

**THE DIORAMA AND THE BOOK  
IN THE ROMANTIC ERA AND NINETEENTH CENTURY (1780-1860):  
“STILL CRAVING COMBINATIONS OF NEW FORMS”**

BY

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## ABSTRACT

Leuner, Kirstyn (Ph.D., Department of English)

### **The Diorama and the Book in the Romantic Era and Nineteenth Century (1780-1860): “Still Craving Combinations of New Forms”**

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Jillian Heydt-Stevenson

This media archaeology project draws critical attention to the diorama as a Romantic-era mixed-media art form that included an important print component—an accompanying booklet—in each show, and that also had long-lasting intermedial effects on book history in the nineteenth century that have not yet been studied. The diorama’s early life in print contributes to its identity as an enigmatic media miscellany as well as its varied influences on authors throughout the nineteenth century. I show that whether writers like Rodolphe Töpffer reacted negatively toward the diorama, or those like James Hogg incorporated textual dioramas into their work, they used the diorama to innovate new forms of the book and to subvert established narrative formats and techniques. I also suggest that we can use the dioramic as a lens to better understand the delicacy and illusory qualities of romantic book collections and related heterotopic spaces, such as Walter Scott’s library in Abbotsford.

The traits that made the diorama desirable for authors to adopt include its relationships to the genre of the miscellany and to picturesque travel writing and drawing. That is, the diorama participates and contributes to a widespread culture of artistic creation and authorship by collecting and recombining material or media in such a way that they do, indeed, generate something new. However, the dioramists’ illusions and their re-expression in books often hide the precise recipe of media and technologies behind the rhetoric of magic. This is one indication of how Romantic-era authors coped with profound changes in book production similar to those

occurring now, in the twenty-first century, as technological advances have drastically increased the number and kinds of texts and platforms available for consumers. Due to the superfluity of books in circulation in the Romantic era, authors felt empowered to create by combining previously published texts or by incorporating existing media, like the diorama, in new ways—a mode of authorship we know as remixing. The diorama’s re-expression in books in the Romantic era, as I uncover in this dissertation, marks a moment of innovation as well as anxiety about the value of new artistic technologies and authorial methods.

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I dedicate this dissertation to Mom.

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE ROMANTIC DIORAMA: ISN'T IT JUST A SHOEBOX?

*I roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,  
Still craving combinations of new forms,  
New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,  
Proud of her own endowments, and rejoiced  
To lay the inner faculties asleep.  
Amid the turns and counterturns, the strife  
And various trials of our complex being,  
As we grow up, such thralldom of that sense  
Seems hard to shun.*

-William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* Book XII (1850)

In Book XII of William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1850), the poet describes his desire for the visible, "craving combinations of new forms," and celebrating the act of laying his inner faculties to sleep under the "wider empire" of sight (143-51). Authors and artists during the Romantic era shared an appetite for mixtures of form and genre—and often those genres celebrated together, intermingling the arts and literature itself. In *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, August Wilhelm Schlegel asserts "the romantic delights in indissoluble mixtures," and his brother Friedrich describes a "romantic book" as one in which "all the forms and all the genres are mixed and interwoven" (qtd in Duff: 161-62). This dissertation takes Friedrich Schlegel's assertion at face value for Romantic-era visual entertainment and explores how the diorama—an early nineteenth-century mixed-media art show—becomes part of book history.

Dioramas, as we most often encounter them now, are museum exhibits or shoeboxes renovated into faux theaters by using scissors, glue, string, and anything else in the arts-and-crafts drawer to assemble a representation of a scene. Teachers have been assigning dioramas as an educational arts-and-crafts exercise in primary schools for decades, and I have made my fair share out of my mother's high-heel boxes. However, original dioramas produced in the early

nineteenth century were the antithesis of an elementary art project, though their creators espoused the same spirit of resourceful “authorship” by collecting and rearranging available technologies in order to present a new, captivating brand of mixed-media art.

This media archaeology project draws critical attention to the diorama as a Romantic-era mixed-medium art form that not only included in each show an important print component—an accompanying booklet—but that also had long-lasting intermedial effects on book history in the nineteenth century that have not yet been studied. The diorama’s early life in print contributes to its identity as an enigmatic media miscellany as well as its varied influences on authors throughout the later Romantic era and the rest of the nineteenth century. I show that whether writers like Rodolphe Töpffer reacted negatively toward the diorama, or those like James Hogg incorporated textual dioramas into their work, they used the diorama to innovate new forms of the book and to subvert established narrative formats and techniques. I also suggest that we can use the dioramic as a lens to better understand the delicacy and illusory qualities of romantic book collections and related heterotopic spaces, such as Walter Scott’s library in Abbotsford. Those who interact with these collections have the power to transform them despite their curators’ efforts to protect the collection.

The traits that made the diorama accessible and desirable for authors to adopt include its relationships to the genre of the miscellany and to the picturesque practices of travel writing and drawing. That is, the diorama participates and contributes to a widespread culture of artistic creation and authorship by collecting and recombining material or media in such a way that they do, indeed, generate something new. However, the dioramists’ illusions and their re-expression in books often hide the precise recipe of media and technologies behind the rhetoric of magic, so to speak. This is one indication of how Romantic-era authors coped with profound changes in

book production similar to those occurring now, in the twenty-first century, as technological advances have drastically increased the number and kinds of texts and platforms available for consumers. Due to the superfluity of books in circulation in the Romantic era, authors felt empowered to create by combining previously published texts or by incorporating existing media, like the diorama, in new ways—a mode of authorship we know as remixing. The diorama’s re-expression in books in the Romantic era, as I uncover in this dissertation, marks a moment of innovation as well as anxiety about the value of new artistic technologies and authorial methods.

### **Daguerre and Bouton’s Diorama**

Media archaeologist Erkki Huhtamo calls the diorama one of the “known unknowns of the history of spectacles,” and though its general features have become more familiar, thanks to a number of scholars’ descriptive and historical explanations, its relationship to other media in the nineteenth century is largely still a mystery (18). Huhtamo’s and other contemporary scholarship on the diorama echo a refrain that dates back to the first exhibits by Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre and Charles Bouton. The question of the day was then, as it is often now, “What is a diorama?”



Fig. 1. The Paris Diorama in “Vue du Château d’Eau,” (A f.t), courtesy of BnF.

The “Diorama” was the name of a large theater complex erected to display just two mural-sized works of art at a time, and each separate painting exhibition was also considered a “diorama” of its own.<sup>1</sup> In Paris, Daguerre and Bouton opened the first Diorama theater and its painting exhibitions in July 1822. Indeed, as this dissertation will show, dioramists gathered all of the art and media forms at their disposal (save just a few, such as drama and opera) to produce the grandest theatrical painting exhibit they could with “combinations of new forms,” such that diorama shows improved upon competing spectacles, especially panoramas and magic lanterns or phantasmagoria. In a sense, Daguerre and Bouton invented a new kind of spectacle experience using everything they could find in the constellation of sensational art exhibitions in France and Great Britain—their own “arts-and-crafts” drawer.

<sup>1</sup> I use “Diorama” to refer specifically to the original Diorama theaters in Paris and London. For all other references to shows or paintings in this medium, I use “diorama.”

Classical French painters and dramatists considered the diorama to be a relation of the panorama and melodrama, respectively, and therefore a “bastardized form,” as it did not solely champion a single discipline, such as painting or theater, but combined several (41). Jacques-Nicolas Paillot de Montabert, for example, tries to describe the diorama as a painting discipline, but falters and instead qualifies the pastiche as “a spectacle for which painting above all is employed, *but which at the same time* can very well favor mechanics, even sculpture if necessary, as well as music, etc” (qtd. in Pinson: 42, my emphasis). Stephen Pinson argues convincingly that Daguerre specifically engineered the diorama to confuse aesthetic boundaries between genres and disciplines in science and art, to avoid artistic forms that could prevent the venture from getting off the ground, and to do something more than the current batch of spectacle entertainments did so as to wow “amateurs of art from all countries” (qtd. in Pinson: 42).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Daguerre learned from his experience at the Ambigu-Comique to avoid close association with the melodrama, as scripts were subject to censorship and the genre was aesthetically confusing in a negative sense, according to Pinson (42).

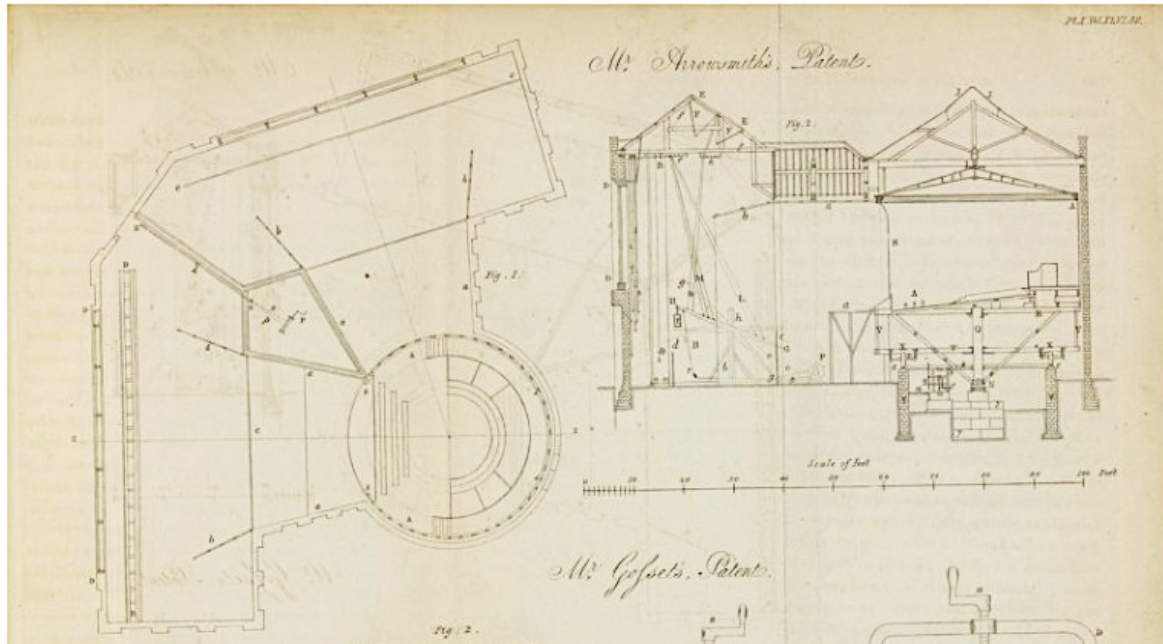


Fig. 2. Diorama – John Arrowsmith's Patent (1824-25), NYPL Digital Gallery. (L) Seating rotunda facing one of two screens, (R) Diorama bisection showing scenographic technologies.

In these several goals, the artists and business partners were successful. After opening their first Diorama in Paris, they quickly built and opened a second one in London's Regent's Park in autumn of 1824. That year, Daguerre partnered with John Arrowsmith to patent the Diorama building's architecture as well as its intricate processes, as seen in figure 2, a diagram excerpted from the patent. In the patent title, Arrowsmith describes the "Diorama" as an "improved mode of publicly exhibiting pictures on painted scenery of every description, and of distributing or directing the daylight upon or through them so as to produce many effects of light and shade" (1). The title itself reminds readers that the Diorama is an "improved mode" and therefore not the only show on the market that exhibits scenery paintings enhanced by changing lighting effects. Though it shared many traits with its competition, the diorama created *trompe l'oeil* and animation effects that truly stunned its audiences.

