James Hogg and British Romanticism

A Kaleidoscopic Art

Meiko O'Halloran

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Lecturer in Romantic Literature, Newcastle University, UK

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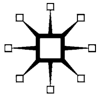

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For my Mother
and in memory of Karl Miller

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List of Abbreviations

Alker & Nelson	*James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace*, ed. Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson (Farnham, 2009)
AT	Hogg, *Altrive Tales*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 2003)
Badlewe	Hogg, *The Hunting of Badlewe, A Dramatic Tale* (London and Edinburgh, 1814)
BLJ	*Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 13 vols (London, 1973–94)
Companion	*The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh, 2012)
Confessions	Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, ed. P. D. Garside (S/SC, 2001)
HJ	Hogg, *Highland Journeys*, ed. Hans de Groot (S/SC, 2010)
JR	Hogg, *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland: being the songs, airs, and legends of the adherents of the House of Stuart*, ed. Murray G. H. Pittock, 2 vols (S/SC, 2002–3)
Letters, I	*The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume 1, 1800–1819*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 2004)
Letters, II	*The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume 2, 1820–1831*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 2006)
Letters, III	*The Collected Letters of James Hogg: Volume 3, 1832–1835*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 2008)
LS	Hogg, *A Series of Lay Sermons*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 1997)
'Memoir'	Hogg, 'Memoir of the Author's Life', in *Altrive Tales*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 2003), 11–52
MND	Hogg, *Midsummer Night Dreams*, ed. Jill Rubenstein and Gillian Hughes with Meiko O'Halloran (S/SC, 2008)
Montrose	Hogg, *Tales of the Wars of Montrose*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 1996)
PM	Hogg, *The Poetic Mirror, or The Living Bards of Britain* (London and Edinburgh, 1816)
QH	Hogg, *Queen Hynde*, ed. Suzanne Gilbert and Douglas Mack (S/SC, 1998)

QW	Hogg, *The Queen's Wake*, ed. Douglas Mack (S/SC, 2004)
Romanticism and Blackwood's	*Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine: 'An Unprecedented Phenomenon'*, ed. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts (Basingstoke, 2013)
S/SC Collected Works	*Stirling/South Carolina Collected Works of James Hogg*, ed. Douglas S. Mack, Gillian Hughes, Suzanne Gilbert and Ian Duncan (Edinburgh, 1995–)
SHW	*Studies in Hogg and his World* (1990–)
Spy	Hogg, *The Spy: A Periodical Paper of Literary Amusement and Instruction*, ed. Gillian Hughes (S/SC, 2000)
WET	Hogg, *Winter Evening Tales*, ed. Ian Duncan (S/SC, 2002)

Introduction: Reclaiming Hogg's Place in British Romanticism

When James Hogg (1770–1835) imagined an emerging canon of British Romantic poets, he placed himself at its heart. In a small anonymous collection called *The Poetic Mirror, or The Living Bards of Britain* (1816), Hogg appears at the very centre, between Wordsworth and Coleridge, with Byron and Scott heading the volume, and Southey and John Wilson closing it. In the guise of an anonymous editor, Hogg presented his readers with a portrait of what the Romantic age looked like with him in it. The collection, purporting to be the work of many well-known poets of the day, combines imitations and parodies in each poet's characteristic style – a gloomy oriental romance for Byron, a Border romance for Scott, ponderous introspective poems for Wordsworth, a comic ballad about a supernatural flight for Hogg, mystical musings for Coleridge, a mixture of extravagant and pedantic fantasy for Southey, and lyrical hymns for Wilson. Beside the earnest and sometimes comically pretentious strains he supplies for the other bards, Hogg appears much more witty, dynamic and imaginative, with a deftness of touch and a sense of humour which make his ballad 'The Gude Greye Katt' one of the jewels of the collection. Even as he depicts himself as an integral part of the modern bardic community, he refuses to take its claims seriously, exploring a dialogic tension between the poets' theories about their work and their practice. As *The Poetic Mirror* invites us to consider, British Romanticism looks very different with Hogg in the picture, and it looks different from his perspective(s). Here, as elsewhere in his work, he presents not a straightforward reflection, but a series of alternative views – one of which is a rejection of the conventional hierarchy: a canonical circle, in which the marginal figure of a shepherd-poet unexpectedly moves to the centre and becomes the focal point.

This book argues for Hogg's centrality to British Romanticism through his radical experiments with literary form and his creative

