Whomever one reads on the question, it seems that Walter Scott created “the classical form of the historical novel” by standing at a locus of contradiction. According to the most influential such accounts, Scott “portrayed objectively the ruination of past social formations, despite all his human sympathy for, and artistic sensitivity to, the splendid, heroic qualities which they contained”; he could accomplish such feats of mediation because he was “two men … both the prudent Briton and the passionate Scot.”¹ These accounts of Scott’s contradictory investments—by Georg Lukács and David Daiches, respectively—find an emblem in the title Virginia Woolf gave her essay on Scott’s late-life journal. Referring to how Scott installed modern lighting at his pseudo-medieval estate, Woolf calls her piece “Gas at Abbotsford.”² Such formulations became

touchstones for Scott criticism some decades ago. Many critics since have adopted the concept of a split Scott that, whatever their other differences, Lukács, Daiches, and Woolf share. Critics vary in their notions of what divided Scott, but they consistently picture him as an author who, torn apart, knits himself back together in a powerful (if perhaps inflexible) corpus. They have shown how Scott fuses the realist and the romantic, the historian and the psychologist, the statesman and the bard. They have charted how Scott’s intricately engineered fictions faithfully reproduce deep fissures of class, race, gender and nationality. Most recently, they have traced how Scott personifies modes of authorial embodiment that can mediate such tensions, without finally resolving them.

The picture of Scott and his oeuvre emerging out of this scholarship still lacks some important details. I aim here, however, less to add details to this picture than to bring its central figure into better focus. If in retrospect Scott seems so crucially multiple, it becomes all the more important to recall what once lent matter-of-fact intelligibility to his composite persona and complex body of work. By what virtue did Scott, who seems to us so contradictory, project a meaningful character? Authors can and do offer us incoherent selves, protagonists, and worlds, and the Edinburgh Edition apparatus make it clearer than ever that Scott presents puzzles on every level.

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4 Key readings of Scott along these lines include Ian Duncan’s account, in Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), of how Scott mediates romance and realism, Trumpener’s description of how Scott bifurcates historical consciousness into ideology and psychology, and James Chandler’s dissection of Scott’s novelistic works as case studies in England in 1819: the Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998).

5 See Mike Goode, “Dryasdust Antiquarianism and Soppy Masculinity: The Waverley Novels and the Gender of History,” Representations 82 (2003), 52-86, and Evan Gottlieb, “‘To be at Once Another and the Same’: Walter Scott and the End(s) of Sympathetic Britishness,” Studies
Nevertheless, few authors make available literary experiences as ultimately cohesive as those Scott provides, and it is hard not to feel that the integral character of those experiences stems from an idea of the self that could compose Scott’s character, and his characters’ characters, in all of their variegated unity.

This article locates such an idea of the self in Stoic philosophizing, understood as a project in emotional life whose history was essentially coextensive with literature as Scott knew and envisioned it. For the ancients, for the neoclassical thinkers of the late Medieval and early modern periods, and for thinkers on the cusp of modernity such as Scott, “Stoicism” named not so much a coherent philosophical position as a literary practice. This practice sought to manage feeling, often through reading and writing, so as to bring the self into accord with the world. While reaching accord could mean squelching feeling and instead cultivating the quintessentially Stoic state of “apathy,” it more often meant balancing conflicting affects and emotions, particularly as they corresponded to irreconcilable forces at work in the world outside. Scott identified Stoic management of the feelings with literary practice, and in both his work and his life he resorted to Stoicism when he sought to fit together disparate elements that concerned him, or simply to hold such elements in ironic juxtaposition.

It is true that by Scott’s time Stoicism had come to seem a diminished ethos. Moral thinkers evoked Stoicism mainly in the course of underscoring the gap between that ideal and the actual facts of a social life governed, they theorized, by sympathy. They portrayed the typical Stoic as a noble failure who tries to summon the indifference,

in Romanticism 43 (Summer 2004), 187-207.

6 For an overview see Steven K. Strange and Jack Zupko, eds. Stoicism: Traditions and Transformations (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); see especially Lawrence Becker’s essay in that volume, "Stoic Emotion" (250-76).

7 This reading of Scott’s Stoicism might usefully be compared to Daniel M. Gross’s account of apathy as a rhetorical strategy for shaping public life in The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle’s Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 51-84.
autonomy, and transcendental consciousness for which his code calls, but who swerves instead into sentimentality. So, for instance, while such British military heroes of the Napoleonic Wars as Admiral Nelson and General Moore were celebrated for their Stoic indifference to pain, they were ultimately cast as martyrs whose feats of resistance to emotional tides ended with final sentiments and floods of public tears. Like those public figures, Scott and many of his characters alloy Stoicism with sentiment, which is to say with the mannered ethos of emotionalism. One might trace this public phenomenon back to the sentimental cult of General Wolfe’s death outside the walls of Quebec City in 1759, only a couple of years before Jean-Jacques Rousseau published Julie and The Social Contract, although, as we will see, it has its neoclassical and classical precedents as well. For as Margaret Graver has most forcefully argued, the Stoic had classically been concerned to manage and enrich his emotional life, not to set it aside. Emotion as such was not the threat, but rather a feeling so overwhelming as to dethrone the judgment and with it the essence of what makes emotion distinct from sensation as such. Stoicism persists, then, as a practical ground for judgment, even—or especially—for emotional judgment, in a sentimental world.

Depicting himself, Scott portrays a Stoic virtuous enough to be sentimental; narrating the emergence of modern Britain, he shows that the Stoic imperative to sympathize and the sentimental dissolution of such resolve necessarily supplement each other. At the level of the character, the interplay between the Stoic and the sentimental composes an ironic system capable of managing the splits between anonymous production and the cult of authorial personality, patriarchal authority and fraternal revolution, realist recording and romantic rhetoric, natural flux and historical progress, cosmopolitan internationalism and national patriotism, and finally the

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sublime disjunction between absolute knowledge and contingent perception. The antinomy of Stoicism and sentimentality built into Scott’s characters symptomatizes these other splits and provides a habitual strategy for producing the ironic consciousness that can overcome them. Scott’s ironic tone derives, in large measure, from the interplay of the Stoic and the sentimental, whether in his own voice, in the voice of his pseudonym “the Author of Waverley,” or in the voices of such recurrent contextualizing character types as that of the antiquary.

