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Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans

Ann Rigney
Comparative Literature, Utrecht

Abstract This article seeks to contribute to contemporary discussions on the workings of cultural memory and examines in particular the way in which literary texts can function as a social framework for memory. Through a detailed study of the genesis, composition, and long-term reception of Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian* (1982 [1818]), I argue that literary texts play a variety of roles in the formation of cultural memory and that these roles are linked to their status as public discourse, to their fictional and poetical qualities, and to their longevity. This analysis of the multiple roles of literary texts in what I call "memorial dynamics" sheds light on the complex communicative processes by which images of the past are formed and transformed over time. It indicates the need to consider discontinuity as a feature of memorial dynamics and to recognize, for better or for worse, that fictionality and poeticity are an integral and not merely "inauthentic" feature of cultural memory.

1. Introduction

1.1. Varieties of History

A four-masted sailing ship that arrived in Quebec in 1843; a hybrid rose with a crimson color; an Australian class of potato; a lounge bar; the steam locomotive which pulled the daily express train from London to Edinburgh in 1900; one of the paddle steamers plying the Clyde in the 1930s; the geriatric unit in Helensburgh Victoria Infirmary, Dumbartonshire as it is this evening.

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Listing all these items side by side may read like a bizarre exercise worthy of a Borgesian encyclopedia: for what can possibly connect these plants, purveyors, and places? The answer is literature. For all these things do have something in common, and that is the fact that they have all been called "Jeanie Deans" after the heroine of Walter Scott's novel *The Heart of Midlothian* (1982 [1818]): Jeanie Deans the four-master; Jeanie Deans the rose; Jeanie Deans the tuber (aka Abundance); Jeanie Deans the lounge bar; Jeanie Deans the locomotive of the Teutonic class, the PS *Jeanie Deans*, Jeanie Deans the hospital ward.[1] In what follows, I examine how and why this proliferation of "Jeanie Deans" in so many domains of everyday life occurred, and I do so in order to address a more fundamental issue: what role do literary texts play in the formation of cultural memory?

A quarter of a century ago, this question would not have made much sense. To be sure, questions were regularly being asked about the relationship between "literature" (or "fiction") and something called "history." But since both partners in the relationship tended to be defined in rather monolithic and mutually exclusive terms, the discussion did not get very far. The fact that Harry Shaw's book *The Forms of Historical Fiction* (1983) should focus on what he calls "the problem with historical fiction" is symptomatic of the fact that, for both literary scholars and historians, "historical fiction" was something of an embarrassment. Neither fish nor fowl, neither "pure history" nor "pure fiction" (whatever those might be), historical fiction was a hybrid genre that was less to be explained than explained away. Things have changed considerably since then.

To begin with, historical themes have become widespread in contemporary literary practice in response to the traumatic events and rapid change that characterized the history of the twentieth century. Not only has the historical novel emerged as one of the dominant genres in postmodernism, but historical themes are also being treated extensively in a wide range of textual forms that defy traditional generic categorization. (A work like Ismail Kadare's *Three Elegies for Kosovo* [2000], for example, is difficult to classify and will as often be found in the "history" as in the "literary" sections of bookstores.)[2] In short: Whether literary theorists like it or not (and in the

1. The Internet has proved a valuable resource in locating all of these Jeanie Deans; for the four-master ship, go to ist.uwaterloo.ca/~marj/genealogy/ships/ships1843.html; for the potato, go to members.ozemail.com.au/~hsca/Potato_Inv_A_to_E.htm; for the rose, cultivated by Lord Penzance in 1895, go to www.rosegathering.com/penzance.html; for the hospital unit, opened as recently as 1998, go to www.argyllnhs.org.uk/hospitals/helensburghs.html. There is extensive literature on *Jeanie Deans* the paddle steamer and *Jeanie Deans* the locomotive; e.g., MacHaffie 1977 and Nock 1988. *Jeanie Deans* the lounge bar figured onboard the paddle steamer *Waverley*; see MacHaffie 1982.

2. Contemporary forms of historical fiction are discussed in Hutcheon 1988; Wesseling 1991;

postmodern nowadays they usually do), recent literary practice has forced us to rethink the limits of fiction and the limits of history and to find new ways of talking about the relationship between the two.

These developments within the field of literary studies are part of a larger trend, moreover: a broad-based reconsideration of the nature of "history" that is currently taking place among theorists of history and analysts of what may be called the "historical culture." Since the publication of Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1973), there has been widespread recognition that historiography is, among other things, a literary practice in that it uses verbal art and discursive procedures to make sense of the past. As a number of more recent studies have pointed out, moreover, academic historiography—the history written by professional historians on the basis of systematic research—is but one of the many ways in which people deal with the past. If, as Johan Huizinga (1929: 166) put it, history is the symbolic form in which a society takes account of its past, then it has become more and more evident in an increasingly museum-filled world that this "accounting for" takes place not only through historiography, but also through a wide range of other activities: commemorative ceremonies, museum visits, apologies on behalf of states, meetings of reenactment societies, watching historical films and reading historical fiction, family gatherings and genealogical research (in recent years, the national archives in Paris are consulted more often by private persons doing family history than by professional historians).[3] This intense preoccupation with the past in all its forms is often explained as an ongoing affect of the traumas of twentieth-century history that we are still trying to come to terms with. Certainly, many of the historical activities mentioned are linked to representations of World War II, and a vast literature now exists on this subject. But it also extends beyond this working through of traumas into a more generalized "musealization" of culture (Zacharias 1990) and to nostalgic tendencies (a "junk-Proustian Schwärmerei," as Dominick LaCapra [1998: 8] calls it), which have been linked to a sense of loss permeating postmodern culture.[4]

Whatever its exact cause, the increasing visibility of nonacademic historical activities has inevitably been met by changes in the conceptualization of "history." Simplifying greatly, these changes can best be summed up as

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Elias 2002. Many of the contributions to the recently established *Rethinking History* (1997–), a journal primarily written by and for historians, reflect this growing interest in exploring new types of relations between fictional and other modes of representation.

3. See Nora 1989: 15. The multiple forms of historical culture at the present time are discussed by, among others, Lowenthal (1985, 1996); Samuel (1994); Füssmann and Grütter (1994); Perry (1999); and Rosenzweig and Thelen (1998).

4. Postmodern nostalgia is discussed by, among others, Huyssen (1995); Hutcheon and Valdés (2000).

the growing recognition of "variety" in our dealings with the past. By now, there is a general consensus among theorists of history (even among those who would be most reluctant to describe themselves as "postmodernist") that there is no eternally "proper" way of doing history; that neither the subject of history nor its form is predestined. This argument applies both to work within the historical profession (in recent years there has been a rapid expansion in the range of "historical" subjects treated by academic historians and in the ways of writing about them) and to the many historical activities referred to above. Indeed, the historical culture is itself a blossoming new field of academic research.[5]

Acknowledging this variety, however, does not mean being logically committed to the idea that all varieties of history are equal and mutually exchangeable. This is a point that needs to be stressed, since the common use of the term *history* with regard to all these activities has tended to confuse the issue. Although they may both represent a form of "history," an academic work of historiography and a historical film from Hollywood clearly differ both in terms of institutional prestige (the academic work is stronger) and in terms of popularity (the film wins hands down). With the recognition of such pragmatic differences has come renewed debate among historians as to their particular role within the historical culture at large, the usual answer being some version or other of the idea that historians offer a critical perspective on ethnocentric views of the past and, in doing so, are committed to certain standards of evidence and argumentation.[6]

The debates are ongoing. One thing, however, has already become clear: a society's dealings with the past can no longer be happily divided into "history proper," identified with the work of professional historians, and "nonhistory" or "improper history," identified with all the rest. But having recognized the existence of "improper history" in this way, what should we now call it? And even more importantly, how can we analyze it in terms that do justice to its cultural importance? It is in the light of the need to find terms to describe the ubiquitous "improper history" that the popularity of the concept of "memory" in recent years can be understood.

1.2. The Communication of Memories

As is evident from what has been said here so far, "memory" came into discussions of history through the oppositional door as an alternative to his-

5. On the differences *within* the profession, see Novick 1988.

6. For various perspectives on the role of contemporary historians, see Leerssen and Rigney 2001. The idea that historians counter received ideas is expressed by, among others, Lowenthal ("whereas memory is seldom consciously revised, historians deliberately reinterpret the past through the lenses of subsequent events and ideas" [1985: 214]); Megill (1999: 233); and Mommsen (2001).

tory "proper" (the title of the journal *History and Memory* is a reminder of these origins). To a certain extent, this basic opposition still plagues discussions. Most egregiously perhaps, Pierre Nora's introduction to the multivolume *Lieux de mémoire* (1997 [1984–1992]) distinguished between "memory"—presented as originary, spontaneous, authentic, and characteristic of premodern communitarian societies—and "history," presented as derivative, analytic, official, and hence alienated from popular feelings (Nora 1989). In short, "memory," in Nora's presentation, becomes the locus of everything that is missing in history proper. It is by definition always a form of "countermemory" that is somehow deemed closer to the past experience of "ordinary people." Following this sort of oppositional logic, the early enthusiasm for "memory" could ironically tend toward a new foundationalism whereby forms of recall outside academic history—in literature, for example—are somehow deemed "more authentic" and "natural" by virtue of their difference from history "proper" or, ironically, even by virtue of some quasi-mystical connection with the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. In all of this enthusiasm for "memory," the fact was sometimes overlooked that memory, as psychologists well know, is always a constructive process which involves amnesia and distortion as well as acts of recall (Schacter 1996, 2001).

