‘Wha sae base as be a slave?’: Linguistic Spaces in Scottish Historical Fiction, and Where Slavery Doesn’t Fit.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the literary incompatibility of two different currents in eighteenth-century Scottish history, exemplified by the figurative use of 'slavery' to refer to the oppression of Scots and the simultaneous effacement of Scotland's involvement in the practice of plantation slavery in the colonies. The focus of the competing histories is Scotland's entry into the sphere of social and economic progress opened up by the Union of 1707. In the traditional version, this happens at the expense of the Jacobites, who are left out of the modern British polity because of their unassimilable backwardness and cultural otherness. In more recent re-evaluations, it also happens at the expense of the slaves whose labour underpins British commercial development. This thesis studies four novels about the 1745 Jacobite uprising: Walter Scott's *Waverley*, whose hero personifies the rejection of Jacobitism in favour of unified Britishness; James Robertson's *Joseph Knight*, which sets slavery and Jacobitism side by side; and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, which fall somewhere in between. It argues that these novels negotiate history in linguistic and spatial terms. Jacobites are closely associated with a particular place, the Highlands, but this space is also conceived as a linguistic gap or 'vacuity'; confronting Scotland with Jamaica brings the semantic flexibility of 'slavery' into question; and the narrative function of Scots dialect is to resist the fixity of histories that either ignore slavery or incorporate it too completely.

Résumé

Ce mémoire examine l'incompatibilité, en littérature, de deux tendances simultanées dans l'histoire de l'Écosse au dix-huitième siècle, représentées, d'un côté, par l'usage figuratif de « l'esclavage » pour indiquer l'oppression des Écossais et, de l'autre, par le silence de l'Écosse au sujet de sa participation à l'esclavage colonial dans les plantations. Ces tendances contradictoires se concentrent sur l'entrée de l'Écosse dans la sphère du progrès social et économique suite à l'Union de 1707. Dans la version traditionnelle, cette entrée se fait au détriment des jacobites, qui sont tenus à l'écart du régime politique de la Grande-Bretagne moderne, puisque considérés comme inassimilables du fait de leur altérité et de leur retard culturels. Dans des relectures plus récentes, elle se fait aussi au détriment des esclaves dont le travail est le fondement du développement commercial britannique. Ce mémoire explore le soulèvement jacobite de 1745 à travers l'étude de quatre romans : *Waverley* de Walter Scott, dont le héros incarne la rejection du jacobitisme en faveur d'une identité britannique unie, *Joseph Knight* de James Robertson, qui met en parallèle esclavage et jacobitisme, ainsi que *Kidnapped* et *Catriona* de Robert Louis Stevenson, qui mêlent les deux tendances. Ce mémoire soutient que ces romans négocient l'histoire à la fois linguistiquement et spatialement. Tout d'abord, les jacobites sont intimement liés à un lieu spécifique, les Highlands, mais cet espace est également conçu comme un fossé ou « vide » linguistique. De plus, mettre en tension l'Écosse et la Jamaïque pose la question de la flexibilité sémantique de « l'esclavage ». Enfin, la fonction narrative du dialecte écossais est de résister la fixité des histoires qui ignorent l'esclavage ou, à l'inverse, l'incluent sans l'interroger.

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Abbreviation Used

NAS Court of Session Papers. *Knight vs Wedderburn.* 1773–1778. National Archives of Scotland.

Introduction

When the speaker in Robert Burns's poem 'Scots Wha Hae' asks, rhetorically, 'Wha sae base as be a slave?' he is not referring to the practice of chattel slavery in Britain's overseas colonies at the time of the poem's publication in the 1790s. He is not even addressing himself to a Scotland active in the ventures of a British nation-state. The poem is presented as a speech given by Robert the Bruce before the Battle of Bannockburn.[1] Its injunction against accepting 'chains and slaverie' is overtly embedded in the Wars of Independence of the early fourteenth century. It is apparently both historical and figurative: 1314 not 1794; Scotland's past subjugation to England, not its current relationship with its more powerful neighbour; and especially not the literal condition of being forced to labour for life without pay.

However, Andrew Lincoln sees in 'Scots Wha Hae' 'a paradigmatic example of the transferability of patriotic sentiments' (49). His examination of the conditions of the poem's original publication reveals the possibility of applying its 'specific history of Scottish resistance to English oppression' to a variety of contemporary conflicts:

> It has sometimes been read as a radical poem (it was composed at the time of the trial of Thomas Muir, a leader of the radical "Friends of the People" in Scotland). But it first appeared anonymously, as an imitation of the style of the Scottish bards, in the *Morning Chronicle* (8 May 1794) . . . in an issue that

[1] Some modern editions of Burns's poetry actually give the title of the poem as 'Robert Bruce's Address to His Troops at Bannockburn — or Scots Wha Hae'. It appears in this form in the 2003 *Canongate Burns*.

> made no mention of Muir, but featured conspicuous reports of two Scottish meetings in support of the war effort against France. (49)

As well as internal class struggle and war with a foreign power, Lincoln cites the campaign of Polish independence leader Thaddeus Kosciusko, covered favourably in the same newspaper, as a potential analogue of Scottish nationhood as located in an inaugural moment of resistance to English domination. The role of liberty's champion is variously assigned to those in conflict with their more conservative fellow-Britons, those waging war on the revolutionary government of another country, and to foreign patriots defying their colonisers. Clearly, the speaking position of the oppressed can be (and was) claimed by many different and often opposing groups simultaneously. Holding radical political opinions, supporting Britain's war with France or desiring a dissolution of the 1707 Act of Union that eradicated Scotland's political autonomy — these positions were in no way inevitably consistent with one another.

The term 'slavery' evidently had a great deal of semantic flexibility in eighteenth-century Scotland; it might appear from these examples that it was a universally applicable description for any form of political disempowerment. However, those actually held in chattel slavery on Britain's Caribbean plantations never supplant the battling fourteenth-century Scots in the enslaved/enslaver equation. Andrew O. Lindsay argues that in Burns's poem 'the use of the word implies an element of complicity and cowardly acquiescence, and may have nothing to do with the contemporary trade in captured Africans' (2). This is surely true, but it is necessary to go further: the word *cannot* be made to have anything to do with that trade without causing the whole structure of sympathy and identification to fall apart.

Acknowledging that the people sold by British (often Scottish) traders to British (often Scottish) planters have the greatest claim to speak from the position of 'slave' would leave the Scots themselves no place in the matrix of domination and resistance but that of the oppressor. When Jackie Kay writes in her article 'Missing Faces' that 'it almost seems anti-Scottish to imagine all those MacDonalds out there in Jamaica stuffing their faces on mutton broth, roast mutton, stewed mudfish, roast goose and paw-paw', she hints at something more than the incongruity or immorality of the facts. Kay is condemning contemporary Scotland's failure to adequately acknowledge its complicity in the slave trade, and questioning the unreflecting assumption that the 'hard-done-to wee nation' is invariably more sinned against than sinning. However, the image of MacDonalds in Jamaica is not 'anti-Scottish' because of its ugliness alone. There is something contradictory, almost nonsensical about it. It is emptied of familiar tokens of Scottishness and geographical reference points. These gluttonous MacDonalds are troubling for more than the suggestion that Scots might be, after all, a bad freedom-hating people. They are also an utter negation of typical formulations of Scottish distinctiveness, inhabiting the history of British imperial expansion and not a history of Scottish victimisation.

Placing the involvement of Scots in the West Indian sugar economy alongside the better-known eighteenth-century narrative of doomed Jacobite uprisings, Highland Clearances and the imposition of Standard English results in a strange disjunction. The two strands — progress towards prosperity and full participation in British statehood, versus cultural marginalisation and loss — do not seem to fit in the same time-frame. In

his essay 'Inundations of Time: A Definition of Scott's Originality', Richard Maxwell quotes early twentieth-century diarist George Sturt's literary encounter with this problem:

> It was while re-reading "Waverley". And somebody — I think Fergus MacIvor — suddenly spoke of the way in which it was customary on slave-ships to bring up the slaves on deck for five minutes' exercise and air. This picture, flashed into one's mind when one was deep in the Scottish heather, interrupting consciousness of it, made that and one's own existence and the slavery business all *simultaneous*. (461)

That simultaneity, in its factual, chronological sense at least, is acknowledged by recent works of historiography like Iain Whyte's *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756–1838* (2006) and Douglas J. Hamilton's *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820* (2005). These do answer Jackie Kay's call for a 'history of the plantations alongside the history of the Highland clearances' in that they publicise the expansionist, oppressive actions of Scotland in the Enlightenment period. But the deeper implications of trying to realign the balance, to bring together two spheres of historical action which have been kept determinedly separate, are rooted in the literary aspect of Sturt's experience; first of all, in the fact that the text he reads through in order to glimpse slaves instead of Scottish Highlanders is *Waverle*y.

Waverley, published in 1814 and generally taken as the foundational text of the historical novel genre, shows an official history being created at the expense of a certain section of society. Its romantic subject matter, the 1745 Jacobite uprising, is ultimately subordinated to a narrative of reconciliation with the British state. Rebellious elements are violently expelled, and a split is enacted between those characters and values that will

move into the future and those that will remain fixed as part of the past against which modern Britain is defined. The far-off violence of slavery is associated in Sturt's mind with the Jacobite Fergus Mac-Ivor, who in turn passes from history by the novel's end, himself cast out of the progressive British narrative.[2]

For Ian Duncan, the 'condition of Scottish cultural modernity' in the wake of the 1707 Union is characterised by precisely these sorts of splits and sublimations. It appears as a 'breach, a "Great Divide," between the ancestral nation and the present' (102), and it is, more specifically, dependent on an identification of the 'ancestral nation' with the Jacobite political faction. Anthony S. Jarrells claims that the civilised values of the Scottish Enlightenment were to a great extent 'conceived in opposition to Jacobitism, to violence, and to a highland society that seemed to exist a century behind the rest of the nation' (162). In Walter Scott's literary engagement with history, this violence and incivility is in fact the enabling condition of progress: necessary, and also necessarily outdated once the change for which it is the catalyst has occurred:

> The effects of the insurrection of 1745 — the destruction of the patriarchal power of the Highland chiefs — the abolition of the heritable jurisdictions of the Lowland nobility and barons — the total eradication of the Jacobite party . . . commenced this innovation. The gradual influx of wealth, and extension of commerce, have since united to render the present people of Scotland a

[2] As Maxwell points out, Sturt's recollection is not entirely accurate. Fergus Mac-Ivor does not actually mention slave ships. Maxwell suggests that the passage Sturt remembers is Colonel Talbot's likening of Scottish English to the speech of 'Negroes in Jamaica'; another possibility, more closely tied to Fergus and 'the Scottish heather', is the comparison of the Highland force's exoticism to that of 'African Negroes or Esquimeaux Indians'.

> class of beings as different from their grandfathers as the existing English are from those of Queen Elizabeth's time. (*Waverley* 492)

Georg Lukács, in *The Historical Novel* (1962), sees Scott's 'great historical art' as deriving from precisely this acceptance of the erasure of certain groups as inevitable and, ultimately, right. Scott, he argues, is able to 'portray objectively the ruination of past social formations . . . he saw at one and the same time their outstanding qualities and the historical necessity of their decline' (55). The impetus of Scott's historical novel project is towards unity and comfortable prosperity: to document the forces that have brought about such positive change and also, it seems, to make a contribution to this progressive movement. Scott's General Preface to the Waverley Novels identifies as his primary precursor and model the Anglo-Irish writer Maria Edgeworth, whose 1800 novel *Castle Rackrent* 'may be truly said to have done more towards completing the Union than perhaps all the legislative enactments by which it has been followed up' (523). Edgeworth has achieved this, in his view, by making the Irish character available and comprehensible to English readers, and Scott famously describes his wish that 'something might be attempted for my own country of the same kind . . . something which might introduce her natives to those of her sister kingdom in a more favourable light than they had been placed hitherto, and tend to procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles' (523). He posits a sort of cementing of political union by means of personal rapprochement and increased mutual understanding of the common interest.

The ways in which difference is actually eradicated — the violent reprisals after the Jacobites' defeat, the suppression of visible signs of Highland culture, the deportations to

the colonies — are placed on the far side of an unbridgeable temporal gap, making it possible to appreciate without political danger 'the memory of brave opponents, who did nothing in hate, but all in honour' (530). Scott's privileging of 'humanitarian sympathy that transcends party difference' means that the briefly-Jacobite hero of *Waverley* need not ever be greatly at variance with prevailing British cultural values (Lincoln 20). He evinces good Enlightenment political thinking when he concurs on 'calm reflection' that since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, 'four monarchs had reigned in peace and glory over Britain, sustaining and exalting the character of that nation abroad, and its liberties at home. Reason asked, was it worth while to disturb a government so long settled and established' (222). Edward Waverley will, of course, go on to try to do just that, fighting for the cause of Charles Edward Stuart. But no ideological, thought-out basis for that action is permitted within the novel. Reason is not on its side.

The Jacobite faction occupies a literary-historical space that is curiously empty. It cannot be fully of its time for fear of its constituting a genuine historical alternative, a different path closed off not by sweepingly universal forces of modernity and liberty, but by contingent events rooted in the specific conditions of 1688, 1715, 1745. Such a view of Jacobitism as the inevitably sidelined, because anachronistic, outburst of 'backward sections of the Scottish people' (Lukács 40) depends on the assumption, which Lukács shares with Scott, that their backwardness is something that can be determined objectively. In other words, that what makes the Jacobites out of step with their time is not an interpretation of historical events dictated by the present status quo, but something immanent in the events themselves. In *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans*, Murray Pittock

argues that the need to assert the 'chivalric', anti-modern character of the unsuccessful rising has led to a weighting of historiography towards the 'clan' elements within the rebel army. Evidence that a 'conventional force', rather than a 'ragbag militia' (13), stood in opposition to the government armies troubles the received narrative in which 'Families fight regiments: how brave, how foolish, how sad' (Pittock 14). The more prosaic history, in which the Hanoverian forces defeat a smaller, less well-equipped army that includes soldiers from 'civilised' parts of Scotland and even England (like Scott's own hero), does not lend itself to being read as a clash between past and future. It places both sides too resolutely in the same historical frame. The outcome may still be beyond doubt, but for more pragmatic political and military reasons, not because one side does not, in some fundamental way, truly exist in 1745.

The argument that the function of the Jacobites in historiography and literature is to cease to exist, to give place to the present day, dictates that one thing they cannot do is simply be absent. For Lukács they represent one of the 'extremes whose struggle produce this "middle way" as their end result' (54), the 'middle way' being Scott's illustration of the continuity of national values and gradual economic and social development. They 'could never be removed from the picture of national greatness without robbing it precisely of all its greatness, wealth and substance' (54). That 'transferability of patriotic sentiments' again. The warlike spirit and connection to tradition of the Stuarts and their adherents, when detached from their political absolutism and High Church Tory associations, are enshrined as general Scottish characteristics. This makes them suitable to be set alongside persecuted British radicals and French, American or Polish revolutionaries in the

pantheon of 'gallant' opponents of the status quo. For example, in 1789 the politically radical Burns extolled the lasting emotional and aesthetic appeal of Jacobitism: 'surely the gallant but unfortunate house of Stewart . . . is a theme much more interesting than an obscure beef-witted insolent race of foreigners whom a conjecture of circumstances kickt up into power and consequence' (*Canongate Burns* xxxiii).

At the same time as they are barred from fully inhabiting the time of their concrete historical action, it is essential that the Jacobites be extremely 'historical' figures in the sense of being confined firmly to the past, bringing that 'ancestral nation' from hazy origins to a definite end point, up to 1746 and no further. Ancestral, but as Pittock puts it, 'not an ancestor'; sealed off and prevented from influencing the future course of British political life (14). When Charles Withers describes the status of the Jacobite in the refined Enlightenment imaginary as that of 'contemporary ancestor', he captures the sense of temporal slippage (147). Scott's postscript to *Waverley*, quoted above, sets up two crucially unequal historical gaps. Contemporary Scots are as distant from their ancestors of 1745 as the contemporary English are from Elizabethans. Implying a greater rate of change for Scotland and a starting point of inferior development, this makes the national division underlying judgements about progress very explicit. Edward Waverley journeys to the Highlands and is met with talk of clan feuds, abductions and cattle theft, all of which he sees as incompatible with modernity, but also with his conception of Britishness. 'It seemed like a dream to Waverley that these deeds of violence should be familiar to men's minds, and currently talked of, as falling within the common order of things . . . without his having crossed the seas, and while he was yet in the otherwise well-ordered

island of Great Britain' (*Waverley* 130). His surprise at the continued existence of such a culture is expressed in terms both of time and geography. It is as strange that the Jacobites should occupy the same national space as Waverley as it is that they should be his contemporaries in time.