From his debut in 1816, the title character of The Antiquary, Jonathan Oldbuck, personified for Scott the world-making powers of the would-be Stoic. The complexity of this antiquary’s Stoic disposition is suggested by the tortuous syntax and repetitive diction of the sentence where Scott first describes Oldbuck’s outlook: “[h]is countenance was of the true Scottish cast, strongly marked, and rather harsh in features, with a shrewd and penetrating eye, and a countenance in which habitual gravity was enlivened by a cast of ironical humour” (6). The bedrock of Oldbuck’s persona is a profound materialism. If Oldbuck is “harsh in features,” it is because, as a man “of the true Scottish cast” (6), he has been molded by Scotland’s rough landscape and phonemes; and he meanwhile exhibits, as Scott elsewhere takes pains to show, the stereotypical materialism of the tight-fisted Scot.9 Yet as signaled by the odd repetition of the word “countenance” in this sentence (which almost reads as if Oldbuck’s countenance has a countenance), this geographically, almost geophysically defined affect, summed up by Scott, in an virtualization of the antiquary’s aptness to his locale, as Oldbuck’s “habitual gravity,” is brought to life by the play of his “penetrating eye”

and the “enliven[ing]” “humour” of his irony.¹⁰ In another repetition, Oldbuck’s irony, like the Scottishness of the first clause of the description, is described as a “cast.” It, too, may be characteristically Scottish, but this second, more active “cast of ironical humour” goes against the grain of the first, more passive “true Scottish cast,” all the more so because irony is an engine of incongruity rather than of congruence, of mobility rather than stasis. Hence from one layer of Oldbuck’s “countenance” to the other, between one use of “cast” and the next, a gulf opens between a world of set physical features and one of labile social adaptation.

In a further, authorial irony, Scott’s equivocal “casting” of Oldbuck foreshadows the (eventually) happy compromise of Stoicism that happens when Oldbuck deploys his supposed mastery of classical theories of “castrametation,” encampment in the wild, to extrapolate from the contours of a modern ditch the location of an ancient Roman fort, or castrum. In this “Kaim of Kinprunes” incident, a once-famous set-piece scene that occurs early in the novel, Scott’s Antiquary fixates on a supposed “castrum” in the landscape as if that landscape was essentially unchanged by modernity. Oldbuck brings his young incognito protégé Lovel to the field he has purchased out of his conviction that the ditch traversing it reveals it to be the site of the encampment where Agricola was attacked by the Caledonians. He walks out the contours of this “camp,” and works himself into a visionary state that culminates in his recitation of stirring lines from Beaumont and Fletcher. He evokes a scene into which he interpellates Lovel and himself, cast as besieged Romans:

¹⁰ For an exposition of how Maria Edgeworth pioneered, and Scott developed, an interplay between “countenances” and “territories” that could work through the modern entailments of a “neo-stoic sense of the moral life” (135), see James Chandler, “Edgeworth and Scott: the literature of reterritorialization,” in Heather Glen and Paul Hamilton, eds., Repossessing the Romantic Past (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 119-39.
See, then, Lovel—See—
See that huge battle moving from the mountains!
Their gilt coats shine like dragon scales;—their march
Like a rough tumbling storm.—See them, and view them,
And then see Rome no more!

The vision is shattered by the first appearance of another Stoic of the piece, the aged itinerant beggar Edie Ochiltree, whose Stoicism is so pure or primitive that he is a “Cynic” in the mode of Diogenes. Edie interrupts Oldbuck to inform him that he “mind[s] the bigging o’t,” a phrase he is asked to repeat several times. It emerges he means neither the mounting grandeur of Oldbuck’s fantasy nor its grandiosity, but rather that he remembers the digging of the supposedly ancient ditch about twenty years prior. Oldbuck never quite admits to seeing the humor in his quashed dream, and he needs to muster all his own ironical resources to parry the teasing about the ditch to which he is subjected for the rest of the novel’s span. Over that same span, however, Oldbuck adeptly facilitates Lovel’s emergence as the valiant Major Neville who will command the local British forces arrayed against French invasion. Ironically, then, Oldbuck reveals a certain uncanny sympathetic intuition in choosing to share with that particular friend his fantasy of martial glories past and of the virtues attendant on

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11 As when, in the once-famous scene where Edie comes to the window at Knockwinnock to meet with Isabella Wardour, Scott notes how Edie “might have been taken by an artist as the model of an old philosopher of the Cynic school, musing upon the frivolity of mortal pursuits” (91). Scott’s vocabulary at such moments is suggestive of how his repertoire of ethical dispositions extends beyond Stoicism and sentimentality. Staying within the argot of the Schools and on the plane of representation, the novels discussed here feature the Cynicism of Edie Ochiltree and of Jonathan Oldbuck himself in The Antiquary, and the Epicureanism of Paulus Pleydell in Guy Mannering. Nevertheless, the dynamic of Stoicism and sentimentality in Scott seems decisive for how he renders these other dispositions.
proper preparations for it, even if the actual event should never arrive.

Well before E.M. Forster’s exposé of its supposed failings, The Antiquary was widely faulted for a plot that at various moments seems to grind to an utter halt. Guy Mannering fared better on that score, yet still can be admitted to contain its longueurs. Scott himself, in the well-known “Advertisement” to The Antiquary where he retrospectively casts his intent in his initial trilogy of novels as having been to “illustrate the manners of Scotland at three different periods,” warns the reader that in these works he has progressively been “more solicitous to describe manners minutely than to arrange in any case an artificial and combined narrative,” and thus has “but to regret that I felt myself unable to unite these two requisites of a good Novel.” Still, a counter-argument was also well and long rehearsed, for he furnishes his tableaux so completely with specimens of old manners, and simply of old things, that he absorbs his readers not in his narrative but in his description. In this, Scott enacts the apathy characteristic of the Stoic who seeks to render himself indifferent to events. He may also provoke Forster’s lament “for passion, passion and how it is never there!” yet read sympathetically, Scott’s novels generate sentimental power exactly in proportion to the seeming inertness of their material.  

Thus even as Oldbuck’s weathered face is enlivened by a susceptibility to irony, so Scott animates his stories with the sentimental charge the passage of time brings to the world of inanimate objects. Oldbuck articulates this charge when he brings Lovel, now his guest, to a bedchamber in his home whose tapestries were long ago embroidered with legends from Chaucer suggested by Oldbuck’s youthful innamorata—unbeknownst to them both, Lovel’s mother. Looking over the room, the antiquary remarks that

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[i]t is at such moments as these, Mr. Lovel, that we feel the changes of time. The same objects are before us—those inanimate things which we have gazed on in wayward infancy and impetuous youth, in anxious and scheming manhood—they are permanent and the same; but when we look upon them in cold unfeeling old age, can we, changed in our temper, our pursuits, our feelings—changed in our form, our limbs, and our strength,—can we be ourselves called the same? Or do we not rather look back with a sort of wonder upon our former selves, as being separate and distinct from what we now are?

As Oldbuck wonders at his distance from his youthful self, that distance suffuses the scene with the irony withheld by the plot's concealment of the room's true significance. Scott then puts in the Antiquary's mouth verses of Wordsworth, not yet composed at the time of the novel's action, which Oldbuck claims to have heard recited:

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
    My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
    Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay;
    And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what time takes away,
    Than what he leaves behind.

