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Caroline McCracken-Flesher

Speaking the Colonized Subject in Walter Scott's
Malachi Malagrowth's Letters

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare demonstrates the malforming power of the colonial gaze when directed at the colonized subject.¹ The Caliban who “first was mine own king” (I, ii, 342), once drawn within range of the colonizing eye stands new-created as morally and physically repulsive. Thus, when Caliban tries to possess Miranda, whatever his motives—whether instinctive or emulative of Prospero’s appropriation of the island—he is refigured as bestial and primitive, as “Filth,” to use Prospero’s term (I, ii, 346). Indeed, within the colonial orbit Caliban becomes a grotesque body speaking only the colonizer’s

¹Trevor R. Griffiths details the provenance of postcolonial readings for *The Tempest* in his article “‘This Island’s mine’: Caliban and Colonialism,” *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 13 (1983), pp. 159-80. Griffiths cites Andrew Lang’s article “The Comedies of Shakespeare,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 84 (April 1892), as the first defence of Caliban within a colonial context. Lang wrote: [Caliban] was introduced to the benefits of civilization. He was instructed. The resources of his island were developed. He was like the red men in America, the blacks in Australia, the tribes of Hispaniola. Then he committed an offence, an unpardonable offence, but one that Caliban was fated to commit. Then he was punished. Do we not ‘punish the natives’ all over the world, all we civilized powers? We are like Ulysses and the Cyclops, as briefly but accurately described in the rhyme:

“Ulysses to the Cyclops came,
To see what he could spy out;
He stole his sheep, and shot his game,
And then he poked his eye out” (p. 660).

language—a language denying him any speech that does not further deform and subject him. When Miranda, in apparent innocence, asserts that “I pitied thee, / Took pains to make thee speak. . . / endow’d thy purposes / With words that made them known,” Caliban notoriously replies: “You taught me language, and my profit on’t / Is, I know how to curse” (I, ii, 353-4, 357-8; I, ii, 363-4). And when Caliban speaks his resentment against his servitude, Prospero responds by appropriating and redirecting his servant’s curses so that they exacerbate his grotesque otherness. The master declares, “For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have cramps.” Most importantly, here, the cramps Prospero prescribes are “Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up” (I, ii, 325-6). For Shakespeare, then, the colonized subject is first and foremost a body, specifically, a deformed and othered body, but it is also effectively a voiceless body. Within colonial discourse, it lacks any power to speak itself except as a grotesque, colonized subject.

So the colonized subject faces two major difficulties: first, to see itself past a body rendered grotesque not only by the colonial gaze but also by its own attempts to voice itself through colonial language; second, to speak itself despite its negatively self-voicing and colonially voiceless body.

But how can the colonized subject escape its othered body? Walter Scott modeled one possibility in an 1826 series of three letters purportedly by one Malachi Malagrowther.² The colonized subject, spoken into colonial insignificance by its bodily difference, might logically seek to articulate itself around the body, that is, to ignore the body. Such a strategy, however, inevitably defeats itself, for in trying to avoid the malforming voicing of the body, the subject refuses its one point of articulation, that same grotesque body; in trying to voice itself, the subject exacerbates its voicelessness. Scott overcomes this problem not by avoiding the repulsive Scottish body, but by grasping it to him. Rather than shrinking from the body malformed by its colonial subjection, Scott acknowledges and occupies it. He infuses into it both his own and the nation’s separate subjectivity, and thus bodies it forth as grotesque excess so that it obtrudes into and cannot be contained by the colonial narrative. He speaks the native, even takes control of the national tale, not by abjuring the subjected body, but by flaunting it.

Yet what can Scott have to do with the dynamics of colonization? Although Scotland never technically has been a colony, when she joined with

² The letters were published in sequence under the rubric: *To the Editor of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, from Malachi Malagrowther, Esq. on the Proposed Change of Currency, and Other Late Alterations, as they Affect, or are Intended to Affect, the Kingdom of Scotland*. The first appeared on 22nd February, the second on 1st March, and the third on 8th March. Each immediately was reissued as a pamphlet. I will refer by letter and page number to the first pamphlet editions, gathered together in David Simpson and Alastair Wood, eds., *Thoughts on the Proposed Change of Currency & Two Letters on Scottish Affairs* (New York, 1972).

