# SCOTT'S THEORY OF THE NOVEL:

# AS EXPRESSED IN HIS CRITICAL WORKS AND PRACTICED IN HIS NOVELS

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# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

# SCOTT'S THEORY OF THE NOVEL: AS EXPRESSED IN HIS CRITICAL WORKS AND PRACTICED IN HIS NOVELS

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. INCENTIVES

The incentives for this study came, first, from my life-long love of The Waverley Novels; secondly, from my desire to find an answer to the unkindly accusations of certain critics of the realistic school against the man who, with his prodigal genius, raised the novelist's art into the dignity of a world-wide recognition; and, finally, from the timely suggestion of Dr. George Morey Miller as to how an adequate defense for this greatest of all romanticists might be sought.

### B. PURPOSE

The purpose of my study, then, was to determine, first of all, what has come to be the accepted theory of the technique of the novel. I then made an investigation to see to what extent Scott had formulated a theory of the novel and to see in what respects it conformed to and in what ways differed from the accepted theory today. Finally I studied Scott's own novels to determine how far he consciously practiced his own theory. If such a study should show that Scott had formulated with some definiteness an accepted theory for the construction of a novel, and if it should show further that he actually put such

a theory into practice, then the attacks of the critics against his art as a novelist should be answered.

## C. LIMITATIONS

The study was limited in various ways. In determining the accepted theory of novelistic technique I found it impossible to read all the critical works written in the last one hundred years upon the technique of the novel; consequently Chapter II was limited to the opinions of men who are considered to be especially good authorities upon the subject today. The material for Chapter III was confined to Scott's critical comments expressed in The Lives of The Novelists, to his letters and Journal quoted in Lockhart's Life of Scott, and to his critical comments upon the novelist's art in the introductions to and in the course of his novels. It seemed more desirable in the last division, finally, to make a somewhat detailed study of six of the novels than a broader though more superficial study of all thirty-two. So, although some of the other novels are used as supporting evidence upon certain points, my study has been largely confined to the following novels: (1) Waverley, because it is the first novel written and is a professed novel of manners; (2) The Monastery, because it is the only novel in which Scott made an extended use of Gothic material; (3) The Heart of Midlothian, because it is so thoroughly representative of the Scottish novels and because of its unusual heroine; (4) Ivanhoe, because of its

popularity, because its setting is in England, and because it illustrates so well the application of Scott's theory of the historical novel; (5) The Talisman, because it has its setting in the Holy Land, a place Scott never visited; and (6) Quentin Durward, because its setting is in France and because in it the historical characters come nearer to holding the foreground than in any of the other historical novels.

Such are the necessary limitations of my task. Of course this does not represent with any adequacy the total amount of reading I have had to do, as will be shown in my bibliography and incidentally throughout the thesis. In spite of my prejudice in favor of Scott as a novelist I have tried to conduct the investigation into the evidence with complete disinterestedness. The results will speak for themselves.

## II. ACCEPTED THEORY OF NOVEL TECHNIQUE

### A. THE NOVEL IS ESTABLISHED AS A TYPE OF FICTION.

The novel as a type of fiction in the realm of literature is a comparatively recent development. It was preceded by a full development of the epic, the drama, and the romance and followed by a full development of the short story. Although parts of its technique are borrowed from all three of its predecessors, the first two are probably its direct ancestors. For a number of years the novel was held in ill repute, and its climb to social recognition and establishment as a literary type has been long and rough. Its boundaries are still rather

indistinct - the usual dictionary definition reading about like this: "A novel is a fictitious prose narrative, now usually of sufficient length to fill a fair-sized volume, in which characters and actions typical of real life are portrayed through the medium of a plot of more or less intricacy."[1] In spite of such indefiniteness, however, the novel does have characteristics which distinguish it from the other literary types.

The novel differs from the epic, the first of its ancestors, most obviously in form. The epic is composed in verse; the novel, although there is no reason except custom that it should be, is written in prose. Their origin, also, is different. A folk epic is the work of many men, each making some original contribution to the traditional whole. The novel, on the contrary, is rarely the creation of more than one man. The epic, similarly, is written for a communal audience, to be chanted or read at some social gathering; while the novel is written for an audience composed of one individual and written to be perused at leisure. There is one other distinction, perhaps a little more subtle than the ones already mentioned. The plot of an epic is simpler than that of the novel. In a novel the plot must be in order of sequence; lack of sequence in the plot of an epic, however, is typical. These differences of form, origin, purpose, and plot mark the dividing line be-

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[1] Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary

tween the novel and the epic.[1]

The distinction between the novel and its nearer kin, the medieval romance, is less evident. There is undoubtedly a place where the most romantic novel and the least romantic romance merge. Both attempt to portray life through a plot of more or less intricacy. In the romance, however, the characters usually exist for the sake of the events and setting.[2] Consequently the characters are not fully developed. The romance, moreover, probably more than any other type of fiction, emphasizes the liberties rather than the limitations of imagination.[3] As the romance is the literary expression of medieval social conditions in England - feudalism and organized medieval religion - it is, as might be expected, largely confined in its subject matter to tales of chivalry - fighting, generally in single combat, and adventure for their own sake; religious asceticism; religious mysticism; and artificial romantic love. There is very little treatment of nature and that mainly conventional.[4] Although there are some exceptions, these are the principal individualizing elements of the romance.

A task of equal difficulty confronts the critic when he attempts to draw a line separating the novel from a still later development in the field of prose fiction, the short

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[1]Cf.Hamilton,A Manual of the Art of Fiction,Ch.IX,pp.155-171
[2]Cf.Crawshaw, The Interpretation of Literature,p.154
[3]Cf.Cross,Development of the English Novel,Introduction,p.xv
Cf.also, Baldwin,English Mediaval Literature,p.64
[4]Cf. Crawshaw,The Interpretation of Literature,p.153

story. The name given to this contemporary literary type - short story - is misleading. Though one would naturally expect the "short" story to be shorter than the novel, this is not always true. Although short stories are usually brief, written to be read at one sitting, the more extended ones are as long as the shorter novels. In fact a story may be long enough to fill a fair-sized volume and still be a "short" story. What, then, is the difference between the short story and the novel? The general method, in the first place, is different. The novel is characterized by a complexity of method; the short story, by a simplicity of method. A still greater difference lies in their conception of the material to be presented. The novel tries to present life in full with all of its complexities; while the short story, through a deliberate omission of the complexities of life, strives for singleness of effect.[1]

There is still another type of fiction, the drama, from which the novel should be distinguished. It is much easier to draw the dividing line here. The drama, first of all, has certain physical restrictions to which the novel is not subjected. It is presented on a stage by living actors. The time of presentation must be short. Because of these limitations, the drama is characterized by a condensation of subject matter and a rapidity of movement not common in the novel. Like the epic the drama is written for a communal aud-

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[1] Cf. Miller and Burke, Theory and Practice Outline for Freshman English, p. 25

ience. It must, consequently, make its appeal to the emotions, the motives, and the intellect common to a large group of people. The novel, on the other hand, may select its audience, an audience preferably of one. There are two other differences, one in structure and the other in method, that should be mentioned. The novel is divided into books and chapters - the drama into scenes and acts. While the novel is both narrative and dialogue in method, the drama is dialogue only.[1] Although the novel is related to the other four types of fiction by the common elements of narrative - people acting under certain circumstances - the differences in form, material and technique described above establish it as a distinct and individualized type of fiction.

## B. PURPOSE

The novel, which started with so much borrowed technique from the other types of fiction, has steadily developed a technique of its own. Its authors now write with a definite purpose in mind - a purpose attained, moreover, by the use of certain material which is handled and molded according to an established technique.

Three purposes for the novel are advanced by authors and critics. Some of them insist that the only purpose of the novel is the presentation of a picture of real life. Such a

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[1] Cf. Hamilton, A Manual of the Art of Fiction, Ch. IX, pp. 155-171

purpose tends to exclude all romanticism. Authors who believe this to be the purpose of the novel contribute to literature the realistic, the life and manners, the character, and sometimes, the problem novel - novels which concern themselves with the usual, the ordinary, and even the sordid or the ugly in life.

Another group of authors and critics believe that the picture presented should teach a lesson. The advocates of such a purpose believe that plot, character, setting, and interest exist only as a means to a didactic end. Supporters of such a didactic purpose contribute to literature the idealistic, the propaganda, and the problem novels.

By far the greatest majority of authors and critics, however, believe the only justifiable purpose of the novel to be entertainment by the presentation of either a realistic or a romantic picture of life. Brander Matthews tells of an enterprising American journalist who, he says, "wrote to some two score story tellers of Great Britain and the United States to inquire what, in their opinion, the object of the novel was. Half a dozen of the replies declared that it was 'to realize life'; and the rest - an immense majority - were satisfied to say that it was 'to amuse'."[1] To interest, then, to amuse, to entertain is the all inclusive purpose of the novel, embracing all other subordinate purposes, with the single exception of the teaching function of fiction.

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[1] Historical Novel and Other Essays, p.26

Such diversity of conception of the purpose of the novel is as old as the novel itself, and it is very improbable that either the critics or the authors will ever unite upon a common purpose. In general,however, we may say that the purpose of the novel is primarily to present a picture of life in full, with all of its complexities, in a series of imagined facts interesting in and for themselves.

## C. MATERIAL

The material the novelist uses in accomplishing his purpose is drawn from life. As life is infinitely various, the author must make a selection. This choice of matter is governed by two main considerations - novelty and worth. On the basis of the selection made the material is first divided into two large divisions, according to the effect desired upon the reader. If the author selects ordinary commonplace material, his works are classified as realistic. The resulting type of literature, in which the emphasis is placed upon the normal and usual, provides what is commonly known as the literature of recognition. If, however, the author chooses unusual and exceptional material, his works are classified as romantic, and they provide the literature of escape.[1] Between these two extremes is the realm of the novel. On the one side it dwindles off to the formless, sprawling creation, the realistic novel in which very little effort is made to select

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[1] Cf. Miller and Burke, Theory and Practice Outline for Freshman English, p.22

appropriate material; on the other it merges into the equally formless product, the romance.

## 1. Plot Material

The material the author selects from life is of three kinds: plot, character, and setting material. The plot material comes from three sources: "conflict between man and his environment or Nature, conflict between man and man, and conflict between opposed traits in the same man."[1] These situations may be suggested to the author by his own observation, by what he has heard or read, or by his own inventiveness.[2] The first of these, man in conflict with Nature, although a very old situation in fiction, in the novel, is a comparatively recent development. In the old romances and the early novels natural forces serve only as a stage or background for the story. Robert Louis Stevenson says its emergence as a plot element in fiction came with Victor Hugo.[3] It is not uncommon now to find novels in which storm, cold, heat and other natural phenomena are conceived as man's active enemies. In some of them, in fact, Nature is almost endowed with a vindictive personality. The second type of plot material

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[1] Dowst, The Technique of Fiction Writing, p.52
[2] Cf. Perry, A Study of Prose Fiction, p. 131
[3] Cf. Familiar Studies of Men and Books

that presents man in conflict with man, is the most common, as this source is the most abundant of the three. The possibilities here are practically infinite. They arise from the multiplicity of passions - ambition, rivalry, love, vengeance - that bring man into conflict with his fellows. Novels that draw their material from the third source, the conflict between two opposed traits in the same man, are not so common. Such a novel is undoubtedly the most difficult kind of story to write. Dowst says: "Such novels deal almost exclusively with psychological data, of facts of the soul, and require knowledge and imaginative insight as well as verbal dexterity. It is supremely easy to conceive a plot involving struggle of the man with himself, but it is supremely hard to give such a struggle objectivity, to expand it into a fiction operative in action and yet developing the internal conflict."[1] These three vortices of stuggle furnish the searching author his plot material.

## 2. Character Material

Character material is the second type of subject matter drawn by the author from life. The story and its people are sometimes referred to as the twin elements of interest in fiction. The people grow from the character material selected by the writer. The characters may be modeled after real people or after characters in literature. They may, also, be entirely

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[1] The Technique of Fiction Writing, p. 55

imaginary. Almost all characters of fiction, however, are some combination of these three sources. The characters constructed may be mere names without vitality; they may be typical of a class, without individuality; they may be individuals possessing typical traits plus individualizing characteristics.[1] A more extended discussion of the problems that harass an author in the characterization of his people will be presented in a later section of this thesis.[2] Suffice it to say at present that the writer's most successful characters will not be wholly typical or wholly individual, but will possess a number of universal traits plus individualizing characteristics.

### 3. Setting Material

The author needs still a third type of material to make his story effective, material usually referred to as background or setting. Life is again the source, and the material is secured in precisely the same manner as that obtained for the characters and plot - by the author's observation, from his reading, or through his imagination. The matter obtained is of two kinds, called social and physical setting. The latter is again subdivided into place and time setting. How much social setting the author will use is determined to a large degree by the type of novel he is trying to write. If it is a social novel, for example, he will need a large number of background char-

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[1] Cf. Miller and Burke, Theory and Practice Outline for Freshman English, p.21; Brewster, Specimens of Narration, p. xiv

[2] Cf. Infra, pp. 16-21

acters. The same principle applies to the place setting. We associate certain places with certain types of stories. Whitcomb illustrates this when he says:

> "Pastoral romance has its retired valleys, with conventional accessories; the romance of chivalry its princely palace, its cell of hermit or monk; Gothic romance its castle, with haunted chamber, gloomy dungeon, and secret passages. Romanticism in general has explored the ideal values of forest, sea, and mountain solitude. Picaresque fiction has made special use of such settings as the prison, the thieves' den, and the tavern."[1]

The time setting, as it usually has some imaginative value for the reader, is, also, largely determined by the author's purpose. Some critics hold that the highest degree of success in the use of background either physical or social depends upon the author's fidelity to the typical. Others, however, object to the slavish copying of environment. There is scarcely any question, nevertheless, that faithfulness to the essential qualities of its types is necessary.[2]

## D. METHOD

### 1. Structural

a. Plot Handling. After the writer has determined upon his purpose and selected his material, his labors are by no means over. He is now faced with a greater problem - the planning and arranging of his material in the manner most effective. The plan of action he chooses is his plot.[3] Critics are generally agreed that it is formed by the weaving together of

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[1] The Study of a Novel, p. 82
[2] Ibid., p. 85
[3] Cf. Miller and Burke, Theory and Practice Outline for Freshman English , p. 19

two or more distinct series of events, and that the events must be arranged in some logical relation, not merely in chronological order.[1] Some contemporary critics, however, contend that complication is not essential to a good plot. Dowst, for example, says, "Complication is not the sine qua non, and should not be so regarded."[2] Yet a little later, on the same page, he makes this statement: "As has been stated, the novel is a broader canvas, without a single emphasis if the writer wills, and here, within the limits of naturalness, complication of the plot is thoroughly desirable."[3] So even Dowst agrees that, at least in the plot of a novel, weaving of the several strands of action is necessary.

The number of single actions woven together and the manner in which they are woven determines the simplicity or complexity of the plot-structure. There are four common ways of weaving the events, usually referred to as the episodic, in which events succeed each other in their regular order - 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.; the alternating, in which events occur in alternating order - 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, etc.; the dependent, in which the events stand in the relation of cause and effect; and the inter-woven, in which several strands of action are carried forward simultaneously.[4] Of these, the first two are the eas-

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[1] Cf. Hamilton, Manual and the Art of Fiction, p.67
[2] The Technique of Fiction Writing, p.51
[3] The Technique of Fiction Writing, p. 51
[4] Cf. Whitcomb, The Study of a Novel, p.56

iest to handle, but they are likely to result in a looseness of plot and necessitate the use of the old-fashioned formula, "Let us now leave John and see what has happened to Henry." Two or more of these four methods are commonly combined in an actual plot, one or another being predominant. "The typical plot-structure of an artistic novel", says Whitcomb, "is based on a combination of the second and fourth formulas."[1]

The weaving of his plot involves still another problem for the writer. He must make sure that his plot shall possess the three qualities necessary in the writing of any good plot - unity, coherence, and emphasis. The only way to obtain unity in a plot is to select only the events which are essential to the weaving of the pattern. Or, to state it in a negative way, to exclude all events which do not contribute directly or indirectly to the progress of the plot. Whitcomb says: "The unity of plot depends mainly on persistent point of view, unbroken motivation, and constant convergence of all action toward the catastrophe, which implies the omission of all non-essential incidents, and proper emphasis upon those recorded."[2] To obtain coherence, the second desirable element, the writer must plan his story so that every event heightens the feeling and interest of the reader until the climax is reached.[3] The final element, emphasis, the writer may obtain by giving the events he wishes to emphasize an emphatic position. The be-

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[1] The Study of a Novel, p. 57
[2] Ibid., p. 73
[3] Cf. Baldwin, Composition Oral and Written

ginning and end of the whole story are emphatic positions. The beginning and the end of any minor division - book, chapter, or paragraph - are, likewise, emphatic positions. Placing events in an antithetical position is still another stratagem of this type. As in other kinds of composition proportion is also a means of gaining emphasis. Narrative has one more device for securing emphasis which demands more skill of the writer, and that is the arranging of events in such a way that they create suspense. By thus governing the selection and arrangement of material unity, coherence, and emphasis determine the effectiveness of the plot.

