PARALLEL PASTORALISMS: CONCURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
EVOLUTION OF SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN LITERATURE

by

ARIEL A. BRITTON

(Under the direction of Dr. James Kibler)

ABSTRACT

Scotland and the American South have a great deal in common. Both groups originate from a distinct geographic area characterized by its own economy, culture, and ethos, and both groups have evolved within the shadow of a regional power that is politically and economically stronger. Scotland and the American South have each fought wars attempting to achieve political independence and lost, yet both regions have engaged in an ongoing struggle for cultural independence. The people of Scotland and the South have employed similar strategies using literature as a means of maintaining cultural integrity and creating a distinct regional identity. An examination of the developments of both regions’ literary traditions reveals striking similarities in their changing use of provincial material and their evolving sense of regional identity.

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ARIEL A. BRITTON

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ARIEL A. BRITTON

Approved:

Major Professor: James Kibler
Committee: Roxanne Eberle
           Elissa Henken

Electronic Version Approved:

Gordhan L. Patel
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2002
for Sid
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INTRODUCTION

People of Scotland and the American South are in many ways kindred spirits. Both groups originate from a distinct geographic region characterized by its own economy, culture, and ethos. Furthermore, both groups have evolved within the shadow of a regional power that is both politically and economically stronger—England has loomed over Scotland in much the same way that the North has hung over the South. Scotland and the South both fought wars in order to preserve their unique cultures and ways of life, but both lost the military battles. Culloden (1746) has the same resonance in the collective memory of Scottish people as Appomattox (1865) does for Southern Americans. However, since these decisive battles, neither region submitted complacently to cultural imperialism, and although politically and economically at a disadvantage to their victorious neighbors, the people of Scotland and the South have used literature as a means of creating and maintaining cultural identity, as well as commenting on the problems that have come to plague their communities as a result of the outside influences that have introduced alien values on these regions’ traditional ways of life.

Although a full examination of the affinities between Scottish and Southern culture is beyond the scope of the present work, in this thesis I will attempt to trace the concurrent development of both regions’ literary traditions from the early nineteenth century through the first decades of the twentieth century. Beginning with Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley* in 1814, the evolution of the provincial novel parallels the ongoing struggle of Scottish and Southern writers to find their artistic voice while writing in the
shadow of a dominant culture. These writers manipulated pastoral conventions in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. Essentially, those characteristics that set their regions apart from the mainstream traditions of British and American culture became exactly the material that made their writing unique and successful among the reading public because it gave outsiders a glimpse of a different way of life that often seemed quaint and romantic, even though these fictional depictions were often less than accurate. In addition to its ability to indulge the curiosity of readers from different backgrounds, regional literature also served an important function within the marginalized communities. Scotland and the American South were both traditionally rural, agrarian communities and therefore acutely felt the changes that came from modernization. Rather than using fiction as a mere vehicle for artistic expression, writers of these regions thus often turned to literature as a means of coping with the changes occurring in their society, many of which posed threats to their cultural heritage.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott and William Gilmore Simms gained audiences and received favorable reviews throughout Britain and the United States, and in Chapter One I will examine the ways in which these works, through their use of factual information coupled with depictions of local customs and manners, established a foundation for distinctive regional literatures. Scott had popularized a novelistic formula which blended antiquarianism with romance and history, and in *Waverley* he uses this formula to promote a Lowland identity that is both Scottish and British. Simms uses Scott as an authorial role model, adopting many of the latter’s techniques and manipulating them in his novel *Woodcraft*, as he does in many of his works, to serve his own goal—the creation of a separate
Southern identity. The popularity of regional literature surged during the latter decades of the nineteenth century as authors on both sides of the Atlantic began to write in the type of sentimental, regional vein popularized by Scott and Simms. In Chapter Two, I will examine the resulting vogue in local color writing that produced the Scottish Kailyard and Southern plantation schools of literature, and I will focus on J.M. Barrie’s *Auld Licht Idylls* and Thomas Nelson Page’s *In Ole Virginia* as representative works. Both the Kailyard and plantation literary movements were grounded in disillusionment with modernity, materialism, and industrialism, but unlike other modernist and realist authors of the same period such as Henry James or Charles Dickens, the writers of these traditions took a decidedly regional and romanticized approach. Their works involved idealized pastoral communities of a bygone era that were inhabited by folk who lived simply, close to the land, and preserved traditional manners and values. Writers such as Barrie and Page thus provided a fictional escape from modern reality, and the immense popularity of both among both British and American audiences testifies to the success of this type of literature in fulfilling the needs of Victorian readers. Kailyard and plantation literature was, however, overly sentimental and despite its popularity with readers, critics generally dismissed it. By the beginning of the twentieth century, regional writers began to react against the nostalgic writings of their predecessors and give more faithful depictions of Scottish and Southern life. In Chapter Three, I will examine two such works—George Douglas Brown’s *The House With the Green Shutters* and William Faulkner’s *The Hamlet*, both of which serve as critiques of the nostalgic literature of earlier regional writers. These two novels borrow and subvert conventions of earlier provincial literature and thereby turn what had been depicted as a pastoral Eden into a
regional dystopia. Both Brown and Faulkner illustrate that the distinctive qualities and provincial lifestyle that had set Scotland and the South apart from mainstream cultures need not be a fiction; but individuals cannot ignore the forces of modernity that will inevitably infiltrate their communities and they must adapt and evolve along with their regions.
CHAPTER ONE

Historical Romance: Scott’s *Waverley* and Simms’ *Woodcraft*

The similarities between the literary careers of Sir Walter Scott and William Gilmore Simms are abundant: both were notable men of letters who wrote poetry, novels, histories, and criticism; both received commendation for their enormous output and criticism for the apparent haste in which they wrote; both were enormously popular and widely read; and both successfully utilized historical and regional material which enabled them to lay the foundations upon which their respective literary traditions were built. In his introduction to the 1972 Penguin edition of *Waverley*, Andrew Hook describes Scott’s amazing fame worldwide:

*Waverley* and the novels which followed it were devoured by the readership of their day with an enthusiasm and excitement which are scarcely comprehensible today. For every category of reader—high-born and low-born, rich and poor, town-dweller and countryman, the literary critic and the common reader, statesman and student—Scott’s appeal was irresistible. From Land’s End to John O’Groats, from Maine to Florida, from France to Italy, to Germany, to Russia and the rest of Europe, everyone who could read read Scott. (9)

The popularity of Simms in no way rivaled that of Scott, but he was widely read and well received by audiences and critics throughout the United States. As James Kibler notes in his essay “Some Unrecorded English Reviews of W.G. Simms,” although no one has yet
undertaken a thorough investigation of Simms’s international reputation, many British presses did release editions of his works, and these works received favorable reviews in several British periodicals. Since Scott was tremendously popular and influential in the nineteenth century, and since Simms was an outspoken admirer of Scott’s work, the similarities between the two writers are, in all probability, less than coincidental. Scott’s innovative fusion of history, romance, and regionalism in his novels helped to popularize a genre that was well suited to Southern as well as Scottish writers.

For both Scott and Simms, history is something that must be preserved and studied as a guide for present and future conduct, and literature is the best arena in which to do this. Both men are writing during pivotal periods in their regions’ history and see a need for adaptation of their regional identity. Whereas Scotland is still settling into British rule after the failed Jacobite uprising of 1745, the South is coming to see itself increasingly at odds with the Northern states and moving towards a struggle for independence. In other words, Scotland is still recovering from a revolution while the South is heading into one. Scott and Simms employ historical settings in their fictional narratives to provide guidance in present circumstances, but regardless of their similar manner of utilizing history to serve a didactic purpose, the ends that each hope to attain are quite different. Where Scott uses his writing to advocate a type of mediated regional identity, championing Lowland Scotland as the perfect compromise between romantic Highland and practical English influences, Simms uses his writing to increasingly promote both cultural and political independence for the South. A further difference between the two men is their relationship to the literary communities of their time. Scott’s reputation as a writer is firmly established throughout Britain as well as abroad,
and he therefore writes as a regionalist from within the larger literary community of his day. Simms, however, remains outside the American literary establishment of his day, resisting assimilation in favor of maintaining a sectional literary tradition. In spite of these differences, however, they are both purposive writers and self-conscious regionalists who want to preserve the unique qualities of their native traditions. They both create historical romances that receive widespread attention for their authentic and skillful representations of local material blended with historical fact.

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1771. Due to poor health as a child, most of his early life was divided between the city of his birth, which was the cultural and intellectual center of Scotland, and his grandfather’s farm in the Scottish Borders. Scott had a great passion for his native culture that was apparent as early as 1802 when he published *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders*, in which he collected the region’s rich oral traditions of ballad and folklore. He followed this publication with several original long narrative poems in the same regional vein, and these poems received enormous praise for, among other things, their delightful depictions of Scottish manners and customs. As a reviewer for the *British Critic* said of Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel*: “[It] gratifies curiosity on the subject of manners, interests the mind in the events of the tale, and excites admiration from the beauty and originality of the poetry” (155).

In writing *Waverley*, one of Scott’s primary motives a similar desire to preserve his native culture. He states his goal explicitly in the concluding chapter of *Waverley* in which he discusses the drastic changes that Scottish culture had undergone in the sixty years prior to the publication of his novel. He explains that he was motivated by an antiquarian impulse to write *Waverley*: 
It was my accidental lot, though not born a Highlander . . . to reside during my childhood and youth among persons of the above description;—and now, for the purpose of preserving some idea of the ancient manners of which I have witnessed the almost total extinction, I have embodied in imaginary scenes, and ascribed to fictitious characters, a part of the incidents which I then received from those who were actors in them.

Indeed, the most romantic parts of this narrative are precisely those which have a foundation in fact.¹

Thus, although Scott was himself a Lowlander, and he believed that the Lowland people who were better assimilated into British society were the future of Scotland, he still believed that Highland culture, which he had become familiar with through his personal associations with individuals of that heritage, had value and was worthy of preservation.

As an experienced antiquarian writer, Scott was further qualified to take on the task of chronicling the distinctive Highland ethos.

Even though he would be continuing to deal with a familiar subject matter, Scott chose to experiment with a new mode and complete his project in the form of a novel. In the early nineteenth century, this decision to switch from poetry to prose was a hazardous move as many critics had begun to consider the novel an inferior literary form. In *Romanticism and Gender*, Anne Mellor suggests that readers held the novel in disrepute because it had evolved out of oral and written forms of discourse such as journals, letters, folktales, or gossip, that were typically associated with women. As a result, it tended to deal with issues of importance to females such as “the correct relationship between

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knowledge, romance, sexuality, familial obedience, and the constraints of both property
and propriety on the lives of women” (5). Although a number of Scott’s contemporaries
had recently relegated the novel to the status of a women’s genre, Scott was quite familiar
with the impressive legacy of eighteenth century male novelists, as is evidenced by his
later work *Lives of the Novelists* (1821-24) in which he praises such notable men as
Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett among others. Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish
Border* is evidence of the rich oral tradition of his homeland, and his collection of
antiquarian lore was part of a large and widespread movement of male collectors of
folklore. In *Waverley* Scott was therefore wedding two disciplines, fiction writing and
antiquarianism, and his blending of the two helped to revive the novel genre as a
respectable masculine form. Regardless of his own familiarity with the rich tradition of
masculine novelists and his awareness that the novel was the form best suited to his
purposes, Scott remained aware of the risk he was taking in light of current literary tastes,
and he protected his reputation by publishing his prose anonymously. In the preface to
the 1829 edition in which he finally claimed authorship he explains this tactic: “My
original motive for publishing the work anonymously, was the consciousness that it was
an experiment on the public taste which might very probably fail, and therefore there was
no occasion to take on myself the personal risk of discomfiture” (526).

For these reasons Scott’s novel was indeed an experiment, both in content and
form, because in writing *Waverley* he had to reconcile his dual authorial impulses: poetic
romancer and erudite historian (Oberhelman 29). This struggle is paralleled in the novel
by Scott’s depiction of the relationship between the Englishman Edward Waverley and
the Lowland Scotsman Baron Bradwardine. Of the two the narrator writes:
Edward . . . was warm in his feelings, wild and romantic in his ideas and in his taste of reading, with a strong disposition towards poetry. Mr. Bradwardine was the reverse of all this. . . . As for literature, he read the classic poets . . . But thus far sacrificed his time to the Muses, he would, if the truth must be spoken, have been much better pleased had the pious or sapient apophthegms, as well as the historical narratives, which these various works contained, been presented to him in the form of simple prose. And he sometimes could not refrain from expressing contempt of the ‘vain and unprofitable art of poem-making’. (108)

The contrast between the romantic and indolent intellect of Waverley and the “upright, starched, stoical gravity” (108) of Bradwardine thus parallels Scott’s views of the contrasting qualities of the genres and subjects that he was manipulating. However, these two perspectives are not irreconcilable but are actually quite complementary, as Scott illustrates in his description of the meeting of the minds of Waverley and Bradwardine: “With tastes so opposite, they contributed greatly to each other’s amusement. Mr. Bradwardine’s minute narratives and powerful memory supplied to Waverley fresh subjects of the kind upon which his fancy loved to labour, and opened to him a new mine of incident and of character” (108-109). Just as Waverley embellishes the memories of Bradwardine, Scott reworks the memories of the Highland people, and his romantic imagination is able to blend historical information with poetic sentiment to create a tale that is both compelling and enlightening, preserving both the political incidents and the unique Highland culture of a bygone era. Scott’s dual authorial impulses as poet and novelist are able to form a bond in the same manner as his two fictional characters
Waverley and Bradwardine: “They met upon history as on a neutral ground, in which each claimed an interest” (108). In the novel the connection is further cemented by Waverley’s marriage to Rose who is both his eager literary pupil and the progeny of Bradwardine, his historical muse.

