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CHAPTER THREE

Britain’s “Imperial Man”

Walter Scott, David Stewart, and Highland Masculinity

The spectacle of Highland sartorial traditions that Scott displayed before George IV in Edinburgh in 1822 was not only a “national performance” of Scottish difference; it was also a performance that was overwhelmingly militant and male. Indeed, though many of Scott’s critics may have seen too much tartan material in the performance, they would have been quite familiar with the scene of tartan uniforms parading on Edinburgh’s streets, as Scotland’s Highland regiments had made frequent appearances during the long duration of the wars with Napoleonic France. Not six years before the king’s visit, in March 1816, Edinburgh had witnessed the triumphant procession of the Black Watch regiment, which had taken part in the great victory at Waterloo. An officer who marched at the head of the regiment described the overwhelming reaction of the city to this spectacle:

[I]t seemed as if two-thirds of the houses and workshops in the city had been emptied . . . the [crowd] was a solid moving mass, pressed together, as if in a frame. The pipers and band could not play for want of room, and were obliged to put up their instruments. Spacious as is the High Street of the city, not a foot of it was unoccupied; and the fronts of its lofty houses appeared as if alive, every window being crowded with heads, chiefly those of ladies. (Stewart 2:67)

In addition, all members of the regiment were given free tickets to the theater and Scott himself organized a public dinner for the officers. By trotting out the Highland uniforms during the king’s visit in a series of quasi-military drills, reviews, and processions, Scott was of course trading on the popularity of the image of the Highland military man, who, in a variety of popular
press accounts which celebrated his fearlessness, hardiness, and—above all—unswerving loyalty, had come to epitomize British military prowess while retaining all the distinctiveness of a particularly “national” corps of men.

Scott, however, was not alone in orchestrating this performance, and, particularly in its militarist aspects, the pageantry of the king’s visit was indebted above all to another member of the planning committee, Colonel David Stewart of Garth, who was Scott’s drillmaster and costume authority, his “Toy Captain,” in Lockhart’s words. Stewart’s expertise on Highland tradition and military exploit was unmatched. Stewart was a decorated veteran of thirty-five years service in the British army and had lost the writing ability of his right arm as a result of wounds suffered at Alexandria and Maida. Stewart also had been instrumental in guiding the work of the Highland Society in producing a catalog of clan tartans, and he had just published in March an exhaustive and well-received two-volume account of Highland society and Highland regiments, Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland, which he presented to the king during the visit. No one, with the exception of Scott himself, was better suited to understand the calculated uses of the spectacle of military masculinity in prompting an appropriately pro-British patriotic response during the king’s visit. It was Stewart who was in charge of the last-minute details of the king’s Highland costume and who had pronounced the king “a verra pretty man,” which for the highlander signifies—as Scott in Waverley already had glossed eight years before—“not handsome, but [a] stout warlike fello[w].” It was also Stewart who had described in the Sketches the “curious effect” the Highland garb had on its wearer, writing that “however clownish a young man appears in his pantaloons . . . if he dresses in the kilt and bonnet . . . he assumes a new kind of character, holds his head erect, throws his shoulders back, and walks with a strut and mien that might become a Castilian, or a knight of Old Spain” (fn. 2:499).

The lavish attention to detail that Scott and Stewart devoted to the male Highland costume is testament both to the symbolic value of masculine display and to the central role of audience in the construction of masculinity. It is also illustrates the achievement of iconic status of the figure of the Highland soldier and the unique expression of manliness the figure had come to embody, not simply during the king’s visit, but in the general wartime climate that had existed during the lives of an entire generation of Britons like Scott and Stewart. Since the latter half of the eighteenth century, Britain and France had been engaged in a persistent struggle for imperial dominance around the world, culminating in the wars against Napoleon.
The final chapter of this struggle, which lasted from 1803 to the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, not only presented Britain with the real threat of invasion, but absorbed much of the nation’s resources and manpower, transforming British military and fiscal institutions in the process. Britain’s army would battle its enemy not just on the Continent, but in North America, the West Indies, Africa, and Asia as well. Scotland would send a disproportionate number of men to fight in the army, and many of these men would serve in specifically Highland regiments, whose total number increased dramatically from their inception. As Robert Clyde writes: “Between the beginning of the Seven Years’ War in 1756 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, over 48,300 men were recruited from the Highlands and Islands to serve in twenty-three line regiments and twenty-six fencible regiments of the British Army, not including the Black Watch.”

The idealization of the Highland male figure in the work of both men points to the ways in which ideas of national identity and gender are tied together. More specifically, the image of the Highland soldier is an aspect of British nationalist representation that linked particular modes of masculinity with national identity within the special arena of warfare. As Graham Dawson argues in his study of nineteenth-century stories of “soldier-heroes,” particular modes of masculinity and national imagery were mutually constituted. In these accounts, warfare is configured as a unique cultural space in which men can achieve the fullest expression of both their masculinity and their allegiance to the nation; war is the supreme test of the nation’s will as it is the supreme test of the fighting men who embody it. At the same time however, if, as Dawson suggests, narratives about soldier heroes are both “underpinned by, and powerfully reproduce, conceptions of gender and nation as unchanging essences” (11), it is important to recognize that this process itself is not an unchanging essence but a product of the particular social and cultural dynamics of its time and place. In other words, the processes by which narratives about soldier-heroes engage with and reinforce national and gender concepts have a history themselves.

Indeed, in the historical context in which the Highland figure rose to prominence, the image of the soldier-hero was still largely a contested one. Moreover, if, as Dawson suggests, certain forms of manliness have met with “disapprobation” and “repression” in explicitly nationalist terms, it is important to note that these terms are often situated within an oppositional framework in which the nation’s soldiers are defined in relation to the antithetical masculinity of its enemies, its Other. In the specific historical context in which Scott and Stewart wrote, the figure of the noble Highland fighting man could be said to represent an early component of the transformation in
attitudes toward the common soldier that occurred later in the nineteenth century. Yet the idealized figure of the Highlander took shape through a discourse of race and ethnicity rather than of class, as the symbolic function of the Highland warrior is always predicated on a set of anthropological assumptions that place the Highlands beyond the realm of civility. These assumptions link the “essential” suitability of the Highland man for a military life to the timeless patriarchal traditions of the Highlands and, ultimately, to the Highland topography itself, as the wild, isolating ruggedness of the terrain—and the rough patriarchal social structure that such a terrain was thought to foster—produces a “natural warrior” who from childhood develops a propensity for warfare.

I wish to label this set of anthropological assumptions “highlandism,” to call attention both to the geographical determinism that underlies it and to its comparativism, which reinforces an imperialist epistemology that assumes the universal condition of other “primitive” mountain people and spaces set apart from normative, civil “lowland” peoples and spaces. The origins of highlandism predate war with France: Even before William Pitt in 1766 famously defended recruitment in the Highlands by lauding the “hardy and intrepid race of men” from “the mountains of the north,” travel writers had remarked on their tenacious, warlike character. Yet highlandism is crucial to the rise in popularity of the figure of the Highland soldier-hero in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Without highlandism, it is safe to say, there would have been no Highland soldier-hero and, quite possibly, no regiments in the British army uniquely designated as “Highland.”

The unique position of the figure of the Highland military man, who is the subject of both a colonialist discourse that constructs him as Other and a nationalist one in which he epitomizes a set of national and gender ideals, complicates prevailing ideas about the rise and function of images of the exemplary British fighting man in the beginning of the nineteenth century. For example, the popularity of the image of the Highland soldier suggests that the foundation of Highland regiments cannot be understood simply within the context of the practical uses of atavistic ethnic groups within the modern state. In the ardent, sometimes heated patriotic rhetoric of Scott and Stewart, something more than utilitarianism is at work, as their writing brings forth not only an exemplar of a particular category of masculinity but a complex expression of nationalist feeling. I therefore wish to explore the ways in which both men—who together offered the most sustained and arguably most influential expression of the Highland male ideal in the Romantic era—emphasize the complex dynamics of difference that inform the interrelation between multiple masculinities within a British national framework. Their work ultimately affirms a British national solidarity in
wartime in opposition to France and a French masculinity and establishes a primitive warrior who is ideally and naturally suited for the new realities of war and military activity in the service of an expanding imperial state in a variety of deployments around the globe. Their work also articulates new conditions and new imperatives for the “normative” masculinity of the British officer who would command the Highlander. Given the complex asymmetries embedded within a masculine figure who is called upon to represent the nation and the Other at the same time, I want to call attention in this chapter to the ways in which Scott and Stewart not only foster an idealized image of the Highland soldier but create a new “imperial masculinity,” a term which can describe and account for the intersections and overlaps of the energies of a nation rising to premier status as colonizer and those of subject cultures brought into the nation’s cultural domination and service.

