

# The Emptiness at *The Heart of Midlothian*: Nation, Narration, and Population

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After Effie Deans is convicted of infanticide, one of the other characters in *The Heart of Midlothian* remarks on the seeming hypocrisy of that legal decision. Says Plumdamas,

Do you think our auld enemies of England care a boddle whether we didna kill ane anither, skin and birn, horse and foot, men, women, and bairns, all and sindry, *omnes et singulos*, as Mr. Crossmyloof says?<sup>1</sup>

A reasonable enough assumption, one might think. Yet, Scott's novel proves Plumdamas wrong about the value of Scottish bodies to England, and thus wrong about the nature of "internal colonialism." Indeed, when the fate of Effie's still-living child is revealed, it neatly refutes Plumdamas's claim. Rather than dying at his mother's hand, he has been purchased by "an agent in a horrible trade that carried on between Scotland and America, for supplying the plantations with servants," that is, with "human flesh" (p. 501). Unwanted, undomesticated, the child is commodified by a system that needs bodies to power colonial production. In this aspect of its plot, *The Heart of Midlothian* comes close to the vision of one eighteenth-century reformer, who thought Scotland might become "A *People-Warren* for supplying [the] King with brave soldiers and sailors and the more fertile parts of the kingdom with faithful servants of every

1 Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 240. References are to this edition.

description."<sup>2</sup> Scottish bodies acquire the most value in the process of imperial expansion not when they kill each other, but when they become portable units of labour.

Although Effie's child, called the Whistler, at first avoids being sold to the American colonies through his purchaser's affection, a colonial destiny eventually overtakes him: the captain of the ship on which he escapes from Knocktarlitie sells him as a servant in Virginia (p. 506). In a way, the Whistler takes on the punishment of banishment his mother has avoided: both the Duke of Argyll and Mrs Glass expect Effie herself to "go over to America and marry well" (p. 381). But no marriageable tobacco merchant such as "Ephraim Buckskin" (p. 382), willing to absolve him of all guilt, awaits Effie's child; instead, the Whistler is gradually absorbed into the colonial strife of the American colonies.<sup>3</sup> The child does generate a certain amount of pathos and concern in the Butlers, his aunt and uncle, but when Reuben Butler tries to locate him he finds that

this aid came too late. The young man had headed a conspiracy in which his inhuman master was put to death, and had then fled to the next tribe of wild Indians. He was never more heard of; and it may be presumed that he lived and died after the manner of that savage people, with whom his previous habits had well fitted him to associate. (p. 506)

This information, coming as it does in the last paragraphs of the novel, may seem perfunctory, yet it performs two important functions in the novel. For one thing, in relocating the Whistler's violence from the Highlands to America, the novel can be seen as displacing the disputes over the "inhuman" conditions of agricultural production which broke out in Scotland throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries into more distant colonial territory.<sup>4</sup> The violence of banditry the child learns in the Highland glens turns out to be best "fitted" for the plantation world. For another, the novel,

2 *Letters of George Dempster to Sir Adam Fergusson, 1756-1813*, ed. James Fergusson (London, 1934). Quoted in Eric Richards, "Scotland and the Uses of the Atlantic Empire," *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 107.

3 Although she does not discuss the colonial implications of the issue, Andrea Henderson provides an illuminating reading of "the novel's techniques for regulating the surplus energies of circulation [both economic and literary]." *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity, 1774-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 130-63, p. 138.

4 Pre-eminently those in Sutherland.

in demonstrating the Whistler's seemingly inevitable trajectory towards the "savage people" of America, naturalizes the depopulation of the Highlands through emigration, coerced or otherwise. That is, it reimagines bodies like the body of Effie's child as originally misplaced: not native, but exportable goods awaiting their appropriate market.<sup>5</sup> Their eventual disappearance can then be read as their reabsorption into the colonial world, leaving the Highlands not depopulated, but returned to a more natural condition. In the sad and melodramatic story of Effie Deans, George Staunton, and their child, we can see the novel emplotting the extinction of colonial social structures on Scottish soil.

In order to understand the relation between Effie's trial and her child's eventual fate—between the legal surveillance of reproduction and the mobility of subaltern subjects—we need to look at Scott's novel in the context of the ideas of his contemporaries about how to measure and value the "units" of a nation, its people. Population theory, from its beginnings in Britain in the late seventeenth century, was concerned with the mobility of peoples, with ascertaining how and where certain groups might be shifted to better suit the empire's needs.<sup>6</sup> The problem of how to acquire information about individuals proved difficult, however. Would such data be voluntarily given or would it need to be coerced? The belief that state enumeration would be too intrusive was one thing that prevented the institution of a census in England itself until 1801, and a national registry system until 1837. In England's colonies, however, there was no such fastidiousness about the ethics of enumeration. Censuses, both private and governmental, were undertaken in Ireland, Scotland, and all the American colonies well before the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Many of these studies were concerned explicitly with how these populations might be moved around to better

5 The Whistler is not a native Highlander to begin with, but the offspring of an Englishman and a Lowland Scot.

6 Population theory in England can be said to have begun with the work of William Petty and John Graunt. See Philip Kreager, "New Light on Graunt," *Population Studies* 42 (1988), 129–40; Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform, 1626–1660* (New York: Holmes and Meier, Publishers, 1975). For an example of schemes to move people for the benefit of the empire, see "The Political Anatomy of Ireland" (1691), *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, ed. Charles Henry Hull (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899).

7 Petty carried out an informal census of Ireland in the seventeenth century, while Alexander Webster undertook one of Scotland in 1755. On seventeenth and early eighteenth-century censuses of the American colonies, see Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

serve the empire. In eighteenth-century population theory, that is, subaltern populations (both inside and outside England) are characterized not by being fixed in some isolated place, but rather by their potential for mobility in the circuits of empire. Thus, Scotland's status as an "internal colony" is determined not only by the subjugation of its territory, but also by the potential dislocation of its people. Attention to the context of demographic theory, then, troubles the conventional distinction between colony and metropolis in terms of the spatial model of "core" and "periphery."

