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Julian Meldon D'Arcy

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Julian Meldon D'Arcy

Roseneath: Scotland or "Scott-land"?
A Reappraisal of *The Heart of Midlothian*

The first three quarters of *The Heart of Midlothian* have frequently been acknowledged as some of the best fiction Sir Walter Scott ever wrote. The opening scenes, with the vivid and stirring descriptions of the Porteous Riots, followed by the heart-rending drama of young Effie Deans on trial for her life, through to Jeanie's heroic walk to London to save her sister, culminating in her gaining a reprieve from Queen Caroline in person, have enthralled and been admired by generations of readers and critics ever since the novel was first published in 1818.

The final section of the novel, however, approximately twenty-five percent of the text, has not usually met with equal approval. Jeanie Deans, her father Davie Deans and her husband, Reuben Butler, being rewarded with farms and a manse in an apparently idyllic West Highland setting, the smuggler Robertson and Effie Deans being transformed into Lord and Lady Staunton and living in high society, and Staunton's death at the hands of his own long-lost son, all seem melodramatic and inconsistent in structure, tone and meaning with all that has gone before. Indeed, Robert Gordon has gone so far as to describe the so-called Roseneath section of *The Heart of Midlothian* as a "disastrous conclusion" revealing an "infantile disregard of aesthetic decencies."¹

¹Robert Gordon, *Under Which King? A Study of the Scottish Waverley Novels* (Edinburgh, 1969), p. 94. Henceforth Gordon.

Other critics have been more generous, and although they may remain critical of the ending, they still find certain themes which give the novel an artistic if not structural unity. For Robin Mayhead, for example, this is "the nature of justice"; for David Craig the problems of conscience within a Presbyterian ethos; for W. H. Marshall the dangers of vengeance; for W. A. Madden the divine gift of forgiveness, and, in perhaps one of the most well-known interpretations, for P. F. Fisher *The Heart of Midlothian* is an illustration of divine Providence. More recently, Beth Newman has interpreted the novel, and especially its last section, as an attempt to "masculinize" fiction.²

Yet other critics, David Daiches and Avrom Fleishman for instance, have argued that, despite its melodrama, the Roseneath section is necessary to fulfill Scott's need to reconcile the nation's past and present by showing how a new, post-Union Scotland has gradually emerged from religious and ethnic discord to move toward a more peaceful, harmonious and prosperous future. In the words of Fleishman: "the new world being created under the symbolic governance of Argyle marks Scott's attempt to portray a new Scottish national community. Roseneath is a symbolic landscape of modern Scotland."³ Finally, in perhaps one of the most positive responses to *The Heart of Midlothian*, Thomas Crawford has persuasively argued that the ending can be justified "on grounds of structure, genre and historical allegory;" but then again even he has reservations as to its possibly "rigged" schematism and the shift in perspective from that of the peasantry to that of paternal landlords, and the final chapter still fails, in his opinion, to rise above "the most perfunctory melodrama."⁴

It is my contention, however, that the Roseneath section of *The Heart of Midlothian* is not in the least inferior to the earlier parts of the novel. Furthermore, it does not have to be accepted on sufferance, for, on the contrary, a careful reading of the text reveals that it provides a very coherent, logical and telling climax to a highly ironic view, maintained throughout the novel, of the

²Robin Mayhead, "The Heart of Midlothian: Scott as Artist," *Essays in Criticism*, 6 (1956), 266-77; David Craig, "The Heart of Midlothian: Its Religious Basis," *Essays in Criticism*, 8 (1958), 217-25; W. H. Marshall, "Point of View and Structure in *The Heart of Midlothian*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 16 (1961), 257-62; W. A. Madden, "The Search for Forgiveness in Some Nineteenth-Century English Novels," *Comparative Literature Studies*, 3 (1966), 139-53; P. F. Fisher, "Providence, Fate, and the Historical Imagination in Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 10:2 (1955), 99-114; Beth Newman, "The Heart of Midlothian and the Masculinization of Fiction," *Criticism*, 36:4 (1994), 521-40.

