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Andrew Monnickendam

Forster Revisited

"But here you are as safe as in England; Signora Bertolini is so English."
"Yet our rooms smell," said poor Lucy. "We dread going to bed."¹

In this essay, I will assess the literary relationship between E. M. Forster and Walter Scott. The proclaimed objective of the *Scott '91* conference held in Edinburgh was to reconsider Scott's writings in the light of new critical theories. As it turned out, many of the papers, including the present author's, perceived the value of reading Scott through Bakhtin, leaving aside many other theorists. This matching springs from the realization that Bakhtin's insistence on linguistic plurality and cultural diversity enables us to retrace our steps and promote a far more open reading of Scott than we had become accustomed to. Generations of Lockhart-inspired gentility corseted Scott, while Hogg's vaguely critical comments had generally been greeted in silence or by mockery from the start. However, the opening speaker, Alan Massie, in his address "The Appeal of Scott to the Practising Novelist," chose to return to a well-known pastime: Forster-bashing. This sport consists of a frontal assault on Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* for its dismissal of Scott as a serious novelist.² The founder of the modern historical novel is demoted and re-classified as a

¹E. M. Forster, *Room with a View* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 15.

²E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth, 1976). Subsequent references will be given in the text.

writer more suitable for imaginative children than for discerning readers. The real objective of Forster-bashing is to show how little Forster, and by extension English people in general, understand Scotland and its culture. Forster-bashing is a guaranteed successful recipe for patriotic enthusiasm, as what really matters is not primarily appraisal of Scott but an affirmation of national values along "Wha's like us" lines.

This essay will show that however important Forster-bashing is to fostering national identity, it should not lead us to dismiss either *Aspects of the Novel* or its author. I will demonstrate that this peculiar volume discusses many areas of interest to Scott scholars: for example, its analysis of narrative strategies in the novel, as well as its laconic remarks on the state of English culture. I will attempt to reinstate Forster as an important critic, even for students and scholars of Scottish culture. Such an approach can best be complemented by a brief but necessary excursion into his fiction. I will demonstrate that both writers share common concerns about fiction and the nature of Englishness.

Let me turn to the question which really riles Scott scholars. Even they must agree that Forster succeeds in his endeavor when he declares, "I hope that I have annoyed some of you over Scott" (p. 52). Forster's attack on Scott is preceded by a dismissal of the story. Adopting his own persona "he says in a sort of drooping regretful voice: 'Yes—oh dear—yes the novel tells a story'" (p. 40). Then, he goes on to tell us that "Neanderthal man listened to stories, if one may judge by the shape of his skull" (p. 41). There is a possibility of confusion here in the difference between thickness and shape of the skull (but what about the brain?) but none at all in his relegation of Scott and storytelling to prehistoric times. Next, Forster paraphrases the story of *The Antiquary* to demonstrate that Scott is a bad writer, incapable even of accomplishing the simplest of narrative skills: that of story-telling. Consequently, Forster decides to rank the Waverley Novels on the same level as boys' adventure stories. He concludes his chapter "The Story" by returning to his initial standpoint that the "story is primitive...it appeals to what is primitive in us" (p. 52). Forster has thus decided to put all Scott readers (critics included) in the category of semi-literates. Any attempt to argue that Forster is unfair (for example, he doesn't paraphrase the novels he praises, *The Old Wives' Tale* and *War and Peace*) is simply a statement of the obvious and as such leads nowhere. Forster's literary evolutionary ladder places Scott on the lower rungs, whereas at the top, emerging into the blazing light of his own times, we find the perfectly evolved product: the modern novel based on the organic plot. The story has not been completely eliminated from the collective memory, but this is a demonstration of how far we have come and how far behind we have left those primitive customs.

It is sometimes difficult to judge Forster's seriousness, however. Running through the Cambridge University Clark Lectures is a vein of humor that dourness has often left unrecognized, undetected and uncommented. For even though his novels are apparently comic, his lectures are rarely, if ever, de-

scribed in similar terms. Surely the remarks on cavemen, skulls and annoyance are an example of this. Yet we should never underestimate the power he has exerted in both particular cases and general questions. An example of the former is his "hatchet job" on Meredith; an example of the latter is the extent to which his literary definitions, classifications, or whatever they are, have become extremely influential, irrespective of whether we find them acceptable or inadequate. Irony is the most relative form of expression, making any conclusion on the subject tendentious. One can do little more than suggest that humor may be lurking somewhere in the background.

