

REALISM IN THE NOVELS OF SIR  
WALTER SCOTT: A STUDY OF ITS  
SIGNIFICANCE AND RELATION TO  
SCOTT'S ROMANTICISM

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SCOTT: A STUDY OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE  
AND RELATION TO SCOTT'S ROMANTICISM.

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## INTRODUCTION

To read Scott, to know his works familiarly, and to examine his biographies is not only to know one of the greatest of romancers, but to know as well a man whose feet were placed upon solid earth. In this reading, one comes under the spell of a great, frank, wise, humorous, and loving nature, a man with a rich and sympathetic imagination, and equipped with an abundance of knowledge both of men and affairs.<sup>1</sup> That knowledge represents the experience of a man, not only of visionary romance, but of realities as well.

Today there are men of letters who affect to speak of Scott with disdain. They criticise his work as romances of chivalry as if it had no connection with actual life. But I believe it can be proved that the essence of Scott, the basis of his romanticism, lies in realism rather than in fantasy and make-believe.

The prose romances of chivalry occupy only a small part of the great bulk of his work. It is life itself that throbs in a score, perhaps a hundred, of his characters. Davie Deans, Jeanie Deans, Bessie Maclure, Wandering Willie, the Dugald Creature, Nantie Ewart, Andrew Fairservice, Louis XI, James VI, Ratcliffe, Madge Wildfire, Callum Beg, Diana Vernon, the fishers of The Antiquary, Ballie Nicol Jarvie, Claverhouse, Meg Dods, --- these are but a few of Scott's immortally living creatures. From kings to gillies, they display life as it is lived. Remoteness and strangeness of time, place, and society can never alter nature, or hide from minds, not prejudiced

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Weekley, "Walter Scott and the English Language." *The Atlantic Monthly*, CXLVIII (1931), 595-601.

and dwarfed by restricted definitions, the creative greatness of Scott--- a greatness founded, as all greatness is, on reality.<sup>2</sup>

Although he is represented, and rightly so, as England's great romancer in the development of the novel, it is my purpose in this work to prove his possibilities as a realist. I shall not attempt to lessen his place as a romanticist, but a study of his realism will, I believe, show in addition how much that realism has enhanced and strengthened his romanticism.

In order to understand Scott's realistic qualities, one must study the term realism and that term's relation to romanticism. It is necessary to understand realism as it is defined today, as well as realism as the early nineteenth century defined it. With these ideas in mind, I have organized my discussion into four chapters: Definitions and Functions of Realism, Scott as a Romanticist, Scott's Realism, and Value of Realism to Scott's Work.

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2 In a letter to Mrs. Gilman, undated, (probably 1864) George Meredith says:

"Realism is the basis of all good composition; it implies study, observation, artistic power....men to whom I bow my head (Shakespeare, Goethe, Moliere, Cervantes) are realists--- au fond.....they give us earth, but it is earth with an atmosphere."

CHAPTER I  
DEFINITIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF  
REALISM

Realism as an attitude of mind, which has affected the texture of literature from its beginning to the present time, has had many aspects. McDowell in his discussion of realism states that the only common factor in the many aspects of realism is the bitter resentment with which a so-called new realism is greeted.<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to mention the realism of the past. The realism of the Bible, the realism of the Greek and Roman theatre, the frank realism of the Middle Ages as it is reflected in sculpture, literature, and architecture, the new realism of the Renaissance, the realism of the eighteenth century, all come to mind without difficulty. But the last half of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century have developed a realism which is felt to be different. It is by this latter realism that Sir Walter Scott is so often judged no realist. It is by the same realism that I hope to prove the authenticity of his realism.

Realism in the modern sense of the term was probably first used by Champfleury, a French novelist, on September twenty-first, 1850.<sup>2</sup> Since that time there have been many variations even within that first French definition. Realism is not a narrow term that may be easily defined in one sentence, but it is broad and complex, revealing itself in various phases. Realism varies not only in the literature and art of different countries, but also in the work of indi-

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1 McDowell, Arthur, Realism: A Study in Art and Thought. (London, 1925.) pp. 20-25.

2. Ibid., p. 22.

vidual artist within a single country. Although realism is flexible, it has one underlying principle and that is "the sense of actual existence; an acute awareness of it, and a vision of things under that form."<sup>3</sup>

Realism may be either analytical or objective. The former deals with the desires and motives of the inner man, and the latter stresses the outer world in what is called external realism. Variations of realism are expressionism, impressionism, naturalism, and sur-realism. With this multitude of phases of realism, it is easy to see why many critics who have mistakenly limited themselves to one phase, might not consider Scott a realist. One of the chief difficulties which has confused even competent critics has arisen from the identification of realism and naturalism, that phase of realism tending toward pessimism and misanthropy. Methods of scientific research and investigation gave the term naturalism its origin. Science caused man to look around and inside of himself and made him realize his possibilities as a human animal as well as a Divine Inspiration. This realization brought the psychological possibilities of naturalistic realism to our literature. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Darwinism became another fountain-head of the scientific expression of naturalism. The insight into the real fluidity of natural species has given the world a "toning down" of the artificial rigidity of logical classifications. To know reality, man could no longer rest in a timeless contemplation of a static system; he must expand his thoughts so as to cope with a perpetually changing process.

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3 Arthur, McDowell, op. cit., p. 3.



Since the world changes, its truths must change to fit it. Zola felt that the true realist must be a psychologist and a scientist of the first rank. The first object of the naturalist was to seek a scientific truth and express it with frankness. Although Zola saw and used a part of what is realism in its true sense, he did not use the term with its whole meaning. Parrington says that man is more than the sex-driven creature which the naturalists often make him, and that the city is more than the slums.<sup>4</sup> Meredith expresses the same thought when he writes "The naturalist sees the hog in nature, and takes nature for the hog."<sup>5</sup> Still one can say that out of nineteenth century science two outstanding theories of realism developed. They were the scientific analysis of man's biological construction, both physical and mental, and man's knowledge of truth as a changing process.

Even so, scientific accuracy was not necessary to all realists, for many felt that the essential element of realism lay in the truth of impressions involving feeling and imagination.<sup>6</sup> The true realist need give neither scientific truths, nor actual facts so long as he creates a world wholly congruous with ours. As McDowell says, realism may be quickened by scientific truth, but it need not be subservient to it.<sup>7</sup>

Then too, because of the tremendous demand by the masses for

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4 Vernon Louis Parrington, "Addenda", The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America. (New York, 1934), p. 325.

5 Ibid., p. 325

6 See Russian realists, especially Tolstoy and Turgenev.

7 Arthur, McDowell, Realism: A Study in Art and Thought, p. 32.

reading matter that was familiar, a group of writers began to answer that demand by writing in a realistic manner. These writers felt that the average reader could better understand and enjoy exposure of city life along with a display of the rude, crude, and simple life of the country. Accordingly it seems natural to say that one of the functions of realism came to be an attempt to understand and portray the common man. Manners, customs, and dress of the common people were the visual tools of realism. Writers began to use a system of note-taking not unfamiliar to the present-day realist. They searched for authentic manuscripts to support their characters and incidents. The development of the novel, English, French, and Russian, with its deeper and broader view of humanity, its appeal to common masses, and its inherent portrayal of truths brought realism into a dominant place among literary techniques. The novel came to be one in which the plot attains the ideal of realistic fiction, as the events are from beginning to end the natural result of the way the characters think and feel. The realism which was merely the representation of men exactly as they are, the expression of the plain unvarnished truth without regard to ideals or romance, is a limited realism.

Realism, as a technique for expression, in prose, had come to mean to the novelist in the nineteenth century, the art of depicting life as it was actually lived; that is without the addition of color to make the story in any way mythical or strained. Realism could be romantic, for there are realities in romance. In Scott, one may say that realism is the portrayal of real happenings or facts, in the manner that life's experience has taught us is essentially true. Again truth, as it is shown through realism, is that work written

from a deep conviction that the individual is of worth and that truth is to be gained by freeing oneself from the constrictive force of organized society and established ways of thinking.