If the author gives due attention to these three elements of technique, his completed plan of action will undoubtedly possess what from the reader's point of view are the three essential effects of good plot - suspense, surprise, and satisfaction.

> "In an ideal plot", Ramsay says, "we should have the utmost possible suspense before the denouement, the greatest possible surprise at the denouement, and the utmost genuine satisfaction after the denouement. The first and second of these qualities", he goes on to say, "may rightly be sacrificed to some extent, if necessary, for the sake of other interests beside the plot; but when the third quality is sacrificed, the story inevitably becomes what is called a melodrama or farce - that is, second rate."[1]

It is only through the application of the three principles of composition to the plot that the essentials necessary for success in the judgment of the reader can be gained.

b. Character Handling. To perform the action he has planned

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[1] Short Stories of America, p. 326

and for human interest the author must have people. The successful creation and presentation of these characters demands a knowledge of one of the hardest points of technique to master. There are two general methods of delineating character - direct and indirect. The simplest means of direct portrayal is by giving an expository statement of the passions and permanent traits of character and a descriptive statement of the character's external appearance. Both methods, according to Hamilton, have obvious disadvantages. Being expository, they are not narrative in mood; they savor of the essay rather than the story; and if they be used not at the outset but during the course of the narrative, they halt the progress of the action. They are abstract rather than concrete; they do not bring the reader into the presence of a character, but merely into the presence of an explanation.[1] The reader, furthermore, is likely to forget the satement of the author before the story has progressed very far. A similar and more desirable means of direct delineation is by reports from the other characters. "When it is desired to depict a character by direct comment on his actions or his personality", Hamilton continues, "there is a great advantage in allowing the comment to be made by one of the other characters in the story, instead of by the author himself in the attitude of assumed omniscience."[2] The final means of direct delineation is by psychological analysis. This method is partly narrative and partly expository. The author looks in-

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[1] Cf. Hamilton, A Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 85
[2] Ibid., p. 85

to the mind of the character to be portrayed and analyzes his emotions at important moments of the story.

> "Much is to be said in favor of this expedient of depicting character by analysis", says Hamilton. "It is the only means by which the reader may be informed directly of those thoughts and emotions of a character which are the mainsprings of his acts. On the other hand, the use of the expedient has the disadvantage of being exceedingly abstract, and of halting the happenings while the author tells us why they happened."[1]

These four methods - by exposition, by description, by reports from other characters, and by psychological analysis- provide the author's means of direct delineation.

There are, also, several ways of presenting characters indirectly. The first of these is through the speech of the characters. In the hands of a skillful writer this means is very artistic and effective. "If the mere speech of a fictitious figure be reported with sufficient fidelity to truth," Hamilton says, "it is possible to convey through this expedient alone a very vivid sense of character."[2] The means has a further advantage in that it does not stay the action of the story. This leads to the second means of indirect delineation - by action. The trite old saying that actions speak louder than words is true not only in life but also in fiction. There is probably no other way so convincing as to see a person in the performance of a characteristic action. Another means closely associated with the last one considered is the portrayal of a character by his effect on other char-

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[1] A Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 89
[2] Ibid., p. 91

acters in the story. This is the most delicate way of indirect delineation. The final indirect means - by environment - also, requires a nicety of touch. If we know a person's habitual haunts, we can deduce many facts regarding his character. "It is possible," says Hamilton, "to describe a living-room in such a way as to convey a very definite sense of its occupant before he enters it."[1] Suggestion, as it causes the reader to become more active, is always more powerful than direct portrayal; therein lies the strength of the indirect methods of delineation. Although these various means have been discussed separately, they are seldom used singly by the artist. The greatest characters in fiction are a result of a combination of all methods, both direct and indirect.

After a writer has become skilled in the means of delineation, he finds himself facing another problem in the technique of characterization. He must be careful that he does not give his characters so many individual traits that they become caricatures or monsters. Such a character may be used, of course, for humor; and there is no reason why the author should take pains to round out the character of an individual whose main function in the story is to unify the plot. In the main, however, the characters of a novel should create the illusion of reality.

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[1] The Technique of Fiction Writing, p. 190

Dowst says:

> "The novel is a natural type of fiction in that it can make some approach to presenting the whole man, with all his contradictory and inconsistent traits and impulses. . . . . .The writer of the short story cannot qualify and distinguish as to his peoples' natures, and that is why the fine short story is less humanly significant than the fine novel, for no man is pure saint or pure villain, pure this or pure that. We are bewilderingly inconsistent, wherein lies most of the interest of life. The novel can show its people blown here and there by the winds of desire, as in life."[1]

To give the illusion of reality and to be true to human nature, the characters should have some typical as well as individual traits.

Neither, for like reasons, should the characters of a novel be wholly typical. They must, however, have enough typical traits to be illustrative of life. It is through these typical traits that the great characters of fiction make their universal appeal. When discussing this point Hamilton says: "A great fictitious character must be at once generic and specific; it must give concrete expression to an abstract idea; it must be an individualized representation of the typical qualities of a class."[2] Then again while discussing individual traits he says:

> "Unless he (the author) endows the characters with certain personal traits that distinguish them from all other representatives or members of their class whether actual or fictitious, he will fail to invest them with the illusion of reality. Every great character of fiction must exhibit, therefore, an intimate

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[1] The Technique of Fiction Writing, p. 190
[2] A Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 82

> combination of typical and individual traits. It is through being typical that the character is true; it is through being individual that the character is convincing."[1]

Characters which are well-balanced as to typical and individual traits are always the most life-like.

c. Setting Control. There is still another structural element the writer must consider - background or setting. In the early novel the function of setting, both physical and social, was largely aesthetic, while its primary value was to increase interest. Its purpose was to give color, concreteness, and individuality to events. The setting is now often used as a motive toward action. "In certain special instances," Hamilton says, "the setting may not only suggest but may even cause the action and remain the deciding factor in determining its course."[2] As stated before, setting may also be used as an aid to characterization.[3] We are coming to realize more and more the shaping power of man's environment.

The social setting, the numerous or few characters that move in the background of a story, has certain functions of its own. The absolute number of these indistinct people in a novel is an important factor in determining its social area. The number of dramatis personae, also, determines to a large extent the complexity of the action. Groups of people - gypsies, crusaders, etc., more significant as masses than as individuals, are

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[1] A Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 82
[2] Ibid., .p.110
[3] Supra, pp. 18-19

used to "increase the epic breadth and dignity of the social picture."[1] In the historical novel the historical and legendary characters move with the background group. To gain the quality of humor the author sometimes places his main character in contrast to his social setting. A quotation from Whitcomb's The Study of a Novel emphasizes the importance of social background. He says:

> "In all plot literature, the richness and stability of the illusion depend to a considerable extent on a gradual shading in the value of the characters - on a complex variety in the degrees of intimacy established between them and the reader. In our actual experience, of the extended scope which the novel imitates, there are persons of every grade of actuality, from the friend more real than self to the mere nominis umbra."[2]

The physical setting, also, has functions of its own. The writer of a historical novel may increase the interest of his story by choosing a period which already has for his reader an imaginative value. The time setting has another value for the historical novelist; it may free him "from acute criticism that is gained by placing events in an age other than the present."[3] Certain time settings, furthermore, have emotional value of their own. "Romanticism", says Whitcomb, "for obvious reasons, has taken special delight in the background effects of evening and night. The sentimental school associated the evening with reflection, sensibility, and melancholy of a gentle type; Gothic romance developed the mystery, the tragic solemnity, and the

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[1] Whitcomb, The Study of a Novel, p. 94
[2] p. 97
[3] Horne, The Technique of the Novel, p. 230

supernatural atmosphere of the deeper night."[1] Authors have, also, come to realize the importance of place settings. Attention to physical details will increase the verisimilitude of the story. Hamilton says: "The readiest means of making a story plausible is by representing with entire concreteness and great wealth of detail the physical adjuncts of the action."[2] The value of the physical setting as an aid to character portrayal has already been discussed under characterization. Emotional harmony, finally, in the setting may be used effectively. Use of the weather is probably the most common means. Proper use of this structural device depends upon a mastery by the author "based upon a detailed and accurate observation of natural phenomena and a philosophic sense of the relation between these phenomena and the concerns of human beings."[3] By the proper control over his setting material the author may thus add color and concreteness to the story, motivate its action, expand its social breadth, increase its plausibility, and augment its general emotional appeal.

## 2. Style

The question of form is closely associated with the structural problems just discussed. Novelists have always realized the importance of this element of technique. "The excellence of the mental entertainment," says Fielding, "consists less in

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[1] The Study of a Novel, p. 80
[2] Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 92
[3] Horne, The Technique of the Novel, p. 236

the subject than in the author's skill in well dressing it up."[1] Further evidence is a statement of Besant: "It is almost impossible to estimate the value of careful workmanship, that is, style."[2] Hamilton, a more recent critic of fiction, says: "The ideal to be striven for in fiction is such an intimate interrelation between the thing said and the way of saying it that neither may be contemplated apart from the other."[3] Not only the opinion of these critics but also the opinion of many others emphasizes the importance of style.

Style has certain qualities which are classified in several ways by critics. Crawshaw makes a fourfold division into intellectual, emotional, imaginative, and aesthetic qualities.[4] A novel has the intellectual quality of style if its wording and phraseology are correct, clear, and simple. These intellectual qualities, although they may not be artistic in themselves, form the basis for a literary style. Emotion, the second quality, is gained through force. The effects obtained through pathos and humor are components of the emotional quality. "The imaginative qualities," says Crawshaw, "are Concreteness and Suggestiveness. By a concrete style is meant a style that appeals vividly to the imagination instead of confining itself to those comparative-

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[1] Horne, The Technique of the Novel, p. 237
[2] Ibid., p. 237
[3] Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 223
[4] Cf. The Interpretation of Literature, p. 66

ly abstract forms of speech that appeal to the intellect. Suggestiveness is that quality of style by which the writer makes us see and understand what he can never really say."[1] The aesthetic quality, finally, is "that quality of style that enables one to please the taste of the reader. It enables one to choose the exact word, the telling phrase."[2] Such, it seems to me, is an excellent summary of the chief qualities that mark a good style.

In a novel the intellectual qualities are probably more marked than the others. "Its prose form", Crewshaw says, "is suited to the expression of pure thought. Its narrative method is conducive to simplicity in expression; and clearness is usually a natural consequence."[3] The novel also possesses many of the emotional qualities of style. Crewshaw says that in this respect the novel is inferior only to poetry, and he might have added the drama. "The novel is a portrayal of life", he says, "and we may therefore expect to find in its style all varieties of strength, pathos, and the ludicrous."[4] Novels possess the imaginative - the image making - qualities of style to a varying degree. Some novels are very imaginative, but never to the marked degree of poetry. The average novel, also, "is probably less imaginative", Crewshaw says, "in style than the average romance or essay."[5] In the novel's use of the aesthetic qualities

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[1] Cf. The Interpretation of Literature, p. 67
[2] Miller & Burke, Theory and Practice Outline for Freshman English, p. 9
[3] The Interpretation of Literature, p. 193
[4] Ibid., p. 193
[5] Ibid., p. 194

there is still a greater diversity. Some novels are very beautiful; others are very homely. If a novel, then, is to be artistic, in conclusion, it will possess at least a part of all those qualities enumerated above. "From the standpoint of the author as well as from that of the general reader," Hamilton says, "material may often be regarded as more important than method. But the critic is not therefore justified in stating that style and structure may be neglected with impunity. Other things being equal, the books that have lived longest are those executed with art,"[1] that is, with the right combination of all the good qualities of structure and style.

I realize that this is by no means an exhaustive statement of the technique of the novel. The discussion of a number of methods of general procedure have been intentionally omitted. The point of view, for example, considered by some critics as "the fundamental principle of technique in the novel structure",[2] has not been mentioned. Neither has anything been said about the external structure , the general length, the selection of the title, the division of the whole into books and chapters, the selection of chapter titles - none of these has been discussed directly. Though some of these qualities will be developed later when needed, yet they - and a multiplicity of other details - can receive full treatment only in a detailed treatise on novel technique.

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[1] A Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 220
[2] Grabo, The Technique of the Novel, p. 81

## III. SCOTT'S CONCEPTION OF THE TECHNIQUE OF THE NOVEL AS EXPRESSED IN HIS CRITICAL WORKS

### A. PURPOSE

The origin of the modern novel Scott places with the works of Fielding in 1741. This fact alone, when we consider Fielding's insistence that the novel should be interesting, should show real life, and should teach the folly and wickedness of all dishonesty, gives us a clue as to what Scott considered the purpose of the novel. Some modern critics contend that Fielding's first "law", interest, is the only one that should govern the purpose of the novel; others are just as insistent as he that the pictures of life should be real as well as interesting. A few of them, moreover, agree with him in his third contention, that is, that it should teach.[1] In his voluminous critical works Scott discusses in detail all three of these "laws".

Scott saw with his characteristic sagacity that a novel to be successful must first of all be interesting. Although he was a strong advocate of verisimilitude, he would sacrifice even this desirable quality to gain the necessary one of interest. A statement to support this fact is found in the Introduction to Peveril of the Peak: "In a story where the greater

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[1] Cf. Supra, pp. 7-9

part is avowedly fiction, the author is at liberty to introduce such variations from the actual fact as his plot requires, or which are calculated to enhance it."[1] Again in the Introduction to the Fortunes of Nigel he says, "I care not who knows it, I write for general amusement; and, though I never will aim at popularity by what I think unworthy means, I will not, on the other hand, be pertinacious in the defence of my own errors against the voice of the public."[2] In 1826 when his imitators were crowding him closely, he realized that the only way to shake them off and hold his public was to provide greater or at least new novelty to his novels. This statement is recorded in his Journal: "There is but one way to give novelty: to depend for success on the interest of a well-contrived story."[3] Not only in these quotations but also in many similar ones Scott emphasized the fact that the principal aim of the novel should be to interest.

Scott would even forgive an apparent breach in morals in other writers if by such a departure they added to the interest of their work. He defends his inclusion of the works of Bage in the Novelists Library thus:

> "We did not think it proper to reject the works of so eminent an author from this collection merely on account of speculative errors. We have done our best to place a mark on these; and, as we are far from being of the opinion that the youngest and most thoughtless derive their serious opinions from productions of this nature, we leave them to

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[1] Page xii
[2] Page xvii
[3] Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. I, pp. 275-6

> the reader's amusement, trusting that he will remember that a jest is no argument: that a novelist, like the master of a puppet show, has his drama under his own authority, and shapes the events to favor his own opinions; and that whether the Devil flies away with Punch, or Punch strangles the Devil, forms no real argument as to the comparative power of either one or the other."[1]

He defends the works of Smollett on the same grounds:

> "His pictures", Scott says, "are often deficient in grace; sometimes coarse, and even vulgar in conception; deficient in keeping, and in the due subordination of the parts to each other; and intimating too much carelessness on the part of the artist. But these faults are redeemed by such richness and brilliancy of colors; such a profusion of imagination - now boding forth the grand and terrible - now the natural, the easy, and the ludicrous; there is much of life, action, and bustle, in every group he has painted; so much force and individuality of character - that we readily grant to Smollett an equal rank with his great rival, Fielding."[2]

By thus defending these writers Scott shows that he could forgive even a breach in morals if it were made to gain interest.

In general, moreover, Scott minimized the effect of any moral that may be expressed in the novel. Romantic fiction, he thinks, may have sufficient justification if it acts as an opiate for the tired spirits.[3] He rebukes Charles Johnston for introducing religious issues into his novel Chrysal. "It is not the province of the Editor of a book of professed amusement," he declares, "to vindicate the tenets of a sect which holds almost all amusements to be criminal."[4] He disapproved, in addi-

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 291
[2] Ibid., p. 112
[3] Cf. Ball: Sir Walter Scott As a Critic of Literature, p. 78
[4] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 273

tion, of the author's stating of the moral to be learned from his story. "But we have elsewhere intimated", he says in discussing Richardson's Pamela, "an opinion that the direct and obvious moral to be deducted from a fictitious narrative is of much less consequence to the public than the mode in which the story is treated in the course of its details."[1] A novel should only be didactic, he says, in so far "that they may sometimes instruct the youthful mind by real pictures of life, and sometimes awaken their better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiment, and tales of fictitious woe."[2] Such statements are evidence that Scott would subordinate any moral or didactic purpose in the novel to that of interest.

The material to be found in Scott's critical works in support of Fielding's final contention that the novel should present a real picture of life is copious. Enough of it will be given here to make his position on this point clear; the rest will be retained for later sections where it applies more directly. Scott didn't insist, of course, that a novel should be an actually real picture of life; but he did insist that the incidents, character, and setting should be plausible. His belief that a novel should be a truthful lie is well illustrated by a statement found in the introduction to Waverley: "In the most improbable fiction", Scott says, "the reader still de-

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 21
[2] Ibid., p. 65

sires some art of vraisemblance, and does not relish that the incidents of a tale familiar to him should be altered to suit the taste of critics, or the caprice of the Author himself."[1] He objected, furthermore, to improbabilities in the novels of others. When commenting upon Sir Lancelot Greaves, he declares: "The leading imperfection is the utter extravagance of the story, as applicable to England, and to the period when it is supposed to have happened."[2] The Vicar of Wakefield meets with a similar criticism: "The narrative, which in itself is as simple as possible, might have been cleared of certain improbabilities, or rather impossibilities, which it now exhibits."[3] The quotations here given show Scott's belief that verisimilitude in a novel is a desirable quality.

