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Genuine Border Stories: James Hogg, Fiction, and Mobility in the 1830s

David Stewart

James Hogg welcomed King William IV to the throne with a poem addressed to ‘King Willie’, a ‘wanton wag, / The blithest lad I ever saw’, in *Blackwood’s Magazine*.¹ The poem is typical of his teasing irony, and his ability to play on his persona as the labouring-class bard of the rural Borders within the forms of print culture that the late Romantic period opened to him. William IV’s reign presented some difficulties for Hogg as he attempted to make money in the changing print market of the period, but it proved a period of sustained productivity for him. Hogg found himself in demand by editors of annuals, and he succeeded, with occasional difficulty, in publishing a range of collections of poetry and short fiction, as well as many other forms of writing.² One might expect that Hogg’s appeal in the print market of the 1830s would be based on his capacity to be presented as a figure of nostalgic backwardness: the retailer of homespun wisdom and folk tales for a bourgeois metropolitan audience to sigh over at the fireside. The majority of his poems and stories detail an encounter with the land and traditions of the Anglo-Scottish Borders: titles like ‘Geordie Scott: A Hamely Pastoral’ imply just such a reception.³ Hogg’s depiction of the Borders in the 1830s, however, is not so

¹ The poem appeared in the *Noctes Ambrosianae* series in January 1831: see *Contributions to Blackwood’s Magazine, Volume 2, 1829-1835*, ed. by Thomas C. Richardson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 168. Further references to Hogg’s work for *Blackwood’s* are to this edition. Hogg had earlier saluted ‘royal Wull that wears the crown’ in a poem titled ‘The Cuttin’ o’ my Hair’, also in the *Noctes Ambrosianae* in August 1830: *Contributions*, p. 129.

² Hogg’s principal publications in this period include *Altrive Tales* (1832), a collection of fiction intended to be the first of a multi-volume collection of Hogg’s works on the model of Walter Scott’s ‘Magnum Opus’; *A Queer Book* (1832), a collection of poetry, much of it gathered from magazines and annuals; *Familiar Anecdotes of Walter Scott* (1832), his highly controversial personal account of Scott published first in America; *A Father’s New Year Gift* (1832), a collection of devotional writings for children; *Lay Sermons* (1834), a collection of philosophical and religious reflections; *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835), a brilliant late collection of short fiction; and many contributions to magazines, most notably *Blackwood’s*, *Fraser’s* and *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal*, and annuals.

³ Hogg’s poem appeared in *Fraser’s Magazine*, February 1831, pp. 39-43. It is considerably more playful than its title might suggest.

easily packaged as picturesque rural nostalgia. I wish to suggest that the Borders became, in Hogg's 1830s fiction, a much more mobile place that evokes the distinctive vitality of the print culture of King Willie's reign.

Hogg's work now occupies a prominent place in Romantic literary studies. He is the subject of an increasingly wide range of scholarship, and a canonizing scholarly edition of his works in over 30 volumes is nearing completion. That Hogg is a labouring-class author – the nickname he was given, 'the Ettrick Shepherd', captures accurately the fact that he was, for a time, a shepherd in Ettrick near the border with England – has proved both a strength and a difficulty to be overcome. Simon Kövesi has written insightfully about the parallel case of John Clare, an author valued largely on account of his intense connection to place through the land he worked on. Kövesi is alert to the patronizing class politics inherent in those critics who seek to praise a poet as 'down to earth', locking him into a connection with place; for Kövesi, Clare is just as much a poet of flight whose nature poetry is 'as moveable, as shifting and dynamic...as the poet's subject position'.⁴ Meiko O'Halloran, in the most important study of Hogg yet published, offers a celebration of the 'restless stylistic shifts' that emerged from his 'in-between space ...in the shifting ground of the literary market'.⁵ In this article I will argue that the accounts Hogg gives of his Anglo-Scottish Borders locations are valuable for just this quality of movement, a mobility that derives from his encounters with the 1830s print market.

Drawing on theories of mobility deriving from geography and anthropology, I will present Hogg's work in this market as a complex set of experiments with Romantic ideas of place that are enabled by his place 'in-between' ideas of class, oral and print

⁴ Simon Kövesi, *John Clare: Nature, Criticism and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 52.

⁵ Meiko O'Halloran, *James Hogg and British Romanticism: A Kaleidoscopic Art* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 13, 10.

culture, and contemporary ideas of landscape. Hogg's account of place offers something more than the 'authentic' replication of an isolated, picturesque rural location that his readers have often sought. Mobility studies has encouraged us to see place as something other than pre-plotted; place is, by contrast, constantly in process, the product of multiple encounters. The combination of Hogg's experiments in narrative form, the 1830s print market, and the Border region enables just such a dynamic experience of place. Hogg was enabled by the opportunities the 1830s market presented him; that context helped him create the Anglo-Scottish borderlands as a place of doubt, play and, above all, mobility. Hogg's presents us with a place, the Borders, that is constantly in movement, and that cannot be contained in a detemporalized scheme often found in Romantic accounts of place deriving from cartography, Enlightenment philosophy, and the picturesque. Hogg's innovations in narrative form, I argue, provide not a representation of a place – a fixed image – but a dynamic encounter with a region that will not stay still.