Memory, of course, refers in the first instance to the ways in which individuals recall their own experience, and as such it cannot be automatically or easily transferred to the social domain.[7] Now that the dust thrown up in the first oppositional wave has begun to settle, however, a more nuanced and usable concept of *cultural* memory is beginning to emerge, one which is better able to account for the variety of memorial forms and for the transformations of experience which all forms of remembrance entail. Let me note in passing that I use the term *cultural memory* in preference to its close relative *collective memory* because it avoids the suggestion that there is some unified collective entity or superindividual which does the remembering. I also use *cultural memory* in preference to *social memory* (Burke 1989) because it foregrounds what Paul Connerton (1989: 39) has called "those acts of transfer that make remembering in common possible" and thus opens the way for an analysis of the artifacts and cultural processes through which shared memories are shaped and disseminated in the modern age.[8]

The concept of cultural memory, as it has emerged in recent years in the work of Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, among others, marks a clear

7. For an account of the pitfalls and possibilities involved in applying concepts of memory to describe collective views of the past, see Fritzsche 2001 and Kansteiner 2002.
8. Olick and Robbins (1998) have also proposed putting "mnemonic practices" at the center of memory studies.

shift away from the idea of "memory" as the spontaneous recall of past experiences as these have been passed on unsullied and intact from one generation to the next. It focuses attention instead on the multiple ways in which images of the past are communicated and shared among members of a community through public acts of remembrance and through publicly accessible media which are sometimes commercially driven (see especially Assmann 1997; Assmann 1999; and Kansteiner 2002). Against the background of this "social-constructivist" approach to cultural memory, which looks at the mediation of memories in various public spheres, the pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs (1950, 1994 [1925]) has taken on renewed significance.[9] Seen from a social-constructivist perspective, cultural memory is not so much a reservoir in which images of the past are gradually deposited by some ongoing spontaneous process. Instead, it is the historical product of cultural mnemotechniques and mnemotechnologies, from commemorative rituals to historiography, through which shared images of the past are actively produced and circulated.

The way has thus been opened toward the study of the role of communication in the shaping and in the transfer of memories between individuals and groups: what semiotic processes are involved when memories are shared among contemporaries and across generations? And to what extent does this "sharing" also always involve the loss and transformation of information? As Halbwachs had already shown and the recent work of Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann confirms, the memories of individuals tend to look for confirmation and interpretation within a "social framework." Through repeated acts of communication, individual memories of particular events tend to converge with those of other people as these circulate and spread in the public sphere. This means, among other things, that the memories which individuals have of events in which they themselves participated become mediated by *other* people's memories of the same events as these are expressed, and thus stabilized, in different fora.[10]

While the mediation of personal experience through "social frameworks" is of interest in understanding the workings of individual memory, of even greater interest is the way in which the public expression of memories enables these to be "transferred" to nonparticipants. Through hearing or reading about other people's experiences in other ages or in other places,

9. The idea of a "social-constructivist" approach to memory is formulated by Jan Assmann (1997: 47). The emphasis on the communal *construction* of shared memories is also reflected in the title of Daniel J. Sherman's recent *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (1999).
10. In his novel *Vertigo*, Sebald (1999 [1990]: 7–8) describes how the personal memory of a landscape can be replaced by someone else's drawing of it; for a similar case, see Lowenthal 1985: 196.

we remember their lives and experiences vicariously, as it were. Such memory transfers occur within the contemporary world as newspapers and other media send out the daily news; but they are of particular importance when it comes to communication between generations. Indeed, Jan Assmann distinguishes in this regard between "communicative memory," based on the firsthand recall of experience on the part of participants and witnesses, and cultural memory proper, where the past is recalled primarily through texts and other forms of representation (as eyewitnesses die out in the century following the events in question, communicative memory is gradually replaced by cultural memory).[11]

Cultural memory, then, is arguably always vicarious in the sense that it involves memories of other people's lives that have been mediated by texts and images: inherited. The point becomes obvious if we consider how many of our images of the past, and even of the world in which we ourselves live, are the product not of our own experience but of secondhand accounts as these are made available in word-of-mouth reports and in the modern mass media. Obviously, the more time has elapsed between events and those who recall them, the greater the degree of mediation in the transfer of memories and, following what was said earlier about "social frameworks," the greater the degree of convergence between them. Thus we all have some image of what it was like to be in the trenches of World War I, but since presumably none of us was actually there ourselves, our ideas about the trenches must be a product of various public discourses ranging from family stories to historiographical works and school textbooks to literary works such as *Im Westen nichts Neues* or the film version of the same. (In the case of World War II, we are still dealing in large, if diminishing, part with firsthand accounts.) There is presumably less divergence in our views of World War I, given our reliance on a limited repertoire of texts, than there would be among all the individuals who actually fought in the trenches, each with his own story to tell his children.

As these last examples already indicate, the recognition that cultural memories are the product of specific acts of communication also leads to the recognition that cultural memories have their own histories and continue to evolve in the course of time. Since "memories" are not flies in amber, which are passed on in pristine state from one person or generation to another like the baton in a relay race, we can expect that, in the course of time, the content of what is remembered will also change; that new images will be acquired and past images revised or abandoned in the light of subse-

11. On the transition between "communicative" and "cultural" memory, see Assmann 1997: 48–56. Marianne Hirsch (1997) uses the term *post-memory* to designate the transition from firsthand accounts to inherited memories.

quent events.[12] And indeed, recent years have also seen increasing interest in the various forms of memory loss and cultural amnesia as the inevitable correlative of cultural memory.[13] Behind this view of memorial dynamics is the idea that "being remembered" is more than a matter of being recorded in some archive—what is stored in an archive is merely a "latent" form of memory, and as long as no one pays any attention to an account of the past, it is effectively forgotten.[14] Instead, memories are dependent on their being recalled in various media by later generations who find them meaningful for the nonce, who may even find it their duty to keep them alive, but whose descendants may, nevertheless, proceed to forget them again.

Against the background of this view of cultural memory as an ongoing elaboration of a collective relationship to the past through the mediation of discourse, the question arises as to the possible role of literary texts in this process. I use the words *literature* and *literary* here in a general way to refer to display texts which are valued because of the way they are written or because of the way they are conceived (*literature* in this sense includes a whole range of texts, most but not all of which are written in recognizable literary genres). Much has been written in recent years by literary scholars on the thematization of personal and cultural memory in particular works of fiction (unfortunately, there has been strikingly little attention paid to literature by analysts of historical culture, who have concentrated on museums and material forms of heritage).[15] By and large, however, literary scholars have been concerned with individual texts, considered in isolation from the broader cultural context and from other forms of nonartistic remembrance. They have also tended to approach these texts as storehouses of individual memories and as repositories of certain types of experience, especially traumatic experiences that would otherwise have disappeared into

12. Forms of remembrance and even the commitment to commemorate things in public are also historically variable; see Ariès 1977; Hutton 1993: 91–105; Assmann 1999: 47.
13. Haverkamp and Lachmann 1993; Weinrich 1997; Ricoeur 2000; Ankersmit 2001.
14. On the distinction between "latent" and "working" memory, see Assmann 1999: 128ff. Weinrich (1997: 257) equates being "stored" (*abgespeichert*) with being effectively forgotten. Echoing the link made by Weinrich between "storing" and "forgetting," Koselleck (1979: 257) has argued that public memorials, while ostensibly a stimulant to remembrance, can, in fact, initiate amnesia.
15. Pierre Nora's massive *Les lieux de mémoire* (1997 [1984–1992]) does pay some attention to literature in the broad sense, but this is effectively limited to a chapter on folktales and proverbs (3: 3555–81), a section on historiographical classics (1: 739–952), a chapter on the children's book *Le tour de France par deux enfants* (1: 277–301), and a chapter on Proust (3: 3835–69). Texts as a memorial medium, or indeed art of any kind with the incidental exception of cinema, is notably absent from the more general works on historical culture cited in note 3 above. The extent of interest in "memory" among literary scholars is indicated by the proceedings of the 1997 International Comparative Literature Association conference (D'haen 2000).

oblivion with those who suffered them.[16] Voices have even been raised suggesting a sort of hotline between literary expression and "authentic" memory (as distinct from "inauthentic" official accounts of the past; see, for example, Hartman 1995). I shall get back to this point later. Suffice it here to point out that literary scholars have tended to view individual texts as the terminus or outcome of remembrance rather than as active ingredients in an ongoing cultural process.