Some early population theorists imagined methods not only for enumeration, but also for fostering population growth. Indeed, the possibility of aligning reproduction with imperial need was one of their favourite fantasies, positioning women's bodies as crucial sites for experiment and surveillance.<sup>8</sup> Yet, this too presented difficulties. Thomas Malthus, for example, the era's most influential population theorist, urged his readers to distrust the irrepressible, anarchic sex drive. Although he does have a certain amount of faith that "a foresight of the difficulties attending the rearing of a family acts as a preventive check," Malthus admits that "it would be hard indeed, if the gratification of so delightful a passion as virtuous love, did not, sometimes, more than counterbalance its attendant evils. But I fear it must be owned that the more general consequences of such marriages are rather calculated to justify than to repress the forebodings of the prudent."<sup>9</sup> As Catherine Gallagher has demonstrated, the paradigm-shifting insight of *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, that virtue may itself lead to personal and social misery, centres on female fertility: "Malthus ... sees the unleashed power of population, the reproducing body, as that which will eventually destroy the very prosperity which made it fecund, replacing health and innocence with misery and vice. ... The healthy, and consequently *re-producing*, body is thus the harbinger of the disordered society full of

8 See Petty, "Of Marriages, &c." in *The Petty Papers: Some Unpublished Writings of Sir William Petty*, ed. the Marquis of Landsdowne (London: Constable and Co., 1927), pp. 50–51; William Temple, "Of Popular Discontents" (1701), *The Works of William Temple, Bart., in Two Volumes* (London, 1720), 1:255–72. See also Mary Poovey, "The Social Construction of 'Class': Toward a History of Classificatory Thinking," *Rethinking Class: Literary Studies and Social Formations*, ed. Wai Chee Dimock and Michael T. Gilmore (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 15–56.

9 Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798; London: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 89, 90.

starving bodies.”<sup>10</sup> Inevitably, efforts to understand the way populations grew and to enumerate them in a scientific manner produced disturbing evidence of the misalignment of biological reproduction with the needs of a centralized state. The publication of Malthus’s *Essay* in 1798, the recognition of the degree to which potato farming had spurred Irish population growth, and the pressure of soldiers returning from the Napoleonic wars fostered a growing public anxiety over the social effects of what was called “surplus” or “redundant” population, and debate over the virtues of government-sponsored emigration schemes for such people.

Georg Lukács famously proposed that “the historical novel arose at the beginning of the nineteenth century at about the time of Napoleon’s collapse.” The participation of so many in the revolutions of the late eighteenth century, and in the armies of the Napoleonic wars, he argued, provided “the concrete possibilities for men to comprehend their own existence as something historically conditioned, for them to see in history something which deeply affects their daily lives and immediately concerns them.” For Lukács, this “mass experience of history” is intimately connected with a contemporaneous “awakening of national sensibility.”<sup>11</sup> Yet, this same historical juncture—the second and third decades of the nineteenth century—also produced a disjunction between the “masses” and “the nation,” articulated with regard to precisely those whom Lukács identifies as the bearers of historical consciousness—the veterans of the Napoleonic wars. These ex-soldiers, along with the Irish, Scottish Highlanders, and other “unproductive classes,” made up what political observers of the time called “surplus population”—a human aggregate whose only value to the nation lay in the exportation of their labour. Scott’s historical novels, then, did not emerge at a time when “the masses” were being transformed seamlessly into nations, but rather during an era that extruded part of those masses in excess of “the nation” and called them (surplus) population. The distinction that emerged between nation and population, furthermore, helped structure the division between British colonies and the metropolis, representing it not in terms of space, but in terms of the

10 Catherine Gallagher, “The Body Versus the Social Body in the Works of Thomas Malthus and Henry Mayhew,” *Representations* 14 (1986), 84, 85.

11 Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), pp. 19, 24, 25.

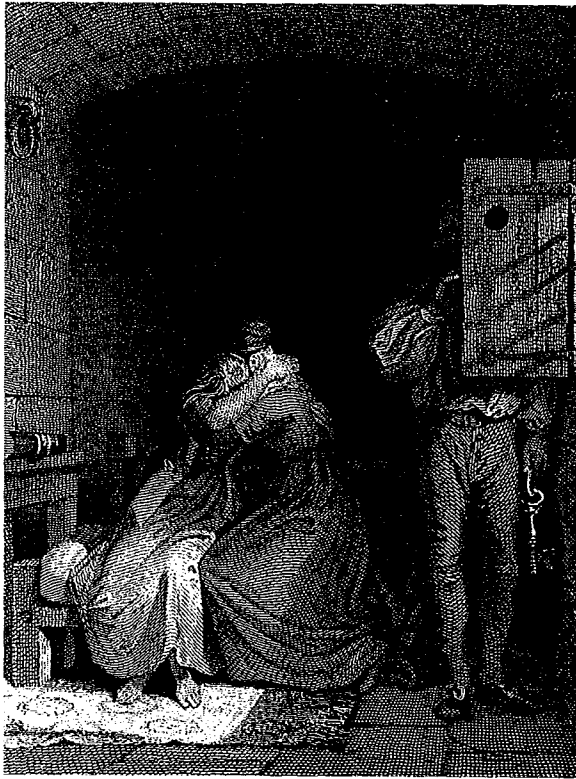
relative mobility of inhabitants. A recognition of this historical context reveals crucial aspects of *The Heart of Midlothian*. Scott's novel distinguishes between the productive and the surplus members of the Scottish population, yet reveals that both elements are subject to the radical mobility imposed by a labour theory of value. It demonstrates that the affiliations between persons and places need to be reimagined under the pressure to make labour portable.

*The Heart of Midlothian* tell two complementary stories about nation and population. The first concerns the isolation and exportation of colonial savagery, represented by the events surrounding the clandestine birth of Effie Deans's child. That narrative is juxtaposed to the story of Jeanie Deans and Reuben Butler. The puzzling, pastoral end of the novel, as the two make a home for themselves on the edge of the Highlands, works to replace the "colonial" world of Effie's "savage" child with a cohesive, "British" world, centred on productive labour, and the improved agriculture of experimental farming. The novel has been accused of eliding the impact of the 1745 rebellion on Highland culture. While this is certainly true, that omission is only part of the way it uses the strategies of historical fiction to retell the transition between the removal of the "savage" populations of the Highlands and the repopulation of those spaces by a more modern, "civilized" community.

