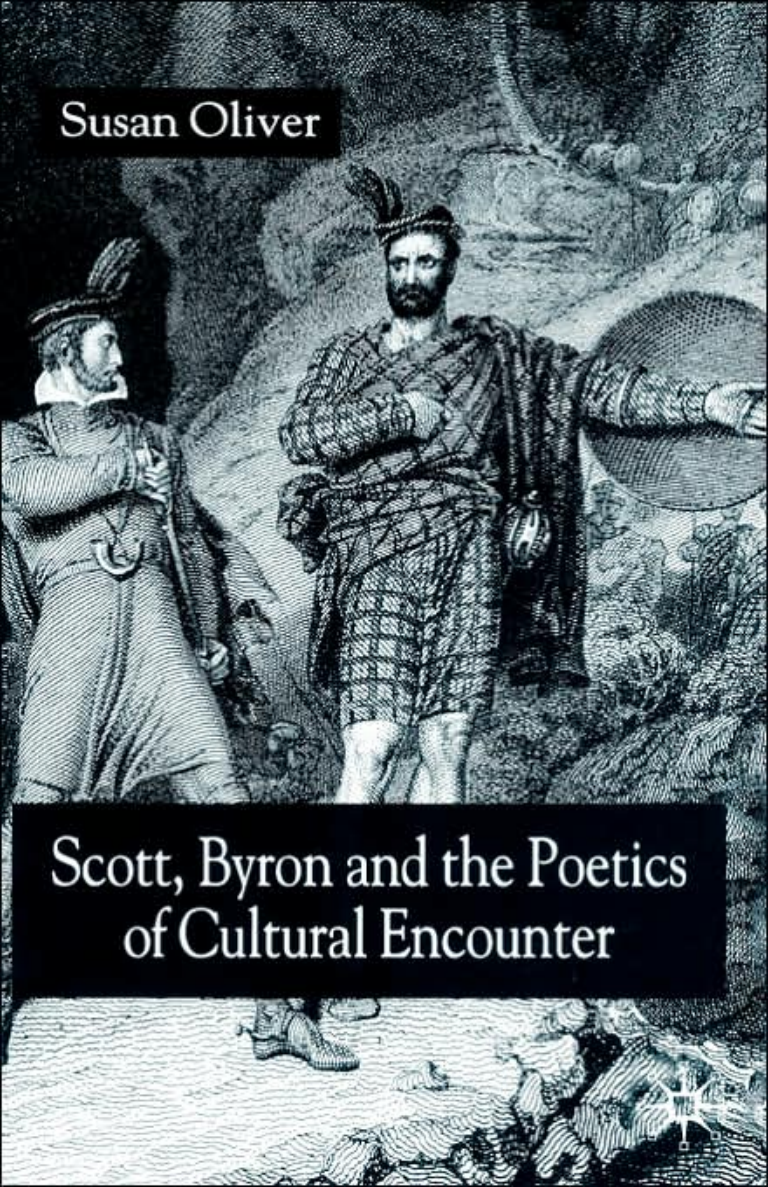
Susan Oliver



Scott, Byron and the Poetics of Cultural Encounter

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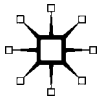

First published 2005 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world

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ISBN-13: 978–1–4039–9474–5 hardback
ISBN-10: 1–4039–9474–9 hardback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Oliver, Susan, 1955–
Scott, Byron, and the poetics of cultural encounter / Susan Oliver.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1–4039–9474–9
1. Scott, Walter, Sir, 1771–1832—Knowledge—Scottish Borders (England and Scotland) 2. Byron, George Gordon Byron, Baron, 1788–1824—Knowledge—Geography. 3. Scott, Walter, Sir, 1771–1832. Minstrelsy of the Scottish border. 4. Ballads, Scots—Scottish Borders (England and Scotland)—History and criticism. 5. Scottish Borders (England and Scotland)—In literature. 6. Borders Region (Scotland)—In literature. 7. Difference (Psychology) in literature. 8. Highlands (Scotland)—In literature. 9. Marginality, Social, in literature. 10. Culture shock in literature. 11. Boundaries in literature. 12. Geography in literature. I. Title.
PR5343.S3O45 2005
821'.709353—dc22 2005047461

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham and Eastbourne

For William

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Contents

Abbreviations and Conventions

Full bibliographical details are provided at the point of first use. Thereafter, the abbreviations given below are used:

MPW	Walter Scott, *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart*. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Cadell, 1867
PWS	Walter Scott, *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*. Ed. J. Logie Robertson. London: Oxford UP, 1917
Letters	Walter Scott, *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*. Eds. H. J. C. Grierson assisted by Davidson Cook, W. M. Parker and others. 12 vols. London: Constable & Co., 1932–1937
BLJ	George Gordon Byron, *Byron's Letters and Journals. The complete and unexpurgated text of all the letters available in manuscript and the full printed version of all others*. Ed. Leslie A. Marchand. 12 vols. London: J. Murray, 1973–1982
CPW	George Gordon, Lord Byron. *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*. Ed. Jerome J. McGann. 7 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980–1993

Where I refer to the 'Debateable Land' in its period context I have adopted the spelling used by Scott and Byron, and most frequently found in archival and other primary literary sources. In instances where the word 'debatable' is used in a more general sense, I have employed the modern form of spelling.

Preface and Acknowledgements

Some years ago I became fascinated by the interest in borderlands and cultural encounter that informed much literature of the Romantic period. I wanted better to understand how individual and collective imaginations figured people from other societies during such a period of international instability. Amongst British writers of the early nineteenth century, Walter Scott and Lord Byron stand out as consistently interested in themes of human encounter and re-encounter. Scott, passionate about the Borders country of Scotland and about his nation's turbulent, confrontational history, and Byron, as a compulsive traveller around the unstable margins of Europe and the Near East, and later a self-exile moving between various locations, hence naturally became the focus of my study.

The present book aims to contribute to comparative literary scholarship. As is often the case when authors embark on a project, I believed I could encompass more material than a single volume would allow. Consequently, I had to relinquish some lines of inquiry in order to pursue others in anything approaching sufficient depth. Scott and Byron were prolific writers, and I do not pretend to cover all their work. I concentrate on Scott's poetry, addressing his many novels only through passing mention. Nor have I included Byron's *Don Juan*. To cover these extra areas adequately would require a further volume. Instead, my analyses explore trends as they emerge much earlier in the work of these internationally influential figures. Scott's ballads and narrative poetry have been neglected for too long, even though that part of his work was formatively influential on his later prose fiction, on other writers across Europe, and on public attitudes towards society and history. Byron might not have pursued the course that brought his initial fame if Scott, as a poet, had not been his precursor. After the storm in demand that accompanied the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Scott, in turn, was obliged to respond to Byron as a competitor in the marketplace and as a fellow writer who frequently referred to his work. I concentrate on poems that most evince mutual and reciprocal interests on the parts of these two poets, or that reflect divergences in perspective towards cultural encounter. My larger aim has always been to open up new ways of understanding

the complexities involved in any such encounter, through attention to poetic form, language and multiple contextual factors.

Many people and institutions have made this book possible. The University of Cambridge generously provided financial assistance, in the form of domestic funding and a travel bursary from the Judith E. Wilson Fund. Wolfson College, Cambridge aided me financially in a number of ways, as did the Arts and Humanities Research Board. The Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Edinburgh, in providing me with a fellowship and bursary for a further project also gave me time and space to finalize details of my work on Scott and Byron. I have valued the intellectual environment of the University of Essex since my undergraduate years, and am delighted to have returned recently as a visiting fellow. I appreciated opportunities to present and discuss my work more widely within conference environments provided by the Sixth International Scott Conference, BARS, the Centre de Recherche sur les Ecritures de Langue Anglaise, Université de Nice, NASSR, and the MLA. The University Libraries of Cambridge and Edinburgh, the Wren Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, the British Library and the National Library of Scotland each afforded me access to rare materials and other vital texts. I would especially like to thank Nigel Leask, Susan Manning and David Hewitt, each of whose expertise and willingness to share their extensive knowledge has been invaluable. Others who have assisted me through discussion, conference activity, encouragement and general advice include Gilbert Bonifas, James Buzard, James Chandler, Peter Cochran, Ian Duncan, Gary Dyer, Mary Favret, Susan Forsyth, Nancy Goslee, Robert Griffin, Peter Hulme, Simon Jarvis, Claire Lamont, Maureen Maclean, Michael Macovski, Jerome McGann, Chris-Ann Matteo, Ruth Perry, Michael Rossington, Sharon Ruston, William St Clair, Charles Snodgrass and Jennifer Wallace. My grateful thanks extend to the many other friends and colleagues at Cambridge and Essex who have talked with me about aspects of this book. Jonathan White has been a stalwart supporter throughout the project and my son, William, has sustained me at all times with his unfailing love, patience and good humor.

List of Maps

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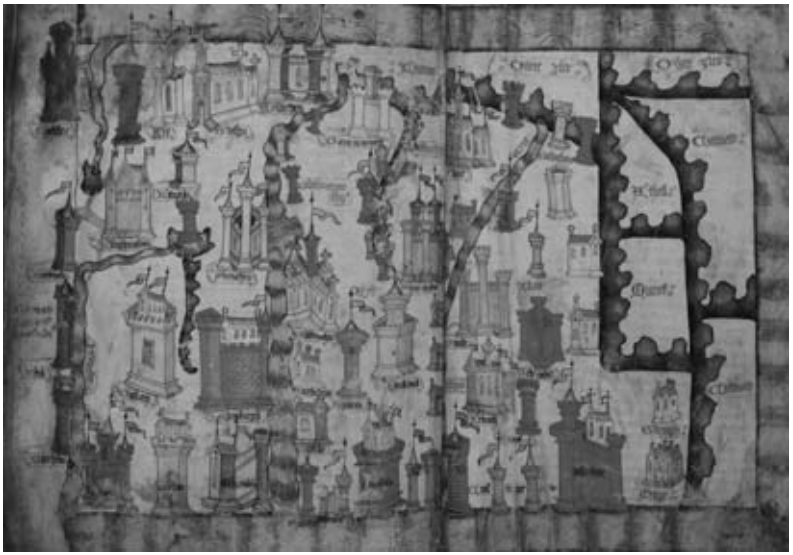

Map 1 The 'Kingdom of Scotland' from the *Chronicle of John Hardyng* (c.1442–1450). Hardyng's hand-coloured maps demonstrate how Scotland was configured in fifteenth-century English imaginations as a land consisting of Baronial castles. The maps are inaccurate in terms of the placement of buildings, in their location of places and charting of the Firths of the Forth and Tay. Hardyng does not show any mountains, lochs or contours, nor does he give any clear account of the coastline or sea. A document known to Scott, this map supports antiquarian perspectives of a feudal Scotland, as represented in the Historical Ballads of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and throughout the period sung of by the Minstrel in *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Map 2 Highlands of Scotland, with the situation of the several clans and the number of men able to bear arms, as also the forts lately erected, and roads of communication or military ways carried on by his majesty's command, with the seats of the most considerable nobility in the Low Country (C. Lempriere, 1731). One of many military maps from the eighteenth century, Lempriere's uses dramatic topography to clarify the lines of demarcation between the Scottish Highlands, the Lowlands and Borders, and England. The Scottish Borders appear as a depopulated, barren region comprising low mountains and a few scattered towns, indicating the migrations of the late seventeenth century (see Chapter 1). Maps from half a century earlier show many more towns and villages. The Highlands are depicted as a terrain consisting of impenetrable mountains (see Chapter 2), and are annotated in red with the location of the clans and the number of men 'able to bear arms'. The cartouche at the top right corner gives statistics for the clans involved in the 1715 Jacobite uprising, with comment on the disarming of the 'disaffected' Highlanders.

Map 3 Luffmann's New Map of Hostile Europe, or, Seat of War (Published 9 March 1807, by John Luffmann & sold by A. Luffmann & J. Blackleek. Price 3/-) Luffmann charts a divided, war-torn Europe and Western Turkey. The title reinforces hostility as a contextual precondition for reading the map's political and social geography. A commentary (top left corner) notes the aggressive colonialism integral to the European power struggle. Turkey typically is represented as divided into European and Asian regions, demarcated at Constantinople. The map and text together exemplify the attitudes and context of instability to which Byron responded.

Transcript of commentary: 'At this period there are, in Europe, only Five Great Powers, or States . . . England, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia. Within the last century England has absorbed Scotland and Ireland, & Portugal is little more than a colony to her. France has incorporated Savoy,

Piedmont, Parma, the Netherlands & part of Germany & Italy, Holland, Spain and Switzerland are dependent upon her. Austria has divided Poland with Prussia & Russia, and the Venetian states with France. Prussia has divided Poland with Austria and Russia, and is now at the feet of the French Conqueror. Russia has divided Poland with Austria and Prussia and mutilated Turkey, which totters to its fall . . . Such appears to be the State of Europe at the close of the year 1806.'

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Introduction: North, South, East – and West; The Strangeness of 'Debateable Lands'

> There is scarce an old historical song or Ballad wherein a Minstrel or Harper appears, but he is characterized by way of eminence to have been 'of the North Countreye': and indeed the prevalence of the Northern dialect in such compositions, shews that this representation is real. On the other hand the scene of the finest Scottish Ballads is laid in the South of Scotland; which should seem to have been peculiarly the nursery of Scottish Minstrels. In the old song of Maggy Lawder, a Piper is asked, by way of distinction, Come ye frae the Border? – The Martial spirit constantly kept up and exercised near the frontier of the two kingdoms, as it furnished continual subjects for their Songs, so it inspired the inhabitants of the adjacent counties on both sides with the powers of poetry. Besides, as our Southern Metropolis must have been ever the scene of novelty and refinement, the northern countries, as being most distant, would preserve their ancient manners longest, and of course the old poetry, in which those manners are peculiarly described.
>
> – Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*[1]

A context of changing borders: Representations and reconsideration

The first years of the nineteenth century constituted a period in which many political and cultural borders across the world were being contested and redrawn, particularly within Europe and Europe's expanding sphere of influence in the Near East. Whilst the contributory factors behind these changes were many, the main reasons for instability were global war, revolution, and modernization of social and economic structures,

themselves rooted in developments in science, agriculture, industry and commerce across the eighteenth century. Within Britain, the French Revolution and involvement in the subsequent Napoleonic wars gave rise on the one hand to fears of invasion, and, on the other, to a considerable degree of public anxiety about social unrest within the home nation. At the margins where Europe bordered on the Islamic Near and Middle East, the European 'superpowers' of Britain, France, Russia and Austria all used a combination of diplomacy and aggression to establish their interest in the countries along the western frontiers of the declining Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, at home in intellectual circles, approaches to understanding human social history in terms of a series of universally applicable stages, and the new science of political economy, had emerged from the Scottish Enlightenment as areas at the forefront of philosophical and scientific debate. Within such a context of confrontation and public discussion, it is hardly surprising that literary conceptualizations of real and imagined borders of varying kinds, along with speculation premised on the possibilities arising for their confrontation and transgression, became part of the spirit of the age. Consequently, a literature emerged concerned with notions of 'debateable' lands, to use a term taken from Scottish history and deployed with some frequency by both Scott and Byron, whilst the vogues for travel writing, primitivism and antiquarianism continued to capture the public imagination.[2]

This book offers a study of Walter Scott's and Lord Byron's poetic constructions of cultural, political and literary borderlands. I enquire into the intricate ways in which each wrote about encounters with 'strangeness' and difference. Indeed, the unprecedented public circulation and influence of Scott's and Byron's poetry, together with the almost obsessive authorial concern with borderlands and marginal zones that is evident within it, makes such an enquiry into the poetics of cultural encounter necessary as well as compelling.

We might begin with some consideration of what the word 'border' meant during the early years of the nineteenth century. In his *Dictionary* (1755) Samuel Johnson had defined 'border' as 'the outer part or edge of anything' and as 'the march or edge of a country; the confine'. When used as a verb he confers on it the concept of contact with an other, whilst retaining the emphasis of location at an edge: 'to confine upon; to touch something else at the side or edge'.[3] The relationship between literal, geographical borders and borders as metaphors representing otherness or that 'something else' can thus be established. Johnson's definitions predate Scott's and Byron's poetry by half a century, but they remain valuable for their emphases on borders as extremities where other cultures

are encountered. My analyses aim to reveal the importance of the ways in which Scott and Byron, as writers who dominated the literary world of the Romantic age, represent geographical and historical (or fictionalized) borders and the societies that live or lived on or beyond them. Scott and Byron each exhibit a keen sense of the existence of actual, geographical and political borderlands: those margins marked by mountain ranges, seas, rivers or remote moorland. Each wrote poetry descriptive of places where such geographical features have served also as points of national or political demarcation *and* indicators of otherness. For example, in *The Lady of the Lake* the Grampian mountains of the Highland faultline to the north of the Trossachs and Loch Katrine embody Scott's keen sense of the way in which three kinds of border – geographical, cultural and metaphorical – are distinctive concepts, but can be intricately connected by the human imagination. My chapter on Scott's narrative poetry discusses the different representations of borderlands in *The Lady of the Lake*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and in *Rokeby*. My two chapters on Byron show how his poetry brings the abstract and metaphorical understanding of borders that lies under the surface of *Childe Harold* increasingly to the foreground with each succeeding poem in the Eastern Tales. In my concluding discussions of *Lara* and of *The Island*, the notion of a border as a metaphor for otherness, being the point at which the familiar is made strange, is seen to dominate.

Further definitions of 'border' by Johnson, as 'the outer part of a garment, generally adorned with needlework and ornaments', as 'a bank raised round a garden, and set with flowers' and as the act of adorning something 'with a border of ornaments', are helpful in establishing the way in which we might understand the inscription of borders in poetry.[4] Scott and Byron each elaborated upon, or 'embroidered', the borderlands they wrote about, using a variety of motifs from existing literary sources and adapting them according to their own imaginations and idiosyncratic styles. I look at these uses of genre, imagery and style, and assess their meanings and implications.

Scott's poetry is closely structured around themes of border and frontier lands. Within those lands, he dramatizes the historical periods of crisis and change between Scotland's clan-feudal epoch and its development into commercial modernity. The principle arising from the Scottish Enlightenment, that societal development is an uneven process occurring at different times in various places, is one that I draw attention to, for it shaped Scott's perception of his nation's distant and more immediate history. Consequently, I examine the implications of his treating the Highland/Lowland border zone as a 'naturally' more primitive region than

the Borders where Scotland meets northern England. The existence of clan feudalism as the dominant social system north of the Highland line until the middle of the eighteenth century was represented by Scott in his poetry through metaphorical comparisons between Highland chieftains and warlords of a 'barbarous' and romantic Islamic East. Indeed, as I show in Chapter 2, Scott depicts the Highland/Lowland borders in *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) as a chronotope, enchanted by its own exoticism and caught in developmental stasis. The action of *The Lady of the Lake* pivots on the Highland margin's inability to progress beyond a warrior culture until its leaders, who lack certain European chivalric principles that are essential in the progression towards enlightenment, are suppressed by outside intervention on the part of the sovereign who represents a more civilized society.[5]

Scott's casting of British politics of cultural suppression and historical change within a frame of providence uncovers a deeper stratum to his poetry if we remember that he was writing at a time when Britain, having recently 'lost' its American colonies, was taking every opportunity to expand its Empire by way of the subjugation of large tracts of Asia, Australasia and Africa. Indeed, in the context of Empire, Scott and Byron wrote and published their poetry as Britain was advancing into the period of massive imperial expansion that would – as many have remarked – turn whole areas of the world map pink over the course of the nineteenth century.[6] Throughout Chapters 3 and 4 my analyses show how implied correlations by Scott between clan feudalism in Scotland and pre-modern barbarism in the East caught the imagination of Byron, who re-formulated them as part of his attack on European ideas of neo-chivalric supremacy over the perceived backwardness of oriental despotism.[7]

Certain fundamental principles that are evident from the outset in Scott's poetry, and which are central to my argument, require clarification before I progress any further. From the beginning of his writing career, Scott, as a Tory Unionist, consistently sought to promote the Scottish Borders as a region that could serve as a focus for British national identity, particularly in times of war. His ballads and poetry emphasize traditions of vigour and martial principle. He also challenges and countermands radicalism within Scotland, and by implication Britain, by constructing these once contentious and 'lawless' Borders as a historical frontier region where martial codes of loyalty and personal honour had through time become naturally embedded in the fabric of a latterly dutiful civil society. Providential progression from within a society is the defining characteristic that distinguishes the Borders of Scotland and England from the Highland margins in Scott's poetry. A response on Scott's part

to the *Ossian* controversy exists in the nature of that distinction, concerning socially and politically charged forms of periphery. As Katie Trumpener points out, the novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century 'absorb many of the *Poems of Ossian*'s distinctive structural features' and 'also internalize the structure of the *Ossian* controversy' as part of their creation of a modern, bardic nationalism.[8] Trumpener illuminates the extent to which the fashion for bardic poetry played a major part in the formulation of national identity, whether pro-Unionist and Imperial by nature or (as in the case of Ireland) of an anti-colonial and devolutionary kind. Scott was a leading proponent of the former, and his ballads and poetry of Scotland's Borders and other margins consistently bear out a position that relegates the Celtic fringe to history at the same time that he immortalizes it in romance.

The heroic masculinity that Scott emphasized as a powerful and an enduring cultural feature of the Borders region roots his poetry in romance, myth-history and fable. As a result of the eighteenth-century interest in primitivism and antiquarianism, the ballad anthology had emerged as a genre in its own right.[9] Many of the Border legends and ballad tales had been documented in the Standard English diction and printed media of the formally educated middling and aristocratic classes. But Scott also incorporated into his poetry curiosities that he found within oral folklore and local superstition. In his 'Essay on Romance', published in the 1824 Supplement to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, he declares 'wild adventures' to be 'the only essential ingredient' in Johnson's definition of Romance, summarising his own explanation of the genre as 'a fictitious narrative . . . the interest of which turns upon marvellous and uncommon incidents'.[10] Scott's dispensation with Johnson's criterion of 'a military fable of the middle ages' is revealing, given his interest in militarism and historical settings: it indicates his belief that Romance remained a relevant and adaptable literary form.[11] Indeed, Scott nurtured an enduring fascination with the 'curious history' he envisaged as recoverable from within unrecorded ballad tales (see Chapter 1). Throughout his life as a writer he emphasized the existence of a cultural lineage stretching back from the modern Scottish metropolitan centres of education, law and commerce, with their extensive print culture, to the older epic, heroic environment of the rural periphery.

Scott's negotiations of the borders between Enlightenment rationalism and romance, and between history and fictional characterization, emerge as key literary innovations in the early nineteenth century. Indeed, he was one of the most popular and acclaimed novelists of the age, and was more responsible than any other writer for the romantic characterization

of the Scottish Highlands. Yet it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that the groundbreaking significance of the historical models that he used was understood in the modern, critical sense. First and foremost in this new approach is Georg Lukács's 1937 account of Scott's development of the historical novel out of the 'great realistic social novel of the eighteenth century', in which Scott is seen to assert a steady – or middle – course 'through the struggle of extremes'.[12] Lukács recognized Scott's position on the edge of another kind of border terrain – the literary frontier of materialist historical representation, where a Hegelian dialectical struggle between progress and reaction takes place. As he points out, 'what is lacking in the so-called historical novel before Sir Walter Scott is . . . the specifically historical', where characters are individually drawn from 'the historical peculiarity of their age'.[13] Scott's manner of historical composition and his figuration of the specific, local or everyday in periods of crisis, Lukács contends, constitutes an 'interesting parallel to Hegel's philosophy of history' because Scott is concerned with what the latter describes as 'world-historical individuals' at the point where 'the new opposes itself hostilely to the old'.[14] My analyses of ballads from the *Minstrelsy* show that the beginnings of such characterization were already evident in Scott's early editorial processes. The relevance of Lukács's readings of Scott's novels can then be located in his narrative poetry of borderlands, which follows on from the *Minstrelsy* and is also mostly written before his turn towards the novel. Scott's development of individual characterization along frontiers that are historically and geographically monumental is traced from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, where it remains rudimentary, through *The Lady of the Lake*, within which the characters of Ellen Douglas and Roderick Dhu are more developed, to *Rokeby*, where the complex representation of Sir Bertram Risingham against an English Civil War background has always been considered more suited to the novel than to verse romance.

Following Lukács, Duncan Forbes broke further new ground by reading Scott equally as an Enlightenment Rationalist and a Romantic in his 1953 essay 'The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott'.[15] Forbes's revisionist evaluation, which again focuses on Scott's novels, prompted me to look more closely at the sociological angles within Scott's poetry and to conclude that even at the very early stage of the first editions of the *Minstrelsy* there is a distinctive 'sociology of literature' emergent within his poetry and notes, that integrates a scientific approach to social history with romance tradition. Forbes's subsequent essay, ' "Scientific" Whiggism: Adam Smith and John Millar', extends this perspective. Looking far beyond the work of Smith and Millar, he locates the dynamic intellectual

environment within which Scott was operating as one where political principles could be dramatized inside a 'practical' and 'liberal science of History'.[16] This liberal approach to history has onward implications for the poetry of Byron, and most particularly for the critique of imperial hegemony he posits within his configurations of Europe and the Near East.

Scott's and Byron's reconfiguration of epic traits does much to illumine the political and social potential of borders within literary tradition. More than any other writers of the early nineteenth century, they offer solutions to the crisis that many felt the epic had been pitched into during the last half of the eighteenth century, when the artifice of Augustan translations and the likening of Britain to Rome was often perceived to have drawn the form away from its simpler, more primitive origins. Certainly, the eighteenth-century vogue for ballads marked a return of interest in Homer and Virgil as the founders of poetic purity. Joseph Addison, as early as 1711, wrote a series of essays for *The Spectator* in which he emphasized a direct link between ancient epic and the vernacular ballad. Choosing the tale of cross-border conflict 'Chevy Chase' (of which Scott's 'Battle of Otterbourne' is a variant) as a supreme example, he rhetorically asks 'what can be more sounding and poetical, or resemble more the majestic simplicity of the Ancients, than the following stanzas', and declares that ballad's account of the death of Douglas to be an episode 'as would have shined in Homer or Virgil'.[17] The epic tradition provides a locus for the rich legacy and importance of borders in literature. From Homer's Troy, situated like Byron's Turkish Tales on the boundaries between Greece and Asia onwards, through Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Chanson de Roland* and the Orlando poems of Boiardo and Ariosto with their tales of Christian and Moslem conflict, Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, which tells of the sack of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, the Spanish/Portuguese chivalric romance-epic set around the British-Gallic margins, *Amadis of Gaul*, and Spenser's allegorical *Fairie Queene*, European poets had created stories that grounded national identities in heroic actions performed on and around contested borderlands. An affinity emerges primed with lineages of political tradition and possibility, between primary epic and the bardic or minstrel narratives of the reiving community of the pre-Union Scottish and English Borders that Scott was so interested in, and the tales of exotic coffee houses and fishing communities of the Near East that Byron relates. By taking the refined Augustan forms of epic sentiment and ideals to a quasi-ancient vernacular form, Scott's *Minstrelsy* and narrative poetry assert Scotland's Borders region as a centralized, contemporary focus for modern British national identity and vigour in time of war. Byron's poetry of the Near East

challenges the moral validity of such British nationalism and, by way of contrast, posits the increasing autonomy on the borders of the Ottoman Empire as a form of resistance.

Concepts of national identity and the sense of belonging to a culture have for some time been recognized as depending upon a recognition that there is something else, against which the collective self can be defined. Homi Bhabha's assertion that 'cultural difference is to be found where the "loss" of meaning enters, as a cutting edge, into the representation of the fullness of the demands of culture' goes some way to explaining this in theoretical terms.[18] The main thrust of Bhabha's argument is that, over centuries, the understanding of national identity has invariably involved the confrontation of anxieties existing at a 'borderline' and at a 'moment of translation'.[19] The existence or, contrapuntally, the loss of meaning in the form of cross-cultural awareness bears upon my close readings. In terms of nation and narration, to use the title of Bhabha's edited collection of essays on that subject, I am concerned in this book with conceptualizations of nationality (rather than national*ism* in the pejorative, modern sense) and of otherness.

Scott and Byron each acknowledge what Bhabha describes as the 'jarring of meanings and values generated in the process of cultural interpretation . . . an effect of the perplexity of living in the liminal spaces of national society.' However, I argue that Byron's experience as a traveller, combined with his political and social liberalism, results in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and the Eastern Tales being more self-consciously aware than Scott's poetry of the problems that Bhabha identifies when cultural difference is allowed to become 'the free play of polarities and pluralities'.[20]

I also seek critically to question how authentic Scott's bardic borderlands are, when one examines what he included and excluded. There are no 'bawdy' ballads in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–1803), even though such ballads had been – and still were – current in the region. By contrast, Burns' *Merry Muses of Caledonia* is a collection of Scottish bawdy ballads that demonstrates the popularity of the form (though Burns, who reputedly kept his manuscript in a locked drawer, suppressed publication).[21] Nor is there mention, either in Scott's ballads and poetry, or in the extensive framework of notes that accompanied them, of the crisis in the contemporary Borders – discontent in the weaving industry during the years that he was writing. As T. C. Smout notes, the escalation of unrest in the handloom weaving industry during the early years of the nineteenth century was caused by the combination of improved technology with an influx of displaced rural

workers, beyond the level that the industry could sustain.[22] Scott's disinclination to draw attention to weaver dissatisfaction over pay and conditions obscures a facet of dissent within the predominantly Tory Borders of the early nineteenth century, and adds weight to my argument that he idealized the region in his writing for anti-jacobin purposes. Weaver dissent, for example, was particularly manifest in Galashiels and Jedburgh. The former is close to Melrose, which Scott immortalized in his writing as the place where the spirit of the Borders might be considered to be concentrated and which he later chose as his own base, and the latter is just a few miles distant towards the border with England. Galashiels fell within Scott's jurisdiction as Sheriff Depute of Selkirk, and the autumn assizes for Selkirk were held at Jedburgh. As a form of social protest, weaver dissent can be read as a rural or small-town analogue to metropolitan Jacobinism during the same period. An ideological angle is thus evident in Scott's inclusion of a three-verse version of the popular ballad 'The Souters of Selkirk' in his *Minstrelsy*, which illustrates the selective nature of his representations of the Borders.

At one level 'The Souters of Selkirk' is a typical Borders Ballad such as one might expect Scott to include in his collection. But at another level it serves as a clarion-call that promotes the shoemaking industry and craftsmen in Scott's own seat of law as a traditional, exemplary counterpoint to the disaffected faction within the modern weaving profession. Lines such as 'Up wi' the Souters of Selkirk, / For they are baith trusty and leal' (3:1–2) emphasize, through their rhythmic momentum and use of Scots Borders vernacular, the valour of the shoemakers at the Battle of Flodden where, as Scott's note informs his readers, 'They distinguished themselves in the conflict, and were almost all slain.'[23] In the same note, Scott comments that the appellation 'souters' probably referred more generally to the inhabitants of Selkirk, being used because shoemaking was 'the trade most generally practised in the town'.[24] He mentions the weavers briefly but interestingly, quoting from James Roberston's contribution to Sir John Sinclair's 1790s *Statistical Account of Scotland*: 'A standard . . . is still carried annually (on the day of riding their common) by the corporation of weavers, by a member of which it was taken from the English in the field of Flowden.'[25] Scott thus gives no indication of dissenting behaviour on the part of the modern Selkirk weaving community, but rather a confirmation of patriotic loyalty and solidarity with the trusty souters, that links past virtue with present civic traditionalism.[26] It is hard to imagine a more stark comparison with Byron's outspoken defence of the frame-breaking Nottinghamshire weavers in his maiden speech to the House of Lords made on 27 February 1812, in which he

compared the British system of justice unfavourably with stereotypes of oriental despotism.

Representations such as these of a loyalist working or artisanal class, rather than of the more familiar, romantically 'noble savage', emphasize Scott's civic patriarchalism. Furthermore, they anticipate and expand the vision he wrote of in his letter to Lord Dalkeith at Edinburgh, dated 23 November 1806, where he imagines the latterly depopulated Borders 'gradually repeopled with a hardy and virtuous peasantry', presumably working within the 'improved' sheep-farming industry.[27]

Byron's commercial success with *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* cantos 1 and 2 and his Eastern Tales led to his displacing Scott as the premier poet in Britain early in the second decade of the century, although the characterization and complex plot of *Rokeby* suggest that Scott was already stylistically moving in the direction of the novel. (The reviewer for the *British Review* described it as 'very intricate and complicated tale . . . unfit for poetical effect.'[28]) Indeed, the representation of borders as a major theme in best-selling poetry takes a dramatic turn from the moment of publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* on 10 March 1812 – just months before the Russians took and then ceded Ottoman-held territory in the Balkans, as Napoleon began his march on Moscow. Outside of Europe and the Middle East, in June of 1812 the second American War against Britain began, whilst in South America Simon Bolivar and his insurgent army was actively involved in the struggle for independence against Spanish colonial rule. Against this background, Scott cast himself as the public guardian of the Scottish minstrel traditions that he wrote about, whilst Byron flamboyantly marketed himself and the heroes of his poems set along the borders of Europe and the Islamic Near East as controversial 'renegado' figures. Challenging social norms and conventions, Byron's poetry repeatedly traverses the bounds of literary and social 'taste' and protocol, contending that such boundaries are artificial and arbitrary – and as such a means both of control and exclusion. He led the imagination of his reading public into digressions and diversions (to use Jane Stabler's phraseology[29]) from conventional aristocratic Grand Tour routes, and in doing so caused reviewers, other writers and politicians to respond in ways that publicized the political and social power inherent in literature – especially in the still dominant genre of poetry written by men.

Scott's and Byron's reputations, which were acquired initially and largely as a result of the poems that I shall discuss in this book, resulted in their literary influence extending beyond Britain, across Europe and North America. France, for example, enthusiastically embraced the work

of each, as did Russia, Germany and Italy in the years leading into the Risorgimento.[30] Thus, they stand as exemplars of poets writing, and being read, in times of civil instability and uncertainty. The main comparative strand of my argument makes the case that Scott's poetry should be understood much more thoroughly than has previously been the case as a principal influence on Byron's writing of East/West encounter – or, more specifically, between a modern Europe based on gothic chivalric-feudal traditions and the so-called 'barbarian' lands of Islamic North Africa and the Ottoman Near East. But there is a further key point to such a comparison of these best-selling popular poets of the Romantic age. Indeed it is precisely on account of the fame of both in Britain and across Europe in their own day (far greater than that of other poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, who achieved their prominence with the passing of time) that I wish to emphasize, through comparisons between them across the entire trajectory of the present book, the quite different politics of the two writers. Scott, in the main, used borders in his poetry as sites, and their communities as instantiation, for his conservative philosophy of social containment and providential progress within the established British Union and its imperial scheme. Conversely, Byron's whiggism encoded a series of challenges to conventions in his tales of cultural borderlands, positing his own controversial philosophies of what might pass as acceptable individual and social mores, and promoting an entirely sceptical perspective on the ethic of Empire-building.[31]

My discussion of Scott begins by looking at his immediate context in Edinburgh during the 1790s through to 1802, when his ballad collection *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was published. I trace the development of his own form of scholarly antiquarianism, with reference to a wide range of the ballad, song and vernacular poetry collectors that published volumes in the eighteenth century, beginning with Allan Ramsay, through Thomas Percy and Joseph Ritson, and with some necessary reflection on Scotland's other prominent nationalist poet and ballad collector, Robert Burns. The public argument that raged for more than two decades between Percy and Ritson, concerning editorial practices and whether or not the Minstrels were the socially respected, 'distinct order' that Percy claimed,[32] forms a locus for my consideration of the politics of antiquarianism and ballad collection. Selected ballads show how Scott's response to a range of previously published anthologies, but especially to those edited by Percy and Ritson, writes his own anti-jacobinism and providential conservatism into the literary Borders landscape. Comparisons of some of Scott's edited ballads with earlier versions by Percy and the radical republican Ritson expose a literary

dialogue between these writers. Furthermore, Scott's engagement with Ritson lays some important foundations for my later work on Byron's writing of borderlands. Ritson anthologized and wrote about ballads and medieval romance poetry from a radical republican position, whilst Byron maintained a radical, but aristocratic, Whig perspective (although with varying degrees of verisimilitude), translating romance narratives into the idiom of insurrection along the contested borders of Europe and the Near East.

Published just over half a century after the defeat of the mainly Highland Jacobite army at Culloden, but at a time when invasion by France was once more feared and urban Jacobinism considered by the establishment to be a very present threat to the stability of civil society, Scott's *Minstrelsy* is a highly significant collection that has received surprisingly little critical attention. I suggest that there is an intricacy to its structure which extends beyond its status as a ballad anthology divided into conveniently separate categories of 'Historical Ballads', 'Romantic Ballads' and 'Imitations of the Ancient Ballad'. My argument, indeed, is that there is an overall narrative to the three volumes of the *Minstrelsy* (especially from the third edition onwards) in which Scott's editorial strategies re-inscribe the literary and social history of the Borders in such a way that the region becomes identifiable as one naturally resistant to urban radicalism or republicanism, and instead a focus of British national identity in the face of the threat of invasion from France. The importance of locality is shown through the subsequent analyses of ballads central to his project of building a literary lineage rooted in the Borders and supportive of Scotland within the British Union, its Establishment and grounded civil and social institutions.

In my second chapter, I look at Scott's narrative poetry.[33] My analysis of the gothic romance poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* shows Scott still concerned with the virtuous or corrupting properties of popular literature, and with the remedying properties of responsible, patriarchal authorship. Through comparative analyses of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), which is set in the Borders, and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), which is set in the Highland/Lowland borders of the Trossachs and Loch Katrine in Perthshire, I demonstrate how his descriptions of the Highland/Lowland margins, with their containment and reconstruction of Highland society, are ultimately indebted to ballad traditions that he transplants from the Borders region. The genres of the Descriptive Sketch and the Scottish Tour narrative, and the relevance of 'survey' accounts of Scottish society such as Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791–1799* comprise a major part of my discussion, as I relate their wider contemporary

importance to their more specific influence upon Scott's writing. An examination of *Rokeby* (1813), which was Scott's last narrative poem to achieve much commercial success, follows to end the chapter and prepare for the comparative readings of Byron in the second part of the book. *Rokeby* marks Scott's literary move back to the borders between England and Scotland, but the action is located on the English side in North Yorkshire. The English Civil War framework, and its characterization of loyal monarchists and renegado ex-buccaneer figures caught in their own, individual schemes to acquire power and wealth following the Battle of Marston Moor, is charged with moral examples that conjure parallels with the French wars and Jacobinism. *Rokeby* also approaches the topic of Empire by way of references to the Caribbean, the indigenous cultures of Central and North America, and the adventures of buccaneers. Scott ends the poem with a scenario that is predictably supportive of the British Union, the Crown and the expansion of colonial enterprise. The buccaneers had brought riches and also dissent home to England. But their plunder is ultimately 'laundered' and integrated into the heritage of Monarchist England. In the second half of my book, these two chapters on Scott serve as constant points for comparison and contrast with Byron's very different literary and political use of borders, as well as of renegado and pirate figures.

Byron's borderlands differed obviously from those chosen by Scott in his poetry, insofar as they were sites of contemporary – rather than historical – conflict or instability: Portugal, Spain, Albania, Turkey and Greece. Byron therefore used settings that drew his readers' attention and imaginations to the areas that were the debateable lands of his and their own day: frontiers that had very recently been, were about to be, or were in the very process of being redrawn through the effects of war and revolution that I have mentioned. I accordingly discuss Byron's development of themes concerned with these borders in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. A Romaunt*, cantos 1 and 2 and his 'Turkish' or 'Eastern' Tales. It is not my intention to address Scott's novels in the present book, but his choice of more contemporary settings in many of his works of prose fiction, and his more direct characterization of encounters in the near and far East significantly occur after Byron began publishing his Eastern Tales.

The representation of otherness as a debatable moral category is possibly the single most enduring theme in Byron's poetry. As my readings show, it is inextricably bound into his treatment of actual and metaphorical borders, and emphasizes the relationship between them. We can appreciate the contentious nature of Byron's approach if we make a comparison

of how his poetry depicts societies that are 'other' than Western European with some of the dominant theoretic positions in our own time. Edward Said's *Orientalism* remains one of the most significant studies of the ways in which European imaginations have tended to construct the Orient as a vast region spreading from the Near and Middle East across to Pacific Asia.[34] The singular Orient which Said identifies as a dominant – and dominating – configuration of the Western imagination is conceived of as culturally backward, sexually preoccupied and deviant, and repressive of women. Paradoxically, it is portrayed as effeminate and weak but warlike and cruel, and thus in need of western governance. I argue that Byron attempts to take an anti-orientalist position, and that to an extent he succeeds. My readings show that his poetry demolishes the notion of an homogenous East defined as *not* being like Europe, and presents a more complex interplay between the Ottomans, Arabs and Europeans (see my reading of *The Giaour*, in Chapter 4). Said's argument is founded on the premise that Europe has translated its knowledge of eastern societies into political and cultural power. Whilst Byron replicates the position typical of the early nineteenth-century scholar of the East insofar as he and his poetic heroes (from Harold through to Lara) are observers and interpreters who appropriate and process what they see, his stance is consciously ironical. Indeed, in some respects he is Saidian well before the fact, although he is also illustrative of shortcomings in *Orientalism* as a text that is perhaps overly rigid in its assumptions about 'textual attitude' and representational strategies.[35] Reconsidering *Orientalism* for the University of Essex Sociology of Literature Conference in 1984, Said remarked that his book had 'fortunately . . . elicited a great deal of comment, much of it positive and instructive, yet a fair amount of it hostile'.[36] The same can be said of Byron's poetry of the Near East, although in a different context, and in the course of my book, I discuss the controversy as it was mediated in the British periodical press.

Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) looks more specifically at nineteenth-century literature and the importance of narrative to Western programmes of expansion into other lands.[37] Again, the argument helps to ground my discussions of the ways in which Byron's treatment of exotic cultures represents the western imagination as an area that demands debate. Indeed, Said concludes that 'No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies', but asserts 'Survival in fact is about the connectedness between things.'[38] His contention that 'it is more rewarding – and more difficult – to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about "us" ' illuminates a strand of thought that

Byron's poetry is consistently occupied by. Indeed, the tensions of transcultural communication become an increasingly evident theme for Byron. Beginning with his consideration of Spain in *Childe Harold* canto 1 as something more than a place for the projection of British interest abroad, he develops motifs of societal ambiguity and misunderstanding through the fractured narrative structure of *The Giaour*, and onward into the metaphysical anguish of Lara's and Khaled's inability to establish meaningful contact with the European society from which Lara came.

My exploration of Scott's and Byron's concern with the presence of otherness on and around borderlands shows how inadequate is any monolithic approach to representations of the familiar and unfamiliar. Scott's poetry of the English/Scottish Borders and of the Scottish Lowland/Highland margins depicts alternative kinds of 'frontier' (even though he uses that term to describe each). His orientalization of the Highland fringe, which I discuss in Chapter 2, establishes a different society from the anglicized clan-feudalism that he represents in the Borders region. Byron's scholarly notes and his integration of feudal and oriental motifs likewise complicate straightforward constructions of East and West, or South and North. John Barrell's triangular 'this', 'that' and 'the other' approach to understanding constructions of difference, in which strangeness becomes a matter of degree (rooted in the emergent British social class system) is more helpful in this respect.[39] His displacement of imagined otherness onto a layered Near (and knowable) 'East' and a 'Far East' (beyond the boundaries of civilization) captures the essence of the metaphorical use of borders by both of my chosen writers. My discussion of Scott's likening of the peaks of Grampians to the minarets of the Islamic Near East and, as they become more distant, to the pagodas of China, together with his atmospheric set-piece description of the appearance of the Highlanders from the far end of Loch Katrine, demonstrates this cultural 'distancing' process.

The problems of empathy and communication across borders is a theme that I discuss in my readings of Scott's *Lady of the Lake* and Byron's Eastern Tales. Scott's Highland clansmen communicate with one another in a 'natural' language that is confusing, disturbing and almost unintelligible to the English-speaking lowland Scots. In return their leader has to strain to hear the softer lilt of the woman of Borders origins that he desires. The madness of Khaled, and her tracing of 'strange characters' (2:625) in the sand towards the end of Byron's *Lara* suggests, to use the more recent framework of Gayatri Spivak's conclusion to her own question regarding the orientalized (and feminized) subaltern, that the Oriental

other ultimately cannot speak.[40] But even this casting of the unspeaking or incomprehensible subaltern as the exotic other does not fully capture Byron's cross-gendered complication of the case in this tale. Lara, the European male traveller who has acquired 'strange wild accents' (1:276) from his travel in foreign places and association with their cultures, is silenced by his own death soon after his return to Western society. Byron's pessimism concerning the sustainability of cultural connectedness is evident in the desolate ending to *Lara* and in the further isolation of utopian possibility in *The Island* (a reading of which concludes this book).

Byron's address of otherness as an admissible, adjacent or even concomitant presence emerges in the first canto of *Childe Harold*'s *Pilgrimage*. As I show, the Moorish history of Spain is emphasized as the determinant of a positive and alluring cultural hybridity. In canto 2 of *Childe Harold* Ali Pasha's Albania is depicted unconventionally as quasi-feudal at the same time that it embodies the more standard oriental stereotypes. My discussions of the Eastern Tales demonstrate that rather than accepting borders and taboos as stable constructs, Byron portrays them as locations and categories to be challenged and crossed (openly in *Childe Harold*, but more secretively and illicitly in the Eastern Tales). As such, and particularly when translated into metaphors, they become sites of debate about travel and transcultural discovery.

Nelson Moe's recent study of the prejudices and anxieties surrounding northernness and southernness in Italy explores the historical construction of the Italian South as a backward and corrupt correlative of the East–West dichotomy, and offers insights that are helpful to my understanding of Byron's treatment of early nineteenth-century Portugal and Spain as Europe's equivalent South.[41] My third chapter begins by looking at Byron's writing of Spain and Portugal, in which Iberia is configured as a borderland politically, culturally and geographically in the sense that it has France to the north and forms the boundary of Europe with Islamic North Africa to the south. I show that Spain, and most particularly Andalusia, is presented in *Childe Harold* as a profoundly liminal land in terms of its Visigoth/Moorish hybrid past, its war-torn contemporary state and its unstable relationship with the rest of Europe. An analogue to my discussion can be found in Moe's identification of recurrent motifs of the Italian South or *Mezzogiorno* as 'a liminal space between Europe, Africa, and the Orient' in texts by Montesquieu, Casanova, Sade and contemporaries of Byron, including Stendhal and Madame de Staël.[42] Naples and Sicily were, of course, Bourbon territories and thus contained cultural elements from Spain and the rest of Italy, as well as from North Africa.

The significance of borders between Europe and the Islamic world are crucial to any discussion of Byron's poetry, for they provided contemporary and historically contentious sites across which he was able to foreground his controversial views on British politics and society. Byron's treatment of the Peninsular War between 1808 and 1812 shows the spectacle of military action, and the pageantry with which it was associated, to be the driving force behind his satirical approach to various dominant literary forms such as the gothic romance revival and reactionary romantic Spenserianism. Gender and sexuality are recurring themes throughout *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2, and in this chapter I discuss Byron's unfavourable comparison of Northern European women, whom he describes as 'languid, wan and weak' (1:602), with 'Spain's dark-glancing daughters' (1:609) and the exotic Houries, or 'black-eyed maids' (1:611) of Islamic Paradise. The second part of the chapter explores the representation of Albania in *Childe Harold* canto 2, as the poem crosses the borders of the Christian West into Ottoman Lands. The seclusion of women and the introduction of a more openly homosocial, and by inference homoerotic, society emerges as a key part of my discussion.[43] From this point onwards in his writing, Byron offers a critique of European assumptions that their society was civilized and morally advanced by comparison with a barbarous orient. My analyses demonstrate how he problematized what was routinely regarded within Britain as a monumental border between one (Christian) cultural and religious system and another (Islamic) irreconcilably different one. The allusions to Scott, which are many, involve the concept of definitive borders and the possibilities – or impossibility – of cultural exchange.

Chapter 4 completes the present book with discussion of Byron's writing of borders in his Eastern Tales and in *The Island*. The popularity of these tales with readers is compared with critical reviews that took a more mixed view of Byron's merit and effect on public taste. I examine the emergence of the outlaw hero in Byron's poetry, most often as a pirate or buccaneer who crosses and recrosses cultural and political borders. I compare such figures with Scott's Border raiders, his Highland warrior-chieftains and, ultimately, with the characterization of the ex-buccaneers in *Rokeby*. Byron's configuration of women in situations of crisis on and around borderlands, and most notably where Islamic law is invoked, forms an important strand of my enquiry.[44] The Eastern Tales all involve action located along the margins of land and sea as well as between Europe and the Islamic East. Consequently, the political significance of shorelines as marginal zones and of piracy as subversive activity is addressed. My comparative argument looks at Byron's development of

the genre of storytelling, as oral tradition and particularly in relation to the ballad tale of striking incident, where Scott's influence is extensive. The poetics of borders and of cultural encounter is kept to the fore, as I analyse the significance of the diversity of poetic forms and narrative techniques within the Eastern Tales, such as the fragment poem in *The Giaour*, the heroic couplet in *The Corsair* and the powerful use of image and rhyme in the metaphysical narrative of *Lara*. In this final chapter I argue that the established boundaries of European literary genres constitute formal borders, or liminal areas, that Byron exoticizes, traverses and complicates. I include a comparative study of Byron's *Lara* and Scott's *Rokeby*, showing how the latter inspired the former, before concluding with a discussion of Byron's later, utopian poem *The Island* and some comment on Scott's development of borders and cultural encounter in the novel. The treatment by Scott and Byron of the borders between communities and cultures that regard one another as strange, or as having become estranged, is thus finally brought together to show how Scott's providentialism and Byron's pessimism offered the public alternative perspectives on their rapidly changing world.

1

Collecting Ballads and Resisting Radical Energies: Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*

Walter Scott conceived of his first major publication, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, in the early 1790s. Throughout that decade and into the first 3 years of the nineteenth century, he worked with a number of collaborators at accumulating a substantial range of ballad versions and archival material. These he used in what was intended to be an authoritative and definitive print version of oral and traditional Borders ballad culture. For the remainder of his life Scott continued to write and speak with affection of his 'Liddesdale Raids' and 'forays', the ballad collecting and research trips that he made into the Borders country mainly during the years 1792–1799.[1] J. G. Lockhart, his son-in-law and biographer, describes the compilation of the *Minstrelsy* as 'a labour of love truly, if ever there was', noting that the degree of devotion was such that the project formed 'the editor's chief occupation' during the years 1800 and 1801.[2] At the same time, Lockhart takes care to state that the ballad project did not prevent Scott from attending the Bar in Edinburgh or from fulfilling his responsibilities as Sheriff Depute of Selkirkshire, a post he was appointed to on 16 December 1799.[3] An affinity between literary production and legal administration endured throughout Scott's life, and the two are constantly interrelated within his work in ways which emphasize his belief in civic responsibility.

The initial two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*, respectively subtitled 'Historical Ballads' and 'Romantic Ballads', were published in January 1802. A supplementary third volume followed in May 1803. In the third edition, published in 1806, Scott systematically rearranged the order of the ballads and made a number of additions. From that point, although there would be some changes in future editions (mainly to the notes), most of the ballads and their accompanying notes were in place. It is these early editions of the *Minstrelsy* that I am chiefly concerned with,

because I want to read Scott's editing and publishing of the ballads in relation to the collection's initial political and cultural context. However, the fifth edition of 1830 contains two of Scott's most important pieces of literary criticism: his 'Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry and on the various collections of Ballads of Britain, particularly those of Scotland' and 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad'.[4] As part of the paratextual framing material that is such a feature of Scott's work, these essays are important. Both were written after Scott's transition from translator and editor, through narrative poet to novelist, and together they constitute a more emphatically literary complement to his original introduction, which comprised a lengthy historical survey of Borders society. I shall comment on the developmental significance of the essays at various points during the analyses that follow.

The *Minstrelsy* was compiled in the period leading up to, during and in the aftermath of the events of the Terror, during years of the rise to power of Napoleon and at a time when Britain was sporadically at war with France, or existing in a state of uneasy peace. Indeed, publication of the first edition occurred at a time when Britain was ready to declare war yet again on France. In terms of home context it was written by a man who had chosen law as his profession, and set against a background of contrasting radicalism on the one hand and virulent anti-jacobin activity on the other. From the early 1790s, there were a number of notorious high-profile treason and sedition trials of radicals in England and Scotland, and many more that were less well known. Whilst High Treason was the most serious charge, carrying a capital penalty, a wide range of other charges was utilized in order to control public and covert political activism. Outside the courts, unofficial anti-jacobin intimidation became increasingly commonplace throughout the decade and on into the nineteenth century, and was often very violent.

Scott expressed unequivocal support for Edinburgh Judge Braxfield's hardline clampdown on radical activists in the mid-1790s and showed little sympathy for the convicted men.[5] In letters to his aunt Christian Rutherford during his attendance of the treason trials of Robert Watt and David Downie in the autumn of 1794, he spoke of sitting in court from seven o'clock one morning until two o'clock on the following day, sustained by 'some cold meat and a bottle of wine' so that he would not miss the proceedings, and of staying on in Edinburgh 'to witness the exit of the ci-devant Jacobin Mr. Watt'.[6] Watt and Downie were tried during September and October for 'organizing a plot for a general rising in Edinburgh, to seize the Castle, the Bank, the persons of the Judges, and proclaim a Provisional Republican Government'.[7] Thus, they were regarded

as agitators plotting against the economic, judicial and administrative structures at the very heart of the nation. Watt, a physician and an illegitimate son who had taken his mother's name, was the more socially disadvantaged of the two defendants. Interestingly, Scott considered his case the more compelling despite commenting in his letter of 5 September that the evidence against each was 'quite the same'. Possibly, a class agency influenced his attitude, as it indeed seems to have affected the sentencing process. Watt was hanged and decapitated on 15 October. Downie, a financier, was also convicted but later reprieved. The trials and Watt's desperate attempts to avoid execution have been documented by John Barrell.[8] Scott acquired a copy of the published *Declaration and Confession of Robert Watt, written, subscribed, & delivered by himself, the Evening before his Execution* – a last attempt by Watt to obtain a reprieve – and in a letter to his aunt described Downie's reprieve as a 'matter of general regret' before beginning his next paragraph with a reference to 'the striking appearance' and 'accuracy in firing' of the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers.[9]

Scott's keen involvement in the formation in 1797 and subsequent training of the Edinburgh Volunteer Light Dragoons militia testifies to his support for the suppression of radical activity by means other than that available through the courtroom, and outside of and away from it. Scotland witnessed the formation of a number of volunteer militias during the last years of the eighteenth and first years of the nineteenth centuries. Even Robert Burns, who had been known for his republicanism and radical disposition, joined the Dumfries Volunteers in 1795, shortly before his death the following year. The common aims of these militias were to resist invasion by France, should it occur, and to suppress radical activity and street protest at home. Scott composed a number of songs for the Edinburgh Volunteers' use, including 'The War Song of the Royal Edinburgh Light Dragoons' in the 'Imitations of the Ancient Ballad' final section of the *Minstrelsy* for the third edition of 1806. The banner-waving, bugle-blowing martial imagery of the 'War Song' perfectly mirrors the masculine, martial themes of the Historical Ballads of the first section, with its rallying call 'To horse', and its exhortation to 'March forward, one and all!'.[10] But notably, the song recasts those themes for a modern world. Scott's prefatory note begins: 'the following War-Song was written during the apprehension of an invasion. The corps of volunteers to which it was addressed, was raised in 1797. . . . It still subsists . . . .'[11] The inclusion and positioning of the 'War Song' towards the end of the *Minstrelsy* demonstrates the tightness and the closure of Scott's overall, anti-radical narrative.

The looser morals and feminized sensual passions of the romantic and popular ballads are securely contained between the two outer, male-dominated groups.

After these remarks on the political and legal framework within which the *Minstrelsy* was compiled, I want to consider certain dominant themes from the pedagogical and intellectual environment of Scotland that particularly informed Scott's method. It then becomes possible to see how intricately these various contexts relate to one another and how, as a consequence, Scott's scholarly antiquarianism, his interest in medievalist romance and gothic tales and his detailed knowledge and love of the Scottish Borders region ultimately reflect upon a range of more modern concerns. For example, Robert Southey, writing to Scott after the first number of the *Quarterly Review* was published in 1809, believed he recognized his correspondent's hand in an article that concluded 'there is, we think, a considerable analogy between the present history of Spain and that of Scotland about the close of the 13th century'. The review drew parallels between Edward I of England and Napoleon, invoked the Battle of Bannockburn and ended with an exhortation to the kind of national spirit that could repel invasion and resist tyranny.[12] The comparativism behind such an equation of medieval, feudal Scotland and modern Spain was politically motivated, but nevertheless utilized a particular line of historicist thought that had been dominant throughout Scott's school and university years.

The intellectual schools that flourished during the course of eighteenth century in the Scottish Universities, and which we now know collectively as the Scottish Enlightenment, produced an extensive range of work in the fields of moral philosophy, social history, architecture and science. Central to this movement, which led Smollett to describe 1760s Edinburgh as a 'hot-bed of genius' where conversation with leading academics was as 'instructive as their writing', was the advancement of a range of innovative empirical studies that investigated the intricacy of relationship between fields that we now classify as social science and political economy.[13] Methodologies were laid down for understanding the processes of social, civic and economic development that involved the comparative examination of different cultures and societies. Amongst the most important premises to emerge from the Scottish Enlightenment was the consensus that human society develops through a series of recognizable and well-defined stages, to the most recent state of commercial civil society. Periods of stability, followed by crisis and defined in terms of socio-economic systems, were identified as marking a linear progression through each stage to the next. The transition from

feudalism, where local traditions and laws based on regional custom prevailed, to a centrally administered civil and commercial society, maintained through a national judicial system, was seen as the most recent, dynamic stage in a self-propelling and providential evolutionary process.

Theories concerning the stadial development of human society were proposed by almost all of those who were active within the Scottish Enlightenment schools, and were so influential that some elaboration is needed. Possibly the most favoured term in use now – Stadial Theory – was coined by John Millar in *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771). There was a high level of interaction between a number of philosophers from Scotland's main universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, with ideas continually being argued, built upon and expanded into publication. In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith proposed that society passes through four stages, from an initial hunter–gatherer phase to civil and commercial society. Adam Ferguson explored similar theories in *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), emphasizing indulgence in luxury and the subsequent decline of martial vigour as the primary catalysts of crisis. Dugald Stewart, Scott's professor at Edinburgh University, introduced the more complex notion of 'conjectural history' in his *Dissertation: Exhibiting the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical and Political Philosophy, since the Revival of Letters in Europe* (1815 and 1821). The *Dissertation* was written for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (to which Scott later contributed essays on Chivalry and Romance), and published as a single book some years after Scott's *Minstrelsy*, but Stewart had debated these concepts at his University and amongst the *literati* during the period in which Scott was working on the Border Ballads.[14] He, too, was especially concerned with the need to maintain the civic role of personal and public virtue, as a means of countering the potentially damaging effect of possessive individualism. As we will see, Scott advocates a similar outlook in the *Minstrelsy* through a choice of texts implying that Borders history is replete with moral example.

The question that vexed philosophers and political economists was how civil and commercial society might sustain the progressive line that it was following without risking collapse into decadence and/or individualism. Two main class-based strands of anxiety were notably emergent. Increased material wealth along with the abandonment of austere principles amongst the more wealthy members of society – and in the case of feudalism, the softening of martial hardiness due to indulgence in luxury – were determined as precursors of crisis in previous stages of

development.[15] The relationship between luxury, its part in past corruption of moral and civic duty, and the forms of modern anxiety that Scott was responding directly to is clearly determined in James Steuart's *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*.[16] Steuart defines luxury as a 'systematical' influence on the moral, physical, domestic and political spheres of everyday life. He maintains that its 'introduction' can be consistent with a rational and prudent society, but uses historical examples of ruined Empires and social systems to warn of its destructive potential when taken to excess:

> The Luxury of those days was attended with the most excessive oppression. Extraordinary consumption was no proof of the circulation of any adequate equivalent in favour of the industrious: it had not the effect of giving bread to the poor. . . . In one word, luxury had nothing to recommend it, but that quality which *solely* constitutes the abuse of it in modern times; to wit, the excessive gratification of the passions of the great, which frequently brought on the corruption of their manners.[17]

It is essential to appreciate this civic concern with excessive indulgence, and to understand how it was believed to emasculate virtue within a male dominated society, because these are issues treated throughout Scott's and Byron's poetry. Displaced onto historic Scotland, or represented in the form of Eastern stereotypes, ideological notions of 'other' societies as pleasure-seeking and irresponsible are compared with modern Britain as a nation perceiving itself to be built on selective traditions of hardiness and sexual restraint. In Scott's case these comparisons tend to be treated relatively directly, emphasizing the importance of moral example. Byron's poetry takes a more ironical perspective on morality, particularly sexual codes of conduct and the repression of desire, as my later analyses in both Chapters 3 and 4 of this book will reveal.

At the opposite end of the social scale, indolence was a negative behavioural trait considered endemic within oriental society and, through stadial models of comparison, within poorer and more marginal British communities. Indeed, indolence – by definition contradictory to the development of a successful free market economy and commercial society – was commonly perceived to be one of the main reasons for the failure of Highland society to develop naturally into a modern, civil society (this is discussed in more detail in my next chapter). John Sinclair's *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, published in Edinburgh between 1791 to 1799 includes a number of reports that comment, under the heading

'Poor', on the manner in which communities on the Highland fringe had only latterly 'become industrious'.[18] Scott's Border Ballad editions and narrative poems address contemporary anxieties over social stability by describing a hardy and rugged, permanent landscape, within which the physical remains of a succession of past phases of social development are embedded. His poems invoke a Borders region replete with cultural history evidenced by Druid cairns, sites of battle, ruined buildings and topographical features associated with legend.