The timeless unconscious of literary history now supplies Scott and his antiquary with a
Stoic moral, extending to an extradiegetic plane the novel’s pained demonstration of the curse of sympathy for the other selves we encounter when we muse across time.

Scott’s dynamic between Stoicism and sentimentality produces the undecidability effect that for Deidre Lynch is “in a precise sense the work of literature.” Positioned, as she says, “somewhere in between the personal and impersonal,” he “keeps literature at work”; the seeming triviality of Oldbuck’s antiquarianism might even be seen “as the constitutive element of a make-work project for literature.”13 Meanwhile, as Ina Ferris has demonstrated, Oldbuck’s misogyny connects the emergence of gentlemanly literary practice with the masculinization of novelistic authority.14 Yet Scott’s Antiquary represents only one node, albeit a central one, in a system of characters. His passivity and excessive literariness serve as a foil for Scott’s representation of patterns of action that transcend the literary field: they enable Scott to narrate, as if it were history, the simultaneous emergence of the martial ethos that Lovel/Neville embodies and of the domestic ethos embodied by Lovel’s eventual bride Isabella Wardour. Even in his practice of Stoicism, Oldbuck engages sympathetically with the various classes, nations, and characters whom he reads about and encounters—from the Romans and Caledonians, to the local peasantry, to the England-bred Lovel, to the German villain Dousterswivel, whose schemes he penetrates almost from the start—and thereby provides the novel with a totalizing reach. In Forster’s famous terms, he becomes the central round character who enables the flat and often allegorical minor characters who surround him to reside in a novel with pretensions to historical realism. Or the antiquary could become such a central character, if only he and the novel that houses

14 Ina Ferris, The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels
him were more manifestly and conventionally successful.

The antiquary’s various failures, however, are important to Scott as well. They are part of an ironic narrative strategy that acquaints readers with the insights borne of a total scope, but that ultimately also brings them beyond mystifying totalizations to instead encounter the world understood ontologically, or for that matter politically, as an assemblage of fragments. Lacking proper plots and stitched together with economic, spatial, and temporal improbabilities, Scott’s Waverley Novels can seem endless miscellanies of local color scenes. Scott long excited social formalism in his theorists, but he also encouraged a bemused literalism in everyday readers that lent itself to discoveries—say, to George Sand’s discerning of a repertoire of modes of popular agency in his works—as well as to complacency. Here the political dimension of the dynamic of stoicism and sentimentality in Scott comes into view. When he celebrated a nationalistic militarism, Scott at the same time sought to renovate a neostoic ethos of self-control at the behest of the state. Stoicism may have urged personal retreat to an interior citadel, but it also outlined, in its later Roman iterations more than ever, a way of conceptualizing imperialism and making it sympathetic, perhaps especially under the aegis of the Stoic term of art “cosmopolitanism.” As nations and states proliferate, merge, and achieve independence as literary objects in Scott’s fictions, they elicit both such an impersonal ethos and the attitude proper to the resistant remnant. So when he narrates the consolidation of Britain, Scott also profiles the autarchic alternative captured in Oldbuck’s “Scottish cast”—an autarchy potentially more Stoical than the


15 I draw here on Trumpener’s efforts to move beyond symptomatic modes of reading Scott in Bardic Nationalism (see e.g., 130), and on Dorothy Hale’s critical genealogy of novel studies Social Formalism: The Novel in Theory from Henry James to the Present (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1998).

Stoicism that would conquer it. If the second-order, sympathetic Stoicism of cosmopolitanism overcomes this work of fragmentation, it can do so only provisionally, in keeping with cosmopolitanism’s catachrestic essence as a concept.\(^{17}\)

The latter part of this paper analyzes such narratives spun by Scott out of his ambivalently Stoic and sentimental characters. It focuses in particular on his early pairs of protagonists and how they share roles as military men and as men of feeling. It starts from Oldbuck and Lovel, because Scott most explicitly thematizes his engagement with Stoicism in *The Antiquary*, and because that novel is where, as mentioned above, he claims that his initial trilogy “intend[s] to illustrate the manners of Scotland at three different periods.” It then reads backward through Scott’s corpus, taking up the title character of *Guy Mannering* and his foil, Harry Bertram, and touching on Captain Talbot and Scott’s inaugural protagonist in the novel that established Scott as “Author of *Waverley*,” before concluding with a look at how a pair of critics, William Hazlitt and Georg Lukács, conjure from Scott’s Stoicism very different measures of his literary trajectory. To prepare for this sequence of readings, some elaboration of the context of the ethical discourses of Stoicism and sentimentality remains necessary. To that end, the next few pages sketch the intellectual history of Stoicism, partly in relation to the associated concept of sympathy; gloss two crucial intertexts for Scott’s narrative of Stoic compromise; and read a passage from Scott’s *Journal* where he discusses Stoicism as “the only philosophy I know or can practise.”\(^{18}\)

In Scott’s time more than in ours—in a time before it lost its particularity of

\(^{17}\) On the extent to which *The Antiquary* entertains ideas of revolution, see Trumpener, 120-4. Relatedly, Yoon Sun Lee’s *Nationalism and Irony: Burke, Scott, Carlyle* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004) offers a nuanced account of the politics of antiquarianism in Scott in relation to Edmund Burke’s perhaps unlikely denigration of the pursuit. 

reference and its capital S—named an ancient philosophical tradition known, as Samuel Johnson puts it, for “holding the neutrality of external things.” In Adam Smith’s account, “contempt of life and death,” and “the most complete contentment with every event which the current of human affairs could possibly cast up, may be considered as the two fundamental doctrines upon which rested the whole fabric of Stoical morality.” Stoicism was associated with the quest for “the clear idea” comprehending the world as a whole—one thinks of Oldbuck’s “penetrating eye” (6)—with the appreciation of nature, as an avenue to such a total vision, and with devotion to an impersonal ideal of virtue. The Greek philosopher Zeno of Citium founded the Stoic school in the third century B.C. Key Roman authors, including Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and above all Cicero, explicitly aligned themselves with Stoicism. Nonetheless, they were eclectic enough to submit the writings of the Greek Stoics to harsh critiques. Cicero, to cite an instance significant for Scott’s plots, attacked the Stoic belief in such divination practices as astrology. The philosophers of the Enlightenment likewise evinced intense interest in, and ambivalence toward, Stoic precepts. Such vernacular engagements with Stoicism retained their currency well into the Romantic period. Scott and his educated contemporaries knew the controversies over Stoic

Press, 1972), 249.


thought, both in Roman texts on Stoicism and in modern writers on morality and politics. Ernst Cassirer suggests that Thomas Jefferson suffused the opening sentences of the American Declaration of Independence with Stoic themes, but was “scarcely aware” of their provenance; Scott would probably have grasped the connection.\(^{21}\) Certainly he would have recognized the Stoicism intrinsic to the teachings of Adam Ferguson.\(^{22}\)

