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**JAMES HOGG'S *THE BROWNIE OF BODSBECK*:
AN UNCONVENTIONAL NATIONAL TALE**

Barbara Leonardi

In the grand narrative of the national tale and the historical novel, as represented by Scott, the marriage plot between two cross-national protagonists, Scottish and English, was an ideological topos symbolising national stability outwith the text, where Scotland and England were to be reconciled in political union and imperial expansion. James Hogg questioned this narrative by challenging conventional representations of the female characters that such novels depicted. When Hogg was writing, the national tale no longer seemed to encode the full range of communities in Britain. In Hogg's short novel *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818), he engages with new symbols of Scottish identity that replace those in the earlier national tale, promoting the image of a proactive Scottish Lowland heroine, Katharine Laidlaw, who does not engage in any courtship rituals with the Highland hero. Hogg offers an unmarried woman as a new national signifier, suggesting that the complexity of Scotland's historical and social grievances cannot find an easy resolution in an idealised union between the Lowlands and the Highlands, if such union only accounts for the privileges of the higher classes.

Paradoxically, however, Hogg counters the ideology of romantic love between the privileged protagonists of the national tale with the trope of "brotherhood." The sincere attachment between Katharine's Lowland father Walter Laidlaw of Chapelhope and a Highland soldier saves the former from the accusation of treason for having helped the Covenanters persecuted by the Royalist soldiers of Claverhouse. Writing a novel about the Covenanters was Hogg's particularly useful way of ensuring that the voice of the working classes should be valued and not marginalised in the imperial partnership between England and Scotland. The egalitarian assumptions inherent in the Presbyterian tradition of the Covenanters had paved the way for the end of absolutist monarchical power in the 1688-89

Glorious Revolution. In *The Brownie*, Hogg shows that Walter's wife Maron's unquestioned acceptance of the Episcopalian minister's arbitrary power leads to the disintegration of the Laidlaw family (a symbol for national unity), exposing her daughter Katharine (and by analogy all the vulnerable members of the Scottish nation) to the predatory self-interest of corrupt institutions.

This article will focus on the strategic use that Hogg made of heteroglot voices in *The Brownie*. Both nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics have viewed Katharine's faultless English as inconsistent with her peasant social background, particularly when her speech is contrasted with her father's broad Scots. If Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* describes the mirroring of social forces in the characters' voices, Jacob Mey's notion of "multivocality" focuses on when such voices clash, namely when an author does not comply with the conditions which govern a character's language use.¹ Yet Katharine's conventional speech has to be viewed in discursive interaction with her father's. For the Scottish Lowland élite of Hogg's time, mastering polite English was a way to feel an equal partner with the bourgeois English: proper language was an indication of high class and success which, however, blurred their Scottish identity and excluded other social realities. The clash between Katharine's Englishness and Wat's Scottishness was Hogg's strategy to abolish social barriers and to define a new inclusive Britishness founded on ethical values. As the discussion below shows, nineteenth-century reviewers felt uncomfortable with Hogg's text, and the possible reasons for this discomfort relate to the conventions of the national tale and related topoi at this time.

One issue for the reviewers was the relation of Hogg's historical novel to those of Walter Scott. Contemporary reviewers charged Hogg with plagiarism. The *Clydesdale Magazine* saw *The Brownie* as a poor imitation of Scott's *Waverley* (1814) and *Guy Mannering* (1815), accusing Hogg of being inaccurate with historical information and of having provided a rather biased and exaggerated depiction of Claverhouse's violence, "as Mr. H. has derived his formation principally from the descendant of that persecuted sect."² In a later issue, however,

¹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981); Jacob L. Mey, *When Voices Clash: A Study in Literary Pragmatics* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000), 153-60.

² Anon., "[Review of] *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*," *Clydesdale Magazine*, 1 (May 1818), 24-28 (24), accessed through <http://books.google.com>, March 24, 2012.

the same journal admitted that Hogg had written his novella long before Scott's *The Tale of Old Mortality* (1816) was published and that, for this reason, Hogg "was necessitated to write his work anew."³ The *British Critic* equally considered *The Brownie* historically inaccurate and a less valuable imitation of Scott's original, adding rather patronisingly that Hogg's name was enough for the work to be judged negatively: "Let a copy be ever so exact, yet the very name alone is sufficient to destroy its value," thus dismissing *The Brownie* as "an entire failure;" this reviewer acknowledged Hogg's talent as long as he did not engage with historical material, because his description of Claverhouse's cruelties "instead of exciting horror, as our author intended, excites only our smiles."⁴ Douglas Mack maintains that Walter Scott's depiction of the Covenanters in *Old Mortality* embodies the radical threat of revolutionary changes in Britain in the 1810s, and Scott's depiction of the royalist officer John Graham of Claverhouse as "cultivated and gentlemanly" serves this purpose.⁵ On the other hand, Ian Duncan contends that though Scott's introductory chapter of *Old Mortality* "establishes the trope of a modern historical 'distance' from civil armed conflict in the elegiac setting of a country churchyard ... [his] treatment of the late seventeenth-century Covenanter insurgency reopened debates about the legacy of Presbyterian radicalism in the turbulent present."⁶ While Scott stimulated such debate more indirectly, Hogg's violent portrayal of Claverhouse incited the same discussion more bluntly, thereby provoking the negative reactions of the above reviewers.

