

Donald G. Priestman

Wordsworth on the Poetry of Walter Scott

Wordsworth's comments on the poetry of Sir Walter Scott are more detailed than his remarks on the poems of any other contemporary. They illustrate Scott's idiosyncrasies in composition, and, because they can be demonstrated by a reading of our own, they remind us that Wordsworth both wrote and judged poetry on the basis of theories which he had begun to formulate as early as 1798. In addition, we can gain from an examination of his estimate of Scott's abilities a clearer picture of the implications of Wordsworth's poetic practice and a greater insight as to why for many years his work was largely greeted with indifference or hostility, while Scott's became the most popular poetry of his age before Byron. The sources of Wordsworth's dissatisfaction with Sir Walter Scott as a poet rest squarely upon his aesthetic principles and generally involve two main areas: language and description – the very issues upon which he battled with the public and critics such as Francis Jeffrey for most of his career. In these crucial areas it was Scott, not Wordsworth, who had precedent on his side.

Wordsworth's disapproval of conventional poetic language is evident in the Advertisement to the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) in which he declared rather aggressively that readers "accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers" would have to "struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness" when they read his work.¹ In the Preface to the second edition (1800), his strictures are more precise. He maintained that, "Except in a very few instances the Reader will find no personifications of abstract ideas in these volumes..." and added, "There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; I have taken as much pains to avoid it as others ordinarily take to produce it".² By way of

illustration, he then quoted Gray's "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West" and concluded that, according to his principles of composition, only five of the lines were "of any value". These, significantly, contained no personification or "poetic" diction. It should be remembered that Wordsworth did not think of Gray's sonnet as preeminently bad, but as typical of the faults of which he disapproved. In the Appendix to the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), he reaffirmed as his touchstone that the language of poetry should conform to language really used by men. He conceded that, "The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative".³ This language declined, Wordsworth believed, when their successors "found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of modes of expression which they themselves had invented, and which were uttered only by themselves".⁴ A theory such as this placed Wordsworth in direct opposition to the mainstream of poetic taste in his own day.⁵ It was, nevertheless, the standard by which he judged Scott's language.

Space will permit only a few illustrations of how personifications in Scott's poetry tend to resemble those in the lines which Wordsworth rejected in Gray's sonnet. With these hints, however, the careful reader may find frequent instances for himself. From *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* we might select the following passage because of its concentration of personification:⁶

And soon beneath the rising day
 Smil'd Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
 The wild birds told their warbling tale,
 And waken'd every flower that blows;
 And peeped forth the violet pale
 And spread her breast the mountain rose. (II.xxv.3-8)

Scott's attempt to bestow human qualities on buildings, birds, and flowers is by no means unusual in poetry of the period. But if we are prepared to admit personification as a legitimate technique, we must acknowledge that it is at least necessary to stay within the bounds of good taste and avoid using it in a way which induces maudlin responses in the reader. For one like Wordsworth who granted grudgingly that the practice "may well be fitted for certain sorts of composition" yet nevertheless insisted "I do not find that such personifications make any

regular or natural part" of "the very language of men" the above lines reveal a similarity with the first quatrain which he condemned in Gray's poem:⁷

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or chearful fields resume their green attire.

Although he was thirty-four when it appeared, it might be argued that since *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was Scott's first published major poem, he might still free himself from the influence of eighteenth-century poetic style. By substituting the imagery of night for that of day, we can see, however, that in *Rokeby*, which was composed seven years later, Scott's personifications still show a strong kinship with those of Gray's sonnet:

'Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky!
Hail, though the mists that o'er thee stream
Lend to thy brow their sullen dye!
How should thy pure and peaceful eye
Untroubled view our scenes below,
Or how a tearless beam supply
To light a world of war and woe! (I.xxxiii.1-8)

Examples such as these could be easily multiplied, but it is more pertinent to ask if the effect is as deleterious as Wordsworth claimed. In Scott's poetry, with the exception of *The Field of Waterloo*, the author either casts himself directly as a minstrel or suggests, as he does in the verses dedicated to William Stewart Rose which preface the first canto of *Marmion*, that he will step back in time to assume that role. As a result of this practice, the reader is encouraged to imagine the poem as the utterance of a former age, or, as Wordsworth put it, an example of the work of the "earliest poets of all nations". Scott poured a wealth of accurate historical detail into his poems to further this impression, but it does not counteract the aura of artificiality that surrounds them. Several factors, such as poetic diction and faulty description which will be discussed later, contribute to Scott's failure in creating an authentic sounding persona, and among these must be classed his use of personification.