If Jamaican colonists appear 'anti-Scottish', too involved in avowedly British pursuits, the Jacobites are remembered as hyper-Scottish. They are identified with Highland geography and culture, often in defiance of rigorous historical accuracy, in such a way as to make this most un-assimilated, inaccessible region function as a metonym for all that is admirable but outdated about Scotland after the Union. *Waverley*'s Baron of Bradwardine, not himself a Gaelic-speaking Highlander but suitably distanced from mainstream society by his antiquated manners and estate on the Highland line, is aware by the novel's end of his fundamental pastness. '"We poor Jacobites . . . are now like the conies in Holy Scripture . . . a feeble people, that make our abode in the rocks"' (443). In short, they represent a Scottish separateness that may linger only in a circumscribed space, retreating inward rather than expanding. Movement outwards — the widespread emigration from precisely this area in the wake of failed Jacobite risings and subsequent attacks on the clan system — takes place in a context of dispersal not conquest, a diffusion of national selfhood and not a forward-looking exportation of values. Samuel Johnson's *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) voices the concern that 'all that go may be considered as subjects lost to the British crown . . . It may be thought that they are happier by the change; but they are not happy as a nation, for they are a nation no longer' (119).

In his account of his travels, Johnson is highly critical of Lowland Scotland's cultural divergences from the English standard, but rather more tolerant of the more complete difference he encounters in the Highlands. This sharp split may be one way of dealing with the uneasiness of 'Scotland's status as both peripheral zone of otherness and central participant in Britain's extra-territorial empire', as Janet Sorensen terms it in *The Grammar of Empire in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (4). The Highlanders are so 'other' that when they leave their own 'peripheral zone' for another, they are simply 'lost'. They do not carry Britishness with them or attain it by serving their country's interests in the New World. Wherever the 'MacDonalds in Jamaica' have come from, they do not overlap with these more familiar MacDonalds, dispossessed and disempowered. Only one of these two sites of marginalisation — the colonised MacDonalds or the colonising MacDonalds — can be made visible at one time without inviting some comparison of degrees of oppression, internal cultural other set against racial other. This would call into question the fitness of the 'slave' speaking position for Scottish subjects, and would show that post-Union Scottish history is built on the suppression of more than one group; that one group more than any other is almost always kept outwith the nation's conceptual as well as geographical borders.

The denials that lie behind 'the established national narrative, platitudes of liberty, and myths of "national character"' (Morris 17) are confronted head on in James Robertson's 2003 historical novel *Joseph Knight*. It derives its plot from a legal battle which took place in the 1770s between the titular African-born slave and his master John Wedderburn, who had been 'out' on the Jacobite side in 1745 and subsequently made his

fortune in exile as a planter in Jamaica. The narrative ranges between the end of the rising in 1746, the Wedderburn family's life in the Caribbean in the 1760s, the Court of Session in Enlightenment Edinburgh and the rediscovery of these now-obscure events by a private investigator in 1802. These spatio-temporal shifts are not, however, used to partition off one phase of Joseph and Sir John's story from another, but have quite the opposite purpose. Robertson insistently draws connections between Jacobite and slave rebels, between the narrative of violently-forged British unity, which renders the Jacobite element inconsistent with historical progress, and the exploitation of overseas colonies, which accepts the slave trade as a necessary condition of economic and imperial development. As Michael Morris points out in one of the few articles so far written on *Joseph Knight,* 'this undermines so much of the victim status of Jacobitism by linking the fall-out from the Battle of Culloden to the sugar plantations in the West Indies' (8). The novel's success as a revelation of Scottish complicity in plantation slavery depends on keeping everything together on the same level, as one story and one story only.

For this reason, *Joseph Knight* might be read as a new departure in the tradition of fictional treatments of the '45 and its consequences. After all, *Waverley*'s emphasis on reconciliation necessitates skimming over the prolonged violence that followed Culloden, passing from the contemplation of Fergus Mac-Ivor's brutal execution to the establishment of a newly stable social order. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, published in 1886, and its 1893 sequel *Catriona* (known in North America as *David Balfour*) take as their subject this process of selective erasure itself. Focusing, like *Joseph Knight*, on a court case, this time the Appin Murder trial of 1752, the story centres on the

injustice, factional politics and cultural imperialism that go into the creation of a particular public account of the murder of the government factor Colin Roy Campbell. An innocent man, James Stewart, is trapped both by 'savage' clan enmity and the needs of 'civilised' British mainstream society, and is left with nowhere to go but out of the national story as violently as Fergus MacIvor before him. If Robertson's contemporary approach to his historical material 'demands that the black Atlantic inflects the Scottish national narrative' (Morris 2), Stevenson and Scott seem to assert, from their very different historical and ideological standpoints, that the national narrative by its very nature will not contain everything.

Each chapter focuses on a different way of constructing that 'national narrative' and the language associated with that narrative strategy. Chapter One examines the portrayal of the Gaelic-speaking Highlands as a place of absolute difference, emptied of all the hallmarks of modern commercial society. The linguistic divide, between an increasingly aggressive Standard English and an increasingly threatened Gaelic, is continually employed as a shorthand for the Highlands' political, cultural and economic otherness. Chapter Two, in contrast, is about the discourse of similarity; the attractiveness of the 'slave' speaking position for referring to marginalised sections of Scottish society and the resulting impulse to identify them with plantation slaves. Chapter Three turns to Scots dialect and how it is used to navigate the textual space of historical narratives, undermining attempts to fix on one history to the exclusion of all others.

Chapter One: The Vacuity

> 'Let them stay in their own barren mountains . . . what business have they to come where people wear breeches and speak an intelligible language? I mean intelligible in comparison with their gibberish, for even the Lowlanders talk a kind of English little better than the Negroes in Jamaica. I could pity the Pr—, I mean the Chevalier himself, for having so many desperadoes about him.' (*Waverley* 387)

This speech from *Waverley*'s Colonel Talbot makes several important points about the importance of spoken English for determining membership in, or exclusion from, the progressive British polity. To this English military gentleman, the Highlanders display three signs of cultural otherness: their clothing, their geographical isolation and their language. Gaelic is so unlike English as simply to be designated 'gibberish'. The Lowland Scots dialect may be recognisable to Talbot — 'intelligible in comparison' — but remains at some distance from the metropolitan standard. This distance is also, interestingly, expressed geographically, but instead of springing from the 'barren mountains' of its own country, Lowland Scots is aligned with those far-off subjects of the British crown whose stake in their condition as 'Britons' is, to put it most mildly, ambiguous. Talbot posits two different Scottish linguistic spaces; one literally cut off from the influence of English language and culture, the other imaginatively displaced into another peripheral locale as a way of signalling that its Britishness, too, is incomplete.

Talbot's knee-jerk disdain for all things Scottish is portrayed as rather comically irrational: 'indeed he himself jocularly allowed that he could not have endured Venus herself, if she had been announced in a drawing-room by the name of Miss Mac-Jupiter' (367). However, although the novel's most prominent Englishman, Edward Waverley, feels some affection for the cultural peculiarities that so alienate Talbot, he ultimately comes to agree with his pro-Hanoverian friend's view of the Stuart faction as irremediably foreign. At the battle of Prestonpans, Waverley comes face-to-face with his former regiment. Among a group of government prisoners he encounters a soldier from his family estate of Waverley-Honour, who before dying reproaches Waverley with his decision to 'fight with these wild petticoat men against old England' (329). This naively reductive understanding of the conflict as a clash between the authentically English and the savagely foreign is reinforced by Waverley's own reaction to his first sight of his old troop: '"Good God!" he muttered, "am I then a traitor to my country, a renegade to my standard, and a foe, as that poor dying wretch expressed himself, to my native England?"' (334). The curious partial repetition of 'my country . . . my native England' leaves it unclear whether two entities are involved — the British state as well as Waverley's specifically English cultural roots — or whether these, when opposed to Jacobitism, are understood to be one and the same.

Talbot's account of his meeting with King George II (to request a pardon for Waverley) equates the monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain squarely with England alone, in opposition not so much to Scotland as to the Frenchified Charles Edward Stuart. '"I do not pretend, indeed, that he confers a favour with all the foreign graces and compliments of your Chevalier errant; but he has a plain English manner"'

(456). This characterisation of the German-born monarch as a quintessential no-nonsense Englishman is a far cry from Burns's 'obscure beef-witted insolent race of foreigners'. There is no allowance here for a neutrally British, let alone peculiarly Scottish, mode of kingship in between the utterly English and the utterly foreign, and it would be disingenuous to suggest that anything else could be the case. No reigning British monarch visited Scotland between 1651 and 1822 — when George IV's tartan-drenched visit was famously stage-managed by Walter Scott himself in his capacity as 'Author of *Waverley*', populariser of Romantic Scotland.[3] On the other side, Charles Edward Stuart may be attractive to his Scottish followers as a gallant adventurer who 'threw himself on the mercy of his countrymen, rather like a hero of romance than a calculating politician' (312), but he is also depicted winning his potential subjects over with his handful of Gaelic phrases and making amused asides to his French companions. His connection to his people is in no way innate; it has to be fostered. The empty space between English king and foreign king-in-waiting is made evident by the two titles Talbot has to choose from: Chevalier, the romantic but markedly un-Scottish sobriquet favoured in Jacobite circles, or Pretender, the Hanoverian denunciation of Charles Edward as fraudulent and inauthentic.

Even more important than the impossibility of a king with Scotland for his native land is the fact that the ability to decide what is foreign, what is obscure, where certain people have no business being and what they have no business continuing to do, rests entirely on the side of the speakers of Standard English, the overriding narrative idiom of

[3] Angus Calder discusses the 1822 royal visit in *Revolving Culture: Notes from the Scottish Republic*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1994.

the novel. The Baron of Bradwardine and the Mac-Ivors can proudly claim their ancient privileges and authority over their dependants, but they cannot advocate the spread of their customs and values throughout the British Isles, and the thought of exporting Gaelic or Scots dialect to England would be laughable. This is because, as was clear to the eighteenth-century standardisers of written and spoken English, Scots and Gaelic are irredeemably local: not the language of government and influence and, yet more crucially, lacking a standard written form. Part of the backwardness of Lowland Scotland, according to Samuel Johnson's *Journey*, derives from the lingering traces of a dialect 'likely to become in half a century provincial and rustick, even to themselves' (147) — on top of a lack of trees and Episcopalian churches. However, when it comes to the even greater economic and cultural backwardness of the Highlands, Johnson is troubled not by the mere existence of a non-English tongue within Britain's borders, nor by the variation of spoken Gaelic from one place to the next, but by the spoken word's independence from writing.

> In literate nations, though the pronunciation, and sometimes the words of common speech may differ, as now in *England*, compared with the South of *Scotland*, yet there is a written diction, which pervades all dialects, and is understood in every province. But where the whole language is colloquial, he that has only one part, never gets the rest, as he cannot get it but by change of residence. (106)

There is no definitive way, in Johnson's analysis, to make judgements about good or bad Gaelic usage: if 'all the language is colloquial' there is no neutral, universal point of reference which is always correct for all people in all places. Mastering all the possible

permutations of Gaelic would entail concrete acquaintance with every place where it is spoken. It cannot transcend geography. This stands in contrast to the ease with which educated Lowland Scots can, with reference to Johnson's *Dictionary*, portion off their Scotticisms from their pure English. Many of Stevenson and Robertson's characters are intensely conscious of that process. Sir John Wedderburn's schoolmaster Aeneas MacRoy can lay claim to having 'trained myself to stop and start my Scotch like a spigot' (*Joseph Knight* 101). The cast of well-known Enlightenment figures in *Joseph Knight*'s Edinburgh sections includes James Boswell, Johnson's biographer and devoted friend, cravenly proud that 'mine is almost the only Scotsman's tongue that does not offend him' (219), and Joseph Knight's lawyer John Maclaurin, who takes pleasure in making his colleague Boswell 'wince at his Scotticisms' (174). Robertson's Susan Wedderburn and Stevenson's Barbara Grant, carefully educated ladies both, occasionally assume 'broad' Scots for effect, in speech — '"I'm no awa tae kiss ye!" she said, turning the accent on' (*Joseph Knight* 90) — and in Miss Grant's case in writing too: 'What does she do, but . . . kilt her coats up to *Gude kens whaur*' (*Catriona* 373). This manipulation of two languages that are (fairly) mutually comprehensible yet possess different social meaning sets Lowland Scots at odds with both Gaelic and Standard English as Johnson understands them. The latter is defined not by context but by its written form, the former so utterly context-bound as to be as fixed, in its way, as written English, able to 'receive little improvement' (Johnson 105).

Waverley's battlefield epiphany about how far he has erred from his 'native England' and all it stands for is triggered by the shock of recognition he feels on hearing 'the well-known word given in the English dialect' (333). With its combination of familiarity and singleness — well-known word, not words — this language offers

Waverley the personal and cultural authenticity he has (temporarily) lost. He immediately connects that loss to his assumption of an attire 'so unlike that which he had worn from his infancy', and his revulsion at his outward self-estrangement bleeds into his view of the linguistic otherness of the side he has chosen, as he 'saw the wild dress and appearance of his Highland associates, heard their whispers in an uncouth and unknown language' (333). In the case of Scots, too, what in *Kidnapped* is the natural idiom of the protagonists, often crossing over into David Balfour's written narration, and in *Joseph Knight* permeates the language of almost everyone right down to the omniscient narrator, in *Waverley* always requires explanation. Waverley's conversations with broad Scots speakers like the Baron of Bradwardine or Janet and Davie Gellatley are rendered in such a way that the reader and the hero both receive the information they need to make sense of the exchanges. For example, during his introduction to the manor of Tully-Veolan and its resident Shakespearean fool Davie, 'Waverley learned two things from this colloquy; that in Scotland a single house was called a *town*, and a natural fool an *innocent*' (85).

Waverley functions in his contacts with Scots as a reader-surrogate: the narrator rarely if ever steps in to explain something that is not also unfamiliar to Waverley, and the implied reader is figured as someone who needs to be informed not only of Scottish history but of Scottish linguistic peculiarities as well. This is inevitable given that Waverley's 'well-known word' — the point at which language becomes comprehensible to him — is also the point at which spoken and written English coincide. When Scots or Gaelic comes into play, a gap opens up and characters, their words and their locations must be placed on one side or the other. As Bakhtin puts it in 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', 'images of language are inseparable from images of various world

views and from the living beings who are their agents — people who think, talk, and act in a setting that is socially and historically concrete' (49). The different settings associated with Scots and Gaelic relate to the English linguistic standard in very different ways, and this difference has everything to do with the carving-out of a separate sphere in which to isolate Jacobitism from modern Britain.

The Lowlands

Janet Sorensen's *The Grammar of Empire* puts the imperative to produce a 'singular, unified, and national' (2) English language at the forefront of eighteenth-century 'Anglo-British efforts at consolidation' (3). It is a commonplace that the idea of Anglo-British civilisation relieving benighted savage ignorance was applied to 'peripheral' parts of the British Isles as well as to the colonies. Sorensen writes that 'I spotlight Scotland, in fact, because at times it functioned as a training ground for linguistic practices of imperial domination' (3). Samuel Johnson's Highland tour, the most high-profile encounter between an Englishman and representatives of rapidly-modernising Lowland Scotland as well as the little-visited Gàidhealtachd,[4] provides plenty of expressions of this attitude. James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson* quotes the following snippet of dinner party conversation: '"We have taught you, (said he,) and we'll do the same in time to all barbarous nations, — to the Cherokees, — and at last to the Ouran-Outangs"' (326). Johnson's own account draws similar parallels between Scots and

[4] The Scottish Gaelic term for the area — the Western Highlands and Islands — where Gaelic is spoken.

other groups living without the benefit of contact with English culture: 'Till the Union made them acquainted with English manners, the culture of their land was unskilful, and their domestic life unformed; their tables were as coarse as the feasts of Eskimeaux, and their houses filthy as the cottages of Hottentots' (24).