Finding 'The Borders' in the 1830s

The difficulty of narrating the 'Borders' starts with its name. 'The Borders', plural, typically identifies a region in Scotland, however loosely that might be defined.⁶ Yet any border clearly has two sides, and for all his local attachments to Ettrick, Hogg, like other writers of the region in the period, thinks about the area in terms of multiple, overlapping allegiances. The 'region' (itself a problematic term) that links Scotland and England is, like all borders, not a hard line between two clearly defined states, but a succession of compromises and negotiations, not just between nations, but between

⁶ Alasdair Moffat's popular history of the region is typical in that its ambition quickly becomes focused on the Scottish side: *The Borders: A History of the Borders from Earliest Times* (Berwick upon Tweed: Deerpark, 2002).

many other local attachments and affiliations. In Hogg's work, as I will go on to discuss, it emerges as a region defined by the ways in which people – whether itinerant musicians, reivers, queens, sheep farmers, or Romantic tourists – moved within it. The Borders (I will, however awkwardly, use this plural term to indicate a broader region extending, with its own vague borders, on either side of the national divide) are, more than other regions, hard to locate, despite the technologies (from Enlightenment cartography to antiquarian localism to historical fiction) that aspired to do so in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Borders in the Romantic period occupied a curious position. With the seeming security of the Union, this was no longer a dangerous frontier. Thanks in large part to the fiction and poetry of Hogg's fellow borderer Walter Scott, the Borders began to become available as a location in the expanding network of Romantic picturesque tourism. By the 1830s it was increasingly easy to access, and, especially on account of the enormous success of Scott's poetic and fictional accounts of the region, attractive to literary tourists.⁷ The Borders had begun to be, as Penny Fielding has helpfully phrased the process, a 'curated region', a region that is neither simply 'organic nor imposed', but rather is an act of imagination that combines 'economy, geography, transport and the institutions of art and literature'.⁸ A similar process had occurred somewhat earlier in the Scottish Highlands and the Lake District, whereby literary tourism, combined with the technologies of print, transportation, cartography and the wider economic structures of the nation, helped to present these regions as tourist

⁷ For further discussion, see Nicola J. Watson, *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁸ Penny Fielding, 'Curated Regions of the North: Art and Literature in the "Scottish Border" and the "Transpennine Corridor"', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 15.2 (2014), 159-72 (p. 162).

destinations in a new way, a topic much explored by literary critics and cultural historians.⁹

This spirit colours the rest of his encounter with the Borders. Near Lanercost in Cumberland (now in Cumbria), on his way to Naworth Castle, he again goes seeking for the kind of Borders he had read about in Scott and George Ridpath's *Border History of England and Scotland* (1776), but is both amused and disappointed by his guide:

The postilion ever and anon stops to breathe his horses. He answers all our queries; and, instead of frightful tales of the sallying foe and slaughtered inhabitants, tells us that such a shooting-box is here – and such an angler's cottage is there – that the cattle, apparently innumerable, and browsing upon the hill-tops or the extended plains, all know their homes and their masters. (I, p. 422)

Dibdin's experience, encountering fictional sallies, historical resonance, and quotidian 'modern' reality, captures an aspect of the Borders that makes the region curiously difficult to package. It was, by the 1830s, a region with a good system of turnpike roads and a growing rail network. Dibdin leaves the moss-trooper country at Greenhead for Carlisle. The city is in an incredible bustle, 'chambermaids and waiters running in every direction' (I, p. 431) at the Bush Inn as the train brings money and passengers to the city, and smoke stacks loom against the skyline. Dibdin's generous, easy manner allows him to present all of these things together as if there were no difficulty in a place being at once industrial and picturesque: a place to encounter an ancient way of life, and yet

⁹ Amongst many important contributions, the following have been especially influential for me here: George Dekker, *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism: Radcliffe, Scott, and Mary Shelley* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); *Romantic Localities: Europe Writes Place*, ed. by Christopher Bode and Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010); *Representing Place in British Literature and Culture, 1660-1830: From Local to Global*, ed. by Evan Gottlieb and Juliet Shields (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

¹¹ Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *A Bibliographical, Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in the Northern Counties of England and in Scotland*, 2 vols (London: C. Richards, 1838). All subsequent references are to this edition incorporated in the text with pagination in parentheses.

¹² The line had been mooted in 1824, with sections opened in stages from 1835 onwards. It was fully completed in June 1838. See Bill Fawcett, *A History of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, 1824 to 1870* (Newcastle: North Eastern Railway Association, 2008).

¹³ Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, ed. David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

also a place of speculative capitalist modernity. It is one of the charms of his book, but it also hints at the difficulties one might have in trying to fix the Borders of the 1830s as a single kind of experience. The place requires, as Dibdin begins to recognise, a different kind of writing.

The Borders possesses a powerful cultural and political history, but the area has always been a borderland rather than a borderline, a set of messy compromises rather than a division. It seems hard to hold a clear image in mind of what the region looks like: mountainous to some extent, but without the grandeur of North Wales or the Lakes; cultivated with links to major cities like Carlisle, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Newcastle, yet seemingly dominated by the shifting grounds of its peat bogs and the Solway quicksands. In the 1830s Hogg farmed in Altrive, but sold his literary wares in the industrializing - but also culturally confident - Newcastle. Centrally important to him was the print market in Edinburgh, but just as relevant was the smack he might take to London, as he did in 1832, and as his books did too on their way to the metropolitan market. That market was connected, as Hogg was well aware, with North America and other international markets. Visitors came to the fashionable spas at Moffat and Innerleithen in Scotland, or in Northumberland at Gilsland or Deadwater. It is true that any region has the capacity to baffle the tourist looking for a particular experience – indeed the gap between one’s literary expectation and the physical reality of moving through a place might be seen to be constitutive of the tourist experience – but the Borders in the nineteenth century, as Dibdin’s narrative suggests, had a special ability to befuddle those who wished to claim it as a region of a particular kind.

Mobility and the Experience of Place

Hogg's Borders writing of the 1830s allows us to grasp, I argue, the peculiar status that the region held in the period. His writing achieves that effect most particularly through its account of place that is grounded not in locality but in mobility, or, rather, that sees locality as bound up with mobility. 'Mobility', a field of study deriving in part from phenomenology, has become increasingly important to theorists of place in geography, anthropology and related fields, as well as literary studies.¹⁴ The Romantic legacy of place has frequently been taken as a problem against which this field has defined itself. Tim Cresswell, in his seminal *On the Move* (2006), considers a definition of mobility as 'a kind of blank space that stands as an alternative to place, boundedness, foundations, and stability'.¹⁵ Such a view of space can plausibly be said to derive from the Romantic period. Romanticism, in this view, privileges the discovery of deep connections to place, most particularly those found in rural communities. This view, associated most especially with Wordsworth, remains influential. It is not just a literary phenomenon: it coincides with the mapping of place that emerged from Enlightenment science and antiquarianism: theories of historical change, the modern imperial nation state, geology and cartography (including the establishment of the Ordnance Survey). Place becomes associated with representation: the stilled, fixed view from above.

