The Wenshan Review of Literature and Culture · Vol 13.1 · December 2019 · 101-127.
DOI: 10.30395/WSR.201912_13(1).0005

Fact, Fiction, or Fantasy: Scott's Historical Project and *The Bride of Lammermoor*

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ABSTRACT

Gothic romancer or rational skeptic? Calculating historian or hapless author seduced by his own fairy visions? The last two hundred years has produced many competing visions of Walter Scott, the founder of the historical novel. Traditionally, critics have often separated his more supernatural works from those of more "legitimate" historical and literary merit. This essay uses the setting of Smailholm Tower, and its current exhibition "Scott and His Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," to present a new construction of Scott's understanding of history and the purpose of his historical fictions. Because Scott's earliest exposure to history and national culture came from the oral medium of ballads, family superstitions, and fireside "crack," Scott's project to make history live again depends upon the recreation of the historical experiences of gothic terror and rational doubt. Focusing on *The Bride of Lammermoor*, I argue that Scott employs supernatural traditions and Enlightenment skepticism to manipulate the reader into experiencing the same credulity and doubt as his historical subjects. Through its juxtaposition of valid prophecy and discredited witchcraft, and its focus on the oral sources of family history, *The Bride* provides the reader with an accurate experience of history by forcing the reader into a position of epistemological ambivalence toward both psychological and supernatural causation. Scott's deployment of affective reading in instances of prophecy, in turn, suggests that the past can be reactivated in the present, restoring lost social discourse between historical and modern populations.

KEYWORDS: Walter Scott, history, supernatural, oral traditions, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, rationalism

[*] Received: December 27, 2018; Accepted: October 13, 2019
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> [T]all and narrow, and built of a greyish stone, [the tower] stood glimmering in the moonlight, like the sheeted spectre of some huge giant. A wilder or more disconsolate dwelling it was perhaps difficult to conceive. The sombrous and heavy sound of the billows, successively dashing against the rocky beach at a profound distance beneath, was to the ear what the landscape was to the eye—a symbol of unvaried and monotonous melancholy, not unmingled with horror.
>
> —Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*

Smailholm Tower, dark, heavy, and solid, rises from a panorama of grass-topped rocky crags, clusters of yellow-tipped gorse bushes, and a patchwork of rolling fields. Below the tower, sits Sandyknowe farm: a grouping of stone buildings populated by a few wandering Suffolk sheep and sturdy Holstein cows, with a sandy ribbon of a road winding across crags and up to the tower. A likely model for Wolf's Crag in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the great ruined tower of Smailholm and the nearby farm formed the primary setting of Walter Scott's childhood. The impressions gained here helped form not only Scott's interests in local history and Border ballads, but also the quasi-factual, supernaturally-tinged, experiential construction of history featured in much of his work. It was at this family farm, in the shadow of "that shatter'd tower / The mightiest work of human power" (Scott, *Marmion* 3.178-179), that Scott claims to have experienced his first consciousness of existence, remembering "distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical" (Lockhart 8). The influence of Sandyknowe and Smailholm tower, set near Scott's beloved Eildons and the low peaks of the Lammermoor hills, cannot be overestimated. In his introduction to the third canto of *Marmion*, Scott recounts

> And ever, by the winter hearth,
> Old tales I heard of woe and mirth,
> Of lovers' sleights, of ladies' charms,
> Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms; (192-195)

The old tales of ladies, witches, and warriors formed a particularly romantic early education. Scott's earliest concepts of Scottish history, formed by the ballads and anecdotes of nearby environments, included a mix of historical people, gruesomely violent events, and supernatural superstition. He recounts

these years in a short snippet of autobiography, blending the factual with the fantastic with little to distinguish between the two.

At eighteen months old, Scott was sent to live with his grandparents at Sandyknowe after contracting a fever and becoming lame in the right leg. Though he returned to Edinburgh for school, he visited the Borders frequently throughout his life, ultimately purchasing and rebuilding his own estate just ten miles from Sandyknowe. Smailholm, Sandyknowe, Kelso, and the surrounding countryside provide the historical settings and events for much of Scott's work. "The Eve of St. John" and the third canto of *Marmion* are set at Smailholm: "that mountain tower / Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour" (3.158-159). His most gothic novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor,* is set in the nearby hills, while *The Monastery*, set in the Borders, makes extensive use of the medieval defensive towers so common to the area. In *Border Antiquities,* Scott writes that Smailholm was "one of the most perfect specimens" of the type of "rude" and "ancient" defensive towers inhabited by "smaller gentlemen" such as lairds and the heads of distinguished families (lix-lx). Such towers featured as both beacon and defensive post in many of the Border ballads. As a prime example of such historical settings, Scott arranged for J. M. W. Turner to visit and sketch the "striking" tower near the "abode of his childhood" for a new illustrated edition of the *Minstrelsy* (Scott, "To Robert Cadell" 485-86). While, as an antiquarian, Scott understood the historical and military importance of such architecture, the tower and its environs are more significant for their gothic and romantic influences upon Scott's imagination and his literary efforts to create an immersive history. Significantly, Scott's works demonstrate a concept of history that departs from the rationalistic, Anglo-centric progress narratives of the Enlightenment era, and instead, interweaves fact with native traditions, the supernatural, and local legends to culminate in a more authentic sense of lived experience.

From the very start, his experiences at Smailholm and Sandyknowe seemed destined to produce an author capable of the gothic horror and romantic whimsy of *The Bride of Lammermoor.* In his short autobiography included in J. G. Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, Scott recollects an early "odd incident" where his first nurse confessed to the housekeeper that she aimed to take him up to the crags and slit his throat with a pair of scissors in order to return to the city and reunite with her lover (Lockhart 5). Her delirious confession resulted in her immediate dismissal and, years later, Scott heard rumor that she had

