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*To the memory of Pegah Naddafi,
dear friend and colleague, to whom I will always be grateful.*

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CHAPTER I

STRUCTURE: FACTS AND FICTION

Sir Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet*, first published anonymously in June 1824, is one of Scott's Jacobite novels (the other two being *Waverley* and *Rob Roy*), revolving around the theme of the Jacobite rebellions in the 18th century. These uprisings opposed Scotland and the supporters of the Stuart monarchy to England and the Hanover dynasty in the attempt to reinstate the alleged rightful heir, Charles Edward Stuart, on the throne. *Redgauntlet* stands out among the other Jacobite novels, and it is arguably for two main reasons: on one hand the Jacobite rebellion plotted in the narrative never occurred in historical reality. On the other hand, its eclectic structure is unusually varied, spacing from letters to third-person narratives to a diary. These peculiarities making the novel complex and multifaceted can be justified by the fact that *Redgauntlet* is built on and pervaded by oppositions which encompass all aspects of the text, from the themes to the characters to its very form. This thesis will focus on analysing this dialectic tension between opposites and the modalities through which it unfolds in the novel. To do so, it will be divided into three chapters, each dealing with three different aspects: structure, events, and characters, respectively. In each of these chapters, this dialectic is translated into corresponding opposing couples, namely facts against fiction as far as structure is concerned, supernatural against historical, and bourgeois hero against Gothic hero. In this first chapter, then, we will introduce this study by focusing on the novel's structure. More specifically, Sir Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* will be analysed in terms of its complex composition and the interaction it creates between reality and fiction in two ways. Firstly, we will look at the peculiar and heterogeneous structure of the novel via the study of the various points of view and nested narratives employed. Then, we will delve deeper into this evaluation by examining how autobiographical elements related to Scott's own youth are rendered in the text in the characters of Darsie Latimer and Alan Fairford, and on how these two characters, being the main narrators of the story, influence the perception of the

events narrated by representing two different and equally valid models of storytelling. Lastly, we will try to explain how all these elements in *Redgauntlet* constitute a commentary on the art of writing historical fiction, since the eclecticism of narrative forms and perspectives all harmoniously cooperate in the attempt at a global approach to writing about the past.

I.1 The Eclectic Structure of *Redgauntlet*

Though dealing with themes familiar to Scott in his Scottish production, including a love-centred and a conflict-centred plot,¹ *Redgauntlet* presents a unique structure in the *Waverley Novels*. This is because *Redgauntlet* is organised in an eclectic, complex structure which alternates different narrative forms, focalisations, and levels of narration. The novel is mainly divided in two different narrative forms, an epistolary exchange composed of thirteen *Letters* and twenty-three *Chapters*. To add to the complexity of the structure, the twenty-three *Chapters* are in turn divided between third-person narratives (the *Narrative* from *Chapter I* to *Chapter III* and *Alan Fairford's Narrative*), and first-person narratives (*Darsie Latimer's Journal*). This is a *unicum* in Scott's production, since every other novel by the author is mostly told by an external, third-person narrator.² In addition to that the whole novel is framed by a letter written by Dr Dryasdust, an antiquary and the supposed editor of both the *Letters* and *Darsie's Journal*. Even from this brief description, it is evident that *Redgauntlet's* structure offers an interesting variety of forms and narrators, and that each of them has its peculiarities. This section is dedicated to delving deeper into the exploration of

¹ Cf. Cusac, Marian H., *Narrative Structure in the Novels of Sir Walter Scott*, Berlin, De Gruyter Mouton, 1969, p. 14; pp. 110-112.

² Cf. Villari, Enrica, *Narrativa, Storia e Costume*, in *Storia della Civiltà Letteraria Inglese*, ed. by F. Marengo, Torino, Utet, 1996, pp. 477-496, pp. 479-480.

Redgauntlet by examining its nested narratives, as well as the shift from homodiegetic narrators to heterodiegetic narrators.

I.I.1 The Embedded Stories in *Redgauntlet*

The eclecticism in the structure of *Redgauntlet* is conveyed by means of what Shaw defined as a “medley of narrative modes”,³ which show different focalizations and narrators, many of whom, as we will see, embed their story into the narrative. Here, we will further analyse these nested narratives that form the greater part of *Redgauntlet* and argue that they play an important role in the novel’s balance between facts and fiction. To start this analysis, the *Conclusion by Dr Dryasdust* needs to be considered first to delve into the Chinese boxes that open into the novel in order. This is because the character’s *Conclusion* constitutes the most external stratum of the novel, Dryasdust being the supposed editor of all the other narratives. He is an antiquarian who allegedly collected all the records about Darsie Latimer and his encounter with Sir Hugh Redgauntlet. This character is not unique to *Redgauntlet* only, being described as the predilected “fictitious character, a prosy antiquary, to whom Scott addresses the prefaces of some of his novels”,⁴ such as in *Ivanhoe*, for instance.⁵ At the end of *Redgauntlet*, Dryasdust intervenes to provide the finishing details about the last relevant episodes of the characters, from Darsie to Alan to Sir Hugh. Dryasdust’s conclusive letter works as a frame for all the other levels in *Redgauntlet*: all the *Letters*, the *Journal*, all the

³ Shaw, Harry E., *Is There a Problem with Historical Fiction (or with Walter Scott’s ‘Redgauntlet’?)*, “Rethinking History”, 9, 2-3, 2005, pp. 173-195, p. 182.

⁴ *Dr Dryasdust* in *The Oxford Concise Manual to English Literature*, 3rd ed. ed. by Drabble, Margaret, et al., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, online resource, accessed on the 5th of December, 2020.

⁵ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Dr Dryasdust, F.A.S.* [1819], In *Ivanhoe*, ed. by Ian Duncan, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.13-23.

newspaper articles and testimonies cited by him at the end, were supposedly collected and arranged by him to reconstruct the story of the Redgauntlets. This technique based on the framing of the main narrative and on the collection of allegedly authentic documents obeys to a literary device that has the aim of adding to the “authenticity effect”⁶ of the novel on one hand, and putting even more distance between the author and the text on the other.⁷ This authentication technique is not original in Scott, since it can be traced back to certain romances, where, as explained by Scott himself, it became customary to prove that the tales told in romances were merely a transcription -and translation, in some cases- of an authentic document, often found by chance.⁸ This technique was then revived by the Romantics, among which figures prominently MacPherson with his famous collection of poems, purportedly composed by the legendary Ossian.⁹ In the light of these observations, it is possible to assume that the blurring of the border between reality and fiction is here produced, in terms of structure, by a framing technique featuring a pseudo-editor, who serves the double purpose of authenticating the text and simultaneously hiding the real author from it. Dr Dryasdust, in fact, in presenting the documents forming the main narrative as authentic and the characters as real, focuses the reader’s attention away from Scott. Incidentally, it is interesting to keep in mind how *Redgauntlet* was published while Scott was still writing anonymously as ‘the author of *Waverley*’. His name was not made public until 1827,¹⁰ three years after the publication of *Redgauntlet*. This means that this anonymity is further enhanced in *Redgauntlet* by using this framing technique. Arguably, this care for casting the

⁶ Duncan, Ian, *Authenticity Effects: The Work of Fiction in Romantic Scotland*, ‘South Atlantic Quarterly’, 102, 1 (January 2003), pp. 93-116, p.101.

⁷ Ivi, pp. 93-116.

⁸ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Essay on Romance* [1824], in *Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.: Chivalry, Romance and the Drama*, Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black, 1870, pp. 127-216., pp. 179-180.

⁹ Cf. Duncan, Ian, *Authenticity Effects*, cit., pp. 96-102.

¹⁰ Cf. Villari, Enrica, *Narrativa, Storia e Costume*, in *Storia della Civiltà Letteraria Inglese*, cit., p. 481.

author into a double anonymity strengthens even more the perception of most of *Redgauntlet* as the authentic result of Dryasdust's research.

In fact, the documents constituting the main story and the second level of depth in the text, Alan and Darsie's *Letters* and Darsie's *Journal*, are presented as authentic documents by Dr Dryasdust. However, the credibility based on Dryasdust's authority is undermined because at the same time these documents report, and embed in a third layer of narrative, transcriptions of oral tales, liable to suspicion, as we will see. These transcriptions account for either a distant past, such as *Wandering Willie's Tale*, or a modern one, such as Lilies's upbringing in a monastery. There are also digressions of various length, from the long narrative about Nanty's origins as the Captain of the Jumping Jenny, to the couple of lines explaining Pate-in-Peril's nickname. These transcriptions are a double-edged sword, because from a certain perspective all these oral stories are told to convey and enhance a feeling of reality, providing every character with a background which gives them more depth and retraces their steps up to their present day, thus "contextualizing the present".¹¹ On the other hand the orality of these tales fuels the opposite tendency to dispel that aura of veracity. In fact, as Shaw observed,¹² the question arises of the possibility to trust the accuracy of orally-aurally transmitted stories put on paper by a third party likely to add or omit details due to the fallibility of memory. Therefore, on one hand the *Letters* and the *Journal of Darsie Latimer* can be considered as authentic documents validated by Dr Dryasdust's authoritative

¹¹ Maitzen, Rohan, 'By No Means an Improbable Fiction': *Redgauntlet's Novel Historicism*, "Studies in the Novel", 25, 2, Summer 1993, pp. 170–84., p. 171;

Perhaps, the only exception to this feeling of reality conveyed by the background of the characters might be identified in Nanty Ewart's story, which, as Daiches observes, may figure as a too picaresque tale inserted in the novel, while Brown argues that its purpose in the novel is far from straightforward cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, p.58;

Cf. also Cf. Brown, David D., *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2016, pp. 151-173, p.171.

¹² Shaw, Harry E., *Is there a Problem with Historical Fiction (or with Scott's Redgauntlet?)*, cit., pp. 182-183.

framing. On the other hand, the oral testimonies they report can be suspected as untrustworthy interpolations of oral narratives and dialogues. We will see in the following paragraph that this dualism between trustworthy authenticity and unreliable fiction is constant across the novel's structure and actually dramatises a debate about the composition and definition of truthful narratives. By presenting to us all the possible angles from which a story can be told and evaluating their advantages and disadvantages, all these stories, and the eclectic structure they are embedded in, together attempt to adopt an all-embracing perspective on the reality portrayed in the novel, actually exorcising the risk to be partial or biased.

In sum, via thickly framed and varied narrative perspectives *Redgauntlet* is built as a literary work suspended between truth to reality and the suspicion of an unreliable fictionality. We also anticipated that the novel's structure seems functional to the quest for the most efficient and reliable narrative technique to investigate the past in historical fiction. These peculiarities are persistent in every element of the structure, as will see in the next paragraph, devoted to the authorial interpolation of *Chapter I* of the story, which clearly underlines the complex seesaw between fiction and reality in the novel.

I.I.2 Interpolations: From First-Person Narrative to Third-Person Narrative

Dr Dyasdust is not the only external character in *Redgauntlet* who intervenes as a heterodiegetic narrator. Indeed, the author himself intrudes in the story when dealing with those *Chapters* focused on Alan Fairford's debut as a lawyer and his journey to find Darsie. This interpolation, though short, has an enormous impact on the narrative structure of *Redgauntlet* and is perhaps the strongest contribution to the dynamics between the

authenticity and fictionalising effects in the text. This is because the author himself, the very one who the framing technique was meant to hide, contradictorily comes to light in marking a significant shift from first-person to third-person narrative. The author knows that he is adopting an unconventional change in the narrative style, hence he comments on the necessity of his decision, not without a tongue-in-cheek attitude:

The advantage of laying before the reader, in the words of the actors themselves, the adventures which we must otherwise have narrated in our own, has given great popularity to the publication of epistolary correspondence, as practised by various great authors, and by ourselves in the preceding chapters. Nevertheless, a genuine correspondence of this kind (and Heaven forbid it should be in any respect sophisticated by interpolations of our own!) can seldom be found to contain all in which it is necessary to instruct the reader for his full comprehension of the story. Also it must often happen that various prolixities and redundancies occur in the course of an interchange of letters, which must hang as a dead weight on the progress of the narrative.¹³

On one hand, this intervention might be read as a manipulation of the narrative which reminds the reader of the real author of *Redgauntlet*.¹⁴ In fact, he is clearly interpolating the narrative, the very eventuality which he seemed to avoid via Dr Dryasdust to maintain coherence and authenticity in the text. At the same time, he delivers another blow to the narrative structure employed up to that point by clearly commenting on the inadequacy of the epistolary mode as a defective means of storytelling, and also as the inadequacy of single documents to “instruct the reader for his full comprehension of the story”, or historical past events we might add. In fact, the author asserts that he had to intervene to supply some details

¹³ Scott, Walter, *Redgauntlet: A Tale of the Eighteenth Century* (1st ed. 1824), ed. by Sutherland, Kathryn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), *Chapter I*, p.141. Hereafter referred to as *Redgauntlet*.

¹⁴ Cf., Kerr, James, *Fiction Against History: Scott as Storyteller*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp 104-105;

Shaw, Harry E., *Is there a Problem with Historical Fiction (and with Scott's Redgauntlet?)*, cit., p. 183.

which would naturally escape the knowledge of the public because Alan “did not, and could not, write to his correspondent”¹⁵. As Kerr observes, however, this does not mean that this third-person narration is better than the epistolary one. It is only that another perspective is introduced to the story, one able to provide more details and fill in the gaps, yet “it is just another way of seeing things”¹⁶. As stated above, this shift obeys again to that quest for the most truthful, reliable form of storytelling via the exploration of the strengths and limits of every option. And this is why the narrative later shifts to yet another form, which is that of the personal diary, and then back to a homodiegetic narrator.

Therefore, what emerges is no victor, just the understanding that through this eclecticism *Redgauntlet* becomes a dramatised ground of opposition and study of different storytelling techniques, which push and pull the novel between the two extremes of reality and fiction, no pole prevailing on its opposite. The logic of this dynamics becomes even more apparent in the opposition pervading the whole novel, that between Darsie and Alan in their *Letters*, and the autobiographical echoes in their characters.

I.2. Lawyers and Storytellers

The greater part of *Redgauntlet* is told by jumping between two main narrators, who provide opposite yet both valid means of perception of the world and attitudes as regards the art of storytelling. The perspectives in question are those of Alan Fairford and Darsie Latimer, the first a respectable young lawyer, the latter a daydreaming orphan wandering on the Scottish border on the quest for his real family. Their different interpretations of reality are conveyed

¹⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter I, p. 142.

¹⁶ Kerr, James, *Fiction against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., p. 105.

by means of their writing, and the difference in taletelling transpires from their letters and identities. More specifically, this difference will be made apparent by classifying Alan as a lawyer- crafting truths via reconstructing narratives, and Darsie as a storyteller who perceives real events through the deforming filter of imagination.

Before delving into the analysis of these two characters' storytelling, however, it might be useful to shed more light on the thin line that separates facts from fiction concerning the novel itself and its very author's life. We will do so by showing the autobiographical echoes in *Redgauntlet*, especially emphasising how Darsie and Alan are two characters who are deeply entwined with Sir Walter Scott's own past and relationships, from their personalities to their occupation in society.

I.2.1 Scott's Autobiographical Echoes in *Redgauntlet*

The genesis of *Redgauntlet* is clouded by secrecy and reserve. The novel was swiftly written right after the publication of *St. Ronan's Well* (1823), very little reference being made to the novel in Scott's correspondence during that time.¹⁷ The reason for this unusual reticence might be interpreted as proof of Scott's pouring personal content in the actions depicted in the novel. And indeed, *Redgauntlet*, as stated by Scott's first biographer, J.G. Lockhart, "contains perhaps more of the author personal experiences than any other of them [the Waverley novels]".¹⁸ It is true that *Redgauntlet* appears heavily inspired by Scott's youth as

¹⁷ Some letters dated 1824 mention *Redgauntlet* as far as the choice of the title is concerned or to discuss business details. However, not much information was disclosed about the inspiration behind the novel. For Sir Walter Scott's correspondence about *Redgauntlet*, cf. Scott, Walter, *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by Sir Herbert Grierson, London, Constable, 1932-1937, 12 vols, vol. VIII, pp.203-204;278; 309-310.

¹⁸ Lockhart, John Gibson, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* [1837], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 7 vols, Vol I, Chapter V, p. 161; Vol. V, Chapter XII, p. 320; For the autobiographical inspiration behind the novel, cf. also. Sutherland, Kathryn, *Introduction*, in

stated in his autobiographical *Memoir*,¹⁹ but in what measure and how is still open to debate. In fact, there are various interpretations of the autobiographical elements in the genesis of the characters of Alan Fairford and Darsie Latimer. As an instance of this, we will here give the two different perspectives on the matter, by John Gibson Lockhart and David Daiches, respectively.

Lockhart's view, based on what he reports about Sir Walter Scott's youth in Edinburgh and his studies as a prospective advocate, is that Scott might have represented himself via Alan Fairford, whereas the role of his dear friend Darsie Latimer might have been inspired by William Clerk, a dear friend of his youth.²⁰ This assumption is sustained by the fact that Scott was known to be a grounded and reasonable law student, not shying away from entertainment altogether, but also not too indulgent in drinking and celebrating.²¹ This perspective could have also encouraged Lockhart to see in Alan's father, Saunders Fairford, Scott's own father due to his legal profession, his strictness, and his sceptical views on literature.²² Furthermore, Alan shows signs of delicate health in the narrative, having "inherited a delicate constitution, with a tendency to consumption"²³ from his mother. This could be a reference to Scott's own childhood, since from birth he used to suffer from health problems so serious to affect his legs and which made him spend most of his infancy in the countryside.²⁴

Redgauntlet, cit., pp. vi-xxiii, p. ix.

¹⁹ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Memoir of the Early Life of Walter Scott Written by Himself*, now in Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I., Chapter I, pp. 1-60.

²⁰ Cf. Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Chapter V, pp. 161-165.

²¹ *Ivi*, pp. 147-148.

²² Cf. Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Chapter VI, pp. 184-185;

Cf. also Scott, Walter, *Memoir of the Early Life of Sir Walter Scott Written by Himself*, cit., Vol. I, Chapter I, pp. 7-10.

²³ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XIII, p.269..

²⁴ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Memoir of the Early Life of Sir Walter Scott Written by Himself*, cit., Vol. I. Chapter I, pp. 15-24.

In Lockhart's opinion Alan figured in the text as the studious, prudent, and delicate Walter Scott, whereas Darsie resembled his beloved friend and companion of studies William Clerk. Indeed, what mainly transpires from Darsie's character, especially from the first *Letters*, is his open, fun-loving personality and his penchant for entertaining himself at the dancehouse and in taverns, all this fitting the description that Lockhart gives of Clerk as a rampant law student in Edinburgh.²⁵

Thus, Lockhart, who was also part of Scott's circle of acquaintances and knew the author personally being his son-in-law, reads the characters as some sort of projection of the author and his friend, the first responsible and reasonable, the latter more reckless and carefree.

Let us now see things from a different angle of interpretation, provided by David Daiches's reading. Not refuting but enriching Lockhart's views, Daiches suggests that both Alan and Darsie can indeed be seen as young Scott and Clerk, but they can also represent two different facets of Sir Walter Scott's personality, the rational one and the romantic one.²⁶ Perhaps, Scott's more mature counterpart, Alan, is the adult version of Scott interacting with Darsie, his younger self. One piece of evidence which could intensify the identification between Darsie and Scott lies in their shared literary interest. Both were captivated in their youth by the same books, namely the works of Cervantes, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and romances in general.²⁷ Furthermore, Scott shared the romantic features exhibited by Darsie in the novel: as Scott himself reports in his *Memoirs*, as a boy he always had a tendency for fantasising on chivalric adventures and sublime sceneries. In terms of character, the two also

Cf. also Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.* Vol. I, Chapter II, pp. 61-90.

²⁵ Cf. Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Chapter V, pp. 147-154.

²⁶ Cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, pp.48-49.

²⁷ Cf. Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Chapter I, pp. 35-50; Chapter IV, p. 130;

Cf. also Johnson, Edgar, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown*, 2 vols, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1970.

share a similar attitude towards their studies, since Scott related that he used to be a very unsteady yet intelligent student, an “incorrigibly idle imp”²⁸ with a mind “gilded by a vivid and active imagination”,²⁹ who was only interested in the topics which could strike his fancy.³⁰ Lastly, this similarity between Darsie and Scott is further strengthened when comparing Darsie’s love interest to Scott’s, given the fact that the mysterious Green Mantle, *alias* Lilius Redgauntlet, is most likely reminiscent of the author’s unrequited love for, probably, Williamina Belsches, a lady once described by Scott in a letter as wearing a “*manteau vert*”.³¹

Thus, even if in the light of this brief and limited comparison, the complexity of the factual material at the basis of *Redgauntlet* starts to emerge, providing an idea of the great network of references to reality pervading the novel. Summing up, what is most important here is that whether they were based more on Clerk or Scott himself, these two characters have a deep connection to Scott’s private life and mark this novel as one strongly inspired by it. The autobiographical vein that runs through *Redgauntlet* flows so deep that even some secondary characters might correspond to real-life ones. Just to provide one instance of this, the Quakers living on Mount Sharon might have been inspired by the recollection of Lady Waldie, the mother of one of Scott’s friends.³²

Of course, it is normal to expect real-life elements to be present in Scott’s work. This is because it is Scott’s technique to draw inspiration from facts when working on his novels, as he wrote commenting on his own literary production:

²⁸ Scott, Walter, *Memoir of the Early Life of Walter Scott Written by Himself*, cit., p. 29.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37

³⁰ *Ibidem.*

³¹ Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Chapter V, p. 161.

