

Nation making and fiction making: Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Tory Lover*, and Walter Scott, *Waverley*

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‘Writing something entirely different’

Beside Sarah Orne Jewett’s desk where she would have seen it every time she looked up was a small copy of the well-known Raeburn portrait of Sir Walter Scott. No critic has commented on this, yet Scott was important to her. As she remarks in a 1905 letter to her dearest friend and companion, Annie Fields, ‘How one admires that great man more and more.’¹ So, what was New England’s most notable, late-nineteenth-century regional writer’s interest in Scott? True, any well-read person would have known Scott’s novels: ‘To be alive and literate in the nineteenth century was to have been affected in some way by the *Waverley* novels.’² Elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 1) Susan Manning discusses Mark Twain’s vexed relation to Scott; the connection between Scott and Jewett is also a complex one.

At the end of her long career charting the social, economic and emotional complexities of contemporary New England through her fictions of small local communities, Jewett turned to write ‘something entirely different’, *The Tory Lover* (1901), her historical novel about Patriot/Loyalist tensions during the American War of Independence. It was Scott, I believe, who helped her negotiate the complexities of this civil conflict in the creating of nations.³ I want to argue that this was not simply some vague influence diffused through popular, partial views of Scott’s novels, but was based on a more thoughtful reading that may also help us with the vexed question of how Jewett positioned herself socially and politically in her fictions.

Starting in the winter of 1777–78 when Independence still hung in the balance, the action of *The Tory Lover* takes place in Maine, France and England. Although Jewett originally intended to focus on John Paul Jones (who commanded the new republic’s first ship and who appears in her

novel as Paul Jones), the novel's narrative interest is as much, if not more, on Mary Hamilton, sister of one of the leading Patriot gentry. Jewett writes of her involvement with the Loyalist Wallingford family, both Roger (whom she encourages to join the Revolutionary campaign on Jones' ship, the *Ranger*, and whom she comes to love) and his mother, who remains throughout fiercely loyal to the British Crown. The novel interweaves Wallingford's transatlantic adventures on the *Ranger* (voyage to France, raiding the English coast, imprisonment in Plymouth and escape) with Mary's life in wartime Maine, her support of Madam Wallingford in spite of their big political differences and the two women's attempt to rescue Roger in England.

The Tory Lover is a problematic text in the Jewett oeuvre. Even Jewett expressed her doubts: 'I grow very melancholy if I fall to thinking of the distance between my poor story and the first dreams of it'.⁴ Although it sold well at time of publication, even then some of her admirers expressed the disappointment subsequently experienced by most readers. A disabling accident the year after the novel's publication ended Jewett's writing career, and *The Tory Lover* with its failures of plot, its uncertain focus, its awkward characterisation and apparent stereotypes has been neglected by most readers and practically every critic since.⁵

For all its deficiencies I want to reinstate *The Tory Lover* into the narrative of Jewett's career, to identify its ambitions and strengths, and, through placing it in the transatlantic context of Scott's work, to attempt to understand what conflicts its hybrid nature signifies. I see the novel as an extension of Jewett's earlier explorations in class, gender and region in relation to America following the Civil War. Whereas her earlier novel, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896), deliberately addressed issues of late-nineteenth-century America by attempting to imagine a present-day utopia (albeit one recognising inevitable insufficiencies and constraints), *The Tory Lover* approaches the same issues indirectly by constructing a narrative of the Republic's beginnings.⁶

Its reasons for doing this were compelling. The Civil War had put strain on the nation's idea of itself, and because creative writers were for the most part unwilling to recognise its hatreds, this war was subsequently repressed or rewritten in superficial ways. In spite of attempted sectional reconciliation between North and South in the 1890s, there was continuing division which prevailing historical narratives could not deal with. By the turn into the twentieth century, classical republicanism was under threat: social diversity, class conflict, a largely laissez-faire economy, an entirely commercial politics and an individualistic ethic held sway.⁷

In writing about the American Revolution, however, Jewett was not simply beating a retreat to a supposedly better, past time when the nation was created and ostensibly unified. Although the Loyalist side of the War of Independence was ignored by professional historians in the interests of maintaining a narrative of unity and triumph, Loyalist/Patriot divisions had been a standard subject for fiction in the nineteenth century.⁸ Jewett capitalises upon this in her own way as a means of exploring the nation's continuing internal power struggles. With the Revolutionary period she could work with a respected society that was none the less both unambiguously stratified by class (unlike the subsequent veiling of class division in the prevailing national ideology), as well as by 'race' and gender. This classed society could be represented as interactive and nuanced in the way that a society structured along the exclusive division of what the late nineteenth century called 'labour' and 'capital' could not be, while as the roots of present-day America it had potential significance for Jewett's contemporaries that could not be ignored. Furthermore, by repeatedly showing us that both Patriot and Loyalist Maine families kept slaves (something ignored in earlier histories), she unmistakably touches on that other internal conflict, the American Civil War.