³ *Clydesdale Magazine*, 1 (July 1818), 121-25 (124), <http://books.google.com>, accessed March 24, 2012.

⁴ Anon., "[Review of] *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*," *British Critic*, n.s., 10, October 1818, 403-18 (403, 406, 412), <http://books.google.com>, accessed March 24, 2012. On whether Hogg wrote *The Brownie* before Scott published *Old Mortality*, see Douglas S. Mack, Introduction, in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976), ix-xix (xii-xv), and cf. Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. Jill Rubenstein (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2004), 21-22, 50-51; and "Memoir of the Author's Life," in *Altrive Tales*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2005), 45-46.

⁵ Douglas S. Mack, "Hogg's Politics and the Presbyterian Tradition," in *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2012), 64-72 (66-68).

⁶ Ian Duncan, "Ireland, Scotland, and the Materials of Romanticism," in *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*, ed. David Duff and Catherine Jones (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2007), 258-78 (272).

Ross MacKay observes that Walter Scott's master narrative in *Old Mortality* and his historical account of the Killing Times reflect the teleological progress endorsed by the Scottish Enlightenment. Scott tries "to contain the revolutionary impulse—both past *and* present," though failing, in this way, to "recognise the class-based grievances of the rebels and therefore ... marginalis[ing] so many of them."⁷ In the same article, MacKay argues that, on the other hand, "Hogg's novel conforms to Bakhtin's dialogic form ... subvert[ing] the notion of a unifying voice of historical representation," as it "expose[s] a blind ideology which is in the service of class oppression ... an alternative impression of the past that explores the operations of power on ordinary people" (MacKay 2001, 72, 74-75). Ian Duncan points out that "Hogg's regionalism in *The Brownie* confounds the imperial topography of periphery and center upon which a state-based national history might rely.... Hogg's Ettrick farming community is quite unself-consciously the center of the world."⁸ However, Hogg's novel not only does not adhere to the master narrative of Scott's teleological progress, as MacKay justly observes, nor indeed to the dialectics of centre/periphery as Duncan suggests, but it also questions stereotypes of gender, class, and ethnicity inherent in the British construction of national and imperial ideologies.

This is shown by the reviewer's reaction in the *Clydesdale Magazine*, according to whom the female bourgeois readership of *The Brownie* would "feel much disappointed at the perusal; no love scene is to be traced here—Katharine Laidlaw has no lover. The happy winding up of a long and interrupted courtship, is not to be found in the conclusion."⁹ Katharine does not engage in any love affair that might result in marriage to the hero because Daniel Roy Macpherson, a Highlander with whom she could potentially realise the marriage plot, is already married. Through this unfulfilled romance, Hogg counters the ideology of erotic desire which supported the British union in the national tale. In the Romance of the eighteenth century, desire was "non-marital and adulterous," while the nineteenth-century novel joined "the erotic and the economic" in bourgeois marriage, and naturalised Romantic nationalism,

⁷ Ross MacKay, "The Scattered Ruins of Evidence: Non-Eventworthy History in *Old Mortality* and *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*," *Studies in Hogg and his World* 12 (2001): 56-79 (63-64, emphasis original).

⁸ Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2007), 188.

⁹ *Clydesdale Magazine*, as in n. 2 above, p. 25.

promulgating “the idea of love for one’s country as a passionate personal relationship.”¹⁰ In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Edmund Burke had supported an ideology of English nationalism founded on the symbolism of “our dearest domestic ties” and “adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections.”¹¹ As Anne McClintock observes, the bourgeois representation of the family based on the dependency of wife and children on the father also shaped British relations between the margins and the centre, in order to articulate perceptions of class, gender, and ethnic inequality as natural.¹² In the construction of Katharine’s character, Hogg does not adhere to what Jennifer Camden describes as “Western stereotypes of femininity,” such as “beauty and dependence,” providing very little physical description.¹³ Hogg, as an alternative, depicts Katharine as an unconventionally independent female type, characterised by high moral values, and endowed with “the strength of mind, and energy of the bravest of men, blent with all the softness, delicacy, and tenderness of feminity [*sic*],” a proto-postmodern heroine whom Hogg proposes, through her father’s *heteroglot* voice, as a new gender model for the “poor shilly-shally milk-an’-water” ladies of early nineteenth-century Edinburgh.¹⁴ Hogg’s rewriting of the national tale in *The Brownie* was thus radical and extreme as it highlights the failure of the Burkean familial trope in the construction of a British nation that does not take account of its ethnic, gender, and class diversity.

To a degree, the efficacy of the national tale was arguably already breaking down by the time Hogg was writing, even in Scottish works. Juliet Shields notes that “Scottish national tales sought to enable, through

¹⁰ Lisa L. Moore, “Acts of Union: Sexuality and Nationalism, Romance and Realism in the Irish National Tale,” *Cultural Critique*, 44 (Winter, 2000): 113-44 (117-119).

¹¹ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O’Brien (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 120.

¹² Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 43-45.

