child 305                        | "Abbotsford Notanda", p.117, EUL MS La. III. 584 | no text  | "I was talking to my uncle concern- them "the old ballads , and he tells me they are mostly escaped his memory, and they really are so - in so much, that of the whole long transactions betwixt the Scottish king and Murray, he cannot make above half-a-dozen of stanzas so metre, and these are wretched" (Letter to Laidlaw, 20 July 1801, "Abbotsford Notanda", p.115 and EUL MS. La. III. 584).  |
| 15 Tushilaw's Lines                      | None                             | NLS MS 3874 f194                                 | 6 verses + traditions                              | "This hath been a popular song in Ettrick Forest since the memory of the oldest person living there and hath been sung sometimes with and sometimes without the second part which indeed in its manner differs much and is not equal to the first part I was told by an acquaintance that once on singing it to some people residing low on Eskdale they informed him that the second part was sung in that country and known by the appellation of Lady Breakenhill's Lines..." (NLS MS 3874 f194). Hogg gave "Tushilaw's Lines" as the tune for one of his own songs, "'Twas up yon' wild an' lonely glen", published 1801 ( <u>Scottish Pastorals</u> , p.56).   |
| 16 The Answer (Lady Breakenhill's Lines) | None                             | NLS MS 3874 f194                                 | 5 verses + notes                                   |   |
| 17 The Battle of Otterburn               | Child 161                        | NLS MS 877 f23+ f243                             | 11 verses + 27 verses, 3 lines, notes & traditions | "...as for the scraps of Otterburn which I have got they seem to have been some confused jumble made by some person who hath learned both the songs which you have..."<br><br>"This ballad which I have collected from two different people a crazy old man and a woman deranged in her mind...I have been obliged to take much of it in plain prose..." (NLS MS 877 f243).   |

| <u>Hogg's Title</u>   | <u>Child Equivalent</u>                                   | <u>Location of MS</u>               | <u>State of Text</u>  | <u>Source, contributor or additional commentary</u>   |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| 18 Old Mai[t]land<br>(printed by Scott<br>as "Auld Maitland") | None  | NLS MS 877 f144<br>NLS MS 3874 f114 | 64 verses<br>+ 2 lines<br>2 lines +<br>short<br>notes   | "...I have taken the opportunity of again pumping my old friend's memory and have recovered some more lines and half lines of Otterburn of which I have become somewhat enamour'd these I have been obliged to arrange somewhat myself as you will see below..." (NLS MS 877 f23).<br><br>Laidlaw heard from a serving girl at Blackhouse that Hogg's grandfather sang "Auld Maitland": "I forthwith wrote to Hogg himself, requesting him to exert himself to procure the ballad called 'Auld Maitland.' In a week or two I received his reply with the ballad as he had copied it from the recitation of his Uncle Will of Phawhope, corroborated by his mother, and that both said they had learned it from their father (a still elder Will of Phawhope), and an old man called Andrew Muir..." (Laidlaw, p.67).<br><br>"I am surprised to hear that this song is suspected by some to be a modern forgery; this will be best proven by most of the old people hereabouts having a great part of it by heart..." (NLS MS 3874 f114).<br><br><u>Memoir</u> , pp.136-37 describes Margaret Laidlaw performing this for Scott and citing Andrew Moor and Baby Mettlin as antecedent sources. |
| 19 Lamkin   | Child 93  | NLS MS 877 f245                     | 20 verses   | No commentary or source given.  |
| 20 The Gay Goshawk  | Child 96  | NLS MS 877 f245<br>NLS MS 877 f256  | 2 verses<br>(as emen-<br>dations<br>to the<br><u>Minstrely</u> )<br>10 verses<br>(further<br>emendations) | "I was very fond of this ballad (the gay goshawk) from my childhood..." (NLS MS 877 f256). He compares it to <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> and "Gil Morice" to "the tragedy of Douglas" (Home's play).  |
| 21 Lament of the<br>Border Widow                              | See Child 106<br>"The Famous<br>Flower of<br>Serving Men" | NLS MS 877 f245v                    | 6 verses +<br>2 lines<br>(cancelled)  | No commentary or source given.  |
| 22 Lord Barnaby   | Child 81<br>"Little<br>Musgrave and<br>Lady Barnard"      | NLS MS 877 f246v                    | 25 verses   | No commentary or source given.  |
| 23 Dowie Houms o'<br>Yarrow                                   | Child 214   | NLS MS 877 f250                     | 15 verses<br>+ tra-<br>ditions  | "Tradition placeth the event [o]n which this song is founded very early..." (NLS MS 877 f250). No informant specified.  |
| 24 Dowie Banks of<br>Yarrow                                   | Child 214   | NLS MS 877 f35                      | 11 verses   | No commentary or informant given. Attributed to Hogg in Child, IV, See item 28.   |
| 25 Johnie Scot  | Child 99  | NLS MS 877 f256v                    | 33 verses   | "The repeater of the above song called the hero once or twice Johny Scot which I omitted in the MS..." (NLS MS 877 f256v).  |
| 26 Lament of the<br>Queen's Marie                             | Child 174<br>"Mary<br>Hamilton"                           | NLS MS 877 f256v                    | 1 verse +<br>half line  | No commentary or source given.  |