Critics received Waverley favorably, furthering Scott’s goals of raising the stature of the novel and associating it with ‘masculine’ ideas such as history, philosophy, and the collection of folklore. Many of the contemporary reviews of Waverley point out its differences from the normal popular fiction of the day, which was generally associated with female readers. The British Critic said, “We are unwilling to consider this publication in the light of a common novel, whose fate it is to be devoured with rapidity for the day, and to be afterwards forgotten for ever” (Rev. of Waverley in Scott: The Critical Heritage 69), and the Scourge expressed similar sentiments: “It will please the man of taste and of feeling, but will not be likely to obtain an extensive popularity among the readers of circulating libraries. It abounds too little in nonsense, affectation, and romance” (298).

Hence, through Waverley, Scott helped revive the novel as an acceptable genre for male writers, readers, and subjects. Gary Kelly aptly and succinctly assesses Scott’s novelistic career in his essay “Romantic Fiction”: “He used his extensive legal, historical, literary, and folkloristic knowledge and his mastery of narrative poetry to convert mere romance into literature . . . he elevated the status of the novel by adding elements of men’s learned culture . . . he treated the local and domestic in terms of the national and public,” and through all of these means, “Scott’s construction of the novel . . . became the major vehicle for the invention of national identity, history, and destiny,
used to disseminate Romantic nationalism in many cultures and countries” (212).

Indeed, Scott used Waverley as a vehicle to advocate a type of Lowland Scottish identity that would reconcile the extremes of Highland romance and English reality.

Scott’s romances found a receptive and enthusiastic audience among readers in the antebellum South. Like Scotland, the South was predisposed towards these kinds of regional, romantic works because both cultures shared a largely rural population, a rich folk tradition, and an experience of being marginalized by a more powerful culture. In Rethinking the South, Michael O’Brien gives an insightful explanation for this romantic predilection:

The South shared a characteristic with other Romantic cultures . . . it was a provincial culture anxious to invent and legitimate itself. To call it provincial is not to insult, for any Romantic sensibility honored itself by the adjective. The indigenous always mattered. The attraction of Romanticism was precisely the dignity it gave to the local. Romanticism was the doctrine of the outsider, its pattern a sense of unjust denigration swelling into a proclamation of self-worth. (50-51)

Thus, Scottish and Southern writers both utilized the type of Romanticism that O’Brien here describes to glorify their native regions, and their writing became an act of cultural affirmation. For them, creation and preservation were of equal importance. The struggle to find their artistic voice and maintain their regional identity is one that continues to plague regional writers. The Scottish poet Edwin Muir understood Scott’s predicament: ‘Scott . . . lived in a community which was not a community, and set himself to carry on a tradition which was not a tradition; and the result was that his work was an exact
reflection of his predicament . . . A people who lose their nationality create a legend to take its place” (qtd. in Trumpener 685).

William Gilmore Simms, the preeminent man of letters in the antebellum South, was an outspoken advocate of Walter Scott. In an article entitled ‘Modern Prose Fiction’ for the *Southern Quarterly Review* in 1849, Simms uses Scott as an exemplar to delineate those qualities that make a writer not only successful but also great. According to Simms, this type of ideal writer possesses a natural gift for his craft, as well as taste and tact; his writing is never forced but flows with ease as if it were ‘the simple out-pouring of his customary thoughts’; his mind must be that of a poet, and ‘all that he is required to do, at the beginning, is so to choose his ground, with such regard to his peculiar tastes, studies and experience, as to give free play to whatever is individual in his character and genius’ (‘Scott’ 46–47). Simms asserts that when a writer does these things as Scott has done, ‘His creations will seem like those of a god’ (‘Scott’ 47). Indeed, Simms appeared to practice this type of writing himself. He was a man of taste and talent, and he was the only Southerner of his day who was able to support himself as a professional writer. He wrote with ease, published prolifically, and his writing was generally well received. A lifelong resident of South Carolina, Simms was well-suited to use his South as the grounds of most of his work. He was a passionate exponent for the creation of a national literature, but he felt that in order to do this every writer must be sectional and strive to depict the unique and remarkable qualities of his own distinct region. These regional works, taken together, would constitute a worthy national literature reflective of the United States as a whole.
Simms was a very careful writer who viewed authors as craftsmen, and he wrote as much about his opinions on literature as he wrote literature itself. His ideas about the nature of romance and history perfectly reflect the way that Scott had used the two forms, as well as the way he used them in his own writing. The Romance, Simms declares in his introduction to *The Yemassee*, is the modern form of the epic. It combines the qualities of prose and poetry, but is superior to the novel. Like the epic, the Romance 'seeks for its adventures among the wild and wonderful. It does not confine itself to what is known, or even what is probable. It grasps at the possible; and, placing a human agent in hitherto untried situations, it exercises its ingenuity in extricating him from them, while describing his feelings and his fortunes in his progress' (*Yemassee* 27). Simms wrote most of his novels as romances, and he desired that his audience read them as such. He likewise exalted history, which he believed was the proper realm of the artist. In Simms's view, history on its own is nothing more than a collection of facts and disjointed information, but through artistic treatment history is brought to life. Those who are able to handle history in this manner are therefore vital to society:

> It is by such artists, indeed, that nations live. It is the soul of art, alone, which binds periods and places together;—that creative faculty, which, as it is the only quality distinguishing man from other animals, is the only one by which he holds a life-tenure through all time—the power to make himself known to man, to be sure of the possessions of the past, and to transmit, with the most happy confidence in fame, his own possessions to the future. (*Views and Reviews* 25)
This statement echoes Scott’s discussion of the intellectual relationship between Waverley and Bradwardine, and delineates the writing strategy of both men. With such similar backgrounds and congruent views on the proper relationship of history, art, and romance, the literary output of both Scott and Simms reflects this extensive commonality. By comparing *Waverley* (1814) with Simms’s Revolutionary War romance *Woodcraft* (1854), these writers’ parallel uses of history, romance, and regionalism become evident and illustrate the ways in which they were able to create cultural identity through their novels.

One of the main characteristics of the romantic genre is the type of characters involved. Typically, the action centers on a fairly dynamic hero who is surrounded by a cast of individuals that serve as representatives of certain qualities or ideals. As Northrop Frye explains in *The Anatomy of Criticism*:

> The romancer does not attempt to create ‘real people’ so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes. . . . That is why the romance so often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks, and why a suggestion of allegory is constantly creeping in around the fringes. Certain elements of character are released in the romance which make it naturally a more revolutionary form than the novel. . . . The romancer deals with individuality, with character in vacuo idealized by reverie, and, however conservative he may be, something nihilistic and untamable is likely to keep breaking out of his pages. (304-305)

Both *Waverley* and *Woodcraft* conform to Frye’s formula for characterization in that each individual clearly represents a positive or negative personality type. These individuals
reveal their allegorical representations not only through their actions and behavior, but also through their very physical appearance. Those individuals who look unwholesome inevitably are, while those who appear virtuous rarely turn out to be anything but pure. Furthermore, virtually every character is paired with a foil thus reinforcing his or her archetypal qualities through contrast, and the relationships between different representative characters also take on allegorical significance.

In keeping with the idea that the reader must identify with the protagonist, the hero of historical romance is different from the epic hero who was usually close to divine. The heroes of Scott and Simms are unmistakably human, and they continually reveal their own foibles. Yet, despite their faults, these characters are still essentially good and evoke the reader’s sympathy and respect. Unlike the cast of supporting stock figures, Waverley and Porgy are the only individuals that undergo any type of transformation other than a mere change of fortune. As the novels progress, the reader follows both heroes as they gain self-awareness, overcome their own shortcomings, and evolve into fully developed individuals. For the heroes of both Scott and Simms, their one tragic flaw, around which both plots develop, is their background of leisure and privilege, and this chivalrous weakness contributes greatly to the romantic appeal of both novels.

As a child, Edward Waverley is indulged not only by his own father, but also by his childless uncle. As the only heir to two English fortunes, and caught between the affections and influence of two men with different political views, Waverley was never exposed to any type of consistent discipline or authority. Although he was given tutors, he was still allowed to follow his own whims, which he did most readily, much to his own detriment: ‘To our young hero, who was permitted to seek his instruction only
according to the bent of his own mind, and who, of consequence, only sought it so long as it afforded him amusement, the indulgence of his tutors was attended with evil consequences, which long continued to influence his character, happiness, and utility” (47). Waverley’s difficulty is not lack of intelligence; he is actually quite intuitive. Yet he channels his brilliancy into creating his own world of adventure and romance and is hence much more comfortable in his own daydreams than in the company of other young men. Waverley’s guardians notice but overlook Waverley’s overly active imagination, until he turns his romantic fascination towards a young woman from a background decidedly inferior to the distinguished English pedigree of the Waverley family. At this time, his aunt resolves that the young heir should see more of the world, and after convincing his father and uncle of the expediency of this arrangement, Richard Waverley secures a military commission for his son. Young Waverley of course sees military service as an unparalleled opportunity to live out his romantic daydreams, and he sets off for Scotland to meet his regiment with the air of embarking on a great adventure.

Waverley’s experiences after this point however prove him only to be servant rather than master of his own fancy, and, by allowing fancy rather than reason to dictate his decisions, his capricious nature leads him to resign his position in the English forces, join the Jacobite rebels, and ultimately become a fugitive wanted for treason. Throughout the novel, he rarely acts but rather is acted upon, and he survives the events of the narrative due to mere luck and the influence of more effectual individuals. Although Waverley does not distinguish himself in feats of bravery or valor, he does come to recognize himself as “the very child of caprice” (376). During his first
experience on the battlefield as a member of Charles Stuart’s Highland forces, Waverley has an epiphany. He sees the English forces and the regiment to which he once belonged and suddenly realizes the predicament that he has allowed his impulsive nature to get him into: ‘Looking around him, he saw the wild dress and appearance of his Highland associates, heard their whispers in an uncouth and unknown language, looked upon his own dress, so unlike that which he had worn from his infancy, and wished to awake from what seemed at the moment a dream, strange, horrible, and unnatural’ (333). Waverley now sees the Highlanders as primitive and threatening, and for the first time, Waverley wishes to escape from the world he created by his own fancy. This insight leads him to once again feel a bond with the English forces and to later rescue the English officer Talbot. By this act of mercy, and by going on to cultivate a friendship with the influential and practical officer whom he saved, Waverley forges an important relationship with the man who will not only serve as his most prudent role model, but will also ensure his safety by helping Waverley avoid captivity until he can obtain a pardon for his participation in the Rebellion. While a fugitive, Waverley finally resolves to adopt a more practical outlook: ‘It was in many a winter walk . . . that he acquired a more complete mastery of a spirit tamed by adversity than his former experience had given him; and that he felt himself entitled to say firmly, though perhaps with a sigh, that the romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now commenced’ (415).

Captain Porgy, the hero of Simms’s *Woodcraft*, possesses many of the same flaws as Waverley. The narrative begins with his returning from service in the Revolutionary War; and his experiences there have led him to many of the same conclusions about himself that Waverley gleaned from his own military service. Porgy is apprehensive
about returning to his home because he knows that his own profligate ways have landed him in enormous debt and threaten to deprive him of his family estate, and his pampered youth has led him to mature without developing any of the skills necessary to remedy his problems: ‘Porgy had been a fast youth. He had never been taught the pains of acquisition. Left to himself—his own dangerous keeping—when a mere boy, he had too soon and fatally learned the pleasures of dissipation. The war found him pursued by debt and embarrassments, as unrelaxing as the furies that hunted the steps of Orestes.”2 Thus, much like Waverley, Porgy’s background of leisure and privilege renders him stunted in matters of practicality. Yet, also in the same way as Waverley, his hardships enable him to recognize his own weaknesses and take appropriate action to alleviate the problem. As Porgy explains to his fellow soldier, Lance Frampton:

I made too many experiments in folly, and found them too pleasant to abandon them in season. The consequence was, that I began to grow wise only as I forfeited the means for further experiment. My wisdom had its birth in my poverty, and as it was through my follies that I became poor, I suppose, logically, I am bound to say that I was wise because I had been so great a fool. (111)

This newfound humility gives Porgy the steadfastness to hold off his creditors, mend his careless ways, and turn Glen-Eberely back into the noble plantation that it once was.

Although he does take a much more active role than Waverley in his own salvation, his change of fortune is still more the result of assistance from other more efficient individuals.

As both heroes develop as characters, they interact with many individuals that serve the same stock role in each novel. Despite the shortcomings of Waverley and Porgy, they are both intelligent, honest, and kind-hearted individuals. These heroic virtues become evident as each hero is contrasted with another man who represents the faults of ambition, self-interest, and immorality. Waverley is initially befriended by his foil, the Highland chieftain Fergus Mac-Ivor, and is captivated by his Highland lifestyle, his power over his clan, and his noble looks and demeanor. However, the signs of Fergus’s failings are literally written on his face:

The eyebrow and upper lip bespoke something of the habit of peremptory command and decisive superiority. Even his courtesy, though open, frank, and unconstrained, seemed to indicate a sense of personal importance; and, upon any check or accidental excitation, a sudden, though transient, lour of the eye, showed a hasty, haughty, and vindictive temper, not less to be dreaded because it seemed much under its owner’s command. (154)

By the end of the narrative, Fergus will have proven all of these signs of weakness. The friendship between Waverley and Fergus leads Waverley to join the Highland army, and Fergus is able to convince his impressionable friend to do this because he knows that he will secure favor with the exiled prince by bringing him an Englishman of impressive background as a recruit. Fergus later abandons his friendship after he believes that Waverley has paid him a personal insult by slighting his sister’s affections. Despite Fergus’s hot temper and excessive pride, he is a much more effective soldier and rational individual than Waverley. However, he is executed for his role in the rebellion while Waverley receives a pardon, and the relationship between the two thus takes on
allegorical significance: to survive, one must not only be strong but also compassionate, ethical, and willing to adapt to changing circumstances. Waverley returns his loyalty to the British government after the Jacobite cause fails, whereas Fergus remains intractable to the end, saying to the judge at his trial, “Yesterday, and the day before, you have condemned loyal and honourable blood to be poured forth like water. Spare not mine. Were that of all my ancestors in my veins, I would have peril’d it in this quarrel” (465).