¹³ Jennifer Camden, *Secondary Heroines in Nineteenth-Century British and American Novels* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 7.

¹⁴ James Hogg, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*, ed. Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976), 164, 163, chapter 16; quotations from Hogg’s novel will be from this edition, with subsequent references in the text, but my work has also benefited from contact with the editors of the forthcoming Stirling/South Carolina edition of *The Brownie*.

sensibility, the integration of a racially and culturally homogeneous and distinct Highland people into a heterogeneous British nation and empire.”¹⁵ In *Clan-Albin* (1815), for example, Shields describes Christian Isobel Johnstone representing “Highlanders as paragons of domesticity and familial affections” not “uncouth savages governed by blind allegiance to a lawless chieftain,” thus integrating them in the present through “the social virtues most cherished by civilized southern Britons,” rather than, as Walter Scott was doing in his historical novels, relegating them to a barbarous past (*loc. cit.*). Shields points out that in *Marriage* (1818), Susan Ferrier “envisions a hybrid Anglo-Celtic Britishness formed not through a facile synthesis of Highland and metropolitan values and manners, but through an open-minded and observant toleration of cultural difference,” and that neither a union based on “unrestrained passion” nor one founded on “political and economic interests” has positive implications for the British nation: “only a union founded in rational affection will produce lasting harmony” (129-130). Hogg was certainly more in sympathy with Ferrier’s idea of the national tale, as in a letter to William Blackwood of 28 June 1824, he acknowledges that “never was there such a painter as she is ... Scott’s portraits are sometimes more strongly defined but they are not more unique and rarely or never so humorous.”¹⁶ Hogg must have loved Ferrier’s humorous treatment of class prejudices in *The Inheritance* (1824), when the young Miss St. Clair’s idealised perception of the pastoral life is disappointed by her encounter with the real peasantry: “she found herself at the door of one of those cottages whose picturesque appearance had charmed her so much at a distance. A nearer survey, however, soon satisfied her that the view owed all its charms to distance.”¹⁷ Ferrier’s hilarious depiction of Miss St. Clair’s disappointed expectations illustrates the same class issues that Hogg wished to expose in his works.

In *The Brownie*, Hogg merges questions of class, gender, and national identity in the character of Katharine Laidlaw. In the national tale, the familial discourse privileged the higher classes while excluding not only the peasantry as “infancy,” but also women as subjects not capable of

¹⁵ Juliet Shields, *Sentimental Literature and Anglo-Scottish Identity, 1745-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), 112-14.

¹⁶ Gillian Hughes, ed., *The Collected Letters of James Hogg*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2004-08), II: 202.

¹⁷ Susan Edmonstone Ferrier, *The Inheritance*, with an introduction by James E. M. Irvine (Bampton: Three Rivers Books, 1984 [1824]), 29.

furthering the project of the British union.¹⁸ Though Hogg primarily highlights Katharine's honourable initiative when saving the Covenanters from death, her pro-active behaviour also offers a new paradigm of female autonomy not subsumed within the marriage to a hero. The storyline with the male coalition proposes a more honest alliance between the Highlands and the Lowlands, refuting the ideology of the familial trope for the stability of the Scottish nation; while Katharine—a single, vigorous woman—saves her familial macrocosm from ruin when, upon returning from her mission to the Laird of Drumelzier, she finds “her father's house deserted, its doors locked up, and its hearth cold” (117, Ch. 12), a direct consequence of her mother's blind faith in the dishonest minister.

Using a single woman to signify Scotland was problematic for the national ideal of submissive female virtue. As Nancy Armstrong observes, the novel of the nineteenth century empowered the middle classes by disseminating an idealised female prototype, a model of virtue which derived from the Burkean trope of domestic femininity for national stability.¹⁹ Thomas Tracy argues that, in *The Absentee* (1812), Maria Edgeworth depicts “female agency as unnatural and perverted,” while her novels after the more radical *Castle Rackrent* (1800) (where childless marriages express the author's hostility to domesticity) present “properly domesticated and largely voiceless Anglo-Irish heroines ... divested of almost all agency beyond that of reproducing the patriarchal social order.”²⁰ Though Hogg invests Katharine with an authentic virtue borne out in action while she pro-actively helps the Covenanters, her free movement between the private and the public sphere questions the national discourse of female passive domesticity. Katharine's agency, however, is not meant to satisfy a personal, selfish, “unnatural and perverted” erotic desire, as implied in Edgeworth's characterization; Katharine's action rather transgresses an unjust law by transcending a

¹⁸ Thomas Tracy, “The Mild Irish Girl: Domesticating the National Tale,” *Éire-Ireland*, 39:1&2 (Spring/Summer 2004): 81-109 (104).

¹⁹ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 9; cf. also Esther Wohlgenut, “What Do You Do With That at Home?: The Cosmopolitan Heroine and the National Tale,” *European Romantic Review*, 13:2 (2002): 191-97 (193), accessed September 1, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10509580212747>.

²⁰ Tracy, as in n. 18 above, 104, 85, 98.

religious diatribe, in order to respect a moral law in defence of more egalitarian human rights.