The 'you' and 'them' in these statements are Lowland Scots, not Highlanders. Their brand of barbarity, their belatedness in attaining the English standard of modernity, is not due to a failure to produce works of art, but to a failure to develop material comforts to match the literary and intellectual achievements which Johnson grudgingly acknowledges. 'I know not whether it be not peculiar to the Scots to have attained the liberal, without the manual arts, to have excelled in ornamental knowledge, and to have wanted not only the elegancies, but the conveniencies of common life' (24). This very lack of commercial development had been one of the immediate causes of the Union itself, the clear economic necessity involved rendering it largely a 'pragmatic transaction reflecting the political realities of the early 18th century, rather than an act of statesmanship or national humiliation' (Watt 254). The collapse of Scotland's erstwhile trading colony on the Darien isthmus in Panama proved 'a central ingredient in the complex financial and political settlement that created the United Kingdom in 1707', as the disastrous loss of capital and independent colonising potential paved the way for incorporation into a larger, richer, more internationally influential political grouping (Watt xv).

Colin Kidd argues for a separation between 'cultural identity' and the 'socioeconomic sphere' in the history of Scotland's integration into the United Kingdom, claiming that Scots, being 'a close dialect cousin of English', was not a relevant factor in the latter area. The fact that 'Scotsmen on the make took advantage of elocution lessons to

mellow their accents, and studied dictionaries of Scotticisms . . . to expunge these from their conversation and writings' does not, in this analysis, point to the existence of 'economic discrimination on the basis of language' (3). However, it is their attainment of 'unfettered access to English colonial and domestic markets' (Macinnes 240) that takes the Scots out of the company of Cherokees and 'Eskimeaux'. Or to use Johnson's terms, their exposure to English 'elegance and culture' encourages them to strive for an acceptable standard of 'common life'. Both formulations imply that leaving the ranks of the barbarous for those of the civilised involves making up a material deficit, resulting in an unavoidable conflation of economic and linguistic backwardness or incivility. For the difference between Scots and English speech is also understood as a deficit, a gap between standard and nonstandard that Scotland is in the process of closing. 'The conversation of the Scots grows every day less unpleasing to the English; their peculiarities wear fast away' (Johnson 147), and what is left after the peculiarities are gone will be British, or free of 'words and expressions which jarred on English ears' (Kidd 3), which amounts to the same thing.

The Highlands

The Highlands are a different case altogether. As Adam Beach points out in 'The Creation of a Classical Language in the Eighteenth Century', 'writers like Hugh Blair, Adam Smith, and Lord Monboddo . . . theorized an intimate connection among language, levels of civilization, and cultural survival' (119), and the potential of Highland culture to survive in the post-Union world was not viewed so optimistically. The fact that links between

language and progress 'were made most forcefully in the Scottish Enlightenment, by Scottish thinkers who were under intense pressure to lose any trace of their distinct linguistic heritage' (Beach 120) relates first of all to Scotland's special position as both colonised and coloniser, or perhaps more precisely, colonised on the way to colonising. But it also points to a conceptual split between Scotland's two major linguistic groupings, allowing philosophers to cast the Scottish Highlander in the 'role of the "primitive", albeit one quickly and savagely tamed, at a time when every thinking man was turning towards these subjects' (Withers 147), while pre-eminent among these 'thinking men' were Lowland Scots.

That these two 'levels of civilization' find their expression in the groups' unequal estrangement from the national linguistic standard is evident in Strabone's statement of the case. 'The Lowlanders spoke . . . a debased, impure form of the English language. The Highlanders spoke not a dialect but their own language' (258) — another way of phrasing Talbot's distinction between 'a kind of English little better than the Negroes in Jamaica' and 'gibberish'. The adoption of Standard English is inevitably experienced differently by those accustomed to speaking a non-standard variety of English and those who initially speak no English at all. Stubborn persistence in speaking Scots dialect conjures, depending on point of view, an image of anti-progressive narrowness or proud cultural nationalism in the face of lost political autonomy (certainly the characters' linguistic choices in *Joseph Knight* are portrayed in this way), but it is not so easily equated with outright rebellion as is a continued attachment to Gaelic. As Adam Beach explains, it is no coincidence that 'the standardization project gained tremendous momentum after the defeat of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745' (118).

Determined to make this latest resurgence of the Jacobite threat the last, the government stepped up their efforts, begun with the Disarming Act after the rising of 1715, to break the power of the Highland clan system once and for all. *Waverley*'s Fergus Mac-Ivor can expect no mercy at the hands of British justice because the measures taken after 1715, which brought him into possession of the family estate in place of his exiled and forfeited father, have failed to reconcile him to the state and his allotted place within it. The incorrigibility of prominent Jacobite families like the Mac-Ivors prompts the government to close off Fergus's path of return to his former life — or to any life at all. 'His father's fate could not intimidate him; the lenity of the laws which had restored him to his father's property and rights could not melt him . . . He threw for life or death, a coronet or a coffin' (461). Unlike Waverley's uncle the English Tory squire, Fergus will not be permitted to retreat to his far-flung patch of wilderness to live a life of quiet disaffection. Neither will the judge at his trial listen to his follower Evan Dhu's plea for him to allow Fergus to 'go free just this once, and let him gae back to France, and no to trouble King George's government again' (465). Fergus's brutal public execution has a function beyond punishing his personal act of treason against the king: it will destroy the distinctive structure of his branch of the Mac-Ivor clan by leaving a void where its organising centre ought to be.

That the authority of the clan chiefs as patriarchs and lawgivers makes them directly accountable for the actions of their dependants is made clear by the judge's pronouncement on Evan Dhu's culpability, or lack thereof. He is inclined to show mercy to the young man 'who, following the ideas in which you have been educated, have this day given us a striking example how the loyalty due to the king and state alone, is, from

your unhappy ideas of clanship, transferred to some ambitious individual, who ends by making you the tool of his crimes' (*Waverley* 466). What is most threatening about the clan system is that the average Highlander's decision to be disloyal to the reigning monarch is, in a sense, already made in advance of any personal political or religious considerations, because it never occurs to him to look to the state as the highest authority in the first place. For the authorities, Evan's attachment to a mere 'ambitious individual' represents a perversion of the duties of the British subject. His offer to substitute six clansmen, including himself, to be executed in Fergus's place demonstrates a veneration for the chief's person that directly replaces the true Briton's willingness to die for king and country. Not only does the chief supplant the monarch's position of primacy, he renders the identity of the monarch a matter of indifference to his clansmen, whose political affiliations will invariably match his own: 'we are for his king, and care not much which of them it is' (150).

This ideological separation from the ordinary current of national affiliations and affections equates, for the government observer, not to a modern political disagreement but to an expression of a cultural otherness as complete as if the Highlanders were to be found at the ends of the earth (perhaps with 'the Negroes in Jamaica'). General Wade, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces until he was replaced by the Duke of Cumberland during the 1745 rising, was charged with the construction of roads and barracks in the Highlands in the 1720s. He reported of the locals that 'Their Notions of Virtue and Vice are very different from the more civilized part of Mankind. They think it a most Sublime Virtue to pay a Servile and Abject Obedience to the Commands of their Chieftans, altho' in opposition to their Sovereign and the Laws of the Kingdom' (Menikoff

52). The terminology of the deficit, of the unequal attainment of standards commonly agreed to be desirable, is not appropriate here. Instead, the Highlanders cannot even be relied on to share general 'Notions of Virtue and Vice'. *Waverley* presents a disconnection between the Highland characters' culturally specific take on morality and the hero's 'ordinary' responses to moral problems. Waverley's instinctive compassion for the dying prisoner from his home estate is only comprehensible to Fergus and his men because of the feudal connection between the young squire and his former tenant, while Waverley himself takes pity on the man prior to recognising him as a dependant.

> They would not have understood the general philanthropy which rendered it almost impossible for Waverley to have passed any person in such distress; but, as apprehending that the sufferer was one of his *following*, they unanimously allowed that Waverley's conduct was that of a kind and considerate chieftain, who merited the attachment of his people. (329)

The Highlanders' responses are never 'general'. They cannot grasp the concept of disinterested sympathy. The adolescent Calum Beg is willing to commit murder on the basis of 'just the degree of roguish malice with which a lad of the same age in England would have brought forward a plan for robbing an orchard' (230). They are swayed by second sight and phantoms presaging doom. Evan Dhu's rebuke to the courthouse spectators who laugh in disbelief at his offer to substitute his life for his chief's is evidence of a kind of nobility both admirable and alien, an exemplary disregard for his own fate as an individual that is archaic in its devotion to an outdated hierarchy — outdated as of that very moment, Evan's loyalties declared inappropriate and indeed treasonous in a court of law.

> 'If the Saxon gentlemen are laughing . . . because a poor man, such as me, thinks my life, or the life of six of my degree, is worth that of Vich Ian Vohr, it's like enough they may be very right; but if they laugh because they think I would not keep my word . . . I can tell them they ken neither the heart of a Hielandman, nor the honour of a gentleman.' (466)

This favourable contrast of (archaic) Highland valour with (modern) British cynicism seems to chime with the opinion of *Kidnapped*'s David Balfour that '"If these are the wild Highlanders, I could wish my own folk wilder"' (99). However, as Andrew Lincoln argues in *Walter Scott and Modernity*, even the noblest virtues function negatively when they belong to the losers of history. 'The constancy of the Jacobite, the Covenanter, and others is rendered dangerous and irrational by the successful establishment of prosperous new regimes' (8). The object of loyalty and devotion falls from favour; affiliations become outdated and so the positive traits themselves lose their value, 'rendered obsolete by political change and the passage of time' (Lincoln 4). What makes the Solemn League and Covenant or the House of Stuart unfit to cling to is their incompatibility with the current political settlement. To break one's promises to such institutions is not immoral because they are barriers to progress, and to hold out against this forward movement is rationally indefensible. Fervent emotional attachment to the king's person is pitted against detached respect for the position of head of state (summing up the post-1688 transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy) in the following exchange between Stevenson's Highland heroine Catriona Drummond and her 'long-faced Whig' suitor David Balfour:

> 'Would you not love to die so — for your king?' she asked.

> 'Troth,' said I, 'my affection for my king, God bless the puggy face of him, is under more control.' (*Catriona* 300)

These Highlanders' understanding of the subject's relationship with the king or chieftain as powerfully personal, according great importance to the leader's physical presence and to demonstrative acts of devotion, is a mark of their exclusion from the modern political sphere. Similarly, Evan Dhu's idea of what constitutes the 'honour of a gentleman' is not — although he does not know this — a universally applicable model of behaviour. In other words, it might be possible to understand perfectly well the 'honour' of a modern enlightened British gentleman and still be puzzled by Evan Dhu's thought process. Evan's assumption is that the 'heart of a Hielandman' and 'the honour of a gentleman' can belong to the same person. This is not at all obvious to outsiders in the Highlands like Samuel Johnson, Edward Waverley or David Balfour. In both Scott and Stevenson, the Highland definition of a gentleman is key to conjuring up a field of action in which ordinary social categories do not quite apply.

Both Waverley and David Balfour continually get into misunderstandings about social status. First of all, Waverley's attempts to label Fergus Mac-Ivor using the same terms he would apply to an English private gentleman risk giving great offence. Rose Bradwardine explains that it is not appropriate to call a clan chief 'Mr Mac-Ivor': '"No, that is not his name, and he would consider *master* as a sort of affront, only that you are an Englishman, and know no better"' (128). It is not initially clear to Waverley that Fergus Mac-Ivor, who openly extorts 'black-mail' and condones the theft of cattle from those who fail to pay him this protection money, ought to qualify for the label 'gentleman' at all. In fact, the rift between the Baron and Fergus Mac-Ivor at the beginning of the novel

comes about because far from seeing such criminal practices as in any way shameful or ignoble, Fergus takes the fact of the Baron's paying him 'tribute' as evidence of his Lowland neighbour's feudal submission to him ('under his banner') as the superior nobleman (128). He is not compromised by such transactions; they are proof of his exalted social position. Theft is not judged according to its legal implications but according to its social meaning. Not all stealing is equal: 'he that steals a cow from a poor widow or a stirk from a cotter is a thief; he that lifts a drove from a Sassenach laird is a gentleman-drover' (148). This isolated people are as indifferent to a legality that does not touch them as they are to a monarchy that does not have any direct rule over them — further proof of the interdependence of their geographical and ideological isolation. As such, directing illegal activities against targets like the 'Sassenach laird' is of a piece with rebellion against the government, and both are attributed to Highland society's possession of a moral framework at odds with the rest of the country. Their chief's trial and execution is the calamity that brings the clan Mac-Ivor abruptly within the compass of the law and ensures they will be unable to maintain their independence from the political or linguistic mainstream. As Robert Maxwell puts it, 'English gradualism — for example, the dying of chivalry into modern manners — is beside the point . . . Where ancient habits are so closely intertwined with everyday life, modernization could easily be wrenching, a sudden disaster rather than a slow dissolution' (441). Progress, for the Highlands, is not represented as a peaceful or voluntary evolution but as a shift between two systems seen as not only politically but morally incommensurable.

Stevenson's Alan Breck Stewart, unsurprisingly for a proud Jacobite gentleman and fugitive from the law, has a rather similar attitude to cattle-theft. 'A man kens little till he's

driven a spreagh of neat cattle (say) ten miles through a throng lowland country and the black soldiers maybe at his tail. It's there that I learned a great part of my penetration' (*Catriona* 311). Here, this peculiarly Highland activity is recast as an essential part of any young man's training, and when David observes sarcastically that '"No doubt that's a branch of education that was left out with me"' Alan regrets his friend's deficiency with complete seriousness. '"And I can see the marks of it upon ye constantly . . . But that's the strange thing about you folk of the college learning: ye're ignorant, and ye cannae see't"' (312). In keeping with his assumption of the universal utility of such skills, Alan Breck does not stop to explain the meaning of those extremely non-universal expressions 'spreagh' and 'black soldiers'. Waverley and David Balfour both meet with a foreign method of identifying 'noble' attributes in which the incomers, with their English and Lowland world views, are the ones who are lacking. It is Waverley who 'knows no better' — Fergus Mac-Ivor turning out to be a highly cultivated individual with far more knowledge of the world than the young Englishman — and it is David whose education has failed to give him the abilities necessary to navigate the landscape of *Kidnapped*, both literal and cultural.

However the biggest cause of confusion, for David Balfour especially, is the detachment of Highland notions of social standing from the usual economic considerations. David remarks, after having offended a man by offering him money for information: 'I could scarce tell him (what was the truth) that I had never dreamed he would set up to be a gentleman until he told me so' (*Kidnapped* 108). The man appears poverty-stricken. But as David grasps rather more readily than Waverley, rags are no impediment to the title of 'gentleman' in a region that suffers from such an acute shortage

of cash that even the acting head of the Stewarts of Appin is only able to scrape together 'three-and-fivepence-halfpenny, the most of it in coppers' for Alan Breck and David to escape on (130). In many ways the absence of money from the social equation is positively regarded. David describes one destitute old man as a 'gentleman' and then defends the label: 'I call him so because of his manners, for his clothes were dropping off his back' (99). Another mark of this person's gentility is his refusal to take payment for his help, just as David's assumption that he will need to bribe Neil Roy Macrob to tell him Alan's whereabouts is misguided. Instead, he needs to show him Alan's silver coat-button. Mapping the Highlands for David as a trail of Alan's clan connections, the silver button is a kind of talisman that replaces money with a currency of personal associations.