By the time of Scott's own formal education at High School in Edinburgh and Kelso, and later at University in Edinburgh under Professor Dugald Stewart, Enlightenment theories of the progression of human societies had come to comprise the backbone of social and historical studies. It is more than coincidental that interest in stadial theory reached its peak in the 1790s, which was the very period in which the *Minstrelsy* project was conceived. Scott came to know a wide range of academics and other intellectuals involved in the formulation, furtherance and debate of ideas on civil society and historical development through Edinburgh University, and later through the social environment of city clubs attended by men from the professions and the *literati*. Apart from prominent figures such as Dugald Stewart and Baron David Hume (a specialist in Jurisprudence and the philosopher David Hume's nephew), both of whom he came to know socially and whose lectures he attended at University, he also personally knew both Adam Ferguson, whose work and publications on history and society were seminal within the Scottish Enlightenment, and Ferguson's son, also named Adam.[19] As P. D. Garside says in his study of the many Enlightenment influences on Scott, 'as a student in Edinburgh in the eighties and nineties, then, Scott would have been soaked with "philosophical" history'.[20] Given this environment, it should be little surprising that a readily identifiable period in Scottish history, immediately antecedent to his own day and seen as representing the movement from the barbarian past to the civilized present, would provide the superstructure around which the *Minstrelsy* was authored.

Economically and socially, Scott lived in a rapidly modernizing Scotland. The eighteenth century, and particularly the period since his birth in 1771, had been characterized by an increase in materialism and possessive individualism within an expanding commercial and manufacturing society.[21] Thomas Pennant described late 1760s Glasgow as 'the best built of any modern second-rate city I ever saw' and a place where 'Young Gentlemen of fortune' lived in fine housing designed 'in good taste', whilst the commercial environment and

fine marketplaces supported a thriving import, export and textile manufacturing trade:

> Great imports of this city are tobacco and sugar. . . . Manufactures here are linnens, cambricks, lawns, tapes, fustians, and striped linnens; so that it already begins to rival *Manchester*, and has in point of the conveniency of its ports, in respect to *America*, a great advantage over it.[22]

Pennant's comparison of Glasgow as a rising rival to Manchester is particularly interesting. For example, he rhetorically moves from a conventional perspective of a Scottish city as second-rate by comparison with its English counterpart into a vibrant description of why that situation might be imminently reversible in a world of imperial expansion and seaborne trade. Scott owned the fifth edition of his widely known three-volume account of his 1760s travels in Scotland, and there is ample evidence within his work of its influence (particularly in the descriptions of the Highland landscape in *The Lady of the Lake* and *Waverley*, the first of which I will deal with in my next chapter).

An increase in the visibility of dispossession and poverty was a feature of the substantial migration of the displaced and unemployed rural poor towards the cities. The desire to share in the wealth being created was not, for example, adequately matched by employment opportunities. The discontent of the poor in urban Scotland, accompanied by the rise of the Corresponding Societies and networks of radical activity, thus became all the more frightening to those of the middling and aristocratic sectors of society in the wake of the mobilization of the *sansculottes* in France. These fears are recognized by Scott, and are confronted within the *Minstrelsy* from the safety and displacement of a historicized and contrastingly rural domain. The examples he posits, in the form of the ballads and their surrounding notes, evoke a period when clan loyalty and the unqualified acceptance of rank within feudal social structures prevailed.

The context of literary production within which Scott read and wrote is similarly important. It is difficult to ascertain with accuracy the number of ballad, song and vernacular poetry collections that were published in England and Scotland prior to the publication of the *Minstrelsy*, but those that became well known within the literary world and to the public well exceeded 40 over a period of some 70 or so years. The majority of these anthologies appeared in the second half of the century, and after 1760. Allan Ramsay's early eighteenth-century *The Evergreen* (1724) and

The Tea-Table Miscellany (1724–1737) each contain ballads and songs. Although not ballad collections in the strict sense, these volumes were seminal in the development of Scottish printed balladry. Ramsay provided inspiration and material that Scott used in revised form in the *Minstrelsy*. ('Johnie Armstrong' from *The Evergreen* and the covenanting ballad 'Lesly's March' from *The Tea-Table Miscellany* were included in the Historical Ballads section.) Indeed, as Lockhart notes, Scott wrote in the margin of his copy of the *Tea-table Miscellany* that the volume had belonged to his grandfather, and that 'Hardiknute . . . the first poem I ever learned – the last I shall ever forget' had been taught him from its pages before he was even able to read.[23] Along with Ramsay's collections, David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* (1769, revised 1776) was a major influence on Scott and Robert Burns, and is particularly notable for its publication of ballads in fragment form, as well as for its fidelity to manuscript sources. Burns' *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786) received a rapturous critical and popular reception later in the century, and firmly established the figure of the lyric song writer and collector and editor who was also a highly capable, creative working poet. Burns' national cultural status is such that his vernacular poems and songs (written in lowland Scots) overshadow his prolific output in the more formal, literary language of late eighteenth-century Scotland (English).[24]

Scott's tribute to 'the avowedly lyrical poems of [Burns'] own composition' is well known but, more importantly for the present chapter, his 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad' also acknowledged the Ayrshire poet's dedication in restoring and creatively repairing old ballad fragments: 'The poet, perhaps, most capable, by verses, lines, even single words, to relieve and heighten the character of ancient poetry, was the Scottish bard Robert Burns. . . . His genius contributed that part which was to give life and immortality to the whole.'[25]

Burns became increasingly involved in the collection of Scots song along with its music, and in the composition of lyrics, in the late 1780s and early 1790s. In this respect he constituted a major contrast with Scott, who collected ballads but chose not to publish airs. Furthermore, Burns' enthusiasm in collecting and submitting musical contributions for the early 1790s volumes of James Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum* (1787–1803), and for George Thomson's *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice* (1792, with annual revisions) was such that his most prolific phase of original poetic composition effectively came to an end. Although the collaboration with Thomson involved travelling within the Highlands and Borders regions in order to collect new material, when he turned to original poetic composition Burns

remained essentially a poet of south-western, Lowland Scotland rather than of the peripheral regions. His compositions, with their frequent treatment of love and courtship and lyrics portraying feeling, can be likened more readily to the Romantic Ballad category within the *Minstrelsy*. It is interesting and appropriate that Francis Jeffrey, reviewing the first edition of the *Minstrelsy* for the *Edinburgh Review*, cited by way of sanction Burns' earlier admiration for the ballad version by Mrs Cockburn of 'Flowers of the Forest'.[26] Scott included 'Flowers of the Forest' in adapted form and with a second part of his own composition in his Romantic Ballads category. He cites Burns as a source for a number of the ballad versions in that section.

In his review of Cromeck's *Reliques of Robert Burns, consisting chiefly of Original Letters, Poems and Critical Observations on Scottish Songs*, for the first number of the *Quarterly Review* in February 1809, Scott expressed disappointment that Burns had allowed his early romantic attraction to jacobitism (considered harmless half a century after Culloden, and consistent with Scott's own similar nostalgic dalliance) to transmute into jacobinism, with its republican and liberal agenda.[27] At a literary level, he lamented Burns' concentration on song. In assessing the significance of that review, it should be borne in mind that Scott had been instrumental in establishing the *Quarterly Review* following his indignation at the *Edinburgh Review*'s Whig politics, and most notably after the *Edinburgh*'s controversial review of Don Pedro Cevallos' *On the French Usurpation of Spain* in its October 1808 number. The 'Don Pedro Cevallos' article was acerbically critical of the class institutions of Britain, and called for reform of the constitution on the pain of 'more violent changes'.[28] The authority of monarchical rule was satirically attacked, and the spectre of mob 'insurrection' raised, anathema to Scott. Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, also reviewed Cromeck's 'Reliques of Robert Burns', for the January 1809 edition of the *Edinburgh*, and Scott's comments need to be located within the context of a politically conscious review environment.[29] In stating a preference for more serious poetic composition over song, and regretting that Burns' 'time and talents should have been frittered away' on the lyrics of 'small and insignificant' compositions – although he withheld outright condemnation of Burns' songs with the qualification that no one should 'suppose that we undervalue' them – Scott displays a class-consciousness within which excessive interest in popular song is charged with lower-class intellectual affiliation and, by association (in the light of the remarks on Burns' politics), with political delinquency.[30] Born and raised in Ayrshire, Burns was at heart always a poet and songwriter of contemporary, rural working-class society in

the central Lowlands of Scotland. Scott's antiquarian work, on the other hand, continually sought to represent the more peripheral Borders as a stylized and emblematic region, powered by rhythms of masculine, martial virtue with respect for rank dating at least as far back as the thirteenth century.

Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) had been the primary ballad collection produced in England in this entire period, and it would be difficult to overestimate the extent of its influence. The *Reliques* was referred to by virtually every ballad editor thereafter, and was acknowledged by Scott as his primary inspiration. Jeffrey, for the *Edinburgh Review* 38 years later in his article on Scott's *Minstrelsy*, reflected on what had become the general consensus: that in the 'publication of the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* Dr. Percy conferred on literature an inestimable benefit'.[31] Several of Percy's ballads are from, or purport to come from, Northumberland – therefore they represent a minstrelsy drawn from the immediate other side of the Scottish/English border that Scott wrote about. Let us look more closely at Percy's antiquarian editorial methods.

The contrast between the English bias of Percy's *Reliques* and the Scottish focus of Scott's *Minstrelsy* seems self-explanatory, given the nationalities of the two editors. However, the differing treatment of the Borders country between England and Scotland by each writer reveals something more interesting about assumptions of power, and associated tensions, within the British Union. 'Sir Patrick Spence', which Scott eventually edited and extended to place first in the *Minstrelsy*, is the seventh of the 12 ballads in the first Book of Percy's three-volume collection. Despite the title of the *Reliques* defining the contents as *Ancient English* poetry, Percy classifies 'Sir Patrick Spence' in his index as 'a Scottish Ballad'. It is one of four so designated in that book. The other eight are mainly from Northern England, and more specifically from Northumberland. Thus, the English Ballads outnumber their Scots counterparts by two to one. It has become standard for the *Reliques* to be read as a collection edited in such a way that it constructs and authorizes a unified British ballad tradition, which offers a naturalized, cultural heritage support for a British Union. Indeed, one could argue that the inclusion of Scottish Ballads with dominant themes of aristocrats loyal to the Crown echoes the attendance of a large contingent of Scottish Lords, led by the influential Earl of Bute, at the Coronation of George III and Queen Charlotte on 22 September 1761, just 4 years before the *Reliques* was first published.[32] But the combination of the indexed declaration of the nationality of ballads that are other than English, and the balance of the actual

Border-country Ballads in book one, as we can see, unfurls the extent of the Anglo-centricism behind Percy's editorial strategy. To enclose Scottish Ballads (and Irish, Welsh and others) between covers that present them as ancient *English* relics reveals a bias of historical – as well as contemporary – superiority in favour of England as the dominant culture and nation. Significantly, Percy did not proceed to publication of the supplementary collection that he had intended to call *Ancient English and Scotish Poems*, and which would have given equal weighting at the point of cover and title to each nation.

The 'bardic nationalism' (to use Katie Trumpener's term) that denotes Percy's approach to history and text was important within the development of popular historical understanding towards the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, his antiquarianism constituted a kind of literary *prospect* view, displaying all of the patriarchal and proprietorial tendencies that accompanied such a gaze. Nick Groom refers in his seminal study of the making of the *Reliques* to the way in which a certain kind of quaint 'Scottish ethnicity' was cultivated within England as a way of 'policing the other' – that 'other' being a contemporary Scotland seeking its share of power within an English dominated Union.[33]

The prose framework to the *Reliques*, and its strategies of control over the ballad texts, demonstrates the model that Scott began working with. If we leave aside the plates, the frame material consists of five distinct pieces of prose, all of which address a polite and educated readership to whom the dialect vernacular of ballad language was quaint and more or less unfamiliar. Three of the framing pieces are found in the first volume, where they precede the ballads. The first is Percy's dedication of his volumes to Baroness Percy, Countess of Northumberland. She was not related to Percy, who was the son of a Shropshire grocer. (Percy had 'improved' his name by emending the spelling to match that of the descendants of the heroic Hotspur.) The second is the preface, which proposes Percy's antiquarian recourse to the famous Folio manuscript and other scholarly sources and delineates his editorial principles and methods. The third is an essay on 'The Ancient English Minstrels', in which Percy stresses that the minstrels were men of creative genius and honourable nature, enjoying privileged social and intellectual patronage prior to the degeneration of their kind into late medieval, vulgar proponents of popular song. The fourth and fifth framing pieces are the indexes preceding each book's ballad texts and the glossaries of obsolete and Scottish words that conclude each. The glossaries, like the indexes, have a role to play in Percy's historicizing project. The juxtaposition of 'Obsolete' and 'Scottish' in the headings of the glossaries, for example,

further testifies to his Anglo-centric methodology: the main natural language of the nation that had most recently threatened English sovereignty is neatly consigned to the realm of linguistic antiquity and curiosity. (Gaelic doesn't feature in the *Reliques*.)

Walter Scott's framing techniques were more complex than those of Percy. The paratextual material of Scott's *Minstrelsy*, for instance, occupies as much space within the volumes as the ballads themselves. Not only are there introductory and interjected essays of considerable length and detail, but the ballads are surrounded and intersected by a plethora of notes that grew and were amended with each edition of the collection. Scott's miscellanea of indices, essays, notes and glossaries provides an authoritative framework to the *Minstrelsy* ballads, that like Percy's, 'polices' (to use Groom's terminology) the more controversial aspects of the ballad texts and their origins, at the same time that it conforms to protocol. But in the *Minstrelsy* the problem of 'otherness' is socially and morally defined, rather than specifically national, and is embedded within a historicized, mainly Scottish environment. The exercise of editorial authority in the *Minstrelsy* applies to the outlaw themes within the Historical Ballads, but becomes far more important as the collection moves into the dubious moral content of the Romantic Ballads.

In the Romantic Ballads section of the *Minstrelsy*, Scott's notes serve as a didactic gloss to the scandals and tragedies that comprise most of the ballad narratives. He presents the problems of corruption from within the essential fabric of the home culture of Scotland, and most notably in the fracture or dismissal of relationships central to the domestic sphere and the family unit. The dominant themes of the Romantic Ballads are sexual intrigue, jealousy, betrayal and murder. Whilst, indeed, the songs and ballads are collected from a range of archival and more modern sources, collectively they may be interpreted as parable-like representations of the damage caused to social structures by lack of self-control on the part of individually motivated characters. Of these ballads 'Jellon Grame', from a version by Mrs Brown of Falkland, Aberdeen, 'Willie's Ladye', from Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, and 'The Daemon-lover', which Scott attributes to the recitation of Hogg's father, William Laidlaw, are thematically and stylistically exemplary. Others in the section involve superstition, fabulous aspects of folklore, court rivalries and rapine without the strict codes of honour that were emphasized in the Historical Ballads.

Scott's note prefacing 'Hughie the Graeme', a ballad which narrates the execution at Carlisle of a Borders horse thief betrayed by his unfaithful wife, points out that the Graeme clan of the Debateable Land 'were said to be of Scottish extraction', and are alleged 'with their

children, tenants and servants [to be] the chiefest actors in the spoil and decay of the country'.[34] His endnote to that ballad is a comment on 'the morality of Robert Aldridge, Bishop of Carlisle' – friend of Erasmus, victim of the theft and suggested object of Graeme's wife's affections – which stresses that his 'political and religious faiths were of a stretching and accommodating texture'.[35] There is no corresponding defence of Maggie Graeme's character. The words of her husband Hughie stand alone to define her for Scott's readers:

> Fare ye weel, fair Maggie, my wife!
> The last time we came ower the muir,
> 'Twas thou bereft me of my life,
> And wi' the Bishop thou play'd the whore.
>
> (XV)

The suggestion of moral example drawn from history that is relevant to the early nineteenth century, when radicalism and revolutionary sentiments were associated with excessive passions and loose morals, emerges from the combination of the Romantic Ballad texts and Scott's editorial paratext. As I will show later in this chapter, with the final, Imitations of the Ancient Ballad section the frame narrative becomes less didactic, and more strictly informative and documentary.

Percy's main ideologically inflected literary achievement was a matter of class politics, and it showed a response to urbanization that anticipates the anti-radical stance that Scott would later take. The *Reliques* adopts the north-country Border Ballad as a paradigm from which one could redeem an oral ballad culture that had latterly become associated with vulgar street culture and popular protest. As Groom says at the outset of the introduction to his facsimile edition of the *Reliques*, Percy was both typical and outstanding within the mid-eighteenth-century world of literary medievalism. He worked to an already established antiquarian format, whilst authoring definitive, 'improved' versions of old ballads with themes of epic sentiment for a substantial and growing middling-class, literate and formally educated readership.[36]

All of the published ballad material and criticism to which I have been referring was accessible to a wide range of readers in the public sphere. Behind the publicly visible printed volumes that entered the literary marketplace, however, there existed an intricate network of collectors and antiquarian scholars, working with the mass of manuscript and early print sources that were being recovered, corresponding

with one another and arguing cases of authenticity. By the end of the eighteenth century the ballad anthology had become a genre in its own right. The rise in its popularity manifested an extensive scholarly and public interest in forms of folkloric poetry, and in medieval and primitive literature. The *Minstrelsy* was produced within this generic environment, and Scott's editorial strategies were shaped by the intricate and extensive protocols that had developed around it.

The growth industry in simple, folk and oral poetry during the late eighteenth century was partially a reaction to poetic artifice and the high sophistication of refined neoclassical form. As Marilyn Butler says, the evocation within the arts of 'a condition of society that was primitive and pre-social' was, indeed, the 'strongest single tendency' of the late eighteenth century.[37] By the last decades of the eighteenth century, when Scott was thinking about and beginning to collect ballads, 'cultural primitivism' had become one of the most fashionable features of the literary world. Ideologically speaking, the majority of antiquarian ballad collectors and publishers came from middling-class families and held Tory views in politics. Consequently, the ballad anthology produced by the antiquarian scholar was one that most frequently sought to retrieve and preserve cultural memories of codes of honour, particularly the binding communal loyalties that were latterly believed to have been lost when feudal structures decayed and disintegrated to be replaced by individualism. Joseph Ritson stands out as an example to the contrary, and he vehemently argued that the appellations bard and minstrel were applied to a range of poets and entertainers who may or may not have been creatively talented, socially elevated as poets or, indeed, virtuous in any sense.[38] I will discuss Ritson's radicalism and its manifestation in his ballad collections later in this chapter, in my comparison of his version of 'Johny Armstrong's Last Good-Night' and 'The Three Ravens' with Scott's versions of the same ballads. Some explanation of his dispute with Percy over editorial methods, and of Scott's response to the furore, is needed at this point, however.

The antiquarian practice of piecing together (often quite literally) fragments of ballad and romance poetry from the manuscripts, print sources and oral traditions of threatened communities involved the negotiation of certain protocols. Not the least of these was the requirement that sources be adequately acknowledged. The notorious dispute between Percy and Ritson over how far one might 'repair' such fragments, and over the extent to which one might claim authenticity either for individual ballads or for the superior status of minstrelsy in general, epitomized the way in which authorial control could be fiercely disputed.

Percy prioritized theme and costume, or manner, over scholarly accuracy in his construction of the *Reliques*. The story of the manuscript which he allegedly rescued as it was being used by a maid to light a drawing room fire allowed him to claim justification for his playing fast and loose with his texts, in the cause of rescuing them from obscurity. Nick Groom points out that relatively few of the ballads Percy used were taken directly from the fire-damaged manuscript, but rather were composites made up of a range of sources including his own invention in part.[39] In fact, Percy's editorial strategy was designed to 'improve' the historical manner of the ballads for a modern readership. His policy of 'improvement' – one of the keywords of the age – and Ritson's even more impassioned devotion to historical authenticity emphasize the differences between a writer who sought to construct a cultural history that enshrined ballad culture in traditions of elevated social status and one who sought to acknowledge, also, its less salubrious realities.

Scott discusses the Percy/Ritson controversy at length in his 1830 'Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry and on the various collections of Ballads of Britain, particularly those of Scotland'.[40] His account is balanced in antiquarian and literary terms, but ideologically it is not so equanimous. Scott honours Percy for the 'felicity' and excellence of his 'antiquarian knowledge' in producing a ballad collection 'which must always be held among the first of its class in point of merit' and for his personal qualities, which are noted as his moderation and evenness of temper.[41] He praises Ritson's formidably rigorous scholarship, commenting on his 'laudable accuracy and fidelity as an editor', but he repeatedly refers to his irascible character and 'eager irritability of temper'.[42] Politics are not mentioned explicitly, but Percy was a Tory and thus of Scott's own party, whilst Ritson's proto-socialist beliefs and republican political affiliations were entirely antagonistic to all that Scott upheld. Scott's comparative descriptions of the two men demonstrate the discursive dimension of his political position: moderation and respectability as positive conservative traits, and eagerness, irritability or excessive passion as markers of radical temperament were so common as to be almost universally employed descriptive formulae during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Those politicized, contrasting character traits are translated into the positive and negative aspects of balladry on the Borders within the *Minstrelsy*.

The antiquarian practices of Percy and Ritson demonstrate how ballad anthologies generally used a range of conventions and editorial strategies to meet contemporary literary tastes. Produced within a modern literary framework, and marketed as volumes of ancient 'folk' poetry

(usually in dialect) in a burgeoning commercial environment, these collections involved a potentially paradoxical set of values. As Marilyn Butler states, the emergence of a fashion for 'pre-modern nativist cultural forms' during the late eighteenth century was partly a response to the 'modern cultural dominance of France and [other] Francophile governing élites', and 'laid the ground for a major shift . . . in social attitudes and group identities' as well as in literary tastes.[43] In the years following the French Revolution, and more particularly after the Terror, those attitudes and identities became polarized into factions of radical and anti-radical sympathizers. Materialism and capitalism resulted in the growth of a market and an intellectual trade in old documents, as the mania for old German and Norse, as well as English, ballad sources increased. Leith Davis has argued plausibly that Scott's 1830 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad' presents the genre of modern Imitation Ballads as 'a recalcitrant response' to these materialist market conditions.[44] I would add that Scott's specific prescription of the Borders and its literary heritage as the definitive region where that response could best take place demonstrates the extent to which he regarded rural borders and margins as particularly valuable sites through which to counter the negative, individualistic aspects of commercial urbanization.

Scott was inspired in his early adult life by the German *Sturm und Drang* and Romantic Gothic movements (Schiller and Herder, in particular). As his letters, prose essays and the catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford all testify, he read extensively in Continental as well as British collections of ballads and *volkslieder*. Scott's interest in German gothic ballad literature is endorsed by his anonymous publication in 1797 of *The Chase and William and Helen: two ballads from the German*, which comprised translations of Bürger's 'Der wilder Jäger' (the wild huntsman) and 'Lenore'. Goethe was particularly inspirational, and Scott published a translation of his early (1773) historical verse drama *Götz von Berlichingen mit der Eisernen Hand*. Lukács, in *The Historical Novel*, points to *Götz von Berlichingen* as particularly influential on Scott's development of social and individual characterization within historical fiction.[45] Goethe, in his turn, had been strongly influenced by Herder's adaptations of folk and ballad literature and thus demonstrated developments that had been taking place within Germany. Scott's translation of *Götz von Berlichingen* was published 3 years before the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*, in 1799. He followed it with five ballads, all with Germanic or Scottish supernatural themes, contributed to Matthew Lewis's controversial *Tales of Wonder*. Scott's involvement with the gothic genre prevailed in spite of arguments, following the

publication of *The Monk* (1796), positing Lewis as typical of the debased modern Gothic prose writers who produced stories of terror and sensation for the readers of circulating libraries and purchasers of cheap fiction.[46] Indeed, Scott became instrumental in seeking to redeem gothic and supernatural writing from accusations of excessive sensationalism and fringe libertarian association. Neither does Lewis seem such an unusual partner when we consider, in Fiona Robertson's words, how he, like Scott, expresses 'conventional misgivings about the corruptions of city life', preferring to create 'rural idylls which emphasize the responsibilities of individuals to each other in small communities'.[47] Scott's faith in the moral solidity of the ballads that he contributed to *Tales of Wonder* is borne out by his inclusion of two of them, 'Glenfinlas' and 'The Eve of St. John' in the Imitations section of the *Minstrelsy*. Furthermore, these ballads are respectively set in the Highland borders of Perthshire and the Borders at Smailholm, Roxburghshire, and provide a link between the *Minstrelsy*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *The Lady of the Lake*.

The borders between historical and sensational gothic literature are once again brought into the foreground within Scott's literary biographies, published in the 1820s. His association of Horace Walpole with virtuous, simple forms of gothic romance, and his alignment of Mrs Radcliffe with a modern vogue for luxuriating in false sensation and phantasmagoria[48] can be compared to his own gendered form of medievalism. Scott contrasts the simplicity of the masculine, heroic Border Ballads with the feminized and more sentimentally themed Romantic Ballads, as I shall show in more detail later.

The *Minstrelsy* was compiled within the material, ideological and literary contexts just described. Upon publication, the first two volumes very quickly became known in England as well as in Scotland. The initial print run by James Ballantyne of 750 copies in January 1802 sold well and was followed by the first of the three-volume edition in May 1803, with a print run of 1000 (1500 of Volume 3). Critical reception was largely supportive of Scott's project and of his editorial methods. The *Edinburgh Review*, keen to uphold a scholarly Scottish counterpart to Percy's *Reliques*, and one that did not attract the controversy over authenticity that had accompanied Macpherson's *Ossian* publications and Pinkerton's ballad collections, gave a lengthy, positive reception to the initial two volumes. The tone of Francis Jeffrey's review for the *Edinburgh* can be deduced from the first paragraph:

> The task which Mr. Scott has here undertaken, requires no common combination of abilities. He appears before the public in the distinct characters of author and editor, and unites, in his own person, the offices of antiquary, critic and poet. Such a task is not light; its execution, therefore, is entitled to indulgence in its censure, and to liberality in praise... The first merit of an author, with respect to history, is his *fidelity*. This spirit... Mr Scott possesses in an eminent degree. Very few of the pretended restorers of literary history, especially among our own countrymen, stand blameless in this respect. The long disputed charges against Macpherson, and the proved and acknowledged forgeries of Pinkerton, are instances too well known to need a comment.[49]

On the note of that early positive acclaim for the *Minstrelsy*, we can now move to a closer look at Scott's texts.

Historical Ballads

The Historical Ballads of Scott's *Minstrelsy* have a number of common characteristics: all are masculine in their thematic bias, and all are based on austere, simple chivalric principles – women are passive and idealized, featuring only as stereotypical 'Ladyes in Castelles' or, where they are more realistically depicted, as war-widows. Patriotism is a constant and prominent theme. All are set in geographically peripheral locations. In the first and second editions of the *Minstrelsy*, 'The Sang of the Outlaw Murray' was placed first in the collection. However, from the third edition onwards, it was moved to fourth place. The Aberdeenshire ballad of 'Sir Patrick Spens' was then placed first, 'Auld Maitland' was introduced and placed second and the 'Battle of Otterbourne' third. An examination of the more structured format of the third and subsequent editions, considered along with the content of the ballads, suggests Scott's reasons for making those changes. Notably, 'Sir Patrick Spens', 'Auld Maitland' and 'Battle of Otterbourne' are all intensely patriotic ballads that do not involve any theme of reiving or banditry. Each involves the death of a magnanimous hero. The following analyses should convincingly demonstrate how those three ballads strengthen the ideological strategy that provides the *Minstrelsy* with its impetus as an anti-radical production.

'Sir Patrick Spens'[50]

Scott begins his note prefacing 'Sir Patrick Spens' by acknowledging Thomas Percy's text (published 37 years earlier, in 1765) as his benchmark

version, and he also praises Johann Gottfried Herder's 'beautiful German translation' in *Volksleider* (1778–1779), an anthology he describes as 'an elegant work'.[51] These tributes need to be seen as more than courteous acknowledgements: Scott had chosen a ballad that was equally well known amongst scholars and readers of antiquarian ballad collections, and in doing so he was consciously locating his own anthology within traditions epitomized by the leading collectors from England and Germany. Following these literary acknowledgements, Scott mentions other sources which directly link old manuscripts to contemporary oral recitation and at the same time establish his own rôle as a restorer (rather than simply a retriever) of history:

> But it seems to have occurred to no editor, that a more complete copy of the song might be procured. That, with which the public is now presented, is taken from two MS. copies, collated with several verses, recited by the Editor's friend, Robert Hamilton, Esq., advocate, being the 16th, and the four which follow. But, even with the assistance of the common copy, the ballad still seems to be a fragment.[52]

Scott's claim that some of the verses had been orally related to him is crucial in establishing the individual, progressive nature of the *Minstrelsy*. First, whilst previous collections virtually made a fetish of oral traditions, they nevertheless prioritized blackletter, broadside and manuscript material as verification of their ballad versions. Indeed, here we see one of the most profoundly innovative differences between Scott, Percy and Ritson. Scott was the only one of the three to use – and state his use of – contemporary, orally related source material. Secondly, Scott establishes a clear lineage from *ancient* manuscript sources through to *modern* recitation by an approved person. Thirdly, the reciter is male, educated and middle class.

Yet, Scott states that the ballad still seems to be incomplete – thus rhetorically providing himself with the authority to repair it to a condition superior to that of the 'common copy'. The resulting addition of verses introducing a complementary story to the existing known incident of 'Sir Patrick Spens' is without question the most significant feature of the version that Scott published.[53] Scott's 'Sir Patrick Spens' has twenty-six verses, compared with the eleven that Percy used, and the extra material perfectly demonstrates his practical programme to compose a history that is both 'curious' in the antiquarian sense, and 'conjectural' as defined by Stewart's providential theory, as a close look at the narrative will now show.

'Sir Patrick Spens' begins in the same way as all other anthologized versions of the same ballad, with an image of the monarch seeking loyal service. Thus, a traditional beginning is used both for the individual ballad and for the *Minstrelsy*:

> The King sits in Dunfermline town,
> Drinking the blude-red wine;
> 'O whare will I get a skeely skipper,
> To sail this new ship of mine!'
>
> (I)

The dense alliteration is entirely consistent with oral tradition, as is the interjected dialogue. Scott's use of dialect (which differs in its orthography from that in the Percy version) along with archaic spellings further lends a sense of authenticity. An air of modish gothic simplicity with implications of savagery is invoked by the reference to the drinking of the 'blude-red' wine.[54] The second verse introduces the theme of loyal knighthood, respect for rank and service to the crown. Once this legitimate point of departure is established, Scott's editing processes start to tailor the ballad more specifically towards his own strategy.

The verses that Scott contended were related to him orally by Hamilton concern the storm scene that precedes the sinking of Spens' ship, and they come towards the end of the poem. Strictly speaking, they are important in a literary more than historical sense, for their main function is to heighten the dramatic effect of the ballad. They also add contemporary elements of the eighteenth-century sublime to what is presented as an ancient ballad text, and they constitute more than a gesture towards the wild, dramatic naturalism of the German *Sturm und Drang* and gothic schools. The vivid description of the 'Forties in winter, all 'faem', 'wind', 'weet', 'hail' and 'sleet', and of the 'gurly' sea against which the sailors pit themselves, employs dialect to emphasize the stark, historic masculine bravado of a nation that Scott configures as pounded and shaped by the unforgiving and savage forces of nature peculiar to northern latitudes. Scott ensures that his version of the Spens ballad supports a distinctly Scottish patriotism, increasing the sense of ruggedness by shifting the shipwreck further north than in prior versions, to offshore from Aberdeen. The power of cultural memory and the authority of the literary historian is thereby northernized and made more hardy, at the same time that it is attached to virtues of patriotism. This emphasis on hardiness is evident in Scott's note, where he remarks that 'the tune of Mr. Hamilton's

copy of *Sir Patrick Spens* is different from that to which the words are more commonly sung; being less plaintive, and having a bold nautical turn in the close'.[55] The storm verses establish a precedent for a living oral balladry, that can safely be listened to from the mouthpiece of an elite, modern 'minstrel' class – represented by men like Hamilton and deemed trustworthy – which exists in co-operation with a print culture presided over by literary authorities such as Scott.

However, it is Scott's attempt to repair the remaining fragment – as he designated it – through the addition of the 'Noroway' verses near the beginning of the ballad, which loads it with a particularly nuanced historical significance. In all other printed or manuscript versions prior to Scott's the purpose of the voyage is either entirely omitted or remains obscure. As Nick Groom points out in his study of the *Reliques*, no catharsis whatsoever can be derived from Percy's version of this ballad because the narrative offers no reason for either the voyage or the drowning of the hero.[56] It is, in short, rhyme without reason. Scott remedies that anomaly. He has Spens travelling to Norway to bring back the heir to the Scottish throne and granddaughter of Alexander III, Margaret the Maid of Norway. The story is explained at length in the prose note prefacing the poem, where Scott offers his readers a tenuous and curious historical tale of a plan to marry Margaret to the English Edward, Prince of Wales. This would have had the profound effect of bringing the Union of the Crowns forward by some three centuries, had the plan succeeded, and would have entirely altered the character of the Borders as a frontier region. In his note Scott acknowledges Lord Hailes' (David Dalrymple's) *Annals of Scotland* and John de Fordun's *Chronicles* as historical texts from the eighteenth and fourteenth centuries that include the story, emphasizing the significance of the conjecture to the historical and literary interest of the Borders:

> The death of the Maid of Norway effectually crushed a scheme, the consequences of which might have been, that the distinction betwixt England and Scotland would, in our day, have been as obscure and uninteresting as that of the realms of the heptarchy.[57]

Covering himself against the very real possibility of accusations of scholarly compromise, Scott freely admits that lack of hard archival sources prevented him from irrefutably linking the events of this story to 'Sir Patrick Spens'. His editorial activism is such, however, that it shades suggestion and possibility into probability.

The sea that claims the lives of 'gude Sir Patrick Spens' (XXVI) and the other 'Scots Lords' represents an obvious natural border (to which

I return in my fourth chapter, on Byron's Eastern Tales), and a political one insofar as it separates Scotland from Norway. But the manner in which Scott links the Aberdeenshire ballad with the ballads set in the Borders region requires more urgent explanation at this point. 'Sir Patrick Spens' stands out as the only one of the Historical Ballads of the *Minstrelsy* not to have Borders origins or a theme of Border incident. Scott makes the connection with the Borders, however, by developing a causal relationship between dramatized conjectural history, in the form of the 'Maid of Norway story', and the 'curious' folk history of the Border Ballad tradition. The centuries of discord that follow the mythical sinking of Spens' ship make possible the ballads that comprise the rest of the *Minstrelsy*, and ensure that the Borders develop into a frontier region with all the characteristics of martial hardiness, valour and resistance to invasion that Scott emphasizes as formative to modern, civil society.

Elements of corroboration of the 'Maid of Noroway' story in the Rhymer's works are suggested by Scott. Furthermore, he argued that Thomas the Rhymer constituted proof both of the noble creativity and status of the Scots bards in general, and of the Scottish Borders more specifically as a site of seminal literary influence in the world of Metrical Romance that extended beyond the British Isles to the European continent.[58] My main discussion of the Rhymer comes later in this chapter, but it helps here to consider how, in proposing such an elevated 'History of literary Romance' rooted in the Borders alongside an ancient exemplar of the more general Scottish folk ballad tradition, Scott laid foundations for the *Minstrelsy* to distinguish between the behavioural examples portrayed in the virtuous, heroic medieval Border Ballads and those of the more disparate, sentimental and Romantic Ballads.

A closer look at Percy's version of 'Sir Patrick Spence' reveals the extent to which Scott's ballad offers an alternative treatment of the material form of the ballad.[59] Percy's ballad is written in a combination of Scots dialect and English archaisms. Though these differ somewhat from those used by Scott, the antiquarian effect is similar. The first verse presents the reader with the same gothic vignette of an anonymous monarch, who sits drinking 'blude-reid wine' (1:2) and is able to command the unquestioning loyalty of his Lords, without the need for specified reason. Alongside the primitivism, the medievalist picture of monarchy and baronial manners, Percy, like Scott, was inscribing ballad form as bearing out a theme of clearly defined social rank and responsibility, and unquestioning loyalty to Crown and country. But whilst Percy's version has all the formulaic verse and rhyme structure conventional to ballad form, its ideological and historical dynamism varies from that of

Scott because it lies entirely in the use of images. Percy's images are of aristocratic nobility and heroism, and his ballad offers a montage-like series of scenes: the King's castle; the reading of the letter; Sir Patrick's vision and dilemma; the drowning at sea; the eternally waiting ladies, with their fans and gold combs. Scott incorporates all of those features, but his connecting narrative and extensive additions have the dual effect of conferring authenticity *and* modernity. The short note with which Percy prefaces his poem also contrasts with that used more than a quarter of a century later by Scott. Percy's note serves as a pretext to his ballad's generalized historicization of knightly heroism, contending that vagaries of time, place and name are much less important than a sense of theme and historical manner. Whilst Scott fully assents to the primary rôles of theme and manner, which he prefers to call 'costume', he adds an array of justifications and historical explanations that suggest an enlightenment-based, socio-historical form of antiquarian awareness. The manner in which the more dramatically descriptive passages in the text of Scott's 'Sir Patrick Spens' work alongside the narrative supports a reading of the ballad as having a providential aspect alongside its semblance of antiquity. The effect is a moralizing form of nationalism, emphasizing duty to one's nation in the face of adversity. Scott's additions to 'Sir Patrick Spens', together with his interpolation of oral source material, accord with David Buchan's suggestion that the oral ballad was traditionally morally *descriptive* rather than *prescriptive*, and that it was 'only with the advent of general literacy' that 'the moral tags and interjections begin to spread through the ballad texts'.[60]

I will return to 'Sir Patrick Spens' throughout the present chapter, noting its structural and thematic relationships with other ballads in the *Minstrelsy*. At this point, I want to argue that Scott placed 'Sir Patrick Spens' first in his collection from 1806 in order to establish stronger and more simply readable foundations of patriotism and civic valour prior to the Border-raid, Reiving or Riding Ballads with their outlaw themes.

'Auld Maitland'[61]

'Sir Patrick Spens' is followed by two ballads that develop the theme of nationalism, chivalric loyalty and Scots honour. Both are tales of defiance and heroism against attacks by England. Each involves rather tenuous events that purportedly occurred in the late thirteenth or fourteenth century, and each is strategically set in the Borders region.

'Auld Maitland', like 'Sir Patrick Spens', opens with reference to a king, but this time it is to a named 'Edward' – whom Scott's notes identify as Edward I of England.[62] However, the nature of monarchy and patriotism

is more important as the key to understanding this ballad. The use of the indefinite article in the first line establishes an immediate contrast with 'Sir Patrick Spens': the monarch here is *a* king rather than *the* king, suggesting an arbitrary quality to his reign. The first line tells us that he lived in a 'southern land', and he is described in the third line as 'unwordily' or unworthily wearing the crown. The heightened northernness of character that had been privileged in the previous poem thus meets its antithesis:

> There lived a king in southern land,
> King Edward hight his name;
> Unwordily he wore the crown,
> Till fifty years were gane.
>
> (I)

Throughout, Edward is represented as a monarch tainted by character traits of deception and injustice. Scott does not mention that Edward I became known popularly in England as the 'Hammer of the Scots' on account of his deposition of John de Baliol, his defeat and execution of William Wallace and his suppression of the Scots' continued insurrection under Robert the Bruce. However, his note comments on 'the stormy period of the Baliol wars', and the ballad takes up the matter of the 'lang wars, in fair Scotland' as early as verse four.[63] The ballad narrator, in Scots, wishes the English king 'dool and pyne' (VI), which translates as 'sorrow and grief'. The escalation of ill will between the English and the Scots forms the basis of the incident of 'Auld Maitland', and thus another contrast is established: 'Sir Patrick Spens' tells a tale of courtly behaviour and diplomacy. The notes with which Scott prefaces this second poem inform the reader of what quickly becomes obvious upon reading: that 'The inveterate hatred against the English, founded upon the usurpation of Edward I glows in every line of the ballad.'[64]

As with 'Sir Patrick Spens', the legendary hero of 'Auld Maitland' is a nobleman of obscure identity. Scott's introductory note identifies him as probably Sir Richard Maitland, Lord of Thirlstane castle in Lauderdale – one who 'seems to have been distinguished for devotion as well as valour'.[65] Repeated use is made of this kind of historical conjecture throughout the notes, and whilst Scott seems to have believed the ballad to be of genuine antiquity, he admits that its actual date 'cannot be ascertained with any degree of accuracy'.[66] It is, rather, the *concept* of the striking incident and the ballad narrator's stylistic 'conformity with the manners of the age' that is more directly relevant to the project of the *Minstrelsy*.[67]

The narrative of 'Auld Maitland' belongs to the category of curious history that I have been referring to throughout this chapter, and it demonstrates the importance within Scott's writing of regional literature as a reconstruction of popular cultural memory. The plot uses a conventional template for the old, gothic ballad tale: Maitland is besieged in his castle, he successfully resists and then, in disguise, with his sons wreaks revenge on his attackers. The whole is related in sufficiently dense Scots Borders dialect to invoke a distinctly regional and traditionally oral character, but again there is enough standard English to make it accessible to a wider readership. Scott ensures that the balance is such that a sense of ethnicity attaching to the narratorial voice is always maintained. The consistent use of dialect in lines of dialogue throughout 'Auld Maitland' warrants comment: the English characters, and even King Edward, speak for the most part in broad Scots. The effect is not so much a matter of suggesting that they would have spoken in such a manner. Rather, the traditions of oral poetry, in which the bard or minstrel would assume and dramatize the voices of a range of characters in the course of the narrative, are conformed to in a way that maintains a northern linguistic and poetic authority.

'Auld Maitland' is a set piece with which Scott attempts to capture the spirit of an age and of a people. Borders, as sites of confrontation where loyalties and virtues are constantly tested, are brought to the fore. The savagery with which Edward's men are killed by the Scots and made examples of – their bodies hung over the drawbridge 'that all the host might see' (LIII) – emphasizes ferocity suggestive of a barbarous, feudal age. Maitland's own fight to the death with Edward's nephew, at the end of the poem, in which he throws down his sword and flings himself at his opponent's throat, subscribes to the image of the Scotsman as a warrior of superior physical strength, if not size. The English youth was described in the second stanza as 'large of blood and bane' and here is portrayed as 'great in might'. The alliterative use of dialect in the stanza that describes the combat, along with the characteristically Scots dropping of the final consonants, linguistically reinforces a sense of cultural authenticity that is full of vitality:

> When Maitland saw his ain blood fa',
> An angry man was he!
> He let his weapon frae him fa';
> And at his throat did flee.
>
> (LIX)

Scott encloses the ballad of 'Auld Maitland' within extensive notes that cite material from a variety of sources in order to authenticate its 'very high antiquity'. His references are literary and cultural, scholarly and popular: some are formal and printed, others either manuscript or oral. A highly heterogeneous literary and historical context for the ballad is thus created, and the overall diversity of the *Minstrelsy* maintained. The first source that he mentions is James Hogg's mother, Margaret Laidlaw, whose sung version of the ballad he acknowledges as his main point of reference. The mention of the 'blind man, who died at the advanced age of ninety' from whom she is alleged to have learned the poem, and Scott's footnote on her own aged status – 'This old woman is still alive'[68] – invoke two of the most prevalent stereotypes of oral poetic tradition: that of the blind bard (whether it be Homer, or Scotland's own 'Blind Harry'), and of the old woman, usually poor, who takes over and only partially preserves the remains of a dying tradition. This is the first instance that we find of the female gendering of the bardic voice that becomes a major feature within Scott's work and which, as I shall show, develops with the Romantic Ballads of the *Minstrelsy* before becoming more fully foregrounded with the publication of his narrative romance *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810.

Throughout the ballad and the notes of 'Auld Maitland' Scott emphasizes his main agenda of capturing the spirit of manners and custom, rather than proving minute historical detail and accuracy of text. The description of the siege of Maitland's castle along with the detail of clothing and weaponry enables him to affiliate his *Minstrelsy* to documented Scottish history, whilst the suggestion of oral sources and the use of formulaic techniques associated with oral tradition endow the ballad with a cultural identity. The notes that follow the ballad point to parallels with both alleged and recorded sieges. With his use of quotations from Blind Harry's *History of Wallace* and Barbour's *The Bruce*, two of the best-known national epics from Scottish medieval history (singing heroes who had been Edward I's primary Scottish antagonists) are drawn in to the *Minstrelsy* to deepen the context of Scottish bravery at the point of its frontier. Maitland is presented as an everyman version of these better-known heroes (as Fergus McIvor and Evan McCombich would prove to be in a Highland context later in *Waverley*). The notes that follow the ballad illustrate at length the romantic custom and chivalric codes that frame the action, all of which takes place within a theatre of conflict located on the feudal Borders.

'The Battle of Otterbourne'[69]

Scott's construction of the Scottish Borders as a site where national, as well as regional cultural identity could be established and maintained, is consolidated in the third ballad of the *Minstrelsy*, the 'Battle of Otterbourne'.[70] Again, he emphasizes the northern origins of the Historical Ballads, following his title with assertions of the Scottishness that distinguishes his version from that published by Percy:

> BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE
>
> The Scottish Edition
>
> The following edition of the Battle of Otterbourne, being essentially different from that which is published in the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, vol. i., and being obviously of Scottish composition, claims a place in the present collection. . . . The ballad, published in the *Reliques*, is avowedly an English production; and the author, with a natural partiality, leans to the side of his countrymen; yet that ballad, or some one similar, modified probably by national prejudice, must have been current in Scotland . . .[71]

Furthermore, it is with 'The Battle of Otterbourne' and its accompanying notes that the overall narrative structure of the *Minstrelsy* as a *borders* text, and the manner in which the Borders region is established as a fulcrum of Scottish social and literary history, become more readily apparent. Rather than opening with reference to a king, there is a shift at this point to the culture of clans, the landscape of the debateable land and border-raids. The first stanza names the Earl of Douglas as the protagonist of this ballad, and the second establishes the unnamed 'muir-men' of the renowned border families of the Gordons, Graemes and Lindesays as his associates. They embark on a ride 'into England, to drive a prey' (I), meaning, to set out on a cattle-rustling expedition across the Border. The reader might at this point anticipate a reiving ballad, but cattle-rustling and outlaw activity is not yet to be the focus of the *Minstrelsy*. Rather, there is an abrupt turn: Douglas's excursion becomes a confrontation of honour and chivalric combat with Hotspur, Lord Percy. That confrontation leads to the battle of the title, with 'the Douglas' dying a hero's death and Percy being taken prisoner into Scotland. Scott further underwrites the Scottish bias of his version in his note on the naming of Hotspur as 'Percy' throughout the ballad, which he states was in itself an antagonistic gesture: 'Hotspur, for instance, is called *Earl Percy*, a title he never enjoyed.'[72] It might not be too fanciful

to read into the notes, with their several references to the two 'Percys' – Hotspur and the Bishop – a somewhat mischievous parallel on Scott's part. The audacious stealing of Hotspur, Lord Percy's 'pennant' that Scott mentions, and the abduction of both it and the Lord himself into Scotland, is perhaps echoed centuries later by Scott's own appropriation of Thomas Percy's pen and his gentlemanly plundering of the *Reliques* themselves.

Several fundamental principles relating to the historical rôle of Borders culture in the shaping of Scotland are mapped and negotiated by Scott in 'Otterbourne'. The landscape – prominent, though strictly speaking a seascape, in 'Sir Patrick Spens', but entirely absent in 'Auld Maitland' – returns to become a feature in this poem. Again, it is a wild environment – but there is a crucial difference between the rôle of the North Sea in 'Sir Patrick Spens' and the Borders in 'Otterbourne'. The Borders landscape of Scott's ballads is hostile, but not to the borderers. On the contrary, it provides them with a habitat to which they have become thoroughly adapted and with which they exist in rude harmony. The simplicity of the ballad form perfectly captures this harmony. A sense of freedom is evoked in lines such as 'The deer rins wild on hill and dale, / The birds fly wild from tree to tree' (XII). The emphasis on extant wildness is all important, for the fells, dales and muirs (moors) are established from the beginning of 'Otterbourne' as a geologically ancient and monolithic, but politically contested, that is 'debateable' terrain lit by the burning peel towers and soaked in the blood of feudal combat. Through descriptive passages such as these, Scott achieves the integrative vision of landscape, social history, oral performance and literary tradition that Katie Trumpener emphasizes in *Bardic Nationalism* as a preoccupation of Macpherson in his *Ossian* poems.[73]

Thus, despite the simplicity of the ballad form, there is a more intricate duality of passion and reason, nostalgia and enlightened sense that runs through Scott's life's work from its beginnings. The Borders country he describes is at once a picturesquely beautiful place and a violent badlands, a place that in times prior to the improvement of livestock farming can only support a population that exists by predation. When Douglas dies and is finally buried according to his request, 'by the braken bush, / That grows on yonder lilye lee', and 'beneath the blooming briar' (XXV–VI), the Border hero becomes part of the soil itself, to be commemorated for ever by the barbed briar and the lily that grow and flower as wildly and freely as he lived.[74] Those lines – with all their romance and beauty – are, of course, poetic fancy. Furthermore, they

reveal a great debt to the descriptive style of John Leyden in *Scenes of Infancy* (1803).[75] But a comparison of Scott's ballad text with the rationale of the notes exposes a romantic sensibility to the ending of the poem, as Scott informs the reader that Douglas was 'not buried on the field of battle, but in Melrose Abbey, where his tomb is still shown'.[76] That combination of balladesque poetic licence and contrasting factual annotation is a feature of Scott's style as an editor. It contributes pointedly to his individual, literary crafting of the Borders as a region where myth and reality combine to form a history that stimulates the imagination, albeit under guidance, as well as the antiquarian desire for authenticity.

The topography of 'The Battle of Otterbourne' is the landscape of the striking incident, and exemplifies what Scott referred to in 1808 in his autobiography as 'the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery'.[77] Scott explains his notion of a 'picturesque in action'. As an aesthetic concept, it requires the observer to communicate more closely with the object of interest than he or she would within the conventions of its more regular, scenic counterpart: 'to me the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling Castle'.[78] Such a close-up approach to landscape and its rôle as repository of social history – in contrast to a more conventional preservation of distance – amounts to an appreciation by Scott of the 'epic directness' that Lukács emphasizes as a primary factor in his success as a portrayer of the 'age of heroes'.[79]

Within the 'Battle of Otterbourne' various conventions associated with picturesque representation and its affect are evident. Austere stone structures built into a landscape of crags, burns and bracken-moors are invoked, and the gothic modality of the architecture appeals to the imagination. Scott's introduction of Melrose Abbey in his notes complements the gothic quality of the ballad itself, and also establishes a marker to which he would return in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*: in both works, Melrose Abbey is the place where devotion to duty and individual honour meet. It functions for Scott as the consecrated, ruined sepulchre of centuries of ennobled Borders history. In the *Lay*, it becomes the spiritual location of the 'magic' of literature itself – the repository of the book of gramarye.[80] Its presence within the notes of 'Otterbourne' perfectly integrates romantic gothic literature and medievalism with conventions of the picturesque.

Scott's introduction of the border clans in 'The Battle of Otterbourne' serves a purpose that similarly extends beyond the individual ballad, and ultimately beyond the *Minstrelsy*. The Gordons, Graemes and Lindesays

are the 'doughty Douglas's' choice of support as he embarks on his ride (I): 'He chose the Gordons and the Graemes / With them the Lindesays, light and Gay' (II). The powerful use of alliteration in those lines binds these families to Douglas, and is typical of the ballad's form and effect in three main ways. First, it is another example of the way in which the *Minstrelsy* ballads conform to oral literary formulae and traditions. Secondly, it contributes to the easy flow, rhythmic pattern and drive of what is, after all, a song, and enhances its readability. It also emphasizes the dominant cultural theme of rapport and solidarity. The Jardines, from the West-Border, provide a strident contrast that is both formal and thematic. They are shamed for their rejection of this code of honour: 'But the Jardines wald not with him ride / And they rue it to this day' (II). The alliteration in those lines, other than in the use of the consonant 'd', is almost entirely self-contained. Scott's note testifies to the way in which such poetic continuities and, conversely, fractures mirror the national calamity that could accompany the failure of clan-feudal codes of loyalty and support: 'Their refusal to ride with Douglas was, probably, the result of one of those perpetual feuds, which usually rent to pieces a Scottish army.'[81]

The Jardines' rejection of the Douglas's call to action, together with their formal alienation within the structure of poem, should not be read simply as an attempt by Scott to construct a parallel to nineteenth-century individualism. However, their example focuses attention on the catastrophic potential of disloyalty or apathy. Thus, popular poetry as a form of cultural memory serves to remind readers of the *Minstrelsy* that collective, unwritten moral principles of duty and loyalty existed deep in Borders history. Scott's inclusion of this version of 'The Battle of Otterbourne' in the *Minstrelsy*, when it is read in conjunction with his editorial note, emphasizes the importance of such traditions of social duty for his own time when many people feared they had become endangered or lost within an increasing pursuit of individual interest.

In terms of Scott's construction of a curious history, all of the families named in 'The Battle of Otterbourne' are important in socio-historical and in literary terms, both within the more regional context of the Borders and the wider, national history of Scotland. Furthermore, they reveal a good deal about Scott's own interpretation of the extent of Borders influence. Douglas became such a well-known name, associated with feudal conflict and monarchical dispute, that this early point of consecration of an ancestral hero contributes to the linear historical framework and continuity of the *Minstrelsy*. But it is the Gordons and

the Graemes – families that migrate – that are particularly interesting. Within the ballad they represent, as we have seen, the regional loyalties and camaraderie of the Borders. This is emphasized by the omnipresent threat of English attack. In Scott's notes, however, the Gordons and Graemes lead the reader out of the Borders through the account of their departure: to Aberdeenshire and Inverness on the one hand, and to Ireland – and more obliquely to Stirling and the Western Highlands – on the other. Scott thus establishes through 'Otterbourne' a diaspora of virtuous Borders culture. An appreciation of such a mapping of cultural influence will aid our understanding of his later work.

The Riding Ballads

I now turn to the themes, structure and textual content of the Riding Ballads, along with Scott's editorial strategy in placing them within the *Minstrelsy*. These ballads form a coherent subgroup within the Historical Ballads section. From the 1806 edition onwards, the Riding Ballads follow the three nationalist Historical Ballads 'Sir Patrick Spens', 'Auld Maitland' and 'The Battle of Otterbourne'. Two-thirds of the twenty-seven ballads that comprise the Historical Ballads from 1806 onwards belong to this category, indicating their level of importance to Scott. The remaining six poems are Covenanting Ballads, which Scott himself described as the product of Scotland 'during a period highly unfavourable to poetical composition'.[82] The Covenanting Ballads appear to be somewhat tacked on to the end of the Historical Ballads section of the *Minstrelsy*, and though there is no doubting their historical place and value, Scott, who was not a religious man, clearly preferred the excitement and spirited romance of the mosstrooping or reiver tales. Taken as a group, and considering their narratives of striking incident and the vigorous heroism of outlaws, the Riding Ballads describe a tenuous and violable border region between England and Scotland during a period from the early fourteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Their placement before the Romantic Ballads adds dramatic impetus to the *Minstrelsy* as a programme of curious historical recovery. Scott's editorial strategies impart sanction and order to the fragmentary and essentially 'unruly' literary – as well as social – character of the ballads themselves.

The use of the wide range of oral literary formulae and stylistic motifs already discussed continues throughout these poems, but a major thematic variation occurs at this point in the *Minstrelsy*: law becomes a central feature alongside patriotism. Richard Lomas concludes that although

'for almost all of the three centuries between 1296 and 1603, Scotland and England were in a state of actual or threatened war', there remains even today a need to 'tone down the popular impression that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Border, and indeed the whole of Northumberland, was a war-torn land subject to constant and sustained Scottish raiding which was primarily, if not solely responsible for creating conditions of depression and poverty'.[83] Scott is without doubt the writer most responsible for creating such an enduring 'popular' impression of Borders banditry, and though poverty is never treated as a negative issue (his tales are of a hardy peasantry and benevolent chieftains), the *Minstrelsy* is the single most influential text in the forging of that impression into cultural memory. Partisan though his account proves to be, Scott puts together a history of the Borders that portrays a social structure based around freebooting on the one hand, and freedom-fighting on the other. The overwhelmingly obvious feature of the *Minstrelsy* Riding Ballads, indeed, is that the degree of acute lawlessness that prevails at one level, and which is carefully documented in the notes, is always accompanied by a correspondingly obvious conformity to codes of kin loyalty and communal custom. Those loyalties are in turn always translatable into loyalty to the state. The old individual and communal virtues that motivate the heroes of these poems thus counterbalance the endemic disrespect of property laws – a disrespect that, with hindsight, would be remedied through the development of the centrally administered legislature and judiciary systems of fully civil, commercial society. Francis Jeffrey's review takes up the issues of lawlessness, specifically in the matter of property, and moral virtue on the Borders as they are represented in Scott's ballads:

> The laxity of Border morals, in respect to property, is seen in the very animated ballad of *Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead*, the *Lochmaben Harper, Dick o' the Cow*, &c. On the other hand, courage, fidelity, enterprize, are exemplified in *Kinmont Willie, Jock o' the Side*, and *Archie o' Cafield*.[84]

Scott cultivated his readers' nostalgia for an outlaw culture that once lived on the edge of the nation (yet in contemporary terms, in a region only fifty to eighty miles from one or other of the nation's major metropolitan centres). His collection of ballads from such a peripheral, frontier region – which he emphasizes as hostile geographically and socially, but which by his own time had been transformed into a 'safe' Tory stronghold – presents a Scottish alternative to the popular English legends

based around heroic outlaws such as Robin Hood. (Robin Hood is mentioned in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and in *Marmion*.)

However, Scott explicitly states in his introduction, and again in his notes that the Borderers from whom these ballads are supposed to have originated tended to cast their national allegiances according to what suited their particular outlaw status at the time. The ballad notes tell of communities that claimed protection from one nation and then the other, showing little or no inclination to identify themselves with lowland or urban Scots, or to respect the institution of the Scottish Crown.[85] At times, the legislatures of Scotland and England are shown to be united and directed against them. In his introduction to the first edition of the *Minstrelsy*, Scott describes a truly marginal community, so peripheral that it risks being foreign to both nations:

> The Borderers had, in fact, little reason to regard the inland Scots as their fellow-subjects or to respect the power of the Crown. . . . They were, in truth, during the time of peace a kind of outcasts against whom the united powers of England and Scotland were often employed. Hence, the men of the Borders had little attachment to the monarchs whom they termed, in derision, the kings of Fife and Lothian; provinces which they were not legally entitled to inhabit, and which, therefore, they pillaged with as little remorse as if they had belonged to a foreign country.[86]

Within this bandit culture, clan-feudalism emerges from the ballads as a distinctive northern variant of the more regular model of English and European feudalism, because of its more powerfully ingrained familial bonds. The Armstrong clan of cattle and horse rustlers appears in many of the Riding Ballads that Scott chose for the *Minstrelsy*, and its members function within the anthology as frontier outlaw archetypes:

> The Armstrongs appear to have been, at an early period, in possession of a great part of Liddesdale and of the Debateable Land. Their immediate neighbourhood to England rendered them the most lawless of the Border depredators; and, as much of the country possessed by them was claimed by both kingdoms, the inhabitants, protected from justice by the one nation, in opposition to the other, securely preyed upon both.[87]

A contradiction plainly emerges which it would be unsatisfactory merely to accept without resolving. In each of the notes I have just quoted,

disrespect for the authority of the Crown is explicitly mentioned or implied. The Riding Ballads that Scott published, however, all involve themes of loyalty to the Scottish Crown, even to the point of submitting to execution in the case of 'Johnie Armstrang'. Indeed, at this point in the *Minstrelsy* something particularly important from the perspective of Scott's relationship with other ballad anthologists happens, and it illuminates the degree of politicization and policy influencing Scott's editorial practice. The editorial dialogue that emerges between Scott, Percy and Ritson through the ballads chosen in their anthologies demonstrates my point. Two of the three 'monarchist' patriotic ballads I have looked at so far ('Sir Patrick Spens' and 'The Battle of Otterbourne') were included in the *Reliques*. But none of the outlaw Riding Ballads that Scott chose to use were in Percy's collection. Joseph Ritson, Percy's most bitter critic and political antithesis, however, anthologized some of the Riding Ballads and, as we will see, others of the Romantic Ballads. Scott can therefore be seen to take the *Minstrelsy* from its initial, safely Tory patriotic stance underwritten by Percy's prior example towards ballad tales of lawlessness, heroic in content but also familiar to readers of radicals such as Ritson.

Scott uses romantic gothic and picturesque conventions to emphasize the physical inaccessibility of the extreme Borders region within which the Riding Ballads are set, and to contrast it with urban and lowland Scotland: in his note prefacing 'The Sang of the Outlaw Murray', for example, he writes of 'a wild and frontier country'.[88] Indeed, this stretch of country had before the Union of the Crowns in 1603 been termed the Debateable Land on account of its contentious and irresolute status. But Scott's use of imagery of the region in his own time creates a picturesque vista consistent with the aesthetics of gentlemanly travel narrative: in his note prefacing the next ballad 'Johnie Armstrang', he writes that 'All along the river Liddel may be discovered the ruins of towers.'[89] Landscape description within the ballads is lyrical, and consistent with the notes surrounding them insofar as it always relates to the documented history of social incident. Scott thus avoids the pitfalls of pathetic fallacy, and also the hyperbolic, elaborate manner that he later condemned as gratuitous in Mrs Radcliffe's prose ('The wild and improbable fictions of an overheated imagination' – fictions furthermore which 'display more liveliness and richness of fancy, than correctness of taste, or felicity of expression'[90]). Adopting the dramatic descriptive stylistics of gothic literature combined with the moralizing *chiaroscuro* of the romantic picturesque, Scott continues with his description of Tarras Moss (a remote wetlands area at the heart of Liddesdale), as 'a desolate

and horrible marsh, through which a small river takes its course' and where a combination of 'morasses', 'dry spots' and streams running 'furiously among huge rocks' is revealed to be the sanctuary of 'the most lawless of the Border depredators'.[91]

Given his outlaw heroes' contempt for authority outside of their own, immediately local and familial communities, one might wonder how Scott managed to talk of their rapacity on the one hand whilst constituting them as heroes of a Borders region that could evolve into a site resistant to contemporary radicalism and revolution on the other. The ideological nuances of his ballad versions, and of his textual insertions and extensive miscellanea, provide the answer and show how the Riding Ballads illustrate stadial history operating providentially. A comparison of 'Johnie Armstrang's Goodnight', as published by Scott, with Joseph Ritson's version of the ballad, published in 1783, demonstrates how Scott's editorial strategies render the Scottish Border country readable in such a way.[92]

'Johnie Armstrang's Goodnight'[93]

I mentioned earlier that politically, Scott and Ritson were poles apart. But though Ritson was a known radical, on account of his pacifism and vegetarianism he was regarded more as an outspoken but relatively harmless and pedantic eccentric than a danger to society. Scott came personally to know him through his antiquarian and literary interests, and entertained him as a houseguest at Lasswade in 1801.[94] He knew Ritson's ballads well, and owned copies of his various anthologies. The version of 'Johnie Armstrang' that Scott chose to publish in the *Minstrelsy* shows many similarities to Ritson's version and must be considered as providing at least some kind of response. Similarly, the 'Twa Corbies' constitutes a definitive response to 'The Three Ravens', as I will show in due course.

