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Patricia Harkin

The Fop, the Fairy, and the Genres
of Scott's *Monastery*



An artist's "failures," as critics are inclined to call those works which violate their expectations, can be an important index of literary change. Contemporary readers frequently perceive generic innovation simply as an artist's failure to work within prevailing literary, conceptual, or social norms. Nassau Senior's comments on Scott's *The Monastery* in *The Quarterly Review* in 1822, for example, indicate that Sir Piercie Shafton and the White Lady of Avenel violate contemporary norms of *vraisemblance*; of the fairy he writes:

We tolerate a supernatural agent only when...its purposes and means are referable to some standard. Without such a standard, we can neither enter into the conduct of a being that appears to have no motives, nor estimate the skill of an author who does not let us know what he intends to represent.

Senior is equally contemptuous of the fop:

As for Sir Piercy, [sic] he is as incomprehensible as the White Lady...his conduct, when the bodkin is presented to him, is the most absurd piece of exaggeration even in our author's pages, subject as they are to that fault.¹

In the evaluations of the more recent critics, *The Monastery* is perceived as formally incoherent in part because it violates conventions of historical fiction. Ian Jack and Donald Cameron believe that Scott failed to achieve the effect which, in the 1832 Preface, he claimed to have desired. His effort, Scott wrote, was

to conjoin two characters...who, thrown into situations which gave them different views on the subject of the Reformation, should...dedicate themselves, the one to the support of the sinking fabric of the Catholic Church, the other to the establishment of the reformed doctrines.²

Working from formalist presuppositions, and unequivocally accepting the retrospective statement of intention as a description of the form at issue, Cameron finds the confrontation "appallingly weak," and observes that "we remember such features, incidental in relation to the ostensible scheme, as Sir Piercie and the White Lady far more vividly than Warden and Father Eustace."³ Jack evaluates the excrescences; "It is difficult," he asserts, "to say which of them is the more resounding failure."⁴ Francis R. Hart argues, on formal-historical grounds, that Shafton is. Whereas the fairy poses the merely technical problem of the credible representation of the incredible, Hart writes, the "Euphuist's failure is one of tonal and historic irrelevance. His folly is social and linguistic, yet his plot importance depends on his role in an ideological struggle to which his folly is unrelated."⁵

Each of these critics offers reasons why the White Lady and Shafton ought not to appear in the narrative. A more appropriate project for the literary historian, on the other hand, is to explain why they are there. The fop and the fairy, I shall argue, exist in this narrative as marks of Scott's generic experimentation.

The conception of "historical romance," Scott's own name for the sub-genre he invented, raises an epistemological problem: how can one know and represent a past which is not empirically available? How can we discriminate (in the language of *Waverley*) "romance" from "real history"? Imagination, as a way of re-presenting an absent past, is an answer that raises its own problems, problems which involve another genre. Several Scott novels, notably *Waverley*, *Rob Roy* and *Redgauntlet*, recount the regulation of a protagonist's imagination such that he learns to integrate his personal with his national history in a socially acceptable way. As a consequence, these novels can profitably be read as *Bildungsromane*, or more precisely as evidence of Scott's alteration of existing norms

of British fiction so as to take account of the problems of knowing the past and regulating imagination. The tendency of Scott's experiment, from our historical perspective, was to contribute to the emergence in British fiction of the *Bildungsroman*.

My procedure in this essay will be to demonstrate, first, that the narrative function of the White Lady of Avenel permits us to consider her a figure for Imagination in the context of Tsvetan Todorov's description of the fantastic; second, that Halbert Glendinning's and Piercie Shafton's encounters with the fairy occasion a growth and regulation of their imaginations; and third, that such an emphasis on regulating imagination is a crucial semantic trait of the *Bildungsroman*.