For Forster, the modern product is organic if there are "no loose ends"; it should contain no "dead matter" (p. 88). Due to the elastic nature of what is or is not loose, this is a debatable point, particularly when we consider the whole question of closure, our desire for a sense of ending. For example, tension in stories which have been appearing serially alters when they are issued in book form, forcing the novelist to tie too many loose ends together at an incredible pace, often through a series of sudden reversals or recognitions—*Oliver Twist* would be a good example. But, Forster proceeds, we need something else for the modern novel, and that is causality. What Forster intends to do is distinguish between episodic narratives, where one incident follows another in a long chain of events, and others, where things come together in some grand finale: *Waverley* belongs to the first group, and I would imagine Forster would like us to think that *A Passage to India* belongs to the second. However, Forster's method of classification is suspect for two reasons. First, it can hardly have escaped Forster's attention that if Scott is renowned for his ability to create adventures, these are not simply events that take place in a vacuum, Kailyard style, but adventures with a strong historical background. If Scott is the founder of the historical novel this is surely because he decided to foreground the background, if we accept the Lukács hypothesis, by illustrating the interplay between history and the individual. Forster willfully ignores both Scott's prefaces, the didacticism of which detractors might label pedantic, as well as such explicit remarks as this justification:

I beg pardon, once and for all, of those readers who take up novels merely for amusement, for plaguing them so long with old-fashioned politics, and Whig and Tory, and Hanoverians and Jacobites. The truth is, I cannot promise them that this story shall be intelligible, not to say probable, without it. My plan requires that I should explain the motives on which its action proceeded...³

It is difficult to imagine a clearer exposition of causality than this. The Scottish Renaissance's vehement dislike of Scott was a reaction against the effect that his fictitious histories had exercised on the Scottish mind by inducing submission and pessimism.

³Walter Scott, *Waverley* (London, 1895), p. 30.

The second reason for treating Forster's opinions with caution is that the radical change from the oral to the written, from the story to the novel, is essential to understanding Scott and his times. What is so curious about Forster's analysis is the way he ignores both these possibilities, preferring, instead, a bizarre, humorous, but nevertheless infantile broadside. It is an extraordinary outburst for someone capable of writing a seminal post-colonial novel, *A Passage to India*, which enjoys canonical status as one of the first novels seriously to examine another kind of causality, the roots of imperialism.

I feel that insufficient attention has been given by critics to the oral/written conflict in Scott. It would be convenient to keep in mind the various creative activities which made up his literary career: ballad gathering, editing earlier historical and literary works, writing epic poetry, and producing novels. We could begin with Margaret Laidlaw Hogg's rebuke to Scott on the publishing of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*:

there was never ane o' my sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursell, an' ye spoilt them a'thegither. They were made for singing, an' no for reading; and they're nouter right spelled nor right setten down.⁴

This might seem to be a comment underlining the McLuhan argument that print is uniform and therefore tyrannous. After the ballads are printed they exist only in one standardized form for scholars; whether it is the *correct* one or not is immaterial, for they have become the definitive version. Yet there is more, for Margaret Laidlaw Hogg regards the songs as her property—"ane o' my sangs"—so we cannot dismiss the possibility that she knows that they are now Scott's ballads: they will bring him wealth from his mainly silent readers.

Scott's desire to remain anonymous after the publication of *Waverley* has received many explanations but no conclusive one. George Dekker suggests that the novel was female territory,⁵ reiterating Ian Watt's thesis that the epic was "masculine...bellicose."⁶ Whatever view is taken, it cannot be denied that the extremely profitable transition from one genre to another is instigated by Scott himself. James Hogg explains that

As long as Sir Walter Scott wrote poetry there was neither man nor woman even thought of either reading or writing any thing but poetry. But the instant that he gave over writing poetry there was neither man nor woman ever read it more! All

⁴James Hogg, *Memoirs of the Author's Life and Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. Douglas Mack (Edinburgh, 1972), p. 62. Henceforth *Memoirs*.

⁵George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 220.

⁶Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 254.

turned to tales and novels which I among others was reluctantly obliged to do (*Memoirs*, p. 124).