England in the Act of Union of 1707, she brought herself within range of England's inevitably colonizing power. As for Scott, up to 1826 he functioned in many respects as a colonized subject thoroughly complicit in his own and his nation's subjection. Those Scots instrumental in securing the Union had sought from it a complex of advantages, not the least of them financial.³ Nonetheless, they had expected to maintain their separate Scottish identity. And through the early years of the nineteenth century, Walter Scott's works strove to convert such expectations into reality; Scott composed pieces that appeared to foreground Scottish difference, but that sold well in England, and that thus inscribed their author as successful within both England's economic narrative and Scotland's national one. Moreover, when, courtesy of George IV, Scott presided as "Sir Walter" at the baronial residence his works had purchased, he seemed to manifest Scotland's continuance within a successful economic Union; he appeared to stand for Scotland as a subject transcending colonization. But in fact, to a degree debated by critics, Scott had facilitated the decline of Scottish difference; he had presented to England the bland face of collusive colonial subjection.⁴ Then in 1826, events conspired to reveal to him that he stood not as transcendent Scot, but as grotesque Other. He began to see himself as a voiceless subject written into and deformed by England's colonial narrative, as a subject suffering a deformation for which he, having tried to speak himself within England's economic narrative, bore partial responsibility.

What catastrophe could have produced such a revolution in Scott's perspective? Through his novels' money-making propensity, Scott not only had inscribed himself in England's economic narrative, he had written himself into its heart. He stood to benefit not just from the operations of his Edinburgh

³ In *The Union of England and Scotland* (Manchester, 1978), P. W. J. Riley argues that the main aims of pro-Union Scots were political. Still, Riley notes that political and economic success were linked for contemporary politicians. Further, he lists the economic concerns prevalent in pro-Union propaganda. He writes, indeed: "That union would make Scotland easier to manage could hardly be avowed in public. There seemed only one safe argument for selling union to the Scots: the increase in trade and wealth it would supposedly generate. Few would declare themselves averse from prosperity" (p. 226). It seems fair, then, to see the Union as motivated by political and perhaps social factors, but to see its ideology as largely economic.

⁴ John Prebble views the King's visit to Scotland, orchestrated by Scott, as the author's best and most unfortunate achievement in selling an outmoded and ultimately oppressive view of the Scots to themselves and to the English. He writes: A bogus tartan caricature of itself had been drawn and accepted, even by those who mocked it, and it would develop in perspective and colour. With the ardent encouragement of an Anglo-Scottish establishment, and under the patronage of successive monarchs who took to kilt and cromach with Germanic thoroughness, Walter Scott's Celtification continued to seduce his countrymen, and thereby prepared them for political and industrial exploitation. See John Prebble, *The King's Jaunt: George IV in Scotland, August 1822* (London, 1988), p. 364.

printer and publisher, but from those of his publisher's London affiliate, Hurst, Robinson and Company. However if Scott could profit from Hurst-Robinson's success, he also stood liable should they fail. Predictably, in 1825, along with many other businesses which had speculated freely—which had presumed on the narrative power of England's economy to generate funds, without much caring that those funds enjoyed a more than fictive reality—Hurst-Robinson collapsed. Worse still, as the company struggled to survive, it drew into ruin Scott's publisher, his printer, and Scott himself.⁵ Scott lost his fortune, his independent property—even his books, whose profits from now on were to be devoted to repaying debts spun out from London. Yet worst of all, Scott lost his separate subjectivity; he discovered that like his economic success, it had been a fiction, sustainable only so long as England's narrating energy was directed elsewhere. Through the years, Scott carefully had maintained his anonymity as "The Author of Waverley"; he was the God paid outside the machine. Now, just at the moment when his books lost their power to generate income, to construct him as transcendent Scottish subject within England's economic narrative, he was named as author, and bound to a process of narration that served not to re-narrate his separate subjectivity, but to reconstruct the economic dominance of others. Events exposed Scott to himself as grotesque, colonized subject, and as the more grotesque because now the cynosure of every eye. To all and sundry, Scott feared, "The Author of Waverley," "the Unknown," was horribly visible as the "Too well Known," as a pitiable "poor man."⁶

Still, if Scott was grotesquely represented as Other, exposed to the public gaze, and rendered voiceless within the colonial narrative, so too was Scotland. The London government, seeking to avert future crises like this one that had ruined Scott, sought to regulate private banks, whose power to print notes in small denominations they thought had contributed to the panic.⁷ Here, the obvious problem for Scotland was not whether the London ministers were correct, but that they sought to extend their legislation to the Scottish banks, which

⁵ Edgar Johnson rehearses the details of Scott's problematic business dealings through this period in his *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* (New York, 1970), II, 941-87.