³David Daiches, "Scott's Achievement as a Novelist," in *Walter Scott: Modern Judgements*, ed. D. Devlin (London, 1968), pp. 33-62; Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* (London, 1971), p. 93.

⁴Thomas Crawford, *Scott* (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 99, 98, 93. Henceforth Crawford.

true status of mid-eighteenth century Scotland. This reading thus not only claims both a structural and thematic unity for the whole of *The Heart of Midlothian*, but also reveals Scott as being far more ambivalent towards the 1707 Union than has previously been supposed.

In terms of plot and narrative structure the Roseneath section is arguably aesthetically vital in providing a true sense of dénouement and closure. As Edgar Johnson, albeit reluctantly, comments "the ending Scott wrote is necessary; neither Jeanie's meaning nor Effie's would be complete without it."⁵ Even Gordon, one of the novel's harshest critics, admits that "Scott could hardly have ended with Volume III as it now stands. Such a conclusion would be wretchedly abrupt, denying us the pleasure of the cadential distribution of characters" (Gordon, p. 95). Indeed what reader would be truly satisfied with the novel if it did not reveal whether Effie was guilty or not of the crime of infanticide, or what became of the child, or what became of Effie herself, or her lover? Regardless of the various moral and religious themes traced by critics in *The Heart of Midlothian*, in purely narrative terms alone there can be no denying that there is a sense of poetic justice and narrative necessity in the fates Scott metes out to Effie, Staunton, the Deans and Butlers; indeed Crawford has aptly noted that the novel's plot is very much in line with folk-tale and ballad traditions (Crawford, pp. 92-3).

One feature of the novel often overlooked by critics is that structurally the final section of *The Heart of Midlothian* is important in the fulfillment of the novel's own narrative terms of reference. In the first chapter of the novel two lawyers, Halkit and Hardie, engage Peter Pattieson, the supposed "narrator," in a conversation on the merits of the novel as an art form. Hardie's viewpoint is what today would be called "the truth is stranger than fiction" school. He states that "the inventor of fictitious narratives has to rack his brains for means to diversify his tale,"⁶ but that tales from the Tolbooth would supply an infinite variety of "whatever of guilt, crime, imposture, folly, unheard-of misfortunes, and unlooked-for change of fortune, can be found to chequer life" (I, 20-21). As a study of the Roseneath chapters will show, every aspect of Hardie's formula, with all its "infinite variety," is fully adhered to, thus bringing the narrative full circle and achieving a sense of fulfillment and literary closure.

The criticism that the Roseneath section of *The Heart of Midlothian* is in fact hurriedly if not carelessly written is also belied by its climactic use of various images and parallels current throughout the novel as a whole. Take for instance the Whistler's fate of ending his days as a wild American Indian. A

⁵Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown*, 2 vols. (New York & London, 1979), I, 660.

⁶Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, ed. Claire Lamont, (Oxford, 1982), Chapt. I, p. 21. Oxford University Press World's Classics. Further references will be given in the text.

superficial reading may indeed suggest that this is a rather fanciful if not melodramatic piece of plotting on Scott's behalf, but a closer reading shows that an underlying transatlantic theme is woven into the text of *The Heart of Midlothian*.⁷ Staunton himself was born in the West Indies of a Creole mother and both he and the Duke of Argyle refer to the possibility of Staunton and Effie starting a new life in the West Indies or America (XXXIII, 327; XXXIX, 381). Moreover both he and Effie compare themselves at least once to a captive, tormented wild Indian (XXXIII, 330; XLVIII, 454). Meg Murdockson's knife throwing ability and Duncan Knockdunder's irreligion are also referred to as being typical of wild Indians (XXIX, 285; XLV, 437). But in structural terms the most telling image is the description of the Whistler as a savage with "swart and begrimed" face and "tangled black hair" (L, 479). When the Whistler has been captured, Jeanie stares at him as she desperately and unavailingly tries to find some resemblance to his parents, Effie and Staunton, "amid features sun-burnt, tawny, grimed with dirt, and obscured by his shaggy hair of a rusted black colour" (LII, 504). The reader, however, suddenly does suffer a shock of recognition when remembering Reuben Butler's description of Staunton (then known as Robertson) in the Porteous riots at the beginning of the novel; dressed as Madge Wildfire, Staunton's personal features were "disguised apparently with red paint and soot, like an Indian going to battle" and half-hidden by "the projecting shade of curch or coif, which muffled the hair of the supposed female" (XIII, 140). Not only has Staunton's son inherited his father's looks with a vengeance, but also Scott's narrative plotting has been revealed to be more precise and effective than has perhaps been previously appreciated.