Hogg's insistence that everyone turned to fiction seems an exaggeration; nevertheless, his words demonstrate how market forces influenced creativity: novels were beginning to sell in far greater quantities than poems, thus offering the possibility of financial security, the lack of which afflicted Hogg all his life. Rather than being a diversion, Hogg's remarks return us to the center of Forster's dislike of Scott: the matter of tales. Unlike Forster, who completely separates the two, Hogg bundles tales and novels together, whereas Scott, in the *General Preface* to the *Waverley Novels* juggles with both terms.

Scott begins by using the term "tale-teller" (p. ix), then goes on to describe his voracious childhood appetite for romances, before startling us with "about the year 1805, I threw together about one-third of the first volume of *Waverley*" (p. xii). He continues to refer to it as a "tale" (p. xv) as "the story of *Waverley*" (p. xvi), before the first of many references to the "Novels," sometimes with and sometimes without the accompanying "*Waverley*." Scott sometimes uses "The *Waverley Novels*" with three capital letters. His emphasis on the apparently lackadaisical composition of *Waverley*, added to the usage of tales and novels, suggests that a rigid distinction between the tale and the novel is not a decided issue in 1829, even though Scott consciously uses both terms. Thus, we reach two conclusions. First, Scott seems to give weight to Forster's criticism that he is primarily a tale writer. Second, Scott is spearheading the canonization of the novel as the major literary form.

Forster is adamant in his dislike of Scott's tales, yet on returning to *Aspects of the Novel*, we find that Forster praises another tale writer at length: Dickens. Forster's attitude is ambivalent:

The case of Dickens is significant. Dickens' people are nearly all flat (Pip and David Copperfield attempt roundness, but so diffidently that they seem more like bubbles than solids). Nearly every one can be summed up in a sentence, and yet there is a wonderful feeling of human depth. Probably the immense vitality of Dickens causes his characters to vibrate a little, so that they borrow his life and appear to lead one of their own... Part of the genius of Dickens is that he does use types and caricatures, people whom we recognize the instant they re-enter, and yet achieves effects that are not mechanical and a vision of humanity that is not shallow. Those who dislike Dickens have an excellent case. He ought to be bad. He is actually one of our big writers, and his immense success with types suggests that there may be more to flatness than the severe critics admit (p. 76).

Let us go further. Not only can we say that Dickens "ought to be bad" because of his flat characters, but also that any attempt to apply the format of the organic plot, with no loose ends, to a Dickens novel has as little, if not even scarcer, chance of success than it does to *Waverley*.

Both Dickens and Scott are tale writers who occasionally try to create round characters, but more than often fail miserably in the attempt to marry tale and novel. Forster's mention of Pip and David Copperfield is significant because they contain much biographical information, but insignificant in number when placed beside the Dickens theatre—or universe—populated by criminals threatening to tear out our livers, by tiny villains drinking scalding potions, by monomaniac old women going up in smoke, by terrified young children like Davy, sweating over the price of five thousand Double Gloucester cheeses at fourpence-halfpenny each, and so on. And what do we remember from Scott? Surely not the woeful unexciting Waverley and the awful Osbaldistone, but the characters who have seemingly stepped out from the ballads and the tales: Wandering Willie, Madge Wildfire, Andrew Fairservice, Flora, rather than Rose. Therefore, even though I can sympathize with attempts to analyze Scott's novels as mainstream realist Victorian fiction, I disagree with such a strategy. A good example is Hewitt's analysis of *Rob Roy*.⁷ In a very incisive essay, Hewitt demonstrates that Scott was capable of writing sophisticated (auto-)biographical fiction which would later influence Dickens and, in particular, *Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield*, which are, as I have noted, precisely the two novels that Forster sees as containing roundish characters. However convincing such an approach might be, I feel it is an attempt to make both Scott and Dickens fit into the parameters of novels which might correspond to other times and other purposes, but have little to do with Scott's own praxis, as the emphasis on tales and transitions underlines. In fact, I would suggest that it amounts to accepting Forster's own rules and regulations, and, by extension, the whole tradition of the great tradition. The appeal of Shklovsky and Bakhtin to Scott scholars came about as a result of the realization that there were other ways of approaching Scott which gave enormous importance to the concept of tales, thus allowing interpretation of Scott more on his own terms than on Forster's.

Having said that, it must also be stated that however unfair or absurd Forster's attack is, he doesn't hold a very high opinion of the English novel at all:

English poetry fears no one—excels in quality as well as quantity. But English fiction is less triumphant: it does not contain the best stuff yet written, and if we deny this we become guilty of provincialism (p. 26).