reconfiguration and parodic interrogation of the values of the early nineteenth-century literary marketplace. I make the case that Hogg's diverse body of work not only offers new ways of perceiving the literary innovations of his time, most notably genre-mixing, but also pushes them further by presenting his readers with a range of interpretative choices that develops their agency. As Stuart Curran has shown, British Romantic poets were especially active in transforming genres such as the sonnet, the ode, the pastoral and the epic.[1] David Duff has also argued that genre-mixing was 'a pivotal concept in Romantic aesthetics and a recurrent feature of Romantic literary practice', demonstrating that in Germany Romantic genre theory was far ahead of Britain, but in Britain the creative practice of genre-mixing was much more advanced and appeared in multiple forms.[2] Duff's rich array of examples is as diverse as Wordsworth's notion of a 'composite species' in his Preface to *Poems* (1815), 'medley' fiction such as Hogg's novel *The Three Perils of Man* (1822) and the miscellany.[3] However, even in their fascinating accounts of Romantic literary experimentation, Curran and Duff find space for only a fleeting mention of Hogg's work, offering up genealogies of Romanticism in which he remains strangely marginalised. Extending and developing their work, I examine Hogg's participation in the Romantic culture of genre-mixing, and in the chapters that follow I demonstrate that Hogg's dynamic treatment of literary form is integral to understanding and evaluating his role in and contribution to British Romanticism. Hogg does not simply inherit the formal innovations of particular genres, but has a central part in reinventing and reinvigorating literary forms in more daring and multifaceted ways than many of the authors who remain dominant in canonical accounts of Romanticism. He frequently leaps between genres in a single work in a highly self-conscious way – making readers similarly conscious of the means by which their reading is shaped, and uncertain of where the locus of narrative authority lies. In this way, Hogg prompts readers to exercise their own critical reflexes.

Hogg's centring of himself in *The Poetic Mirror* only emphasises his later marginalisation: no history of Romanticism would now place Hogg at its core. But if Hogg's placing of himself among his more famous contemporaries seemed over-optimistic in 1816, or it seems so in the present day, it is worth considering a comparable portrait of him by his exact contemporary, Wordsworth, which foregrounds the cultural ubiquity that Hogg had gained by the end of his career. On reading of Hogg's death in the *Newcastle Journal* in November 1835, Wordsworth composed his 'Extempore Effusion on the Death of James Hogg' – a

stirring elegy in which Hogg's death becomes the catalyst for mourning the passing of a whole generation of Romantic-era writers. He begins by recalling Hogg's company on his first trip to the Yarrow in September 1814:

> When first, descending from the moorlands,
> I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
> Along a bare and open valley,
> The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.[4]

Instead of scaling the sublime heights of the French Alps or the fells of the English Lake District as he does in *The Prelude* (completed in 1805), the moment Wordsworth recalls here is a descent. The 'bare and open valley' carries mixed connotations of disappointment and possibility, recalling his own 'Yarrow Unvisited' (1803) and 'Yarrow Visited' (1814).[5] But in the context of Hogg's death, the phrase also recalls 'the valley of the shadow of death' from Psalm 23, which opens with the image of Christ as a benevolent shepherd and guide ('The Lord is my Shepherd'), giving hymn-like overtones to the poem. The Ettrick Shepherd is a pastoral figure who not only guides the poetic speaker through his native Scottish Borders, but comes to have a place in Wordsworth's personal journey as a writer, as recalled through the companionship of various fellow writers.

The 'Shepherd-poet' who was Wordsworth's first guide to the Yarrow and 'the mighty Minstrel', Scott, who was his last, are buried together in the third stanza and placed alongside the recently deceased Coleridge, Charles Lamb, George Crabbe and Felicia Hemans as writers who collectively exemplify their era (ll. 12, 9). The imagery throughout emphasises loss, stagnancy, emptiness and disappearance – 'death upon the braes of Yarrow, | Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes', Scott 'breathes no longer', 'every mortal power of Coleridge' has 'frozen at its marvellous source', Lamb has 'vanished from his lonely hearth', Crabbe is no longer 'forth-looking, | . . . from Hampstead's breezy heath', and the pastoral 'golden leaves' falling in the groves of the Yarrow are eventually displaced by the weeds of urban mourning in an arresting simile: 'Our haughty life is crowned with darkness, | Like London with its own black wreathe' (ll. 11–12, 9, 15, 16, 20, 31–2, 7, 29–30). It is a poem about the end of their shared era and the vulnerable position of 'frail survivors' as much as those who have passed away (l. 36). As an expression of a broader cultural bereavement, composed by a fellow poet, Wordsworth's poem recalls Dunbar's 'Lament for the Death of the Makars'.[6] Wordsworth

may not have had a great personal affection for Hogg, but he depicts him nevertheless as part of a distinguished literary community. The 'Shepherd-poet' here is very far from being a flower 'born to blush unseen' or laid to rest in obscurity among 'the rude Forefathers of the hamlet' – an image from Gray's 'Elegy Written in an English Country Church-yard' which appealed to a number of self-taught poets who were in danger of being overlooked in the annals of literary history.[7]

Hogg's first major poem, *The Queen's Wake* (1813), remained his most well-known work until the end of the nineteenth century. The wide circulation of his poems and short stories in magazines, gift books and annuals, and his regular appearance in the 'Noctes Ambrosianae' fictional conversations in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, helped to make 'the Ettrick Shepherd' a household name in the 1820s and 1830s. A new generation of writers which included the young Brontës and Edgar Allan Poe grew up reading his *Blackwood's* stories and sketches, and his plaid-clad image was made easily recognisable in portraits by prominent artists of the day.[8] When Allan Cunningham came to prepare his *Biographical and Critical History of the British Literature of the Last Fifty Years* (1834), surveying the most important authors between the death of Samuel Johnson in 1784 and that of Scott in 1832, Hogg was among the 42 poets whose lives and works were seen to represent the literature of his age. In Cunningham's chronologically arranged sequence, Hogg is introduced after Cowper, Burns, Crabbe, Rogers, Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, James Montgomery and James Grahame, just before Coleridge. Among the 40 subscribers for a monument of Hogg erected in Ettrick in June 1860 (25 years after his death) were several grandees of Victorian Britain, including Sir David Brewster (inventor of the kaleidoscope and the lenticular stereoscope), Sir Archibald Alison (advocate, historian, and son of the author Archibald Alison), Sir John Watson-Gordon (President of the Royal Scottish Academy) and Lord Alfred Tennyson (then Poet Laureate), whose first collection, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), had appeared alongside some of Hogg's late works.[9] In many ways, then, Hogg was recognised as a significant writer during his life and for quite some time after his death. So what happened?