Further evidence of this structural precision can be found in several interesting and significant narrative parallels and parameters, both in themes and events, which find their ultimate effect in the final *Roseneath* section of the novel. The first scenes of the novel refer to violations of laws regarding smuggling and child-murder; in *Roseneath* laws regarding smuggling and the bearing of arms and Highland dress are also flagrantly violated, and Duncan Knockdunder even contemplates what is in effect the murder of a minor—the very child Effie had been accused of murdering thirteen years previously. Indeed the planned lawless hanging of the Whistler echoes the real lawless lynching of Porteous. Moreover the man mainly responsible for Porteous's death, Staunton, is the bandit Porteous most wanted to apprehend, just as Staunton's killer, the Whistler, is the bandit he most wanted to apprehend, albeit for different reasons. Staunton and Porteous are dramatically paralleled in

⁷For an interesting biographical comment on Scott's use of the West Indian connection, see Tony Inglis, "...And an Intertextual Heart: Rewriting Origins in *The Heart of Midlothian*," in *Scott in Carnival*, ed. J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen, 1993), pp. 225-7. Henceforth Alexander.

one further ironic way: they are both murdered within 72 hours of being reprieved from a death sentence, Porteous by the King's prerogative, Staunton by his case falling into prescription. The whole series of events in *The Heart of Midlothian* is triggered by an unsuccessful attempt at robbery culminating in the death of one of the leading bandits and one of those in authority with a dubious history: Wilson and Porteous. The dramatic action of the novel is brought to a close with yet another unsuccessful attempt at robbery culminating in the death of a leading bandit and a man in authority with a dubious history: Donacha Dhu and Staunton. In the early scenes a prison is broken into and prisoners escape; in Roseneath Jeanie enters the Whistler's place of confinement and brings about his release. In the first part of the novel Staunton appears in disguise with a false name; in Roseneath Jeanie at first cannot recognize the returned Effie, who is so finely dressed, has a new name, and a false history.

Finally, perhaps one of the most poignant parallels of all: Porteous's cruel refusal to take off the handcuffs so painful to Wilson foreshadows, of course, Jeanie's untying of the bonds binding the Whistler's wrists. These are just a few examples, more of which will be commented on later, which reveal just how carefully and meaningfully Scott plotted the whole of *The Heart of Midlothian*, and how the Roseneath section thus brings a perfect literary closure to its own narrative unity, purpose and design. Before discussing the way in which the Roseneath section provides a significant climax to Scott's vision of eighteenth-century Scotland, however, two further aspects of *The Heart of Midlothian* must first be briefly commented on: Scott's use of irony and his sense of Scottish identity and independence.

From whatever viewpoint one reads *The Heart of Midlothian* one cannot help but note its pervasive ironic tone. Scott reveals all the ambiguities and contradictions in the nature of the law, justice, providence and human behavior through a series of ironic contrasts and juxtapositions. Effie Deans is sentenced to death for a crime she did not commit, while Porteous, though blatantly guilty of causing the death of several people, is reprieved. His subsequent unlawful lynching is nonetheless seen by the rioters, and perhaps even the narrative voice, as an act of true justice. Meanwhile Davie Deans openly boasts of having been one of those responsible for the death of Francis Gordon (XLIII, 420), but is never brought to trial at all. Much of Scott's ironic treatment of the realities of crime and law enforcement can be seen in the character of Ratcliffe. One of the most notorious criminals of Edinburgh and northern England, who has escaped the death sentence no less than three times, he later shows so much "vigilance, acuteness and fidelity" to the authorities that he eventually becomes the governor of the Tolbooth prison itself (LI, 489). Moreover it is this criminal who indirectly saves the lives of both Effie and Jeanie: Effie by advising Jeanie to gain the interest of the Duke of Argyle in Effie's case, and Jeanie herself with his pass which effectively protects her from English criminals on her route to London.

