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# Scott's Ghost-Seeing

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## Abstract:

Episodes of ghost-seeing radicalize a key device of Walter Scott's historical novels, in which cultural difference submits to a developmental logic of historical difference. The spectral apparition signals not only the ghost-seer's imminent death but also a historical extinction, that of the life-world in which supernatural phenomena count as real. This essay considers the complication of this historicist logic in *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) and *The Monastery* (1820). In the former, ghostliness is endemic to a time of pure liminality, unmoored from historical purpose: the suspension of the present between a past that fails to pass and a future that fails to arrive empties it of ontological substance. In *The Monastery*, the ghost rudely resists exorcism by rational explanation. Scott's White Lady indexes the severity of the historical breach inflicted by the Protestant Reformation: a discontinuity more violent, in its impact upon knowledge, belief and the imagination, than revolutions of dynasties or political systems.

**Keywords:** Walter Scott; ghost-seeing; *The Bride of Lammermoor*; *The Monastery*; historical novel.

We know why there is a ghost, but we don't know if there is a ghost.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.

A ghost appears late in Walter Scott's novel *Waverley* (1814), shortly before the defeat of the 1745–46 Jacobite Rising. The clan chieftain, Fergus Mac-Ivor, tells Edward Waverley of his moonlit encounter with a 'grey spectre,' the '*Bodach glas*,' during the rebel army's retreat through Cumberland. They are far away from the Mac-Ivor homeland in Perthshire, Fergus admits: 'If that hill were Benmore, and that long blue lake, which you see just winding towards yon mountainous country, were

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Loch Tay, or my own Loch an Ri, the tale would be better suited with scenery.<sup>2</sup> The haunting belongs not to a place but to a person – or rather, to a genealogy. The *Bodach glas* is the ghost of a former ally, killed in a dispute by a Mac-Ivor ancestor, whose appearance to the head of the clan signifies his impending death. 'I do not ask you to believe it,' Fergus assures his incredulous friend, 'but I tell you the truth, ascertained by three hundred years' experience at least, and last night by my own eyes' (294). Privately, Waverley rationalizes the event: 'Edward had little doubt that this phantom was the operation of an exhausted frame, and depressed spirits, working upon the belief common to all Highlanders in such superstitions' (295).

With this episode in the first of his historical novels, Scott affirms certain protocols for the modern literary representation of the supernatural. Firstly: the phenomenon is susceptible to rational explanation, according to the norms of Enlightenment empiricism. Apparitions are not real, since their reality would constitute a breach in the order of nature. They are either frauds, imposed upon the credulous by optical devices (mirrors, magic lanterns), or hallucinations, delusive fumes of an over-stressed physiology. This was a live issue in Scott's day. Scott's career as a novelist coincided with 'an upsurge of interest in spectral illusions in medical, philosophical, and literary circles, impelled by an interest in optics on the one hand and a new "physiology of mind" on the other.'<sup>3</sup> Edinburgh-trained or Edinburgh-based authors published a series of treatises seeking to reconcile accounts of paranormal activity with scientific principles, among them John Ferriar (*An Essay Towards a Theory of Apparitions*, 1813), Samuel Hibbert (*A Philosophy of Apparitions*, 1825), John Abercrombie ('Spectral Illusions,' in *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers*, 1830), and David Brewster (*Letters on Natural Magic*, 1832). Brewster's book was a response to Scott's own late contribution to the genre, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830).<sup>4</sup> Citing Ferriar and Hibbert, Scott concedes 'that the external organs may, from various causes, become so much deranged as to make false representations to the mind,' with the result that people 'really see the empty and false forms and hear the ideal sounds which, in a more primitive state of society, are naturally enough referred to the action of demons or disembodied spirits.'<sup>5</sup> His novels feature seers, deluded by an overwrought imagination into believing their own fantasies (Norna of the Fitful Head, in *The Pirate*), as well as imposters, who fake supernatural phenomena to deceive others (the German adept Dousterswivel, in *The Antiquary*; the cavalier loyalists, in *Woodstock*). Waverley's psychosomatic explanation of the Mac-Ivor clan spectre ('the operation of an exhausted frame, and depressed spirits, working upon the belief common to all Highlanders in such

superstitions') is preceded – and ironized – by Fergus's own appeal to empirical principles: 'I tell you the truth, ascertained by three hundred years' experience at least, and last night by my own eyes' (294).

