Travelling into the Other
The Imperial Gaze and Highland Resistance in Walter Scott's *Rob Roy*

CHIU Kang-Yen
National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

ABSTRACT

This essay examines Walter Scott's novel, *Rob Roy* (1817), through a postcolonial lens, exploring its engagement with internal colonialism and the imperial gaze. While often regarded as reinforcing British national cohesion, Scott's novel simultaneously critiques the subjugation of the Scottish Highlands under Hanoverian rule, exposing the contradictions and anxieties within imperial authority. Focusing on Frank Osbaldistone's journey, the essay analyses how his metropolitan biases distort his perception of Highland culture, reinforcing colonial tropes while also revealing the fragility of British dominance. Drawing on Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism* and Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, the study interrogates Frank's encounters in Glasgow, Aberfoyle, and Rob Roy's glen, illustrating his oscillation between fascination and fear. Additionally, the essay examines hospitality as a contested practice. Frank's intrusion at Aberfoyle provokes conflict, reflecting broader colonial tensions, while his acceptance within Rob Roy's clan underscores the conditional and politically charged nature of Highland hospitality. Despite the generosity he receives, he remains emotionally detached, reinforcing his imperial mindset. Ultimately, *Rob Roy* resists simplistic categorisation as either an imperial or nationalist novel. Scott presents cultural encounter as complex and unstable, demonstrating how imperial power remains vulnerable when confronted with resilient local identities. Frank's unresolved anxieties further underscore the novel's deeper engagement with colonial memory and the persistent tensions of internal colonialism.

KEYWORDS: Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, Imperial Gaze, Internal Colonialism, Highland Resistance

Received: March 5, 2025／Accepted: May 8, 2025
Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities, no. 59 (July 2025): 3-27

§ Kang-Yen Chiu received his PhD from the University of Glasgow in 2012. He is currently an Associate Professor at the Institute of Visual Studies, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University. *Email: kchiu@nycu.edu.tw*

Introduction

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832), a leading figure of the British Romantic period, played a pivotal role in shaping the historical novel through his *Waverley* series. These works set the standard for nineteenth-century European historical fiction and elevated the novel to an unprecedented literary status. Some scholars argue that Scott's novels fostered national cohesion among British subjects and contributed to the expansion of the British Empire, positioning him as a key figure in nineteenth-century imperial discourse (MacMillan). However, I take a more cautious stance toward this claim. While Scott undoubtedly engages with themes of national identity and colonial expansion, his works often express anxieties and ambivalence regarding imperial trajectories. For instance, in *The Surgeon's Daughter* (1827), he critiques the psychological distortions of British colonisers in India. Moreover, he acknowledges that external imperial expansion was often preceded by internal colonialism within Britain itself.

Against this broader backdrop of colonial discourse, *Rob Roy* (1817), the focus of this essay, interrogates the subjugation of the Scottish Highlands under Hanoverian rule, exposing the internal contradictions of imperial power.[1] By presenting a nuanced exploration of imperial encounters, Scott weaves together themes of cultural conflict, hospitality, and resistance against the backdrop of the 1715 Jacobite Rising.[2]

While recognising the complex triangular relations among English, Lowland Scots, and Highland Scots after the Union of 1707, this essay concentrates primarily on the imperial dynamics between the English traveller and the Highlanders, as represented through Frank Osbaldistone's perspective. This essay examines the novel through a postcolonial lens, focusing on Frank Osbaldistone's journey into Highland territory and his interactions with its inhabitants. While ostensibly a passive observer, Frank's perspective is shaped by an imperial gaze that distorts his understanding of the people and customs he encounters. His travels into the Highlands, therefore, serve not merely as a personal adventure but as an ideological confrontation between the "civilised" and the so-called "primitive," the dominant and the subaltern.

Building on Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (1975) and Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), this study interrogates the mechanisms of imperial rhetoric embedded in Frank's narrative.[3] Although the novel is named after the historical figure Rob Roy MacGregor (1671-1734), readers must wait until approximately one-third of the story has unfolded before encountering the infamous cattle trader-turned-outlaw. Instead, the novel's primary focus remains Frank Osbaldistone and his perception of the Scottish Highlands.

By analysing key encounters—from Frank's arrival in Glasgow to his uneasy reception at the Aberfoyle inn and his eventual acceptance within Rob Roy's clan—this essay explores how *Rob Roy* critiques colonial discourse. Scott's portrayal of the Highlanders resists simple categorisation; while Frank's imperial perspective exoticises and marginalises them, the Highlanders emerge as resilient figures whose cultural integrity and defiance challenge the ideological supremacy of the British state.

Placing *Rob Roy* within the broader framework of internal colonialism, this essay highlights Scott's engagement with anxieties surrounding British expansion and the contested space of the Highlands. In doing so, it argues that Scott not only critiques imperial mechanisms but also exposes the vulnerabilities of the colonising power when confronted with the endurance of a people it seeks to suppress. *Rob Roy*, therefore, stands as a significant early exploration of colonial encounters within Britain itself, offering insights that resonate far beyond its historical setting. This raises the central theoretical concern of this essay: the construction and representation of "the other" within internal colonial contexts.

The term "the other" in this essay is employed as a critical lens to explore the construction of cultural difference within the context of internal colonialism. Following Edward Said's foundational definition of "the other" as a discursive product of Orientalist ideology, used by dominant cultures to define and subordinate those deemed alien or inferior, this study applies the concept to the internal dynamics of British imperial identity. Scott's *Rob Roy* presents the Scottish Highlands not as a distant overseas colony but as a domestic periphery subject to many of the same rhetorical strategies of exoticisation, animalisation, and cultural distancing. This analysis also draws on Frantz Fanon's view of "the other" as dehumanised and positioned outside normative definitions of civility in order to legitimise domination. In this sense, the Highlanders in *Rob Roy* are represented as Britain's internal "other," both geographically marginalised and symbolically distanced within Romantic-era discourse.

Hospitality and Conflict: Encounters in the Contact Zone

FRANK OSBALDISTONE'S journey to Scotland begins when his father, William Osbaldistone, summons him from France to take charge of the family's London trading firm. However, Frank resists this career path, leading to a rupture with his father. As a result, he is sent to Scotland to settle family business. His first impression of Glasgow is shaped by the city's austere Presbyterian Sabbath, which contrasts sharply with the warmth and generosity of Bailie Nicol Jarvie, a business associate of his father. This encounter with Jarvie serves as an early indicator of the cultural contrasts Frank will experience throughout his Highland journey. Jarvie's

hospitality is evident in his elaborate dining table, which features an array of imported and local delicacies—tea from China, coffee from Jamaica, English toast and ale, Scotch dried salmon, and Loch Fyne herrings. This generosity exemplifies the ideal of a host offering his finest provisions to his guests.