Stoic thought, and exemplary Stoics such as Cicero and Cato the Younger, played prominent roles in many of the tracts, books, plays, iconographies, and philosophies consequential to British Romanticism. Yet in these works, Stoicism typically finds definition less as a historically specific group of doctrines than as a general constellation of beliefs. As the editors of a distinguished essay collection on the intellectual history of Stoicism note in their introduction, “[b]ecause no corpus of writings by a major Stoic figure survived antiquity, later authors tended to learn about Stoicism in a piecemeal fashion, through fragments of texts and secondhand reports. There was no genuine article for them to be acquainted with” (Strange and Zupko, 2). (In this view, latter-day Stoics such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are better thought of as Stoically inclined eclectics, closer to Cicero than to Zeno.) This situation liberated eighteenth-century philosophers to define Stoicism abstractly, without direct reference to classical

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formulations. In his *Essays, Moral and Political* of 1742, for example, David Hume depicted the type of "The Stoic," along with its Epicurean, Platonist, and Skeptic counterparts, "not so much to explain accurately the sentiments of the ancient sects of philosophy, as to deliver the sentiments of sects that naturally form themselves in the world, and entertain different ideas of human life and happiness." For Hume, and for the Romantics who wrote in his wake, Stoicism denoted an ideal of life conduct that represented one posture in a complex ethical repertoire composed of all the various positions and doctrines of the ancient philosophical schools. While Stoicism did not dominate this structure of feeling, it did catalyze it, insofar as it provided techniques for managing feeling and thereby for composing a system of manners.

A model for such a Stoic system of manners was promulgated at the start of the eighteenth century by Joseph Addison’s *Cato: A Tragedy*—one of the most-frequently produced plays of the Hanoverian era and a tremendously influential text in the republican tradition leading to the American Revolution. Addison’s Cato, last holdout of the former Republican elite, embodies the martial, patriotic version of Stoicism that Oldbuck identifies with in the Romans he imagines besieged at the Kaim of Kinprunes. Not knowing that help is on the way, Cato kills himself rather than surrender to Caesar. Still, in Addison’s hands Cato’s catastrophic retreat to the citadel of interiority turns into a kind of triumph. While the other sympathetic characters, including Cato’s protégé and prospective son-in-law, the African prince Juba, lament


Cato’s precipitous exit, they applaud his spirit of resistance. His tragedy provides a dilated romance moment in which their young lives can take root. As Cato declares:

Why should Rome fall a moment ere her time?
No, let us draw her term of freedom out
In its full length, and spin it to the last.
So shall we gain still one day’s liberty;
And let me perish, but in Cato’s judgment,
A day, an hour of virtuous liberty,
Is worth a whole eternity in bondage. (C, 33)

Supplementing Cato’s philosophy with their sentiment, the members of the succeeding generation redeem the Stoic by accepting his final compromise as a sacrifice for their sake. Cato, for his part, perpetuates his family, his nation, and his ideal of virtue, all of which will persist, if only virtually, as his legend extends. The Augustans often fused Stoicism and sensibility in this fashion when representing the political disposition of Britain in the reductive and fungible mode Srinivas Aravamudan has called “virtualization.” Their composite state had emerged from the Union of 1707 struggling to balance republicanism, commercialism, and absolutism while managing an imperial frontier for which the Africa and Africans of Addison's play could serve as a metonym. For Aravamudan, “Addison’s Cato represents the last gasp of the earlier, more comprehensive Renaissance interest in Stoicism.”25 While this may be true, Cato also translates the holistic Stoic cosmology into a social philosophy of sympathetic system, the nascent idea of political economy devised to govern Whiggish commercial empire.
When Pope, in his prologue to *Cato*, exhorts “Britons attend: be worth like this approv’d / And show you have the virtue to be mov’d” (C, 6), he compresses into a couplet these paradoxes whereby moral value underwrites economic value, and exemplary individuals compose collective systems.

*Cato* did as much as any text to inform the ethical lexicon that Scott inherited. Scott quotes from the play in a late work, his 1830 *Magnum Opus* edition “Introduction” to *Ivanhoe*, where he cites—from memory, it seems, as he alters several words—a line from a speech by the villain of the piece, Cato’s erstwhile North African ally General Syphax. Here Syphax tries to tempt his fellow Numidian Prince Juba away from Cato’s service by flattering Juba on his mastery of the ethos Syphax elsewhere describes as “pride, rank pride, and haughtiness of Soul; I think the Romans call it Stoicism.” Syphax argues that colonials such as Juba have more Stoic virtue than metropolitans like Cato, and illustrates his point by conjuring a picture of the hardy African for whom a luxury is a spring found in the desert after a day’s wandering. At the play’s end, Juba does indeed survive to carry forward Stoic virtue, just as Britain survives Rome. The question Syphax’s sophistry raises for Addison’s metropolitan audience is whether the British who see the play will be able to overcome their own metropolitan vicissitudes, identify with Juba’s primitive virtue, and nevertheless in that identification participate in a further, sentimentally-organized social movement. Hence the appropriate irony of how Scott repositions Syphax’s key image, using it as a figure for literary inspiration. Writing of himself as he came to conceive of *Ivanhoe*, Scott avers that

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the present Author felt that, in confining himself to subjects purely Scottish, he was not only likely to weary out the indulgence of his readers, but also greatly to limit his own power of affording them pleasure. In a highly polished country, where so much genius is monthly employed in catering for public amusement, a fresh topic, such as he had himself had the happiness to light upon, is the untasted spring of the desert;--

Men bless their stars and call it luxury.

But when men and horses, cattle, camels, and dromedaries have poached the spring into mud, it becomes loathsome to those who at first drank of it with rapture; and he who had the merit of discovering it, if he would preserve his reputation with the tribe, must display his talent by a fresh discovery of untasted fountains. 27

Scott mockingly portrays himself as a hardy adventurer among authors, not so much to claim the mantle of Juba or Cato as to travesty the modern literary world as saturated by indulgent tastes, its readership so driven by the desire to enjoy what others enjoy that it stampedes toward any novelty. Still, within this tableau Scott hides in plain sight assertions that he possesses a modern form of Stoic valor. He highlights his own location, as a Scot, on the periphery that provided the “fresh topic” that animated the “Scotch Novels,” as the first eight Waverley Novels became known. Then he celebrates his doughty persistence, by narrating, figuratively, how he crossed borders of both space and time to find the new Medieval English theme for Ivanhoe. In general, he
presents himself as a Stoic seer able to foresee just what nodes of circulation will best nourish the literary sympathies of a future public.