The dioramists toyed with their audience's visual experience from the moment they entered the theater. A typical pair of dioramas featured in the same show includes an exterior landscape view as well as a scene of a gothic building's interior. For example, the first Diorama show in 1822 presented Daguerre's "The Valley of Sarnen" (Unterwalden, Switzerland) alongside Bouton's "The Interior of Trinity Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral." Each architectural aspect of the Diorama building provided a lighting or trompe l'oeil effect of some kind, even before revealing the main attractions—the two paintings—and these enhanced their special effects. The dioramists dimmed the lighting in the building's entryway and installed a second transparent ceiling with "arabesques" painted on it beneath the actual roof, so that the light between the two ceilings dimmed the foyer and decorated it with waves of color. The Diorama designers even decorated the walls of the audience's rotunda with trompe l'oeil curtains that periodically "drew back" to reveal shields with famous painters' names on them (Pinson 43).

The diorama experience was not solitary. Up to 350 attendees at a time filed through the dim hallway into the rotunda, where they settled in for the half-hour show in a darkened theater. A reviewer for *La constitutionnel* at the Paris Diorama's opening show described the seating apparatus as "a circular car decorated with infinite taste and that is itself an object of curiosity" (qtd. in Pinson: 44). The auditorium had the same faux ceiling with painted arabesques as the entryway, but the ceiling's optical effects grew kaleidoscopic when the arena rotated the viewers toward the first painting. Customers could pay more to sit in one of nine raised boxes that each accommodated five people in the back of the rotunda, near the wall with the faux draperies and shields, or they could spend less money to stand with up to 309 other viewers in the main auditorium gallery (Gernsheim 20). I argue in chapter 1 that the rotating auditorium, or "circular

car,” can be interpreted as a representation of the Royal mail-coach.<sup>3</sup> Once everyone was seated or standing in the dark rotunda, the show began through an aperture in the wall that measured about 24.5 feet wide and 21 feet tall:

Through the window was seen the interior of *Canterbury Cathedral*, undergoing partial repair, with the figures of two or three workmen resting from their labour. The pillars, the arches, the stone floor and steps, stained with damp, and the planks of wood strewn on the ground, all seemed to stand out in bold relief, so solidly as not to admit a doubt of their substantiality, whilst the floor extended to the distant pillars, temptingly inviting the tread of exploring footsteps. Few could be persuaded that what they saw was a mere painting on a flat surface. [ . . . ] This impression was strengthened by perceiving the light and shadows change, as if clouds were passing over the sun, the rays of which occasionally shone through the painted windows, casting coloured shadows on the floor. (Bakewell 103)

After 10-15 minutes of watching the lighting change in the cathedral, attendees heard a bell ring and the churning of gears below them. A worker beneath the arena, unseen, turned a crank and began rotating the auditorium 73 degrees clockwise to point viewers at a second aperture in the wall. Down a 42-foot-long hallway, viewers again peered at a painting 45.5 feet wide x 71.5 feet tall (Gernsheim 19-20). This time, they saw a Swiss valley.

Lighting was a central concern and crucial for creating atmosphere and illusion. A reviewer for the *Times* on October 4, 1823 describes the changes of lighting in great detail, which, when combined with the effect of erasing the distance between the viewer and the imaginary scene, constituted the wow-factor of diorama shows.

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<sup>3</sup> Pinson identifies Pierre Chatelain’s toboggan theme-park style ride through a faux mountain range in a picturesque garden as another influence on the spinning auditorium. (44)

The most striking effect is the change of light. From a calm, soft, delicious, serene day in summer, the horizon gradually changes, becoming more and more overcast, until a darkness, not the effect of night, but evidently of approaching storm—a murky, tempestuous blackness—discolours every object, making us listen almost for the thunder which is to growl in the distance, or fancy we feel the large drops, the *avant-couriers* of the shower. This change of light upon the lake (which occupies a considerable portion of the picture) is very beautifully contrived. The warm reflection of the sunny sky recedes by degrees, and the advancing dark shadow runs across the water—chasing, as it were, the former bright effect before it. (3)

The review painstakingly details subtle changes in light that would not hold the attention of twenty-first century viewers. But because of the novelty of illusory scenery transformations for audiences in the 1820s, they captured viewers with “delicious” daylight effects and the subtle change from the “tempestuous blackness” of a storm to the shadows of evening.

The dioramists’ talent for executing lighting effects derives from the Diorama theaters’ architecture and use of natural light. Lighting and the way the building enhanced illumination were so critical to the enterprise that Arrowsmith and Daguerre crafted their patent to protect “the employment of colours, transparent moveable blinds or curtains, as herein-before described, which are adapted to distribute or direct the daylight upon or through pictures or painted scenery of every description, for the purpose of publicly exhibiting the same, and by which means many beautiful effects of light and shade may be produced” (6). The patent’s schematics illustrate the Diorama as a museum-sized optical apparatus that in scale might remind one of William Herschel’s two-story, forty-foot telescope. In fact, the Diorama was far bigger. The roof of the

Diorama featured generous skylights and suspended a large lantern to light canvases from above. Windows behind each painting provided direct rear lighting controlled carefully by a system of curtains and pulleys. By gradually blocking the light, or letting it creep in from behind a shade, Daguerre made shadows and light rays play across his canvases—thin cotton screens painted in oil mixed with turpentine (Pinson 69).

In addition to light sources such as windows and the lantern, dioramists employed different kinds of lenses to change the scale of the view, alter the colors that project on the screen, and to make elements of the painting change or appear to move. Daguerre built concave lenses into the Diorama auditorium so that viewers could see the painting in miniature; he also occasionally handed out opera glasses, as he did for the *View of Paris from Montmartre*, to help spectators zoom in on tiny details, most likely to encourage “reality testing” the elements in his paintings, a practice beloved by both fans and critics of the diorama (Pinson 69). More than any other attribute, animation was the defining feature that separated dioramas from panoramas, but it was an attribute the Daguerre struggled to perfect. In the early dioramas, animation strove to do one thing well: smoothly transform one scene into another on a screen that does *not* move, unlike the scrolling panorama screens. Animation effects also required the most machinery and technical skill to produce.

While moving panoramas scrolled large paintings across the stage, they did not attempt to make the painted elements appear truly alive, and many argued that diorama shows delivered viewers into the represented settings and landscapes more completely than panoramas did as a consequence of its animation and staging effects. Daguerre put enormous creative energy into transforming images on his screens so that they appeared realistic: making clear weather turn stormy, day slide into night, or serene urban settings burst into flames, such as the diorama of the

1824 Edinburgh fire did. Daguerre developed the “double-effect” diorama in 1834 to enhance this aspect in his shows. He outfitted colored lenses between his light sources and the screen and painted on both sides of the canvas. Painters illustrated the first image of the show on the front of the canvas and the second image of the transformation on the back. To create the transformation from one scene to the next, such as day to night, operators used light filtered through the colored lenses so that, for example, light shined gradually through the yellow lens would cancel out the sunny yellow images on the canvas and turn the purple sections to black (Gernsheim 34). In a cruel humorous twist, Daguerre even reportedly used a live goat in his 1831 diorama show “View of Mont Blanc taken from the Valley of Chamonix,” according to *Le Courrier des Théâtres*, to further challenge his viewers to separate the living from the animated painting (Huhtamo 163n42).

Through illusion, diorama shows projected access both to realistically rendered imaginative places as well as actual locations. These illusions were produced by complex media medleys—though the technologies were nearly all established practices in one art form or another. For example, the diorama painting depicts a very lifelike Roslyn Chapel in Edinburgh to an audience sitting in a darkened arena in Paris or London, where they could imagine walking out of the metropolis and into the chapel by approaching the proscenium. So alluring and convincing was the diorama’s ability to imaginatively transport a viewer from an urban center to a far-away destination that Alison Byerly calls it “virtual travel,” akin to the power of the Internet to shorten the distance between two geographically disparate locations (35-36).<sup>4</sup> In fact, an attendee of the opening of Bouton’s Canterbury Cathedral asked to be guided from her seat in

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<sup>4</sup> Byerly largely groups panoramas and dioramas together, even noting that the terms “panorama” and “diorama” were once used interchangeably (262n6). This is a generalization that this dissertation works to debunk.

the rotunda through the proscenium and *into* the painted cathedral (Bakewell 106). Further, the magical sense of nearness to a certain place is created by unseen technology: an unspecific media “cocktail” that creates such a view. Whereas those watching panoramas and moving panoramas had a fairly clear idea that mechanical scrolls pulled the painted images across the stage, diorama attendees marveled at the chimerical animations projected on a screen that did not move. This is a distinction that leads Jonathan Crary to argue that the diorama belongs to a post-Enlightenment, “modern” artistic technological movement in which perception becomes mobilized and abstracted “from the stable and fixed relations incarnated in the camera obscura” and the tracings of objects that the camera obscura enabled (14). The more realistic the diorama image, the more mysterious the workings of this “media miscellany” were to viewers.<sup>5</sup>

I call the Diorama a *media miscellany* because nineteenth-century dioramists employed an “everything but the kitchen sink” method of mixing artistic media already available to them to produce illuminated and animated large-scale paintings. My use of the term “miscellany” indicates the eighteenth-century ethos and practice of recombination or remixing to produce art. The Diorama’s media generated for viewers an almost improbable multiplicity of experiences that included magnified details of landscape textures and long-range views of the countryside, the feeling of watching a scene from within it, the experience of going to the theater, the sounds

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<sup>5</sup> General reviews steered clear of explaining the mechanics and, instead, described the various effects of the diorama and the impressions they made on the audience. For example, a *European Magazine* reporter introducing readers to the diorama in the early 1820s fairly ignores the many technological differences between a diorama and a panorama, which he calls “nearly the same” (248). He then describes numerous changes in the landscape, as the sun illuminates certain features and, alternately, becomes hidden by shade-producing clouds—effects that that a panorama could not produce. The only media he describes are the windows that light the scene from the side and the top—these are not difficult to perceive. He closes with a mention of the diorama’s brook that ran, he claimed, by unnamed “mechanical means” (248). This review is a clear example of the way that reviewers dealt with the challenge of describing media that they could not see due to the quality and complexity of the illusion-producing medium.

of punctuating aural effects and deathly silences, and visual sensation created by intense chiaroscuro. For each unique painting, the dioramists deployed the media available in unique combinations to produce the desired effects. Finally, due to the reliance upon natural lighting to generate special effects, differences in the weather guaranteed that no two shows would be precisely the same.

Throughout my dissertation, I discuss the ways in which the diorama, the picturesque sketch, the comic, and the library are all social spaces, each one constituting its own medium, while simultaneously drawing on and including with it, other media. In discussing these complex interrelationships, I find Lisa Gitelman's definition of media helpful: for her, media are

socially realized *structures of communication*, where structures include both technological forms and their associated protocols, and where communication is a cultural practice, a ritualized collocation of different people on the same mental map, *sharing or engaged with popular ontologies of representation*. (*Always 7*, my emphases)

Gitelman emphasizes that “protocols” within her definition indicate a wide variety of social, economic, and material relationships attached to each medium, but all of these contribute to the goal of communicating a message or representation of some kind to a receiving party.