According to Todorov, the fantastic as genre is coterminous with the reader's and protagonist's hesitation between natural and supernatural interpretations of the same event.⁶ Scott's narrative technique with respect to the White Lady of Avenel produces both kinds of hesitation. Some characters believe in her as a supernatural being; others offer rational explanations for her presence. For the reader, the White Maid is supernatural to the extent that she is unconstrained by space and time, she knows the past and the future, she transports herself, the Bible, and Sir Piercie Shafton magically from place to place, and she saves both Shafton and Halbert from death. Another interesting index of the fairy's supernatural power is that she changes the nature of the language of this fiction: she communicates in non-verbal and verbal signs--the bodkin, for example, and her poetry--which are not immediately comprehensible. The fairy can be read as natural to the extent that she is linked by metonymy and catechresis to Mary of Avenel, whose name she shares, and to Mysie Happer, whose clothing is similar. Moreover, certain of the monks at Saint Mary's suspect that the White Lady is really Mysie.

An explanation of the fairy's presence in the narrative, therefore, would reasonably focus on the semantic value of the narrative functions that the White Lady shares with Mysie and Mary, especially insofar as those functions can admit of both natural and supernatural explanations. What, in other words, is the meaning, in 1819, of an agency that can be both natural and supernatural, that is not constrained by space and time, and that is connected with a beloved?

The semantic value of this shared agency, I suggest, is Imagination as a power for attaining knowledge of self, other, and the past--knowledge which is not available rationally or empirically. Imagination, too, is fantastic: natural in that it is a faculty of mind, supernatural in that it is not constrained by things as they are, and frightening insofar as its

effects are unpredictable.

In seeking to demonstrate that the White Lady is effectively explained as a figure of Imagination, I do not claim that Scott consciously entertained such an intention. Still less is the project psychoanalytic. My argument is warranted historically in the concept of the synchronic hierarchy, a group of texts, literary and non-literary, that are roughly synchronous with the text at issue.⁷ Scott's characterization of the White Maid is analogous with the Romantic poets' descriptions of the imaginative experience. She acts, for example, like Geraldine; her language evokes that of "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Her powers are like the powers ascribed to the Imagination by both the Lyrical Ballads poets and the Scottish Enlightenment epistemologists.

But the case for the fairy as a figure for Imagination must finally rest on her functions within the narrative, where she is primarily a helper or donor, and secondarily a trickster. In both she provides information that cannot be obtained by ratiocination. She can see the invisible and communicate her vision non-verbally and non-rationally. To the pony Shagram, for example, and to the five year old Mary Avenel, she points the direction away from unseen danger. To Halbert Glendinning, the fairy gives the silver bodkin, a signifier whose signified is unknown to him, but communicated non-verbally to its intended audience, Piercie Shafton. To Mary Avenel, she gives the vernacular scriptures, a text which allows that young woman to give expression to powerful emotions. To Piercie Shafton, the fairy gives health and life. When she functions as helper, the White Maid of Avenel carries the semantic value of the creative imagination; in the trickster or shape-shifting function, on the other hand, she suggests the capriciousness of the satanic imagination.

In her dealings with Father Philip and Father Eustace, she assumes a form which is supplied in the text by the wishes and daydreams of the two clergymen. For Father Philip, "a devoted squire of dames," she appears as "a female [sitting] under a large broken, scathed oak tree" (I, 57; chapt. 5). Several aspects of Father Philip's encounter with the fairy are relevant here. First, as a result of it, the sacristan nearly dies. Next, he becomes a poet. Like many artists, Philip is unable to refrain from singing; he remarks, ominously, that he believes he would die singing the fairy's song if he were to be put to death at once. In spite of the dangers, the sacristan tells his story, but because of the marks of his meeting with the fairy, he is not believed. Eustace and Boniface are in doubt about Philip's account precisely because it shows signs of being imaginative: he speaks in rhyme and he appears to be intoxicated. The narrator even stipulates, in an evoca-

tion of "Kubla Khan" and "The Solitary Reaper," that "the strange damsel's song...made a deep impression on his imagination" (I, 76; chapt. 7), then quickly suggests that the entire event may have been an hallucination, confiding that "several of the brethren pretended to have good reason for thinking that the miller's black-eyed daughter was at the bottom of the affair after all" (I, 76; chapt. 7).