³² Cf. Lockhart, John Gibson, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, Chapter III, p. 118.

These coincidences between fiction and reality are perhaps the very circumstances to which the success of these novels is in a great measure to be attributed [...] every spectator at once recognizes in those scenes and faces which are copied from nature an air of distinct reality, which is not attached to fancy-pieces however happily conceived and elaborately executed.³³

Thus, it can be surmised that in *Redgauntlet* as in every other novel by Scott this technique based on “copying from actual existences, rather than from the phantasms of his own imagination”³⁴ is used for the sake of reliability and realism, to make the novel less entrenched in antiquarian technicalities and “more light and obvious to general comprehension”.³⁵

And yet, *Redgauntlet* still stands out among the other Waverley novels, despite obeying the same principle of basing a work of fiction on reality. Arguably, the difference lies in the reality which is the source of inspiration. Indeed, differently from the other *Waverley Novels*, *Redgauntlet* appears to be based more on private experience than on historical, collective experience. So, this predilection for private authenticity might be the reason why it is possible for one of the paramount ‘historical’ event of the novel, the Jacobite rebellion plotted by Sir Hugh Redgauntlet, not to correspond in truth to any historical fact. Perhaps, this is what makes *Redgauntlet* different and unique among the *Waverley Novels*, its being the most autobiographical of them and at the same time its revolving around an imaginary historical event.

³³ Scott, Walter, *Walter Scott* [Quarterly Review, xvi, 1817], now in *On Novelists and Fiction*, ed. by Ioan Williams, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, pp. 237-259, p 238.

³⁴ Jeffrey, Francis, *Edinburgh Review* [November 1814], cited in Phillips, Mark, *Macaulay, Scott, and the Literary Challenge to Historiography*, “Journal of the History of Ideas”, 50, 1, January-March 1989, pp. 117-133, p.127.

³⁵ Scott, Walter, *General Preface to the ‘Waverley Novels’ (1829)* in *Waverley: Or, ‘Tis Sixty Years Since* [1814], ed. by Kathryn Sutherland, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 384-397, p. 389.

I.2.2 Fiction as a Case: Alan Fairford, the Lawyer

This section is dedicated to the analysis of the narrative as told by Alan Fairford, a very young lawyer in Edinburgh and Darsie Latimer's dear friend. He is characterized as a reasonable, modest, and logical individual and along with Darsie Latimer he is the one of the main internal narrators of the novel, especially during the first section which entirely consists of the epistolary exchange between him and Darsie. In this section, we will try to show how Alan's profession and logical personality correspond to a particular idea of narrative transpiring through his stories, which is best exemplified by the technique he uses to defend his client, Peter Peebles, in his very first trial. Indeed, Alan's conception of a 'story' is inextricable from his role in society, that of the advocate. Even outside fiction, the job of lawyers is in a way that of building narratives against or in favour of the case at hand.³⁶ This is achieved via destroying and building realities, so to speak. More specifically, the *pars destruens* consists in refuting and discrediting any falsehood or negative piece of evidence in the case. On the other hand, the *pars costruens* is substantiated by producing pieces of evidence, whether physical objects or witnesses. In summary, the lawyers' narratives are functional to solving a case by patiently undoing its complicated knot, simplifying it as much as possible. The result is a matter-of-fact narrative, as truthful as the evidence makes it possible, and based on facts. In *Redgauntlet*, a certain idea of storytelling emerges in the form of an enquiry meant to pursue the truth among a sea of fog, as if it were a mystery to lay bare in front of a court of justice.

³⁶ Cf. Kerr, James, *Fiction Against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., pp. 112-113;

Cf also. Maitzen, Rohan, *Op. Cit.*, pp 172-173;

Cf. also Zimmermann, Everett, *Personal Identity, Narrative, and History: 'The Female Quixote' and 'Redgauntlet', "Eighteenth-century fiction"*, 12, 2-3, January-April 2000, pp. 369-390, p.383.

In order to prove this, let us delve into more detail in the aforementioned trial which marks the beginning of Alan's career as a lawyer, the case 'Peebles versus Plainstones'. The contention, stemming from the liquidation of the commercial activity of the two parties, has been passed on from lawyer to lawyer and rendered almost impossible to solve after fifteen years of counterattacks and legal quibbles from each counsel, to the point of being the terror of every professional daring to take the case. When Alan is assigned as Peebles's attorney, he miraculously manages to straighten the "huge chaotic mass rendered unintelligible technicality".³⁷ This means that Alan managed to reconstruct a logical narrative out of the extremely complicated tangle of documents in which the Peebles versus Plainstones case consists:

He then plunged boldly into the *mare magnum* of accompts between the parties; he pursued each false statement from the waste-book to the day-book, from the day-book to the bill-book, from the bill-book to the ledger; placed the artful interpolations and insertions of the fallacious Plainstones in array against each other, and against the fact; and availing himself to the utmost of his father's previous labours, and his own knowledge of accompts, in which he had been sedulously trained, he laid before the court a clear and intelligible statement of the affairs of copartnership.³⁸

The story that Alan tells the Court by extricating it out of a confusing past and lacking decisive elements conveys an example of how storytelling could be conceived in *Redgauntlet*, namely as an accurate reconstruction and simplification of a narrative out of scattered and hidden threads of evidence. Indeed, it can be observed how the "mazes of litigation"³⁹ that make up Peebles's lawsuit are not much different from the mazes of

³⁷ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter I, p.144.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

³⁹ *Ibidem.*

narratives which constitute *Redgauntlet*. Arguably, this labyrinth in the novel finds its centre around the main mystery enveloping Darsie Latimer's unknown past and identity. In this perspective, it can be underlined how it is owing to the young man's wish to set off and travel along the border in quest of his true relatives that the other narratives are then triggered. In Alan's mindset then the exit to this maze that is *Redgauntlet* can be found only by treating Darsie's predicament as a case to crack. Even Darsie himself, as observed by Kerr,⁴⁰ in the very first *Letter* opening the novel begs his friend for a professional counsel, as if he were hiring him as his lawyer:

I repeat the little history now, as I have a hundred times before [...] Turn, then, thy sharp, wire-drawing, lawyer-like ingenuity to this same task- make up my history as though thou were shaping the blundering allegations of some blue-bonneted, hard-headed client into a condescendence of facts and circumstances.⁴¹

Therefore, Alan Fairford's storytelling technique as a lawyer can be interpreted as a contribution to constructing narratives, including *Redgauntlet* itself. Darsie's plea for help and Alan's expertise in legal cases hint to the fact that the story of *Redgauntlet*, most specifically Darsie's past, might be conceived as a legal case, its narrative being coherent, factual, yet prudent when there is lack of evidence. Possibly, this might also justify the centrality which law has in the novel, from the Peebles versus Plainstones litigation to Darsie's encounter with Provost Crosbie and the Pretender's legal justification for ascending to the throne. However, Alan Fairford is not the only character here who suggests a specific idea of storytelling. Even if Alan managed to lay in front of the Court a linear story as a solution to the case, there is always room for the opposing counsel to object to some details

⁴⁰ Kerr, James, *Fiction against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., p. 110.

⁴¹ *Redgauntlet*, Letter I, p. 17.

being omitted to make the pieces fall into place. This is exactly what happens during the trial, the “interpretation of certain correspondence”⁴² being required before handing a verdict. In the same way, there is always another point of view in the complex *Redgauntlet*’s storytelling, given the fact that the complexity of the novel stems from the multifariousness of narrators. More specifically, the ‘opposing counsel’ to Alan’s storytelling is that of his correspondent and the other main narrator in the novel, Darsie Latimer, as the next paragraph will argue in more detail.

I.2.3 Fiction as a Romantic Adventure: Darsie’s Letters

Darsie Latimer is the other main internal narrator in *Redgauntlet*. His narrative constitutes the other end of Alan Fairford’s correspondence in the first part of the novel, as well as the *Journal* which the young man then keeps in secret once kidnapped by his uncle, Sir Hugh Redgauntlet. Most importantly, the idea of fiction that emerges from this other paramount narrator might be interpreted as opposite with respect to that of Alan Fairford. The two clearly have a different way of telling stories: while Alan would recount his tales with sound logic and factual evidence, Darsie tends to weave fantastical narratives out of the slightest fragment of reality, being carried away by his vivid imagination. Indeed, reading Darsie’s *Letters* in particular, the reader can identify another idea of storytelling which is just freely inspired by facts, but not built on them. This habit of Darsie’s is not unknown to Alan, who warns him on many occasions against his tendency to “building a castle too heavy for its foundation”.⁴³ In fact, Alan knows that when the reconstruction of certain facts is still too

⁴² *Redgauntlet*, Chapter I, p. 150.

⁴³ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter V, p. 52.

foggy he should not jump to conclusions: the only thing fit to say for him would be “*caetera prorsus ignoro*”⁴⁴ as he would wait for further evidence to be detected. This is exactly what happens, for instance, when the young lawyer overhears the word ‘Latimer’ in a conversation between his father and Mr Herries as recounted in *Letter V*: Alan cannot know more about the exchange between the two and about Mr Herries’ motives and goals, therefore he shies away from baseless conjectures. Darsie’s habit, on the contrary, which is particularly visible in his *Letters*, is that of casting a fantastic aura over every event and landscape, without having any proof to justify his improbable scenarios. This mental constitution of Darsie’s is then based on ignoring reality to follow flights of fancy in scorn of the real conditions affecting the object of his gaze. As Alan briefly exemplifies:

You laugh at me for giving a penny [...] to an old fellow, whom thou, in thy high flight, wouldst have sent home supperless, because he was like Solon or Belisarius.⁴⁵

Here, Darsie sees in an old beggar a Solon as the consequence of his holding a romanticised and literary idea of poverty as the bearer of wisdom and attributing to him a fanciful narrative. This mechanism revolving around romanticisation is the foundation of Darsie’s storytelling, and it is fuelled by his experience as a reader. In Darsie’s case, it is not reality and fact which inspire him, but literature. Classical myths of heroism and Ariosto’s tales of love and battles, what Scott defined as “wild adventures of love and chivalry”,⁴⁶ are very often referred to by Darsie, as if his stories were the continuation or reworkings of heroic

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ *Redgauntlet*, *Letter V*, p. 46.

⁴⁶ Scott, Walter, *Essay on Romance*, in *Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.: Chivalry, Romance and the Drama*, cit., p. 128.

tales. Thus, Alan is an “Apollo”⁴⁷, Sir Hugh is a “Hercules”⁴⁸ and a mysterious fallen knight, and Lilius is a “nymph”.⁴⁹ As James Kerr observes, in *Redgauntlet* Darsie’s narrative is characterised by exaggerated sentimentalism and fancy. More specifically, Kerr observes that Darsie’s language is “like the gushing of a pretentious adolescent”⁵⁰ and his descriptions tending to that poetics of the sublime which makes his narratives far from prosaic.⁵¹ Kerr takes as an example how Darsie renders something as elementary and common as a sunset by transforming it into some poetic landscape by describing it as:

“a warrior prepared for defence” showing his “ruddy front...over a huge battlemented and turreted wall [...] which appeared like an immense Gothic fortress into which the lord of day was descending”⁵²

Another instance conveying Darsie’s imaginative narrative style is Darsie’s encounter with Lilius at the tavern. More specifically, it is clear in this episode how Darsie’s storytelling technique owes its aura of idealisation to romances of chivalry, namely that type of romances which dealt with the themes of love, battles, wild adventures, and knights. These themes, according to Scott, wound up to be “carried into hyperbole and extravagance” along with the romances depicting them,⁵³ unlike their more ancient types, which would still revolve around “marvellous and uncommon incidents”,⁵⁴ but in a different, more balanced way. The difference in this wide “species of composition”⁵⁵ lies in the ratio between two elements

⁴⁷ *Redgauntlet*, Letter I, p. 17.

⁴⁸ *Redgauntlet*, Letter IV, p. 39.

⁴⁹ *Redgauntlet*, Letter XII, p. 123.

⁵⁰ Kerr, James, *Fiction against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., p. 107.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² *Redgauntlet*, Letter IV, p. 32 quoted in Kerr, James, *Fiction against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., p.107.

⁵³ Scott, Walter, *Essay on Romance*, in *Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.: Chivalry, Romance and the Drama*, cit., p.171.

⁵⁴ *Ivi*, p. 128.

⁵⁵ *Ivi*, p.133.

which are both present in them: real, historical inspiration and the invention operated by marvellous events and imagination, and usually the further one goes from antiquity the most imagination overpowers historical source.⁵⁶ In the case of the *Letters*, the romance of chivalry that Darsie is influenced by is that type which tends to lean on the side of imagination the most, to the point of making it impossible to find “the thread of truth in the web of fable which involves it”.⁵⁷ In reading Darsie’s *Letters* there are scenarios where the romance of chivalry appears clearly as a model for storytelling, making Darsie stray away from a factual point of view. For instance, Darsie conceives his relationship with the virtually unknown Lilius, the mysterious lady wearing a Green Mantle, as the one between a “cavalier servente”⁵⁸ or a “squire of low degree”⁵⁹ and a “princess”⁶⁰, completely ignoring that he is being observed and in danger. It becomes clear how Darsie turns reality into romances of chivalry by resorting to its characteristic tropes, thus seeing himself as a knight errant on a quest for his family name on the Scottish border. On his travels full of peripetias, first he encounters dark and mysterious knights such as Sir Hugh, known as the Laird of the Lakes in his territory, a very evocative title for an imaginative youth such as Darsie. Then, the young man is struck by the sight of this beautiful and mysterious lady wearing a characteristic green mantle, who shuns so coldly from his company. Having read so many romances and marvellous tales of brave heroes, he imagines that he needs to win this distant dame’s love and appreciation. Interestingly, the person Darsie must thank for being capable of encountering Green Mantle is Wandering Willie Stevenson, a blind itinerant fiddler whom it is possible to interpret in this mindset as a minstrel. In fact, the strolling musician could

⁵⁶ *Ivi*, p.154.

⁵⁷ *Ivi*, p. 139.

⁵⁸ *Redgauntlet, Letter XII*, p. 124.

⁵⁹ *Ivi*, p.123

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

very well correspond to the image of a minstrel because of his nomadic lifestyle, his sworn obedience under the protection of the House of Redgauntlet, his virtuosity at his instrument, and his storytelling ability in recounting his famous *Tale of diablerie*.⁶¹ Furthermore, Willie might also be interpreted as a loyal squire in Darsie's adventures, and this is because he manages to help him countless times. In fact, the wandering fiddler saves Darsie on multiple occasions: sneaking the young man in and out of the tavern unharmed, hearing his pleas for liberation once he is held captive by Sir Hugh, attempting to free him at the inn where the rebels are reunited, and ultimately faithfully serving him once he acquires his title of Sir Arthur Redgauntlet.

Therefore, we can assume how extravagant romances of chivalry with their values of heroism, valour, obedience to noble ladies, and loyalty play an essential role in Darsie's storytelling. Hence the exaggeration of reality typical of Darsie's tales which very often wins him the adjective "quixotical"⁶², which could not be farther from an errant knight in shining armour.

Then, as far as Darsie's *Letters* are concerned, his stories take the shape of the romance, "a fictitious narrative turning upon the marvellous or the supernatural",⁶³ and most specifically on the romance of chivalry with their apparatus of sublimated ideals about love and valour. Quixotical as Darsie's *Letters* may be, however, his storytelling full of imaginative metaphors and surrounded by a romantic aura is still a valid contribution to the narrative style of *Redgauntlet*, adding his perspective in the game of mirrors that constitutes the novel.

⁶¹ For information on minstrels and their position in society, cf. Scott, Walter, *Essay on Romance, Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.: Chivalry, Romance and the Drama*, cit., pp. 151-157.

⁶² *Redgauntlet*, Letter II, p. 24.

⁶³ Scott, Walter, *Essay on Romance, Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.: Chivalry, Romance and the Drama*, cit., p. 135.

If Alan's storytelling is based on logic and facts and Darsie's is based on the fictionalising lens of romances, neither of the two overpowers the other. In fact, as James Kerr observed, that between Alan and Darsie is a "sparring match which has no clear victor".⁶⁴ In this opposition both tales are valid and true, equally representing a valuable way of interpreting the story, highlighting different aspects. If Alan reconstructs the objective reality of facts, Darsie, albeit deforming what he sees, portrays the different, intimate reality revolving around the genuineness and intensity of his emotions and affection towards his dearest friend and his family. In cooperating to form the narrative of *Redgauntlet* together, Alan and Darsie's writings provide a commentary on how diametrically opposite styles can combine to tell events from two contrasting perspectives, thus unveiling details the other would overlook. Once again, an opposition, here logic versus romantic, embodied by the epistolary exchange and interaction between a logical young lawyer and a romantic youth, manifests itself without one end succumbing to the other.

I.3.1 Facts and Fiction: The Metafictional Implications in *Redgauntlet*'s Structure

Thus far, this chapter has discussed the structure of *Redgauntlet* defining it as eclectic and unique in Scott's production. We also anticipated how the oppositions it creates serve the purpose of creating a field of discussion about the literary composition of historical novels. Now, we will recapitulate the argument to further explain these peculiarities from a metafictional standpoint. In the light of all the elements analysed above, one thing results certain, namely that *Redgauntlet* is an experimental, meta-fictional reflection on the part of

⁶⁴ Kerr, James, *Fiction against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., p. 107.

the author on the art of writing historical fiction.⁶⁵ More specifically, this retrospective reflection crowns a long process of thought on historical romance starting from Scott's very first historical novel, *Waverley*. *Redgauntlet* indeed seems to mark the apex of a long reasoning on literary composition, which is engaged via the oppositions present in the structure. On this subject, Shaw observed how Scott weaves contrasts as some sort of musical counterpoint,⁶⁶ where two different melodies together contribute to creating a harmonic piece, the result being something complex and deep. Even if Shaw specifically refers to the counterpoint of different cultures in Scott's production, it might be suggested how this technique can be also applied to justify the structure of *Redgauntlet*, where two contrasting voices in the narrative start an enlightening conversation on what fiction is and how it could be written, neither of the two overpowering the other but reaching a compromise instead.

To further prove how counterpoint stimulates this debate about the composition of historical fiction, let us go over the opposing couples of narrator again, starting from the first couple of voices we found engaged in a dialogue, *ergo* those of Dr Dryasdust and the interpolating author. Both are external to the narrative, but their approach to it differs. In fact, it emerges how the character of the antiquary and that of the interpolating author embody two different perspectives on writing about historical facts as well as on selecting their sources. Dryasdust's very name, 'dry-as-dust', indicates an old-fashioned, barren idea of writing about history. The antiquary can be described in Southgate words as "the archetypal literary

⁶⁵ lvi, pp. 122-123;

Cf. also Maitzen Rohan, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 170-179;

Cf. also Shaw, Harry E., *Is There a Problem with Historical Fiction (or with Scott's Redgauntlet?)*, cit., pp. 189-190.

⁶⁶ Cf. Shaw, Harry E., *Is There a Problem with Historical Fiction (or with Scott's Redgauntlet?)*, p. 187.

representation of a historian: a tediously pedantic scholar”,⁶⁷ who, the critic observes by referring to the *Dedicatory Epistle* in *Ivanhoe* (1819), resorts to “the dust of antiquity”⁶⁸ hoping to find “dusty records [...] the authors of which seem perversely to have conspired in order to suppress [...] all interesting details”.⁶⁹ In other words, in writing about facts Dryasdust adopts an aseptic attitude, researching history for the love of absolute authenticity, being careful in his “toilsome and minute research”⁷⁰ not to “mingle fiction with truth”.⁷¹ On the contrary, in his interpolated *Chapter*, the author does exactly what Dryasdust would never do, namely “pollute the well of history”⁷² with his inventions: he reveals himself as a creator of the literary text of *Redgauntlet*, pointing to the artificiality of the novel and of Dryasdust himself. Doing so, he defines himself in the text as the literary creator of this historical fiction. The reason why the interpolating author by his very methods implicitly objects to Dryasdust has deep roots in Scott’s experience with historical fiction. Even from the times of *Waverley* (1814), Scott knew that focusing solely on a thorough historical and documentary research and on a thick apparatus of footnotes was not enough for the success of historical narratives, as well as for the contentment of the reading public. This, Scott could very well discern from the failure of the previous, accuracy-centred, antiquarian novels, of which he points out Strutt’s *Queen-Hoo-Hall* as an example.⁷³ Thus, ten years later, Scott seems to dwell further on this subject in *Redgauntlet*, by hinting at how Dryasdust’s antiquarian research, though accurate and focused on documented records, is not the perfect

⁶⁷ Southgate, Beverly, *Why Dryasdust? Historians in Fiction*, “Historically Speaking”, 10,2, April 2009, pp. 12-13, p.12.

⁶⁸ Scott, Walter, *Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Dr Dryasdust*, *F.A.S.*, cit., p. 15.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ Scott, Walter, *Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Dr Dryasdust*, *F.A.S.*, cit., p. 17.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*

⁷² Scott, Walter, *Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Dr Dryasdust*, *F.A.S.*, cit., p. 17.