Accordingly, this definition hinges on the medium's specificity and how specific users interact with it at a certain time. To constitute a medium, then, a technology must be used by a group of people in a way considered popular.<sup>6</sup> The greater “umbrella” medium of the Diorama theater

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<sup>6</sup> Marshall McLuhan's definition of a medium as always containing other media is helpful for seeing the Diorama as a *media collection*; my analysis of the Diorama, however, is more granular than McLuhan's theory accounts for (*Medium Is the Message* 18). That is, Daguerre and Bouton's Dioramas also contain many technologies and elements that are not, on their own, the

contained various media within it, and these media were used for picturesque travel writing and drawing practices as well as exhibiting art in popular shows, such as panoramas and magic lantern performances.<sup>7</sup> Gilpin's picturesque art also embraced miscellany-making, that is, constructing volumes with a collection of texts not organized to create a master narrative, insofar as he gathered elements in a landscape and rearranged them into a view. Daguerre's extensive training as a picturesque scene painter and illustrator gave him a foundation in such a process, one which we see reflected in his dioramas and in the literary works that respond to his art.<sup>8</sup> In his poem "On Landscape Painting," Gilpin writes:

As bees  
Condense within their hives the varying sweets;  
So does the eye *a lovely whole collect*  
From *parts disjointed*; nay, perhaps, *deform'd*.

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conduits of messages in the context of the 1820s. The crank that turns the auditorium, for example, is not a medium by itself because the crank alone does not produce a story.

<sup>7</sup> The scholarship on the picturesque and romanticism is vast. My engagement with the picturesque joins a body of work that studies, in general, the picturesque as useful for understanding complex and mobile constructions of subjectivity in the nineteenth century. For discussions of the picturesque, perception, and authorship through networks of human and non-human technologies, for example, see Ron Broglio's *Technologies of the Picturesque*, Scott Hess *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship*, and Jill Heydt-Stevenson's *Austen's Unbecoming Conjunctions*. Gary Harrison and Jill Heydt-Stevenson's special topic issue for *European Romantic Review* on "Variations on the Picturesque: Authority, Play, and Practice" offers alternative readings to those that align it with patriarchal and aristocratic agendas. John Macarthur moves forward from the Romantic era through the nineteenth century and toward the present in his study of picturesque as an enduring and changing cultural theory associated with pleasure and disgust.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Daguerre was part of a crowd of hundreds of artists that contributed paintings and lithographs to Charles Nodier's marathon book project *Voyages Pittoresque et Romantique dans l'ancienne France*, a 23-volume undertaking, lavishly illustrated and published in exquisite and massive folio editions from 1820-1868. Each volume in this collection, of folio size, measured 22" x 14.5", and needs a large wheeling cart for delivery to readers in the British Library.

Then deem not Art defective, which divides,  
 Rejects, or recombines: but rather, say  
 ‘Tis her chief excellence. (241-47, emphases in original)

This selection stresses how the picturesque values a collection that recombines that which already exists, and so encourages the theory of miscellany, that is, that an artist or author can create an authentic piece simply by arranging fragments. Later in the same poem, Gilpin offers hints to an aspiring picturesque painter who may be intimidated by the great variety of the parts that comprise a scene. He counsels the artist to wait until dusk, “when length’ning shades dissolve” and where “thine eye will [. . .] there be undisturb’d by parts; there will the whole be viewd collectively” (502, 504-6). His *Three Essays* strive to make picturesque viewing and painting easy for a traveler, and one of its primary techniques involves adopting the mindset of a collector and curator of the page or canvas.

Just as picturesque drawings or paintings often illustrate a travel narrative in writing, Daguerre and Bouton’s paintings reached audiences through the theater as well as through the printed pages of programs and periodical reviews. Each show offered a printed booklet or program of about 20 pages that describes the two diorama scenes to viewers. These booklets offer an important counterpart to the painting that scholars often overlook. Interestingly, the programs did not try to explain artistic qualities of the diorama or how the diorama generates the view. The quantity and technicality of the details therein complement, or dampen, the romanticized image of this place that the diorama creates. Rather, the booklets provide extensive historical, architectural, and geographical background information that teaches a reader about the place displayed in the painting as if she were a student or a tourist abroad planning to visit that location. For example, the booklet that accompanies Bouton’s “Cathedral of Chartres” begins in

a dry informational tone by giving the latitude and longitude coordinates of the town of Chartres as well as its distance, in leagues, from Paris. Further along, the anonymous author provides what seem to be superfluous details of how the chapel of St. John the Baptist adjoins the Knights' Chapel through a row of pillars near a flight of stairs "with an iron balustrade, the slope of which forms, with the pavement, and angle of about twenty-five degrees" ("Two Views"). The degree angle of this iron balustrade, I conjecture, would only be useful for tourists with disabilities planning their visit or painters reconstructing this view with stringent attention to detail, perhaps for an engineer.

The same reasoning, however, cannot be used to explain the superabundance of historical detail that diorama booklets publish. For example, in the booklet accompanying Bouton's 1840 diorama "The Coronation of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria," the narrator provides some help identifying the various nobles in the picture, but after this gives a very dense history of the chapel from medieval origins to his present in roughly four pages. The history even includes a full-page table that lists the dates for when each part of Westminster Abbey was constructed and under whose reign ("Coronation" 4). The excess of historical detail in the booklet for the diorama of the "Coronation" is characteristic of diorama booklets in general and perhaps serves to replace discussions of the mechanics or effects produced in diorama images. Though soporific on its own, this written matter comprised part of a diorama show that coalesced, in new ways, artistic illusion and educational texts.

In the very rare instances when diorama booklets mention the actual diorama show, they did not discuss the art with the same precision or technical discourse as they do the site's architecture, geography, or history. After the Westminster coronation diorama, Bouton presents

“The Church of Santa Croce” and, surprisingly, begins by discussing the painting in the accompanying booklet:

The Visitors are requested particularly to observe all the modifications of effect, which, as if by magic, are gradually alternated—from the brilliancy and sunshine of noon—to the darkness and obscurity of midnight, as well as the extraordinary appearance of the artificial illumination, by means of chandeliers and candelabra, which will be seen gradually to become ignited, by the sole effect of colour, and the powerful oppositions of light and shade. These effects, so opposite in character and natural in appearance, will be successively exhibited without any part of the picture being concealed from the observation of the spectator; producing so complete an illusion, as to render it impossible to imagine that the representation is a mere picture, painted with ordinary colours and on a perfectly flat surface of canvas. (“Coronation” 6-7)

In this rare example of a diorama booklet focusing on art for a full paragraph, I want to point out that it is not forthright about explaining the mechanics and media used to create the view, even though these were protected by patent. The passage pretends to offer insights into how the diorama produces its illusions. The lighting effects occur “as if by magic”—a phrase found repeatedly in diorama reviews—and the “chandeliers and candelabra” are not part of the diorama’s mechanics but part of the painted image of the church that provide “artificial illumination.” The conclusion states that the goal of the illusion is to render the painting three-dimensional, but leaves unstated that the illusion completely masks the combinations of media and technologies that produce the chimera. With “educational booklets” that pretend to describe the diorama and yet skim explanations of its technologies, it is no wonder that audiences

regularly left Diorama shows bewildered and continually in quest of a definition for the Diorama.

Even though booklets and reviews continued to mystify audiences by explaining the diorama's technologies as "magic," there were other sources available that properly spelled out the mechanisms and combinations of media. For example, the public had access to Daguerre and Arrowsmith's 1824 patent, which published intricate images and detailed descriptions of the scenographics within the Diorama. In 1827, *Mechanics Magazine* published an article plumb full of technical details of the diorama and with a full-page annotated illustration of the theater and two pages of accompanying text identifying each pulley, window, and screen (289-92). Furthermore, several ventures and shows just prior to the diorama's debut, as well as those that ran concurrently, used technologies and effects one also finds in diorama performances. These include panoramas, Franz Niklaus König's Diaphanorama, Philippe-Jacques Louthembourg's Eidophusikon, Jacques François Louis Grobert's Autorama, and magic lantern shows by various artists.

For example, one of the traits that many consider unique to the diorama, as it contrasts with the panorama, is its method of framing such a large painting with a stage setting. There were, however, several precedents to this mode of displaying a painted spectacle through a proscenium and with wings concealing the edges of the painting, and knowing these precedents would demystify the diorama's so-called unique feature. Grobert theorized the Autorama in 1809, and in 1814 the *Foreign Literary Gazette* announced this "new system of theatrical scenery" about to open in Paris, where Daguerre worked at the center of the theatrical picturesque art scene (721-22). The Autorama's description sounds like a foretelling of Daguerre and Bouton's venture, as it promised theatrical scenery of "extensive views [. . .] vaporous and

indistinct” with moving objects and captivating lighting effects from windows above and behind the scene (722). The announcement boasts that the most “astonishing” part of this new painting spectacle will be “the rapidity with which these effects will be produced; and the simplicity of the mechanism employed” (722). However, the editor follows the announcement with the caveat that they have received ambitious French proposals in the past, and he lets on that he has little faith in this one coming to fruition. In 1814 and again in 1818 the Autorama venture failed to receive approval from the French minister of the interior. After Grobert’s Autorama failures, Pierre Alaux sought to accomplish similar improvements upon stage scenery with his “panorama dramatique,” which was an “illuminated painting” with moving parts, in the panoramic style, and with a new kind of theatrical wing (Pinson 37-38). However, the French government did not grant him authorization to form his joint-stock company to fund his enterprise, as the stockowners and not Alaux would primarily be held financially responsible if the company failed (Pinson 39). Pinson argues that Daguerre learned from both of these failed French ventures, as well as the Eidophusikon. This smaller boutique mechanical theater was its creator’s attempt to improve upon the panorama with more stage-like framing, new lighting effects, and moving images.<sup>9</sup>

### **Intermedial Inquiries**

My dissertation contends that Romantic-era authors reacted strongly to Daguerre and Bouton’s Diorama and iterations of the diorama that followed, and that these mixed-media shows provided

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<sup>9</sup> The Eidophusikon was advertised in similar terms to the diorama: an “imitation of Natural Phenomena, represented by Moving Pictures” where the lighting changed due to a series of colored glass slides inserted before stage lamps. The backdrop was mounted on rollers to slowly move the scene. Philippe-Jacques Lautherbourg created this spectacle apparatus for a few specific views, including Greenwich Park, the Mediterranean, and the port of Tangier. (Pinson 19)

inspiration for authors' literary inventions. As I argue in chapter 3, even those authors who rejected the diorama's technologies represented their aesthetic opposition with a revision of narrative form, as Töpffer's comics do. *The Diorama and the Book* is an intermedial study that widens our knowledge and understanding of the array of eighteenth and nineteenth-century textual and non-textual objects that scholars usually analyze. My broadest aim here is to argue for including the diorama in our studies of textual media that influenced Romantic-era and later nineteenth-century authors. Here I will show how the diorama encouraged authors to work with an ethos of authorship in which it is acceptable, even lauded, to create new works by divvying or borrowing from previously published or performed material and recombining that matter in new ways.