In what follows, I want to broaden the terms of the discussion by approaching the role of literature in terms of the social-constructivist model of cultural memory outlined above. This leads us beyond the study of the thematic content of particular works to a consideration of the way in which literary texts work alongside other memorial forms. The question is no longer how does a particular text view the past but how do literary texts operate mnemotechnically? That is, what particular role do they play, if any, in fixing, transmitting, and transforming memories across time?

In order to answer this question, I shall focus on a single case. By adopting a diachronic perspective, which includes the genesis and reception of a given work, I hope to show how a literary artifact relates to other memorial media and what its long-term role is in what I call "memorial dynamics."

As our many Jeanie Deans have indicated, the case in point is Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818).

2. The Case of *The Heart of Midlothian*

2.1. Remembering Helen Walker

Walter Scott (1771–1832) is perhaps now best known as the author of costume dramas, like *Ivanhoe*, or as one of the earliest businessmen-writers with a keen instinct for what would sell well. He was certainly all of that. But Walter Scott should also be remembered (and here I myself am carrying out a public act of recall) as someone who was active in exploring many forms of historical activity: from collecting and editing literary texts, assembling a private archive, building a neo-Gothic castle, writing a life of Napoleon and a history of witchcraft, and of course, writing a series of historical novels relating to the history of Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These novels were experimental explorations in the border between "living" memory or "communicative" memory, as preserved in oral tradition by those associated with the events described, and cultural memory, as set out in texts accessible to those who are not directly associated with the

16. Langer (1975); Felman and Laub (1982); and Caruth (1996), among many others, discuss literature as a medium for the expression of personal memories of collective events.

events in question (hence the subtitle to the first novel *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*).

That Scott's writings were bound up with his many other historical activities is borne out by his erection of a gravestone in 1830 to the memory of Helen Walker, the woman who had provided the prototype for the heroine of his *Heart of Midlothian*. The monument, which Scott paid for and for which he wrote the inscription, reads as follows:

THIS STONE WAS ERECTED
BY THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY
TO THE MEMORY
OF
HELEN WALKER
WHO DIED IN THE YEAR OF GOD 1791
THIS HUMBLE INDIVIDUAL
PRACTISED IN REAL LIFE
THE VIRTUES
WITH WHICH FICTION HAS INVESTED
THE IMAGINARY CHARACTER OF
JEANIE DEANS:
REFUSING THE SLIGHTEST DEPARTURE
FROM VERACITY,
EVEN TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A SISTER,
SHE NEVERTHELESS SHOWED HER
KINDNESS AND FORTITUDE,
IN RESCUING HER
FROM THE SEVERITY OF THE LAW,
AT THE EXPENSE OF PERSONAL EXERTIONS
WHICH THE TIME RENDERED AS DIFFICULT
AS THE MOTIVE WAS LAUDABLE.

RESPECT THE GRAVE OF POVERTY
WHEN COMBINED WITH LOVE OF TRUTH
AND DEAR AFFECTION

Who was Helen Walker, whose bones lie under this rather prolix stone? She was the pious daughter of a strict Presbyterian in southern Scotland, whose younger sister Isobel Walker was put on trial in 1737 for infanticide, having concealed a pregnancy out of wedlock and probably having killed her child. When Helen refused from principle to perjure herself to save Isobel, the latter was condemned to death according to the extremely harsh laws of the time. Big sister Helen then took it upon herself to walk the whole way to London in search of a royal pardon, which she did actually succeed in get-

ting. Isobel was saved and went on to marry her original lover, while Helen went back to her old life and remained single.

Or so the story goes. Such was the outline of Helen Walker's life that had been narrated to Scott by an anonymous correspondent (later revealed to be a Mrs. Goldie). In a nice illustration of the workings of communicative memory, Mrs. Goldie had run into Helen Walker as an old lady and, impressed by her demeanor, had inquired about her from neighbors and heard her story from them. When Helen Walker died shortly afterward, Mrs. Goldie initially planned to erect a gravestone to her but instead sent the story to Scott on the grounds that he might be interested in using it for a novel "so as to perpetuate her memory in a more durable manner" (quoted in Scott 1982 [1818]: 5).

While the existence of Helen Walker is well documented by those who actually knew her, as is the court case involving the condemnation and subsequent pardoning of her sister, the only source for the story of Helen's refusing to commit perjury and walking the whole way to London to obtain a pardon is in effect Mrs. Goldie and the local gossip which she had picked up. In fact, Helen Walker does not seem to have made it into any of the official archives from the eighteenth century. In a later account provided by John M'Diarmid—a journalist at the *Scotsman* and an acquaintance of Mrs. Goldie who had interviewed different neighbors—it is ironically the *novel* which is invoked as a source for the story about the trip to London. (In a postscript which Scott added to his introduction in the 1830 edition, he in turn quotes John M'Diarmid as a source for supplementary details of Helen Walker's life.)[17] The search for the original source thus turns into a sort of textual Möbius strip whereby "life" and "literature" are inextricably mixed up with each other, with one "source" leading into another and being in turn supported by it. A recent study by Peter Garside (1999) has suggested, moreover, that the topos of a "heroic walk in the cause of virtue" originated in a popular novel from 1807; this does not mean that Helen's walk was necessarily invented but that the existence of a novel on such a subject might have attracted Mrs. Goldie and, later, Scott to the story of Helen Walker.[18] Whatever the actual facts of the matter were, and they are

17. According to M'Diarmid (1830: 385): "Her sister was tried, condemned, and sentenced to be executed at the termination of the usual period of six weeks. The result is well known, and is truly as well as powerfully set forth in the novel." More information relating to the novel's sources can be found in Crockett 1912: 227–40 and Lascelles 1980: 88–102. The most recent account of Helen Walker's life is by Deborah Symonds (1997: 199), who comes up with the rather implausible suggestion that the old woman whom Mrs. Goldie had met was Isobel rather than Helen.

18. On the possible influence of Sophie Cottin's *Elizabeth; or, the Exiles of Siberia* (English trans-

by now impossible to trace, we can note that Scott treated Mrs. Goldie's information as a piece of oral history and turned the story of the two sisters into the centerpiece of a five-hundred-page novel.

The Heart of Midlothian was well received when it was first published, despite some complaints about the last volume, and has since then never lost its place in the core canon of Scott's works: the Victorian novelists found it inspiring; Georg Lukács sung its praises as a portrayal of how ordinary individuals could become heroes if history demanded it; a recent poll among Scott scholars identified it as *the* current favorite among his works.[19] While the appreciation of the novel has remained consistently high over almost two centuries, critical interpretations of it have shifted along with the times. Where early critics were above all concerned with the accuracy of the work as a portrayal of Scottish manners and with the moral characteristics of Jeanie, the attention has recently shifted, under the influence of feminism, to the fate of her hapless infanticidal sister and, under the influence of postcolonial theory, to the background of the novel in the Highland clearances and the mass emigration that followed.[20] Clearly the novel has cultural staying power in the sense that it has been able to generate new interpretations in successive generations of critics and readers. My concern here, however, is not with giving yet another interpretation of the work but in examining the novel, its genesis, and its reception as a case study in the workings of cultural memory.

Three aspects of the novel are important to my argument: (1) its public character as a literary work, (2) its literary form, (3) its afterlife as a textual monument.

lation, 1807), see Garside 1999. Certainly the link between the two stories was already made by Charlotte Yonge in her *Book of Golden Deeds* (1864), when she narrates as parallel acts of heroism the story of Helen Walker (again, her account is closely modeled on Scott's Jeanie Deans) and the story of Prascovia Lopouloff, the prototype for Cottin's novel. In turn, Scott's novel seems to have inspired other "recollections" of heroines going in quest of royal pardons, from Alexander Pushkin's (1999 [1836]) fictional "Captain's Daughter" to the historical Mrs. Campbell, whose unsuccessful attempts to gain a pardon for her husband in 1808 were remembered in a recent issue of the *Scott Newsletter* (28 [1996]: 18–19) under the title "Another Jeanie."

19. For contemporary assessments, see note 20 below; for the influence of the novel on Victorian writers, see Clayton 1991; for his influential comments on the novel see Lukács 1962 [1936–1937]: 55–57; regarding the current popularity of the novel among critics, see Weinstein 1999.