'Johnie Armstrang', like 'Sir Patrick Spens', was widely known amongst late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century antiquarian writers and readers, in a variety of versions. It had been included in collections published by a number of others, including Allan Ramsay and David Herd.[95] Scott's version is heavily based on that used by Herd, which is also in Borders dialect.[96] The plot is straightforward: Johnny Armstrong, a notorious bandit Baron who has established semi-autonomous rule within his Borders locality, is summoned to meet the Scots King. In both Ritson's and Scott's versions, Armstrong willingly goes with a group of his men to pay homage to his monarch. The summons is a trap, and the men are murdered along with Armstrong as a condition of a pact made

in advance between the Scots and the English kings. The ballad has its roots in historical fact.

Ritson's version of 'Johny Armstrong's Last Good-Night' differs from Scott's in that it tells of the outlaws' desperate fight to escape the Scottish king. The point about Ritson's Armstrong is that he fights for the liberty of himself and his men, albeit in vain. Scott's 'Johnie Armstrang' is more idealistically magnanimous in his loyalty, to the extent that he will not take up arms against his sovereign even in the cause of his and his men's lives. Like Ritson's hero he repeatedly tries to negotiate freedom but fails in the face of a deceptive and unworthy monarch. In both versions the king is shown as cruel and merciless against a loyal, if lawless, subject. Both versions include in their early stanzas brief, but quite detailed representations of the domestic sphere of the outlaws, drawing the sympathies of the reader to Armstrong as a family man before he goes to the king. Thus, the 'bad' king is also shown as contravening his duty to protect the families that are his subjects. Scott's note prefacing the ballad comments that the same monarch had also 'guilefully entrapped Bothwell, Maxwell, Home, and other Border lords, and kept them in durance, so that he might be free to deal as he wished with their dependants'.[97] It has to be said that as a known pacifist, as well as a republican, Ritson would not in practice have supported armed insurrection.[98] But even if his version of Johnny Armstrong is a matter of fidelity to scholarly principle, it nevertheless constitutes a powerful indictment of the tyranny and arbitrary application of justice that he regarded as consistent with absolute monarchical power. It is difficult not to read the ballad as offering some comment on the show trials of the 1790s, however oblique.

Ritson's Johnny Armstrong ultimately constitutes the Scottish Borders as a marginal, violent area where nature – human or otherwise – always holds the potential to spark into rebellion if pushed to the limits. Armstrong and his men are freebooters, but they steal to feed their families. Ritson's ballad ends with a return to the domestic sphere that bears out his republicanism. In the last two lines the voice becomes that of the next generation, with the dead man's infant son representing the fomenting irrepressibility and inevitability of revolution:

> O then bespake his little son
> As he sat on his nurse's knee
> If ever I live to be man
> My father's death reveng'd shall be.[99]

Closure is denied and the prospect of future rebellion is left nestling at the very heart of the family.

The Johnie Armstrang of Scott's *Minstrelsy*, by contrast, does not take arms, because he has to be seen as a loyal subject to the end. Scott does not allow him to be readable as a revolutionary in a time of radical unrest, even at a historical distance. Nor are his descendants represented as potential traitors, or the domestic environment in any way construed as nurturing revolution. Scott's ballad is a straightforward glorification of the flawed but virtuous subject, as much as Ritson's is a republican anthem. Scott ends with verses that commemorate the rough nobility of the martyred hero and his patriotic men. The voice of Armstrang dies away, leaving only the commemorative voice of the poet. The son in this ballad version is left with memories of heroism rather than a mission of revenge:

> And God be with thee, Kirsty, my son,
> Where thou sits on thy nurse's knee!
> But and thou live this hundred yeir,
> Thy father's better thou'lt nevir be.
>
> 'Farewell! My bonny Gilnock Hall,
> Where on Esk side thou standest stout!
> Gif I had lived but seven yeirs mair,
> I wad hae gilt thee round about.'
>
> John was murdered at Carlinrigg,
> And all his gallant cumpanie;
> But Scotland's heart was ne'er sae wae,
> To see sae mony brave men die –
>
> Because they saved their countrey deir,
> Frae Englishmen! Nane were sae bauld,
> While Jonnie lived on the Border syde,
> Nane of them durst cum neir his hauld.
>
> (XXX–XXXIII)

Similarly, throughout the Historical Ballads simplistic patriotic devotion by border clan leaders, and the ultimate privileging of themes of bravery and loyalty on the part of men whose families maintain the home front, is borne out over and again. The romanticizing of a hardy, but essentially honourable banditry is thus kept within a masculine frame. The contrast between these characters' bravado in the face of death and

the manner in which Scott represented Watt as a coward on his way to execution in 1794 is marked. Scott had written to his aunt: 'the pusillanimity of the unfortunate victim [Watt] was astonishing considering the boldness of his nefarious plans'.[100]

Romantic Ballads

The move to the Romantic Ballads in the second section of the *Minstrelsy* takes the reader into a quite different cultural context. Masculine, martial modes, patriotism and regionalism set on the extreme peripheries of the Borders cede to more widely cast tales of the supernatural, and to those with romantic and sentimental themes. In the context of Scott's dealing with revolutionary energies, I want to suggest that this central, Romantic and supernatural ballad section, contained as it is between the Historical and Modern Imitation Ballads, specifically treats the threat of unregulated passion, lax morality, superstition and other supposedly subversive stimuli through the genre of an effeminized balladry. John Leyden's haunting lament 'Scottish Music, an Ode', written shortly before Leyden left Britain for India in 1803, is the first of these ballads. Scott's close friend and active associate in the production of the *Minstrelsy*, Leyden posits oriental imagery of 'Hindu legends' and 'Syria's date-crowned shore' alongside Ossianic motifs. Furthermore, the poem also directly refers to three of the ballads included in the Romantic Ballad section – 'The Lass of Lochroyan', 'Brown Adam' and the 'Gay Goss Hawk'. The effect is that an air of heightened exoticism is swiftly brought into the collection at this point. Analogies such as those that Katie Trumpener emphasizes as evident in Scott's novels – inscribing 'the centrality of national identity as a component of imperial identity' – are entirely readable here within the *Minstrelsy*. Scott's editing and Leyden's writing ensures that the Borders are specifically promoted as the heart of national *and* imperial sentiment and virtue.[101]

John Leyden's friendship and collaboration with Scott (they met in the autumn of 1799, and from the winter of 1800–1801 worked on the ballads) resulted in him making a considerable contribution to the *Minstrelsy*. A large part of the essay 'On the Faeries of Popular Superstition' is attributable to his work with Scott. His laments, 'Scottish Music: an ode' and 'Ode on visiting Flodden', take on a particular resonance in the light of these changes and of his career move away from Scotland to India and south-east Asia. An antiquarian scholar, physician, poet and orientalist, Leyden's ability to learn languages and his desire for exploration was taken up by the East India Company and by the British military

forces. He died of illness at the age of thirty-six at Batavia, in Java, in 1811.[102] A considerable part of his semi-autobiographical poem *Scenes of Infancy* (published 1808), which romantically elegizes the Teviotdale area in which he had lived, was written whilst he was staying with Scott at the latter's cottage in Lasswade during 1801 and 1802. Scott profoundly admired *Scenes of Infancy* and, as I will show in my next chapter, the descriptions of landscape in his own narrative poetry reflect its influence. It would be difficult to overstate the importance to Scott of Leyden's knowledge of Borders Ballad traditions and folklore. Born at Denholm in Roxburghshire into a shepherding family, and educated at home until he was almost 10 years old before gaining a place at Edinburgh University at the age of fifteen, Leyden (whose politics, like Scott's, were Tory) exemplified the traditional, humble Scottish virtue and fortitude of the kind that Scott regarded as emanating in its purest form in the rural Borders region. His departure from Scotland epitomized the diaspora of educated, younger Scots in the cause of imperial expansion.

Scott's lengthy essay on the supernatural, entitled 'On the Faeries of Popular Superstition', follows Leyden's ode and introduces the first actual ballad of this section, the 'Tale of Tamerlane' (this ballad is based on Burns' 'Tam Lin', which had been published in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*). Once more, Scott's antiquarian approach uses scholarly erudition to assert authority, and his account of a wide range of beliefs and fairy superstitions is objective and rational. Some of the superstitions treated involve benign phenomena, whilst others are popularly held to be malevolent. Throughout the essay Scott assumes the standpoint of the proto-anthropological or ethnographic travel writer of the period, beginning with beliefs traditional in Iceland, Finland and other countries with Germanic Gothic associations, then extending ever further east to Persia and India. Leyden was, indeed, the source of much of the eastern material cited in the essay. Thus, Leyden's 'Ode' and Scott's essay work together to arouse in the reader a sense of the orient, of magic and of the unfamiliar. With the Romantic Ballads that follow constituting a feminized genre, and one in which sentiment and sensuality replaces the binding loyalties and rugged virtues of the Historical Ballads, these opening male (and in Scott's case overtly patrician) approaches to the fantastical are very significant. Evidence that the Romantic Ballads of the *Minstrelsy* may have formed part of an ideological agenda at an early stage in Scott's project, representative of the need to control potentially wayward or subversive tendencies, can be seen in a letter from Scott to Burns' editor and biographer Dr Currie in 1800:

> I do not mean entirely to limit my collection to the Riding Ballads, as they are called in our country, those namely which relate to Border feuds and forays; but, on the contrary, to admit Scottish Ballads of merit upon romantic and popular subjects . . .[103]

The Riding Ballads with their masculine themes of Border incident clearly always provided the benchmark for the *Minstrelsy*, and Scott does not indicate any qualification of their merit. The romantic and popular ballads were to be 'admitted', to quote Scott – 'but' and 'on the contrary'. Definitively, the status of these ballads is one of contrast and of otherness in relation to the Riding Ballads. (The 'poisonous' effect of the intruding women – the niece and the maid – on the dusty order of the antiquary's study and his more haphazard collection of historical artefacts in Scott's novel of 1816, *The Antiquary*, is a humorous sketch that provides an interesting comparative case study.[104]) The express mention of the application of a criterion of merit suggests a need for control, with Scott positing himself as a moral guardian or censor in respect of a ballad form that had begun to attract radical associations. Scott also makes a clear distinction between 'our country', meaning the Borders, and a more general Scotland that is readable as potentially more vulnerable and in need of guardianship.

The category of Romantic Ballads and the possibility of including a significant female voice from elsewhere in Scotland within the *Minstrelsy* became of more interest to Scott in 1800, as a result of his acquaintance with Robert Jamieson. Prior to this time, he had collected mainly Riding Ballads during his Borders excursions. When Jamieson contacted him and stayed with him for a few days at Lasswade on his return to England from a visit to Aberdeen in the summer of 1800, he showed Scott a collection of ballads he had acquired from Mrs Anna Brown. Jamieson pays tribute to Mrs Brown in the introduction to his *Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts, and Scarce Editions*, and comments on his discussion of her ballads with Scott.[105] Unlike the rural and elderly Margaret Laidlaw, Anna Brown was an educated woman whose father, Thomas Gordon, held the Chair of Humanities at King's College, Aberdeen (he was also appointed Professor of Greek). Intellectually active, she was known to many antiquarians interested in Scottish song and ballads as a valuable and reliable source of oral and written material.[106] Scott includes nine ballads that he attributes either partly or wholly to her in the *Minstrelsy*, all in the second volume of the 1802–1803 edition and retained thereafter.[107]

For the main part, the ballads obtained from Mrs Brown are grouped together. In the early edition, they are mostly located at the beginning of the Romantic Ballads, which is essentially in the middle of the overall collection, whilst with the 1806 edition they are placed in the middle of the Romantic Ballads section and surrounded by ballads from a variety of male contributors (these include Leyden, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Hogg, Herd, Burns, Ritson and Lewis). Furthermore, even where Scott acknowledges Anna Brown as his main source he makes adjustments by incorporating material from versions attributed to various of the male collectors. For example, his note prefacing 'The Lass of Lochroyan' begins 'Now first published in a perfect state' and the ballad he published is an amalgam of her version and that of Herd, whilst 'King Henrie' 'is edited from her manuscript, corrected by a recited fragment' and finally influenced by a modern version in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*.[108] There is no suggestion by Scott that Mrs Brown's versions represent any corruption of the ballads' form or integrity, but his habit of 'improvement' and the manner in which her ballads are clustered and enclosed within the *Minstrelsy* does show a paternalistic pattern in Scott's editing.

The point about the Romantic Ballads and their place is that Scott's choice of ballads and his grouping of them is such that they are seen to represent moral erosion on two closely related fronts: domestic virtue is corrupted on the one hand, and militaristic and chivalric feudal ideals on the other. Several of the ballads are tales about unmarried or abandoned mothers and their children. In the 'Twa Corbies' (another ballad with a version by Ritson), a dead knight who represents the passing of chivalry lies in a bleak and windswept wilderness, his horse, hound, hawk and ladye all having deserted and forgotten him. Jeffrey, for the *Edinburgh Review* commented on the extent to which feminine issues dominate the section: the 'circumstances of pregnancy and parturition are brought forward to heighten the interest of every love story'.[109] Even where morality remains uncorrupted, loss is the theme. The 'Flowers of the Forest', a Roxburghshire ballad towards the end of the section, comprises two parts, the first a particularly beautiful lament on the sorrow of the young women and children left when their men died at Flodden: 'Sighing and moaning, on ilka green loaning –/ The flowers of the forest are a' wede awae' (VI).[110] By this point in his collection, Scott has moved a long way from the defiant 'O wha dare meddle wi' me?' of Kinmont Willie (footnoted by Scott as a 'Border tune'). The section ends with another contemporary poem by Leyden, also on the subject of Flodden and entitled 'Ode on Visiting Flodden', providing a sense of recovery and masculine enclosure yet again.

'The Twa Corbies'[111]

A comparison of Ritson's 'The Three Ravens' and Scott's 'The Twa Corbies' illustrates the degeneration of chivalric virtues that the Romantic Ballads represent for Scott, as well as further elucidating the differing ideological programmes of these two editors.[112] The ballads both involve folklore and the story of a dead chivalric knight whose body is surveyed by carrion birds. In Ritson's 'Three Ravens', which was published in his *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the Reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution*, the knight lies protected by his shield and is watched over by his hawk and hound, until his heavily pregnant lady – in the romance guise of a 'fallow doe' – finds and buries him. She then dies also, before nightfall. In Scott's version, the knight lies unprotected and deserted. The 'Twa Corbies' of the title – two carrion crows, described using an aptly onomatopoeic piece of Scots dialect that mimics the coarse call of the birds themselves – plan to pick his bones clean. On the face of it, Ritson's version – which he subtitles 'a dirge' – is a rather beautiful and wistful romance that enshrines codes of chivalric honour, loyalty and love as triumphing over evil (which is represented by the Ravens and their sinister dialogue). Ritson's ballad ends with a wish that God might bless every man with 'Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman' (lover/mistress). But when looked at in its context within the collection a rather different picture emerges. The ballad that follows, 'The too courteous knight', is a bawdy song that mocks chivalric manners and idealized love. The risible figure of the knight, who is introduced as coming 'Lustely raking over the lay', meets with a wandering young woman who never says nay, and the ballad ends in a thoroughly crude manner with an allusion to the knight's impotence. Thus idealized romance, with themes of purity, loyalty and honour is juxtaposed with a text that immediately subverts all of those principles.[113]

In fact, Ritson's collection (the songs are classified and grouped purely in terms of historical period) contains a number of popular songs of a bawdy nature. This demonstrates one of the main differences between Ritson's view of the history of minstrelsy as a literary form and that of Percy and Scott. Neither Percy nor Scott includes any bawdy or vulgar ballads in his collection. Ritson's texts all bear out the principles of the lengthy dissertations that he included in each publication regarding the nature of the Minstrels. These dissertations persistently contend that oral poetry and song had a history that had always involved common and itinerant characters as well as the more refined bards, and that it was not a form that had been only latterly corrupted. However, Dave Harker, in his sceptical study of the ballad and folk song as a truly

working-class medium, *Fakesong*, argues persuasively that for all Ritson's scholarly 'accuracy and integrity' his choice of sources embodied a scholarly and intellectual elitism on his own part that still denied ballad texts a popular and truly radical ideology devoid of middle-class influence.[114]

Scott printed Ritson's text as part of the note prefacing his own ballad. He states his source for the 'Corbies' (which remains controversial) as Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who acquired it from a nameless 'Lady'. Scott further comments that the lady had herself written the ballad down 'from tradition'. This is just the kind of feminized, popular dissemination that Scott wrote of in his introduction as having eventually degraded ballad form. The ballad text of the 'Corbies' embodies a theme of feudal corruption, decay and abandonment, and its placement in the carefully structured 'Romantic Ballads' section of the *Minstrelsy* summarizes the function of the Romantic Ballad in Scott's version of history. Such a loss of feudal codes of honour and older medieval loyalties becomes a justification for Scott and his collaborators to attempt a rescue of the ballad form, through the *Minstrelsy* as a collection and through the inclusion in it of their own imitations. In short, after the ballad scavengers have picked at the elements of chivalry that they find useful, one by one and bit by bit, Scott and his colleagues are able to retrieve the bare 'white banes' from the bleak wilderness of forgotten literature, and flesh them out again to their own design.

Imitations of the Ancient Ballad

After the Romantic Ballads, Scott's *Minstrelsy* makes a final move towards its valorization of the Borders as a contemporary, patriotic Tory Borders stronghold. Old virtues from the period of the Historical Ballads are reclaimed and re-fashioned through the modern Imitations of the Ancient Ballad by Scott and his mainly male collaborators. The conventional reactionary emphases on localism, masculinity and militarism return, and though there are exceptions the ballads use Borders settings almost throughout. The inclusion of the short, imitation Riding Ballad 'Rich Auld Willie's Farewell' by Anna Seward, without any note (apart from Matthew Lewis's 'Sir Agilthorn', it is the only ballad in this section not to be accompanied by an explanatory note), does not alter the powerfully male emphasis of this section. Seward became a regular correspondent with Scott following the first publication of the *Minstrelsy*, and at her request he edited the three-volume collection of her poetry published by Ballantyne in 1810.[115] This edition might be taken as an indication of Seward's acknowledgement of or even deference to the masculine

authority of Scott. However, the final unity and narrative closure of the *Minstrelsy* is only completed in this section by the added reclamation of romance ballads and stories of the supernatural.

A selection of ballads with supernatural themes which includes two of those that Scott had contributed to Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, one by Lewis, and three others by Leyden, emphasizes the *Minstrelsy*'s re-masculinization of the Romantic Ballad form through its return to the domain of the elevated male bard. Amongst these supernatural poems is Leyden's 'The Mermaid', one of the few ballads in this section not to have a Borders setting. 'The Mermaid' offers a return to various themes dealt with in 'Sir Patrick Spens' at the beginning of the *Minstrelsy*. Most notably, it takes a more northern, seaborne trajectory than any of the other ballads in the section. Leyden supplied the prefatory note, which sets the ballad around the Hebridean Islands of Jura and Scarpa and the Gulf of Colonsay. He states that the ballad is his own composition, and that it is based on an identified traditional Gaelic song and on more general, old superstition drawn partially from Norse myth. Leyden incorporates a number of explicitly Ossianic references and, consequently, within the context of the *Minstrelsy* the poem can be read as an example of Ossianic reclamation on the part of himself and Scott. Structurally, the sea returns at this point in a modern ballad that is, unlike 'Sir Patrick Spens', written in a lyrical form of standard English without recourse to any use of dialect:

> On Jura's heath how sweetly swell
> The murmers of the mountain bee!
> How softly mourns the writhèd shell,
> Of Jura's shore, its parent sea!
>
> (I)

The story of a Chieftain who falls in love with the mermaid of the title, leaves behind his mortal love and subsequently drowns in lines of a dramatic, descriptive nature, clearly has other affinities with 'Sir Patrick Spens'. Leyden's ballad concludes with the same convention of the eternally mourning, exquisitely beautiful female. His image of the mermaid who grieves 'ever as the year returns' for her 'lovely Chief of Colonsay' (LXVIII) is entirely reminiscent of the maidens who wait on the shore at the end of the first ballad of the *Minstrelsy* 'for their ain dear loves! / For them they'll see nae mair' (XXV).

The description of the mermaid casts her as exotic and seductive, but alongside her more sinister supernatural features she nevertheless retains

a noble appearance: her 'form of pearly light, / Was whiter than the downy spray' and 'round her bosom, heaving bright, / Her glossy, yellow ringlets play' (XVII). The dialogue is courtly throughout the ballad and invokes the conventions of chivalric devotion and adventure. The mermaid tries to seduce the Chief, but he clings to his idealized, chaste model of love even to his death. Thus, the ballad bears out the male virtue of adhering to principle in the face of temptation by a feminine influence.

In his 'Essay on Chivalry', first published in *The Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1818, Scott points towards sexual abandon as one of the causes of feudal decay: 'extremes of every kind border on each other; and as the devotion of the knights of Chivalry degenerated into superstition, the Platonic refinements and subtleties of amorous passion which they professed, were sometimes compatible with very coarse and gross debauchery'.[116] Scott's heroes in the Imitation Ballads, and those of his collaborators, reverse the coarseness and debauchery displayed in several of the Romantic Ballads. Moderation and moral austerity are once more seen as cause for celebration. Furthermore, Scott printed 'The Mermaid' together with Leyden's dedication to Lady Charlotte Campbell, daughter of the fifth Duke of Argyle. This acknowledgement of the aristocratic Lady in nineteenth-century Scotland equates with old customs of chivalric devotion when seen within the context of the *Minstrelsy* in its entirety. Scott's editorial organization of his ballad collection to include poems such as 'The Mermaid' works to bring about a redemptive unification of the romantic, supernatural ballad with its older, heroic counterpart.

Scott's three-part ballad 'Thomas the Rhymer' is the most substantial inclusion in the final, imitation section of the *Minstrelsy*. The three poems that comprise this piece can be treated as exemplary, and a more extended look at the way that it operates within the overall narrative strategy that I have been arguing for will conclude this chapter. If we look at the three separate parts of 'Thomas the Rhymer' on a comparative basis, paying particular attention to the interplay of notes and the ballad text, it becomes clear that we are looking at a quite remarkable instance of the way in which Scott's whole programme of refashioning the Border Ballads works within an ideological framework. Structurally and thematically 'Thomas the Ryhmer' echoes the tripartite classifications of the entire *Minstrelsy*.

The first part of 'Thomas the Rhymer', with Scott's note providing details of his manuscript and archival sources, is a poem in Borders dialect and archaic diction based on ballad sources originating from near Erceldoune on the Borders (Erceldoune was Thomas's home). Scott establishes the importance of Thomas as poet and as the subject of

legend, describing him variously throughout the prefatory note as renowned, regarded with veneration, remarkable, celebrated, important and as a poet and man whose 'memory is still held in profound respect'.[117] He makes explicit reference to the gothic nature of the 'wild and fanciful tale' that forms the basis for this part of the poem. His insistence that the 'tale exists in MS . . .', accompanied by details of that document, conforms with the formalities of standard antiquarian practice and also, and more importantly, reiterates the importance to Scott of a readily identifiable and recoverable lineage from the poetry of the thirteenth century through to that of his own.

Thomas of Erceldoune had become the subject of centuries-old Borders legends that held him to be an inspired bardic poet of elevated position and influence extending far beyond the Scottish Borders to Europe. At a more fantastic level, myths tell of his abduction by the fairies, his return to the mortal world and his final call back to the land of magic. Partly through the Rhymer's literary legacy, and partly through the myths associated with him, Scott sought to draw attention back towards a Romance literary heritage that inscribed elements of Homeric significance for the Borders region and for Scotland. Thomas's *Sir Tristrem*, extant as a fourteenth-century transcription of the poet's original oral version, was translated by John Leyden and edited by Scott concurrently with the production of the *Minstrelsy* and finally published on 2 May 1804. Scott continued to maintain – falsely, as it turned out – that the Borders poet was the originator of continental literary forms of the Tristan romance tale. Whether or not Thomas had been the original 'Tristrem' poet is not really of prime importance to the issues I wish to deal with in this book. It matters more that Scott regarded him as a model of ancient bardic virtue emanating from the Borders. By constituting Thomas as the fundamental historical point of departure for his own work on Borders oral tradition, Scott was reinforcing the authority of his own recovery and re-inscription of oral Borders Ballad form. The retrieval of poetic fragments from a time when loyalty to king and crown was apparently honourable and unquestionable, coupled with the regionally specific siting of such loyalties in the villages of the Borders forms the subtext of Scott's description of Erceldoune in *Sir Tristrem*. The intimate and intricate relationship between landscape, the poet and patriotism is emphasized and cast in picturesque terms:

> THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE derived his territorial appellation from the village of Erceldoune, in the Merse, or county of Berwick, situated on the river Leader, about two miles above its junction with the

> Tweed. . . . This small village was once a place of some importance, and, at least occasionally, honoured with the royal residence. . . . In a tower at the western extremity . . . the ruins of which are still shewn after the lapse of seven centuries, dwelt Thomas of Erceldoune, the earliest Scottish poet.[118]

Scott undoubtedly saw himself as the retriever and rebuilder of the neglected 'ruins' of Thomas's poetry, and regularly referred to himself throughout his life as the 'Rhymer'.

The second part of 'Thomas the Rhymer' in the *Minstrelsy* deals with what Scott describes as 'printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymer'.[119] It contrasts with the first part of the poem in that Scott presents it as being compiled from a more disparate range of sources. Scott describes in his notes the difficulties of ascertaining the accuracy and sequence of these sources. The inference is that they are less reliable because they have been affected by degrees of popular dissemination. This is important, as it parallels the dilution and degradation of ballad form that Scott attributed to the lack of control brought about by excessive popular recitation. It also serves as the pretext for the authoritative reclamation I have been speaking about.

Scott acknowledges the third part of 'Thomas' as his own composition. Written entirely in Standard English, which distinguishes it from the first two parts, the third part effectively retrieves the poem for a single, elevated bardic voice, with Scott subtitling it 'Modern – By the editor'.[120] The repeated statement in his note prefacing this part of the ballad that it is 'entirely modern' further emphasizes the nature of Scott's historicist perspective: literary lineages from ancient times lead ever towards modernity. Scott's insistence on his fidelity to the manner of the original, and to the cultural importance of legend – an approach that he steadfastly maintained throughout his life – again observes the formalities of antiquarian protocol. At the same time he assents to a Burkean notion of continuity that denies modernity the revolutionary iconoclasm of severance:

> The following attempt to commemorate the Rhymer's poetical fame, and the traditional account of his marvellous return to Fairy Land, being entirely modern, would have been placed with greater propriety among the class of Modern Ballads had it not been for its immediate connexion with the first and second parts of the same story.[121]

Far from being some kind of apology, the reference to 'immediate connexion with the first and second part of the same story' underwrites the importance of history in providing cultural and social continuity. Furthermore, Thomas's disappearance into the realm of the supernatural at the end of the third part of the ballad leaves Scott, the author, as his latter-day successor and the *Minstrelsy* ballad tradition as his legacy. That succession is naturalized by Scott in the last verse of the ballad, and in the note that he added after it. The ballad ends with a suggestion that the supernatural world is one with which the living is in everyday contact, and that cultural memory can be seen all around:

> Some said to hill, and some to glen,
> Their wondrous course had been;
> But ne'er in haunts of living men
> Again was Thomas seen.
>
> (XL)

Scott's concluding note specifies where various topographical features mentioned in the poem and connected with the Rhymer legend can be found. The list of place names evokes the whole area in which the Rhymer is imagined, and includes locations in Berwickshire, Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire landscapes. It incorporates the localized region of Scott's grandfather's farm, where he spent his own early childhood years, and of the Border *Minstrelsy* more widely as a text. The fantastical aspect of the ballad ending, furthermore, retains its simplicity, and needs no Radcliffean explanation. Colin Manlove pertinently draws attention to the connection between landscape, history, the supernatural and everyday life in his *Scottish Fantasy Literature*, where he locates Scott and Hogg as marking a watershed in the supernatural genre. He argues that 'in Scottish fantasy the fantastic experience and the world from which it emanates are very close to ours' and that localism is part of its character.[122]

In conclusion, Scott's editing of the *Minstrelsy* established several new precedents for ballad collection as a genre. Certainly, it inscribes a Borders culture rich in ballad storytelling traditions. Its recollections of a vernacular oral and literary past invoke a sense of cultural loss, which the Imitation Ballads partially allay. However, behind the nostalgia for the heroes of the past it is always possible to read a post-sentimental endorsement of modern commercial society supportive of a cohesive British union and empire, being built on class and rank hierarchies with the monarch firmly at the top. The gothic and old romance motifs, Scots and archaic

language of the ballads, and Scott's persistent appeals to traditionalist sentiment form a carefully constructed cultural history. Within that matrix any threatened slippage into anarchy and revolution in the modern world is contained and figuratively disempowered, through the moral examples posited in the ballad texts when read in association with Scott's notes. Tensions emerge between the historicized rural settings of the ballads and the increasingly urban or metropolitan societies of Scott's readers. Such tensions can only be accommodated when history is understood as a continuous process, in which each succeeding phase of society is able to recognize and salvage the more valuable constituents of its past.

The *Minstrelsy* is a collection of rural ballad poetry, and it both invokes and commemorates the cultural history of the Scottish Borders region. As an historical frontier between England and Scotland, the landscape either side of the border was layered with sites of battles and outlaw incident – the 'striking incidents' of ballads and vernacular poetry. At a more mundane, but no less important level the depopulation of the Borders throughout the latter half of the seventeenth century, largely as a result of improved farming methods, provided a landscape replete with myth-history and ripe for re-inscription. Scott's evident love of place, evolving from his own childhood experiences, together with his knowledge of local traditions ensured a lively account. He offered his readers a picturesquely romantic perspective onto a glamorous and wild culture. But beyond the imaginative world of curious history and cross-border encounter, his romanticism and the Borders he depicted as such a vibrant, socially organic environment were always aimed at resisting contemporary radical energies either in Britain or from Europe.

2
Scott's Narrative Poetry: The Borders and the Highland Margins

The years surrounding the first publication of the *Minstrelsy* ballads saw Scott involved in a number of projects that took him into other literary genres including the editing of medieval poetry (*Sir Tristrem*, 1804), original narrative poetry and the historical novel. (Lockhart states that the early chapters of *Waverley* had been drafted by 1805, though P. D. Garside has shown that these were in fact written in 1808.[1]) In each of these areas the influence of the *Minstrelsy* ballad traditions is paradigmatic. In this chapter, I shall look at the ways in which the move into writing narrative poetry, the most significant and successful pieces of which he published between 1805 and 1814, enabled Scott to develop his poetic and ideological agenda more fully and to make more specific contrasts between the border country with England and the margins between Scotland's own Highlands and Lowlands.

In terms of context, I have shown how the *Minstrelsy* was particularly influenced by late eighteenth-century literary antiquarianism, German romanticism and gothic literature: the readings that follow reveal a continuation of work within those areas by Scott as he wrote *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), which is similarly set in the Borders. However, with *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) set in the Trossachs and around Loch Katrine, on the margins between the Lowlands of Perthshire and the Highlands, Scott engages more immediately with the literature that had arisen out of the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Scottish Tour. His response to accounts by British domestic tourists, many of whom described what they saw (both through words and in drawings) as exotic, provides a basis for comparison with Byron's use of the continental Grand Tour and its rhetoric in his writing of the Near-Eastern borderlands of Albania and Turkey. There are factors of social class, which in turn involve political implications, that need to be taken

into account in such a comparison, for the Scottish Tour, like similar tours of northern England and Wales, was essentially undertaken by 'bourgeois tourists', or patrons from the middling sort, whilst the continental Grand Tour remained very much an aristocratic preserve. Part of the attraction to the middling classes of the unenclosed landscape of Britain's wilderness regions lay in its configuration as a viewable, vernacular 'heritage'. The association of an educated perspective with taste and the land mattered greatly, for the combination added a sense of quality to socio-economic status, in a society that was acutely aware of 'inheritance' value and the 'stakeholder' interest in the nation of the entrepreneur. Viewing the landscape of Britain became a way of 'understanding' cultural inheritance. Borders which had once been exclusive, but which had now allowed access, elevated travel as a manifestation of moral patriarchy through knowledge.

Inheritance, and its place within a landscape being reshaped by a changing class infrastructure, was a matter of concern for both Scott and Byron. Ruin, reconstruction, preservation and incorporation are dominant themes throughout their poetry, with cultural encounter stimulating the narrative action or, conversely, reaction. Stephen Bann's thoughtful consideration of the 'historical composition of place' sees Byron's Newstead Abbey as the decaying inheritance of an endlessly falling line of male aristocrats, and Abbotsford as Scott's middle-class materialist, ascendant bid to compensate for a 'lost' maternal inheritance.[2] A fascinating divergence is apparent as the former falls further into actual and metaphoric ruin, even whilst the latter is constructed on a site close to Dryburgh, the 'original' location of Scott's maternal legacy. We might bear in mind that Abbotsford was built as a neo-gothic residence within which some walls were hung with armour whilst others were decorated with modern chinoiserie wallpaper. An old door to the Heart of Midlothian (Edinburgh's prison) is incorporated into one of the walls, whilst Scott introduced innovations such as gas-fired central heating. The rather ordinary farmhouse that stood on the site was demolished.

Newstead naturalized Byron's disreputable ancestry within the landscape in the form of a decaying Great House and ruined Abbey that tourists came to see, and from which the owner was almost permanently absent, as Bann notes. It still epitomizes the grandeur of ruin and the elegy for lost glory that is so associated with Byron's poetry. Scott's Abbotsford also became a major tourist attraction, to which he personally welcomed a stream of visitors as the house grew rather than fell apart. Abbotsford was, and still is, a testimony to the historical obsession of its creator.

There is a sad irony to Scott's own financial ruin in 1826, seen from the perspective of his desire to rebuild a lost inheritance that he attributed to mismanagement on the part of his maternal grandparents. His concern to repay his debts by revising and republishing his novels is entirely consistent with his philosophy that success involves the incorporation and reconstruction of choice, selected elements from the past. Indeed, this providential outlook can be seen clearly from my analyses of reconstruction and reconciliation motifs in *The Lady of the Lake* and *Rokeby*, later in the present chapter, and in my concluding remarks in Chapter 4.

Continuing in the *Minstrelsy* tradition: *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

The Lay of the Last Minstrel, which was published 5 years earlier than *The Lady of the Lake* and is set in the Borders around Hawick, Melrose and the Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow valleys, has a strong eastern theme of magic, superstition and the supernatural to its narrative. The glamour of the east – in this case, specifically Palestine – and the power of literature to influence the imagination of the reader are quite literally at the heart of the story. The landscape of the *Lay* is of visible human continuities rather than of stasis. The Borders within which it is set are marked by peel towers, castles and ruined abbeys, whereas Scott describes the Highland margins in *The Lady of the Lake* in terms of mountains that resemble architecture. The verses at the end of canto 1 of the *Lay* that describe William of Deloraine's 18-mile night-ride from Branksome Castle to Melrose Abbey tell how the borderer negotiates his route by way of rivers, hills and moors, but more significantly by the lights of a series of towns and hamlets, by sites of battles, the hideaways of outlaws and by Druid cairns (xxv–xxxi). The continuity of the time-line drawn by these signs of human activity, and which extends from the pagan bronze age to the late medieval period, constitutes a further contrast with the Highlands and the Highland margins which are represented by Scott in other poems as existing only in an arrested state of warrior clan-feudal existence.

Though Scott adapts a wide range of recognizable traditions of metre, rhyme and plot, recalling particularly the Historical and Romantic Ballads of the *Minstrelsy*, as John Sutherland notes, the structure and style of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* nevertheless breaks new poetical ground in many respects.[3] The novelty of the *Lay* stems from Scott's inspired combination of old and modern elements. He primarily uses contemporary, Standard English diction throughout the six cantos, although within

that framework he employs some stylistic archaisms such as 'Ladye' and various other features from older literatures. The rhyme scheme varies from the regular octosyllabic couplets of the frame narrative, to a high degree of irregular patterning in the sections sung by the minstrel, whilst the vigorous rhythmic structure of the metre emphasizes the militaristic, masculine action of the narrative. Sutherland uses a vivid analogy to represent the likely effect of the *Lay* upon readers, likening the poem's movement from an initial, regular and orthodox metre into a more dynamically charged, 'sprung' metrical form of the minstrel's Lay to the more recent 'switch from black and white to technicolor film'.[4] The gothic romance plot includes vividly supernatural and mystical imagery, a theme of feud and intrigue and a tale of forbidden love. The tradition of bardic recitation is borne through a frame narrative that involves the gothic scene of Newark tower, a medieval peel tower which had become a picturesque ruin by Scott's own time, as the Minstrel of the title sings his song there to a company of women. Towards the end of the poem, in canto 6, a collection of short poems and songs is interpolated into the text. These begin with 'The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall' (xi–xii), which the minstrel attributes to his fellow Borders minstrel Albert Graeme as a representative of the 'Land Debateable' (x:7), and range to the most northern point of Scotland with Harold of Orkney's 'The Dirge of the lovely Rosabelle' (xxiii). They are used by Scott to suggest a 'drawing together' of oral traditions from disparate parts of Scotland, and from Cumberland in England, in a celebration of a heterogeneous but unified minstrelsy. The fine translation of the 'Dies Irae' into the 'Hymn for the Dead' or 'That day of wrath' (xxxxi) which ends the minstrel's Lay posits a sublime warning which throws the pettiness of feud and cycles of vengeance into sharp relief. The motif of the bardic festival at the end of the poem adds to Scott's theme of progress through reconciliation centred on the Borders. Thus far, the *Lay* is clearly a natural successor to the *Minstrelsy*. There are major points of difference, however, that emphasize Scott's literary interest in generic borders as sites of cultural encounter, exchange and transition.

I have discussed the way in which the *Minstrelsy* ballads are grouped into distinctive categories, with each category supposedly representing the oral poetry of a particular period. Within that structure, the Historical Ballads are representative of the early feudal period, up to the time of the dissolution of the Debateable Lands and the decline of reiver culture on the Borders, whilst the Romantic Ballads evoke the period of feudal corruption and decline, before the Imitation Ballads reinstate virtue for a modern age. The layered narrative of the *Lay* straddles these periods:

Scott states that the Minstrel is 'the last' of his race, is 'supposed to have survived' the 1688 revolution, but that 'the date of the tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century'.[5] Essentially, it is a poem that enacts the dynamics of periods of transition, rather than the events of the epochs in-between.[6] Furthermore, Scott represents the history of the Borders within *The Lay* in such a way that the turbulence of change from a pre-modern society that looks backwards, to another which embraces the need to progress, offers glimpses of – but ultimately avoids – social catastrophe. Cycles of revenge, the corrupting properties of power and the evils of individualism are encountered and overcome in the course of the narrative. As the precedent of the *Minstrelsy* might lead us to expect, Scott ends the *Lay* with a celebration of communal virtue and unity: the warring factions are reconciled, the Minstrel regains his status and a home, whilst his song is naturalized for posterity within the Borders landscape surrounding Hawick, Selkirk and Melrose, and most notably in the sound of the permanently flowing river Yarrow, beneath Newark Castle.

Another dominant theme of the *Lay* deals more specifically with the ideological power of literature to work 'magic' upon the imaginations of its readers. During a period when books, pamphlets and broadsides were circulating with increasing availability, and when the growth of the print marketplace offered opportunities for political dissent through poetry and fiction, Scott allegorizes the need for regulation and self-control in the retailing and reading of literature. The *Lay* makes the point that books, like oral literature, can be communally beneficial, or individualistically corrupting. The events that take place within the central narrative of the *Lay* demonstrate a dramatized didactic contrast to the responsible literary authority that Scott represents through the Minstrel. These events revolve around the use of the words 'glamour' and 'Gramaryre', both of which etymologically derive from the word grammar and have associations with necromancy.[7] Scott references both words by connecting them to the romantic allure associated with gypsies, to the malevolent mischief wrought by the gothic 'goblin page' Gilpin Horner, and to a symbolic book of spells brought back from the Saracen Middle East by Michael Scott (whose sobriquet 'The Wizard of the North' Scott, in turn, assumed). The symbolism of the book shows the degree to which Scott saw literature as a powerful sociopolitical medium. Because literature has the potential to be used for good or evil, the moral of the *Lay* is that it must be kept by guardians whose integrity is beyond question and who respect its traditions. The poem is clearly intended by Scott to construct a lineage of bardic nationalism that leads

through Michael Scott and the eponymous Minstrel to himself. The interplay between the Minstrel and his tale re-enacts the distinction made between the Historical Ballads and the Romantic Ballads in the *Minstrelsy*, by looking at what happens when literature escapes the guardianship of 'responsible' characters, bringing its opposing benevolent and 'evil' forces into action.

These two main structuring themes within the *Lay* – benevolent actions on the one hand, destructive ones on the other – work together and are deeply interrelated. In my introduction, I mentioned Duncan Forbes's essay on Scott's rationalism. In the *Lay* we can see evidence that the practical application of the 'unique blend of sociology and romance' that Forbes speaks of as a defining feature of Scott's novels was already evident in his poetry.[8] We tend to be hesitant now in the use of terms such as sociology to describe literature from this period, on the understanding that the social sciences as we know them had not been developed in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. However, I want to claim that as a product of his Scottish Enlightenment education and context Scott's reconstruction of a social history, based around ballad romance plots and romantic characters, results in his writing being readable as a sociology *of* romance. My argument throughout this and the previous chapter seeks to extend Forbes's philosophical emphasis on Scott as an Enlightenment rationalist and romantic antiquarian into the specific area of his politically invested, historicized literary use of border regions.

An appreciation of the political and social climate within which Scott was writing between the years 1803 and 1805 demonstrates the importance to him of the continuing, paradigmatic rôle of the Borders and shows why his approach to social history so emphasized a sense of period and place. Scott's preservation of distances in time and locality (acutely historically aware, but always reconstructed poetically) enabled him to avoid any accusations that he might be applying moral accountability according to contemporary codes. Yet Scott's historical verse fiction, like his later fiction in prose, remained relevant to matters topical in his own day, with the Borders never ceasing to be upheld as the definitive anti-radical region. We need to look at how Scott's work achieves that balance with credibility. Forbes's emphasis on Scott's acceptance of Dugald Stewart's principle of conjectural history, which presupposes that there exists a law of the necessary progress of society, is no less important for having become a critical commonplace in Scott studies in recent years. Furthermore, his citation of Scott's *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* as an illuminating example of the manner in which Scott emphasized

the need for society to look beyond cycles of barbarism and towards the relationships necessary for international commerce as the true path forwards remains fresh and full of valuable insight when we look at a poem such as the *Lay*, as a text that confronts the dangers of romanticizing revolution. Scott condemned Napoleon's conduct in war as 'retrograde towards the brutal violence of primitive hostility' and defined the Continental System as disastrous in its 'abolition of all commerce and the reducing of each nation, as in the days of primitive barbarism, to remain satisfied with its own productions, however inadequate to the real or artificial wants to which its progress in society had gradually given rise'.[9] The *Life of Napoleon* was published in 1827, which was 22 years after the first publication of the *Lay*, 12 years after Waterloo and at the height of a period when Scott's immensely successful novels had rather eclipsed his earlier poetry in the public imagination. Scott's argument about the policies of a charismatic leader who had posed such a threat to British security and who had instilled fear in the minds of large sections of the British population, however, provides an exposition of how his historical novels were made possible by the prior composition of poems such as the *Lay*.

The glamour of a Borders tale

The plot of the *Lay* can be divided into three parts that move from retrospective barbarism and feudal militarism, through belief in magic, to the unity of a society that is poised to make its own transition forwards into the modern world. In the first part of the poem, represented by cantos 1 and 2, the area around Branksome Castle in the valley of the river Teviot is dominated by Janet Scott of Buccleuch, a baron's widow who perpetuates her husband's memory by keeping alive the feud that had resulted in his death. Narrating the tale, the Minstrel asks a rhetorical question at the beginning of the eighth verse paragraph: 'Can piety the discord heal, / Or staunch the death-feud's enmity?' (1:viii:1–2). The reply, concluding that paragraph, sets the scene for the action of the poem: 'The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar, / The havoc of the feudal war, / Shall never, never be forgot!' (11–13). There is an ambiguity to those lines, and the Minstrel proceeds through his lay to communicate to his female audience that cultural memory and the active perpetuation of past paradigms are different concepts. The feud of the *Lay* has turned the Borders families against one another, and fractured the unity that Scott emphasized as so important in the Historical Ballads of the *Minstrelsy*. Furthermore, the situation is complicated because Janet's daughter is in

love with Henry Cranstoun, heir to the opposing clan in the feud, the Carrs of Cessford. Janet of Buccleuch is not one of the passive women in Scott's works that Caroline Franklin sees as the prototype for Byron's passive heroines. Rather, throughout five of the six cantos, she seeks to destroy her enemies by any available means, almost bringing about the death of her son, and the defeat of the Scots Border clans by the English as a result.

Janet is introduced by way of metaphors associated with excessive passion. She is a woman 'burning' with pride (1:ix:9), as she vows 'vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain' (7). Therefore, she is representative of the corruption of femininity (which for Scott requires a demure and passive nature) on the one hand, and, on the other, of the *effeminisation* of masculine martial traditions. Her position of authority, as mother and nurturer of the next generation, is intended by Scott to convey the dangers that uncontrolled passions pose to society. But it is her small son's words that reveal what Scott is really doing here, for they take us back to the *Minstrelsy*, the ballad of Johnie Armstrang, and to Scott's response to Joseph Ritson's Jacobinism:

> Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
> Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee –
> 'And if I live to be a man,
> My father's death reveng'd shall be!'
>
> (1:ix:11–14)

With hardly a word of difference, these are the concluding lines of Joseph Ritson's version of 'Johnny Armstrong'.[10] As my comparison in the previous chapter showed, Scott chose not to use these lines in his own version of that ballad, almost certainly on the grounds that they represented the fostering of revolutionary sentiments. Far from portending a positive or heroic outcome for Scott in the *Lay*, they signify precisely the retrograde perspective of a society locked in the 'brutal violence' and 'primitive hostility' that Scott later deplored in his *Life of Napoleon*. The *Lay* thus sets its scene in order for Scott's Minstrel to advocate an alternative.

The next character introduced into the *Lay*, Janet of Buccleuch's champion knight, William of Deloraine, compounds the retrospective and barbarous historical element of the poem. Deloraine, by contrast with Henry Cranstoun, is a mature knight who represents a stage of societal development that is about to be relegated to the past. He cannot

read – 'Letter nor line know I never a one, / Were't my neck verse at Hairibee' (1:xxiv:7–8) – is superstitious and believes in supernatural phenomena.[11] Furthermore, he is entirely motivated by clan-feudal loyalties to the Buccleuchs and to the perpetuation of his own cross-border feud with a Cumberland knight, Richard of Musgrave. When Musgrave is killed in canto 5 by Cranstoun, Deloraine's purpose in life also dies and he is left to muse ''Twas pleasure, as when we look'd behind' (5:xxix:18), and to wish 'Dark Musgrave were alive again' (23). A number of important things happen at this point in the poem. First, Deloraine appears on the battlefield without the 'glamour' either of a knight's apparel or a horse. Crossing 'barriers' at a 'bound', he is suddenly primitivized to look like a savage:

> A half-naked ghastly man
> Who downward from the castle ran:
> He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
> And wild and haggard look'd around
>
> (5:xxiv:12–15)

Stripped of the regular clothing of romance he is nevertheless recognizable in his more barbarous form: 'And all, upon the armed ground, / Knew William of Deloraine!' (16–17).

I have suggested that the *Lay* re-enacts the literary historical layers of the *Minstrelsy*, and that the social function of ballad and romance forms is equally central to both works. The masculine, reiver culture of the 'stark mosstrooping Scott' (1:xxi:1), William of Deloraine, represents the older Borders culture that we have already discussed with regard to the Historical Ballads of the *Minstrelsy*. The plot that he is drawn into when he is sent to collect the magic book of eastern spells from Melrose Abbey takes the poem into the world of the Romantic Ballads and the potential corruption that they represent for Scott. This is the first point of transition that the *Lay* passes through. On the same night that he obtains the book Deloraine, with the age that he stands for, loses his position of power and dominance as Henry Cranstoun defeats him in a duel. His fall backwards, and the shattering of his lance can be read as symbolic of his passing into the past:

> Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
> The stately Baron backwards bent;
> Bent backwards to his horse's tail,

> And his plumes went scattering on the gale;
> The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
> Into a thousand flinders flew.
>
> (3:vi:1–6)

Janet of Buccleuch, who imagines revenge through access to the necromancy contained in the book, is allegorically indicative of the effeminization and misappropriation of ballad and chivalric romance. The book does not reach her, but falls instead into the possession of the malevolent dwarf Gilpin Horner. Horner, who is significantly referred to throughout the *Lay* as the 'Goblin-page', almost brings catastrophe to the Borders by using glamour, or the charm of transformed appearance, to foster discontent amongst the population. In my next chapter, I show how Byron's satirical gothic vignette of the Dwarf of Cintra draws upon Scott's figure of Gilpin Horner as a trickster who delights in manipulating words to make things appear to be other than they are. Just as Scott's dwarf repeatedly uses spells in the form of words from the book to disguise his disproportionate limbs and misshapen head, Byron's parodic personification of modern military diplomacy employs the language of treaties and declarations to cloak its grotesque failings in metaphoric robes of misleading, *faux*-chivalric values. Notably, Gilpin Horner has almost no words of his own. He operates by shrieks, other exclamations and gestures, and by altering the appearance of himself and others through the misuse of what he reads after, very briefly, he opens the book. Periodically, as when he leads the young heir to Branksome out into the forest and thus into danger, he is exposed in his true form and forced to disappear.

The central theme of gothic, supernatural literature and its potentially corrupting effects when in the wrong hands is brought into the foreground of the *Lay* with the book of spells taken from Michael Scott's tomb in Melrose Abbey. The 'glamour' of 'gramarye' – words that are used by Scott in sufficient proximity for them almost to constitute a rhyme (3:ix:11,14) – refers to the ability of literature to transform reality into fantasy, or more pertinently in this instance into an early form of magic realism. Looking back on the events of his narrative, the Minstrel recalls 'all was delusion, nought was truth' (18). In accordance with the format of the Romantic Ballads, a range of supernatural events occurs in the central cantos of the *Lay*. Scott compounds the effect with notes on a range of superstitious beliefs and legendary characters within the folklore of the Borders region. His note explaining glamour, for

example, becomes a brief but detailed discourse on eastern mysticism and on the gypsies. Scott's mention of gypsies demonstrates some of the social dimensions that underwrite the narrative of the *Lay*, and not least the emphasis that is placed on a cohesive and inclusive – but always hierarchical – social structure. The gypsies are acknowledged, and allotted their place as romantic vagrants that appear and disappear within an ordered narrative. Their ability to fascinate or frighten is mediated by Scott's objective manner in placing them within the literary picturesque frame of his poem.

Scott notes glamour to be particular to 'the legends of Scottish superstition', and defines it as 'the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality'.[12] The examples he gives of its misuse include a reference to the Ballad of Johnny Faa, which 'imputes the fascination of the lovely Countess, who eloped with that gipsy leader:- "Sae soon as they saw her weel-far'd face, / They cast the *glamour* o'er her" '.[13] Ramsay and Ritson each anthologized the ballad in question, well known already as a Scottish Border Ballad in a variety of forms. However, Scott did not include it in the *Minstrelsy*.[14] Notably, the person who is so easily misled by illusion and trickery in this Border Ballad is a woman, whilst the class agency involves deliberate deception by a vagrant social group being practised on an unsuspecting aristocrat. The polarization of intent and innocence provides the momentum of the narrative. Accounts of the Borders gypsies were formally documented, and Scott's Abbotsford library of more than 9000 volumes shows his familiarity with an extensive range of books and papers covering their activities. The link that he makes between gypsies and charmed appearances in the *Lay* is part of a wider scheme that associated disingenuous motives and trickery with popular romantic tales of the supernatural and of the East. The words 'Gypsy' and 'Egyptian', with their common etymology, had been interchangeable more than two centuries before Scott was born. Johnny Faa, for example, was known as the 'lord and earle of Little Egipt'.[15] *The Domestic Annals of Scotland* contains an account from 1623 which notes, particularly, the fascination that objects such as trees and rocks of zoomorphic or fantastical appearance held for these people:

> Generally speaking, the most powerful good-luck charms for the gypsies are those which are not manufactured in any way but rather in their natural form resemble a man-made object or some other easily recognisable form. Rocks for example, which contain a fossil

> or are shaped like an animal or appear to have the markings of a human face are considered to be especially powerful charms.[16]

To reinforce my argument that Scott uses romance within a specific Borders setting to write a ballad-like narrative of social change I will look at two more sections, from cantos 1 and 6 respectively, that mirror one another. The scenes concerned each involve a description of a banquet, and together they exemplify a symmetry to the poem's structure that bears out Scott's paradigms of heroic masculinity and romance reclaimed.

The first of the banquet episodes occurs at the beginning of canto 1, as the Minstrel begins his tale. Through five verse paragraphs, he portrays a stylized, gothic scene in the great hall of Branksome Tower. The Ladye is no longer present, having retired to her room, and the remaining company of 'knight, and page, and household squire' (1:ii:2) is entirely male. The Minstrel sings of the events of the evening, recalling 'knights of mettle true, / Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch' (iii:8), from amongst whom a group of ten 'quitted not their harness bright, / Neither by day, nor yet by night' (iv:3–4). He continues with the improbable, masculine imagery and heightens the sense of barbarism: 'They carv'd at the meal / With gloves of steel, / And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd' (iv:8–10). Lines such as these construct a masculine context for the action of this first part of the poem, which Scott refers to at several points, in the language of militaristic medievalism, as 'the iron time'.

Darkness, actual and metaphorical, is similarly part of the pre-civil context to this part of the poem in which light predominantly takes the form of flames from torches and the hearth, the reflecting gleam of armour and moonlight. The conventional gothic ballad motif of the drinking of the red wine recalls the opening stanza of the ballad of Sir Patrick Spens (see Chapter 1). Yet these lines also invoke the savagery of the battlefield, with underlying metaphors of butchery, mutilation and hints of vampirism. Indeed, the Minstrel follows with three verse paragraphs on 'the furies of the Border war' (1:vii:9). Byron alluded extensively to this scene in his description of Ali Pasha's Albanian palace at Tepaleen in *Childe Harold* canto 2, where he draws politicized, satirical parallels between a Near-Eastern borderland that was popularly orientalized (and hence regarded as barbarous and corrupt) within literature and European ideals of martial virtues and chivalric romance. As I will demonstrate in my next chapter, he subverts Scott's scene of gothic, martial homosociality by adding overtones of decadence, effeminacy and oriental homosexuality.[17]

The second banquet scene occurs at the beginning of canto 6. The *Lay* has by this stage become a celebration of unity, as the Minstrel sings of the reconciliation of the Border clans and the English. A group of minstrels, rather than warriors, 'trooping' from 'near and far' (6:iii:3) assembles at Branksome, where the social space is now described in the language of domesticity as a 'Hall' (iii:1), rather than as a Tower. Those that are subsequently named, and whose ballads are interpolated into the text, are the Scottish Borderer Albert Graeme whose family, Scott notes, were resident 'chiefly in the Debateable Land' and whose song is 'adopted, with some alteration, from an old Scottish song',[18] the Englishman Fitzraver and the Orkney bard, Harold. One could argue that in his construction of these characters Scott was alluding again to his own authority and that of Thomas Percy as custodians of ballad literature, along with the creation of a more acceptable, far-northern alternative to James Macpherson.[19] Whereas 'of late, before each martial clan, / They blew their death-note in the van' (6:iii:7–8), these minstrels now 'sound the pipe' and 'strike the string' (11) for a mixed company of 'young knights' (vi:21) and 'ladies fair' (22). Significantly, the archaic 'Ladye' is not used any more except within Graemes's ballad, having been replaced within the main text by the modern form of 'ladies'. Pages now carve and serve the meat for the guests, whilst 'bowls' (vi:19) and 'flasks' (27) are passed around. Scott has reconstructed the Borders, by this point in his poem, as the region of strength and resistance to rebellion that we are already familiar with from the *Minstrelsy*, and as a point of departure into the age of civility. Gilpin Horner is expelled from the text shortly afterwards in a final tumultuous scene of supernatural intervention and William of Deloraine similarly written out of the poem following his 'darkly told' (xxvi:18) account of the event. Janet of Buccleuch renounces superstition and magic: ' 'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd, / Renounc'd, for aye, dark magic's aid' (VI:xxvii:21–2). Margaret of Buccleuch and Henry of Cranstoun marry, and the near tragedy of division and feud is consigned to the past.

The *Lay* concludes with a return to the Minstrel of the title, as he symbolically settles at the confluence of rivers from two valleys. As the epilogue shifts from gothic convention to a picturesque perspective, Scott describes a landscape more familiar to readers of the period. His own physical relationship with the area and his succession to the Minstrel is brought out here, because he had, indeed, already settled a short distance away at Ashestiel and in 1812 would move to the property that became Abbotsford House, on the banks of the Tweed just outside Melrose and not far from its confluence with the waters of the Yarrow and

Ettrick rivers. Newark Castle (where the minstrel is imagined as singing to the Duchess) still stands in Yarrow, about seven kilometres west of Selkirk. Furthermore, the time-scheme of the ballad as a cultural form is similarly brought up to date: instead of the 'proud tower' or the 'hall', the minstrel tells 'the tale of other days' to visitors around the 'cheerful hearth' of a simple hut, with 'lattice clean' and a 'little garden hedged with green'.[20] In those penultimate lines, which idealize the peasant bard, Scott's own voice returns to evoke the atmosphere of the cottages of James Hogg and his family, and of John Leyden, where ballads and border tales had been recited to him. His authorship of the *Lay* is thereby once again located in a continuous tradition of Borders oral culture that casts him as the most recent Minstrel and, in doing so, ironizes the finality of the poem's title. Scott's constant recasting of himself as the re-teller, and indeed the retailer, of oral tales continued with his career as a novelist. The fireside scene from the end of the *Lay* is reworked in a different, but nevertheless recognizable, fashion in the later *Tales of my Landlord* novels where the narrator tells his stories from beside the fireplace in the Wallace Inn, at 'the navel of this, our native realm of Scotland' midway between 'our metropolis of law, by which I mean Edinburgh' and 'our metropolis of commerce and mart of gain, whereby I insinuate Glasgow'.[21] Storytelling traditions are thus embedded socially as centrally significant within a busy, modern commercial society.

The Lady of the Lake: 'Looking back upon a Highland prospect'

The Lady of the Lake is concerned with another historically problematic border terrain, that between Lowland and Highland Scotland. In the last section of the third series of *Tales of a Grandfather* (1830), Scott wrote about the demise of Highland clan culture after Culloden. His graphic account of the military events that led to the defeat of the Highland clansmen, and of the court proceedings that followed, includes uncompromising descriptions of executions. Against this rather protracted and often pedantic reportage of suppression, he sets other perspectives on the change of social structure in the Highlands and on the romantic sentiment that had become attached to the region largely in response to literature such as his own. As with the *Lay*, it is the point at which monumental changes occur that he responds to most imaginatively. The 'period at which the patriarchal system was totally broken up, was that at which it presented the most interesting appearance', he asserts. Continuing, he states that quite apart from the enforced changes brought

about through military and legalistic means, there had been changes made from within as a result of exposure to modern society:

> Highland chiefs of the eighteenth century, at least those who were persons of consideration, were so much influenced by the general civilisation of Britain, as to be not only averse to the abuse of power over their clansmen, but disposed . . . to restrain their followers from predatory habits and, discouraging what was rude and fierce, to cultivate what was honourable and noble in their character.[22]

Scott then uses a simile of nature, destruction and recreation through artifice to capture the nostalgia with which the past culture of the Highlands was popularly viewed. The patriarchal system, he suggests, 'resembled the wood of certain trees, which never afford such beautiful materials for the cabinet-maker, as when they have felt the touch of decay'.