My dissertation contributes an analysis of the diorama's impact on Romantic-era and nineteenth-century literature and book culture to a scholarly conversation that has focused on how the diorama works on its audience and its relationship to other similar visual spectacles. Richard Altick's *The Shows of London* (1978) and Helmut and Alison Gernsheim's *L. J. M. Daguerre* (1956) provide important historical and descriptive accounts of the invention, performances, and demise of the diorama in relation to other European large-scale and small-scale art spectacles, like the panorama and the daguerreotype. These two studies, and especially Altick's, situate the diorama as a product of a booming visual entertainment market flush with panoramas, museums, mechanical exhibitions, wax works, showy art auctions, and experimentations with chemicals and optics that lead to the invention of the daguerreotype. Of course the entertainment market, however, was also flush with visual entertainment in book form, some of which were heavily illustrated, like the editions of Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels that I address in chapter 1. R. Derek Wood's essay "The Diorama in Great Britain in the 1820s"

also provides a substantial history of the diorama, offering links to Arrowsmith's patent and a collection of useful images.

Despite these studies of the diorama, a scholar seeking to uncover new research on the topic must contend with the public's recent interest in the daguerreotype and perception of Daguerre as an opportunistic businessman who did nothing else of note but invent an early form of photography. This is an unfortunate misconception that the Gernsheims perpetuate by organizing their book such that the Diorama appears to be a stepping-stone invention on the way to the discovery of the daguerreotype. Among historical book-length sources, Stephen C. Pinson's *Speculating Daguerre* (2012) tackles this challenge best and in two ways. First, Pinson meticulously documents Daguerre's training and work as a picturesque scenery painter under Jean-Baptiste Isabey and Ignacio Degotti at the Ambigu-Comique on melodrama sets, at the Opéra, and for Charles Nodier's landmark illustrated book collection of picturesque scenes in France.<sup>10</sup> Second, Pinson highlights Daguerre's several talents as the Diorama's business manager as well as diorama painter and scientist who operated a laboratory simultaneously with his sensational dioramas.

Romanticists have used Altick's, R. D. Wood's, and the Gernsheims' works as a foundation for studying the diorama as it relates to visuality, the invisible, and audiences in the Romantic era. Sophie Thomas' *Romanticism and Visuality* (2009) responds to William Galperin's *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* (1993). Galperin examines Lady Morgan's contributions to the *Athenaeum* in 1836 to prove that the Diorama does not

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<sup>10</sup> Pinson debunks the myth that Daguerre worked for and studied under Pierre Prévost, but tells us that Daguerre's partner, Bouton, did (33).

automatically produce spellbinding realism for audiences. Rather, it evokes a resistance to its own illusions by the quality of its representations as well as the community of viewers who prevent any one viewer from experiencing a distraction-free, private performance. Thomas's central claim focuses on the diorama's gothic shadows rather than its urbane crowds. She argues that the diorama creates the romantic visual and the invisible as material constructs that express a preoccupation with the nature and limits of seeing. She engages Daguerre's Diorama as an apparatus that made the invisible palpable such that dark shadows, especially in gothic ruins, had the power to evoke the dead. Where Thomas analyses the gothic doubles in the diorama among many different Romantic-era visual media, such as faux ruins, that evoke an understanding of the romantic fragment, Erkki Huhtamo includes the Diorama in a project that seeks to make known the media history of the moving panorama and analyze different types of moving artistic spectacles in their unique historical and mechanical contexts. Huhtamo includes the diorama in his study of the moving panorama, arguing that a hybrid of the two emerges in the nineteenth century. However, he also suggests that "a closer look is needed" at the diorama on its own, given its status as a "known unknown" of media history (139).

My dissertation does precisely this: it looks closely at the diorama on its own, but in the company of books, by taking Andrew Piper's scholarship on Romantic-era bibliography, *Dreaming in Books*, as its starting point. Piper illustrates how literature in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries communicates the idea of the book while peering inward at itself. He argues that romantic books imagined and talked about books, dizzyingly, in mobile and versatile self-reflexive book forms. Piper's analyses of bibliographical copying and sharing are vital to my project. He sets romanticism's obsession with reproducibility and repetition alongside its equal obsession with authenticity and the desire to return to beginnings—a trope so often identified as

a fundamental of romanticism. The collected edition, Piper argues, became an established form of cultural capital in the nineteenth century and a product of a new “combinatory spirit” that changed attitudes about what constitutes creativity, originality, and a new book (55-57).

Dioramists and the authors that respond to them, I show, also embrace the combinatory spirit of authorship.

In each chapter, I provide new evidence to prove what Piper suggests in his introduction: “the *intermediality* of the romantic book is a core component of the story of the romantic book” and “the proliferation of the printed book [. . .] depended upon an engagement with a variety of non-print, non-book, and non-text practices and sites” (16, emphasis in original). In Chapter 1, I unfold multimedia exchanges that occurred between the panorama and eighteenth-century fiction and poetry before the diorama’s invention in order to foreground a particularly Scottish precedent for Romantic-era Scottish authors incorporating diorama-like spectacles into their work. One of the diorama’s most influential predecessors, the panorama had a similar appeal to authors as a medium steeped in picturesque traditions and that inspired their writings.

Specifically, I uncover an intermedial exchange between Robert Barker’s Edinburgh panorama and Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) as well as *Waverley, or ‘Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814). Scott unfurls the Battle of Prestonpans scene in *Waverley* by ekphrastically bringing Barker’s panorama and its accompanying booklet to the text. Further, I argue that the Royal Mail coaches that barreled throughout Great Britain’s expanding system of highways provide another pre-Diorama textual influence. Mail coaches make the transport of correspondence, periodicals, and books, along with passengers, into a national spectacle, whether the coaches create the attraction by crashing or lighting up the postal depot with a nightly queue of lanterns, horses, and stately decorated carriages. Like his integration of the Prestonpans panorama, Scott also incorporates the

spectacle of the Mail Coach to graphically attract and hook his readers at the start of *The Heart of Midlothian*.

Chapter 2 follows the arc of the intermedial exchange I began in chapter 1. Here I show that Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1823) is a product of the romantic "combinatory spirit" that makes something new out of an assemblage of multiple pre-existing textual and non-textual media. The novel republishes material from *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* as well as the Justified Sinner's diary supplemented with the Editor's commentary, it recirculates the Editor's opening narrative in the *Confessions* and material gathered from local records and stories, and, further, it brings in Scott. Crucially, I show that Hogg also includes a diorama in his assemblage. Heavily influenced by the emphatic exchange between Scott's work and reputation as well as the large-scale art spectacles of Edinburgh scenes, Hogg remediates Daguerre's Holyrood Chapel diorama into *Confessions*. In fact, Hogg aims to use the remediated diorama in his novel in order to boost his literary status, which suffers from the split identity of struggling farmer/shepherd and writer—a dual persona that he cultivated but that plagues his reputation to this day. As one who produces a deconstructed diorama in his novel, Hogg, I argue, takes on the persona of a literary dioramist in addition to the other two; in doing so, he therefore gains new association with Daguerre, Bouton, and the French-British metropolitan artistic cultural centers. Furthermore, the diorama and accompanying booklet that he chooses to remediate generates Scottish tradition by passing on the history of Scottish nobles buried in Holyrood Chapel as well as the chapel's history of iconoclasm. The remediation has the potential to help him join "The Great Anonymous," Walter Scott, as a catalyst and part of Scottish literary tradition.

Leaping from Scotland to Switzerland, the third chapter documents how the diorama inspired Rodolphe Töpffer's invention of the comic strip and his earliest picture stories *Histoire de Mr. Vieux Bois* (1827) and *Voyages et Aventures de Docteur Festus* (1829). This time, I argue, authorial invention comes as a reaction against the diorama's highly mediated shows that attempted to convey realistic copies of nature to an audience. Here, John Tresch's *The Romantic Machine* is helpful for understanding the Genevan artist's objection to the diorama. Tresch points out that the diorama was far more of a "machine" than the panorama and was also widely considered as "an example of up-to-date optical science" that produced both wonder as well as disgust with its attempt to capture nature on a screen (137, 140). Töpffer, a schoolteacher who believed that the rugged Swiss Alps could be a better pedagogical setting than a classroom, challenges Daguerre's aesthetic theory and practices, responding by using the simpler tools of the picturesque: a Claude mirror, pen, some white paper, sketches, and only a few lines of text to accompany each image. Töpffer foregrounds the tools of the picturesque in his comics in order to satirize the technologies of the diorama and other related artistic media, such as the daguerreotype. His two earliest stories, together, argue that the truest representations of nature do not try to perfectly translate one's environment onto the canvas. Rather, by marking the page minimally with text and images and by faithful representations of nature, the artist leaves room for each recipient to interpret realism for him or herself. What the artist leaves off of the page or the canvas or what he does not try to mimic makes a genitive tabula rasa that precludes the need for newer technologies.

My fourth chapter uses what we know about the diorama to think about Romantic-era libraries and collections as dioramic, heterotopic spaces. In addition to responding to the picturesque, dioramas, I argue, are groupings and recombinations of media with roots in the

eighteenth-century genre of the miscellany. Each diorama's collection of media thus works together to produce an illusion of access to a far-away place, usually a desirable tourism site such as an old chapel ruin. The diorama's illusions, produced by a cornucopia of media and effects, can help us see similar illusions of access and stability inherent in Romantic-era book collections and private libraries, especially Walter Scott's Abbotsford estate.

As my postscript shows, Daguerre and Bouton created an art form that refused a singular specialty and, instead, became a kind of catch-all for artists. In the nineteenth century, if you had a realistic painting of a place, some optical tools to create illusions or animation effects, and a venue to display your work, you could create a show and call it a "diorama." This malleable, customizable quality of the diorama, I believe, is what made it so attractive to authors from the start. It creates illusions and associations with the fame of Daguerre out of the materials and media one has nearby. And for those working with paper, print, and bindings, the materials were far easier to acquire than those artists wrestling with scenographics, architecture, lighting, and a wall-sized canvas covered in flammable paint.

One author who clearly and immediately identified the diorama's invitation to remix is Andrew Wilkie. Published just one year after the Regent's Park Diorama opened, Wilkie's book, *The Diorama of Life, or the Macrocosm and Microcosm Displayed: Characteristic Sketches and Anecdotes of Men and Things* (1824), is a diorama-book, a miscellany. Some critics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries considered miscellanies to be unimpressive forms of authorship that merely recycled literature and, therefore, added no new value to book culture. However, miscellanists, such as Wilkie and Benjamin D'Israeli, did not identify literary value in "the continuity of the text" (qtd. in Ferris, *D'Israeli*: 526). Instead, D'Israeli writes about the contents of his miscellany as "diversified objects [. . . that] can never melt together in the

continuity of a text.” Moreover, D’Israeli and Wilkie emphasize that miscellaneous reading needs no training to perform, only one’s attention and natural curiosity—much like a diorama show (Ferris, *D’Israeli* 531-32).