| <u>Hogg's Title</u>                     | <u>Child Equivalent</u>             | <u>Location of MS</u>                | <u>State of Text</u>                     | <u>Source, contributor or additional commentary</u>  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
|   |                                     | NLS MS 877 f258                      | 12 verses                                | No commentary or source given. Unattributed in Child but attributed to Hogg by Keith Harry, (I, 172, 182). This MS is written in copperplate, the lines having been blank ruled, but even allowing for the extreme care with which this text was written down, the hand shows none of the characteristics of Hogg's autograph.   |
| 27 Laminton/<br>Lochinvar               | Child 221<br>"Katharine<br>Jaffray" | Grierson, I, 172                     | no text                                  | "Among Hogg's Ballads was a complete & curious set of Laminton or Lochinvar which I incline to adopt as better than that in The Minstrelsy" (Letter from Scott to William Laidlaw, 1803, Grierson, I, 172).  |
| Ballad called<br>Foul Play              |                                     | <u>Three Perils of<br/>Man, p.36</u> | 1 verse                                  | Fragment included as chapter heading.  |
| 28 The Duel of<br>Wharton and<br>Stuart | None                                | <u>Minstrelsy (No<br/>MS extant)</u> | 13 verses +<br>15 verses &<br>traditions | "My correspondent, James Hogg, adds the following note to this ballad: 'I have heard this song sung by several old people...'" ( <u>Minstrelsy</u> [1803], III, 132).  |
| 29 Lord William                         | Child 68<br>"Young<br>Hunting"      | <u>Minstrelsy (No<br/>MS extant)</u> | 15 verses                                | "This ballad was communicated to me by Mr James Hogg" ( <u>Minstrelsy</u> [1803], III, 264). A note from Hogg added that the ballad was "much liked, and very much sung, in this neighbourhood. I can trace it back several generations, but cannot hear of its ever being in print. I have never heard it with any considerable variation, save that one reciter called the dwelling of the feigned sweetheart, Castleswa" ( <u>Minstrelsy</u> 1803, III, 264).   |
| 30 Earlington's<br>Daughter             | Child 8<br>"Erlinton"               | NLS MS 877 f33                       | 17 verses                                | Attributed to Hogg in Child and printed alongside a version recorded from Nellie Laidlaw by William Laidlaw. Child says: "The differences are purely verbal, and both copies may probably have been derived from the same reciter; still, since only seven or eight verses in sixty-eight agree, both will be given entire, instead of a list of variations" (Child, IV, 445).<br><br>Child did not see the Abbotsford MSS which were transcribed for him by William Macmath <sup>1</sup> who probably first ascribed this text to Hogg. The handwriting of this item is not a distinctive example of Hogg's hand and it might indeed be possible that this and the item which accompanies it, "The Dowie Banks of Yarrow" (f35), were actually taken down by Laidlaw. |
| 31 The Battle of<br>Philliphaugh        | Child 202                           | <u>Wars, III, 25</u>                 | traditions<br>but no<br>ballad<br>text   | "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 when he sung 'The Battle of Philliphaugh,' which was generally every night during winter" ( <u>Wars</u> , III, 25).<br><br>"This account of mind is wholly from tradition, - from the accounts given me by my mother and uncle..." ( <u>Wars</u> , III, 34).  |