⁶See entry for 18 Dec. 1825 in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford, 1972), p. 40. In a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart, 13 April 1826, Scott complains that after his financial fall, "My friends were some of them *poor-manning* me a little too much." See *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott: 1825-1826*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson (London, 1935), IX, 501. Subsequently referred to as *Letters: 1825-1826*.

⁷In "Nationalism and Ideology," N. T. Phillipson provides an excellent summary of the events and issues surrounding the proposed legislation. See *Government and Nationalism in Scotland. An Enquiry by Members of the University of Edinburgh*, ed. J. N. Wolfe (Edinburgh, 1969), esp. pp. 179-80.

were not implicated in the crash, and that they consequently risked devastating an economy successfully supported by promissory notes. However, behind this problem lay another, more serious one. In seeking thus to legislate across Scotland in England's interests, the London ministers once again revealed to the Scots that they considered the Treaty of Union not a prohibitory code rendering Scotland's rights and privileges narratively impenetrable to England's colonizing dynamic, but an old tale subject to colonial retelling. They revealed that Scotland stood voicelessly subject to her southern neighbor's malforming gaze.

It was in this circumstance, then, with self and state exposed as voiceless colonized Others, that Scott struggled to seize the right of personal and national narration. And it was perhaps because of the hideous publicity he now suffered as Walter Scott, the failed Author of *Waverley*, that he chose to conflate the suspect colonial authority of himself as novelist with the grotesque subjected body he had created or become, and the national body malformed by the colonizing gaze—that is, to represent Scotland as a plenitude of bodily difference, and thus to render it unnarratable, impossible to contain within narrowly colonial plots.

How did Scott accomplish his strategy? What body does he infuse with difference? He turns to one of his own Scottish grotesques, Sir Mungo Malagrowther. Sir Mungo appears in *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822). From his early days as James VI's whipping boy, Mungo manifests in his body the extent of the king's and thus the nation's moral deformity. When the adult Mungo appears in London with the king—now James I of England—his deformities have multiplied. He lacks three fingers and walks with a halting gait. Both injuries he has acquired in brawls with fellow Scots subject to his satiric remarks. Consequently, he figures as a comment on Scotland's self-deformation, her collusive drift south for English money. Now, in his *Letter[s] . . . on the Proposed Change of Currency*, Scott invokes this grotesque Scottish body, this body whose very deformity speaks Scotland, through a character who insists he is Sir Mungo's lineal descendant, Malachi Malagrowther. And blurring the line between narrator, character and author, between Malachi, Mungo and the now too-well-known and inherently grotesque Author of *Waverley*, Scott claims for himself and for Scotland an inheritance and an excess of subjected otherness and resistant voicing.

Through Malachi, Scott acknowledges his nation's grotesquerie in some detail. Malachi discourses at length on Scotland as a body subject to experimentation. He writes:

[Scotland] has been bled and purged . . . and *talked* into courses of physic, for which she had little occasion. She has been . . . a subject in a common dissecting-room, left to the scalpel of the junior students, with the degrading inscription,—*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili* [Experiment on this vile body/body of little worth] (MM, I, 10-11).

Further, through his narrator—thoroughly understood by the public as a mask for Scott—the author acknowledges his own bodily malformation, and its vocal potential.⁸ Malachi speaks as the most ugly of beasts, but crucially, as one that utters its difference and its warning. He declares:

... it often happens that [my hasty and peevish] disposition leads me to speak useful, though unpleasant truths. . . . A lizard is an ugly and disgusting thing enough; but, methinks, if a lizard were to run over my face and awaken me, which is said to be their custom when they observe a snake approach a sleeping person, I should neither scorn his intimation, nor feel justifiable in crushing him to death, merely because he is a filthy little abridgement of a crocodile (MM, I, 4).

In Malachi, the subjected Scot figures as an abject animal, but through its abjection, the animal that is Scotland speaks itself, expresses operative power, Scott, then, through Malachi recognizes, comments upon, embodies himself within, and bodies forth the grotesque Scottish subject.