Scott's characteristic gesture of providing an alternative, rational explanation for the apparently supernatural events of his narrative provides a clear instance of the fantastic; consequently it is important to look carefully at the most important result of Philip's adventure, the disappearance of the vernacular Bible, the written history of the Judaeo-Christian culture and belief. The reader is led by this fantastic element of *The Monastery* to raise questions about the literal truth of a history, about the most appropriate language in which to read and write it, about how any reading might be validated, and how any history might be written. The fairy's theft of the vernacular scriptures clearly favors the writing and reading of history in "language really used by men," open to individual interpretation. By contrast, the text of the Latin history is static, unchanging, available only to literate priests, and hence incapable of affording to persons like Lady Avenel the comfort of reading the story through which her culture knows itself. The danger of heresy that troubles the priests is that vernacular history, open to any reader, would remove their priestly authority.

This written history also figures prominently in the White Maid's encounter with Father Eustace, where she takes a form suggested by his musings. The priest is thinking about the abandoned hopes of his personal history. She appears in an attitude of lamentation. When he anticipates inevitable but painful changes in feudal and monastic society, she makes herself known to him by singing about another inevitable change, the propagation of vernacular scriptures:

Back, back
The volume black!
I have a warrant to carry it back.
(I, 105; chapt. 9)

and she warns him to

Ride back with the book, or you'll pay for your prize.
Back, back,
There's death in the track!
In the name of my master, I bid thee bear back.
(I, 105; chapt. 9)

The mention of her master (never identified in the fiction) leads Father Eustace to ask about the fairy's own ontology: "In the name of MY Master," [he demands]..."I conjure thee to say what thou art" (I, 105; chapt. 9). Her reply echoes the language of the major Romantic poets as they describe and problematize the Imagination.

That which is neither ill or well,
 That which belongs not to heaven or hell,
 A wreath of the mist, a bubble of the stream,
 Twixt a waking thought and a sleeping dream
 A form that men spy
 With the half-shut eye
 In the beams of the setting sun, am I.
 (I, 106; chapt. 9)

And Eustace opines, "This is more than simple fantasy" (I, 106; chapt 9). What frightens him is that the spirit is unresponsive to moral or ethical control. Like Nassau Senior, Eustace is concerned that the fairy is not referable to any moral standards. Imagination, that is, can create anything--any kind of reading of scripture, any kind of history. Imagination can produce a past that is incoherent and horrible, rather than the record of the slow steady advance of Christianity embodied in the Roman church. The priests fear loss of control over history, and over its readers.

One potential reader is Halbert Glendinning. The narrative describes three encounters between Halbert and the Fairy. In the first, she gives him a book, a verbal history; in the second she gives him a bodkin, a sword-like image of a non-verbal history; in the third, she prepares him for a confrontation between word and sword. In each of these episodes, she is described, and speaks herself, in language which links her with Imagination as that power is apotheosized by Wordsworth and Coleridge. She is introduced, for example, in the context of an allusion to "Christabel":⁸

I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
 A lady richly clad as she
 Beautiful exceedingly. (I, 139; chapt. 11)

Like Christabel, Halbert asks, "In the name of God, what art thou?" (I, 141; chapt. 12). Unlike Geraldine, the White Maid answers:

What I am I must now show--
 What I am thou cans't not know--

Something betwixt heaven and hell--
 Something that neither stood nor fell--
 Something that through thy wit or will
 May work thee good--may work thee ill.
 Neither substance quite, nor shadow,
 Haunting lonely moor and meadow...
 Aping in fantastic fashion
 Every change of human passion...