Although the average critic<sup>8</sup> may say that the realist is bound to portray life as he sees men live it; while the maker of romance is free to picture life as men dream or desire it to be, or strive to make it, the larger freedom being what chiefly distinguishes the romantic from the realistic, that is too facile a definition.

To understand realism in a modern sense, we must seek its development and definition in its growth in nations other than England. Of all the nations, Russia and France have produced greater realists than have any other countries. A comparison of these realists will produce a definition of the whole of realism. This realism in the case of the Russians, as Maurice Baring penetratingly points out, must not be confused with a scientific attitude of mind, all-inclusiveness or naturalism. Russian realism is unique. It is native to the common Russian spirit, and in the life of the developed Russian culture, Pushkin, the beginning Russian realist, was its father. Pushkin was the source out of which came that life stream of a host of works called the "Russian novel".... from Gogol to Chekhov. Dostoevsky says of Pushkin, "He has the Russian gift of universal comprehension."<sup>9</sup> He speaks to the world as well as Russia.

The Russians, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, and Gorky gave to realism specific virtues: warm and tender sensuousness and an essence of

8 Note: Long, History of English Literature.

9. John Cournas, "Pushkin: The Beginning Russian Realist," Poetry: a Magazine of Verse, March, 1937, p. 300.

human reality. These are given in a universal sense. Their literature is chaste, lucid, precise, avoids abstractions and useless adjectives; it is classic in the best sense of the word. Their works are as fresh to-day as the day they were written, and they find a welcome in the hearts of living men. They, with the French, are the great prompters of literature in our modern literature. This Russian realism is big enough to include all sides of life and in this way differs from the limited naturalism which is all that is included in the average modern definition.

The French Taine, Zola, and Flaubert, great as they are, so limited the scope of realism that realism in poetry, novels, and drama is almost expected to be a fact-history of to-day's current social and political movements.

Science and its philosophy of facts and truths was the matter for literature. It was this ascendancy of fact which caused the change from the old philosophy of the beautiful, the aesthetic, which till then dominated literary production, to an aesthetic which admitted almost anything as matter for literature.

The whole philosophy of the epoch was expressed by Taine in an often quoted sentence: "Today the matter of all knowledge is little facts, well-chosen, important, significant, amply circumstantiated and minutely noted."<sup>10</sup> This sentence provided the new philosophy of literature, the literature of a scientific age, that is the literature of realism which became the dominant, popular, and modern literary mode. To get as near as possible to scientific truth became

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<sup>10</sup> Mary M. Colum, "Literature of To-day and Tomorrow," Scribner's November, 1936, p. 66.

the object. Taine presented to his contemporaries and followers the school of positive doctrines, rigid systems, and resigned hopelessness.

From this school came the realists Zola, Bourget, and Maupassant, all realists. Realism to them meant to give a reproduction of life itself as actually lived, not of certain outstanding personages but of life as it is lived by the average person or by what in the author's experience is the average person.

Authors in short, began to use Taine's dictum to note facts and used the note-book method. They noted down the experiences of common persons in everyday life. One of the realistic novels to follow this theory was Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary.<sup>11</sup> He took his plot and characters from the experiences and personages of his own neighborhood. The result was a novel that revealed life as ordinary people lived it and understood it. Its theme may be easily seen in the anticlimax of the plot-- the suicide of Emma. The theme of Madame Bovary is the attempt to make life, everyday life, conform to one's youthful dreams, and after the vain attempt to make it conform, the renunciation of all dreams.

Thus French realism, powerful as it is, is limited.

To me, the true meaning of realism is presented by the greatest of all realists, Tolstoy (1828-1910). He produced a great series of novels which laid bare the mechanism of the inner life, as well as the outer, and gave a clear and verbal definition to the consciousness of man. War and Peace and Anna Karenina are Tolstoy's realistic

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11 The same author, however, wrote Salambo, one of the most strange and most romantic novels of the nineteenth century.

masterpieces. They mark, in a certain sense, the highest point reached in its development by the modern realistic novel. This realism is far more inclusive than the narrower French form. French realism opened unexplored fields of human life, but in its emphasis of these new fields it narrowed the scope of realism. The Russian realism of Tolstoy is far more inclusive. It recognizes the beautiful as well as the ugly, man's possibilities as well as his limitations, man as a human being instead of merely as another aspect of the biological world.

Literary realism attains in these Russian novels its goal: an adequacy of the verbal pattern to the living reality which ultimately produces the feeling, familiar to readers of Tolstoy, that his characters are to be classified with people in flesh and blood, not with other characters of fiction.

Tolstoy carries the function of realism one step beyond the usual when he makes the reader feel that he is seeing flesh and blood characters from within as well as from without. He presents the realism of the soul of man to the modern world.

The theme and pattern are substantially the same in all the truly great realistic novels. Facts, in them, must concern the interior life as well as the exterior. There are the facts of imagination and fact that life is a dream as well as an actuality, and the true realist takes both sides of life into consideration.

The men of genius among the realists knew that the great conflict, and therefore the great reality of existence, was that between the life of the imagination and everyday life. They conceived life to be

centered around this conflict and they set it down as they perceived it in the life of the ordinary man for that was the object of realism--- to express the ordinary man.<sup>12</sup>

Realism is not a new movement or one of importance to a few only; it concerns not alone literature but art as a whole. Its variety of expression could be summarized by three statements made by undoubted realists whose views nevertheless widely differ. To Flaubert "it was the thing, the reality observed, which decided the colour of what he wrote," and "if truth was his mistress, so also was beauty."<sup>13</sup> H. G. Wells, as one of our most conspicuous contemporary realists: "we are going to write about the whole of life. We are going to deal with political questions and religious questions and social questions, until a thousand pretenses and ten thousand impostures shrivel in the cold clear air of our elucidations."<sup>14</sup> Maupassant considered it childish to believe in pure realism, for he says:

"Since the truth, to each of us, is in his own mind, his own organs. Our individual eyes and ears, taste and smell, create in us as many different truths as there are human beings in the world.... Each of us therefore has simply his own illusions of the world, poetic, sentimental, cheerful, mournful, or vulgar, according to his nature. And the author's only mission is faithfully to reproduce this illusion, with all the elaboration of art which he has learned and has at his command..... Those are the great artists who can make other people see their own particular illusion." <sup>15</sup>

Maupassant's viewpoint is compatible with the Mimesis theory of Aristotle in his Poetics. This idea of realism seems, to me, to be

12 Note: The ultra modern schools of realism--- impressionism, neo-realism, and sur-realism--- are still in such a controversial stage that they may well be beyond the scope of this thesis.

13 Arthur McDowell, Realism: A Study in Art and Thought, p. 110.

the most logical, for it would be a matter of individual taste and ability to discriminate as to the true reality of the writer. It is not only the most logical; it is the only theory of realism that is aesthetically justifiable.

In conclusion, one must say that science gave realism facts as a criteria and taught it to search for an ever changing truth. The beginning novelists gave to realism the common touch. They made neighborhood, manners, clothes, and tradition tools for realistic emphasis. The Russians taught us to appreciate the inward reality of man's soul while the French gave to our realism the proletariat with their vices and virtues.

It remains for me to say that realism is everyday life both as it fights the battle of facts and as it lives in the land of dreams. Since I am to discuss Scott's use of realism with its significance and relation to his romanticism, I shall do so from the above conception and with the right to maintain my point if his works and expressions make use of any of the definitions thus far mentioned.

Realism is truth plus fact, not fact alone, but the truth drawn from fact, and even the facts of realism are not to be limited to the narrow range of facts which the naturalists define as realism. I feel that I can justify my method of definition with an inductive theory of realism, for I have drawn my theory of realism as Aristotle drew his theory of The Poetics, from the usage of the acknowledged masters of that field. With this broader understanding of realism,

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14 Herbert G. Wells, "Introduction," The Outline of History (New York, 1925).

15 de Maupassant, "Preface," Pierra et Jean (Akron, Ohio, 1903).



I believe Scott's works were based on realism, a realism that strengthened his romanticism and in itself, formed a valuable part of his work.