The study of mobility challenges this view most particularly in its angles of perspective. The typical critique of the view from above – found, influentially, in Michel de Certeau and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari – is that it is an imposition of hegemonic power. Doreen Massey phrases this more subtly: 'Not all views from above

¹⁴ This is a large and complex field, but some signal contributions are: David Seamon, *A Geography of the Lifeworld: Movement, Rest and Encounter* (London: Croom Helm, 1979); John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005); Mimi Sheller and John Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning A*, 38 (2006), 207-26; Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Tim Ingold, *Lines, A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007); Peter Adey, *Mobility* (London: Routledge, 2009); 'Mobility and the Humanities', ed. by Peter Merriman and Lynne Pearce, *Mobilities*, Special Issue, 12.4 (2017).

¹⁵ Cresswell, *On the Move*, p. 2.

are problematical – they are just another way of looking at the world [...]The problem only comes if you fall into thinking that the vertical thinking lends you truth'.¹⁶ An experience of mobility begins by recognising that the 'truth' of our experience of place is something that happens in time. The 'landscape' is not a fixed thing *across which* one moves; the landscape (though the term is itself problematic, as John Barrell has influentially shown) is the product of an inherently mobile mesh of encounters that come into being in a lived environment.¹⁷ The experience of a place requires a different kind of epistemology: we know places, as Tim Ingold puts it, '*as we go, not before we go*'.¹⁸ Rather than a network linking static places, the experience of place depends on the recognition that the places are themselves in constant movement: 'Knowledge is regional: it is to be cultivated by moving along paths that lead around, towards or away from places, from or to places elsewhere'.¹⁹

Massey and Ingold share with many theorists of mobility a suspicion of writing because writing, as representation, imposes a pre-planned plot (a fixed-in-advance destination) on what should be a mobile journey that is open to change. Ingold, in celebrating 'lines of growth' over a network of points, sees the growth of print culture as one crucial way in which Western culture fragmented these lines of growth.²⁰ Massey is wary of narrative because narrative is a matter of causality.²¹ Yet, as much

¹⁶ Massey, *For Space*, p. 107. The issue is beyond my scope, but Massey comments insightfully on the politics of ideas of 'boundedness' and 'flow' as they feature in the poststructuralist responses to geography that have tended to influence literary studies.

¹⁷ John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

¹⁸ Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skills* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 230.

¹⁹ Ingold, *Perception of the Environment*, p. 229. On the distinction between this view and the currently popular 'Actor-Network Theory' of Bruno Latour, see Ingold, 'Rethinking the Animate, Reanimating Thought', in *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 67-75.

²⁰ Ingold, *Lines*, pp. 132-42.

²¹ Massey, *For Space*, p. 37. For Massey, the issue is not so much with narrative *per se* but with the way that narrative is frequently used to provide a singular and final account of causality, one that removes place from time and embodiment.

recent work on Romantic ideas of place has indicated, the period's reputation as the location of stilled fixity is in need of revision. Penny Fielding has explored the slippages between the claims of the local and the aspiration to Enlightened mapping that marked encounters with Scotland in the period, and David Higgins has brought out the interweaving of the local and the global in English Romantic writing.²² Ruth Livesey's *Writing the Stage Coach Nation* is especially helpful because it emphasises the halts, hold-ups, and digressions that characterise the experience of place, not simply the commanding view from above (though such a viewpoint is, undoubtedly, an aspect of the Romantic experience of place).²³

Livesey focuses on the period spanning the 1810s through to the 1840s, when the rail network was beginning, but not really connected, and when travel by turnpike road offered a more material encounter with place. She does not discuss Hogg, but his work, I would suggest, can be seen in the terms that she sets out. His method of writing is far from linear or smooth, never an affectless passage from beginning to resolution. The messy details, the interruptions, the wanderings off the path, that take place in the midst of his stories are where he presents to his readers his mobile Borders. The failure of the Borders to fit the kinds of map that the print culture of the 1830s offered readers and writers might suggest some of the region's power. Dibdin's inability to place the Borders within a frame, his difficult and slightly comic balancing of industrial modernity, historical echoes, and fictional play, is not simply an imaginative failure on his part, but a fitting response to the area. Ian C. Davidson has recently suggested that

²² Penny Fielding, *Scotland and the Fictions of Geography: North Britain, 1760-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); David Higgins, *Romantic Englishness: Local, National, and Global Selves, 1780-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

²³ Ruth Livesey, *Writing the Stage Coach Nation: Locality on the Move in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). See also work on Romantic walking, most prominently Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).

scholars of literary mobility move away from searching for representations of mobility to a consideration of the literary work as an ‘event’ that creates mobility through its form.²⁴ There remains a tendency to think of literary form as a straitjacket from which daring writers will break free, and such a view has certainly characterised accounts of the print culture of the 1830s, in particular the period’s accounts of place.²⁵ Hogg, I will suggest, developed a series of methods that draw on and play with narrative form and the products of 1830s print culture to create the Borders as a fascinatingly confusing region in which truth is glimpsed on the move.