The religious themes of the novel are also dealt with ironically by Scott. Jeanie Deans refuses to tell a lie under oath which would have saved her sister's life, but later does not hesitate to tell several white lies, as John Hayden has demonstrated.⁸ Her father, Davie Deans, prides himself on his staunch unbending fidelity to his Presbyterian Covenanters' faith, but a careful study of his words, and the narrative voice's comments on them, reveal, as I have shown elsewhere, that he is in fact a rather selfish, materialistic hypocrite.⁹

Perhaps the greatest irony of all in *The Heart of Midlothian* concerns Jeanie's interview with the queen. As the queen readily admits, Jeanie's plea for mercy on behalf of her sister is indeed eloquent; the whole scene however is virtually an elaborate charade, for as William J. Hyde has convincingly argued, and as other critics (e.g. A. O. J. Cockshut and David Brown) have reluctantly agreed, the interview is in reality a pre-arranged and stage-managed reconciliation between the government and the out-of-favor Duke of Argyle in order to stabilize Anglo-Scottish relations.¹⁰ Effie's reprieve, just like Porteous's, is little more than an act of political expediency.

As D. G. MacIntyre has so rightly stated, Scott's "intense love for his native country requires no stressing. It appears in a hundred instances familiar to those who know his life or his works" and *The Heart of Midlothian* is no exception to this. Indeed as Jane Millgate has noted, by establishing Jeanie as a "nationally emblematic figure" on her journey to London "the matter of Scotland and her national identity is being brought into the forefront of the action," and in the words of Carol Anderson, it is *The Heart of Midlothian* above all of Scott's novels which "so powerfully presents the passionate Scottish sense of national identity and pride."¹¹ This can be seen throughout the novel, from the frequent recalling of the nation's past glory by the citizenry of Edinburgh (Mr. Plumdamas's "Scotland was Scotland in those days" and Mrs. Damahoy's "the gude auld time before the union"), to the Duke of Argyle's brave and deter-

⁸John O. Hayden, "Jeanie Deans and The Big Lie (and a few small ones)," *Scottish Literary Journal*, 6 (1979), 34-44.

⁹Julian M. D'Arcy, "Davie Deans and Bothwell Bridge: A Re-evaluation," *Scottish Literary Journal*, 12:2 (1985), 23-34.

¹⁰William J. Hyde, "Jeanie Deans and the Queen: Appearance and Reality," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 28 (1973), 86-92; see also A. O. J. Cockshut, *The Achievement of Walter Scott* (London, 1969), p. 186, and David Brown, *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination* (London, 1979), p. 123.

¹¹D. G. MacIntyre, "Ambivalence in Scott's Novels," *Review of English Literature*, 8:4 (1967), 63; Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (Edinburgh & Toronto, 1984), p. 162; Carol Anderson, "The Power of Naming: Language, Identity and Betrayal in *The Heart of Midlothian*," in Alexander, p. 196.

mined defense at the English court of the ancient rights and freedoms of Edinburgh and Scotland, right down to the simple but inspiring sense of kinship and compatriotism experienced by Scotsmen as “ardently, under all distinctions of rank and situation, they feel their mutual connexion with each other as natives of the same country” (XXXVIII, 374; note Mrs. Bickerton’s, Mrs. Glass’s and the Duke of Argyle’s behavior to Jeanie).