| <u>Hogg's Title</u>                        | <u>Child Equivalent</u>                  | <u>Location of MS</u>                                      | <u>State of Text</u>                    | <u>Source, contributor or additional commentary</u>   |
|--|--|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |   | Further traditions about the battle are ascribed by him to "a very old man named Adam Tod, than whom I never met with one better versed in the historical traditions of the district" ( <u>Wars</u> , III, 35).   |
|  |  |  |   | "A tradition, annexed to a copy of this ballad, transmitted to me by Mr James Hogg..." ( <u>Minstrelsy</u> [1803], III, 170). Keith Harry notes: "It is not clear whether Scott is referring to the ballad text or to the 'tradition' or even to both items, but Hogg's connection with the ballad is firmly established" (Harry, I, 219). The tradition from Hogg which Scott prints in his note is later used by Hogg in <u>Wars</u> , III, 35-44 and he says it is "a tradition related over the whole country, and which I know to be a literal fact" ( <u>Wars</u> , III, 35). |
| 32 The Battle of Loudounhill               | Child 205<br>"Loudon Hill, or, Drumclog" | <u>Minstrelsy</u>  | 16 verses                               | No source or informant given. Tentatively attributed to Hogg by Harry (I, 219). See next item.  |
| 33 The Battle of Bothwell-bridge           | Child 206                                | <u>Minstrelsy</u>  | 16 verses                               | "This copy is given from recitation" ( <u>Minstrelsy</u> [1803], III, 217).<br><br>Keith Harry (I, 219-21) suggests that the <u>Minstrelsy</u> texts of items 29, 30 and 31 be attributed to the collection of James Hogg because they are linked in Scott's correspondence and because, as M.R. Dobie indicates, <sup>2</sup><br><br>Scott first mentions them after the trip to Yarrow and Ettrick on which he met Hogg and heard Margaret Laidlaw "chaunt" "Auld Maitland". The evidence is suggestive but not conclusive.   |
| 34 "The heron flew east..."                | None                                     | <u>Mountain Bard</u><br>(1807), pp.13-14                   | 16 lines<br>(in couplets)               | "...a beautiful old rhyme which I have often heard my mother repeat, but of which she knew no tradition ..." (1807, p.13). See also Edith Batho's discussion of this text (Batho, pp.30-36).  |
| 35 "And the rough Hoggs of Fauldshope..."  | None                                     | 1807, pp.66-67<br><br>NLS MS 3874 f55                      | 12 lines + traditions<br><br>traditions | Hogg relates that his ancestors farmed Fauldshope and that one William Hogg was Harden's champion. "My father adds that the said William was greatly in favour with Harden..." (Letter to Scott, 22 February 1805, NLS MS 3874 f55).  |
| 36 "Caryfran Gan's they're very strait..." | None                                     | 1807, p.89   | 16 lines + traditions                   | "Part of an old ballad is still current in that neighbourhood [Polmoody], which relates their adventures, and the difficulties they laboured under for want of meat, and in getting hold of the sheep during the night. Some of the country people, indeed, ascribe these depredations to the persecutors..." (1807, p.88).   |
| 37 Earl Douglas                            | Child 160<br>"The Knight of Liddesdale"  | <u>Scots Magazine</u> ,<br>67(1805), 701<br><br>1807, p.97 | 1 verse                                 | "The first stanza of this Song, as well as the history of the event to which it refers, is preserved by Hume of Godscroft in his history of the House of Douglas" (First printed in <u>Scots Magazine</u> , 67[1805], 701, reprinted in 1807, p.97 with minor textual emendations).   |