The story of Effie's pregnancy, her indictment for child murder, and the resulting fate of her child can be read as a narrative about the futility of an untenable, because colonial, system of surveillance and population control. This interpretation is possible not simply because the family drama involving Effie Deans, George Staunton, and the Whistler ends in parricide; the novel also represents the consequences of Effie's secret pregnancy and delivery as the effects of an antiquated legal idea about how to regulate reproduction. Effie is sentenced to death under an infanticide law dating from 1690, which declares that:

if any woman shall conceal her being with Child, during the whole space, and shall not call for and make use of help and assistance at the Birth, the child being found dead or missing, the Mother shall be holden and reputed the Murtherer of her own child.<sup>12</sup>

12 The law is cited in full by Jane Millgate, "Scott and the Law: *The Heart of Midlothian*," *Rough Justice: Essays on Crime in Literature*, ed. M.L. Friedland (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 112.



“The Affecting Scene between Effie Deans and Her Sister in the Tolbooth,” *The Waverley Album Containing Fifty-One Line Engravings to Illustrate the Novels and Tales of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Charles Heath, [18–]), p. 19. Engraved by Charles Rolls after a drawing by Charles Robert Leslie (1794–1859). Reproduced by permission of McMaster University Library.

The suffering this law inflicts on Effie Deans is the most important motor of the plot of *The Heart of Midlothian*; it instigates her sister Jeanie’s journey to London to seek a pardon from the Queen, a quest which takes up the bulk of the novel. Yet there is no ambiguity in the text about the justice of this law; without exception, its characters, even the judge who convicts Effie of the crime, condemn the statute (p. 232). Indeed, one of the primary functions of the infanticide prosecution seems to be to remind the reader that the events related take place in the less civilized past. The novel includes a note telling the reader that “during the author’s memory a more lenient course was followed” as the sentence of death was commuted

to banishment (p. 528). George Staunton does not differ from the general opinion, except in his hyperbole, when he writes the magistrate: "There is a woman in your jail, fallen under the edge of a law so cruel that it has hung by the wall, like unscoured armour, for twenty years, and is now brought down and whetted to spill the blood of the most beautiful and most innocent creature whom the walls of a prison ever girded in" (p. 182). Staunton's image of the law as a kind of rusty armour places its attitude towards unwanted pregnancy in the vengeful, violent, even feudal, past. We might even say that the span of the law, 1690–1809 (Scott mistakenly cites 1803), marks out for the novel a period of turbulence in Scottish history, which was coming to an end at the time the novel was being written.<sup>13</sup>

The law's archaism has to do with its conception of the mysterious, ungovernable space of Effie's womb. The statute imagines female reproductive capacity as something that might work to subvert and outwit economic and social structures, to hoodwink both church and law, and therefore as something that needs to be reined in. What the law really pinpoints, and seeks to root out, is female secrecy, the capacity of reproduction to outwit surveillance. Judith Wilt has argued that, in its presumption of guilt, the law "violates its own nature to trace and publicly punish" infanticide: "for this the law and the fathers fear most of all, that a woman may recognize the man's seed in her body as her enemy and reject it." Part of the work of Scott's novel, Wilt points out, is to make such a law, with its tacit acknowledgement of female violence, unnecessary, even unthinkable, by insisting on the primacy of female sympathy and mercy; "the novel in every significant event asserts, enforces, desires ... the new 'natural' law: woman is the protector and forgiver of male lovers, children, parents, not their killer."<sup>14</sup> The contempt with which the novel's characters regard the law suggests that they believe, as did Malthus, that

13 The Scottish law, and a very similar law enacted in England in 1624, marked out a specific time period in early modern thinking about motherhood. Peter C. Hoffer and N.E.H. Hull argue that the laws arose out of cultural anxieties about the increasing population of landless poor in England. They argue that pressures of enclosures and rack-renting produced more prosecutions for infanticide. See *Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England, 1558–1803* (New York: New York University Press, 1981), pp. 27, 115. For more detailed information about Scotland, see Deborah Symonds, *Weep Not for Me: Women, Ballads and Infanticide in Early Modern Scotland* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). A relevant account of the colonial contexts of the statute's repeal can be found in Josephine McDonagh, "Infanticide and the Boundaries of Culture from Hume to Arnold," *Inventing Maternity: Politics, Science and Literature, 1630–1865*, ed. Susan C. Greenfield and Carol Barash (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), pp. 215–38.

14 Judith Wilt, *Secret Leaves: The Novels of Walter Scott* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 132, 126.



“what at first might be dictated by state necessity is now supported by female delicacy”: that illegitimate births should be prevented by internalized social shame, rather than either individual or legal violence.<sup>15</sup> In this belief, they anticipate institutionalized systems of civil registration, which came into effect in 1837, and substituted voluntary self-disclosure for the threat of legal punishment.

This new conception of femininity certainly holds a particular idea of gender relations in place—but it is also important to the vision of Scottish national identity promulgated by the novel. The ideal of a compassionate, virtuous woman, whose fertility is sanctioned by law, and who consents to her own visibility to the state, enables the novel to reconceptualize Scotland not as a colonial space, but as part of a united British Empire.<sup>16</sup> To see this, we need to recognize that the legal ideas instantiated by the 1690 law function not only as part of a history of attitudes towards women, but also in collusion with colonial systems of population control. If such forms of surveillance and punishment were no longer viable in England and Scotland after 1809, they still had some currency in other parts of the British empire.

As with the census, governmental efforts to supervise and legally control reproduction were implemented to a greater degree in colonial spaces than metropolitan ones during the early nineteenth century. Infanticide, in particular, came to represent the kind of barbarous practice that demanded British imperial intervention. Thus, paradoxically, even as prosecutions for infanticide were decreasing in England during the late eighteenth century, concern over colonial infanticide increased.<sup>17</sup> When evidence emerged in the 1780s that some groups in Benares practised female infanticide, for instance, the East India Company forced members of those groups to sign a legal agreement not to kill their daughters.<sup>18</sup> As Josephine

15 Malthus, p. 142.

16 Many critics have noted the novel's concern with Scotland's national identity. See Millgate; and James Kerr, *Fiction against History: Scott as Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Beth Newman intriguingly connects this concern with national identity to the thematization of novel reading in the novel's preface. “*The Heart of Midlothian* and the Masculinization of Fiction,” *Criticism* 34 (1994), 525.