⁷³ Cf. Scott, Walter, *General Preface (1829)*, cit., p. 389;

Cf. also Scott, Walter, *Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Dr Dryasdust*, *F.A.S.*, cit., p. 18.

solution to writing historical fiction, nor is it granted that it is trustworthy. Proof of this is his epilogue, which in a few lines undermines the credibility of the antiquary with respect to his whole work and his *modus operandi*. This is because this conclusion is mostly based on hearsay and scattered newspaper articles, and the aura of suspicion grows when Peebles' grotesque demise⁷⁴ is reported via an unreliable source, possibly uneducated, since the cause of death, a fit of apoplexy, is comically deformed into "perplexity".⁷⁵ Then, to this inflexible construction of the facts based solely on records and documents, which reveals itself as far from reliable, the interpolating author opposes an alternative mode, that of invention and imagination, fiction in other words. It needs to be clarified, of course, how this imagination is not limitless and raving: Scott's inventions are always bound by the time and place the novel is set in. Though they never historically existed, the events and characters are accurate if they are consistent with the manners of the time.⁷⁶ In other words, his alternative method of writing fiction is still historically accurate, but more adaptable and more inclusive of unconventional sources and techniques, such as intervening to interpolate the story.

This compromise between different methods of tale-telling and interpretation of facts is also to be found in the opposition between the narratives of Alan Fairford and Darsie Latimer inside the novel. In a way, this opposition mirrors and enriches that between the heterodiegetic narrators. Fairford's technique might be assimilated to that of Dryasdust. This is because in a way lawyers operate similarly to antiquarians, for both meticulously reconstruct stories based on facts.⁷⁷ And, consequently, Darsie's narrative might be assimilated to the method of the interpolating author, who underlines the fictional nature of

⁷⁴ Cf. Duncan, Ian, *Authenticity Effects*, cit., p. 99.

⁷⁵ *Redgauntlet*, *Conclusion by Dr Dryasdust*, p. 400.

⁷⁶ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Dedicatory Epistle to the Rev. Dr Dryasdust, F.A.S.*, cit., pp. 20-21.

⁷⁷ Cf. Maitzen, Rohan, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 172-173.

the novel. But things are more complex than that. In truth, Darsie's *Letters* do not simply mirror the interpolating author's solution, they implicitly comment on its possible disadvantages, since Darsie's tales are indeed based on the fictional representation and sublimation of what he experiences, but they are also brought to the extreme by his romantic imagination and thus made defective.

Through these counterpoints, then, Scott builds a dialogue on the composition of historical romances such as *Redgauntlet* itself via the exploration of the different possible approaches to it, from the inflexible, fact-based one, to the more open one, prone to the inclusion of fictive elements and inventions. Neither of the two is perfect and reliable if extremized and employed alone: on one hand, being too based on facts makes the novel unappealing and not necessarily accurate. On the other hand, abandonment to fiction alone might result in the complete distortion of facts, like in Darsie's *Letters*. Therefore, on the complex and composite different narratives in *Redgauntlet*, no solution surpasses the others, for every point of view is granted sufficient authority as a valuable source which can shed light on elements which would be otherwise ignored or rejected. So, what *Redgauntlet* tries to explore is how fiction and facts can coexist and in what measure, not which option is bound to repress the others. Besides, balance between facts and fiction is at the basis of Scott's invention of the historical novel in general, for the very model on which he based them, the romance,⁷⁸ is deeply rooted in that mingling of facts and fiction. As hinted at when examining Darsie's storytelling, Scott denies the simplification of the term 'romance' as commonly intended, *ergo* as solely a tale of chivalry, "a military fable of the middle ages"⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Cf. Villari, Enrica, *Le Premesse del Romanzo Storico: le Tre Voci di Scott per l'Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Contesti", 2-3, 1989, pp.109-132, pp 120-121.

⁷⁹ Scott, Walter, *Essay on Romance, Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.: Chivalry, Romance and the Drama*, cit., p.128.

dealing with love, knights, and occasionally fantastic beasts. This is because he identifies in it a category with many variants, all inspired by historical reality in various degrees:

Romance and real history have the same common origin. It is the aim of the former to maintain as long as possible the mask of veracity; and indeed the traditional memorials of all earlier ages partake in such a varied and doubtful degree of the qualities essential to those opposite lines of composition, that they form a mixed class between them; and may be termed either romantic histories, or historical romances, according to the proportion in which their truth is debased by fiction, or their fiction mingled with truth.⁸⁰

When taking romance as the point of departure for his novels, Scott intended them as strictly related to history, not opposite to them, because the most ancient types retraced the foundation of ancient civilizations, surrounding them with a marvellous aura due to the superstition of the ancient peoples, the interference of lack of memory or interpolation, and the human fondness for inventions.⁸¹

Much in the same way, *Redgauntlet* delves deeper into the compromise between facts and fiction, by especially defending the latter. As Shaw asserts in his study on the form of historical novels, “*Redgauntlet* is Scott's most elaborate defence of the play of historical imagination”.⁸² This “defence” was needed because novels were generally stigmatised as “frivolous”⁸³ and too fanciful. Furthermore, during Scott’s times the historical novel was displaying an innovative way of writing about history without shunning imagination, thus prompting a discussion among historians about its validity, its increasing popularity, and its

⁸⁰Scott, Walter, *Essay on Romance, Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.: Chivalry, Romance and the Drama* cit., p. 134.

⁸¹ Ivi, pp. 134-135.

⁸² Shaw, Harry E., *The Form of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors*, Sage House, Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 208.

⁸³Cf Phillips, Mark, *Macaulay, Scott, and the Literary Challenge to Historiography*, “Journal of the History of Ideas”, 50, 1, January-March 1989, pp. 117-133, p.124.

impact on contemporary historiography.⁸⁴ Aware of this debate, Scott demonstrates that the sources he relies on, both historical records and unconventional “fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them”,⁸⁵ can be more encompassing than contemporary historiography, and that combining them can convey an air of historical factuality without foregoing the pleasure of reading.⁸⁶ In this case, the example Scott sets is brought to the extreme by means of its eclecticism : *Redgauntlet* can provide multiple versions of the same story told by opposite sides with the aim of achieving a deeper understanding of the events and thus exorcising the risk of one-sided and possibly biased misrepresentations.

Furthermore, the fact that the novel contains a Jacobite rebellion which did not take place in imagined events does not make it anti-historical, because it is likely that Scott wanted to explore even further how much the romance could offer as a model for his historical novels, how facts could be highlighted by imagination in the exploration of a past reality. In *Redgauntlet*, he appears to have conceived history as a series of ramifications, where just one direction is then concretized in reality, but the others still maintain their probability.⁸⁷ Mingling the reality of the past with the fiction of probable events is a trait of writing historical fiction which is considered very modern.⁸⁸ For instance, even if the Jacobite rebellion never occurred in reality, its plotting still maintains its statute of probability given

⁸⁴ Ivi, pp. 117-133.

⁸⁵ Ivi, p. 132.

⁸⁶ Ivi, 127.

⁸⁷ Cf. Maitzen, Rohan, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 175-180;

Cf. Shaw, Harry E., *Is There a Problem with Historical Fiction (or with Scott's Redgauntlet?)*, cit., p. 190;

Cf. Morière, Pierre, *Histoire et Récit dans 'Redgauntlet' de Walter Scott*, “Caliban”, 28, 1991, pp. 25-35, pp. 32-35 ;

⁸⁸ Cf. Nagy, Vladislav, *Historical Fiction as a Mixture of History and Romance: Towards the Genre Definition of the Historical Novel*, “Prague Journal of English Studies”, 3, 1, 2014, pp.7-17, p. 17.

the conditions in which the Kingdom versed in the 1760s.⁸⁹ Though weak, Jacobites were still around during that time: someone might still have plotted a rebellion, though bound to failure, therefore it does not contradict Scott's principles to insert it in the novel.

In conclusion, ten years after the publication of *Waverley*, the novel which marked the beginning of the genre of the historical novel, Scott seems to stop to contemplate and experiment with narrative forms and focalisations, creating oppositions and insisting on their compromise to achieve an all-embracing view over the reality portrayed in his works. Therefore, *Redgauntlet*'s eclectic structure allows the reader to encompass the events from various perspectives and possibilities, especially focusing on the balanced coexistence of facts and fiction, logic and romanticism, conventional and unconventional sources. In considering the coexistence of all these angles in terms of storytelling, focalisation, and depth, Scott managed to make multiple points of view cooperate to outline the world of *Redgauntlet* as widely as possible and avoid omissions.

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⁸⁹ Cf. Ghoshal Wallace, Tara, 'Historical Redgauntlet: Jacobite Delusions and Hanoverian Fantasies', *Romanticism*, 21, 2 (July 2015), pp. 145-159, p. 147-155.

CHAPTER II

EVENTS: REALITY AND THE SUPERNATURAL

This chapter aims to discuss the coexistence between historical and supernatural explanations for the events occurring in *Redgauntlet*. To do so, we will first start with the analysis of the short story *Wandering Willie's Tale*, its ambiguity between rational and supernatural readings, and its possible meanings. Having grasped this rational/supernatural opposition in the *Tale*, we will then move on to examine the opposition of historical and supernatural in the main plot of *Redgauntlet* and its turning points and refer it to two different conceptions of history embodied by Sir Hugh Redgauntlet and Darsie Latimer, respectively.

II.1 Wandering Willie's Tale: An Example of Balance between Supernatural and Historical.

This section will examine *Wandering Willie's Tale* by exploring its structure and by discussing its complex balance between supernatural and rational as an essential characteristic. Lastly, the function of the *Tale* in the greater context of the novel will be analysed.

II.1.1 The Inspiration and Plot of the *Tale*.

Wandering Willie's Tale is centred upon the figure of a violent Laird known for his ruthlessness and zeal in battle, to the point that he is deemed to have struck a deal with the devil. Possibly, Scott was encouraged to insert this story as part of Sir Hugh Redgauntlet's heritage because of the blood-tainted past of the real family of the Herries of Birrenswork, Sir Hugh's family on his mother's part in the novel. The main source for the narrative,

however, is not the chronicles of the Herries, but a Scottish folktale of *diablerie* about a farmer's visit to hell to extinguish his debt to his landlord, the devilish Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg.⁹⁰ This legend was related to Scott by Joseph Train, his antiquary friend and informant, and adapted in verse by him in *Strains of the Mountain Muse*, ten years prior to *Redgauntlet's* publication.⁹¹ It appears that Scott was inspired both by the folktale and Train's version, a ballad named *Funeral of Sir Archibald the Wicked*. In fact, if Scott appears to follow the main legend for the visit to hell and the character of Steenie, Sir Robert Redgauntlet seems to be based more on Sir Archibald, presented in detail as a paladin of the Catholic cause and as a bloodthirsty, ruthless warrior:

They sightless saw his eye, that ne'er
Was wet with sympathetic tear;
They nerveless saw his arm and hand,
Red with the blood of half the land;
They saw his fear-inspiring form
Dissolve in pestilential swarm;
and wrench'd they saw his putrid fame
Ere Death to his assistance came.⁹²

As for the rest of the ballad, there are no other significant elements that overlap with Willie's *Tale*, as a demonstration that two different adaptations can spring from the same source. Upon a comparison, in the antiquary's version a digression focuses more on the

⁹⁰ Cf. Train, Joseph, *Notes to 'Funeral of Sir Archibald the Wicked'*, in *Strains of the Mountain Muse*, Edinburgh, George Goldie, 1814, pp. 190-211, pp. 190-195.

⁹¹ Cf. Wilkes, Joanne, *'The Use of Scottish Family History in Redgauntlet'*, "The Review of English Studies", 41, 162, May 1990, pp. 200-211, pp. 205-206.

⁹² Train, Joseph, *'Ballad of Sir Archibald the Wicked'*, in *Strains of the Mountain Muse*, cit., pp. 78-92, p. 79.

wake as well as on the funeral of the Laird, differently from Scott, who exploits to a greater extent other elements only alluded to in the ballad, such as the identity of the chieftain's "pious heir".⁹³ Also, Scott plays down some explicitly supernatural elements in the ballad, like the swarm of devils who take away the corpse of Sir Archibald, leaving the "hearse singed, the coffin riven".⁹⁴ Most importantly, as it will be further discussed below, what characterises and enriches Scott's version of the tale is its ambiguity and its collocation as a nested narrative. Indeed, in *Redgauntlet* the tale is embedded in a section working as a diversion from Darsie's immobility and passivity. Jaded by the monotonous life led by the Quakers living on Mount Sharon, Darsie decides to wander outside his friend's property into the surrounding fields. While he is thus occupied, he encounters a blind old fiddler who reveals himself as 'Wandering' Willie Stevenson. After losing to Willie in a musical challenge, the young man decides to embark on a brief adventure with his new acquaintance: he intends to play alongside Willie as his partner by passing for a simple student on the quest for a night's adventure. In pretending to be an itinerant fiddler, Darsie makes a reckless and inopportune decision because it will result in arising the suspicion that he might be a spy among the undercover Jacobites reunited at the tavern. Even before this unfortunate accident happens, Willie himself is aware of the risks the young protagonist is running by trusting a stranger like him. In fact, he says to Darsie that he "could be the devil hismell, for what you ken",⁹⁵ validating his point by making the traditional reference to fiddlers forming a compact with Satan in exchange for their talent.

⁹³ Ivi, p. 87.

⁹⁴ Ivi, p. 92.

⁹⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Letter XI, p. 101.

This situation inspires Willie to tell what will be recognised as one of best-written ghost stories in literature, namely *Wandering Willie's Tale*.

The protagonist of the story, set in the 17th century during the Covenanters' upheaval, is Willie's ancestor, Steenie Stevenson, a strolling musician like him. The plot is simple yet open to multiple interpretations: as a tenant and servant to the feared and cruel Sir Robert Redgauntlet, Steenie owes the ruthless Laird his rent. On the very day Steenie wipes away his debt, Sir Robert dies. Every night since Sir Robert's death, mysterious events take place in the castle. Strange, whistling noises are heard by Dougal McCallum, the Laird's butler, as if his master were still calling him to help turn him in his bed. The ominous events continue, since the night before the funeral another servant swears to have seen a devilish creature crouching on Sir Robert's bier and McCallum himself is found dead, allegedly following his master's call in the afterlife. At this point, Steenie has no way to prove that he had paid off his debt because his bag of silver disappeared. In addition to this, both the eye-witnesses to the payment, Sir Robert and the butler, died before issuing the receipt that could prove to the new Laird, Sir John, that the debt is extinguished. This is where the tale's tendency to the supernatural reaches its peak: indeed, Steenie is desperate for evidence or money, and while he is drinking brandy in great quantities, he carelessly proposes a toast both to his dead landlord and the devil:

The first [toast] was the memory of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, and might he never lie quiet in his grave till he had righted his poor bond-tenant; and a second was a health to a Man's Enemy, if he would but get him back the pock of siller or tell him what came o' it.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ *Redgauntlet*, Letter XI, p. 110.

While riding aimlessly in his despair, Steenie meets a stranger on horseback who asserts he can help him retrieve the bag of silver and the receipt by asking Sir Robert himself. They ride together until they reach the gates of a castle that looks exactly like Sir Robert's, even if in a completely different location. Before crossing the gates, however, Steenie is warned by his companion not to accept any object or any request from anyone, only to obtain the receipt and take his leave. After entering the castle, Steenie meets his master surrounded by some of his most cruel and bloodthirsty collaborators during the war, all revelling in what may be interpreted as hell. Sir Robert is shown on the very same chair he used to sit on when alive, a void cushion beside him being reserved for his jackanape. The Laird signs the receipt and hands it to Steenie and he also explains to him where to find the silver, but in return he expects him to play a song for him, a tune taught by a warlock. To this blasphemous request, the tenant replies that he believes in God and will not obey his orders. To this confirmation of Christian faith, Sir Robert cannot oppose any resistance, and is thus forced to vanish. Nevertheless, before disappearing Sir Robert obliges him to present himself every year on that day to give his greetings to him. Steenie regains conscience in the churchyard where Sir Robert Redgauntlet rests, and decides to retrieve his silver at once. Upon his return to Sir John's, Steenie presents him the receipt dated past Sir Robert death yet carrying his signature and successfully points out the location of the silver bag, namely a tower called 'The Cat's Cradle'. On retrieving the money, the servants also find many other objects that had been missing from the household as well as the jackanape, which gets shot and killed. It is thought therefore that the monkey may have been responsible for blowing the whistle during those nights of wake after his master's death, as well as for the theft of the bag containing the silver. Also, the same jackanape is reckoned to have been the fiend responsible for the strange events following the Laird's death.

However, the tale does not provide explicit and definitive evidence of the monkey's responsibility for the theft as well as for many other unexplainable events. In the following section, the contradictory elements of the tale will be further explored as well as explained as part of the technique employed by Scott to write about the supernatural.

II.1.2 The Unsolvable Ambiguity of the *Tale* and Scott's Technique.

In terms of structure and content, *Wandering Willie's Tale* presents itself as a perfectly balanced compound of supernatural and rational. On one hand, the disappearance of the silver bag can be the work of a pet monkey instinctively attracted by shiny objects. As for the apparition of a parallel castle in hell, an element also present in the folktale,⁹⁷ this sequence could be justified as an alcohol-induced nightmare: as Julia Briggs suggests, Steenie drank too much brandy and possibly fell asleep during the trip back to his house.⁹⁸ This interpretation of the episode is arguably validated by the fact that Scott himself explained that some apparition of ghosts and other supernatural manifestations could be caused by the state of ebriety following the assumption of alcohol and/or drugs, as he pointed out in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* by referring to the so-called "Blue Devils".⁹⁹ It is even easier to explain Sir Robert's death as an attack of gout, from which he visibly suffered in an advanced state.

On the other hand, it would not be as simple to rationally justify the mysterious identity of the stranger on horseback, and some signs that hint at the devilish nature of the Laird. More

⁹⁷ Cf. Train, *Notes to 'The Funeral of Sir Archibald the Wicked'*, cit., pp. 193-194.

⁹⁸ Cf. Briggs, Julia, *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story*, London, Faber, 1977, p. 36.

⁹⁹ Scott, Walter, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft: Addressed to G. J. Lockhart, Esq.*, London, John Murray, 1830, *Letter I*, pp.1-48, p. 18.

specifically, Sir Robert appears as having forged a contract with the devil. In this case, his death proves more difficult to explain, since he was alone when he passed away, and it is possible to imagine that the fiend took him to serve him in hell, just like what happens in Train's ballad. Another sign that he had a compact with the devil is a fact told by his servants: when the Laird put his feet into water to dull the pain during gout attacks, the water boiled as if he was repelled by it. From this point of view, the jackanape could then be Sir Robert's familiar, given its human attributes. Indeed, this creature is extremely ambiguous in the story since it is hinted at as some kind of demon disguised as an animal, so much so that he carried a name, that of the infamous warlock Major Weir, and dressed like a human.¹⁰⁰ This association is strengthened by the traditional symbology with which monkeys are associated, where they are interpreted as a symbol for the devil and heresy as well as a caricature of human beings.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, a detail prompts the reader to think Sir Robert is suffering eternal damnation and tempting Steenie to serve him in hell, namely a reference to the Sabbath: it is told, according to the superstitions, that the victims of the devil are invited to the Sabbath, and in order to be enslaved and damned for eternity the devil only needs to offer them some food or drink, or to request any service. If the person in question accepts, then they become slaves to Satan. This is exactly how Steenie is tempted, and the stranger warns him not to accept anything from them arguably for this reason.¹⁰² As for the mysterious rider, he could easily be recognised as the devil or some

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Raffaelli, Renato, *La Scimmia Ladra e la Scimmia Assassina*, "Linguae & Rivista di Lingue e Culture Moderne", 11, 1-2 (2012), pp.91-103;

Cf. also Briggs, Julia, p.37;

For more information on Major Weir, cf. also Scott, Walter, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, cit., *Letter IX*, pp.283-343, pp. 329-333.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Impelluso, Lucia, *Monkey*, in *Nature and its Symbols*, Los Angeles, Getty Museum Publications, 2004, pp. 198-201.

¹⁰² For more information about the Sabbath and the covenant with the devil, cf. Gaskill, Malcolm, *Witchcraft: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

supernatural creature capable of tempting Steenie to visit hell. To make the supernatural atmosphere even stronger, the tale is set in two typically Gothic locations, a castle first and dark woods then. Out of all the supernatural elements of the story, however, perhaps the most mysterious element to explain is the receipt: in fact, albeit its post-dating could be explained as forgery, it remains almost impossible to rationally justify how the receipt could remain intact after Sir John decides to cast it into the fire to erase any evidence of his father's eternal damnation. There is a sentence in particular suggesting that Steenie has really been in hell and validating the supernatural theory of the tale:

But Heaven kens the truth, whilk first came out by the minister's wife [...] and then my gudesire [...] was obliged to tell the real narrative to his freends, for the credit of his good name. He might else have been charged for a warlock.¹⁰³

And yet at the same time one might wonder how reliable a minister's wife third-hand tale can be, especially if filtered through her religious husband and a drunk fiddler's distorted perception. The same ambiguity applies to the biased gossips of some superstitious servants about an aristocrat such as Sir Robert, whom they possibly perceived as inhuman due to his inflexible cruelty. Once again, doubt clouds a single vision of the facts. Most importantly, what follows the encounter with Sir Robert is Steenie being surrounded by "all darkness",¹⁰⁴ some gap that marks either the tenant's awakening or his return from the afterlife. In a way, perhaps, this total darkness between two worlds surrounds the reader themselves, suspending them between natural and supernatural interpretations. In other

¹⁰³ *Redgauntlet*, Letter XI, p. 116.