Having established a framework of scientific rationalism, Scott narrates historical cases and popular traditions of ghost-seeing and other supernatural events in the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*. Ghosts merit philosophical attention from the historian and anthropologist as specimens of particular cultural belief systems. They are real within the mentality of what Scott calls 'a more primitive state of society,'<sup>6</sup> separated from us by historical or geographical remoteness. However – and this becomes a crux in Scott's fiction – their appearance heralds the demise of the belief system in which they exist. The ghost portends a cascade of extinctions, beyond the death of the individual witness: the end of a family or clan, of a historical regime, in short, of a subjective life-world or collective imaginary in which supernatural beings count as real.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the fatal event that the ghost prefigures always comes to pass. Even (or especially) within the enlightened frame of a modern narrative, the apparition is a true portent: confronting readers with the paradox of a superstitious manifestation that becomes real in announcing its own obsolescence. Following his vision of the *Bodach glas*, Fergus is taken prisoner by the enemy; when he sees the spectre again, it is on the night before his execution, which marks the end of the Jacobite adventure as well as of the Mac-Ivor line and, by extension, of Highland clan society.

Writing on Ann Radcliffe, Scott reflects on the dilemma of the modern author of supernatural tales, who must either 'bring on the stage his actual fiend or ghost, or, like Mrs. Radcliffe, explain by natural agency the whole marvels of his story.'<sup>8</sup> Scott expresses his own 'preference for the simpler mode of boldly avowing the use of supernatural machinery,' according to the historical-anthropological principle summarized above:

Ghosts and witches, and the whole tenets of superstition having once, and at no late period, been matter of universal belief, warranted by legal authority, it would seem no great stretch upon the reader's credulity to require him, while reading of what his ancestors did, to credit for the time what those ancestors devoutly believed in.<sup>9</sup>

Certain authors, however, 'compound betwixt ancient faith and modern incredulity'; withholding an explanation of the apparition or portent, they equivocate between natural and supernatural causes. Scott admits that such a strategy, although 'an evasion of the difficulty, not a solution,' may be 'the most artful mode of terminating such a tale of wonder, as it forms the means of compounding with the taste of two different classes of

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readers' – the naïve, who want everything to be accounted for, and the sophisticated, who find aesthetic pleasure in ambiguity and obscurity.<sup>10</sup> The strategy, as Fiona Robertson reminds us, is characteristic of modern Gothic fiction, in which 'readers hesitate between the natural and supernatural, history and magic.'<sup>11</sup>

Scott allows readers of his first novel to suspend their belief between Fergus's conviction of supernatural visitation and Waverley's hypothesis of superstition-tinged hallucination. Scott makes the ambivalence a key technique of his historical fiction, insofar as ghostly hauntings occur in the debatable land between different historical states of society – that is, between different cultural mentalities, and not just the expectations of different classes of reader. That cultural in-betweenness is the condition of the ghost's appearance. Its status as a liminal being – the dead haunting the world of the living, the past lingering into the present, the supernatural intruding into the natural – marks the apparition's historical time as also liminal, transitional. Scott's ghosts show up in the twilight zone between historical eras rather than within an ancient era.<sup>12</sup>

The episode in *Waverley* might encourage us, in these terms, to read the ghost as token of a modernist historical teleology, since the ghost-seer belongs to the ancient moral ecology of which his vision portends the downfall. Elsewhere, however, in the two most remarkable cases of spectral apparition in Scott's novels, ghosts signify the breakdown of a progressive historical logic. In *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the ghost-seer is one of Scott's 'wavering heroes,' who personifies the aspiration toward an enlightened modernity – a horizon, however, he is fated never to reach. Scott's account of his uncanny adventure perfects the Gothic aesthetic of epistemological suspension, intensifying a historical predicament into an existential one, in which a suspension between historical states becomes a suspension between being and nonbeing. In contrast, the ghost in *The Monastery* – the White Lady of Avenel – refuses to be vague or ambiguous. Her repeated intrusions into the story assert a substantial presence and agency that the novel's readers, concomitantly, are less and less able to accept. The more she insists on being real, the greater is her unreality as an aesthetic effect.