Jewett's project of writing a historical novel of the Revolution needs first to be seen in the context of an evolving historiographical tradition in America. As John P. Farrell remarks, revolution was a complex phenomenon: 'Something prodigious occurred when the space for public decision was opened to the public at large, when the propositions of the philosophical few were redefined by the oppressed many, when the uncertain measures of men became dogmas of history, and when the imagery of human purpose was shifted from the world of memory and recentered in the world of hope . . . [T]hough designed as a clarification, it developed as an ambiguity'.⁹ To have a 'Revolutionary tradition' – an oxymoron in itself – was an additional problem for later Americans, especially as the society became increasingly unequal and ever less revolutionary in impulse as the nineteenth century went on.

The Revolution was much written about in the nineteenth century by both professional historians and authors of fiction – it remained inescapably the country's originary moment – yet the simplifications and selectivities displayed by many in dealing with this past suggest discomfort about, as well as a desired connection with, their heritage. Even the earliest histories of the Revolution had been shaped by the political need to create a unified national past and to gloss over any factional difference that might threaten the new republic. As the first generation died out, Romantic

histories emerged that presented Americans as a uniquely liberty-loving people, disavowing Britain and led by heroes. These would be read as schooltexts by Jewett's generation in the 1850s (or at least such writings would have shaped the period's dominant historical narrative).¹⁰ By the start of the Civil War, however, the Revolutionary tradition was in shambles. Then, from 1876, as Michael Kammer argues, the Revolution became culturally a matter for imagination rather than memory, and while professional historians became interested in the economic and political conflicts of the Revolutionary period, historical novels were nostalgic and lacked interest in historical accuracy; they also ignored class conflict, dissented from the ideal of equality and in effect derevolutionised the revolution.¹¹

To get the measure of *The Tory Lover* we need to have some sense of these historical novels of the 1890s. The first flourish of American historical novels occurred from 1821 and lasted for about twenty-five years. After further waves in the 1850s, there came a period when reading tastes preferred realistic and domestic fiction. Then, between 1890 and 1902, historical romances became the major best-sellers, and their main American topic was the Revolution, particularly the military conflict. Whether considering these novels in the context of United States involvement in imperialistic ventures with Cuba and the Philippines, or in the context of the Colonial Revival (an anti-modernist, upper-class antiquarian aesthetic movement of the period), twentieth-century commentators have noted the novels' racist, elitist and jingoistic values: a sense of Anglo-Saxon lineage, distaste for foreigners (the English, however, are figured as 'family') and contempt for the lower classes (especially when disputing with their 'superiors'), love of fine houses and nostalgia for a lost wholeness. They reflect, as Amy Kaplan argues in a survey of all kinds of historical romance of this period, a culture 'in the process of redefining white middle-class masculinity from a republican quality of character based on self-control and social responsibility to a corporeal essence identified with the vigour and prowess of the individual male body'. The hero uses spectacular violence against his inferiors, and apparently self-reliant women are depicted as subduing themselves to his natural aristocracy. The American Revolution is presented as a simple, natural process of devolution and 'lodged firmly in the past'.¹²

Is, then, *The Tory Lover* simply an example of these romances? Undoubtedly there are certain parallels, but significantly Jewett handles many common motifs in an original way as if some process of revision and dissent were going on, engaging with these romances and negotiating a different version. So, though Jewett was instrumental in encouraging a

friend, involved in the Colonial Revival movement, to preserve Hamilton House, the fine house and garden that is the novel's principal setting, her novel does not present the house as an upper-class museum of itemised artefacts divorced from their original users. Instead, it is always the hub of a wider community whose life and work, at many social levels, is the object of Jewett's imaginative reconstruction. While her protagonists are typically upper class, and the mob and her villain are lower class, the majority of the town's population do not resemble the common people in typical romances (where they are cowardly, meanminded and lacking the altruism of their 'betters'). In *The Tory Lover*, instead, a wide range of feeling and motive is displayed by the local men turned sailors, both on the *Ranger* and in prison in England (where we are given what reads like a historically genuine letter sent by one prisoner). There is no gratuitous violence, no exaltation of virile, martial manhood and no heroine subordinating her judgement and will to the wiser Patriot man who will succeed a patriarchal father. Conventional concerns with courtship/marriage are relatively marginal to the plot, and the non-combatant world of women's lives counterpoints male military adventures.

Furthermore, as in other contemporary romances, there are scenes in England that may appear to tie Americans to an Anglo-Saxon heritage, but what the characters learn here is that this is not their 'home': the long Atlantic voyages and devotedly described Maine landscapes enhance a sense of a different history and distinctive, independent country. Her repetition of the image of the family to describe the Britain/US quarrel (a standard metaphor for some contemporary historians) does not produce the 'coming of age' motif with which conservative romances had deradicalised Independence: Jewett's Patriots, as we shall see, speak unambiguously of 'rights' to be fought for. To understand this different envisioning of the transatlantic relationship as well as her adaptations of Revolutionary romance in general, we shall need now to look at certain enabling influences that would have encouraged complexity in the handling of this historical moment. It is the novel's contrapuntal relationship to Scott that we now need to turn to – contrapuntal in the sense that it is a relationship making powerful connections across the Atlantic out of two national narratives that none the less remain distinct and different.