In what follows, I read Scott’s _Waverley_ and Stewart’s _Sketches_ to examine an emergent imperial Highland masculinity. Enormously influential in popularizing the image of the Highland warrior, _Waverley_ depicts a complex array of British masculinities and narrates the interplay between them. My reading of _Waverley_ highlights the ways in which the novel mediates varied potentialities of masculinities bought together in the arena of war and defined by class, education, and, particularly, ethnicity. As Scott himself framed the work: “[T]he object of my tale is more a description of men than of manners” (35). I wish to look at the ways in which the novel not only works to effect the masculinization and militarization of the Highlands but is informed by a kind of ethnography of masculinity. As the novel brings a variety of masculine typographies into play—English, French, Scottish Lowland and Highland, and others—it sets them against each other, staging the interactions between them. Thus the idealization of the Highland warrior is constituted in the novel in relation to other, non-Highland masculinities. This is particularly the case as Scott contrasts Highland masculinity with that mode of masculinity he wants to code as “French.” In looking at the relationship between the Highland warrior masculinity and alternate masculine modes in _Waverley_, I also wish to trace the ways in which the novel provides a teleology of “loyalty transference” that neatly accounts for the shift in allegiance from that of clansman to his chief to that of the Highland soldier to his generally non-Highland commanding officer in the British army. This loyalty transference not only works to affirm highlandism but also lays the foundation for new understanding of an imperial military masculinity.

In turning to Stewart’s _Sketches_, I argue that if Stewart mines more deeply the ethnographic vein that Scott had mined in _Waverley_ several years before, he does so from a profoundly different position. Situating himself in his work as a Gaelic-speaking “native” who witnessed firsthand the traumatic
effects of clearance—not only among people in the Highlands themselves but overseas, among the Highland soldiers he commanded—Stewart works to undermine the rigid demarcation between ethnographer and subject culture that informs Scott’s analysis of the Highlands in Waverley. At the same time, Stewart offers a searing indictment of the ideology of “improvement” that recent critics such as Womack argue is underpinned by the romantization of the Highlands. Both affirming and destabilizing the highlandism that Scott set out in Waverley, the Sketches is not simply the inauguration of Highland “ethnography” proper, as some critics have described, but an early salvo in the history of Highland resistance, an “autoethnography,” as Mary Louise Pratt theorizes, that describes instances in which colonized subjects “undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms” (7; emphasis in original).

SCOTT’S MASCULINE ETHNOGRAPHY

The figure of the Highland warrior united three obsessions of Scott’s life and writing—the Highlands, the military, and war with France—and an exhaustive cataloging of Scott’s use of the figure would require much more space than I provide here. In the interim of the war years, Scott devoted his intellectual energy and writing to an insistent and sometimes strident avocation of a hard-line interventionist policy against Napoleonic France. This avocation found expression in both his journalistic writing and his literary work, which made frequent use of the figure of the Highland warrior. For Scott, the war effort provided a grand forum in which his ideas on military strategy, masculine heroism, and the progress of civilizations catalyzed his nationalist agenda.

The publication and initial success of Waverley was exactly contemporaneous with Napoleon’s initial defeat in 1814, and several recent critics have paralleled Waverley’s development and thematic concerns with the unfolding events of the war. John Sutherland, for example, writes that it is “instructive to correlate the second burst of Waverley’s composition in June 1814 with the geopolitical turmoil around Scott as he wrote his novel,” which is “at heart a novel about ideological unsettlement.” Sutherland argues that one can connect this unsettlement with Scott’s own life: “[H]e was British and excessively patriotic during the French wars. He proudly bore the English King’s commission. Yet—at the same time—he had a French wife to whom he was very attached. His son and heir, Walter, was half French” (173). More telling of Scott’s preoccupation with the war, Richard Humphrey writes, is the ways in which “Waverley is a novel of extended journeys and military
encounters, of nations in conflict and leaders in contention, of the civilian
in the battlefield and of history coming home to him and others—a novel
which could understandably be seen in response to the Napoleonic age” (7).

Lockhart records that Scott’s wholehearted support of the war against
France was noted early on by his family and friends. By 1809 Scott began
to expand his knowledge of military strategy and history and to devote much
of his writing to support of the war effort and the passionate avocation of an
aggressive interventionist policy in the Iberian Peninsula, where Napoleon’s
army was engaged in a prolonged struggle against Spanish guerillas. As well,
Scott’s break with the Edinburgh Review and its editor, Francis Jeffrey, was
predicated on what Scott felt was Jeffrey’s insufferable support of the Whig
policy of appeasement in regards to Napoleon’s campaign on the Iberian
peninsula. In reaction to what he felt was a particularly offensive attack on
the Tory position, Scott angrily cancelled his subscription and eventually
launched a pointedly Tory alternate, the Quarterly Review; in the lead article
of its inaugural issue, Scott penned a strident critique of Whig policy and a
passionate defense of British support of the Spanish guerillas.

In 1811 Scott affirmed his support of British military effort on the pen-
insula in the Spenserian stanzas of The Vision of Don Roderick, in which
the unmistakable image of the Highland soldier makes an early appear-
ance. Dedicating the poem to “the committee of subscribers for Relief of
the Portuguese sufferers,” Scott himself admitted to its overheated rhetoric,
describing the poem as “a sort of rhapsody upon the affairs of the pen-
insula” and elsewhere as a “drum and trumpet performance.” Ostensibly,
the poem recounts the prophetic visions of Don Roderick, the last Gothic
king of Spain, who, as he sits in a church vault beneath Toledo, is granted a
glimpse of the future progress of Spain, from the 714 invasion of the Moors
(and his own downfall) to Wellington’s efforts against Napoleon. Rework-
ing the premise that Scott had adopted in his early success, The Lay of the
Last Minstrel, six years before, Scott’s Minstrel in The Vision of Don Roderick
addresses the “mountains stern” and evokes a lost time of great heroic deeds
when the land echoed with the songs of victory. Describing the “kindred
realms” united in Wellington’s army, the Minstrel casts his eyes upon the
“loved warriors of the Minstrel’s land” who are instantly recognizable not
only by their warlike disposition but by their distinctive uniform: “Yon-
der your bonnets nod, your tartans wave!/The rugged form may mark the
mountain band, And harsher features, and a mien more grave;/But ne’er in
battle-field throb’d heart so brave,/as that which beats beneath the Scottish
plaid” (2:lix). The Vision of Don Roderick attests to Scott’s increasing fascina-
tion with the Highland warrior, as a particular expression of “Britishness”
Critics of the Waverley Novels have long pointed out the links between the conflicting temperaments of masculine characters and the dialectic energy of the novel. Alexander Welsh, for example, has shown how the “passive hero” of the Waverley Novels, who is aligned with expanding commercial and property interests of the time, is often contrasted with an antithetical “dark hero,” who is a man of action existing outside the law and who represents anachronistic if alluring romantic energies and values. Many of the dark heroes Welsh examples in his study are Highlanders, like Rob Roy and Fergus Mac-Ivor, who embody a world beyond the Highland line, “the lawless state that civilization has overcome,” to which the hero proper must venture (57).

More recently, Makdisi reads this dialectic within a much different theoretical framework, examining the ways in which Waverley partakes of a colonial project in the Highlands “whose objective is not only to exploit its victims, but to dispossess them and claim all of their land in order to re-code it, re-name it, to literally re-write it and re-invent it” (71). Waverley, Makdisi argues, sets up a colonial dualism that the novel not only maps out in spatial and temporal terms, but embodies in key male characters. One component of this dualism is Colonel Talbot, who is the

voice of the present. An officer and a gentleman, and Englishman, a Unionist, a Hanoverian, his territorial identification is with the Lowlands and England. His position is solidly reinforced, justified, validated, and relentlessly proved correct by the narrator and the narrative. (86)

Talbot’s opposite is Fergus, who, despite his education in France, “has not changed his essential quality as a Highland laird.” Instead his education “gradually and subtly undermines his position by reinforcing the notion that no amount of Continental education and manners could improve upon his stubbornly and immutably Highland mentality and physiognomy. Fergus is a perfect specimen of the species” (87). Makdisi, as do other critics, downplays the novel’s references to Fergus’s Continental influences in order
to read him as the embodiment of a unique idea of Highlandness that Scott wants to consign to the past, foreclosing on the possibility of its continued existence in the present. But if we shift slightly the frame of this dialectical reading of masculine types, we can see how Scott suggests that it is precisely these Continental influences that not only define Fergus’s character but ultimately form the basis for a condemnation and rejection of the particular expression of Jacobitism that Fergus embodies. Reading the two prominent male Highland characters—Fergus and his lieutenant and foster brother Evan Dhu Maccombich—not as two men cut from a single highland cloth, but as two distinct, even competing, modes of masculinity, reveals the ways Scott offers a more nuanced, dual image of Highland masculinity that serves his nationalist vision. While the figure of Evan allows Scott to engender—in both senses of the term—the highlandism that he adumbrates in *The Vision of Don Roderick*, the figure of Fergus allows Scott to engender the particular failures of a corrupted, even effeminate, aristocratic self-interestedness that he explicitly situates within the category of “French.”