Fittingly, Alan declares that he 'got my wastefulness from the same man I got my buttons from' and goes on to tell a story illustrating his father Duncan Stewart's indifference to money (77). One of a group of Black Watch soldiers called upon to give a demonstration of swordsmanship before King George in London, Duncan hands his entire three-guinea reward to the palace porter on his way out and his companions follow suit, in order to 'give the poor porter a proper notion of their quality' (78). An assertion of status perhaps; but the excessive largesse and the pride taken in leaving the king's residence 'never a penny better for their pains' speaks of more than a wish to show the porter that Highlanders are no poorer than other Britons (especially since no one in the novel sees poverty as any diminution of 'quality'). Rather, it is a gesture of indifference to financial exchange: a declaration, maybe, that they cannot be bought.

As well as standing apart from ordinary economic interaction, Stevenson's Highlanders do not have a fixed relation to landed property in the Lowland or English

manner. The overarching story of David Balfour, as it relates to him personally and not to the Appin Murder, concerns his quest to come into his rightful property and assert his claim to be 'David Balfour of Shaws'. To Alan Breck Stewart, this emphasis on ownership of a particular piece of land is rather vulgar (not to mention damaging to his ego as a proud though impecunious and relatively insignificant scion of the Stewart clan). When introducing himself to Alan, David goes out of his way to signal his identity as a laird: 'thinking that a man with so fine a coat must like fine people, I added for the first time "of Shaws"' (61). Alan is unimpressed. '"A king's name is good enough for me, though I bear it plain and have the name of no farm-midden to clap to the hind-end of it"' (61). When David meets Robin Oig Macgregor, the outlaw dismisses the Lowland 'lad o'pairts' as 'some kinless loon who didn't know his own father' (176). It is not a long lineage but his native abilities, coupled with property, education and a degree of political patronage from the likes of the Lord Advocate that David will use to make his way in the world of the novel, so from his 'Whiggish' point of view it is amusing that 'a man who was under the lash of the law . . . should be so nice as to the descent of his acquaintances' (176). But for Alan Breck and Robin Oig, the name is everything, transcending concrete possessions and individual qualities in determining a person's place in the world. The important thing for Alan to know about a stretch of land is the name of the clan that controls it: the family names are what divide the Highlands into safe places and dangerous foreign territory. This insider's geography may have a basis in a somewhat romantic idea of Highlanders as mystically conflated with their landscape. But in Stevenson's account of the Appin Murder, it also accurately reflects the fatal importance of local clan enmities in the

allegedly unpartisan judicial process, so that a murder trial turns into a settling of scores and a demonstration of state power.

> 'Oh!' says I, willing to give him a little lesson, 'I have no fear of the justice of my country.'
>
> 'As if this was your country!' said he. 'Or as if ye would be tried here, in a country of Stewarts!'
>
> 'It's all Scotland' said I. (*Kidnapped* 122)

As history (and *Catriona*, the second part of Stevenson's story) proves, it is David who is given the lesson. Appin is not David's country. It is linguistically, culturally and politically foreign to him; stated more briefly in terms the Highland characters would use, he is not a Stewart. James Stewart is tried in Inverary, which is not his country. Neither is it neutral ground, that 'all Scotland' that David naively invokes in the name of disinterested justice. It is the home ground of his enemies the Campbells. It is not clear, either in Scott or Stevenson, that this single, unified 'all Scotland' exists anywhere, but wherever else it is located or is imagined to be located, it is certainly not in the Highlands.

David's encounter with Neil Roy Macrob repeats in miniature the startling phenomenon of the entire Highland population's silence as to the whereabouts of Charles Edward Stuart after Culloden, when a sizeable reward was offered for information to no avail. Neil tells David that '"that is not the way that one shentleman should behave to another at all. The man you ask for is in France; but if he was in my sporran . . . and your belly full of shillings, I would not hurt a hair upon his body"' (107). The general Highland imperviousness to financial temptation is a continuing theme in *Kidnapped*. Not only are Alan and David able to escape detection despite their descriptions being advertised, but

they are brought into contact with two other famous fugitives: Macpherson of Cluny, supported in his mountain retreat by followers who 'could have made a fortune by betraying him' (157) and Robin Oig Macgregor, walking freely around the town of Balquidder 'like a gentleman in his own walled policy' (174). Barry Menikoff states that 'what made this attitude so remarkable was that it was exhibited among a people who were so poor that one might have thought their price would be quite cheap' (54).

However, in *Kidnapped* this discrepancy is precisely the point: the Highlands' strangeness is accounted for by investing the characters' poverty with more than a merely descriptive significance. That they are poor is not only a result of the barrenness of the land or the harsh treatment of the region after the '45 — though Stevenson is at pains to highlight the latter, going so far as to include an anachronistic sighting of an emigrant ship. The Highlanders also remain willingly poor rather than make money by betraying men wanted by the British authorities. They have no access to the economic opportunities that were the main advantage attached to Scotland's membership of a United Kingdom, and are not included in the 'we' of such statements as: 'being accustomed to these commodities we could not now give them up, and altho' they might once be considered only as the luxurys, they are certainly now become the necessarys of life' (NAS 51). These are the words of the advocate for Sir John Wedderburn in Knight vs Wedderburn, arguing that answering to the exigencies of the current economy (slavery is essential if we are to produce sugar cheaply and efficiently enough to provide for our needs) is consistent with the mores of a highly advanced civilisation (the Greeks and Romans had it too). The Highlanders do not possess the commodities alluded to as 'necessarys of life' for Britons. Nor are they instrumental in producing them, or rather in having them produced

by unpaid, unfree labour. The lack of money, of property, of respect for the law, of an impersonal conception of leadership that does not revolve around physical presence or a specific geographical location, sets the Highlands outside the boundaries of modern commercial society.

Johnson was of the opinion that 'Of what they had before the late conquest of their country, there remain only their language and their poverty' (*Journey* 51). The form of poverty experienced by the Highlanders is conceived as something more than a simple material lack. Unlike the ever-closing deficit of the Lowlands, it is the result of a moral and ideological otherness that is unassimilable.

Floating in the Breath of the People

> I told him I had no Gaelic; and at this he became very angry, and I began to suspect he thought he was talking English. Listening very close, I caught the word "whateffer" several times; but all the rest was Gaelic, and might have been Greek or Hebrew for me. (*Kidnapped* 97)

> I praised the propriety of his language, and was answered that I need not wonder, for he had learned it by grammar . . . Those Highlanders that can speak English, commonly speak it well, with few of the words, and little of the tone by which a Scotchman is distinguished. (*Journey* 31)

In Samuel Johnson's view, the authentic nature of the Highlands resides in two characteristics; one material, one linguistic. Having sketched out the material building-blocks of the novelists' representation of a world view (to return to Bakhtin's phrase) rooted in a highly particularised and politicised setting, it is essential to take into account that world view's mode of expression; how it is made to speak. Along with eliminating the Jacobite military threat and taking measures against the distinctive social structures of disaffected areas, post-1745 Britain faced 'the problem [of] how to unify all the diverse speakers of English across Great Britain, thereby achieving Union at the level of language' (Strabone 237). The period's leading lecturer on elocution, Thomas Sheridan, writing in 1762, makes it quite clear that the incitement to master polite English has an inherent political dimension:

> it cannot be denied that an uniformity of pronunciation throughout Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, as well as through the several counties of England, would be a point much to be wished; as it might in great measure contribute to destroy those odious distinctions between subjects of the same king, and members of the same community, which are ever attended with ill consequences, and which are chiefly kept alive by difference of pronunciation, and dialects; for these in a manner proclaim the place of a man's birth, whenever he speaks. (Strabone 243)

What Scott praises in the writing of Maria Edgeworth, and indicates that his own historical novels will also attempt, is a literary contribution to the work of 'completing the Union'. Scott's assertion that something to rival 'legislative enactments' takes place in the realm of the linguistic holds good beyond the overt fashioning of narratives that foster

understanding of insufficiently integrated groups, explaining them to the reader and paving the way for their eventual inclusion in the category of 'British'. Language itself, and especially speech, is understood by Sheridan as the last bastion of an exclusionary local identity, threatening in its unregulated diversity. The problem with being able to tell 'the place of a man's birth' from his speech is that if English, as a civilising force, is to be imposed upon outlying parts of the growing empire within the British Isles and without, the language itself needs to be placeless. An eighteenth-century subject of the British crown born in India or Africa or Skye will not unambiguously 'proclaim the place of his birth' when speaking English. He might proclaim it in another language, or might speak an English that has come to him from somewhere else. This is the source of the seeming contradiction between the passages from Stevenson and Johnson at the start of this section. In the first, Gaelic is a barrier to communication, making its speaker incomprehensible even when he attempts to speak English. In the second, a native Gaelic speaker is lauded for mastering Standard English far more completely than a Lowland Scot.

However, the two positions are not as incongruous as they seem. Gaelic is never met by English halfway: either it functions as an insurmountable obstacle, or it disappears. Barry Menikoff writes that 'the unwillingness of the Highlanders to use their English, when they did have it, was a means of keeping themselves separate from Lowlanders and outsiders, of retaining their distinctiveness. Language, unlike the proscribed dress, was a feature controllable by the population' (50). This deliberate rejection of English is a feature of David Balfour's initial wanderings through the Highlands, lacking the mediating assistance of Alan Breck: 'few had any English, and these few . . . not very

anxious to place it at my service' (100). This policy is in no way altered by David's status as a fellow Scot rather than an Englishman. There is no sliding scale of difference, simply an absolute silence. However, even when this element of conscious choice is not a factor, the linguistic gulf may prove too great: the man who 'thought he was talking English' ends up speaking Gaelic in spite of himself. The sense of a foreign influence standing in the way of the universal tongue that is Standard English persists, in more subtle fashion, in the speech of those Gaels whose language displays the 'propriety' Johnson finds so pleasing and surprising.

Waverley's first Highland acquaintance is Evan Dhu, who visits Tully-Veolan in order to patch up the Baron's quarrel with Fergus Mac-Ivor. His speech on this occasion is very much in the noble savage vein: '"And he expects you will also say, you are sorry for the cloud, and no man shall hereafter ask whether it descended from the hill to the valley, or rose from the valley to the hill . . . and woe to him who would lose his friend for the stormy cloud of a spring morning!"' (132). Although this and many other pithy maxims like 'while there is a green leaf in the forest, there will be fraud in a Comyne' (165) are reported in Standard English, the linguistic remedy for Sheridan's 'odious distinctions', what they mostly express is an image of their speakers' otherness. Evan Dhu does not always speak in this way; he uses Scots dialect for ordinary conversation. This elevated diction, coupled with the landscape metaphors and appeals to an archaic kind of received wisdom, mark these statements as translations from a foreign tongue and a foreign mindset. Bakhtin writes in *Discourse in the Novel* that 'within these points of view . . . that is, for the speakers of the language', statements made in that language 'denote and express directly and fully' (289). However, for those 'not participating in the given purview, these

languages may be treated as objects, as typifications, as local color. For such outsiders, the intentions permeating these languages become *things*' (289). The idea of language as directly associated with 'point of view' is especially relevant to Scott's Highlanders, whose 'point of view' is portrayed as unassimilably un-British and who do not communicate with Waverley on an equal linguistic plane, even in translation. The Highlanders estrange Standard English from itself when they speak it, because 'the disinterested, "general" position from which . . . standard English could be produced is the position of nobody' (Sorensen 63). The Highlander cannot become that disembodied, neutral 'nobody', because his function is to act as its antithesis.

Chapter Two: In the Slave's Place

Chapter One was concerned with narrative emptiness, a 'vacuity' between Standard English and uncommunicative, unwritten Gaelic into which political ideologies and linguistic specificities seem to fall, replaced by an appearance of linguistic neutrality and a seemingly universal concept of progress. However, denial of the Jacobites' simultaneity in favour of a theory of their immutable difference and objectively-observable backwardness is only one part of the picture. This chapter will examine what happens when connections are explicitly made between one 'minor' group and another; specifically, between various configurations of disempowered Scottishness and slaves. The defining feature of Robertson's engagement with the history of eighteenth-century Scotland is his use of 'two contrasting narrative representations: firstly, between the defeated Jacobite rebels and the defeated slave rebels in Jamaica; secondly between the servants and colliers of the Scottish working class and black slaves' (Morris 3). Both of these groups are offered as possible analogues for plantation slaves within the British nation, but when they are too closely equated with them, stubborn incompatibilities are also pushed to the fore.

Slaves and Jacobites

> 'He had never been a rebel; nor had his father. When he thought of rebels, he thought of slaves. He thought of Joseph Knight. He thought of Tacky' (*Joseph Knight* 108)

> 'When I first came to England, in the year 1779, I remember seeing the remains of a rebel's skull which had been affixed over Temple Bar; but I never yet could fully ascertain whether it was my dear grandfather's skull, or not. Perhaps my dear brother, A. Colville, can lend me some assistance in this affair.' (Wedderburn 45)

There are not one but two 'bothersome Negroes' plaguing the Wedderburn family in *Joseph Knight*. There is the recalcitrant slave who gives his name to the novel, petitioning the Court of Session to recognise his right under Scots law to leave the service of Sir John Wedderburn of Ballindean, sixth Baronet of Blackness. The other man never appears in person but is spoken of, tellingly, as another 'ghost from our West Indian days' harassing the family in search of recognition (162). He is the radical preacher and pamphleteer Robert Wedderburn, free-born son of Sir John's younger brother James Wedderburn by his slave Rosanna, and after the time-frame of *Joseph Knight* he will go on to make his family connections extremely public in such works as *The Horrors of Slavery* and *The Axe Laid to the Root*. These two figures, one hovering on the edge of the narrative, one situated right at its centre yet absent or silent for most of its duration, force the Jamaican-planter phase of the Wedderburns' former lives to intrude into the respectable existence they enjoy on their return to Scotland. The threat represented by Joseph Knight, Robert Wedderburn and the Jamaican plantation slaves is that comparisons will be made; that the position of the disempowered yet honourable Jacobite might in some way parallel that of the rebellious slave kept in check by violence. When Sir John Wedderburn asks Knight's advocate John Maclaurin whether 'a runaway Negro is less offensive to you than

a Jacobite who stands and fights?' he suggests that one set of sympathies must take precedence (276). Maclaurin agrees vehemently with such a conclusion (though not in the way Wedderburn intends), classing Jacobitism and slaveholding as two forms of 'tyranny', both equally at odds with British modernity and therefore only too consistent with one another. This is the danger inherent in the Wedderburns' own lives and in the romance of Scottish victimisation: that the slave's predicament, in being too closely aligned with the Jacobite's, might nullify it.

What the Wedderburns' West Indian money buys them is the restoration of the stability and status that was taken away in 1746: like the restitution gifted to the Baron of Bradwardine at the end of *Waverley*, but with years of purgatory in a hot, unhealthy climate, slowly accumulating wealth by ruthlessly exploiting African slaves, in place of *Waverley*'s quasi-miraculous turnaround in fortunes engineered by Whig well-wishers willing to let bygones be bygones. In Scott's text the interval between the Jacobites' defeat and the pardoning of Waverley and the Baron is very short. In part this is facilitated by the removal of the hero from the field of action before 'the affair of Culloden', so that this climactic event (which Robertson has the young Sir John Wedderburn experience firsthand) happens offstage. By the time the final disaster puts paid to the Jacobite cause, Waverley has already been separated from his comrades in a skirmish at Clifton in northern England, and come to the conclusion that 'the romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now commenced' (415). The novel does of course contain its own tragic climax in the execution of Fergus Mac-Ivor, but structurally this is enveloped by Waverley's movement back towards peaceful domesticity and official acceptance, if not

favour. Fergus Mac-Ivor and Evan Dhu die while Colonel Talbot is renovating the Baron's estate and preparations are being made for the union of Waverley and Rose Bradwardine.