¹⁰⁴ *Ivi*, p. 113.

words, as James Kerr summed up, “Willie's story is designed to allow for multiple interpretations, to invite imaginative readers to ‘make up’ one of their own.”¹⁰⁵

From this brief analysis, it emerges how the ending of the story is constructed upon contradictory elements, supernatural and rational, making a single reading of the tale impossible. Yet, what makes this narrative successful as a ghost story is the very lack of a uniform explanation to it. Instead, as Briggs observed in her study on ghost stories, the tale achieves a “careful equilibrium between natural and supernatural elements”.¹⁰⁶ This dynamic compound is what makes the story successful and alive, a conclusion that Scott himself might have surmised from his studies on Gothic novelists and fiction. More specifically, commenting on Ann Radcliffe’s works, Scott observes that it is difficult to explain away supernatural events in their entirety with rational devices, even if the modern tastes require so, the risk being the solution not being as exciting as the mystery and the reader not being satisfied with the experience.¹⁰⁷

The *dénouement* of ghost stories by the means of rational devices provides a high risk of disappointing the readers for a simple reason, that is the essence of the supernatural itself.

In his essay on Hoffmann and the use of supernatural in fiction, Scott recognises that:

It is evident that the exhibition of supernatural appearances in fictitious narrative ought to be rare, brief, indistinct, and such as may become a being to us so incomprehensible, and so different from ourselves, of whom we cannot justly conjecture whence he comes, or for what purpose, and of whose attributes we can have no regular or distinct perception.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Kerr, James, *Fiction against History: Scott's 'Redgauntlet' and the Power of Romance*, “Texas Studies in Literature and Language”, 29, 3, 2019, pp. 237–60, p 251.

¹⁰⁶ Briggs, Julia, *Op. Cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Ann Radcliffe*, in *On Novelists and Fiction*, cit., pp. 102-119, pp. 115-118.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, Walter, *On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition; and particularly on the Works of Ernest Theodor William Hoffmann*, in *On Novelists and Fiction*, cit., pp. 312-350, p. 316.

Therefore, based on these observations, Scott could form a clear idea on how ghost stories should be written to achieve maximum effectiveness. Mody C. Boatright summarises these rules as follows:

1. There must be an appropriate and continuous atmosphere.
2. What is presented to the reader in the first part of the plot as supernatural must not be explained away at the end of the story.
3. The incidents involving the supernatural must be relatively brief and few.
4. The manifestation of the supernatural force must be relatively indefinite.
5. Although the human beings in a tale of the supernatural are bound by the ordinary rules of probability, and the supernatural appearances must be self-consistent, the latter need not follow traditional modes of conduct.¹⁰⁹

We can argue that all these rules are applied to *Wandering Willie's Tale*, where the supernatural manifests itself briefly and ambiguously in a typically Gothic atmosphere and the mysteries are not explained away.

Furthermore, not only did Scott have clear ideas about the literary structure of ghost stories, he was also aware of the mechanisms through which our minds simulate the supernatural. A troubled imagination could often lead victims of apparently preternatural occurrences to be fooled by their own stirred passions and have their senses muddled, as Scott explains again in *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*:

[...] who shall doubt that imagination, favoured by circumstances, has power to summon up to the organ of sight, spectres which only exist in the mind of those whom their apparition seems to be witnessed?¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Boatright, Mody C., *Scott's Theory and Practice Concerning the Use of the Supernatural in Prose Fiction in Relation to the Chronology of the Waverley Novels*, "PMLA", 50, 1, March 1935, pp. 235-61, p. 242.

¹¹⁰ Scott, Walter, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, cit., *Letter I*, p. 6.

However, not only do our minds and senses lead us to mistake shapes for ghosts, on most occasions the real cause of supernatural events could also be someone employing very simple yet effective tricks. For instance, Scott reports in an anecdote that an alleged ghost who was making crockery fly around the house was in truth a maid who tied very thin horsehair strings to the items, so that she could make the objects fall without approaching them.¹¹¹ As we have seen, Scott had a vast knowledge of the supernatural, its manifestations and its possible explanations, as well as a clear idea on how to convey the contrasting sensations involving the supernatural in writing. This knowledge is clearly applied in the composition of *Wandering Willie's Tale*, where Scott managed to provide some plausible elements for a rational interpretation of the story without fully dismissing the supernatural aura of some events.

II.1.3 The Function of the *Tale* in *Redgauntlet*.

Thus far, this thesis has discussed of the possible significance of *Wandering Willie's Tale* as a story in itself: however, this narrative is inserted as part of a larger narrative. The question that arises is whether the *Tale* has some function apart that of putting Darsie on his guard against strangers, which was Willie's original intention. As explained above, to interpret *Wandering Willie's Tale* as a stand-alone narrative is a difficult feat, as critics are still divided on its true significance. Yet, it is equally difficult to give the *Tale* a function in relationship to the rest of the narrative, given its difference both in terms of language and tone. According to David D. Brown, *Wandering Willie's Tale* could be a symbolic representation of the feudal lord as perceived by his subordinates, ergo a ruthless, devilish,

¹¹¹ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, cit., Letter X, pp.344-402, pp.376-378.

and immortal presence:¹¹² therefore, the passing of Sir Robert followed by his more reasonable son could represent the fall of feudal values of obedience, tracing a shift from tradition to modernity. In the same way, McDougal following his master in hell to serve him even in death may represent those feudal values of loyalty now doomed to belong only to the past.¹¹³ In a way, Steenie's rebellion against Sir Robert can be seen as the peasantry's refusal of the *Ancien Régime*, "an augury of what the just man must do when the past claims his utter devotion".¹¹⁴ Yet, the shadow of the feudal past still looms ominously, for Sir Robert's ghostly existence in hell and his request of an annual tribute, some kind of *corvée* perhaps, symbolise the threat of the revenant past willing to haunt modernity. In this framework, it can be possible to see Wandering Willie himself a residue of that ancient world. Indeed, not only does he occupy the same position as his ancestor as a musician, but he also bounds himself to the same family, having tied himself to Sir Hugh Redgauntlet first and his nephew Darsie then, albeit unconscious of the young man's true identity at first. As Daiches observes, Willie can be considered as a minstrel both for his position as a storyteller and musician, exactly like the minstrels in the past, the only difference being that he has lost a household to serve and under whose protection he can live. Because of this he is forced to lead an itinerant life begging for money in exchange for his music.¹¹⁵ Therefore, Willie is an anachronism that cannot survive in a modern world unless he accepts to transform and leave the past behind. This is what he manages to do by adapting to the new circumstances and finding himself under the service of Darsie, a modern Redgauntlet, at the end of the story, not as a servant but a loyal friend.

¹¹² Cf. Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, p.160.

¹¹³ Cf. Briggs, Julia, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, Edgar, *Op. Cit.*, p. 925.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 45-59.

However, this is not the only case where Wandering Willie and his tale serve as a point of departure for a reflection on the lingering presence of the past and the overcoming of old-fashioned values. The *Tale* has also been read as an anticipation of the ending of the story because from a perspective Sir John Redgauntlet resembles Darsie Latimer. Darsie shares with Sir John flexibility in temperament, a trait which in the latter is subtly and eloquently symbolised by his light, “small walking rapier”¹¹⁶ hanging from his side in visible contrast with the more antiquated, heavier broadsword wielded by his sterner father. Darsie and Sir John also share their breeding as lawyers in Edinburgh, and most importantly they are both tormented by a conflict of loyalties. Indeed, Sir John embraced political ideas which would have made “his father come out of his grave”;¹¹⁷ much in the same way Darsie, a loyal Hanoverian, refuses to side with his Jacobite uncle and help him fulfil his plan despite his father’s skull “commanding him to be a man”.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, there is an even stronger resemblance between Darsie and Steenie Ste’enson when considering the first’s uprising against the will of his fearful uncle compared to the latter’s rebellion against the deceased Sir Robert in hell.¹¹⁹ In sum, it is safe to assume that *Wandering Willie’s Tale*, among the other possible interpretations, can be read as a miniature reproduction of Darsie’s adventure.

Lastly, this narrative serves another, simpler, purpose, along with other inserted tales in *Redgauntlet*, namely that of providing some historical background to the family whose history is explored in the novel.¹²⁰ The short story also constitutes a hint to understand Darsie’s identity for a first-time reader, since it seems logical to connect the uncertain

¹¹⁶ *Redgauntlet*, Letter XI, p.107.

¹¹⁷ *Ivi*, p.106.

¹¹⁸ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XIX, p.338.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, p.159.

¹²⁰ Cf. Kerr, James, *Scott’s ‘Redgauntlet’ and the Power of Romance*, cit., pp. 251-252.

origins of the young man with the only ancient family whose heritage is traced in so much detail. In this respect, the tale also enhances the supernatural aura surrounding the destiny of the Redgauntlets, along with Sir Alberick's legend. More specifically, not only do the legends of this noble House pave the way for a supernatural interpretation of Sir Hugh Redgauntlet's defeat, they also point out the old-fashioned nature of the goals of Darsie's uncle. Indeed, *Wandering Willie's Tale* is not the only element in the story which finds itself between supernatural and rational, ancient feudalism and modern freedom. As we will observe next, it is but one section of the narrative exploring an opposition pervading the whole novel.

II.2 The Future of the Redgauntlets: Fate or History?

Like other novels by Scott, *Redgauntlet* provides the reader with a double explanation for the failure of the characters' goals, a supernatural and a historical one.¹²¹ In this case, Hugh Redgauntlet's failure in fighting alongside the exiled Stuart Pretender to dethrone the Hanover king can be justified by two opposite reasons: either Sir Hugh's failure fulfilled his family's prophecy or he is incapable of understanding the anachronistic nature of his projects. In this section the explanations for Redgauntlet's defeat will be explored in further detail, revealing a conflict between ancient and modern values.

II.2.1 The Supernatural Explanation: The Family's Curse.

Following the supernatural theory of Redgauntlet's downfall, we can find some upsetting events are scattered in the narrative hinting at Sir Hugh's defeat as the result of a pre-

¹²¹ Cf. Villari, Enrica, *La Resistenza alla Storia nei Giacobiti di W. Scott*, in *Storie su Storie: Indagini sui Romanzi Storici 1814-1840*, ed. by AA. VV., Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1985, pp. 5-30.

ordained, superior design. Let us take for instance the comet in *Chapter III*: this is but a very short passage, however it constitutes a veiled suggestion of impending evil. Darsie and the Geddes are having a conversation when a comet crosses the sky. Contemplating the shooting star, Joshua ominously comments:

'These meteors are not formed in heaven, [...] nor do they bode any good to the dwellers upon earth'.¹²²

According to ancient beliefs and superstitions, shooting stars cross the sky as a sign of death, impending wars, or disease, and astrologers would base their predictions on their appearance.¹²³ From this, the reader can expect something terrible is stirring and looming in the distance, something which had happened in the past, too, for comets are known to reappear periodically. The theme of the repetition of the past is here a veiled suggestion, which introduces a *leitmotif* destined to reappear very often in the narrative.

As regards this constant insistence on repetition, Sir Alberick's legend is arguably the most evident instance of this element, and it shows how this theme is used to strongly enhance the supernatural aura of Sir Hugh's destiny. This ancient legend belongs to the past of the real family of the Herries of Birrenswork.¹²⁴ Sir Alberick, 'the first of his house so termed',¹²⁵ a violent lord at war against Edward Baliol, commits a heinous and unnatural crime, thus dooming the future members of the family to suffer a hereditary curse. The crime consists in the murder, albeit unintended, of Sir Alberick's rebellious son. The young

¹²² *Redgauntlet*, Chapter III, p. 164.

¹²³ Cf. Schechner, Sara, *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 123-124.

¹²⁴ Cf. Wilkes, Joanne, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 206-208.

¹²⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter VIII, p. 209.

man had switched sides and ended up fighting against his father: during a battle, Sir Alberick knocks his son off his horse and, to jump over him to get to Baliol on horseback, inadvertently rides on him, crushing his head. As a result of this sin, Alberick's other son is born at the cost of the mother's life and carrying a horseshoe-shaped brand on his forehead. This peculiar birthmark is visible on every descendent of that bloodline up to Darsie's days, including on the brow of Sir Robert Redgauntlet in Willie's tale. According to the superstitions, these marks are reminders of the violence suffered from the victims of bloody crimes which are impressed on the bodies of the descendants.¹²⁶ Another example of this is Liliast Redgauntlet's five blood-specks impressed on her hand as a brand reminding the girl of her father's death and her mother's miseries. However, being branded by birthmarks is not the only mysterious punishment inflicted to the Redgauntlet family, for "Heaven had decreed that the valour of his race should always be fruitless, and that the cause which they espoused should never prosper".¹²⁷ This ordeal might have Biblical echoes, not only because of the 'Sins of the Fathers'¹²⁸ trope, referring to the idea that crimes and punishments are passed on from father to descendant, but also for its resemblance to the curse of Cain. In fact, it is told that after killing his brother, the Lord impressed a mark upon Cain and inflicted upon him a terrible punishment: the land tilled by Cain will never give fruit, and he will be doomed to wander the earth and escape death, suffering a life of torments.¹²⁹ In the same way, the ilk of the Redgauntlets is doomed to embark in fruitless enterprises, as well as carry on their existence as a lineage of erring

¹²⁶ Cf. *Redgauntlet*, *Scott's Notes*, Note 57, p. 412.

¹²⁷ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter VIII, p. 211.

¹²⁸ Cf. *The Holy Bible*, King James Bible Online, Exodus 34:7.

" [The Lord] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

¹²⁹ Cf. *The Holy Bible*, *Op. Cit.*, IV Genesis 4.12.

sinners. Once again, as in *Wandering Willie's Tale*, this legend stresses and justifies the Redgauntlets' destiny of eternal suffering as a punishment for violent crimes. Upon hearing Alberick's tale, the two Redgauntlets have opposite reactions to it, since Sir Hugh embraces the tale and the cursed identity it traces as part of his lineage, unlike the rebellious Darsie. Indeed, Darsie advocates his free will whereas Sir Hugh professes his firm belief that the only choice for his nephew is his involvement in the Jacobite cause, because this is the fate the young man is bound to follow due to their ancestor's sinful cruelty:

'[Free will] The true cant of the day' [...] 'The privilege of free action belongs to no mortal - we are tied down by the fetters of duty- [...] our most indifferent actions are but meshes of the web of destiny by which we are all surrounded.'¹³⁰

Sir Hugh believes that succumbing to fate is a man's duty, and when the time comes for him to accept his defeat, he does so without opposing any resistance. On the contrary, Darsie refuses to accept his alleged destiny: unlike Sir Hugh, he will manage to break the spell clouding the bloodline's future by allying with the winners, namely the Hanover dynasty. Sir Hugh himself recognises that Darsie is destined to something different and that he misjudged him:

I tell you [nephew], that though to breed you up in my own political opinions has been for many years my anxious wish, I am now glad that it could not be accomplished. [...] The fatal doom [...] will, I trust, now depart from the House of Redgauntlet, since its present representative has adhered to the winning side.¹³¹

¹³⁰ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter VIII, p. 212.

¹³¹ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XXIII, pp. 398-399.

Darsie will inherit every possession belonging to his father but one: the family's heirloom, a sword. That blade will be cast in the sea, never to be retrieved. Symbolically, it signifies that the House of Redgauntlet will never fight again for the wrong cause, namely the Stuart monarchy, and that they may finally prosper. Unlike Alberick's son, who did not manage to survive his rebellion, Darsie is perfectly capable to fit in the modern society because of his upbringing as a loyal subject to the Hanover king: indeed, Darsie does not need to switch alliances nor break any loyalty, he is on the right side of history from the very beginning.¹³² Affirming his free will, his own actions and choices, however, not only does Darsie demonstrate his modern, rational virtues such as prudence and good sense, he also asserts his "escape into freedom from the doom of repeating the sins of his forebears".¹³³ Darsie breaks the circular history which bound his family to repeat the past, whereas Sir Hugh, on the other hand, maintains his undying loyalty to his heritage as a Stuart sympathiser even beyond his grave, in an eternal cycle of grief and grudge. He dies away from his home, inflexible in his loyalty to the traditional cause to the point of disagreeing with Charles Edward himself. In the end, he is the last character to appear in the novel, and it is not surprising that the reader sees him in the moment of his death, which is very crucial in the interpretation of the family's curse. Sir Hugh's passing is ambiguous, because it could signify the end of the last cursed Redgauntlet and his eternal torment. Sir Hugh's last scenes are set in a French monastery, where the exiled conspirator supposedly left behind everything involving Scotland, refusing even to speak his language or "mention his own family".¹³⁴ He is even considered close to being a saint, were it not for a secret concealed

¹³² Cf. Villari, *La Resistenza alla Storia nei Romanzi Giacobiti di Walter Scott*, cit., pp. 28-29.

¹³³ Elbers, Joan S., *A Contrast of Fictional Worlds: 'Redgauntlet' and 'St. Ronan's Well'*, "Scottish Literary Journal", 7, 1, May 1980, pp. 155-166, p. 157.

¹³⁴ *Redgauntlet, Conclusion*, p. 401.

under his religious cape that makes his façade of pacific resignation crumble: upon his death, he is found holding next to his heart a silver pendant containing not a saint's relics, but his decapitated brother's locks of hair. On the box, an engraving reading the Latin phrase "*Haud Obliviscendum*", "never forgotten", or more correctly, "[he] *must* never be forgotten",¹³⁵ suggests once again how his fate and the recollection of his "past injuries"¹³⁶ are perceived as inescapable "fetters of duty"¹³⁷ by Sir Hugh. Thus, 'Father Hugo' is cursed to remember his earthly wishes and alliances, no matter how much he may wish to forget and forgive, and this inescapable doom is clear in the last passage in the novel, where it is "doubtful whether, even in the quiet of the cloister, Father Hugo had forgotten"¹³⁸ or whether, even in death, he is tormented by his calling for revenge. This casts for a moment the shadows of doubt on the supposed end of the curse, even more if we think of the correlation between this punishment and the curse of Cain, who is bound to suffer in eternal wandering without receiving death's release. Even without surmising a similarity between Sir Hugh and this Biblical character, an observation made *à propos* of Darsie by his uncle may sound ominous: "I am convinced he will not change it [the winning side], should it become the losing one".¹³⁹ Does this mean that Darsie Latimer's freedom is just a brief, ephemeral respite from his fate? On the one hand, this comment could just refer to Darsie's strong sense of loyalty, and yet, the eventuality of the winning side becoming the losing one would just make this modern Redgauntlet fall into the wrong side of history again, the family curse still lingering on his head. Then, just as in *Wandering Willie's Tale*, the

¹³⁵ The Latin form used in the sentence, a gerundive, is particularly clear in expressing a sense of duty and obligation.

¹³⁶ *Redgauntlet, Conclusion*, p. 402.

¹³⁷ *Redgauntlet, Chapter VIII*, p. 212.

¹³⁸ *Redgauntlet, Conclusion*, p. 402.

¹³⁹ *Redgauntlet, Chapter XXIII*, p. 399.

supernatural essence of the curse is not fully dispelled but kept as a possibility and a key to read the story as the accomplishment of a prophesised defeat. Nevertheless, this is not the only perspective the reader could adopt to understand why Sir Hugh's plans were never meant to succeed, since a Jacobite rebellion in the 1760s could be considered as historically unlikely to succeed, as the following section will argue.

II.2.2 The Historical Explanation: Anachronistic Hopes.

There is also a historical explanation for the failure of Sir Hugh's plan to make Darsie lead an army against the Hanover king in the name of the Stuart dynasty, namely anachronism. After the rebellion of 1745 and the Jacobites' defeat at Culloden, which marked the decimation of the Scottish clans, another uprising was considered as wishful thinking. Therefore, in the 1760s it would have been virtually impossible to gather up a significant number of conspirators strong, resourceful, and motivated enough to endorse a rebellion, and this is why there was no actual conspiracy in reality in the 1760s: it only takes place in the fiction of *Redgauntlet*. Indeed, Charles Edward never visited the shores of England then, the closest event in history being his secret and fruitless visit years before, in 1750.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, it is true that the decade constituted a difficult period for the kingdom and was characterised by civil unrest, but this had nothing to do with Jacobite ideals. Sir Hugh, however, fails to grasp this inconsistency between his wishes and reality and exploits these riots for his own plans. One instance of this discrepancy is the operation put in action to kidnap Darsie, where Sir Hugh's Jacobite plans are carried out by taking advantage of the uprisings caused by the Solway's fishermen, whose traditional methods are threatened by

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Introduction (1832) to Redgauntlet*, pp. 6-8.

the modern stake nets used by Joshua Geddes. Some critics have underlined these anachronistic aspects in Redgauntlet's schemes, as well as point out the disparity between the historically documented riots breaking out in that period and Sir Hugh's intentions to exploit them for his Jacobite ideals.¹⁴¹ In his 1832 introduction to the novel, Scott himself remarks how anachronistic a rebellion was commenting on the weak attempts to revive post-Culloden Jacobitism:

Notwithstanding the discomfiture of Charles Edward, the nonjurors of the period long continued to nurse unlawful schemes [...] Another generation arose, who did not share the sentiments which they cherished; and at length the sparkles of disaffection, which had long smouldered [...] became entirely extinguished.¹⁴²

It is also clear in the narrative itself that the majority of the characters recognise the implausibility of a rebellion and the absurdity of Sir Hugh's plans. For instance, this is what Nanty Ewart, a smuggling pirate at the service of the very Jacobites he criticises, asserts:

You'll as soon raise the dead as raise the Highlands— you'll as soon get a grunt from a dead sow as any comfort from Wales or Cheshire. [...] But I say that this fellow the Laird is a firebrand in the country; that he is stirring up all the honest fellows who should be drinking their brandy quietly, by telling them stories about their ancestors and the forty-five.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Cf. Ghoshal Wallace, Tara, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 145-159;

Cf. also Beiderwell, Bruce, *Scott's 'Redgauntlet' as a Romance of Power*, "Studies in Romanticism", 28, 2, Summer 1989, pp. 273-289;

Cf. Maitzen, Rohan, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 175-177.