The antithetical relationship between the two figures and the national/ethnic background in which this relationship is framed are established early on, when each character first appears in the novel. Evan is the first Highlander to whom the young Englishman Edward Waverley is introduced, amid a growing cultural disorientation, as he is drawn deeper into Highland affairs toward the end of the first volume. The enchanting but dislocating aura of the highlands, which before had made itself known only through a series of incredible accounts told secondhand to Waverley, is made manifest when the very embodiment of highland masculinity unexpectedly walks right into the room in which Waverley is sitting:

[Waverley] started at the sight of what he had not yet happened to see, a mountaineer in his full national costume. The individual Gael was a stout, dark, young man, of low stature, the ample folds of whose plaid added to the appearance of strength which his person exhibited. The short kilt, or petticoat, showed his sinewy and clean-made limbs; the goat-skin purse, flanked by the usual defences, a dirk and steel-wrought pistol, hung before him; his bonnet had a short feather, which indicated his claim to be treated as a Duinhé-wassell, or sort of gentleman; a broadsword dangled by his side, a target hung upon his shoulder, and a long Spanish fowling-piece occupied one of his hands. (131)

From the outset, Evan’s very physiognomy and costume both mark him as strangely attractive and signify the peculiarities of his culture, as his entrance signals the novel’s own entry into the realm of exotic masculine
desire. Evan’s appearance also initiates the reader’s introduction to the “ethnographic imagination” that James Buzard has associated with the novel’s work in “rendering” Scottish culture within the context of an Anglo-dominated British culture.\textsuperscript{12} Though Waverley comes to depend on a variety of cultural “informants” (including Evan himself) during his early forays into the Highlands, narrative intrusions such as the one above to remark on the peculiarities of the Highland way of life only increase as Waverley ventures deeper into the Highlands. Ultimately it is the narrator who is positioned as the greatest authority on Highland ways, who stands outside the society he wishes to describe yet can speak comfortably on its constituents’ behalf, categorizing their every action in an epistemological framework that assumes the universal processes of human societies. It is the author who in this first instance translates the semiotics of Highland costume, which enables his reader to “read” Evan’s social class instantly.

The ethnographic stance of the novel—apparent, Ina Ferris has noted, in chapter titles such as “The Hold of a Highland Robber,” “A Highland Feast,” and “Highland Minstrelsy” (207)—requires that we read Evan not as “individual” but as “individual Gael,” as representative of a particular Highland type that could be replicated in the characters of any number of Highland men. Moreover, this stance reinforces the underlying tenets of the highlandism that follows as it becomes clear that Highland typology is formed in topography: as the physique and character of the Highland man is a product of the rugged terrain in which he is born. Termed a “mountaineer,” Evan leads Waverley on a wild journey to Fergus’s mansion on hidden paths in the Highland wilderness, through the glens and bogs “by tracks which no one but a Highlander could have followed” (136). Moving up the steep Highland mountainsides, Waverley quickly becomes worn out with fatigue, but Evan and his Highland followers continue “without a symptom of unabated vigor, the rapid and swinging pace, or rather trot, which . . . had already brought them fifteen miles upon their journey” (136). The physical dexterity, hardiness, and cunning of the Highlander—whose knowledge of the Highland landscape is instinctive, more animal than human—are allied with “an extraordinary fierceness” in battle, which in close combat gives him “a decided superiority over those who [are] accustomed to trust much to their array and discipline” (340). In addition to these attributes, and most crucial to Scott’s attraction to highlandism, is the powerful code of absolute loyalty, which is fomented by the difficult conditions of mountain life and the patriarchal ties that bind family to family and isolate the clans within their narrow glens. So intense is this code that it prompts Evan near the end of the novel to offer his life in place of his chieftain. For Scott, it is this code of loyalty, the dynamics of which I wish to examine in greater detail later
in this chapter, that separates the Highland fighting man from his English counterpart, making him an ideal “natural soldier.”

Scott would continue to develop his ideas on highlandism set forth in Waverley, and his later work details aspects of his thinking in even greater detail. For example, Scott would use the occasion of his review of the Culloden Papers in the January 1816 issue of the Quarterly Review to provide a more systematic account of social bonds in the Highlands and the martial propensities they fostered, especially before 1745. In his review, Scott outlines the ways in which the topography of the Highlands determined affiliations and allegiances:

The country, though in many places so wild and savage as to be uninhabitable, contains on the sea coasts, on the sides of the lakes, in the vales of small streams, and in the more extensive straths through which larger rivers discharge themselves, much arable ground. . . . These glens, or valleys, were each the domain of a separate tribe, who loved for each other, laboured in common [and] married usually within the clan. (291)

Early in the review, Scott also digresses from his account of Highland clan-ship to remark on Mountstuart Elphinstone’s 1815 account of “The Kingdom of Caubul [Kabul]” which offers, Scott writes,

curious points of parallelism between the manners of the Afghaun tribes and those of the ancient Highland clans. They resembled those oriental mountaineers in their feuds, in their adoption of auxiliary tribes, in their laws, in their modes of conducting war, in their arms, and, even in some respects, their dress. A highlander who made the amende honorable to an enemy, came to his dwelling, laid his head upon the block, or offered him his sword held by the point;—an Afghaun does the same. (288)

This comparative turn in Scott’s account illustrates a key aspect of Scott’s highlandism: As it places Highlanders in a unique subcategory of primitive peoples, “mountaineers,” it brings Highland difference into high relief. Shifting the subject of his comparison, Scott writes that in 1745

it must have been a matter of astonishment to the subjects of the complicated and combined constitution of Great Britain, to find they were living at the next door to tribes, whose government and manners were simply and purely patriarchal, and who, in the structure of their social system, much more resembled the inhabitants of the mountains of India than those of the plains of India. (287–88)
Scott already had used this complex trope of astonishment produced by the comprehension of physical proximity and cultural disparity in *Waverley* two years before—Waverley cannot comprehend the reality that Highland deeds of blackmail could occur within the “otherwise well-ordered island of Great Britain” (130)—and would use it again, as we have seen, in his introduction to the 1829 Magnum Opus edition of *Rob Roy*. Disparity and affinity fascinatingly cut across time and space in a comparison that also serves to uphold the universality of the social development categories that Scott inherited from Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. Moreover, Scott reinforces here the idea that the influences of topography—not simply of geography—can bring a particular culture into being. Thus, though Scott suggests in his review that the Jacobite defeat at Culloden, as a particular historical event, was a failure marked by inefficiency and ineptitude, it nevertheless presents a singular ethnographic case study of highlandism in action.

Scott would provide an exhaustive catalog of such case studies in his nine-volume *Life of Napoleon* (1827), the first large work to be published under his own name, which represents Scott’s most sustained account of the uses of highlandism in war, particularly against the French. Beyond unfolding the successive military events in the career of its subject (who, as Elizabeth Watterson points out, doesn’t even make his first appearance until after the first seventeen chapters of the first volume), the *Life of Napoleon* represents the culmination of Scott’s lifelong fascination with military history and strategy and his ideas on the ways in which military character and behavior are inextricably linked to nationality and ethnicity.

The anthropological underpinnings of Scott’s theories on military history are highlighted in his devotion to the study of irregular military forces—such as the Vendeans fighting during the Revolutionary regime in France and the Spanish, Tyrolese, and Cossack forces fighting against Napoleon—all of whom, in Scott’s schema, notably sprung from the rugged periphery of their respective nations. Scott’s lavish devotion to describing the “manliness” of irregular forces serves to contextualize the allure of the Highland warrior in *Waverley*. Seen in the context of Scott’s continuing fascination and attraction to the exemplary patriotism of the peasant fighters in the war against the French, Evan represents an especially resonant figure as the Scottish and British manifestation of the “primitive warrior.” The architecture of highlandism frames Evan’s every move and attitude: His Highland birth and upbringing forge a masculinity marked by natural intrepidity, imperviousness to physical hardship, perfect acquaintance with the terrain, and utter fearlessness in battle. Evan is not only from the Highlands, he is of them. Highland topography is the cipher that allows us to read him and naturalizes the military tenor of his life.
THE “FRENCHIFIED” HIGHLANDER

If Evan can be said to typify the masculine character of a Duinhé-wassell, a Highland gentleman, then it stands to reason that Fergus, in the logic of highlandism, ought to typify the masculine character of a Highland chieftain. Indeed, at the outset, when Fergus is first introduced, Scott seems to suggest that Fergus, like Evan, is the embodiment of an attractive yet peculiar Highland masculinity:

Above the middle size, and finely proportioned, the Highland dress, which [Fergus] wore in its simplest mode, set off his person to great advantage. He wore the trews, or close trowsers, made of tartan, chequed scarlet and white; in other particulars, his dress strictly resembled Evan’s excepting that he had no weapons save a dirk, very richly mounted with silver. (153)

Fergus is also quite fearless and can laugh at the thought of his own violent death: On the eve of battle he remarks that in the event of his demise, the money in his pocket will “go to the grenadier that knocks my brains out, and I shall take care he works hard for it” (309). Constantly awestruck in Fergus’s presence, Waverley does not seem to comprehend the chieftain’s ultimate fate when, as Fergus awaits execution in Carlisle Castle, Waverley muses:

Is it of Fergus Mac-Ivor they speak thus . . . or do I dream? of Fergus, the bold, the chivalrous, the free-minded—the lofty chieftain of a tribe devoted to him? Is it he, that I have seen lead the chase and head the attack,—the brave, the active, the young, the noble, the love of ladies, and the theme of song—is it he ironed like a malefactor—who is to be dragged on a hurdle to the common gallows . . . ? (467)

Fergus here, like Evan, seems to epitomize the “Northern Scot,” an exotic figure of masculine desire. Yet even in the first description of Fergus, Scott works to problematize his typicalness, undermining the idea that Fergus is representative of a Highland aristocrat.