'That great man'

Scott's nineteenth-century readers entertained a variety of notions about his work; they took from it what they wanted or needed. Readers in the

South (mis)read themselves nostalgically as the truly heroic Jacobites of America, and Northern romantic escapists, inspired by *Ivanhoe* (1819), enjoyed what W.D. Howells calls the ‘horrid tumult of the swashbuckler swashing on his buckler’.¹³ Yet there were also those who took from Scott’s best novels (those set in periods of division within Scotland) an understanding of the importance of the past to the present, an interest in regional dialect, a sympathetic portrayal of common life, a sense of landscape and, most importantly, a certain complicated political moderation.¹⁴ Throughout the century Scott’s reputation in America fluctuated, from enthusiasm between the 1820s and the 1850s for his legitimisation of historical fiction, to a point in the 1870s when his reputation sank to its lowest. As T.J. Jackson Lears observes, Scott became ‘the central figure in the literary polemics of the late nineteenth century. To the apologists for domestic realism, his work embodied outmoded theories of human nature and the social order. To advocates of romance, he seemed the potential savior of American character and society’.¹⁵

Although, as Lears notes, the romanticist view of Scott triumphed in the 1890s with the resurgence of a martial ideal, the way that Jewett handled her one historical novel suggests that she bypassed this Scott-inspired polarisation of domestic realism and the chivalric ideal. I want to suggest that Jewett, born 1849, belonged instead to a generation that was raised on great quantities of serious history writing of many kinds (including fiction) by women, widely disseminated through the culture and some of it initially inspired by Scott.¹⁶ If her stated admiration of Scott has this foundation, it would certainly have set her at a tangent to the dominant 1890s view, thus avoiding the placing of Scott’s work anti-thetically to the realism and domesticity that had been basic to Jewett’s preceding work.

The most striking parallel with Scott is her felt historicism, her sense of a historical, regional geography that draws on local memory played against present-day topography. This is predicated on a sense of enormous social change and the subsequent need to maintain a connection with the past. In 1814, in *Waverley*, Scott writes, ‘There is no European nation which, within the course of half a century, or little more, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland’; a citizen of the United States in 1901 could have echoed this sentiment.¹⁷

True, as with Scott, there are alterations of historical fact in *The Tory Lover* (for instance, Jewett was well aware that the historical Wallingford did not survive the war), but hers is not just an imagined Revolution and she is concerned to record as well as invent. Indeed, that 1905 letter noting

her admiration of Scott begins triumphantly with the news that one of the things she thought she had invented in her novel, namely that Wallingford was a Loyalist until challenged by the woman he loved, had just been proved by family papers to be historically true. *Waverley* (the novel that seems closest to *The Tory Lover* in its dealing with civil war and nation making) was written within living memory of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745: as the novel's subtitle tells us, 'Tis Sixty Years Since'. Jewett, writing 120 years since the Revolution, none the less had plenty of local and family history to draw on – what she called 'real knowledge' as distinct from her 'dreams' (that is, imaginings of the past).¹⁸ Her doctor father cared for one of the *Ranger* sailors in old age, she had listened to many stories locally, and was aware of the Revolutionary history of her family, both Patriot and Loyalist (one great-grandfather, survivor of Washington's army at Valley Forge, lived until Jewett was four).

Making a fiction of past lives is effected by Jewett through an attention to the actual land shaped by human activity – something that *Waverley* had pioneered. At important turns in *The Tory Lover* Mary Hamilton is given Jewett's own capacity to see the landscape and buildings of Maine in terms of their history and the lives lived there, extending this vision back into an embattled seventeenth century and across the Atlantic to England. We have, thus, a version of a pattern (though less realised emotionally and politically) that Cairns Craig identifies in Scott's work as his means of dramatising historical turning points: 'his heroes can stand on both sides of a *historical* divide precisely because they can travel across a *geographical* boundary and in so doing experience the changes in history at a *psychological* level'.¹⁹

This past is shared through the telling of stories. Story-telling was the source of some of Jewett's material, and a repeated motif as well as a common narrative strategy in her previous work. It is an important fictional resource in Scott's work: the Postscript to *Waverley* stresses that the 'imaginary scenes' are based on stories Scott has been told by 'actors in them'. As Ina Ferris argues in relation to Scott, story-telling, a preliterate form of narrative with a different motive, opened up the nineteenth-century novel because it 'both represents and encourages a historicist insight into the temporality and heterogeneity of cultures'. As an important act of cultural transmission, it focused on the margins and gave a space for the local.²⁰ In Jewett's novel it narrows the distance between Patriot Mary and her Loyalist friend, Madam Wallingford.

The voices are insistently regional in both Scott's and Jewett's work, and the implications of such a perspective need now to be explored. In the case

of Scott, though the word ‘national’ occurs frequently in his work,²¹ there are two nations in question here, Scotland and Britain, and *Waverley* explores divisions both in Britain and within Scotland. Scott himself combined support for the 1707 Union of Scotland and England (albeit somewhat ambivalently) with a Scottish cultural nationalism that now required identifying images and stories. He knew he was drawn emotionally (but never politically) to the Jacobites, though this meant ‘not so much devotion to the Stuarts as devotion to his idea of the character, structure, and value of the old Scottish kingdom.’²² There is consequently a complex narrative in his works in which, as Cairns Craig observes, we get both the ‘composed’ order of a progressive official history (linked in *Waverley* with the Union) and the ‘counter-historical flux of human events which, though “buried in silence and oblivion” as far as narrated history is concerned, are not without an immediate – and potentially destructive – power of their own.’²³