The Heart of Midlothian also has, perhaps more than in any other Waverley novel, scenes and comments which are openly anti-English in tone and content. Jeanie safely walks through Scotland on foot, but as soon as she crosses the English border she is continually jeered at and scorned for her different manners and dress. Madge Wildfire dies at Carlisle after being savagely beaten by an English mob unrepentantly declaiming against “Scotch witches” and “Scotch bitches” (XL, 391). Even though the Duke of Argyle has remained loyal to the Hanoverian government, his own daughter still cannot refrain from commenting that “we may all turn Tories for the thanks we have got for remaining Whigs” (XL, 387). As Millgate has commented, in *The Heart of Midlothian* “the populace of Scotland is depicted as anything but satisfied”¹² with the Union settlement. Moreover perhaps Scott even intends a pessimistic comment on England’s post-Union treatment of Scottish rights through creating the discourse of Bartoline Saddletree and Davie Deans; the former spouts unintelligible Latin and the latter extreme dogmatic tenets of Scottish Presbyterianism—and neither speaker has a serious listener who pays the slightest attention. This implied irrelevance of the supposedly unique distinguishing features of post-Union Scotland, the law and religion, is most poignantly illustrated in Reuben Butler’s unavailing attempt to prevent the lynching of Porteous by appealing to the rioters in the name of God and the law.

A further indirect and subtle criticism of the Union may be discernible in the character and actions of Staunton. Many critics have interpreted his role as being a criticism of an anachronistic and immoral nobility, but few ever seem seriously to consider the implications of the fact that Staunton is specifically a member of the *English* upper classes. The result of his two illicit relationships with Scottish women—poverty, loss of identity and madness in the case of Madge Wildfire, and an ultimately empty and guilt-ridden life of wealth and high society in the case of Effie Deans—may indeed subtly reflect on the varying fates of Scotland due to the 1707 Act of Union and some of its consequences, a union only made possible through the wide-scale use of bribery and peerages in the English House of Lords (cf. the successful union of Reuben Butler’s English grandfather and Scottish grandmother, a relationship based on the love, sincerity, and mutual faith and interests of ordinary folk). It may

¹² Jane Millgate, “Scott and the Law: *The Heart of Midlothian*,” in *Rough Justice: Essays on Crime in English Literature*, ed. Martin L. Friedland (London & Toronto, 1991), p. 103. Henceforth Millgate.

even be argued that Scott's treatment of the 1690 statute by which Effie was tried and condemned is also intended as an allegorical comment on the Union. The 1690 statute had a well-meaning intention: the eradication of child-murder in Scotland, but in practice it could lead to serious miscarriages of justice, as in Effie's case. Similarly, the 1707 Union was initially based on the political idealism of protecting and nurturing the mutual interests of England and Scotland on a basis of equality; but once again, in its actual execution, the Union had led to an appalling abuse of the freedoms and integrity of one of the parties, the Scottish nation.

Perhaps the most bitterly ironic and insinuating attack on the Hanoverian government comes in Mrs. Howden's easily overlooked complaint against the indiscriminate killing caused by Porteous in the incident after Wilson's execution: "I wonder how Queen Carline ... wad hae liked to had ane o' her ain bairns in sic a venture?" (IV, 48). A contemporary English reader of *The Heart of Midlothian* may well have considered this a reasonable criticism given Mrs. Howden's own narrow escape in the mêlée; but a contemporary and knowledgeable Scottish reader may well have grimaced, being only too well aware that it was precisely one of Queen Caroline's "ain bairns," the Duke of Cumberland, who was later to be responsible for the indiscriminate and, in some cases, cold-blooded slaughter of hundreds of Highlanders in the Battle of Culloden and its aftermath.

This more somber, ironical aspect of Scott's fiction has recently attracted more critical attention. Bruce Beiderwell, for example, has revealed how Scott explores in depth the apparently inherent ambiguities and contradictions of the law and capital punishment and the disturbing truth that violence could sometimes provide a more acceptable answer to social problems than litigation, especially if it releases the suppressed aggression inherent in the compromises reached by the so-called civilizing forces of a progressive society. Daniel Cottom has claimed to have traced in the *Waverley Novels* Scott's almost schizophrenic struggle with himself, between Scott the lawyer, who wants a modern commercialized, law-abiding society, and Scott the laird who yearns for a feudal, anarchic one in which to claim a personal, chivalrous nobility. As both these critics make clear, Scott was a far more complex and insecure man than previously believed.¹³

Other critics are now also beginning to extend this investigation into Scott's ambivalent political nature; Christopher Harvie, for example, has argued that despite Scott's earlier staunch support for the Union and its consequences for Scotland, in his later years, whenever he "allowed rein to his subconscious," there emerged "a new and dark vision of the modern Scots pre-