Though Scott affirms and delineates the genealogical history that establishes Fergus’s legitimacy as the leader of his clan, Scott is also careful to describe the ways in which the expatriate circumstances of Fergus’s more immediate, ambiguous family history have laid the foundations of his character. After his support of the failed Jacobite uprising in 1715, Fergus’s father had fled to France and to the exiled court of James in St. Germains, where the father obtained employment “in the French service” and married a “lady of
rank in that kingdom” who gave birth to Fergus and his sister, Flora. Fergus’s position as heir to a Highland estate who grew up in France means that he, unlike Evan, would only gradually “become acquainted with the state of the country” and that his character would “assum[e] a mixed and peculiar tone, that could only have been acquired Sixty Years since” (156–57). Scott’s deterministic insistence that individual masculine character is always the product of the environmental conditions of a particular place and time suggest that the particular tensions and contradictions of Fergus’s “mixed” upbringing are manifested in the anomalies of his manhood. These are revealed in his rhetorical style, as, for example, when he comes upon Flora serenading Waverley beneath the Highland cataract. Before reciting bits of verse in three languages himself, Fergus exclaims:

A simple and unsublimed taste now, like my own, would prefer a jet d’eau at Versailles to this cascade with all its accompaniments of rock and roar; but this is Flora’s Parnassus, Captain Waverley, and that fountain her Helicon. It would be greatly for the benefit of my cellar if she could teach her coadju- tor, Mac-Murrough, the value of its influence: he has just drunk a pint of usquebaugh to correct, he said, the coldness of the claret—Let me try its virtues. (181)

Fergus’s overly mannered, insincere courtly rhetoric—liberally sprinkled with phrases in English, French, Italian, and Gaelic and with classical allusions and references to the drinking prerogatives of both a Highland chieftain and cosmopolitan aristocrat—reveals the competing influences of his upbringing.

Not simply trained in the cosmopolitan language of the court, Fergus also wholly devotes himself to courtly intrigue. Compared in the novel to the fourteenth-century general and politician Castruccio Castracani, the subject of Machiavelli’s admiring biography, Fergus’s actions consistently bespeak his ruthless ambition and manipulative self-promotion. For example, Scott characterizes Fergus’s ascension to the command of the Black Watch company as the shrewd maneuvering of one who only seeks to expand his own power in the Highlands.15 In his campaigns against Highland “banditti” of the era, Fergus had acted

with great and suspicious lenity to those freebooters who made restitution on his summons, and offered personal submission to himself, while he rigor- ously pursued, apprehended, and sacrificed to justice, all such interlopers as dared to despise his admonition or commands. (158)
Fergus’s failure to act impartially toward the Highlanders who came under his jurisdiction as a military commander points to his greatest failing as a Highland chieftain: Devoted to expanding his own political power alone, he cares little for the members of his clan. Though he “stretched his means to the uttermost, to maintain the rude and plentiful hospitality, which was the most valued attribute of a chieftain,” Fergus also crowded his estate with a tenantry “hardy indeed, and fit for the purposes of war, but greatly outnumbering what the soil was calculated to maintain” (157). In contrast to Flora, who is devoted to vindicating her clan from “want and foreign oppression” and who is “prepared to do all, to suffer all, to sacrifice all” for the Jacobite cause, Fergus’s devotion is neither to his followers nor even to the cause but only to his political advancement:

Accustomed to petty intrigue, and necessarily involved in a thousand paltry and selfish discussions, ambitious also by nature, his political faith was tinctured, at least, if not tainted, by the views of interest and advancement so easily combined with it; and at the moment he could unsheathe his claymore, it might be difficult to say whether it would be the most with the view of making James Stuart a king, or Fergus MacIvor an earl. (168)

Fergus’s disdain for those in clan society who depend on him extends to his own family. When he concludes that an alliance between his family and Waverley’s would strengthen the position of Prince Charles and therefore enhance his own influence in the Jacobite camp in Edinburgh, Fergus actively pushes his sister into the arms of Edward Waverley, disregarding her own wishes. Moreover, Scott summarizes this example of Fergus’s Machiavellian self-interestedness as the product of the meeting between disparate cultural influences:

Between [Fergus’s] ideas of patriarchal power and those which he had acquired in France respecting the disposal of females in marriage, any opposition from his sister, dear as she was to him, would have been the last obstacle on which he would have calculated, even had the union been less eligible. (205)

This passage is illustrative of Scott’s insistent marking of Fergus’s character as “French” as much as it is “Highland,” and the gender codes of both cultures conspire against Flora’s matrimonial choosing. Even betraying perhaps a moment of anxiety that his reader might misread Fergus as the simple embodiment of Highland aristocratic masculinity, Scott preempts this
interpretation. Contrasting Fergus’s behavior with that of his sister, whose
loyalty to her clan was a “pure passion” and who had only the desire “of vin-
dicating from poverty, or at least from want and foreign oppression, those
whom her brother was entitled to govern,” Scott writes that Fergus

was too thorough a politician, regarded his patriarchal influence too much
as the means of accomplishing his own aggrandizement, that we should term
him the model of a Highland Chieftain. (170)

Through his actions, Fergus reveals the profound contradictions of a charac-
ter composed of the warring masculinities of, in Talbot’s words, a “French-
ified” Scotsman. This character comes under increasing scrutiny in the novel
as it comes to embody a particular mode of French masculinity that Scott
elsewhere explicitly associates with the failings of French culture.

In the Life of Napoleon, Scott would more systematically and explicitly lay
out his critique of French masculinity, particularly that of its aristocracy. In
his account of French court life before the revolution, a time contempora-
neous with the action of Waverley, Scott argues that the crisis of the ancien
régime was at heart a crisis of masculinity, as the “wasting effects of luxury
and vanity had totally ruined a great part of the French nobility” (Life of
Napoleon 1:27). Summarizing the character of the Parisian “haute noblesse,”
most of whom “spent their lives at court, and in discharge of the great offices
of the crown and state,” Scott writes:

[1]nstead of acting as the natural chiefs and leaders of the nobility and gentry
of the provinces, they were continually engaged in intriguing for charges
round the king’s person . . . for all and everything which could make the
successful courtier. . . . Their education and habits also were totally unfa-
vorable to grave or serious thought and exertion. . . . [A] constant pursuit
of pleasure, and a perpetual succession of intrigues, either of love or petty
politics, made their character . . . approach in insignificance to that of the
women of the court, whom it was the business of their lives to captivate and
amuse. (1:32–33)

Corrupted by court intrigue, by the “air of salons, ruelles, and boudoirs,”
which is “fatal, in many cases, to the masculine spirit of philosophical self-
denial,” France’s ruling male elite would cause their own downfall, bringing
the nation down with it in the process (1:54). Here, France’s cultural malaise
is coded ingendered terms as a profound failing of masculinity on the part
of the “natural” leaders of the nation.
Scott’s engendering of national character and his assault on French aristocracy are part of a widespread critique of French masculinity in British culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This critique saw the rise of the figure of the “effeminate Frenchman,” who was both the cause and the embodiment of the inferiority of France. Moreover, as Colley points out, this gendered critique of Frenchness also worked to define a British masculinity.

There was a sense at this time—as perhaps there still is—in which the British conceived of themselves as an essentially “masculine” culture—bluff, forthright, rational, down-to-earth to the extent of being philistine—caught up in an eternal rivalry with an essentially “effeminate” France—subtle, intellectually devious, preoccupied with high fashion, fine cuisine and etiquette, and so obsessed with sex that boudoir politics were bound to direct it. (252)

Nationalist expression like Scott’s, framed as an attack on French effeminacy, served to consolidate a hawkish stance on the war both by emphasizing the alterity of the French and impugning the masculinity of those at home who were accused of supporting them.

Further, Scott’s summary of the French ruling class in the Life also sums up nicely the French half of Fergus’s character. Thus, Fergus’s bravery in battle does not redeem him, as it does not redeem the court nobility of the ancien régime: “[I]n general the order, in everything but military courage, had assumed a trivial and effeminate character, from which the patriotic sacrifices or masculine wisdom, were scarcely to be expected” (Life of Napoleon 1:33; emphasis added). “Military courage” is the exception that proves the rule of French effeminacy, as Scott depicts the aristocratic corruption embodied in Fergus Mac-Ivor as symptomatic of both a failed masculinity and failed patriotism.