Yet, rather than embracing this hospitality, Frank finds Jarvie's enthusiasm overwhelming, feeling compelled "to do rather more justice to the Scottish dainties [...] than was quite agreeable to our southern palates" (204). This reaction raises questions about his self-proclaimed cosmopolitanism. His rejection of local flavours does not signal an openness to the world but rather a regional bias that reveals his mental provincialism. Frank's invocation of his "southern palate" aligns with eighteenth-century discourses on North and South Britain. As Penny Fielding observes in *Scotland and the Fictions of Geography: North Britain, 1760-1830* (2008), Scotland was often perceived as England's cultural and economic periphery, reinforcing the divide between the two regions.

> "North Britain" becomes a pejorative term for Scotland seen as a nation struggling to catch up with England's economic progress. […] Scotland becomes both the spatial embodiment of the north as a foundational British identity and a "peripheral" locality, a north that acts as England's other. (Fielding 11)

In short, Frank's response reveals his underlying prejudice—that a "southern palate" is inherently superior to its northern counterpart.

Returning to Jarvie's dining table, a symbolic tug-of-war unfolds between host and guest, threatening to overshadow the hospitable occasion. However, as a guest of polite education, Frank endures the "well-meant persecution" and refrains from openly disputing his host. Yet his politeness in this instance is not born of genuine modesty or deference but rather a calculated blend of hypocrisy and tact, as the following monologue illustrates:

> it was ridiculous enough to see Owen (the head clerk and chief accountant for the Osbaldistones), whose ideas of politeness were more rigorous and formal, and who was willing, in all acts of lawful compliance, to evince his respect for the friend of the firm, eating […] mouthful after mouthful of singed wool, and pronouncing it excellent, in a tone in which disgust almost overpowered civility. (204)

Frank simultaneously critiques Jarvie's hospitality and takes issue with Owen's conduct as a guest. He struggles to comprehend that Owen's restraint is an act of deference to their host, failing to recognise that Owen is, in fact, a considerate individual who prioritises others' feelings over his own. Ironically, Frank's criticism of Owen's excessive politeness exposes his own reliance on formulaic

diplomacy—expressed through habitual phrases such as "I am happy, sir" and "I am sorry, sir" (8)—when interacting with his father and superiors.

Beyond receiving and accommodating his guests, Jarvie further extends his hospitality by acting as a guide for Frank in the Highlands, despite being a stranger there himself. As they travel deeper into Highland territory, Frank grows increasingly uneasy. The reception at the Aberfoyle inn, situated at the threshold of the Highlands, starkly contrasts with the warm welcome he had previously experienced at an English inn. Borrowing Mary Louise Pratt's term, Aberfoyle can be seen as a contact zone—a site of cultural and economic exchange where differing social worlds intersect, often in conditions of asymmetrical power dynamics (8).

The site is highly fluid, serving as both a point of crossing and a space of cultural clash, where intentions are often opaque and minor misunderstandings can escalate into serious conflicts (Pratt 61). As Frank and Jarvie step into this contact zone, they encounter a "peeled willow-wand placed across the half-open door" (228), a subtle yet clear signal that entry is restricted as the space is reserved for earlier guests. Unfamiliar with this Highland custom, Frank disregards the wand's significance, failing to recognise it as a request for privacy and, in doing so, unwittingly imposes his own expectations upon an unfamiliar social landscape (Kirkwood et al. 30). A detailed illustration of this tradition is provided by the Welsh naturalist and writer Thomas Pennant (1726-1789) in his *A Tour in Scotland* (1776):

> The old highlanders were so remarkable for their hospitality that their doors were always left open, as if it were to invite the hungry travellers to walk in, and partake of their meals. But if two crossed sticks were seen at the door, it was a sign that the family was at dinner, and did not desire more guests (49).

Thus, a simple local tradition is easily misinterpreted as emblematic of a Highland world that appears strange and threatening to outsiders (McNeil 55). Although the "peeled willow-wand" serves as a warning sign, it is not intended to target any specific cultural, social, or political group. Rather, it simply signifies a request for privacy.

"No one bade us welcome," Frank complains (228). Despite his repeated requests, the inn's hostess, Jenny MacAlpine, largely ignores his demands. Frustrated, Frank eventually loses patience and forcibly enters the public-house. His reaction exemplifies a tendency identified by Richard Schmitt: "the dominant groups pretend that they have it all their way" when confronted with the "other." Frank's sense of entitlement reflects the imperial mindset, in which the expectations of the dominant culture override local customs and boundaries (45).

Unable to resist Frank's uninvited intrusion, Jenny is stripped of her privileged status as hostess. With her authority severely undermined, she is powerless to prevent the ensuing conflict between the two groups within her own establishment.

This scene not only illustrates a clash of ideologies but also highlights the fluid and unstable dynamic between host and guest. The shifting power relations in the Aberfoyle inn reflect more than the cultural differences of Highland Gaelic society; they also serve as a microcosm of the broader political tensions between England and Scotland in the early eighteenth century. Within this historical and political context, Frank's role becomes particularly significant in shaping the power dynamics between host and guest.

For the Highlanders, Frank represents the incursion of a foreign, non-native culture, and his insistence on asserting his rights as a guest within the inn carries symbolic weight, mirroring the arbitrary authority that the anglophone world wielded over the Highlands. His uncompromising stance does also reflect the deepening English influence on Scottish culture and daily life, particularly in the wake of the 1707 Act of Union. This theme is foreshadowed earlier in the novel when the gardener Andrew Fairservice laments the impact of the Union: "puir auld Scotland suffers aneugh by thae blackguard lowns o' excisemen and gaugers [Customs Officers], that hae come doun on her like locusts since the sad and sorrowfu' Union" (151). Frank's actions in the inn thus exemplify the wider colonial tensions embedded in the novel, where increasingly intrusive alien authority disrupts local customs and redefines traditional power structures.

The confrontation between these two groups within the contact zone ultimately encapsulates a clash of cultures and power dynamics. Both sides adhere rigidly to their own ideologies, refusing compromise, despite the evident asymmetry in their relationship. In the ensuing skirmish, the quick-witted Jarvie seizes a red-hot ploughshare as a weapon and inadvertently sets a Highlander's plaid on fire (232-233). This moment of distinctly Scottian humour, with its witty portrayal of the otherwise peaceable Bailie, lightens the tension and transforms the altercation into a farcical spectacle rather than a genuine threat.