Nevertheless, the shift from the familial trope to one embodied by an individual as a symbol of Scottish identity threatens the continuation of the nation: in Cynthia Enloe's formulation, Katharine's lack of progeny implies a resistance to progress as "no nation can survive unless its culture is transmitted and its children are born and nurtured."²¹ Deidre Lynch points out that in Burke's project, the "lovely image" of the nurturing mother "guarantees the nation's cohesion"²² and, as Rajani Sudan explains, "women's capacity to produce off-spring" was "commodified to represent a morally healthy British nation and to regulate the feminine body."²³ By proposing a heroine who does not marry, Hogg's plot disarticulates the discourses of mother and country, questioning a model of domesticity founded on the patriarchal family, and depicting instead the disintegration of Katharine's family of origin.

The episode where Mass John Clerk attempts to rape Katharine symbolises the absolutist power of those institutions that mind only the political interests of the *élite* rather than those of the entire social spectrum. As an Episcopalian priest, Clerk has the role of instructing "the inhabitants in the *mild* and *benignant* principles of prelacy," mainly to keep an eye "upon the detested whigs" (12, Ch. 2, emphasis original). Hogg uses the unquestioning devotion to Clerk of Katharine's Episcopalian mother to reveal the effects of a "blind ideology" "on ordinary people," just as Ross McKay shows Hogg doing also in his portrayal of the Covenanters.²⁴ Maron's Episcopalian "conscience approved of every thing, or disapproved, merely as he [Clerk] directed," and "he flattered her for her deep knowledge in true and sound divinity and the Holy Scriptures, although of both she was grossly ignorant" (14, Ch. 2). Here, as Douglas Mack suggested, the third-person narrator presents a complex pattern of oppositions: "the Ettrick community" may

²¹ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. revd. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2014), 119.

²² Deidre Lynch, "Domesticating Fiction and Nationalizing Women," in *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834*, ed. Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1996), 40-71 (54).

²³ Rajani Sudan, "Mothering and National Identity in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft," in Richardson and Hofkosh, above, 72-89 (77).

²⁴ MacKay, as in n. 7 above, pp. 74-75.

be “capable of acts of heroic generosity in assisting the fugitive Covenanters, but it is also capable of absurdity, small-mindedness, and lack of perception.”²⁵

The competing aspects of the society in which Katharine resides—the limitations of her mother and the predatory nature of the priest versus the characters who work to help—question the uncritical acceptance of absolutist power. The characters who work to help the Covenanters, Katharine and her father Wat Laidlaw, are endowed with independent wisdom, perceptiveness, and common sense. On the other hand, as a result of her blind religious zeal, Maron allows Clerk to “exorcise” Katharine from the evil power of the Brownie, leaving her daughter without defence in the “Old Room” under the priest’s “hellish clutch” (115, Ch. 12). Eventually, Katharine is able to keep the priest’s abusive power at bay thanks to the strength of his own superstition. The narrator describes that she resists his advances

with a firmness and dignity that he never conceived to have formed any part of her character; and, when continuing to press her hand, she said to him, “You had better keep your distance, Mass John Clerk, and consider what befits your character, and the confidence reposed in you by my unsuspecting parent; but I tell you, if you again presume to touch me, though it were but with one of your fingers, I will, in a moment, bring those out of the chink in the wall, or from under the hearth, that shall lay you motionless at my feet in the twinkling of an eye, or bear you off to any part of the creation that I shall name” (88, Ch. 10).

When Clerk is about to violate Katharine’s body, the supposedly magic Brownie, who is the leader of the Covenanters in disguise whom she has secretly rescued, appears and saves Katharine by reciting a magic spell, “Brownie’s here, Brownie’s there, | Brownie’s with thee every where,” and then he leads “her off in triumph” (90-91, Ch. 10). Significantly, it is Clerk’s belief in the magic power of old tradition that saves Katharine from rape.

Nonetheless Hogg reserves a harsh punishment for the priest, as Maron obliges him to stay in the “Old Room” one more night in order to get rid of any residual “evil” entity. The following night, the leader of the same group of Covenanters—the supposed Brownie—comes back and decrees, in his biblical voice, the priest’s punishment by emasculation:

²⁵ Douglas S. Mack, *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2006), 134.

thou didst attempt, by brutal force, to pollute the purest and most angelic of the human race—we rescued her from thy hellish clutch, for we are her servants, and attend upon her steps. Thou knowest, that still thou art cherishing the hope of succeeding in thy cursed scheme. Thou art a stain to thy profession, and a blot upon the cheek of nature, enough to make thy race and thy nation stink in the nose of their Creator!—To what thou deservest, thy doom is a lenient one—but it is fixed and irrevocable! (115, Ch. 12, emphasis mine)

The printer James Ballantyne was not pleased to discover the punishment that Hogg had reserved for Clerk, and, as Sharon Ragaz argues, modern readers will probably never know how much of Hogg's actual version Ballantyne excised.²⁶ In the printed edition, the priest's castration is implied by "Claverhouse's laughter" at discovering the priest's tragic fate, as well as by the "description of the night-time scene witnessed by Nanny," the Brownie's wife (Ragaz 2002, 97). Ragaz claims that the priest's violent punishment is in line with the moral law of the Scottish ballad, and that Hogg had already offered a version of Clerk in *The Mountain Bard* (1807) in the ballad "Mess John," where a priest seduces "a young girl ... with the aid of black magic" and, for this reason, is punished by "violent death" (Ragaz 2002, 98-99). Be that as it may, in the literary context of *The Brownie*, Hogg presents the priest's punishment as morally right, as his desire to possess Katharine's body could violate the purity of what Hogg has established as the signifier of the vulnerable groups of the Scottish nation, which Clerk exploits without restriction. Hogg hence portrays the priest's abusive power as a "hellish clutch," more evil than the magic world of the old Scottish tradition—an important legacy that still defines Scottish identity.