Scott was self-consciously such a 'cabinet-maker' of course, and his poems and novels of Highland clan society were instruments in the literary process of the 'beautification' of the decay of that region's old social structures. Perspectives and appearances, mediated in the established vocabulary and cultivated approaches to knowledge of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, lead him to summarize in picturesque terms that

> the view which we cast upon the system of clanship . . . is like looking back upon a Highland prospect, enlivened by the tints of a beautiful summer evening. On such an occasion, the distant hills, lakes, woods, and precipices are touched by the brilliancy of the atmosphere with a glow of beauty, which is not properly their own, and it requires an exertion to recall to our mind the desolate, barren, and wild character, which properly belong to the objects we look upon.[23]

In his poem *The Lady of the Lake*, which his letters suggest was begun in 1806 and which was published in June 1810, Scott introduces his readers to the view of such a prospect from the Perthshire hillsides of the Trossachs, looking north-westwards along the length of Loch Katrine as it shines like 'a burnish'd sheet of living gold' in the evening sun against a backdrop of higher mountains. The first canto of the poem, indeed, consists of an extended, romanticized natural tour of the landscape as the hero pursues a stag that he has been hunting ever farther away from the Lowlands. In a letter to Lady Abercorn in Stanmore, Middlesex, on 9 June 1806, Scott first mentions *The Lady of the Lake* as a project in contemplation 'so

distant, that the distance between Edinburgh and Stanmore is nothing to it'.[24] Referring to a distance that was clearly cultural rather than geographical, he suggests from the outset a different social world, which can be treated as exotic and barbarous. This exoticism gave the poem a considerable amount of commercial appeal, and 20,000 copies were sold within 8 months of its first publication. Lockhart remarks on its continued popularity, noting that at least 50,000 copies of each of it and *Marmion* had been sold by 1836.[25] Furthermore, it shows Scott to be conforming to the conventions of literary tourism to the peripheries, rather than challenging or subverting them, as we shall see Byron does in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

Reviews and responses to *The Lady of the Lake* demonstrate the extent to which the literary context of the period was aware of the power of picturesque aesthetics and romance poetry as a form. Critical reception of Scott's poetry was, as John Hayden says, at best 'uneven'.[26] The most commonplace attacks were directed at his portrayal of gloomy or debased characters such as Marmion and his use of the gothic supernatural in the depiction of malicious figures such as Gilpin Horner, whilst his descriptive powers and their combination with heroic, historical sketches usually met with approval.[27] As a conservative journal, the *British Critic* could be expected to react favourably to Scott, and it is indeed representative of positive responses to the picturesque character of his writing in *The Lady of the Lake*. The *Critic*'s August 1810 review of the poem takes the 'picture of a calm morning, amidst mountain scenery' that constitutes the second verse paragraph of canto 3 to illustrate its praise of the octosyllabic iambic metre combined with a relaxed, 'arbitrary' paragraph, rather than stanzaic, structure that Scott uses. The relationship between Scott's use of poetic form and the aesthetics of tourism, as genteel conventions that incorporate tradition and contemporary approaches to understanding topography and the environment, are summarized in the reviewer's suggestion that 'in descriptions more particularly, his touches are so lively and picturesque, that it seems their effect would be damped and flattened by any other mode of versification'.[28] Coleridge, whose irritation with Scott's poetry was almost certainly still affected by his resentment over the plagiarism issue concerning *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Christabel*, took a decidedly different view of the poetic form and descriptive method around which *The Lady of the Lake* is constructed. In a letter to William Wordsworth, dated October 1810, he is dismissive of the ease with which *The Lady of the Lake* conforms to picturesque conventions, and condemns Scott for being 'himself a Picturesque Tourist' who took liberties with language and constructed

a Scottish Minstrelsy through recourse to 'a vast string of patronymics, and names of Mountains, Rivers, &c'.[29]

What all of these reviews lack, it seems, is an appreciation of the way in which Scott's reading of tourist accounts and local survey sources, along with his acceptance of stadial theory, led him to 'landscape' the Highland/Lowland borders in a way that represents a range of prejudices and commonplace attitudes precisely *through* their naturalization. In his description of the mountains around Loch Katrine in the first canto of *The Lady of the Lake*, for example, Scott portrays Highland cultural 'otherness' by comparing the scenery to an oriental landscape. Typically, he employs metaphors of architecture that denote a particular – and alien – cultural system:

> The western waves of ebbing day
> Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
> Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
> Was bathed in floods of living fire.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The rocky summits, split and rent,
> Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
> Or seem'd fantastically set
> With cupola or minaret,
> Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
> Or mosque of Eastern architect.
>
> (1:xi)

The exhilarated reaction of the poem's hero is very like that of the modern tourist, as from his vantage point on the 'steep promontory' he 'gazed / . . . raptured and amazed' (1:xv:1–2). Furthermore, the mountains at the southern end of the Trossachs are set apart from this Highland landscape by a pathway that ends abruptly at a precipice: 'And now, to issue from the glen, / No pathway meets the wanderer's ken, / Unless he climb, with footing nice, / A far projecting precipice' (xiv:1–4). Metaphorically, Scott positions his adventurer with a view from the edge of civilization as he looks towards 'the fragments of an earlier world' (20). Before proceeding to an analysis of the social theme at the heart of the poem, it would be helpful to consider further the influence of landscape and 'social' topographical writing on Scott, more particularly as it is manifested in the genres of the Descriptive Sketch of remote regions and the Scottish Tour narrative.

The Lady of the Lake is a poem that needs to be understood with an awareness of Sketch narratives and the Scottish Tour as its main literary precursors. Scott's use of landscape description from the perspective of the literary prospect view, as it develops into the romantic picturesque gaze, dominates the first canto of *The Lady of the Lake* and is evident throughout the five cantos that follow. He supports the authority of his text with notes that contain a number of illustrative quotations taken from five identified accounts of tours to the Scottish Highland margins.[30] The use of the tour narrative as generic source material in this poem constitutes an important contrast with the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, where Scott supported his notes mainly with quotations from antiquarian sources such as historical chronicles, archival documents and anecdotal accounts. By far, the best known of the tour volumes that Scott refers to in *The Lady of the Lake* was Pennant's *Tours in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1769 and 1772*. Pennant pays more attention to Loch Lomond than to the much smaller, neighbouring Loch Katrine as an entrance to the Highlands (though he discusses various border points between the Lowlands of Scotland and the Highlands), and the editions of his books had contributed to the popularization of the Lomond scenery with tourists and readers alike. Scott can be seen to be making a conscious break with these already established tourist patterns by concentrating on the smaller, lesser-known and secluded Loch Katrine. The remaining four accounts that Scott cites include texts from two distinct and significant periods: the early eighteenth century and the immediate period within which Scott was writing his poem. Ian Duncan suggests that the significance of the late eighteenth-century genre of the Highland tour is that 'it marks the pacification and domestication of the Highlands'.[31] Duncan notes that the Scottish tour flourished increasingly in the years after 1746, and especially from the 1760s onwards, but he also indicates that there had, earlier, been 'a handful of tours grouped around the period of the 1707 Act of Union'. Whilst Duncan's main object is to demonstrate the influence of the Highland Tour on Scott's novel, *Waverley*, he does not omit to point out that the publication of *The Lady of the Lake* placed Scott as a pivotal figure in 'the industrial-scale expansion of Scottish tourism', and one who encouraged even more writing of the Celtic fringe.[32] Certainly, the Tour within Britain, which increasingly incorporated visits to remote regions, had developed from a scholarly exercise undertaken mainly by educated men to an accessible, genteel middle-class version of the aristocratic Grand Tour by the early nineteenth century.

The Descriptive Sketch, like the Tour narrative, was also influential on Scott in his composition of *The Lady of the Lake* as a poem about the

Highland/Lowland borders. James Robertson, Minister of Callander, includes a section entitled 'Romantic prospects' in his account of his Parish within Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland* which interestingly engages directly with conceptions of 'taste' and tourism in the Trossachs. The account is dated 1791 and is one of the earliest that was compiled for Sinclair's survey:

> The Trosacks [*sic*] are often visited by persons of taste, who are desirous of seeing nature in her rudest and most unpolished state. They are situated about ten miles W. from Callander, and accessible by a carriage road.... When you enter the Trosacks, there is such an assemblage of wildness and rude grandeur, as beggars all description, and fills the mind with the most sublime conceptions. It seems as if a whole mountain had been torn in pieces, and frittered down by a convulsion of the earth....[33]

Robertson, whom Scott knew well, ends this section of his report by remarking on interest in the region in catering for the needs of tourists, commenting that the non-resident local landowner, the Hon. Mrs Drummond of Perth had 'erected booths of wicker work, in the most convenient places, for the accommodation of strangers ... and the tenants of the next farm are very ready to show the beauties of the place to travellers'.[34] In her account of the visit that she, William and Coleridge made to the Trossachs as part of their 1803 Scottish tour, Dorothy Wordsworth mentions these booths and provides an insight into tourism in the region at the time. She describes an amusing scene akin to a holiday snapshot as she recalls Coleridge, who had walked the shore of the Lake and was sheltering from the rain, hailing herself and William as they arrived at the shore by ferry 'with a shout of triumph from the door of one of them, exulting in the glory of Scotland'.[35] However, she also offers an alternative insight into local attitudes to tourists in her remark on the reaction to her brother of a small group of Highland workers in a field at Glengoyle, at the far end of Loch Katrine:

> he ... inquired about boats; there were no boats, and no lodging nearer than Callander, ten miles beyond the foot of the lake. A laugh was on every face when William said we were come to see the Trossach.... William endeavoured to make it appear not so very foolish, by informing them that it was a place much celebrated in England.[36]

The Wordsworth party, due to an error in taking their route from Loch Lomond, had arrived at the less frequently visited north-western end of the Loch, rather than its more accessible foot. *The Lady of the Lake* takes the more conventional foot end as its point of departure.

Scott's literary depiction of the Highland/Lowland margins of Perthshire in a romance poem, then, both responded to the tour phenomenon as it already existed and stimulated its further growth. It is the emphasis that Scott maintains on the 'fringe', margins or borders of the Highlands – rather than on the country beyond them – that I am concerned to explore here, and *The Lady of the Lake* shows how overwhelmingly important the notion of borderland as a literary site of action and change remained for him.

Scott supports his firm establishment of the geographical and socio-political status of the border status of the Trossachs region by quoting from Patrick Graham's *Sketches Descriptive of Picturesque Scenery on the Southern Confines of Perthshire* (1806). The note is appended to lines in canto 1 of the poem in which the hero Fitz-James (later revealed to be the King), who has become lost and whose horse has died of heart failure due to exhaustion, begins to fear the isolated and apparently deserted landscape that he finds himself in. Following immediately after the descriptive introduction to the scenery, and significantly after the metaphors of Islamic and other eastern architecture, they are the first lines that mention possible human habitation: 'To meet with Highland plunderers here/Were worse than loss of steed or deer' (xvi:13–14). Scott's note to this couplet begins with his own comment on 'the clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine', as 'even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their Lowland neighbours'.[37] The quotation from Graham's *Sketches* describes a region in times before the carriage road had been built, which was 'rendered almost inaccessible by strong barriers of rocks, and mountains and lakes' to the extent that 'it was a border country, and, though on the very verge of the low country, it was almost totally sequestered from the world, and, as it were, insulated with respect to society'.[38] Included in Sinclair's *Statistical Account*, Graham's earlier account of Aberfoyle, the parish adjacent to Callander and close to Loch Ard and Loch Katrine (which he names in a manner nearer to the Gaelic as 'Loch Ketterin') at which he was Minister, uses similar aesthetic conventions to convey a concise and acute sense of the region as a border: 'The general aspect of the country is extremely picturesque. Aberfoyle forms part of the extreme precinct of the Highlands. . . .'[39] He asserts a romantic geographical affinity with the Highlands in the form

of the 'great line of the Grampian mountains' in the report, which is dated 1793.[40]

I want now to look at some more specific examples of Scott's methods of characterization of the Highland margins. In *The Lady of the Lake* Scott takes two contrary views of the Highland margins in order to justify popular Romantic sentiment and the death of the clan remnant that had not given up rapine as a way of life. First, he peoples the beautiful landscape of the prospect view with fugitives from the Borders. These characters are Douglases and Graemes, who were already familiar to his existing readers from the *Minstrelsy* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and who embody all the honourable values that Scott had promoted as attaching to Borders feudal culture.[41] The fragile tranquillity with which these people live their lives in this 'enchanted' and 'fairy' land of exile however is shattered with the introduction into the poem of the predatory Highland chieftain Roderick Dhu vich Alpine. Roderick Dhu and his clansmen appear, symbolically, as 'darkening specks upon the tide' (2:xvi:2) from the far end of Loch Katrine. The images of savagery that introduce the clansmen as they row into view are such that they are primitivized from the outset, appearing to come from another epoch. Scott combines highly dramatized descriptive passages that exoticize physical appearances, manners and speech, with references to the Highlanders' 'plaids and plumage' (xvi:14), their 'Spears, pikes, and axes' (12) and their 'shrieks' (xvii:18) that contrast them with the all of the other characters in the poem.

The romance plot of *The Lady of the Lake* is three-sided, with Ellen Douglas at its centre. To summarize, the hero Fitz-James falls in love with her, but she is already in love with Malcolm Graeme. Meanwhile, Roderick Dhu seeks to marry her, and thus to gain legitimate power over the marginal lands on the borders of Perthshire and Stirling. I will cover the story only as far as is necessary, for the matters most relevant to my argument involve the representation of different societies and power structures as they are seen to interact with one another. Roderick Dhu, as a Highland chieftain, is constructed as a warlord and the absolute ruler of the land to the north of Loch Katrine. He is devoid of any of the chivalric principles necessary to take his people into the modern, civilized world and, though he displays vigorous masculine values of bravery and codes of honour in battle, shows no gallantry towards women. Scott depicts him as a Celtic equivalent of an eastern despot, who rules by force and menace, and from whom the virtuous, passive heroine of the romance plot must be rescued. The militaristic, homosocial camaraderie towards which Roderick is naturally inclined (he is almost always depicted in male

company) further emphasizes the barbarous, 'eastern' element to his character. Thus Scott's architecturally mediated orientalization of the landscape, and the accompanying orientalization of its inhabitants are consistent with one another. By the end of canto 2, as Douglas swims the lake rather than further obligate himself to the Highland chief, declaring 'Not long shall honour'd Douglas dwell, / Like hunted stag, in mountain cell' (xxxvii:11–12) and rhetorically calling to his bard, 'Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought, / Not the poor service of a boat' (15–16), it is clear to the reader that a situation of conflict is inevitable.

In canto 3, Scott opens with a paragraph that uses the same line twice to emphasize the inevitability of change, as 'Time rolls his ceaseless course' (3:i:1,9). He then briefly, but effectively, reiterates the romantic idealism of the Highland prospect with the paragraph referred to by the *British Critic*, describing Loch Katrine early on a calm morning. The languid tranquillity of this scene is conveyed through alliteration on soft consonants within enjambed couplets, such as:

> The summer dawn's reflected hue
> To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
> Mildly and soft the western breeze
> Just kiss'd the Lake, just stirr'd the trees.
>
> (3:ii:1–4)

Scott then makes an abrupt departure, as he takes the narrative behind the Highland line into a world of wildness, barbarism and arcane rituals. Where before the poem had been preoccupied with a landscape that is benignly beautiful, it now describes 'a desert' (vii:1) and a place 'where with black cliffs the torrents toil' (3). Supernatural imagery transforms the natural environment into a demonic contrast to the idealized romantic fairyland of cantos 1 and 2, as the poem describes how 'The mountain mist took form and limb, / Of noontide hag, or goblin grim' (7–8). The power of suggestion is used in these lines further to prepare the reader for the momentum with which a superstitious and uncouth Highland society is then revealed as it engages in blood sacrifice and preparation for war.

It would be simplistic to assert that Scott represents the Highlanders as morally 'bad' characters, and the others in the poem as their virtuous counterpoints. Rather, he represents society at its different stages, coming into contact within a secluded, borderland location. As always with Scott, morality lies in the triumph of providential progress rather than

the mere destruction of evil. There are virtues that Roderick Dhu possesses that render his eventual defeat in single combat with the King and his inevitable, subsequent death – representative of the death of the Highland clan system – tragic, and which are of a kind that Scott suggests modern society needs to acknowledge. Roderick lacks courtly chivalric principle, but he embodies martial vigour and the honour associated with warrior prowess that Scott believed to command the highest levels of respect amongst tribal, pre-commercial people. Scott's attitude to the Highlands in *The Lady of the Lake* assents to Adam Ferguson's ideals, which were best known through his *Essay on the History of Civil Society*. Ferguson, who was himself a Gaelic speaker born in the Highland margins of Perthshire, at Logierait, argued that martial spirit was an essential civic virtue in counterbalancing the ease of modern urban civilized society.[42] The Highlanders of Roderick Dhu's Clan Alpine are, furthermore, firmly set within a stadial perspective that affords them a place within the universal scheme of human development, as it was seen in the early nineteenth century. However, Scott's primitivizing and orientalization of these Highlanders casts them as a people who cannot progress beyond a certain point, even when they are brought into communication with those of a more developed culture.

Indeed, communication and the cultural embedding of language are important issues within this poem. As Susan Manning notes, since the middle of the eighteenth century in Scotland theories of language development arguing a connected genealogy of 'use from the primitive to the "correct"' had given speech an historical dimension.[43] Scott places particular emphases on two aspects of the Highlander's means of communication with one another, each of which suggests a fatal simplicity when placed in a borderland context with another culture. First, their language is empathetically 'naturalized', as its sound is likened to the cries of wild animals and birds, or to other 'savage' environmental phenomena such as the wind or rushing water. Secondly, as a form of expression the Highland language is always shown to be excessively emotional and often garbled. Scott's lines introducing Roderick Dhu and his clansmen as they appear from the far end of Loch Katrine exemplify the 'sound' of wild and barbarous society. Their pibroch, carried ahead them on the breeze in a 'thick' series of 'rapid notes' (2:xvii:11), is described in Scott's note as having a 'rhythm so irregular' and 'notes… so mixed and huddled together' that 'a stranger finds it impossible to reconcile his ear to it'.[44] The 'mingled outcry' of their song, with its interjection of 'shrieks' (18) eventually sinking into the 'moan prolong'd and low' (28) of their bagpipes, captures Scott's perception of Highland

music as entirely lacking the rational, measured cadences of polite and gentle society. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast to the festival of the bards in canto 6 of the *Lay*. The series of shrieks, whistles and wails echo throughout the rest of *The Lady of the Lake*, with Scott extending their use to the women of the clans. In canto 3, as the Highlanders prepare the ritual sacrifice of a goat as part of their preparation for war, we read of 'the cry of females, shrill / As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill, / Denouncing misery and ill, / Mingled with childhood's babbling trill / Of curses stammered slow' (3:x:20–4).

Scott's use of imagery that depicts the language of the clans as the savage utterance of warriors inseparable from a near state-of-nature culminates in canto 5, shortly before Roderick Dhu is mortally wounded by Fitz-James. The Highland chieftain calls to his men, who are hidden in the dense heather of an apparently empty mountainside, in lines that are self-consciously Ossianic and which thus prefigure their cultural confinement to a Gaelic past: 'He whistled shrill, / And he was answer'd from the hill; / Wild as the scream of the curlew, / From crag to crag the signal flew' (ix:1–4). An army of five hundred clansmen appears, as 'every tuft of broom gives life / To plaided warrior arm'd for strife' (13–14). Scott then creates a sublime moment in which time momentarily stops, as 'Watching their leader's beck and will, / All silent there they stood, and still. / Like the loose crags, whose threatening mass / Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass / . . . Upon the mountain-side they hung' (19–26). After a pause, Roderick signals again – this time silently, with a wave of his hand – and the Highland army disappears into the broom and bracken 'as if their mother Earth / Had swallow'd up her warlike birth' (x:19–20). In those lines, Scott offers his readers a glimpse of a world that had, indeed, disappeared. The silence is symbolic of the containment of Gaelic north of the Highland line, and it is mirrored in the closing lines of the poem, which I discuss later in this chapter.

The most important note captured by Scott at this crucial point in *The Lady of the Lake* is the fact that the Highlanders are caught and momentarily suspended in their state just prior to disappearance. The figure of speech comparing the clansmen with loose crags, suggesting their very specifically 'threatening mass', hints at a destructive historical power that might be involved in their tottering fall upon the 'hollow pass' below them. Earlier accounts throughout the poem of Roderick Dhu's campaign of terror against the Lowlands, along with Scott's emphasis on the vulnerability of Ellen, prefigure the devastation that such a fall would involve for society south of the Highland border, ushering in a history different from the one which Scott sees as eventually – and

as I have argued all along, providentially – coming to pass. Roy's map of Scotland comprised a set of large-scale sheets produced for military survey purposes around 1750 in the wake of the Jacobite uprising. The section covering the Loch Katrine region cartographically anticipates the romantic sublimity with which Scott's works configured the Highland line. Finally, there is an interesting contrast to be made between the way these clansmen 'hung' from the mountainside, and lines that Wordsworth had written only a few years earlier, in the first book of *The Prelude*, where he imagines the boy sustained by the forces of nature: 'suspended by the blast which blew amain, / Shouldering the naked crag', as 'on the perilous ridge' he 'hung alone' (1:334–6).[45] In Wordsworth's lines the miracle is in the apprehension of being held up, for all the precariousness of the particular childhood experience; such that what perdures in the later adult memory is a sense of the universe as an ultimately sustaining combination of vectors of force upon the boy. For Scott, by contrast, the clansmen have no such assurance of being held aloft, or of tumbling into a subsequent phase of history. They cannot just exist in historical suspension, or cultural stasis, but must either 'fall' to their own and others' ruin, or disappear. In the event, they take the latter course. Fraught as Scott's verse at this point is with a sense that these clansmen's lifestyles have reached a limit, the implicit point being made is that they must 'go down' in consequence, disappear for ever into the realm of legend and historical memory, as instantiation of a stadial phase which must be exceeded for another to come to pass. In the boy Wordsworth, suspended from his crag, there is none of the sense of historical fatedness of Scott's clansmen.

Furthermore, with the dramatic set-piece of the clansmen's hushed withdrawal into the natural world from whence they came, we see a stunning example of Scott's negotiation of another border. In her introduction to Scott's novel set in fifteenth-century France, *Quentin Durward* (1823), Susan Manning emphasizes the manner in which the 'heady excitement' attaching to rebellion held its attractions for Scott, but that he 'knew only too well the horrifying vista of the abyss which stretches away from any extreme position', and always pursued a more civilized and mediating line.[46] Here, as *The Lady of the Lake* approaches its denouement, Scott steps back from the dizzying prospect of cataclysm and moves into the convention of redemptive and cathartic tragedy.

Arguably the most important feature of Scott's Highland/Lowland borderland is that it is a site of abrupt change. There is a dramatic contrast between the fairy-like land of the Loch and its shores on the one hand, and, on the other, the rugged wildness of mountains beyond, that

reflects the reality of the topography. We have seen, however, that Scott's main preoccupation was with a landscape historicized by human activity. The cultural contrast between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of the Highland border in *The Lady of the Lake* is as dramatic as the landscape. Ellen Douglas, who represents the future of the region, is typical of the passive heroines that Caroline Franklin identifies as vehicles through whom Scott addresses the fear of invasion, and by way of whom he appeals to his readers' romantic sentiments for traditional values.[47] Franklin identifies the influence of Scott's 'ladies in distress' and their dualistic association with chivalric virtue and modern female submissiveness on Byron. Her focus on familial relationships emphasizes the significance of masculine conventions such as the elderly father who is also a communal patriarch, the young aristocratic lover and the tyrant invader figure in determining these women. Her discussion of those relationships with respect to *The Lady of the Lake* thus has particular relevance to my analysis of that poem in this chapter. However, in considering Ellen Douglas here – and in the next two chapters, Byron's female characters – I want to focus my argument on the rôles and voices given to such women in poems (later on the same will be true in Scott's novels) that always involve border or frontier regions in which cultural upheaval is occurring.

Ellen Douglas is notable in Scott's poetry, and indeed in his writing career, as the first of his fictional, passive female figures to have any significant voice. A substantial amount of the dialogue in *The Lady of the Lake* is allotted to her, and she sings a number of the interjected songs. Ellen is accompanied throughout much of the poem by the elderly bard, Allan-Bane, who has accompanied the Douglases into exile from the Borders, plays the harp and also sings. Together, these two characters can be read as representative of the voices of oral literature that Scott has taken up and over which he had, latterly, assumed guardianship. Their appearance here in the Highland/Lowland borders of Perthshire transcribes onto the landscape the dispersal of Border ballad traditions. In doing so, it suggests and proceeds to naturalize a providential empathy with songs and oral poetry from the Highland region. By way of parallel, the Douglas and Malcolm Graeme personify the diaspora of old Borders virtues discussed in my previous chapter on the *Minstrelsy*. The Borders, rather than the Highlands, crucially, remains the paradigmatic region associated with virtue. We need to consider how Ellen's voice relates to the utterances of the Highlanders.

In canto 1, Scott ensures that she is identifiable with the Highland border region by noting that 'upon her speech there hung / The accents

of a mountain tongue' (xviii:16–17). The description of Ellen's beauty as she rows towards the concealed Fitz-James in canto 1 contributes to her association with the Highlands, as Scott likens her 'wild luxuriant ringlets' to 'the plumage of a raven's wing' (1:xix:5–7), and casts her 'on this lake's romantic strand' as 'a fay in fairy land' (xxii:21–2). She is dressed in Highland clothing, and a Roman Catholic connection is established by her singing of 'Ave Maria' in canto 4. However, Ellen's soft vowels and consonants disassociate her from the barbarian, warrior Highland clans. Roderick Dhu, whom we know to speak a Highland language shaped by predatory habits, war and a harsh physical environment, symbolically has difficulty understanding her as, at a distance, he 'fondly strains his anxious ear, / The accents of her voice to hear' (3:xxviii:17–18).

I have maintained throughout my discussion of *The Lady of the Lake* that Scott writes the Highland/Lowland borders of the Trossachs, and of Perthshire more generally, in such a way that the romantic and picturesque popular view of the post-1746 Highlands can be seen as a justified successor to the passing of an older Gaelic world. The codification of Roderick Dhu as representative of the Highlands of the past, dying because of contact with the Lowland fringe, is further borne out in some final points that I want to mention. These concern particular changes that had taken place in the Highland margins during the last years of the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century, and they show the degree of politicization and providentialism that shaped Scott's writing, both of *The Lady of the Lake* and of the Highland margins more generally. First, the accounts that make up the north and west Perthshire volume of Sinclair's *Statistical Account* all comment on the continuing use of Gaelic by the population (sometimes generally, and elsewhere according to social status) alongside the understanding of English and Lowland Scots. Graham's account of Aberfoyle and Robertson's of Callander, referring to the area in which the poem is set, are typical in their praise of the linguistic qualities and communal function of Gaelic. Robertson is less optimistic about its future than Graham, remarking on its 'energy and power', and referring also to its 'boldness' and 'Majesty', whilst expressing regret that 'its genius and constitution . . . [and] structure . . . and the affinity it has with some other languages, are not so much attended to'. He also stresses a demographic structure in which 'The language spoken by persons of rank and of liberal education, is English.'[48]

Sinclair's correspondents similarly all comment on the decline of a once predominantly Jacobite population, whilst the breakdowns of

religious affiliation show Roman Catholicism to have declined to such an extent that most parishes quote the number of practising Catholics to be in single figures, along with similar figures for Episcopalians. Secondly, on the subject of agriculture and animal husbandry, black cattle and goats, along with local breeds of sheep, had declined drastically since the early 1770s, whilst the numbers of black-faced sheep had increased by thousands.[49] Robertson states that in Callander, 'about twenty years ago, the farmers began to flock with sheep. At that time, the number of sheep was 1000; now it is 18,000, all of the black-faced kind.'[50] Scott's lengthy descriptions of the clan ritual sacrifices of a goat in canto 3 and a black bull in canto 4, besides providing his poem with a powerful supernatural theme, locate Roderick Dhu and his people in an archaic world known by readers to be doomed. Furthermore, Roderick's appeal to Douglas for kinship, accompanied by the remark that the Borders 'are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide' (2:xxviii:24), is poignantly and ironically prophetic, given the depopulation of the Borders in the late seventeenth century and the Highland clearances during the early years of the nineteenth century, not least because throughout the poem Scott portrays prophecy and second sight as superstitions entirely accepted within the Highlands and its fringe societies.[51]

The Lady of the Lake ends with a celebration of chivalric virtues in Stirling Castle, as Fitz-James reveals himself to be the King, and Ellen Douglas marries Malcolm Graeme. Ellen asks for the posthumous pardon of Roderick Dhu, her request is granted, and Scott adds his epilogue to the 'Harp of the North' as 'The hills grow dark'. From their position on the Celtic fringe, the inhabitants of the Trossachs have united themselves and the values that Scott more readily associates with the Borders, with Stirling and the Monarchy, and in doing so have combined old virtues with the requisites for a modern world. In the final lines of Scott's poem, the Highland song fades, as 'receding now, the dying numbers ring / Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell, / And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring / A wandering witch-note of the distant spell'. Finally, ''tis silent all!' and the reader is left to reflect upon a Highland prospect which prefigures that which Scott would describe 21 years later.

Rokeby, Scott and the English borders: The poetics of return and departure

Before moving on to my study of Byron's poetry of borderlands, I want to look at the last in Scott's run of successful narrative poems, *Rokeby*. Scott began collecting material for *Rokeby* in June 1809, when he first

visited John Morritt at Rokeby Park, Greta Bridge in North Yorkshire. He made further visits in May 1810 and during September and October 1812, by which time he had produced a draft of canto 1. The first canto was heavily revised and Scott's letters suggest that the remaining five cantos were written by the end of 1812.[52] The poem was published on 11 January 1813, almost 3 years after *The Lady of the Lake* and 2 years after his poem in Spenserian stanzas of Moorish Spain, *The Vision of Don Roderick* (see Chapter 3). More significantly, *Rokeby* was completed after the publication of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* cantos 1 and 2 (1812), and only months before his publication of *The Giaour* (1813) and *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), each of which I look at in my next two chapters.

Set entirely in North Yorkshire, *Rokeby* is Scott's first piece of original writing to use England as its main location. The plot is located in 1644, immediately after the Civil War Battle of Marston Moor, in which allied forces of English and Scottish Parliamentarians had defeated the northern Royalist barons. Scott transfers the action of the poem farther north to Greta Bridge and the Barnard Castle area of North Yorkshire. Whilst borderlands in the sense that I have been discussing them are not essential to the gothic plot of *Rokeby*, Scott later made it clear that he regarded the region as a kind of borderland: in his introduction to the 1830 edition he commented that 'the place itself united the romantic beauties of the wilds of Scotland with the rich, and smiling aspect of the southern portion of the island'.[53] The association between Scotland and England emphasized in that statement bears out his Unionist politics, just as the poem celebrates the monarchism which we have seen to be a constant theme within each of the works studied so far, from the Ballad of 'Sir Patrick Spens' onwards.

Scott's characterization of Bertram Risingham and Philip Mortham as buccaneers who have returned from the Caribbean and America takes the poem beyond boundaries of Britain by way of plot, imagery and a series of notes. The notion of a commonwealth, in the literal sense, and of an Empire centred on a British monarchy supported by a loyal aristocracy and people, emerges in *Rokeby* with the motif of treasure, brought back to Britain from Risingham's and Mortham's buccaneering exploits. The Caribbean, of course, had not only been a contested region for three centuries but had been the location of a number of Naval battles within contemporary memory for Scott's readers. It would take me beyond the scope available within the present book to discuss the value of Britain's Caribbean colonies in Scott's lifetime, but its topicality and importance to the British economy and social structure is well known and extensively documented. The treasure in *Rokeby* is thus in many ways allegorical,

and its pivotal function bears a significant resemblance to that of the book in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. We might recall that the magic book in the *Lay* was brought back from Palestine, and that its powers to corrupt are temporarily unleashed in the *Lay*. In *Rokeby*, Scott again uses the motif of an exotic import that requires responsible guardianship, with action that turns upon the threat to that guardianship. The treasure can be construed as economic or literary. In the latter case, it becomes the adventure tale and the threat of misappropriation is similar to that discussed earlier with regard to 'glamour' and 'gramarye' in the *Lay*. With the loyalty of the revolutionary, pirate figure Risingham eventually prevailing, and thus assuring the continued security of the treasure as a royalist heirloom, Scott repeats his familiar process of the reclamation and restoration of virtue and the expulsion of revolutionary energies. The Civil War background to the poem establishes immediately recognizable parallels with the French Revolution and Jacobinism.

We might ask why Scott turned to a tale of buccaneers and their plunder at this particular point in his writing career. His 1830 introduction concludes with a posthumous tribute to Byron as the 'rival not in poetical powers only' who was emerging as he wrote his poem. He acknowledges Byron as 'a traveller, a man whose ideas were fired by having seen, in distant scenes of difficulty and danger, the places whose very names are recorded in our bosoms as the shrines of ancient poetry'.[54] There are aspects of Byron and of Childe Harold, each as rebellious aristocrats returned from abroad having been 'changed' by experience, in Scott's characterization of Bertram Risingham. But Scott's model for Risingham was more generally the generic robber-hero of the exotic adventure tale.

Rokeby's most profound significance to my discussions in the present book is twofold, and concerns the politicization of borderlands in poetry by Scott and Byron. First, the poem represents Scott's literary return to the English/Scottish Borders, but with a difference from his previous writing of that region. The exoticism that he had previously associated with the Highlanders, and which we have seen to be concentrated in Roderick Dhu, is displaced in *Rokeby* onto the Caribbean and American Indians who have influenced the potential traitor Risingham's behaviour. By inference, the old, latterly romanticized threat of Highland Jacobitism and the contemporary danger Scott saw in the form of Jacobinism are thus brought together and transferred onto Risingham. Secondly, *Rokeby* is evidently the model for Byron's brooding and metaphysical gothic tale, *Lara*, which I discuss more fully towards the end of the analyses in my final chapter. Both *Rokeby* and *Lara* use narrative to problematize the seductive effects of exposure to exotic cultures.

In each the poet confronts return from such an exotic location with the codes and constraints of feudal Europe. Risingham and Lara bear many similarities with one another, and each dies in a feudal conflict couched in the accoutrements of gothic literary convention at the end of the poem. But the different conclusions that the two poems present are as profound as one might expect, given the Tory politics of Scott and the aristocratic radical Whiggism of Byron. Scott's flawed character Risingham is true to type, and becomes a romantic hero through virtuous death in battle, just as the outlaw Borders Baron Johnie Armstrang had become a folk-hero martyr in the *Minstrelsy*, and the exotic Highlander Roderick Dhu ensured the romanticized memory of an entire culture through his death in *The Lady of the Lake*.

As with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *The Lady of the Lake*, Scott concludes *Rokeby* with the symbolic marriage of the young heroine, Matilda, to a similarly young suitor, Redmond.[55] The latter, who has been raised as an Irishman by a foster father, is revealed to be the aristocratic, monarchist heir to Mortham, and thus proves a worthy guardian to the treasure and to Matilda. The poem includes a number of minstrel and bard figures, along with more interpolated songs than any of Scott's previous poems. It closes with a scenic description of the point where the rivers Greta and Tees meet close to Mortham Tower, recalling the unifying motif – and the union of the marriage celebrations – at the end of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The gothicized values of British conservatism triumph once again.

Byron's *Lara*, conversely, ends with a pessimistic picture of death, isolation and madness, representing the incompatibility of cultural difference due to the nature of human ambition. In the last lines of his final, truly 'eastern tale' Byron tells of the 'strange characters' (2:625) of the transvestite oriental page Kaled, as they are traced into the sand whilst her tale remains 'untold – her truth too dearly prov'd' (627). Byron's lines allude to the beginning, rather than the end, of Scott's poem, where the parliamentarian villain Oswald is introduced suffering a nightmare that revisits his rôle as a murderer, as 'labouring feelings trace / Strange changes in his sleeping face' (1:iii:1–2). Oswald and Kaled (who is a reconfiguration of Gulnare from the *Corsair* – see my discussion in Chapter 4) each kill because they are motivated by obsessive passions. Oswald's passions are those of extreme individual greed and of revolutionary action, both relevant to Scott's contemporary context and regarded by him as unequivocally damnable. Byron, by contrast, ensures that his heroine is a tragic figure of passion, destroyed by codes that distort her identity and preclude her true self-expression.

Rokeby includes a wealth of references to American Indians, to the Buccaneers and to central America, with supporting references to a variety of accounts of each. Indeed, a note accompanies Scott's introduction of Risingham, explaining the history of 'those West Indian adventurers who, during the course of the seventeenth century, were popularly known by the name of Bucaniers'.[56] The reader is referred to Raynal's 1776 *History of European Settlements in the East and West Indies, by Justamond*, a text which confirms the orientalist metaphor that conflated the cultures of India with those of the West Indies. Raynal's account describes the origins of the buccaneers of the Spanish Main from their beginnings as French castaways hunting and living off the wild bulls and pigs of St Domingo to their later, better known, manifestation as government-approved pirates of various nations. But accounts of buccaneers and pirates were commonplace during years leading up to the publication of Scott's poem – not least because the British Navy was involved in numerous sea campaigns during that period, including the suppression of piracy along the Barbary coast (see Chapter 4).[57] In *Rokeby* sea legends replace the images of superstition and the supernatural that we have seen in Scott's other poems. Scott uses the poem and his notes to hint at ways in which these legends might enable romantic imagery to stimulate reflection on particular contemporary issues (such as we have seen in the instance of the Highland clans' ritual sacrifices in *The Lady of the Lake*). For example his mention in the text of 'The Demon Frigate' (2:xi:34) of the Flying Dutchman legend is accompanied by a footnote acknowledging John Leyden's 'ingenuity' in transcribing the story onto the first ship to participate in the slave trade. Leyden had written the lines, in *Scenes of Infancy*, during the period in which he was hoping to travel to Africa. Again, Scott uses the supernatural as a marker of pre-modern sensibility in his poem, but directs the contemporary sentiments of his readers by way of his paratextual framework towards matters of more immediate contemporary concern.

Scott's focus on militarism and the rugged virtues of primitive societies continues in *Rokeby*. He begins canto 3 with two paragraphs referring to the hunting and tracking skills of North American Indians, commenting particularly on their ability to disguise themselves within the landscape. The succession of end rhymes in the second of these two paragraphs, in conjunction with the rhythmic vigour of the octosyllabic couplets, emphasizes the theme of savagery and cunning: 'prey' and 'way' (1–2), 'far' and 'war' (3–4), 'disguise' and 'tries' (5–6), 'hide' and 'glide' (7–8), 'guile' and 'wile' (11–12). Scott's use of single-syllable words for these rhymes enhances the sense of primitivism, whilst his couplets ensure

that a framework of authority and control is maintained. The appended note on 'the patience, abstinence, and ingenuity exerted by the North American Indians, when in pursuit of plunder or vengeance' refers readers to Adair's *History of the American Indians* (1775), but draws on the many accounts of Indian society that had emerged during the second half of the eighteenth century, and which used the model of stadial theory to explain their culture.[58]

Scott next brings the reader sharply back to the cattle reivers of the Scottish/English Borders, within the text of the poem and in his notes, commenting in the latter that the 'habits of hostile depredation' on the Borders might be compared with 'a similar trade in the wars of the Bucaniers', who had in their turn learned from the warrior strategies of the Indians.[59] He refers to Redesdale, a region 'on the very edge of Carterfell, which divides England from Scotland' that had given rise to the ballad 'The Raid of the Reidswire' (included in the Historical Ballads of the *Minstrelsy*), identifying it as Bertram Risingham's childhood home.[60] Risingham, 'in his Redesdale youth' had 'heard / Each art her wily dalesmen dared . . . And well his venturous life had proved / The lessons that his childhood loved' (3:ii:15–22). In the convoluted plot, Risingham therefore unites the rugged virtues of the borderers with the naturalized guile of the Indians and the economic ruthlessness of a buccaneer. He embodies the politics of Scott's stadial perspective by demonstrating that 'primitive passions' can be harnessed for benefit of Rokeby Park. This Georgian house and estate of Scott's friend John Morritt to whom the poem is dedicated is set midway between the ruins of Egglestone Priory, Mortham Tower and the romantic glen with 'the cliffs that rear their haughty head / High o'er the river's darksome bed' (2:viii:1–2), which hides fugitives and traitors in the narrative. Rokeby Park, as the recently landscaped nineteenth-century gentleman's residence, is hence endowed with a gothic pedigree by the poem. The bards from England and Ireland within the narrative, as they sing the several ballads that Scott interjects, provide it with a vernacular, oral literary tradition. Of the songs, the monarchist ballad 'O Brignal Bank' is particularly significant, because it embeds loyalty to the Crown within the immediately local landscape. Bardic nationalism is thus represented in *Rokeby* as a naturalized cultural form that is particularly rooted in peripheral and border regions, and which is supportive of the British Union. Scott includes descriptive topographical paragraphs in each of the six cantos, and in that respect the poem structurally resembles *The Lady of the Lake*, rather than *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* or *Marmion*. Yet, he avoids the architectural metaphors that he applied to the mountains of the Trossachs and

beyond, preferring natural imagery of scenery that is of a romantic gothic cast: the 'mountain peak and village spire' show no signs of cultural disparity, but are rather in complete concordance with the battlements of the castles of Barnard and Raby, and Mortham's English Peel tower. Scott depicts the English border country, like that of Scotland's Borders region, to be one where unity and progress was possible in a natural modern society within the British Union and Empire, but only when self-interest develops within parameters of loyalty and an acceptance of the providential nature of rank.

3

Crossing 'Dark Barriers': Byron, Europe and the Near East in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Cantos 1 and 2

Throughout the two previous chapters, I discussed how Scott used antiquarianism, historiography and various sources of local knowledge to construct representations of clan-feudal and baronial societies on the Scottish/English Borders and the Scottish Highland margins. I have sought to show why his engagement with encounters along and across borders should be considered as arising out of a political, intellectual and social world deeply interested in European and British Old Romance literature,[1] as well as Scottish Ballad traditions and folk-myth. In the present chapter I want to consider Byron's engagement with, and descriptions of, two quite different border regions in a manner that evaluates the significance of the constant references and allusions he makes to Scott. Before commencing my closer analyses, I shall compare some of the more important contexts, literary methodologies and generic frameworks within which these poets were writing, in order to consider the manner in which Byron, like Scott, adapted and politicized poetic form.

Comparisons and contexts

Byron ventured tentatively into published poetry in November 1806 with *Fugitive Pieces*, a collection of poems privately circulated amongst a group of his friends. Details of the poems inevitably leaked beyond the chosen group of readers, and controversy over the sexually suggestive, morally ambivalent nature of some of the pieces (particularly because many of the characters could be identified) led to the volume's suppression. In January 1807, Byron published a revised and extended version of *Fugitive Pieces*, titled *Poems on Various Occasions*, again for private circulation. The collection was considered more appropriate for general

publication and in June 1807, a further revised and extended version was published by S. and J. Ridge of Newark, this time for public purchase under the title *Hours of Idleness: A Series of Poems, Original and Translated*.

The poems comprising *Hours of Idleness* contain particular references to places and to people, whilst an elegiac theme predominates. In truth, the collection is more concerned with Byron's intimate memories than with cross-cultural engagement. A desire for self-dramatization, and for the extravagant language that would become a feature of his writing style is already evident. However, Byron's interests in classical Greek and Roman literature, medieval romance and the 'northern' epic heroism of *Ossian* are also established in these early poems. 'Elegy on Newstead Abbey', which is a sentimental poem romanticizing and aggrandizing the poet's ancestral home and his line of ancestors, has an epigraph from *Ossian* which Byron must have intended to add gravitas to his family name. Another piece, 'The Death of Calmar and Orla: An Imitation of Macpherson's *Ossian*', Byron states to be adaptation of the story of Nisus and Euryalus from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Byron's affection for the Highlands of Scotland, and his desire to be seen as authentically Scottish, comes to the fore in 'Lachin Y. Gair', a poem that celebrates the Highland regions he visited with his mother when he was a boy and where his mother's ancestors had lived and died in the course of Scottish history. A brief introductory note that is reminiscent of Scott provides information on locations and topographical features, and glosses the pronunciation as Loch-na-gar. In many respects, Byron was moving into territory already occupied by Scott with the few poems on Scotland and the others celebrating baronial exploits in this initial collection.

Publication of *Hours of Idleness* exposed Byron to the verdict of the review press for the first time.[2] The *Edinburgh Review* was by far the most influential critical periodical in Britain at the time, and in January 1808 it witheringly dismissed the poems. Byron's pride was deeply wounded. In point of fact, he ought to have anticipated disdain from such a quarter. His choice of a title that suggested leisured idleness, his drawing of attention to his aristocratic birth and an excessive pleading of his 'minority' in the preface could never have created a favourable impression with the *Edinburgh*'s reviewers, all of whom were energetically professional men educated in the school of civic duty and regulation of luxury that I discussed in my previous two chapters.[3] Henry Brougham, the author of the anonymous review, seized upon opportunities for attack.[4] He scorned Byron on every count, perceiving him to lack any poetical talent. Possibly more painfully, he demolished Byron's claim to Scottish cultural authenticity by remarking that although one of the poems,

'Lachin Y. Gair', was replete with references to the poet's maternal family's place in Scotland's history, he 'had not learnt that *pibroch* is not bagpipe, any more than duet means a fiddle'.[5]

Such an attack on Byron's failure of accurate knowledge of Scottish cultural matters in a poem that profess his fascination and connections with Scottish locality and memory inverts the *Edinburgh*'s earlier criticism of Scott for being overly preoccupied with the particularities of Scottish local culture. Francis Jeffrey's review of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in April 1805 expressed an opinion that 'Mr Scott must either sacrifice his Border prejudices, or offend all his readers in other parts of the empire.'[6] The *Lay* incorporated too many naïve and 'homely personalities' from Borders folklore for Jeffrey's taste. Furthermore, Scott was continuing to raise the profile of Scottish primitivism, a fashion that the urbane, professional and educated Scottish classes found embarrassing as they sought to establish their names within an English-dominated British Union, because it perpetuated negative stereotypes of 'backward' or uncouth Scots.[7] Scott's notes, 'which contain a great treasure of Border history and antiquarian learning', were criticized by Jeffrey for being 'too long, we think, for the general reader'.[8]

If Scott took little notice of the reviewers' admonitions and continued to write tales of Scotland and its Borders steeped in folklore and vignettes of local characters, Byron's response to criticism showed a keener sensitivity. He responded to the *Edinburgh Review's* attack by publishing his own anonymous critical satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* in March 1809. However, Byron's affection for a romanticized and primitivized Scotland and his passion for the grandeur of Ruin remained an essential part of his poetic character, and were soon to become complicated by an additional fascination with exotic lands and distant societies.[9] Byron's travels in Europe and the Near East in 1809 and 1810 led to the composition of *Childe Harold*'s *Pilgrimage: A Romaunt*. Cantos 1 and 2 were published in March 1812, bringing Byron fame at least on a level with Scott and offering readers a new kind of 'borderland' poetry.

The most obvious feature of the borders focused upon by Byron, in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* cantos 1 and 2 and subsequently in his Eastern Tales, is that they are situated at the point where Christian Europe meets the Islamic world. In spite of the increased secularization that had taken place throughout Northern Europe during the eighteenth century, largely as a combination of the European Enlightenment and the expansion of commercial society, the borders between the Christian nations and Islam were still perceived as culturally monolithic.

Throughout the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century western world, Islam and the orient in general was thought of as inherently unenlightened, motivated by passion, and dangerously superstitious.[10] The transgression of cultural monoliths of such unassailable magnitude would have been naturally appealing to a writer of Byron's extrovert and anti-conformist temperament. I am concerned with more than Byron's personal desire to appear – and in many ways to be – transgressive. Indeed, I want to look more closely at the nature of his writing of these borders insofar as it enters into a dialogue with Scott and the wider literary world over the concept of borders as sites of prime literary, cultural and ideological contention. The intrinsic 'otherness' associated with Islam throughout the west in the early nineteenth century was used by Byron to displace and deal with anxieties about cultural and political despotism and the expansion of Empire. As this chapter progresses I will examine, through readings of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2, the manner in which he appropriated an extensive range of orientalist tropes and stereotypes, in much the same way as he used old poetic forms and their revivals, attacking perceptions that any of these might be uniformly representative and immutable.

C. A. Bayly has explored the extent to which heterogeneity existed in the Muslim Empires from 1780 to 1830, and his work can help us to understand the approach that Byron took to the Ottoman Near East.[11] Of particular relevance are the detailed explanations Bayly presents of fissures and crises within the power structures of the late Ottoman Empire, ranging from Afghanistan across Arabia to Algeria. The myths that surround these power structures still exist today, but in the early nineteenth century they formed the mainstream of public opinion against which Byron would react in *Childe Harold* and the Eastern Tales: Byron's premise was that contrary to the inherent eighteenth-century stereotype, Ottoman rule was patrimonial rather than despotic, with the ruling households of the Sultans, along with their Pashas and Beys acting more 'as patrons of peasants and merchants, tying together town and country, cultivator and herdsman'.[12] The Ottoman Empire had indeed undergone a more or less continuous process of decentralization from the later seventeenth century, with the diminution of power at the centre more than balanced by the growth of complex provincial societies under the rule of local magnates. This process of decentralization was particularly evident in the Balkans, Egypt and Mesopotamia.[13] As Eric Wolf notes, tribal and clan-feudal societies constituted the dominant political and social forces in the late western Ottoman Empire.[14] Wolf aims to 'abrogate the boundaries between Western and non-Western

history', presenting a history of the 'East' that is grounded in connection with Europe, rather than segregation, in which the borders between European civilization and 'other' nations deemed barbarous are made transparent to reveal areas of common ground.[15] My debts to both of these studies will become increasingly apparent as my analyses of Byron's poetry and its contents unfold.

Three overwhelming contextual factors inform the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*: travel as a preoccupation and rite-of-passage of young men of Byron's class and educational background (particularly, in Byron's case, men who had recently graduated from Cambridge), Europe as a War zone, and Imperial ambition. All of these involve the crossing, writing and rewriting, actual and metaphorical, of geographical, cultural and political Borders. Byron's immersion in a world that was acutely aware of changing and threatened national borders, and of the precarious instability of social systems and political units, is evident throughout *Childe Harold*. His interweaving of the rhetoric of travel narratives, parody and burlesque, political irony and cultural relativism in the first two cantos, and in the Eastern Tales, establishes radical concepts of borders, as locations for wilful transgression of authority (including literary authority).

Socio-economically, Byron's portrayal of such transgression defines the borderlands he writes of as being, in many ways, similar to the Scottish Borders before the Union of the Crowns in 1603. For Scott, as I showed in my previous chapters, the apparently incongruous relationship between latter-day civic mindedness combined with national loyalty and an older period of lawlessness is only resolved by viewing the wild frontier region in terms of a morally redemptive lineage. Scott unequivocally charted society's natural progress through a period of crisis and change into an authoritatively stable, but rurally depopulated, new era of modernity. I have discussed that figuration within the contextual apparatus and ideological framework of stadial theory in my previous chapters, with emphasis placed on the tensions that Scott acknowledges between providential modernity and the social implications of demographic change.

However, Byron's fragmentation of definitions associated with the Tory government and British Imperial interests – definitions which prescribe a secure dividing line between civilization and barbarism – constitute them in opposition to Scott's ultimate re-inscription of the Scottish Borders region as a site of virtuous, pro-establishment continuity. It is more than visual coincidence that causes Ali Pasha's palace at Tepaleen to remind Byron, on his approach, of Branksome Castle from

Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. I will discuss the scene at Tepaleen later in my closer analyses of canto 2, but the point to be made here is that Byron's fractures, effected through the multiple allusions, digressions and the constantly changing moods and styles of narrative that he uses in *Childe Harold*, subvert the lineage that allows a self-proclaimed, civilized world to define itself as morally righteous and evolved against that other world, which it deems barbarous. The many references and allusions Byron makes to Scott consequently create a literary dialogue, with the representation of borderlands as the ideologically contested topic of debate.

Cantos 1 and 2 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, A Romaunt* were published on 10 March 1812. They were an overnight commercial success with the first edition of 500 bound, quarto copies selling out 3 days after the official publication date.[16] Further print runs, cheaper editions and pirated copies quickly followed to meet public demand as Byron displaced Scott (who had published his own gothic and chivalric poem of East–West cultural confrontation set in Spain, *The Vision of Don Roderick*, just 8 months earlier in July 1811) as the dominant British poet of the time.

The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* are well known for being inspired by Byron's first journey outside Britain. That journey proved to be a mixture of conventional Grand Tourism and eccentric adventure. Byron points out in the first two sentences of his preface that the poem was begun in Albania in 1810, and that it was at least nominally based upon observations made in the course of his journey:

> The following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe. It was begun in Albania; and the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries.[17]

Thus, Albania is constituted as the fulcrum for the narrative. The retrospective nature of Byron's formulations on Portugal and Spain, composed whilst he was able to assess his perspective from across the borders of Europe and the East, is essential to the ideological strategy that unfolds as the poem progresses. Borders and frontiers become fundamental concepts for Byron, representing the presumed limits of authority, offering vantage points for perspectives on vastly differing cultures and inviting forays behind the cover of geographical features such as mountains, rivers or seas into 'unknown' areas. The borders established by nature rather than by governments, in the form of austere and enduring physical barriers, are the only manifestations that Byron credits with

true stability. In *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 and the Eastern Tales that Byron subsequently wrote, borders are frontiers from across which one can think otherwise proscribed thoughts and contemplate otherwise unspeakable actions.

Literary conventions are central to the entire structure of *Childe Harold*. Byron parodies, imitates, burlesques, satirizes and otherwise critiques a wide range of accepted styles and genres. In declaring that he had written *Childe Harold* 'amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe', he was consciously employing the convention of 'writing to the moment', a recognizable trope of travelogues of the period. A comparison of manuscript versions with the revised and published version of the next few lines reveals other developments that are significant in terms of Byron's preparation of his readers' expectations.[18] Three of the draft manuscripts, for example, use 'professes to describe' in place of 'attempts to describe'. What the poem might claim, or 'profess', to describe and what it endeavours to achieve by way of 'attempts' at actual description are two quite different things in terms of intention. The former suggests a literary motive, whilst the latter leans towards factual objectivity. Byron continues the emphasis on experience and authorial responsibility in his published version writing, 'Thus much it may be necessary to state for the correctness of the descriptions', whilst the Yale draft manuscript reads, 'Thus much is necessary to be stated in a descriptive poem.' Here his early concern with the necessities of form dictated by a named literary genre – 'descriptive' poetry – is replaced in the later, published version by a desire to claim accuracy of description as a necessity in itself. One effect of this is to draw his readers' attention towards an altogether more keenly felt sense of place. The conventions of travel writing thus supplant those of descriptive poetry, at least at the level of declared intention. Byron manipulates his readers' minds, persuading them that he is writing 'to the place' as well as to the moment.

As an authorial device, Byron's claim to descriptive objectivity in his accounts of the various countries that Harold visits is comparable with Scott's claim to historical authenticity in his preface to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. If we look back at Byron's Preface, the similarity is immediately apparent. Scott begins with the statement that 'This poem is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland.'[19] Both Byron and Scott conform to the protocol of genre – descriptive poetry and travelogue in Byron's case, and antiquarianism in Scott's – as a means of claiming credibility in their representations of geographical and past locations respectively. Certainly, both wish to be seen as striving for accuracy of description – the

one as a conventional gentleman antiquarian and the other as a gentleman traveller. *Childe Harold*, perhaps more than any other poem of its time, illustrates the connection between literary antiquarianism and travel writing – though Byron was always more interested in people than in artefacts or monuments. My analyses in the latter part of this chapter demonstrate how, time and again, Byron crosses between the close-up scrutiny of curiosity and the distanced stand of the picturesque view, to reveal yet further arbitrariness surrounding conceptual and thematic borders. As with Scott, there is a privileging of the theme of medieval feudalism that becomes central to the ideology of what is about to be presented.

Childe Harold is a descriptive poem, in many senses, and is recognizable as such. But in removing the explicit generic reference from his preface, Byron amplifies and draws attention to the problematic status of his other reference to specific literary form – which is the already privileged 'Romaunt' of the title. The references to each of these genres, either through explicit mention or through conformity with convention, engage the poem with the literary interests of the readership that McGann sees Murray, as publisher, aiming at. That readership had wealth, was classically educated and was interested in travel books, topographical poems, antiquarian literature and aristocratic philosophical musings on art and society.[20]

As an aristocratic Whig and a controversial, maverick character, Byron constituted a marked contrast to the middling-class, legal professional and Tory traditionalist Scott, in terms of social class and political context. He continually and openly criticized the Tory government and the Establishment of early nineteenth-century Britain, flaunting anti-governmental radical sympathies and in doing so courting his own inevitable failure as a politician and member of the House of Lords. Leslie Marchand remarks that Byron's aristocratic pride constrained him 'from allying himself openly with the Radical leaders in Parliament whose point of view he nearly shared'.[21] Malcolm Kelsall further charts the development of Byron's radicalism and politically antagonistic manner through his poetry. Kelsall maintains that notwithstanding the radical hyperbole of his three parliamentary speeches, Byron ultimately held with his aristocratic origins and to his sense of class superiority.[22] Byron's maiden speech in the House of Lords, made on 27 February 1812, used florid rhetorical cross-cultural accounts of eastern, Islamic despotism as a highly dramatized foil against which the execution of frame-breakers in Britain could be highlighted. Employing orientalist rhetoric against the British Tory Government, he dramatized his first-hand

experience of the East to present the treatment of the frame-breakers as the more barbarous, because perpetrated by the rulers of a so-called enlightened, Christian nation:

> I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey; but never under the most despotic of infidel governments did I behold such squalid wretchedness as I have seen since my return in the very heart of a Christian country.[23]

Byron crossed the boundaries of protocol in the House of Lords by using discourse and imagery considered more appropriate for a travel book. His maiden speech sustained the level of invective, posing rhetorical questions that constructed images of extremes of barbarism within the British countryside: 'Will you erect a gibbet in every field, and hang up men like scarecrows?'[24] With the speech being made just 2 days before John Murray advertised *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2, and only 2 weeks before publication, the controversy generated resulted in a surge in interest in Byron's poem with its experiential writing of the East.

Byron's poetry and his prose were anything but measured and restrained. Yet the variety of hyperbole that was so central to his style – in the brief but extravagant speeches in Parliament, as illustrated above, but more notably in his literary writing – was itself readily recognizable within society as a convention of Aristocratic Grand Tour discourse.[25] His flamboyant rhetorical style dramatized cultural encounters and the topographical features of foreign landscapes in a manner that consciously occluded the familiar and the mundane.[26] In such a sense, hyperbolic description serves as a discourse of escapism, invoking sensations beyond those encountered in the course of ordinary life and differentiating markedly between the traveller and those without any experience of travel.[27] Chloe Chard suggests that travel experience led directly to an impulsive 'need' for extravagant exclamation. On such a basis, Byron's sustained use of such description in *Childe Harold* must then approximate to an obsessive behavioural desire or even an addiction. Extremes of desire and addictions both being afflictions associated with, and often causing, infectious diseases, there is a link with orientalism of a Saidian nature.[28] In turn, as infection and notions of the orient were each commonly associated with moral degeneracy and sexual promiscuity it is easy to see how *Childe Harold* could generate controversy, and how its popularity could become a cause of anxiety.

The 'bringing home', or importation of hyperbole, and its publication for a voracious, consuming public became a source of political concern,

particularly when it cast the voice of socially controversial figures like Byron as attractive and seductive. Conservative and reactionary Journals such as the *British Review* and the *Antijacobin* were openly anxious about the subversive effect on the reading public of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. William Roberts, in the *British Review*, employed a rhetoric of bewilderment to register his censure, declaring that the 'puzzle' was 'how to account for the portentious titles of a poem, the subject of which is certainly neither chastity, nor valour, nor truth' and which delivered 'the narrative of a modern tourist' in place of what it seemed initially to promise.[29] Chastity, valour and truth – the 'old' heritage-based values upheld in contemporary European chivalric literature (and attacked by Byron in *Childe Harold* as falsifications) – are the key words in Roberts' review, for they represent the prescribed European codes of morality against which the East was always defined. Byron's poem, with its 'modern' tourist narrative, is accused of inciting readers to cross too many moral as well as geographical borders. The unnamed reviewer for the *Antijacobin*, on the other hand, published a straightforward tirade against *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 on the basis that they deliberately misled an innocent, vulnerable and impressionable readership who sought a literature that could be relied upon to be what it appeared.

The *British Review* and *Antijacobin* advocated a hierarchy of literature that markedly differentiated between types of travel literature. At the top, on the basis of its perceived moral example, was the 'traditional' Western European genre of chivalric romance. The personalized 'ramblings' of modern, wealthy (usually young, male) travellers lay well down the scale. Consequently, the *Antijacobin* declared Byron's poem to be deviant and offensive, 'an anomaly in the annals of chivalry, or in the history of romance', and thus an affront to a genre of heroes 'endowed with soul and spirit, capable of great actions'.[30] Worst of all, in the opinion of the *Antijacobin* (subtitled *Monthly, Political and Literary Censor*) Byron had substituted a tourist trawl, 'Sketches of scenery in Spain, Portugal, Epirus, Acarnia and Greece', for the tale of striking incident promised by his poem's title. He had replaced the anticipated hero with a decadent shadow of the expected form, and allowed him to go 'wandering over the world, without any fixed object'.[31]

The seductive power of Byron's wandering narrative, its apparently wilful dismissal of purposeful resolve and its undermining of heroism that could be 'looked up to' for moral example was, then, a cause of considerable anxiety in conservative critical circles. Lucy Newlyn has investigated the increasing degree to which awareness of the power of the written image caused anxiety amongst those involved in literary

production and reception in the early nineteenth century. Examining the ways in which writers and publishers responded to and manipulated readers' expectations, she cites the *Edinburgh Review*'s article on *Childe Harold* canto 4 in June 1818 as a particular example of concern over the controlling potential of authorial power.[32] That article is worth comment here because it takes a perspective diametrically opposite to that of the *British Critic* and *Antijacobin*, but still warns of the dangerous potential of Byron's influence. The *Edinburgh* compares Byron with Rousseau as one of two writers 'in modern literature' who had exerted 'extraordinary power over the minds of men'. Alluding to the deceptive allure of Milton's Satan and to the expansionist ambitions of the defeated Napoleon, the *Review* remarks of Byron: 'he commanded [readers'] feelings and passions, he cares not for their censure or praise . . . and he aims in poetry, like the fallen chief whose image is so often before him, at universal dominion, we had almost said, universal tyranny, over the minds of men'. Byron further stands accused of pretending 'to be a republican' whilst his 'heroes are stamped . . . with the leaden signet of despotism'. Commenting on the range of poems Byron published between 1812 and 1818, as well as on each canto of *Childe Harold*, the reviewer concludes that his readers encounter a world of imagination where the purposes which 'may govern our actions, vanish altogether'.[33] Regardless of the Whig or Tory allegiances of the reviews, Byron was thus perceived as the purveyor of an addictive literature that catered for a public desire for passion, and as one who had unscrupulously used his popular influence as a poet to increase his control over the minds of his readers.