Chapter sixty-six opens with a line from Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*: 'Now is Cupid like a child of conscience — he makes restitution' (451). Close on this announcement that matters are on the mend comes the trial and execution, in chapters sixty-eight and sixty-nine. Instead of punishment being followed, after a certain space, by restitution, *Waverley* collapses the horror of the former — complete with Fergus's biting denunciation of the barbarism of the English penalty for treason and macabre wish to have his head displayed on Carlisle's 'Scotch gate' — into the middle of the latter. In *Bloodless Revolutions* Anthony Jarrells poses the important question: 'What happens that allows for Waverley to be enlightened while his fellow Jacobites are being executed?' (177). In his view Waverley can be insulated from the consequences of his (technically criminal) actions, and even from any real desire to follow the line of conduct that he does, because 'in Scott's novels a separation is maintained between the political and the cultural' (177). Another way of phrasing that answer in this context would be to say that punishment and restitution are dealt out simultaneously, but to separate people, rather than to the same people at different times in accordance with changes to their political and economic status, which is what happens to Robertson's rebels-turned-planters-turned-respectable-Britons. *Waverley*'s own structure does the work that requires a Jamaican sojourn in *Joseph Knight*. Fergus is sacrificed to the political so that Waverley can transcend immediately to the 'private cultural space removed from the larger world in which the dramatic events of history take place' (Lincoln 2).

Sir John Wedderburn is unable to maintain such a space, because the symbol of what lies in between his political Jacobite past and private British present is uncooperative and insufficiently fixed in meaning. Joseph Knight is intended to serve as a bridge between Jamaica and Scotland, 'an unmistakable, visible sign of Wedderburn's success, of his return from exile, of his triumph over adversity' (29). However, Knight refuses to accept that Jamaica can be superimposed on Scotland in this way with no alteration in his status, and ultimately the law backs him up. He gains some education, begins a relationship with a Scottish woman, marries and asks for wages to support his family, all of which is unthinkable within a system of slavery. Wedderburn is aware that 'it is not so simple here. When you have only one slave you cannot dispose of him as you could in Jamaica' (198) but it does not occur to him that his Jamaican 'sign' might become detached from the law of the plantation. The security of Wedderburn's 'third life' as a legitimate citizen rests on the assumption that no similar transformation can happen for Joseph Knight, that although the position of 'traitor' has proved temporary, subject to the vagaries of time and space, that of 'slave' is immutable. One argument Wedderburn's counsel must make is that the right to hold another person as property still holds good when the economic expediency that makes such practices acceptable in the colonies is no longer a factor. His advocate Cullen declares that 'it cannot be agreeable to the principles of justice, to divest the master or owner of a Negro, of his right of property, by the mere accidental circumstance of his bringing that Negro into the island of Great Britain' (312).

However, the question of Joseph Knight's location is not 'accidental' or negligible at all. If the Highlands is imagined as a space divorced from economics, signalling its ideological and temporal estrangement from Britain, the Wedderburns and their fellow

Scottish exiles (voluntary or otherwise) conceive of themselves as relating to Jamaica in an exclusively economic way. It is not a new homeland but a place to 'sojourn in the sun for a few years' (56). Young John Wedderburn's plan is to 'amass wealth. He would not squander it. He would not be the prodigal son. He would be the 6th Baronet. He would go home to enjoy his own again' (56). He has not gone there to be 'lost to the British crown' and fulfil Samuel Johnson's fears about emigration (Johnson 119). Instead, Jamaica is an essential stopping-place on his route back to the British crown and to family tradition and landed property. His treatment of his slaves on the way to that goal is lauded during the court case as unusually humane, in order to lessen the impact of Joseph Knight's plight and accuse him of abusing a privileged situation for which he ought to have been grateful: 'his master never mistreated him; he therefore forms a scheme for deserting his service' (308). It is certainly true that Wedderburn disapproves of needless cruelty and waste of life. Of course, this is due not so much to a recognition of the humanity of his slaves as to the removal of any such distracting concerns from the equation. Wedderburn is not infected with the racial panic and paranoia of those who 'treated every African wound as self-inflicted, every sign of lethargy as malingering, every desperate fever as one more indicator of the degraded racial origins of their slaves' (70). He is one of the 'calculating, observant, thoughtful ones . . . who saw each dead or debilitated slave as a loss of fifty or sixty pounds sterling, each sound and working one as the same sum spread over ten, twenty or thirty years' (70).

In contrast to the more 'scientifically' racist theories of the nineteenth century, the documents in the real-life Knight vs Wedderburn case make little mention of any concept of inherent racial inferiority, while being extremely matter-of-fact about the economic

basis of the slave system. 'But whatever the case may be with regard to this institution in other parts of the world its [sic] impossible to deny that it is absolutely necessary in our colonies in the West Indies, and that if we were to discontinue that practice there, we should . . . loose [sic] all the wealth and support which we derive from those possessions' (NAS 51). That money was the real motive behind the perpetuation of slavery in the colonies is not exactly a secret, but it is startling to see it stated so plainly, without the usual justifications about bringing civilisation to benighted savages or the natural unfitness of Africans for any other mode of life (though the former at least is also brought up elsewhere in the documents). The memorials for Joseph Knight oppose slavery in terms that canonical nineteenth-century slave narrators like Frederick Douglass might recognise and approve of: 'the Petitioner does not admit that he is a Slave, a State of Slavery being adverse to the natural Rights of Mankind' (NAS 14). But they also make rather banal-seeming economic demands. The original petition to the Sheriff of Perthshire asks that official 'to decern and ordain the said Sir John Wedderburn to pay the Petitioner the sum of — for his bygone wages and the sum of — as his current half years wages' (NAS 3). This aspect of Knight's case is not emphasised in Robertson's fictionalised courtroom scenes, although in other respects he follows the memorials very closely.

It seems on first examination that Knight's defiant rejection of the relationship between himself and Wedderburn — 'if he had purchased him Twenty times over this will not make him his Slave' (NAS 14) — ought to be inconsistent with demands for payment. The acts of resistance to slavery generally seen as most unequivocal entail a complete disavowal of the economic: American slaves escaping to free territory rather than accord

the system legitimacy by purchasing their freedom, for example. However, something slightly different is happening when Joseph Knight bases part of his case against Wedderburn on the latter's refusal to pay him wages. His connection to Wedderburn is reconfigured as a master/servant relationship, the right to personal liberty as the servant's right to find a new place 'unless Sir John shall Contract with him for wages as another Servant in his Station' (NAS 3). Wedderburn's side defines Knight as a piece of Jamaican property and Knight's counsel respond by inscribing him within Scotland's domestic economy. This also has the advantage of replacing the question of the applicability of the laws of Jamaica within Britain with what Ian Whyte describes as the 'jealous concern to judge by the precepts of Scottish law', excluding any input from outside legal systems, English or colonial (Whyte 35). Knight's memorial reads: 'it seems in the first place indisputable that the American colonys are foreign countrys with regard to Scotland. Whether they are governed by the Laws of England or by Laws peculiar to themselves it can make no difference' (NAS 113).

It becomes less clear what Joseph is — African, Jamaican, Scottish, British or all four — and less clear where the former political exile stands in relation to the former chattel if both are subject to the same law. Wedderburn can no longer use Knight as a sort of signpost to 'mark the source of the riches that would continue to flow across the Atlantic and feed his third life', because Knight has broken his connection to that source. Wedderburn loses control of Joseph Knight's legal definition, and subsequently loses sight of him altogether. He employs the investigator Archibald Jamieson to search for Knight in 1802, but Joseph is not found until after Wedderburn's death. Yet some hazy, obscure connection between the two men persists: knowing whether the other is alive or dead

makes a difference to them that the other characters cannot quite fathom. The family portrait, containing the dark spot where Joseph has been painted out, stays on the wall. *Waverley* ends with the unveiling of a picture that makes the dead visible again for the friends who are leaving their cause behind, in keeping with Lukács' dictum that the '45 'could never be removed from the picture of national greatness'. Joseph Knight on the other hand is excised from the records but his very absence is vocal and cannot be eradicated: 'Joseph Knight remained at Ballindean yet was always missing, visible yet invisible' (25). Both Fergus Mac-Ivor and Joseph Knight have their likenesses captured in portraits, but Joseph does not stay put; his image changes.

Portraits of dead Jacobites and compliant slaves attempt to preserve the recent past but also to contain it, to mark it out as already-distant and above all, finished with. In *Waverley*, great care is taken to restore the despoiled manor of Tully-Veolan 'as much as possible according to the old arrangements; and where new moveables had been necessary, they had been selected in the same character with the old furniture' (489). The one reminder of the upheaval that preceded this homecoming is itself a fixed image:

> It was a large and spirited painting, representing Fergus Mac-Ivor and Waverley in their Highland dress; the scene a wild, rocky, and mountainous pass, down which the clan were descending in the background . . . Beside this painting hung the arms which Waverley had borne in the unfortunate civil war. The whole piece was beheld with admiration, and deeper feelings. (489)

The inclusion of Waverley himself in the picture, and the fact that his retired weapons make up part of the 'piece', suggest another function for the portrait besides doing

honour to his fallen friend. It may be a powerful expression of 'the ardent, fiery, and impetuous character of the unfortunate Chief of Glennaquoich', an approximation that will endure though the real man will not, but it is primarily a souvenir for the hero of a formative period in his life (489). John Wedderburn values Joseph Knight as a 'personal landmark', a 'token', 'an unmistakeable, visible sign' (29, 167) and at the end of *Waverley* Fergus Mac-Ivor has become something similar, transformed from an agent into an aesthetic object. At the same time, Jarrells notes, Waverley has progressed from his starting point as an observer of Highland exoticism to become an actor — with reservations. 'By the novel's end, Waverley himself is in the picture . . . but it is only a picture, a "romantic" work' (178). The painting illustrates the division enacted in the novel: for one of its subjects it represents the less-than-real, a past life that is in no danger of recurring, but for the other subject, that frozen moment is the only future. There will be no progress for him; he will not look back upon the scene in the picture as 'the now distant point from which we have been drifted' (492). To Waverley, the action of the novel may be the 'romance of his life', but there is no doubt that for the worldly, sceptical Fergus ('"is this your very sober earnest . . . or are we in the land of romance and fiction?"') it was real enough, with real consequences that the painting cannot acknowledge (211). In *Joseph Knight*, where the divisions between the different 'lives' of ex-Jacobites are less stable, paintings are less effective as a means of containment. The picture of Sir John Wedderburn senior, put to death in the same way as Fergus Mac-Ivor and for the same offence, does not preserve the past so much as supplant it.

> He looked at the painting of his father. That was how he saw him now. The man, the physical man, was quite gone. He still heard his words on

> Drummossie Moor, he still saw a figure mounted on a horse going away from him, but the voice was his own voice, the face was the face of the painting, the memory was a likeness of the painting. (267)

Unlike Edward Waverley, John Wedderburn is not allowed to be sure that the phases he moves through — Jacobite to planter to Briton — are arranged in a stable hierarchy. While *Waverley* is peopled with Highland characters whose ordinary lives consist of events that the English hero 'had used to conjure up in his imagination, as only occurring in ancient times' (129), periods of Wedderburn's own life appear to him strange, perhaps illusory. His decision to bring Joseph Knight back from Jamaica with him is voiced as an echo of Scott's 'the romance of his life was now ended, and its real history had commenced', but is riddled with qualifications: 'like the hero in a fairy tale, he could not pass from the unreal to the real (if that was where he was going) without taking with him a token. It would serve as a reminder of where he had been, and what had happened there' (167). There is no certainty that the Jamaican sojourn is truly a stepping-aside from the real in order to regain it later, and there is no certainty that 'reminders' like the slave or the picture of Wedderburn senior will grant uninhibited access to the past. Characters experience their own history filtered through artistic representations, until the representations come to feel less like surviving snippets of the past and more like replacements for something that may once have been real but is no longer recoverable. Wedderburn's initial feeling about his father's death — 'They had wiped him clean away' — is in no way mitigated, as Waverley's loss of Fergus Mac-Ivor appears to be, by his having a portrait to remember him by (54). His father's last letter, arriving in faraway Jamaica some time after the execution, already seems to have come from nobody: 'as if to

emphasise that awful fact, the letter was not even signed' (54). The painting participates in the erasure: the father's disappearance is made more apparent, not less, by the presence of his image.

Joseph Knight's image, on the other hand, is deliberately covered up. In Michael Morris's view, it is this concealment itself that the novel aims to make visible, as the painting parallels the wider narrative of Joseph Knight's disappearance and rediscovery, which in turn gestures towards a general overhaul of 'Scotland's overwhelmingly white historiography and its supposed innate democratic racial conscience' (2). 'Our attempts to restore the identity of the black figure reflect the re-examination of the hidden history of Scotland's role in the Atlantic slave trade' (7). *Joseph Knight* undoubtedly does participate in this shift towards situating Scotland in its Atlantic context. However, it would be an oversimplification to say that the painting's significance lies in the possibility of restoring it to its original state. What it reveals more than anything is the novel's concern with compromised histories, with a bias so great that no mere discovery of the facts can eradicate it. Wedderburn's daughter Susan is highly sensitive to the intangible presence of Joseph Knight in her home. She sees the hidden figure in the painting and identifies it. Horrified by details of the cruelty and degradation of plantation life, she urges Archibald Jamieson to continue his search for Knight after her father has called him off. But despite her best intentions, Susan is not primarily interested in finding out about Joseph Knight, but in finding out about her father through this enigmatic 'token' of his past life. After her father dies, she can no longer conceive of the continuing existence of Knight. Jamieson sees that 'Her father was dead and therefore so must Knight be. He saw

that Joseph had only ever lived, in her mind, because of her father' (343). She rejects the suggestion that her father 'felt guilty about their lives in Jamaica', choosing instead the familiar exoneration of Scots' imperial involvement as a (forgivable) means of overcoming their own marginalisation: 'he had made the best of a bad situation, and come through it' (342). Knowing more about Joseph Knight does not, of itself, render him completely visible. Neither does picking him out of the dark shadow that obscures him in the painting, if the sufferings of Susan's father and uncles in that 'cruel and hard place' permit her to justify the still greater suffering they visited on their slaves (342).

Joseph Knight is found, eventually. But the 'real' history of the slave trade is not discovered along with him, just as the painting of the dead Jacobite does not provide an unbroken link to Culloden. Joseph Knight also doubts the evidence of his own memory and worries that the 'lives' that have come between him and his origins are playing him false: 'Maybe he was not remembering at all. Maybe he *thought* he recalled these things because of all he had since heard and read' (347). The scenes of the middle passage, with sailors who speak broad Scots, have a kind of distorted correspondence to the elder John Wedderburn's speech coming back to his son in the son's own voice. As a child Knight did not understand what was being said, so the exact words that match his own particular experience cannot be recovered. Now that he speaks like a Scot himself however, the former slave can give voice to the slave trader: 'Maybe over the years his dreams had put words in the sailor's mouth. Maybe, but he knew they were not far wrong. This was how it had been' (352). It is not clear whether Knight's sense of 'how it had been' is subject to the things heard and read, or whether this remembered sailor is, for once, subject to the ex-

slave's interpretation of what is important and historically true. Perhaps both. 'Not far wrong' is the closest he can get. In contrast to a Highland figure like Alan Breck Stewart, reading his place of origin like a text, Joseph cannot 'proclaim the place of his birth' in any sense of the term, cannot pinpoint precisely where he comes from, even in his mind. The pre-1745 Gaelic-speaking Highlander, the executed Jacobite placed in a frame, the Scot raising capital out in Jamaica: these positions may all be to a greater or lesser extent incompatible with British mainstream society, but the location that is always out of sight and disconnected from all other points on the narrative map is Africa. The Highlands and the colonies might be depicted as irreducibly un-British; Africa is not depicted at all. The losers of the '45 are 'things of an outgrown past' and to portray them is to go back in time (Lincoln 22). Joseph's childhood in Africa is 'the beginning of a story that had never happened' (347). A narrative will not reach it by tracing it back through time; its point of origin is lost.