17 On decreasing prosecution, see Hoffer and Hull.

18 *Asiatic Researches, or Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal, for inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences and Literature of Asia*, vol. 4 (London: Vernor and Hood, 1799), p. 356. The agreement reads, in part: “whereas the British Government in *India*, whose subjects we are, have an utter detestation of such murderous practices, and we

McDonagh notes, such “cases demonstrate that the existence of infanticide in the ethnographic record became a measure by which English society could apprehend and celebrate its own humanity, sobriety and restraint.”<sup>19</sup> This imperative to eradicate barbarous colonial reproductive practices persisted into the nineteenth century; Rashmi Pant points out that some aspects of the All Indian Censuses of the 1870s were influenced by “the concern to prevent female infanticide”:

Defending the usefulness of recording caste data ... the Lieutenant Governor wrote in the first *All Indian Census Report* [1872] “had this distinction been given up the discrepancies in the sexes could not have been followed up in the way they have been, nor could it have been shown as the figures in the margin show, to what castes the stigma of infanticide can with the greatest certainty be affixed.”<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the concern over Indian infanticide also serves to illustrate the connection between the surveillance of reproduction on the individual level and large-scale demographic inquiries such as the census.<sup>21</sup>

This link between reproductive legislation and census taking shows up again in the era of *The Heart of Midlothian*, in the context of the Caribbean slave colonies. After the slave trade was abolished in 1807, a system of registration for slaves was initiated in order to make sure that no slaves were being illegally imported into the islands; thus mandatory civil registration began in these colonies decades

do ourselves acknowledge, that although customary among us (which God forbid) who shall be hereafter guilty thereof, or shall not bring up and get our daughters married, to the best of our abilities, among those of our caste, shall be expelled from our tribe, and shall neither act nor keep society with us, besides suffering hereafter the punishments denounced in the above *Pooran* and the *Shaster*.”

19 McDonagh, p. 220.

20 Rashmi Pant, “The Cognitive Status of Caste in Colonial Ethnography: A Review of Some Literature in the NorthWest Provinces and Oudh,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 24 (1987), 149. On the Indian census as colonial apparatus, see Arjun Appadurai, “Number in the Colonial Imagination,” *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 114–39; and Bernard Cohn, “The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia,” *An Anthropologist among Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 234–55.

21 Following a different line of argument, Gauri Viswanathan also draws a comparison between Scott’s novels, ideas of family management, and the British census projects in India. See *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 153–77.

before similar population registries were begun in Britain. These registries, however, revealed that the number of slaves in the Caribbean was decreasing, and this realization added a new dimension to the debate over whether plantation slavery was a viable mode of production. The British censuses of 1801 and 1811 seemed to provide evidence “of consistent and rapid growth during the Industrial Revolution. They gave credence to the idea that sustained population growth, dependent solely on natural increase, was in fact ‘natural.’”<sup>22</sup> Abolitionists were therefore able to argue that the decreasing populations in the colonies were a direct result of the “unnatural” state of slavery. Slave owners, although unwilling to accept this Malthusian argument from nature, still felt the need to try and reverse the decline, hastily instituting policies to encourage female slaves to reproduce the labour force. In other words, they tried to extend their power over the lives of slaves to include jurisdiction over the unruly, and ultimately intractable, space of the womb; many of the new laws passed during this period to ameliorate the condition of slaves were geared towards the protection of pregnant and nursing women. Extra-legal measures were applied as well; in 1816, Matthew Lewis, a Jamaican proprietor as well as the author of *The Monk*, was willing to offer the women on his estate a dollar for each child “which should be brought to the overseer alive and well on the fourteenth day.” Faced with the strange inefficacy of this gesture, “Monk” Lewis became convinced that self-imposed infertility represented the last bastion of resistance for female slaves; “I really believe,” he wrote, “that the negress can produce children at pleasure; and where they are barren, it is just as hens will frequently not lay eggs on ship-board, because they do not like their situation.”<sup>23</sup> Lewis’s faith in cash incentives, in this instance, reveals his desire to make biological reproduction work in concert with economic production.

It may seem odd that an era so preoccupied with the dangers of overpopulation would be exercised simultaneously over the evil of infanticide. Why not, as Plumdamas suggests, simply let subaltern populations kill themselves off? As we will see, however, the proliferation of emigration schemes during the period, with their emphasis

22 B.W. Higman, “Slavery and the Development of Demographic Theory in the Age of the Industrial Revolution,” *Slavery and British Society 1776–1846*, ed. James Walvin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 172. I draw on Higman’s arguments throughout this section.

23 Matthew Lewis, *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor, Kept during a Residence on the Island of Jamaica* (London, 1834), pp. 125, 82.

on the importance of portable labouring bodies to the growth and strength of empire, suggests that observers were worried more by the misallocation of population than by absolute numbers. This concern links the interest in increasing the number of bodies in the slave colonies with the desire to shift redundant bodies out of Scotland, Ireland, and parts of England, and into the colonial arena.

It seems precisely this fear that reproduction will not function in concert with national productivity, unless (or even if) it is subject to legal or economic strictures, that *The Heart of Midlothian* attempts to ward off in its insistence that female compassion and probity will act as the internalized monitors of women's responsibility to the national economy. In the cultural imagination of the period, this anxiety was coded as a colonial problem, and Scott draws on those associations in his description of Effie's dilemma. There is no direct evidence that Scott had the difficult situation in Britain's Caribbean or Indian colonies in mind when he criticized the 1690 infanticide law, nor does it seem accurate to say that by being prosecuted under that law, Effie Deans is being treated "like a slave." Nevertheless, a nexus of concerns around the intersection of reproduction, state institutions of surveillance, and new implementations of demographic science does seem to encompass both Scotland and Britain's more distant colonies during the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, Effie's involvement with these systems puts her inside an economy which circulates bodies for profit within the British Empire.