Hogg’s Borders and the 1830s Market

Hogg’s song of welcome to ‘King Willie’ is merry enough, but his mood was not necessarily sanguine as he entered a new decade. Hogg had attained a prominent, if not exactly secure, place in the print culture of the period. He was frequently in demand as a poet, songwriter and prose writer for a range of annuals; he pursued a number of schemes to have his fiction published; he found new magazines such as *Fraser’s Magazine* (launched in 1830 as a magazine in the *Blackwood’s* mode) and *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal* (launched in 1832 as one of the new breed of cheap, mass-market periodicals) that were keen to publish him; and following Scott’s lead he tried to have his work reprinted in collected form. But that prominence might seem a problem given that, for many of his critics, Hogg’s literary value lies in his capacity to challenge the norms of a hierarchical, commercially-orientated marketplace. The 1830s continues to have a reputation as a time of literary and social conservatism that stifled the Romantic energies for which Hogg, for one, had been noted. It would not be the first time that Hogg had come up against the prudish delicacy of nervous publishers, but the annual-

²⁴ Ian C. Davidson, ‘Mobilities of Form’, *Mobilities*, 12.4 (2017), 548-58.

²⁵ Caroline Levine’s *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015) offers an especially insightful rethinking of literary ‘formalism’.

choked culture of the 1830s seems especially limiting for a writer of his wild energies and, as Meiko O'Halloran has phrased it, his 'kaleidoscopic' literary experimentalism.²⁶ Hogg's popularity in this market might suggest the kind of taming and packaging that I have been considering in terms of place: the middle-class family audience valued by publishers locate Hogg as a sentimental purveyor of 'timeless' rural truths that are situated quite without reference to the living reality of Liddesdale or Coquettale.

Describing his annual stories, Janette Currie and Gillian Hughes claim that 'Hogg reminisces about a bucolic Border landscape and instructs the moral that the Scottish peasants are valuable members of society whose rustic ways are worth preserving'.²⁷ There is some truth in this, but rather than seeing 1830s print culture as placing a limit on Hogg's experiments, I would suggest that Hogg, so continuously fascinated across his career by the formal possibilities that his age opened to him, was in fact enabled by a culture that was far less uniform than many have assumed. 'A Letter to the Ettrick Shepherd', printed in the annual *The Amulet* for 1836, but likely intended originally for the *Juvenile Forget me Not*, is an unusual but helpful example of the way Hogg's writing uses the resources of 1830s print culture to reimagine place.²⁸ The letter sustains the loose fiction of a woman looking to make money in the periodical press, who writes to Hogg asking for help, as someone, 'deeply interested in the periodical literature of both kingdoms' (p. 195). The story she then tells is the tale of her own life, which, it turns out, offers a gentle moral lesson appropriate to the setting the piece has

²⁶ O'Halloran, p. 6.

²⁷ James Hogg, *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books*, ed. by Janette Currie and Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. xxii. Further references to Hogg's work for the annuals are to this edition.

²⁸ 'A Letter to the Ettrick Shepherd', *Contributions to Annuals and Gift-Books*, pp. 212-25. *The Juvenile Forget me Not* was edited by Anna Maria Hall, the wife of S. C. Hall, editor of *The Amulet*.

in the pointedly Christian annual.²⁹ Hogg's individuality is shackled, we might imagine, by the developments in the press of this period: instead of the daringly bodily and unorthodox style he had developed in earlier work, here he must conform to the coy sentimentality demanded by a feminine bourgeois audience. The story appears to be part of the process whereby Romanticism is 'tamed' in this period, as Virgil Nemoianu claims, by the rising prominence of an evangelical culture of 'decency' surveyed by Ben Wilson.³⁰ Where the Border region had once promised access to a violent past and a daringly pagan folk culture, here it becomes a bland backdrop, bleached of local specificity, the story rigidly tied to its moralising ending.

Yet, Hogg's story is in fact considerably more varied than this. Caroline Levine and Mario Ortiz-Robles have argued for the importance of 'narrative middles' as vital to the experience of fiction, rather than the emphasis placed on the conclusions of stories in most narrative theory.³¹ Even a neatly moralising ending cannot undo the experience a reader has when in the midst of a story. The point is parallel to the one I wish to make about the experience of place. Rather than an already concluded vision of place, whereby the end is already mapped out, narrative form can give access to an experience of place that is inherently temporal, a thing in process rather than a thing already concluded. The point is more clearly apparent in other stories by Hogg that I will consider shortly; but even here, in this most 1830s of pieces, the Borders emerge

²⁹ *The Amulet* was subtitled, at least in some of its annual volumes, 'Christian Remembrancer', and looks forward to more explicitly evangelical annuals that appeared later in the 1830s. Its contents were not, in fact, markedly different from the other annuals of the mid 1820s and early 1830s, and it encouraged a wide variety of contributions.

³⁰ Ben Wilson, *Decency and Disorder: The Age of Cant 1789-1837* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007); Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism: European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984). For more appreciative accounts see Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Tim Fulford, *The Late Poetry of the Lake Poets: Romanticism Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and David Stewart, *The Form of Poetry in the 1820s and 1830s: A Period of Doubt* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

³¹ *Narrative Middles: Navigating the Nineteenth-Century British Novel*, ed. by Caroline Levine and Mario Ortiz-Robles (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011).

as inherently mobile. 'A Letter to the Ettrick Shepherd' revolves around a narrator, the woman who has written to Hogg, whose husband, her beloved from youth despite differences in status, has been ruined. For Hogg that ruin is not merely usable material to further the moral conclusion, but a matter of interest that delays the narrative. William, the husband, runs into difficulty: 'The mercantile world having been at this time completely paralyzed, poor William, after a slow recovery, could find no situation for the space of two years' (p. 201). Subsequently, given land and resources by the narrator's kindly father, William begins to improve his farm:

The intense eagerness of William to succeed in this farming speculation, so generously conferred, ruined all. He began his improvements on the most brilliant and expensive scale; and the accommodation afforded by the banks at that period had no bounds. (p. 202)

Hogg's tale is one deeply fascinated by the modernisation of farming in the nineteenth century (a topic Hogg, himself a farmer prone to disastrous improvements and speculation, was well placed to understand).³²

The Borders are not simply a backdrop against which a moral tale might be placed; the region's historical and material particularity impacts palpably on the characters. Hogg's temporal markers ('at this time', 'at this period') are not merely ornamental; they are central to the experience of place as he understands it. The seemingly 'pastoral' tale, like the Borders, is not sealed off from wider trends and currents. The tale finds itself constantly enmeshed in wider systems of finance and wider patterns of movement that are national and, indeed, global. The story might seem an idealised pastoral written for an audience of prim young girls, but its themes of credit and speculation link it to the period's Silver Fork novels, a culture similar to that which

³² Gerard Lee McKeever describes Hogg's ability to combine the function of the supernatural folk tale with the modern, Enlightenment discourse of 'improvement'. McKeever, "'All that I choose to tell you is this": Improvement confronts the Supernatural in Hogg's Short Fictions', *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 25-26 (2015-2016), 30-44.