THE PROBLEMATICS OF LOYALTY

Though Fergus’s masculinity comes under increasing scrutiny in the novel, his social status is never in doubt, and as a chieftain in the patriarchal society of the Highland clans, he is paid unswerving allegiance by his underlings, who depend on him for their safety, their livelihood, and their sense of identity. Yet in return for this allegiance, Fergus must continue to devote his efforts to the continued well-being of the clan. This dynamic of reciprocity is a key element in the Highland tradition of duthchas, or “kindness” that
Scott in *Waverley* seems to recognize. In this tradition, the chieftain was seen less as a feudal master or landlord and more a protector or land trustee, whose authority derived not only from kinship ties but from the continued demonstration of *his* loyalty to the clan. Through this dynamic of reciprocal loyalty that *duthchas* is supposed to engender, *Waverley* highlights both the exemplarity of Evan and the alien-ness of Fergus. We see an example of this dynamic early on when Evan remarks to Waverley that he had served his chieftain dutifully in the Black Watch company that Fergus had commanded. Waverley notes that this seems an instance of ideological betrayal, given that the Black Watch’s government-sponsored mandate had been to put down Jacobite unrest in the Highlands. Surely, Waverley suggests, when Evan was “in King George’s pay” he was “King George’s soldie[r].” Evan defers: “Troth, and you must ask Vich Ian Vohr [Fergus] about that; for we are for his king, and care not much which of them it is” (150). In his response, Evan redefines the grounds upon which Waverley questions his loyalty, shifting from an abstract notion of allegiance to an ideological cause to one of personal devotion to his chieftain. The unmediated intensity of this devotion determines the circumstances of Evan’s life and of his death and illustrates his admirable selflessness in opposition to the self-aggrandizement of his chieftain.

When Fergus and Evan are put on trial for their part in the failed Jacobite insurrection, both men go to the gallows unemotionally. While Fergus uses his chance to speak in the courtroom to proclaim the righteousness of the cause and his willingness to die gladly for it, Evan instead takes his opportunity to argue a Highland bargain with the judge:

> [I]f your excellent honour, and the honourable court, would let Vich Ian Vohr go free just this once, and let him gae back to France, and no to trouble King George’s government again, that ony six o’ the very best of his clan will be willing to be justified in his stead; and if you’ll just let me gae down to Glennaquoch, I’ll fetch them up to ye mesell, to head or hang, and you may begin wi’ me the very first man. (465)

The ease with which Evan expresses his willingness to sacrifice himself for his chieftain demonstrates his total adherence to the Highland code of loyalty—its disinterestedness and artlessness, its grounding in the personal bonds between individuals. It also makes him the ideal fighting man, as it places him beyond the realm of politics and political allegiances altogether, insulating him from the political and ethical ambiguities of Jacobitism that adhere to other characters in the novel. Though Evan follows Fergus to the gallows and pays the ultimate price assigned to those who foment civil unrest, Evan’s inability to even understand, much less adopt, the ideology
that has brought him to trial for his very life effectively works to exonerate him. Scott makes this point overtly in the final pronouncements of the judge, who offers Evan leniency:

For you, poor ignorant man . . . who, following the ideas in which you have been educated, have this day given us a striking example how the loyalty due to the king and state alone, is, from your unhappy ideas of clanship, transferred to some ambitious individual, who ends by making you the tool of his crimes. (466)

The redemption of the Highland warrior here suggests that Scott is not interested simply in straightforwardly linking the figure with a romantic, yet anachronistic Jacobitism. Instead, we can read the judge’s pronouncement as part of a recurring theme in Scott’s celebration of primitive warriors: the betrayal of their noble disinterestedness by a ruling elite corrupted or emasculated by polished society. Cleansing the Highland clansman of the taint of Jacobitism, *Waverley* opens a space for his role as British masculine exemplar, even as it seeks to code Jacobitism as a French-influenced movement, “a foreign invasion” in Ian Duncan’s words (*Modern Romance* 78).

The subtle shifts in masculine behavior and the links between such behavior and national/ethnic identity also highlights the ways in which a novel that narrates the final settlement of Great Britain “sixty years since” is informed by, and engages with, notions of masculinity associated with the nation’s contemporary struggle against France.

In his offer of leniency to Evan, who of course instantly refuses it, the judge also voices the idea of “loyalty transference” that critics have suggested is a crucial component of the romanticization of the Highland soldier. Most recently, for example, Clyde sums up *Waverley*’s role in reinforcing the transformation in attitudes toward the Highland soldier in the war era:

Scott created a romantic vision of the Gaels as a race of fierce and fearless warriors whose only failing was a misplaced loyalty to a deserving albeit hopeless cause. It seemed to many that in the seventy years or so between the Battles of Culloden and Waterloo, the Gaels’ talent for war had been at last redirected towards the British national interest. (177)

Yet representations such as Scott’s, premised on the assumption that Highland loyalty was a product of clanship, also pose a key dilemma: If the Highlander’s unswerving loyalty to his chieftain is a fundamental aspect of the social order of clanship, how can this loyalty be transferred to the similar yet separate social order of the British army? Scott seems to pose this funda-
mental question overtly in a scene in which Fergus, as he awaits execution in
his cell in Carlisle Castle, declares to Waverley:

Would to God . . . I could bequeath to you my rights to the love and obedi-
ence of this primitive and brave race,—or at least, as I have striven to do,
persuade poor Evan to accept of his life upon their terms, and be to you what
he has been to me, the kindest—the bravest—the most devoted. (472)

Fergus’s dream of redirected loyalty, addressed to Waverley, a sometime
officer in the British army, seems just that, a dream: “But . . . that cannot
be. You cannot be to them Vich Ian Vohr; and these three magic words . . .
are the only open sesame to their feelings and sympathies” (472). Scott here
seems to pose the possibility of loyalty transference only to foreclose it, but
elsewhere in the novel he establishes the grounds for just such a transference.
In the same prison meeting described above, Fergus muses on the ultimate
fate of his clan, which will soon be leaderless, and makes a last request of
Waverley:

You are rich . . . Waverley, and you are generous. When you hear of these poor
Mac-Ivors being distressed about their miserable possessions by some harsh
overseer or agent of government, remember you have worn their tartan, and
are an adopted son of their race. The Baron, who knows our manners, and
lives near our country, will apprize you of the time and means to be their
protector. Will you promise this to the last Vich Ian Vohr? (472)

Waverley agrees, and Scott telescopes into the future for a moment to record
that Edward indeed fulfills his promise to Fergus: “Edward . . . afterwards
so amply redeemed [his word] . . . that his memory still lives in these glens
by the name of the Friend of the Sons of Ivor” (472). Scott here seems to
anticipate and condemn the military crackdown and economic turmoil
that would come after the ’45. Moreover, Waverley’s pledge to Fergus and
acceptance of the status of surrogate “friend of the clan” suggest that though
Waverley’s eventual leave-taking of the Highlands could be said to mark his
rejection of “romance” and mature acceptance of a rationalist progressive
ethos, his sojourn in the Highlands has effected a profound transformation
of his relationship with the Highland world—from that of awestruck tourist
to one fully engaged and implicated in that world.

Buzard has insightfully situated Waverley’s transformation in the con-
text of the novel’s ethnographic stance. Characterizing Waverley as “the
living embodiment of English power,” Buzard suggests the novel enacts the
“ethnographer’s double journey”:
The "culturing" of Waverley as a mature English landlord is inextricably bound up with the ethnographic romance of definitively apprehending "Scottish culture." Waverley's (and Waverley's) progress is not from romantic fancy to sober fact, but rather fragmented to unified visions, from ethnocentric first impressions to ethnographic total view. (40)

Taking the basic premise of Buzard's reading of the shift in Waverley's position vis-à-vis the Highlands, I want to push its implications and suggest that the "total view" that Waverley achieves by the end of the novel is premised not simply on his growing sympathy with the culture but on his partial immersion within the culture, as "an adopted son of their race." Waverley's gradual achievement of a variation of Highland fosterage can be traced in the moments when Waverley dons the Highland garb, which can be read as glimpses into his progressive acculturation into Highland ways rather than haphazard instances of his wavering allegiance to Jacobitism. In Waverley's initial sartorial transformation, during the stag hunt at Glennaquoich, he "complied so far with the custom of the country as to adopt the trews (he could not be reconciled to the kilt), brogues, and bonnet, as the fittest dress for the exercise in which he was to be engaged" (187). But by the time he joins the Highland Jacobite army as it marches to battle, Waverley dons the full "garb of Old Gaul" complete with kilt, which makes him, as Evan himself declares, "a pratty man—a very pratty man" (306). Waverley himself seems to agree, gazing into the mirror and acknowledging that "the reflection seemed that of a very handsome young fellow," which may emphasize his immature foppishness, but it also illustrates his acceptance of, and gradual immersion into, the Highland world. As Evan reveals at this point, not simply on the level of costume has Waverley opted to "go native": he has also familiarized himself with Highland weaponry and fighting techniques (306). By the end of the novel, Waverley not only becomes a Gaelic-speaking authority on the Highlands, he can "whistle a pibroch, dance a strathspey, and sing a Highland song," which he proceeds to demonstrate for a young man he encounters on his travels who is no less fascinated by (or ignorant of) Highland culture than Waverley was when he first rode into the Highlands.