This is a most extraordinary comment. It relegates Scott to an even lower position than he was previously assigned, for if the Waverley Novels are poor and primitive when compared to the modernist novels of Forster's time *and* there is no major English novelist who can be compared to Tolstoi, Dostoevski or Proust, we now have to relocate Scott way down the second ladder of literary

⁷David Hewitt, "Rob Roy and First Person Narratives," in J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt, eds., *Scott and his Influence* (Aberdeen, 1983), pp. 372-81.

merit. Although the quotation might appear irrefutable evidence that Forster is no little Englander, his words should be treated with caution. "Triumphant" is certainly a jingoistic term; even though at the moment there is no great English novelist, possibly Forster believes it will not take long for English literature to catch up. Perhaps at some not too distant future date, both English poetry and fiction will rule the waves. Forster hints that poetry is a superior genre, a view that Scott's desire for anonymity on the publication of *Waverley* might corroborate. What is most astounding is that Forster delivered his lectures five years after the publication of *Ulysses*, yet did not consider it a novel on a par with the work of Proust, Tolstoi, or Dostoevski. Rather than involve myself in arguments about literary value, it would surely be a widely held view that few writers and their work are so quickly and so effectively canonized as James Joyce and *Ulysses*. In other words, Forster had a novel of sufficient weight at hand. His dislike of *Ulysses* is patent in his anti-Semitic remarks about Bloom ("a converted Jew—greedy, lascivious, timid, undignified, desultory, kindly, and always at his lowest when he pretends to inspire," pp. 113-114), and the rhetorical question "Does it come off? No, not quite" (p. 114).

If we believe that it is equally important to emphasize Forster's doubts about the provincial nature of English culture, no better evidence can be presented than the canonization of *Aspects of the Novel* itself. It is equally extraordinary that a series of lectures which were supposed to be "informal indeed talkative, in their tone" (p. 21) should have become so influential. Apart from Scott scholars and some literary theorists, I doubt whether many students, scholars and readers in general read *Aspects of the Novel* as a petty, provincial, English volume; it is far more likely that it takes its place as prescribed reading in standard novel survey courses. Its emphasis on classification and simple categories makes it a highly accessible book for students requiring something ordered, but having to study in an academic climate in which the concept of order belongs to a buried tradition. That statement leaves me open to criticism that things have changed recently, to which I would subscribe, but I would reply, how much have they changed? How much of literary discourse, both inside and outside the academy, is still concerned with organic plots and other Forsterian paraphernalia?

Up to this point, I have set out the ways in which Forster's dismissal of Scott is full of contradictions. I have also shown how Forster's role of little Englander has to be set by the side of his professed dislike of provincialism. I will now set about demonstrating how Forster shares some of Scott's concerns. Consequently, if Scott had invited him for a weekend at Abbotsford it would be the Forster-bashers rather than the Laird who would unceremoniously throw Forster into the Tweed. Both writers dislike the ideological consequence of Englishness. Perhaps a character in a vignette, the skill of the tale writer, Mrs. Nosebag would be a suitable point of embarkation. Then, they might proceed briefly to discuss *The Letters of Malachi Malagrowther*. Critics who rely on binary oppositions, who try to separate past from present, Scotland the inde-

pendent kingdom from Scotland in the United Kingdom, romance from pragmatism, and so on, attempt to dismiss Scott's diatribe as something of slight importance when weighed on the same scales as the *Waverley Novels*. This leads us to the paradoxical situation in which fiction is given authority, whereas a political pamphlet, a normal form of political broadcasting, is considered fictitious. If this in itself strikes an outsider as being bizarre, this impression would increase on reading Scott's journal:

February 21. Corrected the proofs of *Malachi* this morning; it may fall dead, and there will be a squib lost; it may chance to light on some ingredients of national feeling and set folk's beards in a blaze—and so much better if it does. I mean better for Scotland—not a whit for me.

February 24. In a novel or a poem I run the course alone—here I am taking up the cudgels, and may expect a drubbing in return.... I do believe Scotsmen will show themselves unanimous at least where their cash is concerned.⁸

Foucault would suggest that Scott could not have realized how powerful the concept of authorship is over the field of ideas. Although he himself separates novels from pamphleteering, Scott, the *Waverley* novelist, has not been allowed to be the author of such ideas. However straightforward Scott's words are, there are other potent arguments which have been put forward to counter the belief that Scott could be so openly antagonistic towards England. There is the case put forward by Michael Crawford⁹ and by Michael Robertson¹⁰ who emphasize the fact that Scott—and many of his contemporaries in the period sixty years since—envisaged participation in a new prosperous Britain, and by implication, in its empire. It requires another essay to analyze the dual role attributed to Scotland as colonized country and colonizer, but I find it hard to accept that Scott is doing anything else here other than expressing his belief in promoting a separate Scottish interest, which he, at least, considers important.