¹⁴² *Redgauntlet, Introduction to Redgauntlet* (1832), p. 4.

¹⁴³ *Redgauntlet, Chapter XIV*, pp. 280-281.

An episode proves Nanty's judgement right and underlines how outdated Sir Hugh's *modus operandi* is, that is the gauntlet scene at the King's coronation. The scene is told by Lilius, who was forced to perpetrate the gesture. The girl approached the king's throne unnoticed and swapped his uncle's gauntlet with the king's champion's, leaving a note to declare battle. Traditionally, throwing the gauntlet signifies challenging the person who receives it to a fair duel, the challenge being accepted in case the opponent takes it up: it is something which belongs to the traditions of knights and refers to a system of values which could not be taken seriously in the 18th century, and which was bound to be outlawed, as observed by Scott himself.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, as Brown observes, King George does not comply to feudal rules:

It is a comment on the unreality of the Jacobite mentality that Redgauntlet and his fellow-conspirators should even imagine that George would hazard his throne over an antiquated ceremony in this way. George does not owe his position to the feudal aristocracy, and so he can hardly be expected to relinquish it in obedience to feudal theory.¹⁴⁵

Indeed, the throwing of the gauntlet passes unnoticed and no duel takes place, with even Darsie dismissing it as an "idle tale".¹⁴⁶ Commenting on this episode and on her uncle's projects, Lilius agrees with her brother Darsie in considering a rebellion a desperate move, admitting that Sir Hugh himself was often disappointed by the lack of faith of his candidates to the point that he was willing to accept proselytes from every corner of both England and Scotland, bandits included. Sir Hugh is attempting in vain to revive a dead cause, disgusted by "the falling away of some friends [...] the degeneracy of the times, the decay of the

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Scott, Walter, *Cavalleria* [1824], cit., pp. 91-109.

¹⁴⁵ Brown, David D., *Op.Cit.*, p. 161.

¹⁴⁶ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XVIII, p. 329.

activity among the aged, and the want of zeal in the rising generation".¹⁴⁷ In other words, he is incapable of correctly analysing the present state of Scotland and miscalculates the plausibility of another '45: there is no place for any inspired and passionate Fergus MacIvor in his army of rebels, the only eager warriors being aristocrats "with opinions as antiquated as their dwellings"¹⁴⁸. Furthermore, what Sir Hugh expects from Darsie, the lead of an army of servants, is not supported by any law anymore since the abolishment of the feudal rules of obligations in 1748, a direct consequence of the '45 which dissipated the clan's power by breaking any heritable right for Scottish landlords over their tenants.¹⁴⁹

Because of all these reasons, every revendication made by Sir Hugh does not hold water. And yet, despite all the warnings, Sir Hugh's plan proceeds in a crescendo, and the highlight of this suspense is reached during the final chapters of the novel, where the structural problems of the conspiracy are rendered more explicit than ever. Even before being betrayed by Cristal Nixon, his closest servant, Sir Hugh comes to terms with the discrepancy between his plans and the matter-of-fact reality by witnessing the friction occurring between Charles Edward and the other conspirators, as well as among the rebels themselves. The first scene before Darsie's eyes upon entering the room where the noblemen are gathered is one of foreboding defeat:

There was a grave and stern anxiety upon their [the conspirators'] countenances, when, on Redgauntlet's entrance, they drew from their separate coteries into one group around him, and saluted him with a formality which had something in it of ominous melancholy. As Darsie looked around the circle, he thought he could discern in it few traces of that

¹⁴⁷ Ivi, pp. 329-330.

¹⁴⁸ Ivi, p. 329.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *Redgauntlet, Editor's Notes*, p. 458.

adventurous hope which urges men upon desperate enterprises; and began to believe that the conspiracy would dissolve of itself.¹⁵⁰

Even before General Campbell's arrival, the rebellion does not look promising from the lack of motivation on the part of the very noblemen involved, their gestures conveying a sense of "melancholy", as if aware of the impossibility of Sir Hugh's wish to revive the '45. Moments later, the reluctant rebels are more and more intimidated by the serious determination showed by Sir Hugh, and try to take some distance from the enterprise, refusing to act and asserting that "this is only a consultation [...] nothing more".¹⁵¹ Upon the confirmation that Charles Edward is really on the premises, most of them are petrified by fear, realising that it is not possible to turn back. Therefore, after an awkward silence, they try to bring up any possible excuse to deem the expedition too dangerous, first asking whether there are any Irishmen in the army, then whether there are any Catholics capable of undermining the operation. Eventually the reason, or better the excuse, to justify why the rebellion comes to a stall is Charles Edward's refusal of satisfying the noblemen's condition to fight for him, namely abandoning his lover, a woman suspected to be a spy for the Hanover monarchy. The Pretender advocates his absolute right to rule over his subjects, because "conditions can have no part betwixt prince and subject",¹⁵² whereas the conspirators do not want him to run the risk of sacrificing a whole army for his whims and his personal affections. What emerges here, as observed by critics such as Beiderwell and Brown, is a clear contrast between the old-fashioned, absolutist politics of Charles Edward and the more advanced views of the followers, who want to take part in the sovereign's

¹⁵⁰ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XXII, p. 368.

¹⁵¹ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XXII, p. 369.

¹⁵² *Ivi*, p. 377.

decisions according to the constitutional monarchy model.¹⁵³ A quarrel ensues between the only possible supporter of the Pretender's antiquated views, Sir Hugh, and the other, cautious, noblemen. At this point, the final blow to the conspiracy is dealt when General Campbell appears on the premises of the inn. This is an anticlimactic and almost comical sequence, everything ending "not with a bang but with a benediction", as Shaw observes.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps it is even possible to assert that what follows is a cruel punishment for Sir Hugh, whose intentions are once again not given the weight he desired. Indeed, no battle ensues, no heroic duels, Campbell just thinks that it would be more plausible to explain the gathering as a lowly "bear-bait or cock-fight".¹⁵⁵ The general speaks on behalf of George III and demands that all conspirators depart at once. His words are meaningful because they convey the modern spirit of a Hanover king:

His majesty will not even believe that the most zealous Jacobites who yet remain can nourish a thought of exciting a civil war, which must be fatal to their families and themselves, besides spreading bloodshed and ruin through a peaceful land.¹⁵⁶

His gentlemanly promise to spare everyone if they comply with his requests is welcomed without hesitation by the rebels. Through these words, a different modality of containing violence and rebellions is applied, a modern one, which is opposed to the flamboyant aggressiveness Sir Hugh would have displayed, due to Sir Alberick's spirit being "alive within him".¹⁵⁷ Indeed, not only does Campbell, and the King through him, deem Sir

¹⁵³ Cf. Beiderwell, Bruce, *Op.Cit.*, pp. 283-284;
Cf. also Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 162-166.

¹⁵⁴ Shaw, Harry E., *Is There a Problem with Historical Fiction (or with Scott's 'Redgauntlet'?)*, "Rethinking History", 9, 2-3, 2005, pp.173-195, p. 189.

¹⁵⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XXIII, p.394.

¹⁵⁶ *Ivi*, p.395.

¹⁵⁷ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XIX, p.342.

Hugh's plans harmless, but he also exercises a new kind of "gentle policy", as Beiderwell defines it.¹⁵⁸ On the one hand, this veiled display of discipline is based upon the assurance that the people will not put into discussion the authority of the king. On the other hand, the successful application of the Hanoverian gentle policy is guaranteed by the weakness of the adversary, who would certainly be defeated in case of resistance.¹⁵⁹ In both cases, the futility and unpopularity of Sir Hugh's Jacobitism are once again underlined.

In the end, Sir Hugh is forced to face his defeat and abandon his land. He will follow the only remnant symbol of his old-fashioned cause, Charles Edward, to France. Yet even the Stuart Pretender himself reveals to be unfitting for Sir Hugh's conception of Jacobitism, so much so that the two have a falling out. Although the reason why the two argued is not stated, it can be possible to think Charles Edward committed a mistake in Sir Hugh's eyes by accepting defeat so readily, and possibly refused any other plan to attempt a rebellion once again. Therefore, Sir Hugh might have been disappointed once more, not in his collaborators this time, but in the very king he swore to serve with loyalty. With no Stuart king worthy of his service, the last period of Hugh's life is spent in total isolation in a monastery. In the final pages of the novel, Sir Hugh alone remains the only harbinger of the pure, uncontaminated ideals of Jacobitism. With his death, the last spark of those anachronistic values is put out forever.

Thus, in the light of these observations, Sir Hugh's death can be simply interpreted as the logical consequence of a series of miscalculations and misinterpretations of the historical reality of Scotland in the 1760s. Sir Hugh has simply applied an old-fashioned metre of judgement to a series of uprisings which were not connected to Jacobitism and ignoring all

¹⁵⁸ Beiderwell, Bruce, *Op. Cit.*, p.286.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Beiderwell, Bruce, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 273-289.

signs of impending defeat as well as underestimating the hesitation of his collaborators. Fuelled by personal motivations such as his brother's execution and his estate's dilapidation, the last Jacobite Redgauntlet throws himself in a predictably unsuccessful enterprise, led by a consuming hatred towards the house of Hanover. From this point of view, the reader is brought to think of the horseshoe-shaped brand simply as a physiognomic trait passed on to future generations, the same way the bloody marks on Lilius's hand are not a symbol of the violence perpetrated on her parents, but a common birthmark. In the framework of a history-based interpretation of *Redgauntlet*, there is no mysterious defeat and no inescapable doom, just the punished stubbornness of a man belonging to a different time which is long past.

II.2.3 A Dualism of Values.

Thus far, we have attempted to present the 'pieces of evidence' leading to either a supernatural or a historical reading of the events. What emerges from the comparison of the two versions is a dualism of systems of values: one is centred upon belief in superstitions, a circular idea of history, and a strong faith in old-fashioned ideals and rituals, the other is built upon rationalism, good sense, belief in progress, and in modern models of justice and power. As Everett Zimmermann observed:

Scott mediates between competing notions of history: history as destiny, as repetition, as determined by birth; in opposition to history as consciousness, as possibility, as freedom. He allows Darsie to become himself and to fulfil his destiny.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Zimmermann, Everett, *Op. Cit.*, p. 388.

As it usually happens in Scott's novels, this contraposition achieves to depict a moment of crisis and transformation, where the lingering remnants of old ideals are extinguished to let modernity take their place.¹⁶¹ In order for the two contrasting worlds to coexist, in *Redgauntlet* as well as in other *Waverley* novels, a stratagem is adopted, namely that of making the main character cross boundaries to make him come to terms with ideas deemed old-fashioned elsewhere. In this case, in his adventure to find his origins, Darsie approaches the border between Scotland and England. At this point, after being kidnapped by Sir Hugh, he is forced to cross the border towards England for his uncle to legally become his tutor. This is because it is only according to the English law that Sir Hugh can exercise his authority on Darsie, whereas Scottish law would identify him as a free, independent subject. The border becomes the battlefield, so to speak, where the two different worlds touch, creating instability: however, the legal systems are not the only elements in contraposition here, but two whole worlds, the old-fashioned Scotland of the Jacobites defended by Sir Hugh versus the modern England of the Hanover represented by Darsie, educated in Edinburgh but *de facto* an English citizen due to his mother's will to protect him from any involvement with his uncle. As remarked by some critics, it is not a coincidence that the first encounter between Sir Hugh and Darsie as well as the intervention by General Campbell happens on the Firth of the Solway river, an area on the border.¹⁶² Not only is this location relevant as the past theatre of many battles between Scotland and England, but its quick sands and swirling stream also signify the metaphorical instability

¹⁶¹ Cf. Villari, Enrica, *Narrativa, storia e costume: Walter Scott*, in *Storia della Civiltà Letteraria Inglese*, cit., pp. 477-496.

¹⁶² Cf. Berndt, Katrine, *Civic Virtues in the Restless Polity: Sir Walter Scott's Fergusonian Vision of British Civil Society in 'Redgauntlet' (1824)*, "Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture", 41, 2012, pp.115-135, p.128;

Also Cf. Sun Lee, Yoon, *Giants in the North: Douglas, the Scottish Enlightenment, and Scott's Redgauntlet*, "Studies in Romanticism", 40, 1, Spring 2001, pp. 109-121, pp. 120-121.

of the kingdom and the contrasting directions towards which the two worlds tend, past and future.¹⁶³ When Darsie gets caught in the middle of the rising tide and gets saved by the mysterious Laird of the Lochs, he is also metaphorically trapped in the clash between these two worlds.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, if Darsie and Sir Hugh are the two main poles of the opposition, they are not the only characters participating in this conflict and bringing out the contradictions stemming from it. The following chapter will be entirely dedicated to further exploring the characters and their contribution to enhancing this dualism between past and modernity.

¹⁶³ Cf. Sun Lee, Yoon, *Op. Cit.*, p.120

¹⁶⁴ *Ibidem.*

CHAPTER III
CHARACTERS: OPPOSITION AND COMPROMISE.

In the previous chapter, we have underlined the opposition between Sir Hugh Redgauntlet and Darsie Latimer by bringing out the different attitudes of the two towards historical change and fate. This chapter aims to discuss into more depth the peculiarities of both Redgauntlets and their differences, as well as examine the various oppositions and dynamics between other couples of characters in the novel. In the end, the final section will explore the theme of progress and evolution in Redgauntlet as stemming from compromise solutions.

III.1 The Two Redgauntlets

The title of the novel being *Redgauntlet*, Scott here seems to follow the classic convention according to which the protagonist also gives his name to the very text he is featured in.¹⁶⁵ This custom is common in eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century novels, examples being *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tom Jones*, or *Waverley*, for instance, and is still used today in some cases. However, at the end of this novel, the reader is aware that there is not one single Redgauntlet, but two, namely Sir Hugh Redgauntlet and Darsie Latimer, who is eventually revealed as Arthur Redgauntlet. This might mean that there is no single hero in this text, but two. Indeed, in *Redgauntlet* the centre of the narrative is not only occupied by Darsie, but also by his mysterious kidnapper, Sir Hugh, who appears almost immediately in Darsie's life under the name of Laird of the Lakes.¹⁶⁶ Both are Redgauntlets, yet of a very different nature and attitude towards reality, as seen in the previous chapter. As argued

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Moretti, Franco, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, 2nd edition, London, Verso, 2000, pp. 105-106.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Morière, Pierre, *Histoire et Récit dans 'Redgauntlet' de Walter Scott*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 29.

Also, as reported by J.G. Lockhart, apparently the name of the novel would have initially been *Herries* or *Herris*, as a proof of Sir Hugh being a protagonist of the story as much as Darsie Latimer cf. Lockhart, John Gibson, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* [1837], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, Vol. V, Chapter XII, pp. 319-373.

in the following sections, where the comparison between Sir Hugh and Darsie will be delved into in more detail, Sir Hugh embodies the Gothic hero and Darsie the bourgeois hero, each with his own system of values.

III.1.1 Sir Hugh Redgauntlet: The Gothic Hero

Sir Hugh Redgauntlet, also known as Mr Herries of Birrenswork and as the Laird of the Lakes, makes his first appearance in *Letter IV*, addressed to Alan Fairford from Darsie Latimer. Sir Hugh's name and identity are not known from the beginning: indeed, he appears as a fisherman commanding a group on an expedition on the Solway river. The first impression when beholding the then-mysterious horseman is the following:

He was a tall man, well mounted on a strong black horse, which he caused to turn and wind like a bird in the air, carried a longer spear than the others, and wore a sort of fur cap or bonnet, with a short feather in it, which gave him on the whole rather a superior appearance to the other fishermen. He seemed to hold some sort of authority among them, and occasionally directed their motions both by voice and hand: at which times I thought his gestures were striking, and his voice uncommonly sonorous and commanding.¹⁶⁷

Thus, it might be said that this fisherman makes a strong, “striking”, impression on Darsie, not only because of the enigmatic aura that typically surrounds strangers, but also due to his athletic prowess and his authority. Furthermore, Darsie recognizes at first glance that this fisherman is superior to the others due to his demeanour, his long spear, and his clothing. Indeed, the adjectives that are referred to the Laird here, from “well mounted” to

¹⁶⁷ *Redgauntlet, Letter IV*, pp. 32-33.

“commanding”, all refer to strength and assertiveness. Another touch of the brush to Sir Hugh’s description can be detected in the exchange of words between him and Darsie during this first encounter. Darsie recounts how he had lost his way on the Solway and risked being drowned by the tide. This is where Sir Hugh intervenes to warn him that he might be in real danger if he stays there, and where the first dialogue between the two takes place. Upon the horseman’s first warning to fall back, Darsie stays still struck as he is by his “wild and ominous”¹⁶⁸ appearance, thus eliciting the curt address: “Are you deaf? [...] or are you mad? - or have you a mind for the next world?”.¹⁶⁹ Realizing the young man’s naiveté and ineptitude, Sir Hugh decides, not concealing frustration and annoyance, to bring him on horseback to his house. The traits that emerge in Sir Hugh here are his impatient, fiery temperament and yet at the same time his total control of the situation. Furthermore, he shows again his superiority to his companions both in terms of knowledge and of physical strength, his figure standing tall and “sitting like a tower”¹⁷⁰ on a horse “looming gigantic”.¹⁷¹ Finally, all the aforementioned elements suggesting authority, control, and a touch of uncanny restlessness are yet again underlined and confirmed by the detailed description given further on in the same *Letter*, where Darsie is put up for the night at his mysterious benefactor’s decayed abode. Sir Hugh emerges into the dining room as follows:

[He] stood before me in a grey jerkin trimmed with black, which sat close to, and set off, his large and sinewy frame, and a pair of trousers of a lighter colour, cut as close to the body as they are used by Highlandmen. His whole dress was of finer cloth than that of the old man; [...] His shirt was without ruffles, and tied at the collar with a black ribbon, which showed his strong and muscular neck rising from it like that of an ancient Hercules. [...]

¹⁶⁸ *Ivi*, p. 34.

¹⁶⁹ *Ivi*, p. 33.

¹⁷⁰ *Ivi*, p. 34

¹⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

He wore neither peruke nor hair-powder; and his chestnut locks, curling close to his head like those of an antique statue, showed not the least touch of time, though the owner must have been at least fifty. His features were high and prominent in such a degree that one knew not whether to term them harsh or handsome. In either case, the sparkling grey eye, aquiline nose, and well-formed mouth, combined to render his physiognomy noble and expressive. An air of sadness, or severity, or of both, seemed to indicate a melancholy, and, at the same time, a haughty temper. I could not help running mentally over the ancient heroes, to whom I might assimilate the noble form and countenance before me. He was too young, and evinced too little resignation to his fate, to resemble Belisarius.¹⁷²

Once again, strength and power are associated to a melancholic temperament and an appearance which shows traces of decayed nobility, if not backwardness. On the other hand, it is true that in this *Letter* Sir Hugh's physiognomy and mannerisms are filtered through the eyes of a youth who tends to romanticize reality and see a "Hercules" in a Solway fisherman. Indeed, as Alan Fairford, Darsie's closest friend, correctly observes and as it will be further examined in the next section, Darsie reads reality through the filter of the fiction he reads. However, even despite "Alan's professedly realistic vision, Herries remains something of a mystery and becomes an object of speculation".¹⁷³ Therefore, despite Darsie's filtering "Lorraine glass",¹⁷⁴ it is safe to assert in the light of these repeated scenes and descriptions that Sir Hugh's nature is that of a powerful, mysterious, brooding, and commanding nobleman in decay, sometimes overcome by bursts of rage and impatience. Because of these traits, it is possible to associate his image to that of the 'Gothic hero-villain', adequately fitting this type in his birth, character, actions, and words.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² *Redgauntlet*, *Letter IV*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁷³ Kerr, James, *Fiction Against History: Scott's 'Redgauntlet' and the Power of Romance*, cit., p. 245.

¹⁷⁴ *Redgauntlet*, *Letter V*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁵ For the Gothic and Gothic villains, cf. Punter, David, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, London, Longman, 1980; Cf. also Duncan, Ian, *The Rhetoric of Gothic*, in *Modern Romance: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 16-58.

Indeed, Sir Hugh belongs to an ancient and noble family fallen in decay after the battle of Culloden. The House had been known for centuries for their legendary bloodthirst and their sinful ruthlessness, so much so that the family is believed to be cursed. Extreme violence and noble social standing are traits that are peculiarly associated with the Gothic hero, thus making of Sir Hugh Redgauntlet a member of the literary family of the Gothic aristocrat in decline.¹⁷⁶ As far as actions are concerned, Sir Hugh's identification as a Gothic hero-villain is enhanced by the strategy adopted for his plans of vengeance against the Hanover monarchy, since Sir Hugh devises to first kidnap Lillias while she is still a child, and then keeps her segregated from the rest of society by trying to indoctrinate her into supporting the Stuart cause. Years later, when he recognizes Darsie as his lost nephew he decides to use the fishermen's rebellion as a cover and kidnaps him, too. Even Alan Fairford, once arrived in quest of Darsie at the inn where the conspirators are gathering, is detained by Sir Hugh for his plans not to be thwarted in any way. In all these cases captivity is the means of achievement of his aims in Sir Hugh's schemes.