These moments of gradual acculturation into the Highland world suggest that something more than the acquisition of the ethnographer's "total view" is at work in Waverley's transformation. Instead, Waverley's sympathy for the Highland people and the reciprocal identification between him and them becomes a key underpinning for the enactment of "loyalty transference" in the novel—for the clan's acceptance of Waverley as friend to, or actual member of, the clan not only makes him their surrogate leader, it makes him their commander in wartime. Further, Scott suggests that acculturation not only
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grants Waverley the authority to command the clan but makes him a particularly effective leader, as the clan’s own testimony would seem to affirm. When Waverley shows concern for a wounded English soldier, the son of one of his uncle’s tenants, Scott writes:

Waverley rather gained than lost in the opinion of the Highlanders. . . . They would not have understood the general philanthropy which rendered it almost impossible for Waverley to have passed any person in such distress; but, as apprehending that the sufferer was one of his following, they unanimously allowed that Waverley’s conduct was that of a kind and considerate chieftain, who merited the attachment of his people. (329; emphasis in original)

This passage marks a crucial moment in Waverley’s acculturation into the clan: Through the principles of duthchas, Waverley begins to receive the clan’s allegiance not because of his lineage or kinship ties, but because he seems to understand and adopt traditional Highland social codes. Evan himself acknowledges Waverley’s chieftainlike position among the clan when a member of a neighboring clan remarks that the shout and bagpipe flourish that Evan’s men give to Waverley upon his arrival was “as if the Chieftain were just come to your head.’ ‘Mar e Bran is e brathair, If it is not Bran, it is Bran’s brother,’ was the proverbial reply of Maccombatich” (326).

The clan’s acceptance of Waverley and his sympathy with its fate in both war and peace suggest that we read him not as the embodiment of Englishness, but as an alternative mode of English masculinity, contrasted, for example—in a novel of so many contrasting modes of masculinity—with that epitomized by Colonel Talbot. If Talbot’s masculinity is marked by a particular code of honor “devoted to the service of his king and country, without feeling any pride in knowing the theory of his art,” which reveals him to be “in every point the English soldier,” his character is also “strongly tinged . . . with those prejudices which are peculiarly English” (365–66). These prejudices manifest themselves in Talbot’s utter excoriation of Highlanders. When Waverley insists that Talbot judges the Highlanders “too harshly,” Talbot replies:

Not a whit, not a whit; I cannot spare them a jot—I cannot bate them an ace. Let them stay in their own barren mountains, and puff and swell, and hang their bonnets on the horns of the moon, if they have a mind: but what business have they to come where people wear breeches, and speak an intelligible language? I mean intelligible in comparison with their gibberish, for
even the Lowlanders talk a kind of English little better than the negroes in Jamaica. (387)

*Waverley* maps out subtle differences in masculinity between characters of the same ethnic backgrounds—contrasting Talbot's singularly ethnocentric inability (or refusal) to engage, much less sympathize, with Highlander culture and Waverley’s willingness to immerse himself in Highland ways. The novel also suggests that the loyalty transference that is necessary to effect the Highland soldier-hero is impossible without some concomitant transformation in the character of his non-Highland commander, who must understand and sympathize with the Highlander’s cultural peculiarities. Scott, therefore, condemns not only Frenchness and Jacobitism through the rejection of a masculinity that links them, but also the kind of chauvinist Englishness that Talbot embodies, which cannot accommodate the new realities of *multiple* British masculinities brought in proximity in the context of warfare. If the novel constructs a “primitive” Highland warrior, it also promulgates a peculiar mode of normative military masculinity for his commanding officer, a masculinity marked by cultural tolerance and sympathy and the “ethnographic” acquisition of Highland “local knowledge.” As the novel narrates relations between these two modes of masculinity, it provides a space for a new *relational* understanding of military masculinity in the context of the new imperial conditions of British military service, as two exemplary yet distinct types of British fighting men wage war against their common enemy.

**HIGHLAND “ROMANCE” AS AUTOETHNOGRAPHY**

The topographically determined cultural peculiarities that made the Highland man an ideal warrior, as well as the new, sympathetic cultural knowledge that highlandism demands in a modern military context, is taken up in exhaustive detail by David Stewart of Garth in his *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*. Indeed, as one of the most oft-cited sources on its subject in the nineteenth century, the *Sketches* represents a key text in the history of Highland representation. As Stewart’s biographer suggests, nothing like the *Sketches*, which was neither a travelogue nor a work of fiction but a full-fledged “sociological” account, “had ever been placed before the public” (Robertson, *First Highlander* 125). Yet relatively scant critical attention has been paid to the *Sketches*; recent studies of the Highlands, if they remark on the *Sketches* at all, give it only cursory
notice. Womack, for example, places Stewart on his short list of purveyors of Highland “sentimentality” in the nineteenth century, along with “Osgood Mackenzie and even Queen Victoria,” who “express a powerful if precious delight in the place” (177). Devine also places Stewart on the list of writers—Anne Grant, Patrick Graham, and, “above all,” Sir Walter Scott—who widely disseminated the “association between Jacobitism and the Highlands” making the former “romantic and seductive” (Clanship 91). By looking more closely at the Sketches and paying particular attention to its “sociological” stance, however, one can read the work as a unique achievement in the history of highlandism that manages to provide a broader systemization of the ethnographic imagination of Waverley, which Stewart admiringly references, while at the same time problematizing the very grounds upon which “ethnography” as a discursive field came to be defined.

In addition to describing the ideal qualities of the Highland warrior, which are the product of the hard environment and patriarchal society in which he is nurtured, Stewart’s work provides a complete history of all the Highland regiments. This history occupies more than half of the two-volume work and provided its initial impetus. In 1816 Stewart was asked to write a history of the Black Watch regiment, and this initial plan ballooned into a work that not only provides a full account of all the Highland regiments that existed up to that time, but also includes a two-part general analysis that catalogs in detail Highland traditions and cultural practices in addition to—as Stewart frequently apologizes in the text—an exhaustive collection of footnoted anecdotes to illustrate the general catalog of Highland ways. The shifting evolution of the work highlights the generic tensions of the final product, which sets out both to “sketch” an overview of an entire culture and to narrate a particular military history. Yet the constituent parts of the work are mutually constitutive: As Stewart asserts repeatedly, the accounts of heroism and exemplary conduct that constitute the individual histories of each Highland regiment cannot be understood outside the context of the distinctive culture in which the Highlander is reared. In turn, historical accounts of Highland military exploit—encompassing a wide variety of combat arenas and spanning, in the case of the Black Watch, over sixty years—serve to illustrate the general propensities of the Highland male.

The tensions embedded in the work are evident early on, as it works to establish itself within an emerging field of anthropology/ethnography. In its first section, Stewart sets out familiar points of highlandism but situates these points within a formal ethnographic framework of key social categories:
From these circumstances [limited agriculture, infrequent intercourse with the Lowlands, and limited population due to moutainousness of the region], as well as from the sequestered situation in which the inhabitants were placed, a peculiar character and distinctive manners naturally originated. . . . [T]heir exercises, their amusements, their modes of subsistence, their motives of action, their prejudices, and their superstitions, became characteristic, permanent, and peculiar.22

Stewart’s work, then, will attempt to provide nothing less than a systematic account of Highland “modes of life.” In other words, the work assumes the ethnographer’s “whole sight,” and, in this, the Sketches partakes of fundamental stance of ethnographic work later in the century. As Christopher Herbert describes:

[What gives [the assumption that a people is to be defined by its beliefs, morals, customs, and so forth] ethnographic significance . . . is the presumption that this array of disparate-seeming elements of social life composes a significant whole, each factor of which is in some sense a corollary of, consubstantial with, implied by, immanent in, all the others. (4–5)\n
Stewart seems also aware that claims to take the full measure of a culture must be founded on a wide variety of reliable source materials, and he seems to betray an anxiety to establish the authority of those sources. The Sketches is brimming over with examples gleaned from other written and informant sources, placed in the text proper and appendices, and in footnotes so frequent and lengthy they could be said to constitute a parallel text.