By its very nature as narrative poetry, Scott's verse is not especially burdened with personification, but whenever he turns from scenes of action to reflection or description, this becomes his most common mode of imagery. In addition to the sentimentalized quality which many of Scott's personifications introduce into the poems, their further disruptive effects on the minstrel-like tone may be seen by contrasting a few instances with lines that achieve a more genuine quality. In *The Vision of Don Roderick*, published at the mid point of Scott's poetic career, the narrator pauses after introducing the arrival of the British forces to reflect upon the action which is to come:

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast,
 Since fate has mark'd futurity her own:
 Yet fate resigns to worth the glorious past,
 The deeds recorded, and the laurels won.
 Then, though the vault of destiny be gone,
 King, prelate, all the fantasms of my brain,
 Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun,
 Yet grant for faith, for valour, and for Spain,
 One note of pride and fire, a patriot's parting strain! (II.lxiii)

His personification of fate is gratuitous and this is not merely because he is working on a small scale. The weakness lies in the fact that the role of fate described in the stanza is so commonplace that the personification simply becomes bombast. By contrast, the simile, "Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun," goes some way to restore a more authentic note and might even keep company with the language of the poets of another age whom Wordsworth claimed "wrote naturally and as men".

A similarly disruptive note is sounded in the description of the bridal train of William and Metelill in Scott's last major poem, *Harold the Dauntless*. He suggests the happiness of the couple in the following manner:

Joy shook his torch above the bank,
 By many a various passion fann'd;
 As elemental sparks can feed
 On essence pure and coarsest weed,
 Gentle, or stormy, or refined,
 Joy takes the colours of the mind.
 Lightsome and pure, but unrepres'd,
 He fired the bridegroom's gallant breast;
 More feebly strove with maiden fear, (V.xiii.1-9)

His tendency to personification is unfortunate in this instance because it intrudes the artificiality of a classically inspired epithalamion at a time when what is required dramatically is something simple to emphasize ironically their pathetic gaiety prior to the furious onslaught of Harold. Even while he prepares his readers for Harold's attack, Scott speaks in abstractions, and, as a result, we hear not the language of minstrelsy but the rhetoric of melodrama:

Such was their various mood of glee
Blent in one shout of ecstasy.
But still when Joy is brimming highest,
Of Sorrow and Misfortune nighest,
Of Terror with her ague cheek,
And lurking Danger, sages speak:
These haunt each path, but chief they lay
Their snares beside the primrose way. (V.xiv.1-8)

He is at his best, however, when the tempo of the action quickens and his description of Harold's descent upon the bridal party is masterly:

As from the bosom of the sky
The eagle darts amain,
Three bounds from yonder summit high
Placed Harold on the plain.
As the scared wild-fowl scream and fly,
So fled the bridal train;
As 'gainst the eagle's peerless might
The noble falcon dares the fight,
But dares the fight in vain,
So fought the bridegroom; ... (V.xvi.1-10)

As in the previous example, Scott comes closest to finding the authentic voice of the bard when he abandons personification in favour of straightforward similes. It is then, excited by his own imagination and his copious reading, that he creates spontaneously that "daring and figurative" language of which Wordsworth approved in the earliest poets.

Poetic diction was the other aspect of language which Wordsworth inveighed against in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. In the Appendix to the Preface he termed it "adulterated phraseology"⁸ and characterized it as trite or imprecise expression. Both the rejected lines of Gray's sonnet and his example of Johnson's paraphrase of Proverbs vi.6-11 show his concern with time-worn diction and because Scott's verse

often reveals this fault, we are able to account for another facet of Wordsworth's disapprobation. A single passage from *Marmion* in the introduction to the third canto will provide a fair example:

Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
 Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
 He seeks not eager to inhale
 The freshness of the mountain gale,
 Content to rear his whiten'd wall
 Beside the dank and dull canal?
 He'll say, from youth he loved to see
 The white sail gliding by the tree.
 Or see yon weatherbeaten hind,
 Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
 Whose tatter'd plaid and rugged cheek
 His northern clime and kindred speak;
 Through England's laughing meads he goes
 And England's wealth around him flows;
 Ask, if it would content him well,
 At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
 Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
 And spires and forests intervene,
 And the neat cottage peeps between? (129-47)

Here we must admit that trite phrases like "sultry day", "mountain gale", "weatherbeaten hind", "rugged cheek", "northern clime", "laughing meads", "verdant screen", and "neat cottage" are simply strung together like verbal wampum.