Scott amplifies the ghost's traditional etiology, a murder or other act of unnatural violence, to a global principle whereby the apparition marks a catastrophic temporal split between past and present, and between incommensurable states of reality – as opposed to the smooth absorption of an outdated way of life into an ever-progressive modernity. What contemporary apparition science explains away as an epistemological disturbance, a problem of knowledge (the ghost as effect of a sensory, hence cognitive, derangement), turns out to be something more

intransigent: an ontological disturbance, a problem of being. Scott's historical fiction admits the dizzying thought that past cultural regimes encoded a different reality, a different order of nature, from the enlightened scientific world we currently inhabit – and not merely an erroneous apprehension of the world, clouded by superstition and ignorance.

2.

*The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Monastery* press the representation of ghost-seeing to radical and opposite extremities. The novels appeared in 1819 and 1820, on either side of the major turning-point in Scott's career marked by *Ivanhoe*, a romance set in the forests and castles of the Middle Ages – England's 'Gothic' antiquity – and in which ghosts and other supernatural agents are conspicuous by their absence. Ghostliness becomes a global principle, endemic to a time of pure liminality unmoored from historical progress, in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. The suspension of the novel's present scene – between a past that fails to pass and a future that fails to arrive – empties it of ontological substance, making it unstable, uncanny, unreal.

*The Bride of Lammermoor* contains the most artful of Scott's ghost-seeing episodes, in which the witness is the novel's protagonist, Edgar Ravenswood. The narrator hedges the event with a typical rhetoric of hesitation, emphasizing the layers of mediation that protect the reader from a decision whether or not to believe in it:

We are bound to tell the tale as we have received it; and, considering the distance of the time, and propensity of those through whose mouths it has passed to the marvellous, this would not be a Scottish story, unless it manifested a tinge of Scottish superstition. As Ravenswood approached the solitary fountain, he is said to have met with the following singular adventure.<sup>13</sup>

He encounters the figure of Blind Alice, 'the last retainer of the house of Ravenswood' (247), directly after the moment of her death (as he later finds out) in a nearby cottage:

As he approached her, she rose up from her seat, held her shrivelled hand up as if to prevent his coming more near, and her withered lips moved fast, although no sound issued from them. Ravenswood stopped; and as, after a moment's pause, he again advanced towards her, Alice, or her apparition, moved or glided backwards towards the thicket, still keeping her face turned towards him. The trees soon hid the form from his sight. (246)

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Alice's silence – the failure of her utterance to be manifest to the senses, in contrast to her (eerily enlarged) visual appearance – enhances the uncanny effect. Appealing to both metaphysical and empiricist principles, Ravenswood wavers between competing explanations:

'Can my eyes have deceived me,' he said, 'and deceived me for such a space of time? ... Must I adopt the popular creed, and think that the unhappy being has formed a league with the powers of darkness?' (246)

...

'[C]an strong and earnest wishes, formed during the last agony of nature, survive its catastrophe, surmount the awful bounds of the spiritual world, and place before us its inhabitants in the hues and colouring of life?—And why was that manifested to the eye which could not unfold its tale to the ear?—and wherefore should a breach be made in the laws of nature, yet its purpose remain unknown?' (248)

Scott's vividly circumstantial description makes us share Ravenswood's conviction in the evidence of his senses: we see what he sees. We share, hence, his irresolution. His irresolution mirrors his ethical predicament in the novel, caught between loyalty to a vengeful, atavistic past and hope for a pacified domestic future. Ravenswood's actions are beset by a bad timing which metastasizes into existential untimeliness. He inhabits the condition Ina Ferris calls 'the time of the remnant,' characterized by 'a suspension of connection and continuity that generates a curiously insubstantial existence in the present' – the expression of a chronic dissociation from historical purpose.<sup>14</sup>

Unable to move forward, unable even to act, Ravenswood himself turns ghostly. This comes to a crisis in his futile interruption of his former beloved's wedding:

Lucy seemed stiffened to stone by this unexpected apparition. Apparition it might well be termed, for Ravenswood had more the appearance of one returned from the dead, than of a living visitor. ... The matted and dishevelled locks of hair which escaped from under his hat, together with his fixed and unmoved posture, made his head more resemble that of a marble bust than that of a living man. (321–22)

When he had passed the upper gate, he turned his horse, and looked at the castle with a fixed eye; then set spurs to his good steed, and departed with the speed of a demon dismissed by the exorcist. (329)

Ravenswood infects Lucy with his condition, making her like one 'stiffened to stone,' and, at last, 'an exulting demoniac' (338).<sup>15</sup> The condition extends, inexorably, to the landscape he moves across.