Evaluating Hogg's contribution to Romantic literature involves confronting the factors that perplexed his early readers. The very qualities that make his work central and distinctive in his era – his radical experimentation with literary form and his gradual rethinking of the role of readers – help to explain his uneasy place in it. In reviews and in the private letters and reported conversations of his friends, acquaintances and publishers, Hogg was often criticised for flouting the rules of decorum

by producing literary works which were considered unpredictable and sometimes bewildering in their sudden shifts of perspective, genre, tone and register. Hogg was as capable as his peers of producing literary disasters, but his finest work is startlingly clever in involving readers and offering us new ways of seeing things, whether he is writing of national history, individual life experiences or the literary contests of his day. Since much of his work was published in bowdlerised form by early nineteenth-century editors who wanted to make it more acceptable to polite readers, it is perhaps unsurprising that much of it fell out of circulation in the Victorian period. The prudish tidying up and sanitising of Hogg's writings removed much of its raw energy, verve and subversive humour. The excised passages which modern editors of the Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of *The Collected Works of James Hogg* (1995–) have restored to volumes such as *Queen Hynde* (1824) now foreground the strange collisions, daring humour and generic oddity which are vital to his writing and thinking. But if, with their close chronological proximity to his work, many of his earliest readers felt that the roughness and generic multiplicity of Hogg's writing made him seem out of place, the unwieldy overall shape of his literary corpus has made it equally tricky for subsequent readers to decide how to place him in relation to other writers.

Consequently, despite Hogg's prominence in his lifetime, his large and remarkably diverse body of work has made it hard to recognise his achievement. Like Scott, he moved from collecting and composing ballads to writing novels, but Hogg's literary output looks and feels quite different to that of his peers – not least because he tried his hand at almost every genre, aiming to do something distinctive in each one. Between the appearance of his first collection of poems, *Scottish Pastorals* (1801), and his last published collection of stories, *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835), he composed ballads, songs, long narrative poems (including epic and mock-epic), theatre criticism, plays, parodies, novels, short stories, prose sketches and even lay sermons. Although he now crops up in interesting ways in histories of the novel, poetry, the magazine and the short story, in order to understand his innovations more fully, one needs to examine his work closely on its own terms while also situating it more broadly.

My evaluation begins in Chapter 1 by examining some ways in which *The Poetic Mirror* (an important but critically neglected work) reveals Hogg's engagement with two key models of genre-mixing in his day – the miscellany and the anthology. I contextualise Hogg's practice with the greatest driver of transformation within his work – the literary

marketplace itself – and argue that, developing from and in response to these literary and market models, Hogg creates a distinctive literary style which is best described as 'kaleidoscopic' in view of its similarities with the kaleidoscope invented in 1816 (the same year as *The Poetic Mirror*) by his friend, David Brewster. Crucially, Brewster's kaleidoscope was not the simple toy we know today; viewers could assemble it in a variety of ways to view a plethora of objects and it was capable of generating an infinite number of images. Hogg's kaleidoscopic literary techniques likewise create a textual space in which readers can exercise choice, and play with their perceptions through the unpredictable range of views that emerge from the pages in front of them. Each of his works can be thought of as presenting readers with a microcosm of the literary marketplace – a kind of bookshop within a single book – in which they can browse and choose according to their tastes and interests.

The concept of a kaleidoscopic literary practice provides the best model for understanding Hogg's radical literary aesthetic – his exploration of multiple perspectives and shifting perceptions, and his interest in facilitating readers' choices in his work and increasing their agency. My use of the term 'kaleidoscopic' points to two separate but interlinked facets of Hogg's creative practice as both a maker and a viewer of Romantic literary culture. Firstly, it functions as a peculiarly apt metaphor to define Hogg's literary practice. The analogy with Brewster's kaleidoscope is especially apt for Hogg because in the act of turning the kaleidoscope, the reflections of the objects being viewed are continually realigned so that the viewer sees what was peripheral becoming central and what was central being moved to the periphery. Much of Hogg's work involves shaking up, playing with and juxtaposing existing literary genres and traditions, and testing the possibilities which arise from re-focalising readers' attention through a range of narrative perspectives. He frequently unsettles or removes the reader's sense of a single controlling narrative authority through his presentation of contending narrative voices. Simultaneously, he often deploys multiple fictional versions of himself as a marginal labouring-class figure which serve to instigate and shape the surprising generic transformations of his narratives. By combining a variety of genres, subverting readers' expectations of particular literary styles, and placing himself at the centre of things, Hogg repeatedly repositions readers in relation to the text and encourages us to engage in a different, more flexible approach to reading – involving instinct, choice, and an acceptance of colliding elements, accidents and creative friction – in order to negotiate his shape-shifting narratives. Secondly, reading Hogg's literature as kaleidoscopic serves to characterise

his relationship to his era by recognising that he, like Brewster, participated in the wider Romantic creative practice of genre-mixing as a critical viewer (as well as an inventor) of the culture of which he was part. Hogg offers alternative views of an emerging canon of British Romanticism in his day by putting various major 'high' and 'low' literary developments into dialogue with one another and crafting his own flexible style of critique. It is only by returning Hogg to a central place in his era that one can see his role in contributing to and developing those intertextual (and interdisciplinary) conversations.