The antagonism, initially charged with hostility, ultimately proves to be less serious than it first appears. As Frank later concedes, "there was more of bravado than of serious attempt [by the Highlanders] to do us any injury" (233). Rather than serving as a moment of irreconcilable conflict, the scene facilitates an unexpected form of engagement between the opposing groups. The duel is not a life-or-death struggle; instead, it becomes a vehicle for cultural exchange, allowing both sides to test and assert themselves, ultimately fostering a grudging sense of mutual recognition.

Seeing the Other: Frank Osbaldistone's Imperial Perspective

FROM the moment they enter Aberfoyle, the visitors become aware of the unfamiliar conventions they are transgressing. Yet it is Frank's insistence on asserting his own expectations that heightens the sense of unease. When confronted with an alien culture, Frank's instinct is not to observe with neutrality but to interpret, imagine, and impose meaning onto what he encounters. Even after he arrives at the inn, Frank's perception is shaped by his preconceptions rather than reality. The hostess's appearance immediately fuels his imagination: her "black hair, which escaped in uncombed elf-locks from under her coif" conjures for him the image of "a witch disturbed in the midst of her unlawful rites" (228-229).

Moreover, the silent gaze of the Highlanders unsettles him to the point that he later admits, "I disguised as well as I could, under an appearance of indifference, any secret anxiety I might feel concerning the mode in which we were to be received by our predecessors" (231). Frank's exaggerated apprehension reveals the extent to which his fevered imagination distorts his perceptions, transforming an ordinary Highland woman into a figure of dark superstition. His response underscores the imperial traveller's tendency to project fear onto the unknown, reinforcing his own cultural superiority even as he betrays his deep-seated anxieties.

As Frank departs the village the following day, the sight of the villagers along the roadside once again fuels his imagination. His gaze distorts reality, transforming the Highland women into sinister figures—"the witches of *Macbeth*," "beldames," or "sibyls"—until he perceives "in the features of these crones the malevolence of the weird sisters" (249). Even the children, rather than appearing neutral or indifferent, seem to embody "an expression of national hate and malignity" (249).

For Frank, the presence of women and children—figures traditionally associated with domesticity and innocence—becomes a source of unease, reinforcing his sense of alienation. This discomfort intensifies when he is no longer the detached observer but instead finds himself subjected to the gaze of the Highlanders. As Fiona Robertson aptly observes, "The nightmare possibilities of the Waverley Novels begin when the roles of the observer and the observed are suddenly reversed" (182). In this moment, Frank's authority as the interpreting subject is destabilised, exposing his vulnerability and challenging his presumed position of control over his surroundings. In an attempt to maintain his self-assumed superiority, Frank suppresses his anxiety beneath a façade of composure. His reaction to his surroundings demonstrates a well-honed defence mechanism, activated as he grapples with the unsettling realisation of his minority status in the Highlands. His response is not merely one of discomfort but a strategic

performance aimed at preserving his sense of dominance in an unfamiliar and potentially threatening environment. As Stanley Sulkes observes, the scene at Aberfoyle "serves as a form of initiation through which Frank and the Bailie pass into a landscape of adventure" (59). Their act of "crossing the Highland line" is more than a physical transition; it marks the moment when two distinct ideologies formally confront one another. In eighteenth-century discourse, the Highland Line functioned as both a geographical and ideological boundary, separating the "civilised" Lowlands from the "barbaric" Highlands—a division that had been reinforced by political tensions following the Union of 1707 and the Jacobite risings. Enlightenment thinkers such as David Hume and Adam Smith often portrayed the Highlands as a space of economic and social stagnation, resistant to the commercial progress that defined the Lowlands. At the same time, military and governmental policies sought to pacify and assimilate the region, particularly after the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. Within this context, Frank's crossing of the Highland Line is not merely an entry into an unfamiliar landscape but a movement into a contested space where competing visions of governance, law, and identity are at stake. This encounter, laden with cultural and political tensions, sets the stage for the broader narrative's exploration of power, identity, and resistance.

We now examine how Frank perceives the Highlanders and the ways in which he defines his relationship with them, particularly when he is invited by Rob Roy as his guest. His initial, detailed depiction of the Highlanders occurs not in the Highlands themselves but in Glasgow, underscoring the fact that one need not travel north to encounter them—they are already present within the city:

> Strangers gazed with surprise on the antique and fantastic dress, and listened to the unknown and dissonant sounds of their language, while the mountaineers, armed even while engaged in this peaceful occupation with musket and pistol, sword, dagger, and target, gazed with astonishment on the articles of luxury of which they knew not the use, and with avidity which seemed somewhat alarming upon the articles which they knew and valued. (155) (emphasis added)

Frank's reaction to the sight of Highlanders in Glasgow closely mirrors his response at Aberfoyle. To him, these "mountaineers" appear as relics of an ancient past, their presence disrupting his perception of modern urban space. Mary Louise Pratt argues that, under the Western gaze, indigenous peoples are often reduced to "only a list of features, situated in a different temporal order from that of the perceiving and speaking subject" (63). This framework is particularly applicable to Frank's view of the Highlanders. Their dress ("antique and fantastic"), their language ("unknown"), and their behaviour—carrying weapons even while engaged in peaceful activities—are all interpreted as signs of anachronism.

Moreover, through Frank's imperial lens, the Highlanders appear not only outdated but also ignorant of Lowland customs and way of life. Yet, ironically, his own surprise at their presence in Glasgow betrays his own lack of knowledge. His reaction reveals that he, too, holds uninformed and simplistic notions about the Highlanders, exposing the limitations of his assumed cultural superiority.

The above quotation primarily highlights the Highlanders' dress and behaviour, but Frank's mistrust extends beyond these aspects to their gaze upon luxury goods, which he perceives with suspicion. Furthermore, his descriptions of their physiognomy are laden with dehumanising imagery. Notably, he repeatedly employs animalistic comparisons, likening the Highlanders to a "simian," "bull," "otter," "deer," and "bear" (187, 275, 280, 292, 307). While other forms of representation—such as feminisation, infantilisation, and Orientalisation—also reinforce his prejudiced perspective, this essay argues that Frank's persistent animalisation of the Highlanders is particularly revealing of his colonial and imperial mindset.

The portrayal of colonised subjects in animalistic terms is a well-documented trope in colonial discourse studies, yet, to my knowledge, it has not been explicitly examined in *Rob Roy* as a means through which Scott critiques the mechanisms of internal colonialism. By foregrounding Frank's rhetoric of dehumanisation, Scott subtly exposes the ideological strategies through which imperial power seeks to justify domination over the Highland "other."