20. For recent studies of the sister's plight, see Clayton 1991 and Symonds 1997. A highly original interpretation of the last section of the novel in the light of the mass emigration from Scotland in the eighteenth century (Jeanie's virtue is rewarded by a new home in the apparently empty lands of the duke of Argyll) is offered by Sussman (2002).

2.2. The Novel as Public Forum

Mrs. Goldie's initiative in sending the Walker story to Scott is itself remarkable, as it indicates a belief that certain life histories are somehow worthy of public remembrance; her initial impulse to put up a gravestone seems to have arisen from the same belief. But why choose a novel rather than a funerary monument as the means to make that story public? To a certain extent, the answer to this question must be speculative, since not much can be reconstructed about Mrs. Goldie herself. The belief which she expressed in writing to Scott, that a text might somehow be "more durable" than a stone monument, is something I shall come back to when talking about the cultural afterlife of *The Heart of Midlothian*. But in order to explain why she chose a *novel* rather than any other sort of text, we have to consider the public role of that medium at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

That Mrs. Goldie should have written to Scott and not to some other writer is indicative of his status—or rather the status of the "author of Waverley" (his identity was not yet firmly established)—as the means through which a "deserving" story might be circulated more widely. The success of *Waverley* in 1814 and of his subsequent novels had broken all records; and it is widely believed this success was due, among other things, to Scott's canny combination of "respectable" historical themes with elements from the popular, but hitherto relatively low-prestige, novelistic tradition.[21] Nor was Mrs. Goldie being idiosyncratic in looking to Scott as a public figure: from the publication of *Waverley* onward, the "author of Waverley" was at the receiving end of a lively correspondence with readers all over Scotland, particularly from interested parties who thought he might have use for certain details of family or local history. These reactions, which I have examined in detail elsewhere,[22] suggest that Scott's work provided a virtual public sphere where private persons, through family or local connections, sought and found representation in the collective history of Scotland. Through his public role as "author of Waverley," then, Scott's work can be said to have worked as a channel for local memories, both living and inherited, whereby various accounts of the past could converge into a common frame of reference, or what Halbwachs (1994 [1925]) called a "social framework" of memory. This convergence of memories on the public medium of the novel adds another dimension to the by now familiar thesis that the modern media played a role in the formation of "imagined

21. Scott's ambivalent relationship to popular novel forms is well described in Ferris 1991 and Robertson 1994.

22. In my *Imperfect Histories* (Rigney 2001: 31–58), I give a detailed analysis of the correspondence between Scott and his readers, particularly with reference to his novel *Old Mortality* (1816).

communities," as distinct from communities based on face-to-face communication. Whereas Benedict Anderson (1991 [1983]) and, more recently, Jonathan Culler (1999) have pointed out the ways in which the very form of fictional narrative meant that novels could create the sense of a shared social space and a shared historical time, the case of Scott suggests that novels at this period also played a more specific role as a public medium for channeling and framing disparate local memories.[23]

But the *public* character of the novelistic medium is not itself sufficient to explain why a novel like *The Heart of Midlothian* should have been the vehicle for certain types of memories rather than for others: in this case, for the story of an obscure Presbyterian woman called Helen Walker, whose actions were never recorded in any official archive. Without the intervention of the novel, her life would almost certainly have disappeared into oblivion along with the passing of those who personally remembered her and could talk about her. Nor is Scott's interest in "unsung heroes" unique: there would seem to be a significant connection between the writing of historical novels and an interest in persons and incidents who did not make it into the archives because they were socially too "unimportant" or because they were the victims of events and hence not in positions to tell their own stories. In introducing an obscure individual into public memory, someone who was neither politically nor socially important, Scott can be said to have initiated a whole novelistic tradition of "counterhistory," which is perhaps best summed up by Victor Hugo's claim in *Les misérables* (n.d. [1862], 3:282) to be writing the "internal" history which had been missed by historians, "the history of the inside, of ordinary people, as they work, suffer and wait."[24] More recently, Geoffrey Hartman (1995: 80) suggested a similar affinity between literature and what Hugo called the "history of the inside," arguing that literature is a "counterforce" which provides a means for recording details and complexities left out of "public history," that is to say, out of both official accounts of the past and the inauthentic versions of the past circulated through the mass media.[25]

23. Approaching the role of the novel in community building from a different perspective, Patricia Meyer Spacks (1985) has linked the genre to that most traditional of social networking: gossip.

24. "L'historien des moeurs et des idées n'a pas une mission moins austère que l'historien des événements. Celui-ci a la surface de la civilisation, les luttes des couronnes, les naissances des princes, les mariages des rois, les batailles, les assemblées, les grands hommes publics, les révolutions au soleil, tout le dehors; l'autre historien a l'intérieur, le fond, le peuple, qui travaille, qui souffre et qui attend, la femme accablée, l'enfant qui agonise, les guerres sourdes d'homme à homme . . . toutes les larves qui errent dans l'obscurité." For more on the influence of novelists on the agenda of historians, see Rigney 2001: 59–98.

25. "When art remains accessible, it provides a counterforce to manufactured and monolithic

This affinity between literature and the history "of the inside" might seem to suggest that novelists are somehow more sensitive than others to the sufferings of the downtrodden and to the importance of the marginal. Without denying that this may sometimes be the case, it seems more plausible to look for a general explanation by comparing novelistic representation with its alternatives: where else might such marginalized and scarcely documented memories be registered in public? If we accept that culture is always affected by what Michel Foucault (1969: 156) called the "principle of scarcity," then it follows that, at any given moment, there is only a limited number of forms of expression available for use and every preference entails the neglect of something else. In the light of the priorities traditionally set by historians, the novel can be seen to offer an alternative forum for recording memories of the past which were left out of the institutionalized discourses of the time and which, given their generic conventions, could not easily be accommodated within them. The relatively unregulated character of novelistic discourse means that it has traditionally been able to accommodate a wider spectrum of stories than could specialized and disciplined discourses like that of the legal system or historiography (especially since the latter became institutionalized in the course of the nineteenth century). Still a relatively parvenu genre in 1818, the novel offered Scott an experimental space for including cases which might otherwise have been forgotten. Since then, of course, not only has the novel changed status and the film emerged as a new medium, but historians have been changing their priorities in ways which inevitably have a knock-on effect on what is "left over" for novelists and filmmakers and for the way in which they define their own role.[26] All of this implies that the role of literature as a public forum is historically linked to the nature and availability of alternative media and that it needs to be studied in relation to them.

Concerning the novel as public medium, finally, it should be noted that there is a price to be paid for representation in the public sphere and, more specifically, in the social framework of a novel. For it would be incorrect to suppose that, because Scott wrote a counterhistory recalling the life of

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memory. . . . Scientific historical research, however essential it is for its negative virtues of rectifying error and denouncing falsification, has no positive resources to lessen grief, endow calamity with meaning, foster a new vision of the world, or legitimate new groups" (Hartman 1995: 80).

26. Moreover, as we shall see later, the novel also provided an important forum for "rehearsing" criminal trials in a new setting. This retelling of criminal trials reinforces Bakhtin's (1981) argument regarding the role of novels in echoing other institutionalized discourses. In the playful preface to *The Heart of Midlothian*, Scott (1982 [1818]: 19–23) has one of his characters sing the praises of the Scottish judiciary as a source of novelistic stories. More generally, on the connection between public trials and novels in the eighteenth century, see Maza 1993.

Helen Walker, the result was the "authentic" or unadulterated memory of things as they were (supposing that memory can ever be pure). To be sure, Helen Walker was commemorated in public, in an extensive narrative which holds the attention of the reader for hours. But as her very gravestone indicates, she was transformed in the process into the first of many "Jeanie Deans." She goes down in history, then, but under another name; she gains a place in the public memory, but at the cost of losing her identity. Her life is literally transformed into literature. The irony of this public transformation becomes complete when we consider the title of M'Diarmid's supplementary account of her life, mentioned earlier. For when M'Diarmid brought out his expanded account of the life of Helen Walker in 1830, he called it "The Real History of Jeanie Deans," a title which highlights the fact that, from the publication of the novel onward, all "real" histories of Helen Walker can only be reconstructed through her better-known novelistic counterpart "Jeanie Deans." Which brings me to the second feature of the work: its character as a literary text.