Joseph also differs from the Jacobite portrait subjects Fergus Mac-Ivor and Wedderburn senior in being the only one of the three whose artistic representation exerts a narrative function while he is still alive. In part, this speaks to his inaccessibility. The painted Joseph Knight is hidden in plain sight, but the real man is even harder to locate and not much more communicative. The bulk of the information about Knight comes from another manmade object ('aesthetic object' would be going too far), the journal of Sandy Wedderburn, the weakling brother who died of fever in Jamaica and left behind the painting and the written record of his guilty, terrified responses to the inscrutability of the slaves and their hatred of himself. Susan Wedderburn, jokingly but significantly, equates

the journal's portrayal of the slave as a young boy with the real-life Knight: 'I told you I had found Mr K. He was hiding in my father's writing-desk' (132). On the one hand, this image continues the theme of the haunting of Ballindean by lingering reminders of the plantation and the legal embarrassment of 1778. But on the other hand, the proliferation of artificial stand-ins for Knight — the painting, the journal, the second-hand accounts that leave Jamieson feeling 'a distance between himself and Knight . . . more than simply all the years that had passed' — serve to detach the meaning of his story from the man himself, all the more because that story is still continuing beyond the static images that tie him to the Wedderburns (239). To think that 'Mr K' can be found, in some definitive way, in the words of someone who hated and feared him and was placed in a position of mastery over him is to create another irrevocably partial history.

The moment when the figure of Joseph actually appears in the painting is doubly distanced, enveloped in Sandy's poorly written report of his brother explaining to the slave the significance of his own image. 'John says to Joseph do you see your self, you will look out from that picter for a hunderd yrs and never age a day' (149). Wedderburn is wrong about this, of course. But the conventional phrases he uses, like 'your self' and 'you will look out', are suggestive in this context. In Morris's reading they constitute something of a triumph for Knight: 'Joseph does continue to look out, though John could no longer bear to look at him' (7). However, accepting the shadowy image in the painting, capable of looking, and the journal, capable of hiding, as 'really being' Joseph Knight is problematic when the character is not, in fact, dead and reliant on these representations to immortalise him. Unlike the executed Jacobites who live on only in their portraits,

however undermined and imperfect that form of survival might be, Knight is living not far away from those who are unearthing his story, working as a collier in the town of Wemyss on the east coast of Scotland. Yet when Sandy's journal comes to an abrupt end without providing Jamieson with closure for Joseph's story, the impression it makes on him is not one of open-endedness or possibility, but of death: 'The boy . . . vanishing, as Sandy Wedderburn himself vanished with the last of the entries. It was as if the ending of the journal deprived them both of life' (159). Sandy did indeed die. Joseph did not — the last sentence of the novel is 'He was alive' — but he is still forgotten, his only public traces a blacked-out figure and a quasi-literate diary (372).

Robertson's method of switching between several time periods, places and points of view means that Knight is shown at a number of distinct stages, with the intervening time and space missing. He appears as a young boy in Sandy's journal, John Wedderburn's memories and the painting, as a young man engaged in his struggle for liberty, from the point of view of his wife Ann and in Jamieson's imaginative reconstruction of the court hearing, and as an older man in a letter from a fellow black worker named Peter Burnet and, when they finally do meet, in Jamieson's own impressions of him. Then finally the reader gains access to Knight's own thoughts in the final pages, but he still keeps things back: his African name is not told to anyone, not even the reader. *Joseph Knight*'s approach to its central figure's story is to split it among many documents and relay it through multiple observers, most of whom do not know Knight well and none of whom can join up all the pieces into one uninterrupted narrative — not even himself. The simultaneous centrality and absence of the slave subject is one reason for the difference

between Scott's rather comforting picture of the transition from past to future as 'drift[ing] down the stream of a deep and smooth river' (492) and Wedderburn's uneasy feeling, which he quickly tries to disavow, that 'There was no continuous stream, only a torn, faded, incomplete map of wilderness' (27).

What Wedderburn is pondering when he has this frightening thought is the possibility that the different points on his journey have not after all come together to form a coherent narrative; that they do not flow one into the other with a sense of inevitable rightness:

> What had a frightened boy on a battlefield to do with an aged laird in Perthshire . . . What had a black boy with some impossible name, chasing birds in an unknown village in Africa, to do with a man called Joseph Knight, sitting in a courtroom in Edinburgh? What had these lives to do with each other? (27)

In the absence of any unifying thread linking the different national and political identities held by any single character, let alone linking the larger national or political groupings themselves, what these 'lives' do in fact have to do with one another may seem harder to pin down than all the ways in which they fail to connect. It is clear that the aesthetic containment of the '45 does not provide an exact analogue of the attempted erasure of the slave; that Jacobitism as *Waverley*'s historical minor chord functions in a different way from slavery as *Joseph Knight*'s. Both are foundational to the construction of Scottish modernity, but one is acknowledged after it is carefully partitioned off into the past and into geographical isolation, while the other is ignored even as it continues to happen. Yet

despite that apparent lack of equivalence, the Wedderburns' experiences in Jamaica are not marked by a realisation that their slaves' situation reflects nothing of their own, but by repeated invitations to observe similarities, to compare.

Past hypocrisy about Scotland's role in imperial oppression has been widely analysed and condemned: it has been shown 'that Enlightenment thought was no automatic ally in the anti-slavery cause and . . . despite educated and enlightened Scots having a philosophical distaste for slavery, social and economic factors could outweigh this' (Whyte 57). The assumption that remains perhaps insufficiently examined is not confined to the relationship between Jacobites and plantation slaves, but it does manifest itself strongly in that quarter. This is the notion that although enlightened, progressive commercial society is implicated in slavery, there is nevertheless a shared position of marginalisation that lends some sections of the Scottish people an affinity with the victims of British colonial expansion. Or put another way, that the Wedderburns' willingness to exploit and kill black Africans is not equally as reprehensible as a Lowlander's or an Englishman's willingness to do so — it is worse. It is worse because it represents a denial of what they once had in common with their victims. It might be understandable to expect that experiencing bloody massacres and the destruction of one's cultural traditions would inspire a reluctance to visit the same fate on others. Although other Scots, as Whyte points out, were able to overlook their 'distaste' in their own economic interest, Jacobites are generally not depicted as possessing such a thing as an economic interest. One effect of keeping Jacobites conceptually separate from commercial society is to pave the way for their relegation to temporal and geographical backwaters. Another effect, however, is to

create a false conflation of, crudely speaking, the bought and the merely not-buying.

The idea of a kind of transference of sympathy crops up everywhere in discussions both of Scottish literature and the use of slavery as a literary motif. Stevenson's *In the South Seas* states that 'what I knew of the Cluny Macphersons, or the Appin Stewarts, enabled me to learn, and helped me to understand, about the Tevas of Tahiti' (Buckton 25). Buckton interprets this as a 'kinship with the colonized subjects of the South Sea Islands . . . connected to his own history as a colonial subject' (25). He misses the point that even if Stevenson were directly equating the two groups, he is not casting himself as a Cluny Macpherson or an Appin Stewart, merely as someone who knows about them. But more importantly, Buckton's reading of Stevenson's 'sympathetic portrayal of Polynesians' as arising from a unity of perspective created by shared experience of colonisation has something in common with traditional historiography's 'blithe conclusions about the benign nature of Scots in dealings with colonial subjects in comparison to their English counterparts' (Morris 3). This is not to say that Stevenson is not sympathetic after all, but that there is a danger in conflating all forms and degrees of oppression which *Joseph Knight*'s clash of Jacobite exiles and slaves makes very clear.

These pitfalls are also evident in the rhetorical strategy that calls on its audience to recognise themselves in the figure of the slave. Nicholas Hudson notes that a great deal of Tory commentary on the state of late eighteenth-century Britain depicted a country menaced by 'slav'ry' in the form of French influence and Whiggish commercialism. This strain of opinion was often also sympathetic to Jacobitism. Yet by the same token, after his overthrow in 1688 'Whigs welcomed the abdication of James II with a wave of

thanksgiving for their release from "slavery"' — a viewpoint that inclines *Joseph Knight*'s staunch Whig Maclaurin to believe that Jacobites might in fact make the most natural slaveholders (Hudson 563). If the perspective of 'slave' is thought of as entirely transferable, capable of belonging to Tories, Whigs, Jacobites, Scots and other Britons alike depending on who is doing the oppressing, then when one of these groups comes into contact with the plantation slaves themselves and the equivalence fails to hold good, the strategy of substitution will begin to break apart.

In *Joseph Knight* this fault line runs through the difficult task of fixing upon a definition of rebellion. John Wedderburn is 'punctilious in describing the Forty-five as a *rising*. To call it a rebellion was to debase the cause and its motives' (108). Rebellion, for Wedderburn, is something that slaves do. 'He thought of Joseph Knight. He thought of Tacky' (108). By definition then, neither Knight's legal battle nor Tacky's violent uprising can have a legitimate cause or reasonable motives. They are defying the proper order of things by rising against their masters, and their reasons for doing so need not, cannot, be considered. As a trope, rebellion is also useful for the polemical purposes of Robert Wedderburn, and he turns Sir John's careful distinction on its head. When he publishes the details of his parentage (employing the tactic that became a hallmark of nineteenth-century American slave narratives in their denunciation of slavery's perversion of family relationships) he makes sure to include a macabre reference to the Wedderburns' Jacobitism.[5] His is not the family's only embarrassingly conspicuous body: he dwells on

[5] Frederick Douglass provides precise details of the location of his childhood home and the identities of his various masters; Moses Roper tells of his master/father's wife trying to murder him as a baby, only to be prevented by his grandmother — whether she was the

the vicious punishment meted out to his grandfather, who 'was hung by the neck until he was dead; his head was cut off, and his body was divided into four quarters', before creating the image of the unacknowledged black grandson face-to-face (as it were) with the mouldering skull of the rebel grandfather (45). The admission that he has no way of positively identifying it as his 'dear grandfather's skull' does not matter; in fact the skull's anonymity adds to the general sense of ignominy that association with a disreputable black preacher can only serve to heighten. At the same time as he insists upon his connection to the Wedderburns, making constant use of sarcastic phrases like 'my dear brother' and 'dear and honoured father', Wedderburn draws a sharp distinction between the sort of rebellion his 'dear grandfather' participated in and the justifiable and praiseworthy rebelliousness of his slave mother. The terms he uses in referring to the '45 — 'the cause of the Pretender . . . the rebellion of the year 1745 . . . high treason' — are all derogatory (45). This rebellion is not accorded any urgent animating cause or legitimate objective. In contrast, his mother's intractability is a direct resistance to her physical abusers. 'My dear brother states that my mother was of a violent temper, which was the reason of my father selling her; — yes, and I glory in her rebellious disposition, and which I have inherited from her' (59).

In spite of the objections of the respectable Mr Colvile, who wrote an outraged letter of rebuttal to *Bell*'s *Life* which was also printed, accompanied by disdainful editorial commentary, Robert Wedderburn's take on his father's character is the one that makes it

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slave woman's mother or the master's is not specified. Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and Roper's *Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper* are both anthologised in Yuval Taylor, ed. *I Was Born a Slave*. Vol.1. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999.

into Robertson's novel. On top of his unabashed exploitation of his female slaves, James Wedderburn is far less uneasy than his elder brother about the implications of drawing direct comparisons between their slaves and themselves. He is fond of making statements that bring the unspoken hypocrisy of the planter's position to the surface: 'But think of it, John. In '45, Papa took only you as his retinue. Were the opportunity to arise again, you could bring four dozen Coromantees to the Prince's standard' (71). The ingenuous suggestion that 'four dozen Coromantees' equal four dozen Highlanders highlights the gulf between a chief's relationship to his followers, based on family ties and personal loyalty, and a planter's relationship to his slaves, based on money and violence. The inappropriate mingling of familial and economic bonds is made more acute by John's retort: '"And you could bring a company of your own black bairns"' (71). John's disapproval of 'that . . . miscegenation of which you are so fond' is not just a moral repugnance, but derives from his need to compartmentalise, to keep slave and master resolutely separate. He is troubled by any kind of common ground, even something so apparently innocuous as a similarity of personality between Sandy and one of his slaves, Charlie. James does not need to maintain such a mental dividing line. While his elder brother is obliged to flee to Jamaica immediately after the Jacobite rising, James, having been too young to fight alongside his father, is permitted to visit him in prison and witnesses his execution. After Tacky's uprising in 1760, a Wedderburn slave named Cuffy is captured and sentenced to be hung in chains; another slave is sentenced to slow burning. The two brothers go along to watch. John is sickened but James, unmoved, stays for several days to see the process through to its conclusion, and afterwards declares that he has 'seen worse', acknowledging that it is possible to mention their father's death and

that of a slave in the same breath, and even to make comparisons.

If 'their experience of revolt against authority might be supposed to translate into understanding or sympathy towards slaves who rebel against authority in Jamaica' there is no evidence of it in James's case (Morris 9). He says '"They brought it on themselves. I have no sympathy for them"' (122). This is not, however, because he follows John's lead in denying any possible correlation between the brutal repercussions of the Jacobite 'rising' and those of the slave 'rebellion'. He sees the similarities, indeed draws attention to them, but 'the implications did not bother him at all. It was the others, some of them anyway, who had bad consciences' (111). James seems to understand that the distinction between legitimate and unnatural rebellion is not self-evident, but determined by power. In relation to the British state his family did not possess it; in relation to their slaves, they do. As for John, faced with the fallout from the slave revolt he is unable to adhere to his own stringent mental rules. After the rebellion has been crushed and the claims filed on executed slaves, Charlie returns and, having already been declared dead and paid for, is renamed 'Newman' and allowed to live. Two slaves for the price of one. This is James's reason at least, 'But for John there was more. Charlie did not remind him only of Sandy: he reminded him of himself. A man went out for a while, and came back to find that the world had changed forever' (125). He also asks Cuffy at his execution 'Why did you go out?' (121). To be 'out' means, usually, to be in arms for the Stuart cause. John Wedderburn is answering that rhetorical appeal to see himself in the slave's position. While elsewhere British political factions are being described as 'slaves', he is viewing slaves through the prism of Jacobitism.

The wilful suppression of these insights is portrayed as highly culpable. His response to the slave revolt, looking back on it, is to 'associate rebellion with heat, as if it came *from* the heat, from tropical storms', and in so doing to rob it of any of the disturbing resemblances to his own past which he saw in it at the time; to disavow the possibility of it, too, being a political action (109). When as a prelude to rebellion their slaves begin to appear for work with shaved heads, the Wedderburns do not understand the sign any better than their neighbours. Yet according to assumptions about transference of sympathy, the Wedderburns have it in their power to bridge this gulf between the perspective of the slave and that of the owner, and fail to do so. Morris writes: 'The Wedderburns, however, fifteen years after the forty-five have no sympathy for the slave rebels and are incapable of interpreting the coded reason for revolt' (10). Following this logic, even if others are taken by surprise by a slave rebellion the Wedderburns ought to guess what results the slaves' treatment will produce. To accept this is to suggest that being more in touch with their former position of marginalisation would have made the Wedderburns able to decode the signals of African slaves; that the overlap between any form of political or social disenfranchisement and chattel slavery could ever be so complete as to render the slaves transparent. And they are not transparent, either to the reader or to the owner who subscribes to what John realises in later life is a 'general delusion' that he 'knew his slaves' (109).

> But the truth was, slaves were unknowable . . . The Africa-born slaves had names and languages that ran like subterranean rivers beneath the surface names and new language they acquired. They wore their faces like masks.

How could they have been anything *but* unknowable? (110)

Slaves and Workers

Although *Joseph Knight* shows the urge to equate Jacobites with slaves to be extremely problematic, it treats the association of slaves with Scottish workers as rather more straightforward. Knight's wife Ann is able to understand his predicament in a way that John Wedderburn, with all his perceived generosity and concern for his favoured slave's wellbeing, never can. This begins to reformulate the master/slave relationship, as the court documents themselves do, as a class-based one, comparable to the compact between employer and servant, with the important omissions of wages and choice. Ann is a surrogate for the reader's critical appraisal of Wedderburn and of the colonial viewpoint in general: 'The story was that he had been plucked from ignorance and savagery by Sir John . . . But Ann, never having benefited from charity, had an ingrained suspicion of such tales' (212). Here, she stands apart from one of the central platitudes of imperial expansion, critiquing it from the outside, and she does so by mapping her own experience on to Joseph's. In the same way, she is able to go a little way towards filling in the space left almost blank by the middle passage, or at least to imagine it as equal to her own place of birth: 'If Joseph had been plucked from anything, it was not from ignorance but from his home, not from savagery but from his family' (212). Her response goes beyond empathy and freedom from prejudice to become a recognition of the underlying

similarity of the exploitation of slaves and workers by the ruling classes: 'She understood this because the gentry used the same kind of terms to describe people like her' (212).