In *Woodcraft*, Porgy’s foil M’Kewn is likewise a man of ambition, greed, and turpitude. Unlike Fergus Mac-Ivor, M’Kewn possesses no honorable or redeeming characteristics. He holds a mortgage to Porgy’s estate and wants to make him sell his land rather than giving his debtor the opportunity to raise the necessary funds, even though he knows it will leave Porgy in financial ruin. M’Kewn is also involved in many illegal business transactions, but he has craftily avoided detection and been able to secure a place for himself in the upper walks of life even though he is a mere tradesman. He served as a spy for the Partisan forces, providing information about the English, but he also acted against the American forces by selling their stolen slaves to the British. Like Fergus, M’Kewn’s evil nature is apparent in his physical appearance: “[He] was a person of rusty complexion, sharp visage, small bulbous-shaped nose, a low, broad forehead, and sinister expression of mouth and eyes. The latter were of a light grey, keen rather than bright, and significant of cunning rather than character” (6). M’Kewn cheats and schemes with cold calculation, using less powerful individuals such as he squatter Bostwick to serve his own ambition, but discarding them as soon as they cease to be useful. He shows loyalty to nothing but his own greed, but his crimes catch up with him and bring about his downfall. Porgy, although far less shrewd than his nemesis, has his
debts cleared and is restored to his aristocratic position in society, while M’Kewn takes his own life in a fit of drunken raving before he can be hanged for his crimes. Once again, the hero triumphs and good wins out over evil.

A romance clearly would not be true to its form if it did not involve a love plot. Both Waverley and Woodcraft trace the hero’s struggle to choose between two women, each of whom represent a different set of feminine values. Waverley is torn between the simple and naïve Rose Bradwardine and the intelligent and sophisticated Flora Mac-Ivor in much the same way that Porgy wavers between the humble and domestic Widow Griffin and the aristocratic and educated Widow Eveleigh. Both men eventually opt for the gentler, more delicate women. For Waverley, Rose at first holds no charm: ‘She was too frank, too confiding, too kind; amiable qualities, undoubtedly, but destructive of the marvelous, with which a youth of imagination delights to address the empress of his affections”(120). He finds the exotic Flora much more appealing: ‘She was precisely the character to fascinate a youth of romantic imagination. Her manners, her language, her talents for poetry and music, gave additional and varied influence to her eminent personal charms”(187). In addition, both women are Scottish, but Rose belongs to a noble Lowland family and therefore represents a more moderate political view, whereas Flora is descended from a powerful Highland clan and is passionately devoted to the Jacobite cause. Waverley initially seeks Flora’s hand in marriage, but she rejects him due to the fact that she is aware of what he does not yet realize: he needs a wife who is willing to submit to him and devote herself entirely to his happiness. Rose is the perfect woman to do this, and Waverley begins gradually to notice her merits until she eclipses his former love Flora in his esteem. He changes his affections to Rose and decides to
‘live for her sake’ (450). The two are married, and at the wedding celebration the Baron makes a toast to ‘the united Houses of Waverley -Honour and Bradwardine’ (491). The narrative then ends with the assertion, ‘As no wish was ever uttered with more affectionate sincerity, there are few which, allowing for the necessary mutability of human events, have been, upon the whole, more happily fulfilled’ (491). The happy union of Edward and Rose ensures that both families will survive and establish a new line combining the proud heritage of both. Flora, however, enters a convent after Fergus’s execution, guaranteeing the extinction of the Mac-Ivor clan.

Porgy is less fortunate in his romantic ventures than Waverley. He is continually drawn towards the Widow Griffin who conjured for him ‘notions of Arcadian felicity’ (372), yet he is better able to rationalize a union with the Widow Eveleigh. He could benefit from her prosperity and the marriage would rescue him from debt, but ‘her very virtues had a manly air which girded his pride; her very wealth, and its importance to his own case, seemed to humble him in his relations with her’ (399). Nevertheless, Porgy proposes to Mrs. Eveleigh after he has cleared his own debt and sees that the union will no longer wound his pride, but like Waverley, he is rejected because she realizes that she is too independent to submit to him as a husband and master. Porgy then attempts to win the Widow Griffin, who had actually been his first choice for a mate: ‘There was something so meek, and artless about this lady—something so little imposing and yet so grateful—that his mood became soothed while he contemplated her’ (399). Unfortunately for Porgy, Eveleigh’s overseer Fordham proposes to Mrs. Griffin first, and Porgy is left to perennial bachelorhood. Thus, both Waverley and Porgy select the
woman who will be their supporter rather than their partner—the only type of helpless, adoring woman suitable to be the mate of a hero.

The final and perhaps most unique character type of the historical romances of Scott and Simms are those people who personify the native regions that are used for the settings for their novels. *Waverley* and *Woodcraft* are both imbued with a deep sense of the uniqueness of their respective localities, and this comes through in many forms. Even though both novels contain several characters that reflect native manners, Scott and Simms each include a figure who is the embodiment of local color. In *Waverley*, this figure is the minstrel fool Davie Gellately, and in *Woodcraft* Porgy’s loyal slave Tom fills the role. Davie Gellately is a peculiar figure in the service of Baron Bradwardine. He dresses in extravagant minstrel attire and spends his time capering and singing bits of old Scottish songs and ballads: “He had just so much solidity as kept on the windy side of insanity; so much wild wit as saved him from the imputation of idiocy . . . great kindness and humanity in the treatment of animals entrusted to him, warm affections, a prodigious memory, and an ear for music” (105). Despite his madness and his seemingly ridiculous appearance, he is a loyal and helpful servant to the Baron, who took Davie into his household after the latter saved Rose’s life. Davie’s brother was a gifted musician who died a young and tragic death, and his mother is believed to be a witch. Waverley is unsurprisingly intrigued by this enigmatic figure who personifies all that is new and unusual about his new surroundings. Davie’s singing is representative of the strong Scottish tradition of oral culture, and his bizarre behavior coupled with the suggestion of a dark and tragic background reflects the mystery and romance of the enchanting Scottish locale.
In Woodcraft, Porgy’s slave Tom reinforces the locale by representing the type of loyal, content slave on which the plantation myth of the Old South was built:

A fellow of flat head and tried fidelity . . . but famous as a cook . . . a genius for stews that commended him quite as much as any other of his virtues to the confidence and regards of his master. . . . He well knew his own merits, and was always careful to be in condition to establish them. . . . He kept close to the heels of his master, and had as ready an ear for all that was spoken, as any of his superiors. He was not wanting, also, in the occasional comment—the camp-life having done much toward perfecting the republicanism of all the parties. (51)

Thus Tom finds fulfillment and takes genuine pride in serving his master, and Porgy respects Tom and treats him well. As depicted here, slavery appears as the type of constructive system benefiting both master and slave that was so much a part of the legend of the Old South. In characteristic Southern dialect, Tom affirms that he does not desire to be anything but a slave when Porgy attempts to set him free: ‘No! no! maussa . . . I kain’t t’ink ob letting you off dis way. Ef I doesn’t b’long to you, you b’longs to me” (509).

In addition to the human representatives of regionalism, Scott and Simms also personify the local topography. Waverley is struck by the Scottish terrain immediately: ‘The Highlands of Perthshire, which at first had appeared a blue outline in the horizon . . . now swelled into huge gigantic masses, which frowned defiance over the more level country that lay beneath them” (73). The towns appear squalid and depressing, and in contrast the Highlands seem infinitely more magnificent. Even Fergus’s mansion,
Glennaquoich, seems drab and forbidding, but Waverley soon finds more enchanting surroundings: “Around the castle, all was cold, bare, and desolate, yet tame even in desolation; but [a] narrow glen, at so short a distance, seemed to open into the land of romance” (174). In this glen, Waverley finds all the ingredients for a picturesque Scottish scene: large craggy rocks of peculiar shape, shrubs and purple heather, waving birch, oak, and hazel trees, and a pair of clear bubbly brooks, one of which terminated in a ‘romantic waterfall’ before the water was caught in a natural reservoir which “corresponded in beauty; but it was beauty of a stern and commanding cast’ (178). The Scottish landscape in this manner continually illustrates its ability to both captivate and threaten.

In Woodcraft, the forests and swamps of the South have a similarly menacing quality while human habitations represent havens of safety and order. This contrast is evident in a depiction of a tumbled down house that the Widow Eveleigh’s train passes as they travel through the forest on the way back to her plantation. This house has deteriorated to nothing more than the bare framework, and ‘weeds and grass, still in rankest luxuriance, environed the decaying fabric, in which, no doubt, during the heats of summer, the serpent and the wild-cat found frequent harborage’ (58). Human settlements are therefore necessary refuges from the dangers of the wild, but they are refuges that must be maintained. Porgy realizes this when he returns to his own ruined plantation to find it less than welcoming: ‘The avenue in front exhibited a dreary aspect in spite of the fact that it was mostly of evergreens. The great oaks, grown together and arching above the track, each wore its heavy streamers of gray moss, which drooped almost to the earth . . . Vacant fields on either hand, fenceless and wholly uncultivated, added vastly to
the dreariness of the scene” (205). Left to itself, the earth will revert to its feral state. The Widow Eveleigh is able to maintain her plantation through the war by carefully negotiating political alliances on both sides, and although her home remains ordered and prosperous, the Widow Griffin’s small cottage represents a pastoral paradise:

Everything seemed perfect, and perfectly delightful about the humble cottage of the widow Griffin. The trees had a fresher look; the ground seemed to shelter the most seductive recesses . . . The skies above the cottage appeared to wear looks of superior mildness and beauty, and to impart a something kindred to the looks of the beings who dwelt under their favoring auspices. (372)

Nature is therefore a fickle but not an impartial force in the South of Simms’s novel. Those who live simple lives and are respectful of their surroundings will be able to live in harmony with the natural world.

The same allegorical impulse which leads romantic novelists such as Scott and Simms to construct archetypal characters and personify the landscape also motivates them to place their narratives in a historical era removed from the period in which they are actually writing. As Georg Lukacs explains in The Historical Novel: “It is clear that the more remote an historical period and the conditions of life of its actors, the more the action must concern itself with bringing the particular psychology and ethics which arise from them as an historical curiosity, but should re-experience them as a phase of mankind’s development which concerns and moves us” (42). Scott’s statements in the introductory chapter of Waverley explaining the subtitle ‘Tis Sixty Years Since’ support Lukacs’s theory. Scott states that he had intended in his novel to place ‘the force of [his]
narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors; —those passions common to men in all stages of society” (35). He goes on to say:

It is from the great book of Nature, the same through a thousand editions . . . that I have venturously essayed to read a chapter to the public. Some favourable opportunities of contrast have been afforded me, by the state of society in the northern part of the island at the period of my history, and may serve at once to vary and to illustrate the moral lessons, which I would willingly consider as the most important part of my plan.

(36)

In other words, historical novelists such as Scott and Simms use accurate depictions and specific details of actual events as a backdrop upon which they relate the experiences of their fictional characters. Thus, individuals such as Waverley and Porgy are caught up in the events but have no actual impact on the outcome, and the reader thereby receives an allegorical lesson by sharing the experiences and learning the same lessons as the hero. The historical setting in its allegorical dimension in this way has a universalizing effect, allowing the work to have enduring significance and speak to people from a variety of backgrounds and time periods.

In addition to the allegorical importance of the historical setting, Scott’s and Simms’s use of the past serves a didactic purpose for natives of their respective regions at the particular time that they are writing. Both writers used their novels to create parallels between the era that they depict and the current events of their society. Scott was acutely conscious of the aftermath of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Having been born in 1771, he watched these events unfold firsthand and he later went on to write
The Field of Waterloo (1815) and The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte (1817). In Waverley, the failure of the Jacobite uprising of 1745 serves to illustrate the need for progress, order, and reconciliation that was created by the continual turbulence of the Revolution and its aftermath, both among the people of Britain and the European continent as a whole. As Gary Kelly explains, “The Scottish Highlands represent the past, while the Lowlands and England represent the future . . . the moment is the Jacobite rebellion of 1745—the last gesture of a feudal, customary, and regionalist society against modernization” (“Waverley” 1420). Scott attempts to illustrate that as the world changes man must change as well. Those like Fergus Mac-Ivor who fight to retain their ancient way of life and refuse assimilation into larger society are doomed. Only those who, like Waverley, retain a decent respect for the past while adapting to the changes of the present will survive, and it is only through the cooperation of such people that society will avoid continual bloody revolution. In this manner, Scott advocates a type of Lowland Scottish identity for the future of his region. This is apparent in the novel in the union of Edward and Rose Bradwardine, and in the compassion of the English officer Talbot. Not only does he secure the pardon of his fellow Englishman Waverley, but he also obtains a pardon for Bradwardine and restores to him his Scottish estate of Tully-Veolan. Despite Scott’s advocacy of Lowland Scottishness, however, he does encourage respect and remembrance of Scotland’s Highland heritage. Before his execution, Fergus’s last request of Waverley is that Waverley use his influence to protect the Mac-Ivor clan, of which he is an adopted son. Waverley readily agrees and so faithfully fulfills his promise that it is said ‘his memory still lives in these glens by the name of the Friend of the Sons of Ivor’ (472). Furthermore, despite Fergus’s personal failings and ignoble death, those
who knew him remember him proudly. When Bradwardine regains his estate he also receives a painting depicting Fergus and Waverley in all of their former Highland glory:

It was a large and spirited painting, representing Fergus Mac-Ivor and Waverley in their Highland dress; the scene a wild, rocky, and mountainous pass, down which the clan were descending in the background. It was taken from a spirited sketch, drawn while they were in Edinburgh . . . and the ardent, fiery, and impetuous character of the unfortunate Chief of Glennaquoich was finely contrasted with the contemplative, fanciful, and enthusiastic expression of his happier friend.