¹³Bruce Beiderwell, *Power and Punishment in Scott's Novels* (Athens, GA, 1992); Daniel Cottom, *Civilised Imagination: A Study of Jane Austen, Ann Radcliffe, and Sir Walter Scott* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 127-202.

dicament," his pessimism especially notable in *Redgauntlet* and *St. Ronan's Well*.¹⁴ More recently Caroline McCracken-Flesher has persuasively argued that when writing "The Highland Widow" in 1826 "Scott saw his nation with a less optimistic eye than in previous years" and that he was increasingly wondering "not just how far Scotland could sustain independence and gain advantage in the context of England, but also whether he had been searching for personal and political identity in all the wrong places."¹⁵ It is my contention that Scott's increasingly pessimistic and critical view of Anglo-Scottish relations can in fact be traced much earlier in his works, even as early as 1818, for it is indeed this attitude to the consequences of the Union which pervades his presentation of mid-eighteenth century Scotland in *The Heart of Midlothian*, and above all in its closing chapters.

To this day many critics still persist in taking Scott's Highland Arcadia of Roseneath quite literally at face value. Thus in a book on Neil Gunn, for example, Douglas Gifford quotes the final section of *The Heart of Midlothian* as an example of what he terms "mythic regeneration," for it is in Roseneath that Jeanie Deans

continues to perform her "magic", her wonderful feat of converting enemies and regenerating the fallen. Roseneath is an island in the novel, if not in fact; and Scott meant it to be a microcosm of Scotland, with its mixture of warring Highland and Lowland elements brought into harmony through Jeanie's essential peasant goodness.¹⁶

Ian Duncan also seems to accept an idyllic interpretation, though with the proviso that the "'fable of regeneration' ends up, in fact, turning away from the political idea of the nation and concentrating upon the domestic and moral economy of a private estate whose virtue consists in its seclusion from a hopelessly chaotic external world."¹⁷

As much of what I have said above might indicate, however, this cannot be the case; the superficially idyllic setting of Roseneath is constantly under-

¹⁴Christopher Harvie, "Scott and the Image of Scotland," in *Sir Walter Scott: The Long-Forgotten Melody*, ed. Alan Bold (London, 1983), pp. 22, 32.

¹⁵Caroline McCracken-Flesher, "Pro Patria Mori: Gendered Nationalism and Cultural Death in Scott's 'The Highland Widow,'" *Scottish Literary Journal*, 21:2 (1994), 70, 71.

¹⁶Douglas Gifford, "Neil Gunn and the Mythic Regeneration of Scotland: The Two Great Epic Cycles," in *Neil Gunn's Country: Essays in Celebration of Neil Gunn*, ed. Isobel Murray and Diarmid Gunn (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 80-1.

¹⁷Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 152.

mined by a series of ironic parallels and comments embedded in the text. The first words of the first chapter of *The Heart of Midlothian* in fact give an indication of what to expect in its ending: "The times have changed in nothing more ... than in the rapid conveyance of intelligence and communication betwixt one part of Scotland and another." Apart from the innovation of high-flying mail-coaches, therefore, little has changed in Scotland since the events of the novel. The text of the Roseneath section precisely collaborates this point. The raid on the customs and excise and the Porteous riots which begin *The Heart of Midlothian* suggest that early eighteenth-century Scotland is still a fairly lawless country—but what do we find in Roseneath at the end of the novel: Davie Deans calmly contemplating the payment of blackmail to protect his livestock from a local bandit by the name of Donacha Dhu na Dunaigh; indeed Reuben Butler's cattle are later stolen by this very brigand. Smuggling still not only takes place but is now actually unofficially condoned by the local authorities in the form of the Duke of Argyle's agent in Roseneath, Captain Duncan Knockdunder. This worthy man rules Roseneath as a petty tyrant, bullying Gaelic- and Scots-speaking parishioners alike. Scott's presentation of Captain Knockdunder as a heavy drinker and profane swearer strikes some critics as being overly grotesque, but replace his Gaelic-English with Lowland Scots and what do we have? The old Laird of Dumbiedikes reincarnated! The reader as well as the Deans and Reuben Butler may well experience an unnerving sense of déjà vu. Duncan Knockdunder is able to have such power over the inhabitants of Roseneath and Knocktarlitie simply by having control over the depredations of the bandit Donacha Dhu; indeed the Captain does not hesitate to employ the latter himself to destroy church records containing evidence of the Captain's sexual indiscretion with a certain Kate Finlayson (L, 479). Not much of an improvement here on that other Captain, the notorious John Porteous who had been "a convenient accomplice" in the debaucheries of the young nobles and gentry of Edinburgh (IV, 42).