The figurative insertion of Joseph into the working-class sphere is made literal by the niche he eventually inhabits in the workforce. When Jamieson tracks him down, he is a collier, a profession that is called upon for its symbolic resonance several times in the novel. Not only does the mine make every miner 'black as the howe of the nicht'; not only does Robertson have Knight, whose whereabouts after the court case are not a matter of historical record, replicate the career of the very first subject of a Scottish fugitive slave case, Davie Spens; but until the 1770s (in the middle of Knight's case) the colliers, 'bound for life to their masters, experienced a form of perpetual servitude' (Morris 12). So Joseph becomes a member of the Scottish working class but also, it seems, already was one, and the colliers were already like him. 'He was surrounded by the faces of men who had also once been slaves, near as damn it' (353). The question of the difference, or lack thereof, between chattel slavery and perpetual servitude is an important part of the arguments in Knight vs Wedderburn, where a passage from Blackstone's *Commentaries* is quoted and debated several times:

> A Slave or Negroe the Instant he lands in England becomes a free man that is the Law will protect him in enjoyment of his person and his property yet with regard to any right which the master may have acquired to the perpetual service of John or Thomas this will remain exactly in the same state as before for this is no more than the same state and subjection for life which every apprentice submitts to for the space of seven years or sometimes for a longer term. (NAS 34)

This is pitted against the Knight memorial's interpretation of his situation: 'his Master refuses to give him any wages at all and insists upon his continuing a perpetual Servant with him or in other words a Slave' (NAS 2). In this analysis, perpetual servitude and slavery are the same thing; a denial of the liberty to choose one's own master. The passage above separates the two, but does so in such a way as to prevent the slave from acquiring his liberty whether the precise designation of 'slave' is ruled to apply in the British Isles or not. Becoming a free man under the law, in this interpretation, means that he is protected from injury and his property is secured, though of course, having been a slave, he does not have any. The criterion that defines slavery in the opposing argument — lack of personal liberty — is not affected because it is held to be distinct from the label 'slave'. Rather it is consistent with a contract of employment that might feasibly be entered into by anyone. The fact that the apprentice's 'seven years or sometimes for a longer term' in the slave's case stretches out to cover his entire lifetime does not matter. The term 'perpetual' remains imprecisely defined, as does the method by which the master 'acquires the right' to the slave's service. This point is seized upon by Knight's legal representatives: the slave system being what it is, Wedderburn has no proof of purchase for this 'property' and 'the Petitioner denies that he has forfeited his liberty either by his own Delict or Consent' (NAS 14). It is consent that makes the final difference. It is just possible, Wedderburn's side argues, that 'a man who has no property nor means of being supported binds himself to the perpetual service of another who is able and willing to maintain him' (NAS 47). But as Robertson's Harry Dundas states, 'There is *nae* contract between a maister and a slave' (301). Joseph Knight's only steps towards 'binding himself' into Wedderburn's service were to be born in Africa and be unlucky enough to be picked off by slave traders as a

child. 'That was the time when choice was taken from him, from all of them, seemingly for ever' (348). The relative lack of choice available to exploited workers does not equate to this. The state of slavery has something irreducible about it.

Acknowledging this, however, does not necessarily lessen the rhetorical force of the term 'slavery' as applied to paid workers. In the political pamphlets of Robert Wedderburn, 'slavery' means two things at once. As the editor of his works, Iain McCalman, puts it: 'Wedderburn claimed to be addressing and reaching West Indian slaves, but his realistic target was English wage-slaves' (108). In *The Axe Laid to the Root*, subtitled *Or a Fatal Blow to Oppressors, Being an Address to the Planters and Negroes of the Island of Jamaica*, published in 1817, Wedderburn attacks the British class system through the prism of a series of messages to Jamaican slaves about how best to gain their liberty and organise a just society. A statement like 'you my countrymen, can act without education; the equality of your present station in slavery, is your strength' seems more consistent with a slave addressee than a working-class one, but the slight uncertainty around 'countrymen', coming from a longtime British resident born free in Jamaica, leaves room for doubt (Wedderburn 87). At other points, allusions to slavery do not take centre stage, but instead are used as a vehicle for commenting on oppression closer to home: 'Oh, ye Africans and relatives now in bondage to the Christians, because you are innocent and poor . . . I may ere long be lodged in a prison, without even a trial; for it is a crime now in England to speak against oppression' (82). These writings overtly claim to educate the slaves of Jamaica about the plight of the British worker, while their subtext conveys an anti-slavery message then uses that message to awaken British readers to a sense of their own plight. The potential pitfall of this strategy is that while Wedderburn

may himself have seen these twin objects as two sides of the same coin — 'It is true what Solomon said, the rich hates the poor, no matter what colour' (106) — when slavery is invoked to portray something else, often only one side of the coin is visible. A government informer's interpretation of a speech made by Wedderburn is a good illustration of this problem: 'Yesterday Evening I proceeded to Hopkins St. Chapel to hear the question discussed whether it be right for the People of England to assassinate their Rulers, for this . . . I conceive to be the real purport of the question tho' proposed in other terms' (Wedderburn 116).

Linked to this issue is the fact that examining slavery and servitude together does not always produce results consistent with a view of the working class as naturally predisposed to sympathise with the slave. When Joseph is brought to Ballindean, he works as Wedderburn's valet and is given some instruction in hairdressing. One of the Scottish servants resents the fact that he undergoes greater physical hardship than a black slave from the plantations: '"They cry ye a slave, but it's clear enough tae me wha the slaves is aboot here. No you wi your work-shy hauns and hoose-bred ways, Joseph Knight. I would be a slave in a minute if I could get leevin like you, man"' (95). The simplistic way of reading this would be to conclude that they are both slaves together, Joseph because of his status as a human chattel, the servant because of his class-based marginalisation. But Joseph's slave status is in no way altered by being worked less hard than a white servant or gaining a more traditionally middle-class set of skills. He does not become middle-class. His position is not in direct dialogue with the servant's and cannot be improved by comparison. The fact that the servant does consider comparison justified, reasoning that if Knight represents slavery then his own condition is worse than slavery, highlights the

danger of using the 'slave' label to foreground the worker's servitude in such a way that the slave's is downplayed or effaced.

Chapter Three: Betwixt and Between

'Betwixt and between,'

. . . 'And that's naething' (*Kidnapped* 59)

When Alan Breck Stewart asks David to identify himself ('and you by your long face should be a Whig?'), David answers 'Betwixt and between'. Alan responds 'And that's naething', but this 'naething' is not an empty signifier; it has a particular power of its own. At the moment he is asked to give a firm statement of his position, David is trapped on board the *Covenant*, kidnapped on his uncle's orders to prevent him asserting his right to the family estate. He is in no way sympathetic to Jacobitism, but neither is he willing to side with his captors in their plan to rob and murder Alan Breck, who is carrying his exiled chief's rent over to France. This indeterminacy continues to define David throughout the narrative, right down to the level of the spoken word, and it is the source of both agency and powerlessness.

Unlike Robertson, Stevenson does not make his characters pass between Scotland and the colonies in order to show the incongruity of the two sorts of history: he has his hero begin to go there, then abruptly turn to the Highlands instead. While *Waverley* turns a story about Jacobites into a story about something else (reconciliation, regained stability, personal domestic ties), *Kidnapped* turns a story about something else into a story about Jacobites. That something else is a colonial narrative: David's original, seemingly insoluble dilemma as a prisoner on the *Covenant* is that 'in these days of my youth, white men were still sold into slavery on the plantations, and that was the destiny

to which my wicked uncle had condemned me' (47). He is to be sold as an indentured servant in the Carolinas, and be 'lost to the British crown', as Samuel Johnson would have it (once again), forever. But this apparently clearly-charted plot is permanently thrown off course by the intrusion of the Jacobite Alan Breck Stewart. The novel's second hero enters David's story by accident when his own boat is run down by the *Covenant*, and this lucky encounter marks the beginning of the truly central action of the book, allowing the spectre of a dismal fate on the other side of the Atlantic to be banished entirely. Buckton emphasises this 'shift in generic conventions . . . as David's kidnapping is displaced by a travelogue of the Highlands' (136). Not only a turn from a transatlantic voyage towards the navigation of Scottish geography, the introduction of Alan Breck Stewart also generates a turn towards historical specificity, as Stevenson sets the wholly fictional David Balfour among characters and events adapted from already-written history, primarily the record of the Appin Murder trial.

David does eventually defeat his wicked uncle and claim his birthright, but he does not have to work his way through the colonies and home again to do so; the progress of the colonial tale is interrupted by the Jacobite plot before it has a chance to begin. The threatened oppression of David Balfour himself gives way to the Appin Murder and its consequences for the Stewarts, staunch Jacobites who, five years after Culloden, once again become the focus of government retribution. Some critics have seen this structural conflict, the lack of an orderly flow from one plot into another, as something of a flaw. Henry James's famous criticism of *Kidnapped* in *Partial Portraits* is that 'the history stops without ending, as it were' (Smith 158). *Kidnapped* does break off without resolving the

affair of the Appin Murder, picking it up again in *Catriona*, published seven years later. When the first novel ends, Alan is left hanging, waiting for David to make arrangements for his escape to France. David's quest to come into his property, on the other hand, is given a resolution; the final words of *Kidnapped* place him outside the bank, about to gain access to his money, and *Catriona* opens on the same spot, with him coming out again. Buckton points out that 'James neglects the extent to which the "romantic" Jacobite plot (beginning with Alan's rescue and the shipwreck of the *Covenant*) is indeed a digression from the plot of inheritance with which the novel begins' (143).

Neither James's assumption that the Jacobite plot constitutes Stevenson's real 'history' nor Buckton's argument that it is, in structural terms, a 'distraction', albeit a very powerful one, take into account the fact that both competing plots are enabled by the abandonment of a third, colonial plot. The Jacobite story supplants David's inheritance struggles at the centre of the text, but that now-secondary story is not discarded entirely: it concludes by other means and in a different location, by way of a journey through the Highlands rather than a colonial sojourn. At the moment when David chooses to ally himself with Alan Breck Stewart, two possible narrative paths coexist and one is chosen. However, it is not David's quest to become a young man of property that is rejected when the choice is made: it is the threatened future spent 'slaving alongside of negroes in the tobacco fields' (54). Instead, he spends the majority of *Kidnapped* fleeing the authorities alongside the Jacobite Alan Breck Stewart; on the wrong side of the law rather than the wrong side of the ocean. David's mind returns to this narrowly-avoided fate in *Catriona*, when he is once again spirited away to keep him from causing trouble: 'If I were to be

exposed a second time to that same former danger of the plantations, I judged it must turn ill with me; there was no second Alan, and no second shipwreck' (330). By foregrounding the shift from potential story to actual story, *Kidnapped* also reveals very starkly, on the level of novelistic structure itself, how the existence of one history depends on the evasion of another.

The narrative strategy of presenting histories which do not completely cancel one another out or merge together is reflected on a more minute linguistic level, in the function of Scots. While Gaelic, all things being equal, presents a far greater block to comprehension than Scots does, it must be turned into English to enter a narrative. Once translated, communication can take place freely, but for this to work the Gaelic itself must become invisible. It is noteworthy that *Waverley*'s primary mediator of Highland culture, Evan Dhu, not only translates Gaelic for Waverley, but any Scottish dialect phrases he uses in their conversations: '"wanting to cleik the cunzie (that is, to hook the siller)"' (151). He also explains English words that are being used in a locally specific way: '"Ah! but ye dinna see through it. When I say wood and water, I mean the loch and the land"' (150). In a similar instance involving Scots speakers, when Waverley picks up the local meanings of the words 'town' and 'innocent' the gloss is provided after the fact by the narrator. The characters to whom Scots is a mother tongue, like the Baron or the fool Davie Gellatley, never perform the sort of self-translation that Evan Dhu does. Highland interlocutors are aware of themselves as strange, because if they were not they could not speak to the hero, and by extension the reader, at all. Unexplained Scots phrases like '"He canna get it wrought in abune two days in the week at no rate whatever"' or '"ane o' his

tirrivies"' do not offer the reader a helpful guide to 'see through it' to an exact English translation (84, 477). They can be deciphered, with the help of context if nothing else, but not given a single definitive English meaning.

However, it is in Stevenson that the distinction between an apparently neutral language of narration and the nonstandard, too-particular speech of Scottish characters really becomes unstable. Here too, an observer with mainstream British values travels through the Highland wilderness, reliant on an intermediary to make sense of the linguistic and cultural differences both for himself and for the reader. This is, in fact, an extremely disingenuous though technically accurate description of David Balfour's position, because his role with relation to the Jacobites and their environment is completely dissimilar to Edward Waverley's. He is, on the one hand, more strongly affiliated than Waverley is with the prevailing Whiggish political creed of the period, and never embraces Jacobitism, but he is also distanced from the cultural standard in a way that Waverley is not: linguistically. Where *Waverley* leaves a 'vacuity' between written Standard English and language that must be effaced by that standard, through translation or wholesale silencing, *Kidnapped* introduces a third perspective. First of all, Scots replaces the elevated, placeless English that marks translated Gaelic in *Waverley*. Stevenson's Alan Breck Stewart also uses certain clearly 'Highland' locutions like 'I will tell it to you, whatever' (120), and has to explain cultural particularities like his virulent hatred of Campbells, but the problems of comprehension that dog Waverley are not present here. Alan is not written as always-already aware that David will not understand some aspects of his conversation; he does not pause unprompted and helpfully explain

words and references that a non-Highlander might not be familiar with. Barry Menikoff accounts for the phenomenon in this way: 'Alan, as a Highlander talking to a Lowlander, either does not have to explain his language or is retaining the authenticity of speech, which would seem artificial if he were to gloss his own talk' (59). One qualification of the emphasis on the authenticity of the spoken word is the fact that the linguistic gap to be bridged in *Kidnapped* is not between Alan's speech and David's, so much as between the speech of both heroes and the language of David's narration.

David reproduces his own dialogue and comments on it in two somewhat different registers, the narration much closer to Standard English, but still not quite there: 'Doig speaking somewhat broad, I had been led by imitation into an accent much more countrified than I was usually careful to affect — a good deal broader than I have written it down' (378). This reference to writing is a reminder that *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, unlike *Waverley*, are related entirely in the first person, and that person makes little apology for his imperfect assimilation of 'the English grammar, as perhaps a very critical eye might here and there spy out even in these memories' (*Kidnapped* 138). Further, Stevenson's hero acknowledges that while giving this account of his youthful adventures, he may not always have succeeded in pinning the word to the page precisely as it was spoken: at times, as in the example here, he has not even tried. The 'written diction, which pervades all dialects', Johnson's unifying vision of Standard English, appears rather as a necessary compromise than an ultimate truth against which the variousness of speech constitutes a decline.

Both Stevenson and Robertson undermine the concept of the fixed, permanent linguistic standard. *Joseph Knight* contains dialogue from many different types of Scottish speaker, from the conscious adoptee of Standard English to the equally conscious exponent of broad Scots as a declaration of national distinctiveness. But its most destabilising language is that of the omniscient narration, which drops phrases like 'the lums of estate cottages' or 'he was scunnered' into passages of prose that are not attributable to the point of view of any specific Scottish character (3, 172). The idea that an aloof, all-seeing narrator might write a regional English is unsettling; nonstandard language generally implies a concrete position, an identity for the voice. The 'position of nobody', in Sorensen's phrase, is reserved for Standard English, where the spoken and written meet and become indistinguishable.

In *Kidnapped*, no speakers of Standard English feature at all. The closest approximation is an English soldier overheard while David and Alan are in hiding, and it is his speech rather than Alan's that is treated as odd: 'It was in this way that I first heard the right English speech . . . "I tell you it's 'ot," says he; and I was amazed at the clipping tones and the odd sing-song in which he spoke, and no less at that strange trick of dropping out the letter h' (138). David is using 'right' in a nonstandard sense here, to mean 'real' or 'very' rather than 'correct'. In fact, the authority to define correctness is a difficult thing to establish in Stevenson. In attempting to describe the Bass Rock, where he is held captive, David declares the English language inadequate to the job:

> I can find no word for it in the English, but Andie had an expression for it in the Scots from which he never varied.