become a lunatic. In another anecdote, Scott, a swaddled toddler, had been accidentally left to fend for himself up in the rocky crags as a great storm rolled across the Borders. A search party was mounted, and he was found laughing up at the lightning and thunder, shouting "bonny, bonny!" (Lockhart 23). An additional tale recalls an attempt by his family to cure his lameness through a local superstition. Upon the killing of a sheep for the family, he recalled being "stripped and swathed up in the skin, warm as it was flayed from the carcase (sic) of the animal" (Lockhart 5). In addition to these heavily romantic recollections, much of Scott's future aesthetic formed out of his exposure to the news, ballads, and anecdotes that frequently made up the conversation at Sandyknowe. An avid listener, Scott formed various political prejudices by listening to the stories and tales of his uncles and grandparents. He developed a "deep and personal cause of antipathy" toward George Washington from the news relayed during his uncle's visits (Lockhart 5). He also believed himself a staunch Jacobite, due to stories of family connections with fallen soldiers. While Scott would ultimately challenge and refine these earliest political beliefs, it was the oral medium of ballad and story rather than the political content that retained a lifelong influence upon Scott's work. Many of Scott's works like *Marmion*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and *The Monastery* trace their earliest origins to "the old songs and tales which then formed the amusement of a retired country family. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden . . . and other heroes—merrymen all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John" (Lockhart 6). Because Scott's earliest training in history occurred through oral tradition, Scott's understanding of truth, of experience, and of history were less strictly factual and objective than one might expect from the founder of the historical novel. Thus, despite intervening years of education and study, Scott's romantic fiction presents histories that retain the embellished quality of oral traditions. Scott's fictions refuse the strict rationalism of the Enlightenment as well as the full supernatural credulity of earlier ages. From the factual notes on history in the "Magnum Opus" editions of his novels to the fabricated lines of "old" ballads in epigraphs, Scott utilizes a wide spectrum of truth. Historical and romantic, rational and superstitious, academic and artistic, Scott's work defies strict generic boundaries to produce an immersive experience of history. For Scott, the history that comes alive again in his work is a history based on the stories, traditions, and emotional

responses of the common, familiar people of Scotland, rather than a history based primarily on accuracy and dates.

It is tempting to envision Scott weighing one world view, and one genre, against another. In his left hand, he might have the more subjective viewpoint: a perspective gained through emotions, personal experience, and relationships. This category of the subjective includes border ballads, local superstitions, oral histories, supernatural charms, local and Scottish loyalties, and family tales. In his right, we might envision him grasping the threads of an "official" or objective world view. Here, we would place recorded history, rational skepticism, official documents, science, imperialist progress, and Unionist sympathies. While Scott's work certainly explores these two extremities, it would be negligent to represent his work as merely a conflict between two poles. His adaptation and reconfiguration of Romance and his conception of history further complicate any attempt to confine his work to a simple relationship of contrasts.

The temptation to place Scott's work into binary, often hierarchical, opposites may result from the biases of reading and criticism practices prior to the rise of cultural studies theories in the late twentieth century. During the Enlightenment era, texts found to exhibit qualities such as reason, objectivity, and intellectual rigor, were regarded as masculine and thus superior to the "feminine" texts that encouraged or depended upon excited emotions, sensuality, and romantic credulity. Joseph Crawford's review of the revival of Romance in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries records the attempt by male authors to recover the Romance from its degraded, "feminine" reputation. To make the Romance healthy or "masculine" again, and to distinguish his work from predecessors like Radcliffe and Walpole, Scott infused the Romance with historical details and rational explanations; works like *The Monastery* that more closely resembled the supernatural Romances of the past were not well-received by contemporary reviewers. Moreover, twentieth-century literary criticism often repeats such gendered, and Anglocentric values in its interpretations of Scott's works. For example, Crawford argues that the supernatural within is to be understood as only didactic metaphor for modern issues and conflicts. Yet Crawford demonstrates his own underlying bias when he declares that modern belief in the supernatural is reserved only for "fringe eccentrics" and "conspiracy theorists" (38). While his examples certainly support this view, a feminist and indigenous studies

perspective might offer evidence of shamanic arts, herbalist remedies, and pagan revivals as more valid modern equivalents of the witches, demons, prophecies, and omens of Scott's national history. Viewed from within the once-degraded peripheral perspective, the supernatural within Scott's work suggests a positive, native alternative to the overtly masculine and Anglo-centric epistemologies of dominant culture. In fact, when it comes to Scott's novels, the power of periphery cultures and ideas often becomes a defining undercurrent in a novel's representation of nation. In his chapter "Scottish Gothic" for *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, David Punter helpfully distinguishes the Scottish tradition of the Gothic, and by extension the Gothic Romance, from the English tradition. While the English Gothic is traditionally viewed as ultimately conservative, distorting and mythologizing "accurate" history to reaffirm progress and modern politics, Punter reminds the reader that formal history, as linked to factual truth, objectivity, and progress, is the purview of those in power: the "dominant perspective" (133). Scottish Gothic, because of Scotland's position in the Union and the multiplicity of cultures and allegiances in Scotland, necessarily includes representations of history that challenge dominant ideologies and patriarchal and imperialist values. Punter reads oral tradition and vernacular in Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* as techniques for a subversion of conservative epistemology: *The Bride* is "a story of how 'other' truths of history strive to make themselves felt through the fabric of the official version" (133). In addition, I would add that Scott's differing treatment of witchcraft and prophecy suggests a subtle, but consistent, defense of the various beliefs, traditions, and ways of knowing natural to the female and native populations that were made vulnerable by British Union and Enlightenment progress.

Despite the copious historical notes added to the later "Magnum Opus" editions of his novels, Scott was less concerned with facts and dates than with the recreation of historical experience itself through Romance, native superstition, and Gothic terror. His marked sympathy for the credulous, under-educated populations of past centuries finds expression not only in the textual space committed to subplots and minor characters, but also in a carefully balanced approach to popular tradition and superstition. In his more gothic and romantic works like *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Scott does not seek to ridicule or denigrate the historical populations that Enlightenment philosophers such as David Hume and Adam Ferguson figured as savage, barbaric, and irrational.

Rather, as remedy to Ferguson's concern that the break of modernity from the past would cause a loss of communication and understanding between generations, Scott seeks to create a sympathy of experience between the modern reader and the past subject through the use of the supernatural.

In order to recreate the experience of pre-Enlightenment consciousness for the reader, Scott first acknowledges, and then transcends, modern disillusionment. As author and editor in introductions and explanatory notes, and as the sometimes intrusive narrator Peter Pattieson, Scott seems to accept post-Enlightenment prejudice against the supernatural. In *The Bride,* the skeptical post-Enlightenment reader can be comforted by Scott's insistence that rational explanation can be found for the uncanny events of the source tale. Both in narration and in authorial notes, historical belief in witchcraft is explained as a result of the machinations of the powerful upon the vulnerable. Thus, Scott seems to fulfill the epistemological demands of a reading population no longer susceptible to fantastic thinking while also appearing to defend vulnerable populations. Through the explicit acceptance of modern skepticism, Scott convinces the reader that the author of the novel will faithfully voice their own concerns. Thus, the reader may relax their critical faculty and become more absorbed in the tale itself. Scott, then, lets the supernatural in through the metaphorical backdoor. He presents supernatural elements that cannot be fully explained by reason, like spectres and Second Sight, and the now-agreeable reader is more likely to experience the same fears and apprehensions as the characters themselves. Scott's true artistic genius is not in the presentation of factual history, or in the debunking of ancient superstition, but in the way his careful manipulation of rational skepticism permits the reader to enter in and experience the susceptible historical consciousness.