Bradwardine accepts the painting with extreme emotion and gratitude, and his Lowland estate will thus bear a continual reminder of Fergus and his clan at the height of their strength and glory.

Simms wrote extensively about the history of his own region during the American Revolution, and used this period as a parallel for the situation in the South as the nation approached Civil War. Written in 1854, Woodcraft is one of Simms’s later Revolutionary novels, written partly in response to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and reflective of its author’s increasingly hostile view of the North. Simms sees Britain’s tyranny over the colonies as analogous to the North’s tyranny over the South. According to Roger J. Bresnahan, ‘Simms’s purpose was to unify the South by giving it a history that was not merely significant but meaningful, one that would literally move Southerners to continue the Revolution by rebelling against the North’ (577). Indeed, Simms attempts to illustrate through Porgy’s struggles to restore his family plantation
while avoiding his voracious creditors that Southerners must protect their own rights against Northern encroachment, even if it means taking up arms as Porgy and his men do to defend his property. Simms elaborates on these views in a speech that Porgy gives to the young Lance Frampton:

Peace is only a name for civil war. Life itself is civil war . . . One of the greatest misfortunes of men, and it has been mine until his hour, consists in the great reluctance of the mind to contemplate and review, calmly, the difficulties which surround us—to look our dangers in the face, see how they lie, where they threaten, and how we may contend against them. We are all quite too apt to refuse to look at our troubles, and prefer that they should leap on us at a bound, rather than disquiet ourselves, in advance of the conflict, by contemplating the dangers with which we think it impossible to contend. (109)

Porgy has disabused himself of this tendency to ignore his troubles, and Simms attempts to encourage his readers to do the same. Southerners can only secure their rights and preserve their land and culture by actively resisting and battling Northern oppression and interference.

_Waverley_ and _Woodcraft_ were intricate fusions of romance, regionalism, and history, and the critics for a variety of widely read periodicals throughout Britain and America did not overlook their careful and innovative construction and praised both novels for all of these qualities. Of _Waverley_, the reviewer for the _Scourge_ declares, ‘If it seldom melts us to tears with its pathos, or astonishes us by its sublimity, it will be long the favourite of every reader to whom the beauties of nature, the peculiarities of general
life and provincial manners, and the development of human character, are objects of sympathy or curiosity’(298). He also praises the author’s ‘rapid but vigorous and hasty sketches of the glen, the mountain, the loch, the cavern, and various combinations of sublime, beautiful, and picturesque scenery, which, even at the present time, awake the astonishment, and soothe the passions of the observer’(Scourge 293). Simms also received a great deal of praise for his depictions of local manners and scenery. The review of Woodcraft, under its original title of The Sword and the Distaff, in The Literary World states: ‘In the stirring scenes of wild-wood life, the ambush, the surprise, the bush fight, the camp fire, and the break neck hunt, [Simms] is pre-eminent. In his descriptions of the rough-hewn, and the half-polished specimens of backwoods humanity, and in his rendering of their droll vernacular, he is perfect’(358). In regard to the historical merit of Scott’s work, the British Critic affirms, ‘The incidents are . . . all founded on fact, and the historical parts are related with much accuracy. The time which has elapsed since the year 1745 has allowed the author the liberty of introducing feigned characters as actors in those real scenes, without wearying the patience or disgusting the credulity of the reader’(71). The reviewer for Godey’s argues that Simms’s novel should be appreciated for the same reasons as those of writers such as Scott. This periodical’s announcement of the publication of The Sword and the Distaff argues: ‘We are always generous to the romance writers of other countries, who send us such works as present us with truthful pictures of personal character, and of the manners of past generations. Let us at least be just to such of our own able writers as labor to preserve the memory and to perpetuate the services of our own progenitors’(277). According to this review, Simms was the perfect writer to do this for the South. In fact, Simms was so successful as a spokesperson for his
region, that when his Revolutionary romances were issued in a series of new and revised editions, the *Southern Literary Messenger* proclaimed that “every southerner should own a complete set” (639).

Sir Walter Scott and William Gilmore Simms undeniably earned their reputations as the fathers of their respective literary traditions. Whereas Scott popularized the regional novel, reviving a genre that had fallen into disrepute and crafting it into a valuable vehicle for cultural preservation, Simms seized upon the form and successfully manipulated it for Southern subjects. Both men were proud of their cultures and believing firmly that their heritage needed to be preserved. They therefore used their writing to capture the unique qualities of their local landscapes, customs, and language. Scott and Simms also saw history as having great instructive power and therefore focused their narratives on important periods in their regions’ histories, so that their readers might be directed in current circumstances by historical lessons. Above all, these men created unique and entertaining narratives that were enjoyed by readers of all backgrounds and regions, thus introducing the reading public to the distinctive qualities of Scotland and the South and establishing conventions of setting, language, and manners that later regional writers would continue to employ.
CHAPTER TWO

Local Color: Barrie’s *Auld Licht Idylls* and Page’s *In Ole Virginia*

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the reading public was no longer interested in epic romances of war and turmoil. Turmoil was too much of a reality in their daily existence, as the nineteenth century saw radical political, economic, and cultural changes in both Scotland and the Southern states. Literature provided a means of escape from the realities of society, and regional literature was especially well suited to this endeavor. For outsiders, it provided a glimpse into quaint locales, and for those belonging to the respective region, it allowed escapism into a simpler and prouder past, regardless of the accuracy of the depiction. The regional writers of the 1880s and 1890s in Scotland and the South adopted many of the literary conventions used in the historical romances of Scott and Simms, such as depictions of native manners and customs, descriptions of local topography, and the use of dialect. These later works are also set in times past, but unlike the earlier historical writings, they do not focus on a specific period or set of events. The romantic novels of Scott and Simms were didactic—they attempted to use the lessons of historical events such as the Jacobite Rebellion and the American Revolution as guides to contemporary circumstances. Later regional writers had no such pretense to didacticism; their works were merely sketches of local color from a bygone time that depicted a way of life that the writers found in many ways superior to their current circumstances. The writers of the Kailyard School, especially J.M. Barrie, popularized Scottish local color in the 1880s and 1890s, while Thomas Nelson Page and
other writers of the plantation school did the same for the American South during the same period.

Local color writing tends to convey the impression of being light-hearted, hardly worthy of serious consideration, and critics often dismissed it as mere popular literature on this account. In the essay “The Rise and Fall of Local Color in Southern Literature,” Claud B. Green explains, ‘By definition, it is implied, local-color literature is of a secondary order of merit. It deals with the pleasant, the picturesque, and the sentimental—but not with the tragic’(2). This type of writing tends to emphasize description and dialogue, usually at the expense of complicated plots, serious situations, or anything else that might confound or discomfort the reader. However, the deliberate avoidance of serious issues is as illustrative of these works’ era as would be outright political commentary or historical exposition, for local color is a class of writing that flourished in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, in a cultural climate predisposed towards escapism. It provided an alternative to the realist and naturalist schools of writing that were also developing during this period. Furthermore, reports of urban squalor and modern decay were appearing at a rapid rate from the pens of journalists and sociologists, and technological advances in photography allowed audiences for the first time to actually see what previously they could only read or hear about. In other words, reality had become a bit too real for most people’s polite Victorian sensibilities, and local color writers provided a welcome alternative to all of the ugliness of social critique. As Thomas Knowles explains in Ideology, Art, and Commerce: ‘Inadequately reconciled to the emergence of modern mass society, to the impetus of apparently uncontrollable, or as yet uncontrolled, socio-economic forces, and to novel
and fragmented urban community forms, authors and intellectuals turned to a preceding age and earlier images and ideals” (10).

This type of genteel literary marketplace was ideally suited to regionalism, and Scottish and Southern writers therefore thrived. Authors in these areas not only had a rich store of materials from which to draw, but were also naturally disposed toward rural escapism since they hailed from societies that had traditionally been rural and agrarian, and in which the troubling aspects of urbanization and modernization were especially problematic. This predisposition led to the development of two distinct schools of local color writing: the Kailyard School in Scotland and the plantation school in the South. In his essay “The Home-ly Kailyard Nation,” Richard Cook explains the formula for this type of Scottish literature: ‘Characterized by its simple versions of pastoral Scotland rather than serious historical representation, Kailyard fiction arranges its exotic scenes of caricatured backwards folk figures around interchangeable conventional tropes and themes of love, covenancy, and sentimentalized rural life” (1054). Lucinda Mackethan identifies similar features of Southern sentimental literature, stating that plantation fiction was ‘stocked with belles and cavaliers, courtships and duels, mansions and cotton blossoms, and, at the heart of the scene, wistfully reminiscing darkies’ (“Plantation Fiction” 209). Both of these literary movements were enormously popular during their day, but writers and critics have attacked them ever since for their inaccurate and overly romanticized depictions of life in Scotland and the South in the early nineteenth century. Literary history has labeled writers such as J.M. Barrie and Thomas Nelson Page as gross sentimentalists who did nothing more than cater to the tastes of a genteel reading public, but these men were actually far more clever than they have typically received credit for
being. Through an examination of the historical and cultural period in which the
Kailyard and plantation authors produced their fictions, and by examining two key
works—Barrie’s *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888) and Page’s *In Ole Virginia* (1887)—these
literary movements will prove to be key developments in both regional traditions,
developments that answered the needs of the marginalized cultures as much as the
demands of the mass market.

During the nineteenth century the Highland Clearances and the Disruption of the
Scottish Kirk affected Scottish culture perhaps even more profoundly than the region’s
union with England in 1707. The Clearances were the means by which entire Highland
communities lost their land and homes, often by extremely brutal methods, beginning
after the failed Jacobite uprising of 1745 when the state began to impose tighter control
over the Highlands and lasting through the 1860s. The Clearances had a twofold
purpose—on one hand they served to break up the powerful clan system that had
determined land ownership and governed the Highlands for generations, and on the other
hand, they also served to clear the land of its native inhabitants in order to make way for
large sheep ranches. Landlords were extremely powerful and easily exploited the tenant
class, which they had previously allowed to hold and work land that they did not own,
leaving the tenants defenseless to resist eviction. The landlords then established farms
that used a great deal of land but required few men to work. These farms monopolized
the arable soil thereby displacing the population, and no other options for support arose to
replace the traditional agrarian existence of the native inhabitants (Devine 134-140). The
displaced Highlanders had no choice but to leave their ancestral homes, either emigrating
to another country such as the United States or Canada, moving to the coastal regions to
join the fishing industry, or relocating to one of the growing cities in hopes of finding employment there.

The changes wrought by the schism of the Scottish Presbyterian Church in 1843 affected Highlands and Lowlands alike. The Scottish Kirk had been the backbone of Scottish culture—one of the few consistent forces of authority in a region that was constantly in flux. However, the issue of patronage, the system through which hereditary landowners called patrons selected the minister in a parish church, had caused friction in the Kirk since 1733. Since the parish church was the arbiter of morals and proper behavior, the enforcer of order, and the provider of education and social welfare, the patronage system allowed the landowners to exert a great influence over their parish (Callum C. Brown 67-70). In his essay on religion in *Modern Scottish History*, Callum G. Brown describes the turmoil that arose over this issue:

> An acrimonious climate developed in very many parishes between the landed elites and the common people, and the parish church became the venue for battling it out. The church became increasingly the class battleground for the wider divisions introduced by agricultural improvement and, in the Highlands and Hebrides, for the Clearances. The parish church became the symbol of a lost proprietorship not only of organized religion but of the parish itself. (70)

The Disruption occurred on May 18, 1843, when a group of dissenting Presbyterian ministers known as the Evangelicals, led by the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, walked out of the Church’s yearly General Assembly at St. Andrew’s Church in Edinburgh in protest to the government’s refusal to abolish patronage and grant the church sovereignty within the
state. These dissenters, which accounted for approximately 37% of the church’s clergy, formed the Free Protesting Church of Scotland, later simply the Free Church (Callum C. Brown 74-76). Chalmers, who had already gained attention for his attempts to introduce rural-style churches into urban centers in order to improve the spiritual health and values of the working class and the poor, became the Free Church’s first Moderator.

Brown cites the Disruption as a catastrophe for the Established Church and a cataclysmic force of change within Scottish society:

By 1851 the Free Church was attracting virtually the same number of worshippers as the Church of Scotland—each with 32% of church-goers . . . . The Free Church took away from the ‘Auld Kirk’ most of the remaining energetic evangelicals—those who promoted schemes of evangelization and religious innovation. The ‘Frees’ were socially complex, marking different class restructurings in different places, yet being held together by offering an ecclesiastical dimension to different class identities, common puritanical ideals, and a common hostility to the power of large landlords. Backed by urban middle-class wealth, it quickly became a rich church with kirks and manses planted in nearly every parish in Scotland . . . [and] a symbol of an energetic, evangelical and puritan crusade that was to be unleashed in Scotland in the second half of the nineteenth century. (Callum C. Brown 79-80)

The Disruption thereby insured the eventual demise of the Auld Kirk that had been the bedrock of Scottish culture, but more than the disastrous effects on the Scottish Kirk, the Disruption is significant as the focal point of all the problems and forces of change that
had been plaguing Scotland for up to a century prior. In the teachings and efforts of Chalmers—the chief instigator and orchestrater of the Disruption—the detrimental effects of urbanization and industrialization, exacerbated by the large-scale population shifts brought about by the Highland Clearances, religious dissatisfaction and upheaval, emerging class conflict, and the elitist and genteel Victorian value system all converge to provide an illustration of the complex political, economic, and cultural climate that produced Kailyard literature.