## CHAPTER II

## SCOTT AS A ROMANTICIST

Sir Walter Scott accomplished the task his eighteenth century forerunners in the novel had essayed in vain.<sup>1</sup> Through his mind rushed the ages of long ago. To his awakening of the past, the author owes, in part, his position as a romanticist. Romanticism, in Scott's time, was a term used to designate the modern rise and development of the imagination and sensibility in the literature of Western Europe.

The term is not one that is easily defined. From one point of view romanticism is an attitude of mind in which the wonder and the glamour that are in life appeal more strongly than do, perhaps, more matter of fact aspects. Another way of looking at romanticism is to feel it as a reaction against the neo-classicism of the preceding period. Again critics have defined romanticism as a reaction to the literalness of realism. However one may prefer one of the definitions of romanticism, Scott's romanticism is wide enough to include all these aspects. In regard to the definition of romanticism as a literary movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Scott's work shows many of the aspects of that romanticism--- his love of nature, especially in its wilder moments, his patriotism, his love of the medieval, his use of the supernatural, his delight in what Stevenson calls "glamorie."

Although in Scott's early work many elements of neo-classicism

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Radcliffe, Walpole, Burney, Reeve, etc. See: Lecture on the English Novel, William Hazlett and Lives of the Novelists, Sir Walter Scott.

remained, many of his prefaces show that he was consciously freeing himself from them. Again in the same prefaces and his work itself Scott maintains his right to unite imagination with realism in its more literal sense.

In a sense, it was a realistic province of romanticism to rediscover that man is more than intellect; that he possesses imagination and emotion. Again the romantic, through Scott, came to mean the result of retrospection. Scott possessed the true enchanter's wand, the historical imagination. With this in his hand, he raised the dead past to life, made it once more conceivable, made it even actual. Many of the characteristics of romanticism-- the love of the picturesque, history, and superstition-- found combined expression in Scott, first in his verse tales and afterwards in the Waverly novels.

Writing that had become often monotonous because of the reign of form became freer. New words and expressions were coined and made a part of the common vernacular. Into prose, with Scott, came old, out of date, unused, and obsolete words and expressions. He furthered the work of Burns in introducing to the English mind the actual speech of his native Scotland. Perhaps the greatest gain to our language from romanticism has been the choice of words for their rich coloring and sounds. Through these words, Scott lets his reader's mind wander in a world of reality. The writers of the period asserted the right of the man of letters to proceed untrammelled, to choose his themes from whatever source might please him and to treat them as he liked. Thus Sir Walter Scott owes his value as a romanticist first, to his awakening of the medieval past and subsequent invention of the historical novel in which he used the materials of realism as well as

those of romance, and second, to his many studies of Scottish life and character through stirring emotion, stimulating thought, rousing imagination, and broadening experience, sympathy, and understanding. Scott did more than all other men of his time to enlarge our vision, by extending it over wide stretches of history. He revolutionized the current conceptions of history as a body of deep facts. Scott appreciated the simple and understood the poor. While others were looking at forms and rules, Scott was seeing the real and human side of history. Through his imagination he brings these things to us. Beauty in nature and breadth of canvas were two of his most romantic qualities. The human nature that he understood is revealed in his opening scene in *Guy Mannering*. The habits of the laird, with his feelings about coming events, shows Scott's ability at portrayal of the exterior and interior of Scottish humanity.

The circumstances of the landlady were pleaded to *Mannering*, first, as an apology for her not appearing to welcome her guest, and for those deficiencies in his entertainment which her attention might have supplied, and then as an excuse for pressing an extra bottle of good wine.

'I cannot weel sleep', said the Laird, with the anxious feelings of a father in such a predicament, 'till I hear she's gotten ower with it; and if you, sir, are not very sleepery, and would do me and the Dominie the honour to sit up wi' us, I am sure we shall not detain you very late.'<sup>2</sup>

William Hazlitt says of Scott, "It is no wonder that the public repay with lengthened applause and gratitude the pleasure they received. He writes as fast as they can read, and he does not write himself down. He is always in the public eye and we do not tire of him. His worst is better than other peoples' best . . . His works,

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2 Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, (Cambridge, 1923), pp. 20-21.

taken together, are almost like a new edition of human nature."<sup>3</sup> If Hazlitt had said are an edition of human nature, he would have been correct. In a word Scott is romanticism. He is the middle point and the culmination of English romanticism. Towards him all the lines of the romantic revival converge.

Much of romance-- the popular ballad, German literature, the Scandinavian, the Gothic romance, and the Ossianic poetry-- find a focus in the romance of Sir Walter Scott. Scott handled his material with the freedom and breadth of subject that was characteristic of romance. His style was broad, vigorous, easy, careless, healthy, free. He wrote of medievalism, as Coleridge said, as though it were the "diffused" drama of history. Scott, true to his romantic technique, wrote not in miniature but upon a large canvas and with many ages at his call. A glance over even the titles of his novels shows how the heroic side of history for over six hundred years finds expression in his pages; and all the parties of these six centuries--- Crusaders, Covenanters, Cavaliers, Roundheads, Papists, Jews, Gypsies, Rebels-- start into life again to fight or to give a reason for the faith that is in them. Scott had become saturated with the love of adventure and romance and a pride in Scotland. Scott's power as a romanticist lies first, in his knowledge of the past, and second, in his imagination.

There have been more profound students than Scott, and there have been better makers of plots; but no man, either before or after

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3 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," (Archibald Paterson), The Heart of Midlothian. (New York, 1923), p. xx.

him, has ever combined such familiarity with the past and such ability to tell a story. His incidents and pictures are so clear and vivid that only an understanding mind fused with the imagination in realism could have written them.

This thesis has no intention of going into the complete history of Scott's romanticism. No one who knows Scott can deny that it is as a romanticist that he is great. The brief sketch in the foregoing pages is given only to show that the following of his realism is a minor side of Scott's work even though the writer feels that it is important in the contemporary appreciation of Scott and more important in that it is a powerful aid to that romanticism in which his greatness lies.

## CHAPTER III

## SCOTT'S REALISM

In matters of realism, Scott would seem at first glance deficient: he undoubtedly painted his pictures upon a broad canvas with broad strokes; he drew his characters from a wide range of time, place, and position. There is no doubt that one's strongest and most lasting impression of Scott is that of a romanticist. Yet one finds after making a thorough study that realism undoubtedly has a place in his work and moreover that his romanticism, itself, was based on a solid ground of realism.

In the preceding chapters, I have been concerned with definitions of realism and romanticism. With these definitions made, I wish to prove through them that Scott not only had a use for realism but used it in its modern interpretation. Realism accordingly, as employed by the greatest realists, British, French, Russian, reflects the world of external fact and the facts of the inner world of mind and heart. Romanticism is that attitude of mind in which the wonder and glamour in life appeal more strongly than do the more matter of fact aspects of life. It is a mental attitude dealing with the imagination of man. It is obvious that romanticism and realism are not necessarily mutually exclusive terms.

An obvious first step in the discussion of Scott's realism would be to examine his own theory on the subject. Scott in discussing with Captain Clutterbuck, the reasons for his withdrawing the White Lady of the Monastery from the Abbot gives his ideas of realism and its use in prose fiction.

...I am greatly deceived if in many cases a superior advantage is not attained by the air of reality which the deficiency of explanation attaches to a work written on a different system. In life itself, many things befall every mortal of which the individual never knows the real cause or origin; and were we to point out the most marked distinction between a real and a fictitious narrative, we would say that the former, in reference to the remote causes of the events it relates, is obscure, doubtful, and mysterious; whereas in the latter case, it is a part of the author's duty to afford satisfactory details upon the causes of the separate events he has recorded, and, in a word, to account for everything. The reader, like Mungo in the Padlock, will not be satisfied with hearing what he is not made fully to understand.<sup>1</sup>

Scott felt that romance was, in part, to be included in the realistic. He felt that the story could be strained and unnatural, that is to say romantic, yet retain its realistic value. His theory is plainly seen in his criticism of Clarissa:

...it is unfair to tax an author too severely upon improbabilities, without conceding which his story could have no existence; and we have the less title to do so, because in the history of real life, that which is actually true bears often very little resemblance to that which is probable.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Scott felt as a modern realist would feel that the images and personages should not put a strain on the credulity of the reader. In the same sketch of Richardson these views are given of that author's impossible Sir Charles Grandison.