2.3. The Novel as Literary Composition

In order to represent Helen Walker's particular story at any length, Scott had to have recourse to his imagination for the details—after all, his source was no more than a hundred lines long. But since he was working within the conventions of the novel, he was also in principle free to invent within the borders of what was historically plausible.[27] Calling upon his huge store of knowledge concerning the history and mores of Scotland in the eighteenth century, he generously applied his freedom to invent in order to flesh out the character and life of Helen Walker. Even more interestingly, he used this freedom to tie up the real story of Helen Walker with another historical episode from the same period in Scottish history: the Porteous affair. In contrast to the story of Walker, which was known only in a restricted circle, this affair was already well known at the time Scott wrote his novel. As one reviewer put it, it was a "traditionary fact," "a story deeply registered in the Memory of many now living."[28]

The Porteous affair, as it was called, had taken place in Scotland in 1737, more or less concurrently with the Walker trial, though in Edinburgh rather than Roxburgh. The rather complicated facts run as follows: a captain of the Edinburgh city guard, a man called Porteous, was put on trial for having been instrumental in the cold-blooded killing of a number of demonstra-

27. For a more detailed account of Scott's freedom to invent and the limits of that freedom, see Rigney 2001: 31–58.

28. Review of *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1818, 564–74; see p. 568.

tors in the city. Although he was found guilty and condemned to death, an unexpected royal pardon saved him from execution; this so angered the citizens of Edinburgh that, in the middle of the night, a group of them, disguised as women, broke into the prison where Porteous was being held and carried out their own highly ceremonious execution of the oppressor. London reacted with extreme punitive measures against the city, but those responsible for the midnight execution were never brought to trial, and the whole episode had remained in folk memory as an example of the power of Scottish tenacity and sense of justice in face of arbitrary English rule. (We need to realize that all of this was happening just a few decades after the parliamentary union between Scotland and England, which had taken place in 1707, and that Scott himself was writing just some fifty years after the last great attempt in 1745 to break that union—the subject of *Waverley*.)[29]

The Heart of Midlothian begins with an extremely graphic account of the dramatic lynching of Porteous in nocturnal Edinburgh and the lead-up to it, deviating little from the very extensive documentation of that event that had been published in 1737 and then republished to coincide with the publication of the novel. Indeed, the page opposite the title page of the first edition carried an advertisement for the anonymous *Criminal Trials, Illustrative of the Tale Entitled "The Heart of Midlothian," Published from the Original Record* (1818). Thanks to the novel, then, the original records of the case are recirculated and brought back into the culture, but they do so now as "illustrations" of the fiction from which they appear to derive. Just as the publication of the novel meant that Helen Walker took on a new identity as "the real Jeanie Deans," so too did the original record of the Porteous case become an illustration to the novel (a reprint from 1909 again appeals to the reader's familiarity with Scott's account).[30]

In reality, the two historical cases—the Porteous affair and the affair of Helen Walker and her sister—had nothing to do with each other except the fact that they roughly coincided in time and place (if you take Scotland as a single location, that is). Scott brings them together by treating them within the pages of the same book, which thus again provides a framework whereby disparate memories are brought together. It is worth considering the par-

29. Scott came back to the Porteous affair in his *Tales of a Grandfather* (1828–1831), where he described it as "a strong and powerful display of the cool, stern, and resolved manner in which the Scottish, even of the lower classes, can concert and execute a vindictive purpose" (quoted in Scott 1982 [1818]: 10).

30. "Between the eventful years of 1715 and 1745 the affair of the Porteous Mob forms a memorable and striking chapter in the history of Scotland. That few incidents of that history are more familiar to modern readers is due to the genius of Sir Walter Scott, who, with an artist's appreciation of its romantic value, has made it the basis of one of his happiest tales" (Roughead 1909: 1).

allels between the novel—which provides a fictional framework where different stories can be linked—and a museum collection: like a museum collection (but unlike historical narratives as traditionally conceived of), the novel is free to "dislocate" certain memories from their originary context and transpose them into a new setting where they occur side by side.[31] And in being brought side by side, the symmetries and differences between them become foregrounded as in a poetic composition (both are about legal processes in Scotland, the granting of pardons by London, and the intervention by Scottish citizens). In this way, the reduction of disparate memories to certain common patterns is facilitated by their artificial (in the sense of nonspontaneous and contrived) representation in a fictional novel. The two episodes are historical in the sense that they are documented, but it is the framework of the novel which brings them together for the first time and allows them to play off each other. To stretch the analogy with a museum collection even further: the episodes can be said to be exhibited side by side within the framework of the fiction.

This is a point worth emphasizing, since it brings to light a principle of discursive organization different from those which have hitherto figured in discussions of historical representation and its literary dimensions. As the currency of the term *narrativism* indicates, these discussions have concentrated above all on narrativity—conceived as the emplotment of events into beginning-middle-end configurations. The case of *The Heart of Midlothian* suggests that memories may also be reorganized according to the eminently poetic principle of equivalence as described by Roman Jakobson (1960). It is the repetition of comparable events in the narrative syntagma, rather than the logic of the story, which endows otherwise disparate events with a mutually reinforcing meaning.[32]

That is not to say, of course, that narrativity is irrelevant to the relationship between the two episodes in Scott's novel. As behooves a novelist, Scott used his freedom to invent not just to bring the episodes together but also to weave them together as part of the same story. As importantly, he used his poetic license to flesh out both of their stories in a very tendentious way. A detailed discussion of the very incident-rich plot would take me too far

31. On the importance of "dislocation" in the composition of museum collections, see Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998.

32. For surveys of discussions regarding the role of narrative in historical interpretation, see Kellner 1987; Ricoeur 1983–1985. In his early work, particularly *Metahistory* (1973), Hayden White had argued that meaning was produced in historical texts through a variety of means, including both emplotment and the application of "tropes" to the organization of information. It was his discussion of emplotment, however, which was taken up in later discussions rather than his somewhat baroque typology of tropes.

from my subject here. Suffice it to point out three crucial deviations from the historical record.

To begin with, Effie Deans is transferred to the "Heart of Midlothian," as the Edinburgh prison was called, so as to be there at the same time as Porteous.[33] Second, the leader of the nocturnal lynching party who assassinated Porteous is turned into the man who had made Jeanie Deans's sister pregnant, a double involvement which suggests an intimate, personal connection between the two affairs. Finally, whereas the historical Isobel Walker went on to marry the man who had made her pregnant and presumably lived "happily ever after" (at least nothing more is known of her since her pardon), her fictional counterpart Effie Deans marries the nocturnal rioter, but the marriage is left childless and ends in violence: the original child, whose alleged murder was behind the whole drama, turns out to be alive after all and has matured into a good-for-nothing criminal who ends up murdering his own father. The many twists of the plot are highly contrived (a number of early reviewers found them implausible[34]), but its basic significance is clear: those who do not respect the rule of law will come to a sorry end. The significance is all the clearer when the fate of the unfortunate Effie is compared with that of her virtuous sister Jeanie: whereas the historical Helen Walker remained unmarried, Scott deviates widely from his sources by allowing her fictional counterpart Jeanie Deans to "inherit the land," as it were, rewarding her with a husband, multiple children, prosperity, and a new home on the estates of the duke of Argyll; her sister Effie, in contrast, fails in the novel to have any children within wedlock, is widowed by her illegitimate child, and ends up going into exile in a French convent while her good-for-nothing son is packed off to the wilds of North America.

In this way, Scott uses his freedom to invent not just to weave two separate historical cases into a communal story but, even more importantly, to turn composite memories into a story with a moral to it. As an inventor of plot, he operates a bit like an immigration officer of the symbolic realm, allowing the virtuous to stay while deporting undesirables to for-

33. The Edinburgh prison known as the "Heart of Midlothian" had actually been demolished in 1817. The title of the novel suggests a desire on Scott's part to commemorate the passing of this institution. Presumably from a similar impulse, he also made a point of recycling some of the wood from the old building in constructing bookshelves in the library at Abbotsford; see [Macvicar] 1833.

34. Criticism of the plot was voiced by anonymous reviewers in, for example, the *New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register* 10 (July–December 1818): 250; the *Monthly Review* 87 (December 1818): 356–70 (see p. 367); the *British Critic*, n.s., 10 (July–December 1818): 246–60 (see p. 254); and the *Edinburgh Review* 1 (1820): 1–54 (see p. 3).

eign fields or to the next world. This way of proceeding shows how generic conventions may work as a filter through which memories are passed and shaped. Fictionality and moralizing are linked, as Oscar Wilde famously quipped in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895): "The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what fiction means" (Wilde 1982: 340). Echoing Wilde, Hayden White (1987) has argued that there is a structural affinity between "narrativizing" events (turning them into a story, with or without the use of invention) and moralizing them (reconstructing events as a struggle between moral forces). Scott's weaving together of various historical sources with the help of fiction provides a clear illustration of White's point. And as we shall see, it is the exemplary character of Jeanie, rather than her (in)authenticity as a derivative of the historical Helen Walker, which seems to have stuck in the minds of reviewers.