We find these competing loyalties born of sectional conflict (whether between region and nation, or nation and nation, or between various sections within a country) repeated in American literature. Jewett was a regional writer for all her long writing career, and *The Tory Lover* retains the local in its turn to the historical, even as late-nineteenth-century academic historians themselves turned to the local.²⁴ Pre-Revolutionary America had been composed of local societies. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Maine found itself economically, politically and culturally at the margins of continental America, so that readers needed to be informed of Maine’s central role in the Revolution. For Jewett to go back to Revolutionary Maine is, then, to fold the larger history into the local, to find central national concerns and look at them from a fresh perspective.²⁵

This, I want to argue, placed Jewett in an interesting position: as a member of the Boston cultural elite and resident in Massachusetts half of each year, she was at the centre, but she retained her family and community roots in Maine, where she also lived for six months yearly. In the debate that has arisen in the 1990s about Jewett’s social and political affiliations, which dualistically assigns her either to female outsiderdom or to complicity with white conservative privilege, I align myself with Marjorie Pryse, who argues instead that Jewett’s fiction is characterised by liminality that resists classification and teaches fluidity: Jewett lives on borders.²⁶

But how similar, then, is this position to that of *Waverley*, protagonist of Scott’s first novel, who crosses geographical and political borders to see

the Second Jacobite Rebellion from several perspectives, and how might this also resemble Scott's own, much debated political position? Scott's political views were more overtly stated than Jewett's, yet there is a much-noted doubleness in his writing that might, alternatively, be figured as a straddling of borders. His imagination engages complexly with the lives and subjectivities of those whom he would oppose politically and whom the forces of 'progress', he believes, will inevitably defeat. So, when Flora accuses herself of 'murdering' her brother by encouraging him in armed insurrection against the Hanoverians, Scott leaves her political principles unassailed, but makes her regret her failure to acknowledge that their cause was bound to lose (*W*, pp. 468–9).

History, then, is on the side of what Scott and his contemporaries called 'Improvement' or 'Progress'. This Enlightenment view of progress involves loss as well as gain, and constitutes a less optimistic notion than that of later Whig historians. Its effects are cushioned by imagining it as gradual reformation rather than radical change: some of the old in *Waverley* is conserved in the new structures of power, the ancient house of Tully-Veolan remains in the hands of the Baron, though his former authority is gone and Waverley, son of a Hanoverian and nephew of a Jacobite, will inherit. Most importantly, the idea of progress gave Scott the sense that social values change over time and, as Cyrus Vakil argues, this led him to a historicist understanding that people act within a specific place and moment.²⁷ In *Waverley* Fergus explicitly exemplifies this: 'Had Fergus MacIvor lived Sixty Years sooner than he did, he would, in all probability, have wanted the polished manner and knowledge of the world he now possessed; and had he lived Sixty Years later, his ambition and love of rule would have lacked the fuel which his situation now afforded' (*W*, p. 157).

While such a sympathetic understanding of those on the 'wrong' side of history bears some resemblance to Jewett's handling of the Loyalists, who are seen as products of a previous era, the American Revolution makes for crucial differences in her tale. This is not simply because Scott was hostile to radical democratic reform in Britain and had no use for the idea of equality (in his view events in France in his lifetime showed that revolution leads only to anarchy and military rule).²⁸ While some of his nineteenth-century readers might be drawn to what they thought of as Scott's *via media*, finding its combination of progress and conservatism appealing, Jewett's novel insists on the issue of 'rights' (paradoxically rights learnt, across the Atlantic, from Britain) and hence the unavoidable break with established authority to secure these. The novel

plays self-consciously several times with the image of the conflict simply as a family quarrel, and each time the metaphor is rethought, and revised or rejected.²⁹ It dwells on the consequences of the Declaration of Independence for every individual; none escapes making a public choice of allegiance. This is the issue with which the book begins and which precipitates the plot: ‘There is no place left for those who will take neither side’ (*TL*, p. 30). This contrasts with Scott’s hero, Waverley, who, true to his name, wavers in his engagement in the civil war and with surprising impunity survives his switch from being an officer in King George’s army to a combatant in the Jacobite forces, welcomed in person by Prince Charles Edward Stuart. Waverley’s pardon for treason (punished brutally in the case of Fergus) is due to a certain emotional fence-sitting that results at the battle of Prestonpans in his taking care of some members of the opposing side. His lack of principled commitment is explicitly commented – ‘blown by every wind of doctrine’ (*W*, p. 353), he would prefer to be at home. True, home is where Jewett’s Wallingford ends up, but not before fighting hard for the Republic.