But in the living world, a state of trial and a valley of tears, such unspotted worth, such unvarying perfection, is not to be met with; and what is more important, it could not, if we suppose it to have existence, be attended by all those favours of fortune which are accumulated upon Richardson's hero; and hence the fatal objection, of Sir Charles Grandison being the

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1 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," The Abbot (New York, 1923) p. 15.

2 Sir Walter Scott, "Samuel Richardson," The Lives of the Novelists (New York, n. d.), p. 24.



'....faultless monster that the world ne'er saw.'<sup>3</sup>

In the Introduction to St. Romans' Well, Scott, in reference to scene and manners, explains his theory.

It is intended, in a word-- celebrare domestica facta-- to give an imitation of the shifting manners of our own time, and paint scenes, the originals of which are daily passing round us, so that a minute's observation may compare the copies with the originals.<sup>4</sup>

Again Scott felt that realism could be an aid to imagination in the novel. He saw that a story supported by solid scenery and background would be a great deal more interesting to the reader than one without that solidity. The author states in his Lives of the Novelists:

It is the object of the novel-writer, to place before the reader as full and accurate a representation of the events which he relates, as can be done by the mere force of an excited imagination without the assistance of material objects.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout his Prefaces and his Lives of the English Novelists, one finds a wealth of material proving Scott's use and theory of a realistic basis for his novels. Scott believes: that romance must be based on solid realism; that a novel is worthless, as far as interest to the reader is concerned, unless it has the basis of reality; that the imagination when used correctly has reality in it; and that the best novel is one that has a setting and incidents with their source in actuality.

Our author loved his Scotland. Through this love, he has given

3 Ibid., p. 32.

4 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," St. Roman's Well (New York, n. d.), pp. 9-10.

5 Sir Walter Scott, The Lives of the Novelists, pp. 49-50.

us an incomparable picture of it in many different ages. One of the strongest points for realism in Scott's work is his intense love for Scotland. That love produced a graphic picture of Scottish manners, dress, and tradition. A great artist must love his subject with passion.<sup>6</sup> Scott was an antiquarian and as such was continually gathering manuscripts of antiquity along with numberless Scotch relics, among them being dirks, horns, battle-axes, and furniture of all kinds. Scott had visited and had made a thorough study of many of the exteriors and interiors of old keeps and castles; he had studied ancient dialects, habits, modes of ancient combat, antique military apparel and weapons, and the observance of history. Above all else he knew his natives and their land. Lockhart says Scott got the greatest joy in an excursion into the wilds of his home-land, from which he would often carry home a coveted prize such as a horn or manuscript. He gives many incidents from Scott's life proving his intense love for Scotland.<sup>7</sup>

Out of this love for all things Scottish grew Scott's use of the note-book and the gathering of a great number of manuscripts. His settings, incidents, and characters have the naturalness that results from keen observation. This observation led to the use of manuscripts, letters, truthful stories by responsible people, and the note-book. Such manuscripts and note-books are among the most prized tools of the modern realists.<sup>8</sup> Was Scott not a person forever hunt-

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6 See: Longinus in On the Sublime.

7 John Gibson Lockhart, The Life of Sir Walter Scott (London, 1906-1931), pp. 146-48 and pp. 266-267.

ing for the truth behind legend, for the facts of his native ballads, and for the truth about actually existing localities and scenes? We have noted that he had a great number of manuscripts and was always gathering the weapons, dress, and evidence of the actual life of the natives of the past. Flaubert used in his note-taking the observations of his neighbors and their environment. Did not Scott know and use persons of his own acquaintance and the neighborhood of his famous Abbotsford? As we shall note, later he used real characters true to their type and to their times. He had a note-book of the mind; for his memory for episodes, that took, as he says, his fancy, was remarkable and above all prolifically used.<sup>9</sup> Scott, it is obvious, had something of the realist in him through his intense love of his subject, Scotland, as it is reflected in his theory and his ability to note and record facts of setting, incident, and character.

Of the elements of prose-fiction Scott used in a realistic sense the setting, incident, and character. As reflected through scenery, manners, action, dialogue, and source, they are the true basis for his power.

One of the paramount purposes of the realist is his attempt to build a true picture of the neighborhood of which he writes. This purpose was evident in a great part of Scott's work. He kept in mind the scientific background of environment as a necessity for realism in his novels. His descriptions, his actions, his scenery, his in-

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8 See: Zola, Flaubert, and Lewis. They obey the rule to note the dictum of facts by the note-book method.

9 John Gibson Lockhart, The Life of Sir Walter Scott, "Autobiography". pp. 28-29.

terior background, and his situations all speak of his beloved Scotland, its surroundings and environment.

Setting includes all the circumstances, both material and immaterial which surround the action and determine the condition under which that movement takes place. Scott drew his setting realistically. Many of his scenes and backgrounds were built with a basis of actual fact which is the essence of modern realism. In speaking of parts of his novels which are based upon the truth, Scott, himself, points out many examples of reality in his settings. For instance, he says:

....I may, however, before dismissing the subject, allude to the various localities which have been affixed to some of the scenery introduced into these novels, by which, for example, Wolf's-Hope is identified with Fast-Castle in Berwickshire--- Tillietudlem with Drapshane in Clydesdale,--- and the valley in The Monastery, called Glendearry, with the dale of the river Allan, above Lord Somerville's villa, near Melrose.<sup>10</sup>

The variety of Scott's use of scenery is in itself a proof of his realistic touch. His scenes were such that they could be seen, heard, and felt with a sense of the actual.

In Guy Mannering, Scott paints by contrast two varieties of scenery that have in them the reality of night and day. As Mannering viewed the night surroundings of Ellangowan Castle, one sees with him the reality of the ruins and the beauty of the night.

The scene which thin light presented to Mannering was in the highest degree unexpected and striking . . . It was one hour after midnight, and the prospect around was lovely. The grey old towers of the ruin, partly entire, partly broken, here bearing the rusty weather-stains of ages, and there partially mantled with ivy, stretched along the verge of the dark rock which rose on

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10 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," Chronicles of the Canongate, (New York, n. d.), pp. 26-27.

Manmering's right hand. In his front was the quiet bay, whose little waves crisping and sparkling to the moonbeams, rolled successively along its surface, and dashed with a soft and murmuring ripple against the silvery beach. To the left the woods advanced far into the ocean, waving in the moonlight along ground of an undulating and varied form, and presenting those varieties of light and shade, and that interesting combination of glade and thicket, upon which the eye delights to rest, charmed with what it sees, yet curious to pierce still deeper into the intricacies of the woodland scenery.<sup>11</sup>

Contrasted with this beautiful night scene Scott has through the eyes of the same man viewed the same scene during the light of day.

If the view of the scene around Ellangowan had been pleasing by moonlight, it lost none of its beauty by the light of the morning sun. The land, even in the month of November, smiled under its influence. A steep but regular ascent led from the terrace to the neighbouring eminence, and conducted Manmering to the front of the old castle. It consisted of two massive round towers projecting deeply and darkly at the extreme angles of a curtain, or flat wall, which united them, and thus protecting the main entrance, that opened through a lofty arch in the centre of the curtain into the inner court of the castle.<sup>12</sup>

Scott has caught in the preceding scenes the difference of night and day. This difference shown as he shows it is but another evidence of his use of realism.

Scott not only pictured the land as it actually existed but he could paint his scenes with a mixture of circumstance that proved his use of reality. He could picture the sea and land in such a way that one would hear and see them even though not familiar with them. In The Antiquary the beauty and terror of the sea and storm are combined to present a feeling of reality that will appeal to all of the senses. Sir Arthur and Miss Wardour, in attempting to return to Knockwinnoch by the turnpike road, discern Lovel just ahead and upon

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11 S. W. Scott, Guy Manmering, pp. 25-26.