As with the violent and mysterious behaviour of Gothic villains, the effect that Sir Hugh causes on his victim seems to be that of mental confusion. Indeed, what Darsie experiences after being kidnapped is a sequence of confused dreams. These hallucinated visions are due to his hitting his head and losing consciousness first, and then to his being bedridden with a high fever:

¹⁷⁶ As far as the Gothic framework of interpretation of Sir Hugh is concerned, it is also interesting to see how Carroll Siobhan identified Sir Hugh and Dracula as similar in their attachment to the feudal past and in their plans of invasion of England, Cf. Carroll, Siobhan, *Resurrecting 'Redgauntlet': The Transformation of Walter Scott's Nationalist Revenants in Bram Stoker's Dracula*, in *Victorian Transformations: Genre, Nationalism and Desire in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, ed. by Bianca Tredennick, Farnham, Ashgate, 2011, pp. 114-131.

[...] the fever lay like a spell upon my tongue, and when I would have implored the doctor's assistance, I rambled from the subject. [...] Some power, which I was unable to resist, seemed to impel me into a different course of conversation from what I intended.¹⁷⁷

Despite the rational explanations of the effects produced by his illness, Darsie uses evocative words such as “spell” and talks of some arcane, irresistible power, as if Sir Hugh had cast some sort of enchantment on him. This supernatural aura surrounds Sir Hugh on another momentous occasion, when he shows Darsie the infamous horseshoe-shaped brand on his forehead, this also being the first hint suggesting Sir Hugh's identity as a Redgauntlet. In this scene, Sir Hugh, who until this point has gone under the name of Mr Herries of Birrenswork to avoid rising any suspicions about his Jacobite designs, asks Darsie whether he is sure he has not seen him before:

‘Will you swear to that?’ said the singular man, who seemed to await the result of this debate, secure as a rattlesnake is of the prey which has once felt its fascination. And while he said these words in deep undertone, [...] he bent on me a frown so portentous, that no one who has witnessed the look can forget it during the whole of his life. [...]. I had heard such a look described in an old tale of *diablerie*, which it was my chance to be entertained with not long since; when this deep and gloomy contortion of the frontal muscles was not unaptly described as forming the representation of a small horseshoe. The tale, when told, awaked a dreadful vision of infancy, which the withering and blighting look now fixed on me again forced on my recollection, but with much more vivacity. Indeed, I was so much surprised, and, I must add, terrified, at the vague ideas which were awakened in my mind by this fearful sign, that I kept my eyes fixed on the face in which it was exhibited, as on a frightful vision;¹⁷⁸

Once again, Sir Hugh is here represented as possessing some hypnotic and predatory power, suggested by the association with rattlesnakes. He then proceeds to reveal the symbol of the curse of the Redgauntlets, the “portentous” frown which awakens “vague”

¹⁷⁷ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter IV, p. 178.

¹⁷⁸ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter VI, p. 192.

feelings of terror in Darsie. What is also interesting in this passage is that the term referred to the birthmark is “sign”, a term that may as well refer to the emanation of a supernatural being, like in the expression ‘divine sign’. Under this light, this episode may then be interpreted as some prodigious or double epiphany, the association of the horseshoe-brand with a tale of *diablerie* on one hand and repressed childhood memories on the other. Darsie’s awkward sensation of uneasiness is then enhanced by another episode which may remind the modern reader of the literary phenomenology of the doppelganger, since Darsie responds to Sir Hugh’s famous look...

...by a look of the same kind, and catching the reflection of my countenance in a large antique mirror which stood before me, I started again at the real or imaginary resemblance which my countenance, at that moment, bore to that of Herries.¹⁷⁹

Overall, the impression that Sir Hugh creates in these scenes is one of surprise, terror, fascination, mental distress, and uncanny familiarity expressed through the repetition of the same traits.¹⁸⁰ These are all feelings normally associated to Gothic fiction, especially as far as the uncanny sensation of unfamiliar identity between Sir Hugh and Darsie is concerned.¹⁸¹ In this perspective, Sir Hugh Redgauntlet acts as a Gothic hero-villain to pursue his goals by exploiting means such as entrapment, and also by causing mental trouble and physical weakness in his victim, albeit indirectly. In addition to this, Sir Hugh also shares other traits of the Gothic hero-villain. For instance, he is consumed by an

¹⁷⁹ *Redgauntlet, Chapter VII*, pp. 199-200.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Freud, Sigmund, *Il perturbante*, in *Opere*, 9, Torino, 1977, p. 95, quoted in Villari, Enrica, *La Resistenza alla Storia nei Giacobiti di Walter Scott*, cit., p. 14.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Punter, David, *Introduction: The Ghost of a History*, in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter, Somerset, John Wiley & Sons, 2012, pp. 1-11, p.2;

unextinguishable thirst for revenge, best summarized by his attachment to his dead brother's relics, which arguably haunts him even from beyond the grave. Another Gothic touch is in Sir Hugh's final moments, which he spends in a French monastery in the clothing of a monk. Perhaps, this might be read as a veiled reference to that trope according to which classic Gothic novels are set in Catholic countries and often featuring members of the clergy as villains. Also, it might be added that Sir Hugh's belief in the Redgauntlets' doomed destiny and thus in a cyclical idea of history completes the portrait of a character deeply ingrained in a Gothic mindset. Indeed, Sir Hugh's Gothic characterisation is not only suggested via his actions, but also through his words. Sir Hugh is indeed distinguished from the other characters in the use of a researched and antiquated vocabulary. For instance, to provide just one of many examples let us look at the very first prophetic words Sir Hugh utters to Darsie:

‘You sleep sound—’ said his full deep voice; ‘ere five years have rolled over your head, your slumbers will be lighter— unless ere then you are wrapped in the sleep which is never broken.’¹⁸²

As it has been observed, this style of speech resembles more that of a tragic character in a Shakespearean play than the more straightforward speech of an eighteenth-century man.¹⁸³ This type of language is associated to a theatrical genre typically suited to deal with events of a sublime nature, and sublime events are also paramount in Gothic literature because of their capability to induce fear and awe, as Scott himself knew well. Indeed, commenting on Hoffmann, Scott quotes one of the main theorists of the sublime, Edmund Burke,

¹⁸² *Redgauntlet*, Letter IV, p. 44.

¹⁸³ Cf. Welsh, Alexander, *Hamlet in His Modern Guises*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001, pp 72-102.

recognizing how Gothic literature bases the greater part of its features on his theories.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, Sir Hugh's elocution and high register contribute to the representation of a Gothic hero-villain, the more so if we also consider that his voice is described as deep, loud, and imposing.

In the light of these considerations, Sir Hugh appears from his very first entrance in the novel as the epitome of a Gothic hero, yet it must not be forgotten that he may be sublime, tragic, and enigmatic, "and yet", Elbers observes, in an historical perspective which is that of *Redgauntlet* as of all Scott's historical novels, "he is an anachronism".¹⁸⁵ The very title "Laird of the Lakes" sounds haughty and ceremonious at first, but then Darsie finds out that this title is just the residue of an old-fashioned tradition and that it is referred to Sir Hugh "in idle derision",¹⁸⁶ the so-called Lakes on the Solway being in reality nothing more than "pools of salt water".¹⁸⁷ Indeed, being actually the heir to an ancient decayed aristocratic family and thus tragically doomed to extinction, Sir Hugh is, as lingering anachronism, the "heroic character possessing a magnetic vitality that Darsie and Alan, the new generation, lack"¹⁸⁸. Despite this vitality, he is destined to take a bow and leave his place to the new type of hero of Hanoverian Britain, the bourgeois hero.

III.1.2 Darsie Latimer: the Bourgeois Hero

The previous section has argued that Sir Hugh Redgauntlet embodies the type of the 'Gothic hero-villain' type and all the traits usually associated with it. This character is put

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Scott, Walter, *On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition; and Particularly on the Works of Ernest Theodore William Hoffmann*, in *On Novelists and Fiction*, cit., pp. 314-316.

¹⁸⁵ Elbers, Joan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 163.

¹⁸⁶ *Redgauntlet*, Letter VII, p. 72.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸⁸ Elbers, Joan S., *Op. Cit.*, p. 157.

in opposition to the other male Redgauntlet, namely Darsie, who will be discussed in this section as the modern ‘bourgeois hero’.

At first Darsie Latimer, *alias* Arthur Redgauntlet, would seem the least adequate person to embody bourgeois values given the fact that he is in truth the descendant of an aristocratic family. However, despite his noble birth and unlike Sir Hugh, Darsie manages to survive in the modern world, unlike Sir Hugh, because of his different, bourgeois upbringing as an Edinburgh law student. Indeed, this education is the origin of Darsie’s modern values, among which shines his stalwart loyalty to the Hanover monarchy, a devotion which is also supported by his complete lack of knowledge of his true identity during his youth.

Alongside birth, there is also another element which would apparently lead the reader to discard Darsie’s identification as a bourgeois, namely his romantic predisposition. Indeed, as Kathryn Sutherland observes, “like Don Quixote, Darsie misconceives reality, making his experiences reflect the literature he has read”.¹⁸⁹ This is the reason why in *Letter IV* Sir Hugh is identified by him with a “Hercules”¹⁹⁰ and his adventure on Sir Hugh’s horse as of “the Magician Atlantes on his hippogriff”.¹⁹¹ The same misinterpretation of reality will occur when he meets the enigmatic Green Mantle, who is actually his lost sister Lillas, but he becomes infatuated with her because of her mysterious aura. The very reason too why Darsie leaves Edinburgh and his studies to become an advocate has something of the adventurous in it, he leaves his home to look for answers concerning his origins. Darsie’s tendency to seek romantic adventures as a consequence of his reading is a trait that he has in common with another young character by Scott, Edward Waverley. Indeed, in both cases

¹⁸⁹ Sutherland, Kathryn, *Introduction*, in *Redgauntlet*, cit., pp. VII-XXIII. p. XI.

¹⁹⁰ *Redgauntlet*, *Letter IV*, p. 40.

¹⁹¹ *Ivi*, p. 35.

it could be argued that this peculiarity results sometimes in ridiculousness when displayed in public, as well as causing their rejection on the part of the romanticized women.¹⁹² In fact, Darsie exposes himself to ridicule very often when he dissociates from reality. Just to provide one example, the scene where Sir Hugh tries to explain to him the road to go back to Shepherd's Bush is steeped in comic undertones stemming from Darsie's daydreaming, to the point of making Sir Hugh exclaim in exhilarating frustration:

“In the name of the devil, young man, do you think that others have no better use for their time than you have, that you oblige me to repeat the same thing to you three times over? Do you see, I say, yonder thing at a mile's distance, that looks like a finger-post, or rather like a gallows? I would it had a dreaming fool hanging upon it, as an example to all meditative moon-calves!—[...]. Plague on thee, thou art wandering again!”¹⁹³

From this description it would be difficult to think that Darsie embodies the bourgeois Redgauntlet in opposition to Sir Hugh. It is true, from this point of view and at this point in the novel, that Darsie does not embody at all those values that are typically linked to the bourgeois, who, according to Franco Moretti is hardworking, serious, and matter-of-fact.¹⁹⁴ However, Darsie's habit of dreaming is not present throughout the whole novel, as it is only consistently displayed during the first half of the narrative.

It is when Darsie is put through an eye-opening hardship that he abandons his daydreaming attitude, namely when he is kidnapped by Sir Hugh. It is interesting to note that Darsie's reckless behaviour leads him to meet his kidnapper, by getting lost on the Solway first and looking for a night of adventures as a fiddler later, thus drawing the undesired attention of

¹⁹² For a detailed analysis of *Waverley* and idealisation of reality, cf. Duncan, Ian, *The Romance of Subjection: Scott's 'Waverley'*, in *Modern Romance: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens*, cit., pp. 59-130.

¹⁹³ *Redgauntlet*, Letter VI, p. 55.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Moretti, Franco, *Il Borghese tra Storia e Letteratura*, Torino, Einaudi, 2013.

the conspirators. All the wandering on the border results in Darsie losing his freedom, and arguably in putting aside his romantic reveries upon realizing the direness of his situation. Only then does he defend himself via the practical, no-nonsense objectivity of a bourgeois. The first occurrence of this shift of attitudes takes place when Darsie is questioned by Justice Foxley about his real origins in order to guarantee the legitimacy of Sir Hugh's custody of him. For the first time, Darsie makes use of his knowledge of the English law as a prospective advocate to represent himself and to prove the questioning to which he is being subjected as unorthodox:

‘Then he [Foxley] ought to know, or you, sir, as his clerk, should inform him,’ said I, ‘that I am the complainer in this case, and that my complaint ought to be heard before I am subjected to cross-examination.’¹⁹⁵

The trial then proceeds, and Darsie proves himself eloquent and skilful in using moderation when pleading his case with “as much earnestness as I could”,¹⁹⁶ since he knows that any excessive declaration against Sir Hugh or Foxley would make him lose his advantage and the judge's benevolence. Therefore, on this occasion he tries to save himself from the real danger of being legally detained against his will not by daydreaming, but by the exercise of caution and his earnestness, a quality which adequately fits the bourgeois system of values.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, as Daiches sums up, “The modern world is a world of businessmen and lawyers, and modern battles are fought in the lawcourt”.¹⁹⁸ In sum, Darsie's defence against Judge Foxley is based on sensible arguments, and his bourgeois education is finally put to

¹⁹⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter VI, p. 190.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Moretti, Franco, *Il Borghese tra Storia e Letteratura*, cit., pp 108-111.

¹⁹⁸ Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, p. 45.

good use. The coronation of Darsie's modernity in this scene occurs when he sustains his belief in free-will as opposed to Sir Hugh's creed in destiny and family curses, thus underlining the gap existing between his modern upbringing and Sir Hugh's old-fashioned system of beliefs, as examined in the previous chapter.

As the novel progresses and Darsie's captivity is prolonged, the romanticized aura that he had wrought around some characters and objects is dispelled. One example of this is the change of attitude towards the person who was most romanticized by Darsie, namely Lilius Redgauntlet. During his captivity, Darsie realizes that the object of his romantic attentions is in truth his sister, and he is "flung from his romantic Pegasus [...] with his back on the ground".¹⁹⁹ Yet, even before knowing Lilius is his sister and still in the middle of his romance about her, Darsie displays moderation and caution, namely bourgeois values. This happens when Lilius warmly greets her brother unbeknownst of the fact that Darsie still does not know they are related, and therefore behaves in his eyes as "the most frank-hearted and liberal lass that had ever lived".²⁰⁰ Darsie, instead of recklessly and romantically taking advantage of the girl's affection, acts following the bourgeois values of propriety and courtesy, by judging Lilius's behaviour as inappropriate, until the matter is cleared.

This Darsie, grounded and modest, is now capable of being accepted in modern society, for he is no longer the undisciplined student escaped from Edinburgh to look for his relatives, but the rightful heir belonging to an ancient family who deserves to be accepted by the Crown as a reward for their loyalty and principles. Darsie's introduction to King

¹⁹⁹ *Redgauntlet, Chapter XVII*, p. 318.

²⁰⁰ *Ibidem*.

George III might be seen as the consequence of the victory of common sense and logic over the excess and idealization. It could be argued, in the narrator's words, that

Those who follow the banners of Reason are like the well-disciplined battalion which, wearing a more sober uniform, and making a less dazzling show, than the light troops commanded by Imagination, enjoy more safety, and even more honour, in the conflicts of human life.²⁰¹

It is perhaps symbolic that Sir Arthur Redgauntlet is presented to the Hanover King by General Campbell: indeed, it might be argued that Campbell might have noticed in Darsie the very same values displayed by himself in dispersing the last remnants of the Jacobites, namely moderation and earnestness. Therefore, he might have wanted to recognize Sir Arthur as the harmless, bourgeois ally to the Crown and not the fierce and ruthless Redgauntlet of the feudal past.

Thus, Darsie Latimer is accepted into society as a bourgeois Redgauntlet, whereas his Gothic counterpart is defeated, exiled to the Continent, and eventually dies in utter solitude. At the end of the novel, Sir Arthur may carry the name of his ancestors and own their properties, but in reality he has been deeply steeped in modernity and the bourgeois world from the very beginning. The merit of this modest and bourgeois upbringing goes in part to Darsie's foster family, the Fairfords of Edinburgh, and especially to Alan, with whom Darsie establishes a dynamical relationship based on oppositions, as the following sections will further investigate.

²⁰¹ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XVII, pp. 316-317.

III.2 Opposing Couples: Creating Ambivalence.

In its exploration of the conflict between modernity and the past, *Redgauntlet* features various characters, both primary and secondary, who show opposing traits, thus creating illuminating contrasts. These oppositions contribute to making the narrative more dynamic, and also provide two different versions of the same type of individual. Indeed, in the following sections this thesis will discuss Alan and Darsie as opposing figures of young men, and Charles Edward and Peter Peebles as two different versions of pedants.

III.2.1 Alan Fairford versus Darsie Latimer: The Logical and the Romantic.

The opposition between Alan Fairford, a young and promising lawyer, and Darsie Latimer, an undisciplined and romantic orphan, has been remarked by various critics.²⁰² Also, this relationship is made complex by the strong friendship and the brotherhood linking the two. Indeed, Alan and Darsie have known each other ever since school times, since Darsie was sent to Alexander Fairford, Alan's father, for his upbringing.

From the outset of the novel, Darsie is presented by the characters that know him best and by Darsie himself as too inconstant and excessively naïve, like a "reed shaken by the winds".²⁰³ Also, from Saunders Fairford's point of view, Darsie constitutes a bad influence on Alan, who is supposed to keep his reputation as a serious and hardworking bourgeois student destined to follow his father's career as a lawyer. Indeed, though "imbued with middle-class assumptions and values",²⁰⁴ Alan is very often tempted by Darsie to abandon

²⁰² Cf. Zimmermann, Everett, *Op. Cit.*, pp 381-384;
Cf. also Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 48-49;
Cf. also Brown, David, D., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 152-155.

²⁰³ *Redgauntlet*, Letter I, p. 15.

²⁰⁴ Brown, David, D., *Op. Cit.*, p. 153.

his books and go on adventures, ending up in situations which are quite disreputable for a man of his social standing, and which would put his delicate health in jeopardy. Darsie himself is aware of the consideration that Fairford Senior has of him, by summing it up in the following sentence:

He is angry, too, that I will not, or cannot, be a lawyer, and, with reference to you, considers my disinclination that way as *pessimi exempli*, as he might say.²⁰⁵

Another short yet revealing description of Darsie, this time in Saunder's words, is the following:

“Darsie was a pleasant companion but [...] somewhat scatter-brained [...] he has little solidity, Alan, little solidity.”²⁰⁶

Further on in the dialogue, Fairford underlines how Darsie is not careful with money, being “extravagant enough to spend five shillings”,²⁰⁷ and how he only thinks of amusing himself, reading “idle trash”²⁰⁸ such as *Tom Jones* and spending his time at the dancehouse. Therefore, Darsie is not presented as a reliable character because of his penchant for adventures and his refusal to blend in with the bourgeois society of Edinburgh. His main characteristics at the beginning of the novel are indeed recklessness, indecisiveness, and distractedness. This latter feature is Darsie's main defining trait in the *Letters*, and it is determined by his tendency to imagine impossible fantasies out of reality. The ideal patina that Darsie gives to the object of his gaze is not a mystery to his good friend Alan, who

²⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁰⁶ *Redgauntlet, Letter II*, p. 21.

²⁰⁷ *Ivi*, p. 22.

²⁰⁸ *Ivi*, p. 21.

gives the reader perhaps the most precise description of Darsie as he is at the beginning of *Redgauntlet*:

Wert thou to plant the bean in the nursery-tale, thou wouldst make out, so soon as it began to germinate, that the castle of the giant happen to thee gets a touch of the wonderful and the sublime from thy own rich imagination. Didst ever see what artists call a Claude Lorraine glass, which spreads its own particular hue over the whole landscape which you see through- thou beholdest ordinary events just through such a medium.²⁰⁹

Alan associates Darsie's narrative to the *Jack and the Beanstalk* fable, thus suggesting that his friend has a talent for creating fictions out of the slightest fragment of reality, and Alan knows full well that this kind of perception of the world works as a screen between the factual reality and his friend. This is why Alan always tries to protect Darsie and warns him against "castlebuilding"²¹⁰ by giving him eye-opening pieces of advice, such as not seeing a "Dulcinea in every slipshod girl".²¹¹

In opposition to Darsie, in fact, Alan Fairford is Darsie's grounded, logical counterpart, young but determined to occupy his place in society as a lawyer, so meticulous in his work to almost succeed in extricating one of the most difficult knots of the legal system, namely the case 'Peebles versus Plainstones', as Zimmermann observes.²¹² Alan's "judicious and modest tone"²¹³ in beginning his address to the Court during the trial earn him the judge's respect and his father's pride, all during his very first trial in his career. However, the word 'almost' must be underlined, since Alan may seem the perfect lawyer and student, but his acquaintance with Darsie and the influence he has on him prevent him from going to the

²⁰⁹ *Redgauntlet*, Letter V, p. 46.

²¹⁰ Kerr, James, *Fiction Against History: 'Redgauntlet' and the Power of Romance*, cit., p. 244.

²¹¹ *Redgauntlet*, Letter II, p. 25.