In order to understand how Hogg's kaleidoscopic literary practice emerged from, and captures, the cultural ferment of his era, it is worth reviewing his situation as both a reader and a writer in the literary marketplace and magazine culture. Hogg's particular enjoyment of a miscellaneous form of literature which gave readers the opportunity to exercise choice comes across strongly in his response to the launch of *Blackwood's* a year after *The Poetic Mirror*. Writing to William Blackwood on 19 October 1817, after reading the first number, he praises the dynamic mixture of subjects in the magazine and the pleasure of an unstructured approach to reading which allows readers to pursue their whims:

> of all things connected with the Magazine I like that best of intermixing all things through other. A general miscellany should exactly be such an *olio* that when a man has done with a very interesting article he should pop his nose upon another quite as distinct but as good of its kind. One may then if they please begin with a review or a poem or anything he pleases in short a reader should have no rule to go by but the table of contents.[10]

Hogg describes as a novelty qualities which we may take for granted today: the 'intermixing' of poems, reviews and articles, and the freedom of reading according to 'no rule' but what one 'pleases', beginning with whatever happens to strike one's interest from the contents page and roving across the magazine at will. This readerly freedom was part of a new and changing literary landscape for readers in the early decades of the nineteenth century. At a time when British periodical culture was dominated by the more formally arranged *Quarterly Review* and *Edinburgh Review*, William Blackwood introduced a new format of magazine, 'removing all the formal departments, mixing together fiction, reviews, correspondence, and essays, and infusing exuberance throughout'.[11] As Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts emphasise,

Blackwood's proved 'remarkable for its variety, its inconsistency and irreverence' – qualities which Hogg's work often shared.[12]

The Romantic period saw the rise of the author as a professional man or woman of letters – a transition from a private system of patronage to an increased emphasis on selling one's work in the public marketplace for profit and a wider readership.[13] Although the professionalisation of writing as a career created an upward mobility and a more democratic space for many authors in the public sphere, post-Napoleonic British literary culture was still rife with conflict and class tensions. The British pamphlet war of the early 1790s had unleashed a maelstrom of voices responding to the French Revolution and projecting the possible outcomes of a social revolution in Britain. Two decades later, the culture of dispute and competing voices continued in print, particularly in the burgeoning number of early nineteenth-century magazines and the belligerent battles of words that were exchanged in and out of their pages. As Richard Cronin has argued, the fatal duel in which John Scott, the editor of the *London Magazine*, was killed by Jonathan Henry Christie, the London agent for *Blackwood's* editor, Lockhart, in 1821 exemplifies the intense rivalry of magazines and the violent clashes of 'personalities' in this period.[14] Physical and verbal aggression was part of the review culture of this era – in a periodical industry which Byron called the 'literary *lower* empire'.[15] Hogg played an active part in the new magazine culture of his day, from his entry to the field as the editor and author of his own miscellany, *The Spy*, in 1810–11 to his extensive writing for magazines in the 1820s and early 1830s. Throughout his literary career, he negotiated a literary marketplace which was full of conflict and diversity. As Sharon Alker, Holly Nelson and other scholars have explored, the challenges of the marketplace were intensified for Hogg as a labouring-class writer.[16] He was, however, temperamentally and creatively suited to its competitive climate, and his self-positioning as a bard tapped into a cultural nostalgia for an oral past that was situated in the rural. That his literary experiments often imbibe and dramatise the competitive culture in which he (in his own phrase) 'fought',[17] deploying fictional versions of himself as a competitor in tropes of contest, conflict and authorial quest, shows how integral his view of himself as a market player became to his literary identity and his radically experimental approach to writing.

Hogg's involvement in launching *Blackwood's* as a Tory rival to the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, together with Blackwood, Wilson and Lockhart, put him at the centre of a magazine culture which was full of disputes, hoaxes, antagonism and rivalry.[18] Hogg's troubled relationship with

Blackwood's has attracted much valuable scholarly attention. As well as investigating the personal resonance of Hogg's use of doppelgängers in *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (1985), Karl Miller, in his critical biography, *Electric Shepherd: A Likeness of James Hogg* (2003), vividly brings out Hogg's dynamic presence and involvement in the life of *Blackwood's* and a motley Romantic era. Ian Duncan also provides a compelling account of the ways in which Hogg became an object of fascination and envy, as well as sinister manipulation, by Wilson and Lockhart, as part of the fiction-making culture of Romantic Edinburgh in *Scott's Shadow* (2007).[19] The undermining effects of Hogg's caricatural appearances as the Ettrick Shepherd in the *Blackwood's* 'Noctes Ambrosianae' series have long been thought to have influenced his terrifying representation of Robert Colwan's loss of control of his identity in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824).[20] Hogg's *Blackwood's* experience has been read as directly informing the power struggles depicted in his *Confessions*: Karen Fang has even referred to the novel as 'an autobiographical allegory of the author's wranglings with *Blackwood's*'.[21] Hogg's credibility as a capable and intelligent author of sketches and stories in the magazine was certainly undermined by the fictional representation of him as a 'boozing buffoon' (Lockhart's phrase) in the 'Noctes Ambrosianae' and he sometimes suffered grievously from his fellow *Blackwood's* wits' high-handed manipulation of his literary identity.[22] But the dominant critical view of Hogg as a defiant victim and example of marketplace 'failure' has led to an overemphasis of the destructive implications of the novel – its thorough combustion of the Romantic genre system – which has drawn attention away from its equally energetic creative achievement.[23]