There is much that might be said about *The Heart of Midlothian* as a piece of narrative art.[35] Suffice it here to point to the role of verbal art *as such* in the formation of cultural memory. A key to understanding this role, I argue here, is "memorability," by which I mean in the first instance the power of something to fix itself in the mind in such a vivid way that it is not easily forgotten. By writing about Jeanie Deans and by expanding the brief story about Helen Walker which he had inherited from Mrs. Goldie into a full-scale novel, Scott made a character who is *memorable*. He created a figure whose life we are made interested in following for an extended period of time, and this is borne out by many critics: Lady Louisa Stewart, for example, praised Scott for having succeeded where everyone else had failed, namely, in making the perfectly good character the most interesting (quoted in Lockhardt 1906 [1836]: 336); more recently, Patricia Meyer Spacks (1998) has described her as a "memorable heroine of fiction," who after almost two centuries "remains a splendid imaginative creation." Within the framework of the novel, Jeanie Deans, also known as Helen Walker, is not just briefly commemorated, as she is later on the gravestone, but represented at length by a highly skilled storyteller in such a way that she is transformed into a character in whose struggles readers become imaginatively involved. Without the benefit of verbal art, in other words, there would have been little to remember about the life of Helen Walker. Like so many other flowers, she would have been born to blush unseen.

All of this suggests that literary expressiveness and narrative *skills* have a role to play in the creation of memories, that is, of stories that are memorable: why do certain images of the past stay alive, and to what extent can this longevity be attributed to the way in which they have been expressed in

35. See Marshall 1961; Lascelles 1980; Millgate 1984.

writing? The contrast between Mrs. Goldie's brief account of Helen Walker with Scott's narrative of Jeanie Deans indicates that, with cultural memory as with jokes, it may not just be a matter of what the outline of the story is, but how you tell them. The case of *The Heart of Midlothian* shows that texts help stabilize and fix memories in a certain shape (a point made by Aleida Assmann [1999: 249–64]). At the same time, it suggests that the manner in which stories are told—what I have been calling here the expressiveness of the text—may also contribute to making those stories "stick" in the minds of third parties: they are not merely recorded but actually remembered. In this case, the capacity to tell a rattling good tale was facilitated by Scott's freedom as a novelist to flesh out Helen's story and shape it at will; but the basic point about the memorability of a well-told story that catches the imagination of readers presumably also holds in principle for works of nonfiction.[36]

The second aspect of memorability that is relevant here has to do with the matter of value, the idea that some things are memorable in the sense of "worthy of being remembered" whereas other things may happily be forgotten. As has already been noted, Scott transforms his raw materials in such a way as to moralize events: in terms of the moral economy of the plot, the upright woman who trusted to English justice and walked to London to get a pardon for her sister is privileged above the rioters who took the law into their own hands. In other words, she is made "memorable" not just in the sense that she gets prolonged attention from the narrator but also in the sense that her achievements are celebrated and symbolically rewarded in the development of the plot. The way in which the novel foregrounds certain figures in the past as worthy of being remembered suggests that discussions regarding cultural memory need to be extended beyond questions of authenticity and origins, where they are usually concentrated, to include other functions and values, such as exemplariness. It is important to recognize that certain things are remembered not because they are actually true of the past (which may or may not be the case), but because they are somehow meaningful in the present. In other words, "authenticity" may not always be relevant to memorial dynamics, and certain things may be recalled because they are meaningful to those doing the recalling rather than because, from the historian's perspective, they are actually true. In this context, it is worth noting Frank Ankersmit's recent argument about history and extending it to discussions of cultural memory. History, as Ankersmit (1994: 179) points out, has more functions than have been recognized in dis-

36. For a more extensive discussion of the relationship between fictionality and narrativity, see Rigney 2001: 16–31.

cussions among professional historians: in practice its value may lie not just in its "telling it as it was," but in its offering images of the past for ethical and aesthetic contemplation. The same principle already seems to apply to *The Heart of Midlothian*: irrespective of its authenticity, the story of Jeanie Deans is more memorable than that of Helen Walker. (For proof of its being remembered, see below.)

Finally, the case of *The Heart of Midlothian* exemplifies the fact that "making memorable" in the ways I have just been describing is inseparable from "forgetting." As mentioned earlier, theorists have been pointing out with increasing frequency in recent years that remembering goes hand in glove with putting other things behind one. This Ernest Renan (1887) was already aware of in his famous essay "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" when he argued that national identity is based on collectively remembering certain things and on being able to forget other, more divisive events.[37] "Forgetting" in this paradoxically active sense is not just a matter of simply ignoring certain things but of *being able* to ignore them despite their troubling character. Scott's combination of the Porteous and Walker affairs may be explained in part in the light of this dialectic of remembering and forgetting. Although the novel begins with the detailed recollection of the carnivalesque execution of Porteous, the narrative in effect goes on to sideline the memory of this event in favor of remembering Jeanie Deans. The Porteous affair is recalled *pro memorie*, as it were, recalled for the record but then effectively pushed aside as a once-off anomaly as it becomes upstaged by the story of the determined but law-abiding Jeanie. Recalling a disquieting memory and then going on to temper its affective power was typical for Scott. *Old Mortality* (1816), for example, portrays the bitter religious conflict of the seventeenth century but in such a way that it also attempts to resolve the bitterness, so that bygones may be bygones.[38] In the case of *The Heart of Midlothian*, the logic of the narrative points to a desire to overwrite Porteous with Jeanie Deans, but the very power of Scott's description of the midnight execution makes for a certain unresolved tension in the work. Indeed, the impression that the book actually says more than Scott himself intended is perhaps one of the reasons for its continued appeal in an age where tensions and unfinished businesses are aesthetically more de rigueur than virtuous solutions.

To conclude this discussion of the novel as literary composition: the way

37. "L'oubli, et je dirai même l'erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d'une nation" (Renan 1887: 284–85). In Rigney 1990 (esp. 90–101), I show, with respect to nineteenth-century narrative historians, how the foregrounding of certain events goes together with playing down the significance of—in effect forgetting—other ones.
38. On this point, see further Rigney 2001: 30–31.

in which Scott foregrounds certain memories, while marginalizing others, indicates that the role of novels is not just a matter of recalling, recording, and "stabilizing" but also of selecting certain memories and preparing them for future cultural life as stories. As his work demonstrates, moreover, poetic and narrative forms have an important role to play in this process of "making memorable" and forgetting.

2.4. The Novel as Textual Monument

The idea that texts resemble monuments is very old. Like statues or gravestones, textual artifacts have a fixed character which allows them to play a role in recalling some person or event of yore and in bearing witness to them. Indeed, as Horace and many others after him pointed out, textual artifacts may be even more durable than stone or bronze (*aere perennius*), since they are not susceptible to the wear and tear of erosion and lichen but can be reproduced in pristine condition at later moments in time.

There is a crucial difference between texts and other sorts of memorials, however, regarding location: whereas stone monuments are fixed in a particular site (which becomes literally a *lieu de mémoire*), texts are not, and hence they may be recycled among various groups of readers living in different parts of the globe and at different historical moments. In this sense, texts are "portable" monuments, which can be carried over into new situations. Or as Heine once put it, a book can be a "portable Fatherland" ("portatives Vaterland," quoted in Assmann 1999: 306), a possibility that has clearly been enhanced by the development of new printing techniques and pocket-size vademecums or *livres de poches*.[39] Whereas all texts are in principle transportable into new situations, literary texts are by definition susceptible to being relocated, because they are valued *as* pieces of verbal art and hence preserved as a recognized part of a cultural heritage and/or because they are fictional and as such not bound to any single historical context. Reactivated at a later point in time through the medium of such texts, memories can enter into new combinations.

Having considered the genesis and composition of *The Heart of Midlothian*, I want to complete this study by examining the cultural afterlife of the novel on the assumption that the writing of a text and the recording of memories is less the outcome of a process than a new starting point. In the end, the proof of the memorial pudding is in the reading and remembering. How then did *The Heart of Midlothian* function at later points in time in keeping alive cer-

39. In his study of German literary culture during World War I, Wolfgang Natter (1999) provides a fascinating discussion of the way in which the production of paperback editions of canonical works was linked to the notion that literature was a form of heritage which was by nature "portable."

tain (partly fictionalized) memories of the eighteenth century? And, linked to this, how has the novel itself, as a piece of cultural heritage, dating from the early nineteenth century, functioned as an object of remembrance or *lieu de mémoire*? As we shall see, this work has several afterlives which run concurrently: as the story of Jeanie Deans, as part of the oeuvre of Scott, as a novelistic text that can still be read today.