Even this quality of verisimilitude, however, was subordinate in Scott's estimation to the quality of interest.

> "But some exaggeration", he says while discussing Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe, "must be allowed to the author of a romance; and considering the part which Lovelace had to perform, it was necessary that his character should be highly coloured. It is unfair to tax an author too severely upon improbabilities, without conceding which his story could have no existence; and we have less title to do so, because in the history of real life, that which is actually true bears often very little resemblance to that which is probable. . . . . Something, no doubt, is to be allowed for the license of an author, who must necessarily, in order to command interest and attention, extend his inci-

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[1] p. vii
[2] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 92
[3] Ibid., p. 159

dents to the extreme verge of probability."[1]

In this statement Scott strikes the very heart of the matter when he says that events may be true and still seem improbable, and it seems to me that he justifies very well the subordination of probability to interest.

Summary. Scott believed that the primary purpose of the novel was to amuse. If it were interesting, moral, and realistic - so much the better; if interesting and moral but improbable - not so good; if interesting, but immoral and improbable - not so bad; if moral and probable, but uninteresting - impossible.

## B. MATERIAL

Scott knew that the real stuff for a novel was life. He commends Richardson upon his return to "truth and nature" in Pamela.

> "Hitherto", he says, "romances had been written, generally speaking, in the old French taste, containing the protracted amours of princes and princesses, told in language coldly extravagant, and metaphysically absurd. In these wearisome performances, there appeared not the most distant allusion to the ordinary tone of feeling, the slightest attempt to paint mankind as it exists in the ordinary walks of life - all was rant and bombast, stilt and buskin. . . . . It will be to his immortal praise, that he was perhaps the first in this line of fictitious narrative, who threw aside the trappings of romance, with all its extravagance, and appealed to the genuine passions of the human heart."[2]

Fielding's Tom Jones receives his approbation for the same rea-

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, pp. 23, 24 and 28
[2] Ibid., pp. 19 and 39

son. Prior to its publication the English public had, he says, "not yet seen any works founded upon the plan of painting from nature." The novels just preceding it were "but a step from the old romance"; and although they approached "more nearly to the ordinary course of events," they still dealt with"improbable incidents, and with characters swelled out beyond the ordinary limits of humanity. The History of a Foundling is truth and human nature itself, and there lies the inestimable advantage which it possesses over all previous fictions of this particular kind."[1] Through such statements as these Scott expresses his belief that the principal source of material for a novel is life.

As long as the author's material maintained the illusion of reality, he might drew his material from his imagination, from his store of knowledge, or from his direct observance of life. The first two sources, of course, provided most of the material for Scott's own novels. In the General Preface to the Waverley Novels he says: "I believe I read almost all the romances, old plays, and epic poetry in that formidable collection, and no doubt was unconsciously amassing materials for the task in which it has been my lot to be so much employed."[2] A statement from the Introduction to Guy Mannering illustrates the use he really did make of this knowledge: ". . . the manner in which the novels were composed cannot be better illus-

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 65
[2] p. xi

trated than by reciting the simple narrative on which Guy Mannering was originally founded; but to which, in the progress of the work, the production ceased to bear any, even the most distant resemblance."[1] Although most of his own material came from the first two sources, he realized the wealth of material which might be obtained directly from life. He admired such writers as Jane Austen, who had "the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting" and regretted that he, like most romanticists, should be confined to the "Big Bow-wow strain."[2] In one or two of his novels he did, indeed, attempt to break away. He started to write Waverley with the idea of doing for Scotland what Maria Edgeworth had done for Ireland.[3] St. Ronan's Well, he says, was written with the intention of giving "an imitation of the shifting manners of our own time, and paint scenes the originals of which are daily passing round us, so that a minute's observation may compare the copies with the originals."[4] Scott recognized, therefore, as shown by these quotations, that the author's material might be drawn from his imagination, from his reading, or from his direct observation of life.

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[1] p. v. Cf. also Introduction to Ivanhoe
[2] Scott's Journal: Quoted in Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol.IV, p. 512
[3] General Preface to Waverley, p. xiii
[4] Introduction to St. Ronan's Well, p. ix

## 1. Plot Material

Almost all of his plot material Scott drew from one source - the conflict between man and man. Conflicts between man and his environment or nature may be found in his novels, but none of them is constructed with this kind of a struggle as the general plan of action. The use of the conflict between two opposed traits in the same man demands such an analysis of character as Scott was probably incapable of handling. More likely, however, the use of such a source never occurred to him. Inevitably the scenes of his novels are ones of physical conflict between man and man. The general design of the Monastery was "to conjoin two characters in that bustling and contentious age who, thrown into situations which gave them different views on the subject of the Reformation, should, with the same sincerity and purity of intention, dedicate themselves, the one to the support of the sinking fabric of the Catholic Church, the other to the establishment of the reformed doctrines."[1] "The Jacobite enthusiasm of the 18th century", Scott says, moreover, "particularly during the rebellion of 1745"[2] was chosen as the setting of Redgauntlet. A similar reason is given for the selection of the setting of The Fortunes of Nigel. "The state of society in the reign of James I was strangely disturbed," Scott says, "and the license of a part of the community was perpetually giv-

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[1] Introduction to The Monastery, p. vii
[2] Introduction to Redgauntlet, p. ix

ing rise to sets of blood and violence."[1] Always Scott is attracted in the selection of his plot material to some form of physical struggle between man and man.

## 2. Character Material

Scott thought that most of the author's character material for his principal personages should be sought "in the class of society who are the last to feel the influence of that general polish which assimilates to each other the manners of different nations. Among this class I have placed some of the scenes in which I have endeavored to illustrate the operation of the higher and more violent passions; both because the lower orders are less restrained by the habit of suppressing their feelings and because I agree with my friend Wordsworth that they seldom fail to express them in the strongest and most powerful language."[2] He had no objection, furthermore, to the use of characters modeled after real people. He uses many characters of this type in his own novels and sometimes even points out their source.[3] In general, however, he thought the best characters were those drawn from imagination. "It is impossible that traits proper to persons, both living and dead, with whom

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[1] Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel, p. vii
Also Cf. Introduction to Ivanhoe, p. vii
Also Cf. Introduction to The Monastery, p. xii
[2] Introduction to The Antiquary, p. v
[3] Cf. Introduction to Guy Mannering, p. xiv
Also Cf. Introduction to Old Mortality, pp. ix and xi

I have had intercourse in society should not have risen to my pen in such works as Waverley and those which followed it. But I have always studied to generalize the portraits, so that they should still seem, on the whole, the productions of fancy, though possessing some resemblance to real individuals."[1] Scott thought, therefore, that the best characters were those drawn from imagination, but modeled after real people in the lower ranks of society.

### 3. Setting Material

Scott, because he was a painter of pictures, was very much interested in the artistic effects that may be gained through the proper use of setting. He praises Mrs. Radcliffe for "having been the first to introduce into her prose fictions a beautiful and fanciful tone of natural description."[2] At least a part of any writer's setting material, he thought, should be obtained through his own observation. He records in the Introduction to the Pirate that his trip around the coast of Scotland, in 1844, was for the purpose of gathering data for The Lord of the Isles, with a view to prose fiction. He apologizes for certain possible weaknesses in St. Ronan's Well on the grounds that the writer was not familiarly acquainted with his subject. "It is not, however, sufficient", he declares, "that a mine be in itself rich and easily accessible; it is necessary that the engineer who ex-

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[1] Introduction to The Antiquary, p. vi
[2] The Lives of the Novelists, pp. 213-14

plores it should himself, in the mining phrase, have an accurate knowledge of the 'country' and possess the skill necessary to work it to advantage."[1] This familiarity with his subject did not, however, necessitate the writer's being absolutely accurate in all details. In fact Scott believed that the ultimate portrait should bear but slight resemblance to the original. In the Introduction to The Monastery, for example, he says, "It was not the purpose of the author to present a landscape copied from nature, but a piece of composition, in which a real scene, with which he is already familiar, had afforded him some leading outlines."[2]

He knew the artistic effect that could be gained by bringing the place setting into harmony with the story. In the Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel he says, "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu has said, with equal truth and taste, that the most romantic region of every country is that region where the mountains unite themselves with the plains or lowlands."[3] And again in the Introduction to The Monastery, he says, "The localities of Melrose suited well the scenery of the proposed story: the ruins themselves form a splendid theatre for any tragic incident which might be brought forward."[4]

The imaginative value of certain time settings he, also,

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[1] Introduction to St. Ronan's Well, p. xii
[2] Page viii
[3] Page viii
[4] Page vii

realized. The interest of Kenilworth he says "is thrown upon that period which the sudden death of the first Countess of Leicester seemed to open to the ambition of her husband, the opportunity of sharing the crown of his sovereign."[1] The setting of The Fortunes of Nigel had an especial emotional value, he thinks, because, "Some beams of chivalry, although its planet has been for sometime set, continued to animate and gild the horizon."[2] Such statements show that Scott realized the connotative value of certain time and place settings.

Summary. Although Scott believed that writers should observe carefully that their setting might seem real, he objected to the exact reproduction of material. He believed that a novel should have a wealth of background, both physical and social. For the background, of his own novels at least, he preferred the choice of people, times, and places of action and color.

## C. METHOD

### 1. Structural

Scott's expositions of his own critical views in the prefaces to The Novelists' Library are probably the best source of evidence of how profoundly he had investigated the principles and practice of his most successful predecessors in novel literature. At least a part of the investigation, although The Lives of The Novelists was not written until 1821, was probably made

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[1] Introduction to Kenilworth, p. vii
[2] Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel, p. ix

before he struck out on a new path for himself. There is hardly any phase of novel technique that escaped his attention. Saintsbury says, "With that unconquerable and unconventional commonsense which was wedded to his genius, he saw that a novel, to be good for anything must 'tell a story', use live speech, describe real or imaginably probable places, project on the screen figures which have at any rate some life and reality."[1] Scott gives almost as good a summary of his knowledge while discussing the life and works of Fielding. "Force of character", he says, "strength of expression, felicity of contrast and situation, a well-constructed plot, in which the development is at once natural and unexpected, and where the interest is kept uniformly alive, till summed up by the catastrophe - all these are requisites as essential to the labour of the novelist, as to the dramatist."[2]

a. Plot Handling. There is no doubt but that Scott knew the value of a good plot and gave much thought to this principle of technique. The failure of Sir Charles Grandison he says, "was not caused by any diminution in Richardson's powers, but solely to the adoption of an inferior plan."[3] It was the absence of plot alone that makes his two earlier works preferable to the last. "In his two first novels he showed much attention to plot; and though diffuse and prolix in narrative, can never be said

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[1] Introduction to The Lives of the Novelists, p. xii
[2] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 49
[3] Ibid., p. 35

to be rambling or desultory."[1] He also considered Fielding's novels superior to those of Lesage and Smollett because they had better plots: "The art and felicity with which the story of Tom Jones evolves itself is nowhere found in Smollett's novels."[2] He commends Goldsmith for the "admirable ease and grace of the narrative"[3] in the Vicar of Wakefield. He credits public interest in Mrs. Radcliffe's The Romance of the Forest to "the wonderful conduct of the story."[4] Finally, he says, "The most deficient part of Mrs. Smith's novels is unquestionably the plot, or narrative. . . . . This desertion of the story is, no doubt, an imperfection; for few of the merits which a novel usually boasts are to be preferred to an interesting well-arranged story."[5] All of these statements and many similar ones are evidence of the fact that Scott realized the importance of plot.

Scott believed that the plot was formed by the weaving together of a series of events and that the events should be arranged in the logical relation or pattern and not merely in chronological order.[6] He selected the material for his own stories so that "there could be no want of the means to complicate and extricate the incidents of his story."[11] He disliked

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 43
[2] Ibid., p. 107
[3] Ibid., p. 160
[4] Ibid., p. 215
[5] Ibid., p. 331
[6] Introduction to The Monastery, pp. xix and xx
[11] Ibid., p. xii

the plot of Sir Charles Grandison because "the various events are no otherwise connected together, than as they place the hero in some new and peculiar point of view."[1] Smollett's plots he considers inferior because, he says:

> "the heroes pass from one situation of life, and from one stage of society, to another totally unconnected, except that, as in ordinary life, the adventures recorded, though not bearing upon each other, or on the catastrophe, befall the same personage. Characters are introduced and dropped without scruple, and, at the end of the work, the hero is found surrounded by a very different set of associates from those with whom his fortunes seemed at first indissolubly connected."[2]

In speaking of De Foe's works, furthermore, he says it cannot be "the artful conducting of the story" that interests the reader. He continues:

> "De Foe seems to have written too rapidly to pay the least attention to this circumstance; the incidents are huddled together like paving stones discharged from a cart, and have as little connection between the one and the other. The scenes merely follow, without at all depending on each other. They are not like those of the regular drama, connected together by a regular commencement, continuation, and conclusion, but rather resemble the pictures in a showman's box, which have no relation further than as being inclosed within the same box, and subjected to the action of the same string."[3]

"Tristram Shandy", he says, "is no narrative, but a collection of scenes, dialogues ."[4] Neither", he continues, "can Rasselas be termed a narrative being in a great measure void of incident."[5]

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 23
[2] Ibid., p. 107
[3] Ibid., p. 374
[4] Ibid., p. 185
[5] Ibid., p. 168

Scott, also, discusses this phase of plot structure many times in connection with his own works. This statement is found recorded in his Journal October 18, 1826, when he was seeking to escape the competition of his imitators: "I have endeavored to weave them (the incidents) pretty closely together, and in the future I will study this more."[1]

Paradoxical as it may seem, in connection with his own practice, Scott was a vigorous advocate of unity in plot structure. He approves of Richardson's first two novels, Pamela and Clarissa Harlowe, because in them the story "keeps the direct road. No characters are introduced but for the purpose of advancing the plot."[2] Sir Charles Grandison on the other hand meets with his disapproval because of "those digressive dialogues and dissertations with which the story abounds."[3] He applauds Fielding's Tom Jones because of "the felicitous contrivance, and the happy extrication of the story, where every incident tells upon and advances the catastrophe", an element of technique which he thinks "cannot too often be mentioned with the highest approbation".[4] Scott does, however, like Fielding's preliminary chapters explaining his art, that Fielding places at the beginning of each Book of his novels, although they do, he says, "rather interrupt the course of the

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[1] Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol.V, p. 6
[2] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 43
[3] Ibid., p. 43
[4] Ibid., p. 63

story, and the flow of interest at the first perusal."[1] They do, moreover, have the disadvantage, he thinks, of reminding us that we are reading a work of fiction, in other words destroy the illusion.[2] He objects, furthermore, to Smollett's insertion of The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality in his novel, Peregrine Pickle, as a "tiresome and unnecessary excrescence upon the main story."[3] He admires Mrs. Radcliffe's skillful use of "suspense, the most fertile source, perhaps, of sublime emotions, . . . . . while chapter after chapter, and incident after incident maintains the thrilling attraction of awakened curiosity and suspended interest."[4] Unity, therefore, Scott considered one of the essentials of a good plot. Just how highly important Scott considered unity of plot to be can be seen from the advice he gave to young Cunningham about the necessity in a drama of plot unity. He thought that it was even more indispensable in the plot of a drama. He advises Allan Cunningham, a young dramatist of his time, to make sure his plot "should advance with every word", to see that the interest in the plot never stands still or retrogrades, and to select one single interest "to which every other is subordinate."[5] He recommends that Cunningham "should previously make a skeleton of his incidents, dividing them

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 67
[2] Cf. Ibid., p. 110
[3] Ibid., p. 80
[4] Ibid., p. 231
[5] Cf. Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. III, p. 501

regularly into scenes and acts, so as to insure the dependence of one circumstance upon another, and the simplicity and unity of his whole story."[1] Although he considered the unities of time and place mere "fopperies", he told Cunningham that the nearer he could come to them the better, as it would make his action seem more probable. "But that unity of action", he continues, "- I mean that continuity which unites every scene with the other, and makes the catastrophe the natural result of all that has gone before - seems to me a critical rule which cannot safely be dispensed with."[2] Even though Scott thought that a defect in the unity of the plot was "less perceptible in the closet than on the stage", he believed that "one unbroken course of interest "would make even the "perusal more gratifying".[3] Scott thought, as can be seen, that if a drama is to be successful, its plot must be unified; and, furthermore, that in the plot of a novel unity is a very desirable quality.

In his own novels Scott says he tried to throw the force of his "narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors - those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which have alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under the steel corselet of the fifteenth century, the broadcloth coat of the eighteenth, or the blue frock and white dimity waistcoat of the present day."[4] This contention

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[1] Lockhart's Life of Scott, p. 522
[2] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 501
[3] Ibid., p. 502
[4] Introduction to Waverley, pp. iii and iv

that the motivation should depend upon the universal passions of mankind is supported by many contemporary critics.