How successful was Scott in obtruding the colonized subject, in all its grotesque excess, across the colonial narrative? N. T. Phillipson, the letters' most thorough modern critic, considers that despite Scott's apparent assertion of Scottish difference from and danger to England in the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters, ultimately, "with their furious flights of fancy swiftly brought to earth by realism and common sense [the letters] express . . . a mood of impotence and of frustration" (Phillipson, p. 184). Phillipson dwells on Scott's tendency to suggest his nation's violent potential, but then to undercut his own comments.⁹ When Scott exclaims through Malachi: "The heather is on fire far and wide; and every man, woman, and child in the country are [*sic*] bound by the duty they owe to their native land, to spread the alarm and increase the blaze," and when he refers to England as "the foreign *enemy*," Phillipson observes "we think [he] is about to raise the spectre of revolt" (MM, II, 4, 14; Phillipson, p.

⁸Malachi's attackers and defenders both identified Scott as author. On March 13, the exasperated Chancellor of the Exchequer obliquely named Scott, exclaiming in Parliament: "as long as I am armed with the consciousness of seeking to diminish the burthens, and to increase the happiness of the people, I can look without terror upon the flashing of the Highland claymore, though evoked from its scabbard by the incantations of the first magician of the age." See *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 2nd ser. 14 (2 February-17 March 1826) col. 1319-20. In turn, Christopher North (John Wilson) defended Scott by name to James Hogg and thus to the *Blackwood's* readership: "James, only think of an infuriated dunce in the Scotsman declaring, that Sir Walter Scott is not entitled to offer his opinion to the public on the Currency!" See *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 19 (April 1826), 507.

⁹For consistency's sake, I will continue to cite the first pamphlet editions of the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters as they appear in Simpson and Wood. These vary from Phillipson's sources only in punctuation.

183). But instead, Phillipson notes, Scott temporizes. In the first case, "Scott's honesty forced him to climb down and to face the facts" (Phillipson, p. 184). Scott writes: "[this] is not a hostile signal towards [England]. . . the last time the celebrated fiery cross was circulated in the Highlands . . . the clansmen were called forth not to fight an enemy, but to stop the progress of a dreadful conflagration" (MM, II, 29-30). And in the second case Scott maunders: "I was about to erase [*sic*] the last word [*enemy*]; but let it remain, with this explanation—that the purpose of this invasion of our rights is acknowledged to be kind and friendly; but as the measure is unauthorized by justice, conducted without regard to the faith of treaties, and contrary to our national privileges, we cannot but term the enterprise a hostile one" (MM, II, 14). For Phillipson, then, hesitations in the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters that arise from Scott's competing desires as loyal Tory and resistant Scotsman transmute the author's efforts once more into complicity with the Union; Scott provides "not a call to action but a substitute for it" (Phillipson, p. 185). In our terms, from Phillipson's perspective the colonized subject does not obtrude across but rather conforms with the colonial narrative.

Still, the contemporary response to Scott's letters indicates that both his compatriots and the London government registered not the letters' hesitations and reservations, but their threat. Numerous Scots identified with Malachi's nationalist cause and acknowledged his body's expressive force so far as gleefully to force themselves into his malformed shoes. Although Phillipson questions the results achieved by such apparently perverse cross-dressing, he nonetheless acknowledges:

Before [the letters'] publication, petitioning [against the proposed legislation] had been confined to politically experienced bodies. . . . By the end of March, having been extracted in many local papers, and having gone through three editions in as many weeks, [the letters] had become widely known. And by the end of March, the petitions had begun to flow in from [a] plethora of tiny interests. . . . Moreover, [the letters] provided a *genre*. The idea of explosive letters about slights to national honour, written in a spirit of bitter but humorous grumpiness, caught on. 'Saunders Saunderson' of Prestonpans wrote on these lines in the broadest Scots. 'Paddy Blake' put the Irish case, and so on (Phillipson, p. 184).

Meanwhile, to the south, the government was not mollified even by the bathos of Phillipson's least favorite phrase: "We had better remain in union with England, even at the risk of becoming a subordinate species of Northumberland" (Phillipson, p. 183; MM, I, 17). They responded to the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters as thoroughly and as hysterically as if Scott had been inciting rebellion. J. G. Lockhart wrote from London to his father-in-law: "The Ministers are sore beyond imagination at present and some of them I hear have felt this new whip on the raw to some purpose" (4 March 1826; *Journal*, p. 104).