(I, 141; chapt. 12)

This juxtaposition of fashion and passion recalls that passage in *Waverley* wherein the narrator confronts the epistemological problems of writing an historical novel. Commenting on the many changes in fashion in the "sixty years since" the events of his story, the author of *Waverley* asks to be

understood to have resolved to avoid them as much as possible, by throwing the force of my narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors--those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which have alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under the steel corslet of the fifteenth century, the brocaded coat of the eighteenth, or the blue frock and dimity waistcoat of the present day.⁹

But these unchanging passions are available for study only through "manners," those manifestations of passion which, as the narrator has just established, *do* change in time.

Upon these passions it is no doubt true that the state of manners and laws casts a necessary coloring; but the bearings, to use the language of heraldry, remain the same...It is from the same book of Nature, the same through a thousand editions, whether of black letter or wire-wove and hot-pressed, that I have venturously essayed to read a chapter to the public.

(I, 5-6; chapt. 1)

Thus the historian's epistemological problem becomes one of finding a way of knowing, and then of representing, that which is changeless, even though he can see and represent only that which changes. What is needful is a way of knowing that goes beyond the empirical, one that can read and interpret the great book of Nature: Imagination. But Imagination is a fearsome power. The activities of the fairy of Avenel clearly indicate her power over the book of Nature, and they have shown as well that her power is capricious. This new information, that she is capable of "aping" "...change of human pas-

sion," calls upon the reader to see the historian as artist, as one who not only sees but also represents those invisible passions. The imitation occurs "in fantastic fashion"--as a function, that is, of the mind's power to make fictions. History, then, is a fiction, something made, something imagined.

The fairy's powers can be controlled, she says, through "wit or will," such that the representation of the passions may be put to use, in, for example, the formulation of ideology, to "work thee good [or] ill." Such has been the function of the priests who gave only their own interpretation of Scriptures to their flock. But this protestant Renaissance fairy heralds the establishment of a new ideology, a new understanding of history, one solidly based in the "Romantic Imagination" as that power is described by that poet whose rhythm she so resonantly echoes, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

In this first encounter, the water sprite invites Halbert to her underground cave; Scott's imagery suggests the cavern in which Bradamante meets Melissa in Book III of *Orlando Furioso*, but the more immediate source is probably "Kubla Khan":

he beheld a grottoe, or natural cavern, composed of the most splendid spars and crystals, which returned in a thousand prismatic hues the light of a brilliant flame that glowed on an altar of alabaster. This altar, with its fire, formed the central point of the grotto, which was of a round form, and very high in the roof, resembling in some respects the dome of a cathedral....No human imagination can conceive, or words suffice to describe, the glorious radiance which, shot fiercely forth by the flame, was returned from so many hundred thousand points of reflection, afforded by the sparry pillars and their numerous angular crystals....What was of all the most remarkable, the black volume...lay not only unconsumed, but untouched, in the slightest degree, amid this intensity of fire.... (I, 145-6; chapt. 12)

Such resonant allusions to Exodus and to Coleridge's fable of the artist's inspiration are linked by Scott here with the black book of history. When Halbert demands that she "teach [him] the art to read and understand this volume," (as she had promised) the fairy disappears from the fountain at Corriennan-Shian like Coleridge's woman wailing for her demon lover:

What had late the symmetry of form, and the delicate yet clear hues of feminine beauty, now resembled the flitting and pale ghost of some maiden who has died

for love, as it is seen, indistinctly and by moonlight, by her perjured lover.