Scott’s Stoical self-presentation borrow its ironic framing technique from the crucial British treatment of Stoicism in the years between Addison and Scott, Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Like Addison, Smith places the figure of the Stoic at the nexus of patriotism and romance. But whereas Addison proffers Cato, however flawed, as a model for the nation to sentimentally idolize, Smith by contrast challenges Stoicism, albeit through the indirect means of irony. The practical recommendations that Smith offers in his *Theory* do show, as Jean-Christophe Agnew has put it, a “masculinist and Stoical cast.” Smith spotlights certain Stoic virtues, and urges his audience to mimic them. The Stoic belief in the unity of nature, meanwhile, provides an obvious precedent for Smith’s theory of the networks of sympathy, if not for what Agnew calls “the sentimental ethos that flourished after his death.” Yet if Stoicism describes the “overriding” character of Smith’s thought, then Smith’s thought is in turn overridden by his ironic style. The unfolding of Smith’s *Theory* finds him overcoming Stoic influence, through the stratagem of exhibiting the Stoics themselves in his theater of sympathy. Dramatizing his own ironic relationship to Stoicism, Smith short-circuits the Stoic project, rendering the cultivation of apathy at best tragic, at worst ridiculous. He kills the philosophy of Stoicism with kindness, faithfully sympathizing with it to the point where he describes the Stoics as having “prepared a death-song” that “the Grecian patriots and heroes might make use of upon the proper occasions” only to praise it as “by far the most animated and spirited song” to be found amongst “all the

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different sects” (T, 283). The ironies here are many. The Stoics do not admit to sentimentality, yet their music carries across the ages to inspire sentiment, since for Smith “when music imitates the modulations of grief or joy, it either actually inspires us with those passions, or at least puts us in the mood which disposes us to conceive them” (T, 37).

The Stoics focused on the natural order’s great chain, threatening human sympathy by dissolving it in the contemplation of natural sympathy. Smith, by contrast, argues that human sympathy constitutes natural links, even as he links himself to the Stoics, sympathizing with them in their doomed philosophical struggle to abolish such sentimentality. “The plan and system which Nature has sketched out for our conduct,” Smith writes, “seems to be altogether different from that of the Stoical philosophy.” The world is by nature inconsistent, uneven. “By Nature,” Smith argues, “the events which immediately affect that little department in which we ourselves have some little management and direction, which immediately affect ourselves, our friends, our country, are the events which interest us the most” (T, 292). Certain men do achieve a disinterested preeminence. They rise above the petty, local concerns that they manage. They do so, however, only to find themselves the interested representatives of larger localities—to find themselves, in Smith’s vocabulary, patriots rather than citizens of the world. Absolute imperial ambition might be able to produce a world in which everyone could be a disinterested citizen, but then it would of necessity neglect “[t]he soft, the amiable, the gentle virtues.” These “virtues of indulgent humanity,” for Smith, “are, in comparison, but little insisted upon, and seem, on the contrary, by the Stoics in particular, to have been often regarded as mere weaknesses which it behooved a wise man not to harbour in his breast” (T, 306). Possessed of Stoic ambition, one would be

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restricted instead to the Stoic virtues: emotional apathy, and indifference to life. One would be a war machine, perfectly prepared to sing one’s death song, enacting patriotic tragedy. Smith would no doubt assign an important role to such an ethos, particularly in consideration of the imperatives faced by the nation at war. Ultimately, however, he urged that it remain in check. And certainly this was a sentiment with which Scott agreed; as often as he glorified the valor of Britons present or past, he took care as well to praise peacemakers and peace.

For Scott, as for Addison, the Stoic’s stalwart virtue is integral to the system of national sympathies. Scott follows Smith, however, when he ironizes Stoicism by confronting its self-restraint with its inclination to spectacle. Scott treats his own characteristic Stoicism in this manner no less than the Stoicism of his characters. At moments of great personal anxiety, he takes an ironically detached view of himself: as, for instance, in the wake of the financial disaster of 1826 that brought him intense physical and emotional pain. J.G. Lockhart, Scott’s son-in-law and official biographer, writes of Scott at this period that “the severest test his philosophy encountered was the feeling of bodily helplessness that from week to week crept upon him.”

Lockhart splits Scott’s philosophy from his feeling, and hypostatizes both into dramatic figures who render the novelist’s struggle to live as a kind of gothic masque. Lockhart’s characterization of Scott’s difficult winter in fact traces Scott’s own way of representing his decline in his Journal of that time (the period when Scott was also composing Magnum Opus introductions such as the forward to Ivanhoe glossed above). One characteristic sequence begins with Scott’s entry for November 28th, which reports the news that his niece’s husband, Major Thomas Huxley, had killed himself. For days Scott

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wrestled with his emotions:

O Lord, What are we?—Lords of Nature—why a tile drops from a housetop, which an elephant would not feel more than the fall of a sheet of pasteboard, and there lies his lordship. Or something of inconceivably minute origin, the pressure of a bone or the inflammation of a particle of the brain, takes place and the emblem of the Deity destroys himself or some one else. We hold our health and our reason on terms slighter than one would desire were it in their choice to hold an Irish cabbin.

29 Wednesday  Awakd from horrid dreams to reconsideration of the sad reality—he was such a kind, obliging, assiduous creature. I thought he came to my bedside to expostulate with me how I could believe such a scandal—and I thought I detected that it was but a spirit who spoke by the paleness of his look and the blood flowing from his cravat. I had the nightmare in short, and no wonders.

I felt stupefied all this day but wrote the necessary letters notwithstanding. Walter, Jane, and Mrs. Jobson dined with us—but I could not gather my spirits. But it is nonsense, and contrary to my system which is of the Stoic school, and I think pretty well maintaing. It is the only philosophy I know or can practise—but it cannot always keep the helm.

30 Thursday  I went to the Court and on my return set in order a sheet or two copy. We came back about two—the new form of hearing counsel makes our sederunt a long one. Dined alone, and workd in the evening. (J, 247-8).

Losing his self-assurance, Scott turns his thoughts to the inhuman flux of nature, to life as it exists, as it were, beyond life. But he restores himself to his particular ties through
narrativization that stands here literally as dreamwork. (One thinks of the Stoic interest in divination, and also of Oldbuck's supernaturally tinged dream chamber in *The Antiquary*, where Lovel sleeps beneath his mother's legends, and dreams up the resolve to persist in wooing his wife-to-be.) Horror becomes personified, and Stoical philosophy then rights itself through the disciplined ritual of writing until Scott regains his preternaturally balanced tone. Scott is restored to the helm of his writing desk: but the storm is food for meditation.