I firmly uphold that Scott identified Englishness, disliked it and criticized it, not only in *The Letters of Malachi Malagrowth*, but in other writings, including his major fiction. A simple, demonstrative example of the identification of Englishness can be found in his preface to *Joseph Andrews*:

⁸Walter Scott, *The Journal of Walter Scott 1825-1832*, ed. David Douglas (Edinburgh, 1891), pp. 130; 132-3.

⁹Michael Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford, 1992).

¹⁰See *Books in Scotland*, 47 (1993), 34.

The persons of the story live in England, travel in England, quarrel and fight in England; and scarce an incident occurs without it being marked by something which could not well have happened in any other country.¹¹

It is only logical to presume that in the Jacobite trilogy the narrative of the journey across borders is designed to demonstrate what happens on either side. Thus, if we consider the importance of closure, this short dialogue from the end of *Waverley* is chilling:

‘While I acknowledge my obligation to you, sir, for the restoration of the badge of our family, I cannot but marvel that you have nowhere established your own crest, whilk is, I believe, a mastiff, anciently called a talbot; as the poet has it,

A talbot strong, a sturdy tyke.

At least such a dog is the crest of the martial and renowned Earls of Shrewsbury, to whom your family are probably blood relations.’

‘I believe’, said the Colonel, smiling, ‘our dogs are whelps of the same litter’ (p. 440).

This is not simply a case of *Dulce Domum*, of sweet domesticity with darling Rose at the novel’s close, nor is it just an affirmation of a return to those roots which Scott emphasized so much at the end of chapter five of *Waverley*, which I cited earlier, but the reaffirmation of a strongly militaristic, political platform. For Talbot is indeed a bloody ancestor, “the terror of the French” in Shakespeare’s *1 Henry VI*. If Henry V is the great national figure who conquers France, Henry VI is not his fitting successor. The martial qualities of Henry V are passed on to Talbot who is only defeated after a series of betrayals in his own camp. The English king is indecisive, his nobles quarrel and prepare for civil war, only Talbot remains a pillar of strength; his death consequently implies the loss of France. What I am proposing is that *Waverley*, and the other middling heroes, should not be considered just as mirrors to view the Scottish world in decline, nor as uninteresting members of the aristocracy, but as significant products of Englishness. What can be more central to the construction of Englishness than a reference to Shakespeare, himself living in and propagating a climate of deep-seated antipathy to Scotland? We can hardly forget that the new kingdom described at the end of *Macbeth* is stripped of anything that might remind the audience that it had a history before the union, nor the controversy surrounding *Eastward Ho*. The objection to this is that it is stretching the limits of anyone’s imagination to make *Waverley*, or *Osbaldistone* for that matter, into powerful ideological constructs; they are too uninteresting, too unaware of what is going on. That is exactly the point. For they predate Disney by nearly two hundred years by managing to turn history into a form of tourism, in which, in this case, Scotland plays its part as a theme park

¹¹Walter Scott, *Lives of the Novelists* (London, 1906), p. 1.

organized by (English) national heritage. For one of the characteristics of Scott's construction of Englishness is that its use of understatement, its ability to avoid discussion of its own national identity by emphasizing the imperfect identity of others, is one of its major characteristics. Paradoxically, its supposed unostentatiousness is highly ostentatious, supported, whenever needed, by an efficient army led by a Talbot. Furthermore, I would claim that Forster's novels, as a representative of English fiction, are full of Waverley's descendants. *A Passage to India* stands out as being a novel that acknowledges that such unostentatiousness lies at the basis of British imperialism.