12 Ibid., p. 32.

Miss Wardour's plea decide to take another direction. They follow a path along the side of the ocean and among the cliffs found in that part of Scotland. In following the sea-path, they witnessed a sunset upon the sea:

The sun was now resting his huge disk upon the edge of the level ocean, and gilded the accumulation of towering clouds through which he had travelled the livelong day, and which now assembled on all sides, like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch. ....The distant sea, stretched beneath this varied and gorgeous canopy, lay almost portentously still, reflecting back the dazzling and level beams of the descending luminary, and the splendid colouring of the clouds amidst which he was setting. Nearer to the beach, the tide rippled onward in waves of sparkling silver, that imperceptibly, yet rapidly, gained upon the sand.<sup>13</sup>

Such a description is the above that one can see with reality the calm, so beautiful and peaceful, just before the storm. Scott's use of realism necessarily had to show not only the storm but the preparation for that storm. Again in the same scene, he combines the scene of the land with that of the sea by a description of the surroundings about Sir Arthur and his daughter.

The crags which rose between the beach and the mainland, to the height of two or three hundred feet, afforded in their crevices shelter for unnumbered sea-fowl, in situations seemingly secured by their dizzy height from the rapacity of man. Many of these wild tribes, with the instinct which sends them to seek the land before a storm arises, were now winging towards their nests with the shrill and dissonant clang which announces disquietude and fear.<sup>14</sup>

We note here that Scott used all the circumstances that would strengthen the realistic sight and sound of this scene. In contrast to the first sun-set he paints the final act as follows:

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13 Sir Walter Scott, The Antiquary, pp. 83-84.

14 Ibid., pp. 84-85.

The disk of the sun became almost totally obscured ere he had altogether sunk below the horizon, and an early and lurid shade of darkness blotted the serene twilight of a summer evening. The wind began next to arise; but its wild and moaning sound was heard for some time, and its effects became visible on the bosom of the sea, before the gale was felt on shore. The mass of waters, now dark and threatening, began to lift itself in larger ridges and sink in deeper furrows, forming waves that rose high in foam upon the breakers, or burst upon the beach with a sound resembling distant thunder.<sup>15</sup>

Finally to complete Scott's variety of scene with storm and sea we find his final picture of the storm in its full raging fury.<sup>16</sup>

It was indeed a dreadful evening. The howling of the storm mingled with the shrieks of the sea-fowl, and sounded like the dirge of the three devoted beings who, pent between two of the most magnificent yet most dreadful objects of nature-- a raging tide and an insurmountable precipice-- toiled along their painful and dangerous path, often lashed by the spray of some giant billow which threw itself higher on the beach than those that had preceded it. Each minute did their enemy gain ground perceptibly upon them.<sup>17</sup>

Thus in the depiction of the realistic scenery in the settings one can note Scott's use of variety and detail in the circumstances surrounding that scenery. Realism is in the minute description of the partly entire and partly broken ruin of Ellangowan Castle, in the sound and sight of the waves, soft and murmuring, as they ripple against the silvery beach, in the stillness of the sea before the storm, in the noting of the gain upon the beach made by the tide, in the wild cry of the sea fowl, in the advance of the early darkness, in the rising of a moaning wind with its effects first visible on the distant sea, and in the slow progress made by the characters in

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15 Ibid., page 85.

16 See: CF end of Chapter I, Almayer's Folly, Conrad, Joseph.

17 Sir Walter Scott, The Antiquary, p. 88.

the face of all the elements that make up the fast approaching storm. Scott makes one feel and see the peace and quiet of the calm before the storm; he makes one see, hear, and feel the beginning of the storm at sea; and last he brings one the raging storm, itself, along with its effects upon the characters of the scene.

Scott's realism in setting is shown in the novel St. Ronan's Well. In this novel, the author selects the setting as he says:

The scene chosen for the author's little drama of modern life was a mineral spring, such as are to be found in both divisions of Britain, and which are supplied with the usual materials for redeeming health or driving away care.<sup>18</sup>

What could better display Scott's adept use of realism in setting from the viewpoint of manners, neighborhood, customs, etc. than the peculiar circumstance that gave motive and background to the narrative St. Ronan's Well? Scott's pictures of Meg Dod's inn and the new mineral wells hotel with their elements of conflict, which resulted in the story's situation, have in them the realism of Scottish manners, dress, and tradition. He made his reading public see the setting so vividly that they felt and knew it to be real. The novel settles around the distinct rivalry of Meg Dods and her inn located in the decaying and deserted village of St. Ronan's and the new hotel St. Ronan's with its health-giving mineral waters located not many miles distant on the new high-road. Scott dresses his setting with a background of neighborhood scenery. An excellent example of the description of neighborhood is to be found in the trysting-place for Tyrrel and Miss Clara in St. Ronan's Well.

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<sup>18</sup> Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," St. Ronan's Well, p. 10.



In a small peninsula, formed by a winding of the brook, was situated, on a rising hillock, a large roughhewn pillar of stone . . . . These trees, with their broad spreading boughs, made a twilight even of noon-day; and, now that the sun was approaching its setting point, their shade already anticipated night. This was especially the case where three or four of them stretched their arms over a deep gully, through which winded the horse-path to Shaws-Castle, at a point about a pistol-shot distant from the Buck-stane. . . . He sat down by one of the larger projecting trees, and, screened by its enormous branches from observation, was enabled to watch the road from the Hotel for a great part of its extent, while he was himself invisible to any who might travel upon it.<sup>19</sup>

Scott's use of neighborhood that was familiar, of Scottish people whom all Scotchmen knew, of the correct dialect for the time and place, of the tradition and workings of the Scottish mind and heart, and of the Scottish manners gave the basis of reality to three of his most popular novels. They were as he himself explains in the advertisement of the novel The Antiquary:

The present work completes a series of fictitious narratives, intended to illustrate the manners of Scotland at three different periods. Waverly embraced the age of our fathers, Guy Mannering that of our youth, and The Antiquary refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century. I have in the two last narratives especially, sought my principal personages in the class of society who are the last to feel the influence of that general polish which assimilates to each other the manners of different nations.<sup>20</sup>

Scott in his variety of scene painting, in his scenes of land, storm, sea, and night and day, in his ability to portray actual Scottish neighborhood, dress, and manners is a realist. It is to the above that his realism in setting owes its being.

One of the strongest points in favor of his use of realism is his use of realistic happenings as the basis for his stories and

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19 Sir Walter Scott, St. Ronan's Well, pp. 160-161.

20 Sir Walter Scott, "Advertisement," The Antiquary, p. 9.

characters. Many incidents were familiar to Scott because of his having traveled in all parts of Scotland in his youth and in later days. Among the actual incidents that Scott had proof of or had seen there are four that will conclusively prove his use of realism. They furnish the foundation of realism upon which he developed the realistic narratives The Antiquary, Old Mortality, The Heart of Midlothian, and The Bride of Lammermoor. (1) A short conversation with Robert Patterson in 1792 by Scott, himself, and the supporting history and facts of Argyle's rising and the Whigs' Vault, the Castle of Dumottar furnished by Mr. Joseph Train, supervisor of excise at Dumfries, were the basis for the novel Old Mortality. (2) Several personal letters---- of the facts concerning the episode of an upright and high-principled female named Helen Walker, telling of her refusing to save her sister's life by an act of perjury and of her journey to London to obtain a pardon for that sister, which were furnished by a Mrs. Goldie, a resident of Scotland who swears that they are the facts ---- are the foundation for The Heart of Midlothian. (3) Old and odd books and a considerable collection of letters and fact concerning the history of a Scottish family of rank coupled with the sworn statement, of a female relative of the family, that the story of the forced marriage and subsequent insanity of the bride was true fact, are the supporting truths upon which the author based his novel, The Bride of Lammermoor. (4) Finally the author's knowledge of the actions, speech, and habits of a dear friend of his youth furnished incident and character delineation for Jonathan Oldbuck in The Antiquary. All of those proofs in the author's own words may be found in the Introduction to the Chronicles of the Canongate

or the Prefaces of any of the novels mentioned.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Scott, with his use of actual fact, of real events, and of real incidents about doings and sayings that he actually heard and saw presents once more his use of realism to the modern reader. Even his incidents, not based on actual events, grow so naturally out of the real that they satisfy the requirements of the greatest art, that art which to be great must be grounded on reality.