Scott, furthermore, disliked the use of a deus ex machina and supernatural machinery in a novel. In his mind this is one of the main distinctions between the novel and the romance. "The species of romance", he declares, "which Mrs. Radcliffe introduced bears nearly the same relation to the novel that the modern anomaly entitled a melodrama does to the proper drama."[1] It does not gain its effect by appealing to real feelings and passions; the only motivating element is fear, aroused mostly through the use of superstitions. He speaks of the early romance as having "unnatural turns of incidents."[2] "The most marked distinction between a real and a fictitious narrative", he continues, "is that the former, in reference to the remote causes of the events it relates, is obscure, doubtful, and mysterious; whereas in the latter case, it is a part of the author's duty to afford satisfactory details upon the causes of the separate events he has recorded, and, in a word, to account for everything."[3] This last phrase, however, is too strong, as he points out elsewhere in reference to Mrs. Radcliffe's catastrophic explanation of the mysteries of her plots - such rationalization Scott disliked.[4] If the supernatural is to be used at

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 225
[2] Ibid., p. 188
[3] Quoted in Whitcomb's The Study of a Novel, p. 63
[4] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 206

all, he prefers Walpole's method of furnishing ghosts without explanation, Again in discussing Cumberland's Henry he says: "There is the usual, perhaps we should call it necessary, degree of improbability, for which the reader must make the usual and necessary allowance."[1] From this statement we can see that Scott did not believe that every incident should have a clear and causal explanation, for life itself is not so simple; but, nevertheless, he did object to the improbable turns given to events by most of the writers of Gothic romance.

An artistic narrative demands a more or less emphatic catastrophe. While the novel must deviate from life somewhat at this point, it must not degenerate into artificiality. This artificiality in the catastrophe takes several forms.[2] The two most common ones are forced pessimism or optimism, sometimes the result of the author's will but more often the result of his slavery to the reading public. On the whole Scott preferred happy endings. In the Introduction to The Betrothed he speaks of the "distribution of happiness at the conclusion of the piece" as being a "common-place of technique."[3] He would not, however, have the happy closing come in contradiction of what had gone before. He commends Richardson for having Morden pass his sword through Lovelace's body at the

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 139
[2] Cf. Whitcomb, The Study of a Novel, p. 61
[3] Page xix

close of Clarissa Harlowe.[1] "The hasty and happy catastrophes" of Charlotte Smith's novels, he says, "seem inconsistent with the uniform persecutions of Fortune, through the course of the stories."[2] Scott, also, favored the forced ensemble at the conclusion. He criticizes The Mysteries of Udolpho because Mrs. Radcliffe, "like the careless knitter, neglected to take up her loose stitches" at the end.[3] He cautions the critic, however, about being too severe in this regard, reminding him that it is much easier "to devise a complicated chain of interest, than to disentangle it with perfect felicity." If Dryden, he says, could curse the inventor of fifth acts in the drama, then the romance writers certainly owed no blessings to the memory of him who devised explanatory chapters.

Summary. Scott realized the importance of plot in a successful novel. He knew that the events of the plot should be arranged in some logical order and that the several strands of the action should be woven together. He knew, furthermore, that the most successful plots are well-unified and that the best motivating forces are the universal passions common to all men. Although he believed that the catastrophe should not be a contradiction of the preceding action, he preferred forced ensembles at the close and happy endings. His many

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[1] Cf. The Lives of the Novelists, p. 27
[2] Ibid., p. 333
[3] Ibid., p. 221

comments on all these subjects are evidence of his broad knowledge of plot structure.

b. Character Handling. To Scott nearly all characters were portraits. In his critical comments on character he uses this word again and again. The clowns in Cumberland's Henry, for example, he says are so "well-sketched that they may be placed by the side of similar portraits by the first masters."[1] It is probably this conception of character which caused him to place so much emphasis on the surface manifestations. Although Scott emphasized this phase of character delineation, he did realize its principal disadvantage. In discussing the works of Richardson he says: "These minute and highly labored details frequently no doubt occasion a suspension of the narrative, in order to afford time for the minute delineation of character."[2]

In this direct expository and descriptive manner the character's principal traits of character are explained and his external appearance is described. Scott thought the novel should, first of all, describe in detail the character's physiognomy and dress. "It will be to Richardson's eternal praise," he declares, "that he tore from his personages those painted vizards, which concealed, under a clumsy and affected disguise, every thing like the natural lineaments of the human countenance, and placed them before us barefaced, in all the

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 137
[2] Ibid., p. 41

actual changes of feature and complexion."[1] The character's costume and dress, Scott thinks, should, also, be fully described. He realized in full the significance of dress in historical and social characterization. Le Sage, he says, gives his characters reality by describing their costume minutely.[2] This description of the habiliments of a historical character need not, however, be accurate for his historical period.[3] Nevertheless, the describing of the character's outward appearance Scott undoubtedly considered the greatest element in characterization.

He also approves of Richardson's descriptions of human passion, the second method of characterization by direct exposition, in all its "light and shade."[4] Again in the Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel he says the time chosen made it possible that the "sentiments of many of the actors may be described with a great variety of shading and delineation."[5]

Scott realized that by reporting a character's speech, an indirect method of delineation, the author could do much toward identifying him. He speaks frequently of the necessity that this reported speech be natural. Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison, he says, is a failure because of the very

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 19
[2] Cf. Ibid., p. 261
[3] Cf. Ibid., p. 37
Also Cf. Introduction to Ivanhoe, p. 24
[4] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 19
[5] Page ix

care the author took to endow his conversation with every becoming grace; "His talk is too stiffly complimentary, too like the printed book, to permit us to associate the ideas of gentleman-like ease and affability with it."[1] In discussing Clara Reeve's use of ghosts in The Old English Baron he says that the author should not exceed the reader's credulity, should "evoke no spirits whom he is not capable of endowing with language corresponding to their supernatural character."[2] While discussing the works of this same author, he gives his theory of the shaping of the character's language in historical fiction. " To interest the readers of the present time" the author must "invest his characters with language and sentiments unknown to the period assigned to his story." The only way, he says, to gain this object and at the same time to escape the "just censure of the rigid antiquary" is to adopt "the style of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, sufficiently antiquated to accord with the antiquated character of the narrative, yet copious enough to express all that is necessary to its interest, and to supply that deficiency of colouring which the more ancient times do not afford."[3] In the dedicatory epistle of Ivanhoe he discusses this subject more in detail. Here he says that Chatterton's error was the fact that he rejected every word that was modern, and "produced a dialect entirely different from any that had ever been spoken

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 37
[2] Ibid., p. 207
[3] Ibid., p. 209

in Great Britain."[1] "He who would imitate an ancient language with success," he says, "must attend rather to its grammatical character, turn of arrangement, than labour to collect extraordinary and antiquated terms, which do not approach the number of words still in use, though perhaps somewhat altered in sense and spelling, in the proportion of one to ten."[2] He approves of Mrs. Smith's use of language.[3] To make the speech of the character sound natural, finally, Scott thinks the writer should combine the specialized language of a period and social class with the language that "belongs to all ranks and conditions, all countries and ages."[4]

Scott realized, furthermore, that the author could do much toward delineating his characters by showing them performing characteristic actions. As was the case with speech, the paramount issue here is naturalness. He thought, therefore, like Wordsworth, that it was better to select characters from a "rude people" because their actions, he says, "are always founded on nature."[5] He thinks the actions of Sir Charles Grandison are as unnatural as his speech. Richardson made him so polite that his behavior takes on "a heavy formality, and a sort of flourishing politeness."[6] In the creation of supernatural characters, moreover, the writer should be guided by his

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1 Introduction to Ivanhoe, p. xxiv
2 Ibid., p. 24
3 Cf. The Lives of the Novelists, p. 332
4 Introduction to Ivanhoe, p. xxiv
5 Introduction to The Monastery, p. xvii
6 The Lives of the Novelists, p. 37

ability to endow them with characteristic actions.[1] What actions the author has his historical characters perform are determined by the same principle as his speech and customs. Part of the actions should be characteristic of generation or so previous, but most of them should be modern because the "actions, however influenced by the peculiar state of society, must still, upon the whole, bear a strong resemblance to those of the present."[2]

Above all the actions of the characters should possess moral unity - do or say nothing out of character with themselves. Scott severely censures the characters of Smollett for their moral depravity. "While we do justice to the author's motives," he says, "we are obliged to deny the validity of his reasoning."[3] The character of Count Fathom he considers a "disgusting pollution of the imagination."[4] His women, excepting Aurelia Darnel, he condemns because their actions excite "rather appetite than affection."[5] Fielding, also, incurs his wrath on this point. The character of Tom Jones he thinks is "unnecessarily degraded by the nature of his intercourse with Lady Bell Aston. This is one of the circumstances", he adds, "which incline us to believe that Fielding's ideas of what was gentleman-like and honourable had sustained some depreciation."[6] Even Richardson does not escape his re-

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[1] Cf. The Lives of the Novelists, p. 207
[2] Introduction to Ivanhoe, p. xxiv
[3] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 83
[4] Ibid., p. 83
[5] Ibid., p. 108
[6] Ibid., p. 64

proof on this count. "The character of Pamela", he says, "is somewhat sunk by the eager gratitude with which she accepts the hand of a tyrannical and cruel master when he could not at a cheaper rate make himself master of her person. There is want of taste" he continues, "in this humiliation; and a touch of spirit upon the occasion would not have misbecome even the all-forgiving Pamela."[1] To have characters thus act out of character Scott considered a weakness in delineation.

The final means of indirect delineation by environment Scott understood very well. His knowledge of this method has already been discussed indirectly in the section on customs and will receive more detailed treatment in the section on setting control. It may be said here, however, that he knew the value of placing his wicked characters in a fitting environment, of giving his noble characters a rich and colorful background, and of having his supernatural characters live in ruined and lonely haunts.

In addition to these various ways of characterization Scott knew that the best characters resulted from a combination of individual and typical traits. "Nature", he says, "maintains a certain balance of good and evil in all her works; and there is no state perhaps so utterly desolate which does not possess some source of gratification peculiar to itself."[2] In giving his own method Scott says: "I have always studied to generalize the portraits, so that they should still seem, on

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, pp. 20- 22
[2] Introduction to The Black Dwarf, p. xxi

the whole, the productions of fancy, though possessing some resemblance to real individuals."[1] Fielding's Jonathan Wild he considers a "cold personification of the abstract principle of evil"[2] and not a real character. The "unattainable excellence" of Sir Charles Grandison he thinks is just as poor a character at the other extreme. "All this," he says, "does well enough in a funeral sermon or monumental inscription, where, by privilege of suppressing the worst qualities and exaggerating the better, such images of perfection are sometimes presented. But in the living world such unspotted worth is not to be met with."[3] Le Sage's character, Gil Blas, on the other hand, he likes because he "has all the weaknesses and inequalities proper to human nature, and which we daily recognize in our acquaintance."[4]

Scott realized the danger, however, of carrying this generalization too far. He criticizes the characters in Mrs. Radcliffe's Sicilian Romance because they are hastily sketched "without any attempt at individual distinctions, being cast in the usual mould of ardent lovers, tyrannical parents, with domestic ruffians, guards, and others."[5] Strange as it may seem, nevertheless, Scott insisted that the heroes and the heroines, especially the heroines, of all novels should always be the same. He approves of Mrs. Radcliffe's heroines because, al-

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[1] Introduction to The Antiquary, p. vi
[2] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 110
[3] Ibid., p. 32
[4] Ibid., p. 259
[5] Ibid., p. 213

though they have "some pleasant touches of originality, they wear the usual costume of innocence, purity, and simplicity, as proper to heroines as white gowns are to their sex in general."[1] He thought it strange, furthermore, that the heroine of The Heart of Midlothian"succeeded in some degree in awakening an interest in behalf of one devoid of those accomplishments which belong to a heroine almost by right."[2] In general, however, he preferred characters with some individualizing traits.

This did not blind him, nevertheless, to the dangers of too great an individualization which leads to caricature. The characters in Smollett's Roderick Random he thinks are not quite so good as those in Peregrine Pickle because they "border upon caricature."[3] "The characters of Mrs. Smith", he says, "are conceived with truth and force, though we do not recollect any one which bears the stamp of actual novelty; and indeed, an effort at introducing such, unless the author is powerfully gifted with the inventive faculty, is more likely to produce monsters than models of composition."[4]

Summary. In his critical statements Scott recognizes nearly every means of character delineation although he emphasizes the direct means of description and exposition. He realized, furthermore, that the characters possessing both typical and individual traits are the most successful.

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 214
[2] Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel, p. vii
[3] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 79
[4] Ibid., p. 332

c. Setting Control. Perhaps it was the poet in Scott which led him to consider scenery as interesting enough to stand alone. Whatever the reason, he did consider the function of setting to be largely aesthetic. He admired Mackenzie's "beautiful landscape-painting which he has exhibited in many passages assuring us of the accuracy and delicacy of his touch in delineating the beauties of nature."[1] The "exquisite morsels of landscape" in Le Sage, also, win his praise. Ann Radcliffe's The Romance of the Forest he considered "striking" because the story was "varied and relieved by descriptions of the ruined mansion, and the forest with which it is surrounded, under so many different points of view, now gloomy, now terrible - scenes which could only have been drawn by one to whom nature had given the eye of a painter, with the spirit of a poet."[2] While he loved this detached scene painting, he realized that too much of it was a bad thing in a novel. He thought The Castle of Otranto, for example, superior to the works of Mrs. Radcliffe because the simplicity of his narrative did not admit "that luxuriant, florid and high-varnished landscape painting" with which she "not unfrequently encumbered her kindred romances. Description, for its own sake," he continues, "is scarcely once attempted in TheCastle of Otranto; and if authors would consider how very much this restriction tends to realize narrative, they might be tempted to abridge at least the showy and wordy

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 301
[2] Ibid., p. 215

exuberance of style fitter for poetry than prose."[1]

Scott knew, furthermore, the value of choosing a place and time setting which had for the reader a connotative interest. In the Introduction to The Monastery he says: "The country around Melrose, if possessing less of romantic beauty than some other scenes in Scotland, is connected with so many associations of a fanciful nature, in which the imagination takes delight, as might well induce one even less attached to the spot than the Author to accomodate the imaginary scenes he was framing to the localities to which he was partial."[2] He says, moreover, that he selected the time setting of The Fortunes of Nigel because "the strong contrast produced by the opposition of ancient manners to those which are gradually subduing them affords the lights and shadows necessary to give effect to a fictitious narrative; and while such a period entitles the author to introduce incidents of a marvellous and improbable character, as arising out of the turbulent independence and ferocity, belonging to old habits of violence, still influencing the manners of a people who had been so lately in a barbarous state."[3] Such statements provide evidence that Scott knew that the novelist could gain a great deal of interest by selecting times which already had for the reader an imaginative value.

The use of the setting to make the action seem more plau-

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 202
[2] Page ix
[3] Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel, p. ix

sible and the characters more real Scott , also, knew. "It must not be overlooked," he says, "that, by the circumstantial detail of minute, trivial and even uninteresting circumstances, the author (Richardson) gives to his fiction an air of reality that can scarcely otherwise be obtained."[1] While discussing the works of De Foe, he notes this same fact again. The minuteness with which he describes his scenes add to their "Fidelity."[2] Le Sage, he says, also, "created, as it were, a reality in fiction itself, by a strict attention to costume and locality."[3] In his own works he justifies his choice of a "watering-place" as the scene of St. Ronan's Well because "unquestionably," he says, "it afforded every variety of character, mixed together in a manner which cannot, without a breach of probability, be supposed to exist elsewhere; neither can it be denied that, in the concourse which such miscellaneous collections of persons afford, events extremely different from those of the quiet routine of ordinary life may, and often do take place."[4] Such is the theory of the realists, and Scott understood it very well. Like them he knew that a great deal of seeming reality could be given to the story by the mentioning of unimportant details.

Although, as can be seen, he realized the value of choosing a definite time and place, he did not approve of too ex-

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 42
[2] Ibid., p. 375
[3] Ibid., p. 261
[4] Introduction to St. Ronan's Well, p. xi

act a reproduction. While he desired his own scenes to be described with "accuracy and truth", he says it was not his purpose "to present a landscape copied from nature, but a composition in which the real scene, with which he is familiar, had afforded him some leading outlines."[1] In this and similar statements Scott declares his opinion that natural setting should not be copied exactly.

Scott knew, finally, that the setting might be used to condition the action. He censures the works of Mrs. Radcliffe because her art in this respect is too visible. "Her heroines", he says, "voluntarily expose themselves to situations which in nature a lonely female would have avoided. They are too apt to choose the midnight hour for investigating the mysteries of a deserted chamber or a secret passage and generally are only supplied with an expiring lamp when about to read the most interesting document."[2] This function of the setting - the conditioning of the action - is a very important one, and Scott realized its full significance.

Summary. Although Scott admired setting in itself, he did not overlook the fact that it performs many important functions in the story. He knew certain time and place settings have an imaginative value for the reader, that the setting could be used to "tag" the action and characters, that it could be used to make the action seem more plausible, that it should not be copied in exact detail, and, finally, that

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1 Introduction to The Monastery, p. ix
2 The Lives of the Novelists, p. 231

it might be used to condition the action.