One thing that the novel allows us to discover in the course of Jeanie's journey to London is the originary cause of George Staunton's violence and irresponsibility. Staunton, it turns out, has been brought up in the West Indies, and

passed the first part of his early youth under the charge of a doting mother, and in the society of negro slaves whose study it was to gratify his every caprice. ... Staunton acquired, even in childhood, the habit of regarding his father as a rigid censor, from whose severity he was desirous of emancipating himself as soon and absolutely as possible...when he was about ten years old, and when his mind had received all the seeds of those evil weeds which afterwards grew apace, his mother died, and his father, half heart-broken, returned to England. (pp. 341-42)

Later, his father sends him out of England, "but he only returned wilder and more desperate than ever" (p. 342). Staunton's moral instability is thus imagined as a colonial weakness, a flowering of the

“evil weeds” of Creole culture: his aggressive attitude towards authority not merely Oedipal, but a slave owner’s jealous need for absolute sway. Throughout Jeanie’s encounter with Staunton as he lies injured in his father’s house, the novel compares him to the doomed leaders of archaic systems of political domination. He pronounces “the word, ‘Remember!’ in a tone as monitory as it was uttered by Charles I upon the scaffold” (p. 335), for example—his affect linked to the pathos of the condemned monarch. The novel also pictures Staunton “stretched on his couch like the Mexican monarch on his bed of live coals” (p. 323), comparing his injuries and humiliation to the torture inflicted on the Aztec emperor Guatemozin by Cortez. Once she permanently ties her fate to his, Effie too is drawn into this colonial vocabulary of images. Meeting the Duke of Argyle by accident in her new identity, she writes Jeanie: “I suffered with courage, like an Indian at the stake, while they were rending his fibres and boring his eyes, and while he smiled applause at each well-imagined contrivance of his torturers” (p. 424). In all these instances, the unhappy pair is envisaged as the relic of defeated systems of absolutism, a political structure the novel associates with the colonial arena.

We can also read the fatal encounter between Effie’s child and his father as a figuration of colonial conflict. Like Effie and George Staunton, the Whistler, as he comes to be known, is described as a member of an obsolete tribe. He is:

a tall, lathy, young savage, his dress a tattered plaid and philabeg, no shoes, no stockings, no hat or bonnet, the place of the last being supplied by his hair, twisted and matted like the *glibbe* of the ancient wild Irish, and like theirs, forming a natural thickset, stout enough to bear off the cut of a sword. Yet the eyes of the lad were keen and sparkling; his gesture free and noble, like that of all savages. (p. 480)<sup>24</sup>

The Whistler and his parents are not the only characters compared to colonial subjects in *The Heart of Midlothian*: both Meg Murdockson and Duncan Knockdunder are described as “wild Indians” and Jack Porteous is called a “neger” (pp. 285, 437, 186).<sup>25</sup> Yet the three do

24 T.C. Smout notes that before 1745, Lowland Scots often referred to Highlanders as “the ‘Irish,’ being unwilling even to admit them as Scots.” *A History of the Scottish People 1560–1830* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969), p. 332.

25 Saree Makdissi notes similar comparisons of Highlanders to the natives of Africa, America, India, and the Orient. See “Colonial Space and the Colonization of Time in Scott’s *Waverley*,” *Studies in Romanticism* 34 (1995), 159.

form a striking family portrait. If the father is imagined as a doomed and impotent wielder of arbitrary power, the son becomes the residual, resistant savage object of that power: representative of a group—the ancient Irish—that has already disappeared. Thus, the Whistler's murder of George Staunton is on one level an actual parricide, and is, on another, figured as the destruction of a colonial ruler by a colonial subject: an act of violence that signals the removal of colonial systems of power from Scottish soil.

It is after this encounter that the Whistler begins his gradual disappearance into the American wilderness. This fate, I would argue, records Scott's pessimistic take on the fate of Scotland's surplus population during the period. The condition of the Scottish population in the later part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth seemed to present a paradox. On the one hand, especially after the failed Jacobite uprising of 1745, large parts of the country, especially in the Highlands and Islands, appeared depopulated, even deserted, as economic conditions encouraged massive emigration. On the other hand, Scotland seemed overpopulated, suffering under the demands of an underemployed, undernourished population. This situation came about primarily through changing agricultural practices. Scottish population increased during the course of the eighteenth century, as the introduction of potato farming made it possible for the land to support more people than ever before.<sup>26</sup> The depopulation of certain areas occurred at the same time, however, as Scottish landlords realized that sheep farming might be a better source of revenue than the rents of impoverished tenants. Thus, the population of places such as the Highlands grew even as available land decreased. As one observer explained in 1818:

The system established in many parts of the Highlands, of engrossing farms, turning larger tracts of land into pasture, that were formerly cultivated, and supported the inhabitants; and the consequent depopulation in some parts, and the overpopulation of others, by gentlemen, who, sensible of the values of an economical moral people, and knowing the aversion of the Highlander to leave the land of his fathers, so long as he can remain in it, have allotted their dispossessed tenantry, small portions of uncultivated waste, where they

26 Smout, p. 358.

subsist in a state bordering on starvation, and spend their labor on a barren and unthankful soil.<sup>27</sup>

Hechter has argued that the hallmark of England's relation to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales during this period was "a situation where the relative value of land surpassed that of labor."<sup>28</sup> Rural people who had hitherto been subsistence farmers were pushed to the edges of large sheep runs, or to the unpredictable fishing trade on the coast. The situation provoked a good deal of nostalgia and pathos, as John Sinclair records in 1825:

What can be more painful, it is said, than to see one person living in, and renting a property on which formerly one hundred inhabitants were reared to the state, and found comfortable subsistence? and to see a few shepherds strolling over the face of a country, which formerly was the nurse of heroes, the bulwark of their native soil, ever ready to brave danger and death in its defense?<sup>29</sup>

Brutal clearances and evictions, such as those that took place in Sutherland in the second decade of the nineteenth century, were not the norm; still, the poverty and general misery of the Highlanders increased. They were crowded into poverty, integrated into the urban industrial work force, or absorbed into the circuits of empire.

The best-known contemporaneous account of this situation is John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*. This work consisted of information derived from long questionnaires given to all parish ministers of the established church—Sinclair had the approval of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.<sup>30</sup> After publishing the *Statistical Account* in twenty-one volumes between 1791 and 1799, Sinclair published an *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland* in

27 Patrick Colquhoun, *Considerations on the Means of Affording Profitable Employment to the Redundant Population of Great Britain and Ireland, through the Medium of an Improved and Correct System of Colonization in the British Territories in Southern Africa* (London: G. Smeaton, 1818), p. 33.

28 Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 83. For Malthus's discussion of the mutations of value that occur when cows replace people, see p. 188. See also Catherine Gallagher's excellent discussion of a "biological economy ... in which cattle 'eat' men" (p. 97).

29 John Sinclair, *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, with a general view of the history of that country* (Edinburgh: Arch, Constable and Co., 1825), p.168.

30 See *Scottish Population History: From the Seventeenth Century to the 1930s*, ed. Michael Flinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 77–80.