My understanding of Hogg's creative practice as 'kaleidoscopic' offers an alternative way of grasping that achievement by reading Hogg's satirical response to the diversity and conflict of his literary sphere as part of his creation of a radical fictional aesthetics of shifting perspectives which brings into play the ethical agency of readers. Many of the parodic gestures and rhetorical shifts in the *Confessions* and his other works correspond with similar features in the magazine culture to which he belonged. Hogg's brainchild, the 'Translation of an Ancient Chaldee Manuscript', a spoof on Edinburgh literary politics in the language of the Old Testament which caused a storm when it appeared in the first number of *Blackwood's* in October 1817, has been seen as an early example of Hogg's writing and identity being taken over and libellously rewritten by Wilson and Lockhart.[24] But it also exemplifies Hogg's sense of himself as a mischievous and complicit participant in the politics of

the literary scene – a writer who willingly involved himself in and often enjoyed the provocative game-playing culture of *Blackwood's*.

Hogg was one of many writers who responded instinctively to the pressures of the changing marketplace to make his living. Much of his success as a writer of short fiction for *Blackwood's* and other miscellanies arose precisely from his occupying an in-between space and a niche area in the shifting ground of the literary market. In an era which had already seen the American and French Revolutions and the Napoleonic wars, and which was now in the throes of the Industrial Revolution, there was a fresh nostalgia for the past from which the heady commercial world of publishing could profit. Hogg's repackaging of a vanishing old rural world of superstition for a modern urban audience in his 'Shepherd's Calendar' tales, for example, was especially valuable to *Blackwood's*. As Cronin observes, in this series and his 'Tales and Anecdotes of the Pastoral Life' Hogg 'presented himself as the conduit through which the oral folk wisdom of the Borders might be transported into the new world of print'.[25] Since the idea of untaught peasant writers appealed to the nostalgia for the past in urban print culture, it suited *Blackwood's* to have an Ettrick Shepherd. The *London Magazine* may have championed John Clare, the labouring-class Northamptonshire poet, as a counterpart to Hogg, as well as acquiring the services of Allan Cunningham, a Scottish stonemason poet who had been a neighbour of Burns.[26] Negotiating the intersection between an old rural world and the modern world of commerce was an uneasy matter and involved all sorts of power struggles. Hogg frequently went without payment for his contributions to various magazines and yet, as a writer for whom contraries and friction were a source of creativity, he was peculiarly suited to this world. The changeable literary marketplace and its capricious players informed Hogg's taste for creating an experimental and unpredictable style of literature. The volatile character of the literary market, however, was often expressed in a severe review culture which was imbued with deep social snobbery.

Like other early nineteenth-century writers, Hogg faced the challenge not only of negotiating with publishers and appealing to the tastes of a large general audience, but also of managing the reception of his work by another kind of writer and cultural mediator – the professional critics and reviewers who had the power of appraising or razing his work. If authors were interested in inspecting and commenting on one another's work, the scrutiny they faced from critics was even greater – for what they produced was magnified and often distorted through the hypercritical lenses of periodical reviews – or, worse, overlooked altogether. Despite the increased emphasis on social meritocracy, the politics

of the marketplace was still very class-based, with many of the most influential authors, critics, publishers and editors belonging to an intellectual élite. This was the era in which Lockhart ordered Keats 'back to the shop' as an apothecary, having already declared that 'All the great poets of our country have been men of some rank in society, and there is no vulgarity in any of their writings,' in a series of articles attacking 'the Cockney School of Poetry'.[27] As a real-life shepherd, Hogg, who had far less education than Keats, was repeatedly put in his place by critics (including Wilson and Lockhart who purported to be his friends) who persisted in the view that his natural habitat, according to his birth and station in life, was the pastoral genre and that his most fitting mode was ballad-writing. He may have been a living example of the 'low and rustic life' that Wordsworth celebrated in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* – someone who communed with nature and spoke 'the real language of men' – but the world of print was closely guarded by bastions of good taste and refinement.[28] In reviews, Hogg was frequently criticised for his lack of finesse and for flouting the rules of convention and propriety. In this arena, dominated by a highly educated professional middle class, ambitious writers who wanted to secure their fame for posterity as well as earning their bread had to present their work and position themselves in such a way as to attract an immediate general audience and gain the respect of leading writers and critics in order to cultivate their acceptance for the long term. This was all the harder for self-taught writers because of the financial hardship and the intense class prejudices they faced. As Hogg's comments in his Memoir imply, the feeling of not belonging was both destructive and motivating:

> I know that I have always been looked on by the learned part of the community as an intruder in the paths of literature, and every opprobrium has been thrown on me from that quarter. The truth is, that I am so. The walks of learning are occupied by a powerful aristocracy, who deem that province their own peculiar right; else, what would avail all their dear-bought collegiate honours and degrees?[29]

Hogg saw himself as an outsider, an adventurer and a contender, but he also wanted to be an insider and to have his fame validated by the literary establishment. As we will see in Chapter 1, his response was not to write critical prefaces and treatises to shape the reception of his work, but rather to take his own critical edge, satirical wit and changeable style into his self-consciously performative art and to make readers participate in his work by exercising their critical instincts.