The history of animalisation is as old as human civilisation itself. In postcolonial studies, one of the most influential modern interpretations of this phenomenon is provided by Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967). He argues:

> At times this Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. […] When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms he constantly refers to the *bestiary*. (Fanon 32-33) (emphasis added)

Fanon's critique of the settlers' tendency to depict natives in animalistic terms is not limited to a single context; rather, it is a recurring feature in the history of colonial discourse across various formerly colonised countries. This process of dehumanisation serves as a means of justifying subjugation, reinforcing hierarchies of power, and legitimising imperial rule.

However, this colonial discourse is not confined to overseas imperial contexts; it also emerges in representations of socially, religiously, politically, and culturally marginalised groups within former colonial nations. The Highlands of Scotland

serve as a particularly illustrative case. Fanon's concept of animalisation is especially relevant when examining Scott's *Rob Roy*, where similar rhetorical strategies are deployed to depict the Highlanders as primitive and subhuman.

A striking example appears in Frank's description of Dougal Gregor, the turnkey of Glasgow Tolbooth, when the Highlander unexpectedly encounters his clan chieftain, Rob Roy:

> *a wild shock-headed looking animal, whose profusion of red hair covered and obscured his features,* which were otherwise only characterised by the extravagant joy that affected him at the sight of my guide. In my experience I have met nothing so absolutely resembling my idea of *a very uncouth, wild, and ugly savage adoring the idol of his tribe. He grinned, he shivered, he laughed, he was near crying, if he did not actually cry.* (173) (emphasis added)

In the passage above, Dougal's appearance is explicitly animalised through Frank's description. His "profusion of red hair covered and obscured his features" evokes a striking resemblance to an orangutan, "any of three species of Asian great apes found in rainforests on the Southeast Asian islands of Sumatra and Borneo" ("Orangutan"). This comparison does more than dehumanise Dougal—it also Orientalises him, as the orangutan is a distinctly Eastern species, reinforcing an implicit association between the Highlander and the so-called exotic, uncivilised "other."

Moreover, as Murray Pittock notes, the animalisation of Highlanders was not a new phenomenon. As early as 1678, the Cameronian William Cleland had described Highland Scots as monkeys, a term deliberately employed to underscore both their supposed primitivism and their Catholicism. This historical precedent highlights the persistent rhetoric of dehumanisation used to justify their marginalisation within the British state (Pittock 2012: 20).

As a "seeing-man," Frank's act of interpretation, classification and many other similar examples demonstrate what Pratt terms "the meaning-making powers of empire" (9, 3). His observations are not neutral but rather shaped by the imperial impulse to categorise and define the "other" within a rigid hierarchical framework. This tendency is further evident in the following passage, where Frank's sustained interest in the physiology and physiognomy of Rob Roy reveals his preoccupation with reading the Highlander's body as a site of difference and deviation.

> Two points in his person interfered with the rules of symmetry—his shoulders were so broad in proportion to his height, as, notwithstanding the lean and lathy appearance of his frame, gave him something the air of being too square in respect to his stature; and his

> arms, though round, sinewy, and strong, were so very long as to be rather *a deformity*. (187) (emphasis added)

Rob's unusually broad shoulders, square frame, and disproportionately long arms are, in Frank's eyes, markers of "deformity," assessed through both his self-proclaimed scientific observation and his culturally conditioned notions of beauty. Much like his portrayal of Dougal, Frank's depiction of Rob evokes the image of an anthropoid ape, reinforcing an implicit classification of the Highlander as subhuman—"unfinished in the process of civilization." This rhetoric of physical aberration aligns with colonial discourse, where bodily difference is often framed as evidence of cultural and evolutionary inferiority, justifying the Highlanders' marginalisation within the British state (Ahuja 131). Rob's body is perceived as markedly different from the modern, developed physique that Frank implicitly associates with himself. This contrast reinforces Frank's sense of superiority, as his own form aligns with the ideals of civilisation and progress, while Rob's is framed as primitive and unsophisticated, further entrenching the Highlander's otherness within an imperial hierarchy of physical and cultural development.

Later in the novel, when Rob is "in the dress of his country," Frank observes that he possesses "a felt of thick, short, red hair, especially around his knees, which resembled in this respect, as well as from their sinewy appearance of extreme strength, the limbs of a red-coloured Highland bull" (275). Here, Rob's physical features are not only likened to those of a primate but also to those of a bull, further reinforcing his association with the animalistic. Frank's description operates as more than mere observation—it serves the broader function of dehumanisation, positioning the Highlanders as creatures closer to the natural world than to civilised society. His emphasis on Rob's exposed limbs and their resemblance to a Highland bull echoes a familiar Anglophone discourse that fixates on the "nakedness" of kilted Highlanders. In eighteenth-century British writings, Highland dress, particularly the kilt, was frequently framed as a marker of barbaric primitivism. This fixation often reflected a mixture of revulsion and admiration, portraying Highlanders as hyper-masculine, untamed, and physically potent. Frank's description, in likening Rob's body to that of a powerful beast, participates in this discourse, reinforcing the idea that Highlanders exist outside the norms of civilised refinement—figures of both fascination and latent threat.

By portraying the Highlanders as not fully human, Frank creates a psychological and ideological distance between himself and them, a distancing mechanism that aligns with colonial rhetoric. As L. Perry Curtis argues, the "act of deflection often takes the form of reducing the perceived enemy or menace to an animal" (xi), thereby justifying their marginalisation or subjugation. Through such descriptions, Frank not only asserts his own cultural superiority but also reinforces

the Highlanders' perceived primitiveness, framing them as beings outside the bounds of modern, civilised humanity. Indeed, the animalisation of the Highlanders serves as one of Frank's primary psychological strategies for managing his fear when confronted with those he perceives as fundamentally different from himself—figures he imagines as potential threats. By reducing them to the status of beasts, he not only distances himself from their unfamiliar world but also frames them as less rational, less civilised, and ultimately less human. This process allows him to reaffirm his own superiority while mitigating his anxiety in the face of an environment he cannot fully control or understand.