| <u>Hogg's Title</u>    | <u>Child Equivalent</u> | <u>Location of MS</u>         | <u>State of Text</u>                              | <u>Source, contributor or additional commentary</u>  |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
|                        |                         |                               | 5 full +<br>2 half<br>verses<br>from<br>tradition | Hogg "lighted upon a few scraps, which he firmly believes to have formed a part of that very ancient ballad. The reader may judge for himself. The first verse is from Hume; and all those printed in italics [1807 - "within brackets" ] are as near the original as rhyme and reason will permit" ( <u>Scots Magazine</u> , 67[1805], 70).<br><br>"Some fragments of this ballad are still current, and will be found in the ensuing work," says Scott, <u>Minstrelsy</u> , I, 221, note, ed. 1833. It may be Sir Walter became convinced that these fragments were not genuine; at any rate, they do not appear in his collection edition" (Child, III, 288). |
| 38 The Gypsy<br>Laddie | Child 200               | "Marvellous<br>Doctor", p.361 | No text   | "...my mother...cited Johnie Faa's seduction of the Earl of Cassilis's lady, so well known in lowland song..." (Note this does not show that she could perform a version of the song.)   |

Addendum

7. continued

Scott wrote to Laidlaw: "I have used your copy of ['Graham and Bewick'] literally with the exception of a verse which I heard Hogg repeat in which he made the conclusion rather different in word although not in sense..." (21 January 1803, Grierson, I, 169).

In trying to establish the nature of Margaret Laidlaw's singing repertoire it seems useful to set out those titles collected by Hogg for which a text exists and those for which he claimed to be able to procure texts, documenting wherever possible the informant for each piece. This appendix deals mainly with those items collected or otherwise noted by Hogg in the period between 1801-03 when he helped William Laidlaw to collect ballads texts for Scott, who was preparing the Minstrelsy, but includes traditional ballad and song texts printed by Hogg up to the appearance of the Mountain Bard. These are included as Hogg began to think about material for many of the Mountain Bard pieces as a result of his work for the Minstrelsy. Thus the letter to Laidlaw, incompletely printed in "Abbotsford Notanda" (pp.115-17) concludes with a list of local histories which Hogg offers Mercer, including the fall of the Tushilaw family, the murder of the heir of Thirlstane and "the death of the Baron of Akewood and his brother in law on Yarrow" for which he says there is no ballad (EUL MS La. III, 584).

A good summary of Hogg and Scott's meeting and transactions during this period can be found in M.R. Dobie's article (Dobie, pp.79-80). All the evidence shows that at this period Hogg was keenly involved in finding and recording texts for Scott but after the appearance of the Minstrelsy ballads are quickly superceded in Hogg's correspondence by discussions about Border traditions and the poems Hogg is composing. Later works such as the Queen's Wake and Three Perils of Man refer to ballads, traditional songs and rhymes, sometimes quoting snippets, but there is no way of knowing if such items derive directly from printed sources or from informants within or outside his family. It is for this reason that the only later items included here are those which clearly cite members of Hogg's family as sources.