Riding to fight a duel at sunrise, Ravenswood vanishes into the tidal quicksand of the Kelpie's Flow, a topographical analogue of the story's liminal time. Scott underscores the effect by narrating Ravenswood's disappearance in a double syncope, not once but twice, from different angles of vision – in which each witness fails to register the actual moment of his death.<sup>16</sup>

Commenting on the contemporary vogue for explaining apparitions as optical tricks or hallucinations, Terry Castle comments:

The rationalists did not so much negate the traditional spirit world as displace it into the realm of psychology. Ghosts were not exorcized – only internalized and reinterpreted as hallucinatory thoughts. Yet ... if ghosts were thoughts, then thoughts themselves took on – at least notionally – the haunting reality of ghosts. The mind became subject to spectral presences.<sup>17</sup>

*The Bride of Lammermoor* takes this logic a step further. Scott's novel Gothicizes or (Castle's term) spectralizes not only interior, mental space, but the objective historical scene, one in which the old (metaphysical) foundations of reality have melted away and new ground has yet to solidify.

### 3.

The site of Ravenswood's ghostly vision, the 'Mermaid's Fountain,' is doubly haunted. According to local legend, an elemental water-sprite (a 'nymph' or 'Naiad') kept tryst there with a Ravenswood ancestor, until a monk, insisting she was 'a limb of the kingdom of darkness,' proposed an experiment to determine her true nature (58). He rings the vesper bell half an hour later than the time appointed for the tryst, and the nymph, with a cry of despair, dissolves into her fountain. The agent of the Church enlists the scientific method: Christianity, in other words, is a modern system, wielding the weapons of empiricism against the old pagan order rooted in the natural world. The breach of an ancient contract (between human and spirit realms) constitutes the original sin of Edgar's family history: 'From this period the house of Ravenswood was supposed to have dated its decay' (58).

The ghost in *The Monastery* is kin to the legendary fountain nymph in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, which is to say, she has no human original. Her manifestation differs in key respects from the apparition of Blind Alice. Confined to the passing moment, Alice's wraith appears only to disappear, once seen, and cannot be heard. The White Lady of Avenel is all too active, persistent, and not only visible but audible,



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holding forth in a 'wild musical voice' (92), a 'measured chaunt' or *Sprechgesang* (165). Alice's wraith typifies the rule of modern phantoms, which is that they *appear* and, enigmatically, signify – portents communicating interpretive uncertainty – but they do not, cannot, *act* – exert physical force in the world, become material causes. The White Lady manages the plot of *The Monastery* as well as (by synecdoche) the revolution that is the novel's historical theme. Appearing at first only to the clairvoyant daughter of the Avenels, she soon becomes ubiquitous, whether called for or not, fading in and out of sight, assuming (when she wants to) corporeal heft. Not content with issuing warnings and directives, she ducks one monk in the river, knocks another monk and a freebooter off their horses, whisks young Halbert Glendinning into an enchanted underground cavern, hands him a token to confound his enemy, and repeatedly teleports the 'black book' of the Avenels back to the family.

These affronts to the decorum of modern ghost-seeing (which Scott himself had done much to consolidate) led reviewers to blame the White Lady for the novel's disappointing reception in the wake of the best-selling *Ivanhoe*.<sup>18</sup> Modern critics have reiterated the charge, deploring the incoherence of Scott's conception, which mixes together figures from different demonological traditions. 'The White Lady of Avenel, with her contradictory traits borrowed from French, German, and Scottish lore – from creatures of the earth and of the water, is certainly not the white lady of popular tradition,' huffs Coleman Parsons.<sup>19</sup> In his introduction to the 'Magnum Opus' edition of *The Monastery*, Scott records his embarrassment at 'the discredit attached to the vulgar and more common' expressions of 'Scottish superstition,' and his consequent recourse to

the beautiful, though almost forgotten, theory of astral spirits, or creatures of the elements, surpassing human beings in knowledge and power, but inferior to them, as being subject, after a certain space of years, to a death which is to them annihilation, as they have no share in the promise made to the sons of Adam.<sup>20</sup>