Scott, himself, was not immune to the bewitching or affecting nature of his fictional histories. In the 1831 introduction to *The Abbot*, while discussing the character of Queen Mary, Scott figures himself as "an enchanter who raises a spirit over who he is uncertain of possessing an effectual control" (83). In a comic dialogue between Captain Clutterbuck and the "Author of *Waverley*" in the introductory epistle in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, the "Author" claims, "I have repeatedly laid down my future work to scale. . . . But I think there is a daemon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write and leads it astray from the purposes. Characters expand under my hand; incidents are multiplied. . . . In short, sir, on such occasions I think I am bewitched" (10). His

extended subplots and surprising attention to minor characters who often prove more substantial and real than his romantic heroes and heroines are evidence of this tendency to be led "astray" from his purpose in the main text. Scott's stated experience of writing his novels is akin to a reader's experience of reading: so forceful is his vivifying of character and place that the emotional and psychological experience supersedes intellectual skepticism.

To truly understand Scott's concept of history and how he might recreate historical experience, we are best served by returning to Smailholm Tower and its exhibition "Scott and his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*" by artists Anne Carrick and MacDonald Scott (donated to the museum by Historic Scotland in 1983). The exhibition consists of various vignettes of highly-detailed hand-crafted dolls. On the first level, we find biographical vignettes illustrating various moments from Scott's life in the Borders. We see him reading Percy's *Reliques* under a great tree in Kelso, walking with a crutch with his Aunt Janet, and listening to the ballads and stories of the elderly Mrs. Hogg accompanied by James Hogg and Willie Laidlaw. These biographical scenes and anecdotes from Scott's life have been recorded and confirmed by multiple sources; thus, the first level of the exhibition records a faithful, accurate representation of recent history. On the second level, the vignettes illustrate scenes from the historical ballads Scott collected in his *Minstrelsy*. Here, we find scenes from "The Lament of the Queen's Marie," "Kinmont Willie," and "Sir Patrick Spens," among others; this floor is reserved for those ballads of historical personages, places, and events, even if the details have been somewhat embellished during their transmission from source to source. Yet another staircase takes us to the last level: the dark and whimsical supernatural ballads of the Borders. Here, we find fantastical vignettes for the "The Young Tamlane," "The Wife of Usher's Well," and "The Daemon Lover." These vignettes are only differentiated from the previous ones by their placement within the building and the unavoidable physical manifestations of the supernatural, such as the paler skin of spectres and the skeletal horses of the fairy host. The three levels of the exhibition represent three types of story: fact, fictionalized history, and the fantastical. Modern readers might be tempted to judge the three genres of story as the rational, the plausible, and the irrational. Scott, however, rejects such stark hierarchical categorizations. Without modern science and archives, the lines between fact, fiction, and fantasy were often blurred for amateur historians and common folk alike. Scott's *Antiquarian* is full of the typical hoaxes and

mistakes made by antiquarians of the eighteenth century in the pursuit of historical knowledge. Furthermore, his time at Smailholm and Sandyknowe seem to suggest that the traditions of the Gothic and Romance were not so different from his own remembered experiences of Border life.

For Scott, the truth that resides within his fiction must be understood as the accurate experience of a historical population, rather than the experience of accurate history. György Lukács' highly influential work *The Historical Novel* argues that Walter Scott founded a new genre of historical fiction with his 1814 publication of *Waverley.* Distinct from the murky universal pasts in Romance, this new genre placed human desire and motivation on an ever-changing, ever-progressing scale. Lukács defines the criteria for historical fiction as distinct from factual reporting: "What matters . . . is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality" (42). Thus, the text must force the reader to approach events with the same varying degrees of credulity, superstition, and faith as its historical characters. While Lukács reads *Waverley* as a model of historical fiction in opposition to Romance, the same effect results from *The Bride of Lammermoor* precisely because of its romantic and gothic elements.

Widely considered the most tragic and gothic of Scott's novels, *The Bride* combines the localized historical impulse of *Waverley* with the romantic imagination of Scott's earlier poetry. Modern editors have shown how Scott constantly alludes to specific historical information, including eighteenth-century Scots law, Union-era political figures, and multiple Jacobite conflicts. The "Magnum Opus" edition relates the historical inspiration for the tale: the betrothal of Janet Dalrymple to David Dunbar in the seventeenth century. However, the historically accurate facts of the story recede from focus as Scott's romantic imagination reconstructs the superstitious consciousness of the period. Scott employs the gothic supernatural to populate the historical setting with familiar figures from this period's national imagination: witches, prophets, and ghostly ancestors. By the time Scott was publishing novels, however, popular taste had turned against the supernatural. When the then-anonymous author of *The Pursuits of Literature* commented on Matthew Lewis' Gothic novel *The Monk*, Scott came to Lewis' defense. The critic "denounced as puerile and absurd the supernatural machinery which Lewis had introduced,"

but Scott implies that such criticism is not legitimate and points to the hypocrisy of the critic's praise for Italian poets and the works of Ann Radcliffe (Scott, *Minstrelsy* 31). Scott's personal feelings about the supernatural in literature are more clearly revealed when he suggests that Lewis' German aesthetic might be "employed as a formidable auxiliary to renewing the spirit of our own, upon the same system as when medical persons attempt, by the transfusion of blood, to pass into the veins of an aged and exhausted patient, the vivacity of the circulation and liveliness of sensation which distinguish a young subject" (29). Here, Scott argues that the Gothic rescues what is old, the past, from degeneration and from possible death and renews it, makes it young or alive or present again. Clearly, it is the supernatural, rather than historical, details that make the past live again in a new age.

As a gothic fiction, *The Bride*'s historical accuracy depends upon its very ambivalence toward empiricism, rational skepticism, and moments of supernatural prophecy. Scott's rationalism exists alongside and in equal standing with the Scottish tradition of Second Sight, although he is quick to discredit the more malignant and harmful practices of witchcraft. The epistemological uncertainty of the novel produces a more accurate representation of common understanding in the tumultuous Union Era of Scotland, when belief in the Second Sight had not yet disappeared, than a strict historical account could provide. The reader experiences the supernatural within the text as both an antiquated superstition, explained by rational deduction, and as the true force moving the novel towards its prophesized and fatal end. Unlike other Gothic works of the Romantic era, like Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* and Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, the modern reader cannot easily dismiss all of the supernatural as sensationalism, Catholic superstition, or the barbaric ignorance of past generations.