The list of titles shows an impressively wide range and illustrates Hogg's knowledge and enthusiasm for balladry, though it is impossible to know how many of the items Hogg was familiar with before Scott's researches put him on the trail. It is worth noting the diverse range of informants he used as he mentions certain anonymous informants from outside his family as well as his uncle and mother. Of the material specifically for the Minstrelsy there are texts for 17 items and Scott published identifiable contributions from Hogg in 10 ballads in the Minstrelsy (Harry, Appendices, II, 103-05). With regard to Margaret Laidlaw, 9 verse items are reasonably clearly stated to be recorded from her or to be in her repertoire: items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 31, 34, and she had traditions relating to item 38. NLS MS 877 f.256 includes a number of short items which are clearly additions or emendations to the texts printed in the first volumes to the Minstrelsy and it is possible that these are the items Hogg offers to send Scott in NLS MS 3874 f.114. It might therefore be plausible to suggest that these items derive from Margaret Laidlaw.

There are only four titles indisputably associated with Hogg's uncle (9, 14, 18, 31), but each of these indicates that Hogg placed a great deal of confidence in the extent of Will Laidlaw's traditional knowledge. It is worth remembering that it is NLS MS 3874 f.114, where Hogg himself seems to be discovering how much his mother knows, that provides most information about her. It would be illuminating to have a similarly detailed introduction to her brother but the tone of the letter suggests that he was already known to Scott, by reputation at least.

One should also note in passing the extent and influence of the broadside and chapbook trades. Examples of a number of items above, especially those not recorded in Child, can be found in various

chapbook collections. The Harvard collection, for instance, includes one on the "Battle of Bannockburn" (no. 1045), one on "The Battle of the Boyn" (no. 656), and two in "Bateman's Tragedy" (nos. 654, 655) as well as a prose account of this last. The chapbook account of Bateman is far removed from the classic ballads and Bateman hangs himself which seems more directly connected with the title Hogg includes.

## Appendix IV

Additional Sources and Collectors

It will perhaps be helpful to give some information on three men who have been mentioned in Chapter One. They are significant not only for any influence, more or less direct, which they may have had on Hogg, but for their importance as transmitters of tradition on the Borders and the light they may throw on the changing attitude towards folk tradition.

Andrew Moore

Thomas Boston was minister at Ettrick Kirk from 1 May 1707 to 20 May 1732. He did much to establish an interest in religious debate in the area and raised Church attendance dramatically. He was the author of a number of theological works including an influential and often reprinted work best known as The Fourfold State of Man.<sup>1</sup> During his time at Ettrick he employed as his servant-cum-verger Andrew Moore. This Andrew Moore must have had a collection of songs for it was he who, having learned it from Baby [Barbara] Mettlin, transmitted "Auld Maitland" to the Laidlaw family. This is the only song that is known to be directly from his repertoire. Like Will o' Phaup he was a colourful character who was the centre of a number of tales dealing with the supernatural world and its inhabitants. The Mountain Bard tells, for instance, how he saw the legendary water-cow of St Mary's Loch (1807, pp.94-95).

Andrew, who died according to Hogg about 1781 (1807, p.69), was apparently a tremendous source not only of ballad material, but also of traditional narrative forms. It is rare to find an attested source of such diverse material partly, as suggested earlier, because

of the contemporary interest in the ballad and this can only emphasise Andrew Moore's importance within the community. Hogg reflects this by referring to him on more than one occasion in the Mountain Bard and all his descriptions emphasise Andrew's breadth of repertoire and authority as a traditional performer: "This singular old man could repeat by heart every old ballad which is now published in the 'Minstrelsy of the Border,' except three, with three times as many; and from him, Auld Maitland, with many ancient songs and tales, still popular in that country, are derived" (1807, p.69). Hogg expanded on this picture when comparing him with Will o' Phaup:

There was a contemporary of Laidlaw's, who died about the same period, but an older man, who was also a very remarkable man in his day, superstitious in the extreme; many of his stories and traditions were of a visionary nature. But in legendary lore he was altogether unequalled - he was master of it; a sovereign over that department of literature, making it his boast and pride that he could sing every song and ballad that ever his country produced. He had not only all the old ballads since published in the Border Minstrelsy, but as many more of a nature too romantic, trivial, or indelicate, to be admitted into that work.