The White Lady identifies herself as one of these:

What I am thou could'st not know—  
Something betwixt heaven and hell—  
Something that neither stood nor fell ...  
Neither substance quite, nor shadow,  
Haunting lonely moor and meadow ...  
Happier than brief-dated man,

Living twenty times his span;  
Far less happy, for we have  
Help nor hope beyond the grave!<sup>21</sup>

Her liminal being encodes a double nature. Between heaven and hell, she belongs to the earth; neither substance nor shadow, she invests herself with each. She is the tutelary spirit of the Avenel family, and something more, the emanation of a pre-Christian, indeed pre-human dispensation – which can only be manifest in the derangement of a fully humanized natural order, that is, a world subdued to scientific reason.

Scott emphasizes the transitional character of his novel's historical setting: 'the great schism,' in the words of a Benedictine monk, 'called by you the Reformation' (22). While Scotland's government is 'almost entirely in the hands of the Protestant party,' its Queen is 'still a Catholic' (254). It is striking, in this light, that Scott does not make the White Lady a proxy for Roman Catholic 'superstition.' Instead, he grants this revenant from a pre-Christian universe the role of guardian of the Protestant bible, the vessel of the incoming new religion. One world-historical revolution, from Catholicism to Protestantism, overlays another, prior, greater one, the magnitude of which is natural rather than cultural – since the fall and redemption of mankind, via God's incarnation and sacrifice, changed the very order of things. In the fissure between confessional regimes, a primordial being categorically excluded from divine grace exerts her powers to protect the Christian testament, translated into the vernacular tongue, from monkish attempts to suppress it. Scott's Border nymph oversees the great transition that is the novel's historical theme – complicating the view of her as the remnant of an old (superstitious) order, according to hard-line Protestant views of Catholicism as a pagan offshoot.

Recent criticism has tried to make sense of this. According to Lionel Lackey, the White Lady personifies the objective, dialectical operation of historical progress, theorized by Hegel and adopted by Georg Lukács for his analysis of Scott's 'classical form of the historical novel':

The White Lady ... promotes this dialectic by alternately aiding the upcoming Protestants, protecting yet disarming the declining Catholics, and furthering the interests of a family that is to include elements of both faiths and, in its destined male heir, to achieve an (in Scott's view) ideal fusion of the two. ... Her supernaturalism seems less incongruous in the midst of Scott's realistic-rationalistic approach if she is seen as an impersonal, inevitable historical will instead of a romantic, mood-creating presence.<sup>22</sup>

The argument smooths over the perversity of Scott's decision to assign the role to a daemonic agent from outside the Christian dispensation and outside the order of nature ratified by historical progress. In an ingenious analysis, Evan Gottlieb reads the White Lady as a 'vanishing mediator,' a function of the Hegelian dialectic. The vanishing mediator transmits a new order of things and must then disappear, so that the new order can become fully itself. Scott's White Lady, who 'regularly, literally *vanishes*' after each of her appearances, 'literalizes the idea of an intermediary whose presence gradually fades as it becomes unnecessary.'<sup>23</sup> She personifies the 'superstitious device' that 'Protestantism disavows but quietly retains,' in the double (human and divine) nature of Jesus Christ – a double nature the White Lady parodically reflects. Her mediation thus makes visible the supernatural freight shared by both Catholicism and Protestantism, 'but which only the former accepts as a legitimate vehicle of grace.'<sup>24</sup>