1825. In this piece, he moves from empirical data based on place, as collected in the *Statistical Account*, to abstractions based on class, eventually organizing the Scottish population into twenty-seven categories based not on location but on profession. These groupings he then further divides into "the productive classes," "the useful classes, which are indirectly productive," and "the unproductive or useless classes."<sup>31</sup> The distinctions Sinclair makes in the *Statistical Account* are valuable, he argues, because,

Were full information obtained, respecting the numbers and situations of these several classes, leaving the *productive* and *useful* to act and provide for themselves, the whole attention of Government should be directed to the *useless* or unproductive classes, and the means of enabling as many of them as possible, to earn their subsistence, independent of public aid. If that cannot be effected at home, the system of colonization, on a great scale, ought to be adopted; for retaining the idle, and the criminal in this country, is in the highest degree prejudicial to the public interests.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, Sinclair moves from local empiricism, to economic abstractions, to assumptions about the portability of persons. In the Whistler's fate, we can see the logic of this system working, as his criminality renders him unfit for continued residence in Scotland.

In his concern with the burden of useless population upon the state, Sinclair joins in the general anxiety about "surplus" or "redundant" population felt during the first decades of the nineteenth century, provoked by peace, potatoes, and Malthus. As Patrick Colquhoun argues, contemplating the end of the Napoleonic wars, "there cannot be a greater calamity than that which exhibits a surplus population, who must be clothed and fed—willing to labour, but without the means of finding employment":

That such a crisis is to be apprehended in this country no person will deny, who has looked accurately into the state of society, in all its intricacies and ramifications, and contemplates at the same time the period which has arrived when vast numbers must cease to receive the wages of the state, and when others, whose support depended on the continuance of war, and can no longer find the means of subsistence.

In this situation, the multitude become desperate,—criminal delinquency pervades every part of the country; the demand for punishment increases; and

31 *Scottish Population History*, p. 168.

32 Sinclair, *Analysis*, p. 168.



the general happiness and comfort of the nation are abridged. The privileges of innocence are everywhere invaded, and the persons and property of the subject are rendered insecure.<sup>33</sup>

This account shares with Sinclair's the assumption that the value of persons to their nation or country rests on their productive labour, rather than their local affiliations. Once they cannot contribute in that capacity, they are represented as portable. Thus Sinclair and Colquhoun, along with other writers on this issue, work to create a distinction between participants in the nation, and the units of a (surplus) population.

Evidence of the evils of a redundant population seemed most visible to early nineteenth-century commentators with regard to the Irish, as Sinclair points out:

[In Ireland] the people, from a scarcity of employment, are obliged to accept wages, on which they and their families cannot subsist; and the result is, such scenes of misery as cannot be contemplated without horror. To use the words of a report recently presented by a Committee of the House of Commons: "It is almost impossible in theory to estimate the mischief attendant on a redundant, a growing, and unemployed population, converting that which ought to be the strength into the peril of a state. It is obvious, that the tendency of such a population to general misery must be rapid, in proportion to the facility of procuring human sustenance, leading to the boundless multiplication of human beings, satisfied with the lowest conditions of existence."<sup>34</sup>

Yet concern over the effects of "superabundant" or "redundant" population appears with regard to the Scots as well. Sinclair records that "in the small island of Eigg, also, containing 399 souls, no less than 176 persons emigrated between 1788 and 1790; the principle cause of which, we are told, was, the country being so *overstocked with people*, that the lands were unable to supply them sufficiently with the necessaries of life."<sup>35</sup>

33 Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Wealth, Power, and Resources, of the British Empire, in Every Quarter of the World, Including the East Indies...* (London: Joseph Mewman, 1814).

34 Sinclair, *Analysis*, p. 145. He quotes from "Second Report on the State of Disease, and Condition of the Poor in Ireland" (Ordered by the House of Commons to be Printed, 7th June, 1819), p. 97. For this reason, Sinclair produces elaborate mathematical models that distinguish Scottish productivity from Irish (lack of) productivity (pp. 420–21).

35 Sinclair, *Analysis*, p. 147.

The most frequently proposed solution to the problem of surplus population was emigration.<sup>36</sup> As the anonymous author of a "Memoir on the Necessity of Colonization at the Present Period" (1817) explains:

War has, of late years, thinned the ranks of mankind; but, inasmuch as the destructive sword is sheathed, and long it is hoped to remain undrawn, other means of provision and employment must be made out. The most obvious is that of colonizing, and at the present moment, can only be looked to as the means of salvation to the kingdom of Great Britain.<sup>37</sup>

And yet the question of emigration forced demographic commentators to confront the tension between the idealized emotional ties between persons and places, and the reality of rural depopulation, urban growth, and increased international mobility. Under the pressure of this ideological contradiction, they searched for rhetorical strategies to resolve the gap between residual ideas of communal identity shaped by locality and emergent ideas based on economic utility. So Patrick Colquhoun, in a treatise of 1818, argues that it is precisely the local character of the Highlanders, "inured to all kinds of agricultural labour, and trained to habits of self-dependence," that makes them "better calculated than almost any other people to contend with the difficulties of a new settlement."<sup>38</sup> And a writer named Thomas Arnold claims:

Nor let it be said, that whilst we so highly extol the system of planting distant settlements, we are undervaluing the sanctity of local affection, or would release mankind from all those ties which bind them to the land in which they were born. We do not propose to destroy this feeling, but to extend its influence. For in every nation many will be found ... who regard their country with aversion, and behold it only as the witness of their vices, or the scene of their misfortunes. To men like these, emigration to a distant region is like a new state of being ... and thus by the happy magic of Colonization, all the energies of the intellect and of the heart are made to spring up in a soil, which before was overgrown with sloth and apathy.<sup>39</sup>

36 See H.J.M. Johnston, *British Emigration Policy 1815-1839: "Shovelling out Paupers"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

37 *Memoir on the Necessity of Colonization at the Present Period*, p. 1.

38 Colquhoun, *Considerations*, p. 34.

39 Thomas Arnold, "The Effects of Distant Colonization on the Parent State" (A Prize Essay, recited in the Theatre at Oxford, 7 June 1815), p. 28.

Thus, the “happy magic of colonization” reconciles “local affection” with emigration. Colquhoun collapses local character into a labour theory of value—making Highland virtue a portable commodity—while Arnold puts the motility of attachment to place in the service of empire building.