But at the same time, Stewart is careful to establish his own credentials as an authority on the Highlands. In presuming to contradict the opinions of those “men conspicuous for talents and acquirements” who have spoken on the Highlands before him, Stewart clears a space for his own higher authority by giving evidence of his own knowledge of his subject. This knowledge originates, he writes,

principally from the circumstances of my being a native of the country and having from early infancy associated much with the people. Speaking their language and keeping an attentive ear and observant eye to what was said or done in my presence, I have been able to acquire a considerable knowledge of their habits, dispositions, and traditional histories. [I am] descended by both parents from families in which all I have said of patriarchal kindness
and devoted attachment had for ages been exemplified . . . and still farther, [I have] had occasion, in the course of my professional duties, to come into daily contact with the same people.23

It is in Stewart’s attempt to establish himself as authority on his subject where the tensions and contradictions begin to surface. Stewart positions himself as his own informant—as one born and raised in the Highlands, speaking the language, and fully conversant with Highland tradition who nevertheless also can report objectively and authoritatively on his subject in the metropolitan epistemological framework that is demanded of such a work. The contradictions of such a position are revealed in the shifting subjectivity of the narrator, as he alternately labels himself a “native,” while making reference to “their” language and “their” habits. As both native informant and outside observer, Stewart undermines the distance between the normative vision of the ethnographer and his subject culture that is crucial to ethnographic discourse and that reinforces difference. The author of the Sketches is always part of, and fully implicated in, the society he wishes to observe and report on. This fundamental contradiction in Stewart’s work is also revealed in the way in which he is intent on systematically cataloging not only Highland cultural practices but also the profound transformation in the Highlands of his own time.

Indeed, the second section of the Sketches proper is devoted to delineating the “present state, and changes of character, manners, and [even] personal appearances” of the inhabitants of the Highlands. In this section, Stewart launches an insistent and passionate critique of new land management practices in the Highlands, which, he argues, threaten to destroy the very fabric of the Highland way of life. Furthermore, the critique of land policy and later analysis of Highland military character are inextricably interwoven, as Stewart ties Highland military propensity to the continued maintenance of traditional ways:

Military character depends both on moral and on physical causes, arising from the various circumstances and situations in which men are placed. Every change in these circumstances tends either to improve or deteriorate that character and hence we find, that nations that were once distinguished as the bravest in Europe, have sunk into weakness and insignificance, while others have been advancing to power and pre-eminence. The importance of preserving this character is evident. Unless a people be brave, high-spirited, and independent in mind and in principles, they must, in time, yield to their more powerful neighbours. (1:217–18)
Thus extolling the natural benefits of highlandism and calling for an end to socioeconomic experimentation in the Highlands are inextricably intertwined. The logic of highlandism insists that the peculiarities of Highland society that produced the Highland fighting man cannot be sustained in the current climate of social and economic upheaval. This, in turn, has direct implications for the health of the nation. At the same time, Stewart’s history of the military exploits of Highland regiments forms the basis of his plea on patriotic grounds for just treatment in the Highlands. Recounting the bloody sacrifices of Highland soldiers throughout history, Stewart makes appeals on behalf of the Highland people by reminding his readers of Highland contributions to the nation.

The process by which new land management practices work to undermine British military might is twofold for Stewart. The most immediate process is immigration, which Stewart characterizes as a “White Slave Trade”:

> Such drains on the populations by extensive and compulsory migrations . . . have removed from this country as many valuable members of society as were killed by the enemy in the whole of the Peninsular campaigns,—and this in a much shorter period than the duration of those apparently destructive and deadly operations. (2:57)

But more crucial for Stewart is the effect of new land practices on the emotional well-being of soldiers and their families back home in the Highlands. The *Sketches* details the trauma of clearance displacement and dispossession, which, Stewart writes, has produced a widespread “demoralization” within the Highlands. Having lost the “natural” protection of the landowner, Stewart writes, the people have

> in too many instances, sought consolation in the doctrines of ignorant and fanatical spiritual guides, infected with the rage of proselytizing, and capable of producing no solid or beneficial impression on the ardent minds of those to whom their exhortations and harangues are generally addressed. (1:125)

In addition, the “natural enthusiasm of the Highland character has, in many instances, been converted into gloomy and morose fanaticism. Traditional history and native poetry, which reminded them of other times are neglected” (1:125). In the same manner, Stewart writes, Highland social gatherings have denigrated into outlets for venting anger and frustration:
[T]heir taste for music, dancing, and all kinds of social amusement, has been chilled. Their evening meetings are now seldom held, and when they do occur, instead of being enlivened with the tale, the poem, or the song, they are too frequently exasperated with political or religious discussions, or with complaints against their superiors, and the established clergy. (1:126)

Stewart’s answer to this demoralization is to call for a kind of renewed “moral economy” in the Highlands in which landlord-tenant relations are based not on “cold-hearted calculation” but on a benign paternalism:

What they [Highland natives] have formerly been, will they not still continue to be, if they were only made to experience the same kindness as their forefathers? The cordial and condescending kindness of the higher orders, as I have already oftener than once said, contributed materially to produce the character which the people seem anxious to perpetuate. (1:206)

Stewart places the blame for social problems in the Highlands squarely on the shoulders of landowners who have “unhinged the social virtues, and the mutual confidence between them and their formerly attached dependents” (1:207). This attachment is bound not by a contract, by lease, but by obligations of “honour, or mutual interest, and reciprocal advantage” (1:207). In sum, Stewart calls for nothing less than a return to the principles of duthchas in the Highlands.

This call for what amounts to a kind of individualized social paternalism as a cure-all for the economic and social ills in the Highlands might be expected from one who was himself a Highland landowner and who would be forced to sell off much of his family estate to pay off creditors in the difficult post-Waterloo economy. Moreover, Stewart does not reject the basic underlying principles of agricultural improvement but instead condemns the destructive “revolutionary” pace at which such principles were implemented in the Highlands. Contrasting the pace of change in the Highlands with that in the Lowlands, Stewart links the sudden acceleration of socioeconomic change with the “spirit of enterprise which burst forth after the Seven Years War [1763]”:

In the Lowlands . . . the people were allowed time to overcome old habits, and to acquire a gradual knowledge of the new improvements. But many Highland landlords . . . seeing the advantages of these improvements, and the consequent increase of rents, commenced operations in the north with a precipitation which has proved ruinous to their ancient tenants, and not always productive of advantage to themselves. (1:139)
Stewart’s acute analysis of the unique pace of transformations in Highland economy anticipates more recent accounts, and, despite the landowner ideology that can be said to inform the work, the Sketches would influence a generation of Highland land reform advocates, from Donald Macleod to Alexander Mackenzie. In Stewart’s plea for measures to end emigration, short leases, and secret biddings in auction, and in his demand that preference be given to “natives” in the sale of land and that limits be set on total acreage that any individual can control, his work amounts to an unprecedented call for a systematic and intrusive reform of land policy in the Highlands. Indeed, because of this aspect of the work, and because Stewart condemns the management policies of the Sutherland estate and its factor, Peter Sellar, by name, the Sketches was labeled a “radical” treatise, so potentially incendiary that Stewart’s friend Sir John Macgregor Murray (a founding member of the Highland Society of Scotland whose son was married to the Duke of Atholl’s daughter) advised Stewart not to publish it (Robertson 90).

By placing the Highlands firmly within the realm of historical process, historical change, Stewart’s work instead undermines the “denial of co-evalness” that Johannes Fabian has argued is fundamental aspect of European anthropology in the nineteenth century and after.

Stewart’s careful documentation and bitter critique of the processes of historical change in the Highlands represent a crucial difference between his work and Waverley, which makes scant mention of the economic upheavals in the Highlands after 1745. In his review of the Culloden Papers, Scott provides some commentary on the contemporary state of the Highlands, alluding to the processes of depopulation and emigration, and he echoes Stewart’s suggestion that the ultimate price of a transformation will be paid in losses to the Highland military rolls. Famously ending the piece on an elegiac note, Scott writes:

[1]f the hour of need should come—and it may not, perhaps be far distant—the pibroch may sound through the deserted region, but the summons will remain unanswered. The children who have left her will re-echo from a distant shore the sounds which they took leave of their own—Ha til, ha til, ha til, mi tuidh!—“We return—we return—we return—no more!” (333)

But there is no such final note of inevitability in the Sketches as Stewart continues to demonstrate (as does Scott, implicitly at least, in Waverley) that the vestiges of Highland masculine character continue to find a home in the military and that national self-interestedness ought to grant the Highlander a “reprieve.”
The complex contradictions of the Sketches’s “ethnographic” stance—the liminal subject positioning of its author, its marked insistence on a Highland historicity, and its insistent social critique—suggest the work must be read not as an ethnography but as an autoethnography. Distinguishing between the two terms, Pratt writes: “If ethnographic texts are means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or dialogue with those metropolitan representations” (7). This reading of the Sketches of course complicates the notion that it is an example of the romanticization of the Highlands that works to elide the “realities” of the Highland Clearances. Instead the Sketches both resists and collaborates with metropolitan orderings of the Highlands. A wholesale “translation” of its subject into English, the Sketches is marked nevertheless by, again in Pratt’s words, a “transcultural dialogism” that on metropolitan terms attempts to make its reader sympathetic to a Highland way of life.