The imaginative history and ambivalent gothicism of *The Bride* is due in part to the oral sources for the tale. In the "Magnum Opus" edition of 1830, Scott adds an introduction in which "the author feels himself now at liberty to tell the tale as he had it from connexions of his own, who lived very near the time, and were closely related to the family of the Bride" (Introduction to *The Bride* 335). He draws attention to the subjective, personal source but does not dismiss it for its lack of formal records; rather, by including that the source shared the relative time period of the historical figures of the novel, he further validates the provenance of this history. In this new introduction, Scott reveals

the "real source from which he drew the tragic subject of this history": the oft-repeated story of the Dalrymple family and Janet Dalrymple's ill-fated marriage to David Dunbar of Baldoon (335). After the marriage of Janet, daughter to Lord and Lady Stair, "the most wild and piercing cries" issued from the bridal chamber (337). Upon unlocking the door, the wedding guests discover a grisly scene: Baldoon has been stabbed and is bleeding across the threshold while Janet sits "grinning at them, mopping and mowing," her shift stained with his blood, and unable to speak coherently except to say "Tak up your bonny bridegroom" (338). Janet never recovers and dies three weeks later. Scott, attune to the gothic overtones of the story, writes that "various reports went about on this mysterious affair" and that it was difficult to inquire into the "strange things [that] sometimes took place" in families of higher ranks (338). The true tale is already Gothic in its multiplicity of versions and the veiling of scandal afforded to powerful families. He includes informal records of the history: reports, verses of poetry, family tales. While the informality of these types of histories may explain how a true tale became supernatural or Gothic, the inclusion of the historical source story immediately distinguishes this work from the purely fantastic creations of his predecessors. While Gothic novels usually insist that they came from other sources, sibylline leaves or journals or collected histories, their resources are often just a fiction of the author. For *The Bride,* it is no mere trope as many readers would recognize the family's name and may have even read verses by Andrew Symson. The story was one Scott had heard countless times from the women in his family. In a letter to James Ballantyne, Scott wonders if "I shall make it so effective in two volumes as my mother does in her quarter of an hour's crack by the fireside?" (186). Scott questions whether his written, and therefore more official and possibly artificial, tale can match the enlivening qualities of the oral tradition practiced by his mother. In her introduction to the work, Kathryn Sutherland writes, "This is a tale that could be told no other way . . . . Great-aunt Margaret Swinton, its most authoritative source, was hacked to death by a crazed woman servant" (xxxi). Scott was only ten at the time of the murder. Thus, from its very origin, as a tale from a female relative who suffered her own Gothic fate, the story invoked recollections of oral traditions, gothic violence, and personal history.

Perhaps due to the association between *The Bride of Lammermoor* and his murdered great-aunt, Scott repeatedly condemns violence practiced by women upon vulnerable subjects. The anecdote of the mad nurse who would have slit

his throat so as not to be denied her lover may also have contributed to his horror of violent women preying upon the vulnerable. However, his condemnation focuses primarily on the supposed practitioners of witchcraft. As an antiquarian, Scott was said to own three (or perhaps one, thrice-named) counter-charms to witchcraft. He avidly researched local oral traditions and collected many rare pamphlets, papers, and books on the tradition as practiced in Scotland. Through his research, Scott was keenly aware of the many historical instances when belief in witchcraft had been used for political or economic gain. Thus, throughout his fiction, and especially in *The Bride*, Scott is quick to refute the powers of witchcraft while exposing the reasons for the tradition's long-lasting existence. It is in his condemnation of this particular supernatural phenomenon, that Scott most clearly encourages a conservative, Enlightenment disdain for the supernatural. In his introduction to *The Bride*, Scott informs the reader that popular tradition held that Dame Margaret was in compact with the devil and bestowed with unnatural abilities such as necromancy and prophecy (335). Several of the accounts of the tale suggest that Lady Stair had used her supernatural powers to bewitch her own daughter, ultimately resulting in Janet's hysteria—a symptom of demonic possession. However, when writing of Dame Margaret's supposed supernatural manipulation of her daughter, Scott writes: "It is needless to point out to the intelligent reader, that the witchcraft of the mother consisted only in the ascendency of a powerful mind over a weak and melancholy one" (343). First, Scott implies that only an unintelligent reader would be credulous enough to suppose Dame Margaret's influence to be actual witchcraft, immediately manipulating the reader into agreement. Second, by writing "consisted only," Scott fully refuses any possibility of supernatural aid in Lady Stair's influence upon her daughter. Like Lucy Ashton in the fictionalized account, Janet Dalrymple is a victim of psychological manipulation.

Scott's demystifying, rational attitude toward the more malignant supernatural is most obvious in his depiction of witchcraft within the fictional tale of *The Bride*. Aislie Gourlay, Scott's malignant Sycorax, uses Lucy Ashton's susceptibility to Romance to psychologically manipulate her into a state of fevered terror that appears to the credulous as demonic possession. The Wise Woman of Bowden, Scott writes, "had acquired a considerable reputation among the ignorant by the pretended cures which she performed" (*Bride* 238). Scott's use of "the ignorant" to delimit the credulous population seems to echo

the dominant, Enlightenment perspective of history as progress away from a barbaric past. Scott goes on to denounce those who professed to practice witchcraft for malignant means as "the worst of the pretenders to these sciences" (239). His general condemnation of historical figures that claimed demonic powers continues:

> Real crimes were often committed under pretense of magical imposture; and it somewhat relieves the disgust with which we read, in the criminal records, the conviction of these wretches, to be aware that many of them merited, as poisoners, suborners, and diabolical agents in secret domestic crimes, the severe fate to which they were condemned for the imaginary guilt of witchcraft. (239)