(I, 148; chapt. 12)

And, indeed, she never does explicitly explain to Halbert how he might use the history she has given him. His consequent confusion is described in yet another allusion to Coleridge: terror-stricken after the spirit's disappearance, Halbert is somewhat comforted by "a breeze [which] realized the beautiful and wild idea of the most imaginative of our modern bards--

It fanned his cheek, it raised his hair,
Like a meadow gale in spring;
It mingled strangely with his fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

(I, 149; chapt. 12)

The young man leaves the fairy's fountain "sobered" and "contemplative" after his encounter with the ineffable. Most important, he carries with him the book which contains the raw materials of his cultural, national, and personal history. Almost at once, he begins to learn to use them: his conduct toward his mother, the Abbot, and even to Piercie Shafton, evoke "a general feeling that his...person had an air of dignity" (I, 182; chapt. 14). The effect on Halbert's language is striking:

Whether it were that the wonderful Being with whom he had so lately held communication, had bestowed on him a grace and dignity of look and bearing which he had not before, or whether the being conversant in high matters, and called to a destiny beyond that of other men, had a natural effect in giving becoming confidence to his language and manner, we pretend from this day, young Halbert was an altered man; that he acted with the steadiness, promptitude, and determination, which belonged to riper years, and bore himself with a manner which appertained to higher rank.

(I, 182-3; chapt. 14)

For Halbert, Imagination brings heightened self-consciousness. He sees and understands himself as other than his brother; he separates his desires from those of the parental figures, his mother and the priests, and even Martin, who have sought to control him.

Halbert's second encounter with the fairy, like his first, is occasioned by his affection for Mary Avenel. Whereas his jealousy of his brother's proficiency in reading sent him to

the holly brake in the episode just examined, it is jealousy of Piercie Shafton's "way with words" which sends him there a second time. What characterizes Shafton's Euphuistic discourse is the use of metaphor and simile, and in this new contact with the fairy, Halbert is instructed in the use of figurative language. To his question about the origin of the power that has so changed him, she answers in a riddle:

A mightier wizard far than I
 Wiields o'er the universe his power...
 Changeful on shape, yet mightiest still
 He wiields the heart of man at will....
 (I, 230; chapt. 17)

But Halbert demands that she "speak not thus darkly." When she responds that the change in his demeanor is the result of his passion for Mary Avenel, he seeks to know "by what means shall I urge my passion, by what means make it known?" (I, 230; chapt. 17). At his request, the White Lady gives Halbert a metaphor with which to prosecute his rivalry:

When Piercie Shafton boasteth high
 Let this token meet his eye. (I, 233; chapt. 17)

The gift of the bodkin makes Halbert a poet as well as an historian; he himself does not consciously know the events of the foppish knight's personal history, yet he communicates that history through a signifier whose signified is unknown to him, the bodkin. The power of the poet-historian is obviously and immediately felt in Shafton's mortal challenge.

Halbert's imagining of his own future and that of his loved ones evokes the White Maid's third apparition. Significantly, Halbert does not intentionally call her forth. Thus this last (to Halbert) visit is like those instances wherein the demonic imagination produces unbidden and horrible images.

her presence impressed him with...the hideous apprehension that he had associated himself with a demon.
 (II, 39; chapt. 20)

She quickly names the passions that have caused her to materialize:

He whose heart for vengeance sued,
 Must not shrink from shedding blood;
 The knot that thou hast tied with word,
 Thou must loose by edge of sword. (II, 39; chapt. 20)

Halbert's imaginative, figurative use of language has called forth effects which are substantial. The metaphor of the bodkin becomes now a sword, threatening death. Scott makes much of the encounter: Shafton's prolix verbal aggression is cut short by Halbert's cryptic taunt, "The token, Sir Knight, the token" (II, 54; chapt. 21). And Halbert retains his verbal advantage, leading with a powerful play on words, "I have heard Father Eustace...speak of the three furies with their thread and their shears" (II, 56; chapt. 21). The sword play which ensues ends in Shafton's "death." He is the victim of Halbert's metaphoric history. But Halbert is also the victim of his own violence. Thus, the awakening of his imagination has had terrible effects.