J. M. Barrie and the other major writers of the Kailyard tradition were all members of the Free Church. They had William Robertson Nicoll, also a member of the Free Church and editor of the religious journal *The British Weekly* in which much of the Kailyard works were first serialized, to thank for the success of their sentimentalized sketches of rural Scottish life. Nicoll encouraged these writers and patronized their works because they reinforced church doctrine. In her essay “The Kailyard,” Gillian Shepherd discusses the ideology shared by the Free Church and Kailyard fiction:

The untrammeled innocence of the Scots peasant was, perhaps, perceived . . . by the Kailyard novelists as redemptive. . . . Such a vision is consistent with the theological doctrines of the Free Church after the Disruption of 1843 . . . High priest of these doctrines was Thomas Chalmers, who believed devoutly that the salvation of Scotland was to be found not just in the preservation of rural values but in their re-introduction in the towns. He compared the urban, working-class Scot unfavorably with a mythological peasant, in whose obedience, humility, and willingness to be directed was found the cement of society. (314-315)
Thus, Kailyard writing served to disseminate the nobler virtues of the peasantry to the urban masses through its depictions of the simplified country life of former times and the accompanying ethos of those fortunate enough to lead such lives.

The influence of the Free Church partly explains the appeal of pastoral writers such as J. M. Barrie, but Kailyard writing was also immensely popular outside of Scotland, where the Disruption and the influence of the Scottish Kirk were inconsequential. For non-Scottish readers, Kailyard writings provided a fictional alternative to late nineteenth century reality. As Shepherd explains: “In the Kailyard Eden the only serpents were the implicit threat of distant urban squalor, poverty, riot, unrest, industrialization and secularization” (312). The escapist value of Kailyard writing was also important to readers in increasingly industrial Scotland, aside from its association with Free Church principles. In “Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel,” Beth Dickson explains the relevance of the Kailyard writers’ complete disregard of the processes of modernization that were transforming their region:

That Scottish novelists did not chart the process of urban social change, that much of the actuality of Scottish life goes undocumented by its novelists, is neither to be deplored nor regretted. Their work operates as an analysis of Scotland’s self-perception and psychological condition at a level that does not lend itself to the documenting of the conditions of the urban industrial world.(59)

Knowles also addresses the extent to which regional writing was responsible for creating Scottish cultural identity: ‘Scottish writing, in its history of rural and regional themes . . . reflects a national self-consciousness, a search for Scottishness vis-à-vis England . . .
[T]his tradition also reflects the ‘spiritual inability’ of the Scottish people (presumably both audience, publishers, and authors) to cope with the realities of urbanization and industrialization in fiction” (14). Scotland had undergone industrialization too quickly and too powerfully for Scottish writers to yet be able to make sense of it. As George Blake explains in his study Barrie and the Kailyard School: “The Industrial Revolution knocked the old Scotland sideways, with a violence in both the process and the consequences unexampled. A strange series of historical accidents brought it about that a certain amount of native genius, and certain natural supplies of raw materials, turned the Clyde Valley almost overnight into a Black Country” (8). Furthermore, Scottish people were at a disadvantage due to their status as a marginalized culture in which forces of authority such as the government and church frequently shifted during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Blake gives a pointed if overly harsh assessment of the Scottish penchant for pastoral literature: “We always return to the point that the Scots, for all their great civic and administrative, scientific and academic qualities, remain inveterately backward in literary culture—bewildered and sentimental children bleating for the old securities of the parochial life” (81).

James Matthew Barrie’s own life parallels the developments taking place within his nation. Born in 1860 in the small weaving community of Kirriemuir, he personally witnessed industrial and religious transition. In J. M. Barrie: the Man Behind the Image, biographer Janet Dunbar describes Kirriemuir in the mid-nineteenth century: “In this town of linen weaves, there were hand looms in most of the houses, and the clackety-clack of the flying shuttles could be heard in every street” (2). James’s father David was a weaver, and like most of the other townspeople, he began his career with his own loom in
one of the rooms of the family house. As the family grew, the industrious and enterprising David Barrie rented a nearby house and began a loom shop in which he employed a few other weavers (Dunbar 3-5). By the late 1860’s, however, the introduction of power looms began to threaten weaving as a cottage industry, and James’s father decided to take action: ‘David Barrie, always a farseeing and shrewd man, had no intention of waiting for the inevitable. If power it was to be, he would begin to learn as much about the machines as he could’ (Dunbar 17). He went to the nearby town of Forfar to apply at the linen factory there, but due to his experience and ability, he was given the position of clerk. The Barrie family then left the small village of Kirriemuir for the larger town of Forfar, and David Barrie’s career thus illustrates the shift from craft to industry, workshop to factory, rural to urban. Margaret Ogilvy, James’s mother, is representative of the shifting allegiances of Scottish Presbyterians. She was raised in the Auld Licht church, and her father was ‘one of the most fanatical upholders of that fiercely puritanical brand of Protestantism’ (Dunbar 3). When she married David Barrie at the age of 21 she switched to the Free Church, to which her husband belonged. Despite her adoption of her husband’s religious affiliation, ‘In her heart and mind she never left the narrow self-righteousness of the Auld Lichts’ (Dunbar 4).

Thanks to Barrie’s exposure to elements of both old and new Scottish culture, he was clearly qualified to be a writer of nostalgic literature. Since throughout his writing career he refused interviews, discouraged any type of writing that used him as the subject, and even resisted being photographed, his explicit goals as a writer are unknown. In the scant commentary that Barrie did leave behind, he continually asserts that his goal was nothing more than entertainment. As he states in his third-person memoir, The
Greenwood Hat: “In the marrow of him was a shrinking from trying to influence anyone, and even from expressing an opinion” (29). However, Barrie’s early career as a prolific journalist attests that he could not have been entirely oblivious to the events of his age, and his close attachment to his mother and his membership in the Free Church indicate the lingering influence of his Scottish Presbyterian upbringing on his personal outlook and development. In fact, his earliest success as a writer came from his sketches of Scottish life, and on these works he relied entirely on his own childhood experiences in Kirriemuir and on the stories that his mother had told him about her own girlhood.

Margaret Ogilvy influenced her son so profoundly, that in the introduction to A Window in Thrums, Barrie states: “It is the love of mother and son that has written everything of mine that is of any worth” (x). Thus, Barrie’s portrayals of the Auld Licht community in his Scottish sketches are, despite the apparently deprecating humor, respectful depictions of a way of life that had value and merit worthy of preserving.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Southern states were undergoing monumental changes in the structure of their society similar to those taking place in Scotland. The Civil War had generated a fierce desire among Southerners for a separate nation and identity, as well as a compulsion to defend their culture and way of life. In practical terms, the war sapped the region’s economy, devastated its landscape, and deprived it of a significant part of its able-bodied male population. In larger terms, however, the South’s defeat was more than military or economic—it was a failure that went to the root of its cultural identity and which appeared as an indictment of its entire way of life. Southerners were a spiritually even more than a militarily defeated people. Reconstruction seemed to the South to be an even greater betrayal. The former
Confederate states felt as if the victorious and more powerful North had colonized their territory rather than readmitted them to the Union. In *Origins of the New South 1877-1913*, C. Vann Woodward assesses the impact of Reconstruction on the South:

The year 1877 marked the end of a period of social, economic, and political revolution in the South. This revolution had as one of its avowed aims the ending of the ‘house divided,’ and as the objective of a secondary phase of coercive reorganization the removal of such remaining differences as set Southern society apart. The end result, however, was actually to widen and deepen the disparity between the revolutionized society and the rest of the Union in several important respects, particularly those of wealth, living standard, and general welfare. (111)

Woodward also points out the difference between the motivating forces behind industrialization in Europe and in the South: ‘While the causes of the industrial revolution in England were ‘narrowly economic,’ it is said that ‘in the South they were moral as well.’ ‘During Reconstruction the South, like a man thrown into prison, had time to reflect on past sins’(Woodward 113). In the famous collection of essays *I’ll Take My Stand*, Frank Lawrence Owsley’s essay “The Irrepressible Conflict” aptly describes the South’s lingering feelings of bitterness and disappointment in regard to the outcome of the Civil War: “The North defeated the South in war, crushed and humiliated it in peace, and waged against it a war of intellectual and spiritual conquest. In the conquest the North fixed upon the South the stigma of war guilt, of slave guilt, of treason, and thereby shook the faith of its people in their way of living and in their philosophy of life”(66). After this spell of figurative imprisonment the South, which had previously
been fiercely resistant to the influx of “Yankee” values and practices, was ready to be transformed in the image of the North, and thus began the era known as the New South period, lasting roughly from 1877 to 1913.

During the New South period, the region’s landscape began to change drastically. Edward L Ayers’ study *The Promise of the New South* examines the transformation of Southern culture after Reconstruction in detail. The large slave plantations, which previously had been the area’s most distinguishing feature, disappeared as the former owners abandoned them due to, among other reasons, the loss of their labor supply and the general disrepute into which the planter class had fallen (Ayers 7). The spread of railroads allowed for easy contact between once remote areas, leading to the establishment of towns and cities across the South (Ayers 19). These growing settlements attracted Southerners from all walks of life—the former landed class that was leaving the plantations, as well as the poor planters seeking other employment in the hopes of escaping the cycle of chronic debt created by the tenant farming and crop lien systems (Ayers 62). Prior to 1880, 75% of manufacturing laborers were employed in small workshops, but this changed over the next two decades with the development of the South’s major industries and the establishment of factories across the region. The rate of industrial growth in the New South actually began to exceed national averages, and the region’s productivity increased faster than had New England’s during its own period of industrialization half a century earlier (Ayers 21-22).

Industrialization and the new settlement patterns in the South led to the growth of a middle-class, which “in spirit as well as in outer aspect . . . was essentially new, strikingly resembling the same class in Midwestern and Northeastern cities” (Woodward
151). In other words, the South was losing the distinct ethos and unique characteristics that had distinguished it as a region prior to the Civil War. This was due in a large part to the fact that in addition to economic change, “a new philosophy and way of life and a new scale of values” accompanied the process of industrialization (Woodward 148). Traditionally, the North had been the region concerned with profit and acquisition, while the Southern plantation culture liked to consider itself a leisured, aristocratic society above such greed and materialism. Industrialization upset this value system, but many Southerners were not ready to accept the change: “White Southerners wanted to enjoy the benefits of commercial prosperity and yet to feel superior to the bald economic striving of the North” (Ayers 26). Woodward points out that this conflict between traditional values and material reality, coupled with the South’s need for self-justification in reaction to feelings of inferiority, led to the development of “a cult of archaism, a nostalgic vision of the past” (156). As he explains, “The bitter mixture of recantation and heresy could never have been swallowed so readily had it not been dissolved in the syrup of romanticism” (Woodward 158). The writers of the plantation school served as powerful creators and exponents of this glorified myth of the Old South.

Southern writers in the decades after Reconstruction used literature as a means of making sense of the changes occurring in their society. One of their main goals was to preserve and justify the values of the Old South. As time passed, aging Confederates began to worry that the younger generations would forget or misinterpret their position and motives in the Civil War (Ayers 27). The writers of the region took on the task of preserving the memory of the Southern cause for those people in both the North and the South too young to have firsthand recollections: “Southern writers wrote out of a desire
to explain the South, to suggest that despite slavery and military defeat the Old South had
nurtured some values worth maintaining, that despite their unusual accents people in the
New South held emotions and ideals not unlike those elsewhere in the country” (Ayers
339-340). This type of literature also served to heal the lingering wounds of the reunited
nation in much the same way that Scott’s *Waverley* advocated national reconciliation and
mutual consideration among Britons of all backgrounds in the wake of the failed Jacobite
rebellion of 1745. Readers in the United States became more interested in the South after
its defeat since it no longer posed a threat, and local color writing was the ideal medium
through which to indulge this curiosity. In *Nineteenth-Century Southern Literature* J. V.
Ridgely explains the creation of the plantation myth that came to characterize Southern
local color writing:

> Now that the South presented no threat to the body politic, its quixotic
> attempt to establish an aristocratic empire could take on the special
> glamour reserved for lost causes. Domiciled amid the ruins of its artifacts,
> the southern writer could dream of the never-never land—the pillars of its
> plantations grown prodigious, its ladies more classically beautiful, its men
> more dashingly gallant, its gardens more lovely in the moonlight, its field
> songs more melodic and soothing. (91)

The Old South thus began to grow to mythic proportions as writers continually portrayed
it as a lost golden age. Mackethan assesses local color writing in the post–bellum South:

> “While it provided for minute attention to features of setting, speech and quaint character,
> it incorporated a sentimental rather than a critical vision of life in the Old South. . . .

What appeared was a vision of order and grace to communicate a new myth of a lost
cause” (“Plantation Fiction” 210-211). Northern as well as Southern audiences tolerated and even welcomed these fictions because they provided ‘the vicarious experience of places where life had more depth and resonance” (Ayers 339).