Paradoxically, religion can become a weapon against the nation when its members misuse their power for the selfish interests of a chosen few. In this respect, Hogg's focus on the second wave of the Covenanters is significant. The first wave had initiated a more aristocratic rebellion: in 1638 the nobility and the landowners had acted as leaders against the king because they did not recognise him as the supreme head of the Reformed

²⁶ Sharon Ragaz, "'Gelding' the Priest in *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*: A New Letter," *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 13 (2002): 95-103, cites Ballantyne's letter to William Blackwood, March 3, 1818, asking "Do you chance to be aware, that one of the incidents in the Brownie of Bodsbeck is the emasculation, the *gelding* of a priest by the said Brownie? In case you are not aware of this most irregular aberration, I take the liberty to point it out"(98).

Church of Scotland. The second wave, in 1666, was instead a more popular rising not just against “the state but their social superiors,”²⁷ as they did not accept the reintroduction of the episcopacy in Scotland after the Restoration in 1660, instead maintaining their Presbyterian form of government. David Stevenson contends that “a new self-reliance and confidence was emerging among common folk, especially in the west, displayed in a willingness and ability to think for themselves and express their opinions” (p. 71). He points out that the Cameronians—a particularly strict, ideologically fundamentalist faction of the Covenanters who followed Richard Cameron (1648-1680)—took inspiration from “the Covenanters as the poor ... rather than the Covenanters led by the nobility in the arrogance of their days in power in the 1640s, zealously persecuting others” (p. 72).

The memory of the later Covenanters influenced various literary works in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries “surrounding the martyrs with a severe romantic glamour” (Stevenson p. 73), because they had articulated not only religious but also civil rights. This was the legacy they left to the following generations of working-class organisations in defence of their political rights: in Stevenson’s summary, “the Covenanting past ... had provided the Scots with a strong tradition of denouncing corrupt and oppressive landlords” (p. 77). Douglas Mack suggests that writing a novel about the Covenanters’ second wave was thus Hogg’s strategy to give a voice to the margins because “in line with the egalitarian assumptions of the Presbyterian tradition he [Hogg] was willing to recognise, like, and admire ‘talents and oral worth’ in any kind of person.”²⁸ The figure of a sexually threatened young woman, her integrity in dealing with the abusive minister, and her moral strength in helping the Covenanters are thus Hogg’s tools for defending the democratic values which he hoped would shape the future of Scotland.

Katharine’s sense of true honour counterpoises the ideology of sympathy in constructions of the British nation. Juliet Shields suggests that Adam Smith’s vision of society shaped by sensibility and restraint was exploited in contemporary representations of the British union between Scotland and England, in order to mask the bourgeoisie’s economic reasons behind discursive assumptions of shared sympathy.²⁹

²⁷ David Stevenson, *The Covenanters: The National Covenant and Scotland, Saltire Pamphlets*, n.s., 11 (Edinburgh: Lindsay, 1988), 6, 62-63, 62.

²⁸ Mack, “Hogg’s Politics and the Presbyterian Tradition,” as in n. 5 above, p. 71.

²⁹ Shields, *Sentimental Literature*, as in n. 15 above, pp. 9, 30.

In this respect, Katharine's honesty offered new hope to the weaker layers of the Scottish nation whose members, according to Hogg, had been affected rather negatively by the supposedly progressive assumptions of North Britain. In the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture* (1831-32), Hogg reveals that the peasants of the Scottish Lowlands did not benefit from the material advantages of the colonial enterprise, but rather suffered a deteriorated relationship between master and servant, feeling like "a slave; a servant of servants, a mere tool of labour."³⁰ On the other hand, Hogg saw women as gifted with extraordinary social skills. In *Lay Sermons* (1834), some years later after the publication of *The Brownie*, Hogg would argue that "the power of women in general ... may be said to be omnipotent, therefore they must take the lead in reforming" society.³¹ A female character endowed with honourable qualities like Katharine symbolises a new democratic Scotland: a heroine who actively engages in defending a group in distress like the Covenanters, pursuing the goal of a society free from corruption. Hogg's female character thus differs significantly from the protagonist of Scott's *Waverley* (1814) who, according to Richard Maxwell "is educated by being swept into historical conspiracy, then saved by his ability to detach himself from it."³² Even so, it is difficult to decide whether to view Katharine as a static or a dynamic character. According to the narrative conventions of the national tale, Katharine's failed marriage implies a sort of stasis for the Scottish nation: its impossibility to grow until corruption is defeated and a morally valuable partner found. Nevertheless a post post-modern reader will be inclined to perceive Katharine's defence of the vulnerable as a highly dynamic behaviour, no matter what her marital status.