Rob's character is further exoticised through comparisons that extend beyond the Highland context. He is said to possess the morality of "an Arab Chief" and is likened, in terms of his authority, to "the Sultan of Delhi" (292; Scott 1998: 20). Meanwhile, Rob's wife, Helen, is compared to the Israelite heroines Judith and Deborah (260), further reinforcing the impulse to situate the Highlanders within a framework of remote, exotic archetypes. This strategy of rendering Highlanders as figures of romanticised distance was not unique to Scott. William Wordsworth, too, in "The Solitary Reaper" (1807), portrays a Highland woman not as a subject with historical specificity, but as an exotic, almost otherworldly presence whose song transcends immediate understanding. Wordsworth situates the Highland lass within a landscape of sublime primitivism, comparing her to a solitary singer in an "Arabian desert" or among the "Hebrides." Much like Scott's depiction of Rob Roy as a noble tribal leader or Helen as a figure out of biblical antiquity, Wordsworth's reaper becomes an emblem of timeless cultural alterity, evoking fascination but also reinforcing distance. Both writers engage in what Mary Louise Pratt terms the "meaning-making powers of empire" (3)—a concept referenced earlier in this essay—by projecting Highland subjects into a realm of aestheticised otherness. This process enables the imperial observer to contain and manage the unsettling presence of cultural difference. In this sense, Wordsworth's poem and Scott's *Rob Roy* exemplify the Romantic era's complex entanglement with internal Orientalism, revealing the anxieties and contradictions inherent in representing Britain's own internal margins as exotic spaces.

The Orientalisation of the Highlanders in *Rob Roy* is not an isolated literary device but part of a broader cultural discourse that sought to categorise peripheral and resistant groups within an imperial framework. In an 1816 *Quarterly Review* essay, Scott himself directly compared the manners of the Scottish Highlanders to those of Afghan and Persian mountain tribes. Such parallels reflect an imperialist logic of classification, wherein societies deemed pre-modern or oppositional to centralised authority were grouped together, reinforcing their perceived exclusion from European modernity. By situating the Highlanders within an Orientalist framework, Scott adopts a familiar colonial rhetoric that portrays them as both

noble and unruly—figures who, much like their Eastern counterparts, remain on the fringes of the British imperial imagination.

This strategy both romanticises and marginalises the Highlanders, rendering them objects of fascination while emphasising their perceived incompatibility with the rational, civilised order of the modern British state. Romantic-era depictions of the Highlanders echoed the imperial tropes used to describe Eastern societies, reflecting Britain's broader "anxiety of empire" (Nigel Leask's term)—a projection of its fears of resistance onto culturally distinct groups. Frank's perception exemplifies this tendency: his Orientalisation of the Highlanders serves a psychological function, reinforcing his need to assert a clear boundary between his modern self and the so-called primitive other. By aligning the Highlanders with distant, exoticised peoples, he consolidates their perceived alterity and his own cultural superiority, reinforcing the colonial logic of defining British identity through the Other.

Beyond references to animals, savages, and mythical beings such as elves, Frank also frequently draws parallels between the Highland clans and Indigenous American tribes. Notably, he describes Rob Roy's dwelling as a "hospitable wigwam" (293), invoking the shelters used by the First Nations peoples of the Great Lakes region and beyond. This comparison not only extends the discourse of othering but also situates the Highlanders within the broader framework of colonial expansion, aligning them with groups historically subjected to displacement and imperial control. Through such associations, Frank's narrative reflects the mechanisms of internal colonialism, reinforcing the Highlanders' perceived primitiveness while simultaneously framing them within a global context of indigenous resistance to imperial rule ("Wigwam"). In the 1829 *Magnum Opus* Introduction to the novel, Rob's character is explicitly described as "blending the wild virtues, the subtle policy, and unrestrained license of an American Indian" (Scott 1998: 5). This comparison reinforces the broader pattern of associating the Highlanders with indigenous peoples who were perceived as noble and hospitable yet untamed. Such rhetoric reflects the imperial tendency to classify resistant, non-modern groups within a shared framework of primitivism, aligning the Highlanders with colonial subjects across the globe.

By likening Rob to an American Indian, Scott draws upon familiar tropes of the "noble savage," presenting the Highlander as both admirable and inherently incompatible with the structures of modern British society. This depiction underscores the extent to which the Highlanders, much like Native American tribes, were framed as obstacles to state control—figures whose autonomy and cultural traditions placed them at odds with the expanding reach of empire. Murray Pittock argues that "In early colonial times, commentators could diagnose the Highlander's ability to get on with Native Americans as a sign of their common

savagery" (1999: 25). This observation underscores how the Highlanders were not only seen as analogous to indigenous peoples but also as sharing a perceived primitivism that set them apart from the civilised norms of Lowland Scotland and England. Such comparisons functioned as a means of justifying their marginalisation, aligning them with groups considered resistant to modernity and state control.

As David Brown observes, "the clan's social organisation, and the manners of its adherents, are nearer to those of other, far-flung tribal societies than they are to Jarvie's Glasgow, or indeed, to anything Scott's readers would have recognised as modern civilisation" (96). This underscores how contemporary observers perceived the Highlanders as occupying a liminal space between European society and the "tribal" worlds of colonial subjects. Such views were shaped by the stadial theories of the Scottish Enlightenment, which classified societies by their stage of economic and social development. Thinkers like Adam Smith (1723-1790) and William Robertson (1721-1793) placed the Highlands within a "pastoral" phase—defined by tribal loyalty, a subsistence economy, and resistance to commercial progress—reinforcing the notion that Highland culture was archaic and obstructive to modernity. By situating the Highlands within this global discourse of otherness, both Pittock and Brown illustrate how they were systematically cast as outside the bounds of progress, justifying their treatment as a site of internal colonialism within Britain. Like non-European peoples subjected to British imperial rule, the Highlanders were framed as remnants of an earlier stage of human development, marked for assimilation or suppression to conform to the commercial and civilised order of the British state.

Regarding Rob's distinctiveness, Frank concedes, "Indeed, so much had this singular man possessed himself of my imagination, that I felt it impossible to avoid watching him for some minutes" (301). His fascination with Rob underscores his uneasy engagement with the Highland world—both intrigued by and anxious about its perceived otherness. However, despite his curiosity, Frank resists any form of identification with the Highlanders, striving instead to maintain a rigid boundary between himself and them. His refusal to "ape" their ways reflects his deeper need to affirm his own cultural and social superiority.

To solidify this sense of dominance, Frank employs a metropolitan lens to frame the Highlanders in ways that diminish their complexity. By reducing them to a set of predefined, exoticised, and dehumanised traits, he confines their identity within narrow categories that reinforce his own self-perceived elevation. This act of classification exposes the violence inherent in so-called "civilised" values when imposed upon the "other." While outwardly presented as an exercise in rational observation, it ultimately serves to legitimise colonial hierarchies and preserve Frank's own sense of superiority.