Scott's rational attack on witchcraft is clearly connected to the negative, even fatal, influence of these "pretenders" on the credulous and vulnerable. Nonetheless, it is important to notice that Scott also writes of reading criminal convictions with "disgust." Scott is aware, then, that some of the convicted were victims of the period's prejudices against women. Thus it is power exercised over the vulnerable that Scott truly condemns. In *The Bride*, Scott is primarily concerned with the exploitation of superstitious belief in witchcraft for the use of psychological manipulation. Aislie's witchcraft, like Dame Margaret's in the introduction, consists primarily of her ability to "adopt the hateful and dangerous character [of a witch], for the sake of the influence which its terrors enable them to exercise" (239). "Adopt" clearly signals that Aislie is performing the role of witch rather than exercising the skills of a witch. Lucy Ashton is particularly susceptible to influence as she delights "in the old legendary tales . . . . This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aerial palaces" (25). In secret, Lucy "laboured at this delusive, though delightful architecture" (25). Scott's use of "delusive" hints that the potential threat of a romantic imagination is its susceptibility to deception and influence. However, it is important to note here how Scott undercuts our expectations of a Scottish heroine steeped in lore: Lucy is not Flora MacIvor. As Juliet Shields has pointed out, native traditions of a romantic or gothic character are not Lucy's natural inheritance: she learns them through books and the stories Old Alice teaches her. Scott uses the language of edifices when describing her

engagement with these works, suggesting that they are a sort of defense, fortification, or shelter that she deliberately raises. Perhaps, one could even argue that the romantic cast of mind proves fatal to her but not to the women of *Waverley* because it is constructed rather than inherent. Lucy, with her fragile and delusive defense of Romance, is the perfect, credulous victim for psychological manipulation, and so Lady Ashton employs the local hag, Aislie Gourlay, to "attain the absolute subjugation of Lucy Ashton's mind" (239). After a particularly scathing description of those persons, "odious to humanity," who claim the powers of a witch, Scott writes: "such was Aislie Gourlay" (239). Aislie is a woman so capable in her part as witch that she could convince even "a less credible imagination, in an age more hard of belief" (240). Such a note seems to suggest that the forcefulness of her character may also tempt a reader toward belief: a precarious condition that closely mirrors the apprehension of educated, rational characters from the period. Scott continues on to describe how Aislie, aided by her terrible, hag-like appearance, manipulates Lucy into a frenzied state of terror at the mother's request. Like Janet Dalrymple, Lucy Ashton's horrific actions in her bridal chamber and subsequent death are firmly the consequence of manipulation rather than demonic possession or supernatural influence.

Repeatedly, Scott rejects belief in witchcraft with a vehemence not apparent in other manifestations of the supernatural. In his introduction, he denounces the "highly scurrilous and abusive verses" of the "Satyre of the Familie of Stairs" which describes the family as "wry, false, witch, pets, parricide, possessed" (Introduction to *The Bride* 338, 339). This negative reception of supposed witchcraft is extended to other witch-like figures in the novel. He writes of the three women that come to watch over Alice's body that they are a ghastly company: "so evil-omened and so odious" (*Bride* 192). The novel's anxiety about witchcraft, often expressed as derisive condemnation, is less unusual if we remember that the last witch burning in Scotland took place in Dornach in 1722 and that the novel aims to portray the feelings of its historical setting in the early 1700s. As Fiona Robertson notes in *Legitimate Histories*, "Scott's usual practice when dealing with individuals reputed to have demonic powers was to provide psychological explanations, emphasizing [their] delusions . . . and the credulity of the times" (370). Edgar Ravenswood, the hero of the novel who often seems to echo the reader's skepticism and Scott's own epistemological ambivalence, rejects the supernatural powers of witches.

However, he also expresses a sympathy more in line with Scott's discussion of witchcraft in *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*. Ravenswood "despise[s] most of the ordinary prejudices about witchcraft" and understands that confessions to witchcraft were extracted "by the fear of death, and the pangs of the most cruel tortures" (Scott, *Bride* 193). While Ravenswood declaims the credulity of the population concerning witchcraft as irrational, he recreates the historical horror and distaste for witches through his strong condemnation. Thus, the reader often assumes the position of Ravenswood: an enlightened man critical of supernatural belief but forced to navigate the suspicions and prejudices of his contemporaries.

Though Scott privileges scientific reasoning over experiential credulity to expose the negative impact of this particular native superstition, he is less quick to reject the power of prophecy, another heavily traditional supernatural power often called Second Sight in Scotland. The introduction to *The Bride* informs the reader that Dame Margaret foretold that the family would prosper after her death as long as her coffin remained unburied and upright. Scott cites the memoirs of her grandson, John Dalrymple, 2nd Earl of Stair, as evidence of her request. Her prophecy, as published by Dalrymple in 1747, appeared to have proven true by the time Scott wrote *The Bride of Lammermoor.* Scott writes that the Dalrymple family "produced, within the space of two centuries, as many men of talent, civil and military, and of literary, political and professional eminence, as any house in Scotland" (Introduction to *The Bride* 335). Scott adds that the family "first rose into distinction in the person of James Dalrymple" who was born in 1619, exactly two hundred years before the first publication of *The Bride of Lammermoor* (335). Thus, according to Scott's own evidence, the rise of the Dalrymple family coincides perfectly with Dame Margaret's prediction. Lady Stair died in 1692, the same year that the eldest son of the family sullied Lord Stair's reputation through his involvement with the Glencoe Massacre. The grandson, who would later go on to professional success in the military and as a diplomat, was only nineteen at the time and hardly provided any assurance that the family would retain its influence in the future. Given their fluctuating reputation and power during the politically unstable period of the early Jacobite rebellions, Dame Margaret's prediction of the future prosperity of her family cannot simply be attributed to belief in the stable continuation of good fortune. Scott explains the uncanny truth of her prophecy by writing that "the talents of this accomplished race were sufficient to have

accounted for the dignities which many members of the family attained, without any supernatural assistance" (336). This explanation does not contain the language of absolute rejection present in Scott's explanation of Dame Margaret's supposed demonic influence. Additionally, Scott follows this assertion with "[b]ut their extraordinary prosperity was attended by equally extraordinary family misfortunes" (336). The use of the conjunction and the repeated use of "extraordinary" suggest that such a concurrence of both success and tragedy is not only highly unusual, but that it also suspiciously coincides with the powers of "supernatural assistance." The possibility of the presence of prophetic powers evolves into a stronger credulity in *The Bride* as prophecies and omens come true despite the efforts of both Ravenswood and Scott to rationalize the supernatural.

While Scott does not permit Aislie Gourlay's witchcraft any possibility, she is permitted to prophesize correctly on more than one occasion. Prophecy, often associated with witchcraft through the use of unnatural abilities, is nevertheless treated very differently by Scott. Aislie's wedding day pronouncements that they are "soon to see as braw a burial" and that the new bride's "winding sheet . . . is up as high as her throat already" come true (*Bride* 256, 257). At their most skeptical, the reader might assume that this educated guess is based on Aislie's time spent terrorizing Lucy and her knowledge of Lucy's fragile health. Her prophecy regarding Ravenswood's death is less easy to explain. In response to Annie Winnie's exclamation that Ravenswood "wad mak a bonny corpse," Aislie foresees that "hand of women, or of man either, will never straught him—dead-deal will never be laid to his back" (192). Indeed, Ravenswood appears to be swallowed up in the Kelpie quicksand and no trace of him is ever discovered. We hear no rational explanation for such pre-knowledge and she says that her information comes "frae a sure hand . . . and frae them that spaed his fortune before the sark gaed ower his head" (192, 193). While we might argue that the prophecies regarding Lucy are not true revelation because Aislie was the primary agent of Lucy's ill health, there is little evidence of rational explanation for her foreknowledge of Ravenswood's death and bodily disappearance. In both sets of predictions, the author does not intervene to propose a rational explanation as he did when discussing Aislie's supposed powers of witchcraft.