In his 1976 edition of *The Brownie*, Douglas Mack remarks about the novel's plot construction that the two parallel narratives of Walter Laidlaw and his daughter Katharine, where both characters help the Cameronians unaware that the other is doing so, render the storyline of

³⁰ James Hogg, "On the Changes in the Habits, Amusements and Condition of the Scottish Peasantry," in *A Shepherd's Delight: A James Hogg Anthology*, ed. Judy Steel (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1985), 40-51 (44-45). Hogg's essay was published for the first time in the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, vol. 3 (February 1831-September 1832).

³¹ James Hogg, *A Series of Lay Sermons on Good Principles and Good Breeding*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1997), 35.

³² Richard Maxwell, *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), 49.

Hogg's novel rather disjointed. Mack also points out that the rambling nature of Hogg's novel is exacerbated by the violent murders perpetrated by Claverhouse's Royalist soldiers, episodes which, according to Mack, are not particularly related to the main narrative but spread throughout the plot to expose the brutal treatment of the Covenanters. Even so, Mack maintains that *The Brownie* shows Hogg's "intimate understanding of the character, beliefs and, above all, the language of the Border people."³³ Furthermore, Katharine's plot provides a fantastic dimension which is eventually rationalised, as for the entire story she is suspected of being in league with the Brownie of Bodsbeck, a supernatural figure of local tradition. The following section will contend that Hogg made an intentionally strategic use of the Border people's heteroglot voices, of Katharine's seemingly fantastic nature, and of the two apparently disjointed plots.

Margaret Elphinstone claims that Katharine's "didactic accents bear no relation to the picture of one whom a 'young skempy' would 'wile her out o' her bed i' the night-time'," arguing that Katharine's language is a serious flaw, as there "is no purpose to be served by bringing her into the world of the pompous narrator in which the conventional accents of the romantic heroine of the early nineteenth-century novel surely place her."³⁴ Likewise, Martina Häcker views Katharine's Standard English as "inconsistent with her family background," particularly in an historical novel like Hogg's, where the use of vernacular voices is meant to "increase the intended impression of authenticity."³⁵ However, Hogg made strategic use of what Jacob Mey defines as "voice trash," a literary phenomenon which describes a clash of voices occurring when characters speak in ways that are inconsistent with their roles, a phenomenon Mey subsequently views more negatively, as the result of an author's oversight and failed negotiation with the reader.³⁶ However, in *The Brownie*, the

³³ Mack, as in n. 4 above, p. xviii.

³⁴ Margaret Elphinstone, "*The Brownie of Bodsbeck: History or Fantasy?*," *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 3 (1992): 31-41 (37).

³⁵ Martina Häcker, "Literary Dialects and Communication in *The Tale of Old Mortality* and *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*," *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 8 (1997): 1-11 (pp. 3, 1).

³⁶ Mey, *When Voices Clash* (2000), as in n. 1 above, pp. 198-202; and cf. also Mey, "Pragmatics of Reading," in his *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), 775-79 (775).

adherence to a centripetal form of language through Katharine's conventional speech produces a clash of voices that Hogg exploits deliberately to set his brave heroine on the same level as, and as a better model than, the more delicate and passive heroines of the early nineteenth-century novel. Hogg then enhances Katie's moral strength through the comments conveyed by the centrifugal and ironic voice of her father who, upon discovering what she has risked and accomplished in defence of the Cameronians, presents his daughter as a more reliable national model than the Edinburgh young ladies of 1685, a textual representation of the ladies of Hogg's own time.

The dialogue between Wat and Katharine occurs at a crucial moment in the novel, when she reveals her role in rescuing the Covenanters, while simultaneously disambiguating the novel's supernatural dimension, as she has been suspected of dealing with witchcraft:

"O my dear father," said she, "you know not what I have suffered for fear of having offended you; for I could not forget that their principles, both civil and religious, were the opposite of yours—that they were on the adverse side to you and my mother, as well as the government of the country."

"Deil care what side they war on, Kate!" cried Walter, in the same vehement voice; "ye hae taen the side o' human nature; the suffering and the humble side, an' the side o' feeling, my woman, that bodes best in a young unexperienced thing to tak. It is better than to do like yon [those] bits o' gillflirts [giddy young women] about Edinburgh; poor shilly-shally milk-an'-water things! Gin [if] ye but saw how they cock up their noses at a whig, an' thraw their bits o' gabs [mouths]; an' downa bide [are not able to endure] to look at aught [anything], or hear tell o' aught, that isna i' the top fashion. Ye hae done very right, my good lassie—od, I wadna gie ye for the hale o' them, an' they war a' hung in a strap like ingans [onions] (163, Ch. 16).