'Aye,' he would say, '*it's an unco place, the Bass.*'

> It is so I always think of it. It was an unco place by night, unco by day; and these were unco sounds, of the calling of the solans, and the plash of the sea and the rock echoes, that hung continually in our ears. (338)

This untranslatable word functions as something of a 'linguistic barrier against the English reader . . . The English reader's alienation from the dialect reverses the relationship between literary and cultural "center" and colonial "outpost"; while reading the story, the English reader is compelled to accept the narrating authority of the Scots dialect' (Buckton 28). Leaving aside the problems inherent in defining Scotland as a colonial location in an unqualified way, David's stay on the Bass Rock does represent a turn towards exclusively broad Scots narration. David's captor Andie Dale tells an outlandish story embedded in peculiarly Scottish folklore, 'The Tale of Tod Lapraik', but it is legitimised by its origin in Andie's own life story. Such a conclusion would make Scots, and the position of the Scots narrator, no longer 'betwixt and between', but central, replacing Standard English with a standard of its own. The possibility of such a comfortable outcome is taken away at once, as another of the tale's hearers, a Highlander, remarks: '"She would ken that story afore," he said. "She was the story of Uistean More M'Gillie Phadrig and the Gavor Vore"' (346). Now the tale loses its direct tie to the experience of the teller, and appears to exist in at least one other iteration. It returns to the realm of folktale. But Andie is defiant: '"It is no sic a thing," cried Andie. "It is the story of my faither (now wi' God) and Tod Lapraik"' (346). No resolution is reached; they appear both to be right.

The absence of any single locus of linguistic authority gives Scots the ability to sustain apparently conflicting positions simultaneously. One of the most troublesome contradictory positions in Scottish literature is the fact that Burns, author of that most Scotland-specific of figurative uses of 'slavery', 'Scots Wha Hae', did himself plan to emigrate to Jamaica to take up a book-keeping position. He received a last-minute reprieve when his *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* became a success, leaving room for 'much speculation about what Robert Burns would have "really" thought of the West Indian slave trade' (Andrews 15).[6] Surprisingly, the notion that Burns, the national poet, could not ever have participated in the oppression of African slaves even makes its way into *Joseph Knight*. 'One wonders how such a man could possibly have acted as the oppressor's lieutenant: Mr Tannahill is of the opinion that either he would have been on the first boat home, or that he would have begun a rebellion among the Negroes' (328). In spite of everything that the novel has revealed about the disproportionate number of Scots involved in the running of the plantations, it remains unthinkable that Burns and Jamaica could ever fit together. The Wedderburns' own political marginalisation does not exculpate them; no essentialised freedom-loving national character — 'we focht for it against the English wi Wallace and Bruce . . . Of course we'll fecht for the freedom o the Negroes' — is seen to prevail over the commercial incentive to enslave Africans (250). This last statement comes from a grotesque personification of facile patriotism who visits Maclaurin in a dream, and Maclaurin answers it with a picture of Jamaica not just filled with Scotsmen but engraven with Scots names.

[6] This aspect of Burns's biography is discussed in numerous places: among works cited here, Andrews, Lindsay and Fielding all provide interpretations of its significance.

> 'It's Scots that run the plantations . . . The place is rife wi us. Look at the names, ye blin beggar, and tell me I'm a liar . . . Jamaica reads like an Edinburgh kirkyard! And the plantations are a map o Scotland . . . If ye're a true Scotsman, sir, ye wouldna be proud. Ye would be ashamed!' (251)

Yet the writer of poetry, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, is exempt from this general condemnation. In another piece, 'Writing at the North', Fielding mentions Burns's abortive plan in terms that set up a definite opposition between the colonies and Burns's literary practice: 'In 1786 he decided to remain in Scotland and write rather than go South: on the verge of emigrating to Jamaica, he had his first publishing success with *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*' (38). Not only is what people believe they know about Burns's character inconsistent with colonial life, he could not take his writing there. Burns himself writes of the possibility of his having ended up in Jamaica in such a way as to separate it emphatically from his poetry:

> Before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my Poems.---I weighed my productions as impartially as in my power; I thought they had merit; and 'twas a delicious idea that I would be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears a poor Negro-driver, or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of Spirits! (Lindsay 2)

Burns does not subscribe here to the idea of Jamaica as a place to 'sojourn in the sun for a few years'. Jamaica, as well as being the last stop before death, is imagined to be so cut off that poetic success could not touch him there. It is now well established that eighteenth-century Jamaica was not empty of Scottish people, quite the reverse. But associating

Scottish speech, or writing that approximates that speech, with anywhere outside the nation's borders, and especially with somewhere lacking in the full enjoyment of liberty, remains something of a conceptual problem.

In *Joseph Knight*'s courtroom scenes, passages from the case documents held in the National Archives are quoted more or less word for word. '"In a country where the blessings of liberty are so completely enjoyed . . . it is natural for a good man when he hears the very name of slavery to take the opposite side of the question"' and '"The pursuer's counsel have thought proper . . . to plead their cause exceedingly high"' are only two cases where the wording of the original documents is reproduced almost verbatim (306). The important thing about this is that in the novel these words are spoken, while the Knight vs Wedderburn documents are not a transcription of speech. They precede speech, being the written memorials prepared for the hearings, not a record of the hearings themselves. They are, therefore, in Standard English, give or take some peculiarly Scottish legal terminology. As a result, the fact that the words lifted directly from the memorials are apportioned solely among speakers who are hostile to Joseph Knight becomes suggestive. For the most part they are placed in the mouth of Wedderburn's counsel, Cullen: the two examples above are spoken by him. Certain wider reflections on the relationship of slavery to the 'Law of Nations' and the 'Law of Nature' are condensed into interjections from Lord Monboddo, and are consistent with his characterisation in the novel as a man inclined to look to the classical world for precedents on all matters. '"And remember too," Monboddo breenged on, "that the highest civilisations the world has ever seen, of Greece and Rome, countenanced slavery"' (300). Knight's advocates, on the other hand, all make their arguments in broad Scots. 'The Petitioner denies that he has

forfeited his liberty either by his own Delict or Consent' (NAS 14) becomes '"nor, being sae young, could he hae committed sae heinous a crime as tae forfeit his freedom in perpetuity; nor was he auld enough tae enter intae a contract tae sell himsel"' (294). The legal disagreement is coded as a linguistic division. Merely being Scottish has been effectively shown to be no guarantee of an anti-slavery position, but speaking Scots, in the literary rendition of the court hearing, does function in that way.

Robertson's James Boswell differs from his friends Maconochie and Maclaurin, Knight's legal representatives, on both the slavery issue and the language question. He keeps an anxious grip on his Scotticisms, and is dismayed, during a drunken night out in Edinburgh, to feel 'his English, like sheets of paper caught in a gust of wind, fleeing away from him as fast as his clarity of vision' (224). The concept of the English language as an object that can be removed, leaving Scots behind, and the implication that its existence depends on the written record, on the physical possession of the 'sheets of paper', might seem like an assertion of the authenticity of spoken Scots, rejecting the restrictions of the written word. However any such ideas are severely undercut by the way in which the courtroom scenes are relayed to the reader. There is no eyewitness delivering a verbal report of the words exactly as they were spoken. There is neither an omniscient narration nor an obviously partial point of view, but something in between. In a chapter entitled 'Dundee, 15 January 1803/ Edinburgh, 15 January 1778' the investigator Archibald Jamieson gives an account of the hearing to his wife. The characters' act of imagining themselves in the courtroom is depicted as a physical movement towards the centre of the narrative: 'He would have to take Janet into the Parliament House . . . Archie led Janet through the Great Door' (283). Once there, the proceedings are narrated as though from a

spectator's vantage point, but when the hearing ends, spatial and narrative distance are re-established. 'Archibald Jamieson had not, of course, been reproducing every syllable of these learned speeches to his wife . . . Not having been present, he could not have known everything that had taken place in that crowded courtroom' (313). But for the reference to 'these' learned speeches, this might seem like an assertion of the authority of Jamieson's imaginative instinct for what must have happened: instead, the implication is that the reader has been privy to the real speeches while Jamieson, in 1803, has been saying something slightly different. It is also important to notice the source of Jamieson's knowledge. His account is directly derived from writing: '"I wasna there of course. It's jist hoo I hae biggit it in my mind frae the papers I hae read"' (313). Like the author himself, Jamieson has constructed speech out of writing. *Joseph Knight* takes elements from a written document and turns them into written speech, firmly located in a particular place and time, yet unstable because of its simultaneous transcendence of, and dependence on, writing.

Stevenson bases his narrative even more closely on legal documents, but while the effect created in *Joseph Knight* is of an expansion outwards from the words on the page, in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* the 'betwixt and between' narrator occupies a space in the midst of the written record of the Appin Murder trial. David Balfour is present at several key points in a story originally pieced together from the testimony of scores of witnesses, none of whom had seen everything and most of whom had seen very little. He meets Colin Roy Campbell, the government factor, who is on his way to evict the tenants of Appin and is killed before David's eyes. He is also present at the house of James Stewart, the eventual defendant or 'pannel', when arrangements are made for Alan and David to hide from the

law; then he accompanies Alan on his flight towards the Lowlands. These were three main points of speculation during the trial of James Stewart (charged as an accomplice in the absence of the principal, Allan Breck, in a highly dubious legal move): according to the Crown, these were the moments when Allan murdered Colin Campbell, colluded with James Stewart and fled from the law because he was guilty.[7] In the fictional text, David provides testimony to Alan's innocence, but the majority of the novel's extreme faithfulness to the historical record is complicated by Stevenson's insistent foregrounding of the fictionality of minor details. As well as subtly distancing his iteration of Alan Breck Stewart from the historical figure by the dropping of a letter, Stevenson avoids any claim to strict historical truth-telling by ostentatiously drawing attention to the alterations he has made to dates and places, changes that a reader would be unlikely to notice or view as significant. 'If you ever read this tale, you will likely ask yourself more questions than I should care to answer: as for instance how the Appin murder has come to fall in the year 1751, how the Torran rocks have crept so near to Earraid' (5).

Unlike the memorials in Knight vs Wedderburn, Stevenson's documents are not primarily used to dramatise the legal proceedings themselves; when James Stewart is brought to trial in *Catriona*, there are no scenes of witness testimony being given or the advocates delivering their arguments in court. Barry Menikoff draws attention to Stevenson's method of appropriating phrases reportedly uttered as personal threats against Colin Campbell and using them for a more general purpose: to create 'a mini-history of the long hostilities between the clans — from the perspective of a passionate

[7] The historical records render the fugitive's first name as 'Allan'; Stevenson's character is 'Alan'. The original spelling is used when referring to the trial documents.

Stewart' (136). Witnesses reported that Allan swore to 'make black cocks' of anyone who helped turn the tenants out of Appin, and that James alleged 'that he would shoot Glenure [Campbell], even if he was so disabled, as to be obliged to go upon his knees to a window in order to do it' (Menikoff 136). Stevenson combines and polishes the two to produce this tirade from Alan: '"I know nothing I would help a Campbell to," says he, "unless it was a leaden bullet. I would hunt all of that name like blackcocks. If I lay dying, I would crawl upon my knees to my chamber window for a shot at one"' (77). As well as altering the addressee to the fictional David Balfour, the most significant change is chronological: Alan makes this speech before any mention is made of Colin Campbell or the grievance that leads to his murder. A few isolated words from the trial documents are made to signify far more widely, summing up the clan hatred that is such a large factor in the crime and its punishment.

David's own role in the text-bound course of events that is the Appin Murder is the greatest demonstration of his uncertain status, of what Buckton calls 'an indeterminacy that requires the introduction of another protagonist, Alan Breck, in order to advance the historical plot' (128). Somewhat like Waverley, David is often in the position of 'spectator of the historical action' (Buckton 205). He witnesses a murder and becomes a wanted man (or boy) through no fault of his own; possessed of the proof of Alan and James's innocence, he is unable to avert James's fate. Buckton attributes David's relative ineffectiveness, his 'enforced absence' at decisive moments, to his failure to definitively throw his lot in with either his Jacobite friends or the government. 'Lacking any strong political commitment, David cannot be a historical agent, his ambivalent status of "betwixt and between" guaranteeing a political impotence' (205). In both Scott and

Stevenson, the quality of disinterestedness, the 'humanitarian sympathy that transcends party difference' sets the heroes apart from their companions and enables the friendships (with Talbot and Alan Breck respectively) that determine the outcome of their own histories (Lincoln 20). However, it can also be seen as an avoidance of political engagement. *Joseph Knight* is the only novel of the four to disallow the motive of disinterested friendship: no one who helps Knight does so because they like him personally. '"Like him? I never has cause tae *dis*like him. But like him? I canna say"' (239). In contrast, David's instinctive liking for Alan is the catalyst for everything that follows: the choice of the Jacobite plot over the colonial one, the entanglement in Stewart affairs that 'I have no credit by it; it was by no choice of mine, but as if by compulsion, that I walked right up to the table and put my hand on his shoulder' (60).

However, Buckton's analysis of David's inability to be a 'historical agent' underplays the importance of two factors: the explicit politicisation of David's removal from the field of historical action, and the extent of his integration into a historical narrative that is already written. Simply put, David's inability to save James Stewart precedes the existence of any such character as David Balfour. His inability to do so also has a significance beyond narrative necessity — it is part and parcel of the injustice surrounding James's conviction. The ultimate fruitlessness of David's strenuous efforts to arrive at Inverary courthouse on time also does double duty: firstly, it keeps him in his indeterminate position in relation to the historical record, neither changing history nor standing back from it. In addition, it allows his failure to enter the text of history to be externalised, his inaction connected to the real action: 'He had been hanged by fraud and violence, and the world wagged along, and there was not a pennyweight of difference' (393). His removal

from that tight relationship with the events of the Appin Murder trial is not, on the other hand, done seamlessly. In a repetition of his original kidnapping, this time politically motivated, David is seized and sequestrated on the Bass Rock. It is an extreme physical dislocation and an abrupt sidestepping from the plot that has driven both novels along up to this point, taking the form of an extended digression into Scottish folklore. The narrator of *Waverley* can claim that 'It is not our purpose to intrude upon the province of history', but in Stevenson it is leaving that province that is cast as an intrusion (389).

It is the tight connection between the fictional narrator and the historical record that defines David's 'betwixt and between' perspective. Not independent enough to change the course of events, nor weak enough to be discounted, David's position also reflects the instability generated by Scots dialect in historical narrative.

Afterword

> There was, if I may express it in this way, a rich Jamaican ground, overlaid with Scotch sounds and occasional Scotch words, probably pronounced in the tones of Dundee or Perth; and I daresay the stitching itself may have been done with an African needle. Listening to him was like listening to a ship's company all speaking at once, yet in a kind of harmony. I must, though, leave the resulting effect to your imagination, and reproduce only the general run of his words. (322)

This description of the speech of Joseph Knight encapsulates the interconnection between language, space and history that animates all of the novels studied here. Scottish specificity — 'the tones of Dundee or Perth' — coexists with the 'Jamaican ground'. They do not merge together seamlessly; one is 'overlaid' with the other, but neither is cancelled out. The image of the ship's company seems to offer a solution to the common problem faced in Scott, Stevenson and Robertson: the question of how to hold opposing positions at the same time and in the same place, to reconcile Jacobitism with Britishness, or Jacobitism with slavery, or Scots with English, or speech with writing. Yet the speech that is evoked in this passage does not, quite, make it onto the page. What is available is a representation of the distance between the 'general run of his words' and the potential combination of all these disparate elements: a gap in which 'we can glimpse the coming together of what has risen and what has been risen above, the latter just beneath the

surface of meaning, ready to break through' (Jarrells 59). The presence of slavery within Scottish history, acknowledged or disavowed, prevents other histories from achieving perfect coherence. It cannot be partitioned into a circumscribed space defined as being outside modernity in temporal, ideological and linguistic terms. It is too clearly a product of the commercial development of the progressive, unified Britain. Neither can it be mapped neatly on to the space occupied by another group. Not assimilable, nevertheless it cannot be taken away.

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