Among the flurry of comment, John Wilson Croker's pamphlet stands out. Here, in two letters that respond (significantly, I will argue) only to Malachi's

first publication, Croker speaks for his party against his fellow Tory in fascinating terms.¹⁰ Croker was quite the representative Englishman. Although born and raised in Ireland, he was the child of an English father who traced his descent from before the conquest,¹¹ since 1806, Croker had served in Parliament (at first, as a member for Ireland, but from 1819—apart from a brief stint as member for Dublin University—as a member for various English constituencies), and since 1808 he had held a succession of government appointments; in 1826, he continued as Secretary to the Admiralty, a post he had filled since 1809. So much of an Englishman was he, indeed, that the *Dictionary of National Biography* credits him with coining the name “conservative,” for the Tories. And he made his national allegiance quite clear when in 1832, after the Reform Bill was enacted, he refused to re-enter Parliament, claiming that he could not “spontaneously take an active share in a system which must in my judgment subvert the church, the peerage, and the throne—in one word, the constitution of England” (*DNB*, V, 129). Yet in 1826, in the wake of Malachi’s first letter, this scion of the English government expends considerable effort trying to claim for himself—and thus for England—the inheritance of the Great Unknown’s colonially authoritative voice. Constituting himself as “Edward Bradwardine Waverley, Esq.,” as a descendant of Scott’s first and, significantly, English hero, he claims a closer relationship with his authorial progenitor than that enjoyed by the Scottish Malachi. He utters his amazement at finding in Malachi “so little resemblance to our common parent [Scott]” (Croker, p. 2). Apparently the Author of Waverley, so admired to the south, so embedded in “British” tradition and in Tory policy, has bodied forth his separate subjectivity and bonded it with that of the grotesque and distinctly Scottish Malachi to the extent that Croker is desperate to divorce the two. Further, this representative Englishman seems remarkably squeamish about his Scottish consanguinity—especially for someone who wants to claim a closer bond of kinship with the Author of Waverley. On one hand, Croker/Edward Bradwardine Waverley asserts he has “Scotch blood in my veins, derived from my grandmother, the celebrated Rose Bradwardine,” but on the other, he can barely bring himself to acknowledge the blood tie with Malachi (as equal descendant from Scott) that presumably authorizes him to comment on his cousin. He stresses “the re-

¹⁰*Two Letters on Scottish Affairs, from Edward Bradwardine Waverley, Esq. to Malachi Malagrowth, Esq.* Croker’s letters first appeared in the *Courier*, then were published in pamphlet form (London, 1826). They appear, with Postscript, in facsimile in Simpson and Wood. Since they are continuously paginated, I will refer to them by page number.

¹¹In *The Croker Papers: The Correspondence and Diaries of the Late Right Honourable John Wilson Croker . . . Secretary to the Admiralty from 1809 to 1830* (1885; rpt. New York, 1972), the editor, Louis J. Jennings, indicates the Croker family’s extensive English pedigree through a Devonshire rhyme: “Croker, Crwys, and Copelston / When the conqueror came were at home” (p. 4).

moteness of our relationship" (Croker, pp. 1, 2). Croker's rhetorical strategy requires him to intervene between Scott and Malachi, to claim Scottish blood, but he is horrified at the proximity this forces upon him and the colonized subject, terrified at the possibility of receiving a taint from Malachi's more abject fluid. Evidently, Scott's fully-bodied colonized subject enjoys a circulation that threatens the colonizer with infection, and that forces him to deal with it at a distance.

One odd aside demonstrates the extent of Scott's accomplishment in constructing for Scotland a body whose grotesque excess renders it impossible to contain within colonial narration. It confirms the othered body as the locus for Croker's anxiety. Croker uneasily opines:

In most *unions* the bride is expected to assume the name, share the fortunes, and assimilate with the manners, of the husband. Your notion of what was to be expected from Scotland, on her union with England, seems on the contrary, to be like that which your renowned relative, Sir Mungo, entertained of Mrs. Martha Trapbois, when she condescended to intermarry with Mr. Ritchie Moniplies. 'It seems to me,' said the knight, 'that this bride of yours is like to be *master* and *mair* in the conjugal state' (Croker, pp. 5-6).