What Scott is cleverly capturing is the tangle that civil war makes of the web of loyalties, responsibilities and ties of indebtedness for most people. Revolutions, on the other hand, are radical precisely because commitments become sharper and permanent. This is, as Jewett’s old Major realises, a different war – ‘war with moral enemies, and for opinion’s sake’ (*TL*, p. 61) – that lacks the ‘happy certainties’ (*TL*, p. 60, my emphasis) of previous conflicts. Her novel chronicles a break with the old life, making one a ‘stranger in the familiar house’ (*TL*, p. 84). So, for all its concern for the Loyalists’ plight and unorthodox sense that this was in effect a civil war, *The Tory Lover* is in no doubt that there is a ‘right side’. The novel is not neutral, though at times it is drawn to this position. The recurrent presence of Paul Jones – the naval commander later enshrined as a hero – keeps readers minded (in spite of Jones’ personal shortcomings) of the Revolutionary urge and the American promise in an unqualified form. The foregrounding of the heroine’s vigorously expressed political views and the postponing of the love plot also confirm the novel’s commitment to one side of the conflict. Scott’s clearest message in *Waverley* in a journey north past bodies left on battlefields and destroyed homes is that civil war is dreadful and worth most prices to avoid. *The Tory Lover* also acknowledges quite movingly the suffering of the bereaved, destitute and imprisoned as the price of liberty – the novel’s best chapter, set with the women in the spinning room, proleptically mourns the wounded and the dead. But for all its revelations of

mixed motives for fighting on the Patriot side and Jones's betrayal of old, poor friends in the Whitehaven raid, the novel still has recourse to Revolutionary heroic narratives in recounting Jones's campaign during the difficult winter of 1777.

The Civil War of 1861–65 is an unspoken presence in the text, and not just because older readers would touch their own memories in the depiction of non-combatants (for example, hurriedly packing the bags of the soldier leaving for war). The novel's opening dinner party counterpoints the issue of slavery with the debate about Loyalists, and Paul Jones makes a point of including the Hamiltons' African slave in the revolutionary toast to freedom. This signals the unfinished business of slavery inherited by the new republic, and despite of Jewett's racialist stereotyping in her characterisation of the slaves, it is clear that this later civil conflict also had for her its 'right side'.³⁰

None the less, like *Waverley* before it, *The Tory Lover* refuses any simple notion of what commitment means. Arguably, Jewett found in *Waverley* useful material on this. She replays Flora MacIvor's tragic influence on her brother to support the Stuart army in order to explore what it means for a young woman to persuade a man, who loves her, to join the war on her side when his mother, to whom she is deeply attached, thinks it is utterly wrong. Her novel then goes on to make these two women's difficult but loving relationship the most important in the narrative.

Jewett also combines her unequivocal support of this Revolution with some understanding that its values must apply to a later America too and with a understated handling of divisions and airing of contrary views. The narrative's lack of critical comment at certain points has made some readers think this a highly conservative text, but some reactionary opinions expressed by her characters are not necessarily there for approval, even if attendant ironies are not underlined: for instance, one respectable dinner guest thinks that switching the conversation from Loyalists to slavery is to move to 'safer ground' (*TL*, p. 14). Like Scott, who upheld the 1707 Union yet understood the situation of his Jacobites, Jewett's novel is *politically* clear about the Revolution's rightness and necessity, yet by foregrounding the plight of Loyalists it gives her readers no easy place *emotionally*: as Benjamin Franklin observes in the novel, Wallingford (sympathetic to peace with Britain and a reluctant combatant) is putting his political principles 'to a greater strain than if you stood among the Patriots, who can see but one side' (*TL*, p. 199).

‘Natural Tories’?

This ‘strain’ shows up most clearly in Jewett’s handling of social class. ‘Race’ too presents problems (her constructions of Native Americans, Africans and varieties of Whiteness such as Irish and ‘Norman’), but the novel’s principal site of disturbance is class, and we need to ask to what extent the novel’s attempt to look fully at all sides of the conflict (that is, national conflict acted out locally) produces some uncontrolled confusion and contradiction specifically in this area. It is here that Scott ceases to be an enabling influence; apparent similarities in social structure in the fictional worlds of Scott and Jewett mask essential differences and difficulties.

Historically, society in America at the time of the Revolution had a hierarchical structure, evolved from English models in which deference was paid to its most powerful families. This is recorded mostly without remark in *The Tory Lover* (except when Paul Jones takes exception to the term ‘lower classes’, used to describe the poorer, more extremist Patriots, and when Wallingford looks back appreciatively at the different structure on board ship). None the less, these great Maine houses of wealth and refinement have, as the novel indicates, only a ‘look of rich ancestry’ (*TL*, p. 14), since they are built instead on mercantile success by men of poor origins, such as Colonel Hamilton who started life as an itinerant shoemaker. This is not an inherited system of privilege and power such as underpins the world of *Waverley*.

But this tricky American combination of democratic opportunity and admiration for upper-class life is disturbed by a persistent discourse of aristocracy, royalty and ‘good blood’: the words, ‘sovereign’, ‘king’, ‘prince’, ‘queen’, ‘royalty’, ‘courtiers’, ‘great lady’, ‘gentleman’, ‘genteel’, ‘high breeding’, ‘descent’ and ‘antecedents’, are pervasive terms of praise, though not just of the actual gentry but also the poorer born and some African slaves. In a novel that includes actual British and French aristocrats and deals with the establishment of a society based on the principle of equality, the meaning of these words is confused, all the more for Jewett making the villain (cardboard cutout though he is) of a lower class and deeply resentful of his ‘betters.’ Furthermore, the mob that actually attacks Madam Wallingford are clearly labourers and she is rescued by the Patriot gentry, themselves loyal to their class.