Aislie and Alice, as the similarities in their names suggest, serve as positive and negative representations of the feminine supernatural. These

women, associated with witchcraft and prophecy in *The Bride*, are often referred to as both "hags" and "sybils." In Scott's time, "hag" implied both "an ugly, repulsive old woman: often with implication of viciousness or maliciousness" and "a woman supposed to have dealings with Satan and the infernal world" ("Hag," def. 3a; "Hag," def. 2). Scott's use of the term may have an even stronger supernatural implication, as he uses "noontide hag" (3.105) in his poem *Lady of the Lake* (1810) to reference a goblin, employing the original definition of "hag" as "an evil spirit, dæmon, or infernal being, in female form" ("Hag," def. 1a). The multiple associations of the word demonstrate historical changes in belief; in Scott's use of "hag," medieval demonic belief is juxtaposed with the Enlightenment's rationalism. Fittingly, "hag" appears in the novel the exact same number of times as "sibyl." A sibyl is defined as "one or other of certain women of antiquity who were reputed to possess powers of prophecy and divination" and "a prophetess; a fortune teller" ("Sybil," def. 1; "Sybil," def. 2). Scott's use of both terms for women of opposing natures suggests the impossibility of completely disentangling the power of prophecy from its more demonic associations with witchcraft. To promote a positive portrayal of prophecy while simultaneously exposing the immorality of assuming the figure of the witch, Scott must demarcate between the two by exposing the latter as a trick or deception and permitting the former to retain some degree of plausibility.

Blind Alice is another figure that Scott uses to embody Scottish tradition while also undercutting our expectations of romantic nationalism. Alice, the benevolent blind vassal, seems an embodiment of the Scottish phenomena of Second Sight. However, she is in fact English, having become a tenant of the Ravenswood family through her husband many years ago. Her supernatural powers are therefore not necessarily a Scottish inheritance from "barbaric" or "pagan" times, but rather pan-British. And while Scotland is both her literal and spiritual home, and her loyalties remain with the Ravenswood family, Blind Alice nonetheless demonstrates that credulous belief in prophecy is not limited to the peripheral nations of the Empire. Her other supernatural powers are limited to the appearance of her ghost and her ability to read the emotions of her visitors despite her blindness. When Ravenswood sees Blind Alice's spectre, Scott forebears from an overly concrete explanation, granting the reader an experience of historical credulity and doubt. Ravenswood's horse was "sweating and terrified, as if experiencing that agony of fear with which the

presence of a supernatural being is supposed to agitate the brute creation" (Scott, *Bride* 188-89). The author's commentary, while rejecting an absolute rationalization of this event, does suggest an alternative explanation. Ravenswood was not sure "whether [the apparition] was real or whether it was the creation of a heated and agitated imagination" (188). The novel does not absolutely recommend either the rational or supernatural explanation to the reader, thereby allowing the reader to experience the historical ambiguity of belief.

The reader's acceptance of supernatural possibility depends greatly on the reader's judgement of the characters' state of mind and their attention to Scott's ambivalence. In his work "Fiction Against Fact," James Kerr focuses on a sympathy between Scott, the reader, and Edgar Ravenswood at his most rational. He suggests that the reader and the author must view Ravenswood's ambivalence as a result of the epistemological conflict between fiction and reality, rather than a credible conflict of belief. Kerr argues that these moments of conflict between supernatural possibility and rational explanation actually call attention to the failure of language and the artifice of Romance to successfully capture reality. Juliet Shields, however, suggests that the reader focuses on the female figures in *The Bride* instead, in order to discover a more subversive, nationalist and feminine trajectory in Scott's writing. Shields focuses on Lucy Ashton, rather than Ravenswood, as the site for Scott's representation of the conflict between a Scottish history, tied with feminine sensibility and feminized native traditions, and a British present. In her faith in Blind Alice and her susceptibility to supernatural tales, Lucy Ashton looks to the knowledge of native peripheral or "degraded" cultures to claim validity and power. Ultimately for Shields, however, both Lucy and the novel fail to activate an authentic and active connection between audience and past. Both Kerr and Shields rely upon the assumption that the reader will easily dismiss the supernatural explanation within the reality of the story. Kerr ignores the "particular [Scottish] inflections" (Punter 133) of the Gothic that might justify a more credulous reading, while Shields does not find that the novel delivers the modern reader a viable, historical affect. For both scholars, Scott's historical Romance cannot restore the past because the reader will likely ignore the text's ambivalence to the supernatural and instead, apply the rational, scientific skepticism of the modern period. However, if we evaluate Scott's novel and his periphery characters from the position of a fully engaged reader, the affected

reader rather than the critical or consciously-knowing reader, the supernatural within the context of the story is not so easy to dispense with. Scott and his contemporaries were well-versed in the affective properties of literature: from the seventeenth century on, novel writers had to contend with the popular suspicion that the novel, especially a Gothic Romance, could have a corrupting influence on the reader. Lucy Ashton is herself emblematic of the affective reputation of literature as she is susceptible to Aislie Gourlay's manipulation because of her partiality for Romance and legend. With a sympathetic view towards historical superstition, Scott's recreation of pre-Enlightenment historical experiences suggests that the past may not be completely irretrievable. In *The Bride*, the fiction of Romance creates an actual experience, a reality, for the reader. Scott's supernatural phenomena bridge the gap between the narrative and the real by recreating the historical experience of epistemological doubt. Furthermore, by using traditions of prophecy and omen, Scott renews sociocultural discourse by passing knowledge through the varied generations of subject, author, and reader.