To Croker, the Scotland bodied forth through the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters brims with unnatural and uncontainable passions. It is thus horribly and androgynously gendered. As a result, despite Croker's own equation of political and marital union, Scotland is a bride he cannot bring himself to clasp.

Yet if, in his first letter, Scott managed to obtrude his nation's othered body as an excess too awful for colonial employment, did he manage to speak Scottish subjectivity across that body? Insofar as it is the Scottish body's hideous articulation as androgyne that Croker dare not grasp, he certainly did. But the Scottish subject more than speaks itself, here. Across Malachi's second letter, the Scottish body extends its obtrusive presence and its voicing power, progressively forcing the colonial narrative into silence. If Croker couldn't bear the touch of Malachi's grotesque body that his own strategy forced upon him for the first letter, in Malachi's second letter, the reader feels the Scottish body swell against him. Here, Scott draws his compatriots' complicit grotesquerie to their attention; he points out to them that like Esau, their "sottish facility . . . aggravates the unfeeling selfishness of [their] artful [English] brother." Further, he encourages them to bond together in recognizing their colonial malformation. He calls on them, in fact, to celebrate their subjected selves, to combine into a multiply grotesque, massively assertive body. It is here that he exhorts: "do not let us . . . fall to jealousies among ourselves, when heart, and voice, and hand, should be united against the foreign *enemy*" (MM, II, 14). Moreover, if in his binary reality as governmental representative and complicit colonized Irishman Croker had been concerned by Scott's earlier hint of violent resistance modeled on Ireland, in Malachi's second letter Scott encourages the now massive, multiple, and thoroughly grotesque Scottish body

to combine with that of Ireland to resist England's malforming operations. In the first letter, Malachi coyly suggested that "claymores have edges" and that "Pat" had gained attention by wielding his pike and shilelah (MM, I, 9, 17); "Edward Bradwardine Waverley" responded: "Good God! Cousin, what were you thinking of, when you allowed your pen, or even your mind, to wander into such perilous pleasantries?" (Croker, I, 26). Now Malachi asserts: "the [English] line of conduct of which we complain, may be compared to a well-known operation resorted to for taming the ferocity of such male animals as are intended for domestication and to be employed in patient drudgery." Then he turns to Ireland, to ask, "Patrick, my warm-hearted and shrewd friend, how should you like this receipt for domestication, should it travel your way?" And he draws Ireland aside to whisper "why should not you and we have a friendly understanding, and assist each other, as the weaker parties, against any aggressions, which may be made upon either of us, 'for uniformity's sake?'" (MM, II, 22-4).

It is particularly important to our understanding of Scott's nationalist success, in the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters, that Croker remains silent in face of these egregious extensions of Scottish presence and Scottish voicing power. To give Croker some credit, Scott's third epistle adds little to the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters from our perspective. Here, Scott replies to specific criticisms leveled against his data in the earlier letters. However, when Croker decides not to tangle with *either* of Malachi's final two pieces, even though they were published before he issued his own, he indicates that the Scottish body has spoken the colonial narrative into silence.¹² Indeed, when he goes so far as to declare of letters two and three together that "they add nothing new to the *principles* of the questions which we have discussed," he by his reluctance to acknowledge the development of Scott's argument indicates the wide and threatening reach of Scotland's rediscovered voice (Croker, "Postscript").

But Scott does not stop at extending the range and pitch of the subjected body's obtrusive grotesquerie. Having spoken Scotland through the body, in letter two he also asserts her distinctive voice. Repeatedly he stresses Scotland's ability and responsibility to speak effectively. He claims that he "[speaks] for my Country" to the English Parliament and calls on the Scottish MPs, in

¹²The Chancellor of the Exchequer similarly was spoken into silence. In his speech on the Financial Situation of the Country (March 13), he sidestepped the matter of currency, and engaged Malachi only with regard to a throw-away example in the letters about the Scottish Boards of Customs and Excise. The intensity of his attack on this side issue indicates the degree to which he had ceded the currency question to Scott. He declaimed: "I trust we may long continue to contemplate [the glory of Scotland's great men] with instruction and delight, although [Scotland's] revenue boards have lost the affected importance of their imaginary independence, and have been swallowed up. O! dreadful catastrophe! in the all-devouring vortex of English uniformity." *Hansard Parliamentary Reports*, 2nd ser. 14 (2 February-17 March 1826) col. 1317-20, esp. 1319.