One way of understanding this would be to relate it to the elitism of America’s late-nineteenth-century Establishment, the wealthy patrician caste that emerged out of Northern urban mercantile success and that was

currently constructing a history of the nation that would legitimate the outcome of the Civil War and its power.³¹ To this elite Scott's images of great aristocratic power and unquestioned authority were appealing; he was, as I have indicated, vastly popular at this time.

But, I would argue, there seems no nostalgic hankering after past hierarchies or legitimising of present power structures in Jewett's portrayal of Revolutionary society. Quite apart from her well-established imaginative commitment to the wide range of Maine society in her other writings, her historical sense militates against such a response. She knows this to be a colonial order long since passed. Instead, given Jewett's understandings of her present-day America as a classed society in her previous work, the society of *The Tory Lover* may have seemed attractive as an example of an upper class that, *unlike* the America of her own day, combined refinement and the possibility of advancement from poverty with an ethic of responsibility for one's economic dependants – Mary and Madam Wallingford are 'mistresses of great houses and the caretakers of many dependents' (*TL*, p. 289).

Scott can be no help to her here. His solution to the class war that he feared did not involve him in the discourses of social equality; instead, in his view, society was naturally stratified. Like Jewett, he imagines his fictional pre-industrial societies functioning well as communities; happiness depends on community, and this is based on landed property that gives its owners responsibility towards dependants. But he was cautious about innovation and would not have given the common people political power.³² So, the importance that Scott placed on community within the nation could have been attractive to Jewett, but not his antagonism to equality as a political ideal.

None the less, genteel culture appealed to her as it had done to many Americans since the Revolution, but in America this was not a privileged or exclusive lifestyle. The historian Richard L. Bushman argues that gentility became increasingly accessible throughout the nineteenth century, blurring social distinctions as some barriers were overcome (though obviously the urban and rural poor were excluded). The involvement of America's gentry in farming, trade and industry eased this process. Aristocratic gentility could thus be reconciled with republican equality, and the 'best people' came to constitute an aspirational 'vision of noble life'. Women were central to this development.³³ It is, then, possible that the upper-class discourses of Jewett's novel, unlike in Scott's, are part of this would-be democratic appropriation.

Gender is the other factor to be taken into consideration in charting

where Jewett's novel pulls away from connections with Scott – that is, history written by women, the Revolution seen from female perspectives and Jewett's politics. Nina Baym in *American Women Writers and the Work of History* has shown the importance of history for women writers contesting the public/domestic divisions in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, in the post-bellum period women lacked access to the developing academy and women's role in the Revolution continued to be ignored (indeed until the 1970s). In addition, most Revolutionary romances in the 1890s focused on the military conflict.

The example that Scott could give in respect of gender in historical fiction would have been limited but not negligible. There is evidence that Scott's novels were read by nineteenth-century readers in ways that appealed to women as well as men: *Waverley*, with its power to heighten sympathies, retained its female readers while opening fiction to a male audience, and its hero, more acted upon than acting and ultimately domestic in his fate, was 'feminised'. Increasingly emancipated women found in Scott 'independence, intelligence, bravery, unconventionality, and continual protests against the inferior position of women'.³⁴ *Waverley* finally gives the conventional Rose a happy marriage and consigns the determinedly political Flora to a convent, but its Chapter 52 is an extended and knowing disquisition from both women's point of view on social notions of femininity and masculinity that the novel's four main actors embody.

But such readings run against the dominant grain of Scott's novels. Jewett still needed to revise male-authored historical narratives of the Revolution, imagining the experience of civil conflict and nation-making from her own perspectives as a woman with a long career writing about contemporary female lives. It is most likely that she drew on local memory, much as Elizabeth Ellet's pioneering historiographical work (four volumes published between 1848 and 1852) on the domestic experience of women in the American Revolution had done in turning to private archives when political histories told her little.³⁵ *The Tory Lover*, particularly Chapter 32 where Mary and Madam Wallingford recount the past lives of Mrs Davis and her mother, occasionally suggests an unofficial history of women's lives passed down the female line and not recognised by their menfolk. Scott's counter-historical sense of the past is given here a gendered inflection.

As we now understand from twentieth-century historians, the Revolution did erode barriers between the male political world and women's domestic domain: it was, as Linda K. Kerber shows, 'a strongly

politicising experience' for women, though mainstream arguments on political liberty ignored gender.³⁶ Although women had the reputation for neutrality or hesitant patriotism (the war was something looked back upon as a nightmare), they had to commit themselves. They did not become 'citizens' in the new republic, but practised 'civic virtue' in the home.

Something of this sense of the Revolution survives in Jewett's text, awkwardly grafted onto an unconvincing, indeed silly, adventure story and adapted to late-nineteenth-century perceptions of women as capable of independent lives. The notion of Republican motherhood, dominant for half the century, is totally absent from Jewett's novel. Jewett, working probably with a late-nineteenth-century sense of women's rights, stresses only the basic radicalism of the Revolution in Mary's arguments for the former colonies rather than its actual conservative outcome for women. Still, 'home' here is not the limited space of the nineteenth-century bourgeois family, but denotes the whole wider community of her town in which Mary is active as a responsible agent. The spinning room scene is powerful, not only because it records women's pre-industrial daily work as well as folk images of women's webs of connection and classical images of life's thread, but also because spinning was regarded a patriotic activity, making clothes and bandages without imported cloth.