Thomas Nelson Page was the ideal spokesperson for this apotheosized vision of the Old South. Born in 1853 on a Virginia plantation to an esteemed Southern family, Page actually possessed first-hand experience of the age that he glorified in his writing. In his introduction to the 1991 edition of In Ole Virginia, Clyde N. Wilson discusses the circumstances that early influenced Page as a writer: ‘Turning twelve two weeks after Appomattox, Page experienced the war at a most impressionable age, so that the heroism of the men in gray and the women who sustained them, and the hardships of the “Reconstruction” peace which followed, formed the central theme of his experience and thus of his writing” (xi). Certainly, these impressions instilled in Page a love and passion for his Southern heritage and a fierce desire to preserve the way of life of which he had witnessed the demise. In The Old South, Page eloquently eulogizes the antebellum culture: ‘Under [the] brilliant exhibition of the South’s public career lies the record of a life, of a civilization so pure, so noble, that the world to-day holds nothing equal to it” (43).

Like his predecessor William Gilmore Simms, Page lamented the fact that the Southern states had failed to develop their own literary tradition, and he believed that this inadequacy contributed greatly to the South’s defeat because it left the region susceptible to cultural misinterpretation: ‘It was for lack of a literature that [the South] was left behind in the great race for outside support, and that in the supreme moment of her existence she found herself arraigned at the bar of the world without an advocate and
without a defense” (*Old South* 50). Page took it upon himself to remedy this situation with his own writing, creating tales that depicted the Old South as the noble and heroic civilization that he believed it had once been. In her study *The Dream of Arcady*, Lucinda Mackethan cites this desire of Page “to project a mode of the past onto present existence” as the quality that made his work successful and unique from other literature of the same period: “The war and its aftermath emphasized for Page the values of the old world just at the moment that they were disappearing, leaving him with a sense that the regime that had been destroyed had a tragic grandeur and his childhood memories a special importance that might serve as instruction for posterity” (40).

Page was fortunate to begin his career as a Southern writer at an extremely auspicious time. He published his most famous work of plantation fiction, *In Ole Virginia*, in 1887 during the period when North and South were mutually receptive to reconciliation. With Reconstruction a decade past, the South’s wounds were sufficiently healed as to allow for self-reflection, and the North was secure enough in the state of the Union to indulge such activities. Page was fully aware of this more hospitable climate. In an article entitled “Literature in the South Since the War” for *Lippincott’s Magazine* in 1891 he states:

> In the South . . . the conditions for a literature now exist as perhaps they do not exist in any other country or section. An heroic past is already assuming the proper romantic perspective for a literature. The forces which existed and which in the past created a race of orators and polemical writers of the first rank continue to exist, and forces have changed. The South perfectly understands and appreciates the value of
literary work; and recently, for the first time in its history, has comprehended the fact that it has a life worth preserving and possesses a power fully equal to its preservation. (Page 179)

Although Page believes that the greatness of the Old South has yet to be matched, he clearly has great hopes for his region’s future. In much the same way that the Kailyard writers attempted to re-introduce the values of the peasantry in order to combat the ills of urban existence, Page sought to recapture the virtues of antebellum times to serve both as models for his contemporaries in the New South and as illustrations for non-Southerners of the merits of his region that would increase the empathy and understanding necessary to heal sectional differences. As Wilson states:

For Northerners Page provided reassurance that sectional conflict was not intransigent, that the South had accepted restoration of the Union in good faith. For Southerners, he satisfied the desire to establish that they had not been dishonorable in their motives and conduct in the war and that the South had not really been the domain of diabolism of lurid abolitionist and Black Republican propaganda. (xiv)

In this manner, Page created a regional literature that despite its nostalgic and somewhat self-gratifying perspective, answered the needs of not only his section, but also the entire nation.

J.M. Barrie and Thomas Nelson Page thus share many characteristics that contributed to the artistic development of each. Both grew up within a marginalized culture during a time of great flux, and both witnessed great political, economic, and social change. Both men also possessed great literary talents which they utilized to create
colorful sketches of Scottish and Southern life. Like Sir Walter Scott and William Gilmore Simms, their predecessors in the field of regional writing, they do not write about their societies as they currently exist but as they once were. However, unlike the earlier historical writers, Barrie and Page attempt to recreate a way of life rather than reenact a historical event or period, and this gives their work the nostalgic and sentimental tone that is its most distinguishing characteristic. This tone is also the quality that made these works successful because it spoke to disenchanted Victorian audiences.

Barrie’s *Auld Licht Idylls* and Page’s *In Ole Virginia* are these men’s first and perhaps most famous works of local color, and their success and influence was so great that schools of writing developed based on the patterns and conventions that they employ. *Auld Licht Idylls*, declared by a review in the journal *Academy* to be “not only the best book dealing with Scotch humble life, but the only book of the kind deserving to be classed as literature” (354), gave birth to the school of Kailyard fiction in Scotland. In a similar fashion, *In Ole Virginia*, avowed by *The Nation* to be “an epic historical and tragic” (236), generated the plantation school of Southern fiction.

Barrie and Page both depict their chosen locales in a retrospective manner, emphasizing that their subjects no longer exist as they once were. In *Auld Licht Idylls*, Barrie’s setting is the small weaving town of Thrums, and his focus is the people of that town who belong to the Auld Licht Kirk. Barrie’s narrator, however, makes it clear that these subjects are either extinct or quickly vanishing. As a town of weavers, mechanization poses a serious threat to the way of life in Thrums, and the introduction of power looms changes the community considerably. The narrator, calling attention to this shift, explains: “Until twenty years ago . . . every other room, earthen-floored and
showing the rafters overhead, had a handloom, and hundreds of weavers lived and died Thoreaus ‘ben the hoose’ without knowing it. In those days the cup overflowed and left several houses on the top of the hill, where their cold skeletons still stand.”\(^3\) (188). The narrator clearly suggests that although Thrums is no longer as it once was, the change has been detrimental rather than progressive. In a similar manner, he describes the dwindling of the Auld Lichts:

Their kirk has but a cluster of members now, most of them old and done, but each is equal to a dozen ordinary churchgoers, and there have been men and women among them on whom the memory loves to linger. For forty years they have been dying out, but their cold, stiff pews still echo the Psalms of David, and the Auld Licht kirk will remain open so long as it has one member and a minister. (226-227)

Although the narrator owes his allegiance to the Free Church, he clearly respects the Auld Lichts’ religious devotion and regrets their diminishing ranks.

Page likewise depicts antebellum Virginia retrospectively and with a definite sense of loss. This becomes apparent at the very start of “Marse Chan,” the first and most well known sketch in the collection. The narrator relates his observations on the Virginia countryside of 1872: “The road I was traveling . . . had just struck me as most significant of the character of the race whose only avenue of communication with the outside world it had formerly been. Their once splendid mansions, now fast falling to decay, appeared to view from time to time, set back for from the road, in proud

\(^3\) J.M. Barrie, *A Window in Thrums and Auld Licht Idylls* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912) 188. All subsequent page references refer to this edition.
His surroundings provoke a greater sense of lost splendor than present decay, giving the scene the same elegiac tone as Barrie’s description of Thrums. A few pages later, the narrator encounters an old Negro man who shares his memories of antebellum times, heightening the sense of loss: ‘Dem wuz good ole times, marster—de bes’ Sam ever see! Dey wuz, in fac’! Niggers didn’ hed noth in’ t all to do—jes’ hed to ‘ten’ to de feedin’ an’ cleanin’ de hosses, an’ doin’ what de marster tell ‘em to do. . . . Dyar warn’ no trouble nor nothin” (10). Once again, time has brought change but not progress. In Page’s idealized South, even Sam believes that Virginia has degenerated since the war and prefers the old ways, despite his previous condition of enslavement.

By their tone of loss and regret, Barrie and Page both emphasize the value of the cultures that they are preserving through their sketches. Critics have often condemned these works for being inaccurate and self-indulgent, but initially reviewers praised both Barrie and Page for their faithful portrayals. Of Auld Licht Idylls a reviewer for The Forum asserts: “The wonderful effects of realism are wrought by simplicity and depth of feeling—not by endowing plain people with the complex emotions of artificial civilization. The pathos and humor are of the quiet kind which appeal strongly to people of taste” (597). The reviewer for The Critic commends In Ole Virginia on similar grounds: “All that Mr. Page had to do—and he has done it well—was to be a faithful ‘recording angel’ to open a sympathetic and retentive ear, to reproduce in firm outlines what everyday life in Virginia abundantly provides” (166).

A further affinity between Barrie and Page, for which they both received critical acclaim, is their portrayal of the distinctive ethos and conduct of those individuals who

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populate their sketches. Barrie devotes the majority of *Auld Licht Idylls* to describing the qualities that distinguish an Auld Licht, such as extreme religious devotion, a demanding work ethic, and a general sour disposition. His narrator states, “You could generally tell an Auld Licht in Thrums when you passed him, his dull vacant face wrinkled over a heavy wob” (191). Although these descriptions are at times less than flattering, Barrie essentially treats the Auld Lichts with deference and attributes their demise to the rigors of their lifestyle:

There are few Auld Licht communities in Scotland nowadays—perhaps because people are now so well off, for the most devout Auld Lichts were always poor, and their last years were generally a grim struggle with the workhouse. . . . There are a score or two of them left still, for, though there are now two factories in the town, the clatter of the handloom can yet be heard, and they have been starving themselves of late until they have saved up enough money to get another minister. (190)

The Auld Lichts, then, are committed above all to their faith, and they do not shrink from labor or self-deprivation in order to support their devotion.

Page chooses as his subject the young men of the Old South who were similarly self-sacrificing. Whereas the Auld Lichts would go to any lengths for their kirk, Page’s southern men are willing to risk their lives to go to war in defense of their way of life. The review in *The Nation* describes Page’s typical hero in terms almost as valorous as Page’s own:

Born to lordship, his life-path cut straight-through gardens of roses that never fade almost before he comes to his own, his princedom is but an
empty home: the roses are all thorns; he falls before the cannons mouth,
his dead fingers twined about his so-called country’s flag. That is the
beautiful figure by which, be it true to life or false, a capable story teller
has chosen to perpetuate the South that fought and died. (236)

This formula aptly describes the figure that Page places at the center of each of his
sketches, be it Marse Chan whom the enemy shoots down as he leads a charge with the
Confederate flag in hand, or Marse Phil in ‘Meh Lady’ who fought to his death so
valiantly that his general proclaims that ‘he’d ruther been Marse Phil fightn’ he bat’ry dat
day den a’ been President de Confederate States’’ (85), or even the man who appears
only as Ole Marster through the recollections of his former slave in ‘Ole ‘Stracted.”

Page also depicts the antithesis of his Southern hero in ‘No Head Pawn.” In this story,
the subject is a cruel slaveholder that was hanged for killing one of his slaves: “Making
all allowances, his life was a blot upon civilization. At length it culminated. A brutal
temper, inflamed by unbridled passions, after a long period of license and debauchery
came to a climax in a final orgy of ferocity and fury, in which he was guilty of an act
whose fiendishness surpassed belief” (169). His ghost still haunts his old plantation in
the recesses of a gloomy swamp. This dark and terrifying story is at odds with the
reverential tone of the others, but it serves to emphasize the near perfection of the heroes
of the other stories by contrasting them with sheer brutality and depravity. Whereas the
other men take on near mythic proportions in the stories commemorating them after their
death, the subject of “No Head Pawn” is immortalized in a gruesome ghost story that
terrifies children and stands as a warning against the abuse of power.
Although *Auld Licht Idylls* and *In Ole Virginia* appear to be simple works of local color, within the context of late nineteenth century Victorian society, their genesis and reception becomes increasingly complex. Critics have often attacked local colorists for pandering to popular tastes and creating unabashedly romanticized and unrealistic depictions of their provincial locales. However, the Scottish and Southern people that had served as the models for the quaint provincials in the works of Barrie and Page were no more ready to accept the realities of modernity than the audiences that enjoyed the works for the glimpses they provided into a different culture—a culture that seemed to be unsullied by the effects of industrialization and urbanization. The writings of Barrie and Page are therefore important developments in their regional literary traditions. They provided fictional havens from the ugly realities of modern society in which the unique characteristics of their regions could be preserved and revered. While they did offer a non-critical and occasionally self-indulgent view of Scottish and Southern culture, Barrie and Page were writing in a marginalized tradition and their regional literatures had not yet reached the state of maturity that would allow for major self-analysis. The role of critical self-evaluations would hence fall to the next generation of regional writers.
CHAPTER THREE

Dystopic Regionalism: Brown’s *The House with the Green Shutters* and Faulkner’s *The Hamlet*

The vogue in quaint local color writing did not outlast the Victorian era. Writers such as Barrie and Page answered the needs of a society still reeling from rapid modernization, a society that needed a halcyon fictional realm into which to escape. Yet, as industrial progress showed no signs of slackening, society could no longer ignore the fact that it existed in a modern and much changed world. Continued industrialization and modernization, along with economic recessions, increasing class conflict, and a variety of social troubles all contributed to the bleak outlook of the early twentieth century. As had been the case throughout the nineteenth century, this host of problems was even more detrimental to the cities and rural areas of Scotland and the South. As traditionally rural and agrarian communities, these regions had less time to adjust to the process of industrialization than the more developed areas of England and the Northeast United States. Scots and Southerners experienced industrialization as a far more drastic and revolutionary force because it completely altered the structure of their society and challenged their traditional value system and way of life. No longer willing to play quaint provincials, regional writers began to realize that nostalgia and escapism would not alleviate the conditions of modernity that were responsible for the economic and cultural decay within their communities, and literature then began to give more realistic depictions of Scottish and Southern life, exposing both the characteristics that made those
regions unique, as well as the flaws that were plaguing these communities. Two such works are George Douglas Brown’s *The House With the Green Shutters* and William Faulkner’s *The Hamlet*, both of which are set in small, fictional communities and trace the rise and fall of prominent men. Unlike the regional writers before them, Brown and Faulkner did not wish to glorify their homelands or recapture the grandeur of days gone by. Both men placed their narratives in locales that were apparently fictional but that were closely based on their hometowns. They then depicted their respective settings as they knew them to be—communities in states of dramatic change—and thus in their works, the locales that had appeared as pastoral Edens in earlier regional literature became blighted dystopias. These two novels borrow and subvert conventions of their regional nostalgic literature to show that materialism and self-interest leads to the breakdown of communities and deterioration of personal moral codes.