Wilkie’s miscellany *The Diorama of Life* takes the diorama’s optics and the array of visual perspectives it provides and renders them as metaphors for insights on life. This miscellany contains over one hundred separate prose vignettes, and each provides both “profit and delight,” much like the entertaining views that dioramas exhibited along with educational booklets. The vignettes sound as if the same author composed them, but at the same time, they share the bland, authorless tone of a collection of morals. None of the vignettes contain episodes that take place at the Diorama or a panorama show, and the word “diorama” only occurs in the book’s title. By calling his book *The Diorama*, Wilkie takes advantage of the new medium’s popularity and most likely hopes to attract buyers with the title. However, he also transforms The Diorama into *The Diorama*, a book that has no content in common with the painting shows or the diorama theaters in Regent’s Park or Paris, the only two that existed at the time. The book title envisions the spectacle of the Diorama, which just opened in London, in bibliographical miscellany form—a far cry from the two-painting shows with 3-D moving images of Alpine valleys and gothic chapels on display at Regent’s Park. Or is it? This dissertation attempts to answer the questions of what prompted Wilkie and authors like him to merge his book with The Diorama, and what made the label of “diorama” so desirable for authors?

As I argue, the diorama enabled its own multi-media transmission. In other words, it contained, in its guts, the essence of Romantic-era objects that are built to pass themselves on. Just as we expect old manuscripts to be found, reread, and reprinted for the reader in romantic gothic novels, we should also expect to find evidence of dioramas in other romantic and

nineteenth-century media, from books to spectacle shows. The transmissive essence of the diorama comes from the book genre of the miscellany. The miscellany, Piper argues, serves a petri dish for studying the continuum between ownership of original writing and giving another author or editor credit for arranging others' writing in a certain way, say, in a gift book ("Romantic Miscellany" 128-9). Gift book authors not only claimed credit for other authors' writing, simply by arranging and binding it anew, but also offered authorial credit to the readers they invited to write on gift book pages and make them their own. Here, we must remember that the Diorama also cultivated readers of their media miscellanies: those who read their programs describing each painting spectacle. Daguerre, so keen to manipulate visual perception, chipped away at the distinction between watching and reading. It follows that if the show can be read, its illusions, as pages, can be cut, and then viewers become readers as well as authors who reorganize and reproduce the show's "pages." Daguerre and Bouton's shows, then, promoted creativity and the making of new kinds of books *and* new kinds of diorama shows that raise familiar questions about where the page ends and the "screen" begins—a topic media historians and theorists grapple with today.

## CHAPTER 1

### WALTER SCOTT AND ROMANTIC-ERA TEXTUAL SPECTACLES BEFORE THE DIORAMA

Here I uncover interactions and exchanges that produced a new kind of multimedia text in the Romantic era: textual panoramas and dioramas.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter and the next, I follow the course of an intermedial dialogue that carries us between grand-scale art spectacles and books, two of the most popular visual entertainments of the period. The study centers on Walter Scott and James Hogg's techniques for pushing the limits of authorial invention in an effort to bring Scottish literary and cultural heritage to life by incorporating popular methods of displaying art in their prose and verse. My evidential course in this chapter follows the Scottish invention of the panorama to Scott's historical novels and long poems that incorporate textual panoramas. I then outline the influence of illustrated editions of Waverley novels and how they fed textual panoramas by producing enchanting visual experiences of a place *within* the text. The chapter concludes with a look at transportation, road improvements, and mail delivery at the turn of the nineteenth century, when the panorama enjoyed great popularity. Finally, the Diorama's turning auditorium, a Scottish diorama painting, and its accompanying booklet take the audience back to this time before the Diorama's invention, before train travel, to savor the slower progression of post and the unfurling length of the panorama—a time when texts (handwritten as well as print) traveled without the aid of machines. My analysis of early nineteenth-century textual panoramas in this first chapter lays a historical foundation for uncovering, in the subsequent chapter, the

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout, I use Diorama, with a capital “D” to specify the specific Diorama theater in London or Paris that Daguerre and Bouton built and in which they showed the first diorama paintings. I use diorama, with a lowercase “d,” to refer to diorama paintings or the medium of the diorama in general.

textual diorama in James Hogg's Scottish gothic fiction as well as the long and varied life of the "dioramic" in books of many kinds throughout the nineteenth century.

Before the invention of the Diorama in 1822 by L. J. M. Daguerre and Charles Bouton, Romantic-era authors transformed panoramas and related art shows to create textual spectacles, new forms of mixed-media narrative. This transformation is not a remediation; textual panoramas do not attempt to replace the original spectacular medium and hide the process of transformation from what is essentially a painting to a text.<sup>2</sup> Rather, panoramas-in-text leave traces in language of the artwork that inspired them. These book-bound allusions do not specifically announce or cite their sources, but rather, point to the message or topic the panorama conveyed as well as how the panorama worked: its effects, dimensions, and moving parts such as wheels. This is especially true among Scottish panoramas, writings, and dioramas that I analyze in the first half of this dissertation project. Textual panoramas and their textual medial trail invite readers to watch or "look here" as much as to read the words on the page. They also indicate that the text and bound volume a reader holds is just part of the picture, literally. A study of literary form and invention in the Romantic era is incomplete without considering the influence that ocular entertainments had on eighteenth and nineteenth-century authors.

### **The Panorama and Textual Panoramas in Romantic-era Writing**

The Irish painter Robert Barker invented panorama painting in the late eighteenth century in Edinburgh, and his very first panorama depicted a view of the Scottish capital that connects him geographically and artistically to Scott.<sup>3</sup> He patented his artistic invention in 1787, and it thrives

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<sup>2</sup> For more on remediation, see Bolter and Grusin's *Remediation: Understanding New Media*.

<sup>3</sup> For general descriptions and histories of the panorama, see Stephan Oettermann's *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium* (1997); Erkki Huhtamo's *Illusions in Motion: Media*

as an artistic genre to this day, though “panorama” now refers to a very wide range of artistic products, including photographs. In the eighteenth century, at the time of its inception and original popularity, the panorama was a type of painting unique for its length, scope, and the way that audiences viewed it. These paintings depicted a single location, but did so in an expansive, elongated fashion. They required a very long horizontal canvas or wall, usually circumscribing a large, circular room in a building constructed for the purpose of displaying these encompassing artworks that dwarf their viewers. The upper and lower borders of the painting remain hidden, and lighting techniques transformed what would have simply been a very long painting into an illusory experience, one meant to transport a viewer imaginatively to the location presented in the painting. Indeed, Barker asserts in the 1787 patent for *An Entire New Contrivance or Apparatus, which I call La Nature à Coup d’Oeil, for the Purpose of Displaying Views or Nature at large by Oil Painting, Fresco, Water Colors, Crayons, or any other Mode of Painting or Drawing* that a panorama viewer should feel “as if really on the very spot” (Mannoni 157-58). Viewers must have felt this as they were “exploring” the scape of the painting by walking around the gallery and seeing its various parts, painted in exhilarating details on vast wall planes.

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*Archaeology and the Moving Panorama* (2013); Bernard Comment’s *The Panorama* (2003); *Panoramas, 1787-1900*, in five volumes (eds. Sibylle Erle et al.); and Richard Altick’s *The Shows of London* (1978). For studies of the panorama in relation to romanticism, see William H. Galperin’s *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* (1993); Gillen D’Arcy Wood’s *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (2001); Sophie Thomas’ *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Ruin* (2007); Denise Blake Oleksijczuk’s *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (2011); Daniel White’s *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, and Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (2013); Peter Otto’s *Multiplying Worlds: Romanticism, Modernity, and the Emergence of Virtual Reality* (2011); J. Jennifer Jones’ “Absorbing Hesitation: Wordsworth and the Theory of the Panorama” (2006); Ross King’s “Wordsworth, Panorama, and the Prospect of London” (1993); Markman Ellis’ “‘Spectacles within Doors’: Panoramas of London in the 1790s”; and Michael Charlesworth’s “Subverting the Command of Place: Panorama and the Romantics” in *Placing and Displacing Romanticism* (2001).

Though these paintings did portray a single location, and often a historical event at a certain site, they also conveyed a narrative. The artist would create such a narrative by the way in which he engineered the panorama's massive canvas to be viewed and interpreted. A panorama painting—especially one that was not mechanized—was usually far too large for a viewer to take in all at once. Because the painting covered the walls of a circular room the viewer had to consume its parts in slices and then use her memory to imaginatively piece it all together in order to reconstruct the full arc of the image. Like dioramas, each panorama usually exhibited with a program booklet that explained the historical significance of the painted scene and the many landmarks depicted therein. These contained a miniature plan of the panorama, a small reproduction of the whole scene, marked with numbers that referred to a key. In the key, each number included a description of the site and its attributes located at that number. The printed key could then be used as an annotated map to identify the parts of the painting on the rotunda's walls. Thus, while the full panorama depicts a lengthy arrangement of details in a given scene that comprise a synchronous moment in that scene, the panorama also “reads” as a succession of events according to the numbered key. A viewer must experience the parts of the painting in succession as she moves through them or among them, while alternating between reading the booklet and looking back up at correlative images that surround her.

Panoramas have a very close relationship to nineteenth-century novels, and not just those by Walter Scott. According to Alison Byerly, Victorian fiction, such as novels by Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot, often contain a “sweeping, panoramic survey of a scene” that has roots in a tradition of landscape description as part of picturesque travel, travel

writing, and sketching or painting that travelers accomplished on their trips (13).<sup>4</sup> The panorama art industry sought to capitalize on citizens' increased desire to travel and the simultaneous popularity of adventures in one's own "backyard," so to speak, by eliminating physical transportation and the costs of a journey in terms of time and money. The panorama replaced actual trips with the *feeling* of journeying and contemplating enthralling vistas and tourist sites that appeared in mesmerizing tableaux. For example, one reviewer of Allom's Constantinople panorama describes the experience of becoming spellbound by such a painting:

You choose some dark corner of the room, and there unseen by everyone, and seeing no one, you leave England, and all thoughts of duns and debtors and household cares, far behind you. The next minute you open your eyes, and find yourself wandering in the streets of some foreign capital. You have no necessity to leave your seat; only give yourself up to the pictorial influence of the scene, and let your eyes walk instead of your legs. It is more amusing, less fatiguing, and does not wear out the shoe-leather. ("Constantinople" 97)

From this review, we glean that panoramas gave their viewers the rush of their own personal escape. Though they were seated or standing in a large gallery, panorama viewers felt, viscerally, as though each one of them, alone, had travelled by carriage or by boat, usually, to experience a place apart from their current location, responsibilities, and social milieu. This feeling that, despite the impossibility of being in two places at once, one could physically stand in a crowded

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<sup>4</sup> Byerly also links panoramic surveys in Victorian novels to the practice of hot air balloon travel, as it also created a point-of-view that was both picturesque and disorienting (13). I find this example less compelling as an inspiration for Scott's panoramic scenes because there is less of a discord between reality and fiction in balloon travel. Of course, the view from the clouds disorients and offers an unsettling perspective of what previously was familiar on the ground. However, the balloon view does not require the viewer to do mental battle between feeling immersed in a fictitious scene of a historical event and also returning to one's senses to recall that the scene is painted on a wall or canvas in a theater within a city center.

Edinburgh or London gallery and, simultaneously, abscond to witness a historical battle or landmark in a different place and even a different year, was an essential physiological symptom that made these shows so compelling, and perhaps near addictive, for nineteenth-century audiences (Byerly 56).<sup>5</sup> Audience members felt physically transported into the view and relished the act of suspending their disbelief that a painting could move them so.