Triteness produces boredom but imprecise diction breeds confusion and annoyance. Wordsworth quotes in the Appendix Cowper's phrase "the church-going bell" as an "instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language"⁹ and years later he could complain directly of Scott's lack of precision when he remarked:

W. Scott quoted as from me,
 "The swan on *sweet* St. Mary's lake
 Floats double, swan and shadow,"
 instead of *still*; thus obscuring my idea, and betraying his own uncritical principles of composition.¹⁰

A few examples closer to home may be seen in these lines from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*:

For she had known adversity,
 Though born in such a high degree;
 In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
 Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb: (Introduction.41-44)

The phrase “bloody tomb” might be defended as a transferred epithet, but this does not erase the image of a tomb smeared with gore. On the other hand, a term like “bloody tower” for the Tower of London is appropriate because the suggestion of the actual presence of blood is intended. In the same work we read:

Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more; (IV.i.1-2)

Had Scott written instead “Sweet Teviot! on thy silver side” we might be content. As it stands, however, one might facetiously consider that it was the folly of lighting a fire on water rather than the coming of peace that extinguished the bale-fires. Finally, a few stanzas later we hear:

The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims
To wreath his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars; (IV.viii.5-9)

Here again, in the phrase, “mossy wave”, we have an example of the imprecise diction in poetry of which Wordsworth complained, for it was surely the bank on which James camped and not the wave that was mossy.

A related aspect of Wordsworth's dissatisfaction with Scott as a craftsman may be seen in a letter he wrote in 1815 to John Gillies, an aspiring Scottish poet:

But I confess if there is to be an Error in style, I much prefer the Classical model of Dr Beattie to the insupportable slovenliness and neglect of syntax and *grammar*, by which Hogg's writings are disfigured. It is excusable in him from his education, but Walter Scott knows, and ought to do, better.¹¹

Two examples from *Rokeby* will serve to illustrate Wordsworth's point. In the first, we can observe Scott's rather cavalier disregard of tense:

'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay
On battled tower and portal grey:
And from the grassy slope he sees
The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
Where, issuing from her darksome bed,
She caught the morning's eastern red,
And through the softening vale below
Roll'd her bright waves, in rosy glow,
All blushing to her bridal bed,

Like some shy maid in convent bred;
 While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay,
 Sing forth her nuptial roundelay. (II.xvi.9-20)

After establishing the tense in the first line, Scott then shifts it three times in the remainder of the selection, and since a verb appears only once as the final word in the next eleven lines, he could hardly plead the exigencies of rhyme for the other changes. In the second example, he both confesses and illustrates his careless habits of composition in a passage better suited to burlesque than to a tale of heroism:

'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
 Hurrying, as best I can, along,
 The hearers and the hasty song;— (VI.xxvi.24-26)

In this case, the idea of the poet “hurrying along” both his hearers and the song revives memories of the famous Miss Bolo who “went home in a flood of tears and a sedan chair.”

Wordsworth's second principal criticism of Scott's poetry deals with his descriptions. This is harder to illustrate but something of his dissatisfaction may be discerned from a reminiscence of Aubrey de Vere:

“He expatiated much to me one day,” says Mr. Aubrey de Vere, “as we walked among the hills above Grasmere, on the mode in which Nature had been described by one of the most justly popular of England's modern poets — one for whom he preserved a high and affectionate respect. ‘He took pains,’ Wordsworth said; ‘he went out with his pencil and note-book, and jotted down whatever struck him most — a river rippling over the sands, a ruined tower on a rock above it, a promontory, and a mountain-ash waving its red berries. He went home and wove the whole together into a poetical description. ... He should have left his pencil and note-book at home, fixed his eye as he walked with a reverent attention on all that surrounded him, and taken all into a heart that could understand and enjoy. Then, after several days had passed by, he should have interrogated his memory as to the scene. ... the picture surviving in his mind — would have presented the ideal and essential truth of the scene, and done so in a large part by discarding much which though in itself was striking, was not characteristic. In every scene many of the most brilliant details are but accidental; a true eye for Nature does not note them, or at least does not dwell on them.’”¹²