²¹² Cf. Zimmermann, Everett, *Op. Cit.*, p. 383.

²¹³ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter I, p. 148.

bottom of the case. Indeed, what happens during the trial is that upon receiving a letter reporting Darsie's disappearance, Alan abandons his work on the spot and leaves the town to help his friend. In other words, he shows the same recklessness and unpredictability which were so criticized in Darsie. The scene might serve perhaps as an example of the negative effects of Darsie's influence because the consequences of Alan's action are to his detriment. Indeed, the young lawyer loses six potential clients wanting to do business with him, but reconsidering their intention since "they did not like his lowping away like a flea in a blanket".²¹⁴ The truth is that Alan is not only a logical and serious student, a "Dutch doll, depending on the pressure of certain springs, as duty, reflection, and the like",²¹⁵ as Darsie comments, because he freely chooses to ignore those social pressures and put his friend and the loyalty towards him first, thus acting carelessly just like his friend. Indeed, all the events involving Alan from his escape onwards become more and more extravagant, especially reaching their peak in the chapters narrating his journey with the picturesque smuggler Nanty Ewart. Thus, it emerges that the complexity of the opposition between Darsie and Alan also resides in their mutual exchange of influences on each other: in this case, Alan starts to resemble more and more Darsie in his intention to embark in an adventure to find him, and Darsie makes use of the teachings of the logical Alan in trying to defend himself from Sir Hugh and plead for his freedom, as it was observed above.

In sum, Alan has some romanticism in him thanks to Darsie, and Darsie has some bourgeois logic in him thanks to Alan. The only difference which at first makes Alan different from Darsie in this exchange is his solidity, namely his ability to find a balance between logical and romantic due to his certain bourgeois identity. Darsie will acquire this certainty later

²¹⁴ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter I, p. 152.

²¹⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Letter III, p. 26.

in the novel, as soon as he finds out and embraces his other name, *ergo* Sir Arthur Redgauntlet.²¹⁶ At the end of the novel, when the two have both stable identities and are both balanced in their values, Darsie and Alan arguably reach the peak of the relationship of mutual identification and assimilation which permeates their story, and which is eventually crowned by social success. Indeed, both characters prize their equilibrium by securing their place in society. In Alan's case, his final marriage to Lillas Redgauntlet, the mysterious Green Mantle with whom he had fallen in love, might be read as the character securing his stability thanks to the achieved stability between bourgeois values and more ideal and romantic ones, such as his recklessness in saving his friend. Furthermore, Alan's marriage results in symbolizing the balance achieved between bourgeois Fairfords and aristocratic Redgauntlets on the one hand and confirming his brotherhood with Darsie on the other. The same recognition in modern society is given to Sir Arthur Redgauntlet not through marriage, but via the acceptance of his family by the Hanover King. This dynamic of progressive identification and mutual influence between Alan and Darsie becomes ever deeper when reading them as two different aspects of Scott's personality, as suggested by Daiches.²¹⁷ In this case, indeed, it is even more meaningful to interpret the two as complementary in their traits, each possessing a quality the other needs for them to be a fully formed individual.

In conclusion, Alan and Darsie form a dynamic couple which starts off as diametrically opposite, Alan being logical and Darsie romantic, and which eventually reveals to form a much more complex relationship based on exchange and balance of the two main traits of

²¹⁶ Cf. Zimmermann, Everett, *Op. Cit.*, p. 383.

²¹⁷ Cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, p. 49;
Cf. also Sutherland, Kathryn, *Op. Cit.*, p. xxi.

the characters, the achievement of which results in stability in public life. This dynamic and personal maturation also contribute to Darsie's survival as a modern Redgauntlet, a topic which will be further developed when discussing compromise solutions.

III.2.2 Peter Peebles versus Charles Edward: The Comic and The Tragic Pedant.

The following pages will now focus on another contrasting couple of characters who have been both obsessed with legal matters and justice for decades, and portray two opposite variants of the pedantic type, namely the comic and the tragic.

The figure of the pedantic, whether comic or tragic, is not new in Scott's literary production. As for the comic pedantic, we can think of The Baron of Bradwardine in *Waverley* or Caleb Balderstone in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, two characters whose obsession with old-fashioned traditions and rituals turns them into comical types detached from reality. Their equivalent and tragic version might be retraced in Fergus MacIvor for *Waverley* and Edgar Ravenswood for *The Bride* due to their sublime nature, their attachment to their family's past, and their tragic deaths.²¹⁸ In *Redgauntlet*, this dualism is represented by Peter Peebles in the first instance and Charles Edward in the second.

Let us start this analysis with Peter Peebles. The character looms in the narrative mainly for the eternal and impossible contention between him and his former business partner. Indeed, the infamous case 'Peebles versus Plainstones', opposing these two former business associates after the liquidation of their activity, is the nightmare of every lawyer in Edinburgh assigned to the case, and the amusement of every spectator in the audience.

²¹⁸ Cf. Villari, Enrica, *La Resistenza alla Storia nei romanzi giacobiti di Walter Scott*, cit., pp. 20-30.

From his very first appearance, Peebles's fame precedes him, and when he eventually appears in the flesh he steals the scene as some farcical character right out of the *Commedia dell'Arte* or some Dickensian miser.²¹⁹ Peebles immediately turns every situation into a comedy because of his short temper, his binge drinking, and his misuse of Latin and legal terminology. Like his prospective advocate, Alan, reports: "But, to turn what was grave into farce, the door opened, and Wilkinson ushered in Peter Peebles."²²⁰

The character's attire is then described in detail, underlining Peebles' poverty because of his obsession with his legal predicament and fifteen years of legal expenses. In the narrative, every detail about Peter Peebles is theatrical, from his costume made of rags to his style of convoluted and nonsensical speech. Another trait that makes Peebles a comic character that he takes advantage of his benefactors for food and drink, often abusing the latter. Thus, at the end of the first encounter between Peebles and the Fairfords Peebles gets dragged out of their house, completely drunk after unceremoniously chugging down brandy and ale while raving about his case. In other words, he makes the perfect entrance and exit for a comic character. The ridiculousness in Peebles here does not stem only out of the contrast he creates between his serious predicament and his farcical character, but also from his pedantry. Indeed, Peebles is ridiculously pedantic because of his excessive reverence of the law, his morbid knowledge and misuse of the judicial vocabulary, and his stubborn motivation to endure fifteen years of trials and overcomplicate his contention. This knowledge of his, flaunted via a confused deluge of Latin words, is an element which Peebles brandishes to convince himself he is an expert in law, hiding the truth that he is an old, mad man and the laughingstock of the Court. More specifically, his pedantry often

²¹⁹ Cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, p. 55.

²²⁰ *Redgauntlet*, Letter XIII, p. 135.

translates in grandeur mania, thus making the character ridiculous given the gap between his fantasy of importance and the crude reality. Peter Peebles is in fact convinced he is well-respected in the courthouse because of his fame, to the point of introducing himself as “Peter Peebles of the great plea against Plainstones, et *per contra* – if I am laird of naething else, I am aye a *dominus litis*”.²²¹ Of course, this could not be farther from the real perception that the Edinburgh society has of him, which could be summed up by Alan’s comment: “he is an insane beggar- as poor as Job, and as mad as a March hare!”.²²² In sum, the comic effect stems from the contrast between his person and reality, which translates in his being a farcical pedantic. This gap between personal fantasies of greatness fuelled by a vainglorious reliance on the law and the grim, ruthless reality is what links Peter Peebles to the Pretender, Charles Edward.

It is necessary, however, to clarify a point as far as Charles Edward is concerned. It seems counterintuitive to choose him as the sublime and chivalric counterpart to Peebles, since Sir Hugh Redgauntlet certainly shines more in the novel for his awe-inspiring aura on one hand, and for his tenacity on the legal field as a Jacobite and Darsie’s guardian.²²³ It has also been observed how Peebles and Hugh do share some hidden connection, since for both the ’45 was an eventful year.²²⁴ It is true that Sir Hugh is a sublime and chivalric character: however, an argument which paradoxically discards a deeper possible comparison would be the excessive difference existing between Sir Hugh’s perfect nobility and Peebles’ flawed meanness. Instead, a comparison between morally similar characters such Charles

²²¹ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XX, p. 354.

²²² *Redgauntlet*, Letter XIII, p. 133.

²²³ Cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 54-55.

²²⁴ Cf. Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, p. 170;

This comparison could be extended between Peebles and Charles Edward as well, since 1745 was an eventful year for the Pretender, too. In fact, after the defeat of Culloden, the Pretender, who had assumed the command of the rebel army, was forced into exile to France.

Edward and Peter Peebles would make a more dynamic and revealing association, underlining hidden aspects in the two. This is possible because both have similar failings, unlike virtuous Sir Hugh. For instance, it has been noticed how both Peebles and the Pretender have a penchant for excessive drinking. As Scott himself reported in his 1832 *Introduction to Redgauntlet*, in the later years of his life the Pretender “yielded to those humiliating habits of intoxication [...] to drown the recollection of their disappointments and miseries”,²²⁵ namely alcohol. Another trait in common between Peebles and Charles Edward is their care about their own interests. Peebles is a selfish character, so much so that he is the cause of the ruin of two of his tenants, and he is generally presented as only interested in his victuals and his legal cause.²²⁶ In the same way, using Scott’s words again, the Pretender was thought to be characterised by “that egotistical attention to his own interests, which has often been attributed to the Stewart Family”.²²⁷ In the novel, this egotism is made apparent in the refusal on the part of the Chevalier to forego his lover, a presumed spy for the Hanovers. On the other hand, the haughtiness which marks Peebles as pedantic is also present in Charles Edward, more rightly in his case, since he belongs to a royal family whose upbringing taught him his superiority towards the subjects. And exactly like with Peebles, this superiority often translates into bursts of impatience and arrogance, present in the scene where Alan encounters the Pretender disguised as Father Buonaventure:

‘Nothing must be supposed incompatible with my honour,’ replied the priest, interrupting him; ‘when such as I am confer favours, we expect that they shall be accepted with gratitude, or declined with thankful respect— not questioned or discussed.’²²⁸

²²⁵ Scott, Walter, *Introduction to ‘Redgauntlet’ (1832)*, cit., pp. 9-10.

²²⁶ Cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, p. 55.

²²⁷ Scott, Walter, *Introduction to ‘Redgauntlet’ (1832)*, cit., p. 3.

²²⁸ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XVI, p.305.

Also, the character of Charles Edward even tends to overlap with Peter Peebles and appear as comical: in fact, the disguise as a Catholic priest has been recognised by critics as farcical and overall ridiculous.²²⁹ However, this instant of identification does not discard the diametrical opposition between the two, for even in disguise Charles Edward still appears as “having something of majesty, depressed indeed, and overclouded, but still grand and imposing.”²³⁰

In conclusion, the main element both Peebles and Charles Edward share is their sacrificing time and money fighting for a lost cause, consequently accumulating debts upon debts. Peebles and the Pretender are in the end ruined and impoverished by a legal battle carried on for decades, making them older and avaricious.²³¹ More specifically, Charles Edward’s claim to the throne occupied by the Hanover king might be sustained only by a complex system of rules of succession based on the principle of monarchy by divine right, a tenet which however was discarded in favour of the Hanover access to the throne, based upon constitutional monarchy.²³² Much in the same way, the ‘Peebles versus Plainstones’ case is made impossible due to its hinging upon legal quibbles and dishonest commercial practices. Therefore, in both cases the road to truth and justice is thwarted by a set of laws to the point of blurring the lines between legitimate and illegitimate. In the end both characters will not win their battle, Peebles dying of a fit of apoplexy and the Pretender being mercifully sent back to his French exile.

²²⁹ Cf. Sutherland, Kathryn, *Op. Cit.*, p. xx;
Cf. also Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, p. 162.

²³⁰ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XVI, p. 303.

²³¹ Cf. Scott Walter, *Introduction to ‘Redgauntlet’ (1832)*, cit., p. 8.

²³² Cf. Beiderwell, Bruce, *Op.Cit.*, pp. 283-284;
Cf. also Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 162-166.

According to this brief analysis, it is safe to assume that Peebles and Charles Edward are two faces of the same medal with respect to their temper, economic status, and obsession with law, the first being a grotesque caricature of the latter.²³³ The difference between the two that makes Charles Edward tragic, despite his farcical disguise as a Catholic Father, is his social standing and what he puts at stake through his actions, namely a whole Kingdom and his own life. Albeit his similarity to Peebles, Charles Edward remains the Pretender, a man of social standing whose noble birth ill suits a comic situation. His mania of grandeur is in fact justified, and the friction between his objectives and his persona and the world is not as ridiculous as in Peebles' case. Thus, it would seem logical to associate an exiled, dispossessed king to a tragic character and a tragic narrative. His eventual defeat is due to the old-fashioned nature of his claims, not to his madness or avarice, as is Peebles' case. Although he does not suffer a violent death, Charles Edward still dies tragically, facing a fate perhaps worse than the gallows, being forgotten by the nobility of Europe, "scarce remembered and scarce noted".²³⁴ This is because the Stuart King, the absolutist monarch, is not fit for ruling a modern kingdom anymore, and therefore he is destined to be abandoned by everyone who once used to support his claims. His tragic character resides in his being anachronistic and in having "judicial blindness"²³⁵ supposedly inherited due to a "great and inexpressible crime",²³⁶ just like Sir Hugh, with which the Pretender shares the melancholic sense of loss of their past greatness to a new modernity in which they can find no place.

²³³ Cf. Johnson, Edgar, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 925-926.

²³⁴ Scott, Walter, *Introduction to 'Redgauntlet' (1832)*, cit., p. 10.

²³⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XXII, p. 380.

²³⁶ *Ibidem*.

III.3 Bridging the Gap: The Compromise Solution

This chapter has until now analysed oppositions between characters which overall embody values belonging either to modernity or tradition. In *Redgauntlet*, modernity is presented as the progress which must replace old ideas and ancient powers. However, what is the cost of such change in the novel? This section will further explore the price of modernity and the dynamics that allow the past to give way to the future via compromise.

III.3.1 The Price to Pay for the Future: Joshua Geddes and Cristal Nixon.

In this section, the sacrifice that modernity imposes on ancient traditions will be explored in the instances of two characters, Joshua Geddes and Cristal Nixon, who embody the most ambiguous aspects of modernity, since they represent modernity as a force which sweeps away ancient practices by causing suffering and pain to those who have not embraced progress yet. In truth, it might be possible to mention Peter Peebles as a character who might represent the *pars destruens* of modernity as well, because of his obsession with money and the law to pursue it, and his avarice and selfishness. He could be seen as a modern bourgeois who led two of his tenants, a mother and a daughter, to death for the first and a life of misery and dishonour for the latter.²³⁷ However, due to the caricatural nature of the character, the dynamics behind Peebles's modern behaviour and money obsession are not as clear and deeply explained as the ones displayed for Geddes and Nixon.

Joshua Geddes is introduced as a peaceful Quaker living off salmon fishing on the Solway river. Even if Joshua presents himself as a devout individual who prefers non-violent methods and peace, his ancestors were not as religious as he and his sister are. Indeed, the

²³⁷ Cf. Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, p. 171.

Quaker's identity is that of a descendant of a family as violent as that of the Redgauntlets, whose characterisation owes much to by the true Geddes family of the Peeblesshire²³⁸:

Yes, friend Latimer, my ancestors were renowned among the ravenous and bloodthirsty men who then dwelt in this vexed country; and so much were they famed for successful freebooting, robbery, and bloodshed, that they are said to have been called Geddes, as likening them to the fish called a Jack, Pike, or Luce, and in our country tongue, a *ged*— a goodly distinction truly for Christian men! Yet did they paint this shark of the fresh waters upon their shields [...] and became yet more ged-like, slaying, leading into captivity, and dividing the spoil, until the place where they dwelt obtained the name of Sharing-Knowe, from the booty which was there divided amongst them and their accomplices.²³⁹

Therefore, in order to fit into the modern society based on moderation instead of bloodthirst and ruthlessness, Joshua decided to modify his identity to the point of effacing his family escutcheon and twisting the name of his residence from the infamous Sharing-Knowe to Mount Sharon.²⁴⁰ As a proof of his adaptation, the Quaker's residence is indeed the most peaceful environment one can imagine, full of gardens and harmless books of devotion, so much so that it provides no excitement at all to romantic Darsie. Therefore, Geddes manages to create an "illusion of peace and harmony in a border region where conflict is the rule".²⁴¹ However, there are some instances in which it is possible to see flickers of the Quaker's true temperament, which is naturally, and perhaps culturally hereditary, inclined to bursts of rage, unlike the meek and patient mask the man manages to assume in public.²⁴² When Benjie, a young, undisciplined rascal living nearby, steals

²³⁸ Cf. Wilkes, Joanne, *Op. Cit.*, p. 208.

²³⁹ *Redgauntlet*, Letter VII, p. 66.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Kerr, James, *Fiction Against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., pp. 114-116.

²⁴¹ *Ivi*, p. 116.

²⁴² Cf. Wilkes, Joanne, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 208-209.

his pony Solomon., Joshua displays a very colourful vocabulary unfit for a man of religion:

“The villain means to mount him!” cried Joshua, with more vivacity than was consistent with his profession of passive endurance. [...] “The mischievous bastard! [...] the doomed gallows-bird! – He will break Solomon’s wind to a certainty.”²⁴³

Thus, in the light of his familiar legacy, Joshua might arguably be interpreted as the mellowed, modernized version of a Redgauntlet belonging to the opposite old faction of radical Puritans, perhaps anticipating in this perspective and in a lower social dimension Darsie’s fate of a modernized version of tradition.

Nevertheless, the main element which makes Joshua Geddes a controversial modern man is not his family history, but his fishing activity. Indeed, Joshua employs stake nets against the traditional spear. As it was observed by critics such as Brown and Elbers, this may be a more efficient and more modern method of fishing salmon, but this innovation also causes the other, less advanced fishermen to lose their catch and suffer from the loss of their only income.²⁴⁴ The situation is exacerbated to the point that a revolt bursts out on the river to destroy the nets and allow the fishermen to keep living off salmon fishing. Therefore, by depicting the painful struggle between new, more fruitful methods and ancient traditions, Scott portrays the shift from past to modernity as a change which demands sacrifices, and which is usually ambiguous in its morality. In the case of Geddes, this ambiguity is underlined by the fact that the “legality of the mode of fishing [...] is greatly doubted”,²⁴⁵ therefore leaving the practice in a grey zone of legality. Then, a final touch which might

²⁴³ *Redgauntlet*, Letter VII, pp. 62-63.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, p. 153;
Cf. also Elbers, Joan S., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 157-158.

²⁴⁵ *Redgauntlet*, Letter VIII, p. 84.

suggest Geddes' modernity is his refusal to resort to violence as a means of justice:²⁴⁶ perhaps his passive, non-violent behaviour as a resolution technique might be aligned with the concept of gentle policy displayed by General Campbell at the end of the novel, since both approaches underline the bourgeois virtue of moderation and compromise over open aggression.

Non-violent but ambiguous behaviour is also displayed by another controversially modern character, namely Cristal Nixon, an old servant who acts as Sir Hugh Redgauntlet's right-hand man. Nixon is possibly the most negative character in *Redgauntlet* in terms of ethics, since he is suspected for being involved in the seizure of Darsie's father's at Culloden, he betrays his master for money, inappropriately attempts to court Lillas, and shoots Nanty Ewart in cold blood before being killed himself in return. This moral ugliness is conveyed not only via his actions, but via his whole being, his voice being "as unpleasant as his physiognomy".²⁴⁷ Being a servant in an ancient family in a Scott historical novel, Nixon might be expected to play the part of the most loyal and respectful servant, just like Caleb Balderstone in *The Bride of Lammermoor* or the loyal Evan Dhu in *Waverley*, who is devoted to the point of dying alongside his chieftain. On the contrary, Nixon reveals to embody the modern flaw of individualism and opportunism as compared to the feudal values of trustworthiness and loyalty to one's own companions and masters.²⁴⁸ Indeed, Nixon demonstrates many times to care predominantly about his own interests by prying into conversations, showing interest in bribes, and eventually deciding to sell his master to George III for thirty thousand pounds. All of this is done for money to add to his "dog's

²⁴⁶ Cf. Elbers, Joan S., *Op. Cit.*, p. 163.

²⁴⁷ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XVIII, p. 326.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Villari, Enrica, *La Resistenza alla Storia nei Giacobiti di Walter Scott*, cit., p. 10.

wages”²⁴⁹ and as revenge over his ill-treatment on the part of the Redgauntlets. This obsession with money which replaces loyalty is possibly the only instance of modernity which is openly criticized in the novel, since even the beneficiary of Nixon’s betrayal, General Campbell, asserts on seeing Nixon’s body that “that broadsword cut has saved us the shame of rewarding a traitor”.²⁵⁰

Therefore, in the light of these brief analysis, it could be argued that if these characters provide two examples of adaptation to modernity, yet they are very different versions of it: one is only debatable, the second is utterly sanctioned in the novel: Joshua Geddes is the result of a process of a compromise between innovation, albeit harmful to those who are left behind, and the heritage of the past, whereas Cristal Nixon, and Peter Peebles with him, embody those extreme aspects of modernity centred upon money and individualism not moderated by any influence of traditional values as a guarantee of damage control.

III.3.2 Two Figures of Compromise: Justice Foxley and Provost Crosbie.