Thackeray would depict in his novels set in this period. The place is different (rural rather than metropolitan) but the process is not. Hogg does not allow his readers to forget that any story takes place ‘at’ a particular time, and in a particular place that is itself constantly changing, nor that any story’s narrative line will be moved and buffeted by its encounters with those elements. The Borders, in turn, cannot be narrated as if the place were a framed picture for the aesthetic enjoyment of a reader. Instead, Hogg brings the Borders into being.

A small piece like this, largely forgotten by scholars, is suggestive of the distinctive accounts of place Hogg’s 1830s work has to offer. Hogg’s Borders, whether set in the past or the present, are always conscious of their place ‘at this period’, and the Borders emerge from his work as a place of constant movement and change, not a safely historicised past or a pleasingly picturesque setting. His Borders contain a number of important features: the Border raids of the moss-trooper period; supernatural events; the persecution of the Covenanters; the experience of war; as well as a delight in the humour of local communities. As Gillian Hughes and Meiko O’Halloran have argued, the frequently violent histories he recounts, most notably in his 1835 collection *Tales of the Wars of Montrose*, are expressive of Hogg’s uneasy, conflicted feelings about the Reform era of the 1830s.³³ These stories interact in fascinating ways with the ongoing history of the decade in which Hogg published them. I wish to focus on a single aspect of this, however: the relationship his work develops between place and narrative form. His accounts of the Borders produce a place that is, and always has been, on the move. Penny Fielding, commenting on Hogg’s relation to wider Enlightenment systems of measurement, captures this well: ‘Hogg is not so much a local writer as a writer

³³ O’Halloran, pp. 220-21; Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 291.

about locality and about the impossibility of fixing it'; 'the local is not really knowable in any repeatable, recognisable way but is something that occurs once in one space and time'.³⁴ The methods he used to create this sensation offer crucial lessons for theorists of place, and help suggest the vitality of 1830s print culture.

Hogg's Mobile Places

Although one might assume that this 'labouring-class author' would stick to the region he knows, Hogg, like so many of his peers in the 1830s, saw writing as a space in which place is explored rather than fixed. 'The Pongos', published in *Altrive Tales* (1832), is typical of Hogg's geography.³⁵ It is set in the Cape colony, and involves the abduction of an infant by orangutans. Perhaps just as typically all the place-names in Africa are Borders place-names, and when the child is recovered from the orangutans he has learned to speak with an Annandale accent. Annandale is in South-West Scotland, one source of many Scottish colonists; but it is the promiscuity of the mixing of places and identities (crossing in this case between humans and orangutans) that really captures Hogg's thinking. Just as one might find Annandale in Africa, by the same token, the Borders are not represented as a once stable location threatened by modernity's mobility. On the contrary, Hogg suggests that the Borders were always a site of movement and change. 'Some Remarkable Passages in the Remarkable Life of the Baron St Gio', printed in *Blackwood's* in June 1830, is typical in taking a Borders character and conceiving of his life as a sequence of 'passages', suggesting not simply episodes, but movements.³⁶ The story offers a neat catalogue of Hoggian motifs:

³⁴ Fielding, *Scotland and the Fictions of Geography*, pp. 161, 163.

³⁵ Hogg, 'The Pongos: A Letter from Southern Africa', *Altrive Tales*, ed. Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 160-71.. An earlier version appeared as 'A Singular Letter from Southern Africa' in *Blackwood's*, November 1829.

³⁶ 'Some Remarkable Passages in the Remarkable Life of the Baron St Gio', *Contributions to Blackwood's Magazine*, Volume 2, pp. 90-112 Hogg had a productive relationship with *Blackwood's*

cannibalism, dead bodies that will not stay quiet, doubles, moments that are ‘unaccountable’ and yet must be accounted for in some narrative form. Just as Hoggian, though, is his tendency to depict a life as a succession of flights that seem to overwhelm an individual’s will. The narrator, Mr Kendale, witnesses a murder, is kidnapped to prevent his bearing testimony and smuggled to the Americas. He returns to the Borders, determined to discover the truth, flees again to Italy, where he makes his fortune and is made Baron St Gio by a grateful Venetian. The town Mr Kendale was born in is called ‘Dalkerran, in the parish of Leeswald; but whether that is in England, Scotland, or Wales, he does not inform us; judging in his own simplicity of heart, that every one knows where bonny Dalkerran is as well as he does’ (p. 90). Hogg hints that it is in southwest Scotland (a point Thomas C. Richardson confirms in his edition), but Dalkerran is not somewhere that will stay still on a map. The central, haunting fact of his life is the murder he witnessed, and the dead body he wishes to bring to the surface. After a long period overseas, he returns and wishes to bring out the truth. But truth is not something that stays still and waits for the discoverer. He knows he needs the physical evidence still to be there or his story ‘would pass as an infamous romance’ (p. 100). A remote Borders location should act as a museum depository. But when he gets back, ‘The house I could not point out, though I perambulated the suburbs of the town over and over again. Every thing was altered, and whole streets built where there were only straggling houses’ (p. 100). The experience is common enough, but it is remarkable in terms of the representation of place in the period. Locality, as Fielding observes, ‘occurs once in one space and time’, but this runs quite contrary to the desire for a rural landscape frozen in printed space characteristic of a certain strain of the

Magazine throughout his career. In this period it offered him a place for his more daring literary experiments, before a falling out with William Blackwood led to a break in the mid 1830s. For discussion, see Richardson’s introduction to *Contributions*, and Hughes, *A Life*.