## 2. Style

Scott probably has a less clearly defined idea in regard to style than on any other element of technique. This is undoubtedly explained by the fact that the art of writing prose was not very old when he wrote; and, still more significant, formal instruction in English composition and in the history of criticism had scarcely begun. Scott, nevertheless, did formulate some opinions. He objected to the mock heroic style that Fielding uses in some of his novels, "which tells ludicrous events," he says, "in the language of the classical Epic; a vein of pleasantry which is soon wrought out, and which Fielding has employed so often as to expose him to the charge of pedantry."[1] Fielding's failure as a dramatist and his success as a novelist he accounts for by the fact that his "chief talent lies in addressing the imagination only." His style is, therefore, more "expanded and circumstantial" a style better fitted to the novel than to the drama. Scott says, "where so much must be left to the efforts of the actor, with his allies and assistants, the scene-painter and the property man."[2] "The very qualities most excellent in a novelist," he says, "are out of place, and an impediment to success on the stage. Description and narration, which form the essence of the novel, must be sparingly introduced into dramatic composition."[3]

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 57
[2] Ibid., p. 51
[3] Ibid., p. 50

It is the object of the novelist, he thinks, to place before the reader as accurate a representation of the events "as can be done by the mere force of an excited imagination, without the assistance of material objects. His appeal is made to the world of fancy and of ideas, and in this consists his strength and weakness, his poverty and his wealth."[1] Such statements would lead one to believe that Scott considered the emotional and aesthetic qualities of style the most important in a novel.

Prolixity is another stylistic quality that Scott mentions frequently. It would seem strange indeed that a man as verbose as Scott, and moreover a lawyer, should consider verbosity a weakness in style. Yet he did so consider it. He gives two reasons for the prolixity in Richardson's style. It was caused partly, Scott thinks, by his "innate love of detail"; but mostly by the fact that he tells his story in letter form. "A game of whist", he says, "if the subject of a letter, must be detailed as much at length as a debate in the House of Commons, upon a subject of great national interest; and hence his tendency to prolixity."[2] He describes the style of Sterne as "excessive, rambling, excursive." Rabelais, from whom Sterne copied his style, he says was justified in assuming "this Harlequin's habit" that he might use it as a cover "to vent his satire against state and church." But Sterne, he says, assum-

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 49
[2] Ibid., p. 41

ed it "only as a mode of attracting attention, and of making the public stare; and, therefore his extravagances, like those of a feigned madman, are cold and forced even in the midst of his most irregular flights."[1] Scott evidently disliked a loose rambling style.

The two qualities of style that Scott liked best were those of beauty and humor. To succeed perfectly, he thought, a novelist must have "most of the properties of a poet". He enjoyed the works of Mackenzie because he "possesses the powers of melody in addition to those of poetical conception."[2] The works of Mrs. Radcliffe, also, won his admiration because she introduced"into her prose fictions a beautiful and fanciful tone of natural description and impressive narration, which had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry."[3] Characteristic expressions of his liking for the quality of humor may be found in his criticisms of Richardson's works. He liked Richardson's wit and his "quaint drollery"[4]. In his Journal he records his liking for Lady Morgan's novel O'Daniel because the "comic part is very rich and entertaining."[5] Scott never says anything more definite about style than the statement made in the quotations above. To him as to many critics it was rather a *je ne sais quoi* quality. He did, however, as

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[1] The Lives of the Novelists, p. 183
[2] Ibid., p. 295
[3] Ibid., p. 213
[4] Ibid., p. 45
[5] Lockhart's Life of Scott, p. 511

can be seen, recognize it as an element of technique in composition.

## IV. SCOTT'S CONCEPTION OF THE TECHNIQUE OF THE NOVEL AS SHOWN IN HIS NOVELS

### A. PURPOSE

Scott's contention in his critical works that the predominant aim of the novel should be the entertainment of the reader is well supported by his own novels.[1] Carlyle bewailed the fact that the Waverley Novels delivered no great gospel. This is a fault in his estimation, as a writer should have a higher aim, he thinks, than that of "harmlessly amusing indolent, languid men."[2] Most critics, however, consider such an aim sufficient. Although we may disagree with Carlyle and agree with some other critics who say that Scott did have a gospel to deliver to the world, a gospel that Carlyle detested, that of feudalism, still we must admit that his paramount aim is to interest the reader.[3] In such novels as Quentin Durward, Ivanhoe, and The Talisman he made the past more interesting than it had ever been made before in fiction by showing the reader that, as Carlyle says, "the bygone ages of the

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[1] Cf. Supra, pp. 27-32
[2] Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. IV, p. 74
[3] Cf. Ian Maclaren, Books and Bookmen, pp. 127-172

world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, statespapers, controversies, and abstractions of men."[1] Another way in which he sought to interest the reader was by presenting for him a picture of manners, especially the manners of Scotland. "For", says Scott, "if a man will paint from nature, he will be likely to amuse those who are daily looking at it."[2] This type of interest is illustrated by such novels as Waverley, The Heart of Midlothian, and The Monastery.

His novels, furthermore, illustrate his belief that even veracity should be sacrificed if necessary to gain interest. Scott believed, as has been shown,[3] that a novel should create the illusion of reality; and the Waverley Novels do, on the whole, give the impression of verisimilitude. Carlyle says that they possess a "solidity and veracity even of imagination."[4] In spite of his firm belief in verisimilitude, however, Scott does not hesitate to change even facts of history or to introduce improbabilities into his novels, if by so doing he can heighten the interest. In The Abbott for example, he changes the sight from which Queen Mary viewed the Battle of Langside from Cathcart Castle to Crookstone Castle and defends himself with these words; "It seemed so much to increase the interest of the scene", he says, "that I have been unwilling to make, in this particular instance, the fiction give

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[1] Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, p. 77
[2] Introduction to The Antiquary, p. iv
[3] Cf. Supra, pp. 31-32
[4] Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. IV, p. 78

way to the fact."[1] In Waverley he has the Baron of Bradwardine discuss a kind of agriculture at that time unknown in Scotland.[2] In The Monastery to add color to the setting he has the monks gather under a large oak tree, although it is well-known that oak trees never existed in that region of Scotland.[3] In Ivanhoe there is the violent breach of probability when Athelstane is resuscitated.[4] Again in The Monastery the reader's credulity is infringed upon when Sir Piercie Shafton recovers over night from a mortal wound. So it is in all his novels; he does not hesitate to change facts or to introduce improbabilities into his stories if by so doing he can increase their interest.

That a novel should never be written for a didactic purpose was, also, Scott's belief; and his novels again support his conviction. Not one of them is written to spread propaganda; neither is any of them, with the possible exception of The Heart of Midlothian, which has an expressed moral at the end, written to teach a moral. Scott tells his stories simply because he loves to tell a good story and, although he never perverts facts, human nature, nor moral law to attain his end, that end is always the same - interest.

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[1] Note 27, p. 440
[2] Page 61
[3] Page 363
[4] Page 422

## B. MATERIAL

Scott secured the material for his novels from three sources: from his own observation, from his reading and things he had heard, and from his own inventiveness. "I have buried myself in libraries," he says, "to extract from the nonsense of ancient days new nonsense of my own. From this learned sepulchre I emerged, to mingle in the crowd, and to elbow amongst the throng, making my way from the highest society to the lowest, undergoing the scorn, or, what is harder to brook, the patronizing condescension of one, and enduring the vulgar familiarity of the other to collect materials to write a successful novel."[1]

Scott traveled a great deal, especially in Scotland, before and during the time he was writing the Waverley Novels. Although there is little direct evidence that he saw happenings during these travels which later suggested plots for his novels, he probably witnessed many incidents that were added to his supply of plot material. This is undoubtedly true of the group portraying Scottish life and manners - such as, Waverley, The Monastery, and The Heart of Midlothian. We do know, however, that many of the characters in his novels were at least modeled after real people he met while "elbowing amongst the throng." The Baron of Bradwardine in Waverley, for example, was patterned after the life and character of a real

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[1] Introduction to Waverley, p. xxix
[2] Cf. The Monastery, Note 25, p. 379

individual, a Mr. Stewart, whom Scott "knew well."[1] There is abundant evidence, furthermore, that his observation supplied much of his setting material. The physical place settings were often copied after places he had seen. The celebrated ruins of Melrose so vividly pictured in The Monastery, for instance, were in the immediate neighborhood of his own residence. The remains of an old fortress called Lochside Tower in Yetholm Loch served as a model for Avenel Castle as described in the same novel.[2] Some of the country of Waverley, furthermore, the author says is real and "about five miles from Aberfoyle."[3] Scott even visited the site of many of his historical novels. In Ivanhoe, for instance, the ruins of an old Saxon fortification suggested the castle of Coningsburgh.[4] He says that he "saw the site and ruins of Jorvaulx Abbey in the pleasant valley of the river Jore or Ure, in the North Riding of Yorkshire."[5] He also visited the site of the Battle of Stamford.[6] This evidence, together with much more given in course of his novels and in the introductions and notes attached, justifies the conclusion that much of Scott's material was secured through his own observation.

Scott was a voluminous reader, however, and a great deal of his material came from this source and from things he had

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[1] Introduction to Waverley, p. xxix
[2] Cf. The Monastery, Note 25, p. 379
[3] Waverley, Note 25, p. 477
[4] Cf. Note 27, p. 460
[5] Note 21, p. 459
[6] Cf. Note 11, p. 453

heard. A great many of the incidents for his plots he secured from history, manuscripts, and old legends. The idea of the struggle between the Saxons and the Normans in Ivanhoe, for example, is taken from Logan's tragedy of Runnemede.[1] The incident of the meeting of the King and Friar Tuck in the cell of the hermit is taken from the metrical tale entitled The Kyng and the Hermite.[2] The "formidable" name of Front-de-Boeuf came from a roll of Norman warriors, occurring in the Auchinleck M.S.[3] Most of the material for Ivanhoe, however, Scott says he"found in the singular Anglo-Norman M.S. of Sir Arthur Wardour."[4] Nearly all the supernatural material used in The Monastery, moreover, came from legends of the country surrounding Melrose.[5] While he was collecting material for Waverley, the Author says he was acquainted with some of the old warriors of 1745 whom he "easily induced to fight their battles over again for the benefit of a willing listener like myself."[6] "The mutual protection afforded by Waverley and Talbot to each other," he continues, "upon which the whole plot depends" is taken from an anecdote of the war of 1745.[11] The incident upon which the story of The Heart of Midlothian is based was told

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[1] Cf. Introduction, p. xi
[2] Ibid., p. xvi
[3] Ibid., p. xvii
[4] Ibid., p. xxvii
[5] Cf. Introduction, p. viii
[6] General Preface, p. xii
[11] Introduction, p. xxvii

him by a Miss Lawson.[1] Some of the material for The Talisman was obtained from Ellis's Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances.[2] "The manner of the death of the supposed Grand Master of the Templars", Scott says, "was taken from a real tragedy enacted by Saladin upon the person of Reginald De Chatillon."[3] A great deal of the material for Quentin Durward, finally, was taken from Mimoires de Philippe des Comes.

Many of the characters of Scott's novels, also, came from history and legends that he had read or heard about. Many historical characters are to be found in his novels. In Ivanhoe there is Richard I, Prince John, and a host of minor historical characters; in The Talisman, there is Richard I again, Conrade of Montserrat, and Saladin; in Quentin Durward - Louis XI, Charles of Burgundy, Tristran l'Hermite, and William de la Marck; in Waverley - Prince Charles Edward and Colonel Gardiner; in The Heart of Midlothian - the Duke of Argyle and Queen Caroline. The famous friar of Robin Hood's band in Ivanhoe was modeled after the "fighting parson in the old play of Sir John Old Castle."[4] The character of Locksley was taken from the ballads of Robin Hood.[5] The character of the White Lady in The Monastery was suggested to him by a similar character in a work by Compte de la Motte Fouque.[6] The character of Sir Piercie Shaft-

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[1] Cf. Introduction, p. xiii
[2] Cf. p. 414
[3] Note 11, p. 418
[4] Note 22, p. 459
[5] Note 26, p. 403
[6] Cf. Introduction, p. xiii

on, with his courtly manner and conversation, was, also, suggested to him by his reading from the book Euphues and His England.[1]

Many of the scenes and much of the social setting, also, came from his reading and what he had heard. In Ivanhoe there is the historical background of the crusades, Prince John's attempt to usurp the English throne and his abettment by certain Normans with selfish interests, Richard's secret appearance in England in 1194, the contrast between the Saxons and the Normans before the amalgamation of the races, and, finally, the harsh treatment of the Jews in the Middle Ages. In The Talisman the historical background is again that of the crusades, only this time in Palestine. In Quentin Durward it is the romance of the 15th century during the reign of Louis XI in France, when the feudal system was passing. In Waverley it is the Scottish rebellion of 1745; in The Heart of Midlothian, the Porteous Mob at Edinburgh in 1737; in The Monastery, the contentious age of the Reformation in Scotland. The material for all this background, for a great many of the characters, and for many of the incidents in his plots Scott secured through his reading and hearing.

A great deal of the material for the novels, finally, is imaginary - secured through Scott's own inventiveness. Even the material suggested to him by his observation and reading was revamped to suit his purpose. The love plot of his novels

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[1] Cf. Introduction, p. xv

is nearly always imaginary. The love intrigue of Quentin Durward, for example, Scott says, "is fiction used only as a means to bring out the character of Louis."[1] Again in the Introduction to The Talisman, he says, "Most of the incidents introduced in the following tale are fictitious; and that reality where it does exist, is only in the characters of the piece."[2] Nearly all the characters of his love plots are, also, imaginary. In The Monastery, for instance, he says the names were real but the characters fictitious.[3] Even those characters modeled after real people are in his own words "generalized".[4] A great deal of the background in the novels, moreover, is the result of his own invention. A large portion of the social background, especially in the historical novels, is by necessity fanciful. Even the natural setting based upon real places is altered. The fountain and the holly-tree of the White Lady in The Monastery, Scott says do not exist in the country surrounding Melrose, while the course of the river is changed a great deal.[5] The mansion, Tully-Veolan, in Waverley, possesses characteristics peculiar, Scott says, to "various old Scottish seats."[6] As Scott never visited the Holy Land, finally, the setting of The Talisman must be largely imaginary. He says

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[1] Introduction, p. xvii
[2] Page xiii
[3] Cf. Introduction, p. xi
[4] Supra, p. 37
[5] Cf. Introduction, p. x
[6] Note 7, p. 472

himself, "I felt the difficulty of giving a vivid picture of a part of the world with which I was almost totally unacquainted."[1] A large part of the plot, character, and setting material in the novels is undoubtedly imaginary.

Summary. A great deal of the material for the Waverley Novels Scott secured through his own observation. Some of the places are so accurately described that it is said his novels may be used as a tourist guide; while many of the characters were identified as replicas of people he knew in real life. There is, also, abundant evidence that a large portion of his material was suggested to him by his wide reading and from legends he had heard. The rest of the vast amount of material displayed in the novels was the result of his own invention.

## C. METHOD

### 1. Structural

a. Plot Handling. Plot in Scott's novels is probably one of his weakest narrative elements. He is not greatly concerned with plot, and his novels are , therefore, not well-planned. In the Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel he says;

> "I have repeatedly laid down my work to scale, divided it into volumes and chapters, and endeavoured to construct a story which I meant should evolve itself gradually and strikingly, maintain suspense, and stimulate curiosity; and which, finally, should terminate in a striking catastrophe. But I think

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[1] Introduction, p. ix

> there is a demon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write, and leads it astray from the purpose. Characters expand under my hand; incidents are multiplied; the story lingers while the materials increase; my regular mansion turns out a Gothic anomaly, and the work is closed long before I have attained the point I proposed."[1]

Four years later under an entry in his Journal for October 18, 1826, he makes a similar statement. "A well-contrived story", he says, "requires thought, consideration - the writing out of a regular plan or plot - above all, the adhering to one - which I never can do, for the ideas rise as I write, and bear such a disproportioned extent to that which each occupied at the first concoction, that I shall never be able to take the trouble."[2]

The weakness in planning, mentioned above, is evident in many of his novels. Waverley, for example, began with hardly a thought of plot at all. Scott admired the Irish scenes of Miss Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent and wished to do for Scotland what she had done for Ireland.[3] The first ten chapters of the novel illustrate how far he was led astray by the plotlessness of his model. The plan of Guy Mannering, furthermore, was changed during the process of composition - changed without a great deal of revision upon that already written. "The scheme projected," Scott says, "may be traced in the first three or four chapters of the work; but farther consideration induced the author to lay his purpose aside. It appeared on mature

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[1] Page xxii
[2] Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. V, pp. 5 and 6
[3] Cf. Introduction to Waverley, p. xiii

consideration, that astrology, though its influence was once received and admitted by Bacon himself, does not now retain influence over the general mind sufficient even to constitute the mainspring of a romance."[1] In the Introduction to The Antiquary he says, "I have been more solicitous to describe manners minutely than to arrange in any case an artificial and combined narrative, and have but to regret that I felt myself unable to unite these two requisites of a good novel."[2] The general plan of The Monastery, finally, he says, "was to conjoin two characters in that bustling and contentious age who, thrown into situations which gave them different views on the subject of the Reformation, should, with the same sincerity and purity of intention, dedicate themselves, the one to the support of the sinking fabric of the Catholic Church, the other to the establishment of the Reformed doctrines."[3] Such indefinite planning is characteristic of the whole group of the Waverley Novels.

The weakness in planning first makes itself manifest in his novels through defects in the unity of his plot structure. In a perfectly unified plot every incident included advances the action, only those incidents essential to the weaving of the pattern are included, and a consistent point of view is maintained throughout. [4] Scott's crime is largely one of over inclusion. Some one has compared the plot structure of a novel

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[1] Introduction to Guy Mannering, p. xii
[2] Page v
[3] Introduction to The Monastery, p. vii
[4] Cf. Supra, 15

to a skeleton and the incidents to the flesh that covers the bones. If the same figure of speech were applied to Scott's novels, they would at least be judged as being corpulent.