Highland Hospitality and the Politics of Resistance

THE previous section explored Frank's observations of the Highlanders from an external perspective; the following part examines his experience within their own lands. How does his interaction with the natives shift when he is introduced by Rob as a guest rather than arriving as an uninvited outsider?

Rob's reception among his own people is marked by physical gestures and an outpouring of emotion—bodily contact and uninhibited cries of joy express the warmth of his welcome. This scene starkly contrasts the spontaneous, demonstrative nature of the Highlanders with the restrained decorum of polite society. Frank perceives them as people whose emotions flow instinctively and powerfully, unmediated by the conventions of civility that he associates with refinement. Their reception of him, too, exceeds anything he has encountered within his own cultural framework. As he describes:

> I now sustained nearly as much inconvenience from their well-meant attentions as formerly from their rudeness. They would hardly allow the friend of their leader to walk upon his own legs […] at length, taking advantage of a slight stumble which I made over a stone […] they fairly seized upon me, and bore me in their arms in triumph towards Mrs MacAlpine's. (292-293)

This passage highlights the Highlanders' collective willingness to welcome Frank, as they all partake in Rob's responsibility as hosts. Their hospitality is spontaneous and unconditional, unmediated by the expectation of material exchange or reciprocity. This contrasts sharply with the transactional nature of Lowland and metropolitan hospitality, where social interactions are often governed by implicit negotiations of status and obligation.

Marcel Mauss' argument in *The Gift* (1950) is particularly relevant to a reading of *Rob Roy* in this context. Mauss asserts that "The land, the food, and all that one gives are, moreover, personified: they are living creatures with whom one enters into a dialogue, and who share in the contract"(72). Here, Highland hospitality functions as a deeply embedded cultural practice, where acts of giving are not mere transactions but form a living, relational bond between host and guest. Through this personified hospitality, the rigid boundaries between outsider and insider, self and other, are momentarily dissolved, offering a vision of social exchange that is both intimate and communal. Highland hospitality is a marked feature of all Anglophone writing from Pennant onwards. This is not a "colonial construct" but more an "ancient/primitive" feature at odds with new mercantile norm.

Frank's experiences in the Highlands oscillate between two extremes, yet both leave a lasting impression. Earlier in the novel, at Aberfoyle, he is sharply rebuked—"Ye make yourself at home, sir" (231)—for intruding upon local customs and privacy. In contrast, within Rob's glen, the Highlanders actively attempt to make him feel welcome. The stark difference in these receptions underscores the crucial role of Rob Roy as an intermediary figure. Without Rob's invitation, Frank is a trespasser whose presence poses a threat; with Rob's endorsement, he is transformed into an honoured guest.

This dramatic shift in status reflects the Highlanders' historical wariness of outsiders, a suspicion shaped by their long-standing subjugation under state power. Their instinct to protect their own is deeply ingrained, yet their deference to Rob allows for a transfer of trust, extending their hospitality to Frank. His acceptance within the glen, therefore, is not a recognition of his own merits but a testament to Rob's authority within his community. In this way, Highland hospitality is revealed to be not only a cultural practice but also a reflection of power dynamics within the clan system, where allegiance and trust are relational rather than universal.

In *Rob Roy*, the titular character personally ensures Frank and Jarvie's safe departure, stating, "ye ken our fashion—foster the guest that comes—further him that maun gang […] I must set ye on the Loch, and boat ye down to the Ferry o' Balloch" (302). The act of seeing off guests in both instances carries a unique significance, as it extends beyond the conventional duties of a host. Typically, hospitality obligations conclude once the guest leaves the host's premises; however, in these cases, the host takes on an additional responsibility, ensuring the guest's safe passage beyond their immediate domain. As Julie Kerr notes, "The host who escorted his guest beyond [his territory] exceed[s] the demands of hospitality" (141). This practice suggests a deeper social and cultural meaning—hospitality in the Highlands is not merely about offering shelter and sustenance but also about ensuring the guest's well-being as they transition back into unfamiliar or potentially hostile territory.

Before their departure, Helen (Rob's wife) offers Jarvie a warm farewell hug, but Frank remains reluctant to accept such familiarity. He describes her embrace as "an unexpected and apparently unwelcome" gesture, likening it to "the gripe of a she bear, without being able to distinguish whether the animal is in kindness or in wrath" (307). This description, consistent with Frank's broader pattern of animalising the Highlanders, reinforces Helen's alignment with the perceived wildness and physicality of Highland men. No matter how hospitable her reception, Frank continues to perceive her as a threat. His unease is evident when he later reflects that "a chill hung over our minds as if the feast had been funeral, and every bosom felt light when it was ended" (308).

Frank's reaction may partly stem from witnessing Helen's role in the ambush of Captain Thornton's soldiers, an event that casts her as a figure of violence in his imagination. However, Ian Duncan contextualises this ambush within "the theater of colonial resistance rather than national history" (113), suggesting that it represents an act of defiance against state oppression rather than mere lawlessness. Frank, as a beneficiary of British imperial authority, is unlikely to grasp the Highlanders' struggle in these terms. His father's investment in vast tracts of Highland Forest (31) further aligns his family's interests with the expansion of Lowland and English economic control over the region and casts him as a threat the Highlanders.

This imbalance of power is underscored in a speech by Rob Roy, in which he articulates the suffering of the Highlanders under an increasingly hegemonic government:

> You must think hardly of us, Mr Osbaldistone […] we are a rude and an ignorant, and it may be a violent and passionate, but we are not a cruel people—the land might be at peace and in law for us, did they allow us to enjoy the blessings of peaceful law—But we have been *a persecuted people*. […] their hanging, heading, hounding, and hunting down an ancient and honourable name, as deserving better treatment than that which enemies give to enemies? (303) (emphasis added)

Rob emphasises that the Scottish Highlanders are not treated as equal subjects within the same nation but as victims of systemic oppression. His testimony specifically highlights the persecution of the MacGregors, which, as Scott presents it, extends beyond mere oppression to an attempted extermination. Rob further argues that the Highlanders suffer more from state brutality than they inflict upon others. Yet, when confronted with this reality, Frank remains detached and unresponsive, offering only a tepid acknowledgment: "that the proscription of his name and family sounded in English ears as a very cruel arbitrary law" (303). While he concedes the injustice of the 1603 act that outlawed the MacGregors, he fails to engage with the contemporary reality of state dominance over the Highlands, conveniently overlooking the ongoing subjugation of Rob's people. His reaction reflects a broader imperial mindset—one that recognises historical injustices yet remains complicit in the structures that perpetuate them.