Gottlieb pinpoints the grotesquerie of Scott's conception as expressive of the grotesque remainder of supernatural belief carried over in the modern, putatively more rational, text-based religion. But the weirdness of the White Lady exceeds her habit of vanishing, just as her pesky recurrence throughout the story performs the opposite from it. This inheres in her relation to the object of her care, the Black Book of the Avenels: a translation of the Holy Bible. Penny Fielding and Deidre Lynch discuss its provenance in a literary tradition of uncanny books that are accursed, black-magical, rather than holy – a notable instance of which, the warlock Michael Scott's Black Book of spells, Scott features in his very first Border romance, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). The signal characteristics that the Avenels' Black Book shares with Michael Scott's eldritch codex are its materiality ('a thick black volume with silver clasps,' 59) and its magical mobility, or rather portability. Fielding and Lynch note the paradoxical constitution of this edition of the Protestant Bible as a unique rather than a reproducible (printed) text, subject to a frenetic motion that is the opposite of public circulation, since the White Lady keeps on bringing it back to its owners: 'Its singularity—not so much a book for one reader only as a book for one aristocratic family—belies the democratic promise of uniformity and unanimity contained within modernity's emergent theology of print.'<sup>25</sup>

Although the key quality of the Protestant Bible is that it should be *read* – diffusing the Word of God without priestly mediation – its custodian is a rhyme-chanting pagan faery, the very emblem of a pre-literate culture. 'The White Lady, herself illiterate, is a spokesperson for the social advantages of literacy,' notes Fielding, in an analysis of the

bizarre episode in the subterranean grotto, in which the phantom upbraids Halbert Glendinning for not having learned to read even as she charges him with the power of the Black Book by contagious magic.<sup>26</sup> The material condition of the book infects the scripture it contains, precipitated as written or printed text. Father Philip (the novel's naïve representative of monkish prejudice) equates the popular reading of scripture with Eve's eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge – the primal transgression that broke the ancient covenant of which the White Lady is the garrulous relic. 'The Word slayeth' (61), Philip proclaims, in an unwitting reversal (ironical on the narrator's part) of St. Paul's distinction between the fatal literalism of the Old (Hebraic) Law and the life-giving spirit of the New (2 Corinthians 3:6): 'Far from distinguishing two forms of reading and two ontologies of the book, *The Monastery* collapses them into each other.'<sup>27</sup>

The White Lady thus scrambles the oppositions that sustain the historical dialectic – between old and new, primitive and modern, spiritual and literal or material – as much as or more than she may mediate between them. This is in keeping with her character as 'a patchwork of native and outlandish elements,' including (in Parson's summary) 'elemental sprite, castle spectre and attendant spirit, goblin and brownie.'<sup>28</sup> We might rationalize the compound, according to Scott's own historicist method, by viewing the White Lady as an elemental – primitive, immemorial – upon which successive layers of legendary lore have been grafted. It is her elemental status, however, that is most problematic. As his sources for the 'theory of astral spirits, or creatures of the elements,' Scott cites a novel of occult lore by the Abbé Henri de Montfaucon de Villars, *Le Comte de Gabalis* (1670), and Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's fantastic novella *Undine* (1811), which popularized the elementals for European Romanticism. Scott's sources, in short, are modern works of fiction. They derive their demonology from the Renaissance alchemist Paracelsus (Theophrastus von Hohenheim), who invented the machinery of elemental spirits in a treatise published posthumously in 1566 and composed around the time *The Monastery* is set (1546–62).<sup>29</sup> Paracelsus's elementals were taken up by the Rosicrucians, as well as in works of fiction. Scott does not mention the most famous English example of the latter, Alexander Pope's heroicomic poem *The Rape of Lock* (1712), which adopts the 'Rosicrucian Doctrine of Spirits' as a miniature, toyshop version of the Olympian machinery of epic: a supernatural system that is to be played with rather than believed in.<sup>30</sup>

Scott's primordial being, anterior to the Christian dispensation from which she is shut out and yet promoting its progress in human history, is

thus also a modern invention, conceived in the stormy transition between religious regimes and reiterated in disreputable traditions of heretical lore and fantastic fiction. In her obdurate contradictoriness, refusing to resolve into a figure that makes sense, the White Lady indexes the severity of the historical breach made by the Protestant Reformation. A religious revolution, breaking and remaking the forms of knowledge and belief, – that is, our imaginary relation to reality, – inflicts a discontinuity more cataclysmic than revolutions of dynasties or political regimes. That religious revolution recapitulates, in turn, a greater disenchantment, continuous with the history of the world, which originates with the fall of man. The White Lady's hybrid, heterodox, fake, fictive nature expresses the schism not only between different historical epochs and mentalities but between different orders of being. *The Monastery* bars the reader from imaginative reconnection with that lost order through the insistent unbelievability of the figure that represents it, in an abiding aesthetic scandal. 'The spirit is so palpable, so freakishly energetic,' – Coleman Parsons, again – 'that her numerous interventions lead to a familiarity that breeds indifference, if not boredom.'<sup>31</sup> Scott's refusal to allow us to take the White Lady seriously, making it impossible for us to view her as ever having been in any sense natural, highlights our irrevocable divorce from the reality of which she is the emissary.