It is of the greatest interest that *Redgauntlet*, the novel which so straightforwardly pronounces the sentence of death for Scottish independence, is most explicit in its handling of nationalism. The Pretender's unsuitability for the Scottish cause is emphasized by the unhealthy French education he has received, the whiff of Catholicism and the incongruous presence of his mistress in the masculine world of epics, in this case, epic failures. *Redgauntlet* is a better location for analyzing Scott's ambiguity towards the Jacobite past and possible welcome to the future than either *Waverley* or *Rob Roy*. The major reason is that Darsie is a perspicacious, intelligent observer, unlike Waverley or Osbaldistone. He says:

I am sensible I myself have since that time acquired Scotch in perfection, and many a Scotticism withal. Still the sound of the English accentuation comes to my ears as the tone of a friend; and even when heard from the mouth of some wandering beggar, it has seldom failed to charm forth my mite. You Scotch, who are so proud of your own nationality, must make due allowance for that of other folks.¹²

Readers of *Waverley* often wonder how Waverley can so suddenly return to the English camp after his adventures, but Darsie tells us why: it is the thrill of recognition, the feeling of being among his own folk. Darsie's appeal for tolerance is sadly an anomaly, as few other people seem to make "due allowance." That is hardly surprising; as I have stated above, Englishness makes its presence felt through its denial of itself. Darsie is possibly unique in the Waverley Novels because he alone recognizes both his own cultural roots and the rights of others to be others. Thus, I would argue that *Redgauntlet* is the clearest example of Scott's recognition that the modern European nation state is firmly based on nationalism; English—after the union—is no exception.

This might lead some readers to suspect that I will try to argue that Forster likewise professes, or recognizes, this fervent unostentatiousness. I would propose that many of his fictional characters do, whether they are in England, Italy or in India. Forster's fiction is often classified as social comedy, because he certainly has a wonderful ear for capturing dialogue and framing human absurdities. Part of the reason for the success of the Merchant/Ivory adaptations

¹²Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet* (London, 1897), p. 22.

of his novels must reflect this skill. However, the fact that it is comic does not mean that it has to be inane, flighty or superficial. On the contrary, I would argue that his comedies are revealing, insightful and deeply pessimistic. It is worth pointing out that many scholars have argued that comedy is potentially much more subversive than a cathartic tragedy, where death cleans everything ready for a new era. It is not only in the nature of comedy, dialogue, plot and so on, but in closure, and the obligation to carry on life in marriage, that cracks appear. An eloquent example of the subversive potential would be Lucio's dismay at the end of *Measure for Measure* when he exclaims "Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, / Whipping and hanging," (V. i. 521-2). Of course, none of Scott or Forster's heroes have to marry a punk, but just because marriage concludes *Waverley* doesn't make for a happy ending. This is why I described its end as "chilling." The comedy in Forster, in fact most of Forster criticism, is based on class. Forster, like Noel Coward, supposedly shows up the follies of the middle and upper classes of a society riddled by class prejudice. The one exception would be *A Passage to India*, where the clash is across cultures which refuse to understand each other. In a way similar to "The Two Drovers," we could conclude that England and India acted "in ignorance of each other's national prejudices,"¹³ or simply wanted to do so.

However, I would argue against the critical consensus that Forster's is a social critic, and propose that he is more concerned with issues of national identity than with class. No English author, I believe, fits Edward Said's thesis that imperialism lies at the center of all novels better than Forster.¹⁴ Consequently, if we return to the quotation at the beginning of the essay we can easily identify the Pension Bertolini as comic. In its dining room we encounter several manifestations of class prejudice, some bizarre religious bickering, marked hostility towards the Emersons for being socialists and for having something to do with "the railway." But such diversity does not stop all British passport holders from coming together, living together in the same *pension*, and going on an excursion, not to Box Hill, but to a violet-strewn viewing point. It is highly appropriate that Lucy and George Emerson kiss out of sight (as they mistakenly believe). The guests at the Bertolini's have come to look at Italy, but they want to feel safe, that is, have no more than the most perfunctory contact with Italians. For them Italy is some vast museum which is accessible through Baedeker's, and only through Baedeker's. It is surely more than a coincidence that for Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance the *Waverley* Novels had become the equivalent of Baedeker's, concerned basically with

¹³In Douglas Gifford, ed., *Scottish Stories* (London, 1973), p. 42. In "The Two Drovers" the judge does not restrict his comments to the two drovers themselves, but also refers to "a cowardly Italian," "Merry Old England," "North American Indians," "the noblesse of France" and "Cherokees or Mohawks."

¹⁴Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993).