The Heart of Midlothian is generally considered to be one of Scott's most popular works, a popularity borne out by the National Union Catalogue, which lists no fewer than eighty-seven editions between 1818 and 1900. Moreover, the story also survived—albeit in a different medium—in the many pictorial illustrations to the work and the many (more or less reverent) adaptations to the stage that took place throughout the nineteenth century.[40] *The Heart of Midlothian* was produced more than three hundred times on the British and American stage in a variety of theatrical genres, from melodrama (for example, Daniel Terry, *The Heart of Midlothian: A Musical Drama, in Three Acts* [1819], and Thomas Dibdin, *The Heart of Midlothian: A Melodramatic Romance* [1819]) to burlesque (William Brough, *The Great Sensation Trial; or, Circumstantial Effie-Deans: A Burlesque Extravaganza* [1863]) to high opera (Joseph Bennett and Hamish MacCunn, *Jeanie Deans: A Grand Opera in Four Acts and Seven Tableaux* [1894]).[41] Through the many reprints of the novel and through these multiple adaptations to other media, then, the story of "Jeanie Deans" became something of a household word in the nineteenth century, especially in Scotland.

As with the other Waverley novels, the popularity of *The Heart of Midlothian* seems to have been due to the combination of the subject matter and the narrative style. As I have shown elsewhere (Rigney 2001: 30–58), readers appreciated Scott's work in the first instance for offering a colorful and plausible image of eighteenth-century life in a highly readable form. One can speculate that the particular popularity of *The Heart of Midlothian* was also linked to its having a relatively uncontroversial plot based on an unknown historical figure (as we have already seen, Scott sidelines the more controversial Porteous affair in the narrative). Thus, where *Old Mortality* (1816), which dealt with a well-known and traumatic civil conflict, led to extended discussions on the validity of Scott's representation of history, readers of *The Heart of Midlothian* do not seem to have been overly concerned with historical accuracy. Even after the identity of Jeanie's prototype was dis-

40. For pictorial illustrations, see, for example, Royal Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland 1873. More generally, regarding the reactions of visual artists to Scott's work, see Gordon 1988: 286–358.

41. Bolton (1992: 259–96) provides an excellent account of the many versions, productions, and performances of the novel, which was also available in abridged form (Stewart 1833).

closed, her factuality has been less an issue, as I suggested above, than the moral significance of her character seen as representative of a certain age in Scottish history and of a certain class in Scottish society. Thus Georg Lukács (1962 [1936–1937]: 56), in keeping with the earliest reviewers, praises Jeanie Deans as a historically and morally significant character but makes no mention of her actual prototype.[42] Such an attitude confirms what was said earlier about memorability and the fact that actual historical accuracy may be less important in the long-term than exemplariness and relevance.

From the so-called magnum opus edition of 1830 onward, most reprints of the novel have included an introduction by Scott in which he narrates the story of Helen Walker and reproduces his correspondence with Mrs. Goldie. In principle, therefore, the story of Helen Walker has been available for those willing to look it up, alongside that of her fictional successor Jeanie Deans. The result has been a certain amount of fame, a persistent if tenuous afterlife in later discourses: Helen Walker was the subject of John M'Diarmid's "The Real Life of Jeanie Deans," which I mentioned earlier; she figured in propria persona in Charlotte Yonge's *Book of Golden Deeds* (1864), as she did in the anonymous "Jennie [*sic*] Deans, or Helen Walker," published in *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* (June 1855)—basically a retelling of the Walker story through the prism of the novel. More recently, she has figured in an Internet heritage site devoted to celebrating women's role in Scottish history, a modest renewal of interest in Helen in the postfeminist era, which suggests that cultural memory loss is *reversible* as long as the relevant information has been stored somewhere.[43] And of course, Helen has also received some attention in scholarly discussions of the novel—including the present one (see, for example, Lascelles 1980).

But these various recollections of Helen Walker remain fairly marginal beside the memory of the fictitious Jeanie Deans, which has enjoyed a widespread cultural life. Symptomatic of the enormous popularity of Scott's (or, for that matter, Dickens's) work is the fact that his characters have become so well known that they can enjoy a new life as cultural icons. Thus, alongside all the reproductions and adaptations of Scott's story mentioned above, the figure of "Jeanie Deans" also circulated independently of any of the particular texts in which her story was told or dramatized. As importantly, her name was circulated in cultural spheres which had nothing to do with

42. For an early appreciation of Scott's success in portraying Scottish manners of the period, see, for example, the anonymous reviews in the *Edinburgh Magazine, and Literary Miscellany*, August 1818, 107–17 (see p. 109); the *London Literary Gazette, and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, Etc.* 81 (August 1818): 497–500 (see p. 498); the *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1818, 564–74 (see p. 570); and the *Edinburgh Review* 1 (1820): 1–54 (see pp. 3–4).

43. See "Women in History of Scots Descent," available online at www.electricscotland.com/history/women/walker_helen.htm.

literature as such. Thus "Jeanie Deans," as I indicated at the very beginning of this article, crops up in a variety of social and cultural domains, from horticulture and transportation systems to hospitals and hostelries. The prominence of Scott's characters in the naming of ships and railways is particularly noteworthy. The fleet of Craigendoran steamers on the river Clyde was called after various characters and novels in Scott's oeuvre and included the famous paddle steamer *Jeanie Deans* (as if to drive the point home, the first-class lounge was furnished in light oak and with etchings from *The Heart of Midlothian*); the same fleet also included a ship called *Waverley* that had a "Jeanie Deans" lounge. This mixing up of different stories illustrates once more the way in which memories are dislocated from their original contexts and then "collected" again to form composites.[44] A similar pattern emerges in the development of the Scottish railway network: this included the famous Waverley station in Edinburgh, at least one train called after Scott himself, a type of locomotive called the "Scott class," a "Waverley route," and various generations of engines called after his characters, including the ubiquitous Jeanie.[45]

The inscription of Jeanie Deans and others in the public transport systems suggests that the literal ubiquity of "Jeanie Deans" was part and parcel of a more general invocation of the oeuvre of Scott and the figure of Scott himself as symbol of Scottish heritage. (This status was borne out by the erection of the Scott monument in Edinburgh between 1840 and 1844 and the emergence of Abbotsford as a major tourist destination in the same period.)[46] Presumably, the names of "Jeanie Deans" and others on the sides of railway engines were meant to be *recognized* by the general public of travelers. In this sense, the names help recall the particular stories and texts in which they figured, or for those who only have a secondhand knowledge of the novels, they invoke a generalized acquaintance with Scott's oeuvre or, at the very least, the idea of a common Scottish heritage. In this sense

44. The steamship seems to have been the most famous of a series of *Jeanie Deans*, including the four-masted sailing ship in the 1840s and a motor yacht registered in Brisbane as recently as 1973 (www.amsa.gov.au/Shipping_Registration). A history of the Craigendoran steamers is given in McCrorie 1986. For an affectionate "biography" of the steamship, see MacHaffie 1977. To a certain extent, the steamship has by now become celebrated in its own right, without any reference to Scott. But the Scott model is incidentally recalled; for instance, when MacHaffie contrasts the positive outcome of Jeanie's trip to London with the neglect and destruction awaiting the ship there: "In 'Heart of Midlothian' Jeanie Deans journeyed to London to plead the cause of her sister Effie imprisoned in the Tolbooth, Edinburgh. The satisfactory outcome of the mission was not matched by *Jeanie Deans*'s visit to the capital city" (ibid.: 29). On the *Waverley*, see MacHaffie 1982.
45. On the different generations of "Scott" locomotives, see Nock 1988: 80–88; on the "Waverley" line, see Siviter 1988.
46. On Abbotsford as a tourist site, see Crockett 1905 and Durie 1992.

they are what Juri Lotman (1990: 264) calls "mnemonic symbols," that is, symbols which do not so much recall the past as remind us of a memory.

An epidemiological study of the spread of "Jeanie Deans" would provide insight into the role of literature in linking up different areas of cultural experience and, specifically, its role in providing a framework for the "acculturation" of new technologies and new practices.[47] In seeing a train, one is reminded of the (literary) past. The close relationship between technological innovations and the literary heritage suggests that a process of "acculturation" is going on whereby modernization and renewal are symbolically linked to the cultural heritage and hence rooted in existing traditions (the fact that Edinburgh's most famous football club should carry the name "Heart of Midlothian" can be ascribed to a similar process of acculturation).[48] In being carried over into new cultural situations and linked with other aspects of Scottish life, the memory of "Jeanie Deans" was thus perpetuated at the same time as it contributed to the formation of new memories and the mapping of new forms of heritage. For both locomotive Jeanie and steamship Jeanie have in turn become established parts of the engineering heritage of Scotland, and this, as an Internet search confirms, is the object of much devoted study and remembrance on the part of professional and amateur devotees. A layering process seems to be going on, with the continuous erosion and accretion of shared memories: just as "Jeanie Deans" took over from "Helen Walker" in 1818, the memory of Scott's character has in turn been largely replaced by the memories of the steam engine, the steamship, and the football club. The affectionately written biography *Jeanie Deans 1931–1967: An Illustrated Biography* (MacHaffie 1977) thus refers to the steamship, not to the (fictitious) woman who walked to London.