Jewett thus revises the narratives of civil conflict and nation-making, both British and American. She invests much less imagination in the masculine plot of the novel (Paul Jones) and the conventional feminine plot of courtship. To the surprise of her brother, Mary is 'no lovelorn maiden' and speaks to him 'in the tone of comradeship', animated by political events (*TL*, p. 69). Unlike the typical woman-authored Revolution romance earlier in the century, Mary has no patriarchal tyrannical father or Patriot lover to rescue her.³⁷ The novel gives her the role of arguing for Independence, though it retains an awareness that such political discussion is the 'talk of men' (*TL*, p. 296) and as such is hard for older men to take from her (*TL*, p. 313): Paul Jones forgets she had listened to 'the most serious plans and secret conferences at her brother's side' (*TL*, p. 44). Her acts have consequences.

Yet Mary's web of ties and responsibilities is different from those of the 'gentlemen' assembled in the opening chapters' dinner party from which she chooses to absent herself to pursue other priorities protecting old friends of the wrong political persuasion. Women supporting other women (across generations, classes and political commitments) is a repeated motif, though this is mixed up with a more conventional plot

where Mary's beauty and her male connections get her what she needs. '[W]omen folk', comments a boatman, 'is natural Tories; they hold by the past, same as men are fain to reach out and want change' (*TL*, p. 79). But this simplistic generalising explanation of female (and indeed male) conduct is immediately deconstructed both by Mary's superior river skills as she canoes past to face Madam Wallingford's anger at her getting Roger onto Paul Jones's ship, and by the second boatman who understands the other mixed allegiances in this privileged family. In Mary, then, Jewett has created a fresh model of the national character (not an easy thing to do with a woman protagonist), who holds to the correct principles and is involved in events of recognised historical significance while demonstrating a breadth of sympathy and pity for everyone caught up in the national conflict. These are the borders on which Jewett stands.

In conclusion, since we know that Jewett, an American regionalist and a woman with liberal politics, read Scott with admiration, then from the evidence of her own historical novel it is likely that she read him in ways that were different from the majority of her contemporaries. For us to read Scott and Jewett in conjunction is to revise the history of his reception in America, distinguishing at least one individual reader from the generality of his audience. It also allows us to see how Scott's work in certain ways supported Jewett's attempt to write her history of the Revolution somewhat differently from contemporary romances, even if it somewhat muddied the waters in matters of social class. Furthermore, *The Tory Lover* is not simply a piece of Scott-influenced fiction. It has its own, quite deliberate transatlantic project – to think positively about the connections and, vitally, the differences between the two nations both in their making and by implication their present states.

Notes

- 1 Sarah Orne Jewett, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*, ed. Annie Fields, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1911, p. 210.
- 2 John Henry Raleigh, 'What Scott Meant to the Victorians', in Harry E. Shaw (ed.), *Critical Essays on Sir Walter Scott: The Waverley Novels*, New York, G.K. Hall, 1996, p. 49. See also George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- 3 Sarah Orne Jewett, *Sarah Orne Jewett: Letters*, ed. Richard Cary, Waterville ME, Colby College Press, 1967, p. 138: 'it is certainly a dangerous thing to try to write something entirely different after one has been for years and years making stories as short and round as possible but I have long had a dream of doing this, as you know, and I suppose I had to do it'.

- 4 Letter, 28 August 1901, quoted in Marie Donahue, 'Introduction', Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Tory Lover*, South Berwick ME, Old Berwick Historical Society, 1975, p. vii. Hereafter, *TL*.
- 5 There is only one extended critical account of *The Tory Lover*, in Paula Blanchard, *Sarah Orne Jewett: Her World and Her Work*, Reading MA, Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1994, pp. 339–48. Passing references elsewhere tend to castigate her alleged upper-class racism, or simply categorise the novel alongside historical potboilers of the period.
- 6 For a discussion of her career in these terms, see Alison Easton, "'How Clearly the Gradations of Society were Defined": Negotiating Class in Sarah Orne Jewett', in Karen L. Kilcup and Thomas S. Edwards (eds), *Jewett and her Contemporaries: Reshaping the Canon*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1999, pp. 207–22. See also Alison Easton, 'Introduction: History and Utopia', in Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories*, ed. Alison Easton, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995, pp. vii–xxii.
- 7 For political responses at the period, see John Patrick Diggins, 'Republicanism and Progressivism', *American Quarterly*, 37 (1985), 572–98. On writing the Civil War, see Michael Kammer, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, pp. 256–9.
- 8 Historiographical neglect of Loyalists continued until the 1970s: see Kammer, *Season of Youth*, p. 177. See also Lester H. Cohen, *The Revolutionary Histories: Contemporary Narratives of the American Revolution*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1980, pp. 213 and 223, who comments on the absence of ethical ambiguity in nineteenth-century histories of the Revolution.
- 9 John P. Farrell, *Revolution as Tragedy: The Dilemma of the Moderate from Scott to Arnold*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1980, p. 17.
- 10 See Kammer, *Season of Youth*, pp. 221–2; Arthur H. Shaffer, *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution, 1783–1815*, Chicago, Precedent Publishing, 1975, pp. 161–83; and Nina Baym, *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790–1860*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1995.
- 11 Kammer, *Season of Youth*, pp. 33–75.
- 12 Amy Kaplan, 'Romancing the Empire: The Embodiment of American Masculinity in the Popular Historical Novel of the 1890s', *American Literary History*, 2 (1990), 659–90, pp. 662, 682. See also Beverly Seaton, 'A Pedigree for a New Century: The Colonial Experience in Popular Historical Novels, 1890–1910', in Alan Axelrod (ed.), *The Colonial Revival in America*, New York, Norton, 1985, pp. 278–93; and Kammer, *Season of Youth*, pp. 145–220.
- 13 See Dekker, *American Historical Romance*, pp. 275–8; and W.D. Howells, 'The New Historical Romances', *The North American Review*, 171 (December 1900), 936. *The Tory Lover* began its serialisation in *The Atlantic Monthly* a