Unfortunately Wordsworth's declaration runs counter to Robert Shortread's statement that he never knew Scott to take pen or paper with him on his excursions.¹³ His complaint about too much detail in Scott's descriptions nevertheless reveals Wordsworth's reservations concerning his method of attaining romantic effect.¹⁴

A "romantic" effect can be achieved in a variety of ways, depending upon the sensibility of the artist, but for Scott it is often the effect created by the piling up of data until a scene or dramatic incident becomes momentarily real and convincing because of its seeming authenticity which we are inclined to accept because of the wealth of detail supporting it. Like the television programme of a few years ago called *You Are There*, Scott's brand of romanticism invites us not to enter into idealism or fantasy but to step back as invisible spectators into the world as Scott would have us believe it once was. For Wordsworth, on the other hand, romantic effect, though he would not have called it that, did not involve recreating a scene or incident for its own sake but rather alerting a reader to the significance of everyday things where he had not seen them before and teaching him to recognize that they can be associated with our most valuable feelings, thoughts, and memories so that they or their types become renewable links with the past. Given this emphasis of Wordsworth's on the significance of an object or scene rather than on its mere presence, no matter how convincingly conjured up, we may better understand him in Mrs. Davy's reminiscence:

"I don't like," he said, "to say all this, or to take to pieces some of the best reputed passages of Scott's verse, especially in presence of my wife, because she thinks me too fastidious; but as a poet Scott *cannot* live, for he has never in verse written anything addressed to the immortal part of man. In making amusing stories in verse, he will be superseded by some new versifier; what he writes in the way of natural description is merely rhyming nonsense."¹⁵

On the same subject he said to his nephew:

"S , in the work you mentioned to me, confounds *imagery* and *imagination*. Sensible objects really existing, and felt to exist, are *imagery*; and they may form the materials of a descriptive poem, where objects are delineated as they are. Imagination is a subjective term; it deals with objects not as they are, but as they appear to the mind of the poet."¹⁶

With Wordsworth the term "imagination" has a fairly narrow and precise connotation which is best explained in his preface to the edition of his poems published in 1815. This is hardly the place to go into a detailed discussion of Wordsworth's concept of imagination, but it should be recognized that for him it involves making an appeal to the sublime and handling imagery in a certain way; it is not the mere presence of that imagery itself. Without going into lengthy documenta-

tion, the best example, perhaps, is the contrast between Scott's poem "Helvellyn" and Wordsworth's "Fidelity" which were occasioned by the same incident.¹⁷ Wordsworth's poem is far from being one of his better performances. The language is prosy, and the narrative fails to engage us. We can, nevertheless, see the pattern of the poem and appreciate what Wordsworth was trying to do even if we cannot applaud the result. From the outset he emphasizes the desolation and remoteness of the setting. It is a place visited only by ravens, clouds, mist, and stormy blasts; the only sound to be heard is the leaping of a fish in the lonely Tarn. Into this scene a shepherd enters, discovers the dog, and is led to the skeleton of the unfortunate young man. The emphasis in "Fidelity" is upon the remarkable fact of the dog's survival in such a lonely place and upon its faithfulness. Everything in the poem, although it lacks spirit, leads logically to the last stanza which attempts, in accordance with Wordsworth's notion of imagination, to invest the incident with significance:

Yes, proof was plain that, since the day
 When this ill-fated Traveller died,
 The Dog had watched about the spot,
 Or by his master's side:
 How nourished here through such long time
 He knows who gave that love sublime;
 And gave that strength of feeling, great
 Above all human estimate!

Scott's "Helvellyn" concentrates on the more likely theme of the young man's death and introduces the dog only incidentally. It is a more engaging poem than "Fidelity", and this is partly due to the fact that its imagery is more vivid. From Wordsworth's point of view, however, it is imagery at the expense of imagination. The picture is clear, but there is no attempt to find significance in the action or to make comment upon it. We are encouraged to surrender to the atmosphere Scott has created rather than reflect upon the human condition. Although Wordsworth praised the verse beginning, "How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?/When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?" there could have been little else to please him.¹⁸ Particularly disturbing would have been the intrusion of the penultimate stanza:

When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has yielded,
 The tapestry waves dark round the dim-lighted hall;
 With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,
 And pages stand mute by the canopied pall:
 Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches
 are gleaming;
 In the proudly-arch'd chapel the banners are beaming,
 Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,
 Lamenting a Chief of the people should fall.