In all of these morphings, "Jeanie Deans" takes on a life as a cultural icon

47. Jan Assmann (1997: 145–51) discusses the "acculturation" of new groups in the evolution of cultural memory, but the case of Scott suggests that the issue also arises with respect to new technologies.

48. The Heart of Midlothian Football Club was founded in 1874; the name of the club originated in the name of a dance hall which the players frequented and which may have originated in Scott's novel or in the memory of the "Heart of Midlothian," the popular name for the prison demolished in 1817. Whatever the exact origin of the name of the dance hall, the official history of the football club links the name to the work of Scott: "The Tolbooth of Edinburgh, which was demolished in 1817, was known locally as the Heart of Midlothian. Sir Walter Scott immortalized the name in his writings and many institutions were named after this old jail" (Heart of Midlothian Football Club 1998: 9). Since its foundation, the football club has acquired its own history, which is celebrated in such publications as the *Hearts Official All-Time Greats* (Heart of Midlothian Football Club 1999) and *The Hearts Quiz Book* (Blackwood et al. 1987); it is worth noting, as an indication of memory loss, that the quiz book, focusing on the goals and penalties of famous players, includes no reference to Scott.

which is rooted in *The Heart of Midlothian* but takes place independently of it. As a cultural icon, her story is circulated in an ever reduced form, however, and this means that, although her name is inscribed in various cultural spheres, there is no guarantee that the original story of Jeanie Deans, not to mention Helen Walker, will also be remembered. Both forgetting and memory loss are part of the evolution of cultural memory, as we have seen, and at a certain point, some people will presumably know "Jeanie Deans" more as a lounge bar than as a Presbyterian. Moreover, there is evidence that the general public of 2003 is no longer as familiar with some of the more obscure characters from Scott as were those generations who traveled by steam train and to whom those "Scott" locomotives were addressed.[49] The fact that some memories are lost and others gained is not to suggest, however, that memorial dynamics is either linear or irrevocable. As we have already seen, Helen Walker has recently made a modest comeback.

And this brings me to my final point, which bears on the fact that Scott's text remains in print and that artifacts can outlive memories. The durability of texts, to which I referred earlier, means that it is always possible for certain accounts of the past to be reactivated and appropriated by new groups. Whenever those texts are reread, certain images of the past are at once re-reactivated and adapted to the new context in which they function. Up to a point, this can be said of all sorts of texts stored in archives: they too may be dusted off, brought into circulation, and become meaningful again in new contexts. But the chances of this happening are far less than in the case of literary texts, which, by their nature as display texts, as fictions, or as pieces of literary heritage, lend themselves to recycling.

At this point, the poetic qualities of Scott's text which I discussed earlier become relevant again. Scott's skill in telling the story of Jeanie Deans and making her memorable presumably contributed to her longevity as cultural icon. But *The Heart of Midlothian* as such still remains a highly readable text for contemporary readers (at least if they are not put off by the lengthy passages of dialect, which even Scott's earliest readers found a bit difficult).[50]

49. Nock's (1988: 87) comments on the Scott class of locomotives in his history of the northern railways again reflects memory loss: "Even at this early stage [1909–1912] in the naming of this ultimately numerous group of locomotives, it would need a specialist quiz contender to identify some of the personalities involved in those North British engine names! Who, for example, was 'Madge Wildfire' and who was 'Vich Ian Vohr'?" The fact that this recent historian of the railways is apparently not familiar with minor characters from *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Waverley* shows that the work of Scott is much less well known nowadays than in 1909.

50. While the *Monthly Review* (December 1818: 356–70 [p. 363]) saw the use of dialect as one of the attractions of the novel, the *New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register* (July–December 1818: 250) was more negative, dismissing it as a Scottish affair—of interest to the Scots in

To be sure, the book has become dated in some ways, and Scott's confidence in the existence of a natural justice whereby the good are rewarded and the bad deported seems naive from the perspective of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, my own reading experience has shown that the book, through its powers of description, dramatization, and characterization, can still engage a contemporary reader and interest her or him in the fate of eighteenth-century characters whose agendas are quite foreign. At another level, as I suggested earlier, it also arouses interest in the nineteenth-century world of Scott and *his* agenda as he struggles and ultimately fails to resolve in poetic form the tensions immanent in the history of Scotland.

Whether or not every reader nowadays will share this particular judgment of Scott's novel is not in itself important. What is important is the theoretical point that it allows me to make: the case of *The Heart of Midlothian* demonstrates that literary works—by virtue of their poetic and fictional properties—may have a distinctive role to play in reawakening eroded memories in later generations. Linked to this and perhaps even more important, literary texts may have a role to play in arousing interest in histories which are *not* one's own, in the history of groups with which one has hitherto not identified. This suggests the importance of seeing literary texts not just as channels for perpetuating certain memorial traditions but also as the source of new traditions and the means for broadening the horizons of what one considers one's own heritage.

Concepts of cultural memory have generally been premised on the idea of some sort of continuous memorial tradition, albeit one subject to erosion and modification, in which the shared memories of a particular group are gradually deposited, a bit like rainwater in a bucket.[51] This is not in itself surprising since, as we know from at least Renan, the sense of sharing memories and of having a common heritage is an important part of identity formation. The evidence presented here suggests that literary works (and, mutatis mutandis, films) indeed play a role in identity formation in this sense. But my case also suggests that literary works are capable of arousing interest in the history of *other* groups and hence in creating new sorts of affiliations based on "discontinuous" and cross-border memories. This is something which has hitherto received little systematic attention but seems particularly pertinent to the role of literature and other forms of artistic expression. The point is borne out if you consider not only the perennial interest of someone like Scott even for those who are not Scottish, but also

"recalling to their minds the traditionary facts of their early days" but relatively inaccessible to the English reader.

51. On the relation between "tradition" and "cultural memory," see especially Hutton 1993.

the fact that recent historical fiction on Balkan history by such writers as Ismail Kadare and Danilo Kiš is readily available in English translation and hence has presumably found a "foreign" readership. This suggests that literature plays a role in transferring memories not just between individuals belonging to the same community, but also across groups. This was presumably what Geoffrey Hartman (1995: 90) had in mind when he proposed that "the arts, and literature in particular" serve to remind us "that the heritage of the past is pluralistic and diverse."[52]

The case of *The Heart of Midlothian* shows, however, that literature does not have a single pre-given role in memorial dynamics; nor do literary works have only one cultural afterlife. The same literary work may serve both to confirm and consolidate the sense of a common heritage and, depending on who is doing the reading, to arouse interest in the heritage and experiences of other groups. To take the point even further: it is arguable that making uninterested parties "interested" in the experience of others may be as much a key to the construction of cultural memories as the putatively spontaneous identification with the experiences of one's family or the experiences of the ethnic group with which one usually identifies. Why certain stories rather than others should succeed in awakening interest in "other people's experience" is a question which calls for the future integration of research in poetics and in the dynamics of cultural memory.

3. Conclusion

The case of Jeanie Deans troubles any clear distinction between "literature" and "life" in that it shows how the formation of cultural memory is a part of collective life at the same time as it is discursive "all the way down." From Mrs. Goldie's selection of a "tellable" tale to pass on to the novelist to the transformation of Helen into Jeanie to the transformation of Jeanie into a steam locomotive: there is no point at which one can say that historical experience is ever free of narrative models. More specifically, the case of Scott shows that a literary work can play a mediating role both in the acculturation of new phenomena and in the recall of things past.

To be sure, Scott was an exceptional case, and one highly popular "author of Waverley" does not make a theoretical springtime. Yet considered in all its diachronic complexity, the case of *The Heart of Midlothian* does raise a number of issues that at the very least deserve more detailed consideration in any future considerations of the dynamics of cultural memory and the

52. A similar idea was expressed even more recently by Tim Woods (1998: 346), who argues that literature is "a mechanism for collective memory that opens up the past to scrutiny" and that acts "ethically by resisting dogmatic, fixed, closed narratives."

place of literature in it. To begin with: the cultural ubiquity of Scott's work indicates the importance of an interdisciplinary approach which takes into account the various media, discourses, and cultural spheres through which memories are conveyed and transformed. Secondly, the cultural longevity of his "portable monuments" shows the importance of a nonlinear approach to the evolution of cultural memory, which would allow for different temporalities and for discontinuities within traditions. Thirdly, the complexity of his works as literary artifacts points to the need for a further elaboration of a "poetics" of memorability based on the principle that literary form may be constitutive of memory and not merely a travesty of "authentic" experience. Linked to this: the fact that Jeanie Deans has upstaged Helen Walker forces us to take into theoretical account the idea that "artificial"—even patently false—memories crafted by writers may prove more tenacious in practice than those based on facts which have not been submitted to the same creative reworking. An uncomfortable idea for historians, perhaps, but an interesting challenge for the literary scholar.

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