month before this essay appeared. Howells's essay, a witty but serious protest against 'the recent deluge of historical romance' (p. 935), argues for a better alternative historical fiction based on 'knowledge and penetrating sympathy' (p. 947) which refuses a simplified patriotism and romanticised violence, and challenges easy present-day social, political and national values. It seems not unlikely that, as a friend and early supporter of Jewett, Howells had discussed such matters with her.

- 14 See Robin Gilmour, 'Scott and the Victorian Novel: The Case of *Wuthering Heights*', in J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (eds), *Scott and His Influence*, Aberdeen, Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983, pp. 363–71, for such influences on the English provincial novel.
- 15 T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1981, 105. For a fuller discussion see pp. 101–6.
- 16 See Baym, *American Women Writers*, pp. 1–10.
- 17 Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972, p. 492. Hereafter, *W*.
- 18 Letter to W.D. Howells, quoted in Donahue, 'Introduction', *The Tory Lover*, p. viii. For information on Jewett's family, see Blanchard, *Sarah Orne Jewett*, pp. 7–9.
- 19 Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Patterns in Scottish and English Culture*, Edinburgh, Polygon, 1996, p. 71 (his emphasis).
- 20 Ina Ferris, 'Story-telling and the Subversion of Literary Form in Walter Scott's Fiction', in Shaw (ed.), *Critical Essays*, pp. 98 and 101. This may partly explain why the nineteenth century read Scott both as a romancer and a realist.
- 21 This is especially true of *Waverley*, and the other Jacobite novel, *Redgauntlet*. See Richard Humphrey, *Walter Scott, 'Waverley'*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 20.
- 22 P.H. Scott, 'The Politics of Sir Walter Scott', in Alexander and Hewitt (eds), *Scott and His Influence*, p. 209.
- 23 Craig, *Out of History*, p. 68. See also Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 119–22, and 195–236; and Humphrey, *Walter Scott, 'Waverley'*.
- 24 See Kammer, *Season of Youth*, p. 63. Dekker, *American Historical Romance*, pp. 103–4, notes how Scott was attractive to a sectionalised American South.
- 25 For other aspects of this, see Susan Manning, 'Scott and Hawthorne: The Making of a National Literary Tradition', in Alexander and Hewitt (eds), *Scott and His Influence*, pp. 421–31; and June Howard, 'Unraveling Regions, Unsettling Periods: Sarah Orne Jewett and American Literary History', *American Literature*, 68 (1996), 365–84.
- 26 Marjorie Pryse, 'Sex, Class, and "Category Crisis": Reading Jewett's

- Transitivity', in Kilcup and Edwards (eds), *Jewett and Her Contemporaries*, pp. 31–62.
- 27 See Cyrus Vakil, 'Walter Scott and the Historicism of Scottish Enlightenment Philosophical History', in J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (eds), *Scott in Carnival*, Aberdeen, Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1993, pp. 404–18. On Scott on 'progress', see also Harry E. Shaw, *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983, and Craig, *Out of History*, pp. 64–73.
- 28 See Thomas R. Mockaitis, 'Scott and the Problem of Revolution', in Alexander and Hewitt (eds), *Scott in Carnival*, pp. 419–33.
- 29 See *TL*, pp. 19, 197–8 and 319–20.
- 30 Jewett's two short stories with Civil War material, 'The Mistress of the Sydenham Plantation' (1891) and 'A War Debt' (1896), are an earlier, queasy attempt to imagine reconciliation with the South. *The Tory Lover*, I suggest, reconsiders this, rejecting it as politically impossible.
- 31 See Peter Dobkin Hall, *The Organization of American Culture, 1700–1900: Private Institutions, Elites, and the Origins of American Nationality*, New York, New York University Press, 1984.
- 32 See P.H. Scott, 'The Politics of Sir Walter Scott', pp. 208–17.
- 33 Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Person, Houses, Cities*, New York, Knopf, 1992.
- 34 Raleigh, 'What Scott Meant to the Victorians', p. 55. See also Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, pp. 80–101.
- 35 See Baym, *American Women Writers*, pp. 233–8; and Linda K. Kerber, "'History can do it no Justice": Women and the Reinterpretation of the American Revolution', in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (eds), *Women in the Age of the American Revolution*, Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1989, pp. 3–42.
- 36 Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980, p. 11.
- 37 See Baym, *American Women Writers*, pp. 170–2.

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