In the characterization of Piercie Shafton, on the other hand, we see the potentially ridiculous effects of imaginative activity. It is important to note that Shafton makes his first appearance in this fiction at precisely the time when Halbert first meets the fairy. This juxtaposition allows us to discriminate Halbert's regulated imagination from Shafton's. Given the several allusions to Coleridge in the characterization of Halbert, one is inclined to speculate that, in his characterization of Piercie, Scott was inferring the distinction between imagination and fancy that was to occur in *Biographia Literaria*. But such anachronistic speculation is unnecessary, for the grounds for the distinction already exist in the writing of Dugald Stewart, widely considered one of Coleridge's sources,¹⁰ and recognized as a significant influence on Scott's thinking. Stewart writes that

The province of Imagination is to select qualities and circumstances from a variety of different objects, and by combining and disposing these, to form a new creation of its own....The operations of the imagination...[in the arts] illustrate the intellectual processes, by which the mind deviates from the models presented to it by experience, and forms to itself new and untried objects of pursuit, in those analogous ...cases, which fall under the consideration of the moralist.¹¹

Although the "objects of perception should produce much stronger impressions on the mind than its own operations...it is possible, by long habits of solitary reflection, to reverse this order of things, and to weaken the attention to sensible objects to so great a degree as to leave the conduct almost wholly under the influence of imagination." "Ill-regulated" imagination, for Stewart, is one which is so at variance with sense impressions in its creation of new combinations that

"the mind gradually loses command over the train of its ideas [,] till at length the most extravagant dreams of imagination acquire as powerful an influence in exciting all its passions, as if they were realities."¹²

To a man of ill-regulated imagination, external circumstances only serve as hints to excite his own thoughts, and the conduct he pursues has, in general, far less reference to his real situation, than to some imaginary one, in which he conceives himself to be placed: in consequence of which while he appears to himself to be acting with the most perfect wisdom and consistency, he may frequently exhibit to others all the appearance of folly.¹³

Such is the case with Piercie Shafton, the Euphuist and fashion plate who can only imitate "in fantastic fashion / Every change of human passion." His epithets--Affability and Protection, Audacity and Condescension--reflect the fancied status which he seeks to impose upon the residents of Glendearg. His clothes suggest his impertinence in wearing the outward signs of a social and political power to which he has no right.

Shafton, moreover, cannot talk about his history. He never answers when the protagonist asks "whence he came" (I, 189; chapt. 15). Halbert, in fact, expressly wonders whether he is "wasting his words on a monumental image" (I, 188; chapt. 15). Shafton is just that--a monumental product of his own fancy. It is this spurious social persona, of course, which is destroyed by Halbert, through the White Maid's agency, at Corrie-nan-Shian. I suggest that it is Shafton's doublet which is buried in the fairy's grave. He reports it missing, but neither Halbert nor Warden nor Martin sees it at Corrie-nan-Shian.

There can be no doubt that his "rebirth" after the duel is the result of the White Maid's magic. After it Shafton changes from a state in which love is merely a word in his Euphuistic arsenal to one in which he experiences affection for Mysie Happer. Shafton is startled into growth by his need for Mysie's assistance. First, he perceives her with new clarity; he

gazed with surprise on the graceful figure of the woman who stood before him;...The romantic imagination of the gallant would soon have coined some compliment proper for the occasion, but Mysie left him not time.
(II, 151; chapt. 28).

This perception of a new beauty--or rather of an object never before perceived as beautiful--suggests the aesthetic of the *Lyrical Ballads*. And, indeed, after giving away his disguise as a milkmaid by announcing "I am she, O most bucolical Juvenal, under whose charge are placed the milky mothers of the herd" (II, 158; chapt. 28), Piercie Shafton does recognize the need to bring his discourse "near to the language of men." He also begins to attend more carefully to the language of the fair Molinera, who "makes similes...though somewhat savoring of her condition" (II, 180; chapt. 29). With Mysie, the terms of metaphor become metonymic; they are drawn from the natural sources of her own socio-political class. Shafton, in exile, is like the poet of *Lyrical Ballads*, ready to create a life for himself and Mysie in which the natural events of country society are to be valued.