Romantic picturesque. When he eventually gets there, he ‘at once recognised the place. The common was partly enclosed and improven, but that part on which the open pits were situated remained the same’ (p. 101). The local place was already part of a wider mesh of lines of development: commercial, cultural, even colonial.

The tale is one of many by Hogg in which a character’s life is narrated as if he were constantly on the run. The loose, rambling method of narrating a life may simply seem unfocussed, especially when set against the self-consciously concise formal precision of the short story form as it developed later in the nineteenth century. As John Plotz puts it, ‘[i]nescapable variability – in focalisation, in form of address, in dialect, and in epistemology – is precisely the point of many of Hogg’s stories’.³⁷ Hogg’s narrative methods mirror the account he gives us of place as - to borrow a phrase of Henri Lefebvre’s - ‘a dramatic becoming’.³⁸ Kendale is not just an unstable character moving across a landscape, encountering ‘local’ people who stay in place. He comes to recognise that place is as unstable as his own identity. That a Dalkerran native ends up cutting deals with German merchants and Charles I before careering across France and Italy is, perhaps, unlikely, but largely in keeping with the way in which Hogg presents places like Dalkerran in the first place.

Another rambling tale in *Blackwood’s*, ‘The Mysterious Bride’ (December 1830) presents itself as a picture of dense locality: it opens with a drunken Laird riding home along a lane with hedges so high on each side that he can see only the road in front of him. That he then meets with an apparition suggests that this deeply local place is the site also of the kind of supernatural visitation impossible in the advanced print modernity figured by the magazine in which the story appears. Yet the story also

³⁷ John Plotz, ‘James Hogg and the Short Story’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*, ed. by Ian Duncan and Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 113-21 (p. 116).

³⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 23.

contains a hot air balloon, a trip to Ireland, and a move into the ballrooms of polite society, with a fleeting mention of the outré fashion in dresses the Laird is charmed by. Just at the point at which a reader might settle into the expectation that Hogg will present a comfortably distanced account of the pre-modern Borders, Hogg shifts the perspective to present place as occupying multiple temporal and geographical planes. As in ‘The Baron St Gio’, a deeply local character, the Scots-speaking Marion, is the source not of grounded permanence but amused play. She is taken to the central location in the tale, the spot on Birky Brow where the Laird met the apparition. However, ‘the hail kintra’s altered now. There was nae road here then’ (p. 167). She finds the spot eventually, and buried evidence is discovered. But place is not the fixed location of deep knowledge; it is, instead, always being altered. Earlier, the Laird ‘left Ireland with his mind in great confusion, groping his way, as it were, in a hole of mystery’ (p. 165).³⁹ Hogg’s physical phrasing is carefully chosen: one moves through and in land not with the confident gaze of a cartographer measuring distances on a map, but in a state of constant epistemological uncertainty. Knowledge comes, but it is knowledge of a partial kind, experienced only on the move as we grope our way through a ‘hole of mystery’.

Plotting and Reforming with Hogg

One of the problems that Tim Ingold has with plot is that a plot seems to have decided in advance what the answer is. Hogg’s stories are frequently about mysteries, and, as in ‘The Baron St Gio’ and ‘The Mysterious Bride’, those mysteries can seem to be solved with empirical evidence found on the spot. More typical is Hogg’s sense that

³⁹ Hogg has two characters whose ‘minds were wandering and groping in a chaos of mystery’ in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, ed. by P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), p. 58. That novel also features – as so often in Hogg – the baffled attempt to prove the truth by digging up a body.

truth and knowledge are matters that keep moving. He commented to William Blackwood that ‘I like to give them [his stories] every variety’, and the variety that the reader encounters is experienced not just between stories but also within them as they shift and mutate in unpredictable ways.⁴⁰ Hogg toys with the reader’s desire for a neatly rounded conclusion; but, even when a conclusion of that kind arrives, it cannot quite dispel the sensation that we remain, as a character in ‘A Story of Good Queen Bess’ puts it, in a ‘dirdum’ (a quandary).⁴¹ We would like to step back from the stories and assess the terrain, but such a stance is denied us, even as they judder to a conclusion. One of Hogg’s most interesting readers in this period was the *Blackwood’s* writer D. M. Moir, who William Blackwood used as a sounding board for Hogg’s contributions. Moir is not always sympathetic, but he can be perceptive. He comments of ‘The Baron St Gio’ that ‘[c]ertainly there are many absurdities and improbabilities in it, but the force of the narrative makes us swallow these, without any particular wryness of mouth’.⁴² His sense of Hogg’s ‘absurdities’ risks being simply patronising, but it was a word of which Hogg, too, was fond, and captures the provocative strangeness of many of the moments in these stories. What matters, though, is ‘the force of the narrative’. These are tales that are, above all, driven: experiences of motion in which our assessment of the events is inextricable from their momentum.

Hogg comments frequently, and teasingly, on his use of form and its relation to knowledge. ‘An Awfu’ Leein’-Like Story’ (*Blackwood’s*, September 1831) includes an interjection from the reader: “‘Our Shepherd has often lee’d terribly to us, but nothing to this’”. It is, nevertheless, beloved reader, literally true’ (p. 208).⁴³ Hogg often protests

⁴⁰ James Hogg quoted in Richardson, *Contributions to Blackwood’s Magazine*, II, p. xviii.

⁴¹ Hogg, ‘A Story of Good Queen Bess’, *Contributions to Blackwood’s Magazine*, II, pp. 169-91 (174, 175, 179). First published April 1831.

⁴² D.M. Moir quoted in Richardson, *Contributions to Blackwood’s Magazine*, II, p. xix.