The contrast between Wat's and Katharine's voices may sound quite incoherent to readers, as it did to Elphinstone and Häcker. However, even a centripetal voice like Katharine's may become potentially subversive once Hogg's reason for placing it in the heteroglot world of the Scottish Borders is recognized. Janet Sorensen argues that "the standard language constructed throughout the eighteenth century figured centrally in the national subject's ability to imagine him or herself as a member of a

national community.”³⁷ Tobias Smollett’s use of Celtic dialect in *Humphry Clinker* (1771), for example, “institute[d] the insider/outsider distinction used to determine true British status” (p. 22). Yet, Sorensen also points out that “nationalisms of all stripes ... obscure the pressing distinction of class and gender in the claims of a culture (and language) shared by all its members” (p. 25), adding that “a recognition of struggle and competing views of language as existing, not between nations, but between all language users” should be developed (p. 27).

Concerning class distinction, Sorensen maintains that the bourgeoisie’s mastering of polite and proper English was a way to mark their meritorious membership of the higher levels of society, rather than belonging through lineage of the blood (pp. 140-41, 202). Polite English was also an ideology that distinguished the middle class from the lower classes (p. 151); this was particularly the case with the ambitious members of the Lowland Scottish élite who aspired to feel at the same level as their English counterpart in the conquest of the British Empire, and to distinguish themselves from both the uncouth Highland warriors and the peasantry of the Scottish Lowlands. However, Sorensen also remarks that politeness generally implies a certain degree of falsity (p. 153) as “polite conversation, far from being an open exchange of one’s innermost sentiments, is more often a concealing of them” (p. 214). This is why in *The Brownie* Hogg has Wat Laidlaw convey his ideas of honour in Scots: his Scottishness has the double function of marking him as a genuine character and of distinguishing him from the male members of the Lowland bourgeoisie, whose proper English would not only hide their Scottish identity but also mask their not-always-honourable intentions to exploit the British Empire, as Hogg implies in the essay in the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*.

Concerning the use of dialect in some Scottish authors, Murray Pittock observes that while “Burns uses Scots from different dialectal areas to produce alternate readings of the same poem” and “Scott allows ... the presence of characters who offer individuated critiques of modernity through vernacular culture ... in a ‘literature of combat’ ... that simultaneously often takes place within a closure of Unionist conformity,” Hogg’s tension between vernacular and proper English is

³⁷ Janet Sorensen, *The Grammar of Empire in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 13.

meant to challenge “a narrative intended to produce that very closure.”³⁸ Sorensen contends that “behind the naming of a particular usage as dialect” or nonstandard is a social struggle (p. 67), similar to Bakhtin’s idea of heteroglot voices that challenge the rules of literary politeness by distancing themselves from what is considered to be the centripetal language of the dominant discourse. Thomas Keymer notes that, in Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740), later editions revise the heroine’s language, amending “Pamela’s deviations from polite usage” and toning down the “strident lexical markers of her subaltern status.”³⁹ On the other hand, the ferocious reception of Hogg’s use of broad Scots shows that contemporary reviewers failed to perceive Hogg’s sophisticated use of both English and Scots; for example, the prostitute Bell Calvert’s beautiful English in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) signals her upper-class origin and subsequent fall.⁴⁰

Considering Hogg’s clever use of languages in his *oeuvre*, Katharine’s voice in *The Brownie* acquires a special significance: her beautiful English is not a mere mask of politeness behind which she hides concealed intentions, but it is a standard speech *also* validated by honourable inner qualities. The dissonance between Katharine’s language and the conditions which should govern her speech as a member of the peasant class is a strategy that Hogg exploits to denote her as a meritorious symbol for the Scottish nation. Hogg’s use of Katharine’s and Wat’s speeches should hence be viewed in dialogic relationship as they together expose the performative quality of British national identity through language. Both characters counter the ideology of centre/periphery and the rhetoric of inclusion/exclusion implicit in the dialectic between Standard English and vernacular languages so fundamental to the formation of the British Empire. Sorensen notices that

³⁸ Murray Pittock, “Introduction: What is Scottish Romanticism?,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2011), 1-9 (4).

³⁹ Thomas Keymer, Introduction to *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), vii-xxxiv (xvii).

⁴⁰ Barbara Leonardi, “An Exploration of Gender Stereotypes in the Work of James Hogg” (PhD diss. University of Stirling, 2013), 10, 46, 230; see also Barbara Leonardi, “The Pragmatics of Literary Interaction in James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*,” in *Papers from the Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics & Language Teaching 2010*, 5 (2011): 92-108 (104-05), accessed January 26, 2016, <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/events/laelpgconference/papers/v05/Leonardi.pdf>.

“the polite language of the Lowland elite signalled their society’s advanced status in a four-stage chronology of human societal development” (p. 153), arguing that it “is likely on these terms that Scottish ‘improvers’ could comfortably celebrate Burns” (p. 155). The fluid use of Katharine’s and Wat’s speeches in the same social setting is thus radical because, in them, Hogg dismantles class distinctions and destabilizes the ideology of Englishness.