Thus do both Halbert and Piercie create new identities for themselves through imagination. In both cases, the beginning of imaginative activity is figured as an encounter with the fairy, but in each case too, the fairy is first called forth by the awakening passion of love. Through imaginative love, Halbert creates a self worthy of assuming the name and bearings of Avenel, and Piercie discovers himself to be capable of marrying the miller's daughter. Imagination, already established as a dangerous and unpredictable way of knowing the past, becomes as well a way of knowing self and other. And the process of learning to control it is a central concern of Scott's.

This emphasis upon the regulation of the protagonist's imagination is, I suggest, a manifestation of a generic innovation with which Scott is not often associated, that of the *Bildungsroman*. In the absence of a semiotic or structural description of that genre, I have recourse to Jerome Hamilton Buckley's thorough and erudite contentual one.

A child of some sensibility grows up in the country or in a provincial town, where he finds constraints, social and intellectual, placed upon the free imagination. His family, especially his father, proves doggedly hostile to his creative instincts or flights of fancy, antagonistic to his ambitions, and quite impervious to the new ideas he has gained from unprescribed reading. His first schooling, even if not totally inadequate, may be frustrating insofar as it may suggest options not available to him in his present setting. He, therefore, sometimes at a quite early age, leaves the repressive atmosphere of home (and also the relative innocence), to make

his way independently in the city....There his real "education" begins, not only his preparation for a career but also--and often more importantly--his direct experience of urban life. The latter involves at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, one debasing, one exalting, and demands that in this respect and others the hero reappraise his values. By the time he has decided, after painful soul searching, the sort of accommodation to the modern world he can honestly make, he has left his adolescence behind and entered upon his maturity.¹⁴

If the characters of Halbert Glendinning and Piercie Shafton are taken together, virtually every element of this contentual description is encompassed. Halbert grows up in the country; Shafton finds constraints placed upon his free imagination; both characters are fatherless, but come into conflict with authority figures; Shafton has gathered bizarre ideas from unprescribed reading; both leave home, Halbert for the real education of the military, Shafton for the country; Glendinning has an exalting love affair, Shafton a debasing one that becomes exalting; both reappraise their values, leaving their adolescence behind.

If we look at Buckley's descriptions from a structural perspective, we can generate several useful hypotheses: in a group of fictions which generations of readers have named *Bildungsromane*, a protagonist moves from one narrative state to its inversion; during the process, he/she comes into conflict with one or more narrative agents whose principal semantic trait is authority, and is helped or hindered or both by a narrative agent or agents of the opposite sex. Buckley's research suggests strongly that the principal semantic trait of the protagonist is imagination and that the change in narrative states has to do with the regulation of imagination. Such an analysis, albeit spare, is useful in that it permits us to link *The Monastery* with the great *Bildungsromane* of the later nineteenth century, to see the link between Glendinning and Shafton as a device for splitting a rhetorically problematic protagonist, and to see the fairy as a vital narrative agent.

It remains to ask why this emphasis on imagination occurs in a fiction that is both historical novel and *Bildungsroman*. By imagining our past, the historical novel tells us, we create ourselves as story, as history. The *Bildungsroman* recounts the education of a young protagonist's imagination such that the story that he makes of and for himself allows him to participate in his society. In creating his life fiction, the protagonist must be careful that his imagination operates in a regulated way. And the self he imagines must, like Halbert's

new bearings, create for him a future. In the process, the protagonist encounters otherness--his past, his hidden self, and his beloved. Imagination is the dangerous but necessary way of knowing this always desirable, always elusive otherness. Scott's contemporaries, Wordsworth and Coleridge, posited imagination as a way of knowing otherness, but the other of the Lyrical Ballads was personal and spatial. It was Scott's innovation to see otherness as temporal and collective. The fop and the fairy function in this narrative to connect past with present and self with other, and to figure imagination as the unique and awesome way of knowing them.