Since André Gide sparked new interest in Hogg's fiction in the landmark London Cresset Press edition of the *Confessions* in 1947, the novel has become widely regarded as a masterpiece of Romantic fiction, attracting a rich vein of criticism, with approaches ranging from the psychoanalytical and the Gothic to the narratological and the national.[30] But the combined effects of Hogg's image as a 'peasant poet', the prevailing idea of the *Confessions* as an 'outcast' novel,[31] and the strange and surprising qualities of his writing, have led to his work often being perceived as removed from the wider British canon. The current regeneration of Hogg's work in the Stirling/South Carolina *Collected Works of James Hogg* after over a century and a half of bowdlerised obscurity makes a fresh critical assessment of his writings essential. With the *Collected Works* approaching completion (35 volumes in total), and the three-volume *Collected Letters* already in circulation, all of Hogg's writings will soon be available in modern scholarly editions for the first time.

Previous monographs by Louis Simpson, Douglas Gifford and David Groves usefully redressed the tendency to focus on *Confessions* to the exclusion of Hogg's other writings by elucidating Hogg's development as an author across selected works, but often in a localised way.[32] Conversely, in the last 25 years, Hogg's significance in Scottish Romanticism has been confidently established in ambitious thematic studies by scholars who include Susan Manning, Penny Fielding, Douglas Mack, Ian Duncan and Murray Pittock.[33] Several essay collections have further explored Hogg's importance in Scottish literary contexts,[34] and Valentina Bold has studied Hogg as part of a specifically Scottish self-taught tradition.[35] Karl Miller's and Gillian Hughes's wonderful critical biographies have done much to illuminate Hogg's life and work in the context of the Romantic period, while other scholars – for example, Peter Murphy, Margaret Russett, Erik Simpson, Maureen McLane and Mark Schoenfield – have offered stimulating and suggestive readings of Hogg's work as part of wider developments in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature.[36]

Building on this rich critical work, it is time to examine Hogg's contribution to British Romanticism in greater depth as well as breadth, and to begin to conceive what his era might look like from his point of view. Doing so requires a conceptualisation of Hogg's work which foregrounds the flexibility and energy which characterises it, for Hogg not only picks up and reworks the characteristic tropes and practices of British Romanticism, but demands that his readers engage in the meaning-making process. The concept of Hogg's kaleidoscopic creative

practice offers just such a multifaceted model. My framing of Hogg's 'kaleidoscopic' literary techniques recognises the playful and creative way in which he fuses many disparate literary forms and their associated ideas – as for example, in the *Confessions*, where religious fanaticism and the effacement of national, political and personal identities are presented through a fusion of genres and literary forms circulating in the novel – the Gothic, comedy, tragedy, the drama, spiritual autobiography, pamphlet, parable, allegory, folk tale, private journal, periodical and letter. Moreover, my examination of the 'kaleidoscopic' qualities of Hogg's work offers a way of understanding the restless stylistic shifts which irritated his first readers. John Wilson's vicious review of *The Three Perils of Woman*, for example, figures Hogg's novel as a meal in which all the courses arrive in the wrong order and dishes are mixed indiscriminately, flouting the rules of propriety and offending the refined palate.[37] Rather than seeing Hogg's practice as the product of an unsophisticated literary palate (a view that has its own class overtones), I argue that his work absorbs and transforms in order to create a new kind of literature which is 'kaleidoscopic' in its multi-layered use of allusion, creative collisions of genre, mixed imagery, structural experimentation and, above all, its encouragement of proactive reading and interpretation. I also use the term 'kaleidoscopic' to characterise the ways in which Hogg's writing, with its deliberate destabilising of narrative authority and frequent shifts in genre, narrative structure, voice and language, invites readers to engage with the texts and protagonists by adopting an unconventionally flexible and independent approach to reading, instead of looking for authorial direction.

In the following chapters, I examine Hogg's sources and achievement across a spectrum of key works, in which his changing literary identity, experiments with competing traditions and voices, and his fascination with endless transformation, are manifested most interestingly. Hogg's creation of multiple personae for himself, his use of mixed literary forms, and his invention of a new kaleidoscopic fiction emerge in response to several factors: the wider British reinvention of its cultural ancestry, his need to create a place for himself in the literary marketplace, and his desire to secure his place among revered literary ancestors as well as the contemporaries with whom he wanted to compete. While Chapters 1 and 2 explain why and how Hogg's aesthetic developed towards a kaleidoscopic model, Chapter 3 traces the emergence and application of his experimental techniques. Chapters 4 and 5 then offer analyses which demonstrate how thinking of that aesthetic as kaleidoscopic illuminates a reading of his more mature work.