Tales and scenes that have nothing to do with the plot or are just "tacked on" form a large part of the excrescence. The tale of Dame Elspeth in The Antiquary[1], Sheerkolf's tale of magic and the Hermit's story in The Talisman[2] are representative of the tales without a plot function; while the scene of archery immediately following the tournament in Ivanhoe[3], together with the opening scenes in Waverley[4] and The Heart of Midlothian[5], is typical of the scenes which do not advance the action. Lumps of description and long expository passages on manners, also, disrupt the plot unity.[6] In The Heart of Midlothian, for example, he describes at great length the Salisbury Crags southeast of Edinburgh. He apologizes to the reader by saying that he liked the scene so well that he was "unable to pass it over without an episodical description."[11] There are many lyric interludes, furthermore, which, although they sometimes aid in characterization and add color to the narrative, on the whole add to the bulk of unnecessary plot material. In Ivanhoe there

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[1] Chapter XXXIII
[2] Chapters I to X
[3] Pp. 29 and 189
[4] Chapter I
[5] Chapter XIII
[6] Cf. Infra, p. 93
[11] Page 71

are the characteristic medieval songs of Richard and the Friar;[1] of Richard and Wamba;[2] the death song of the Saxon hag, Ulrica; and the religious hymns of Rebecca.[3] In The Talisman there are the eastern chants of Saladin[4] and the songs of the minstrel, Blondel;[5] in Quentin Durward, the love lyrics of Countess Isabelle;[6] in The Heart of Midlothian, the mad songs of Madge Wildfire;[11] in The Monastery, the supernatural chants of the White Lady;[22] and in Waverley, finally, there are the many Scottish songs, sung chiefly by Flora Mac-Ivor and Davie Gellatley.

Scott gives a great many historical incidents, moreover, which are not woven into the plot. The entire first Chapter of Quentin Durward, for instance, is devoted to the history of France in the 15th Century; while Chapters II to V in The Heart of Midlothian are used to set forth the history of the Porteous Mob in Edinburgh. There is one other type of material which checks the progress of the action in the novels - the comments by the author upon his art. They not only make breaks in the action, but also tend to destroy the story illusion. In Chapter V of Waverley, for illustration, he pauses to tell the reader how the minuteness with which he traced Waverley's early pur-

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[1] pp. 159 and 161
[2] pp. 395 and 396
[3] Page 378
[4] Page 31
[5] Pages 273 to 276
[6] Page 40
[11] Page 417
[22] Page 40

suits compares to the method of Cervantes; in Chapter XXIV he thinks aloud for a whole page as to whether the chapter should be short or long. He stops the action of The Heart of Midlothian to explain the difficulties an author meets in the weaving of his plot.[1] In The Fortunes of Nigel he devotes several pages to the explanation of how he thought a novel should end.[2] All this material - inserted tales, special scenes, lumps of description, passages on manners and history, expositions upon the author's art, and many lyric interludes - form the bulk of unnecessary material that weakens the plot unity.

A frequent shifting of the point of view which confuses the reader is the second weakness of the novels in plot unity. Scott usually assumes the omniscient point of view and regards his characters and incidents with an impersonal attitude. The evident advantage of such a point of view is that the narrator is never obliged to account for his possession of intimate information.[3] It has corresponding disadvantages,[4] however, and from these Scott was not free. Because of the aloofness of the point of view, his scenes frequently lack a certain vividness- a certain immediacy of observation - and the reader is not sure from just what angle he is viewing the events. Scott undoubtedly realized the disadvantages of the method, as he sometimes assumes a definite point of view temporarily to give to a certain episode vividness and immediacy. A good example is Rebec-

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[1] Page 161
[2] Pages 434 ff.
[3] Cf. Hamilton, A Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 129
[4] Cf. Ibid., p. 129

ca's report of the fight before the castle of Front-de-Boeuf.[1] Scott attempted to tell the story of Redgauntlet from the definite point of view of several actors by means of the device of letters written by the people of the plot. The novel, however, is an interesting example of the breakdown of the epistolary form, for Scott soon gives it up and assumes the less restrictive omniscient point of view.

Scott probably came as near to maintaining a consistent point of view in Quentin Durward as in any of his novels. The reader sees almost the entire action take place over the shoulder of Quentin. There is a great structural advantage to be gained by telling the story in such a manner, as the hero is present in every scene and acts as a central unifying figure.[2] Even here, however, Scott finally finds the advantage gained not worth the difficulty involved, and in Chapter XII says:

> "In this place the Memoirs which we have chiefly followed in compiling this true history were unhappily defective; for, founded chiefly on the information supplied by Quentin, they do not convey the purport of the dialogue which, in his absence, took place between the King and his secret counsellor. Fortunately, the library of Hautlieu contains a manuscript from which we have been able to extract a very full account of the obscure favourite's conversation with Louis which we might otherwise have sought in vain."[3]

After the incidents of the interview, he again assumes his original point of view and holds it quite well until Chapter XXVI, where he is confronted with the difficulty of having Quentin in two places at the same time, and proceeds to tell

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[1] Cf. Ivanhoe, Chapter XXIX, pp. 267-277
[2] Cf. Hamilton: A Manual of the Art of Fiction, p. 122
[3] Page 137

the rest of the story in his usual omniscient method.

The device of a unifying strand of action, the final means of giving unity to the plot structure, Scott, also, uses rather ineffectively. To be effective the line of action chosen must be continuous throughout the entire story. Scott ordinarily uses for this purpose the action centered around his hero, but neither this line of action nor any other continues unbroken throughout the length of any of his novels. In fact the unifying action is frequently absent and is sometimes almost forgotten.[1] The diagram on page 81 illustrates just how broken up the action usually is. The hero action in The Talisman, as may also be seen from the diagram on page 82, probably comes as near being continuous as the unifying action in any of the novels. Because the novels so consistently fail to have a unifying strand of action, because they fail to maintain a consistent point of view, and because they include so much unnecessary material, the plots of the novels suffer somewhat from a lack of unity of effect.

The next general weakness in the planning of the plots is one of poor coherence. Coherence governs the weaving of the several strands of action and the arrangement of the events in such a manner that the plot movement advances steadily up to the climax.[2] Scott combines two methods of weaving the different strands together in his novels - the alternating and

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[1] Cf. Ivanhoe, Chapters XXIX to XXXIX; The Monastery, Chapters XXVI to XXXVI; Quentin Durward, Chapters XXVI to XXXI; Heart of Midlothian, Chapters II to V

[2] Cf. Supra, p. 15

the interwoven.[1] By using the chapters as a unit for examining the sequence of the narrative, the weaving of the several lines of action in Ivanhoe and The Talisman may be diagrammed as follows:

Ivanhoe

| Chp.[2] | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | | | | | - | - | | - | - | - | - | - | | | - | | | | | | |
| II | | | | | | | - | - | | | | - | - | - | - | - | - | | | | - |
| III | | | | | | | | - | | | - | | - | | | - | - | | - | - | |
| IV | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | | | - | | - | | | | - | - | | - |
| V | | | | | - | - | - | - | | - | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Chp. | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | | - | | | | | - | - | | | | | | | | | | |
| II | | | | | | - | | - | | | - | | - | | | | | |
| III | | | | | | | | | | | - | - | | | | | | |
| IV | | - | | - | - | - | | | - | - | | | | | | | | |
| V | - | | - | | | | | | | | - | | | - | - | - | - | - |

| Chp. | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | - | - | - | - | - |
| II | - | - | - | | - |
| III | | - | | | |
| IV | | | - | | - |
| V | | | | - | - |

Lines of Action

I. Wilfred of Ivanhoe - disinherited by his father, exiled from home and the lady of his heart.
II. Richard the Lion-hearted - conspired against by his brother and virtually a political exile from England.
III. Robin Hood and his merry men - dispossessed of forest freedom by the barons and made outlaws.
IV. Cedric, Athelstane, Rowena, and the Saxons, disinherited

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[1] Cf. Supra, p. 14
[2] Arabic numerals represent the chapters; Roman numerals, the lines of action.

by the Norman Conquest and living as subjects in the land their fathers had ruled.
V. Isaac, Rebecca, and the Jews - strangers in a foreign land.

## The Talisman

| Chp. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | - | - | - | - | - | | - | - | - | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | | - | - | - |
| II | | | | | | | | | - | - | - | | - | | | | | | - | | - | |
| III | | | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | - | - | | | | |
| IV | | | | | | - | - | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| V | - | - | - | | | | - | - | - | | - | | | - | | | - | - | | - | | - |

| Chp. | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| II | | - | | | | - |
| III | | | | | | - |
| IV | - | - | | - | - | - |
| V | - | | - | | - | - |

### Lines of Action

I. Sir Kenneth, a Knight of the Crusade and the lover of Edith Plantagenet.
II. The conspiracy against Richard lead by Conrade.
III. The Hermit of Engaddi, who is working for the freedom of the Holy Land.
IV. Richard I of England, leader of the Crusade to regain the Holy Land.
V. Saladin, who defends his country against the Christian invaders.

These diagrams illustrate several things about Scott's method of weaving together the strands of the plot. In the chapters where there is more than one line of action present, in the first place, interweaving is necessary, and here the interwoven method is employed. The diagrams show clearly, however, that Scott's usual method was the alternating. By this latter method he advances one column of characters to a convenient halting place and then returns to bring up the other line.

To bring the several strands of action together, when using the interwoven method, Scott has the characters representing each meet in battle, at tournaments, and at banquets. In Ivanhoe three lines of the action are brought together in Chapter V by the storm which forces the characters to seek shelter in the home of Cedric at Rotherwood; in Chapter VIII all five lines are brought together by the tournament at Ashby; in Chapter XLIV four lines are brought together by the combat at Templestowe between Ivanhoe and Bois-Guilbert for the life of Rebecca and by the nuptials of Ivanhoe and Rowena. In The Talisman two lines of action converge in the first chapter when Saladin and Kenneth meet in combat at The Diamond of the Desert; in Chapter VII three lines converge when Kenneth brings Saladin to the Christian camp to cure Richard of his fever; in Chapter XI four lines meet when Leopold of Austria tears down the English banner and raises his own in its place; in the concluding chapter all the lines of action are brought together by the combat at The Diamond of the Desert between Conrade and Kenneth and by the banquet given by Saladin to celebrate the occasion. These illustrations are quite representative of Scott's methods of bringing the several lines of action together.

To bind the actions together Scott ordinarily uses a character who is common in the several actions. Quentin Durward, Ivanhoe, and Waverley perform this function in the novels cal-

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[1] Cf. Infra, p. 114

led by their names. In The Heart of Midlothian it is Jeanie Deans; in The Monastery, Halbert Glendinning; and in The Talisman, Sir Kenneth. By the use of these unifying characters, together with other ubiquitous characters, urged to action by motives which will be discussed in a later section,[1] Scott succeeded in using the interwoven method at times quite effectively.

As may be seen from the diagrams, however, Scott's usual method of weaving was the alternating. Herein lies the greatest weakness in the coherence of the plots. That Scott realized the weakness inherent in the method may be seen from a comment he makes in The Heart of Midlothian:

> "Like the digressive Poet Aristo", he says, "I will find myself under the necessity of connecting the branches of my story, by taking up the adventures of another of the characters, and bringing them down to the point at which we have left those of Jeanie Deans. It is not, perhaps, the most artificial way of telling a story," he continues, "but it has the advantage of sparing the necessity of resuming what a knitter might call our 'dropped stitches'."[2]

Scott is often carried away from the direct road to the climax by his interest in some byway. "When I light on such a character as Bailie Jarvie or Dalgetty," he says in explanation, "my imagination brightens, and my conception becomes clearer at every step which I take in his company, although it leads me many a weary mile away from the regular road, and forces me to leap hedge and ditch to get back into the route again."[3] The

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[1] Cf. Infra, p. 85
[2] Page 161
[3] Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel, p. xxii

author usually resumes the main thread of his narrative in the novels by some such expression as this - "To return from our digression."[1] The plot frequently retrogrades, backs and fills in.[2] Many modifications of the old formula 'Let us now leave John to see what has happened to Henry', so necessary when the alternating method of weaving the strands of action together is used, are to be found in his novels. In The Talisman he says, "Our narrative retrogrades to a period shortly previous to the incidents last mentioned."[3] In Ivanhoe he returns to pick up one of his 'dropped stitches' with this statement: "Our history must needs retrograde for the space of a few pages, to inform the reader of certain passages material to his understanding."[4] The Monastery supplies another example, "The course of our story," the author says at the beginning of Chapter XXVI, "leaving for the present Halbert Glendinning to the guidance of his courage and his fortune, returns to the tower of Glendearg."[5] Such expressions become necessary when the alternating method of weaving the strands of the action is used.

To complicate and to motivate the action, to keep it moving forward to the climax, Scott makes use of private passions common to all men - love, hatred, ambition, etc.,- and the more public passions of racial hatred, national patriotism, and re-

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[1] Heart of Midlothian, p. 51
[2] Cf. Heart of Midlothian, Chapters XVI to XVIII; The Talisman, Chapter XXII; Ivanhoe, Chapter XXVIII; The Monastery, Chapters XXVI to XXXV.
[3] Page 227
[4] Page 254
[5] Page 237

ligious fervor. The plot of Ivanhoe is motivated by the racial hatred of the Saxons and the Normans and by the more private passions such as Ivanhoe's love for Rowena, Rebecca's love for Ivanhoe, the ambition of Prince John and De Bracy, and Isaac's love of riches. In The Talisman the general motivating forces are religious fervor - the conflict of Mohammedanism and Christianity - and national pride; while the more individual passions are Kenneth's love for Edith Plantagenet, and the jealousy and ambition of the Marquis de Montserrat and the Grand Master. In Quentin Durward the main motivating forces are the selfishness, ambition, covetousness, and superstition of Louis XI, together with the love of Quentin for the Countess Isabelle. The general motivating forces in Waverley are patriotism and clan loyalty; while the individual motives are furnished by the love affairs of Waverley. In The Heart of Midlothian, except for the one force of national patriotism, all the motives are private - the religious fervor of Davie Deans, the love of Jeanie for her sister and Butler, the love of Effie and Staunton, Madge Wildfire's love for Staunton, and old Margaret Murdockson's desire to revenge the injury to her daughter.

Aside from these common private and somewhat public passions, Scott uses one other form of motivation. As much as he disliked the use of supernatural machinery,[1] he sometimes employs it in his own novels.[2] The plot of The Monastery, for

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[1] Supra, 46
[2] Cf. The Bride of Lammermoor

example, although there are minor motivating forces such as Halbert Glendinning's love for Mary Avenel and general religious fervor, resulting in the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism, the principal motivating force is supernatural, the one represented in the character of the White Lady of Avenel. She leads the Lady of Avenel and her daughter safely through the moor to the refuge of Glendearg Castle, foreshadows the death of the Lady of Avenel, twice rescues the Bible from the Catholic priests and returns it first to Halbert Glendinning and then to Mary Avenel, thus influencing them to accept the reformed doctrine. She saves Halbert Glendinning from death in the duel with Piercie Shafton by enabling him to run his sword through the body of the tiresome Euphuist, much to the delight of the reader; and then practically raises him from the dead, much to the chagrin of the reader. But it isn't often that Scott depends, as here, upon supernatural motivation; usually, as stated above, his motivation arises out of the universal passions, whether private or public, common to all men.

Emphasis is Scott's third and final general weakness in the planning of his plots, both in emphasis by position and in emphasis by bulk. Slow unforceful beginnings, weak artificial endings of both major and minor divisions, and events swelled out of proportion, are usually characteristic of the novels. It is necessary to say <u>usually</u> because some of the novels are not weak in these respects. The beginning of <u>Ivanhoe</u>, for ex-

ample, is quite strong. The story begins upon one of the minor lines of action with a specific incident, and the main theme of the novel - the struggle between the Saxons and the Normans- is introduced almost immediately. The Talisman, also, begins with a specific incident and upon a major line of action. The entire first chapter of Quentin Durward, however, is devoted to a historical introduction, no specific incident of the plot occurs and no one of the several lines of action is started. In Waverley the reader is forced to flounder through five chapters of obscure and worthless explanation before any incident significant in the plot occurs. The Monastery begins with a description of Scottish manners. Chapter I of The Heart of Midlothian, likewise, is not directly related to the plot. It is told in the first person and is supposedly the source of material for the story. The Edinburgh lawyers here introduced, as Lady Louisa Stewart, one of Scott's most friendly critics says, grow a little tiresome.[1] In general, although there are some exceptions as indicated, the Waverley Novels lack emphasis at the beginning.