Above all the claims one might make for realism in Sir Walter Scott, the most outstanding is that he used realism in the building of his many characters. Especially was this true of the persons that he portrayed from Scottish life. It was Scott's use of realistic tendencies in his characters that enhanced his popularity as a romancer. He has succeeded in his novels in part by presenting faithful pictures of the periods dealt with, and his characters, true to their times and places, maintain their identity, and move through his pages with the reality of life.

It is this very life-like realness in his creatures, which like Shakespeare's move today, that gives his books a continuity of interest for the reader. Scott preferred, above all else, to take his reader on a ramble or a gallop in the invigorating breezes of his beloved Highlands and to introduce him to all the fascinating people along the road. As has been stated, Scott's chief claim to greatness lies in the fact that he was the first novelist to recreate the past; that he changed our whole conception of history by making it not dry facts, but a stage on which living men and women played their parts.

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21 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," Chronicles to the Canongate, pp. 19-22

Not only the pages of history, but all the hills and vales of his beloved Scotland are filled with living characters,---- lords and ladies, soldiers, pirates, gypsies, preachers, schoolmasters, clansmen, bailiffs, dependents,----- all Scotland is here before our eyes, in the reality of life, itself. It is astonishing, with the large number of characters, that Scott never repeats himself. Naturally he is most at home in Scotland and with humble people. When he describes characters like Jeanie Deans in The Heart of Midlothian, and the old clansman, Eban Dhu, in Waverly, we know the very soul of Scotch womanhood and manhood.

There can be little doubt that a claim for realism in Scott's novels must in the main be upheld by his use of actual source, pure Scottish dialogue, and realistic action in his many Scottish characters. His knowledge of the common man and his native soil were tools of his realism.

Critics say that Scott did not know how to paint women, being too gallant to see their weakness. That charge cannot apply to his peasant lassies. His contrasted Scotchwomen, Jeanie and Effie Deans, in The Heart of Midlothian, do not uphold the statement that he lacks ability to portray weakness. His character Jeanie Deans, especially when contrasted with her weak sister, Effie Deans, proves the use of realism not only of exterior but of interior type. The struggle of the passion of a peasant girl for the advancement of truth and the protection of her sister are life-like efforts of a soul in torment. Although Scott does not have the depth of a Tolstoy, we can see a likeness in their work. Carlyle has accused our author of being un-

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able to manifest the soul, yet in this one instance I think his observation has been proved incorrect. Lockhart says of this character:

Never before had he seized such really noble features of the national character as were canonized in the person of his homely heroine: no art had ever devised a happier running contrast than that of her and her sister, or interwoven a portraiture of lowly manners and simple virtues, with more graceful delineations of polished life, or with bolder shadows of terror, guilt, crime, remorse, madness, and all the agony of the passions.<sup>22</sup>

Jeanie Deans with her simple Scotch dialogue, her stanch and courageous morals, and love for her sister represents all the play of passion in an actual "flesh and blood" character that even the most modern realist could wish for. I believe that the trial scene, during which Jeanie tells the truth in spite of a passion that demands a lie to save her sister, is one of the most life-like in English literature. When Jeanie had been asked by Mr. Fairbrother twice of Effie's discussion of her ailment and the honest Scotch girl had replied in the negative twice the spectators were in a passion of sorrow and sympathy for those defendants most concerned. With Jeanie's:

"Alack! Alack! she never breathed word to me about it."

A deep groan passed through the court. It was echoed by one deeper and more agonized from the unfortunate father. ...Even in this moment of agony and general confusion, Jeanie did not lose that superiority which a deep and firm mind assures to its possessor under the most trying circumstances.

"He is my father, he is our father," she mildly repeated to those who endeavoured to separate them, as she stooped, shaded aside his grey hairs, and began assiduously to chafe his temples.

The Judge, after repeatedly wiping his eyes, gave directions that they should be conducted into a neighbouring apartment, and carefully attended.....(the prisoner.)

"The bitterness of it is now past," she said, and then

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22 John Gibson Lockhart, The Life of Sir Walter Scott, p. 337.



boldly addressed the Court. "My lords, if it is your pleasure to gang on wi' this matter, the weariest day will hae its end at last." 23

Scott has made us see in Jeanie's actions the simple life of a Scotch woman of a high quality of loyalty, courage, and sacrifice. She is portrayed as a thrifty housewife, a maker of good cheese, and saver of money. When we know that frugality and industry are the very roots of Scotch life we know the reality of this, the best of Scott's women characters. No speech, no action could be more representative of the true Scotchwoman than Jeanie's eloquent plea for her sister's pardon to Queen Caroline. Scott makes Jeanie speak without knowing that she is speaking to the queen. His description of Jeanie and the Queen after Jeanie's plea is a revelation in realism.

Tear followed tear down Jeanie's cheeks, as, her features glowing and quivering with emotion, she pleaded her sister's cause with a pathos which was at once simple and solemn.

'This is eloquence,' said her Majesty to the Duke of Argyle<sup>24</sup>

Jeanie, doubting her senses, expresses her awe by:

"And that leddy was the Queen hersell?"<sup>25</sup>

Then again when she realizes the pardon has every chance of being obtained, she exclaims:

"Oh, God be praised! God be praised!" ejaculated Jeanie, "and may the gude leddy never want the heart's ease she has gi'en me at this moment."<sup>26</sup>

Again realism is found in the use of dialogue, for with every

23 Sir Walter Scott, The Heart of Midlothian, p. 224.

24 Ibid., pp. 356-357.

25 Ibid., p. 358.

26 Ibid., p. 359.

speech Jeanie speaks as a true Scotch housewife of the lower orders would speak. Scott's theory does not allow him to use the authentic dialect with those characters drawn from other ages but he does characterize his own age with his true speech. In the dialogue between Jeanie and Ratcliffe and then between Jeanie and her sister Effie one can find nothing, excepting the true native vernacular. After admitting her to the jail "with a leer that made her shudder," Ratcliffe says:

"I ken that fu' weel, my bonny doo; mair by token, I have a special charge to stay in the ward with you a' time ye are thegither."

"Must that be sae?" asked Jeanie, with an imploring voice.

"Hout, ay, hinny," replied the turnkey....

"Ye are ill Effie," were the first words Jeanie could utter--  
"ye are very ill."

"O, what wad I gie to be ten times waur, Jeanie!"....

"O, Effie," said her elder sister, "How could you conceal your situation from me?" O, woman, had I deserved this at your hand? Had ye spoke but ae word--- sorry we might hae been, and shamed we might hae been, but this awfu' dispensation had never come ower us." 27

Another point of evident realism is the author's source for the character Jeanie Deans. He built his story upon an incident and person of actuality. He says, himself, that he received correspondence from a Mrs. Thomas Goldie conveying to his mind the picture and life of a Helen Walker, the prototype of his Jeanie Deans.<sup>28</sup> He added to that information by introducing anecdotes respecting Helen Walker,

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27 Sir Walter Scott, The Heart of Midlothian, p. 299-300.

28 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction", The Heart of Midlothian, p. 9.

from Sketches from Nature, by John M'Diarmid, the editor of a newspaper in Dumfries.<sup>29</sup> In the creation of Jeanie Deans, Scott has a universally interesting character endowed with the passions of "flesh and blood," with the tools of true Scottish dialogue and action, and with a true source drawn from real life.