George Douglas Brown was born in 1869 in Ochiltree, Ayrshire. His mother was an unwed and illiterate dairy worker, and his father was a farmer known around the area as Smudden after his farm Drumsmudden. As a child, Brown did well in school, but he was unable to escape the stigma of his illegitimacy and was always aware that it set him apart from other children. He was frequently referred to as “Smudden’s bastard,” and he was well aware of the implications of the term for himself and his unwed mother (Bold 109). These early experiences and impressions had a great influence on the young Brown, and led him to experience small town Scottish life as very different from that depicted by Kailyard writers. In a letter written after the publication of *The House With the Green Shutters*, Brown warns a friend that he may not like the book due to its negative portrayals, but Brown felt that it was precisely the negative characteristics of life
in small Scottish communities that needed to be brought to light. Of the novel Brown says, “There is too much black for the white in it. However, the malignants of rural life in Scotland had never been studied and I wished to show them up as they deserved” (qtd. in Civardi 21). In his novel he creates a class of these type of rural malignants whom he calls “the bodies,” and shows how their spite and med dling plagues his fictional community of Barbie. In another letter written in 1902, Brown further reveals his intentions in his novel: “It is more complimentary to Scotland, I think, than the sentimental slop of Barrie, and Crockett, and Maclaren. It was antagonism to their method that made me embitter the blackness” (qtd. in Civardi 22). Brown resented the works of the Kailyard writers because they were discordant with his personal experiences, and he therefore wanted to depict the type of community that he had known. As Alan Bold explains in Modern Scottish Literature, “Brown had suffered from malicious gossip in his own life and had formed a bitter impression of Scottish smalltown life. Scots, according to Brown’s experience, were motivated by malice: they resented any man who surpassed the situation he inherited” (112). Brown had surpassed his illegitimate origins by distinguishing himself as a promising scholar and receiving fellowships and scholarships to continue his studies at university, yet his persistent bitterness towards his experiences in Ochiltree is evident in his scathing portrayals in The House With the Green Shutters. As a reviewer for The Bookman said of the novel in 1902: “Surely only a Scot would dare to draw such a picture of a Scottish village; it is entertaining, and it is apt in its witticisms, but it is remorselessly cruel—there is scarcely one kind heart in it” (534).
William Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi in 1897, but his family moved to Oxford, Mississippi while he was still a small child and he made this town his home for the remainder of his life. Faulkner’s family had lived in Mississippi for four generations, and he was named after the first member of his family to settle there. Faulkner was fascinated by his namesake, his great-grandfather William Clark Falkner, who had moved to Mississippi in 1840. In a letter to Malcolm Cowley, Faulkner recounts the deeds of the man who had been “a considerable figure in his time and provincial milieu” (qtd. in Brooks 333). He rose from humble origins to fight in the Civil War and then went on to do many great things, as Faulkner explains in his letter to Cowley. ‘He built the first railroad in our county, wrote a few books, made grand European tour of his time, died in a duel and the county raised a marble effigy which still stands in Tippah County’ (qtd. in Brooks 333). He used his great-grandfather as the prototype for his character of John Sartoris in his novel *Sartoris*, which appeared in 1929 and was the first of his works set in the fictional Mississippi county of Yoknapatawpha. Faulkner used Yoknapatawpha as the setting of numerous later works, *The Hamlet* being one. *The Hamlet* is the first book of Faulkner’s Snopes trilogy, and although its publication date was 1940, Faulkner had begun work on many of the stories in the novel in the mid 1920’s around the same time that he was writing *Sartoris*. Despite Faulkner’s interest in his ancestors and the Old South, he does not hold them above reproach as earlier regionalists had done; and his fiction therefore often serves as a critique of Southern culture. In his 1940 review of *The Hamlet*, Malcolm Cowley explains Faulkner’s view of the South:
Faulkner is usually described as a realist and a rebel against the Southern tradition. In reality he accepts the tradition, but in an altered form, making it less material than moral. He does not insist in his books that ante-bellum life was glamorous and he is not interested in white-pillared plantation houses except as symbols of decay. What he does tell us is that there used to be men in the South who were capable of good and evil, who observed or failed to observe a traditional code of ethics. These men, he says, were defeated in the Civil War, but not by the Northern armies. Surviving into a new era, they were weakened by a sense of guilt resulting from their relations with the Negroes; and they were finally destroyed by new men rising from among the Poor Whites. (510)

Indeed, in *The Hamlet*, Faulkner illustrates the conflict between the value systems of the Old and New South, and the picture he presents of the community in which materialism has won out is bleak. Desmond Hawkins, the reviewer for *The New Statesman and Nation*, provides an apt description of the novel and expresses opinions reflective of many reviews of the work: ‘Mr. Faulkner's world is occupied by a few passions and sensations, elemental in their structure and violent in their articulation. Dog eats dog, with no pity and precious little remorse’ (312-313). Both *The House With the Green Shutters* and *The Hamlet* therefore provided dark and critical portraits of life in small Scottish and Southern communities, and these portraits were even more striking to audiences and critics accustomed to the pleasant provincialism of earlier Kailyard and plantation works.
Brown sets *The House With the Green Shutters* in the fictional Scottish town of Barbie, which has the appearance of an idyllic rural community: “The freshness of the air, the smoke rising thin and far above the red chimneys, the sunshine glistening on the roofs and gables, the rosy clearness of everything beneath the dawn, above all the quietness and peace, made Barbie, usually so poor to see, a very pleasant place to look down at on a summer morning” (Brown 39). In the early morning sunlight, Barbie has the appearance of an ideal Scottish village. With none of the citizens yet about, the town seems tranquil and inviting. Faulkner's fictional town of Frenchman’s Bend likewise conforms to idealized images of small Southern communities. It consists of a schoolhouse, church, blacksmith’s shop, general store, and assortment of other structures one would expect to find in a small town. The rustic location of the town also creates a sense of peaceful seclusion: “Frenchman’s Bend was a section of rich river-bottom country lying twenty miles southeast of Jefferson. Hill-cradled and remote . . . it had been the original grant and site of a tremendous pre-Civil war plantation” (3). While these two towns appear to be pleasant places, they differ from the type of ideal communities usually depicted in Kailyard and Plantation narratives in one major way: the inhabitants.

Both Barbie and Frenchman’s Bend are unwholesome environments in which community values have withered. Man is a social creature and requires interaction with other humans. For this reason, men have settled in groups since time immemorial, but the communities must be based on more than convenience or economic necessity. As Cleanth Brooks states, “A true community . . . is held together by manners and morals deriving from a commonly held view of reality” (339). A community must share a
system of values, a feeling of unity, and a desire to preserve the well-being of every individual. The citizens of Barbie and Frenchman’s Bend have lost these qualities and become selfinterested and even spiteful, thus deviating drastically from the quaint, kindhearted provincials that typically populate sentimental narratives. In both novels, a group of townspeople consistently observes and speculates on the events of the narrative. These groups, the “bodies” of Barbie and the congregation of men at Varner’s store in Frenchman’s Bend, illustrate the deterioration of community values through their gossip and petty competitiveness.

Rather than being friendly and compassionate, the people of Barbie are spiteful, malicious individuals. Brown identifies a type of person, “the bodie,” who can be found in every Scottish town, and who spends his time loitering and gossiping about his neighbors. The bodies of Barbie are of a distinct type: “The genus ‘bodie’ is divided into two species: the ‘harmless bodies’ and the ‘nesty bodies.’ The bodies of Barbie mostly belonged to the second variety” (58). These men congregate daily in the center of town “to pass judgment on the town’s affairs” (58). Their chatter is far from harmless, however, and often takes the form of taunting and scheming against their fellow citizens. The men who are continually lounging on front of Varner’s Store in Frenchman’s Bend constitute a third type of bodie: the indifferent bodie. Joseph Gold has pointed out that “The villagers are essentially human, and on the whole well-meaning, but their behavior has become formalized, their moral fiber weakened. They do not want to make trouble for themselves; they want only to live without fuss, to plod along untroubled” (30). Like the people of Barbie, these men seem to occupy themselves by doing nothing more than watching and discussing their fellow townspeople. The events of the town serve as
nothing more than entertainment, which they watch with interest but never involvement. Thus, interaction amongst these men, both the men of Barbie and Frenchman’s Bend, does not create any feelings of accord between them. Despite their conversing and physical proximity, they are alienated and at odds with each other.

These men logically turn their attention most frequently to the prominent members of their societies. In Barbie, John Gourlay is initially the most wealthy and powerful man in the town, whereas Will Varner and Flem Snopes share the position in Frenchman’s Bend. John Gourlay and Flem Snopes serve as the focal point of both their towns’ curiosity and the events that constitute each novel, yet they possess few of the qualities usually associated with a hero or protagonist. Not only are they at odds with their communities, but they are also ambitious, materialistic, and callous. Gourlay and Flem become agents of the changes that are occurring within their small communities, changes that appear to bring progress but really only create devastation.

John Gourlay, the most prominent man in Barbie, is a sort of anti-hero. He is a stupid brute, but luck has enabled him to be successful in business. He is one of the most powerful men in Barbie, but good fortune has endowed him with the tragic flaw of excessive pride, which alienates him from the community. The people of Barbie resent Gourlay’s wealth and status, and John Gourlay is one of the bodies’ favorite subjects. The bodies begrudge Gourlay’s pride and status, but they also fear him. Therefore, the only weapon they have is spiteful chatter: ‘It was not the least of the evils caused by Gourlay’s black pride that it perverted a dozen characters. The ‘bodies’ of Barbie may have been decent enough men in their own way, but against him their malevolence was monstrous. It showed itself in an insane desire to seize on every scrap of gossip they
might twist against him”(66). Eventually Gourlay’s business begins to fail, and the bodies savor his misfortune with fiendish glee and taunt him at every opportunity, thus contributing to his downfall.

Gourlay is the owner of the House with the Green Shutters, and he sees this structure as a monument to his pride. He built it so that the townspeople would have a constant reminder of his wealth and success. The house also represents Gourlay’s materialism and distorted sense of values:

Every time he looked at the place he had a sense of triumph over what he knew in his bones to be an adverse public opinion. There was anger in his pleasure, and the pleasure that is mixed with anger often gives the keenest thrill. It is the delight of triumph in spite of opposition. Gourlay’s house was a material expression of that delight, stood for it in stone and lime.

(48-49)

The house is Gourlay’s passion, and he constantly spends money on it, seeing every improvement in the structure as a snub to the people of Barbie. In the essay “The House With the Green Shutters: A Chapter of the Moral History of Scotland,” Christian Civardi discusses the novel as a warning against the perversion of pride and explains the complex cultural forces that caused pride to become such an overwhelming and antagonistic influence in Scottish society. The Scottish people had been united for centuries in their struggle against the English, but with the Union of 1707 they lost their common enemy and turned against each other:

Pride and individualism were turned into envy and censoriousness, and singleness of purpose became sheer stubbornness. These flaws were
exacerbated by the ‘agricultural improvements’ of the late eighteenth century, the main effect of which was a new eagerness for profit . . . [which] was given a justification and a philosophy by the economists of the industrial age, as well as by many Calvinist theologians . . . Unlike the English, who could always struggle up the ladder of social, religious, military or political hierarchy, the Scots had no hierarchy to climb, they did not have a vast enough field on which they could vent their pride. When individualism, pride, poverty, and the Calvinist equalitarian dogma were combined within the bounds of small communities, they fostered rampant and all corrupting greed and envy. (Civardi 22-23)

These are the forces that have set the people of Barbie against each other, leading the bodies to spiteful envy and resentment of Gourlay's financial success, and causing Gourlay to flaunt his wealth and sacrifice everything to maintain his proud position.

Although the community of Barbie aggravates Gourlay's troubles, he bears a great deal of the responsibility for his own misfortune. He is doomed by his own personality: ‘He was not wilfully cruel; only a stupid man with a strong character, in which he took a dogged pride. Stupidity and pride provoked the brute in him’ (54). These are the qualities that allow Gourlay to become the most successful businessman in Barbie, but they are also what will cause his downfall. Gourlay is a cheese merchant, a quarry operator, and the only goods carrier in the burgh. Even though Gourlay did not need to expend a great deal of effort to monopolize commerce in such a small town, he dealt ruthlessly with the occasional competitor, sacrificing his own profits to drive the other out of business. At the height of Gourlay’s success, a man named Wilson returns
to Barbie after an absence of many years. The son of a mole-catcher, Wilson has risen from his humble origins to financial success. He remembers Gourlay as one of the most important men in Barbie and approaches him hoping for recognition of his own achievement, but Gourlay insults him as an inferior, wounding Wilson’s pride. This encounter creates a rift between the two men that will lead to Gourlay’s downfall.