Subversion, then, was regarded by many of Byron's critics as a covert form of activism within *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. But how radical was Byron, when his poetry is assessed as an overall collection of work? Malcolm Kelsall contends that his subversive tendencies ultimately turned in upon themselves, and that even with *Don Juan* his radical posturing did not threaten to overturn or change the existing structures of social order, because it remained the perspective of a patrician aristocrat.[34] *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 seem to bear out such a thesis, when we consider Harold's mode of viewing. We read time and again in *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 of Harold's gaze being arrested as he stands at a 'little distance' from those he is observing. As Harold approaches borders between countries, he always pauses and surveys the land that lies before him. However, at points in the poem Harold's distance from people – and more importantly, from those belonging to lower social orders – is emphasized.

For example, towards the end of the Spanish stanzas of canto 1, in a stylistic and thematic allusion to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Satan's preservation of distinction of rank, Byron writes: 'Still he beheld, nor mingled with the throng' (1:828). The scene involves Harold musing on the spectacle of flamenco dancers – possibly gypsies – around a fire at night. Later, in canto 2, Harold observes the 'native revels' of the Palikars, Albanian mountain clansmen who are romanticized as 'uncouth' warriors and ballad singers, also around a campfire (2:636–9). Byron expressly draws attention to Harold's patrician perspective:

> Childe Harold at a little distance stood
> And view'd, but not displeas'd, the revelrie,
> Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude:
> In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
> Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee,
>
> (2:640–4)

I will discuss this scene more fully later in this chapter, within my analyses of the Albanian stanzas, but for now I want to establish the importance of Harold's aloofness and position. Distance on the part of the viewer, with a standing back from the landscape and its inhabitants, was an essential convention of the picturesque as an aesthetic, and of picturesque travel writing. Furthermore, the picturesque as a means of viewing always placed the observer in a position of power associated with proprietorship and control, which could not fail to pose difficulties for anyone wishing to establish a radical perspective.[35]

In many ways *Childe Harold* is a poem in the manner of eighteenth-century topographical poetry, and Byron uses an extensive range of the rhetorical strategies and stylistic mannerisms of that form in his description of border and frontier geographies. The stanzas on Harold's arrival in each new location – Portugal, Spain, Albania and Greece – draw heavily on the rhetorical flourishes and rhapsodic tropes of the topographical genre. Personifications of natural features and, indeed, of gendered Nature are located within extravagant descriptive passages dealing with the actual traversal of borderlands. Religious and classical allusions are employed and compounded to inscribe morality into the natural features of landscape, as Harold crosses one border after another. Byron groups the borderland locations of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 in pairs – Portugal and Spain (which are described as 'sister' countries, separated geographically from a predatory France), and Albania and Greece (each seeking to

assert its autonomy from Ottoman rule). However, he still seeks to define autonomy in distinctive features that separate as well as join each of those nations.

Two stanzas on actual borders allow us quickly to note the extent to which Byron uses topographical poetical conventions in such a manner, then immediately subverts them. Harold's arrival at his first destination, Portugal, is narrated as follows:

> Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
> What heaven hath done for this delicious land!
> What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!
> What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!
>
> (1:207–10)

The key terms that form the framework around which the rest of that stanza is built are 'goodly sight' and 'goodly prospect'. They draw on the eighteenth-century patrician concept of the prospect view in a manner that Byron's readers would instantly recognize. The descriptions suggest a roseate, virgin land that is unspoilt and sensually wholesome, which is certainly not what the poem then goes on to represent. Descriptions such as these proliferate in travel accounts, in which Grand Tourists often idealized a fertile, Arcadian-style landscape and then lamented the unworthiness of a local population, on whom the natural benevolence is wasted.[36] Byron casts his hyperbole – which is, in itself, mimetic of overabundance – in an ironic manner, and the fresh beauty is soon exposed as strident and coarse. The following stanza begins with a continuation of the kind of rhetorical flourish on topography that might have been expected by readers: 'What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold! / Her image floating on that noble tide, / Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold' (1:216–18). Yet even in these lines Byron is reminding his readers that first impressions upon encounter with a border are shaped by problematic 'images' that precede experience. The 'images' that float on the tide are naturally and inherently unstable. The sublime presence of the sea (a very politicized metaphor in this poem) thus acts as the machinery of power, revealing and obscuring images to manipulate public perceptions. Byron furthermore suggests that poets, seeking commercial success, are complicit in the process. Like Cervantes, who warns his readers at the beginning of *Don Quixote* of the dangers of buying too many books on Romance and of believing too much in their fantasies, Byron faces his readers with the prospect of illusion and disillusion.

The last three lines of the stanza present a contrasting image, once the border has been crossed, of 'A nation swoln with ignorance and pride, / Who lick yet loath the hand that waves the sword / To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord' (1:222–4). In the next stanza, any remaining preconceptions of beauty are dispelled:

> For hut and palace show like filthily:
> The dingy denizens are rear'd in dirt;
> Ne personage of high or mean degree
> Doth care for cleanness of surtout or shirt,
> Though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwash'd, unhurt.
>
> (1:229–33)

It is the coarseness and ugliness of the people of Portugal who deface the land, according to Byron in these stanzas.[37] He represents them as contrasting absolutely with the fictitious, courtly inhabitants of the chivalric literature that Portugal had become associated with amongst fashionable readers in Britain. The comparison of hut and palace allude in principle to Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, and more specifically to book 2, in which the agency of poetry as art triumphs through its alliance with industry and truth. The stanzas Byron refers to are 7–9, in which Thomson contrasts the humility of the cottages and sheds of the poor with the palace of pride. Yet, Byron's diction takes the allusion in another direction. Indeed, the deliberately unattractive cast of his descriptions here draws on the blunt, realistic descriptive methodology used by another writer known particularly for his poetry of borderland communities, George Crabbe.

Byron paid tribute to Crabbe, who disclaimed pastoral idealism with poems set in landscapes of disaffection along the Suffolk coastal margins, in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), declaring him to be 'nature's sternest painter, yet the best'.[38] Crabbe's first major poem, *The Village* (1783), contains the lines in which he declared his intention to 'paint the cot, / As truth will paint it, and as bards will not' (1:53–4).[39] *The Village* quickly became a seminal anti-pastoral text, and remains an important poem of the late-Augustan period. Importantly for my argument, Crabbe's satirical use of the heroic couplet and his descriptive realism were no more directed at classical literature than Byron's satire on contemporary chivalry was at the works of writers such as Ariosto, Boiardo or Spenser (*The Village* also contains lines that praise Virgil's example of pastoral). Rather, Crabbe's poem sought to vilify

eighteenth-century imitation pastoral poetry – 'fancy', as he calls it – of the kind designed to make middle class and wealthy readers feel happy about a countryside that was in social disarray due to enclosure and rural poverty.

Published just 2 years before *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2, Crabbe's epistolary poem *The Borough* received critical praise for its sharply drawn satires on moral decadence amongst the wealthy and professional classes, for its descriptive passages and narratives of a coastal town.[40] However, the letter entitled 'The Poor and their Dwellings', which contains 'Peter Grimes', was virtually universally deplored by critics for the disgust caused amongst readers. Crabbe countered the trope of the neoclassical sylvan scene, and its suggestion of rural benevolence and a contented, moral peasantry with his landscapes of the margins of disaffection.[41] He was well known to a significant number of Byron's and Scott's readers (Scott himself regularly alluded to his works in his novels, as did Jane Austen), so for many Byron's sketch of the 'dirty denizens' immediately behind the introductory image of the coastline border of Portugal would have been an instantly recognizable allusion. The diction that Byron uses, with its images of physical and moral squalor turned to satirical effect, is neither Spenserian nor similar to that of Thomson, but is unmistakably reminiscent of Crabbe. Byron's lines thus constitute a brief, but important, pastiche showing solidarity with another prominent writer who used marginal communities to convey his critique of literary illusion.

Childe Harold canto 1: Portugal and Spain as borderlands

Due to constraints brought about by the French wars, Grand Tourists during the early years of the nineteenth century would commence their journey in Northern or South-western Europe, moving ever eastwards to conclude it with an 'oriental' encounter in Constantinople. That template was one that Byron and his companion John Cam Hobhouse more or less followed.[42] Yet the departures they took from the normal routes, and which inform much of *Childe Harold* and the Eastern Tales, are what make their journey so interesting and important. Byron's 'digressions', as Jane Stabler so aptly calls them, combine his wanderlust as a traveller with his poetic transgression of social and political authority. Stabler's analyses chart the manner in which literary digression in the form of generic and narrative 'ramblings' goes hand in hand with literal touristic deviation in *Childe Harold* and the Eastern Tales.[43] Byron's 'ramblings' are, indeed, the wanderings to which the *Antijacobin* took such exception, and are also what defined him for William Roberts as

a 'modern' rather than a conventional tourist. Leaving the familiarity of Europe behind, Byron ventured – and took his readers' imaginations – into the poorly mapped and virtually unknown (to Western Europeans) interior of Albania.[44] He lost no opportunity to use the eccentricity of his excursion to publicize his actions and writings as evidence of the extent to which he desired to defy conformity and to court danger.

Notably, the idiosyncratic version of the Grand Tour that Byron undertook along with Hobhouse and a small group of servants and other companions was begun during the Peninsular campaign of 1809. While they were planning the voyage, and at the point of their departure from England, Lt. Gen. Sir Arthur Wellesley (soon to become the Duke of Wellington) was rallying the British, Portuguese and Spanish troops once again following the uneasy peace that had succeeded the controversial Convention of Cintra (30 August 1808). Byron, Hobhouse and their party sailed for Lisbon on 2 July, which was just 3 weeks prior to the first major conflict of the new campaign, the Battle of Talavera (July 1809) in Spain. The loss of life at Talavera, where the French were defeated by Wellesley's forces, was enormous. Byron wrote from Gibraltar to John Hanson on 7 August, stating that 'the barbarities on both sides are shocking', and further commenting that he had seen some French prisoners along the road from Badajoz to Seville, including 'a spy who was condemned to be shot'.[45] He was appalled by the glamorous image and following that militarism had acquired back in Britain, and in a letter to his mother dated 11 August 1809 expressed his dismay that the scale of loss was almost certainly being obscured by the pageantry of victory: 'In England they will call it a victory, a pretty victory! Two hundred officers and 5000 men killed all English, and the French in as great force as ever.'[46] Within *Childe Harold* canto 1, Byron confronts the moral validity of any claim to victory in the aftermath of such a loss of life: in stanza 41 he satirizes the propaganda machine that made myths out of militarism and chivalric imagery. The stanza is a parody of the standard-waving exhortation to battle epitomized by Scott's 'War-Song for the Royal Edinburgh Light Dragoons', to which poem from the Imitation section of the *Minstrelsy* Byron quite possibly refers. It is further possible to read into the last two lines an allusion to the death of chivalry in the ballad 'The Twa Corbies':

> Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice;
> Three tongues prefer strange orisins on high;
> Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies;
> The shouts are France, Spain, Albion, Victory!

> The foe, the victim, and the fond ally
> That fights for all, but ever fights in vain,
> Are met – as if at home they could not die –
> To feed the crow on Talavera's plain,
> And fertilize the field that each pretends to gain.
>
> (1:441–9)

Childe Harold cantos 1 and 2 consist of a montage of scenes, images, narrative and descriptive passages. The effect is one of fragmentation that can, at times, become disorientating. Byron's frequent generic digressions and sweeping changes of poetic mood exacerbate this process, though they achieve the end of disallowing the reader from accepting literature as an easy, passive activity. I mentioned earlier the ideological agenda of this fragmentation, as a means of undermining propaganda of what constituted civilized and barbarous behaviour. I now want to propose a structural experiment, which exposes more clearly the framework of the Peninsular War around which Byron was working. If we take away the connecting narrative and descriptive topographical material from *Childe Harold* canto 1, we are left with an account of seamless savagery in the Peninsular War. The campaign becomes exponentially barbarous and futile, as Byron uses allegorical episodes, refers to specific battles and, more generally, addresses the concept of the Iberian Peninsula as a fiercely contested Debateable land.

Coming just four stanzas from the end of the canto, stanza 90 is formally climactic, Byron uses repetition at the beginning of each of the first three lines of the stanza, in a manner similar to the example I have just quoted. However, this time he compounds a negative rhetoric. He names battles, and uses hyperbolic irony, concluding that the British could not even claim the positive outcome of winning freedom for the Spanish: 'Not all the blood at Talavera shed, / Not all the marvels of Barossa's fight, / Not Albuera lavish of the dead, / Have won for Spain her well asserted right' (1:918–21). Byron did not write those lines whilst he was in the Levant, but in England, either late in 1811 or early in 1812. The battles named were the key confrontations in the campaign to that date, and though each had ostensibly been a victory for the allies, the loss of life had been colossal. To put Byron's reaction into perspective, we should consider the casualty statistics for these battles in addition to those for Talavera. The Battle of Barossa, fought on 5 March 1811, resulted in 1238 of the 5000 British troops who took part being killed, along with 2062 French soldiers. At Albuera, where the battle was

fought just 2 months later on 16 May 1811, the bloodiest conflict of the campaign so far left over 6000 allied and 7000 French troops dead. The concluding stanzas to *Childe Harold* canto 2, in which Harold is forced to 'plunge again into the crowd / And follow all that Peace disdains to seek' (2:909–10), were composed after he had had time for reflection, but his opinion of the circus of the Peninsular war and its mediation to the British public had not changed at all from that expressed in the letters he had written just days after leaving Iberia two and a half years earlier. The retrospective view of Portugal and Spain, mentioned at the beginning of the preface, in which he states that his observations formed the basis of what he wrote is entirely borne out.

Byron takes his critique of the Peninsular campaign in *Childe Harold* back beyond the hostilities of 1809 to the events of the previous year. Canto 1 contains three stanzas that explicitly ridicule and condemn the Convention of Cintra (288–314). In a sharp satire on the glamorization of chivalry as means of rallying public support for the British military elite, Byron writes a brief but powerful gothic pastiche with a dark, *faux*-supernatural cast. A malevolent dwarf, described as 'a fiend, / A little fiend that scoffs incessantly', is invoked as a mocking personification of the convention, sitting 'in parchment robe array'd' (1:290–2). The signed treaty, 'Where blazon'd glare names known to chivalry, / And sundry signatures' (294–5) and which takes the form of a medieval scroll, hangs by his side. The dwarf points at the treaty, and 'laughs with all his soul' (296). The grotesquerie of the skit gives way to a more conventional invective that builds to a peak in line 307 where, assuming the authority to speak for all truly patriotic Britains, Byron declares 'Britannia sickens, Cintra! At thy name'. Four more stanzas condemning Cintra were cut from the poem before publication, thus removing pejorative references to Wellesley (who had initially opposed the agreement, but had eventually been persuaded to sign), Sir Harry Burrard and Sir Hew Dalrymple.[47] However, the events surrounding Cintra had been extensively reported in the press in Britain and were so well known to the public that the targets of his satire remained obvious. One could argue that the poem is all the stronger for its simpler, less distracting but immensely powerful literary imagery.

Many interpretations of the stanzas on Cintra have been given. However, as far as I am aware none has discussed the allusion to Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, where the dwarf Gilpin Horner, constantly laughing and shrieking but otherwise inarticulate, almost wreaks havoc with the gothic book of spells that he manages to procure. My reading of the *Lay* in Chapter 1 contended that the book Scott places at the

centre of his poem is representative of the 'glamour of grammar' and that the poem addresses the dangerous 'magic' that can be unleashed by the improper, and more particularly the ill-intentioned, use of text. Byron pursues a similar theme of literary lies and grand illusion through the entirety of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. The political 'spin' that had been put on the Convention of Cintra in order to save face is the immediate target of the stanzas I have just been addressing. Thus, the literary relevance of Scott's Gilpin Horner to Byron's stanzas on Cintra – and to the remainder of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 – is too striking to be ignored. Byron can be read as consciously responding to Scott in the gothic vignette of the dwarf of Cintra, and in the critique of chivalric pageantry within literature that follows it.

Scott's and Byron's respective portrayals of Gilpin Horner and the dwarf of Cintra employ conventions of gothic allegory that are readily identifiable with contemporary interest in medievalist literature, and in Spenserian Romance. Byron goes farther than Scott in incorporating it within the imitative form of Spenserian stanzas. On this matter Greg Kucich's *Keats, Shelley, and Romantic Spenserianism* is helpful in analysing the significance of Spenserian form for the Romantic poets, and in placing Byron within that context. Kucich discusses the duality of Byron's use of Spenserian form in *Childe Harold*, looking at the stylistic, structural and thematic levels at which he 'confronts Spenser' in order to work out his 'radical vision of experience'.[48] He cites a wide range of examples to demonstrate how Byron's 'subversive deployment of [Spenserian] narrative and linguistic patterns' still upheld Spenser's principle of addressing division, whilst enabling him radically to reform Spenserian form into a mode suited to the mediation of modern truth in a world of warfare.[49] The dwarf sketch is not mentioned by Kucich, but the three stanzas that comprise it constitute a particularly powerful use of gothic allegory that entirely undermines the use of medievalism by other contemporary poets and writers to glamorize the Peninsular campaign. Indeed, these stanzas constitute a prime example of the way in which Byron's literary radicalism drew on eighteenth-century burlesque traditions (for the latter had routinely employed Spenserian form for satirical purposes) and then took them across new contextual boundaries.

The ultimate difference between Byron's treatment of the 'little fiend' of Cintra and Scott's handling of Gilpin Horner is that Scott breaks the Lady of Branksome's obsession with the power of the book, the dwarf disappears, harmony is restored between England and Scotland on the borders and the poem is resolved. Byron cannot simply erase the Convention of Cintra. He offers his readers no solace as Harold

moves onwards, traversing the border to Spain where the glamour of chivalric literature and the barbarity of militarism continue to be the dominant themes, and where the celebration of each is increasingly undermined.

I discussed earlier in this chapter Byron's use of topographical descriptive convention in his portrayal of borders in *Childe Harold*. He returns briefly to those conventions in his narrative on the border country between Portugal and Spain. This border, like that ahead of him as he made his sea-bound approach to Portugal, is viewed in terms of images pre-formed from a distanced perspective, and is mediated with a hyperbolic surge of enthusiasm. Byron describes a picturesque vista that winds and undulates from a luxuriant foreground towards a distant horizon. Except for the wandering pilgrim, it is a scene devoid of people. The gazing traveller responds with an overwhelming sense of joy: 'O'er vales that teem with fruits, romantic hills, / (Oh, that such hills upheld a freeborn race!) / Whereon to gaze the eye with joyaunce fills, / Childe Harold wends through many a pleasant place' (342–5). The winding, luxuriant valleys and romantic hills open to reveal 'Immense horizon-bounded plains' (353) that stretch ahead from the 'silver streamlet' against which 'rival kingdoms press' (369–71). Byron's adjective-laden stanzas appear to be a celebration of a discovered Eden-like landscape, or of a pastoral Arcadia – which itself would indicate the fulfilment of the primary Grand Tour objective of experiencing, and participating in classical literary landscape. Indeed, the grand Georgic illusion is completed as Byron muses that somewhere in the distance, beyond the actual border, Spain's 'shepherds tend / Flocks whose rich fleece right well the trader knows' (355–6).

All in Spain was clearly not idyllic, though. The interjected aside in brackets, quoted above, raises from the outset the matter of Byron's favourite cause – human freedom. Indeed, the question of freedom taps away at the mind of poet and reader alike in these stanzas, rendering the mirage-like scenery of the borders, with their seductive timelessness, discomfortingly unstable. The lines on the Spanish shepherds, despite their pastoral opening, metamorphose into a cryptic reference to the contemporary commercial motives both of Spain's would-be conquerors and of her apparent allies.[50] Byron pursues the theme of freedom by following his elegant rhetorical descriptions of landscape with a sobering reminder of the current state of warfare in the Peninsula, and with a warning that differentiates the prospects of citizens and subjects: 'For Spain is compass'd by unyielding foes, / And all must shield their all, or share Subjection's woes' (358–9).

We can make a startling and valuable comparison at this point between Scott's and Byron's perspectives on borderlands. Byron views Spain *from* its borderlands, and sees it as a vulnerable land where those tenuous borders harbour 'unyielding foes'; Scott's vision is of a confident, protective and safe Scottish Borders. His Lowland–Highland margins are cleared of the potential 'foes' that operate within them. In the lines quoted above, Byron chooses the rhetorical ploy of personification, conventional within classical literature and a device of Spenserian allegory, to represent 'Subjection'. He emphasizes that long after the end of Moorish rule, the Spanish borders remain disturbingly enticing to the designs of Imperial power – and such power contradicts all his notions of individual freedom, whether wielded by the British or the French. Byron bemoans the past, present and likely future enslavement of the Spanish, as his allegory of the romano-classic, pastoral shepherd represents a rural ideal and a nation each exploited for gain. Indeed, throughout *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 he envisages the relationship between Imperial power and its colonies, like that between the British Tory government and its subjects within the Union, as an exploitative one of despot and subject. The relationships between internationally trading nations, with each seeking to hold the balance of power, are seen as analogous, in many ways, to a baronial power-struggle. These perspectives are represented in his imagery of oriental despotism, and of feudalism with its implications of vassalage: both function as metaphors for Imperialism, and its subjugation of individual freedom and identity.

Given the precedent set by the Portuguese stanzas, the introduction of Spain as another idyllic landscape almost portends subversion. Byron does not disappoint, for the stanzas that follow promptly contend that western ideals of classical or Christian purity are quite literally shot through with confusion and disorder. He does not achieve such a radical position merely by juxtaposing a wasted, modern nation with its idealized 'older' form – the representation of classical landscapes lost on an undeserving contemporary population was a commonplace feature of Grand Tour travel writing and by no means a revolutionary device. Rather, it is his idiosyncratic development of the Spenserian stanza, incorporating through imitative irony a critique of the wider use of Spenserianism within the chivalric revival, which helps give *Childe Harold* its credible radical edge. If we turn again to Greg Kucich's study, we see how Byron fits into a nexus of writers fascinated by Spenser. Kucich identifies James Thomson and James Beattie as the seminal precursors of Romantic Spenserian writing: Thomson on account of his emphasis in *The Castle of Indolence* on poetic moral responsibility to

acknowledge the 'division between fancy and realism',[51] and Beattie for his exemplification in *The Minstrel* of the poet's duty to distinguish clearly between 'imaginative beauty and intellectual truth'.[52] Emphasizing notions of Spenserian 'double vision', Kucich quotes Leigh Hunt's argument that Spenser created a 'fine, lazy, luxurious, far-off, majestic dream' through his use of gothic language and motif, whilst 'the astonishing variety of his pictures, and the rapidity with which he passes from one kind to another [resulted in] an extraordinary mixture of light and darkness. . . . No man, by seeing one thing exquisitely, saw further into its opposite than he did. . . . [He is] at once sacred and seductive.'[53] Hunt's reading of Spenser sounds uncannily like a retrospective written in the light of Byron's imitative Spenserian programme in *Childe Harold*. Byron's acknowledgement in his Preface of the influence of Thompson and Beattie on *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 thus serves both as a tribute to these writers' development of Spenserianism, and points towards his own moral crusade to expose literary impropriety and to promote a poetry that can accommodate both beauty and realism. Borders are entirely fundamental to his method, as the only sites from which he is able justifiably to dream or imagine as a poet, and then see with utter clarity the anomalies that exist – to quote Beattie's 'hoary sage', to yearn to restore 'tranquil days. . . . / When fancy roam'd through Nature's works at will', but then to face 'dreadful truth' and horrors of 'Human folly' (2:29–30).[54] The topographical idealism of the borders between Spain and Portugal in *Childe Harold* canto 1 describes a fanciful perspective against which, once the narrative descends into the nation itself, a realism of modern warfare and imperial ambition can be exposed. In the discussion that follows, I argue that these contrapuntal elements emerge from within *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 to transform rhapsodic description into a radical attack, not on Spenser or his contemporaries but on contemporary, reactionary imitations of Spenser, and of 'heritage' forms of literary military medievalism more generally. Interestingly, Byron's liking for Scott's poetry – whilst not for his politics – remains evident. I argue that by this point he regarded Scott as a man of literary integrity who avoided the use of fancy, and as one, like himself, with a genuine interest in human history for its own sake and for its relationship to contemporary matters.

Immediately after the three topographical introductory stanzas on Spain, Byron writes of the 'mingling bounds' (378) that are crossed into a literary land steeped in tales of 'Moor and Knight' (383). The archaism of his reference to the 'noted ancient roundelays' that tell of 'Paynim turban and the Christian crest / Mix'd on the bleeding stream' (381–6)

points to the vogue for ballads and romance literature, and to the critique of neo-gothic medievalism that is to follow. The use of the words 'mingling' and 'mix'd', along with the engagement with tales of Moorish and Christian conflict, has particular ideological significance at this point in the poem. Seven centuries of cultural exchange, resulting from Moorish occupation, had resulted in Spain being seen in Northern Europe as a volatile mixture of southern European passion and North African exoticism. Byron, who was fascinated by the orientalized Moorish strains of Spanish culture, capitalizes on the potent poetic possibilities of this hybridity in order to question received conventions of 'otherly' Islamic barbarism and European Christian 'civility'. He does so through a sustained satire directed at the fashionable literary consecration of European chivalric manners as heroic and honourable, dismissing the proliferation of recently published tales of Moorish–Spanish conflict.

The image of Gothic heroes driving Moorish villains from Europe's soil was immensely popular in Britain during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Part of a general movement that sought to consecrate a British Germano-gothic heritage, the objective amongst anti-jacobin and pro-war writers was to define Britain as morally righteous against a villainous, dark and overly passionate France. The most popular story used to this purpose was that of Don Roderick, and the fall of Spain from Gothic into Moorish rule. The story is alluded to in *Childe Harold* immediately after Byron's rhetorical exclamation of Spain's fame as a 'renown'd, romantic land!' (387) and is backed up by a brief explanatory note.[55] Scott's Spenserian narrative poem *The Vision of Don Roderick* (1811) featured, in typical Scott style, the heroic stand of the flawed but brave Roderick, the last Gothic king of Spain. *The Vision of Don Roderick* sees Spain brought to the depths of despair by Roderick's culpable involvement in the effeminate world of magic and catholic superstition, not to mention his rape of the nobleman's daughter Cava (described by Byron as 'the Helen of Spain'). Each of these actions – dabbling in magic, privileging superstition over reason, and indulging in excessive, uncontrolled sexual activity – could be associated with a dangerous East, thus conflating the Moors and Spanish catholicism. In Scott's poem Spain is conquered by the Moors, subsequently occupied by Napoleon, and finally restored to vigour and freedom by the intervention of the British.

Landor's *Count Julian* (1812) is also based on the Roderick story (he uses the Spanish 'Roderigo'). Julian, father of the violated heroine, avenges her honour on Roderigo and in doing so aids the invasion of the Moors. Another adaptation is Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the*

Goths, which was not published until 1814 (and thus well after the initial appearance of *Childe Harold*). All of these poems embed themes of gothic heroism and tragedy, set against Islamic treachery, invasion and barbarity. Similarly, all of them glorify and glamorize British involvement in the Peninsular war. A host of lesser known poets wrote and published tales also based on Iberia's past or on more recent battles, and as Jerome McGann suggests, it is most probable that Byron was referring to these in his attack on the 'gaping throng' and their 'worthless lays' (466–7) at the end of stanza 43, which begins by recalling the realistic horror of the 'field of grief' (459) of Albuera.[56] The salient feature of all of the pro-war poems on gothic Spain is that they work towards the 'rescue' of Spanish national characteristics, and thus bring about the restoration of a dangerously borderline nation to European ideals. Indeed, in every case the tale ends by separating the Moors and the Spaniards. Byron constantly reminds his readers that this is an unacceptably simplistic approach – one that is 'worthless', in fact. In *Childe Harold* Moorish Spain and Christian, European Spain are far from separate, looking out from the same romanticized and exoticized eyes – deliberately ambiguous, and at once barbarous and civilized depending on how one chooses to read them.

The Spanish stanzas of canto 1 are, indeed, the point at which Islam is first explicitly brought into *Childe Harold*. Byron spreads a host of references to its pervasive presence across a spectrum of topography, physiognomy and national character. For example, if we look at the topographical element of his writing of Spain we see that the immense plain of Andalusia that stretches before the eye on arrival is referred to again eighteen stanzas later; this time, rather than being bounded by a nondescript horizon, its farthest reaches are described as 'crown'd / With crags, whereon those Moorish turrets rest' (513–14). The threatening 'other' – albeit the culture of an historical invader – is brought forward and into view. The geographical and historical distance from which this view is represented is crucial, for Byron posits it as yet another panoramic gaze over Spain that employs the conventions of the picturesque. The exotic image of the turrets in the distance excites, but does not really threaten. However, the stanzas that follow confront the reader with a very different panorama. Looking back towards Portugal, and thus westwards and away from the exoticism of the East, Byron abandons all the conventions and manners of foreground, middle-distance and horizon, along with notions of contrasts between light and dark, and delivers a shocking scene of indistinct destruction: 'At every turn Morena's dusky height / Sustains aloft the battery's iron load; / And, far as mortal eye can compass sight, / The mountain-howitzer, the broken road / . . . The

magazine . . . the ball-pil'd pyramid, the ever-blazing match, / Portend the deeds to come' (531–40). In those lines, we see the apocalyptic sublimity of the radical stance that Byron takes in *Childe Harold*, obscuring the previous token gestures of picturesque protocol. To counter any accusations of exaggeration, the realism of the account is vouched for in a note that Byron appends to the stanzas, re-enforcing his status as an eyewitness to the scene.[57] My reading of his use of 'defile' in his note, to denote the troops passage – described as a 'road' in the poem – is that he deliberately invokes the word's homonymic capacity.

Byron situates himself on the Andalusian plain and looks either way – east and west – at images of barbarism and crusade. He then sweeps away the reassuring continuity of a landscape that yields up a literary lineage traceable from classical times, through the age of chivalric romance, and the prospect view of the eighteenth century to the safely distanced delights of curiosity and travel afforded by the picturesque. In doing so he gestures to the reader that modern barbarism is as much a feature of Europe as of the East. By suggesting a war landscape in which no sides are mentioned, he implies that all involved are equally complicit. His refusal morally to elevate the British accords with the letters that I quoted earlier, where the figures are given for casualties on either side, and with the mention of the various battles in *Childe Harold*. To remark once more on his descriptions of Spanish physiognomy, Byron also emphasizes that he is looking back, writing from a vantage point the other side of the border described at the beginning of the poem as that demarcating 'Paynim shores . . . Earth's central line' (99). In other words, from the Islamic East. He compares 'Spain's dark-glancing daughters' (609) with the 'Houries' (607), the 'black-eyed maids of Heaven' (611) of the Islamic 'Prophet's paradise' (610). The physical similarities between his Eastern and Spanish women are striking, making all the more divisive the comparison that he offers with the 'paler dames' (601) of Northern Europe, whom he describes as 'languid, wan, and weak' (602).

The few lines that I have just been speaking of, in which Byron describes dark, female Spanish beauty, mark one of only two points where Byron shows any sign of sexual attraction towards the women of Spain. When his narrative is concerned with European influence, which is most of the time, he speaks only in terms of aversion and mounting disgust. The Spanish women who look towards Europe in *Childe Harold* canto 1 are partly based on stories originating from the Peninsular war – as in the case of Agustina de Aragón, known as the Maid of Saragoza – and are partly elaborate allusions to the European women who were drawn

to tales of chivalric Romance and who responded with excitement to the spectacle of uniform and the pageantry of warfare. In stanzas 37 and 38 Byron invokes a ferocious goddess with a voice 'that speaks in thunder' (410) as 'Each volley tells that thousands cease to breathe' (420). Harold hurries on, 'full swiftly' (477) making his 'lonely way' through a battle-scarred landscape in which 'Desolation plants her famish'd brood' (483) and 'young-eyed Lewdness walks her midnight rounds' (492). A few stanzas follow in which Harold pauses, rhetorically to ask what has happened to the ideal of the rustic with his love, and balladeer with his lays of romance and devotion. The next encounter is with another female-warrior figure, this time real rather than allegorical, but still endowed by Byron with elements of mythology. The Maid of Saragoza, the 'Spanish maid' of stanzas 54–6, has hung 'on the willow her unstrung guitar', as 'all unsex'd' she sings 'the loud song' and 'Stalks with Minerva's step where Mars might quake to tread' (559–66). This defeminized maid is explicitly described as 'arous'd' by war. Byron's note accompanying these stanzas tells of his time in Seville, during which he saw the Maid walking daily in the Prado decorated with military medals and colours 'by the command of the Junta'.[58] There is an ironic tone to his remarks that suggest a distaste for a woman's enactment of the elements of male ritual (i.e. that of military parade, in a public square). For instance, he refers rather dryly to her 'exploits', a word more readily associated with male action in tales of striking incident and knight errantry than with behaviour considered appropriate to a woman.[59] Dieglo Saglia accounts for several British writers figurations of Agustina de Aragón, and discusses Byron's treatment of the Maid of Saragoza in the context of the poet's experiences with women in Spain.[60] As Saglia points out, Agustina became immortalized by Byron, but accounts of her existed in British literature well before the publication of cantos 1 and 2 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.[61] For example, Charles Richard Vaughan published his 38-page *Narrative of the Seige of Saragoza, and Travellers Guide* in London in 1809. Reviews of Vaughan's pamphlet in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* almost immediately after its publication ensured a level of public awareness that extended beyond the informed coterie of British representatives in Spain and the Holland House set.[62]

We should bear in mind that 1809 constituted a high point of interest in Spain and Portugal in the reviews, not least because the eruption of public outrage following Brougham's essay on Don Pedro Cevallos the previous October led to the establishment of the Tory *Quarterly Review* under the auspices of Scott, William Gifford, John Wilson Croker, George Canning and other Tory establishment figures. The *Quarterly*

enlisted Robert Southey as literary critic, with the express sanction of Scott.[63] I mentioned in Chapter 1 Southey's remarks about Scott's probable involvement in the inaugural article in the *Quarterly*. Southey's own interest in Spanish and Portuguese literature was already known and, as a result of his involvement with the *Quarterly*, reviews of publications about Spain and articles on Iberian literary traditions in each of the two leading British journals continued to generate interest, but from this point onwards within a more open context of journalistic dialogue.

Thus, a carnivalesque kind of gender transgression is ascribed to Spain, in which women behave like men, whereas, as we will see, in the Albania of canto 2 men are shown to behave like women. In the Eastern Tales, as I argue in my next chapter, a certain type of attractive, assertive female figure emerges in Byron's work. However, in *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 Byron's preference is for conventional ideals of womanhood that locate females within a world of domesticity and sexual submissiveness. The Maid of Saragoza subverts those ideals and the gendered codes of chivalric behaviour, first leaving the domestic sphere of widowhood to fight in battle and then spending her days parading in public. Her 'decorations' and ritualistic displays contradict the conventions of female adornment, and are inconsistent with the romance expectations we saw, for example, embodied in the women at the end of Scott's 'Sir Patrick Spens'. Scott's Aberdeenshire widows maintain their silent and motionless vigil for their drowned menfolk, as the emphasis falls poetically on the feminine nature of their adornments (fans and gold hair combs). Furthermore, the Maid of Saragoza's voice is the antithesis of the soft tones that Scott confers on Ellen Douglas in *The Lady of the Lake*.

Byron's lines on the Spanish Maid undermine the British ideal of demure womanhood, along with literary configurations of Spain as a feminine-gendered nation in need of rescue from a marauding France. In manuscript versions of *Childe Harold*, the Maid is referred to as 'this new Joan of Arc', though syntactical ambiguity makes it unclear whether the words are Byron's, or whether he is quoting the travel writer Sir John Carr, whom he and Hobhouse met in Seville.[64] The published poem leaves the reader to make the association between the Maid of Saragoza and the Maid of Orleans. The allusion to a catholic woman from the fifteenth century, who renounced sexuality and dressed as a man before going into battle – against an English army – is particularly relevant in a poem that seeks to expose the chivalric revival within British literature as a moral aberration and as political propagandism.

These instances occur in close succession in *Childe Harold*. In each case the soft female voice has been lost to a masculine battle cry. Byron's

subversion of the ideal of the gentle female in Spain continues, the theme gaining momentum with each incident as the canto progresses. The next major episode is that of the bullfight in stanzas 71–80. One of the most colourful spectacles associated with Spain, Byron plays on the dualism of fascination that does not distinguish bravado from barbarism. Throughout the scene, he emphasizes the sexually charged nature of the predominantly female spectators' gazes and of the matadors' performances. The extent to which he was engaging with the fascination that uniform, the militia and the Army held for women in Britain during this period needs little comment. The allegory of 'the light-limb'd Matadore', parading before the contest 'in costly sheen and gaudy cloak array'd' (738–9), is transparent as a representation of the well-bred officer with his purchased commission and colourful 'Regimentals', strutting before adoring females prior to going into battle. It seems almost absurd to think of Byron concurring with Jane Austen over a matter of behavioural decorum, but there is clearly some degree of common ground in his disapprobation of women who are drawn to uniform and military display. One is reminded not only of Catherine and Lydia Bennet, the two younger sisters in *Pride and Prejudice*, but especially of their mother, garrulous Mrs Bennet, who in middle age still finds Red Coats irresistibly exciting.[65]

The parodic relationship between the bullfight episode of canto 1, and chivalric rites is, as McGann says in his commentary, clear and it links the preface – most notably the September 1811 'Addition' – with the narrative of the poem.[66] The allusion to the chiefly female purchasers and readers of medievalist verse romances that glorified the excitement of militarism is sharply satirical. Byron writes of an audience at the bullring that is largely female: 'dons, grandees, but chiefly dames abound' in the capacity audience of 'thousands on thousands' (721) that are 'pil'd' in at the 'crowded circus' (718). It is no knightly display, but an 'ungentle sport' (792). Once again, the female voice is unflatteringly raucous, and the caustically ironic visual image that is conjured up exposes dressed-up beauty and fashionable manners as a pretentious masquerade: 'Skill'd in the ogle of a roguish eye' (725), the shouts of the audience jar discordantly with the implied feminine gentility of 'ladies lovely' (735). After a narrative that compounds a host of clichés drawn from chivalric literature, the 'triumphant cries' of the spectators are brought to a peak of excitement, and contrasted with the silence of the bull, as it compliantly dies 'without a groan, without a struggle' (786–7). Throughout the scene, the incongruous interchange of high-fashion social occasion and pre-civilized brutality contributes to the carnivalesque atmosphere.

Jerome Christensen and James Chandler have remarked that apparent opposite concepts are frequently turned to apposition by Byron, particularly when working with satire.[67] That is, indeed the case with the *corrida* episode in *Childe Harold* canto 1, as clear-cut notions of heroism and bestiality collapse along with the bull. The effect, as barbarous behaviour and polite society meet, is that the spectacle becomes almost unbearably grotesque, cacophonous and violent. In the published version Byron extends his strategic irony in the concluding death scene of the bull, where the animal's 'dark bulk' (791), symbolic of conquered otherness, becomes a 'sweet sight for vulgar eyes' (789). McGann notes that the Murray manuscript, Byron's first fair copy of the poem, reads more crudely and transparently: 'The trophy corse is reared – disgusting prize.'[68] In either case, Byron's contempt and the object of his satire is clear as he reveals the cruelty behind the glamour. The bullring is metaphorical, the episode an ironic allegory, for a Spain that has been constructed by others as a land where 'good', brave knights defeat the 'evils' of brute barbarism, but where in actuality the horrors of human conflict, in Byron's version of the case, have been turned into entertainment.

Albania and Ali Pasha – the feudalization of oriental despotism

After leaving Spain, Byron and Hobhouse took their first major digression from normal tourist routes, heading away from the classical landscapes of Europe and the known Near East of Turkey into the relatively unknown Ottoman territory of Albania. This part of their journey is immensely important in terms of its influence upon *Childe Harold*. However, the letters and journals of both men suggest that Albania had not originally been part of their itinerary. Rather, these documents indicate that the plan had been to go briefly to North Africa – 'Barbary', as Byron refers to it in letters to his mother sent from Gibraltar in August 1809 – before heading on via Malta to Turkey.[69] Three of Byron's letters refer to the planned Barbary excursion, and its failure to take place.[70] In the first, dated 11 August 1809, Byron writes that he is 'going over to Africa tomorrow'. The second, dated 15 August, says that the wind prevents immediate travel but that the Spanish General Francisco Janier de Castaños has furnished Byron with 'letters to Tetuan in Barbary for the principal Moors'. The third letter, also dated 15 August, starkly declares 'I cannot go to Barbary, the Malta packet sails tomorrow and I with it.' I will discuss speculation over possible reasons for the change of itinerary later, for the historical context is

important, but I want now to draw attention to the importance of Byron's brief comment on the proximity of Moorish Africa towards the beginning of *Childe Harold* canto 2. Byron only includes a half-stanza on the passing of Africa, as the narrative takes Harold from Gibraltar towards Albania. But the four lines remind the reader that Spain is a true borderland, situated at the extreme edge of Europe. Once more the physical similarities of the Spaniards and the Moors are commented upon. The reciprocal, cultural gaze is languid and sexually charged, and the orientalized exoticism of the physical descriptions marks a re-emergence of desire:

> Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
> Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
> Lands of the dark-ey'd Maid and dusky Moor
> Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze.
>
> (2:190–3)

Desire, as we soon see, proves to be as powerfully evident in canto 2 as it is absent in canto 1.

The exotic scenes of *Childe Harold* canto 2 provide a valuable counterpoint to the Southern Europe of canto 1, with the contrasts turning once again on Byron's engagement with the ideology of literary form. As we have seen, the first canto is largely a critique of landscapes and people as they were imagined within the stylized world of neo-chivalric literature. Within that first canto, Byron satirizes contemporary writers' corruption of literary integrity as much as he expresses his disgust at the condition of popular public morality as a result of reading. As his narrative passes 'earth's central line', to recall the description of borders between East and West upon Harold's departure from Britain, a different scenario is constructed. Byron emphasizes from the outset in the Albanian stanzas of canto 2 that Albania was *not* a land written of either in chivalric tales or in the classical literature that British Tourists and others from the upper classes were educated in and familiar with, and that its landscape could not be charted in terms of the recognizable ancient sites or ruins identifiable with the western literary canon. Radically, he proceeds to suggest that the didacticism of the western literary canon and of conventional Grand Tour travel could be matched by the empirical experience of this 'unknown', disorienting landscape, and by contemplative encounter with a hitherto uninscribed and unfamiliar cultural terrain:

> Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
> For we have many a mountain-path to tread,
> And many a varied shore to sail along,
> By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction, led –
> Climes, fair withal as ever mortal head
> Imagin'd in its little schemes of thought;
> Or e'er in new Utopias were ared,
> To teach man what he might be, or he ought;
> If that corrupted thing could ever such be taught.
>
> (316–24)

The absence of existing popular literary inscription, and hence of the moralizing 'authority' of classical and romance literature, is emphasized again a few lines later as Byron writes, seductively, of Harold's passing 'From the dark barriers of that rugged clime / . . . o'er many a mount sublime, / Through lands scarce notic'd in historic tales' (406–9). The 'darkness' of the border serves as a compound metaphor for 'barbarism', a generally 'unenlightened' East, and for the lack of literary account – all of which are interlinked. Yet, the Near East had a history as a general literary concept, having gained in popularity in Britain throughout the eighteenth century. The publication between 1704 and 1712 of the *Arabian Nights*, its popularity thereafter, and of other oriental tales set in the North Africa and Middle East such as Johnson's *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759) and Beckford's *Vathek, an Arabian Tale* (1786), satires such as Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (Ozell's English translation 1722) and a flourishing trade in travel writing of the East around the turn of the nineteenth century had fashioned a public appetite for tales and descriptions of an enchanting and barbarous East, and had created a stylized, imaginary oriental world. Byron displays a tangible degree of relish that Albania had not been the subject of much literary attention, and throughout *Childe Harold* canto 2 he persistently courts the readerly delight of encountering danger as it could be imagined from a safe distance. As Harold sets foot on the 'Paynim shores' referred to upon his departure from Britain, the poem emphasizes the extreme vulnerability of the romantic traveller: 'Now Harold felt himself at length alone, / And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu; / Now he adventur'd on a shore unknown, / Which all admire, but many dread to view' (379–82). The rhyme of 'alone' with 'unknown', and of 'view' with 'few' provides an example of the way that he uses form to draw attention to the poem's evocation of danger and of intrepidity.

Albania was widely imagined in Western Europe to be both exotic and dangerous. In reality, it *was* dangerous. Byron's introduction of the scenery upon Harold's approach anticipates a savage and masculine land, with the mist rising from the coastal plain to 'Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer' (375). The subsequent two lines extend the portrait of wildness, developing the association of predatory, violent natural and human environments: 'Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his beak, / Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear, / And gathering storms around convulse the closing year' (376–8). Playing upon the reputation of the Albanians as a race of ruthless hill-bandits, Byron alludes to his readers' only prior source of information about the region – the travel accounts written by a group of men, largely Philhellenic opponents of the Ottomans, who had experienced it only from its margins. One such writer, whom Byron refers to in his notes to canto 2, is William Eton. Eton particularly subscribed to the stereotypical view of Albania as a den of barbarous thieves, writing that just 12 leagues (approximately 26 miles) from Janina any foreigner risked kidnapping and sale into a flourishing slave trade. Janina, which Byron points out was in Epirus, was Ali Pasha's administrative capital. Referring to the population of Albania as 'Turks', for he made no distinction between the ruling Ottomans and their Balkans subjects, Eton used all the conventions of orientalism to describe a ruthless, barbaric and despotic province. By contrast, his partisan views on Russia and Greece contended that these were Christian nations and therefore intrinsically more 'western' and civilized. Eton was typical of the kind of writer whose account of the Near East was accepted within Britain as authoritative and credible. He had worked as translator to the French in Janina in the late 1790s and met the Albanian ruler Ali Pasha there on a regular basis in the course of his work. His *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (1798) recalled his various encounters with Ali Pasha, and gives details of the late-century military campaigns that the Pasha had waged in order to suppress opposition and enforce his own control of the region.[71]

Byron's interest in Eton goes beyond the latter's lurid orientalist account of Albanian barbarism, and engages with the issue of Russian Imperial ambition. Eton wrote that the Russians, because of their orthodox Christian similarities, might offer the best means of releasing Greece from oppression. Byron acknowledges that argument in his notes, writing from Athens on 23 January 1811, and expresses his disagreement that the Russians (not regarded at the level of Christianity, but indistinguishable from the French as Imperialists) might constitute any valid release from tyranny:

> Were [the Ottomans] driven from St. Sophia to-morrow, and the French or Russians enthroned in their stead, it would become a question, whether Europe would gain by the exchange. England would certainly be the loser.[72]

Childe Harold canto 2 addresses the sociopolitical issue of the relief of Ottoman 'oriental despotism' with a stanza that gives vent to Byron's anti-Imperialist views. In contrast to Eton, Byron attacks the niceties of debate over which western power might 'best' bring the Ottoman territories back into Europe. Instead, he suggests that the establishment by *any* Western European 'Christian' nation of Imperial interest in the crumbling Ottoman Empire would be no better, in terms of liberty, than the establishment of an extreme Islamic state:

> The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
> The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest;
> And the Serai's impenetrable tower
> Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
> Or Wahab's rebel brood who dared divest
> The prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,
> May wind their path of blood along the West;
> But ne'er will freedom seek this fated soil,
> But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil.
>
> (729–37)

We see in that stanza, with its sustained theme of subjection, the way in which Byron could employ the final, rhyming couplet of Spenserian form to powerful ideological effect. Furthermore, the Serai, which for Europeans evoked an exotic, mysterious and inaccessible East, is used here as a metaphor that exposes orientalism as an erotically charged Imperialist discourse.

Apart from Harold, Ali Pasha of Tepaleen is the most important figure in *Childe Harold* canto 2. Byron describes him, and consequently the band of soldiers that surrounded him, through a mixture of feudal and oriental imagery, tropes and diction. Thus, he sets the scene for the most important aspect of his characterization of the Near Eastern borderlands. Byron broke with convention, representing as feudal a Near Eastern border that had, to date, been almost exclusively imagined as typically 'oriental'. For example, when Harold approaches Albania we read of the

'valour' (584) of the inhabitants. Assuming the retrospective tense, Byron further writes: 'Childe Harold saw them in their chieftain's tower / Thronging to war in splendour and success' (586–7). His choice of 'valour', a word of Old French etymological derivation and with distinct medieval romance associations, and his subsequent reference to the chieftain's tower invokes the kind of feudalism that Scott wrote of, especially in the image it conjures of Ali's palace as a castle. But the reference to 'splendour' suggests oriental luxury. The descriptions that follow depict an army of exotically dressed soldiers from a wide range of ethnic groups – Tartars, Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Moors, Macedonians, Delhis and lastly 'swarthy' Nubian eunuchs – all orientalized and in contrast with the foregoing European medieval imagery. Byron's practice of weaving fashionable orientalist conventions and feudal imagery in the Albanian stanzas established a paradigm that he carried through into the Eastern Tales. As a strategy, it forced reflection on the language and moral connotations of cultural imagery, at a time when Eastern luxury was thought inherently decadent and corrupt, and thus in need of control, whilst medievalism was conversely being used to construct a European heritage of 'old' values and virtues.

In reality, as an Ottoman governor, Ali Pasha was by far the most powerful of the Pashas that ruled semi-autonomously, under appointment by the Ottomans from the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. By the time of Byron's visit, he had managed to subdue and obtain the united loyalties of most of the tribal groups of central and southern Albania and northern Greece. But bandits still remained in the interior highlands. Byron repeatedly mentions Hobhouse's account of their journey in his notes, and a look at an extract from the lengthy section Hobhouse wrote on these Albanian robber groups in *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, during the years 1809 and 1810* (1813) is helpful in understanding the more intimate and immediate context of Byron's verse. I do not have the scope here to give Hobhouse's book sufficient consideration, but it needs to be read as a parallel text. Hobhouse's account of robber culture explains how the groups were integrated with local shepherding communities and how they operated on a seasonal basis. He particularly gives a sense of the rôle of the robber bands as fiercely independent units, but also as soldiers frequently serving the Pasha. In all, he depicts a community that, in stadial terms, is very like the clan-feudal society of Scott's 'Historical Ballads' in the *Minstrelsy*. His account can be seen, here, entirely to support Byron's account of the region as essentially feudal, rather than oriental:

> All of them are warriors, and equally capable of using the sword and the long gun. . . . It is not easy to distinguish a soldier in service from a peasant. . . . Nor are their arms for show, for, until very lately, (and in some parts it is the case even now), every district was either upon the defensive against bands of robbers, or was in allegiance with them, and in rebellion against the Pashas of the Porte. Some of almost every village have belonged to these bands, and as no disgrace is attached to plundering upon so large a scale, it is very common to hear a man say, 'when I was a robber.'
>
> It is early in summer that these banditti, in bodies of two, five, and seven hundred, and sometimes even of a thousand, assemble under some formidable chief, and leaving the towns and villages where they have separately passed the winter, retire to the summits of the most lofty mountains. . . . The flocks of the shepherds, who are in concert with them, supply them with meat, and in the night time they steal down singly into the villages in their alliance, and procure bread. No violence is used on this occasion; the messenger taps gently at the door of the cottages, and whispering the words, 'Bread, bread', (psome, psome) is immediately understood by the peasant, and provided with what he wants.[73]

Hobhouse and Byron both pointed out that tribal strife and feudal-style warfare were still commonplace in the Albanian northern and central Highlands. Furthermore, in his notes to *Childe Harold* canto 2, Byron makes explicit comparisons between Albania and Scotland. He combines empirical observation with metaphorical effect to emphasize similarities between the mountain cultures of each, thus mirroring and reversing Scott's orientalized image of the Highlands in *The Lady of the Lake*: 'The Arnouts, or Albanese, struck me forcibly by their resemblance to the Highlanders of Scotland, in dress, figure, and manner of living. Their very mountains seemed Caledonia with a kinder climate.'[74] As with Scott, the aural quality of the foreign language is commented on. Whilst Byron does not suggest any direct connection between Gaelic and Albanian, he remarks that the Albanese dialect is 'Celtic in its sound'.[75] Historical studies of the Balkans confirm their perspective, showing how powerful, controversial and important Ali Pasha was during the late Ottoman period in the region. The ethnic Gedge warriors of the Northern Highlands, for example, were involved in numerous skirmishes with Ali Pasha and his army of Arnout Albanians from the central Highlands, and there were other tribal groups that sought to establish power bases wherever the chance arose.[76]

As a result of this instability, the country situated immediately between the Ottoman power base of Turkey and Europe was frequently visited in terms of its main Adriatic seaports, but very rarely explored beyond the edge of the coastal plain. Byron accordingly capitalized on opportunities to promote his Albanian travels as nonconformist 'adventures'. He informs his readers in the notes to *Childe Harold* canto 2 that, apart from himself and Hobhouse, only Major William Leake, the British Resident in Janina from 1807–1810, had visited Tepaleen in recent years.[77] That comment was accurate. Amongst studies of Grand Tour travel routes, Jeremy Black locates the significance of Byron's route in sociopolitical terms. Black points out that Albania, Macedonia and much of mainland Greece, apart from Athens and the better known sites of classical antiquity, 'were visited by very few', and he traces the customary routes taken to Constantinople either through the Mediterranean and Aegean, or downwards through the ethnically Slavonic, orthodox Christian Balkans by way of Budapest, Belgrade, Nis, Sofia and Adrianople.[78]

The virtual absence of Western European travellers from areas of Albania beyond the margins of its Adriatic coast and its borders with North-West Greece, meant that Byron was able to claim a degree of privilege as a poet and travel writer with first-hand experience of the region, when the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* were published. Leake's *Researches in Greece* with its detailed accounts of Greece and Albania was not published until 1814, after his return to Britain and after both *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 and Hobhouse's *Journey Through Albania*. When Leake's book was published the *Quarterly Review* and the *Edinburgh Review* discredited it, with reviewers claiming that it was little more than an eccentric and obscure linguistic study.[79] Leake responded to the accusations of the *Quarterly* in an open letter published in *The Classical Journal* in December 1814, bringing the acrimonious nature of the dispute more openly into the public domain.[80] In fact, there are detailed descriptions of the regions as Leake saw them, and they offer an alternative view to that offered by Byron and Hobhouse. Hobhouse, who was the subject of sustained criticism by Leake throughout his text and especially in the appendix, was the author of the *Edinburgh*'s satirical put-down, although he was protected by the journal's usual code of anonymity (Jeffrey had asked, through Thomas Moore, that Byron and Hobhouse write a joint review but Byron judiciously declined).[81] Hobhouse's accusation in the review that Leake had disproportionately written 'a little about the Albanians, and a good deal about Mr Hobhouse' needs to be understood within the context of personal animosity.

Hobhouse believed that the 24 or so Albanian dialects spoken by the more remotely located 'ancient' Albanese population consisted of 'Sclavonian, mixed with a variety of other tongues' and had been influenced by 'an almost uninterrupted succession of barbarians'.[82] Concurring with Leake on the basic premise that many linguistic influences exist in the Albanian dialects, he notes from the outset in his *Journey* that 'it is very true' that 'Albania must be inhabited by a mixture of different nations – composed of the descendents of Greeks, Romans, Goths, Vandals, Spaniards, Italians and Ottomans.' But Hobhouse contends that successive waves of invaders had actually shaped Albanian speech in its modern forms. Thus, he assents to the notion of Albania as a nation with borders that have, historically, been crossed with some frequency – but from Europe as well as from Asia. His accounts support Byron's representation of Albanian society in *Childe Harold* canto 2 as a mixture of European (feudal) and Eastern (oriental) social structures. Hobhouse claimed that he 'never heard [rural Albanian dialects] as a written tongue' and that he was offering his readers 'almost the first specimen ever put to paper'.[83] He gives a romantic and picturesque account of a pre-civilized rural Albania, inhabited by an ethnic mixture of Eurasian bandits and tribesmen, but which had nevertheless grasped a distinctive identity for itself. Rather than obscuring the notion of national and cultural borders as defining features, separating two rigidly monolithic cultures in the form of East and West, accounts such as Hobhouse's and Byron's conform to John Barrell's tripartite formulation of otherness – 'this', 'that' and the 'other' – that I mentioned in my introduction. They privilege Eurasian liminality, giving it both historical grounding and a geographical mapping in which a third cultural entity emerges with both presence and power.[84]

However, even if we leave Leake aside, the Albanian heartlands and eastern territories were not quite the *tabula rasa* that Byron claimed in terms of western literary representation. Amongst the several other writers who need to be taken into account when considering his descriptions are Richard Chandler, whose *Travels in Asia Minor* (1775) gives accounts of the 'Atzíncari or Zíngari, the Gypsies of the East', and of a group of Turks at Ura around a campfire at night that are sufficiently similar to Byron's account of the Spanish Gypsies in *Childe Harold* canto 1 and the Albanian Palikars in canto 2 to suggest that Chandler may have been an influence.[85] William Gell's several comparative writings on Turkey, Greece and the Ionian Islands, based on journeys he made between 1801 and 1806 and thus only shortly prior to Byron's, were known to Byron and were also widely circulated amongst readers of the Cambridge

philhellene travellers.[86] Henry Holland's *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Macedonia, &c., During the Years 1812 and 1813* (1815) gives an account of the author's travels soon after Byron's and Hobhouse's journey, and is another valuable text for comparative study.[87] These books are but a few of the wide range that were published, and brought to the attention of the public through the British periodical press, during the years surrounding the publication of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. Often, little or no distinction is made between the Turks and Albanians socially, and both peoples are represented as Oriental. Greece is frequently treated in similarly 'orientalist' forms, to emphasize the loss of the 'classical nobility' that was considered embodied in the ruins and literature of the Hellenic age. The geographical borders between Albania, Turkey and Greece are generally seen as arbitrary, serving as a naturalized manifestation of the erosion of Greek identity by the Ottoman occupation.[88] I discuss certain of the travel writers that Byron refers to specifically later in this chapter, as they play a more particular part in my analyses.

Recognizing the immediate literary and ideological potential for a romanticized narrative of a bandit culture, Byron included the figure of Ali Pasha and local tales of internecine warfare in the region in his poetry, in order to engage with the larger picture of travel writing as an aid to European Imperial expansion. If we look at the content of Byron's letters as complementary to the published poetry of *Childe Harold* canto 2, we see him working quite clearly, and over a period of time, with images of shifting internal borders that ultimately transcend local politics, to illuminate the pan-European contention of the Near Eastern frontiers. Writing to Hobhouse (who had returned to England) on 4 October 1810 from Patras, a year after he had left Albania for Turkey and Greece, Byron states that 20,000 Gedges under the command of Ibrahim Pasha and the Pasha of Scutari had mounted a reprisal against Ali Pasha, and that 'all Albania is in an uproar'.[89] A similar representation of destabilization across Albania followed an event mentioned at some length in *Childe Harold*, canto 2, and which had occurred whilst Byron and Hobhouse were at Tepaleen. The incident is the subject of the interpolated 'Tambourgi!' warsong of the Albanian stanzas of canto 2, which Byron contended was compiled from a number of songs that he heard.

The warsong is an example of Byron's use of a naïve bandit-warrior tale in *Childe Harold*, and it invites comparison with Scott's Border Ballads as a politicized part of the poem that similarly inscribes borders as sites of defence and incursion. Written self-consciously in the verse-ballad form that was already very familiar to readers of collections such as Scott's *Minstrelsy*, Byron's song refers in the convention of 'striking

incident' to a confrontation between one of Ali Pasha's sons, 'Dark Muchtar', and the slavonic 'yellow hair'd Giaours' (685–6). The sudden metric variation from Spenserian form, the suspension of the numbered sequence of the stanzas and the gesture towards 'oral' tradition enhances the reader's attention to the importance of the song within the poem, as yet another example of a hybrid European feudal and oriental culture that had assumed its own identity. Again, we see Byron using antiquarian diction and archaisms familiar to readers of British contemporary medievalism, and particularly redolent of writers such as Scott, immediately alongside exotic oriental imagery:

> Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy 'larum afar
> Gives hope to the valiant, and promise of war;
> All the sons of the mountains arise at the note,
> Chimariot, Illyrian, and dark Suliote!
>
> (649–52)

The event that the 'Tambourgi!' song refers to warrants some mention for, as with Scott's Historical Ballads, it transcends its superficial invocation of local, tribal skirmish. When we read beyond Byron's narrative adaptation of Scott's concept of 'the picturesque in action', Albania emerges as a constituent within a much larger picture. Like many of the other battles mentioned in *Chile Harold* cantos 1 and 2, the confrontation took place in 1809, and thus whilst Byron was travelling. It resulted in the Slavs – more specifically, the people that later in the century became the Serbians – being defeated at Previsa and driven northwards across the Danube into Belgrade.[90] Hobhouse referred to the incident in just a single sentence, seemingly making relatively little of it except as an example of the Albanian's barbarity in war: 'But their fights are not always bloodless: whatever was done against the Russians during the last campaign, was done by Mouctar Pasha and his Albanian troops.'[91] Yet, even in that brief sentence it is clear that a larger nation – Russia – was involved.