Just as Jeanie is realistically drawn from his women, so Jonathan Oldbuck and Edie Ochiltree are characters drawn in the same realistic style from the opposite sex. Here, the same truths of dialogue, source, and action are evidences of the author's use of realism. The oddities of Jonathan Oldbuck and the gay life of Edie Ochiltree are painted so very realistically that one can see them in action as one reads. George Saintsbury, speaking of Scott, says:

With that unconquerable and unconventional commonsense which was wedded to his genius, he saw that a novel, to be good for anything, must 'tell a story,' use live speech, describe real or imaginably probable places, project on the screen figures which have at any rate some life and reality.<sup>30</sup>

Some life and reality are words too mild to express the personages Oldbuck and Ochiltree. The source of these very realistic individuals is plainly indicated by Scott in the Preface of The Antiquary. He pictured the person Oldbuck in such a natural manner that a very dear friend of the family recognized the author immediately.<sup>31</sup> Of the source he says:

....the character of Jonathan Oldbuck in The Antiquary, was partly founded on that of an old friend of my youth,..... he resided in an old house near a flourishing seaport, and that

29 Ibid., p. 15.

30 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," (George Saintsbury), The Lives of the Novelists, pp. 11-12.

31 John Gibson Lockhart, The Life of Sir Walter Scott, p. 239.



the author chanced to witness a scene betwixt him and the female proprietor of a stage-coach, very similar to that which commences the history of The Antiquary.<sup>32</sup>

The source for Edie Ochiltree is as realistic as that of Jonathan. It is based upon a Scotch mendicant by the name of Andrew Gemmells and upon a particular race of Jockies not long extinct in Scotland. After explaining the actual habits, dress, and source of Andrew and men of his type that he knew, Scott says of Edie:

Such are a few traits of Scottish mendacity designed to throw light on a novel in which a character of that description plays a prominent part. We conclude that we have vindicated Edie Ochiltree's right to the importance assigned him; and have shown, that we have known one beggar take a hand at cards with a person of distinction, and another give dinner parties.<sup>33</sup>

Edie's use of the Scottish dialect is yet another instance of the realism found in this character. As Edie leads Lovel to the cave and then explains that few people know of the place one can easily note the realistic speech of this old beggar. The mendicant explains:

"Few folks ken o' this place," said the old man; "to the best o' my knowledge, there's just twa living by mysell, and that's Jingling Jock and the Lang Linker. I have had mony a thought, that when I found mysell auld and forfairn, and no able to enjoy God's blessed air ony longer, I wad drag mysell here wi' a pickle ait-meal; and see there's a bit bonny drapping well that popples that self-same gate simmer and winter;----- and I wad e'en streek mysell out here, and abide my removal, like an auld dog....."<sup>34</sup>

Another phase of realism is shown in the eccentric Jonathan's dialogue and action. To one who has known and lived with older people his actions and language during the sickness of Hector M'Intyre

32 Sir Walter Scott, The Antiquary, pp. 11-12.

33 Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction," The Antiquary, p. 20.

34 Sir Walter Scott, The Antiquary, Vol. I, p. 337.

certainly bear the reality of "natural life." Mr. Oldbuck, descending to his breakfast-parlour, found that his womenfolk were not upon duty and that his breakfast was not ready and, above all, his silver jug of mum was not in its usual place. The passionate outbreak and subsequent yells that result are so life-like that no person would feel them strained or unnatural. He grumbles:

"This confounded hot-brained boy!" he said to himself; "now that he begins to get out of danger, I can tolerate this life no longer. All goes to sixes and sevens----- a universal saturnalia seems to be proclaimed in my peaceful and orderly family. I ask for my sister---- no answer. I call, I shout----- I invoke my inmates by more names than the Romans gave to their deities--- . . .<sup>35</sup> Here he began to hallow aloud---- "Jenny, where's Miss Oldbuck?"

The growth of a belief in his many troubles caused by the young man's illness, his grumbling, and his underlying concern for the boy's health are excellent examples of Scott's use of realism.

Among Scott's many realistic characters are: Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle, Callum Beg, Lucy Ashton, Edgar Ravenswood, Meg Dods, Frank Tyrrel and Caleb Balderston. Each of these is upheld by an actual source and by a sense of action and dialogue that is upon the whole realistic. They furnish the character and action for many of his best works. A study of these characters will prove not only that Scott built a careful background of real source and incidents for his characters, but that he knew how to unite these hints and suggestions with imagination to produce true realistic novels as Guy Mannering, Waverley, The Antiquary, The Heart of Midlothian, The Bride of Lammermoor, and Old Mortality.

Other characters, not major but minor, that Scott develops in the

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35 Ibid., Vol.II, pp. 9-10.

realistic mould are: Madge Wildfire, suspicious and astute in her madness--- a character described in such a realistic manner and yet encircled with a halo of piety, and the poor fisherman who, when discovered repairing the "auld black bitch of a boat" in which his boy had been lost, says:

And what would you have me do, unless I wanted to see four children starve, because one is drowned? It's weel wi' you gentles, that can sit in the house wi' handkerchiefs at your cen, when ye lose a friend; but the like o' us maun to our work again, if our hearts were beating as hard as my hammer.<sup>36</sup>

All the sorrow, pathos, and practicality of the centuries are in the remarks which the fisherman makes in understandable Scottish dialect. Scott's true nature makes his characters speak in the simple language that one expects them to use, and he makes his reader, not only feel that his characters are the product of their environment, but feel that they are taken from the great "book of nature."

If this be true, then we must conclude that realism has its place in Scott's novels. His scenes, incidents, and characters in many cases display all the elements of realism.

Thus in conclusion we can reassert our belief that Scott used elements of realism in his romantic work. Although the term realism was not in use, many critics of Scott knew how to interpret its techniques. One of his critics, Jeffrey by name, writing under the name of Jedediah Cleishbotham in the Edinburgh Review in 1818 had this to say of Scott's work:

The author, whoever he is, has a truely graphic and creative power in the invention and delineation of characters--- which he

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<sup>36</sup> Sir Walter Scott, The Antiquary, Vol. II, p. 35.

sketches with an ease, and colours with a brilliancy, and scatters about with a profusion, which reminds us of Shakespeare himself; yet with all this force and facility in the representation of the living agents, he has the eye of a poet for all the striking aspects of nature; and usually contrives, both in his scenery and in the groups with which it is enlivened, to combine the picturesque with the natural, with a grace that has rarely been attained by artists so copious and rapid."<sup>37</sup>

From this excellent example we know what the critics of his own day felt about his work. In the sense of the modern as well as of the past we can justly maintain that Scott did use realism in many of his works.

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37 Francis Jeffrey, "Tales of My Landlord," (Jebediah Cleishbotham, pseud.), Edinburgh Review, XXVIII (1817), pp. 194.

## CHAPTER IV

## VALUE OF REALISM TO SCOTT'S WORK

This study of Scott's realism proves that realism and romanticism are not of necessity antagonistic. Both are included in everyday life, which would be a very dull affair without something of the one and would be decidedly incoherent without the other. Scott's value as a realist lies in the firm foundation which that realism gives to his romanticism.

He proved that a combination of the realistic and the romantic would gain for the novel both a popularity and an artistic effect. The past had been regarded hitherto as an uncharted wonderland, from wandering in which the romanticist might come back, in much the same manner as Sir John Mandeville did from the remoter quarters of the actual world, to narrate such stories as he chose, with none to challenge. Scott's purpose in the novel was to recreate the past realistically. He brought to his task the romanticist's imagination and love of scenery, something of the historian's exact and detailed scholarship, and the realist's power over plot-construction and life-like presentations of facts and characters. Scott was the greater artist because of this combination of realism and romanticism. The tone of strength in Waverley at once announced the new master, and was more than justified by the superior genius of the following narratives up to The Talisman. From the beginning of this union in the above mentioned novels one might fairly ask the reader of them if his interest lay wholly in the romance therein or if that interest were not in part strengthened by his use of flashes of realistic scenery.

characters, or by a union of both.