Mary Louise Pratt critiques this form of imperial rhetoric, arguing that

> In the literature of the imperial frontier, the conspicuous innocence of the naturalist […] acquires meaning in relation to an assumed guilt of conquest, a guilt the naturalist figure eternally tries to escape, and eternally invokes, if only to distance himself from it once again. (56)

This interplay between innocence and guilt aligns with Nigel Leask's analysis of the empire's anxiety, wherein the literary construction of naturalist figures or sentimental travellers both conceals the violent realities of colonial expansion and exposes a deeper unease about imperial authority and legitimacy. Frank's response exemplifies this dynamic—by framing Rob's suffering as a regrettable yet distant historical injustice rather than an ongoing political reality, he absolves himself of the need to confront the enduring consequences of British dominance in the Highlands. His detachment suggests either a conscious suppression of guilt or an unwillingness to acknowledge his own complicity in the structures of colonial power.

With regard to Frank's rhetoric, the greatest irony lies in the hospitable offer he extends to Rob and his sons. In an attempt to reciprocate Rob's welcome, Frank proposes, "I resumed my proposition of obtaining military employment for himself [Rob], if he chose it, and his sons in foreign parts" (303). On the surface, this suggestion appears pragmatic, given the severe poverty and lack of opportunities in the "over-peopled" (22) Highlands. However, Rob immediately recognises it as a colonial manoeuvre rather than an act of genuine generosity.

Frank's offer reflects the state's broader imperial strategy: Highland unrest could be efficiently quelled by sending men abroad, thereby neutralising potential resistance at home while simultaneously repurposing Highland martial prowess for British military expansion. The Highlands, long viewed as a site of disorder, could thus be rendered "useful" through the enlistment of its displaced population in the service of empire. However, Rob's rejection of this offer is not merely personal but deeply political—he explicitly states his preference for his sons to "find their fortune in the French or Spanish service" (304), aligning himself with Jacobite and anti-Hanoverian allegiances rather than embracing British military interests.

Up to this point, Frank has primarily functioned as a tourist—an observer rather than an active agent. However, his practical suggestion regarding Highland military service betrays a mindset akin to that of an ethnographer or a landscape narrator, assessing the utility of native populations within an imperial framework. As Mary Louise Pratt argues:

> [Landscape narrator] produces land as landscape and territory, scanning for prospects; [ethnographer] produces the indigenous inhabitants as *bodyscapes*, scanned also for prospects. Together they dismantle the socioecological web that preceded them and install a Euro-colonial discursive order. (63) (emphasis added)

Pratt's argument aligns closely with the overarching themes of this essay and provides a useful lens for further examining Frank's perception of the Highlanders. Through his imperial gaze, the Highlanders are reduced to bodyscapes—objects of

scrutiny, assessed for their potential utility rather than their intrinsic worth. Rather than engaging with them as individuals with agency, Frank evaluates them in terms of their possible exploitation, particularly within the framework of military service.

Thus, the hospitality Frank extends to Rob is not a genuine act of reciprocity but, as Pratt's analysis suggests, a more subtle demonstration of power—one that ultimately serves the interests of the British state rather than the well-being of the Highlanders. His proposal is not rooted in concern for their livelihoods but in the logic of imperial management, seeking to repurpose Highland resistance into a tool for expansionist ambitions. In this light, Frank's offer functions less as an act of goodwill and more as an articulation of the imperial rhetoric of exploitation.

Throughout his journey in the Highlands, Frank remains consistently unsettled by the appearance and conduct of the Highlanders, interpreting them through the distorting lens of his own "civilised" prejudices. Despite experiencing genuine hospitality from many of Rob's clan, he continues to view their world with suspicion and resistance, refusing to engage with it on its own terms. Rather than seeking understanding, Frank adopts protective measures to shield himself from what he perceives as an alien and potentially threatening culture. His interaction with the Highlanders is thus largely one-sided—marked by observation and judgment rather than reciprocal exchange. Enclosed within his own pride and prejudice, he remains emotionally and intellectually detached, preserving his sense of superiority at the cost of deeper engagement.

Yet, while Frank initially appears to succeed in maintaining psychological distance, the strain of this resistance manifests as an underlying anxiety that ultimately overwhelms him. On the night before his departure, he confesses to feeling "a restless and feverish anxiety" (298), a state in which his emotions and imagination override his rational judgment, culminating in a nightmare of confusion and terror. This unease does not dissipate with time; even in the narrative present, fifty years after his Highland tour, he remains haunted by memories of his experiences. At the beginning of his memoir, Frank reflects and acknowledges that "the recollection of those adventures [...] has indeed left upon my mind a chequered and varied feeling of pleasure and of pain, mingled" (5). Despite his attempts to impose order on his recollections through the seemingly controlled structure of his "frank" narration, his account instead reveals the lingering grip of unresolved trauma.

Jonathan Lamb's *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (2001) examines eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travel writing, highlighting the recurring tension between maintaining psychological coherence and confronting unsettling encounters. He argues that such narratives, intended as acts of self-preservation, paradoxically expose the anxieties they seek to suppress, revealing

the narrator's vulnerability rather than securing his authority. While Lamb focuses on maritime exploration and colonial encounters in the Pacific, a similar dynamic emerges in depictions of the Scottish Highlands. Frank's memoir, presented as a rational reflection on his youthful adventures, similarly betrays deep-seated anxieties, suggesting that, for Lowland and English observers, the Highlands were a space of both psychological and geographical exposure.

Frank's claim to maintain psychological distance from his experiences ultimately collapses under the strain of his unresolved trauma. His nightmare before departure and his continued preoccupation with the events of his Highland journey suggest that, much like the travellers in Lamb's study, he remains haunted by an encounter that destabilised his sense of self. The act of narration, which should offer retrospective control, instead serves as a medium through which his anxieties persist. This aligns with Lamb's broader argument that travel writing, rather than simply documenting external events, often reveals the internal fractures of the traveller. His notion of "exposure"—both physical and psychological—thus provides a useful framework for understanding Frank's predicament. Although he attempts to shape his recollections into a structured and controlled account, the memoir ultimately discloses his inability to fully distance himself from his past, much as later travel narratives of the Pacific would expose the existential insecurities of their authors.

By placing Frank's experience within this larger discourse of travel anxiety, it becomes clear that the psychological disturbances associated with encounters in the South Seas did not emerge *ex nihilo* in the late eighteenth century. Instead, the Highlands had already served as a site of unsettling confrontation for Lowland and English travellers, revealing the fragility of their perceived detachment. Lamb's analysis allows us to recognise that the narrative instabilities and anxieties evident in Frank's account are not merely personal idiosyncrasies but part of a broader epistemic crisis that long predated British engagements with the Pacific.