This stanza has no relevance to the subject at hand, but it allows Scott to introduce the imagery of which he is most fond and so into the midst of a lyric presumably devoted to the accident of a nineteenth-century tourist, we have inserted a kind of epic simile describing the obsequies due a medieval prince.

A recollection of Wordsworth's conversation recorded in 1844 by Lady Richardson may also help us to understand, if not concur with, Wordsworth's criticism of Scott's verse:

He does not consider that it [Scott's poetry] in any way goes below the surface of things; it does not reach to any intellectual or spiritual emotion; it is altogether superficial, and he felt it himself to be so. His descriptions are not true to nature; they are addressed to the ear, not to the mind.¹⁹

Descriptions addressed to the ear and not the mind are the exact reverse of what Wordsworth means by imagination. "Helvellyn's" final stanza leaves us with a strong visual impression and sense of atmosphere, but the picture implies no comment on the tragedy and the atmosphere of loneliness is created by the rhetorical effect of the place names 'Helvellyn' and 'Catchedicam'. I do not wish to suggest that all this is unacceptable in poetry, but only that it lacks the concentrated fusion of imagery and thought which Wordsworth demanded. Despite "Fidelity's" superior aesthetic pattern, Scott's poem, for all its meanderings and superficialities, is by far the more pleasing performance. If we would see the relevance and justice of Wordsworth's criticism, however, we might turn to a poem such as "The Brothers". It is considerably more spirited than "Fidelity" and we may see in it Wordsworth successfully doing what he found lacking in Scott — addressing his imagery to the mind rather than the ear. Early in the poem a country priest begins by noting changes in the country-side:

On that tall pike
 (It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
 There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
 As if they had been made that they might be
 Companions for each other the huge crag
 Was rent with lightning — one hath disappeared;
 The other, left behind, is flowing still. (ll.139-45)

Here we have imagery addressed to the mind, for in this case it prefigures what is to follow in the rest of the poem which is the account of the younger brother's fall from a cliff to his death and the elder's sense of loss and loneliness. Again, if we observe "Resolution and Independence", we may see several excellent instances of imagery addressed to the mind rather than the ear. The descriptions in the first two stanzas are by no means ineffective in their appeal to eye and ear, but they are also pressed to serve a double duty. Because the poem discusses Wordsworth's spiritual crisis when he considers the uncertainties of a poetic vocation and traces the movement of his moods from one of despair to one of joy and confidence, we realize that the transition in the first stanza from storm to sunlight is symbolic. Similarly, the hare which is presently happy but is at the mercy of all the winds that blow is symbolic of the improvident poet. Later, he finds in the old leech gatherer an exemplar of the resolution and independence which he himself must emulate. What makes the old man impressive is the feeling of durability and steadfastness which he conveys, an effect, Wordsworth explained in the preface to the edition of his poems in 1815, achieved by carefully modifying the descriptions of stone, sea-beast, and man so that they coalesced.²⁰

When writing to James Ballantyne, Scott declared that the emphasis in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* "was thrown on style — in *Marmion*, on description."²¹ Whether this is actually the case or whether as Edgar Johnson insists, "The descriptions in *Marmion* are neither more numerous nor more brilliant than those in the *Lay*," need not concern us here.²² Let us accept Scott's estimate and observe for a moment the nature of the description in *Marmion*. Perhaps the most famous description is that of the hero at his first appearance which occupies the fifth and sixth stanzas of the first canto. Following this, two stanzas of lively description are devoted to his squire and men-at-arms and then several stanzas more to the appearance of the soldiers of the guard. The whole scene is brilliantly colourful and we are fascinated by the

authenticity of the vision. One's first reaction is to equate it with the heraldic procession that introduces The Red Crosse Knight in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, but it is an impulse that must be rejected because Scott's procession is not heraldic. Despite the fact that we may revel in the luxuriousness of the imagery, we have discovered all when we are told that Marmion is "a champion grim". Essentially the same observation may be made of the vivid descriptive passage picturing Sir David Lindsay in stanza vii of the fourth canto. It conveys a splendid spectacle of knightly pomp and elegance, but when we have read the first ten lines we have learned all this stanza can tell of him as a man; his dazzling costume, whose description occupies the remaining twenty-one lines, contributes nothing to our understanding of the character.