⁴³ Hogg, ‘An Awfu’ Leein’-Like Story’, *Contributions to Blackwood’s Magazine*, II, pp. 202-16.

that things are ‘literally true’, a revealing tautology that hints at the latitude he gives to that concept. He promises to tell the ‘Baron St Gio’ in the Baron’s own style, though this had been ‘uniformly rejected’ by the booksellers because the narrative did not come ‘into the compass of an ordinary tale’ (p. 95). ‘The Ettrick Shepherd’ has attempted to make it do so, but he retains much of the Baron’s original manner, because ‘it is exceedingly amusing, and if not truth, tells very like it’ (p. 95). Truth might be something one finds precisely because a tale exceeds the ‘compass’ of an ‘ordinary tale’, and the print culture of William IV’s reign encouraged such freedom. Rather than being a restriction on his creativity, Hogg’s writing takes succour from the varieties of 1830s print culture. The promiscuous mingling of literary forms, of fact and fiction, prompted by annuals and magazines allowed him to play with the interconnection of form and truth.

There are frequent asides that invite the reader’s reflections on the kind of tale they are reading. In ‘The Baron St Gio’ we learn that ‘Mr Kendale seems to have had little taste for the sublime or beautiful, for he only says of the Alps, “It is an horrid country, and the roads very badly laid out”’ (pp. 103-04). Hogg invites but undermines the idea that his story-telling style is a product of his roots in an unsophisticated oral tradition. His ‘Scottish Haymakers’ (in the 1834 annual *Forget me Not*) describes the art of the Nasmyths (father and son painters):

[T]hey have often drawn most exquisite vistas the truest to nature of any thing I ever saw in my uncultivated judgment, which can only discern what is accordant with nature by looking on nature itself’. (p. 81)

Yet the sketch that contains the comments plays constantly on the ways in which nature is transformed by the artist. Hogg walks south of Edinburgh with the Nasmyths who bicker about how best to frame the scenes, with the actor Daniel Terry, and with Alexandre Vattemar, a stage ventriloquist, who continually tricks the company and the

haymakers they meet such that they see the landscape populated with people and animals who are not there. The same point extends, of course, to Hogg's sketch (itself framed in the elegant binding of the *Forget me Not*), which, 'if not truth, tells very like it'.⁴⁴ Hogg is obsessed with the nature of truth in his stories, and the connection between form and movement is the key to the understanding of truth that he develops.

Geniune Border Stories

Hogg often suggests that the looseness of his fiction's forms owes itself to the fact that these are closer to the oral tales of the borderlands. Hogg refers in his 1832 *Anecdotes of Sir W. Scott* to 'my ram-stam way of writing'.⁴⁵ The sense of onward momentum, of pushing through tangled undergrowth, is telling. The connection of style with movement mirrors Byron's claim to 'rattle on exactly as I'd talk, / With any body in a ride or walk' in *Don Juan* (1824) (a poem Hogg knew and quoted from).⁴⁷ Like Byron's, Hogg's 'ram-stam' is a kind of half-truth: Richardson and other editors have found evidence in manuscripts of the way that Hogg 'thought carefully about his art as he shaped the story into its final form'.⁴⁸ As Ian Duncan puts it, Hogg 'promiscuously' mixes oral and print-cultural traditions, and the 1830s market, rather than restraining him, offered him further opportunities to draw these elements together.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ 'Geordie Scott: A Hamely Pastoral', *Fraser's Magazine*, February 1831, pp. 39-43, is another good example of Hogg's play with artfulness in its reflections on the 'painter' who 'sits within' our minds, drawing images called up by the poet's art.

⁴⁵ James Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. by Jill Rubenstein (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 18.

⁴⁷ Lord Byron, 'Don Juan', in *The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), XV, 19.

⁴⁸ Richardson, *Contributions to Blackwood's Magazine*, II, p. xxiii. See also Gillian Hughes in James Hogg, *Tales of the Wars of Montrose*, ed. by Gillian Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), p. 253; Peter Garside, 'Vision and Revision: Hogg's MS Poems in the Turnbull Library', *Studies in Hogg and His World*, 5 (1994), 82-95.

⁴⁹ James Hogg, *Winter Evening Tales*, ed. by Ian Duncan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. xiii.

Hogg's Border tales of the 1830s, like the decade more generally, risk being forgotten because they fail to fit the models of literary form and periodisation that Romantic and Victorian studies have made available to us. These elements come together in 'A Genuine Border Story', a remarkable piece that Hogg wrote for *Blackwood's* in 1834, but which Alexander Blackwood would not publish. It was substantially recast and published as 'Mary Montgomery' in *Tales of the Wars of Montrose* (1835).⁵⁰ The story's capacity to wrong-foot its readers is, I would suggest, at the heart of the value that this decade, this region, and this writer can offer us. Each element – the claim to truth in the word 'genuine', the uncertain region of the 'Border', and whatever Hogg might mean by the word 'story' – suggests the uncertainty in which Hogg involves his readers. The tale begins, as frequently in Hogg's stories of the Reform era, in a period of civil unrest, in 1688 'when England was all in utter confusion' (p. 280) on account of a different King William. The Borders become a place where identity, nation and order are under threat. A border lady of high degree finds herself a vagabond, having been abducted from her home as a child following a raid by moss-troopers. Mary is guarded by Christy, the wife of one of the men involved in the raid; thus begins an itinerant career that takes Mary across Scotland, during which she becomes dependent on her ability to charm the legendary king of the Border gypsies, Johnny Faa. The tale ends with Mary's identity fully discovered and with her receiving her money and lands back, and in so doing the tale seems to place a great trust in landed proprietors and the established order. Hogg was, certainly, disturbed by the threat to this order that the Reform agitation of the 1830s presented. He was opposed to the introduction of the Reform Act, fearing the possibility of a revolution and he

⁵⁰ 'A Genuine Border Story', *Contributions to Blackwood's Magazine*, II, pp. 280-327. Richardson describes the story's knotty publication history in *Contributions to Blackwood's Magazine*, II, p. 479. I refer throughout to 'A Genuine Border Story', which Richardson prints from the manuscript rejected by *Blackwood's Magazine*.

published explicitly anti-Reform poems in *Blackwood's*. Yet Hogg's politics were always complex, and should not simplistically be called 'Tory'. What he desired more than anything was civil peace.⁵¹ To read the story as a simple reflection of his anxiety about Reform, or an allegory intended to locate honest loyalty in the Borders peasantry, risks undoing all the uncertainty that Hogg incorporates into the words of his title: 'genuine', 'border' and 'story'.