As late as 1751 Captain Knockdunder's men are blatantly ignoring the ban on Highlanders wearing the tartan and bearing arms, and he himself contemptuously brushes aside the restrictions imposed on his power by the 1747 Heritable Jurisdictions Act by demanding the execution of the Whistler, without any due process of law whatsoever. As the Duke of Argyle's groom of the chamber once bluntly says to Mrs. Dutton, who was prevaricating over having to sail to Roseneath: "It's high time you should know you are in the Duke's country, and that there is not one of these fellows but would throw you out of the boat as readily as into it, if such were his Grace's pleasure" (XLI, 404); and as a gentleman of the law also states to Davie Deans: the Duke's lands are "beyond the bounds of ordinary law and civilisation" (LXII, 410). It is thus hard to see how Roseneath is in any way intended to be superior to the Scotland of earlier in the century. Indeed the cavalier attitude to concepts of legality on the Duke's estates even has a bad influence on the hitherto law-abiding Jeanie Deans—the woman who once refused to lie under oath in court, not

even to save her sister's life. As soon as she lands on Roseneath, however, she tries to persuade her sister Effie—a convicted criminal exiled from Scotland for fourteen years—to take advantage of the island's being “outside the law” and safely remain with her: “We will be sae happy a' thegither” (XLVI, 443). Moreover as Jane Millgate has so rightly said: “It is scarcely less disturbing that Jeanie should carry out as her final major action in the novel the release of her nephew, the parricidal Whistler” (Millgate, p. 105). Whatever her motives, Jeanie Deans was still aiding and abetting the escape of a murderer.

In economic terms, however, there certainly does seem to have been some improvement between the years 1736 and 1751—at least Jeanie and Reuben Butler achieve prosperity and happiness both for themselves and for their family in Roseneath. Moreover their success is presented as being primarily due to their personal merit and their conscientious, God-fearing and humble Scottish character; but even this apparently positive aspect of the ending has its ironies. How, for example, were the Butlers able to maximize their landed property and ensure their family's continuing well-being? By buying the nearby Craigsture estate with English money. For years Effie, now Lady Staunton, has been sending Jeanie a £50 bill out of her own allowance (presumably rent from Staunton's English estates) at six-monthly intervals (the same denomination as Queen Caroline paid Jeanie), and it is this money, money which Jeanie refuses to explain to her husband, which enables the Butler family to buy Craigsture. And how does their son gain rapid promotion and a commission in the army? From the same source: Lady Staunton's connections in the fashionable world of London (LII, 506). As Jeanie and Effie know only too well, and indeed as even the Duke of Argyle has experienced, the strengths of the true Scottish character may serve an individual long and well, but all decisions which ultimately matter are either taken in England or financed with English money.

The meaning and purpose of the last section of *The Heart of Midlothian* is thus to present an ironic rather than idyllic picture of mid-eighteenth century Scotland; far from being a wishful model of a law-abiding, unified “Scotland,” the Roseneath of the 1750s is as fundamentally prone to lawlessness, violence and moral corruption as the Scotland of the early eighteenth century. Scott may perhaps have intended a contemporary English reader of the novel to interpret the “Scott-land” of Roseneath as a vindication of the 1707 Union, but as his own artistic use of irony might suggest to a contemporary Scottish reader, Roseneath is a more grimly pessimistic picture of eighteenth-century Scotland: the individual Scotsman could gain all the profits of the British Empire but the Scottish nation had lost its soul.