## Notes

1. Elaine Freedgood, *Worlds Enough: The Invention of Realism in the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 130.
2. Walter Scott, *Waverley*, ed. by P.D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 294. Future references are to this edition and page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.
3. Ina Ferris, "'Before Our Eyes': Romantic Historical Fiction and the Apparitions of Reading," *Representations* 121, no. 1 (2013): 62.
4. See Ferris, "'Before Our Eyes'", 62–70; and Terry Castle, 'Phantasmagoria: Spectral Technology and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie,' *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 1 (1988): 53–56. See also Celeste Langan's account of Scott's late magazine ghost story 'My Aunt Margaret's Mirror' in 'Telepathos: Medium Cool Romanticism,' *Romanticism on the Net*, 41–42 (2006). <https://doi.org/10.7202/013154ar>
5. Sir Walter Scott, *Demonology and Witchcraft: Letters Addressed to J.G. Lockhart, Esq.* (New York: Bell, 1970), 33.
6. *Ibid.*
7. See Srdjan Smajic, 'Supernatural Realism,' *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 42, no. 1 (2009): 6–7.
8. Ioan Williams, ed., *Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 116.
9. *Ibid.*; see also Scott's essay on Horace Walpole, 89.

10. Williams, *Sir Walter Scott*, 116. On Scott and the supernatural in fiction see Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 60–61, 64–66.
11. Robertson, 'Gothic Scott,' in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 105.
12. On 'in-betweenness' as historical condition for a Scottish Gothic aesthetic of the uncanny see Davison and Germanà, 'Introduction,' *Scottish Gothic*, 2–4.
13. Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. Fiona Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 245. Future references are to this edition and page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.
14. Ferris, "'On the Borders of Oblivion": Scott's Historical Novel and the Modern Time of the Remnant,' *Modern Language Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (2009): 475. See also Luke Terlaak Poot, 'Scott's Momentaneousness: Bad Timing in *The Bride of Lammermoor*,' *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 72, no. 3 (2017): 283–310.
15. The first edition reads 'petrified to stone.' See Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. J. H. Alexander (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 247. Robertson's edition reprints the 1830 'Magnum Opus' text.
16. On the ghosting of Ravenswood, see Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 143–145.
17. Castle, 'Phantasmagoria,' 52. See also Simon During, *Modern Enchantments: The Cultural Power of Secular Magic* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), 62–63.
18. See John O. Hayden, ed., *Scott: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1970), 343.
19. Coleman O. Parsons, 'Association of the White Lady with Wells,' *Folklore*, 44, no. 3 (1933): 300; see his more extensive account, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), 158–63.
20. Walter Scott, *Introductions and Notes from the Magnum Opus: Ivanhoe to Castle Dangerous*, ed. J. H. Alexander, with P. D. Garside and Claire Lamont (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 47.
21. Walter Scott, *The Monastery*, ed. Penny Fielding (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 114. Future references are to this edition and page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.
22. Lionel Lackey, 'The Monastery and *The Abbot*: Scott's Religious Dialectics,' *Studies in the Novel* 19, no. 1 (spring 1987): 53.
23. Evan Gottlieb, 'Vanishing Mediators and Modes of Existence in Walter Scott's *The Monastery*,' *Yearbook of English Studies*, 47 (2017): 79.
24. *Ibid.*, 85.
25. Penny Fielding and Deidre Lynch, 'The Book as Fearful Thing,' in *The Unfinished Book*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Deirdre Lynch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 115.
26. Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 72.
27. Fielding and Lynch, 'The Book as Fearful Thing,' 116.
28. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction*, 161.
29. See Fielding's 'Historical Note,' *The Monastery*, 434.
30. Alexander Pope, *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 217.
31. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction*, 167.