Novelists, in turn, saw that their writing could create a similarly engrossing effect that brought a reader into a panoramic scene and constructed a visceral and layered impression of reality. I add to Byerly's research that virtual travel of this kind in novels is not unique to the Victorian novel, but also dates back to the Romantic era, especially to those experiments in the gothic novel, like Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), so popular in the 1790s and the earliest decades of the nineteenth century, that brought readers to panoramic scenes in the French and Swiss Alps, Italy, and Sicily. It is no coincidence that Walter Scott uses travel as a vehicle to begin both *Waverley* and *The Heart of Midlothian*; what better way to create an itinerary that helps a reader imaginatively leave her seat, in which she cradles her book, and arrive in an earlier time and at a new location where the fictional plot begins? Knowing that his readers crave a vista, *Waverley*'s narrator implores them:

Those who are contented to remain with me will be occasionally exposed to the dulness [*sic*] inseparable from heavy roads, steep hills, sloughs, and other terrestrial retardations; [. . .] I also engage to get as soon as possible into a more

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<sup>5</sup> Byerly emphasizes the physiological reaction these shows caused their attendees. The viewer's sense of realism and of having been virtually transported derives from the exhibit's "success in stimulating a physical sensation of mobility in the viewer" (56). She invokes Mark B. N. Hansen's *Bodies in Code* to emphasize the importance of physiological perceptions of feeling located, noting that physical movements and sensory stimuli create a bodily and sensation-based reality that joins a person to her surroundings. (16)

picturesque and romantic country, if my passengers incline to have some patience with me during my first stages. (24)

Here, Scott's tone is partially ironic, as a journey in writing should preclude the physical toils and skip right to the sites on an itinerary. Yet, the author aims metaphorically to use a trip's hardships to his advantage: travel necessitates the patient and slow navigation of steep hills and imperfect roadways, which make the reward of obtaining a picturesque view all the more sweet. Here, "picturesque and romantic country" refers to Scotland and the protagonist's journey there with the Hanoverian militia just before the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. In the chapters that follow, the reader joins Waverley on this journey and, with him, finds the Scottish Highlands and their clans so enticing that he absconds from his squad and converts to join the Highlanders and their Jacobin cause.<sup>6</sup>

Panoramas often presented scenes of landscapes featuring tourist sites, historical battles, or cityscapes. They also reproduced major battles or political events that would show well as a spectacle. For example, some of the panoramas produced between 1788 and 1800 include *View of the Grand Fleet at Spithead in the year 1791* (1793-94); *View of the City of Bath and the Surrounding Country* (1794-95); *View of London from the Roof of the Albion Mills* (1795-96); *Position of the British and French fleets, about Nine a.m., the First of June 1794* (1795-96); *Admiral Cornwallis' Naval Engagement with the French* (1796-97); *View of Plymouth* (1797-98); *View of Margate* (1799-1800) (Oleksijczuk 173). This list of panorama titles reveals the political, historical, and geographical specificity that this genre strove for; most paintings take

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<sup>6</sup> A miniature scroll panorama was invented in the 1820s, just after the publication of *Waverley* and before the invention of the Diorama. These scrolls operated like scrolls of text, but instead of revealing words, they uncovered images as the handles turned and unfurled a continuous illustrated sheet (Huhtamo 46-57). These devices shrunk the panorama and delivered it as text was once delivered: by the twist of wrists and to a single reader at a time. These small panoramas, then, operated like early books.

their audience to a very specific place, time, and event regenerated by the artist as an immersive virtual experience. In this endeavor, they accomplish the same work as Walter Scott's historical fiction in *Waverley*, which delivers Edward Waverley and the reader to Holyrood on the eve of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion as recreated in Scott's imagination.

### **Scott's Textual Panorama in *Waverley*: Barker's "Edinburgh" and Victory at Prestonpans**

*Waverley* depicts the clash of the Stuart and Hanoverian armies as a theatrical spectacle. In the following analyses I demonstrate the connection between Scott's textual spectacles in *Waverley* and his verse in *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, early panoramas of Edinburgh and Scottish scenes, and how they are precursors to the diorama and the Scottish paintings it exhibited. Holyrood Palace, in *Waverley*, is the Stuart stronghold for Prince Charles' challenge to Hanoverian rule in Britain. The novel's fictitious protagonist, Edward Waverley, joins forces with the Highlanders and meets Bonnie Prince Charlie in Holyrood Palace the night before the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion begins at the battle of Prestonpans on September 21. At the height of Waverley's confusion about his political allegiances, he dons Highlander tartans, accepts the sword and shield given to him by the Prince, and joins the Stuarts in their impassioned battle near Arthur's Seat. Scott gives his readers a vivid, partially fictional reconstruction of the 1745 rebellion that includes the language of technologically produced visual representation.

In fact, I argue that the episode that illustrates, with prose, views of the Stuart and Hanoverian armies at the 1745 battle of Prestonpans is a panorama in text, painted by Scott with language. I believe that he bases this panorama on Robert Barker's famous first panorama, *View of Edinburgh and the Surrounding Country from Calton Hill*, which inaugurated this genre of

artistic expression that still thrives in the twenty-first century.<sup>7</sup> Scott's narrator beckons the reader to take up Edward Waverley's view; it is both hypnotic and unsettling, encouraging him to zoom outward at the shape of the entire army, but also reverse direction and focus in on details. Like one observing a panorama amazed at both the detail and the immense scale and length of the painting, and enthralled by the sense of being located both in a gallery in London and on a battlefield near Edinburgh, Edward Waverley cannot select one position in the scene to occupy. He oscillates between the two. This scene, spanning several chapters, is too vast in detail and in length—that is, too much of a true textual panorama—to quote here in full. (Booklets that described panoramas regularly spanned 20 pages.) Here, I excerpt from various points in this comprehensive illustration in prose. I also italicize key phrases in this long quote to highlight its panoramic extent and the language of spectacle embedded within, including those phrases that signal the panorama's large size, changes in perspective, allusions to spectacles with audiences, and hints related to moving parts that differentiate this textual panorama from an ekphrastic rendition of a history painting.

When [Waverley] had surmounted a small craggy eminence [ . . . ] or the hollow between the mountain of Arthur's Seat, the rising grounds on which the southern part of Edinburgh is now built [...] lay beneath him, and displayed a singular and animating prospect. It was occupied by the army of the Highlanders, now in the act of preparing for their march. Waverley had already seen something of the kind at the hunting-match which he attended with Fergus Mac-Ivor, but *this was upon a scale of much greater magnitude, and incomparably deeper interest*. The rocks, which formed the back-ground of the scene, and the very sky itself, rung with the

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<sup>7</sup> For an image of this panorama, see Denise Blake Oleksijczuk's *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (2011), pages 24-25.

clang of the bagpipers, summoning forth, each with his appropriate pibroch, his chieftain and clan. The mountaineers, rousing themselves from their couch under the canopy of heaven, with the hum and bustle of a confused and irregular multitude, like bees alarmed and arming in their hives, seemed to possess all the liability of movement fitted to execute military manœuvres. Their motions appeared spontaneous and confused, but the result was order and regularity; so that a general must have praised the conclusion, though a martinet might have ridiculed the method by which it was attained.

The sort of complicated medley created by the hasty arrangement of the various clans under their respective banners, for the purpose of getting into the order or march, was in itself a gay and lively *spectacle*[. . .] After forming for a little while, there was exhibited a *changing, fluctuating, and confused appearance* of waving tartans and floating plumes, and of banners[. . .]

*At length the mixed and wavering multitude arranged themselves in a narrow and dusky column of great length, stretching through the whole extent of the valley.* In the front of the column the standard of the Chevalier was displayed, bearing a red cross upon a white ground, with the motto *Tandem Triumphans*<sup>8</sup>. The few cavalry, being chiefly Lowland gentry, with their domestic servants and retainers, formed the advanced-guard of the army, and their standards, of which they had rather too many in respect of their numbers, were seen *waving upon the extreme verge of the horizon*[. . .] The fascinations of the Circes of the High Street, and the potions of strength with which they had been drenched over night,

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<sup>8</sup> “*Tandem Triumphans*” is italicized in original.

had probably detained these heroes within the walls of Edinburgh somewhat later than was consistent with their morning duty. Of such loiterers, the more prudent took the longer and circuitous, but more open route, to attain their place in the march[. . .] The *irregular appearance and vanishing of these small parties*, as well as the confusion occasioned by those who endeavoured, though generally without effect, to press to the front through the crowd of Highlanders, maugre their curses, oaths, and opposition, added to the *picturesque wildness*, though not to the military regularity of the scene[. . .]

Waverley walked briskly forward, yet often casting a glance upon *the darksome clouds of warriors who were collected before and beneath him*. A nearer view, indeed, rather diminished the effect impressed on the mind by the more distant appearance of the army. The leading men of each clan were well armed with broadsword, target, and fusee to which, all added the dirk, and most the steel pistol[. . .] But, in an inferior rank to these, there were found individuals of an inferior description, the peasantry of the country, [. . .] being indifferently accoutered, and worse armed, half naked, stunted in growth, and miserable in aspect[. . .]

From this it happened, that, in bodies, the van of which were admirably well armed in their own fashion, the rear resembled actual banditti. Here was a pole-axe, there a sword without a scabbard; here a gun without a lock, there a scythe set straight upon a pole; and some had only their dirks, and bludgeons or stakes pulled out of hedges. The grim, uncombed, and wild appearance of these men, most of whom gazed with all the admiration of ignorance upon the most

ordinary productions of domestic art, create surprise in the Lowlands, but it also created terror[. . .] It cannot therefore be wondered if Waverley, who had hitherto judged of the Highlanders generally, from the samples which the policy of Fergus had from time to time exhibited, should have felt damped and astonished at the daring attempt of a body not then exceeding four thousand men, and of those not above half the number, at the utmost, well armed, to change the fate, and alter the dynasty, of the British kingdoms.

As he moved along the column, which still remained stationary,<sup>9</sup> an iron gun, the only piece of artillery possessed by the army which meditated so important a revolution, was fired as the signal of march[. . .] No sooner was its voice heard upon the present occasion, than *the whole line was in motion*. A wild cry of joy from the advancing battalions rent the air, and was then lost in the shrill clangour of the bagpipes, as the sound of these, in their turn, was partially drowned by the heavy tread of so many men put at once into motion. *The banners glittered and shook* as they moved forward, and the horse hastened to occupy their station as the advanced guard, and to push on reconnoitering parties to ascertain and report the motions of the enemy. *They vanished from Waverley's eye as they wheeled round the basis of Arthur's Seat*, under the remarkable ridge of basaltic rocks which from the little lake of Duddingston[. . .]