SCOTLAND’S (BRITISH) WARRIOR FOR EMPIRE

Stewart’s argument against land policy is often utilitarian—preserving the character of the Highland male preserves his effectiveness as a fighter—but, as I have suggested, the exemplarity of the Highlander, his ability not only to serve British state interests but to embody particular masculine attributes in nationalist discourse, is at the center of his popularity. Stewart himself seems to recognize the particular symbolic role that the figure of the Highland soldier plays in nurturing and consolidating national feeling. Indeed, Stewart argues that without the existence of the Highland soldier in his Highland uniform, there would be no ability to signify a uniquely “Scottish” military essence at all. Citing examples for the Napoleonic Wars, Stewart summarizes this phenomenon:

In short, if there were no Scotch regiments, and no highland uniform, we should hear no more of the military character than we do of the naval exploits of Scotland. There might be, as there have always been, many individual instances of distinguished merit, but there would be no national character. (2: app. lxxxix)26

The figure of the Highland soldier in his distinctive uniform works to effect a covalent Scottish/British patriotism that recognizes the possibility of dual national allegiance in the context of imperial warfare. Stewart’s insistence on a national identity in difference sometimes makes for strained historical
analogy—for example, when he, after declaring Bannockburn the battle that “may be said to have fixed the independence of Scotland as a nation,” goes on to compare that battle with Waterloo:

As the [latter] sealed the destiny of Buonaparte, so Bannockburn destroyed the hopes of a proud invader, and established the independence of Scotland on a foundation which kept it firm, till the Union with a more powerful kingdom rendered the independence of the one inseparable from the other. (2:343)

The slippery logic of this comparison allows Stewart to trace a continuous line in Scottish military history and to read both battles as special dramatic moments of trial, in which the nation’s integrity was preserved and its greatness reaffirmed, all through manly exploit. Thus, Stewart’s British patriotism does not efface a Scottish patriotism. Rather, in Simon Gikandi’s words, “to be Scottish . . . was to belong to a larger more compelling and authoritative narrative, one made possible by the imperial mission” (33).

Stewart cites a particular instance of the Highland figure’s ability to inspire Scottish national feeling while evoking Britain’s great contemporary nemesis when he recounts the reaction of “an old friend” and native of the Highlands who agreed to accompany Stewart to a royal review of the Gordon Fencibles in Hyde Park in 1794. This friend, Stewart writes,

[at] the commencement of the French Revolution, [had] imbibed many of the new opinions, became an imaginary citizen of the world, and would not allow that he had a country. . . . However . . . when he saw the regiment, the plaids, and the bonnets, and heard the sound of the bagpipes, the memory of former days returned with such force, that his heart swelled, his eyes filled with tears, and . . . he exclaimed, “I have a country, after all: the sight of these poor fellows has given me a truer lesson than all my boasted philosophy. (2: app., fn.xc)

Stewart here describes the profound power of a figure that powerfully evokes a set of associations that signify “Scottishness” and simply overwhelms an expatriate cosmopolitanism. Moreover, that this cosmopolitanism is distinctly coded as “French” in this passage recalls Scott’s attack on French effeminacy in Waverley and elsewhere.

For Stewart, the response to French effeminacy is, as for Scott, Highland manliness, with its rugged hardiness, natural skill in military action, and devotion to his commanding officer and to his nation. But beyond this, Stewart’s avocation of the reciprocal principles of duthchas in the second half of the first section of the Sketches finds its exact parallel in the regimental
histories. In these, Stewart makes clear that if the preservation of Highland military character is contingent on renewed awareness of, and paternalistic sympathy for, Highland ways on the part of the landowning class, the actualization of this character within the army itself is contingent on the selfsame attitude on the part of commanding officers. As Stewart stresses in his introduction to the regimental histories,

A Highland regiment, to be orderly and well disciplined, ought to be commanded by men who are capable of appreciating their character, directing their passions and prejudices, and acquiring their entire confidence and affection. The officer to whom the command of the Highlanders is entrusted must endeavor to acquire their confidence and good opinion. With this view he must watch over the propriety of his own conduct. He must observe the strictest justice and fidelity in his promises to his men, conciliate them by an attention to their dispositions and prejudices, and, at the same time, preserve a firm and steady authority, without which he will not be respected. (1:220)

This passage points to a key difference in Stewart’s construction of Highland and non-Highland military masculinity, which highlights the essentializing turn of the work as a whole: In contrast to its descriptive summary of the Highland fighting man, its summary of the Highland officer is proscriptive—an officer must endeavor to acquire the regiment’s confidence, and so on. Nevertheless, Stewart’s insistence on a reciprocal relationship between Highland soldier and non-Highland officer is a key feature of his work, for if the historical account serves to provide illustrations of highlandism in action, it also provides examples of the special qualities demanded of officers to “bring out” highlandism within the special confines of the army. Typical of these examples is Stewart’s description of the commanding officer of the 101st (Johnstone’s Highlanders) Regiment:

Although Major Johnstone was not himself a Highlander, he had every qualification for the command of a Highland regiment. An excellent judgement enabled him to perceive the advantages of availing himself of the peculiar habits of the men, and of commanding them rather by influencing their minds, than by fear of corporal punishments. He entered on his functions with the spirit of a knight of former times, and while he made himself agreeable to his men by wearing their favourite garb, and by humouring and indulging them in the exercise of their characteristic habits and customs, so far as they did not interfere with their duty, he secured their attachment, while he possessed their respect, by the spirit and energy he displayed. (2:86)
Securing the “attachment” of the men is a crucial task for an officer of a Highland regiment, and in this and other examples Stewart suggests that the achievement of “loyalty transference,” to which Scott only alludes in Waverley, is wholly a function of sympathetic knowledge and tolerance of Highland “peculiarities.”

Just how varied and widespread the demands on Britain’s imperial warriors proved to be is demonstrated in the casualty lists of the Highland regiments, which Stewart provides in his appendix. These not only give the numbers killed and wounded, they also provide a complete catalog of the unprecedented movements of an army that was called upon to mobilize by land and sea to over five different continents in the space of some sixty years. Stewart’s history of the Black Watch, the oldest of the Highland regiments, alone catalogs engagements from Hulst and Beveland in the Low Countries to Martinique and Guadeloupe in the West Indies; from the wilderness of the North American interior to the urban outskirts of New York City and Brooklyn; from Maida in Egypt, Fuentes de Honor in Portugal to Toulouse and Quatre Bas in France. (Stewart describes his own contradictory impuls-es when he, as an officer of the Black Watch, is called upon to quell rioting in Ross-Shire in 1792, Bliadhna nan Caorach “the Year of the Sheep.”) Not simply providing what amounts to a litany of the countless assaults, storm-ings, counterattacks, and charges of actual combat, the Sketches also recounts the garrisoning, bivouacking, occupying, and patrolling that is required in the ceaseless job of enforcing and maintaining British imperial will in an ever-expanding theater of operation. The lives of Highland military men—so insistently bound to their homeland that the very terrain is said to define them—is framed in Stewart’s work wholly in terms of service to their country. Perhaps ironically, however, in an imperial age their lives are also marked, just as insistently, not only by the deprivations of combat in varied climes but by an unceasing global nomadism.

Such a condition brings into relief the anomalous condition of the Sketches as an autoethnography. If such a text is always the product of the “contact zone,” the term Pratt uses to “invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect” (7), then what could be said to constitute the specific contact zone in which the Sketches is produced? Though it appears that Stewart composed the bulk of the manuscript during a three-year stay in London, the work encompasses, as Stewart himself writes, a lifetime’s gathering of material from military sources and experiences. The cultural space in which the Sketches arises is no less marked by the coming together of subjects once separated by geography and history,
yet at the same time this space is revealed to be a complexly multilayered and dynamic “translocality,” as British fighting men like Stewart—Highland and non-Highland both—are brought together and shuttled across the globe, encountering a wide variety of “Others,” both within and beyond the army, in a wide variety of climates and circumstances.

And what is the nature of the sacrifice the nation may ask of the Highlander? The Highland soldier must be willing to meet death not simply in the context of battle, but in ways that he could hardly imagine back home. Toward the end of the Sketches, Stewart gives an example of Highland loyalty by citing Anne Grant’s dramatic account of the fate of one hundred members of the 73rd (Macleod’s Highlanders) Regiment during the siege of Mysore in 1780, who, after refusing to “take the turban,” to join the enemy and convert to Islam, were imprisoned and slowly starved to death by the Muslim leader Haider Ali:

> It was not theirs to meet death in the field of honour. . . . This well known, though neglected, instance of what may be expected from being accustomed from the cradle to self-command, and self-denial, affords an additional proof of the importance of preserving, unmixed and undebased, a race so fit to encounter those perils and labours, worse than death, which the defence of our wide extended empire requires.” (Grant, Essays; cited in Stewart, Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland 2: 151)

Britain’s primitive warrior, more than any other man, epitomizes the kind of military masculinity that imperial will requires. It is a desire that would only accelerate after Napoleon’s defeat in 1814, in a time of unfettered British colonial expansion in which the Highland warrior would continue to be celebrated, but in much different contexts and conflicts. In the colonial setting, to which my study will now turn, the exploits of the Highlander were set against those of the rebellious native, with curious results.