In the story of the Whistler, brief as it is, Scott undermines these Utopian schemes for Britain’s surplus population. The Whistler’s removal to the American colonies reveals the radical portability of subaltern bodies under the regime of a labour theory of value. Yet, his “uselessness”—his incapacity to contribute to a productive imperial economy—cannot be ameliorated by the “happy magic of colonization”: he remains resistant and destructive to the British colonial project until he disappears from view, “leading a conspiracy in which his inhuman master was put to death.” Furthermore, despite the novel’s happy ending, this portability is reflected in the Butlers’ story as well. Albeit to a lesser degree, they, too, are enmeshed in a system in which regional affiliations are remade for the benefit of national productivity. If the Whistler’s story provides a way to imagine the emptying out of the Highlands, then Jeanie and Reuben Butler’s residence there fills up those spaces with industry and peace. It would be inaccurate to call their settlement in Roseneath colonization, yet it does figure, in a Utopian register, the remaking of “local affections” under the demands of industriousness. The end of the novel has always puzzled critics—its turn to the pastoral idyll often seems an escape from the historical particularities which power the opening sections, and a continuation of Jeanie’s story long after it has lost any dramatic interest.<sup>40</sup> It is certainly true, as Jane Millgate and others have pointed out, that the final quarter of the novel obscures the social disturbances of the era in which it is set—notoriously mentioning the revolt of 1745 only as the cause of an increase of criminals in the neighbourhood (p. 462).<sup>41</sup> Yet in eliding the history of the mid-eighteenth century, Scott is putting the form of the historical novel to good use—providing a Utopian narrative in which the “savage” peoples of the Highlands are replaced by peaceable improvement without violence, and a useless population replaced with a productive nation. To this end, he transports the values of the late eighteenth

40 Kerr summarizes the history of bad opinion, pp. 67–68. Harry Shaw refutes the long-standing idea that Scott wrote the fourth volume simply to make money. See *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 241.

41 Millgate, p. 166.

century into the 1730s and 1740s, through the actions of the Duke of Argyle.

Kerr is right to say that “Knocktarlitie can best be described as an improver’s pastoral.”<sup>42</sup> Effie’s crime has shattered the ties which bound Jeanie and her father to their former home at St Leonard’s, rendering it “detestable” to them (p. 411). So, when the Duke of Argyle benevolently relocates Jeanie, Davie Deans, and Reuben Butler to Roseneath, his “beneficence” remakes the relationship between persons and places in two significant ways (p. 409). In the manner of clan leaders after 1745, the Duke imagines his “immense estates” as private property, rather than as the habitation of tacksmen and tenants who owed him fealty.<sup>43</sup> He sets out to improve part of this expanse through experimental (and ultimately profitable) agriculture. Also after the manner of later Dukes, he decides to import an industrious and energetic Lowlander to carry out his wishes. Davie Deans, in running the cattle farm at Roseneath, will be bound to the Duke not by the archaic bonds of clan loyalties, but by a modern system of shared values and economic gain. The second Duke thus seems to express proleptically the beliefs of the third Duke, who wrote to the Chamberlain of Tیره in 1756, “I’m resolved to keep no tenant but such as will be peaceable and apply to industry.”<sup>44</sup> Uncannily reflecting the set-up in Knocktarlitie, as it remakes Highland culture in the circuit between Davie’s industry, Jeanie’s virtue, and Reuben’s rational religion, the Duke goes on to advise the Chamberlain to “intimate this some sabbath after sermon.”<sup>45</sup> This “Highland Arcadia” represents the triumph of improvement (p. 432).

Emptied without undue violence of its former occupants, inhabitants themselves imagined as no more native than the Deanses and the Butlers, this particular Highland glen is peaceably repopulated.<sup>46</sup>

42 Kerr, p. 67.

43 Smout, pp. 349–50.

44 Quoted in Eric Cregeen, “The Changing Role of the House of Argyll in the Scottish Highlands,” *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), p. 11.

45 Quoted in Smout, p. 345.

46 McDonagh offers a similar reading of George Eliot’s *Adam Bede*, calling it “a Malthusian narrative ... in which the world will be peopled by the vigorous and morally superior offspring of the civilized classes, whereas the barbarians ... will be expelled by the nation and will eventually perish” (p. 229). See also Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transform-*

Colonial power relations are successfully banished to the more peripheral spaces in which they belong, and Knocktarlitie becomes part of a Scotland that manages to keep its national identity, even as it maintains a peaceful relationship with England. This reterritorialization can already be glimpsed in a symptomatic moment during their move. Effie has been banished from Scotland for fourteen years, although she can live freely in England, the colonies, or the Continent. Yet, the Duke's lawyer suggests to David Deans that despite this restriction, she might be able to reside with her family at Knocktarlitie, because "the extensive heritable jurisdictions of his Grace excluded the interference of other magistrates with those living on his estates" and because "living on the verge of the Highlands, she might, indeed, be said to be out of Scotland, that is, beyond the bounds of ordinary law and civilisation" (p. 410). Effie's elopement forecloses this possibility; but in terms of the novel's plot, Davie's refusal demonstrates both that his family's allegiance to the Duke has nothing to do with his power to avoid the strictures of national law, and that Knocktarlitie is indeed part of Scotland. If Scotland is still regarded as a legally separate state, as evidenced in the terms of Effie's banishment, Deans is nonetheless willing to abide by the decrees of the British Crown. In this way, the Butlers morally and politically inhabit a post-1745 world based on economic rather than feudal relations even as they move to Dumbartonshire in the 1730s (heritable jurisdictions were abolished in 1747).

Yet, the establishment of this "improver's pastoral" does not entail its isolation from the imperial economy that absorbs the Whistler, although its connections are somewhat subterranean. Significantly, the Butlers' eventual purchase of their own land in the region is enabled by Effie's money. Judith Wilt argues that this is the final form taken by female secrecy in the novel: "that secret sisters' wealth is crucial in the last reward of Jeanie's virtue ... the full domestication, more, the bourgeoisification, of Jeanie Deans Butler."<sup>47</sup> If we take into account the fact that the Staunton family money comes at least in part from the slave plantations of the Caribbean, however, we can also see the reinvestment of that money in the "improved" economy of the Highlands as proof that such colonial wealth bolstered the economic transformations of the eighteenth and early nineteenth

*ations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott and Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 168–69.