*Here then was a military spectacle of no ordinary interest, or usual occurrence.* The two armies, so different in aspect and discipline, yet each

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<sup>9</sup> Waverley, here, moves along the stationary, very long column of mustered militia, noticing their details, much like a viewer would move along the long unfurled column of a panorama canvas. This, interestingly, would make the Highlander army gathering the canvas of the panorama.

admirably trained to their peculiar mode of war, upon whose conflict the temporary fate at least of Scotland appeared to depend, *now faced each other like two gladiators in the arena*, each meditating upon the mode of attacking their enemy. The leading officers and the general's staff of each army could be distinguished in front of their lines, busied with their spyglasses to watch each others' motions[. . .] *From the neighboring hamlets, the peasantry cautiously shewed themselves as if watching the issue of the expected engagement; and at no great distance in the bay were two square-rigged vessels bearing the English flag, whose tops and yards were crowded with less timid spectators.*

When this awful pause had lasted for a short time, Fergus, with another Chieftain, received orders to detach their clans towards the village of Preston, in order to threaten the right flank of Cope's army, and compel him to a change of disposition[. . . The English soldiers] approached so near that Waverley could plainly recognize the standard of the troop he had formerly commanded, and hear the trumpets and kettledrums sound the advance, which he had so often obeyed. He could hear, too, the well-known word given in the English dialect, by the equally well-distinguished voice of the commanding officer for whom he had once felt so much respect. It was at that instant, that looking around him, he saw the wild dress and appearance of this Highland associates, heard their whispers in an uncouth and unknown language, looked upon his own dress, so unlike that which he had worn from his infancy, and wished to awake from what seemed at the moment a dream, strange, horrible, and unnatural. "Good God," he thought, "am I

then a traitor to my country, a renegade to my standard, and a foe, as that poor dying wretch expressed himself, to my native England!” (212-15, 220-21)

In this slice of a very long textual panorama, the narrator’s view follows a historical plot leading up to the battle of Prestonpans, the beginning of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Claire Lamont tells us that Scott recounts the Jacobite rebellion “with accuracy,” including Prince Charles’ occupation of Holyrood and the Stuarts’ victory at Prestonpans, described in the passage above, the invasion of England all the way to Derby, and the Stuart army’s retreat and final battle at Clifton (xii). The reader takes Waverley’s changing vantage, one that alternates between a distant view of the “cloud of warriors” and the nearness of distinct details, such as the various weapons that the men of each clan carried. Images illustrated by describing the far away scene of the mustering army contrast with moments in which the narrator describes smaller details of Highlanders getting ready for battle. Waverley takes an especially panoramic viewpoint when he looks out from the saddle near Arthur’s Seat and sees the southern part of Edinburgh as a “singular and animating prospect” of an army of Highlanders, near Holyrood, preparing to march into battle, a “mixed and wavering multitude [that] arranged themselves into a dusky column of great length stretching through the whole extent of the valley” (212, 213). The column of great length is a panorama. Like a spectator’s view of a panorama painting that he cannot see all at once, Waverley’s view does not hold steady: it is “mixed,” “wavering,” “irregular,” a “complicated medley.” Further, Waverley’s attention also waffles as he becomes alternately engrossed and self-aware, intimately absorbed in the military rally but also curious about how the parts of the Stuart army—the clans and weapons, for example—work together. It is also historical, and a “remarkable spectacle” of “picturesque wildness” (213).

Importantly, I point out here that Scott's textual panorama in *Waverley* does not just fit the scenery illustrated in Barker's first *Edinburgh* panorama; it depicts the same historical event that Barker ascribes to this inventive painting. The panorama exhibit included a raised viewing platform—like *Waverley*'s view of the army from the cliffs above Holyrood—at the center of a circular canvas nearly nine feet high and twenty-three feet in diameter (measured from the center of the viewing platform) (Oleksijczuk 23). The canvas was not one seamless piece: rather, the artist sewed together six hand-colored aquatints to complete the view of Edinburgh as seen from the roof of the Calton Hill astronomical observatory (Oleksijczuk 23). Starting due west and peering toward the medieval castle, the view read clockwise, through New Town, past the glass factories in Leith, to the port of Edinburgh in the northeast, to the unfinished new observatory, to Holyrood Palace and chapel to the east, and to Edinburgh castle. The painting depicts a clear, sunny day such that one can see distant highlands, volcanoes, slopes, farms, estates, lowlands, and the North Sea (Oleksijczuk 23). A peaceful scene at first glance, the panorama is seemingly divorced from the turbulent and bloody chapters of Scottish history that Scott recounts. There are only a few human figures in the scene, including some light traffic on the Royal Mile, the road that leads to Holyrood Palace, and a few couples standing on the plain and pointing to Arthur's Seat in the fifth panel. If we analyzed this panorama as simply a visual spectacle – the way that they are usually analyzed, and the way that dioramas are also usually considered – this scene conveys nothing more than a serene, sparsely populated old image of Edinburgh and its surroundings as a view taken from the Calton hilltop. However, when analyzed in concert with the booklet that accompanies the panorama, the view tells a far more politically charged story.

When we examine the booklet that Barker wrote to accompany and explicate his first panorama we see that it reveals that this expansive picture was interpreted and used as a visual to

explain the battle of Prestonpans—the same battle depicted in Scott’s *Waverley* textual panorama. The 25-page booklet contains three parts: an introduction with instructions for how to best view the scene and how to “read” it left-to-right, the body that describes each plate in the total panoramic scene, and a conclusion that instructs the spectator in how to imagine the plates as a setting for the 1745 battle of Prestonpans and related events (Oleksijczuk 35). While the body of the booklet suggests a more linear method of “reading” the panorama, the conclusion offers a nonlinear approach – one not too difficult or inconvenient to enact, considering that a viewer stood in a central viewing platform with the painting wrapped around her. In fact, historians or guides commonly recounted stories of historical events that took place in the surrounding illustration from the “podium” of the raised platform in the center of a panorama. From this central position, they could point to any sector of the painting and gesture to indicate the movements of parties in the story to offer the narrative in a visual geographical context using the panorama. Barker does just this, but with prose, in the conclusion of his Edinburgh panorama booklet:

In the year 1745, previous to the battle of Prestonpans, Hamilton’s dragoons were encamped on the links of Leith, the field immediately joining Leith on the right-hand side of the road, on which now stand some handsome detached houses. . . . When the Highlanders came in sight, the dragoons retired through Edinburgh, by way of the Grass-market and Cowgate, to Musselburgh, six miles distant. The town-guard retreating into the city, the Chevalier and his army marched unmolested through the Grass-market and Cowgate to the King’s Park, which comprehends the flat and high grounds behind the palace to the hills beyond St. Anthony’s Chapel, except Lord Dundonald’s enclosure. The Highland army

encamped behind these hills near Duddinston, and the Chevalier took possession of Holyrood House. The dragoons having joined some infantry, the whole amounting to 3000 men, encamped on the plain to the right of Prestonpans, and the night before the battle the Highlanders took post on the heights to the right hand above them. At four in the morning they marched down with nearly equal numbers, attacked and defeated the king's troops; and the Chevalier marched back through Edinburgh. (Barker, *Explanation of the Six Plates* 15, qtd. in Oleksijczuk)

We can imagine a historian using the panorama to point out the movements of Hamilton's dragoons east, from Leith to Musselburgh, when the Highlanders closed in, encamping beneath Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat. In order to trace the progression of events in the conclusion of the booklet, spectators had to engage more dynamically and physically with the spaces depicted in the panorama, since the landmarks relevant to the sequence of this battle could not simply be read left-to-right. This kind of physical involvement with the scene required cerebrally as well as viscerally tracing, in the 650-square-foot painted tableau, the movements of the armies through the Highlanders' important, though short-lived, victory. Though Barker's rhetoric lacks the flourish and drama of Scott's, it delivers a similar sympathy for the Highlanders because it ends with their victory at Prestonpans, not their subsequent slaughter at Culloden.

The mustering of the Highlander army and the battle that follows in *Waverley* tells the story and the history of this event as a textual panorama: it layers the panorama's vast spatial representations of the landscape, the booklet's account of this specific event, and the fictional plot that follows Edward Waverley's journey. Though his interpretation of the panorama as a stage for the visualization of the 1745 is just a short portion of the 25-page booklet that accompanies Barker's *Edinburgh* panorama, it is his emphatic conclusion and the naissance of an

influential medium. It demonstrates that his panorama was meant to help tell the story of the 1745 Prestonpans battle in an experimental mixed-medium. The booklet, considered within the space of the panorama, creates a multimedia historical Scottish narrative that the reader must walk back and forth across the platform to follow. This exercise makes the panorama a pedagogical apparatus, immersive and memorable—a combination that Daguerre’s Holyrood Chapel diorama would emulate closely.

### ***Lay of the Last Minstrel* and the Textual Spectacle of Roslyn Chapel**

I have argued that Scott’s *Waverley* deploys a textual panorama of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion, and in the larger argument of this chapter I propose that *Waverley* and *Lay of the Last Minstrel* were influential precursors to Daguerre’s Scottish diorama paintings in the 1820s and Hogg’s textual diorama in *Confessions*. My larger point here is that Scott’s composition of a textual panorama of the “Forty Five” is an important precursor to Daguerre’s invention of the Diorama and his paintings of Holyrood Abbey as well as Roslyn Chapel, his two earliest Scottish exhibits. This situates the diorama in an intermedial dialogue between Scottish literature and large-scale spectacular art shows. It also makes a case for a redefinition of what mixed-media literature means for the Romantic era. It means, of course, literature published with illustrations in print, common place books, flower books, miscellanies, and the like, but to these we must add textual panoramas and dioramas.

In *Memoirs of the Life of Walter Scott* (1845), J. G. Lockhart exclaims, “In the history of British Poetry, nothing had ever equalled [*sic.*] the demand for the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*”

(123).<sup>10</sup> Here, I turn to this Canto to show the panoramic effects in the Rosabelle episode, namely, those that make Roslyn chapel a brilliantly lit theater that nests its incandescence in frames. The frames and their audiences make the act of reading Canto VI a lesson in seeing the visual spectacle, fit for a gallery of viewers, on the printed page.<sup>11</sup>

Scott's focus on chiaroscuro, brilliant illumination, and shade effects depicting Roslyn Chapel, as well as his careful inclusion of an audience that views a framed spectacle from a distance, provide textual spectacle precedents to Daguerre's diorama "Roslyn Chapel near Edinburgh, effect of sun."<sup>12</sup> In Canto VI, a bard tells a tale of almost pure description, illustrating a brilliant

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<sup>10</sup> In 1823, two years after its translation in French, Daguerre visited Roslyn chapel featured in Canto VI of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* to conduct research for his diorama painting of the chapel (Barnaby xxvii). To reiterate my argument, this demonstrates the influence that Scott's literature had on those creating large-scale theatrical art exhibitions, such as Daguerre's Diorama, in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>11</sup> Celeste Langan's influential essay, "Understanding Media in 1805: Audiovisual Hallucination and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*," argues that with the "lastness" of Scott's poem, printed poetry after *Lay* (1805) necessitates a more visual interpretation of the "audiovisual hallucinations" that print, as a medium, creates. Before the print revolution, the close connection between poetry and orality allowed for the medium of poetry to produce sound and visual content directly from the page. In print, Langan argues, the difference between prose and blank verse disappears. Importantly, Langan claims that the materiality of the book in which *Lay* is published sets up a distinct and stark contrast between the orality of the minstrel and the song he sings against the modern delivery of that song in print. We must not confuse the "invisible, inaudible medium of print" with the "audiovisual hallucinations" it conveys – the content of the story or meaning of the text (54). Peter Manning's "The Birthday of Typography: A Reponse to Celeste Langan," also published in *Studies in Romanticism*, provides a wonderful summary of Langan's complex argument and uses it to frame readings of John Keats, George Gordon Byron, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

<sup>12</sup> Renzo Dubbini also notes the dioramic qualities of Walter Scott's writing style. Scott uses optics to construct his literary descriptions, along with variations of light, supernatural effects, and careful use of architecture to create the character of a place. See Renzo Dubbini, *Geografie dello Sguardo, Visione e paesaggio in età moderna* and, by the same author, "Il paesaggio dei Diorami."

spectacle of the blazing Roslyn Chapel as well as the spectacle's audience.<sup>13</sup> In the story, a storm causes a shipwreck, drowns the crew and passengers, and washes "a wet shroud rolled round ladye gay" (XXIII.365)—the corpse of lady Rosabelle—within view. The drowning of Rosabelle St. Clair causes Roslyn Chapel to appear to be engulfed in "a wondrous blaze"—a ghostly fire that revisits the chapel each time a St. Clair dies, according to the legend (xxiii.27). Like the distant view of the army at Holyrood in *Waverley*, the fiery spectacle of Roslyn Chapel, seen from a distance, is comprised of rhetorical techniques that prefigure what the diorama did visually to put forth a luminous scene. According to the poem, the chapel creates a far-reaching, flaming and bright tomb in which "Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie; / Each Baron, for a sable shroud, / Sheathed in his iron panoply" (XXIII.35-37). The poem indicates that the entire interior construct of the chapel—crypt, altar, pillars, battlements, pinnets, and buttresses—blazes red. However, such brilliant, evanescent images would not have been made by a panorama. We must look elsewhere to find the brand of theatrical art that they allude to.