Steering away from the specter raised by the death of one in whom he had made a sentimental investment, Scott anxiously affirms his Stoic apathy—so anxiously, that he rates his hold on health and reason as less secure than that an Irish lessor could expect to have on his hovel. The ethical horizon of Stoicism merges with the social horizon of political economy at the vanishing point of self-sufficiency; this response to the trauma of Huxley’s suicide also rationalizes Scott’s ongoing response to his own crises of bankruptcy and physical breakdown. His emotions thus vanish in the utter typicality of his last entry, where he records recommencing his labors. Thus balancing his character between apathy and death, Scott maintains his stake in life. Far removed from the reverie over contingency of his entry two days prior, Scott recognizes that his own apprehension of nature will always remain limited by the desire for life that brings him to sympathize with society's most humble stakeholders. Only work can produce a character that mediates between such sublime apprehensions and such quotidian

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30 While the dwellings inhabited by Irish peasants were notoriously primitive, even in Scott’s day those peasants still often held their lands on lifetime leases. Nevertheless, the Irish peasantry was beset by speculative middlemen seeking to profit on rents by forcing tenants from their homes, while reformers like Scott’s friends the Edgeworths, whom he had visited in Ireland earlier in 1825, were promoting shorter leases in hopes that more frequent renewals would lead to better upkeep. Given such complications, in Scott’s day the “terms” on which “one would desire ... to hold an Irish cabin” was an apt figure for a slight degree of security obtainable either through difficult negotiation or (perhaps even more precariously) through none.

31 See Gottlieb, “‘To be at Once Another and the Same’,” on the later Scott’s “staging of the
sentiments. In Scott’s case, that work involves representing his characteristic philosophy as well as representing the sentiments of all those with whom he can bring himself to sympathize. Resolving the tension between these distinct representational responsibilities to philosophy and to history is, for Scott, the ethical work of narration.

Scott underlines the world-making force of this ethos of the Stoical labor of repetitive production when he introduces himself as “the Author of Waverley” on the title page of his second novel, Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer, and when he reintroduces that Authorial figure with The Antiquary. As Peter Garside has argued, “from [Henry] Mackenzie’s essentially rootless and ineffectual ‘man of feeling’” Scott in those novels “helped forge a ‘nineteenth-century’ man of sentiment” whose local sentimental allegiances legitimate his imperial domination.”

Garside notes Scott’s valedictory dedication of Waverley to Henry Mackenzie, in “A Postscript which should have been a Preface,” and accepts Scott’s claim, in the “Advertisement” to The Antiquary, that his initial trilogy illustrates the history of the manners of Scotland. For Garside, Scott’s depiction of Scottish manners seeks to recuperate local, ahistorical sentiment and place it at the service of the historical mission of national patriotism. Garside emphasizes the sentimentality of this process; yet as he explains Scott’s reconstruction of the man of feeling, he also continually highlights the salience for Scott of Stoicism at the points where Scott’s narrative energies are most intensely felt.

failure of sympathetic Britishness” (204).

On Garside’s account, Scott reconstructs sentimentality by administering doses of Stoicism in order to temper the man of feeling’s character. Scott finds both elements in Britain’s history: it is, Garside writes, “Scott’s sense of a dualism, in the eighteenth century, between ‘feeling’ and ‘reason’ (or, alternatively, ‘passion’ and ‘stoicism’)” which informs his characterizations (S, 85-6). So while Garside emphasizes sentimentalism, the coeval presence of Stoicism in his argument is striking. Discussing The Antiquary, Garside dwells on how Oldbuck’s “stoicism is belied by an overwhelming sympathy.” In both scenes from the novel that Garside analyzes, Scott uses forms of the word “Stoic” in connection with Oldbuck. The first of these scenes comes when Oldbuck reveals to Lovel the dire financial straits in which the Wardour family finds itself. Here Oldbuck initially renounces “the stoical exemption which philosophy affects to give us over the pains and vexations of human life” (A, 100). As the scene continues, Lovel waxes sentimental: “‘I would as soon wish my hand to be as callous as horn, that it might escape an occasional cut or scratch, as I would be ambitious of the stoicism which should render my heart like a piece of the nether millstone’” (101). Garside quotes this part of the exchange (85), but not the Antiquary’s response to his protégé, which resonates with Scott’s language for his own predicament years later. “Wait, young man,” the Antiquary cautions, “till your bark has been battered by the storms of sixty years of mortal vicissitude—you will learn by that time to reef your sails, that she may obey the helm.” Lovel closes the exchange by averring to Oldbuck “I resemble you more in your practice than in your theory” (A, 101). In practice Oldbuck’s stoicism melts into sentiment. Yet, ironically, reiterating Stoic theories is for that no less integral to the Antiquary’s practice, to his vocation, and to that of the Author of Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since, whose own novelistic practice

eds., The Unknown Samuel Johnson (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1983).
is ironically evoked by Oldbuck’s lament for “sixty years“ of bad manners.

At times, Scott weighs in to supplement the Antiquary's Stoicism, for instance in the second scene that Garside treats from The Antiquary, where Oldbuck encounters the fisherman Meiklebackit the day after the funeral of Meiklebackit’s shipwrecked son Steenie. Oldbuck finds Meiklebackit back at work, repairing his boat, manfully putting his sentiments in check, and yet willing to pause to thank Oldbuck for leading the funeral. Deeply touched, the Antiquary, we learn, “would not willingly have had any one by upon that occasion to quote to him his favourite maxims of the Stoic philosophy” (A, 268). Yet citing such philosophy is nevertheless what Scott does, not only by reminding the reader of Stoicism at this juncture with sly *occupatio*, but by juxtaposing Oldbuck with untutored Stoics such as Meiklebackit and, a few pages later, the Catholic Lord Glenallan, whose decades-long retreat from the world has unexpectedly been broken for a visit to of all places Meiklebackit's cottage. Glenallan's visit has been occasioned by two other Stoics: by Edie, who carries the summons that brings him to the cottage, and by old Elspeth Cheyne, who issues this summons. “[W]ith her wonted air of apathy“ Elspeth is in some ways the novel’s ultimate Stoic (A, 219). The dying Elspeth alternates between total insensibility and sudden visionary memories, which she voices in forms that range from historical ballads to confessions of her youthful misdeeds as the close companion of Glenallan’s nefarious mother. In her last throes, she reveals the secret story that undergirds Scott’s plot, such as it is. Twenty-odd years earlier, obeying her noble friend’s orders, she spirited away the son borne to Glenallan’s secret wife, none other than the Eveline Neville beloved of the Antiquary in his youth. Reared as a bastard child by Glenallan’s brother, this child has grown up to be Major Neville, a.k.a. Lovel. By giving this tale to Old Elspeth to tell, Scott entrusts the ultimate narrative of his novel to a female Stoic whose sentimental breakdown is
concomitant with her full achievement of indifference-in-death.