At the heart of this story is something 'literally true'. A piper, having fought with Johnny Faa, runs and is pursued. He takes ground in a farmhouse. His pursuers follow him in. The servant girl denies having seen the piper, but they find him, and kill him. Hogg – and the story pointedly invites us to see this as narrated by 'James Hogg', though of course who 'James Hogg' might be is something he constantly questions – tells us repeatedly that this is 'genuine', that he can relate it 'correctly': he has 'often looked at it [the blood stain] myself', and he had heard the story first hand from the girl in question 'again and again when I was a boy' (p. 303). As Richardson shows, this seems to be true (the historical James Hogg saw the blood stain and heard the story), and Hogg frequently defends this kind of 'traditionary' evidence, found on the spot, over other sorts of history.⁵² The usual story about 1830s print culture might lead us to expect that his tale would become shaped around a central point, a neat 'moral' that would please what editors imagined readers of the period desired, one enabled by Hogg's position as 'labouring-class' rustic connected deeply with a pre-modern Borders. Yet rather than being limited by his age's print cultural forms, Hogg enjoys experimenting within them, seeming to present a plotted conclusion while testing and questioning that desire for finality.

⁵¹ See O'Halloran, p. 220, on the relation between Hogg's unusual narrative form and 1830s politics.

⁵² Richardson, *Contributions to Blackwood's Magazine*, II, pp. 484-85. Compare, for example, 'Wat Pringle o' the Yair' in *Tales of the Wars of Montrose*, pp. 197, 202-03 on the value of local tradition.

This incident is far from central to Mary's life: if it is the centre of the 'genuine' in the tale, then the majority of the story risks appearing as an unimportant succession of ornamentations. The claim to 'literal truth' in fact unsettles the reader's understanding of what kind of 'story' this is. The seemingly incoherent collection of events surrounding this moment do not allow it to become the nugget of authentic local reality that the reader might take away and value as an insight into local 'truth'. These kinds of historical trauma are enormously important to Hogg: the other major form this takes in his work of this period is tales of the persecution of the Covenanters. Perhaps the most haunting incident in the tale is the horrific violence that a very young Mary witnesses, which involves her family priest being beheaded. The 'Border' aspect exerts a magnetic pull on the story – we must always come back to this original injustice – and yet it is hard to find in it a causal primacy in a 47-page story of seemingly relentless movement. The idea that the moss-troopers acted unjustly is surely true; and yet they were just as likely to act otherwise. After Christy has saved Mary, the borderers are ordered to find her and burn her house. Christy has escaped, but she hears them debating the justice of the act at length. That they do eventually burn the house is less a matter of causality than caprice. By the same token, so at home is Mary with the gypsies that we might wonder whether that better captures her true identity than her return to her ancestral lands.

The same spirit drives the rest of the story. Beyond cannibalism and gypsies, the story also includes some rough wooing of the heroine in Edinburgh by two men who look alarmingly similar and fight a duel. The better man wins, but, yet again in his fiction, Hogg presents us with an experience of doubling in which what is 'genuine' is bafflingly 'unaccountable'. Hogg hints constantly at all the other stories that are left untold, or only hinted at, in disarmingly self-conscious ways, as when 'Lady Langley

smiled and made a long speech about matters which I do not chuse to bring into my tale' (p. 298). For all its length, the tale might have gone on: the gypsy king, saluting Mary, is promised that should he require help she will aid him, and 'thereby hangs a tale which I hope I shall live to relate' (p. 326). Hogg's presence as self-conscious shaper of his materials is both the root of the story's claim to truth and the cause of our doubt. His use of form invites the reader's desire for enclosure and finality, and yet equally leaves us puzzled, still awaiting the sequel. We return to the beginning in the sense that the story ends back on the estate from which it commenced. The 'utter confusion' with which we began seems resolved, with aristocrats dispensing rewards to loyal underlings. But however conservative this might seem, Hogg's account of place is so disarmingly unstable, and so relentlessly mobile, that aligning this with an experience of security or finality seems impossible. We are not, and we could never be, back to where we came from, because that place no longer exists.

Theorists of place have often been resistant to narrative, just as they are resistant to representation, because it imposes a singular and pre-determined image on place, one that makes it static. We could think here of the distinction Ingold draws between 'the *trace of a gesture* [and] an assembly of *point-to-point connectors*', where the latter creates 'a finished object, an artefact. Its constituent lines join things up, but they do not grow or develop'.⁵³ As they developed in nineteenth-century print culture, the short story and the novel tended to privilege that sort of thinking. To read Hogg is to read narratives that seem to be on the road to somewhere in particular, but then that road comes into being, and the traveller is waylaid. Ingold describes place as 'lines of growth issuing from multiple sources [that] become comprehensively entangled with one

⁵³ Ingold, *Lines*, p. 77. Emphasis in original.

another', and this is a good summation of the effect of reading Hogg.⁵⁴ We tend to think of narrative as something that encloses, and at times it has tended to do so; but we ought to recognise that a narrative is a line that comes into being in time, like a musical score, and that like an orchestral score there can be many lines all at once, meshing, pushing against each other, not always at the same rhythm. The 1830s might seem a time in which the dominant rhythm of capitalist print production imposed itself on the kinds of stories one might tell about the Borders. Hogg, I am suggesting, did not simply resist this. It is rather the case that 1830s print culture, its annuals, its magazines, its collections, and also its social and political uncertainty, offered him an opportunity for experiment. These curious, neglected stories give us a means of thinking about place as intrinsically mobile: Hogg, the Borders, and the 1830s can teach us the value of being in a 'dirdum'.

⁵⁴ Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 71.