("General Anecdotes", p.445)

Andrew's boasts suggest a man familiar with the principles of oral recreation and therefore able, after one hearing, to reproduce any ballad though Hogg attributes this ability to memory. Andrew, with his large and varied repertoire must surely have been regarded as the main performer in the community and though it can never be known how much of his repertoire filtered through to the Minstrelsy through the Hogg and Laidlaw family, it is likely that his influence was not inconsiderable. Hogg would have been about eleven years old when Andrew Moore died and his understanding of folk transmission is based on the approach of his parents' generation rather than on the

trained recomposition of a man like Moore. If this is a true reflection of the changing response to tradition then the germs of change were established by the middle of the eighteenth century. It is ironic that Ettrick Manse should have drawn together at the same time such a fine representative of traditional culture and Boston, the man who was to help in so many ways to open up that culture, base it more firmly on organised religious observance and make Ettrick known to the outside world. It is a measure of the resilience of folk tradition that Boston too was drawn into the body of folk knowledge. Many tales existed involving Boston. In the notes to "The Pedlar" in the Mountain Bard Hogg relates the story of Boston exorcising the spirit of the murdered packman (1807, pp.30-31). As a result Hogg claims that Boston himself was one of the most superstitious men of his age ("General Anecdotes", p.445). In this way superstition and religion could become in a sense mutually dependent; "But an age, singular as that was for devotion, would readily be as much for superstition; for, even to this day, the country people, who have the deepest sense of religion, are always those who believe most firmly in supernatural agency (1807, p.33). Both depend on belief and as we have already noted the values they promoted were often the same. However, it is clear that domestic worship did in some measure supplant the occasions which promoted the performance and transmission of traditional folklore. Interestingly, the literature of the nineteenth century, particularly that of Galt, Scott and Hogg, provides many portrayals of domestic worship but almost none of any kind of communal storytelling or song singing. This may simply be because they occurred as a secondary activity, for instance while some work is being done. Whatever the reason, the omission is a significant example of the fallen prestige of tradition as an expression of culture and community.



Thomas Beattie

Thomas Beattie of Muckledale or Meikledale, a farm in the parish of Ewes, near Langholm, lived from 1736 to 1827 and was very successful as a sheep farmer, stocking several farms at the same time. He had a complete and thorough knowledge of the traditions and histories of the families in his area and was widely respected for this knowledge. Laidlaw referred to this when he relayed to Scott some anxieties about his Liddesdale sources: "It seems the Liddesdale people say you got your information there from Dr Elliot & they persist in saying his knowledge is very shallow. But if you have seen Mr. Beattie Muckledale it answers this objection".<sup>2</sup> Scott returned a rather ambiguous but accurate reply: "As to the Liddesdale tradition I think I am pretty correct although doubtless much more may be recovered. The truth is that in these matters as you must have observed old people are usually very positive about their own mode of telling a story and equally uncharitably critical in their observations on those who differ from from them" (Grierson, I, 173). It seems that Scott did develop a high regard for Beattie's knowledge and ability as a collector. Beattie sent Lady Dalkeith a version of "Tam Lin" from which Scott adopted eleven stanzas for the Minstrelsy (Harry, I, 240-44). The version showed strong modern influences but Scott did not suspect Beattie and asked Laidlaw to "enquire whether within the memory of Man there has been any poetical clergyman or schoolmaster whom one could suppose capable of giving a coat of modern varnish to this old ballad" (21 January, 1803, Grierson, I, 171).