**Guy Mannering** features Stoicism no less prominently than *The Antiquary* does. As in Scott’s third novel, the title character of his second eventually becomes its chief sentimentalist. Like Oldbuck, however (and like Elspeth), “the Astrologer” Mannering only falls into sentimentality when his Stoicism fails him—a fact that Garside, with his emphasis on sentiment, notes but does not develop. Astrology, with its doctrines of universal correspondence and determination, was, as has been noted earlier, a Stoic discipline. Thus in a sense *Guy Mannering* begins from the challenge set to narrative by the absolute determinism of Stoicism. For its opening sequence culminates in Mannering casting the horoscope of a child born at an estate where the young English officer has arrived, lost, almost at random, while touring Scotland during a leave from his military profession. The narrative slowly works through and undoes, as far as it can, the act of absolute vision with which its chief protagonist opens its action—a process of compensation summed up in the closing words, “here ends THE ASTROLOGER.” By that end point, the Stoicism of the novel’s story has become fully enmeshed in the network of sympathy wrought by its plot, with the novel’s recognition scenes doing the most to show Mannering’s character as that of the Stoic compromised but unbowed by sentiment.

The main action of *Guy Mannering* unfolds in the early 1780s, 21 years after Mannering casts the horoscope of the newborn heir of Ellanogowan. In the interim, Colonel Mannering, as much a Stoic in his martial disposition as in his astrological studies, has been posted with his family to India and has fought a duel with young Vanbeest Brown, a lieutenant of Dutch background whom he suspected of courting his

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wife. Now Mannering has returned to Britain with his daughter, his wife having died. He gravitates to the vicinity of Ellanogowan. There he revisits the estate and discovers that its heir, Harry Bertram, had disappeared at age 5, in keeping with Mannering’s astrological prophecy that Bertram would face crises at ages 5, 10, and 21. Meanwhile Brown is discovered in the vicinity, drawn, it emerges, by his passion for Mannering’s daughter Julia (a passion that, in India, Mannering had tragically mistaken for an interest in his wife). As the plot unfolds, Mannering discovers that the Dutchman Brown, unbeknownst to himself, is actually Bertram, Ellanogowan’s lost heir, who had been smuggled away to Holland before growing up to become a soldier of fortune in India.

Mannering first awakens to the narrative in which he is enmeshed and begins to temper his Stoicism with sentiment when Julia shows him letters from her late mother that reveal Julia, and not her mother, to be the object of Brown’s affections.

Mannering took the packet to the window—his pride forbade a more distant retreat. He glanced at some passages of the letters with an unsteady eye and an agitated mind. His stoicism, however, came in time to his aid—that philosophy, which rooted in pride, yet frequently bears the fruits of virtue. He returned towards his daughter with as firm an air as his feelings permitted him to assume. ‘There is great apology for you, Julia, as far as I can judge from a glance at these letters—…’ (G, 316-7).

Stoicism and sentimentality operate in tandem to both further the plot and allow Mannering to become conscious of it. In keeping with the Cato metanarrative, Stoicism fosters romance, by enabling the patriarch to bear the burden of his parental duties
“with as firm an air as his feelings permitted.” Mannering's retreat to the window, which frames the proper objects of Stoic contemplation, nature and the stars, suggests the visionary dimension of his complex character, and his subsequent turn towards his daughter thus bespeaks a philosophical illumination oriented in a sentimental, familial direction. In an ensuing speech to Julia, he denies that he is “anxious about his getting the estate of Ellanogowan,” but adds that “such a subject is held in absolute indifference nowhere except in a novel.” With that remark, Scott posits the task of the novel as an ideal reconciliation of absolute scope and emotional partiality.

As Brown, young Bertram had existed only as an epigone of Mannering. In the wake of Mannering’s self-abnegating renunciation of Stoic pride, however, the cosmopolitan romance that has taken root under the Colonel’s protection, in India, England and Scotland, can flourish. In a letter written while confined by her father lest she elope with Brown/Bertram, Julia describes how she passes the time by “begin[ning] at the end of a grave book, and read[ing] it backward” (G, 160). Julia’s procedure seems an apt figure for the Romantic undoing of the proper order of things that the denouement of Guy Mannering effects. If, as Ian Duncan suggests, Scott links the operation of the law of the father, as imposed through Pleydell and Mannering at the book’s conclusion, to the magical operations shot through the rest of the book, it is nonetheless the case that the law’s operation continually reintroduces figures that demand to be read back into the non-causal scheme of Stoical magic and sentimental romance.  

For instance, when Hattaraick betrays his implication in young Bertram’s kidnapping by declaring to Pleydell that on the day he seized the boy the ground was too frozen for him to have left a footprint, the long-past frost he invokes figures into Scott’s broader image system that casts Bertram’s return as a melting of the frozen Stoic

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34 Duncan, Modern Romance, 130.
world. Likewise, the final piece of legal evidence introduced bears the marks of magic. This is “a small velvet bag” that Bertram explains “he had worn round his neck from his earliest infancy, and which he had preserved, first, from superstitious reverence, and, latterly, from the hope that it might serve one day to aid in the discovery of his birth.” When the bag is opened, it is “found to contain a blue silk case, from which [is] drawn a scheme of nativity.” Mannering owns this paper as “his own composition,” and proves that it “afford[s] the strongest and most satisfactory evidence, that the possessor of it must necessarily be the young heir of Ellangowan,” by telling the story of how he himself “first appeared in that country in the character of an astrologer” (G, 347-8). Even the discourse of the law rests, in the end, on the assertion of “the character of an astrologer”—not a character created by, or for, an astrologer, but a character who ironizes astrology’s Stoic claim that by renouncing human sentiments for natural sympathies, one can read both past and future in the book of nature.

Were we to continue reading backward through Scott’s initial trilogy, we could see this ironic tension between Stoicism and sentimentalism already bearing on Scott’s project of representing manners in Waverley. It is in that novel that Scott first adumbrates the ambiguity whereby “manners” can mean general human customs as well as habits specific to one time, place, or stage of society. Scott’s production of character is a strategy for mediating between the global and local demands made on his authorial consciousness as he sketches the manners of diverse times and nations. In Waverley, the lynchpin for this process is Colonel Talbot, the stoic veteran who, personifying character as such (in the sense in which it is synonymous with philosophical virtue), becomes the deus ex machina who can effect the sentimental reconciliation of England and Scotland, Edward Waverley and his times. Subsequently, when, with Guy Mannering, the authorial character of “The Author of Waverley”
makes his debut, Scott faces the problem of what range or scale of manners to treat across his corpus of novels. Too much universality would risk the “mannerism” that Scott criticized in John Dryden’s practice of repeating “sentiments and illustrations from prose to verse, and back again to prose.” Instead, Scott makes the question of what manners are to be represented an matter for ongoing negotiation. His interest in manners as acts of judgment is suggested by his use of the name “Guy Mannering,” which not only announces his protagonist to be a type of the mannered gentleman, but also, by making “manners’ into a participle, advertises both character and novel as studies in how manners are to be performed. The subsequent titular figure of the antiquary then epitomizes, but also ironizes, the collection and judgment of such performances. In the “Epistle Dedicatory” to Ivanhoe, Laurence Templeton, the pedantic antiquary who supposedly redacts that novel, writes that unfamiliar subjects must be “translated into the manners, as well as the language, of the age we live in,” even as they are placed “on the extensive neutral ground … of manners and sentiments … arising out of the principles of human nature.” In the final analysis, however, Templeton shares with Oldbuck, with Scott’s other antiquaries, and with Scott himself a respect for the contingent, even accidental relationships among the objects of collector or novelist. This respect for particularity is intrinsic to the expert judgment, the finely restrained sensibility, that such figures embody, however parodically Scott presents them.