Wilson establishes himself as a rival businessman and the competition between the two men is fierce. However, Wilson has an intellect far superior to Gourlay and his business begins to grow while Gourlay’s declines. Although Gourlay had previously been able to force other small merchants out of business, Wilson has learned his craft in the city and can easily out-maneuver Gourlay’s old-fashioned practices:

[Gourlay] was nowhere in the stress of modern competition. The grand days . . . when he was the only big man in the locality, and carried everything with a high hand, had disappeared for ever. Now all was bustle, hurry, and confusion, the getting and sending of telegrams, quick dispatches by railway, the watching of markets at a distance, rapid combinations that bewildered Gourlay’s duller mind. At first he was too obstinate to try the newer methods; when he did, he was too stupid to use them cleverly. (135)

Gourlay’s business is eventually ruined and he has to let all of his workers go, but his dogged pride still will not allow him to abandon his rivalry with Wilson even though he no longer has the financial means to continue the feud. He borrows money and manages to make the town believe that he is voluntarily reducing the size of his business. However, Gourlay’s last attempt to compete with Wilson is also his gravest mistake.
Upon hearing that Wilson is sending his son to university, Gourlay decides that he will send his son as well. This decision ensures not only Gourlay’s downfall, but the downfall of his entire family.

The young John Gourlay is an even more tragic figure than his father, but he lacks all of his father’s beneficial characteristics. As Civardi points out, the young John Gourlay represents the weakening character of the Scottish people: ‘The old Gourlay is an embodiment of the pride and individualism which had for ages sustained the Scots’ struggle for existence . . . the son is an embodiment of the fear and escapism which appeared in the nineteenth century, when Scotsmen were brutally confronted with the dire realities of the industrial age” (22). Where the older Gourlay is strong and brave, his son is weak and cowardly, which makes him ill suited to university. He dreads leaving the small and familiar world of Barbie, and finds Edinburgh strange and terrifying. He turns to drink to sharpen his intellect and bolster his courage, but he does not have the strength to control his habit. He manages to win a prestigious academic prize, but this small success merely raises his father’s expectations and makes his ultimate failure more acute. He is expelled from the university due to his drunkenness, and his disgrace is such an injury to his father’s pride that it drives Gourlay into a cruel and inhuman rage. For the first time, Gourlay is vulnerable to the malicious bodies of Barbie: ‘It was his son’s disgrace that gave the men he had trodden under foot the first weapon they could use against him. . . It had enabled his foes to get their knife into him at last—and they were turning the dagger in the wound” (209). Prior to this, the townspeople had only envy and spite to direct at Gourlay. John’s shame gives them a concrete weapon, and the bodies seize the opportunity.
Gourlay is forced to endure an entire day of taunting before he confronts his son. In his fury Gourlay brutally plans to punish his son, but he is never able to vent his wrath. As soon as he pounces, John strikes him over the head with a heavy poker and kills him. The family tells the town that Gourlay fell from a ladder and hit his head, and the town believes the story. However, without Gourlay’s overbearing presence the family falls apart. Although John managed to escape punishment for the patricide, he suffers great psychological torment and he takes his own life with a little poison and a dram of whiskey. When his mother and sister find him they realize that they must do the same. Gourlay has left them in terrible financial debt, and they are too weak in both health and character to take care of themselves. They finish John’s poison and the tragedy of the Gourlay family is complete. The House with the Green Shutters is left ‘sitting dark there and terrible, beneath the radiant arch of the dawn’ (247), and the novel ends with the tone more of a Greek tragedy than a pastoral romance.

The relationship between Will Varner and Flem Snopes parallels the shift in power from Gourlay to Wilson. Varner is the most important citizen in Frenchman’s Bend:

He was the largest landholder and beat supervisor in one county and Justice of the Peace in the next and election commissioner in both, and hence the fountainhead if not of law at least of advice and suggestion . . .

He was a farmer, a usurer, and a veterinarian . . . He owned most of the good land in the country and held mortgages on most of the rest. (5-6) In addition to these many enterprises, Varner also owns the cotton gin, the blacksmith shop, and the store in front of which the men of Frenchman’s Bend congregate to watch
the activity of the town. He is a successful businessman, but he still has an agreeable disposition and exudes the air of a leisured country gentleman. Among Varner’s many landholdings is the old plantation from which Frenchman’s Bend derives its name, and he is associated with the structure in much the same way as Gourlay is associated with the House with the Green Shutters. The original owner of the Frenchman’s Plantation is long dead, and the house stands in ruins; all that remains is ‘the gutted shell of an enormous house with its fallen stables and slave quarters and overgrown gardens and brick terraces and promenades’ (3). Yet even in its dilapidated state, it testifies to the pride and prosperity of its builder. Will Varner owns the house and keeps it as a symbol of arrogant humility. He explains, ‘I reckon I’ll just keep what there is left of it, just to remind me of my one mistake. This is the only thing I ever bought in my life I couldn’t sell to nobody’ (7).

Varner’s son, Jody, has taken over the running of the family businesses, but, like young John Gourlay, Jody lacks many of his father’s strengths. Even his physical appearance and demeanor are inferior to his father, and he seems a bit of a ridiculous figure:

[He] was about thirty, a prime bulging man, slightly thyroidic, who was not only unmarried but who emanated a quality of invincible and inviolable bachelordom as some people are said to breathe out the odor of sanctity or spirituality. He was a big man, already promising a considerable belly in ten or twelve years, though as yet he still managed to postulate something of the trim and unattached cavalier. (7)
Jody has never known struggle or hard work since his father has already established the enterprises that Jody merely took over. Jody also lacks a great deal of his father’s cleverness. He takes his economic success for granted and, for the most part, allows the businesses to run themselves. The Varners have had no competition in Frenchman’s Bend, and therefore no reason to change their ways. Greed is the one characteristic that Will and Jody share, but whereas Will was able to combine his intelligence with his acquisitive nature to become a successful businessman, Jody allows his greed to completely dictate his decisions.

Jody’s avaricious nature is directly responsible for Flem Snopes taking over the family businesses. Jody convinces his father that they should rent a farm to Ab Snopes, even though they know that he was accused of burning his previous landlord’s barn, because Jody plans to wait until Ab has worked the land and then confront him with the crime in order to swindle him out of his fair share of the profits. In order to guarantee that Ab Snopes will not harm his property, Jody hires Flem to be the clerk in his store. The townspeople are fascinated with Flem, “a thick squat soft man of no establishable age between twenty and thirty, with a broad still face containing a tight seam of mouth stained slightly at the corners with tobacco, and eyes the color of stagnant water, and . . . a tiny predatory nose like the beak of a small hawk” (57), but his reticence and guardedness give the town scant material for gossip. Flem quickly proves himself to be a more capable businessman than Jody, who was notorious for making mistakes. Flem conducts business with a mechanical precision, and soon Jody leaves him entirely in charge of the store:
It had actually seemed as if not only the guiding power but the proprietorial and revenue-derived as well was concentrated in that squat reticent figure in the steadily-soiling white shirts and the minute invulnerable bow, which in those abeyant days lurked among the ultimate shadows of the deserted and rich-odored interior with a good deal of the quality of a spider of that bulbous blond omnivorous though non-poisonous species. (64-65)

The town watches as Flem’s success grows. He moves into town and begins to undertake his own business ventures, some of them honest and open, some of them dubious and covert. He lends money, acquires property, and replaces many of the positions in the town such as blacksmith and schoolteacher with members of his own family: “Those who watched the clerk now saw, not the petty dispossesssion of a blacksmith, but the usurpation of an heirship” (98). Flem even displaces Jody from his position as trusted son. Varner allows Flem to take on responsibilities he never entrusted to Jody, and Flem begins to accompany Varner on is leisurely rambles through the countryside. The two are often seen sitting in front of the old Frenchman plantation, and Varner allows Flem to sit in his precious flour barrel chair as if he was relinquishing his throne.

Despite Flem’s success and efficient dealings with the community, he does not have the rapport with the townspeople that Varner did. He is aloof, impassive, and seemingly indifferent to everything except material acquisition. He never joins the conversations of the men congregated at the store, and even when he is seen with Varner, he is simply listening passively. As William J. Palmer has pointed out, “The old, traditional society of the South is defined by its humanistic and passionate representatives
and the new, economic society of the twentieth century, which systematically destroys the old tradition, is defined by the character of Flem Snopes” (185). Will Varner is a relic of traditional Southern society, and ‘Flem represents a new, inhuman approach to life, an approach which negates love and exalts economic gain” (188). This shift in values is completed with Flem’s marriage to Eula Varner.

Eula is an anomaly in the quiet, mundane community of Frenchman’s Bend. She possesses a mysterious charm that captivates everyone around her, and she brings with her “amoist blast of spring’s liquorish corruption, a pagan triumphal prostration before the supreme primal uterus” (126). In the midst of the indifference and materialism, Eula exudes femininity and fertility that affects the men of the town like a spell and holds the promise of rejuvenation and redemption. Yet, when Eula becomes pregnant, Varner destroys any promise of renewal that Eula could have initiated by marrying her to the one man unable to appreciate her: Flem Snopes. In order to avoid the shame of an illegitimate child, Varner trades his daughter as though she were a piece of land, and Flem agrees to the bargain because he will also get the deed to the Frenchman plantation. This marriage has serious ramifications for the entire community. Linda Prior suggests that Eula symbolizes an ancient life force that is lacking in the hamlet: “Eula is a ray of hope that begins to blossom in the hamlet, but only briefly, for she is wasted. A woman capable of great powers of reproduction, she is given to an impotent man who, to complete the tragedy, does not even want her” (237). Indeed, after Eula’s marriage, Frenchman’s Bend seems “alittle lost village, nameless, without grace, forsaken, yet which wombed once by chance and accident one blind seed of the spendthrift Olympian ejaculation and did not even know it” (164).
Flem’s dominance within the community is complete, and his possession of the Frenchman plantation signifies the replacement of the old Southern way of life with the new materialistic, callous system of values. Through the entire process, the people of Frenchman’s Bend have watched apathetically as Flem takes advantage of their neighbors, neglects his family, and uses any means to increase his own wealth. Flem pulls off his biggest swindle when he tricks Ratliff, Bookwright, and Armstid into buying the Frenchman plantation. He buries bags of silver dollars on the property, and makes a show of being seen digging around in the plantation’s garden at night. The townspeople have always heard a myth that the previous owner of the land buried a fortune in gold on the property, and Flem knows people will believe that that is what he is digging for. Armstid brings the other men to the plantation, and they unearth the money that Flem has buried. However, they allow their greed to cloud their judgment, and they rush to buy the land before anyone else can get it. Ratliff realizes the trick too late, and he and Bookwright abandon their digging. Armstid, on the other hand, was already weakened in mind and body by one of Flem’s earlier schemes to sell wild ponies, and he continues his crazed digging. The townspeople hear of Armstid’s madness, and they begin to congregate daily at the plantation to watch and occasionally antagonize him. Each day the crowd would disperse, “leaving Armstid in the middle of his fading slope, spading himself into the waxing twilight with the regularity of a mechanical toy and with something monstrous in his unflagging effort, as if the toy were too light for what it had been set to do, or too tightly wound” (405). Flem passes the spectacle on his way to Jefferson, and he regards the scene he has created with complete indifference. This scene, consisting of the ruined mansion, a man driven mad by his own greed, a
community with no apparent sense of concern for each other, and the impersonal agent of change and modernity indifferently leaving them all behind, is emblematic of the entire novel.

The small towns of Barbie and Frenchman’s Bend are thus both left corrupted by greed and self-interest, and the novels serve as Brown’s and Faulkner’s warnings to their communities of what will happen if they continue to relinquish their traditional values. These fictional towns have no sense of community, and the values that could have united and redeemed them have all been sacrificed to progress and acquisition. The bleak lesson illustrated by Gourlay and Flem is that material gain cannot be an end in itself. As long as people are driven by nothing more than the desire to possess, their lives will be stunted, for as Gourlay and Varner discovered, that which a man has acquired can easily be taken away by the next individual who is just a little bit more clever or a little bit more ruthless. The only chance for redemption in these towns is a return to traditional values. As Gold states, “Positive moral values and insistence on a love ethic are essential to social salvation. Man must be helped, not merely ignored”(30). The people of Barbie and Frenchman’s Bend must reject the callous moral code of men like John Gourlay and Flem Snopes and return to a sense of community concerned with collective well-being before they will be able to return to the type of life that resembles the pastoral ideal.
CONCLUSION

In the formation of Scottish and Southern literatures, Scott and Simms each established the foundations for a regional literary tradition, Barrie and Page embellished their framework, and Brown and Faulkner strengthened the practices and conventions that their predecessors had established. These later writers’ revolt against sentimental literature helped to draw attention to the lack of a fully-developed literary tradition that would reflect all aspects of their culture, both positive and negative, and they thereby cleared the way for both Scottish and Southern writers to successfully reassess their goals and methods, which enabled both traditions to flourish in the first half of the twentieth century. Both Scottish and Southern traditions commenced a literary renaissance in the 1920’s in which writers such as C.M. Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid), Edwin Muir, and Neil M. Gunn in Scotland, and John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Donald Davidson in the South all made concerted efforts to champion their regions’ cultural identity. This endeavor began with the staunch affirmation that Scotland and the South did have separate and unique identities apart from British and American mainstream culture. Both regions began to produce histories, sociological studies, novels, poetry, anthologies, and numerous journals and periodicals devoted to the reappraisal, examination, and preservation of Scottish and Southern culture. Thanks to the achievements of both renaissance movements, Scottish and Southern people have finally escaped the characterization of quaint provincials. Both regions can now claim distinguished literary traditions accompanied by an impressive and continually growing body of criticism and
scholarly work. Although both regions are still politically dependent on Great Britain and the United States, Scotland and the South can now, thanks in a large part to the literary achievements of regional writers from Scott and Simms to Brown and Faulkner, boldly assert their cultural independence and take pride in their distinct regional identities.
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