Realism in Scott's characters adds to the strength of their romantic qualities. Therein his value, in part, lies in his eminent humanity which delighted in the sense and virtue and wit of the common people. In his own household and neighbors (like Flaubert) he found characters and pets of humble class, with whom he established the best relations---- small farmers and tradesmen, shepherds, fishermen, gypsies, peasant-girls, cronies----- and came with these into real ties of mutual help and good-will. From these originals he drew so genially his Jeane Deans, his Dimonts and Edie Ochiltrees, Caleb Balderstones and Fairservices, Cuddie Headriggs, Madge Wildfires, Dominies, Meg Merrilies and Jenny Rentherouts, full of romance and reality; making these the pivots on which the plot and interest of his stories turn. With all the glamor of romance about them, one feels that they are solid, real, and actual.

Meg Merrilies, the prominent gypsy of Guy Hamming, illustrates Scott's ability to combine the supernatural, the strange and mysterious of the romantic with the detail of dress and general appearance found in realism. She is a character forcibly sketched, whose dress and general appearance correspond with and support the almost supernatural atmosphere which surrounds her, whose language and demeanour enhances the terrors amongst which she moves, or forms as the action may demand a strong and vivid contrast to them. Her appearance is of the romantic to the point of making Hamming "start, " as well it might. Yet the detail displayed in that description has in it the foundation of realism, for it makes Meg appear as an actual person.

In her first appearance:

She was full six feet high, wore a man's greatcoat over the rest of her dress, had in her hand a goodly slaithorn cudgall, and in all points of equipment, except her petticoats, seemed rather masculine than feminine. Her dark elf-locks shot out like snakes of the gorgon between an old fashioned bonnet called a bougrace, heightening the singular effect of her strong and weather-beaten features, which they partly shadowed, while her eye had a wild roll that indicated something like real or affected insanity.<sup>1</sup>

The romantic elements of the elf-locks, the snakes of the gorgon, the real or affected insanity is strengthened by the full six feet high, the wild roll of her eye, the masculine dress of realism. Meg Merriles' character in the tale corresponds with the strangeness of her external appearance. "Harlot, thief, witch, and gypsy" are the words she uses to describe herself. The hero, Harry Bertram, is preserved by Meg's virtues; half-crazed as she is described to be, he owes his safety on more than one occasion to her skill in stratagem, and ability in managing those with whom she is connected, and who are most likely to be familiar with her weakness and to detect her craft. A particularly good bit of description, which shows the great value that realism plays in that it affords the lights and shadows necessary to give effect to fictitious composition, is found in the description of Meg Merriles, who had lagged behind the gypsy troop as they were taking their forced leave of the Ellangowan estate. As Godfrey Bertram was about to pursue his journey homeward, Meg unexpectedly, in the romantic manner, appeared before him. Although romantic in the general portrayal the scene is full of the realism of detail that makes for belief on the part of the reader. Scott pic-

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1 Sir Walter Scott, Guy Mannering, p. 20.

tured her in this manner:

She was standing on one of those high precipitous banks which, as we before noticed, overhung the road, so that she was placed considerably higher than Ellangowan, even though he was on horse-back; and her tall figure, relieved against the sky, seemed almost of supernatural stature. We have noticed that there was in her general attire, or rather in her mode of adjusting it, somewhat of a foreign costume, artfully adopted perhaps for the purpose of adding to the effect of her spells and predictions, or perhaps from some traditional notion respecting the dress of her ancestors. On this occasion she had a large piece of red cotton cloth rolled about her head in the form of a turban, from beneath which her dark eyes flashed with uncommon lustre. Her long tangled black hair fell in elf-locks from the folds of this singular head-gear. Her attitude was that of a sibyl in frenzy, and she stretched out in her right hand a sapling bough which seemed just pulled.<sup>2</sup>

No one can doubt the romantic wildness, strangeness, and beauty found in this passage. The tall figure against the sky with its supernatural height, the arrangement of her costume in a foreign style, the elf-locks, the attitude of a sibyl in frenzy all speak with the tongues of romance. Yet in the same forceful style, Scott gives us realism that shades his romance into its true value. The detailed account of her attire even to the red turban upon her head, the long tangled black hair, the dark eyes that flashed with an uncommon lustre, the sapling bough which seemed just pulled are all of solid realism. Meg's

"Ride your ways, ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan; ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram,"

and

Our bairns are hinging at our weary backs; look, that your braw cradle at home be the fairer spread up; not that I am wishing ill to little Harry, or to the babe that's yet to be born ...God forbid... and make them kind to the poor, and better folk than their father!<sup>3</sup>

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2 Sir Walter Scott, Guy Mannering, p. 70.

3 Ibid., pp. 70-71.



seems like a terrible malediction and prophecy filled with the essence of romance. Yet the very passion with which it is uttered, from the soul of the old gypsy, who was losing her home and the birthplace of her sons, gives the dialogue the basis of solid realism--- a realism not unlike that of the Russian, Tolstoy. Although this character is strangeness personified, Scott's ability is proved because of the great interest evidenced in this character by the average reader which is based primarily upon her seeming actuality. The explanation of this is the realism with which Scott applied his theory of character portrayal by showing that Meg Merriles arose and was produced out of the peculiar circumstances of gypsy life in the localities in which he placed his scene. The author shows this to his readers, not by lengthy or elaborate description, but by chosen incidents, dialogues, and comments.

Scott's vivid portrayal of the external surroundings enhances the effect of his narrative art; it heightens the interest, and assists him in conveying a sense of reality to the settings he depicts so romantically. As an instance of his employment of a graphic description of surroundings to rouse and impress the reader's imagination reference may be made to Waverley with its splendid examples of realism and romanticism combined. The story took place during the last Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Scott knew the country which he pictured, and he knew intimately many of the soldiers who took part in the rebellion. Therefore he had a splendid knowledge of background for his narratives.

Nowhere, except in the Highlands, could this story have taken

place. It is a story of an English youth who came in contact with an atmosphere which was saturated with the romance of a high-spirited Highland chief and his followers. In the novel one finds pictures of a mysterious cave where a band of robbers lived, colorful portrayals of the characteristic hospitality of the Highlanders, descriptions of mountains, valleys, and streams, the picture of a race of people who were proud but vindictive, accounts of battles and court life, and legends concerning traditions and the gift of supernatural power. All of these, the sentiments of life, are found in Waverley.

The business of life, however, as well as the sentiments of life, is pictured with equal force in Waverley. Fergus Mac-Ivor's ways and means, his careful arrangement for receiving subsidies in blackmail, are as carefully recorded as his lavish Highland hospitality. When he sends his silver cup to the Gaelic bard who sings of Fergus' greatness, Scott does not forget to tell his readers that Fergus will be hardpressed for future generousities. This incident puts Fergus in the same category with men of all times, who have suffered the same embarrassment; it makes Fergus, who is unusual in many ways, understandable and human; it makes Scott's readers realize that, even in a remote period among glamorous surroundings, people suffered from financial reverses.<sup>4</sup>

Scott did not fail in Waverley, to paint the petty pedantries of the Scotch traditional conservatism. He was so careful in this respect that he did not spare even Charles Edward the humiliation of submitting to old Bradwardine's "solemn act of homage," but he

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4 Sir Walter Scott, Waverley (London, 1897), Vol. I, pp. 188-189.

made the pretender to the throne of England go through the absurd ceremony of placing his foot on a cushion to have his boots unfastened by the dry old enthusiast of heraldic lore. This incident of setting goes to show that Scott gave a picture of Scottish manners, in which he shows the strong contrast produced by the opposition of ancient manners to those which are gradually subduing them. These incidents of setting not only add to the interest of the narrative, but they show that Scott knew how to use the lights and shadows of realism to make his settings interesting and of value in his novels.

Scott's realism was a reflection of his personality, of his general interest in his people, of his love of Scotland and of everything Scottish.

Realism in his works is a part of his technique to present a combination of realism and romanticism with the emphasis placed upon the latter. Still, in all fairness, one must give credit to his realism. Although a romanticist of the first rank, he did use realism to a great degree and with that use was a better writer. Through that use, he found himself as Emerson says "the best of the best."<sup>5</sup>

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5 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Sir Walter Scott," Miscellanies (Boston, 1891), p. 377.

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