Rather than serving as an instance of what Romantic poets saw as the redemptive power of memory (Millgate 134), Frank's recollections instead take on a compulsive and destabilising force—an inescapable presence that undermines his efforts to contain it. The more he attempts to distance himself from the memory of his Highland experience, the more insistently it asserts itself, eroding the stable identity he seeks to preserve. By the end of the narrative, the once-elevated, detached, and self-assured traveller emerges as a melancholic and isolated old man, consumed by recollections of a "romantic adventure" (342) in a terra incognita that he never truly understood.

Conclusion

FRANK OSBALDISTONE'S journey into the Highlands functions as both a literal and psychological confrontation with cultural difference, internal colonialism, and the fragilities of imperial authority. His encounters with the Highlanders disrupt his assumptions of civility and order, yet he resists transformation, retreating into retrospective narration to contain, rather than comprehend, his experience. The resulting memoir exposes the anxieties provoked by his confrontation with the Highland "other," revealing the traveller's failure to stabilise his imperial self-image.

This essay has argued that *Rob Roy* offers an early and incisive literary exploration of internal colonialism within Britain. Engaging with the frameworks of Hechter and Pratt, it has shown how Scott constructs Frank's imperial gaze as both narrative strategy and critique. Frank's recurrent animalisation, exoticisation, and objectification of the Highlanders reproduce the dehumanising tropes of colonial discourse while simultaneously exposing the vulnerabilities and instabilities of the observing subject. In contrast to conventional colonial narratives that resolve with mastery over the unknown, Scott leaves Frank suspended between memory and misrecognition, implying that the imperial encounter destabilises the coloniser as much as the colonised.

Rob Roy thus aligns with a wider Romantic interrogation of empire, displacement, and cultural marginality. Scott's depiction of psychological disturbance, cultural resistance, and narrative uncertainty anticipates Romantic literature's ambivalent engagement with colonial expansion and its discontents. The novel participates in and complicates the Romantic preoccupation with the sublime and the exotic by foregrounding the internal contradictions of British national development and the enduring resilience of subjugated peoples.

By exposing the dissonance between imperial authority and narrative control, *Rob Roy* transforms the historical novel into a critical site for examining the human costs of colonial encounter. In so doing, Scott not only challenges the ideological certainties of early nineteenth-century British imperial discourse but also positions *Rob Roy* as a foundational text for understanding Romanticism's complex entanglement with the anxieties of empire, internal colonialism, and the enduring limits of imperial imagination.

©This essay originated as a chapter of my doctoral dissertation, *Hospitality, Nation and Empire in Walter Scott's Waverley Novels* (2012). Substantially revised and expanded, it has since been developed into its present form. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers whose thoughtful suggestions for revision proved immensely valuable. I also owe particular thanks to Dr Coinneach Maclean, an expert in Gaelic language, culture, and history, whose generous guidance greatly enriched my understanding of the Scottish Highlands during the revision process.

Notes

1. Scott (2008). All subsequent references are to this edition, except where specified. Page numbers are given in brackets after quotations in the text.
2. The Jacobite uprisings (1689-1746) were a series of failed attempts to restore the Stuart monarchy to the British thrones. Early risings in 1689 and 1715, led respectively by Viscount Dundee and the Earl of Mar, ended in defeat. A minor 1719 rebellion, backed by Spain, also failed. The final and most famous effort came in 1745, when Charles Edward Stuart led a Highland army into England, only to be decisively defeated at Culloden in 1746. This marked the end of the Jacobite cause and led to severe repression of Highland culture.
3. In *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (1975), Michael Hechter argues that the economic and cultural inequalities between England and the peripheral regions of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland—collectively termed the "Celtic Fringe"—can be understood through the model of internal colonialism. Hechter contends that, following the expansion of the English state, these regions were politically incorporated but economically subordinated, leading to structural dependency, underdevelopment, and cultural suppression. The dominant English core extracted resources and imposed political and cultural hegemony over the periphery, inhibiting its independent development. This framework challenges traditional accounts of British national integration by highlighting persistent regional disparities and the colonial-like dynamics within the British Isles. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), Mary Louise Pratt examines how European travel writing from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries functioned as a key instrument of imperial expansion and cultural domination. She introduces the concept of the "contact zone," where cultures meet, clash, and negotiate under asymmetrical relations of power. Pratt argues that travel narratives constructed a Eurocentric vision of the world, framing non-European peoples and lands as subjects of curiosity, knowledge, and ultimately control. The book also explores how local or colonised peoples engaged in transculturation—selectively adopting and reinterpreting imposed cultural elements—as a form of resistance and self-determination within these encounters. Pratt's analysis thus reframes travel writing as a complex, contested site of imperial discourse and cross-cultural exchange.

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踏入他者之境

華特· 司各特小說《羅伯・羅伊》中的帝國凝視與高地抵抗

邱剛彥
國立陽明交通大學

摘　要

本論文透過後殖民視角探討華特・司各特小說《羅伯・羅伊》(1817)，分析其對內部殖民及帝國凝視的批判。雖然司各特的小說常被視為鞏固英國國族認同的作品，本書卻揭示了漢諾威統治下蘇格蘭高地的被壓迫狀態，並暴露帝國權力內部的矛盾與不安。本論文聚焦於法蘭克•奧斯巴迪斯通的蘇格蘭旅程，探討其都會視角如何扭曲對高地文化的理解，不僅重現殖民敘事，亦突顯英國統治的脆弱性。論文借鑒邁克爾・赫克特的《內部殖民主義》及瑪麗・路易斯・普拉特的《帝國之眼》，分析法蘭克在格拉斯哥、阿伯弗伊爾及羅伯・羅伊部族中的經歷，並揭示他在迷戀與恐懼之間的擺盪。此外，本論文還探討「好客」作為一種權力運作的方式。在阿伯弗伊爾，法蘭克的闖入引發衝突，反映殖民焦慮；而在羅伯・羅伊部族內，他的接納則突顯高地「好客」的選擇性。儘管受到款待，他仍保持情感上的疏離，延續其帝國心態。最終，《羅伯・羅伊》無法被簡單歸類為帝國或民族主義小說。司各特揭示文化接觸的複雜性，展現當地身份的韌性如何挑戰帝國權力。法蘭克未能化解的焦慮，亦突顯小說對殖民記憶的深層關注。

關鍵詞：華特・司各特、《羅伯・羅伊》、帝國凝視、內部殖民主義、高地抵抗