Scott was anxious not to antagonise Beattie as he was "curious to see his other traditional treasures" (Grierson, I, 171). This may have come to pass as Scott's introduction to the 1830 edition of "the Lay of the Last Minstrel" shows that the Goblin Page is based,

at the request of Lady Dalkeith, on Gilpin Horner, a kind of brownie.<sup>3</sup>  
 The story of Gilpin Horner was conveyed to Lady Dalkeith in a letter from Thomas Beattie of Muckledale.<sup>4</sup>

Beattie's family were not tradition bearers in the way Hogg's were. There was apparently no great tradition of singing or tale-telling. His father did sing occasionally:

My Father gave occasion to many a hearty laugh by his singing, as he had a great memory, he retained the words of a great many of the old Border Songs, which he learned in his youth & as his voice was indifferent & his ear very bad, yet when he was in company & hearty, he sung these songs (if his manner deserves that appellation), seemingly with glee & satisfaction to himself & diversion to his audience. He seemed fond of music & judged for himself.

(Beattie, p.27)

Beattie himself does not seem to have been especially gifted musically himself although as a young man he was sent to fiddle lessons. In later life he could apparently, under exceptional circumstances rise to an occasion and perform a song. He did so, at any rate, at an election dinner in Jedburgh in 1806: "... they proposed to the Sherriff Substitute, Mr Shortreed, to sing a song, he did so, but I thought little of it, altho he received the thanks of the Meeting: I started up and proposed to sing for Dumfriesshire and sung a very strange [song], which I would by no means have done if I had been sober, but as I believe few of the Gentlemen had ever heard of it, met with loud applause..." (Beattie, p.270). This anecdote may indicate some slight rivalry, possibly only of area, between Beattie and the Shortreed/Elliot families with whom Scott dealt closely. This might explain why Scott did not correspond directly with Beattie. It is interesting to note that Alexander Campbell in his diary of his collecting trip to the Borders, in 1816, was most impressed by the the Shortreed family as ballad performers

(Campbell, EUL MSS La.II.378, entry for 21st October, 1816).<sup>5</sup>

Beattie shows an intermediate stage in the traditional process. The tradition referred to here is not so much a singing tradition as a particular form of narrative tradition, namely family history. He had received a good education and was familiar with published histories such as Hume of Godscroft. Nevertheless, the main wealth of his knowledge derived from traditional sources. Thus he was a genuine repository of tradition and not as Dr Elliot seems to have been a collector. He turned for various reasons to preserving some of his knowledge in a written form in his journal, illustrating the way that for a man with any pretensions to education, position, or cultivation, the proper sphere of interest was now held to be the written word.

Dr. John Elliot of Cleughhead

Dr. John Elliot of Cleughhead in Liddesdale is an intriguing figure.<sup>6</sup> According to Shortreed, he is the main source for most of the ballads Scott got in Liddesdale having "collected a vast deal o' old Ballads o' the country for his own amusement" (Wilson, p.58). There were apparently no tunes in this collection and there is no record of him singing any of the ballads. His concern seems to have been with the ballad as a written record rather than as living tradition. He was a collector rather than a tradition bearer. Michael Robson suggests one reason for the detachment: "It is likely that John Elliot, as a doctor, stood at some distance from the more intimate areas of tradition and folklore in Liddesdale, but at the same time his ancestry lay so firmly in the district that he could scarcely have avoided hearing the more famous tales and songs" (Robson, "Jock o' Side", p.12). He certainly did amass a vast

amount of material for he is apparently the "Gentleman of taste, in Liddisdale" who gave Caw a number of songs for his Poetical Museum.

Elliot presents then the third stage of transmission. By nature and situation he had access to a rich tradition of song and tales yet his whole energies were directed to recording this rather than performing it.

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The lines are altered in later editions:  
And is she na very well aff  
Wha has Brogues & Brochen an' a'  
(NLS MS 10279 f.83 [1803], not in Hogg's hand)  
  
'An' isna the laddie weel aff  
What has brogs an' brochen an' a'  
(Mountain Bard, p.179,  
Forest Minstrel, p.190.)

An' isnae her very weel aff  
 Wi' her brogues an' brochen an' a'  
 (NLS MS 4805 f.26. MS, in Hogg's hand, for 1831 edition of  
 songs.)

An' is nae her very weel aff  
 Wi' her brogues an' brochin an' a'?  
 (Songs, p.2)

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