The conclusions of the novels, like the beginnings, because of forced ensembles and Scott's firm belief in "the distribution of happiness at the conclusion of the piece"[2] are usually weak. Ivanhoe ends with a specific incident, but Athelstane is even raised from the dead to be present and receive his portion of the happiness and to make the immediate

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[1] Cf. Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. III, p. 267
[2] Introduction to The Betrothed, p. xix

marriage of Ivanhoe and Rowena possible. The Talisman, too, ends with a specific incident and would end with emphasis if Scott could have forborne the addition of a little peroration. The Conclusion of Quentin Durward, likewise, ends with a "tacked on" peroration. Waverley ends with a "postscript which should have been a preface."[1] The Monastery does not end with any specific incident of the plot but with a return to the imaginary Manuscript of Benedictine. The Heart of Midlothian has an especially weak ending. The reader's interest begins to flag after Jeanie obtains the reprieve for her sister in Chapter XXXVII; but Scott carries the action on to the length of fifty-two chapters, to end in what Lady Louisa Stewart characterizes as a "lame and huddled conclusion"[2] and an expressed moral. Such unforceful endings are characteristic of almost all the Waverley Novels.

The emphasis at the beginning and end of the minor divisions - the chapters - is, also, frequently weak. The chapters are usually introduced by bits of verse, original or quoted, to give the tone of the action which is to follow, and in this respect they do seem to have a kind of emphasis at the beginning. Often, however, the chapter proper does not begin with the action but with a description of character,[3] a description

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[1] Waverley, Chapter LXXII, pp. 447
[2] Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. III, p. 267
[3] Cf. The Talisman, Chapter XVI

of place,[1] or an explanation.[2] Although they sometimes end with a definite conclusion and suspended interest,[3] the endings are, also, frequently ineffective because chapter endings stress unimportant material. Statements similar to the following, which are not only weak but also tend to destroy the story illusion, are not unusual at the ends of the chapters: "She gazed, accordingly, upon the scene, which we shall endeavour to describe in the next chapter."[4] -- "But the subject is of importance sufficient to deserve another chapter."[5] -- "But more of this in a subsequent chapter."[6]---"But this being an important subject, must form the commencement of a new chapter."[11] Such endings, together with unforceful beginnings, weaken the emphasis of the chapters.

The final weakness in the emphasis of the plots is caused by a lack of proportion. The conclusion to The Heart of Midlothian, for instance, is almost as large as the story itself;[22] while the introduction to Waverley, as has already been mentioned, takes nearly one fourth of the story.[23] Individual incidents within the action, moreover, are frequently

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[1] Cf. Ivanhoe, Chapter III
[2] Ibid., Chapters XIV and XXVIII; Heart of Midlothian, Chapter XVI
[3] Cf. The Talisman, Chapter XII and XX; Ivanhoe, Chapter XIV
[4] Ivanhoe, Chapter XXXVI
[5] Heart of Midlothian, Chapter II
[6] Waverley, Chapter II
[11] Ibid., Chapter XVIII
[22] Cf. Chapters XXXVII to LII
[23] Cf. Chapters I to V

given undue attention, as, for example, the incident of the elopement of Mysie and Sir Piercie Shafton in The Monastery[1] or the incident of the meeting of Richard and Friar Tuck at Copmanhurst in Ivanhoe.[2]

Summary. Because of their lack of unity, poor coherence, and weak emphasis, it is almost impossible to maintain that Scott's plots are well-constructed from our modern point of view. In spite of this fact, however, they could be a great deal worse. The very fact that Scott continues a favorite among children, who are always interested primarily in the story, is evidence that the plots must have some redeeming features. Horne thinks that the Waverley Novels make a distinct advance in the realm of the novel in the element of plot structure. He likes especially well the plot of The Bride of Lammermoor, which he says, "adds to emotion a cumulative intensity which is Byronic. Apart from this note of extravagance (grandiloquent situations) and something of diffuseness", he adds, "most of Scott's novels have dramatic and consistent plots. Incident springs from incident, and leads, though without much cumulative force, to a definite external goal."[3] Saintsbury, too, after making due allowance for all weaknesses, concludes that Scott's plots are almost as good as his characters.[4] With these opinions any intelligent lover of Scott must agree.

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[1] Chapters XXVIII and XXIX
[2] Chapters XVI and XVII
[3] The Technique of the Novel, p.134
[4] Cf. A History of Nineteenth Century Literature, p. 134

b. Character Handling. By far the larger part of Scott's characters are static. Very few of them in the course of the story grow either up or down. When they first make their appearance, they are labeled as hero, heroine, villain, servant, or soldier. A description of their external appearance and an exposition of their permanent traits of character are given, and they act ever after in accordance with the character so given upon their first entrance into the story. Sometimes, however, characters do grow from children to adults as the story advances, but there is never any doubt as to what their adult character will be. In such children, for instance, as Jeanie and Effie Deans, Halbert and Edward Glendinning, Mary Avenel, and Reuben Butler, we see the same traits of character as are present when they become adults. A very few of the characters, moreover, are to a small degree kinetic. Halbert Glendinning and Mary Avenel change their belief from the Catholic to the Reformed doctrine; but, as they are never very firm Catholics, the change is small, and the reader is not surprised. Effie Deans changes from a wayward country girl to a haughty fine lady, and George Staunton changes from a rascal to a law abiding citizen; but the growth in both cases seems forced and unnatural. These are quite representative of Scott's kinetic characters - the change is never great, and what little there is, is always up. In general the first impression is not only full; it is lasting.

To acquaint the reader with his characters Scott uses

several means of both direct and indirect delineation. As has already been mentioned, however, the means he uses most frequently are the direct methods of description and exposition. Usually at the introduction of a character he furnishes the reader with an elaborate set portrayal, partly descriptive and partly expository of the features, dress, and principal traits.[1] This initial direct statement serves for the character delineation throughout the remainder of the novel. Scott probably realized the weakness of the method - that the reader is likely to forget the statement of the author before the story has very far progressed - because the description is sometimes repeated. In The Heart of Midlothian, for example, Jeanie Deans is introduced in Chapter IX with the customary description; then in Chapter XXXV when Jeanie appears before the Duke of Argyle to plead

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[1] Cf. Ivanhoe; description of Gurth and Wamba,pp.4 and 5; description of Cedric, pp.23-24; description of Rowena,p.34;description of Rebecca,p.67; description of Richard,p.394. Quentin Durward; exposition of the character of Louis XI,Chapter I; description of Quentin,p.8; description of Louis,p.12; description of De la Mark,p.247. The Talisman; description of Kenneth,pp.1-2; description of Richard,p.62; exposition and description of Queen Berengaria, p.165; exposition and description of Leopold of Austria,p.115; The Monastery; description of Father Eustace,p.46; description of Halbert Glendinning,p.168; exposition and description of the Baron of Avenel, p.218; Waverley; description of Rose Bradwardine,p.52; description of the Baron of Bradwardine,p.53; exposition and description of Flora Mac-Ivor, pp.129 to 131. The Heart of Midlothian; description of Effie,p.94; description of George Staunton,p.166; description of Madge,p.166; exposition of Jeanie and Reuben,p.81; exposition of Dumbiedikes,p.83; exposition of Effie,p.95; exposition and description of Queen Caroline,p.385

for her sister's life, the description is repeated in almost the same words. Whether he realized the weakness of the method or not, however, it is always through direct description and exposition that the reader obtains most of his understanding of the characters.

The first of the two remaining means of direct delineation - by psychological analysis and by the comments of other characters - Scott uses very little. The latter method, however, he does use, and sometimes very effectively. In Ivanhoe Fitzurse speaking to De Bracy characterizes Prince John thus: "Unhappy are the counsellors", he says, "of a prince who wants fortitude and perseverance alike in good and in evil."[1] Before Effie makes her appearance in The Heart of Midlothian her character is delineated by a speech of Mrs. Saddletree.[2] Again, in Waverley, Fergus Mac-Ivor in a conversation with Waverley gives a good exposition of the character of Charles Edward the Chevalier.[3] Perhaps the most striking use of the device is in Chapter VI of The Talisman. Here a conversation takes place between Richard I and his councilor, De Vaux. Richard is ill with fever and De Vaux proposes possible leaders to take Richard's place. He suggests first one and then another of the leaders in the crusade - Philip of France, the Archduke of Austria, the Grand Master of the Templars, and the Marquis of Montserrat. Richard discusses the

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[1] Page 139
[2] Cf. Page 45
[3] Cf. Page 258

character of each man as he is suggested to determine his fitness to lead the crusade, and the reader thus becomes acquainted with the character of each. These, together with many other examples in the novels, illustrate the fact that Scott employed, in addition to description and exposition, the direct means of delineation by reports of other characters.

Scott, also, makes some use of all the means of indirect delineation. His people, in the first place, always act in conformity with their character. The reader learns much about the perfidious character of Prince John in Ivanhoe from his actions at the tournament and at the banquet immediately following.[1] The strength of Rebecca's character is delineated through her actions in the scene where she defies the Templar.[2] When Richard regains his throne, we learn about the liberality of his character through his actions toward the usurpers.[3] In The Talisman his tearing down of Austria's banner shows another side of his character - his impetuosity. These are only a few of the many examples to be found in the novels where the character is delineated through action.

The characters are, also, made known to the reader through their effect on other characters in the story. In The Talisman, for example, when Richard makes his first appearance at the council after his illness the strength and nobility of his character are shown through his effect upon the other leaders of

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[1] Chapters XII to XVI
[2] Chapters XXIV
[3] Chapter XL

the crusade. Although they are kings and princes themselves, although they are plotting against him, and although many of them are his enemies, they cannot help treating him with respect and honor.[1] In The Heart of Midlothian in the trial scene Effie's beauty is emphasized by her effect upon the court.[2] The repulsiveness of the Doomster's character is, also, shown in the same scene by his effect upon the court.[3] These are only a few of the many examples to be found in the novels where the characters become known to the reader through their effect on other characters.

The method of indirect character delineation by speech Scott uses more than all the other indirect methods combined. In The Heart of Midlothian Jeanie Deans's every speech shows her unselfishness, her simplicity, and her love of truth; while critics have said that for a single passage of passion and pathos her plea made to the Queen for her sister's life[4] is not to be excelled[5]. Scott never created a character for whom he could not provide consistent speech. The Scottish peasants have their native dialect; Saladin, the figurative language of the eastern world;[6] Sir Piercie Shafton, the euphuistic style of Queen Elizabeth's court;[11] the White Lady of

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1 Chapter XIX
2 Page 222
3 Page 247
4 Page 30
5 Cf. Maclaren: Books and Bookmen, p. 169
6 The Talisman, p. 233
11 The Monastery, pp. 119 and 222

Avenel, her mysterious chants ;[1] and Madge Wildfire[2] and Davie Gellatley[3] their wild and broken songs. Always the speech is appropriate and serves to emphasize the character of the speaker.

Scott knew, furthermore, that a well-drawn character should possess typical traits plus a few individualizing characteristics.[4] The character parts in the Scotch are probably the best-drawn characters in the novels and best illustrate Scott's use of his knowledge of this principle of technique. While each portrait is distinct and vivid, they are, also, easily classified as to type. There are Bailies like Macwheeble, Highland clansmen like Mac-Ivor, gossips like Mrs. Saddletree, theological peasants like Davie Deans, rascals like Ratcliffe and Calum Beg, advocates like Sharpitlaw, schoolmasters like Butler, ministers like Poundtext, beggars like Eddie Ochiltree, country lairds like Dumbiedikes, and great nobles like the Duke of Argyle. All these and many more are easily classified as to type; yet they are always differentiated from others of their class - they are individualized. Consequently Scott must be given credit not only for knowing but also for practicing the fundamental device for lifelike character portrayal.

Scott is not, however, always so happy in his characterization. Some of his characters are so typical that they lose their individuality. It has become one of the commonplaces of

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[1] The Monastery, pp. 72, 96, and 287
[2] The Heart of Midlothian, pp. 179, 318 and 417
[3] Waverley, pp. 80 and 390
[4] Cf. Supra, pp. 54-56

criticism, for instance, to declare that his heroines are always exactly alike and all typical heroines with corn-colored hair, and white flowing robes -"empty pictures of a gallant gentleman's ideal."[1] Exception must be taken, of course, for Scott's one homely heroine - Jeanie Deans, who was so extraordinary a heroine that even Scott himself wondered how one so "devoid of those accomplishments which belong to a heroine almost by right"[2] should have succeeded. Much the same criticism applies to his heroes - they are all too typical. Usually they are well-read, modest, polite, gallant, honorable, handsome, and frequently enter the story incognito as Ivanhoe and Sir Kenneth - always they look, speak, and act as a hero should look, speak, and act. Again exception must be made; this time for the physically weak, unheroic hero of The Heart of Midlothian - Reuben Butler, who is all that his name implies. With few exceptions, however, Scott errs in the delineation of his heroes and heroines on the side of over typification and under individualization.

Neither are the novels free from errors in characterization at the other extreme - the extreme of individuality or caricature. Sir Piercie Shafton, The Euphuist, in The Monastery, for example, is undoubtedly a caricature, which probably accounts partially for his failure and general condemnation. Scott introduced him into the story in a spirit of burlesque; but his asinine actions and extravagant speech cease to be

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[1] Horne, The Technique of the Novel, p. 182
[2] Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel, p. vii

amusing, and the reader learns of his resurrection with a sigh of regret. The character of the Baron of Bradwardine in Waverley, while not exactly a failure, is, also, surely a caricature; the reader becomes tired of his family tree, bears and boot-jack, and he becomes a bore. It is not often, however, that Scott's characters, because of undue stress upon some one trait, become caricatures.

There is one other character, universally condemned as a failure, that should be mentioned - the White Lady of The Monastery. Although the fault here is not one of over typification or of caricature, it is a fault, as Scott himself says, "of execution rather than conception."[1] Some critics say that the failure of the White Lady is caused by her descent to clownish pranks not consistent with her character.[2] The real cause of the failure, however, is probably caused by her too frequent introduction into the story. Shakespeare's witches in Macbeth undoubtedly would have caused a similar reaction had they been introduced in every scene. The first few appearances of the White Lady are effective; but, to use a platitudinous phrase, familiarity breeds contempt, and in the last half of the story the reader refuses to be frightened by her supernatural character.

There are, also, a great many historical characters in the novels, and Scott's method of handling them should be noted. They are usually in the background and are never the main char-

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[1] Introduction to The Fortunes of Nigel, p. xvi
[2] Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. III, p. 484

acters. With the possible exception of Louis XI in Quentin Durward, it is always a fictitious character who holds the foreground. Perhaps Scott placed his historical characters in the background partly to escape the wrath of the great god Verity. He does not entirely escape, however, as some critics deny the accuracy of the historical portraits. Graham, for instance, says, "As pictures of certain historical people, they are poor likenesses."[1] Scott probably never intended that they should be accurate, however, as he believes that the historical characters should be modernized.[2] It is the general opinion of critics, moreover, that, as novel characters, they are effective. Lady Louisa Stewart in a letter to Scott says, "My prejudices were secretly gratified by the light in which you place John of Argyle. You have drawn him to the very life. You have likewise colored Queen Caroline exactly right."[3] Ian Maclaren, also, praises the delineation of his historical characters. "He is indeed in the first line of the great creative minds of the world," he says, "for he has definitely succeeded in the ideal reproduction of historical types so as to preserve at once beauty, life, and truth."[4] Although the historical characters are not true likenesses in small details, they are, as Maclaren says, true to their historical type and very good fiction characters.

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1 The Bookman's Manual, p. 207
2 Cf. Introduction to Ivanhoe
3 Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. III, p. 268
4 Books and Bookmen, pp. 132-33

Summary. Nearly all of the characters in the novels are static; and the growth in those that are kinetic is very slight and is always up. In making the characters known to the reader Scott uses nearly every means of delineation - both direct and indirect. Direct delineation by description and by exposition, however, are his principal methods. Although a few of the characters are failures because of over typification or individualization, they are on the whole well-balanced. Even in the opinion of such adverse critics of Scott as Carlyle, the characters are usually considered strong.[1] Saintsbury says: "No artist is less chargeable of stereotype than he. His characters are hardly ever doubles; their relationships (certain general connections excepted, which are practically the scaffolding of the romance in itself) do not repeat themselves."[2] So it is with all critics; they may condemn Scott on many points of technique, but his characters always receive their approbation.

c. Setting Control. Scott makes the setting perform many functional duties. Mention has been made of his belief that the time and place setting selected should have for the reader some special imaginative value.[3] His novels illustrate how well he applied this belief to his own work. The time setting of Ivanhoe is the dawn of the modern English nation; of The Talisman, the defense of Christendom against the Koran; of

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[1] Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. IV, pp.74 to 77
[2] A History of Nineteenth Century Literature, p. 135
[3] Cf. Supra, p. 58

Quentin Durward, the passing of feudalism and the growth of monarchy; of Waverley, the Scottish Rebellion of 1745; of The Heart of Midlothian, the general unrest of Scotland in the seventeenth century; and of The Monastery, the death struggle of Catholicism. The place settings, also, have for the reader romantic interest. In Ivanhoe it is England because England is the place of the struggle between the Saxons and the Normans; in Quentin Durward, it is France because France was the center of the death struggle between feudalism and monarchy; and so it is for all the novels - the place and time setting chosen always have for the reader a special connotative value.