In order to increase Blind Alice's credibility as a supernatural figure, Scott remains tentative in his rationalizing of her power of intuition. She is described as having "some way of looking into your very heart . . . . for it seems as if she saw one change colour, though she has been blind these twenty years" (*Bride* 45). Her uncanny "acuteness of perception" may be a consequence of her blindness, as her hearing "has been sharpened by [her] blindness, and [she] can now judge of the slightest sounds" (30, 149). Again, Scott offers a possible explanation, but while blindness may increase the sensitivity of the other senses, her ability to see into the "very heart" of a person suggests an extrasensory, supernatural perception. Indeed, this perception seems very like female intuition, an alternate subversive, feminine "truth" making itself "felt through the fabric of the official version" (Punter 133). Alice's ability to prophesize correctly is even less easy to explain than her blind intuition. While we might attribute some of her prophetic power to her knowledge of Ravenswood's feudal ancestors and the legends surrounding the lands now held by Ashton, Scott does not insist upon this explanation. Her prophetic warning that Mermaiden's Well will prove "a place fatal to the race of Ravenswood" comes true when Lucy breaks the engagement (*Bride* 152). Ravenswood admits, "Old saws speak truth . . . Alice spoke well" (187). In the repeated use of the verb "to speak," Scott emphasizes the power of the oral to produce truth. Her

prophecy to Ashton that he is "on the brink of a precipice" and that a vengeful Ravenswood "may bide his time" derives not from her knowledge of any real conspiracy but is "a warning of another kind" (34, 35, 34). Again, Scott emphasizes prophecy as an alternative means of accessing truth which challenges the supremacy of dominant, objective, universal forms of knowledge. History, in the form of familial and local legend, features in all of Alice's prophecies, suggesting one reason for Scott's more credulous attitude to this form of the supernatural. Her prophecies refigure a connection to the past that has disappeared in an age of feudal aristocratic decline. Through Alice's prophecies, Ravenswood's ancestors are permitted influence on the life of their last remaining heir. Moreover, the fantastic prophecies ensure a fatalistic quality to the reading of the story. The reader knows, as surely as Alice does, that the novel will end just as the legendary prophecy foretells.

Omens and portents become another form of permitted prophecy in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. The bull and raven are "portentous signs vouchsafed to ready and unready participants in action—and to those bystanders known as readers" (Parsons 243). Their significance is particularly emphasized for the reader who immediately understands the omens in terms of prophetic power and fate. Through the various introductory frameworks, the reader is already aware of the tragic ending to come. When the reader confronts these ancient symbols of the Ravenswood family, they engage in the act of prophecy by reading the actions of the animals and the violence enacted on them as symbolic of the certain violence to come. In the reading and acceptance of these supernatural warnings, the reader shares the fatalistic and superstitious belief of the more credulous characters of the novel. The bull, as family crest, is immediately recognizable as symbolic of the family line. The raven, the reader is told, has long been under the protection of the family, and indeed, "raven" serves as the root for the family name. Yet despite their clear symbolic power and his already existent concerns over his inherited legacy of revenge, the Master of Ravenswood fails to read the death of the bull and the raven as prophetic. In these instances, his rationalization of superstition and rejection of portents actually ensures the fate that he is at pains to reject.

The ominous figure of the bull first intrudes upon the story as Ashton is planning how to use the disruption at Lord Ravenswood's funeral against the last remaining heir. Scott writes that Ashton, pausing in his work, "chanced, in looking upward, to see the crest of the family for whose heir he was whetting

the arrows . . . it was a black bull's head, with the legend, 'I bide my time'" (*Bride* 24). It is, of course, no coincidence that Ashton is in the middle of planning a final legal assault on the Ravenswood line when the reader is first introduced to the family motto and the story of successful revenge upon a usurper. Moreover, Scott's particular phrasing of "whetting the arrows" foreshadows a scene at Mermaiden's Well where the youngest Ashton shoots down a raven, another animal associated with the Ravenswood family, with bow and arrow. The omen of the bull, and its legacy of Malisus' revenge, is disturbing enough to prompt Ashton to put aside his indictment of Ravenswood, "reflecting farther on the consequences of the step he was about to take" (24). Yet when a living bull charges the Lord Keeper and his daughter, he fails to recognize the connection between living, active portent and the symbolic crest. In contrast, the crest's motto is never far from the reader's mind; repeated references to revenge, and the reader's certain knowledge of when and how this ancestral revenge will emerge, imbues the living bull with significant representational power. As symbol, the historical portent functions as sign or omen just as effectively for the reader as it does for Alice, a reader of omens. Scott's description of wild cattle might appear unremarkable, mere rural landscape, had not the subsequent paragraph immediately alerted the reader to the connection between the aristocracy and these descendants of a once ancient and savage species. We learn that wild cattle, "degenerated from the ancient race in size and strength," have been preserved at noble houses, as a relic of their fierce ancestors (36). Having been informed earlier that the Ravenswood crest is a bull, the reader immediately associates the declining bovine heirs of an ancient line with Ravenswood, the last heir of a declining aristocratic family. Just as the living cattle are diluted copies of their feared and noble ancestors, retaining only some part of the savage ferocity of their ancestors, Ravenswood is a weakened copy of his ancestors—having neither their wealth nor their affectation of power—who retains the family desire for revenge. The bull charges Ashton as a symbolic act of Ravenswood revenge. The Master of Ravenswood intervenes, placing himself as an obstacle between the legacy of revenge and the object of vengeance. The symbolic, prophetic significance of the event, however, is challenged by the narrator's rationalization. The narrator ascribes the reason for the bull's sudden violence as "stimulated either by the scarlet colour of Miss Ashton's mantle, or by one of those fits of capricious ferocity to which their disposition are liable" (37). As David Brown points out

in *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination*, this rational rejection of portentous representation is "not adequate to the incident's symbolic effect in its context" (134). Furthermore, because the incident so clearly follows the novel's larger events, the narrator's blind rationalization calls into question the adequacy of reason to account for reality throughout. Through his act of shooting the bull, Ravenswood saves the very family against which he had earlier vowed revenge: he is forced to renounce and eliminate the symbol of his ancestral past in order to engage with the Ashton family. Through the destruction of the symbol, Ravenswood appears to reject the legacy of vengeance. However, the reader knows that this is a false respite from a fatalistic, predetermined end; ultimately, the Ravenswood line is avenged through Lucy's death and the later death of all the Ashton heirs. The family motto, "I bide my time," outlasts Ravenswood's peace-making resolutions. Since he makes himself an obstacle to this indefatigable impetus—located not within a physical body but as an unexplainable ancestral force at work—he must also suffer its fatal repercussions.