Chapter 1 focuses principally on Hogg's mock anthology, *The Poetic Mirror*, as the text which mostly clearly exhibits his positioning of himself as an author in the period, his interest in bardic communities, his ironic critical interventions in wider debates, and his kaleidoscopic methods. Thereafter, my examination of texts is broadly chronological. Taking a case study approach, my analysis ranges across his reworking of a number of genres, from his first successful long narrative poem (which is also a collection of ballads) to his theatre criticism and his first published play. I return to Hogg's collection of parodies to demonstrate its relationship to his mock-epic poem, progressing through to what is now his most famous novel, and, finally, his last published work, a collection of prose tales. Across the book, I trace Hogg's important intertextual relationships to predecessors who include Spenser, Shakespeare, Johnson, Gray, Collins, Macpherson and Sterne, and his enthusiastic engagement with writers such as Burns, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Baillie, Byron and Keats. My case study approach is not meant to imply that Hogg's kaleidoscopic strategies are limited to the works I discuss; they can be found in many of his other works, and should be understood as a defining aspect of his creative practice.

Chapter 2 examines Hogg's responses to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century cultures of imagined literary ancestry and lineage in *The Queen's Wake* – a poem which can be thought of as a literary instrument, like *The Poetic Mirror*, for reviewing past and present literary traditions and addressing the processes of canon-formation. In his ambitious reimagining of Scottish literary history in *The Queen's Wake*, Hogg situates his personal quest for fame within an epic portrait of Scotland's national aspirations; he imagines himself as part of a poetic tradition patronised by Mary, Queen of Scots, which implicitly rivals the Elizabethan Golden Age. I suggest that Hogg developed his voice by absorbing the competing registers of the marketplace and making the multiplicity and changeability of the contest part of his own identity. As I discuss in Chapter 3, this witty ploy, which was also a bid for survival, is carried into the contest of *The Poetic Mirror*. Here, I demonstrate the formative role of theatricality and playwriting in the development of Hogg's new approach to fiction. In his parodies and his mock-epic poem, *Queen Hynde*, he breaks down literary conventions and plays with his audience's expectations in the style of a kaleidoscopic literary toy. He also begins to create characters who exemplify the instinctive skills of improvisation and performance which he hoped to elicit from his readers. Drawing on contemporary reviews throughout the book, I trace the

disorientation and discomfort with which many early readers responded to his work.

In my view, Hogg realised his greatest innovations in his novels and short stories. My discussion therefore culminates in two more closely focused critical readings of his kaleidoscopic fiction. In Chapter 4, I relate Hogg's shape-shifting narrative style and Gil-Martin's 'cameleon art' of changing his appearance in the *Confessions* to Brewster's kaleidoscope, demonstrating how Hogg plays with and challenges readers' expectations and sympathies by presenting a series of narrative lenses through which readers encounter, for example, the breeding of moral deformity, the blending of inner and outer landscapes, and the mysterious doubling and splitting of characters. Hogg's most distinctive facet as a Romantic writer is his interest in invoking the ethical agency of his readers, a trait he shares and which I will elucidate through contrast and comparison with a writer of whom he was not aware – William Blake. For Hogg, as for Blake, the removal of a mediating narrative voice to negotiate the collision of opposing ideas is a crucial technique for prompting the active engagement of readers who must respond by thinking for themselves. The final chapter examines *Tales of the Wars of Montrose*, as a disturbing forum of competing voices, in which the tales (drawn from seventeenth-century models such as Defoe, Cervantes and folk ballads) jostle against one another, presenting the colliding lives of the protagonists and the sliding eccentricities of Hogg's prose, as implosively as the Scottish civil war itself. Here, the baffling and extreme shifts of Hogg's kaleidoscopic literary aesthetic are likely to draw readers into conflict with the text. In his fiction, Hogg's multiple narrative registers and perspectives, and his denial of a fixed narrative authority, disclose a series of changing perceptions of the characters and plot, which often force readers to grapple with the dark fragments of history and human experience, but also to engage in a more generous range of human sympathies. Throughout the book, I consider the effect of Hogg's creative practice in unsettling and reshaping our canonical understanding of the Romantic era in a way that restores its miscellaneity and amorphous complexity. My analysis re-evaluates Hogg's contribution to Romantic literature as that of a writer who engages in distinctive and original ways with other writers of his generation.

1
Hogg's Self-Positioning in *The Poetic Mirror* and the Literary Marketplace

This chapter provides a foundation for the case studies in my subsequent chapters by elucidating Hogg's attraction to a kaleidoscopic literary practice through his self-positioning as both a participant in, and a critical viewer of, the literary marketplace; he draws together and critiques some of the competing impulses and rival literary forms circulating in the Romantic period. I begin by situating his kaleidoscopic art at the cultural intersection of Brewster's scientific invention and some contemporary literary responses to the kaleidoscope – most specifically, the popular perception of the miscellany as its closest literary analogue in the 1810s and 1820s. Part I then pursues Hogg's conception of a commercially based miscellany, placing his projected 'Poetical Repository' and its successor, *The Poetic Mirror*, in relation to debates about canon-making and commerce, and demonstrating his critical engagement with the prevailing literary conflicts of his day through his use of the two key models of genre-mixing – the miscellany and the anthology. Using the 'high' culture of anthologising which would become central to the construction of a canonical British literary history, and 'low' literary forms of parody and imitation, Hogg eventually created a mock miscellany which was also a satirical take on the anthology as a mode of shaping a selective narrative. As my analysis of Hogg's parodies of Wordsworth and Southey will reveal, much of the critical value and insight of *The Poetic Mirror* turns on Hogg's use of 'low' literary forms to critique and challenge some of his fellow poets' disdain for the popular. Part II maps out and explores several other facets of Hogg's self-fashioning which contribute to the development of his kaleidoscopic literary aesthetic. Drawing on Hogg's other works, I explore some further expressions of his interest in literary diversity through his shifting relationship to bardic communities and his friendship and artistic affinity with