Scott's love of setting and his belief that it has an aesthetic interest valuable in itself is also well-illustrated in his novels. Mention has already been made in the section on plot unity of the lumps of description. Sometimes he dwells through entire pages, unrelieved by any human presence, upon the beauties of some natural scene.[1] At other times it is the home of a peasant, the cave of an outlaw, the cell of a hermit, the tent of a soldier, or the castle of a noble.[2] Although

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[1] Ivanhoe, pp. 1,3,61,148,413,429
The Talisman, pp. 1, 11
The Heart of Midlothian, pp. 71, 72
Waverley, pp. 41, 98

[2] Ivanhoe, pp. 21, 22, 150
The Talisman, pp. 238, 239
The Heart of Midlothian, pp. 51, 261, 329
The Monastery, p. 212

these scenes always perform other functions than that of merely adding color to the story, they probably do in some cases receive undue stress for the color function alone. Sometimes the setting is brought into emotional harmony with the action. The principal place setting of The Monastery is in harmony with the supernatural action. Almost all of the action takes place in a glen which Scott describes as "lonely, nearly inaccessible, and sterile. Although the glen was not absolutely void of beauty", he continues, "its extreme solitude pressed on the heart; the traveler felt that uncertainty whither he was going, or in what so wild a path was to terminate."[1] Again when the White Lady appears in the attitude of lamentation, foreboding the death of Lady Avenel, Scott says: "A November mist overspread the little valley, up which slowly but steadily rode the monk Eustace. He was not insensible to the feeling of melancholy inspired by the scene and by the season."[2] In Ivanhoe the setting is made to harmonize with the gala day of the tournament at Ashby. "The morning," Scott says, "arose in unclouded splendour."[3] In The Talisman, however, where the contest is to be carried on till the death of one of the opponents and a more serious affair, the weather is gloomy and forebodes the death of Conrade.[4] Another example of the effective harmonization of the action and the setting is in the chapel scene, also in

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[1] The Monastery, p. 7
[2] Ibid., p. 56
[3] Page 111
[4] Page 299

The Talisman where Sir Kenneth meets with so many strange adventures. "Sir Kenneth," Scott says, " paced the solitary chapel till about the time of the earliest cock-crowing. At this dead season, when night and morning meet together, he heard the sound of a small silver bell. The hour and the place rendered the sound fearfully solemn, and bold as he was, the knight withdrew himself into the farther nook of the chapel."[1] These examples are quite representative of the scenes where Scott makes the setting harmonize emotionally with the action.

The setting in the form of natural phenomena is occasionally, furthermore, used as an aid to the action. The storm in The Antiquary, Chapter VII, is not only a fine background for the tragic incident, but is the direct cause of it. The storm at the beginning of Ivanhoe, also, aids the action by forcing the principal characters to seek refuge in Cedric's mansion and thus bringing about for the first time the interweaving of the several strands of action.[2] Still another example of the same device is the scene in The Heart of Midlothian where Sir George Staunton and Butler are forced by a storm to land on a wild section of the coast, thus bringing about the murder of Sir George by his illegitimate son.[3] Such illustrations show Scott's use of natural phenomena as an aid to the action.

A large amount of space in the novels is, also, devoted to

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[1] Page 47
[2] Pages 21 and 37
[3] Page 524

social setting. The novels picture a world filled with people. Ivanhoe, for instance, has fifty-two speaking characters, seventy-one present, thirty referred to, and a total of one hundred and fifty-three characters. For the entire Waverley Novels, there are some 1700 characters enumerated.[1] In addition to these distinct characters there are many such groups as archers, knights, Highlanders, gypsies, mobs, armies, monks, and crusaders - significant only as masses.[2] These groups are brought together in battles, at tournaments, in court scenes, and at banquets. In addition to the groups themselves there are long passages which add to the social background, explaining and describing manners and customs of the time of the story. Peculiarities of dress and strange rules of conduct are described.[3] Because of the large number of characters and the social groups, Scott's novels give the impression of real life - the picture shades off gradually from the distinct characters we know well to ones that are in-

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[1] Cf. Whitcomb, The Study of a Novel, p.92

[2] The Monastery, pp. 333, 363
The Talisman, pp. 63, 127, 248, 284
Ivanhoe, pp. 10, 74, 295, 355
The Heart of Midlothian, pp. 32, 59, 221

[3] Ivanhoe, pp. 134, 154, 203, 204
The Talisman, pp.14, 33, 117, 118
Quentin Durward, pp. 53, 293
Waverley, Chapters, XI, XII, and XIII
The Heart of Midlothian, pp. 17, 18, 263, 296

distinct and mere acquaintances. The descriptions of manners have an innate interest and the groups add social breadth to the novel, while both help to make the story colorful.

The combined setting, both physical and social, performs an important function in Scott's novels - that of conditioning the action. The setting is not merely decorative; it actually conditions the actions so closely that it is difficult to imagine the incidents taking place exactly as they do in any other surroundings. In Ivanhoe, for example, the tournament at Ashby provides a means of bringing the many characters together and the very form and structure of the lists themselves determine the nature of the action in the tournament. Out of this action, determined by the physical structure of the lists and the social conventions of chivalry, through the wounding of Ivanhoe and the intensifying of the hatred of the Saxons and the Normans for each other, grow many resulting lines of action.[1] In The Talisman a great deal of the action hinges on Richard's illness with the fever, and that fever, Scott says, was caused by the "burning heat and chilling dews" of the desert.[2] Scott makes it clear that the action in The Heart of Midlothian is conditioned by the difficulties of travel at that time in England and Scotland, both physical and social.[3] The incidents of Waverley, finally, could hardly have occurred in any other place or at any other time than in the Scotland of 1745, es-

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[1] Pages 60-130
[2] Page 59
[3] Page 284

pecially that part of Scotland where the lowlands and the highlands meet. The action of all Scott's novels is wrapped up with and conditioned by the combined physical and social setting.

Summary. Even if we concede that Scott sometimes stresses his setting unduly; sometimes dwells for too long a time upon the beauties of some natural scene, the color of a social group, or the grandeur of an ancient castle, we should not be led into thinking by the clamor of prejudiced critics that Scott's setting is superfluous. Always it has a special connotative value; always it aids the action, conditions it, and increases its emotional effect; always it adds social breadth to the novel as a whole. Invariably, therefore, it performs some functional purpose, a purpose which Scott deliberately constructed it to perform.

## 2. Style

The vigor and force of Scott's style is proverbial; yet unfriendly critics triumphantly attack it on a good many vulnerable points.[1] Probably the chief reason for his infelicities of style, principally in the intellectual qualities, was his method of composition. He wrote rapidly, often neglected to re-read what he had written, rushed the copy off to the printer, and ignored the proofs. Such a voluminous writer

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[1] Cf. Stevenson, R. L., Learning to Write, p. 64
Horne, The Technique of the Novel, p. 239
Trent, Longfellow and Other Essays, p. 43

could not do otherwise. For fifteen years he averaged a novel every six months, and the last two volumes of Waverley were written in three weeks. As a result he is frequently verbose and sometimes sinks to tautology and grammatical blunders. His verbosity might, also, have been caused by his legal training, but whatever the cause, it is there. Take, for example, this sentence in The Talisman from the description of the crusaders' camp: "A space of ground, large enough to accommodate perhaps thirty tents, according to the Crusader's rules of castrametation, was partly vacant, because, in ostentation, the knight had demanded ground to the extent of his retinue, partly occupied by a few miserable huts, hastily constructed of boughs and covered with palm leaves."[1] Another sentence from the explanation of French history in Quentin Durward, also illustrates the point. "These petty tyrants", Scott says, "no longer amenable to the exercise of the law, perpetrated with impunity the wildest excesses of fantastic oppression and cruelty."[2] Such pedantic and bookishly worded sentences are characteristic of the passages of description and explanation. These, together with grammatical blunders which it is probably not desirable to point out in special notes, weaken the intellectual qualities of his style and are chiefly responsible for the accusation that Scott has no style.

Yet such weaknesses in the intellectual qualities become mere trifles when compared to his strength in the emotion-

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[1] Page 76
[2] Page 1

al, imaginative, and aesthetic qualities of his style. There are descriptive passages of action in the novels that are sharply outlined, vivid, and intensely interesting. Take, for example, the scene of the tournament at Ashby in Ivanhoe, Chapter VIII. Brewster says that few finer specimens of narration are to be found in English and characterizes it thus: "Direct and vigorous in the purely narrative passages", he says, "it has besides, in its wording, its dialogue and its admirable description all the rich coloring which shed over actions and incidents the glamour of romance."[1] Another good example is the scene of the storming of Torquilstone, as narrated by Rebecca in Chapter XXIX of Ivanhoe. The scene of the storming of the tolbooth in The Heart of Midlothian, moreover, strikes me as being one of the most vivid passages of descriptive action I have ever read.[2] The sentences in these passages are short and the paragraphs brief; the language is free from verbosity, and descriptive verbs, connotative adjectives, and striking figures of speech make the picture concrete and vivid. Many such passages could be cited to prove the forcefulness of his style.

Even some of the pictures of still life are done in a masterly fashion. Almost any of the many descriptions of character illustrate how well Scott could paint a portrait with words. See, for example, the description of the Baron of Brad-

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[1] Specimens of Narration, p. 119
[2] Page 59

wardine in Waverley,[1] a portrait modeled after a real person; or in Quentin Durward of Quentin,[2] an imaginative portrait; or of Louis XI, a historical portrait.[3] Such natural scenes as the glen in which the Castle of Glendearg is located in The Monastery,[4] and many such indoor scenes as the description of the mansion of Cedric the Saxon in Ivanhoe[5] are, also, well done. All of these pictures of people, residences, and natural scenes are done with a fineness of touch and detail worthy of a Dutch master.

There are, moreover, passages that show Scott's imagination, passages that are filled with emotion, passion and pathos. The Heart of Midlothian has many such scenes. Take, for example, the pathetic scene of the trial in Chapter XXIII that comes to a climax in the speech of Jeanie: "Alack! alack! she never breathed a word to me about it." The plea of Jeanie made to Queen Caroline for the life of her sister is almost the height of emotional eloquence.[6] For pure imagination the scene in Waverley where Scott describes the loyalty of a Highlander for his chief by having Evan Maccombich offer his life to redeem that of Mac-Ivor is especially good.[11] The

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[1] Page 53
[2] Page 9
[3] Page 12
[4] Page 7
[5] Page 22
[6] Page 390
[11] Page 421

passages mentioned are convincing evidence of Scott's powerful command over the emotional and imaginative qualities of style.

Although most of Scott's humor is gained through eccentricities of character, many times a slow Scottish humor creeps into the language. In Ivanhoe in the scene in the hermit's cell where Richard sings for the hermit's amusement Scott says:

> "During this performance, the hermit demeaned himself much like a first-rate critic of the present day at a new opera. He reclined back upon his seat with his eyes half shut; now folding his hands and twisting his thumbs, he seemed absorbed in attention, and anon, balancing his expanded palms, he gently flourished them in time to the music."[1]

In Waverley at the banquet given in Waverley's honor Scott thus humorously describes the guests:

> "The Baron", he says, "eat like a famished soldier, the Laird of Balmawhapple like a sportsman, Bullsegg of Killancureit like a farmer, Waverley himself like a traveller, and Bailie Macwheeble like all four together; though either out of more respect, or in order to preserve that proper declination of person which showed a sense that he was in the presence of his patron, he sat upon the edge of his chair, placed at three feet distance from the table, and achieved a communication with his plate by projecting his person toward it in a line which obliqued from the bottom of his spine, so that the person who sat opposite him could only see the top of his riding periwig."[2]

Such pervasive humor is never biting but always of this quiet mild type.

Mention has already been made of Scott's theory of the

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[1] Page 160
[2] Page 57

shaping of historical language for novel use.[1] His novels illustrate the application of the theory. Some times, but not often, he makes the mistake of mixing historical forms and modern forms of language in a single speech of a character. Louis XI, for instance, speaking to Tristan l'Hermite says, "Run, gossip, and help your blunder by giving him aid, if thou canst. He belongs to thine own troop."[2] Undoubtedly this mixing of the old and modern forms of the personal pronoun you in the same speech is bad. Usually, however, the historical language is handled with better skill. In Ivanhoe there is a sprinkling of such words as gramercy, thee, rere-supper, hath, damsel, mantelets, arblast, hinds, and gammon. There are just enough of them to give the proper historical coloring to the novel and no more. By thus giving the impression of antiquity without obscuring the meaning of the story Scott succeeds in applying his theory to his own novels.

Mention has, also, been made of how well the speech in the novels fits the characters.[3] As Scott has characters ranging from rascals like Calum Beg to heroes like Richard Coeur-de-Lion and from fools like Wamba to statesmen like the Duke of Argyle, this was no easy task. Although Scott is probably better in the homely style of the lower stratum of society, he can also handle the grand style of the upper class. The conversation between old Margaret Murdockson and the ruf-

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[1] Cf. Supra, pp. 50-52
[2] Quentin Durward, p. 10
[3] Supra, pp. 96-97

fian, Levitt, in The Heart of Midlothian illustrates how well Scott could do the homespun speech of his lower class characters.[1] The simplicity and naive quality of the language in the letters Jeanie writes show how completely he could subjugate his own personal style. The speech of his aristocrats is not quite so natural and is perhaps a little too formal; nevertheless, it is well executed. The conversation between Queen Berengaria and Richard I in Chapter XVII of The Talisman or the dialogue between Queen Caroline and the Duke of Argyle in Chapter XXXVII of The Heart of Midlothian illustrates just how well Scott could handle the grand style necessary to give natural speech to his noble characters. Sometimes, moreover, the speech assumes a tragic elevation, as in the dialogue between Rebecca and Bois-Guilbert in Ivanhoe, Chapter XXXIX. Here the language is removed, sublimated, from the speech of daily life. Even in such extreme cases as these the speech not only fits the character, the mood, the situation; it gives also the impression of naturalness.

Such dramatic narrative in dialogue form plays a large part in Scott's novels. Whitcomb says that forty per cent of The Bride of Lammermoor is in dramatic form.[2] The mechanical dialogic connectives, essential to clearness in complicated dialogue, Scott handles well; the reader is never confused as to who is doing the speaking. The connectives are, however, monotonous. The frequency of the "said so-and-so's" in any

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[1] Chapter XXX
[2] Cf. The Study of a Novel, p. 17

one passage of dialogue in the novels illustrates the lack of variety. Even Scott himself noted this fact and in Chapter I of The Bride of Lammermoor writes of the "everlasting 'said he's' and 'said she's' " of his preceding novels. Aside from this one mechanical defect, however, the style of the dialogue in his novels is good.

Summary. Although the criticism that with Scott art is secondary to matter is probably justified, and although the style is not always delicately correct or polished, it does have a certain naturalness, freedom, buoyancy, and strength in the emotional, imaginative, and aesthetic qualities that should prevent more than a mild condemnation. Carlyle says:

> "He is a blind critic who did not recognize here a certain genial sunshiny freshness and picturesqueness; paintings both of scenery and figures, very graceful, brilliant, occasionally full of grace and glowing brightness blended in the softest composure; in fact, a deep sincere love of the beautiful in Nature and Man, and the readiest faculty of expressing this by imagination and by word. There is an easy master-like coherence throughout, as if it were the free dash of a master's hand. It is the Perfection of Extemporaneous writing."[1]

In this quotation Carlyle gives about as good a summary as can be made of Scott's style. Artificially exact and polished it is not, but that it does possess natural beauty and rugged strength cannot be denied.

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[1] Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. IV, p. 74

## V. CONCLUSION

The aim in Chapter II of this study was to determine the accepted theory of novel technique. The first section is devoted to the establishment of the novel as a type of fiction. The opinions of critics and writers as to the purpose of the novel and what material, in their estimation, should be used to accomplish that purpose was then discussed. Their opinion upon such structural problems as the handling of the plot, the characters, and the setting was next stated. In the last section, finally, the opinion of the authorities upon the style of the novel was considered. Through the study of these various elements the accepted theory of novel technique was determined.

The aim of Chapter III was to find out Scott's conception of the technique of the novel as expressed in his critical comments. It was found that Scott, like the majority of authors and critics, considered the purpose of the novel to be the entertainment of the reader; that he recognized all the principal sources of material; that he realized the importance of plot and knew how it could be developed effectively; that he understood nearly every means of character delineation and was aware that the characters possessing both typical and individual traits are the most life-like; that he knew every functional purpose the setting could be made to serve; and that, finally, he had even formulated some definite opinions in regard to style. His many sagacious comments

on all these elements are evidence of his broad knowledge of novel technique.

The aim of Chapter IV was to determine Scott's application of his knowledge of technique to his own novels. It was found here that every other purpose in his novels is subordinated to that of interest; that the material for the novels is drawn from every possible source; that Scott did not always apply his full knowledge of the technique of plot handling, and as a result, although his plots are on the whole consistent and dramatic, they suffer from a looseness of structure; that though most of his characters are static, they are portrayed by practically every means of character delineation and, with few exceptions, are well-balanced as to typical and individual traits; that he makes the setting perform most of the chief functional purposes; and, finally, that his style as a romantic novelist, while weak in the intellectual qualities appropriate to the modern problem or critical novel, shows exceptional strength in the emotional, imaginative, and aesthetic qualities of style needed to secure his chief end - interest.

In the light of the findings of this entire study it seems only fair to conclude, therefore, that Scott knew a great deal more about the technique of the novel and what is more important made a greater application of his knowledge to his own novels than he is ordinarily given credit for having known or having done. Against his modern critics, then, Scott is his own best defender.

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[1] Arranged alphabetically in the following order: (1) works by Scott (2) works about Scott (3) works on the technique of fiction

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