Scott's use of the raven as symbolic of the Ravenswood line generates competing connotations. The raven, an "'ill-omened and ill-favored' vulture," was often the object of witchy transformation: "the blackness of the plumage match[es] their Satanic master's complexion" (Parsons 243). These particular birds are all "under the protection of the Lords of Ravenswood," negating a demonic association through the bird's historic connection to the family of the novel's protagonist (Scott, *Bride* 159). The connection to the family is made abundantly clear by Edgar's surname: Raven's wood. The incident of the raven violently and abruptly intrudes upon a romantic and idyllic scene at the legendary setting of Mermaiden's Well. Lucy and Ravenswood pledge their love to each other and "as they arose to leave the fountain which had been witness of their mutual engagement, an arrow whistled through the air, and struck a raven" (159). It is Henry Ashton, the hidden huntsman, and not the presence of the unoffending raven, that interrupts the happy scene. Lord Ashton's metaphorical whetted arrow from an earlier scene now violently disrupts a romantic moment to kill the symbol of the house of Ravenswood. The bird becomes an omen of bad luck because Henry Ashton, the child of the usurping family, kills the protected familiar of the estate's former owners. Ashton's destruction of the family bird prompts Ravenswood to admonish him, saying that "to kill one in [the family's] presence, is such bad luck that it

deserves the stab" (159). The gamekeeper Norman, employed formerly by the Ravenswood family and thus a type of family guardian, had seen the raven near the couple and "wished it might be for good luck; for the raven is one of the wildest birds that flies" (159). Instead of implying an evil or demonic association with the family, this raven has the potential to repair the deep divide between past and present ruling families by helping unite the young lovers. The death of the raven foreshadows the lamentable and tragic death of Edgar Ravenswood, while the flippancy with which young Ashton treats such an important family symbol reflects the callous treatment of aristocratic tradition by the modern middle-class. Another subtle analogy is also present: the ravens, like the feudal vassals of earlier centuries, enjoy the protection of the Ravenswood family. Just as "raven" is the essential feature of Edgar's aristocratic surname, the estate's human tenants, former feudal vassals, are an essential part of the aristocratic patrimonial tradition lost to modern socio-economic change. The usurper has severed this chain of allegiance and interdependence just as Henry, the usurper's son, has broken the Ravenswood's oath of protection to the ravens. The multi-faceted symbolic importance of the raven's death is not lost on the reader as we experience the event as the historical decline of aristocracy, the fictional family's decline, and the supernatural portent.

All of the prophetic omens and supernatural warnings in *The Bride* culminate in the inauspicious Ravenswood family prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer:

> When the last Laird of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride,
> And wooe a dead maiden to be his bride,
> He shall stable his steed in the Kelpie's flow,
> And his name shall be lost for evermoe! (139)

The reader learns of this prophecy from Ravenswood's servant, Caleb Balderstone. A comic figure, Balderstone's chief occupation in the novel is to disguise the financial ruin of the Ravenswood family to outsiders, necessitating many modifications of the truth. With such an unreliable source, it would seem the reader is expected to treat the prophecy as lightly as Ravenswood does when he replies "I hope I shall chuse a better stable for my horse than the Kelpie's quick-sand" (140). However, Scott informs the reader of this prophecy through

an untrustworthy source to counterbalance a nineteenth-century reader's knowledge of the historical prophet. Unlike Scott's other figures of the supernatural, which are modified forms of Scottish folklore archetypes, True Thomas is lifted straight from Scotland's history. Thomas of Erceldoune was a famed prophet and poet from the thirteenth century and appears throughout recorded Scottish folklore, literature, and in several of Scott's works, including *Letters on Demonology*, *The Minstrelsy*, *Castle Dangerous* and *Sir Tristem*. Scott's contemporary readers would find it harder than a modern reader to dismiss or rationalize a prophecy coming from such a significant and proven historical prophet as his "reputation as a prophet is too great for his words to be contradicted" (Parsons 238). It is also important to remember that "long after the heyday of the Scottish Enlightenment, instances of ghosts, 'visions' and second sight were widespread in Scotland" (Jarvie xii). The legitimacy of prophecy is further affirmed by the fact that the Ravenswood prophecy comes true. Given that the Ashtons now own the Ravenswood estate, the last heir of Ravenswood does ride to Ravenswood to woo Lucy. When Ravenswood visits her for the last time, Lady Ashton has already arranged her marriage to Bucklaw. Aisle, employed months before to manipulate Lucy into accord with her mother's wishes, has had ample time to work Lucy into the fatal and fevered state of terror which will lead to her death. Therefore, when Ravenswood finally goes to speak with the now doubly-engaged woman, she is already a "dead maiden." Ravenswood recognizes the Kelpie's flow as the "quick-sand betwixt the tower and Wolf's-hope," thus legitimizing the possibility that the prophecy bears some local truth (Scott, *Bride* 139). This is the very quicksand into which Caleb observes Ravenswood enter and Scott writes that "the prophecy at once rushed on Balderstone's mind" (267). Without any rational disclaimer from the author, the reader is forced to consider this moment and what follows as a fulfillment of the prophecy. Caleb "never saw him pass further" (267). The last to hold the name Ravenswood is "lost for evermoe" as Ravenswood's body is never found. While the supernatural prophecy proves true, it is a fictional prophecy despite its supposed historical source. Ravenswood's rationalism when he dismisses the prophecy competes with the accuracy of Thomas' the Rhymer's augury, and the credibility of his historical reputation, thereby challenging any absolute conviction in either post-Enlightenment rationalism or supernatural explanation.

Scott's ambivalence about the supernatural in *The Bride*, and his differing

treatment of prophecy and witchcraft, can be understood in terms of the importance of native traditions of transgenerational communication. Prophecy maintains Scotland's oral tradition in *The Bride*, as the purpose of prophecy is to communicate a warning or vision of the future from the position of the past. The prophecies of both Alice and Aislie are devolved in conversation, recreating literal communication from the irretrievable past in the modern present. As the movement of prophecy is temporal, prophecy permits figures of an already defunct past to communicate with the present through intermediary figures representative of historical change. Scott's historical literature communicates, just as prophecy does, between past and present eras. Just as Ravenswood relives his ancestor's history through the playing out of an ancient prophecy, and as Scott relives local history through the oral tales of his relatives, the reader relives Scottish history through Scott's tales. Thus Scott's use of plausible prophecy is not merely romantic nostalgia or personal attachment to national fancies; it is, in fact, the very medium through which Scott is able to negotiate the complex existence of the past in the present and recover the lost shared experiences crucial to the immersive history Scott seeks to create. Furthermore, Scott's ambivalence toward the supernatural requires the reader to take an especially active part in creating and determining the truth of the reality of this fictional world. Thus, both prophecy and Scott's historical fictions enable the past to affect and participate in the present. While indeed Scott's gothic fictions may well suggest that some of the past stays in the past, such as the belief in witchcraft and malevolent demons, it also suggests that the Enlightenment-era concept of linear time and stadial progress fails to capture Scotland's dynamic relationship with its history.

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