I will conclude by triangulating Scott in light of the present argument with his harshest critic and his staunchest defender, William Hazlitt and Georg Lukács. In The Spirit of the Age Hazlitt declares Scott “‘lord of the ascendant’ for the time being” (96),

36 Scott, Ivanhoe, 18.
thus identifying him as the planet that Robert Burton calls the “Significator of Manners” (18). For Burton this planet is Saturn; for Hazlitt’s “Age,” his use of the figure suggests, it is Scott. Hazlitt’s rhetoric here is ironic. By employing astrological jargon, Hazlitt casts aspersions on what he considers the folly of Scott’s pretensions to fix the course his nation’s manners have taken. For Hazlitt, Scott’s partisanship has tragically “narrow’d the mind” of a writer “born for the universe” (111; Hazlitt quotes Goldsmith). Blind to the true import of his own time, Scott’s vain attempts to turn away from, or “put down,” the progressive aspect of the Spirit of the Age evince a retrograde movement also all too characteristic of his moment (109). Hazlitt’s astrological figure captures Scott’s inability to bring newness into the world. This problem haunts the self-deconstructing complements that Hazlitt addresses to Scott; for instance, that “his works (taken together) are almost like a new edition of human nature” (109). There can be no singularity to Scott’s work, only republication. The grand scope of the overview Scott takes of the world causes him to miss the spirit of change immanent to it. “Our historical novelist firmly thinks that nothing is but what has been, that the moral world stands still, as the material one was supposed to do of old, and that we can never get beyond the point where we actually are without utter destruction” (97). So from Hazlitt’s perspective, Scott’s fictions deny that the world of manners moves at all. This critique of Scott, we should now be able to see, is also a critique of a Stoicism that Hazlitt finds too salient in Scott’s works, and that he evokes not just as an apathetic stance toward history but as an astrological view of a total universal system.

The author trapped within such a system would fail to develop a progressive understanding of his own times, but instead would recreate and destroy the past with

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each commencement and conclusion of a new volume. Scott’s novels do sometimes feel like such acts of conjuring and dispelling, in a process for which Guy Mannering’s closing phrase “Here ends THE ASTROLOGER” has already been made to stand as the emblem. Yet as that line intimates, and as I have been showing, Scott himself rigorously and sentimentally ironizes such Stoic absolutism about narrative. His skepticism toward Mannering’s astrology is reinforced by the mocking depiction of the local scholar Dominie Sampson, as when the humorous dialogue in which Mannering and Pleydell tease the Dominie for, in his ecstasy at Bertram’s return, spilling tea on the dog, Plato, who “receive[s] the libation with a howl that [does] little honor to his philosophy” (G, 319).

The Colonel’s equanimity was rather shaken by this last blunder. “Upon my word, my good friend, Mr. Sampson, you forget the difference between Plato and Zenocrates.”

“The former was chief of the Academics, the latter of the Stoics,” said the Dominie, with some scorn of the supposition.

“Yes, my dear sir, but it was Zenocrates, not Plato, who denied that pain was an evil.”

“I should have thought,” said Pleydell, “that very respectable quadruped, which is just now limping out of the room upon three of his four legs, was rather of the Cynic school.”

The Dominie’s friends tease the pedant by punningly reducing philosophers to dogs, using the etymology of “cynic” to travesty the prophetic topoi of catastrophe and of the 1984.
rebirth of Plato. They thereby parody, through inversion, the Dominie’s way of making the everyday portentous, as he does by exclaiming “prodigious!” at every occasion. Everything for him is a sign of the revolution of the times; there is nothing new under the sun. No wonder, then, that the Dominie should, together with Meg Merillies, occupy the true center of the novel’s romance; and no wonder, on the other side of the equation, that Hazlitt should find this very breakfast at Woodburne, which places Pleydell and a now forward-minded Mannering in the ascendancy, “the finest scene in all these novels” (105). Hazlitt seems to have appreciated how in disavowing the Dominie, Scott disavows in advance Hazlitt’s caricature of his authorship. The accidents of bad manners, from trivial slips of the teacup to the follies of the Pretender, do have their place in Scott, and those bad manners can, through the grace of sentiment, lead to narrative outcomes with which we can sympathize. Beyond the Dominie’s ken, but not beyond Mannering’s, Pleydell’s, Oldbuck’s, or Scott’s, is the fact that not only virtue, but also errors of what the Antiquary calls ”mortal vicissitude“ will leave their traces, even in translation, for human nature continually moves in sentimental excess of itself.

Scott’s vindicator Lukács, like Hazlitt, employs a figure of Stoic character to take Scott’s measure. Lukács gestures, however, not toward disreputable Stoic astrology, but rather toward the firmament of heroes who find their apotheosis in political literature. When he formulates the contradiction “between Scott’s directly political views and his artistic world picture,” Lukács invokes Stoicism’s most famous failure, Cato himself. Surveying the “endless field of ruin,” the “broken social formations” Scott depicts, Lukács writes that while “Scott, the Scottish petty aristocrat, automatically affirms this development with a sober rationality,” on the other hand “Scott, the writer … embodies the sentiment of the Roman poet Lucan: ‘Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni’” (54). “The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the vanquished pleased Cato.” Scott, a
close reader of Lucan, to whom he has Templeton make elaborate reference in *Ivanhoe*’s “Epistle Dedicatory,” would surely have appreciated Lukács’s maneuver linking him with the Republican sage. While Hanoverian Britons like Scott who admired Cato’s virtuous last stand against Caesar may have been expressing resistance to the march of commercial society, that very sentimentalism linked them up into that society’s sympathetic, and in its own totalizing way Stoical, system. When Lukács invokes Cato as the precedent for Scott, he poses a paradox embodied in the idea that resistance to the imperial march of history can be identified as a historical fact that occurs repeatedly according to fixed laws. As is well known, to Lukács’s mind Scott was unconscious of his work’s paradoxical position as at once historical and historicizing. Yet when Scott depicts Stoic sentimentalists such as Oldbuck and Mannering, he anatomizes characters who like himself forever gesture towards total representation, and forever settle for reiterating everyday partiality. Such depictions suggest Scott to be highly self-conscious about how such ironies develop, not only where celebrations of resistance to history plant such resistance all the more firmly into history’s plot, but also, more generally, wherever quotidian divisions are organized by the masterplot of Stoicism’s noble failure.