47 Wilt, p. 141.

century. The plot thus eventually replaces the transgressive secrecy surrounding the birth of Effie's child with the culturally sanctioned obscurity surrounding the fuelling of domestic economies with colonial funds. Ultimately, the circulation of bodies finds its mirror in the circulation of money. With this domestication of colonial wealth, Scotland takes its rightful place in the British empire.

Thus, attention to the context of the population debates, with their emphasis on the portability (and imperial profitability) of labouring bodies, draws our attention to the ways in which subalternity was constructed during this period. Rather than being understood as a pure product of colonization, in which subaltern persons are those whose native lands are controlled by others, in this reading, subalternity also is defined by the subject's susceptibility to being moved, not only from his or her natal place, but perpetually. Those persons with the capacity for productive labour, like the Butlers, are assimilated to the imperial nation through such movement: those irredeemably useless, like the Whistler, move farther and farther away, in a kind of infinite regress. In contrast to many recent readings of Scott, which concentrate on his manipulation of time, I have focused here on questions of space and mobility, and on the way *The Heart of Midlothian* uses those concepts to distinguish between nation and population.<sup>48</sup> And while the "improver's pastoral" at the end of the novel may work to bind Scotland into an increasingly homogeneous British nation, the unresolved narrative of Effie's child, who was "never more heard of," serves to remind us of the ragged, unbound edges of that nation. Recognizing his story, which haunts, or shadows, the other plots of *The Heart of Midlothian* from beginning to end, reveals that the novel is not perfectly aligned with the project of forging a modern, imperial, state.<sup>49</sup>

For this reason, I want to conclude by briefly considering the role that literature itself played in the discourse surrounding surplus population and emigration during this period. As productive bodies

48 See, for example, Makdisi; and James Buzard, "Translation and Tourism: Scott's *Waverley* and the Rendering of Culture," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 8 (1995), 31–59.

49 The settlement at Roseneath would seem to align *The Heart of Midlothian* with some of the conservative, pro-Empire novels Katie Trumpener discusses, such as Christian Johnstone's *Clan-Albin* (1815), in which a Highland glen is brought "new prosperity ... through economic and agricultural reform," and "becomes home to a new transnational British community" (p. 266). Yet, the Whistler's tale brings the novel closer to what Trumpener calls "more complex" narratives of colonial history, like John Richardson's *Wacousta* (1832), which reveal that the "distance and emptiness" of the colonies "have no power to neutralize old angers or to dull the cause of vengeance" (p. 273).

were distinguished from unproductive ones throughout the British empire, and moved around accordingly, literature functioned, at times, as the residual distillation of the local affiliations that were being lost. Literature, for example, seems both the product of, and the compensation for, the emptiness left by rural depopulation in Scott's own representation of Scottish emigration. Discussing the Culloden Papers in the *Quarterly Review* in 1816, he writes:

in but too many instances, the glens of the Highlands have been drained, not of the superfluity of population, but of the whole of their inhabitants, dispossessed by an unrelenting avarice, which will be one day found to have been as short sighted as it is unjust and selfish. Meanwhile, the Highlands may become the faery ground for romance and poetry, or subjects of experiment for the professors of speculation political and economical.<sup>50</sup>

The passage explicitly concerns Scott's opposition to the clearances then taking place in the Scottish Highlands. In it, however, his engagement with contemporaneous debates about "superfluous" population is also visible, as he registers the paradoxical connection between overpopulation and depopulation in those areas during the early nineteenth century. Yet Scott's last sentence reveals the odd intimacy between political and literary experimentation in such spaces. Left deserted, the Highland glens might end up inspiring new forms of either economic or literary production.

Trumpener has recently argued that the affect produced by novels such as Scott's compensated for the painful renegotiation of the relationship of persons to places forced by emigration, while suturing Scottish and Irish emigrants more firmly into the economy of the empire: "the reading of these works was to encourage patriotism, to restore a damaged or missing sense of national pride," and make "'England's exiles' better, more loyal subjects of the British Crown."<sup>51</sup> Yet the literary, as residue, offered up a rhetoric of resistance as well. The anonymous author of a pamphlet entitled *No Emigration. The Testimony of Experience...* (1828), for example, accuses the proponents of government-sponsored emigration of having "too much considered the lowest classes as goods and chattels" and ignoring "the horrible misery which must be induced before such families are brought seriously to entertain thoughts of leaving, for ever, the

50 *Quarterly Review* 14:28, 333.

51 Trumpener, p. 257.

land of their forefathers, the society of all their living friends, and the graves of all those whom they once knew and loved."<sup>52</sup> This writer relies on poetry to capture the emotional consequences of demographic mobility, beginning his pamphlet with a long epigraph from Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village." This recourse to poetry to recall "local affection" is a strategy he might have borrowed from Sinclair's own evocative description of the population shift from country to city:

If the country should be depopulated, is it easy to replace its inhabitants? Or is it true, that

"A bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied?"

Whether this revolution in the state of our country will prove a national advantage, and whether a servile, pallid, and sickly race, brought up in the confined air of cotton-mills, with few attachments, and not trained up in virtuous principles, will compensate for our having lost the sturdy sons of our plains and mountains, or will furnish as loyal and virtuous subjects, as we formerly possessed, are questions which it must be left to posterity fully to determine.<sup>53</sup>

One writer scathingly called such thinking "the economics of Oliver Goldsmith."<sup>54</sup> Yet, the use of poetry here to articulate a political position seems important. Goldsmith's sentiment serves as a metonymy for all the pathos of the lost connection between people and places long inhabited by their ancestors. It is as if the emotionality of the couplet stands in for the lived experience of "local affection."<sup>55</sup> As Scott also implies, once the people are gone from rural Scotland, only poetry will remain. *The Heart of Midlothian*, written just two years after that review, might be said to usher in a time when "local affection" could more easily be found in books than in persons—when "faery ground[s] of romance and poetry" would provide a necessary supplement for places emptied out for the needs of empire.

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52 *No Emigration. The Testimony of Experience...* (London: Longman, 1828), pp. 11, 15.

53 Sinclair, *Analysis*, p. 170.

54 John MacCulloch, *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, 4 vols (London, 1824), 112. Quoted in Eric Richards, *The Highland Clearances: People, Landlords, and Rural Turmoil* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000), p. 57. It is worth noting that in Goldsmith's poem, poetry actually leaves with the emigrants, while the poet watches, dismayed.

55 John Barrell's reading of the political importance of "The Deserted Village" is relevant here. See *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).