“the external picturesque,”¹⁵ guiding tourists round natural monuments and ruins, thus ineluctably reinforcing the belief that that is all Scottish culture amounts to. However, John MacQueen goes farther and suggests that it is Scott himself who has little more than Baedeker knowledge of the Highlands. I do not have the tools which would enable me to affirm or deny that statement, but I do think it worth pointing out that each of the three novels of the Jacobite trilogy has at least one incident which predicts Lucy’s belief that foreign equals primitive: in *Waverley*, the approach to Tully-Veolan in chapter VIII; in *Rob Roy*, the poverty-stricken countryside described in the journey in chapter XXVII; Darsie in chapter V of *Redgaunlet* commenting on how clean English inns are compared to those north of the Tweed. Scott’s Scotland shares with Forster’s Italy the dubious honor of accepting tourism.¹⁶ Indeed, it is surely remarkable that Scott introduces the figure of a French tourist in that very same chapter of *Waverley* as an objectifying device.

I have argued that both Scott and Forster recognize the peculiarities of Englishness, in particular its potent use of understatement and its focus on other cultures. I would also add that Forster’s fiction expresses very similar views, even though the social structures and gender questions are far more complex. Highly significant in this respect is *A Passage to India*. Miss Quested and the rest of the British community carry on regardless, preferring not to mix with the natives unless the latter show sufficient proof of being westernized. But of greater interest to this essay is the figure of Mrs. Moore, who, horror of horrors, has her name changed by the inhabitants of Chandrapore to “Esmis Esmoor.”¹⁷ But worse is to follow: a local legend has come into being in which this strange woman is immortalized for her attempt to understand another culture. Her own rejects her: her son resents her patronage of Aziz and her ruinous influence on Adela. The Lieutenant-Governor’s wife laments that her death “spoils one’s homecoming” (p. 255). It seems logical that Forster liquidates his character in this way, by insisting that her ghost should not reach the Mediterranean, in other words Europe.

Both in their attitude to continental Europeans and Indians, Forster’s English characters display an attitude towards others which is extremely reminiscent of *Waverley*. This superficial unassertiveness is perhaps best expressed in *Howard’s End*. This novel, first published four years before World War One, is Forster’s clearest depiction of nationalist hysteria. The image of the country

¹⁵John MacQueen, *The Rise of the Historical Novel* (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 50.

¹⁶How little things have changed can be seen from the following quotation from an altogether different sort of novel: “Ah remember walkin along Princes Street wi Spud, we both hate walkin along that hideous street, deadened by tourists and shoppers, the twin curses ay modern capitalism.” Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (London, 1994), p. 228.

¹⁷E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (Harmondsworth, 1980), p. 255.

house under siege with the Schlegel sisters inside, refusing to budge, while true Englishmen await outside, could be the center for an exhaustive study of Englishness. Apart from describing prejudice, intolerance and violence, *Howard's End* defines Englishness in a far more damning way than Scott:

Up the avenue Margaret strolled slowly, stopping to watch the sky that gleamed through the upper branches of the chestnuts, or to finger the little horseshoes on the lower branches. Why has not England a great mythology? Our folklore has never advanced beyond daintiness, and the greater melodies about our countryside have all issued through the pipes of Greece. Deep and true as the native imagination can be, it seems to have failed here.¹⁸

Forster has asked a question, so here is a series of possible answers. A national mythology interacts with a feeling of national identity; Englishness is based, as I have stated, on the identification of identity elsewhere. Trips to Italy, trips to Scotland, simply reinforce the conviction. Furthermore, if England has no "greater melodies"—I presume this is a reference to Keats—it is because it has preferred the apolitical aesthetics of the Grecian urn over, for example, the radicalism of early Wordsworth. The association with Greece shows us convincingly that just as Greece was responsible for ancient civilization, so Englishness, by negating the importance of its own cultural identity, strives to make itself universal.

My conclusion is a very simple one. Scott and Forster think along very different lines in their aesthetics, and on very similar lines in their description of Englishness. The consequence of my analysis is that the defense of Scott or Scotland along traditional nationalistic lines is bound to fail because it operates on exactly the lines that Englishness requires: "justify your own nationalism, because you can't do otherwise." I hope that my suggestions indicate other ways of approaching the matter in which a less local, less restrictive, form of literary discourse is needed. But all of this adds up to the bare minimum equipment required in the 1990s, as post-structuralism threatens to deconstruct all those parameters used in describing minority cultures.

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¹⁸E. M. Forster, *Howard's End* (New York, 1954), p. 267.