Byron – demonstrated through their mutual enjoyment of playful competition, mixed literary styles, and self-reflexivity. This leads onto a discussion of Hogg's understanding of himself as an instinctive and non-didactic author, attracted to the miscellaneous and motley, and interested in inviting readers to exercise their own critical judgement – aspects of his writing and thinking which collectively inform his extensive literary experimentation.

A cultural intersection: Brewster's invention and literary kaleidoscopes

It is not surprising that Hogg does not draw direct comparisons between his work and the kaleidoscope, for while his kaleidoscopic literary practice bears a figurative resemblance to Brewster's invention and shares some affinities with it, it was not a planned response to it. I suggest that, as he participated in a literary culture of miscellaneity and genre-mixing which had much in common with Brewster's invention, Hogg felt his way instinctively towards an analogy with the kaleidoscope, rather than consciously using literature as a technology or seeking to provide a literary counterpart to Brewster's scientific endeavour. In a culture which was intensely preoccupied with the act of viewing and reviewing itself, instruments which altered the viewer's perceptions attracted particular excitement and interest. In 1814, as Hogg began to conceive of his 'Poetical Repository', Brewster's experiments with the polarisation of light by successive reflections between plates of glass led to an accidental discovery: under certain conditions, the viewer could see the multiple reflections of an object clustering mysteriously in a circular arrangement. After further experiments, Brewster invented a new optical instrument which he called 'the kaleidoscope', the name deriving from the Greek words, 'χαλος, beautiful; ειδος, a form; and σχοπεω, to see'.[1] By positioning mirrors at certain angles inside a tube, and placing pieces of coloured glass or other objects in a cell at one end, Brewster made it possible for the viewer who looked through the tube and turned the cell to see an ever-changing series of multiplied reflections, projected with perfect symmetry in a circular pattern. The kaleidoscope thus gave structure, order and harmony to miscellaneous objects, transforming them into beautiful forms, and as the movement of the cell made the objects collide in unpredictable arrangements, viewers could enjoy an endless variety of images. After demonstrating the effects of an early model of the kaleidoscope to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1815, Brewster obtained a patent for his invention in

August 1817. By 1818, there was a commercial mania for kaleidoscopes all over Britain.

Hogg was neither a theoretical nor a methodical writer, but his experiments with narrative structure and perspective, and characters who transform continuously, led him to feel his way imaginatively towards the creation of kaleidoscopic literary techniques at the same time that Brewster was working on his invention. It is unclear how and when they met, but their mutual friends and acquaintances included Scott, who was known to Brewster from his boyhood in Jedburgh (Brewster was ten years' Scott's junior and 11 years younger than Hogg), and General Alexander Dirom, whose children Brewster tutored at their home at Mount Annan in Dumfriesshire in 1804–7.[2] If their paths did not cross at the homes of Scott or Dirom in the Borders, they may have met in Edinburgh in the early 1810s. Brewster became the editor of the *Edinburgh Magazine*, a periodical devoted to science and literature, from 1801, and took up residence in the city a year or so after Hogg moved there in 1810. By the 1820s, Hogg was in the habit of calling at Brewster's home in the Borders, Allerly, just outside Melrose, when he went to sell his sheep at Melrose fair. Brewster fondly recalled Hogg's visits and his own visit to Mount Benger (Hogg's home between 1821 and 1830) when he contributed to the construction of a memorial monument of Hogg at St Mary's Lake in 1860.[3] In *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835), Hogg mentions that Lady Brewster (his friend's wife) told him the events which form his story, 'Julia M,Kenzie'.[4] His conversations with Brewster himself may have been influential on Hogg's thinking too. It is possible that Hogg had heard about the kaleidoscope that Brewster demonstrated to the Royal Society the year before he composed *The Poetic Mirror*. But if not, he could hardly have missed hearing about Brewster's popular new invention in the public press (and especially *Blackwood's*) soon afterwards, when the kaleidoscope was manufactured, marketed and pirated across Britain and Europe in 1817–18. Whether or not Hogg recognised the parallels between their scientific and literary interests, his experimental parodies and imitations of 1816 led him to compose a kaleidoscopic collection of poetry which offered readers a range of views which was comparable to Brewster's optical invention.

Brewster's kaleidoscope was far more intricate and complex than the cheap toy we know today. Its most distinctive feature and the most significant for its analogy with Hogg's work was the wide array of choices it gave viewers – not only in selecting the objects they wanted to view, but also in deciding how to view them. The instrument could be assembled in a variety of ways – from its 'simple' form to the telescopic,