Compromise as a key for adapting to modern society is evident in two other figures belonging to the legal world, namely Justice Foxley and Provost Crosbie. Indeed, both have personal attachments to Jacobite environments and yet need to recant those liaisons in order to occupy their roles in public society.

As for Justice Foxley, he first appears at Darsie’s trial in the role of judge to ascertain Sir Hugh’s custody of the boy. It emerges from the narrative that Foxley is a Jacobite who conceals his political sympathy for Sir Hugh and tries to help him by confirming his

²⁴⁹ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XXIII, p. 382.

²⁵⁰ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XXIII, p. 397.

guardianship over Darsie. He does so by carrying out a minimal examination and ignoring the young man's sensible remonstrances of miscarriage of justice. However, once Mr Herries's identity as the Jacobite Sir Hugh Redgauntlet is publicly revealed and his warrant produced, Foxley has no other choice but to "do my duty".²⁵¹ In other words, he must deny his allegiance to Sir Hugh in order to keep his public role as judge and not arise suspicions in his clerk. Therefore he tries to publicly apprehend Sir Hugh, thus implicitly refusing to further help his accomplice.²⁵² What emerges from Foxley's sudden change of allegiance in this scene is the compromise he strikes between personal Jacobite sympathies and the loyalty to King George required of his public office, which makes it impossible, in the performance of his public function, to allow a wanted man involved in the '45 to request any favour of him, let alone to sabotage an examination. The nature of this compromise can be summarized by Darsie's realization that "Justice was anything more than an ass"²⁵³ due to its being corrupted and contradicting at times.²⁵⁴ Provost Crosbie is a man who finds himself in a similar position as Foxley,²⁵⁵ with the addition that his own wife is a Redgauntlet, namely an open supporter of the Jacobite cause:

The provost was certainly proud of his lady, nay, some said he was afraid of her; for of the females of the Redgauntlet family there went a rumour, that, ally where they would, there was a grey mare as surely in the stables of their husbands, as there is a white horse in Wouvermans' pictures.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter VII, p. 202.

²⁵² Cf. Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 155-156;
Cf. also Ghoshal Wallace, Tara, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 151-152.

²⁵³ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter VI, p. 188.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Berndt, Kathrine, *Op. Cit.*, pp 157-158.

²⁵⁵ Cf. Daiches, David, *Op. Cit.*, p. 56.

²⁵⁶ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XI, p. 237.

Mrs. Crosbie may have Jacobite ideals and argue often with the husband over the rightful heir to the throne, but the Provost is a man involved in the public life of the Kingdom, and therefore needs to hide every possible sympathy for the Jacobites. The ambiguity of his position, between private allegiances and public duty, is expressed very eloquently in the toast scene, where Alan witnesses the balance of forces characterizing the household, for no name is specified when toasting to the health of the sovereign:

The Provost emphatically named the toast, 'The King', with an important look to Fairford, which seemed to say, You can have no doubt whom I mean, and therefore there is no occasion to particularize the individual.²⁵⁷

Once again, Jacobitism is allowed only in the private world of these characters, as opposed to their public behaviour inspired by loyalty to the lawful King. When that separation between public and private is not possible, then something like ambiguity seems to predominate. As observed by Brown, this uncertainty of loyalties is created by Crosbie by means of his "plausible tongue"²⁵⁸ so that people cannot really tell whether "he is Whig or Tory".²⁵⁹ In other words, Crosbie is skilled in using the right words and make every discussion as vague and innocuous as possible, as the toast scene discussed above can exemplify.²⁶⁰ What is also compromising in Crosbie is his relation to Maxwell Summertrees, also known as Pate-in-Peril, an old Jacobite escaped from capture after the battle of Culloden, and who is remarkable for being one of the most sentimentally motivated Jacobites in *Redgauntlet*. Overall, what can be read between the lines in what

²⁵⁷ Ivi, p. 239.

²⁵⁸ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XII, p. 252.

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, pp. 156-157.

concerns these characters is the opacity clouding the judicial system after 1745, as pointed out by Ghoshal Wallace,²⁶¹ so that a “practical, but unattractive”²⁶² compromise is the only way for Jacobites to survive in modern society via keeping their ideals as pure sentimentalism, as opposed to the militant way of Sir Hugh Redgauntlet’s Jacobitism. These two characters represent indeed the only types of Jacobites destined to survive due to their compromise with the present, which allows them to keep their past alive only in their sentimental and private spheres.

III.3.3 Darsie’s Compromise: Bridging the Gap.

So far, this thesis has argued that compromise as a means of adaptation requires sacrifice and is not entirely devoid of immorality or ambiguity, or “unattractiveness”, even in the most balanced cases. In the present section, the argument will be that the whole story, tinged with Gothic suggestions as we have seen, of Darsie’s quest for his unknown origins that puts the action of the plot in motion, was conceived by Scott to illustrate the conditions of a compromise possibly the least harmful and the most exemplary in maintaining the individual’s innocence in bridging the gap between past and present. This is indeed possible thanks to the boy’s upbringing on one hand and his passivity on the other.

As far as upbringing is concerned, this element is a fundamental factor in guaranteeing Darsie’s eventual success as a modern Redgauntlet. The crucial relevance of his education can be better appreciated if we read Darsie’s story, from his birth to his unfortunate adventure with Sir Hugh, on the background of the rules of the English version of European

²⁶¹ Cf. Ghoshal Wallace, Tara, *Op. Cit.*, p. 152.

²⁶² Brown, David D., *Op. Cit.*, p. 155.

Bildungsroman which were studied by Franco Moretti.²⁶³ In fact, Darsie's story seems to follow its typical scheme where the character's initial condition, starting from his very childhood, is the correct one, and the eventual happy ending consists in the return to that life. So it would seem that youth appears in *Redgauntlet* as Moretti argues for the English version of European *Bildungsroman*, a period liable to mistakes which should pass as swiftly as possible.²⁶⁴ But things in *Redgauntlet* are much more complex. The peregrinations of the protagonist, indeed, are not strictly speaking 'mistakes', being what allow him to discover his true origin. It is true that they are necessary detours which allow the protagonist to err, "explore conflicting values",²⁶⁵ discover a deepened sense of identity and be eventually reabsorbed into the society from which they were detached at the beginning as complete and mature individuals. And it is true thanks to the blunt, fairy-tale-like opposition -typical of the English *Bildungsroman*- between heroes and villains where the characterization of each individual is clearly defined and fits into a type, thus making it easy to categorize the characters in binary couples. All of this is what happens in the case of Darsie Latimer and his finding a balanced compromise between his family history and the contemporary reality. But *Redgauntlet's* contribution to the scheme of the English version of European *Bildungsroman* is complicated and enriched by the circumstance that Darsie's childhood identity is Jacobite by birth and Hanoverian as a condition of his education.

So, Darsie's identity as a modern Redgauntlet and his compromise with the present start to be defined since his very his childhood. It must be here underlined once again that this is a

²⁶³ For an analysis of the English *Bildungsroman*, cf. Moretti, Franco, *The Way of the World*, cit., pp. 181-228.

²⁶⁴ Ivi, p.204.

²⁶⁵ Ivi, p. 185.

dynamic which is essential and strictly peculiar to the English *Bildungsroman* as opposed to its European counterparts.²⁶⁶ There is a reason behind this characteristic English formula where the hero's maturation revolves around infancy, and it is linked to the very birth of the genre. In order to better understand the peculiarity of the English *Bildungsroman* vis-à-vis the European one, let us explain briefly what its purpose was in general. The genre originated at the end of the eighteenth century out of the necessity of explaining a new and complex idea of modernity as conveyed and symbolised by youth, which thus became a "symbolic concentrate of uncertainties and tensions of an entire cultural system"²⁶⁷ worried about reconciling the stability of the past with the unpredictability of the future generations. To make the matter more complicated, youth also represented those conflicting, irreconcilable values which opposed "self-determination and the equally imperious demands of socialisation",²⁶⁸ namely the necessity of the single to the need of the many. Solving this conundrum proved very difficult, and different European cultures tackled the issue of ushering unpredictable, unformed youths into stable adulthood in their own way, also with respect to their different approach to the new generations and to the impact which the French Revolution had on them. Overall, however, there is one common element to these various responses, namely that these modern oppositions channelled by youth cannot be reconciled by synthesis, but only by compromise, hence its centrality as a theme in the genre.²⁶⁹ In this scenario, there are two coexisting principle which these novels lean towards in order to strike this compromise. The first is defined as the "principle of classification":²⁷⁰ in favouring it the novel tends to lead the young hero to the consolidation

²⁶⁶ Ivi., pp. 202-206.

²⁶⁷ Ivi., p. 185.

²⁶⁸ Ivi., p. 15.

²⁶⁹ Ivi., p.9.

²⁷⁰ Ivi., p. 7.

of his identity as a member of a stable rank in society, a process usually sealed by marriage. As an alternative option, the *Bildungsroman* can lean towards the other, so-called “principle of transformation”,²⁷¹ which insists more on individualism, thirst for freedom, the ambition and social mobility characterising youth, and it usually refuses a closed ending.²⁷² In other words, either these novels favour the conservatism of the past and the need for socialisation, or they privilege the instability of future changes and the whims of individualism. In this framework, the English *Bildungsroman* contributes to this debate by establishing a clear identity for the individual from the very cradle, therefore opting for the stability of classification and for socialisation. As Moretti asserts:

The heroes’ childhood, if not always their birth, is granted an emblematic and lasting prominence. It is the first of the many differences between the English bildungsroman and the continental one. [...] in the English novel the most significant experiences are not those that alter but those which *confirm* the choices made by childhood ‘innocence’. Rather than novels of ‘initiation’ one feels they should be called novels of ‘preservation’.²⁷³

Therefore, childhood is extremely important in the English variant of the genre because it answers the dilemma revolving around youth and modernity by serving the principle of classification, mirroring that solidity and conservatism characterising England back then and differentiating it from post-1789 Europe.²⁷⁴ Here the most tender years are that “stage of life most suited for absorbing such a clear cut and unquestionable value structure”,²⁷⁵ namely the legitimacy and the correctness of the *status quo* and the necessity to fit into it.

²⁷¹ Ibidem.

²⁷² For more information and the analysis of some novels based on the principle of transformation, cf. Moretti, Franco, *Waterloo Story*, in *The Way of the World*, cit. pp. 75-127.

²⁷³ Moretti, Franco, *The Way of the World*, cit., p. 182.

²⁷⁴ Ivi, p. 189.

²⁷⁵ Ivi, p.213.

Furthermore, the institutionalisation of the hero as a member correctly inserted in an established, unquestioned society is made even easier thanks to that fairy-tale dualism between villains and heroes mentioned above. This is because if no ambiguity can be conceived it is easy to discern what is right and what is wrong, the first usually assimilated in childhood and the second experienced in youth as a mistake, albeit made forcibly or unconsciously.²⁷⁶ In the specific case of *Redgauntlet*, Darsie's dual identity as a loyal, bourgeois Hanoverian and at the same time as the descendant of an ancient Jacobite House, though unbeknownst to him, is actually the contradictory truth of his childhood to which he will return and embrace in maturity, once it is wholly unveiled. On the other hand, the hero's involvement with Jacobitism, albeit brief and coerced, can be read in this path of formation as the error of his youth which will just strengthen the righteousness of his past childhood 'compromising' condition by contrast.

In line with the aforementioned peculiarities of the English *Bildungsroman*, then, the very first choice conditioning Darsie's childhood condition happens when his mother, an Englishwoman, decides to cut ties with Scotland and her husband's Jacobite family by bringing up her child in in England. This decision seals Darsie's future: indeed, the role played by his mother reveals itself as vital for the mellowing of the original rebellious Jacobite spirit of the Redgauntlets. As Lilius observes, in fact, both she and Darsie are hybridized Redgauntlets, so to speak:

“My uncle says that you and I, Darsie, are but half Redgauntlets, and that the metal of which our father's family was made, has been softened to effeminacy in our mother's offspring.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ Ivi, pp. 188 ; 203.

²⁷⁷ *Redgauntlet*, Chapter XVII, p. 318.

In other words, Darsie has been steeped into a modern world due to his mother's distancing from the milieu of the House of Redgauntlet. His education is then carried on when living with the bourgeois Fairfords of Edinburgh after her death, and especially thanks to the interaction and exchange between Darsie and Alan examined above. As a result, the first steps in Darsie's education already constitute a strong foundation for his identity as a Hanoverian subject. Nevertheless, and in line with the scheme of the English *Bildungsroman*, a deviation from this initial, modern bourgeois existence is still required, because Darsie lacks something essential for his safe adaptation into society, namely his past.²⁷⁸ This is where Darsie's journey in quest for his true identity and his heritage, which prompts the whole novel, comes into play. His adventure on the border and his kidnapping translate in an experience of personal growth and eventually allow Darsie to hone his character and skills, bringing him to maturity and stability of character. However, it needs to be noted that this experience will not transform Darsie into someone different and new from what he was. On the contrary, it will allow Darsie to complete and enrich his self by providing him with answers to his mysterious past. This finding, however, does not cause Darsie to embrace the Jacobite cause. What happens instead is that the discovery of the Redgauntlets' history will confirm Darsie's identity as a loyal Hanoverian subject. And this happens because education, the force that enables individuals to make adult and conscious choices, makes it impossible for Darsie to accept an allegiance with his uncle despite his blood ties with Jacobitism. Darsie's growth, therefore, does not translate into becoming a Jacobite chieftain, nor into just reverting to his former life. What Darsie manages to achieve in this contradictory situation, namely finding out to be a Hanoverian descending from a Jacobite family, is balancing the two aspects by accepting the most

²⁷⁸ Cf. Kerr, James, *Fiction Against History: Scott as Storyteller*, cit., pp. 248-253.

innocuous values of his Redgauntlet heritage and discarding the most anachronistic. Darsie is able to incorporate his modern upbringing with his family name by abandoning any wish to support the Stuart monarchy. Arguably, this balance is sealed on the material level, too. Indeed, not only does the young man enrich himself metaphorically by finding about his family history, but he also inherits a considerable sum of money and prized possessions. Only the sword, an ancient heirloom, is cast into the sea and lost forever. This *agnitio* is relevant in two ways. First, it contributes to depicting Darsie as innocent in yet another way, since his fortune does not derive from any immoral activities: unlike Peter Peebles or Nixon, who adopt dishonest ways to earn their money due to their greed, Darsie unexpectedly inherits it once he discovers his identity.²⁷⁹ More specifically, he inherits estates, not money: this way those modern vices related to wealth are completely unrelated to Darsie's legacy.²⁸⁰ Secondly, this legacy is the tangible proof that Darsie has legitimately embraced his past and symbolically left behind the violent, anachronistic values for which all previous representative of the House of Redgauntlet were ready to die.

In sum, Darsie's education makes him able to form his half-Redgauntlet identity, "a conciliator and a mediator of the differences between Scotland and England",²⁸¹ thus abandoning that social instability and personal incompleteness which characterised him as having little solidity at the beginning of the novel. Thanks to this maturation, Darsie Latimer eventually embodies that hero who is balanced on a compromise between tradition

²⁷⁹ This is also another trope which is widely present in the English *Bildungsroman*, cf. Moretti, Franco, *The Way of the World*, cit., pp. 205-206.

²⁸⁰ Cf. Welsh, Alexander, *The Romance of Property*, in *The Hero of the Waverley Novels*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 77-85, p. 79.

²⁸¹ Zimmermann, Everett, *Op. Cit.*, p. 382.

and modernity, epitomising that conservatist logic that permeates the English *Bildungsroman*.²⁸²

Alongside upbringing and childhood, another essential element contributing to the harmlessness of Darsie's compromise is his total passivity in the story. This trait is typical of Scott's young and inexperienced characters, and Scott himself was aware of this when writing about his own novels:

His [Scott's] characters are never actors, but always acted upon by the spur of circumstances, and have their fates uniformly determined by the agency of the subordinate persons. [...] The insipidity of this author's heroes may also be in part referred to the readiness with which he twists and turns his story to produce some immediate and perhaps temporary effect. This could hardly be done without representing the character either as inconsistent or flexible in his principles.²⁸³

Scott himself, then, asserts that his heroes are characterised by "insipidity", flexibility, and passivity. Scott's words on his characters have been embraced by many critics, who then further observed how these traits define a new type of hero introduced by his historical novels. One of the most influential critic whom argues how Scott's heroes are incredibly innovative and relevant in their passivity and malleability is Georg Lukács.²⁸⁴ In his study on the historical novel, Lukács recognises how Scott's passive heroes reflect new, post-Revolution views on historical progress as based on class struggles and the dialectic between tradition and modernity.²⁸⁵ This struggle eventually resolves into the achievement

²⁸² Cf. Moretti, Franco, *The Way of the World*, cit., p. 185; 206.

²⁸³ Scott, Walter, *Walter Scott*, in *Sir Walter Scott: On Novelists and Fiction*, cit., pp. 237-251, p. 240.

²⁸⁴ Cf. Lukács, Georg, *The Historical Novel* [1937], transl. by Mitchell, Hannah and Mitchell, Stanley, Boston, Beacon Press, 1963, pp.30-63;

Other critics insisted on the passivity of Scott's heroes, among which we can cite Alexander Welsh, James Kerr, and Ian Duncan.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Lukács, Georg, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 19-29.

of a peaceful “middle way”,²⁸⁶ namely a compromise, between the two, not without painful sacrifices.²⁸⁷ In this scenario, the mediocre hero plays a key role because in his passivity he can bring together “the extremes whose struggles fill the novel”²⁸⁸ which eventually result into the middle way:

The "hero" of a Scott novel is always more or less mediocre, average English gentleman. He generally possessed a certain, though never outstanding, degree of practical intelligence, a certain moral fortitude and decency which even rises to a capacity for self-sacrifice, but which never grows into a sweeping human passion, is never the enraptured devotion to a great cause.²⁸⁹

Thus, by means of his passivity, normality, and moderation, the mediocre hero can open a window on the two conflicting realities in which he is involved, so that the reader may see and explore both. Also, his total inactivity in the conflicts which the historical novel narrates exempts him from any blame due its exclusive affiliation with one of the two parties in conflict or with their old-fashioned ideas of honour and revenge.²⁹⁰ Darsie’s inaction allows him to be cleared of any accusations of conspiracy against George III on one hand, but also from the blame for his painful compromise ushering modernity into the ancient House of the Redgauntlets on the other. Indeed, when Darsie takes his place in society as Sir Arthur Redgauntlet his success is obtained at the cost of sacrificing those old-fashioned values of loyalty to the Stuarts and ruthlessness embodied by Sir Hugh. Darsie actually adapts the Redgauntlet House to modernity, and so does Lilius by marrying

²⁸⁶ Ivi, p. 32.

²⁸⁷ Ivi, p. 54.

²⁸⁸ Ivi, p. 36.

²⁸⁹ Ivi, p. 33.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Villari, Enrica, *Narrativa, Storia e Costume: Walter Scott*, in *Storia della Civiltà Letteraria Inglese*, ed. by. F. Marengo, Torino, Utet, 1996, pp. 477-496, pp. 486-487.

the bourgeois attorney Alan Fairford. But the carefully built plot of the novel, and its art of characterization, show that progress is possible only because old values and anachronistic characters, no matter how loyal and sublime, have been sacrificed. Yet, by making Darsie as inactive as possible as his mother meant him to be concealing to him his Jacobite origins, it is hard to see him guilty of any decision and action, because the authors of the change that he only passively accepts are elsewhere and outside of reach. Darsie represents that hero who does not bring any change in the society he lives in, but merely demonstrates through his adventures why the *status quo* could not be any different, thus legitimizing it.²⁹¹

Putting together all the threads of this complex and composite historical novel we have tried to reconstruct we can conclude by saying that Darsie's path of growth and self-discovery is traced from his very childhood and education, in accordance with the typical scheme of the English *Bildungsroman*. Thus, this adventure of an orphan raised in a modern bourgeois home who is revealed in the end to be the heir to an ancient aristocratic family represents that compromise between the heritage of the past and unpredictability of the future in the wider debate centred on modernity at the basis of the two contemporary genres of the *Bildungsroman* and the historical novel. Darsie's formation via compromise is aimed to somehow exorcise as much as possible that inevitable loss and painful crisis stemming from progress, in this case by typically favouring the classification of the hero. In fact, the shift from past to present which characterises the advancement of society, albeit requiring a sacrifice, is presented in a favourable light because it is met with a compromise between

²⁹¹ Hence the omnipresence of the law and trials in this kind of narrative as a means of justification of the present system of power, Cf. Moretti, Franco, *The Way of the World*, cit., pp. 202-211; For more information on the acceptance of the *status quo* in Scott's literary production, cf. Cusac, Marian H., *The Mediocre Hero and History*, in *Narrative Structure in the Novels of Sir Walter Scott*, Berlin, De Gruyter Mouton, 1969, pp. 64-95.

ancient traditions and present values where the past is stripped of any threatening aura and the hero takes his place in an appeased society, in the process of gaining stability, since, between the violence of the past and the prudent, appeasing spirit of the present, the modern hero chooses the latter.²⁹² This sublimation of the past allows Darsie to erase his history of violence in the same way Joshua Geddes concealed his family escutcheon, and so to be recognised by the King as a modern Redgauntlet. At the same time, it allows the reader to cherish the once-fearful past as a peaceful memory to which the mind goes back with pleasure and a sense of melancholia, making it finally possible to forget and forgive.

²⁹² Cf. Welsh, Alexander, *The Passive Hero*, in *The Hero of the Waverley Novels*, cit., pp. 21-40, p. 38.

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