The Monastery thus mixes the conventions of historical novel, *Bildungsroman* and fantastic in a way that was innovative in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Nassau Senior's response shows how threatening this mixture was to Scott's contemporaries. If the supernatural agency of Imagination is not referable to some standard, if, in other words, we cannot predict its operations, then we can expect to discover things about our selves and our past that we would prefer not to know. But Imagination--or, as we might prefer to say in the late twentieth century, non-rational or non-empirical knowing--is indeed without motives and uncontrollable. Similarly, Senior objects to Shafton's conduct at the discovery of his shameful past as "absurdly exaggerated." But our fear of our origins, Freud tells us, is awesomely strong. The comments of Jack and Campbell and Hart, I believe, reveal an approach to literary history which emphasizes one diachronic line over the synchronic hierarchy. Accepting the historians' commonplace that Scott invented the historical novel, his earlier critics did not look in his texts for conventions belonging to any other genre. When they encountered the elements of a *Bildungsroman*, therefore, they called them excrescence and regarded the novel as a "failure." But literary evaluations are helpful only in history.

In the recent history of literary studies, concern has shifted from studies which offer individual interpretations and evaluations to those which examine the conventions of reading which render any interpretation or evaluation possible. Generic expectations provide such sets of conventions. By invoking only the conventions of historical novel, readers of *The Monastery* have considered it a failure. But I would claim that it is less important, at this moment, to see Scott's text as a failed historical novel than as a narrative in which the translator of Goethe experimented with the conventions of the *Bildungsroman* and the fantastic and linked them in an examination of the awesome power of Imagination.

NOTES

¹"Novels by the author of *Waverley*," *Quarterly Review*, 26 (1822), 137-38.

²*The Monastery*, ed. Andrew Lang (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1893), I, XXI. All subsequent references to *The Monastery* will be to this edition and identified by volume and page number in the text. For the benefit of readers using a different edition the cumulative chapter number will be given also.

³"History, Religion, and the Supernatural, the Failure of *The Monastery*," *SSL*, 6 (1968-69), 80.

⁴*English Literature: 1815-1832* (New York, 1963), p. 199.

⁵*Scott's Novels: The Plotting of Historic Survival* (Charlottesville, 1966), p. 192.

⁶*The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, 1975), pp. 34-40.

In a closely argued essay, "Historical Genres/Theoretical Genres: A Discussion of Todorov on the Fantastic," *NLH*, 8 (Autumn, 1976), 145-58, Christine Brooke-Rose suggests revising Todorov's notion of the fantastic as a theoretical genre to call the fantastic an "element" of a literary work, on the grounds, in part, that Todorov's assertion that the fantastic is coterminous with the reader's hesitation between natural and supernatural explanations is more readily applicable to elements of works than to whole works. Professor Brooke-Rose's approach illuminates the problem of *The Monastery*. The question of the fairy's ontology is, for me, never fully resolved, although the preponderance of textual data suggests that she is "supernatural." Thus, according to Todorov, Scott's novel would be classed with works of the "fantastic-marvelous." Like Professor Brooke-Rose, however, I am more concerned with the reader's hesitation than with determinate textual data, and prefer to call my readers' attention to the fairy as "fantastic."

⁷For a thorough elucidation of the concept, see Ralph Cohen, "Historical Knowledge and Literary Understanding," *PLL*, 14 (Summer, 1978), 227-48.

⁸Edgar Johnson notes that Scott had heard "Christabel" recited by his acquaintance Dr. John Stoddard during the summer of 1800, and that he graciously acknowledged his metrical debt

in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, to Coleridge's work (*Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* [New York, 1970], I, 179, 197, 338).

⁹*Waverley or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, ed. Andrew Lang (Boston: Dana Estes and Co., 1892), I, 5; chapt. 1.

¹⁰See, for example, Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York, 1953), p. 161.

¹¹*Works* (Cambridge, Mass., 1829), III, 395.

¹²*Works*, I, 382.

¹³*Works*, I, 384.

¹⁴*Season of Youth* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1974), pp. 17-8.