Russia had been steadily extending and consolidating its influence and territorial domination across north-eastern Europe, the Black Sea states and the Crimea for almost half a century by the time of this confrontation, and in anticipation of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire it had been seeking to push further into the Balkans and to increase its power and influence in Turkey and Greece (particularly the Ionian Islands, which it had briefly occupied until they were annexed

by Britain in 1809, with Ali Pasha's support).[92] Byron makes two important distinctions in the 'Tambourgi!' song, and each points to the monumental cultural difference of Europe and the Islamic East: one is based on skin colour, defining the Albanians as dark and oriental and the 'giaours' as fair haired and European; the other defines difference on the basis of religion, Muchtar being an Islamic name and the word 'giaours' meaning infidels in the eyes of Islam, and thus Christians. The borders between West and East, and North and South, are once more presented in terms of an absolute nature – geographical, ethnic and religious. Here, there is none of the shared physiognomy of the Spaniards and the Moors. One reason for these distinctions being made, within a ballad tale of striking incident, is that Byron constructs the Albanians of canto 2 as similar to Scott's clan-feudal Borderers, and as upholders of individual freedom against the threat of Imperial domination – whether that domination took the form of stereotypical Eastern despotism or modern European Imperial expansion. Indeed, one of the most fundamental features of Byron's writing of the Near Eastern Borders is that he configures them in such a way that a hybrid blend of oriental and feudal society emerges and they become a site of resistance to the parallel tyrannies he identifies as existing within the western and eastern worlds.

Within *Childe Harold* and its accompanying notes, Byron repeatedly sets up images of East in West in such a way that the exclusive concept of 'Earth's central line' as the boundary between civilized freedom and barbarous subjection is subverted. He emphasizes, for instance, that Ali Pasha and the Arnout Albanians were far from being entirely committed Moslems. The observance of familiar oriental and Islamic rituals described in the scenes at Tepaleen – such as gender segregation within the 'sacred Haram's silent tower' (496), the call to Prayer of the Muezzin whose voice 'doth shake the minaret' (530) and the devotional requirements of 'Ramazani's fast' (532) – becomes superficial, as the narrative shifts its focus to an almost orgiastic male revelry at night. Around the Palikars' mountain campfire, he depicts the 'red wine circling fast'. Byron thus exposes as a fallacy the concept of Islam as a rigid, uniform, fundamentalist entity, gripping a 'Paynim' Ottoman Empire. At the heart of the description on the interior of Tepaleen, Harold is depicted 'Scanning the motley scene that varies round', where 'some grave Moslem to devotion stoops' whilst 'some that smoke, and some that play, are found' (524–6). In the lengthy notes that he appends on the Albanian Moslems, Byron writes that the 'Greeks hardly regard them as Christians, or the Turks as Moslems; and in fact they are a mixture of both, and sometimes neither.'[93] That observation was not new, for most writers

about Albania stressed the lack of strict religious observance by the local population. Byron was merely concurring with impressions that were already commonplace. However, Byron's depiction in *Childe Harold* of the Albanians as a people who assert their own autonomy against the laws of religious systems does not imply moral degeneracy, as was so often the subtext of accounts of poor observance of religious practice. Rather, the Albania he describes constitutes yet another example of his frequent use of borderlands as locations where resistance to imperial or colonial hegemonies can thrive. The terrain of Albania becomes a borderland where racial and religious groupings that are neither entirely European nor eastern provide the material for an exotic narrative of defiance. Indeed, four main religious groupings existed within the region, comprising two Islamic factions (Sufi and Sunni) along with a Christian minority and a small number of Jews.[94] Ali Pasha aligned himself with the dominant Moslem faction in Albania, the Bektashi Sufis (the Turks were largely orthodox Sunni Moslems), but available accounts suggest that his observance of religious custom and ritual was primarily a matter of diplomatic and political expediency, and that his respect for Islam was almost as low as his regard for Christianity.[95]

Travel writing about Albania is as important an area of engagement for Byron in *Childe Harold* canto 2 as Grand Tour narrative and chivalric literature were in canto 1. The conventions of eighteenth-century topographical poetry remain essential to both cantos. Whilst travel in the interior of Albania was indeed almost entirely avoided, its politics and socio-economic structure were not entirely unknown to the British or to other Europeans. An extensive range of accounts of the state and nature of the Ottoman Empire was produced in the last years of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, by travellers within Turkey and by persons who had resided in parts of the Ottoman Empire by virtue of their occupations. These travellers' accounts invariably took Constantinople as their stimulus, but also gave extensive coverage to the peripheral provinces. Almost all include detailed sections describing the topography, people and political situations in Albania, Epiros, the Ionian Islands and various other regions controlled by Ali Pasha, with the result that even in Europe Ali became a myth in his own time. The more mundane and less romantic aspect of his rule, which involved the successful administration of a large chunk of the western Ottoman empire, using diplomatic skills and a highly developed sense of trade and of foreign politics, was much less remarked upon.[96]

The location of Constantinople as the archetype of the near-Orient for so many Europeans was due not least to its position as a prime centre

of trade and thus to its relative accessibility, but also because for so many travellers it marked the last and most easterly destination, and thus the climax of, the Romantic Grand Tour.[97] The point that needs to be understood here is that Constantinople represented, for the Grand Tourist, the ultimate encounter with 'otherness'. This is borne out time and again through the published accounts of a range of writers, many of whom Byron had read.

Constantinople certainly played an overwhelmingly determinative role in European perception and description of the Ottoman orient, with rulers such as Ali Pasha understood within the paradigms of orientalism associated with Turkey and the Ottoman Porte. Byron engages directly with the stereotype of the Despot in *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2, and throughout the course of the Eastern Tales. One of the perspectives that Harold takes, for instance, at Tepaleen is to gaze around at 'Moslem luxury' and the 'spacious seat / Of Wealth and Wantonness' (2:570–2). Yet in all his Eastern works – as we see in *Childe Harold*, and as I show in my next chapter on the Eastern Tales – he challenges western notions of the absolutism of Oriental despotic rule and pursues his perception of a prevailing strain of feudalism within Near Eastern politics and society. The extent to which this was a highly unusual way of representing the more routinely orientalized Near East is fundamental to our understanding of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 and the Eastern Tales, and it enables us to read them as transgressive texts.

Byron had read many of the more well known travel accounts of the Ottoman territories before commencing his travels, and some are mentioned on a comparative basis in the notes to *Childe Harold*. I will look at some of these now, as Byron engages directly with their views in his poetry. The figuration of Greece in almost all of these accounts as a once-great nation latterly subjected to Ottoman tyranny is crucial to the critique he offers. Rather like the use of the fall of Gothic Spain to the Moors in the chivalric literature so savagely satirized by Byron in *Childe Harold* canto 1, the representations of fallen Greece in these accounts are confronted as excuses for Imperialist intervention and expansionist ambition that would merely replace one form of tyranny with another. In *Childe Harold* canto 2, Byron demolishes the popular perception of the Greeks as a people representative of the very concept of freedom, describing them instead as 'Hereditary bondsmen!' (720). He rhetorically exclaims 'know ye not / Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?' (720–1).

In his notes to *Childe Harold* canto 2 Byron compares a selection of writers on Greece and the Ottoman Near East, remarking on what he

sees as the failings of each. For example, he opposes the renowned and controversial Ottoman apologist Thomas Thornton, to whose accounts of a feudal Near East he assents, to the philhellene François Charles Pouqueville. Pouqueville wrote extensively about the Ottoman territories, constructing an image of stereotypical barbarism and oppression. He had experienced Constantinople and the Ottomans as a captive in 1798, when an expedition to Egypt under Napoleon's orders had gone wrong. However, he later accepted an appointment as the French ambassador to Ali Pasha's court between 1806 and 1816.

Pouqueville's conventionally orientalist account, *Travels through the Morea, Albania, and Several Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire to Constantinople during the Years 1798, 1799, 1800 and 1801. Comprising a Description of those Countries, of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, &c. &c.*, had become a modern travel classic by the time Byron made his journey, being published first in France in 1805, and then in translation in English in 1806.[98] Hobhouse refers to him throughout the Albanian section of his *Journey*, commenting that 'not withstanding its defects' he knew of no other book 'that the traveller can carry with him or consult'.[99] Pouqueville's sharp demarcation of incompatible eastern and western cultures in that account is epitomized in his summary of Constantinople:

> Such is a rapid view of this city, inhabited by a people, who belong in no respect to Europe, except by the spot which they occupy in it; a city in which there is no post-office, where the streets have no particular denomination, the inhabitants no family name, but are only distinguished by equivocal surnames; and lastly, where nobody knows his age, as there are no registers to prove the civilized state of the people. There reign oppression, licentiousness, despotism, and equality; a system of laws, and another of terror; there the assassin is punished, and applauded; there may be found an assemblage of virtue and vice, of civilization and barbarism: nothing, in short, seems at Constantinople in its place . . . for much remains to be known and published relative to the Turks, whom a modern writer has described as a people of *antithesis*.[100]

The Ottoman capital and its people, in other words, are entirely fascinating and exotic but so alien that they resist all European conventions of understanding. Their defiance of systems of classification becomes the subject of a category of 'knowledge' in its own right, resulting in the east being 'understood' as intrinsically mysterious and devious. Byron's mention of Pouqueville in *Childe Harold* is strategic, for his *Travels* was

highly influential in shaping public perception both of Constantinople and of the Albanians as oriental models. Byron's remark to the effect that 'few foreign landscapes were so well known as the Sultan's capital'[101] – in contrast to his topographical descriptions of the 'desolate and dark' (597) Albanian countryside in which Harold finds himself alone – ironically refers to the profusion and popular effects of typically orientalist travel accounts.

Byron notes in *Childe Harold* that he regarded Thomas Thornton's account of Islamic manners as the best available in English.[102] Indeed, he follows that pronouncement immediately with a statement to the effect that he concurs with Thornton's overall thesis that 'The Ottomans, with all their defects, are not a people to be despised.'[103] One of the more interesting aspects of Thornton's subversion of the standardized forms of orientalist classification is that he portrays the Greeks as more given to 'oriental' behaviour than their oppressors. Admittedly, Byron regarded him as overstepping the mark in this respect, accusing him of knowing as little about Greece as someone visiting Wapping, or even Berwick on the Scottish/English borders, might know about the Western Islanders or Highlanders of Scotland.[104] Thornton's account is nevertheless worth looking at. Writing of the Greek nobility and gentry, as they existed under the Ottomans and more immediately under Ali Pasha, he uses images commonly associated with oriental luxury to comment that they were motivated by

> interest or consanguinity, and continually occupied in plots and cabals. These men have forsaken their workshops and warehouses, and pass their lives in soliciting, or in abusing, authority; or in wasting in tremulous luxury and ostentation the fruits of rapine and extortion.[105]

Thornton's account of the Ottoman Turks, as I have said, posits their Empire and society as recognizably feudal in its manner and administrative infrastructure, rather than as conventionally oriental. It is to his account of the Near East that Byron's own interpretation comes closest, and the hybrid concept of oriental and feudal social structures that both men recognized in Turkey and Albania, as well as in Ottoman-occupied Greece, is fundamentally important to understanding the ideological strategies of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 as well as the Eastern Tales. Byron continues his note on Thornton by making a move that clarifies the moral nature of the comparative study of Europe and the Near East that comprises cantos 1 and 2 of *Childe Harold*: 'Equal, at least, to the Spaniards, [the Ottomans] are superior to the Portuguese.'[106]

The rhetorical comparisons continue with an argument on the way in which general prejudice of an orientalist nature had misinformed popular comparative judgements of the Ottomans (bad, barbarous) and the Spaniards (good, brave):

> With regard to that ignorance of which [the Ottomans] are so generally, and sometimes justly, accused, it may be doubted, always excepting France and England, in what useful points of knowledge they are excelled by other nations. Is it in the common arts of life? In their manufactures? Is a Turkish sabre inferior to a Toledo? or is a Turk worse clothed or lodged, or fed and taught, than a Spaniard? Are their Pachas worse educated than a Grandee? or an Effendi than a Knight of St. Jago? I think not.[107]

Given Byron's own philhellenism, he was inevitably interested in how the Greeks were represented in travel accounts. With Ali Pasha ruling Epirus, and extending his influence and control over an increasingly large swathe of the Greek mainland, all contemporary accounts of Greece included comment on the Albanians and their most powerful leader. All of the writers mentioned by Byron portray Ali Pasha in orientalist terms, and account for Greece as a tyrannized subject. Indeed, by comparison with accounts of barbarous Turks and Albanians, Greece tends to be represented as essentially honourable, but weakened by its Islamic oppressors and seduced into corruption and collaboration. Byron responded by using the *Childe Harold* stanzas on Albania to demonstrate what he saw to be wrong with Greece, as well as with Iberia (both represented as occupied borderlands at the edge of Europe), and to hint at how the situation might best be relieved. Certainly, Byron saw Ali Pasha as flawed, and as a man with a ruthless desire for power. However, he regarded the Pasha's success in achieving semi-autonomous rule from the Ottoman empire, and in manipulating British and French overtures of friendship, as an example of the stand of individual freedom against Imperial subjection, whilst the Greeks, conversely, remained a subjected people in an occupied land.

In his notes to *Childe Harold* canto 2, Byron compares Eton's writing of the Ottoman East with that of Charles Sonnini de Manoncourt.[108] Sonnini's clinically descriptive and anti-Islamic *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie, fait par ordre de Louis XVI, et avec l'autorisation de la cour ottomane* (1801) describes the Islamic world and the far East in graphic terms – from North Africa through to China – as violent, disease ridden and unhealthy in terms of diet, sexual habit and physical type.[109] Again, the

conventions used to depict inferiority as characteristic of non-western peoples were commonplace. *Childe Harold* canto 2 needs to be understood as arising out of a context of literary production that generated and marketed these travelogues, social studies and others like them, as well as the profusion of popular medievalist and gothic romantic tales that are the subject of the critique of canto 1. All of these accounts address, and seek to control through knowledge, the perceived perversions and excessive passions of the East.

The seraglio constituted a particular area of fascination, not least because western men were literally denied any 'insight' into it. Byron addresses the desire to enter, indeed to 'penetrate' the seraglio in his Eastern Tales. *Childe Harold* canto 2, however, is almost devoid of reference to women in its portrayal of Albania. They are silenced and screened from sight, while a different form of passion – homosociality, shading into homosexuality – is brought to the fore.

Before embarking on the part of the journey that took his party away from Europe, Byron sent his youngest travelling companion and servant, Robert Rushton, home, declaring in a letter to John Hanson dated 13 August that 'Turkey is in too dangerous a state for boys to enter.'[110] Byron seems to have been aware at this point that his own life might be in danger, for in the same letter he asks John Hanson to ensure that Rushton 'still be considered as my servant, so that in the case of my death he may be entitled to his legacy'. The following day, writing to Rushton's father (a tenant on his estate at Newstead) he omits mention of Turkey and refers only to 'the country which I am now about to travel through' as 'in a state which renders it unsafe'.[111] It is impossible to say whether this indicates that he already knew that he would be travelling through Albania on his way to Turkey, or whether he was expecting to take a more conventional route. Peter Cochran has researched this part of Byron and Hobhouse's tour in detail, looking at the range of available documentation, and has concluded that the decision to go to Albania and to visit Ali Pasha was probably not made until towards the end of the 3 weeks that they spent in Malta.[112]

Cochran's thesis is that Byron was coerced by the British military and Diplomatic corps into undertaking the journey to Albania, and that his mission was aimed at ensuring the continued favour of Ali Pasha following the decision to annex the Ionian Islands (the islands had previously been promised to Ali Pasha in return for his support and assistance). However, given Byron's concern for his life in the Hanson letter, and his earlier mention of the condemned spy seen alongside the road in Spain, it is possible that the decision had been made as early as Gibraltar

and was not being openly spoken about for security reasons. Whether or not that was the case, the letters I have just referred to were all written from locations where the effects of European warfare were in daily evidence around Byron. The importance of Albania as the land around which he constructed *Childe Harold* is that, separated from Europe by the Adriatic Sea and by mountain ranges, and reputedly ruled by oriental bandits, it epitomized commonplace conceptions of Eastern barbarism. Ali Pasha, its warlord leader, had, as I have shown, been construed by western commentators as a colourful but utterly ruthless oriental despot who was seeking to subject Greece to his own form of tyranny in place of that of the Ottoman Turks. As Byron crosses the border that takes him from countries regarded generally as 'civilized' and refined into those popularly thought of as 'barbarous' and cruel, he raises the conventional images of the East as fundamentally perilous. The sexualizing of that peril was part of the general Western process of orientalism, and it is essential to the critique of convention that *Childe Harold* canto 2 offers. Reverting to Rushton's return to Britain, Byron's concern for his safety can be interpreted as a reference to the real risks constituted by banditry and the flourishing white slave trade, but it also hints at the perceived and powerfully imagined dangers of homosexual seduction, assault or abduction. In all accounts of Ottoman Turkey and Albania during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century – and in those of North Africa – the East is viewed as a place of sexual excess and deviance. Byron's response to these accounts in his letters before leaving home (which anticipate an orient structured around such accounts), in later letters, within the stanzas of *Childe Harold* and in its accompanying notes, comprises a combination of thinly disguised sexual excitement and political critique.

My discussion so far has looked at Byron's engagement with borderlands to confront various conventions of cultural conformity, and to perpetrate digression and subversion of those conventions. I have contended that Portugal and Spain, after an initial illusion of exoticism, are seen to generate sexual revulsion on the parts of Byron and Harold. Their disgust is partly aimed at the breakdown of conventions of femininity and female decorum, once the surface of society and manners is passed. It is also partly a dismissal of western expectations of sexuality, which becomes an attack on the principles of conformity as another example of wielding tyranny. Canto 1 is exclusively concerned with heterosexual desire, apart from the fleeting reference to William Beckford in stanzas 22 and 23, where Byron speculates on 'the schemes of pleasure' (279) that the scandalized and self-exiled Briton may have planned during the 2 years

that he lived at Quinta da Monserrate, just 3 miles from Cintra. Significantly, Beckford is first mentioned in a stanza that begins with an allusion to the ruined Moorish castle at Cintra. Byron thus makes a structural connection between the influence – indeed, the decaying presence – of the East, ruined reputation, and a man known both for his oriental novel *Vathek* and for his involvement in a homosexual scandal. As McGann notes, Beckford fled Britain in 1785 as a result of accusations of pederasty with William, Earl of Courtenay.[113]

Byron's ironically camp letter of 25 June 1809, written to John Hanson from Falmouth, famously refers to Beckford as 'the great Apostle of Paederasty' and the 'Martyr of Prejudice'.[114] He wrote to Henry Drury on the same day, promising contributions to Hobhouse's planned account of their journey in the form of 'a chapter on the state of morals', and a further treatise on the same to be entitled 'Sodomy simplified or Paederasty proved to be praiseworthy from ancient authors and modern practice'.[115] Again, Byron's mischevious tone indicates that his correspondent should not take him too seriously. Yet the letter to Dury testifies to the high level of association in Byron's mind between the East as an exotic cultural context and as a place reputedly rampant with homosexual encounter.

Byron's ambiguous sexual proclivity and his rumoured homosexual activities in early adulthood need to be considered in relation to his narratives of encounter around frontier locations. Where Scott focused emphatically upon the decline in feudal morality brought about by feminization, seeing its literary manifestation in the diffusion and weakening of the minstrelsy and ballads proportionate to their distance from Borders paradigms of masculine, militaristic heroism and honour, Byron adds a vibrant dimension of homoerotic desire to his poetic and prose accounts of homosocial activity. The political implications of the male camaraderie he portrays in episodes such as the Tepaleen stanzas of *Childe Harold* canto 2 are important both as a contrast to the reactionary militarism of Scott's male chivalric poetry, and as a challenge to codes of social conformity within Britain as a means of control. However, the levels of discretion that he ultimately showed, notably in terms of self-censorship, reveal his reluctance publicly to go beyond certain bounds in terms of propriety and taste.

From the middle of the eighteenth century, homosexual activity had become increasingly unacceptable in Britain to the point where those suspected of engaging in sodomitic practices ran a very real risk of prosecution at the least, or execution at worst.[116] Outside of the law, social intimidation and the attentions of criminals such as blackmailers markedly increased. In his article on Byron and 'Flash' language in *Don Juan*,

Gary Dyer offers a fascinating insight into the well-publicized case of Percy Jocelyn, the bishop of Clogher v. James Byrne (1811) as an illustration of how attitudes towards the sodomite as victim had hardened over a period of 30 years.[117] The Jocelyn case is significant to any study of Byron's poetics of homosexual encounter, because it was publicly topical and contemporary with the compilation of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. Though Byron does not mention the case in any of the sources that remain available to us, he certainly would have been aware of it and of the implications.

How, then, is the hardening of public and legal attitude towards homosexuality in Britain relevant to *Childe Harold* as a poem, to my discussion so far and, particularly, to Byron's representation of borderlands? Part of the answer lies in Byron's self-censorship of his poem, which involves his doubling-back on moves that have breached boundaries of taboo. Byron cut the last five lines of stanza 61 from the Albanian stanzas of his manuscript of *Childe Harold* canto 2 shortly before publication, and in doing removed the only unambiguously explicit reference to sodomy from his poem. Stanza 61, as it originally stood, depicted an openness of homosexuality in Eastern society that contrasted entirely with the silence, seclusion and separation of women from men. It is important to realize that in that stanza, and those surrounding it, Byron is deliberately stylizing his vignettes. He replaces the lines in the published version of the poem with an extension of his comment of the separate existence of women, and more particularly with an endorsement of their apparent happiness within such an arrangement. The published stanza, and the original lines are as follows:

> Here woman's voice is never heard: apart,
> And scarce permitted, guarded, veil'd, to move,
> She yields to one her person and her heart,
> Tam'd to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove:
> For, not unhappy in her master's love,
> And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
> Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
> Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
> Who never quits the breast, no meaner passion shares.
>
> (541–9)

> For boyish minions of unhallowed love
> The shameless torch of wild desire is lit,

> Caressed, preferred even to woman's self above,
> Whose forms for Nature's gentler errors fit
> All frailties mote excuse save that which they commit.
>
> (MS version, lines 545–9)

The published stanza, which covered only the stereotype of female seclusion is gradually extended into a desexualizing account of the Harem womens' delight in their function as mothers. The original stanza, by contrast, had led the reader from female banishment into an inflamed account of homosexual desire. These changes show Byron moving from an initially orientalist account of charged sexuality to one emphasising feudal ideals of womanhood.

In the next stanza, Byron retained his hints at Ali Pasha's homosexual inclinations in the ambiguity of lines referring to 'The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace' (558). We should think carefully about the strategies emerging at this point. Within a poem whose protagonist's own hidden past remains a tantalizing mystery of guilt and shame, Byron's ambiguity plays deliberately with the reader and prompts the imagination. The deeds that stain Ali might refer to his cruelty in dealing with his enemies, or to the kind of covert sexual activity that would bring disgrace in Britain. However, Byron does not represent Ali Pasha as degenerate. By contrast, it is his vicious satire on the prevailing ideals of heterosexual neo-chivalric romance in his portrayal of the Iberia of canto I that presents the keener picture of moral decay and distortion. Dyer analyses Byron's oblique linguistic and thematic codification of homosexual awareness (in *Don Juan*, more particularly), pointing out that the codes and linguistic usage would have been obvious to men involved in clandestine homosexual societies.[118] As I mentioned earlier, Peter Cochran has explored the possibility of Byron's sexuality being used by British diplomatic and military officers to win political favour with Ali Pasha (see pp. 261–2). I want to contend that the pistol-play, sabre-dancing and militarism that Harold encounters in the Albanian stanzas (his slightly distanced stance is important) contests British prescriptions of what was and wasn't sexually and morally acceptable, so that Byron's exoticized perspective becomes an ironic aside on the conventional institutions of male militarism.

The Albanian episode continues to describe an exclusively male society – both in the scenes set in Ali Pasha's palace and in the account of the campfire gathering of the native Palikars. Male-bonding thematically dominates all these scenes, in stark contrast to the display of effeminized

feudalism played before an audience of women in canto 1. The loudness and coarseness of the female voice in canto 1, furthermore, is contrasted with the complete silence of the Eastern woman in canto 2. Harold shows no interest in the Harem, passing by its motionless, 'silent tower' (496) in a single line, as Byron's narrative conveys him to the hubbub of the palace hall. Once inside Tepaleen the correlation that the poem establishes makes between male dominated orientalism and masculine, martial feudalism is evident everywhere. For instance, Ali Pasha's court appears 'Within, a palace, and without, a fort' (503). Byron wrote to his mother that Tepaleen 'brought to my recollection (with some change of dress, however) Scott's description of Branksome Castle in his lay, & the feudal system'.[119] The vignette that follows, of Tepaleen's interior, is a remarkable pastiche of Scott's description of Branksome Castle, with its parade of warriors, dressed ready for battle and its stylized depiction of the barbarous, communal feast. Byron mentions dress: in Scott's *Lay*, the knights wear their armour whilst they eat and drink, whilst in Byron's poem the 'Richly caparison'd' ranks of Ali Pacha's armies are vibrantly clothed in costumes that testify to their range of exotic ethnic backgrounds. The Ramadan feast of stanza 60, where the 'plenteous board' is spread at night within the 'gallery' (537–8), invites parallels with the 'barbarous' banquet in which Scott's knights stab their meat and drink red wine. Byron's description of the feast reaches its climax with the feudal and oriental imagery posited as entirely interactive, in a 'mingling din' from which 'page and slave anon were passing out and in' (539–40).

The outdoor campfire scene with the Palikars that follows the stanzas on Ali Pasha's palace similarly depicts a feast that is both feudal and oriental in its imagery. The fire that 'brightly blaz'd' whilst, as 'The feast was done, the red wine circled fast' and Harold 'ygazed' (631–3), uses medievalist conventions and diction, and also pastiches both the banquet scene of the *Lay* and Scott's images of Rhoderick Dhu and his Highland clansmen in *The Lady of the Lake*. Indeed, clan-feudalism of a kind inviting cultural comparison with the Scottish Highlanders is evident in the sabre-dance and 'uncouth dirge' (639) of the war-song that Harold witnesses and hears. The primitivism of his recollection of the 'lay' that they 'half sang, half scream'd' (648) again implies idiosyncratic, feudal and oriental hybridity on Byron's part.

Masculinity of a particular kind is fundamental to Byron's account of martial feudalism. His accounts of homosocial camaraderie, as I have shown, frequently shades into intimations of homosexual encounter. Lines such as 'Here men of every clime appear to make resort' (504) are

followed, two stanzas later, with references to men that 'recline in groups' (523) and of others 'that play' (526). Again, the episode pastiches Scott's Branksome. Scott depicts a scene where 'knight, and page, and household squire, / Loiter'd through the lofty hall' (1:ii:2–3), in canto 1 of the *Lay*, and invokes an evening of 'dice and draughts' and 'foot-ball play' (5:vi:20–3), immediately prior to battle against the English in canto 5. But whilst Scott's Borders gathering aims to invoke conventional, martial masculinity, Byron hints, as I suggested earlier, at a fantasy of orgiastic male revelry. Clearly, it is sociologically significant that he was only able to both think and write lines on the subject of sodomy whilst he was physically and politically the other side of the East/West cultural border – the 'central line' spoken of early in canto 1 as Harold leaves Britain. His transference of anxieties of this very 'otherly' kind of digression to an East/West orientalized location, and more specifically to a location that, as a cultural borderland, had already been constructed by virtually every travel writer as sexually threatening, corrupt and unhealthy, is indicative of the ways in which borders themselves offered an immensely important site for the debate of otherwise suppressed issues.

Having considered all these factors, I conclude the present chapter with a summary of how the masculine bias of *Childe Harold* canto 2 interacts with the heterosexual emphases of canto 1, and how this relates specifically and usefully to the conceptualization of borders and cultural encounter. I suggested earlier that we might look at the narrative of canto 1 without its topographically linking passages in order to see clearly the ideological extent of Byron's confrontation with chivalric literature, militarism and actual warfare at Europe's southern bounds. We are left with a litany of turmoil, in the form of warfare and inverted conventions of sexual display and behaviour. On the other hand, canto 2 contains several passages of extended topographical description, which are important in their evocation of a wild, beautiful and far lesser 'known' landscape. The fractures between Harold's perspectives on geographical encounter and on human experience are much less conspicuous in the Albanian stanzas, to the point where they barely exist. Jennifer Wallace makes an important point in her observation that Byron configures Albania as surpassing Greece in its 'arcadian' qualities, both in terms of its natural beauty and in the 'alternative, nomadic and unwestern lifestyle' of its people.[120] The vivid images invoke scenes of oriental opulence, baronial grandeur and barbarous revelry within a conspicuously male warrior-society located on the immediate frontiers between Europe and the East. Episodes in which feudal tropes and oriental stereotypes become intermingled follow one another in rapid flow and

close succession, as Byron poses implied questions about the values associated with European medievalism on the one hand and the orient on the other. The two cantos thus transmute into a major critique of how Empires, and Imperial expansion, are viewed by those who desire to see their own interests as morally right and those of their opponents as 'otherly' and in need of control. We need to understand the extent to which actual borderlands and cultural borders represented politically 'charged' areas for Byron. Then it becomes possible to appreciate the importance of the Albanian section of his Grand Tour – an 'off-beat', or 'off the beaten track' (to use James Buzard's phrase[121]) transgression of normality – as all-important to the construction and ideological programme of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. These cantos can be read as a response to Scott's Borders *Minstrelsy* and his narrative poetry.

Scott and Byron were responding – albeit in the different ways I have discussed – to contemporary literary fashion in Britain during a time of radical activity, and at a time when that activity was being utterly suppressed. Each poet offers his interpretation of literary form as a potent public model, embodying his particular political beliefs. Like Scott, Byron celebrates virtues associated with male camaraderie. Yet, as with his response to other genres and literary forms, he takes Scott's providential model and turns it to his own purpose. *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 do not offer the closure that Scott's *Minstrelsy* and his narrative poems so reassuringly seek to provide. The issues of feudally-derived and oriental societal principles, of strangeness and aberrant behaviour, and of the Near East as a culturally problematic borderland are carried through into the Eastern Tales. Those tales are the subject of my next chapter.

4
Byron's Eastern Tales: Eastern Themes and Contexts

Byron's fascination with the Near East and with the margins of Europe continued after the publication of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. His series of narrative poems addressing themes of East–West cultural encounter collectively known as the 'Turkish' or 'Eastern' Tales was published between March 1813 and April 1816. These poems consist of *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814) and *The Siege of Corinth* (1816). I shall also comment on *The Island: or Christian and His Comrades*, which Byron published with John Hunt in 1823. Though not an Eastern Tale, *The Island* is relevant to the present chapter because it deals with 'southernness' and 'northernness' through a number of recognizable orientalist configurations. The result is a reconciliation of difference that Byron represents as impossible in the earlier tales, but one that remains problematic. Furthermore, despite its subtitle's suggestion that Fletcher Christian is the protagonist, *The Island* takes a lesser mutineer, a 'blue-eyed northern child / Of isles more known to man, but scarce less wild' (2:163–4), as its main character, situating him in a land of exotic, natural abundance and intercultural sexual liberation (a 'bountiful' land, in many senses).[1]

Byron's inclination to make casual and dismissive remarks about the worth and sincerity of the Eastern Tales is well known,[2] but the extent of his preoccupation with the Near East nevertheless is captured in a letter to Lord Holland dated 17 November 1813. Replying to Holland's approval of *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, he wrote, 'My head is full of Oriental names and scenes.'[3] The 'Orient' had apparently lodged names and scenes firmly within Byron's mind, but was by this reckoning expressible only in the European conventional terms of classification and imagery. If we recall the excitement evident in his letters immediately prior to his departure for Portugal 4 years earlier in 1809, followed by

his writing of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* – which I discussed in my previous chapter – the extent of his interest is seen to transcend superficiality, and in remarkable ways. As I argued in my introduction, borderlands, their transient and debatable status, and the political manipulation of cultural difference were of overwhelming international importance during the early nineteenth century – and on into our own time. A study of the Eastern Tales, examining the ways in which Byron's poetical use of borderlands developed in the second decade of the nineteenth century and into the final year of his life, follows to conclude the present book.

An overall narrative programme and thematic continuity (in spite of the local 'fragmentary' structures of individual poems such as *The Giaour*) is as evident in this series of poems by Byron as it is in Scott's *Minstrelsy* and narrative poems, though Byron's ideological agenda in representing border regions is entirely different. Indeed, the nature of the Eastern Tales is such that they comprise a poetry of continuous traversal, digression, narrative and thematic return. Consequently, it becomes less valuable in a study such as this to deal with the individual tales in a rigidly conventional, sequential manner. My analyses will look at narrative clusters and recurring themes, variant formal properties and devices, and the political or ideological contexts and displacements that lie behind Byron's poems of transcultural encounter.

Byron's direct experience of the Near Eastern regions in which he set the Eastern Tales gained from his travels in Albania, Turkey and the Levant from September 1809 to April 1811, providing him with the opportunity to claim empirical legitimacy for his narratives to a degree which transcended that of any other canonical British poet of the Romantic period. He repeatedly referred to an East that he knew better than most, and in the case of Albania better than any, British writers of the time. The letter to Lord Holland dated 17 November 1813 which I referred to above continues as follows, with Byron's stressing of Hobhouse's earlier departure for England, and a suggestion that the time afterwards was most memorable in terms of (what we might here call) his own proto-anthropological experience:

> It is my story & my *East* – (& here I am venturing with no one to contend against – from having *seen* what my contemporaries must copy from the drawings of others only) that I want to make palpable – and my skull is so crammed from having lived much with them & in their own way (after Hobhouse went home a year before me) with their scenes & manners.[4]

Byron's profession of cultural authenticity is clearly accompanied by a proprietorial claim on his subject matter – it is *his* story and *his* East. On that basis, the Eastern Tales must be seen as a continuation of the appropriation, 'bringing home' and marketing of oriental material that we saw with *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. Yet, as I argued in my analysis of the active role of hyperbolic description in *Childe Harold*, the experience of exotic 'otherness' cannot be understood simplistically in terms of a one-way process of domination and appropriation.[5] The alternation between exploitation through a form of literary colonialism, and the invasion of Byron's mind by his 'lived' experience of the 'way', 'scenes' and 'manners' of Albania and Turkey, constitutes a dynamically reciprocal relationship. Such a relationship, in which the influence exerted *by* eastern experience counterbalances Byron's desire to appropriate it, transgresses the one-sided occidental hegemony posited by, for example, Saidian orientalism. For Byron, the Near East was a palpable, living context, not merely a metaphor for despotism and cruelty from which the reality of human existence was excised. It is, for example, the antithesis of constructions such as those by Edmund Burke in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, which represent in a patronizing and stylized fashion 'the barbarous anarchic despotism of Turkey, where the finest countries in the most genial climates in the world are wasted by peace more than any countries have been worried by war; where arts are unknown, where manufactures languish, where science is extinguished, where agriculture decays, where the human race itself melts away and perishes under the eye of the observer.'[6] (Burke was using the state of Turkey, as he believed it to be, as an example with which to counter criticism of the French monarchy as in any way a despotic institution, just as Paine by total contrast used the trope of oriental despotism as an analogue for British political institutions.)

The key concepts here can be argued in wider terms. Clifford Geertz, writing of more recent and specifically 'anthropological' studies than Byron's, makes an incisive point about the wide fascination that the 'exotic' may hold for cultural interpreters, in his statement that 'the famous anthropological absorption with the (to us) exotic . . . is . . . essentially a device for displacing the dulling sense of familiarity with which the mysteriousness of our own ability to relate perceptively to one another is concealed from us'.[7] Geertz's sentence is, in general terms, a corrective to theories based on the inevitability of hegemonizing impulses, or the will to dominate, on the part of members of more powerful and purportedly more advanced cultures. In the specific instance, it helps us to put Byron's compunction to write of the Near East into

perspective in the light of his concern about society and politics in Britain. In Geertz's view, we do not need to disassociate the attention to 'exotic' cultural experience from the context of the writer in his own culture. Indeed, we cannot so disassociate it but must, rather, be on constant watch for factors of displacement of the latter concealed in it.

From Jerome McGann's seminal *Fiery Dust* (1968) onwards, a number of scholars have developed and refined a line of allegorical readings that locate the narratives of Byron's Eastern Tales as, precisely, displacements of concerns about British society and politics within the United Kingdom. Collectively, these readings constitute a substantial and convincing body of criticism. Yet, however allegorical, the majority of these studies maintain a real sense of the poems' value as 'Eastern' Tales, with at least some representative cultural content. McGann, for example, points out that '*The Giaour* uses the device of "fragments" to give a . . . kind of cultural authenticity to the events of the story', and that the story itself, as Byron states, is a translation of a 'Romaic [or] Arnout' ballad which the poet overheard 'by accident recited by one of the coffee-house story tellers who abound in the Levant'.[8] Literary convention – in this instance fragment form or the recited tale – and cultural authenticity are seen to be complementary.

Beyond constructions of a recognizable Near East, couched in orientalist terms but with sufficient references to European-style feudalism for parallels to be easily drawn, the rôle of borderlands in the Eastern Tales as ambiguous stretches of land within which cultures encounter one another and mingle (rather than as exclusive lines of East–West cultural demarcation) thus becomes particularly important. Amongst more recent critical studies focusing on the Tales as allegories, the Marxist sociological perspective of Daniel Watkins's close readings in *Social Relations in Byron's Eastern Tales* takes the analytical bias more decidedly towards British society and politics, with less emphasis on the accompanying foreign nature of the narratives. But Watkins's finely honed sociopolitical perspective, as he stresses, does not seek to limit the texts to such an extent that it invalidates other kinds of inquiry.[9] My own readings attempt to move into areas not overdetermined by McGann's or his readings, but without losing the value of many of their arguments. Amongst the questions I seek to answer in my concluding analyses are: just how 'Eastern' are the Eastern Tales, and to what extent did they (or, indeed, do they still) stand as a valid cultural comment, when one looks beyond the obviously oriental storylines?

In terms of their immediate historical and political context, the Eastern Tales engage both with particular and more general events and crises on

and around the borders of Europe and the Near East. I want to concentrate on Byron's literary rôle in mediating and responding to these events, with specific reference to the life-altering qualities he affords incidents of encounter. Through his poems' narratives, with their obvious allusions to Eastern oral storytelling and to ballad traditions as alternatives to more regular documentary histories (similar to the 'curious history' that Scott declared theoretically to be retrievable from ballads and folklore), Byron extends the critique of militarism and of the European power struggle that he began in *Childe Harold*. The border regions of the Eastern Tales, however, whilst remaining highly contentious, have shifted eastwards from the Peninsular War terrain of Iberia and the Albanian and Greek frontiers of the Ottoman territories, almost exclusively to the boundaries of the latter two. Virtually all criticism of the Eastern Tales to date has examined the poems in terms of their construction of the relationship between Turkey and Greece. Byron's poetic angst over the loss of classical virtues and his interest in the struggle for Greek independence have together, understandably, determined such a tradition of philhellenic enquiry. I argue that a definite response can also be seen within the texts to developments on the Arab–Turkish frontier, and around the ports of the Persian Gulf. That response is reflected in a wide range of thematic motifs as well as through linguistic reference, with distinctions made and parallels sometimes drawn between Turkish custom and that existing within states where a more fundamentalist form of Islamic law and government existed. For example, Byron frequently and self-consciously employs diction in the Tales that is taken from Arabic speech as well as from the more familiar Turkish idiom. Often there are Persian literary precedents for the use of such words, but a theme of heterogeneity that is far from benign nevertheless emerges, and an acute sense of disparity and of fragile relationship is established between different strands of Islamic society. In effect, Byron uses linguistic means to reflect the long-standing historical hybridity of the Turkish lands, where a dominant Ottoman culture was interpreted by means of Arabic, Jewish, Persian and Greek culture and language. The effect may be usefully compared with the treatment of Spain in *Childe Harold* canto 1 as a volatile, ambiguous combination of Moorish North African and Gothic European cultural heritage.

Byron's satirical rejection of the reactionary, patriarchal notion of rigid borders establishing western cultural superiority and exclusivity is made most clear some years later in *Don Juan* (1819), where he mockingly introduces Juan's father as 'a true Hidalgo, free from every stain / of Moor or Hebrew blood, he traced his source / Through the most Gothic

gentlemen of Spain' (1:66–8), whilst the seductress Donna Julia's dark 'Oriental eye' (1:441) accords with her Moorish ancestry. Juan, like Donna Julia's kin, proceeds to leave Spain, travels eastwards and falls in love with the exotic daughter of a pirate (based on Ali Pasha) to become the rebellious product of such a system of belief. To return to the matter of Turkey, however, the heterogeneous form of Islam that is made explicit through the use of linguistically dissimilar forms and variations of custom in the Eastern Tales always hints at potential conflict. Turkey thus has to be regarded as looking with anxiety towards the East as well as to its unstable European, Northern Baltic and Crimean frontiers. A range of close analyses will show, within the context of particular poems, how intricately and consistently Byron works with Turkey as a nation with more than one problematic frontier, although it was popularly regarded within Britain and by other, more simplistically 'orientalist' European literature in a unitary way, as definitive of Eastern power and despotism.

I want to begin with some examples that clarify the literary and political themes of my argument, and which establish that the instability of factors of difference in cultural borders was present from the outset in the Eastern Tales. In this passage from *The Giaour*, which comes immediately after the dramatic fragment concerning the eponymous hero's frantic twilight ride along the Turkish shore, the foreign and supposedly oral narrative of the Turkish fisherman delivers a prophecy of an apocalyptic scenario following the death of slave-girl Leila:[10]

> But Gloom is gathered o'er the gate,
> Nor there the Fakir's self will wait;
> Nor there will wandering Dervise stay,
> For Bounty cheers not his delay;
> Nor there will weary stranger halt
> To bless the sacred 'bread and salt.'
>
> (338–43)

Byron's choice of language at points in the poem such as this holds the key to our understanding of this conflict. The above lines are laden with rhetorical negativity and concerns about cultural instability. Fakir and Dervise, for example, are both words meaning beggar, or religious ascetic – the former being Arabic and the latter Turkish (Dervish is the more usual English transcription, whilst *dervis* is listed by the OED as the Turkish etymological source).[11] *Dervis*, or dervish, as Byron note informs the reader, is more particularly used of Sufi Muslims, and thus

pertains to the people of Turkey and Albania that Byron had lived with during his travels (there are many comments in letters and notes on the Albanian servant who attended Byron from Albania onwards in 1809 and 1810, each referring to him using the soubriquet 'dervish').[12] Byron's use of both words at this crucial point in *The Giaour* expresses the fatal paradox of similarity and difference he saw as existing between the two distinct forms of Islamic society.

In the same passage, custom is invoked in a manner that similarly reveals ambiguity. This point is best explained by Byron's relatively short note to *The Giaour* elaborating on the inviolable sanctity of the Moslem custom of breaking of bread and salt to 'insure the safety of the guest, even though an enemy'.[13] In the 4th–6th editions of the poem he added that, though a pledge of hospitality with all Moslems, the custom was more particular to 'the Arabs'.[14] The theme of destruction within the Ottoman world, which the narrative deems to be wrought as much by the western invader as by barbarous actions of the Turk, is thus seen to have far-reaching repercussions throughout the Islamic world beyond Turkey. Hassan's palace, a metaphor for the Ottoman Porte, becomes 'Desolation's hungry den' in line 349. Just two lines later, and concluding the fragment, Hassan's turban is described as 'cleft by the infidel's sabre!' Byron configures the turban as an orientalized crown, symbolic of Hassan's ruling power. I argue that this motif prefigures the crucial splitting by European intervention (recall that the 'infidel' in question here is the European Giaour, and that the narrator is Turkish) of the power of Ottoman rule and of the coherence of Islamic Empire. There is an immediate historical correlative to back such a reading, for a look at the complexity of British involvement with certain Ottoman factions shows how strategically divisive its overall intervention was, not least because aimed at securing commercial and political power over Greece and the Aegean trade routes.

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century the British were aligning themselves with the Turks against Wahhabist Islamic factions, at the same time that they were cultivating friendship with the semi-autonomous renegade Ali Pasha in Albania and along the Ottoman western frontier. A further consolidation of British interests in Egypt was simultaneously taking place, after the defeat of the feudal Mamelukes in that country initially by Napoleon, but finally by Muhammad Ali (an Albanian nephew of Ali Pasha) in 1811.[15] Following the demise of the ethnically Turkoman Mamelukes (who had ruled as the dominant social group in Egypt since the mid-thirteenth century), the nomadic Bedouin tribes had vied for power in an attempt to establish a more hardline

fundamentalist Egypt alongside the existing Arabian territories of Ibn Sa'ud and the Wahhabist factions. Muhammad Ali was supported by the British (who sought to prevent the emergence of an Arabic, Islamic fundamentalist power bloc) in his suppression of the Bedouins, to the extent that as part of a 'friendship' package a lenient attitude towards limited piracy was tolerated along the Barbary coast, at his discretion, even though the professed British intention was to rid the region of pirates.[16]

Another example of the extent to which Turkey is shown as a central power facing unstable borders to its east as well as to its west and north involves a fragment that engages the more specifically literary aspect of the poem and the politics of representation. As a poetic device, the exquisite extended simile of the Kashmiri butterfly in lines 388–421, which follows the fisherman's account of Leila's death, further emphasizes the onward, eastward projection of *The Giaour*. Byron uses imagery of beauty and exotic extremes within an orient that becomes more elusive and enchanting as it becomes proportionately more eastern and distant. His representation of the ephemeral nature of exotic beauty begins with an image of gorgeous, zoomorphic otherness:

> As rising on its purple wing
> The insect-queen of eastern spring,
> O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
> Invites the young pursuer near . . .
>
> (388–91)

Beginning *in medias res*, the simile subsequently reflects that the butterfly had lured the poet's imagination 'from rose to tulip' (413), or from Turkey and Persia across an exoticized Asian land mass to the mountains of Kashmir, where the image is pursued until it fragments and disintegrates the instant that it is caught. It has been but 'a lovely toy' (404), a plaything or luxurious diversion rather than the embodiment of reality. Conventionally, this simile has been read as an elegiac contemplation on the impossibility of sustaining passionate love, on the fragility of purity and innocence, and on the tragic human propensity to destroy the beauty that it desires. I argue that the passage has another function, which is entirely bound into Byron's involvement of his poem with popular perceptions of a monocultural, mesmerizing East of Turkish harems, sherbert and splendid silk. Upon the disintegration of the 'brightest hues' (407) of the insect, its 'charm' (408) – the glamour (to return to a term

used similarly, and also in relation to eastern literary material, in my analyses of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*) – is gone.

One is immediately reminded of the images cast in *Childe Harold* upon reaching the borders of the various countries that are represented – shimmering literary illusions that, likewise, disintegrate upon the experience of reality, and offer a range of fragmented alternatives that tantalize, dodge and evade the dominant forms and conventions of western understanding. Popular understanding of the Near and Middle East through to India was such at the time that Byron was writing the Eastern Tales that few British readers had any sense of a heterogeneous Islamic world. The butterfly simile suggests that, beyond the charm of perceived oriental luxury, beauty and standard representations of cruelty testified to in the accounts of travellers that I have discussed in my previous chapter, a very different world existed. On the immediate Eastern borders of Turkey, the austere interpretations of shari'a law imposed by the followers of Wahhab and Ibn Sa'ud in the later years of the eighteenth century and the first years of the nineteenth century had banished the saint-worship and opulent rituals of the Sufi Moslems from Iraq and Syria, into Saudi Arabia and eastwards to what is now Pakistan.[17] From Basra and Damascus, Wahhab had preached against the Ottoman Turks as morally corrupt heretics, given to luxury and without virtue.[18] I have already shown that Byron was well aware of the reality of these factions, with their strict interpretations of the Qur'an, pressing in towards the Porte.

Conflict and rivalry within the Islamic world, in the form of Hellenophobic and Arabophobic attitudes, is more directly referred to in *The Bride of Abydos*, where the Turkish patriarch Giaffir contemptuously says of his ward, Selim, 'I'll watch him closer than before –/He is an Arab to my sight' (1:143–4). Selim, who is of Greek origin, reveals himself as a flamboyantly dressed pirate in canto 2, and is subsequently killed in a battle with Giaffir's men. The ineffectiveness of Greek resistance and its suppression by the Turks is thus dramatized, but Byron's aside in the note to line 144 adds further cultural weight to the text, ensuring that the reader does not miss the significance of the few words that might otherwise be lost merely as private expressions of resentment: 'The Turks abhor the Arabs (who return the compliment a hundred fold) even more than they hate the Christians.'[19]

The textual engagements I have just been speaking about show the first of Byron's Eastern Tales reacting against prevailing attitudes towards Islam as a monolithic and barbarous entity. *The Giaour* works persistently with motifs of the East as exotic, elusive and desirable, from the tantalizingly unpronounceable nature of its title, through the use of

foreign words within the text (Fakir, Dervise in the instance recently given), and poetic devices such as fragment narrative and the simile of the Kashmiri Butterfly. A method emerges in which Byron seeks to prompt questions about the ethics and motives surrounding the incursions of British trading, political and military activity around the edge of the Arab world, often in collaboration with Ottoman parties (such as Mohammed Ali in Egypt and Ali Pasha in Albania), as well as more immediate intervention in and around Turkey and Greece.

Developments – borderlands, piracy and the Arab Middle East

Byron's development of his poetry of borderlands after *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 is perhaps best seen with the help of a resumé of the frequency with which he depicts nations as multifaceted entities that look in a range of directions. In *Childe Harold* canto 1, Spain was repeatedly configured as a feminine land, simultaneously gazing with sultry, and sexualized dark-eyed face towards Africa, and with its pale, gothic face turned towards Northern Europe. The poem maintains that influences from Moorish North Africa and from Europe have become embedded as part of Spain's own, unique character – in the form of picturesque ruin (the Moorish castle near Cintra), in its living, sexually productive and passionate native population (the gypsies that Harold watches around their campfire) and in its modern, military and commercial identity. In canto 2, Byron used images of Albania – this time gendered masculine – looking to Europe and to the East, as well as northwards towards the Slavonic states and Russia. His brief, three-line mention of the Wahhabis, referring to their sacking of 'the prophet's tomb and all its pious spoil' at Medina, together with the inference that they 'May wind their path of blood along the West' (2:735) takes the gaze momentarily but memorably eastwards beyond Turkey.

Because of their importance to European history, the Napoleonic campaigns of the first decade of the nineteenth century were the dominant current affairs of the period. Some of Byron's readers would have been aware of the Wahhabi Arabs' seizure of the major Moslem holy cities of Karbala (1801), Mecca (1803) and Medina (1804), and of the subsequent rôle of the British navy in assisting Turkey to suppress further fundamentalist expansion from the Gulf ports. C. A. Bayly's historical chronology of these events and his account of the high level of British activity that was involved in suppressing Wahhabism help us to place the narrative of *The Giaour* and the other Eastern Tales amidst the continuous activity taking place along the Near Eastern frontiers. Furthermore, Bayly's

attention to the politics surrounding British and American moves to 'bring to heel the "Barbary Pirates" of Algiers', which I mentioned earlier, adds to the dimension of poems such as *The Corsair*, in which the hero is by description and definition a buccaneer (although Conrad is clearly a Frank, rather than a Muslim, piracy is the salient issue), and also highlights the need to think carefully about the role of the sea and its relationship with authority more generally in the Tales.[20] It is worth bearing in mind that Captain Wentworth, in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, recounts how he and fellow naval men had quickly 'made money' through legitimized piracy on 'a lovely cruise together off the Western Islands' of the Mediterranean.[21]

Amongst the various studies of intellectual reactions to Islam during this period, and of the decline of the Ottoman empire, Albert Hourani's *Islam in European Thought* as well as his *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798–1839* offer a survey of critical perspectives. Based on historical and literary readings, and on developments with which Byron as a traveller in Albania, Turkey and the Levant during the critical years 1809–1810 was familiar, Hourani's accounts also emphasize the magnitude of the Arab fundamentalism pressing on Turkey from the East, and its destabilizing effect on the Ottoman Porte.[22] Byron's note to *Childe Harold* canto 2 demonstrates his awareness of Arab Islamic expansion: 'Mecca and Medina were taken some time ago by the Wahabees, a sect yearly increasing.'[23] With Ali Pasha running a semi-autonomous state to the West of the Porte, and the Arab fundamentalists threatening to extend their influence from the East, Turkey thus becomes almost a borderland in its own right, whilst still constituting the administrative centre of the Ottoman Empire. In the Eastern Tales, Byron writes both explicitly and allegorically of Turkey as a nation that borders on Albania and Greece and also on the Arab Islamic regions to its own East, in the form of what are now Syria, Iraq and (southwards) Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, his continuous use of these Janus-like representations of nations that constitute debatable regions offered him the opportunity persistently to question stereotypes, and thus the ideologies that produced and perpetuated them. In the Eastern Tales, he launches a sustained literary assault on perceptions that the 'Orient' (and thus despotism and barbarism) exists somewhere distant and to the East of a discernible, monumental border. Instead, he substitutes a broad area of cultural liminality and literary *chiaroscuro*, within which East and West cease to be morally exclusive categories.

My arguments in this chapter so far have predominantly been concerned with passages from *The Giaour*, and will progress to cover

The Corsair and *Lara*. Those poems illustrate the course that Byron's writing of the Near Eastern borders took as it developed. However, I also want to look at features of the Eastern Tales as a group and, indeed, as a series of poems with an overall narrative. Again, a number of factors emerge that link Byron's and Scott's poetry. Like Scott's *Minstrelsy*, Byron's Eastern Tales form a rich repository of cultural material, stories and miscellanea directly related to his experiences of border regions and societies. That material, like Scott's, is retrieved, editorially shaped and reworked in various forms in his later works. Both poets are concerned with issues of gender, indicating its status as a contentious topic at this time. A core of thematic issues involving perspectives on land borders, or borders between land and sea, and narrating their transgression is always evident. For example, all of the Eastern Tales involve actions that take place around the coastlines of Turkey, Albania and Greece. All narrate plots centring on sensational and violent incidents between opposing Eastern (Islamic) and Western (Christian) protagonists. Each Tale consists of a story or surface narrative involving the fate of women suppressed within Eastern, usually Muslim, society, and in which a particular woman becomes the object of desire for a man from a western culture. As always in Byron's poetry, a high level of irony within these narratives ultimately turns the themes of cruelty, vice and luxury back onto the European – and, more specifically, British – culture of the reader. The harem is not a surprising choice of theme by Byron, and its imperial analogues for the gender politics of imperialism, both in terms of libidinous reality and as cultural allegory, lie firmly at the heart of the Tales.

The exotic allure of the Seraglio, and the desire of western men to be able to penetrate such a sexualized zone (and a forbidden one that was the property of an adversarial male), was a feature both of heterosexual masculine desire and of one of its political manifestation, imperial ambition. Byron responds to such masculine desire and imperialism as intricately related to one another, and as inextricable. The critique that the Eastern Tales offers as a series of poems addressing imperial ambition begins with the cultural devastation set in motion by the predatory sexual desire and faux-morality of the eponymous Giaour, and culminates in the mutual destruction of Turks, Greeks and Venetians, brought about by the cultural cross-dressing Italian Lanciotto/Alp, who turns Turk out of desire and revenge in *The Siege of Corinth*. In that latter poem the motif of the exotic Seraglio and the invasive European male predator is turned on its head, in the configurations of Francesca as the forbidden and secret European woman, and Lanciotto/Alp as the renegado European

male who poses as a Muslim invader in the hope of gaining access to her. *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, and metaphorically, in the final unveiling scene, *Lara*, each involve the penetration of the Seraglio by western protagonists, and thus question notions of the inviolability of the power structures of Despotism. *The Siege of Corinth* completes the correlation of Near Eastern despotism and European Imperialism, radically to suggest that the latter is no less violable than the Ottoman Empire that it seeks to replace. Lanciotto's action, furthermore, takes the Tales in a full circle back to the revenge of the Giaour, who joins a band of Albanian bandits to destroy Hassan (the association of the British with Ali Pasha is referred to here). In each case, Byron equates the ambitious European on the border with savage behaviour and with passions of revenge more regularly associated with a 'cruel' East.

The paradigm of the unseen, silent, and entirely passive Eastern female spoken briefly of in *Childe Harold* canto 2 is taken to the extreme in the lifeless form of Leila in *The Giaour*. Critics have frequently noted that Leila is allegorically representative of the captive, subject status of Ottoman-occupied Greece. As such, she represents a unified concept, but one entirely lacking the power of self-definition and determination. More generally speaking, Byron configures her as the feminized embodiment of the individual member of society living under any tyrannical system of government. *The Bride of Abydos*, however, breaks with the motif of absolute female passivity. In *The Bride* (where, true to Byron's habit of misleading titles, there is ultimately no such figure), the narrative tells of a Turkish woman's attempts to rebel against patriarchal dictatorship and escape forced marriage into a Harem. It is in *The Corsair*, however, that Byron begins fully to develop the motif of the radically active heroine.[24] Gulnare, the seductive harem slave, plays upon Conrad's chivalric spirit, in order to save herself and *him* (thus breaking with the passivity of Leila). But, more importantly, she prompts a series of actions that shatters the authority and sanctity attaching to convention and tradition within the Eastern harem and, through the death of the conventional Medora, on Conrad's feudally managed island.

Integral to Byron's narratives of patriarchal eastern despotic power and the institution of the Harem are the comparisons made in all of the Tales between feudal social systems (associated with the European past) and contemporary perceptions of the East as an older, barbarous world existing in a stasis of cruelty, slavery and repression. By consistently drawing parallels between these two apparently disparate sociopolitical systems, Byron removes any notion of reassurance that geographical and

historical distance keeps the East and the cruelty that it embodies at a safe remove from Britain as a heritage culture.

Nostalgia becomes difficult, or even impossible. Chivalric tradition, romance literature and Scottish Enlightenment philosophy are used within the framework of the oriental tale to build a critique of the ease with which distinctions were commonly made between societies deemed barbarous and those regarded as civilized. Again we see Byron using convention, and turning it around to offer a satirical commentary. Cultural comparisons between existing 'barbarous' societies and past, pre-civil stages in modern, western society had become axiomatic within Scottish Enlightenment stadial models of social development, as we have witnessed in some of Scott's own deployment of those theories. Indeed, it is from Byron's correlation of oriental segregation and the subjugation of women with gothic romance stories of their imprisonment that the powerful philosophical and political dimension of his Tales springs. The predicament of Byron's more conventional Eastern heroines echoes that of their European chivalric romance counterparts in three main ways: either they face ritual execution (as in *The Giaour*), they are rescued by a chivalric hero (Gulnare, as harem slave, in *The Corsair*) or they die of grief following desertion (Medora, in *The Corsair*).

In my first chapter on Scott's *Minstrelsy*, I mentioned the progression from Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, through the socio-historical theories of moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, to the contention that the treatment of women within a society was the gauge by which its status as either barbarous or civilized could be determined. According to these theories, the influence of which had extended far beyond academic and intellectual circles by the early nineteenth century, chivalric feudal society (in which custom idealized women and their virtue) was unique to Western European culture. No analogue to Chivalry was thought to have existed, in any recognizably similar form, East or South of the European frontiers. The consequence, that women in Western European society alone came to be afforded superior – and thus civilized and free – status, was used contrastively to deprecate the barbarous conditions of slavery and repression that perpetuated themselves in the East, where it was believed women were thought of as a form of property or as little better than animals. The Eastern Tales confound all their initial simplicity of form to complicate western acceptance of such ideas, ironically presenting them as unsophisticated and unreflective. *The Giaour* mounts an extended critique along these lines, not least in Byron's persistent and ironic references to the commonly held belief that Islam denied women a soul. The motif in *The Giaour* of

the Muslim woman as 'soulless toy for tyrant's lust' (1:490) is discussed at length by Caroline Franklin,[25] and therefore I shall not pursue it further here, other than to comment that the lines in the poem and Byron's sarcastic note are as much aimed at British and other Western European perceptions of Islam as at actual Qur'anic belief and its interpretation by Muslims. Byron's note reads: 'A vulgar error; the Koran allots at least a third of Paradise to well-behaved women; but by far the greater number of Musselmans interpret the text their own way, and exclude their moieties from heaven . . .'[26] Whilst he does not absolve Muslims like Hassan of extreme cruelty and misogyny, nor does he allow the Giaour – who has no conventional Christian belief – moral elevation. By demolishing the precedent of 'liberation' as justification for colonizing such societies, and for 'educating' them in Western European customs, Byron subverts the main discursive argument of imperial expansion and contends that, given human nature, the very concept of a liberal superpower is an oxymoronic delusion.

The freedom of women to appear in public in Spain, as represented in canto 1 of *Childe Harold*, was contrasted by Byron with the silent and unseen private space within which they exist in the Tepaleen of canto 2. The Eastern Tales reintroduce the controversy of female passivity or, conversely, activity, and examine the domestic, social and civic behaviour of women, along with their conformity or transgressive natures within severely constraining social systems. Byron's factual base for these representations was partly his own experience of Albania and Turkey, as Islamic Ottoman states in which women were indeed largely segregated. He was also drawing heavily upon accounts of Near and Middle Eastern and Islamic society that he commented on in his notes to *Childe Harold* canto 2, and which I discussed in my previous chapter. As mentioned above, Thomas Thornton's description of Turkey as a feudal society in the European sense, rather than as an orientalized despotic Sultanate, was particularly influential.[27] The homosociality depicted in *Childe Harold* canto 2 owed much to Byron's familiarity with Thornton, particularly in its focus upon an exclusively male public and leisure environment. Thornton's argument was that the Turks possessed an '*adventurous* spirit of chivalry' (my italics), in many ways similar to that of Scott's vividly vigorous Borderers in the *Minstrelsy* ballads and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Thornton deprecates the 'almost idolatrous gallantry of the chevaliers deriving from a preoccupation with women', that had defined European chivalric feudalism.[28] Byron's European heroes and his Near Eastern 'despots' are characterized with those differences of romantic chivalry and masculine adventure very much borne in mind.

The irony that runs through the Eastern Tales works, indeed, by subverting European beliefs that their lineage of gallantry – commemorated in the artifice of romance literature and the gothic revival – had shaped them as entirely morally superior. The generic figure of the harem owner, Pasha or Bey, in any of the Eastern Tales by Byron, is representative of the upholding of tradition as a means to political power; he is not necessarily evil as an individual, but is always bound by the codes of conduct of his social context. His alter ego is the European hero, whose respect for women stems from feudal tradition and chivalric romance, but which proves equally destructive.