In addition, the two apparently disjointed narratives have a specific purpose, because Katharine’s solitary endeavours position her as an unconventionally independent female character. James Barcus has suggested that, in his long narrative poem *Mador of the Moor* (1816), Hogg’s portrayal of Ila Moore echoes the popular ballad “Tam Lin,” presenting a brave heroine who does not bear her fate as an abandoned single mother passively, but, “with robe of green, upfolded to her knee,” goes in search of her lover.⁴¹ Similarly, in *The Brownie* Hogg depicts a proactive heroine whose possible supernatural power highlights her strength of character—an option that, until the end, keeps both the readers and her father in trepidation. The belief in the existence of the Brownie creates strong suspense, keeping the supernatural dimension as a possible world until the point of revelation. In Todorov’s terms, the hesitation between the marvellous and the uncanny gives life to the fantastic, enhancing the perception of Katharine as a vigorous female character.⁴²

Wat Laidlaw’s plot, on the other hand, allows Hogg to develop the friendship between this Lowland tenant and Daniel Roy Macpherson, the Highland soldier who fights for Claverhouse against the Cameronians, but whose deep humanity saves Wat from being accused of being a Cameronian himself. H. B. de Groot observes that Macpherson “begins as a stock parody of an incomprehensible Highlander and ends up as a man of great humanity and sensitivity ... to show an alternative way of behaving which makes that of Claverhouse and his cohorts bleaker still.”⁴³ Martina Häcker argues that “in the dialogues between ... Laidlaw

⁴¹ Cf. James Hogg, *Mador of the Moor*, ed. Barcus (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2005), 119; Francis James Child, ed., *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols (New York: Folklore Press, 1957), 1:335-58 (Child 39).

⁴² Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 25.

⁴³ H. B. de Groot, “The Historicity of *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*,” *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 6 (1995): 1-11 (10).

and ... Macpherson Hogg ... shows how people of different cultural backgrounds can come to an understanding.”⁴⁴ Indeed, through this friendship—rather than through the marriage plot—Hogg suggests a possible solution to Scotland’s internal inequalities. Hogg plays ironically with the Highland notion of blood ties through the voice of Macpherson who, quoting “ould Simon Glas Macrhimmon, who knows all the pedigrees from the creation of the world,” provides his own evidence to support the fact “that te Lheadles [meaning Walter’s second name, Laidlaw] are all Macphersons” (144, Ch. 14). Through such a hilarious “evidence” of true brotherhood, Hogg epitomises a more democratic alliance between the Lowlands and the Highlands where its members are, in the end, all equal brothers. Such sense of democracy, coming soon after Macpherson’s refusal of Katharine as wife because he has already got one, “and fery hexcellent boddach, with two childs after him,” (143, Ch. 14) highlights brotherhood as Hogg’s new trope for national unity, providing an alternative “to a nation seeking to live beyond the binarisms of British or class identities,” as Caroline McCracken-Flesher observes with regards to Hogg’s *The Three Perils of Man* (1822).⁴⁵

Hogg’s models of Scottish identity, however, were too audacious, and the negative criticism that *The Brownie* suffered led him to engage with the marriage plot in his subsequent works, subverting it in more subtle ways, particularly, as I have argued elsewhere, in *The Three Perils of Man*, where he transgresses class boundaries in the marriage between the English Lady Jane Howard and the poor Scottish warrior Charlie, and where the witches’ destroyed bodies after their carnivalesque marriage to the devil symbolise the “social pressure suffered by nineteenth-century bourgeois women ... manipulated through the discourse of sensibility to yield to unhappy marriages for economic interests from which, however, they were excluded.”⁴⁶ In *The Brownie* Hogg fuses the primary and the secondary heroine in a unique character symbolic of the Scottish nation. Camden claims that in nineteenth-century British and American novels with a marriage plot, the hero’s repressed attraction towards the more

⁴⁴ Häcker, as in n. 35 above, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Caroline McCracken-Flesher, “‘Perfectly Ludicrous’: The Game of National Meaning in *The Three Perils of Man*,” in *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace*, ed. Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 175-84, and 176 n. 7.

⁴⁶ Barbara Leonardi, “James Hogg, the *Three Perils*, and the Pragmatics of Bourgeois Marriage,” *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 22 (2012): 19-38 (24-25).

rebellious secondary heroine poses a threat to the nation's stability, as his real feelings return like a Freudian "uncanny" to "destabilize" and "complicate" the "national ideals" embodied by the primary heroine. The hero's hidden feelings for the secondary female character expose "national anxieties," thus "pointing to the instability of national identity."⁴⁷ In *The Three Perils of Woman* (1823) Hogg engages with this dialectics. In Peril First, Cherry's death signals the cost of the over-idealised marriage between Gatty and M'Ion, and the marriage in the secondary plot between Rickleton, a Northumbrian landowner, and a Scottish Lowland prostitute critiques the ideology of the national tale, foregrounding acceptance and forgiveness as the fundamentals of marriage. Yet in Peril Third Hogg then subverts this romanticised union when the Highland gentleman fighting at Culloden is oblivious to the fate of his Lowland servant wife and their child, revealing, I have argued, "the catastrophic effects of a war violating a maternal body," and leaving Scotland, once again, with no progeny for the future.⁴⁸ Though in these later works Hogg engages with the marriage plot, he still shows that a political marriage of convenience that does not account for the vulnerable members of society will never guarantee the continuation of the nation.⁴⁹

University of Stirling

⁴⁷ Camden, *Secondary Heroines*, as in n. 13 above, pp. 2, 6, 5.

⁴⁸ Leonardi, as in n. 46, pp. 81, 90, 95.

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