their combination, to do the same (MM, II, 29). He exhorts them: "Let each, in his own style . . . state to administration the sentiments of his constituents, and those of his own breast; let it be perfectly understood that the Representatives of Scotland speak in the name of their country" (MM, I, 15). He threatens, furthermore, that those Scottish representatives who do not speak will be spoken against. "If the voice of the public in streets and highways did not cry shame on [the wayward Scottish nobleman's] degeneracy," he declares, "even inanimate objects would find a voice of reprobation. The stones of his ancient castle would speak" (MM, II, 18-19).

And if England's voice was silenced, Scotland's voice was heard. The banking legislation's application to Scotland was quietly huddled away in committees. As for Croker, he wrote apologetic, ingratiating letters to Scott—to which Scott replied politely but obdurately, interestingly continuing to evoke the specter of that body most grotesque in governmental eyes, the mob. Scott wrote on 19th March 1826:

. . . if you *unscotch* us you will find us damned mischievous Englishmen. The restless and yet laborious and constantly watchful character of the people, their desire for speculation in politics or any thing else, only restrained by some proud feelings about their own country, now become antiquated and which late measures will tend much to destroy, will make them, under a wrong direction, the most formidable revolutionists who ever took the field of innovation (*Letters: 1825-1826*, IX, 472).

Within the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters, then, Scotland has become a voicing body, a body capable of uttering resistance and even of shouting down the colonial narrative.

However, if Scott's experience demonstrates that the colonized body can be foregrounded as grotesque excess, can be occupied and fleshed out beyond the grasp of the colonizing narrative—that it can be made to speak—it also manifests the limitations of his approach. Scott's strategy requires his compatriots to recognize and celebrate their grotesque subjectivity. Unfortunately, some Scots proved unable to accept their compatriot's vision of what England's colonizing dynamic had made of them, and what, in their complicity, they had made of themselves. Lord Melville, Lord Privy seal of Scotland (from 1811) and First Lord of the Admiralty (1811-1826), constitutes such a case. In the middle of Scott's attempts to body forth Scotland as separate because grotesquely subjected, Melville circulated a letter uncannily reminiscent of Croker's missives in its anxiety to claim Scottish subjectivity, to distance Scott the repulsive Scottish subject, and to separate Scott from mutual friends. He writes, for instance:

I have perused within these few days two letters in the newspapers from a certain Mr. Malachi Malagrowther, and I should not now have mentioned them if I had not heard with sincere regret that they are from the pen of Sir Walter Scott. I

know the people of Scotland as well as he does, and I also know full well how they ought to be dealt with; and I am much mistaken if the period is far distant (if it has not already arrived) when every person in that country, whose good opinion he would most wish to cultivate, will not join with me in condemning, on public grounds (I will not condescend to advert to private feelings), the style and tone of those letters.¹³

Scott described the screed as “between thirty and forty pages in angry and bitter reprobation of Malachi, full of general averments and very untenable arguments, all written *at me* by name but of which I am to have no copy and which is to be shown to me *in extenso* and circulated to other special friends to whom it may be necessary to ‘give the sign to hate’” (9 March 1826, *Journal*, p. 107). He commented that same day: “I do not wonder that [Melville] is angry though he has little reason for he . . . has from time to time sufferd [*sic*] all manner of tampering to go on under his nose with the institutions and habits of Scotland” (*Journal*, p. 108). Clearly, the colonized subjects most heavily implicated in their own subjection may never manage to accept their subjected ugliness. In this circumstance, the author who strives to bring colonized subjects to a liberating awareness of their abject state may find himself, Scott noted, playing the role of “the Jacobite wife who was drowned by the mob at Carlisle, [while all the time screaming] *Charlie yet!*” (*Letters: 1825-1826*, IX, 506). He may find himself shrilly asserting Scottish difference through a body grotesquely and androgynously exposed only at the moment he too is silenced—permanently.

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¹³See George W. T. Ormond, *The Arniston Memoirs: Three Centuries of a Scottish House, 1571-1838* (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 318.