Byron addressed the problems of traditional relationships between men and women, based on fixed power structures, through the example of Conrad in *The Corsair*. His focus, indeed, is on Conrad's downfall as a result of his relationship with the active (and therefore revolutionary) figure of the 'harlot' Gulnare. Nigel Leask's reading emphasizes the tragedy of Conrad's adventurous affair, tracing it to an excess of chivalric pride that prevents him from seeing that he is becoming party to the destruction of traditions of his own.[29] I want to take that reading into my own area of research in a specific way, and argue that Gulnare is an individual who dares attempt the kind of self-definition that Leila, in *The Giaour*, cannot even contemplate. By seizing the capacity to define herself, verbally and through her actions, Gulnare also begins to define those around her. Unlike Leila, she is hardly ever depicted as motionless or silent and never as both. She takes opportunity in whatever form it arises and uses it to appear virtually as she wishes, to Seyd and to Conrad. The poem's description of Seyd sitting 'within the Haram's secret chamber' whilst 'pondering o'er his Captive's fate' (3:131–2) seems at first to suggest the absolute power of the patriarch or despot over Gulnare and the imprisoned Conrad alike. Yet we can read the 'chamber' that encloses him as a sexual snare. Conrad, who is steeped in chivalric virtue and its associated respect for women, enters the same chamber and believes he is saving a damsel-figure until, returning to his island, he has time in his 'memory to review' (453).

The action of reviewing – or, more accurately, of seeing anew – is crucial to the poem's denouement. Conrad's thoughts, having penetrated and 'liberated' the Haram, are of Medora, the inactive and silent wife he believes he can return to, and who is his true ideal. But, as his mind anticipates 'her afar, his lonely bride: / He turned and saw – Gulnare, the homicide!' (3:462–3) Conrad cannot perpetuate or reconstruct the chivalric ideal, and the critique Byron offers in *The Corsair* of literature that valorizes chivalry and feudalism to legitimize an expanding empire

could not be clearer. Rather, Conrad becomes a tragic figure as for 'Medora's tower: / He looks in vain' (568–9). Everything that he imagines himself to be at home with is now 'strange' (569), and has long since become 'dark' (2:270). Byron repeats the motif of strangeness throughout the poem, adding archaic diction that reinforces the effect: ''Tis strange – of yore its welcome never failed' (3:571). When Conrad eventually finds the lifeless body of Medora, he has to face reality: 'But she is nothing' (622). *The Corsair* subsides from a romping tale of striking incident into a Romantic exposition of emotion and guilt. In doing so, it shifts from a masculine, heroic mode that is reminiscent of Scott's Historical Ballads into a feminized genre consistent with the Romantic Ballads. Conrad is left only with Gulnare, the active heroine who has determined events and who, as the result of chivalric respect for women, is now free. He loses his own powers of definition, sinking into 'exhaustion', 'stupor' and 'weakness' (3:646–50), before fading out of the text. The final paragraph reasserts Byron's unchanged attitude towards the fashion for chivalric literature. Conrad's pirate crew 'long mourned . . . whom none could mourn beside' (691), and they perpetuate the idealized memory of Medora: 'fair the monument they gave his bride' (692). The last couplet testifies to heroic literature's complicity in the tragedy of human ambition and passion, whether it takes the form of the French Revolution, the Peninsular War or the more diverse forms of imperial expansion that were topical at the time: 'He left a Corsair's name to other times, / Linked with one virtue, and a thousand crimes'.

In short, Byron employs shocking, stereotypical examples of extreme forms of subjection and control to question the legitimacy of the discourses of western civilization that were being used by conservative writers to elevate the moral self-esteem of Tory Britain, obsessed as they were with their historic, feudal lineage. The Eastern Tales repeatedly suggest that the taxonomies which sought to measure standards of barbarism and civilized behaviour were themselves hegemonically intrusive, and merely justified a different kind of despotism that was manifesting itself in the form of aggressive imperialism and colonial domination. Amongst the interpretations of Grand Tour rhetoric offered by Chloe Chard, the familiar, late eighteenth-century 'device of constructing binary, symmetrical oppositions between the familiar and the foreign' as a means of 'translating foreignness into discourse' is particularly helpful in summarizing the kind of Enlightenment rationalization that Byron was reacting against.[30] In one of the most quoted lines from the Tales, the Giaour makes a guilt-ridden confession that Hassan – the owner/master/executioner from whom he had sought

to free Leila – had done 'but what I had done / Had she been false to more than one' (1062–3). Byron thus assimilates the Near East and Europe, where the rhetoric of imperial power perpetually opposes them to one another.

Boundaries of literary form in the Eastern Tales

My analyses of Scott's *Minstrelsy* and his narrative poetry, and of Byron's *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 have shown how significant the choice of poetic form was to the effect and ideology of each work, and to their invocation of borderland locations. Byron's use of Spenserian form for *Childe Harold*, for example, and the controversy it generated amongst reviewers, was a means by which he publicly attacked and subverted fashionable Tory chivalric-gothic revivalism and established his own alternative literary programme of political and social protest. (On a less confrontational plane, I showed the literary link that Byron established between himself and Scott, the Spenserian romantic-gothic poet of *Don Roderick*.) *Childe Harold*'s narration of the wandering traversal of a succession of controversial borderlands, based on the digression of a 'Grand Tourist' from approved safe routes, was seen to connect the poem's plot with Byron's eccentric deviation in using a range of literary conventions and protocols. I previously showed how Scott, conversely, sought to uphold literary conventions and protocol, though with a forward-looking, providential outlook. I now want to look more closely at form and structure in the Eastern Tales, for again we see Byron using literary features that, in turn, are heavily dependent for their full effect upon the setting of the poems in border regions widely known to be politically and culturally unstable.

There is an immediate and marked difference in metric form within the Eastern Tales, in which Spenserian stanzas are dispensed with as Byron explores a range of poetic forms, more suited to the evolving subject matter of his writing. His letter to Lord Holland dated 26 September 1812, for example, suggests that he had been more than comfortable writing in Spenserian form: 'I can weave a nine line stanza faster than a couplet, for which measure I have not the cunning. – When I began "Ch[ild]e Harold" I had never tried Spenser's measure, & now I cannot scribble in any other.'[31] However, just over a year later, on 17 November 1813, in another letter to Lord Holland, Byron refers to the couplets he used in *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* as more suited to the casual telling of an oriental tale: 'I merely chose that measure as *next* to *prose* to tell a story or describe a place which struck me – I have a thorough & utter

contempt for all measures but Spencer's [*sic*] stanza and *Dryden's couplet.*'[32] Spenser still seems to have been one of Byron's poetic ideals, but not the culturally appropriate one for the narrative of the Eastern Tales.

Byron's mischievous mocking, and apparently self-effacing irony in remarks such as 'I have here and there risen to the couplet when I meant to be *[vastly] fine*' and his flippancy about 'things written in that debauched measure' cast a misleadingly trivial glaze over the deeper issues that form the core of the Tales. Similarly, his suggestion that the 'very *wild* stanzas are more like Southey . . . than anything English – but that is thoroughly Eastern & partly from the Koran' seems calculated to stimulate and excite curiosity in both the form and subject matter of his Tales.[33] *The Giaour* and *The Bride* were indeed self-consciously exotic in their appeal, and were anything but unsaleables, the term that Madame de Staël had originally used of Southey's oriental verse in a letter to Byron, and which he onwardly quoted in a letter to Thomas Moore.[34] It is, rather, Byron's reference to the 'wild' nature of his stanzas that holds the essential clue to his method, and to the ideological framework within which he was working throughout the Eastern Tales. Wildness, we have already seen, was an aesthetic concept connected with the Sublime, but contained and repeatedly referred to in a picturesque manner by Scott in the notes to the *Minstrelsy* in his descriptions of the Border raiders and their culture.

However, the literary genre with which Byron was most seeking to draw parallels in the Eastern Tales was not the 'English' oriental tale, however 'wildly' and exotically it might have been told by Southey, but the German, gothic 'volk' tale that had evolved through Sturm und Drang into Schiller's, Bürger's and Goethe's tales and onwards into the gothic romanticism of Scott. His transposition of the North-European gothic folk-tale across cultural barriers and onto the problematic borderlands of Eastern Europe and the Near East enabled him to craft poems that challenged firmly embedded western ideologies of heroism and political morality. It is in the medievalism of Schiller and Scott in particular, and in that of their contemporaries, as Marilyn Butler says in *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries*, that the origin of the Byronic hero lies.[35]

In *Childe Harold*, traditions associated with oral tales and ballad form were dealt with quite specifically in terms of interrelationship with the more complex structure and sophisticated rhyme schemes of the Spenserian stanza. But in the Eastern Tales the engagement with folk storytelling traditions is much more direct. Furthermore, in each of the Tales Byron mediates his verse through narrators who differ vastly from the highly educated, aristocratic English traveller, Harold (who

from first publication was regarded as a thinly disguised Byron, in any case). Byron's dispensing with the dignified, distanced stance of Harold, in favour of simpler, more subjective narratives dramatized by 'foreign' characters, casts a sense of greater authenticity and legitimacy onto narratives that purport to come from unsophisticated figures, or renegades, living along the margins of supposedly barbarous Near Eastern Islamic cultures.

With *The Giaour* first being published just a year after the appearance and controversial critical reception of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2, the change of narrative style itself was achieved with dramatic effect. The move towards a more naïve primitivism is established from the outset of the Eastern Tales, and is manifest in the fractured narrative of the Turkish fisherman which forms the central fragment of *The Giaour*, and towards the end of that poem in the testimony of the gothic monk. Oral traditions are therefore posited as equally existent in Near Eastern as in European cultures. The fisherman's fragmentary narrative interweaves the evidence of his own involvement in the incident at the heart of the story. It also begins with a spectacular reversal of the literary convention of an entranced, western public gazing eastwards with amazement towards the exotic other: for it is the Giaour, a European intruder only referred to in the language of an Islamic culture, who, the Turk recalls, 'drew / My gaze of wonder as he flew . . . like a demon of the night' (200–3). Whilst Byron was certainly responding to the fashionable interest in, and thus the burgeoning market for, orientalist literature he was also engaging in a classical manner with oral traditions that sought to re-establish purer, lost virtues as a counterbalance to the rise of urban commercialism in Britain. We need to look well beyond the surface narratives and more obvious literary stylistics of the Eastern Tales to understand these ambiguities and to appreciate the true complexity of the poems.

McGann, in *Fiery Dust*, takes his critique of *The Giaour* straight to the relationship between fragment poetry and ballad literature, contending that the adoption of a range of diverse, narrative 'character' rôles is part of the overall fiction of an authentic oral, bardic performance. At a literary level, Byron 'presupposes in his English readers a knowledge [of] ballad-type poetry', drawing on a plethora of 'formulaic techniques picked up from the many English Ballads, true and bogus, which were so well known'.[36] This is unquestionably the case, and extends to the other Eastern Tales, as Byron's texts reveal. I have been arguing, though, that *Childe Harold* canto 2, and the Eastern Tales, are also *culturally* rooted in Byron's first-hand lived experience of the Near Eastern Ottoman borderlands, and that they employ a range of ironies to mediate that

experience through literature. This does not mean that a contradiction emerges between Byron's choice of Near Eastern settings and his adaptation of British literary ballad form. We have seen how cultural comparisons were made between older British 'folk' cultures that had produced the ballads of antiquarian collections and existing societies deemed barbarous, such as the semi-feudal states of the Ottoman borderlands. Such comparisons were consistent with the stadial theories that had become intellectual currency following the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment – though there were certain major conditions attached, such as the insistence, already mentioned, that 'true' feudalism of a chivalric nature had only existed in Europe, whilst the East was tainted by luxury and indolence. McGann continues his critique by further exposing the structural relationship between Byron's cumulative use of 'Eastern imagery', oral tradition and fragment form – a combination which enabled him to circumvent the criticism of purist antiquarian pedants – whilst employing techniques where, quite clearly, 'the tradition is that of Sir Patrick Spens'.[37]

Following from McGann, Marjorie Levinson concurs – in her reading of *The Giaour* as a digressive variant of the Romantic fragment poem (which she distinguishes from the antiquarian ballad fragment) – that the narratives of characters such as the fisherman were designed to mimic the different dramatic recitations of oral, bardic poets.[38] However, Levinson offers a valuable extra perspective, showing that there is a lineage incontrovertibly connecting Byron's poem with Herodotus's classical *History of the Persian Wars*.[39] Byron's use of oral and bardic ballad traditions, his invocation of the evasive nature of eastern storytelling (very like Sheherezade's perpetually suspended narratives from the *Arabian Nights*, which were seminally influential for him) are, Levinson's analyses show, ultimately grounded in the world of classical literature and history. Whilst that literature was itself grounded in 'folk' traditions and oral witness, in the early years of the nineteenth century the range of references that Byron uses would have been accessible only to the well-educated British (or at the very least, European) reader.

The fragment form of *The Giaour*, and its growth as Byron 'lengthened its rattles'[40] over the 5 months and seven editions from its initial publication on 5 June 1813, has been addressed by almost every critic. *The Giaour* in fact grew from the 453 lines of fifteen copies struck for private circulation in late March 1813, through the 684-line first edition of 5 June 1813 to the 1334 lines that constitute the 7th edition of November 1813. McGann provides a table that shows when the various lines were composed and included in particular editions.[41] I have covered,

throughout the course of this chapter, aspects of the radical ways in which Byron's fragments perpetuate disjunction to deny the reader (and, indeed, himself) the comfort of any closure to parts of, or to the whole poem. In this respect, Byron diverges from the model of Rogers' *The Voyage of Columbus*. Rogers' hero is endowed with a Christian faith, ending his poem on a note of providential optimism similar to that we have seen to be so evident in Scott's poetry.[42] The extreme fragmentation and incompletion that occurs at the end of *The Giaour*, however, and the rejection of absolution is such that the poem concludes without even a conventional identification of the hero, and the eponymous figure disappears with the insubstantiality of a shadow: 'He pass'd – nor of his name and race / Hath left a token or a trace' (1329–30). Those words are attributed to the monk, and they occur six lines before the end both of his narrative and the poem. Uncannily, they recall a similar testimony from the fourth line of the Turkish fisherman's narrative: 'He passed and vanished from my sight' (203). Byron's poem is left straddling the borders of the Near East and West, and his hero, who is neither a Muslim nor a Christian but is associated with both, is as elusive and perpetually problematic to one as to the other. Reflecting upon Scott's Border raiders of the old debateable land, the figure of the Giaour is Byron's incarnation of the subversive 'borderer'. *The Giaour* is a poem that depends for existence upon culturally and politically contentious lands, within which the tragic dramas of man's desire for power are perpetually being acted out. Byron leaves his readers with a couplet that testifies to the apparent inevitability and infinite irresolution of division, conflict and destruction: 'This broken tale was all we knew / Of her he lov'd, or him he slew' (1333–4).

At the heart of Susan Wolfson's study of *The Corsair* is Byron's choice of a 'canonically stamped' poetic form, bound by a formidable array of existing rules and conventions, in order to 'render a tale of an outlaw'.[43] The heroic couplet becomes the measure of the anti-hero. The 'tale' in the case of *The Corsair* is that of a man – Conrad – who traverses authority (represented by the metaphor of the sea), to cross and recross cultural boundaries as he sees fit. The beginning of the poem is immensely interesting in its use of stylistic devices, as well as themes and motifs, which suggest authority and, paradoxically, freedom. Enjambment, for instance, was defined by Lord Kames in 1762 as a form of poetic 'license', and subsequently deemed dangerously in sympathy with revolutionary ideals. As hostility to radicalism grew in the years following the French Revolution, and continuing into the post-Napoleonic period, there was a consensus amongst conservative reviews that 'loose versification'

connected with 'moral looseness verging on political subversion'.[44] Byron's self-publicizing of his motives in choosing the heroic couplet is revealing. He wrote in his dedication of *The Corsair* to Thomas Moore that he had chosen 'the good old and now neglected heroic couplet' on the basis that it was 'perhaps, the best adapted measure to our language', declaring that 'the stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for [this] narrative'.[45] I argue that what he refers to as 'our language' – on the surface, a straightforward reference to English – has a subtext implying the voice of literary radicalism, a forward-looking 'good old' cause with only scant regard for the overly restrictive boundaries of polite form.

I have maintained throughout my analyses of Byron's poetry so far that the sea represents a Burkean revision of the Sublime as the ultimate manifestation of authority. In *The Giaour* it became the manifestation of power to which the passive individual, Leila, was sacrificed. Byron, of course, represents such tyranny as inviting subversion. Thus in all of the Eastern Tales, the borders between sea and land represent the extreme margins of political and cultural difference that are constantly open to transgression. The link between the sea as such a metaphor and Byron's use of literary form is easily made. *The Corsair*, for example, begins with an exhortation to freedom. The first couplet advocates the triumph of freedom of thought and spirit, but nevertheless emphasizes the physical bounds conventional to couplet form: 'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea, / Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free' (1:1–2). Wolfson comments on the typicality of the Byronic rhyme of 'sea' (a word associated with military campaigns and commerce, as well as with piracy and slavery) with 'free' (indicating liberty) at this primary point in the poem, as an instance of Byron's use of one aspect of versification to counter another.[46] Furthermore, she points to the momentum of the verse and the proliferation of similar rhymes in the first 22 lines of the poem, on the basis that they set the pattern for the entire two-canto work. I will return to those rhymes in a moment, but before doing so I want to look at some lines of my own choosing from the same passage, which show the rapidity of the development Byron effects from the opening couplet. A strategically powerful instance of Byron's use of enjambment, in the manner spoken about more generally by Wolfson, enters the poem at this point to break loose in the middle of an otherwise conventionally punctuated stanza:

> These are our realms, no limits to their sway –
> Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
> Ours the wild life in tumult still to range

> From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
> Oh, who can tell? not thou, luxurious slave!
> Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave.
>
> (1:5–10)

It would be difficult to overstate the significance of those lines, and I argue that they are amongst the most revealing in the Eastern Tales series. First, empire, monarchy and subjection are invoked in a traditionally punctuated couplet. Byron's use of imperial imagery makes this clear, even though the pirate's island initially looks like a paradise of freedom and egalitarianism. Then, in lines 7–8 a wild flourish, couched in the language of passion, tumult and revolution, breaks free from the pattern of physical constraint, with no endstopping between the two lines. Line 7 acts as a perfect counter-statement to line 6. The exultation of joy to be found in 'every change' in line 8 heralds social, political and literary reform as being inseparable from one another, and potentially irrepressible. Byron then returns to heavy punctuation with an endstopped couplet that prompts an ironic critique of apathy towards slavery and eastern despotism (represented by the convention of the 'luxurious slave') and a reassertion that the sea, the ultimate manifestation of authority, invites challenge. The florid Burkean stylistics and rhetorical figures of this last couplet are inverted in the typical Byronic manner.

The examination of rhyme schemes in *The Corsair* offered by Wolfson provides a comprehensive account of the way in which the emphasis on an outlaw dominates the more conventional framework of the heroic couplet. Besides pointing to the subversive use of feminine rhymes at 'heroic' points in the poem, she has identified the 'bounding' nature of Conrad, and the poem's plot involving his transgression of borders and boundaries, as all contributing to Byron's expansive resistance to 'the traditional protocols of heroic couplets'.[47] Wolfson focuses on the succession of rhymes such as 'sea / free, sway / obey, range / change, fight / delight, zeal / feel, core / soar' in the opening lines as evidence of the radical reform of the heroic measure that could appeal to 'aristocratic' Whig reviewers such as Francis Jeffrey. Jeffrey, in his unsigned review of *The Corsair* and *The Bride of Abydos* for the *Edinburgh Review* dated April 1814, praised *The Corsair* (which he deemed a finer poem than *The Bride*), not least on the basis that Byron had given to the heroic couplet 'a spirit, freedom and variety of tone, of which . . . we scarcely believed that measure susceptible', and that in doing so had proven 'that the oldest and most respectable measure . . . is at least as flexible as any other – and

capable . . . of vibrations as strong and rapid as those of a lighter structure'.[48] Seven years after the *Edinburgh*'s contemptuous review of *Hours of Idleness* had derided Byron's immature view of an heroic past, the keywords 'oldest' and 'most respectable' are the defining characteristics here for Jeffrey. Byron's respect for the poetic integrity of the couplet would have helped greatly in securing his praise.[49] *The Corsair*, and the Eastern Tales generally, were far more generously reviewed than *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. Partly, this was because Byron appeared more conventional in his telling of tales of 'striking incident', and in his construction of heroes who at least on a superficial level of understanding fought against the barbarism of eastern tyranny – until, that is, he complicated the matter, as in each of the tales he does, by showing that barbarism exists also within the actions of Western Imperialism. The embedding of chivalric-style heroes within verse forms consistent with 'class invested . . . literary style' (these words are Wolfson's) gained the favour of the *Monthly Review*, which was delighted by Byron's 'return to the standard heroic measure'.[50] George Ellis for the Tory *Quarterly Review* cast Byron in the conventions of the British aristocracy and its Augustan patriarchal traditions, speaking of 'the striking evidence of this poet's talent', and praising his use of eastern imagery as 'distinct and glowing, as if illuminated by its native sunshine'.[51] Ellis, however, objected to some (unspecified) passages on the grounds that they 'excited sympathies' that might lead to the poet being able to 'possess himself of our imagination and become master of our emotions', and thus exceed 'the legitimate pretensions of poetry'.[52] His overall verdict was that *The Corsair* and *Lara* were superior to *The Giaour*, because more in keeping with the manner of poetry that reflected the 'progressive improvement' of language and manners from one age to another.[53] William Roberts in the *British Review*, whose negative criticism of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 was discussed in my previous chapter, likewise regarded *The Corsair* as an 'improvement' in terms of manners and language, and praised Byron's use of the heroic couplet.[54]

Byron's use of Heroic form to tell tales of piracy and sexual intrigue in *The Corsair*, though, was less appreciated by some other conservative journals whose investment lay in maintaining the restraining borders of unambiguous morality. For a different perspective, we might look to the *Antijacobin*, whose criticism of *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 was, similarly, discussed in the last chapter. A brief return to *The Giaour* puts the position taken by the *Antijacobin* into perspective. The anonymous reviewer had been prepared to endorse *The Giaour*, but only with qualifying deprecations of the 'ambiguous' morality of some of the more

sensational subject matter and characterization. He begins by declaring that 'Lord Byron is, unquestionably, one of the best poets of the present day', but then levels him with the defect of 'the ambiguity cast on his opinions'.[55] This ambiguity, as I have argued, far from being a defect in terms of Byron's programme is the pivotal point upon which the ideology of the Eastern Tales turns, and it is entirely dependent upon narratives involving the constant traversing and transgression of Near Eastern borderlands for its success. The *Antijacobin* was not prepared to maintain its brief show of enthusiasm for Byron's literary skills, and its review of *The Bride of Abydos* and *The Corsair* opens, in contrast, with a tirade against Byron's 'extremely prolific' habit of 'bursting' upon the public with poetic examinations of a succession of 'beauties and deformities'.[56] The rhetoric of the *Antijacobin* is predictable, but nevertheless interesting, for it accuses Byron through the use of orientalist conventions, metaphors and allegorical figures that were regularly used to denigrate the East: lack of control resulting in overly prolific issue, and a fascination with exotic beauty that sits disturbingly alongside deformity. The review speaks ironically of the 'wonderful rapidity' with which the three Eastern Tales so far published had succeeded each other. Indeed, the *Antijacobin* goes so far as directly to attribute Byron's literary promiscuity to his 'excursion to the East'.[57] The lack of literary willpower and self-control that he is accused of, having crossed the borders of civilization and rationality into the realm of barbarism and passion, suggests the ongoing nature of the kind of addiction or disease that I referred to in my previous chapter. Again, it is entirely connected with notions of borders as protective barriers between cultures, rather than areas of exchange. The *Christian Observer*, as might be expected, was morally outraged by *The Corsair*, and deplored Byron's use of the heroic couplet to give voice to 'the jovial ribaldry of a savage piratical crew'.[58]

As a poem with a pirate hero who lives with his band of outlaw followers on an island in the sea (a metaphor for authority), and who traverses the waves as he sees fit, *The Corsair* offered Byron virtually unlimited scope for advocating alternative forms of government. We have seen that *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 were criticized for the aimless, modern wandering of their protagonist. The theme of the nomadic traveller is picked up time and again throughout *The Corsair*. In lines 15–16 of canto 1, for instance, we read of 'The exulting sense – the pulse's maddening play, / That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way'. The poem moves from its impassioned opening exultation of freedom into a description of Conrad's island, however, and we enter a familiar feudal domain. The scene, in which the pirates 'game – carouse – converse – or

whet the brand' (1:48), is instantly reminiscent of Ali Pasha's palace at Tepaleen (and the Palikar campfire episodes) of *Childe Harold* canto 2, as well as of the hall at Branksome in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and that of the Douglas chieftains' Highland borders home in *The Lady of the Lake*. The society depicted by Byron initially looks like a pantisocratic style democracy, but it becomes readable as a conventional rank-based stronghold. The Corsair, who is constructed as a composite blend of Byron's own rebellious hauteur and Ali Pasha's audaciously flamboyant individualism, is a typically Byronic hero, 'lonely straggler' (1:130) whose 'dark eye-brow shades a glance of fire' (196). It is a prominent case of Byron's blending his highly individualized orientalism with outward forms of masculine feudalism previously noted in Scott.

If we look back to Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* we immediately see the literary precedents that Byron was working with, and which he seeks to challenge in the Eastern Tales. The romance of *The Lay* involves a crucial oppositional interplay between on the one hand the regressive trope of oriental superstition, linked to Roman Catholicism, magic and retrospection in the figures of Michael Scott, the Lady of Branksome and William of Deloraine, and on the other, the enlightened chivalric gallantry that Scott enlisted as the prerequisite for the propulsion of the Scottish Borders forward as a model of morality, epitomized in Henry Cranstoun, Margaret and the re-tuned Bard. Byron brings notions of historic feudalism and perceptions of the contemporary orient together in each of the Eastern Tales, telling his own stories of 'striking incidents'. The stories all draw the reader into scenes of immediate intimacy, along the shorelines of the Ottoman Near East, precisely because these borders constitute areas in which perceptions and prejudices of other cultures are undetermined, and never resolved. By the end of each Tale, the initial clarity with which the oriental and western figures were drawn and distinguished has dissolved and, discomfortingly, the two have all but shaded into one another. Literary precedents are subjected to as much scrutiny and subversion as in *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2. The tropes of the Harem girl and the 'romantic' figure of the damsel in distress of chivalric medievalism each bear heavily upon the themes used in the Eastern Tales, appealing to a female readership familiar with sentimental, modern gothic literature. Byron's Eastern Tales thus courted a public that had recourse to its own knowledge of a prolific range of contemporary gothic and oriental literature, typified by Scott's gothic ballads and narrative poems, Mrs Radcliffe's romances, and eastern fiction such as William Beckford's *Vathek*.

Shorelines as borders: Estrangement and the impossibility of return

In my previous chapter, I argued that Byron constructed *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 around a narrative that traversed and crossed a series of borders separated by seas and rivers. The sea was seen each time to serve as a highly political symbol of authority, presenting the reader with a perspective on the land ahead based on prescriptive definitions and prejudices. In Portugal, for example, we saw how Harold's first impression is described through a reflection of the land seen in the sea. Albania, noted by Byron as virtually absent from western literature and outside the known landscape of classical Europe, is visible on approach only in terms of its immediate shore, its interior mountains initially shrouded in mist. The Eastern Tales differ notably in the way that borderlands are used structurally and within narrative. Instead of the *interior* of the lands of the Near East providing the main location for the poems' action, as in *Childe Harold*, it is the margins where the land meets the sea that provide the narrative fulcrum. In *The Giaour*, Leila is taken from the 'silent shore' (365) to be executed by being drowned at sea – in 'channel'd waters dark and deep' (369). The central narrative of the fragmented poem is that of a fisherman whose skiff is used to convey her to the place, which nevertheless remains in sight of the bank to which the chillingly ironic 'calm wave' (375) of her death sends its ripples. *The Bride of Abydos* involves a hero who turns pirate. Conrad, the eponymous protagonist of *The Corsair*, is likewise a pirate. (As I mentioned earlier, Byron wrote the poem at a time when British naval forces, having succeeded in suppressing the Wahhabi ports of the Persian Gulf, were attempting to deal with the problem of piracy along the Barbary coast.) Kaled, the cross-dressing page in *Lara*, drowns Ezzelin, and in doing so sets off the chain of events that finally brings about the death of the hero. In *The Siege of Corinth*, a renegade Italian is borne by 'the Adriatic' to 'the Paynim shore' (198–9) where he becomes 'a traitor in a turban'd horde' (399), joining the besieging Turks on the foreshore and initiating the annihilation of both sides. In each of the Eastern Tales, sea and land form distinct areas that can be crossed and re-crossed, sometimes furtively and sometimes aggressively. The sea was crucial to Britain's power structure. As Bayly writes, following the major sea battles of the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by 1815 'British squadrons controlled virtually every major sea route [around the near and middle East].'[59] Byron's use of the sea in the Eastern Tales connects the aesthetics of the sublime with manifestations of masculine power and ambition, to

render the sea an omnipresent metaphor for the deployment of imperial ambition and might.

Whilst the sea is readable as a site of masculine enterprise in the Eastern Tales, at the other pole of gender women emerge from their virtual exclusion from the narrative of *Childe Harold* canto 2 to become another immutable presence within the Eastern Tales. Metaphorically speaking, the more passive and compliant of these women feature as traditional, conservative literary personifications of the *land*. Laws and social codes of conduct are imposed upon them by a male-dominated society. The motif of the Harem, seen from such an allegorical perspective, represents the enforced perpetuation of systems of belief and the enslavement of entire peoples by imposition of customs and laws. Yet whilst Byron takes female vulnerability to its extreme, in the form of the deaths of characters such as Leila in *The Giaour*, Medora in *The Corsair* and Francesca in the *Siege*, the women of the Eastern Tales, as we have seen, are by no means all, or always, passive. The rebellious harem slave Gulnare of *The Corsair*, who 'becomes' the transvestite page-figure of Kaled in *Lara*, as other critics have indicated in their readings of Byron's progressive narration from Tale to Tale, undermines the manner in which 'tradition' insisted that male and female social rôles and paradigms should be stable constructs. Recalling the attempts of travel writers within the Ottoman territories to impose categories, which I mentioned in my previous chapter, these transgressive women break down the formalities of rule that enable knowledge to be converted into power. Although there are clearly many anxieties informing Byron's creation and development of active women within the Eastern Tales, they undoubtedly challenge the coherence of orientalism, as we have come to see it in Said's sense, as a discourse and set of paradigms that endorse Western dominance.

Nigel Leask's readings directly relate literary tradition to political controversy in the Eastern Tales. Within that relationship, the passive female figures in the Eastern Tales are seen as representative of an orientalized European 'narrative past'. The oriental passive female and the feudal maid within the gothic tower, both literary stereotypes, indeed bear an uncanny resemblance to one another. Leask suggests that the Byronic heroes' desire for passive women is ultimately a rejection of modernity and all that it stands for; in every case circumstances conspire to reveal it to be disastrous.Thus, the displaced invocations of chivalric 'courtly love' that motivate characters such as the Giaour and the Corsair (who becomes Lara when seen in the context of narrative progression), and the 'old' virtues of pride and honour which accompany that love, support a critique of political systems and ideologies founded on traditions of rank and

hierarchy.[60] In *The Corsair* Medora, by contrast with Gulnare, cannot exist without her patriarchal husband-master: rumours of his death destroy her. Her death, in turn, results in Conrad's disappearance from the narrative. Conversely, the active heroines of the Tales represent the seduction of societies by modern concepts such as individualism, revolutionary liberty and the questioning of authority. Yet even Gulnare, transformed into Kaled, sinks into madness and eventual death following the loss of Lara.

Lara and the East within Europe

Lara, the fourth of Byron's Eastern Tales and the last to be written whilst he was still living in Britain, was published in August 1814. Thus it reached the public 6 months after the first edition of *The Corsair*, but also just a year after Scott's last commercially successful poem, the six canto Gothic romance *Rokeby*, less than a year after the same author's attempt at Arthurian romance, *The Bridal of Triermain*, and a month after the first of his novels, *Waverley*.[61] I have chosen to conclude with a discussion of *Lara* followed by some consideration of Byron's 1823 poem *The Island* for a number of reasons. Not least amongst these is the manner in which *Lara* brings Byron's Eastern Tales to their natural apogee in terms of the thematic use of borderlands and their rôle in a poetics of cultural representation, whilst *The Island* offers a later, different perspective. *Lara* is the poem in which Byron finally 'makes strange' the East in a European plane of representation. *The Island* reverses that situation by making Europe strange. Ambiguity and illusion, which are main themes throughout each of the Eastern Tales, are at their most significant in the plot and text of these poems. Equally importantly, it is in *Lara* and *The Island* that Byron's indebtedness and response to Scott, to his standing in the literary world of the early nineteenth century and to his literary politics, is most evidently and eloquently marked. Finally, whilst *The Siege of Corinth* was written later than *Lara*, and is frequently considered one of the Eastern Tales on account of its treatment of Christian/Muslim conflict on the Ottoman borders, Byron stated in a letter to Murray dated 2 September that *Lara* was the poem that brought the series, as it then stood, to a natural and coherent conclusion:

> A word or two of 'Lara' which your enclosure brings before me. – It is of no great promise separately but as connected with the other tales – it will do very well for the *vols* you mean to publish – I would recommend

> this arrangement – Childe H[arold] – the smaller poems – Giaour – Bride – Corsair – Lara–the last completes the series – and it's [*sic*] very likeness renders it necessary to the others.[62]

Strategies of communication, language and translation, and their effect upon human understanding, are immensely important in *Lara*. Strangeness, which I showed earlier to be so important to the conclusion of *The Corsair*, dominates the poem as it moves towards the final scene in which the 'page' Kaled is depicted tracing her 'strange characters along the sand' (2:625). (By this point she has been revealed to be a woman.) Language constitutes both a refuge and a problem, hinting at cultural impasse, from the outset in this most reflective and metaphysical of Byron's Eastern Tales. Count Lara is unable or unwilling to speak for the first 225 lines of the poem. His taciturn nature contrasts markedly with the disgressive, rhetorical rambling of Childe Harold, and he neither breaks into the confessional mode of the Giaour nor the highly dramatized dialogue of Conrad, the Corsair. When Lara does break his silence, with the exception of a few lines of exchange with Otho, 'his words are strung / In terms that seem not of his native tongue; / Distinct but strange . . . / . . . accents of another land' (1:229–32). In the depth of night, he cries out in 'strange wild accents' (276) that frighten those who do not understand them, and in the daytime he speaks in a subdued tone only to his eastern page. Byron makes a great deal of the linguistic barrier that separates Lara and Kaled from the other characters in the poem, and from the reader. Partly, Lara's muteness in his native language stems from the morally untranslatable nature of the events that have taken place elsewhere, and which are never explicitly revealed. In this respect, *Lara* offers the reader of the Eastern Tales series another key to the problems of negotiating the ambiguous 'truths' and alternative accounts presented in *The Giaour*.

Suspicion, pertaining to what the traveller may have become involved in across 'the bounding main' (1:12), is similarly a main theme of *Lara*. Byron does not tell his readers what Ezzelin, Lara's accuser, actually knows. In terms of the poem's effect it is entirely expedient that the details remain a matter of speculation and imagination. The *withholding* of information thus infects *Lara* with a heightened sense of drama that complements Scott's *insertion* of explanation into 'Sir Patrick Spens' – the difference being that Byron encourages and excites his readers' individual speculation, whilst Scott prescribes his own, predetermined version of events.

A vital part of the extraordinary atmosphere of *Lara* is the suspense that hangs over the poem because haunted by a sense of an overwhelming

East that cannot, or does not, reveal itself in any tangible way until the very end. In the last few lines of the poem, when the mortally wounded Lara finally ceases conversing with Kaled in words that can only be guessed at 'from the tone' (2:454), and raises his hand in his last conscious act to point incontrovertibly 'to the East' (467), one feels a sense of relief and, even if only vaguely, of explanation. Until that point connection with the orient and with configurations of the Islamic world is manifest in Byron's use of cloaked figures such as Kaled, with 'his' eastern looks and name, and the mysterious Lara, returned from crossing the 'bounding main' (1:12) and with a complexion when angered that approaches 'blackness in its demon hue' (2:74). The eastern 'scimitar' (2:363) used in the fight with Otto is consistent with conventions of representing oriental savagery. Lara is the traveller who has become so entranced, so changed and – literally – rendered incomprehensible by the experience and witness of 'barbarous' culture across the boundaries between Europe and the East that he cannot readily present himself in conventional terms. Indeed, he can only refer in broken sentences that recall the fragment narrative of *The Giaour* (and in the involuntary shrieks of a nightmare, followed by silence) to events that took place in 'lands where – but I must not trifle…' (2:50). The reader is led to speculate over the rest, and the imagination leads back to *The Corsair*. Byron's prefixed advertisement to the three editions in which *Lara* was published anonymously with Rogers' *Jacqueline* helped this association along, by suggesting 'The reader… may probably regard it as a sequel to a poem that recently appeared.… To his conjecture is also referred the name of the writer.'[63] Whilst the subsequent editions in which it was printed separately and under Byron's name did not contain that advertisement, the relationship between Byron's poems had become incontrovertibly established.

We might well ask why Byron should choose to locate the poem that succeeded *The Corsair* within a European, gothic setting if he wanted to deal with oriental material again. At one level, he was clearly responding once more to the kind of politicized gothic verse romance that *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 addressed, and more specifically to Scott's poem about return, power and disinheritance, *Rokeby*, which I will come back to shortly. But one of the points I have been arguing throughout my analysis of Byron's writing of the Near East is that he constantly works and reworks themes, motifs and figures, turning them into conceits and reversing tropes, to expose moral complacency and cultural ambiguity. *Lara* enacts the inversion of the familiar figure of the European stranger in the East, so epitomized by the Giaour, Selim in *The Bride of Abydos*, and Conrad in *The Corsair*. Count Lara's 'blacken'd fame' (2:122) operates

at an obvious level to reinforce the moral smear brought about by an alleged crime, but at another level it exoticizes the hero as a European who has unmistakably turned Turk.

One of the most immediately 'strange' aspects of *Lara* is the manner in which the understated eastern element manages to dominate the extensive gothic stylization of the plot and frame text. Nigel Leask has pointed out that the oriental *materiale* of the other Tales is not so much denied as 'condensed or displaced' in *Lara*.[64] That condensation and displacement provide the base from which my own inquiries seek further to explore how far there is a readable eastern cultural strand to this Tale, and how it represents Byron's frustration with convention, cultural hegemony and the unquestioning acceptance of 'truths' purveyed by authoritarian sources.

From the outset there is tension between two elements – orientalism and gothic feudalism – which hold the poem together. That tension does something more dynamic than draw mere comparisons: it foregrounds fundamentally oppositional cultural prejudices, then undermines them. The opening lines of *Lara*, for instance, consist of a standard literary set-piece of gothic, chivalric revivalism that delineates the full, rank-based feudal system: the first ten-line paragraph contains references to 'serfs', 'slavery', the 'feudal chain', the 'unforgotten lord' and 'chieftain' and a host of 'gay retainers' (1:1–9). The first three couplets are concerned with servitude and vassalage: they are endstopped, conventionally punctuated and contained. Two couplets narrating the celebrations of Lara's return follow, and Byron's abrupt switch into enjambment offers the first hint of the disturbance to order and convention that he brings with him. The next paragraph begins with a motif of homeland and belonging, followed by a question that introduces the notion of crossing borders as a form of straying, abandonment and the transgression of rule: 'The chief of Lara is returned again: / And why had Lara cross'd the bounding main?' (1:11–12). Borders, at this point in the poem, are posited as cultural and moral boundaries, with Byron assuming the voice of a reactionary rhetorician. In answer to the bewildered indignation implied by that initial question, Byron starts to add the references that accumulate to hint at Lara's experience: upon his return Lara's sole companion is a 'page, / of foreign aspect' (1:47–8). Lines 528–615, towards the end of canto 1, comprise an extended description of the page, in the middle of which he is named. The portrait of Kaled again employs many conventions of gothic romance, but nevertheless refers to him in a manner that testifies to his eastern ethnicity: his face is described as 'darkly delicate' from exposure to his 'native sun' (1:528–9); his character is of 'A latent

fierceness that far more became / His fiery climate than his tender frame' (580–1). To the adjectival 'blackness' of Lara's reputation, and the more literal darkening of his physical appearance, these and other motifs link Kaled and 'his' master to cultural aspects associated with a presumed orient. In this way, Byron's text guides the reader eastwards and towards conventions that translate orientalism into 'understanding'. The reality, however, is that no one is able accurately to read the strange page, for he/she is not what prejudgement might lead one to suppose. Byron again sets up conventions and images in order to reveal them as deceptions, just as he had in *Childe Harold* cantos 1 and 2 – Kaled is uncovered, and revealed to be a woman in canto 2, lines 514–19.

It might be considered reasonable to speculate that Kaled's late revelation as a woman was designed by Byron to insure against accusations of extreme immorality in the form of homosexuality. If we recall the lines withdrawn from *Childe Harold* canto 2, which were replaced by an account of women within the Harem, and reconsider the homophobic social climate within which Byron was living and writing, such an explanation seems plausible and likely. Indeed, Leask has drawn attention to the extent to which Kaled's late exposure as a woman seems almost an afterthought to the homoerotic charge that exists in the relationship between 'him' and Lara up to that point.[65] However, the secrecy, impenetrability and exotic mysteriousness of Kaled's and Lara's relationship, whilst it builds a powerful homoerotic frisson within the poem, also approximates to the codes of conventional gender segregation associated with the East from which it has come.

The complexity of gender relationships and their place within social systems in *Lara* become clearer when the poem is read in the light of Byron's earlier poems and Scott's poetry. With *Lara*, Byron indeed returns his Eastern Tales to an exclusively male public domain. Other than Kaled, there are no female characters in the poem. The motif of the Hall that opens the text once again recalls the feudal aspect of Tepaleen in *Childe Harold* canto 2 and, by definition, Scott's Branksome from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* with its *mise en scène* of 'bright faces in the busy hall, / Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall' (1:5–6). However, within the Hall of Lara the exuberance and *joie de vivre* that emanated from the homosocial and multiethnic world of Tepaleen (and, by inference, that of Scott's Hall of Branksome) immediately evaporates. A miasmic gloom descends on a public world that (contrary to that of Ali Pasha) does not admit foreigners, and within which a power struggle emerges from inside the immediately local, patriarchal society when it is realized that one of them – Lara – has become 'changed'. As I have indicated, the

truest approximation of *Lara* to Scott's poetry is to *Rokeby*. In Chapter 2 I looked at the scene in Scott's opening canto, which depicts the Baronial Hall and its company into which the dark-skinned and treacherous 'stranger' (1:v:20; vi:1; viii:1), Sir Bertram Risingham, is admitted after his return from a career buccaneering in the Spanish Main and central America. The similarities between Risingham and Lara, the subsequent ways in which Scott and Byron deal with estrangement and material return, and the poems' different conclusions, now re-emerge as factors of central comparative importance in this penultimate section of my study.

Conducted in an incomprehensible language, the 'import' of which can only be guessed at from its 'tone' (2:444), the *private* world of Lara and Kaled is veiled by both physical and linguistic clothing, obscuring Kaled's true gender till almost the last moment of the tale. Byron's text becomes increasingly effeminized as his poem draws towards its conclusion. Lara's death and Kaled's madness employ the tropes of women, hysteria and the need for patriarchal authority. But feudal masculinity and oriental femininity are shown to be unstable – the peasant's narrative suggests that Kaled, far from being a passive companion, is a self-motivated killer like Gulnare. If we look at the Eastern Tales as a series, this is history repeating itself as Byron establishes a direct link with the homicidal Gulnare. The suppression of 'truth' in *Lara* results not in the perpetuation of western systems and their supremacy, epitomized by the country to which Lara has returned and Kaled has been brought. For Lara and Kaled undermine these in the motif of the peasant's revolt and liberation. Instead, Byron allows his Tale to subside into maladjustment and illness, represented in the terminal form of Kaled's mad tracing of 'strange characters' along the borderline of the shore. The disordered script of the woman who subverts all the conventions of womanhood remains indecipherable, and *Lara* concludes with 'her tale untold – her truth too dearly prov'd' (2:627). The final feminization of *Lara* enacts an inversion of the remasculinization that concludes Scott's *Minstrelsy*.

Scott and Byron: Some endings and some beginnings

The chronological proximity of *Rokeby*, *The Bridal of Triermain*, *Waverley* and *Lara* is significant in a number of ways. First, there is the turning point in British literary history in which Scott fully diverted his attention away from the established masculine genre of verse romance and towards the writing of the historical novels for which he would be best remembered, leaving Byron as Britain's foremost poet. In that respect, Scott crossed a literary border from which, apart from the occasional foray

back into poetry and verse drama, he would not return. Secondly, the ideological splitting of the two main genres of literary production – poetry and the novel – between these two writers was such that at this point poetry became dominated by a controversial aristocratic, republican, radical Whig ideology whilst the novel, which would develop as the dominant literary form in the nineteenth century, became the domain of the nation's most celebrated traditionalist, pro-Imperial and monarchist literary giant. The reality of Scott's historically progressive programme, in stark contrast with Byron's frustration over the failure of ideals of individual freedom, is perhaps never more clearly delineated than in this generic split. Thirdly, and inseparable from all I have just been saying, the influence of *Rokeby* on *Lara* is such that Byron's poem is directly readable as a response to Scott's last major poem of borderlands, and constitutes a highly public form of literary dialogue.[66]

The influence of *Rokeby* on *Lara* is at its most textually obvious in the extended description of Lara in canto 1:289–382, where the Byronic hero's many similarities with Scott's swarthy and misanthropic villain are both a tribute to the other poet and an inversion of his moral code. The haughtiness and silent pride of Byron's mysterious character, for instance, are a sign of individualism against the crowd and disdain for public opinion in a man whose nature has been irrevocably changed by travel in foreign lands: whereas for Scott the same features prefigure a ruthlessness that threatens to subvert the social cohesion of a Britain whose very foundations are laid in lineage, descent and legitimate succession. It is no coincidence that Lara is orphaned, or that he abandoned his destined bride in order to wander abroad and return with a young boy as a companion (although that boy is subsequently revealed to be a woman). Lara's involvement in an event too appalling to be articulated, recalling the 'memory of some deadly feud/Or disappointed passion' (*Childe Harold*, 1:66–7) adds to his status within the context of a poem that continually hints at the exotic East but which remains in its dark, gothic, European setting. Furthermore, the Spanish location returns Byron's Tales to the European/Islamic borderlands first encountered in the opening canto of *Childe Harold*. But as I have been exemplifying, Byron's use of the full costume of baronial chivalry unmistakably invokes Scott's *Rokeby*. Lara, like Bertram Risingham, has been irrevocably changed by experience. Unlike Scott's buccaneers, however, he cannot bring his foreign 'treasure' (Kaled) home and convert it into a European heritage. At the end of the poem, Lara dies rejecting absolution as he steadily fixes his gaze on Kaled and raises his arm in a final gesture towards the East, cast as a man whose last conscious act is a rejection of

his own culture and all that it holds to be sacred. On the other hand, Scott's Risingham – who is portrayed as a ruffian from the outset – is redeemed through a litany of confession and remorse prior to his death.

Once again, the concept of borders and the creation of heroes that cross them in order to foray and bring home cultural curiosities from the other side is key to the structures and plots of both writers, as is the homage to oral culture that by this point seems almost to have become obligatory to each. *Rokeby* achieves the effect of an oral element through the character of the harper, and a succession of interpolated ballads that include 'To the Moon', 'Brignal Banks', 'The Cypress Wreath', 'The Harp' and 'And whither would you lead me then'.[67] In *Lara*, the 'peasant's tale' at the end of canto 2 (550–97), which tells of the murder of Ezzelin, has a similar effect and also refers Byron's readers back to the Turkish Fisherman's narrative that was central to *The Giaour*. A profound difference between the two poets' approach to oral literature is evident. Scott uses songs with themes of patriotic lament, whilst Byron's 'peasant's tale', told after feudal authority has been subverted through the revolt, is a narration of revolution and murder. Byron's Ezzelin represents authority, and the bringing of Lara to account for his dalliance with piracy in the East, but before he can complete his testimony he is assassinated by the invasive and subversive presence of that East, embodied in the hermaphroditic figure of Kaled. Piracy, which is such a favourite theme with Byron, also figures in Scott's poem. But whilst Byron's pirates – most notably in the configuration of Conrad, the Corsair, and his development into the returned wanderer, Lara – are flamboyant renegados whose chosen 'spoils' remain illicit and corrupting, in the form of the highly sexualized women they attempt to steal away but never make into lawful wives, Scott's *Rokeby* legitimizes the spoil of buccaneers and subsumes it into the respectable estate and inheritance of the British aristocracy. Robbery on the high seas, for Scott, can be approved as long as it is given the sanction of the state and returns with its gains to Britain, where they can become part of the heritage of the nation. Buccaneering, therefore, displaces and re-enacts the exploits of the Border raiders of the *Minstrelsy* at an Imperial distance.

Configuring the future of cultural encounter

I wish in conclusion to acknowledge some further lines of development in both Byron's and Scott's careers, that provide the groundwork for more extended study of the configuration of cultural encounter. The present book is concerned primarily with poetry, but Scott's importance

as a novelist is such that a full consideration of his treatment of the themes I have been discussing would necessarily involve tracing their ongoing development throughout his prose. Scott's novels turn on figurations of cross-cultural encounter and debatable lands as surely as does his poetry, but his career as a novelist was so prolific and his fiction so rich in details that I am unable to follow those lines of enquiry adequately here. Needless to say, Susan Manning's work on the debatable lands of the Netherlands, both in actuality and where 'Dutchness' or configurations of low-country cultural stereotypes appear in Scott's novels, extends crucially into areas that place Scott's fiction in the broad picture of European, British and American transatlantic relationships.[68] Her consideration of the sea as an ever-threatening natural force, socio-political agent and metaphor in novels such as *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *The Abbot* (1820) and *The Betrothed* (1825) adds further insight to the comparative perspectives on Scott's and Byron's poetry that I am aiming at here. Likewise, Caroline McCracken-Flesher's work at the time this book is going to press, on memory and the problems encountered by characters returning to Scotland from exotic locations in Scott's later novels, confronts issues that will interest my readers.[69] McCracken-Flesher's interest in the changing nature of Scotland, and the impossibility of simple return to a 'known culture' in works such as *Chronicles of Canongate* (1827), looks in intriguing ways at the changes wrought both in Scottish characters who have lived, or been born, in distant countries such as India and in those who have remained in Scotland. She furthermore explores the cultural encounters of such differing Scots with one another.

Returning to Byron and poetry, if we extend our perspective beyond the Eastern Tales to the larger picture of Byron's overall career, themes of East–West encounter similarly persist. Typically, he continued to work with themes of a protagonist's subversion of codes of normative behaviour and with the transgression of established physical boundaries. Analyses of Byron's later works again extend beyond the scope of this book, but it is important to acknowledge that the 'Haidee' and Seraglio episodes of cantos 2 to 6 of *Don Juan*, and the Russian cantos 7 and 8 adapt and rework earlier oriental and Near Eastern material, from both *Childe Harold* and the Eastern Tales, into the mature satire and burlesque of his final years.

Byron's late poem *The Island, or Christian and His Comrades* (1823) is set in the South Pacific, and therefore is not an 'Eastern Tale' in the Turkish sense. However, it treats primitivist tropes that have many affinities with processes of orientalism, and uses a narrative of cultural encounter and

erotic politics between a highly sexualized, southern woman (this time free and empowered) and a British man (in this instance, a mutineer, and thus a fugitive criminal). The normal gender roles are reversed. Furthermore, despite his choice of a South-Sea setting, Byron returns to a Scottish theme in *The Island*, casting a Hebridean outlaw as his protagonist, using Ossianic imagery of wildness and once more gesturing towards Scott. Austere Gothic motifs, culminating in the resemblance of a subterranean cavern to a Cathedral in canto 4, sit alongside descriptions of luxuriance and South-Sea primitivism. Configurations such as these are persistently reinforced by Byron's choice of language and rhyme, within a narrative of cross-cultural romance. I shall say more about Byron's dialogue with Scott soon, because this poem treats strangeness in ways that allow conclusions not available from the Eastern Tales alone. First, I want to look at some thematic issues in *The Island* which relate to those discussed throughout the course of this book, and which offer variant representations of cultural encounter.

Most critics now include some discussion of *The Island* with analyses of the Eastern Tales. Nigel Leask shows how Byron finally 'reworks many of the themes and narrative techniques' of the earlier oriental poems. He points out that the utopian ending offers a complete reversal of something more general, pervasive and profound, the 'normal discourse of colonialism'.[70] Indeed, Leask's and also Caroline Franklin's readings of *The Island* illumine the extent to which Byron continued to respond to social and literary conventions concerned with sexuality and the subjugation of women, and to the hegemonies of colonialism, as ideological formulations that fed off one another.

Much of my discussion has concerned notions of South, East and North insofar as Scott's and Byron's poetry responded imaginatively to Enlightenment codes of categorization and cultural comparativism. I have looked at the ways in which Scott celebrated heterogeneity only to confirm the separateness between Highland and Lowland Scotland in poems such as *The Lady of the Lake*, whilst Byron's rebellious characters saw eastern eyes looking out from southern European faces, and northern, European feudal mannerisms in the behaviour of Ottoman Beys and Governors. The short extract from Captain Bligh's *Narrative of the Mutiny and Seizure of the Bounty* that Byron included as an appendix to *The Island* makes clear that the mutiny was led exclusively by men from the North of England.[71] The extract also gives more coverage to Fletcher Christian than does the poem, for Byron subverts his subtitle to make one of Christian's comrades the effective protagonist.[72] In Byron's poem, the fictitious Torquil's Hebridean status takes northernness to geographical

extremes, but in literary terms it has other functions. Torquil is born of an ordinary family, but whilst he is no chieftain he nevertheless embodies Ossianic characteristics: emerging from a wild, natural environment in a manner also reminiscent of Scott's Highlanders in *The Lady of the Lake*, he is introduced as a 'fair-hair'd offspring of the Hebrides' who has been 'rock'd in his cradle by the roaring wind' (2:165–7) and 'nursed by the legends of his land's romance' (176). Byron conjures 'visions' of him as the 'patriotic hero' or 'despotic chief' (204) that he might have become, under different circumstances and in another age, gesturing towards the vogue for translated epic at a time when such literature was highly popular in Britain.[73] Further references to the Firth of 'Pentland with its whirling seas' (166) and to 'Loch-na-gar' establish markers of place that proceed to combine 'Celtic memories' with epic legends of 'Troy' and the 'Phrygian mount' (291). Torquil, indeed, joins a pantheon of heroes and anti-heroes from every known continent – Ishmael, a Chillean 'cacique', a 'rebellious Greek', Tamerlane, Nero. Unlike Scott's Highland hero Roderick Dhu, and indeed Fergus McIvor and Even Dhu Maccombich of *Waverley*, he keeps his life. Fletcher Christain's death – he plunges from a cliff-top onto jagged, wave-lashed rocks rather than face trial and execution – serves instead as the heroic sacrifice. Furthermore, unlike the heroes of Byron's Eastern Tales, Torquil remains with the woman he loves.

Byron's configuration of southernness in *The Island* is very different from the *Mezzogiorno* interpretation of Southern Europe that I mentioned earlier. He repeatedly uses motifs of a lack of corruption in the South Seas, before encounter with Europeans brought vice, property ownership and sexual inequality. There is an obvious 'fall' theme operating in these instances, and Byron's play on the sailors' desire for paradise involving disobedience towards an authoritarian master is entirely transparent. But I want to concentrate on the ways in which this poem develops and mutates ideas that appeared in the earlier Tales, and which are similarly elaborated on in Scott's move from poetry into the novel. Originating from far beyond the fusion of Europe with North Africa or the Near East, *The Island*'s heroine, Neuha, is represented as sharing more cultural similarity with Torquil than with the dark-eyed Spanish maids or the harem women of the Ottoman Empire. Amongst the many lines that emphasize the sympathies uniting the south and north in this idealized situation, the following compound the effect through the added impetus of repetition and rhythmic drive:

> Of these, and there were many a willing pair,
> Neuha and Torquil were not the least fair:

> Both children of the isles, though distant far;
> Both born beneath a sea-presiding star;
> Both nourish'd amidst natures native scenes,
> Loved to the last, whatever intervenes . . .
>
> (2:272–7)

In canto 4, as the pair take refuge from the naval party sent to bring Torquil to justice, Neuha lights their cave with a brand of fire representing the enlightening experience of mutual understanding as well as love. The brand is the most elemental and ultimate fusion of north and south, a 'pine torch, strongly girded with gnatoo' (4:138) that emits its sparkle to reveal the natural splendour of the 'gothic canopy' (146) affording the couple cover until they are able to return to Neuha's idyllic Island. The unlikeliness of the entire scenario is striking. It is incredible that the brand would have remained alight after submersion in the sea, despite its 'plantain-leaf' covering. Allegorically, the sea as a sublime force which carries Imperial authority *and* facilitates its subversion, and Neuha and Torquil as heroic figures of resistance become components of a fairy-tale, as the magnificently cavernous bolt-hole is illuminated by a gleam of other-worldliness. The question remains as to whether Byron was still contending that in reality, cross-cultural encounter was doomed to end either in one-sided exploitation or in alienation?

The idealistic resolution of *The Island* leaves Torquil in a utopian location and in an apparently complete union with his South-Sea wife. The fusion of a tropical landscape with wild, Ossianic seas is again emphasized as the poem draws to its close in ways that underwrite the eroticized transcultural ending of this encounter of extreme north and extreme south. As such, the conclusion of *The Island* is the exact inverse of the desolate close to *Lara*, where Lara and Kaled/Gulnare are separated by death, with Kaled left stranded in a hostile wilderness of complete cultural isolation. The 'sand' in which the latter silently scrawls her indecipherable characters, bounded by the sea of authority which forbids her from becoming a character of her own definition, takes on a new resonance when seen retrospectively from the perspective of *The Island*. The crucial lines which begin the final verse paragraph of *The Island* reveal Byron's vision of the retreat of authoritarianism:

> Again their own shore rises on the view,
> No more polluted with a hostile hue;
> No sullen ship lay bristling o'er the foam,

> A floating dungeon: – all was hope and home!
> A thousand proas darted o'er the bay,
> With sounding shells, and heralded their way
>
> (4:401–6)

The sea is again associated here with authority, in earlier works appropriated – 'polluted' – by tyranny and oppression. It shimmers like the Bay of Lisbon in *Childe Harold* canto 1, which I discussed earlier, but the effect here is reversed because the imagery is changed from that of hostility and disappointment to that of an idyll. Whereas for Leila and the Giaour the horror of a watery grave prevailed, and for Conrad the Corsair the transgression of authority by way of piratical activity led to the loss of all self-expression, for Torquil and Neuha the sea is more complex because it ultimately unites rather than separates their cultures.

Figurations of ambiguity run through *The Island*, and their structural positioning is such that they offer radical views of colonial activity and the function of contact zones. For example, we need to consider differing attitudes towards east/west and north/south relationships. First, the sea brings the male British sailors to Otaheite in a conventional form of colonial encounter. However, from an early point in the poem conceptions of 'strangeness' are configured as the prerogative of the islanders rather than of the sailors: 'Their [the Tahitians] strangest sight' is 'an European face', and their country is one for 'which these strangers [Europeans] yearn'd' (1:47–8). By the end of canto 2, the mutineers have sufficiently integrated themselves into the culture of the islands that they, too, have come to regard Europe as strange. When the British ship sent to bring them to justice appears on the horizon, it is not represented as ominously familiar but, rather, as 'a strange sail in the offing' (503). This imagery again recalls Scott's description of Roderick Dhu and the Highlanders, as they appeared from the end of Loch Katrine in *The Lady of the Lake* (see Chapter 2). Indeed, the allusion is sufficiently recognizable as to suggest a deliberate reference through which Byron prepares the way for his reversal of the fortunes of British authority and renegado, in this alternative zone of cultural contact.

Unlike the Eastern Tales, *The Island* is not a poem that Byron wrote from any experience of place, and its utopian vision is inconsistent with the earlier works I have discussed throughout this book. Literary sources alone provided the background material that informed the poem, including various accounts of South-Sea voyages, of the mutiny on the *Bounty*, and of other 'exotic' travels. Byron had read the sixteen novels by Scott

that were published before *The Island* went to press. For the full significance of the continued literary engagement between Scott and him it is necessary to look beyond the former's poetry and into his development of prose fiction. As I have said, there is insufficient scope here to consider the substantial body of Scott's novel output, but I would like to introduce a few salient points of reference which open the way for further inquiry. I discussed earlier how the disappearance into the heather of the Highlanders in *The Lady of the Lake* meant that continued cross-cultural encounter on the Highland fringe became impossible. Scott drew a line at the Trossachs, leaving the reader with a picturesque view of a land beyond inhabited only by wildlife and the echoes of Romantic legend. *Waverley* concludes with the Highlands similarly consigned to a picturesque future and a romantic past, for with Fergus McIvor and Evan Dhu executed and Flora entering a convent they are figuratively unable to regenerate. David Gellatly's 'new' clothing is so mesmerizing that he can no longer remember the simple, older songs he once knew. Waverley marries Rose, the passive and impressionable daughter of the reformed Baron Bradwardine. In short, the remaining characters are shown to toe the line in a carefully revamped conclusion to their Highland fling.