Scott's descriptions of the stag hunt which opens *The Lady of the Lake*, of the gathering of warriors in Canto III, and of the gathering of forces in the fourth canto of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* are justly famous. Their power to evoke an air of reality is considerable, but from Wordsworth's point of view, it is imagery for the sake of imagery. He could not conceive of, and herein lies a crucial difference between him and Scott, a poem whose *raison d'être* was to re-create history and rode over the niceties of diction and the integrality of description in order merely to make it as colourful and vital for the reader as possible. This was, of course, the basis of Scott's immense popularity, and after him Byron's quasi-autobiographical poems possessed much the same appeal. On the other hand, Wordsworth's calculatedly simple diction and more earnestly moral approach to poetry which led him to dwell on descriptions of even the humblest of wildflowers because they were integral to his theme exposed him to the ridicule of reviewers whose influence, he believed, curtailed the sale of his work. He would not, however, be led from his own principles by the success of his friend, and on the occasion of *Marmion's* publication he wrote to Scott, "I think your end has been attained; that it is not the end which I should wish you to propose to yourself, you will be well aware, from what you know of my notions of composition, both as to matter and to manner".²³ What Wordsworth had in mind may be recalled from his assertion that each of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* had "a worthy purpose" and that, "If in this opinion I am mistaken I can have little right to the name of a Poet".²⁴ For Wordsworth, Scott's re-creation of

a "gorgeous" past seemed an end in itself. This is not necessarily so, but it seems clear that Wordsworth could not see Scott's forest for the trees of his diligent historical researches. The idea that a poem might be justified because it succeeded in capturing some of the glamour of the past or in interpreting men's actions as the result of historical forces they could not control, or were not even conscious of, apparently never crossed his mind.

Footnotes

1. W.J.B. Owen and J.W. Smyser, eds. *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I, p.116, hereafter known as *Prose Works*.
2. *Ibid.*, p.130.
3. *Ibid.*, p.160.
4. *Ibid.*, p.161.
5. Jeffrey's acid but perceptive remark in the *Edinburgh Review* (II: October, 1807, p.217) when discussing *Poems in Two Volumes* indicates the degree to which it was felt that the contemporary style of poetic language was under attack:
 With Mr. Wordsworth and his friends, it is plain that their peculiarities of diction are things of choice, and not of accident. They write as they do, upon principle and system: and it evidently cost them much pains to keep down to the standard which they have proposed themselves.
6. All quotations from Scott's poems are from J.L. Robertson, ed., *Scott: Poetical Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1904); those from Wordsworth are from E. de Selincourt, ed., *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 5 vols. 2nd ed. rev. H. Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952-59), hereafter referred to as *PW*.
7. *Prose Works*, I, p.130.
8. *Ibid.*, I, p.161.
9. *Ibid.*, P.164.
10. Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoirs of William Wordsworth, Poet-Laureate, D.C.L.* ed. H. Reed (1851; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), II, p.483, hereafter referred to as *Memoirs*. A similar comment was recorded by Henry Crabb Robinson: "...Wordsworth spoke with great contempt of Scott, and illustrated his remarks on a phrase, 'kindling a spark' — it is with a spark we kindle a fire, etc." E.J. Morley, ed., *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers* (1938; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1967), I, p.82.
11. E. de Selincourt, ed., *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, III, The Middle Years, Pt. 2, 1812-1820*, 2nd ed. rev. M. Moorman and A.G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.196, hereafter referred to as *Middle Years*.
12. Quoted from F.W.H. Meyers, *Wordsworth* (1880; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1925), p.144.
13. See W.E. Wilson, "The Making of the Minstrelsy," *Cornhill Magazine*, N.S. 146 (July-Dec. 1932), 281.
14. The lengths to which Scott was prepared to go for romantic effect may be seen in another context in F.A. Pottle's perceptive article, "The Power of Memory in Boswell and Scott," in *Essays on the Eighteenth Century, Presented to David Nichol Smith*, ed. J. Sutherland and F.P. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), pp.168-89.
15. *Memoirs*, II, p.454.
16. *Ibid.*, p.487.
17. See E. de Selincourt, ed., *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, I, The Early Years, 1787-1805*, 2nd ed. rev. C.L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p.612.
18. See *PW.*, IV, 417.
19. *Memoirs*, II, p.457.
20. *Prose Works*, III, p.33.
21. H.J.C. Grierson, ed., *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, III* (London: Constable, 1932), p.184.
22. E. Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott, The Great Unknown* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), I, p.343.
23. *Middle Years*, II, pt. 1, p.264.
24. *Prose Works*, I, pp.124 and 126.