

At a time of national and political tensions and a potential invasion from another European nation, a young man finds himself in a country that is not his own. To his surprise, he is arrested and interrogated by a local magistrate. He is appalled to discover that his recent movements, letters sent to him from a suspected traitor, and some items that have been found among his possessions are used to incriminate him. A narrative of treasonous activities seems to explain his recent experiences as the behaviour of a spy, although as far as he is concerned, he is completely innocent and the victim of circumstances. Of what novel is this plot? The answer, of course, is not simple. On the one hand I have described the incident in *Waverley* at Cairnvrecken in which Edward Waverley is arrested by Major Melville:

Beset and pressed on every hand by accusations, in which gross falsehoods were blended with such circumstances of truth as could not fail to procure them credit, —alone, unfriended, and in a strange land, Waverley almost gave up his life and honour for lost, and, leaning his head upon his hand, resolutely refused to answer any further questions, since the fair and candid statement he had already made had only served to furnish arms against him.¹

excitement and enjoyment, then who better to flourish in this society than someone who can trade secrets with anyone, and is not too scrupulous about where their money comes from? Someone like, perhaps, Scott's Rob Roy McGregor, who moves round the novel fixing, enabling, swapping disguises, languages and political allegiances, lurking round pillars in Glasgow cathedral to warn the unsuspecting Frank Osbaldistone that he is in danger in that city.

Robert Louis Stevenson thought *Rob Roy* was Scott's best novel. And Stevenson also has a main character who is both a spy and a double agent, as well as being one of the most famous boy heroes in literature. Jim Hawkins is a good agent, giving the officers of the *Hispaniola* advance warning of the mutiny when, hiding in an apple barrel, he overhears them plotting. But Stevenson also draws Jim as an ethically ambiguous character whose skills as a spy are not always advantageous to him. His allegiance to Squire Trelawney is tested by his attraction to Long John Silver as he moves between the parties, he loses his sense of self, and ends up associating his experiences with nightmares of an island to which he refuses to return. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* marks to an the spy as a rootless, shifting figure.

Jamieson betrays Jacobites and

spy in fiction. Whereas one (Rebus and Edinburgh, Morse and Oxford) spies range across local and frequently national borders. Detectives on the other hand tend to be faced with a specific set of circumstances — a case — which, when it is fully understood, forms the plot of the novel. In its classical form the detective (Poirot, for example) assembles the suspects in one place and recounts to them the sequence of events as a narrative of cause and effect before dramatically pointing to the guilty party. Spy novels tend to have a much less determinable plot. Allegiances shift, national powers may manoeuvre for supremacy, but with no specific outcome, the accumulation or circulation of knowledge for itself rather than for the preservation of a particular secret may be what is at stake. The spy is not necessarily the figure who gradually uncovers the mystery (in John Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* the central character is not by own secret service almost the hero of the novel). Spies are either hapless, or accidental (like Edward Waverley) or adaptable to changing circumstances (like Rob Roy).

For these reasons, the spy novel more than the detective story seems to tackle the

shooting trip. (It's not hard to see how the recent Bond film *Skyfall*, was influenced by Buchan). The final chapter is structured by Hannay's detailed account of his final engagement with Medina in which he is able to give us as chapter subheadings the exact times at which everything happens: 9 a.m. to 2.15 p.m.; 2.15 p.m. to about 5 p.m. Scotland is produced at the end of the novel as a silent kind of propaganda. It is the place where the terrors of modernity can be suspended to clear a space for autonomous events, and especially the traditional events of the adventure which follow the romance structure. Hannay doesn't know Medina is pursuing him so he is the actant rather than the author of the story, but his actions are decisive and autonomous. Time and place are no longer forms of global alienation but are restored to the individual hero and his bodily experience. The novel finally produces a resolution not through explanation but through action: Medina falls off a cliff, Hannay passes out with exhaustion, the novel is over.

The two endings — cut off from each other in locality and narrative style — produce Scotland as a Romance space that does not fit easily into the modern world, a theme that we can see early in Buchan's writing. He had already explored Scotland as a location for the spy story, most famously in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915). Here again, at first glance, Scotland seems to be recuperative, and readable through action and experience. Hannay escapes the Germans by blowing up the side wall of the cottage in which he is imprisoned (his captors having failed to take into account his training as a mining engineer). But, as in *The Three Hostages*, Scotland is not a place to deal with international conspiracies. The schemes of the Black Stone conspirators are confounded in the setting of a villa on the South Coast of England during the unromantic circumstances of a game of bridge. For all Hannay's Scottish roots, he is himself a global figure who can fit in anywhere by employing a mental trick he has learned in his colonial experience of imagining himself into any physical background. Even Scotland itself becomes an imaginary space that he uses to appropriate the memories of the road-mender he is impersonating to escape his German pursuers:

I remember an old scout in Rhodesia, who had done many queer things in his day, once telling me that the secret of playing a part was to think yourself into it. [...] So I shut off

With Scott, Stevenson and Buchan we can trace an evolution of the Scottish spy story that deals with the role of spies in the modern world. The particular association of the Scottish novel with the mode of Romance creates both opportunities and challenges for these novelists in which spying tests the boundaries both of individual characters and the position of the nation an

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