Houses are significant enough to require some comment here because they, too, become changed when they are located in marginal or contact zones. Bradwardine's castle, situated on the Highland/Lowland fringe and in ruins after the unsuccessful Jacobite rebellion of 1745–1746, is confiscated and rebuilt in a more modern style before being restored to its owner. Several other characters in Scott's novels experience similar makeovers of property and person. *Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer* (1815), Scott's second novel, concludes with the estate of Ellangowan inherited by a hero whose travels have taken him from the 'debatable' Lands of the Netherlands to India before he finally returns to settle in South-West Scotland near the Solway Firth. Ellangowan has itself become 'debatable' because of a plan to thwart its true Scottish heir, in a modern plot that nevertheless bears some comparison to *Rokeby*. Scott incorporates a wealth of narrative material in this novel, concerning encounters between characters from cultures as different as Gypsies, the Dutch, Indians, Englishmen and Scottish Borderers. The final chapter involves the building of a replacement for the 'auld' castle, a 'large and splendid house [. . .] to be built on the scite of the New Place' in 'a style corresponding to the magnificence of the ruins in its vicinity' in which the heir and his bride, along with the faithful family retainer Dominie Samson, are to live.[74] Scott includes a suggestion that the tower might imitate the Eagle Tower at Caernavon, where Edward II is alleged to have been born, and whimsically

comments that a 'few bags of Sicca rupees' could be used as ballast to anchor the entire building to the ground. As P. D. Garside notes, Sicca rupees were new rupees minted by the Government of Bengal between 1793 and 1836, being heavier and more valuable than those of the East India Company because they contained more silver.[75] Thus, Scott again uses the notion of treasure brought home from Empire and converted into the 'heritage' of property that we saw earlier as central to *Rokeby*. The vignette of newness and the future in *Guy Mannering* continues to the last. The nearby 'Singleside-house' is to be 'repaired for the young people and to be called hereafter Mount Hazelwood'. Other reconstructions are planned. Only an observatory (the novel is subtitled *The Astrologer*) is rejected.[76]

Torquil, in Byron's *The Island*, by contrast with Scott's homecomers, relinquishes any hope of returning to promotion in a modern Britain when he becomes a 'truant mutineer', exchanging the ordered cabin life of the *Bounty* for his dream of life in a native hut. Bligh's *Narrative* states that promotion would have been recommended for the crew of the *Bounty*. Byron's poem suggests that the mutineers seek a return to a simpler life, where childlike memories and sexual freedom irrespective of rank might prevail. His own experiences and observations meant that he knew this life was not possible in a modern world.

We may do well to consider some observations concerning the poetics of space and simplicity, as signified by our polarized conceptions of houses and of the hut. For Gaston Bachelard, the house is a manifestation of our obsession with sociality, rank and identity. Its verticality requires, ideally, a cellar and an attic, symbolizing memories and ambitions, and it should have space around it (this space can be in front, behind or adjacent to the building). We build our houses on memories in order to take them with us into the future in much the same way that Scott's rebuilt castles incorporate selected features from the past and from his characters experiences. The hut, by contrast, is 'so simple that it no longer belongs to our memories – which at times are too full of imagery – but to legend; it is a center of legend [which] becomes centralized solitude'.[77] Torquil has everything to live for but no ambition – he is no tropical island Crusoe. His memories become isolated and frozen in time. Furthermore, the cottage he and Neuha build 'beneath the palm…/Now smiling and now silent, as the scene' (2:403–4) and the cavern which provides their sanctuary are each places of solitude. Torquil ceases to be himself in order to become his own legend, a character whose story will be recited over and again by the bards of the Island. There is no metaphorical cellar of the kind suggested by Bachelard's theorization, in which he can store selected memories in the way that Scott's characters

so typically do, in order that they can be retrieved and updated. Nor does Byron allow Torquil to covet the ruins of a lost past in the manner of *Childe Harold*, *The Giaour*, *The Corsair*, or *Lara*. The finality of his situation is made clear by Byron's choice of the definite article and past tense: 'the tale was told' (4:411). The impossibility of Torquil's return to Europe involves him both in the solitude associated with exile and the society of the other culture with which he is united, ambiguities which add to the instability of Byron's vision. We might conclude that Byron finally draws as clear a line as Scott, and that his idealistic vision of cross-cultural encounter is inevitably unrealistic. The difference is that Byron's Mutineer hero finds himself on the 'other' side of the line. Bernard Beatty has aptly identified as a central theme of Byron's poetry, from *Childe Harold* to *Don Juan*, the paradoxical relationship between the desire for libertarian world citizenship and transient fascination with particular cultural experiences.[78] The temporary nature of serial encounter, as Beatty points out, has a negative effect on the value accorded the subjects of such encounter. Intriguingly, *The Island* is a tale of a hero's refusal to move onwards in an endless cycle of loving and leaving. Byron experimented in *The Island* with a destination that forces an endgame from which there is no way backwards *or* forwards.

I have looked at the structure, form and literary convention of all the poems discussed so far, so will offer some brief comments on those aspects of *The Island*. The voices of Torquil and Neuha generate a legend of their own – a 'new tradition' (4:413) which the islanders throng to hear and which Byron, as poet, exports back to Britain. We might read another, more familiar consolidation of encounter here: oral storytelling is united with contemporary, western literary form and production in ways similar to those suggested by Scott 20 years earlier in the Imitation Ballads of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Indeed, *The Island* is an extended ballad tale – an anti-Imperial, yet in many ways colonial, answer to the patriotism of *Sir Patrick Spens*. Even the oxymoronic qualification of Byron's phrase 'a new tradition', which he uses just eight lines from the end of the poem, should be sufficient to warn against taking his vision too seriously. Byron's representation of paradise is qualified, for it requires permanent exile from western culture, rather than suggesting any possibility of change. Biographical readings of *The Island* examine the parallels with Byron's own situation of self-imposed exile, but there are more profound matters of human history at stake in this late poem. *The Island* offers a vision of the possibilities of cultural encounter within a world driven by post-Napoleonic Imperial ambitions. But the vision is itself made 'strange'.

As my dealings with Byron's cultural poetics in the last two chapters have indicated, he could not have remained politically content with such sanction and closure as Scott promoted. Byron holds to his implied premise that there are certain things that can only be well spoken about by means of poetic terminologies of displacement, and for the most part from the far side of cultural borderlands from where he began. He and Scott each made 'forays' into their respective forms of debateable land, crossing geographical boundaries, and those of class and culture in so doing. Byron was unable to maintain the discreet distance that he accorded to Childe Harold, and, like Lara and Torquil, he was never able comfortably to return and live within British society again. Whereas Scott constitutes his borderlands as places where the British Union and its institutions might be represented at their strongest and most heroic, Byron's experiences led him to write descriptions and narratives that challenged the agendas of imperialism and promoted values of individual freedom. Always controversial, Byron's actual experience of the cultures of which he wrote informed his descriptions, narratives and the body of notes that accompanied his writing, to an extent that set his poetry of the Near East apart from that of other writers of the period. To appreciate these aspects of his poetry, and those of Scott's (whose poems receive far less attention than his novels), we ourselves as readers in our own age of cultural instability have to negotiate certain thresholds of taboo and received interpretation.

Notes

Introduction: North, South, East – and West; the strangeness of 'Debateable Lands'

1. Thomas Percy, 'An Essay on the Ancient Minstrels in England', *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry. Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of Our Earlier Poets, Together with Some Few of Later Date*, 4th edn (London: John Nichols for F. & C. Rivington, 1794), pp. li–liii.
2. See Scott's note to canto 6 of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Scott, *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. J. Logie Robertson (London: Oxford UP, 1917), p. 85. The 'Debateable Land' was a tract of desolate moorland and marsh along the Scottish Border with England. Comprising much of Liddesdale, it was inhabited by cattle farmers and rustlers, was 'so called because it was claimed by both Kingdoms' and was subject to depredations by both sides. Finally, it was divided 'by commissioners' between the two nations towards the end of the seventeenth century.
3. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language: In which the words are deduced from the Originals, and Illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best Writers* . . ., Facsimile edn, 2 vols, vol. 1 (1755; New York: AMS, 1967).
4. Johnson, vol. 1.
5. See Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002), pp. 50–1, for a discussion of antiquarian rhetorics of temporalization, and nineteenth-century attitudes to European and non-European feudalism as factors in societal development. Leask gives examples of writers who employed negative comparative strategies (often with Hellenic Greece) to 'fossilize' some exotic cultures in a 'non-progressive past'.
6. Byron's draft of his proposed joint review with Hobhouse of William Martin Leake's *Researches in Greece* (for the *Edinburgh Review*) contains a page of comment on British interest in territorial expansion. The review was not submitted for publication. Hobhouse wrote the article that the *Edinburgh* published. Byron, *The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 49–50, 320 n. 1 and 2.
7. Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, p. 50, n. 135. Leask refers to Norbert Peabody's essay 'Tod's Rajast'han and the Boundaries of Imperial Rule in 19th-Century India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30, 1 (1996) 185–220.
8. Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), pp. 101, 115–16.
9. See Marilyn Butler, 'Antiquarianism (Popular)', *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776–1832*. General editor Iain McCalman (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), pp. 328–38.

10. Scott, 'Essay on Romance', first published in the *Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1824; *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 3 vols, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1867), p. 554.
11. Johnson, vol. 2.
12. Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, 1937, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin, 1962), pp. 19, 30–7.
13. Ibid., p. 19.
14. Ibid., pp. 38–9.
15. Duncan Forbes, 'The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott', *The Cambridge Journal*, VII, 7 (1953) 20–5.
16. Duncan Forbes, ' "Scientific" Whiggism: Adam Smith and John Millar', *The Cambridge Journal*, VII, 11 (1954) 643–70. For a specific study of Scott's grounding in Scottish Enlightenment Historical thought, see P. D. Garside, 'Scott and the "Philosophical" Historians', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXXVI, 3 (July–September 1975) 497–512.
17. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 74 (25 May 1711) in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), pp. 315–22. See also pp. 297–303, 360–4, for Addison's essays dd 21 May 1711 and 7 June 1711, for nos 71 and 85 of *The Spectator*. See ch. 1, pp. 46–50, for my reading of Scott's version of the related ballad 'The Battle of Otterbourne'.
18. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 162.
19. Ibid., p. 163, and Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 313.
20. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 162.
21. Robert Burns, *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*, ed. James Barke and Sydney Goodsir Smith, with a prefatory note and some authentic Burns texts contributed by J. DeLancey Ferguson (London: W. H. Allen, 1965); *Bawdy Verse and Folksongs, Written and Collected by Robert Burns*, intro. Magnus Magnusson (London: Macmillan, 1982). *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* was first printed in 1800, after Burns' death.
22. See T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1560–1830* (1969; London: Fontana, 1998), pp. 391–402.
23. Walter Scott, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, with Notes and Introduction by Sir Walter Scott*, ed. T. F. Henderson, 4 vols, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1932), pp. 387, 399.
24. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 3, pp. 390–1.
25. Ibid., pp. 389–90.
26. There is almost certainly an element of 'spin' even in Scott's inclusion of the *Souters*, for shoemakers were also associated with radicalism in Scotland after 1789. See Smout, pp. 412–20 and note to illustration 'The Shoemaker'. Fewer in number and not facing the same kind of mechanization as the textile industry, shoemakers' radical activites took different forms from those of weavers.
27. Walter Scott, *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, eds H. J. C. Grierson assisted by Davidson Cook, W. M. Parker and others, 12 vols, vol. 1 (London: Constable & Co., 1932), p. 334.
28. *British Review, and London Critical Journal*, IV (May 1813) 127.
29. Jane Stabler, 'Byron's Digressive Journey', *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775–1844*, ed. Amanda Gilroy (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000), pp. 223–39.

30. See *Scott and His Influence: The Papers of the Aberdeen Scott Conference, 1982*, ed. J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, c. 1983); *Byron's Political and Cultural Influence and Nineteenth-century Europe: A Symposium*, ed. Paul Graham Trueblood (London: Macmillan, 1981).
31. Malcolm Kelsall, *Byron's Politics* (Brighton: Harvester Press Ltd, 1987; Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books, 1987), passim.
32. See the 1765 and revised (1794) versions of Percy's 'An Essay on the Ancient English Minstrels', in *Thomas Percy, Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. Nick Groom, 3 vols, vol. 1, facsimile 1765 edn (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1996), pp. xv–xvi, xxi; 4th edn, pp. xiii, xxii.
33. To date, there is still no critical edition of Scott's poetry. I have used the standard 1932 edition by T. F. Henderson of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and J. Logie Robertson's edition of Scott's *Poetical Works* (Oxford, 1917) for my main analyses, indicating where I have used early or other editions.
34. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
35. See Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, pp. 15–16, 49–50, for comments on protocols and other textual factors that affected the representation of types and stereotypes.
36. Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', Francis Barker *et al.*, *Europe and its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature*, July 1984 (Colchester: U of Essex, 1984), p. 14.
37. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. xiii.
38. Ibid., p. 408.
39. John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991), pp. 1–24. 'This/that/the other' is the title of Barrell's introduction. These categories are anticipated in Scott's and Byron's poetry, although the notions of otherness do not involve the same degrees of horror that are so clearly present in De Quincey's writing.
40. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak', *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp. 66–111.
41. Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2002).
42. Ibid., pp. 3, and 1–81 passim.
43. Gary Dyer's article 'Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets: Being Flash to Byron's Don Juan', *PMLA*, 116 (May 2001) 562–78, is concerned with Don Juan, but contains insights that inform my argument about the codification of homosexuality in *Childe Harold* canto 2.
44. Caroline Franklin, *Byron's Heroines* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), pp. 12–37, shows Scott's heroines to be a precursor for the passive heroines of Byron's Eastern Tales. Jennifer Wallace, in *Shelley and Greece: Rethinking Romantic Hellenism* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 132–3, exposes Byron's apparent sexual liberalism as, ultimately, an inscription of dominant masculine conventions. As Wallace points out, Byron's poetry asserts its own bounds of patriarchal behaviour in its 'pursuit of the male heroic identity'. Byron emerges as rather closer to Scott in this respect than the politics of the two writers might suggest.

1 Collecting ballads and resisting radical energies: Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*

1. In his use of words such as 'raids' and 'forays', Scott was consciously borrowing from the vocabulary of the outlaw or 'reiver' society that had once inhabited the Borders region.
2. J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 2nd edn, 10 vols, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: R. Cadell; London: J. Murray and Whittaker & Co., 1839), pp. 326–7.
3. Lockhart, vol. 1, pp. 326–7.
4. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 1–54, and vol. 4, pp. 1–52.
5. Lockhart, vol. 1, pp. 218–20.
6. Scott, *Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 34–7.
7. Lockhart, vol. 1, pp. 218–19.
8. John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide 1793–1796* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), pp. 252–84. See also pp. 162–9, 256, for accounts of Braxfield's sentencing of radicals, and of opinions within the judiciary that he was excessively harsh.
9. Scott, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 37. Parallels can be, and frequently are, drawn with the treason trials of Tooke, Hardy, Holcroft and Thelwall, leading figures in the London Corresponding Society, in England. (Lockhart states that the Watt/Downie plot was 'supposed to have been arranged in concert' with these men. See Lockhart, pp. 218–19.) The Jury acquitted each defendant after trial, though Thelwall's trial was protracted and controversial. The penalty of hanging, drawing and quartering in England is thought to have been the reason why a jury was reluctant to convict. The Scottish trials made public examples of known radical leaders. Activists such as Muir, Gerrard, Margerot and Skirving were transported to Botany Bay. Many died during the journey or before their sentences had been served. The prominent radical society in Edinburgh during this period was the Friends of the People. Smout, pp. 412–20, gives a concise account of Scottish urban radicalism in the 1790s.
10. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 4, pp. 214–16.
11. Ibid., pp. 212–13.
12. *Quarterly Review*, I (February 1809) 1–19 *Affaires d'Espagne, Nos 1 to 5. – Confédération des Royaumes et provinces d'Espagne contre Buonaparte, Nos 1 to 6, &c.* Scott probably collaborated in this article by Ellis and Canning. For Southey's letter, see *New Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. Kenneth Curry, 2 vols, vol. 1 (New York and London: Columbia UP, 1965), p. 501. Letter dd 11 March 1809.
13. Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, 2 vols, vol. 2 (London: W. Johnston; Salisbury: B. Collins, 1771), pp. 76–7.
14. Dugald Stewart, 'Dissertation: Exhibiting the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical and Political Philosophy, since the Revival of Letters in Europe', *Encyclopædia Britannica, Supplement to the Fourth–Sixth Editions*, vol. 1 (London, 1824).
15. See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, General editors R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, textual editor W. B. Todd. Based on third edition, 1784 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976). Book three considers the issues of differing wealth levels during the progression of the third stadial phase, and explores the effects of increased expenditure on luxury goods.

16. James Steuart, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy: Being an essay on the science of domestic policy in free nations, in which are particularly considered population, agriculture, trade, industry, money*, . . . 2 vols, vol. 1, book II (London: A. Millar & T. Cadell, 1767), pp. 306–11.
17. Ibid., p. 324.
18. For example, see Rev. James M'Lagan's report on Blair Atholl and Strowan, in the North and West Perthshire volume of *The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791–1799*, ed. John Sinclair, 20 vols, facsimile edn. General editors Donald J. Withrington and Ian R. Grant, vol. 12 (Edinburgh, 1791–1799; East Ardsley, Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1978), p. 104.
19. Ferguson and Stewart were of considerable influential on Scott, and not least as a result of their personal friendships with him.
20. P. D. Garside, 'Scott and the "Philosophical" Historians', p. 504.
21. There are many studies and archival sources documenting these social conditions and changes. My sources include Smout, particularly Part Two in 'The Age of Transformation', pp. 223–484. T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700–2000* (London: Penguin, 1999), pp. 105–230; J. D. MacKie, *A History of Scotland*, revised and ed. Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker, 2nd edn (London: Penguin, 1978), pp. 282–332; and Scott's own accounts of Scotland's economic and social transformation during the eighteenth century in his letters, journal and *Tales of a Grandfather*, third series, *MPW*, vol. 3. Other works on specific elements of change are cited in my bibliography. These include Henry Hamilton, *The Industrial Revolution in Scotland* (1932; London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1996) and *An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), both regarded as groundbreaking studies; and Ian Adams, *The Making of Urban Scotland* (London: Croom Helm, 1978). My aim has been to maintain a balance between more recent scholarship and that which Scott, and the readers of his day, had access to.
22. Thomas Pennant, *Tours in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides*, 1769 and 1772. 5th edn, 3 vols, vol. 1 (London: Benjamin White, 1790), pp. 230–4.
23. Lockhart, vol. 1, p. 83. Scott's library contained a 1724 first edition of *The Tea-table Miscellany*.
24. See Thomas Crawford, *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1960), pp. 2–3, 192–216 passim, for a discussion of Burns's dexterity in Scots and English. Crawford's *Society and the Lyric: A Study of the Song Culture of Eighteenth-century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979), passim, provides a helpful discussion of Burns' interest in song. See particularly pp. 185–210.
25. Scott, 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad', *Minstrelsy*, vol. 4, p. 15.
26. *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, I (January 1803) 405.
27. 'Reliques of Robert Burns, consisting chiefly of Original Letters, Poems and Critical Observations on Scottish Songs; collected and published by R. H. Cromeck', *Quarterly Review* (February 1809) 19–36. Also, *MPW*, vol. 1, pp. 847–52 and see also Andrew Noble, 'Robert Burns', *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, pp. 439–40.
28. *Edinburgh Review*, XIII (October 1808) 215–34. The *Edinburgh* maintained a policy of anonymity with respect to its reviewers, but the identities were routinely guessed at. The 'Don Pedro Cevallos' review is now understood to

have involved collaboration between Jeffrey and Henry Brougham, though Brougham was thought to have been solely responsible at the time. See John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers. The Edinburgh Review, 1802–1815* (London: Faber & Faber, 1956), pp. 110–15.

29. *Edinburgh Review* (January 1809) 250–76.
30. *Quarterly Review* (February 1809) 32.
31. *Edinburgh Review* (January 1803) 306.
32. See *The Annual Register for the Year 1761, or a View of the History, Politics and Literature for the Year 1761*, 3rd edn (London: printed for J. Dodsley, 1772), pp. 215–42. A full account of the Coronation ceremonies is given, with attendance list, processional and seating plans on pp. 222–4.
33. Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), p. 62.
34. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 3, p. 129. A version of this ballad was included by Ritson in *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the Reign of King Henry the Third to the Revolution* (1790; London: Payne & Foss, 1829), pp. 192–6. Scott's note acknowledges recourse to that version, which is similar to his own more Scotticized version (p. 131). Scott and Ritson's versions each end with an invocation of Johnny Armstrong to avenge Graeme's/Grime's death. Burns supplied a version (set in Stirling, rather than the 'Debateable Land' of the Borders) to Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh, 1792), no. 303. The Graeme clan, after their exile to the Highland margins of Perthshire, feature in Scott's *Lady of the Lake* (see Chapter 2, p. 89).
35. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 3, p. 138.
36. Percy, *Reliques*, ed. Groom, vol. 1, p. 1.
37. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries; English Literature and Its Background 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), p. 16.
38. Ritson constantly argued this point. See his *Ancient Engleish Metrical Romanceës* (London, 1802), pp. clvi–clxv, for an example of his argument with Percy over the matter.
39. Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques*, pp. 123–44.
40. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 28–47.
41. Ibid., p. 28.
42. Ibid., pp. 28, 45.
43. Butler, 'Antiquarianism (Popular)', p. 335.
44. Leith Davis, *Acts of Union. Scotland and the Literary Negotiation of the British Nation 1707–1830* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998), p. 164.
45. Lukács, pp. 22, 54. In his section on Scott, Lukács emphasizes the influence of Goethe. He cites a conversation between Goethe and Eckermann in which Goethe explicitly praised Scott's sense of 'social equivalence' in his treatment of heroic folk outlaw characters such as Rob Roy. This approach demonstrates the manner in which 'extremes' are absolutely necessary to the 'middle way' that Lukács, and Goethe a full century earlier, see Scott as pursuing in the cause of National stability: 'Goethe . . . clearly senses what it is that constitutes Scott's pride in English history: on the one hand, naturally, the gradual maturing of national strength and greatness, the continuity of which Scott wishes to illustrate in his "middle way"; but on the other, and inseparable from this, the crises of this growth, the extremes whose struggle produces this "middle way" as their end-result and which could never be removed from the picture of national greatness without robbing it precisely of all its greatness,

wealth and substance' (p. 54). I include this quotation because it is relevant not only to the individual heroes of Scott's novels, but also to the ballad heroes of the *Minstrelsy*. Obviously, it has particular relevance to the 'outlaw' or Riding Ballads. Lukács' confusion of England and Scotland is well known.

46. See Lisa Wilson 'Matthew Lewis', *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, pp. 582–3, for a précis of the Lewis controversy.
47. Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 103.
48. *MPW*, vol. 1, pp. 304–10, 313–25.
49. *Edinburgh Review* (January 1803) 395–6. Macpherson's *Ossian* publications and Pinkerton's *Ancient Scotish Poems* and *Select Scotish Ballads* each involved the publication of poetic or ballad fragments presented as having been taken from ancient original sources, but which were actually forgeries. The incidents and protracted debates surrounding each case are extensively documented, in the literature of Scott's own period and since. For Scott's comments, see especially 'Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry', *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 43–5, and *Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 320–4, vol. 12, p. 24.
50. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 215–31.
51. Ibid., pp. 215–17.
52. Ibid., p. 215.
53. I am not seeking here to enter into the long-running debates concerning the authenticity of Scott's ballad insertions. A detailed account of the manuscript sources, with analyses of their use by Scott, is given by Keith. W. Harry, in 'The Sources and Treatment of Traditional Ballad Texts in Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and Robert Jamieson's *Popular Ballads and Songs'* unpublished diss., U of Aberdeen, 1975.
54. See Chapter 2, p. 80, for comment on similar imagery in the Hall of Branksome scene from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.
55. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, p. 217.
56. Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques*, pp. 45–6.
57. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, p. 216. Dalrymple's credentials as a Scottish jurist, antiquarian and historian were considerable. He was a correspondent of Percy's, with a particular interest in Scottish ballads and poetry. Scott owned the two-volume 1776 edition of his *Annals*. John of Fordun (c.1320–1384), fourteenth-century chronicler of Scottish history, is very frequently referred to or cited by Scott throughout his works. His Latin *Chronica gentis scotorum* was continued by Walter Bower (1385–1449) as *Scotichronicon*. Copies of both of these works were in Scott's library, and his addition of 'etc.' after Fordun's name in the note to 'Sir Patrick Spens' suggests acknowledgement of each.
58. Scott contended that the Rhymer was the source of the Tristrem romance tale, within Britain and throughout Europe. It is now well known that Thomas of Erceldoune was influenced by continental romance versions of Sir Tristrem rather than the other way round, as Scott thought.
59. Percy, *Reliques*, ed. Groom, vol. 1, pp. 71–3.
60. David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 82.
61. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 232–75.
62. Ibid., p. 235.
63. Ibid., pp. 235, 244.

64. Ibid., p. 236.
65. Ibid., p. 233.
66. Ibid.
67. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, p. 232.
68. Ibid. Note dated 1805, for 3rd edn. In 1820, Scott changed the note to read: 'The mother of the "Ettrick Shepherd" is now deceased.'
69. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 276–308.
70. This ballad is related to the various 'Chevy Chase' ballads. Percy published versions of both, consecutively, in his *Reliques*. Significantly, Scott only anthologized 'Otterbourne'. For comments on the exemplary status attaching to 'Chevy Chase' in England from the early eighteenth century, see my introduction, p. 7.
71. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 276–9.
72. Ibid., p. 280.
73. Trumpener, p. 101.
74. Scott used a combination of the fragmentary version of the ballad published by Herd, in his *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads &c.*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1776) and variations by James Hogg to arrive at these lines. For the main part, the words are from Herd.
75. John Leyden, *Scenes of Infancy: Descriptive of Teviotdale* (Edinburgh: T. N. Longman, & O. Rees, 1803). I discuss Leyden's collaborations with Scott later in the chapter.
76. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, p. 280.
77. Lockhart, vol. 1, p. 51.
78. Ibid., p. 51.
79. Lukács, p. 35. Lukács is specifically treating Scott's development of the historical novel, but these comments, which draw upon the use of epic conventions, are equally applicable to the *Minstrelsy* ballads – especially when the collection is read in terms of an overall narrative, as is the case here.
80. Scott, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto 2. See Chapter 2, pp. 120, 124–5.
81. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, p. 301.
82. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 2, p. 194.
83. See Richard Lomas, 'The Impact of Border Warfare: The Scots and South Tweedside, c.1290-c.1520', *The Scottish Historical Review*, LXXV, 2, no. 200 (October 1996) 147–67.
84. Jeffrey, *Edinburgh Review* (January 1803) 396.
85. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, p. 330.
86. Ibid., p. 331.
87. Ibid., p. 330.
88. Ibid., p. 302.
89. Ibid., p. 331.
90. Scott, *MPW*, vol. 1, pp. 319, 324.
91. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, p. 351.
92. Ibid., pp. 352–8 and Joseph Ritson, *A Select Collection of English Songs* (London: J. Johnson, 1783), pp. 322–6. Scott owned a copy of this and other anthologies by Ritson as part of his extensive collection of ballad literature. See J. G. Cochrane, ed., *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1838).
93. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 331–52.

94. Scott, *Letters*, vol. 12, pp. 194–8. Scott's letter to George Ellis dated 24 September 1801 gives an account of Ritson's stay at Lasswade.
95. See Allan Ramsay, *The Evergreen* (1724) and David Herd, *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, &c.* (1769). Scott owned copies of both.
96. David Herd, *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, &c.*, 2 vols, vol. 1 (Glasgow: Kerr & Richardson, 1869), pp. 13–17.
97. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 1, pp. 350–1.
98. For details of the life and politics of Ritson, see J. Ritson, *The Letters of Joseph Ritson*, ed. Sir Harris Nicolas (London: W. Pickering, 1833); J. Haslewood, *Some Account of the Life and Publications of the Late Joseph Ritson* (London: printed for R. Triphook, 1824); and B. H. Bronson, *Joseph Ritson*, 2 vols (Berkeley: Berkely UP, 1938).
99. Ritson, *A Select Collection* . . . , p. 326. Ritson comments in his note prefacing this ballad that 'The best account of Armstrong, his conduct, capture, and execution, . . . for, alas! instead of ending his life so gallantly as he is made to do in the song, he was ignobly hanged upon a gallows, . . . is given by Lindsay of Pitscottie, in his History of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1727. Folio). He is likewise noticed by Buchanan . . .', p. 314.
100. Scott, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 37.
101. Trumpener, p. xiii.
102. Leyden taught himself Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Persian. He knew Mungo Park, and had intended to travel to Africa before being persuaded that his abilities could be better used in India. Leyden left Scotland in 1803. Taking a post in Madras, and subsequently travelling extensively in India and south-east Asia, he familiarized himself with and translated from a wide range of languages and dialects.
103. Scott, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 104.
104. Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995), pp. 20–1.
105. Robert Jamieson, *Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts, and Scarce Editions* (Edinburgh: 1806), pp. vi–x.
106. David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk*, pp. 62–73, gives an account of Anna Brown's understanding of and involvement with ballad and oral folk traditions. See Harry, pp. 334–86, for a comparison of Scott's and Jamieson's treatment of Mrs Brown's ballads.
107. The ballads are 'The Gay Goss-Hawk', 'Brown Adam', 'Jellon Grame', 'The Lass of Lochroyan', 'Rose the Red and White Lilly', 'Fause Foodrage', 'Cospatrick', 'King Henrie' and 'The Cruel Sister'.
108. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 3, pp. 253, 339.
109. *Edinburgh Review* (January 1803) 404.
110. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 3, pp. 402–5. Scott describes the first part of the ballad in his prefatory note as 'having been composed, many years ago, by a lady of family in Roxburghshire'. The second part is by Scott.
111. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 2, pp. 415–18.
112. Ritson, *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the Reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution*, pp. 53–4.
113. Ritson dates his source for 'The Three Ravens' at 1611, which establishes it as contemporary with the first part of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (though before the translation of Cervantes' satirical romance into English).

See Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, p. 53. Whilst Ritson contends that his ballad was actually much older, there would seem to be an editorial attempt on his part in the placement of it and the succeeding bawdy ballad that satirizes knight errantry to engage with the late eighteenth-century revival of interest in *Don Quixote* and other such satires. Ideally, I would elaborate on the political implications of such an engagement, and on the class-consciousness of the chivalric revival, but there is insufficient scope to do so here with justice.

114. Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British Folksong, 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes: Open University P, 1985), pp. 36–7.
115. Anna Seward, *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward with Extracts from her Correspondence*, ed. W. Scott, 3 vols (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne & Co., 1810).
116. *MPW*, vol. 1, p. 534.
117. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 4, pp. 79–84.
118. Scott, ed., *Sir Tristrem*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co., 1811), pp. iv, v.
119. *Minstrelsy*, vol. 4, p. 84.
120. Ibid., p. 125.
121. Ibid., p. 127.
122. Colin Manlove, *Scottish Fantasy Literature, a Critical Survey* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), pp. 13–15.

2 Scott's narrative poetry: The borders and the highland margins

1. Lockhart, vol. 2, p. 52. P. D. Garside, 'Dating *Waverley's* Early Chapters', *The Bibliotheck*, 13 (1986) 61–81.
2. Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), pp. 93–111.
3. John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 100. See pp. 100–12 for discussion of the *Lay* and of contemporary influences acknowledged by Scott in his 1830 afterword. Sutherland considers the influence of Southey's *Thalaba* (1801) and Coleridge's then unpublished *Christabel*. Scott's incorporation of material allegedly taken from the latter led to acrimony and accusations of plagiarism.
4. Ibid., p. 102.
5. *PWS*, p. 1.
6. James Chandler, *England in 1819* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998), pp. 245–7, discusses the significance of history and the notion emergent in the mid-eighteenth century that it should 'teach *by* example and . . . *across* period boundaries'. Chandler takes Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and Use of History* as his primary case study. See Henry St John Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (London: A. Millar, 1752).
7. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, 20 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), vol. 6, pp. 553, 741.
8. Forbes, 'The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott', pp. 20–35.
9. Scott, *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of the French: With a preliminary view of the French Revolution. By the author of 'Waverley'*, 9 vols, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne and Co. for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and

Green, 1827), vol. 3, p. 144; vol. 7, p. 71. Cited in Forbes, 'The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott', pp. 27–8.
10. See Chapter 1.
11. See Scott's note, 1st edn of the *Lay*, p. 24: '*Hairibee*, the place of executing the border marauders at Carlisle. The *neck-verse* is the beginning of the 51st Psalm, *Miserere mei, &c*., anciently read by criminals claiming benefit of clergy.'
12. *PWS*, p. 69.
13. Ibid.
14. See *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Francis Child 5 vols, vol. 4 (New York: The Folklore Press in assoc. with Pageant Book Co., 1957), p. 61.
15. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 63.
16. *The Domestic Annals of Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution of 1745*, 2 vols, vol. 1 (London: Chambers, 1858), p. 536.
17. See Chapter 3.
18. *PWS*, p. 85.
19. Harold links Orkney to Lothian through the rôle of the Rosslyn Chapel in his ballad, the action of which is set not in the Northern Isles, but on the Firth of the Forth. Rosslyn Chapel stands against a backdrop of the Pentland Hills, near Edinburgh. It was founded in 1446 by William St Clair, last St Clair Prince of Orkney and has masonic associations made manifest through symbols represented in its elaborate stonework. Many masonic references are encoded into the text of the *Lay*. Rosslyn Chapel became symbolic of Scottish Romantic-Gothic architecture more generally and, along with the deep wooded gorge behind it, was a major source of Romantic literary inspiration.
20. *PWS*, p. 47. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, epilogue.
21. Introduction to the first series of *Tales of my Landlord, collected and reported by Jedidiah Cleishbotham, parish-clerk and schoolmaster of Gandercleugh*, quoted here from Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1993), p. 5.
22. Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather*, third series, *MPW*, vol. 3, p. 458.
23. *MPW*, vol. 1, p. 458.
24. Scott, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 303.
25. Lockhart, vol. 3, p. 67.
26. John O. Hayden, ed., *Scott, the Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 2.
27. Hayden, pp. 2–6.
28. *British Critic*, I (August 1810) 119–20.
29. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs, 6 vols, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1959), pp. 290–6.
30. Martin Martin, *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland etc*. (London, 1703); Alexander Campbell, *A Journey from Edinburgh through parts of North Britain: Containing remarks on Scotish landscape; and observations on rural economy, natural history, manufactures, trade, and commerce* . . . , 2 vols (London: T. N. Longman & O. Rees, 1802); Thomas Pennant, *Tours in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides*; Patrick Graham, *Sketches of Scenery in Perthshire* (Edinburgh, 1806); *Sketch of the Scenery near Callendar* (Stirling, 1806); *Letters from Northern Scotland* by 'an officer of engineers, quartered at Inverness about 1720', London, 1754. For a modern edition of the latter see *Burt's*

Letters from the North of Scotland, intro. Charles W. J. Withers, ed. Andrew Simmons (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1998).

31. Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), pp. 87, 268, n. 38.
32. Duncan, pp. 87–8.
33. Sinclair, vol. 12, pp. 139–40.
34. Ibid., p. 142.
35. Dorothy Wordsworth, *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland*, intro. and ed. Carol Walker (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997), pp. 102–3.
36. Ibid., pp. 96–7.
37. *PWS*, p. 277.
38. Ibid.
39. Sinclair, vol. 12, p. 1.
40. Ibid., p. 3.
41. See Chapter 1.
42. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), pp. 141–6, 213–23.
43. Susan Manning, *Fragments of Union. Making Connections in Scottish and American Writing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 241–79. The point is specifically made on p. 247.
44. *PWS*, p. 284. See Chapter 3, p. 105 for comment on the *Edinburgh Review*'s remarks concerning Byron's apparent misunderstanding of the pibroch.
45. William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd edn, revised Helen Darbyshire (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1959).
46. Susan Manning, ed., *Quentin Durward*, by Walter Scott (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), p. xv.
47. Franklin, pp. 15–37.
48. Sinclair, vol. 12, pp. 174–5.
49. Ibid. The various accounts give a statistical picture of the overall changes in animal husbandry in Perthshire in the late eighteenth century. See Bruce Lenman's introduction for a summary of changes and for bibliographical references to a range of other sources. Lenman points out that black-faced sheep had largely 'ousted the less commercially profitable Highland breed' throughout the Highland fringe region by the end of the eighteenth century, and that, rather than being reared locally, stock was largely imported from Peeblesshire on the Borders, pp. xix–xxii.
50. Ibid., p. 161.
51. See Scott's notes, *PWS*, pp. 278–9, 294–5.
52. *Letters*, vol. 3, pp. 209, 220.
53. *PWS*, p. 380.
54. Ibid., pp. 380–1.
55. See Franklin, pp. 17, 22, 27, for some concise and valuable comments on this union, compared with similar relationships elsewhere in Scott's poetry and in the works of selected other Romantic writers.
56. *PWS*, p. 383.
57. Scott refers his readers to Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, A philosophical and political history of the settlement and trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies; and 'the popular book called *The History of the Bucaniers*'. *PWS*, p. 383. Published in 1776 and 1779 respectively, both

books ran to many editions throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
58. *PWS*, p. 391.
59. Ibid., p. 392.
60. Ibid.

3 Crossing 'Dark Barriers': Byron, Europe and the Near East in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* cantos 1 and 2

1. See Nancy Moore Goslee, *Scott the Rhymer*, for an in depth study of Scott's response to Romance literature and its traditions.
2. For a critical discussion of *Hours of Idleness*, including the reviews response and Byron's response to the reviews, see Jerome J. McGann, *Fiery Dust* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968), pp. 3–28.
3. See also Susan Manning, *Fragments of Union: Making Connections in Scottish and American Writing* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 66–76, for a valuable and concise discussion of Scottish attitudes towards idleness and leisure, indolence and intellectual torpor.
4. Byron erroneously believed the author of the article to have been Francis Jeffrey, the *Edinburgh*'s editor and one of its main literary critics. Most biographers comment on the episode.
5. *Edinburgh Review*, XXII (January 1808) 36.
6. *Edinburgh Review*, XI (April 1805) 18. See my previous chapter for comment on how, conversely, Scott took trouble to explain the pibroch in his notes to *The Lady of the Lake*.
7. Most of the *Edinburgh*'s reviewers, Brougham included, left Scotland for residence in London. Their Scottish accents remained stigmatized, and prejudice against Scottish mannerisms was a matter for sensitive response. Francis Jeffrey was resident in Scotland throughout his life. The *Edinburgh* fiercely defended the reputation of a modernizing Scotland.
8. Ibid. The review leads this number of the *Edinburgh*, and is on pp. 1–20.
9. See Robert F. Gleckner, *Byron and the Ruins of Paradise* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1967) for a seminal book-length study of Byron's fascination with ruins. For a more recent account of Byron's interest in place, history and nostalgia, see Stephen Cheeke's *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
10. Montesquieu was especially influential in this respect, suggesting climate to be a determinant of cultural behaviour and character. See *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. and ed. Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), part 3 passim, esp. pp. 231–6.
11. C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780–1830* (London: Longman, 1989), passim.
12. Ibid., p. 19. From section 'The Muslim Empires: Integration and Uniformities', part of chapter, entitled 'Political and Social Change in the Muslim Empires, 1600–1800'.
13. Ibid., p. 49.
14. Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: U of California P, [1982] 1997), pp. 35–7, 286–7.

15. Ibid., p. xvi.
16. See Jerome J. McGann in Byron, George Gordon, Lord, *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980), p. 269; and McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 258–9, for publication details and for McGann's comment on Murray's anticipation of a wealthy readership.
17. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 3.
18. Ibid.
19. *PWS*, p. 1.
20. McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections*, p. 259.
21. Leslie Marchand, *Byron, A Portrait* (London: Cresset, 1970), p. 113.
22. Malcolm Kelsall, *Byron's Politics* (Sussex: Harvester, 1988), pp. 34–6, 192–3.
23. Quoted in Leslie A. Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1958), vol. 1, p. 321.
24. Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. 1, p. 321.
25. See Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988), for a discussion of discourses evolving out of the Grand Tour, and especially of Byron as an exemplar in the use of hyperbole. Chard focuses upon Italy, with reference to *Childe Harold* cantos 3 and 4.
26. Chard, p. 4.
27. Ibid., pp. 48–125.
28. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
29. William Roberts, *The British Review*, III (June 1812) 278.
30. *The Antijacobin Review and True Churchman's Magazine, or, Monthly, Political and Literary Censor*, XLII (August 1812) 344.
31. *Antijacobin* (August 1812) 344.
32. Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), pp. 3–48. The review of *Childe Harold* canto 4 was published anonymously, as were all reviews in the *Edinburgh*, but it has been attributed to John Wilson who also wrote for the Tory *Blackwood's Magazine*.
33. *Edinburgh Review*, XXX (June 1818) 87–120.
34. Kelsall, pp. 34–56.
35. Tim Fulford *Landscape, Liberty and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996). Fulford argues that even those who attempted to turn the picturesque into a means of radical inquiry (such as Richard Payne Knight) inevitably reverted to a patriarchal perspective.
36. Chard, pp. 109, 238–9.
37. For comment on Byron's adverse view of Portugal, see Diego Saglia, *Byron and Spain: Itinerary in the Writing of Place* (Lewiston, New York, Salzbug: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), p. 73; F. de Mello Moser, 'Byron and Portugal: The Progress of an Offending Pilgrim', in *Byron's Political and Cultural Influence in Nineteenth-Century Europe: A Symposium*, ed. Paul G. Trueblood (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 132–42; Nigel Baker, 'Byron and Childe Harold in Portugal', *Byron Journal*, 22 (1994) 43–9.
38. *CPW*, vol. 1, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, lines 857–8.
39. George Crabbe, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Norma Dalrymple-Champneys and Arthur Pollard, 3 vols, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p. 158.

40. See *George Crabbe: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Arthur Pollard (London: Routledge, 1995), for a survey of criticism of Crabbe. Jeffrey, writing for the *Edinburgh Review*, April 1810, was amongst the critics of Crabbe's more sordid low life portraits in *The Borough*. Byron's praise of Crabbe was an expression of his genuine admiration for the Suffolk genre-scene poet, but it is quite likely that he took pleasure in publicly announcing his favour as a means of slighting Jeffrey following the *Edinburgh*'s earlier dismissal of *Hours of Idleness*.
41. See John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), pp. 73–88, for one of the better, relatively recent discussions of Crabbe's poetic portraits of the rural poor. Barrell concentrates his analysis on *The Parish Register* (1807) on account of that poem's response to Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* (1770). Gavin Edwards, *George Crabbe's Poetry on Border Land* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1990), analyses the formal role of borders and boundaries in Crabbe's poetry.
42. See Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 1–37. This chapter entitled 'Numbers, routes and destinations' gives an account of the development of the Grand Tour in terms of route, etc.
43. Jane Stabler, 'Byron's digressive journey' in *Romantic Geographies: Discourse of Travel 1775–1844*, ed. Amanda Gilroy (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000), pp. 223–39.
44. See William Martin-Leake, *Researches in Greece* (London: John Booth, 1814), p. 406, for comment on Hobhouse's inclusion of an inaccurate map of Albania in his *A Journey through Albania, and Other Provinces of Turkey*. In his section entitled 'Preliminary Observations: An Outline of Albanian History – Geographical Divisions of the Country', Leake comments that the map by M. Barbié du Bocage contains many cartographical errors: 'It appears to me neither to agree with the real topography [of the region around Ionanina], nor even with Mr. H.'s description of it. For a person who had actually seen a part of the country, I should have thought it would not have been difficult to compile a much better map from the outline of Arrowsmith.' Leake contested the accuracy of much of Hobhouse's account.
45. Byron, *Byron's Letters and Journals. The complete and unexpurgated text of all the letters available in manuscript and the full printed version of all others*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 12 vols, vol.1 (London: J. Murray, 1973), p. 217.
46. *BLJ*, vol. 1, p. 221.
47. *CPW*, vol. 1, pp. 19–20.
48. Greg Kucich, *Keats, Shelley, and Romantic Spenserianism* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1991), pp. 113–28.
49. Ibid., p. 118.
50. At a particular level, for more than two decades George III had been trying to acquire prime Spanish Merinos with the intention of improving British wool. A number of public figures, including Sir Joseph Banks and Lord Castlereagh, were involved in the scheme. See H. B. Carter, *His Majesty's Spanish Flock: Sir Joseph Banks and the Merinos of George III of England* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1964). See also Wolf, p. 113, for comment on the extent to which wool production underwrote Spain's economy and its military activities.
51. Kucich, pp. 56–64. Quotation from p. 97.

52. Ibid., pp. 63, 71–81. Quotation from p. 71.
53. Ibid, pp. 79, 108–9. Kucich cites *Leigh Hunt's Literary Criticism*, ed. Lawrence Huston Houtchens and Carolyn Washburn Houtchens (New York: Columbia UP, 1956), pp. 427, 435, 443, 447; and Leigh Hunt, 'English Poetry Versus Cardinal Wiseman', *Fraser's Magazine* 60 (1859) 747–66.
54. James Beattie, *The Minstrel, in Two Books: With Some Other Poems* (London: printed for E. & C. Dilly, 1779).
55. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 188. See canto 1:387–90.
56. Ibid., p. 279.
57. Ibid., p. 188.
58. Ibid., p. 189.
59. Ibid.
60. Diego Saglia, *Poetic Castles in Spain: British Romanticism and Figurations of Iberia* (Amsterdam, Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 194–9.
61. Saglia also discusses figurations of Agustina de Aragón after the publication of *Childe Harold* 1 and 2. For example, he notes that she was the model for Adosina in Southey's *Roderick, The Last of the Goths* (1814). See Saglia, *Poetic Castles . . .*, p. 196.
62. *Edinburgh Review*, XIV (April 1809) 244–64. *Quarterly Review* (February 1809) 226–31. Vaughan's pamphlet carried a notice that profits would be donated to the inhabitants of Saragoza.
63. Scott insisted that Southey's contribution should be confined to literary criticism. He warned against inviting him to write politically sensitive articles, arguing that Southey's sympathies were insufficiently anti-Whig. See Scott, *Letters*, vol. 12, pp. 305–7.
64. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 189. Also, pp. 41–2. Byron enjoyed Carr's company in Seville, but did not approve of his travel writing. Suppressed stanzas from canto 1:891 ironically refer to Carr in chivalric terms as 'Green Erins's knight!' and satirize 'the Boke of Carr', on account of his militaristic, neo-chivalric perspective on the Peninsular war.
65. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. R. W. Chapman, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988), p. 229.
66. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 280.
67. Jerome Christensen, *Lord Byron's Strength: Romantic Writing and Commercial Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993), passim, Chandler, p. 358. Chandler engages Christensen's interest in this stylistic feature of Byron's writing with McGann's analysis of Byron's own coining of the phrase 'force of circumstance' in his *Don Juan in Context* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1976). The issue, in all three cases, is more directly related to analyses of *Don Juan*, but the principle is relevant to my discussion here of Byron's much earlier *Childe Harold* 1 and 2.
68. *CPW*, vol. II, p. 37.
69. *BLJ*, vol. 1, p. 221.
70. Ibid.
71. W. Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire: In which are considered, I. Its government, . . . II. The state of the provinces, . . . III. The causes of the decline of Turkey, . . . IV. The British commerce with Turkey, . . .* (London: printed for T. Cadell, jun., & W. Davies, 1798), pp. 372–90.
72. *CPW*, vol. II, p. 210.

73. John Cam Hobhouse, *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, during the years 1809 and 1810* (London: James Cawthorn, 1813), pp. 149–50.
74. *CPW*, vol. 2, pp. 192–3.
75. Ibid. See Leake, pp. ii, 238–40 and Hobhouse, pp. 1123–50, for differing views of the cultural history of the Albanian dialect. The purity (for Leake) or otherwise (for Hobhouse, who believed it to be a collection of hybrid dialects from Europe and Asia) of Albanian, in comparison with Romaic Greek, was a source of acrimony between these two. Byron included a specimen of 'the Albanian or Arnout dialect of the Illyric' in his notes to *Childe Harold*; see *CPW*, vol. 2, pp. 196–8.
76. K. E. Fleming, *The Moslem Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999), passim, evaluates Ali Pasha's life and influence. Fleming compares critical claims that Ali Pasha brought devastation on a once-flourishing centre of trade with arguments that, conversely, he saved the region from disintegration into political chaos and rampant brigandry. This latter thesis suggests that by uniting the robber factions, and exerting discipline particularly amongst the mountain Kleftsmen (Klephts) and other Albanian tribes, Ali Pasha exerted a stabilizing influence conducive to Albania's commercial development. See particularly pp. 37, 40–4. See also Byron's letters, *BLJ*, vol. 2, pp. 21–3.
77. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 192.
78. Black, p. 29.
79. *Quarterly Review*, XI (July 1814) 458–80; *Edinburgh Review*, XXIV (February 1815) 353–69.
80. *Classical Review*, X (December 1814) 402–12.
81. Byron, *The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991), pp. 48–50, 317–19. John Cam Hobhouse, *Byron's Bulldog: The Letters of John Cam Hobhouse to Lord Byron*, ed. Peter W. Graham (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1984), pp. 155, 163–4.
82. Hobhouse, p. 1125.
83. Ibid., p. 144.
84. The prescribed 'purities' of language, and the desire to control corruptions, had become very topical in the eighteenth century. Hobhouse and Byron recognized an autonomous assertion of power and identity in the Albanians assimilation of a range of linguistic influences over the ages – which they did not perceive to be the case with the Greeks, whose language they believed to have declined from its classical form. This approach differs from Leake's primitivist account of the Albanians' adherence to ancient, barbarous sounds.
85. Richard Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor: or, an account of a tour made at the expense of the Society of Dilettanti* (Dublin, 1775), pp. 153, 159.
86. William Gell, T*he Topography of Troy, and its Vicinity/illustrated and explained* (London, 1804); *Geography and Antiquities of Ithaca* (London, 1807); *Itinerary of the Morea: Being a description of the routes of that peninsula* (London, 1817).
87. Sir Henry Holland, *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Macedonia, &c., during the Years 1812 and 1813* (London, 1815).
88. Wallace, pp. 119–47. Wallace's discussion of the 'Orientalisation of Greece' within a range of these travel texts pays particular attention to the intricacies involved.

89. *BLJ*, vol. 2, pp. 21–3.
90. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 290.
91. Hobhouse, p. 151.
92. Brian Dolan, *Exploring the Frontiers of Empire: British Travellers in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 73–112.
93. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 193.
94. Fleming, pp. 66–9.
95. Ibid., pp. 67–8.
96. Ibid., passim, discusses attitudes to Ali Pasha's rule. She notes the scarcity of primary material relating to 'the economy of his lands', and comments on the difficulties in compiling contemporary accounts of any degree of true accuracy, p. 36. Her study points out that 'Ioannina itself was of tremendous economic and cultural importance', to Ali Pasha, to the Ottomans, to Europe and to Russia, highlighting its long-standing trade contacts with Venice, Padua, Livorno, Belgrade, Sarajevo and Vienna, p. 37.
97. Tilar J. Mazzeo, ed., *Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion, 1770–1835 – The Middle-East*, vol. 4 of *Travels, Explorations and Empires*: *Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion, 1770–1835*, General editors Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson. 4 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), pp. 117–18.
98. F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea, Albania, and Several Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire to Constantinople during the Years 1798, 1799, 1800 and 1801. Comprising a Description of those Countries, of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, &c. &c.* (London: Richard Philips, 1806). Philhellenic interests led Pouqeville to write on the regeneration of Greece. F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Histoire da la régénération de la Grèce, comprenant le précis des évènements depuis 1740 jusqu'en 1824*, 4 vols (Paris, 1824).
99. Hobhouse, p. 110. Leake derided Hobhouse's use of Pouqueville, remarking: 'The first part of Mr Hobhouse's journey was in *Epirus* and Albania, where he confesses that the ground-work of his information is taken from the travels of M. Pouqueville. He could not have chosen a more fallacious guide. . . . M. Pouqueville himself never visited those provinces until after his book was published, but he has since resided for several years at Ioánnina as Consul-General of France, and must therefore by this time be as sensible as any other person, who has remained long in the country, of the unfitness of his book to be taken as a guide to the topography of *Epirus* and the adjacent districts.' Leake, p. 405. Though he was correct about Pouqueville's experiences in Albania, Leake may well have had political reasons for publicly dismissing his credibility, especially given the conflicting interests of Britain and France in the region during the Napoleonic wars.
100. Pouqueville, *Travels through the Morea*, p. 137.
101. Mazzeo, p. 117.
102. *CPW*, vol. II, pp. 203, 210.
103. Ibid., p. 210.
104. Ibid., p. 203.
105. Thornton, Thomas, *The Present State of Turkey: or a description of the political, civil, and religious, constitution, government, and laws of the Ottoman Empire*, 2 vols, 2nd edn (London: Joseph Mawman, 1809), pp. 306–7.
106. *CPW*, vol. II, p. 210.

107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., pp. 201, 203.
109. Charles Nicolas Sigisbert Sonnini de Manoncourt, *Voyage en Gréce et en Turquie, fait par ordre de Louis XVI, et avec l'autorisation de la cour ottomane*, 2 vols, with plates (Paris, 1801).
110. *BLJ*, vol. 1, p. 222. Letter to John Hanson, dd 13 August 1809.
111. Ibid.
112. Peter Cochran, ' "Nature's Gentler Errors": Byron, the Ionian Islands, and Ali Pacha', *The Byron Journal*, 25 (1995) 22–35.
113. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 276.
114. *BLJ*, vol. 1, p. 210.
115. Ibid., p. 208.
116. Louis Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England* (London: Faber, 1985).
117. See Gary Dyer, 'Thieves, Boxers, Sodomites, Poets: Being Flash to Byron's *Don Juan*', *PMLA*, 116 (2001) 572, n. 576. Jocelyn was widely rumoured to be homosexual. In 1822, he fled to Europe after being arrested on charges of sodomy with a soldier. See *BLJ*, vol. 9, p. 121, for Tom Moore's censored version of Byron's comment on Jocelyn's arrest.
118. Ibid., pp. 562–78.
119. *BLJ*, vol. 1, p. 227.
120. Wallace, pp. 194–5.
121. James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1819* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993).

4 Byron's Eastern Tales: Eastern themes and contexts

1. Byron, *The Island, Or Christian and His Comrades* (London: John Hunt, 1823).
2. The instances are too many to quote, but see, for example, Marchand, *BLJ*, vol. 3, p. 208. Byron speculated (wrongly, as was soon proven) in his journal entry dd 16 November 1814 that Lord Holland would not like *The Bride of Abydos*: 'I sent Lord Holland the proofs of the last "Giaour", and "The Bride of Abydos." He won't like the latter, and I don't think that I shall long. It was written in four nights to distract my dreams. . . . Heigho!' Byron frequently remarked to the effect that the Eastern Tales were casually dashed off, as a diversion from other matters or on impulse. He later became far more deprecatory, referring to their 'false, stilted trashy style' and describing their content as 'exaggerated nonsense'. See *BLJ*, vol. 7, p. 182 and vol. 9, p. 161.
3. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 168. Lord and Lady Holland were express admirers of *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, both of which had been published prior to this letter. See also *BLJ*, vol. 3, p. 208 for Byron's journal entry of 17 November 1813 for his comments on Lord Holland's letter on the matter.
4. Ibid. Byron may have been alluding, also, to homosexual experience after Hobhouse's departure.
5. See Chapter 3.
6. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (London: Penguin, [1968] 1986), p. 231.

7. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1st pub. New York: Basic Books, 1973; London: Fontana, 1993), p. 14. ch. 1, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture'.
8. Jerome J. McGann, *Fiery Dust* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968), pp. 142–3.
9. Daniel Watkins, *Social Relations in Byron's Eastern Tales* (Cranbury: Associated UP, Inc., 1987), pp. 34, 146, n. 1.
10. *CPW*, vol. 3, p. 417. McGann refers to lines 218–19 of *The Giaour* as alluding to Scott's *Lay* I.17.1–3. Indeed, the entire fragment of the Giaour's ride is indebted to Scott (*Lay*, I.21–31) and owes a great deal to the account of William of Deloraine's near-fatal mission into the terrain of the Borders' superstitious past, in a quest for a book of Palestinian magic spells. The allusion is entirely typical of the ways in which Byron establishes recognizable, and crucial, links between his Eastern Tales and European romantic-gothic literature.
11. *OED*, vol. 4, p. 506; vol. 5, p. 681.
12. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 506. See Byron, *CPW*, vol. 2, pp. 192–5, for note to Childe Harold on Albanians and with an account of Byron's servant, Dervish. The latter is spoken about more specifically in terms of his role after Hobhouse had returned to England.
13. *CPW*, vol. 3, p. 417.
14. Ibid.
15. Bayly, pp. 57–8, 170; Wolf, pp. 286–7; Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), pp. 87–8, 159–63.
16. Bayly, pp. 227–34.
17. Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms. Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002), pp. 74–8; Bayly, pp. 180–1.
18. Ali, p. 74; Hourani, *Islam in European Thought*, pp. 162–3.
19. *CPW*, vol. 3, p. 436.
20. Bayly, pp. 226–8, 233.
21. Austen, *Persuasion*, pp. 66–7.
22. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age. 1798–1939* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962), pp. 37–8, 53, 106–8.
23. *CPW*, vol. 2, p. 290.
24. Franklin, pp. 72–98.
25. Ibid., pp. 42–7.
26. *BLJ*, p. 419.
27. Thornton, passim.
28. Thornton, vol. 2, p. 56.
29. Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), pp. 45–54.
30. Chard, p. 40.
31. *BLJ*, vol. 2, p. 210.
32. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 168. Letter dd 17 November 1813.
33. Ibid., pp. 168–9. Letter dd 17 November 1813.
34. Ibid., p. 101. Letter dd 28 August 1813.
35. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), p. 118.
36. McGann, *Fiery Dust*, p. 146.
37. Ibid., p. 147.

38. Marjorie Levinson, *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of a Form* (Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina P, 1986), pp. 115–28.
39. Ibid., pp. 115–28.
40. *BLJ*, vol. 3, p. 100. Letter to John Murray, dd 26 August 1813.
41. *CPW*, vol. 3, p. 411.
42. Leask, *British Romantic Writers* . . . , pp. 31–2.
43. Susan Wolfson, *Formal Charges: The Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997), p. 134.
44. Ibid., p. 136.
45. *CPW*, vol. 3, p. 149.
46. Wolfson, p. 137.
47. Ibid., pp. 145–63.
48. *Edinburgh Review*, vol. XXIII (April 1814) 206. Jeffrey's complete review is on pp. 198–229.
49. Jeffrey was notably altogether less sanguine in his response to Southey's and Keats's use of the Heroic couplet, accusing them of exoticizing and corrupting the form.
50. *Monthly Review*, II (February 1814) 190.
51. *Quarterly Review* (July 1814), 455. The complete review of The Corsair and Lara is on pp. 428–57.
52. Ibid., p. 457.
53. Ibid., p. 429.
54. *British Review*, V (February 1814) 507.
55. *Antijacobin Review*, XLV (August 1813) 127.
56. Ibid., XLVI (March 1814) 208.
57. Ibid.
58. *Christian Observer*, XIII (April 1814) 246–7.
59. Bayly, pp. 226–7.
60. Leask, *British Romantic Writers* . . . , pp. 46–7.
61. Leask sees the poem as seminal in its use of suspense, narrative deferral and – above all – resolution of the unfinished story of The Corsair. Franklin explores the Byronic heroine with a reading of Kaled, rather than Lara, as the most significant figure in the poem. See Leask, *British Romantic Writers* . . . , pp. 54–63; and Franklin, pp. 56, 77–8, 86–9.
62. *BLJ*, vol. 4, p. 165.
63. *CPW*, vol. 3, pp. 452–3.
64. Leask, *British Romantic Writers* . . . , p. 55.
65. Ibid., pp. 57–8.
66. Rokeby is relevant as a precursor to Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* (1819). I have sufficient latitude here to treat the many factors of influence, but they are concerned with exotic encounter, disinheritance, travel abroad, homecoming, cultural restitution and the prevention of miscegenation. In *Ivanhoe* the characters of Isaac and Rebecca, a Jew and his daughter, and their involvement with the hero Ivanhoe, an Anglo Saxon Crusader returning to find his inheritance displaced, require careful and detailed consideration.
67. *Rokeby*, 1:xxxiii, 3:xvi, 5:xiii, xviii, xxviii.
68. Susan Manning, *Fragments of Union*, pp. 65–106. The chapter 'Finding the Boundaries' offers much of interest to readers of the present book.

69. Caroline McCracken-Flesher, 'Over the Water to Memory Loss: Foreign Exchange and Literary Aphasia from Chrystal Croftangry to Morven Callar', Discussion Group on Scottish Literature Session, 'The Scottish Empire Writes Back: Pictland to Postmodernity', MLA Convention, Marriott Hotel, Philadelphia, 29 December 2004.
70. Leask, *British Romantic Writers* . . . , pp. 63–7.
71. Byron, *The Island*, pp. 81–94.
72. Byron did not keep to the recorded events surrounding the mutiny, although his narrative is loosely based on the story. The mutineers fled to Picairn Island, part of the Friendly Island group and not too distant form Tahiti, with a small group of Polynesian men and women. Only one mutineer, John Adams, survived beyond 1800. Pitcairn Island is still home to a community directly descended from the mutineers, and the Pitcairnese language (still spoken, although English is the official language) is a mixture of eighteenth-century English and Tahitian.
73. See Keats' 'On First looking into Chapman's Homer' (1816), for another example of poetic engagement with the fashion for epic in translation. Henry Francis Cary's *Vision, or Hell, Purgatory and Paradise of Dante Alighieri*, the first full English translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, had become an important Romantic text in its own right since its initial publication in 1812.
74. Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer*, ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999), p. 353.
75. P. D. Garside, explanatory note, *Guy Mannering*, p. 578.
76. Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, p. 353.
77. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Trans. Maria Jolas, Fwd. Etienne Gilson (Boston: Beacon, 1969. 1st pub. *La Poétique de l'espace*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), pp. 31–2. I am indebted to Stephen Cheeke's *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), for drawing my attention to Bachelard's work, and for some invaluable insights into theories of literary geography. As mentioned in my previous chapter, Cheeke's book will be of particular interest to readers wishing to consider Byron and his fascination with place and history.
78. Bernard Beatty, 'Byron and the Paradoxes of Nationalism', in *Literature and Nationalism*, ed. Vincent Newey and Ann Thompson (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1991), p. 152.

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