The lighting effects and nested frames of spectators in Canto VI create very similar conditions to two backlit painting genres that preceded the diorama and that had traits in common with both the panorama and the diorama, namely, the diaphanorama and moonshine transparencies. The pageantry of the panorama was in its grand size, especially its length, and occasionally in the mechanics of its moving parts; it did not require elaborate light arrangements to generate its spectacular effects. In 1811, Swiss artist Franz Niklaus König (1765-1832), student of panorama painter Marquard Woher, invented an illuminated version of the panorama called the diaphanorama (Oettermann 74). König exhibited his luminous diaphanoramas privately, for gentry and nobility, for about a decade before opening the show to the Parisian

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<sup>13</sup> For more on the role of description as sometimes inseparable from plot in Romantic literature, see Jillian Heydt-Stevenson's essay "Narrative" in *A Handbook of Romanticism Studies*.

public in 1820-21, when Daguerre most likely studied this medium (Altick 163).<sup>14</sup> The diaphanorama created a grander, more theatrical version of “moonshine transparencies,” decorative night-lights that homeowners mounted on their walls. They featured paintings of the moon or a campfire set in a small box that held a row of petite oil lamps just behind the screen. These very popular, portable night-lights were often hung in bedrooms and lit in the evening to add a romantic fireside glow to the room (Oettermann 74). The diaphanorama, on the other hand, entertained larger public audiences with an elaborate light show. König painted watercolors of Swiss landscapes on paper either rubbed with oil or scraped thin to achieve various lighting effects (Oettermann 74). As in the moonshine transparencies, König’s paintings were also encased in a box with lighting affixed behind the painting. Audiences viewed the diaphanorama from seats in a darkened room and, like the panorama and diorama, with programs or booklets to describe the scene.

Roslyn Chapel’s spectral flame in Canto VI of *Lay of the Last Minstrel* creates a theatrical and sublime spectacle that emanates outward through a series of frames, especially when read in the context of moonshine transparencies and the diaphanorama, as Daguerre would have after its translation in 1821. This stanza moves from the Chapel’s stone architecture outward, to the copse-wood glen, the oak grove, and finally, to “caverned Hawthornden,” approximately one mile away. This blaze originates within the chapel and radiates through the valley:

It glared on Roslin’s castled rock,

It reddened all the copse-wood glen;

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Altick is not the only Daguerre scholar to suggest that he most likely studied the diaphanorama during its showings in Paris, from 1820-21. Helmut and Alison Gernsheim and Stephan Oettermann also suggest that Daguerre probably attended a diaphanorama show and that it influenced his invention of the Diorama just a year later, in 1822.

‘Twas seen from Dryden’s groves of oak,

And seen from caverned Hawthornden. (XXIII.30-33)

Not only does Roslyn Chapel’s ghostly inferno color the countryside, but “‘twas seen” from multiple distant locations, which implies, importantly, that it has an audience turned toward the flame-tinted landscape. Furthermore, the tale of Rosabelle has a third audience: the guests in the “darkened hall” who listen to her tale and who, the narrator tells us, were unable to clearly perceive their neighbor’s or their own bodies in the dark auditorium (XXV.2). This audience reminds one strongly of those viewers in a darkened diaphanorama or diorama theater, watching the Roslyn Chapel scene from a pitch-black viewing gallery that many spectators felt to be uncomfortably dark. The audience in the tale and in the gallery plays an essential role in this textual diaphanorama: they ensure that the processes of watching the fire, hearing the tale, and remembering the St. Clairs are built into the story itself.

### **Picture Pages: Walter Scott’s Illustrated Novels**

While Scott incorporated panoramic textual spectacles into his romance poetry and novels, he also wove intricate illustrations into his stories to enliven key plot moments and landmarks.<sup>15</sup> Numerous illustrated editions of his novels circulated for the first time in the early 1820s, including five editions in three different formats (octavo, duodecimo, and decimo-octavo)

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<sup>15</sup> Important work in both print and electronic archives has been published recently on the subject of Waverley’s illustrations. Richard Hill’s *Picturing Scotland through the Waverley Novels* (2010) is an invaluable resource and contains a catalogue: “the first full index of all the illustrations produced for the Waverley novels that were produced during Scott’s lifetime by or for his publishers in Edinburgh” (167). There is also a comprehensive digital archive called *Database of Printed Illustrations to the Waverley Novels*, edited by Peter Garside, “which contains just over 1500 entries for illustrations to Walter Scott’s prose fiction that appeared in print form in Britain between the publication of Scott’s first novel Waverley in 1814 and the end of the nineteenth century.” Garside is also the author of “Illustrating the Waverley Novels: Scott, Scotland, and the London Print Trade, 1819-1836,” in *The Library* 11.2 (June 2010): 168-96.

of *Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley* between 1819 and 1823, as well as three corresponding versions of the *Historical Romances* between 1822 and 1824, and finally three identical versions of the *Novels and Romances of the Author of Waverley* from 1824-25 (Hill 88). Alexander Nasmyth produced a total of 33 illustrations for the Waverley novels between 1821 and 1825 in addition to illustrations for *Poetical Works* in 1821 (Hill 88). These editions were released by Archibald Constable just prior to Daguerre's trip to Scotland to study Holyrood and Roslyn Chapels for diorama paintings and his return to France to open the Paris Diorama in 1822, his display of the Holyrood Chapel diorama for the first time in Paris in 1823-24, the opening of the Roslyn Chapel diorama in Paris 1824-25, and the debut of the Holyrood diorama in London in 1825-26. The illustrations show how historic Scottish sites featured in Scott's writing create compelling visuals and commodities that offer viewers two narratives for each illustration: the Scottish historical narrative and the fictional story that Scott wove and that readers devoured across Europe as translations became available. Both kinds of stories fed Scottish panoramas and dioramas.

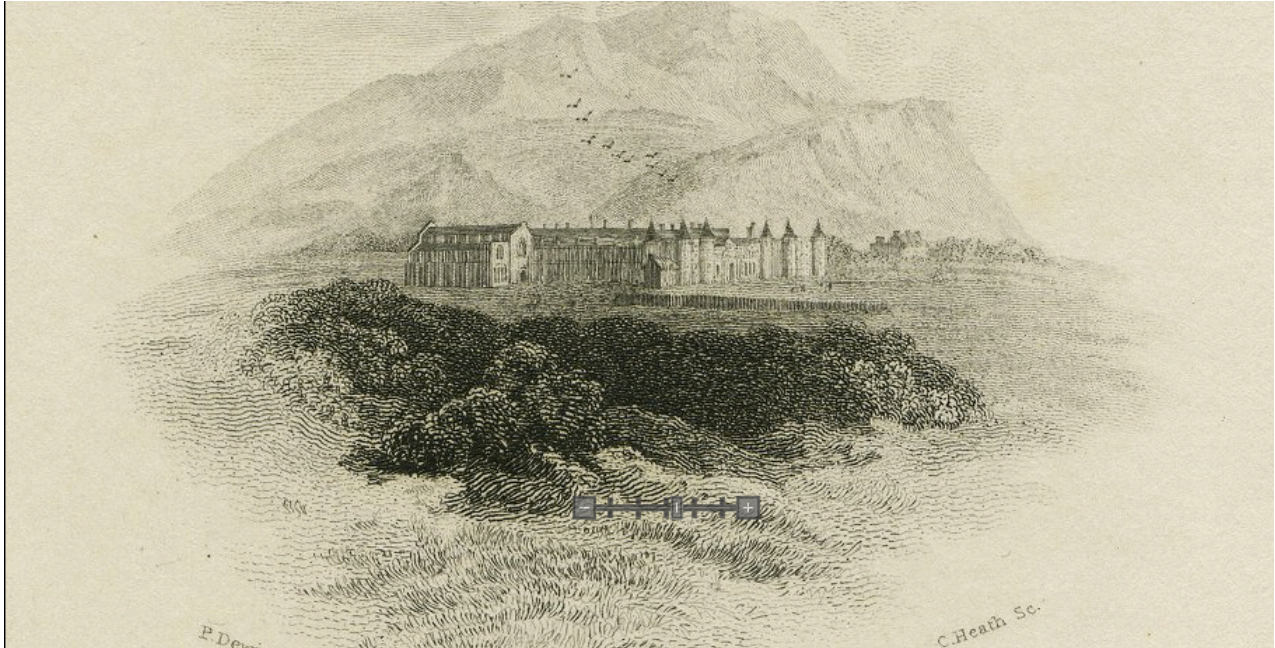


Fig. 1. “Holyrood House” by Alexander Nasmyth, engraved by William Home Lizars, 1821, in *Novels and Tales of The Author of Waverley* [12mo issue], 16 vols (Edinburgh: Constable & Co., 1821).

One specific illustration of Holyrood House and Arthur’s Seat, seen in figure 1, plays an important role in the earliest illustrations of Scott’s work that circulated and drew acclaim during the time when Scott and Holyrood attracted Daguerre’s attention. The illustration shows landmarks that served as a basecamp for Charles Stuart’s challenge to the English army in Scotland: Holyrood Abbey on the left and the palace on the right, framed beneath Arthur’s Seat and Salisbury Crags, which loom ethereally above them. In 1821, Archibald Constable published this image in a collection of Alexander Nasmyth’s illustrations—the first collection of Scott’s illustrated work to be painted, engraved, printed, and published entirely in Edinburgh—in *Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley*. These also constitute the first landscape book illustrations of the Waverley novels produced under Scott’s guidance and with his approval (Hill 171).

Though Nasmyth's painting of "Holyrood house" (figure 1), is just one illustration in a literary marketplace full of illustrated novels about Scotland, this particular image gathered considerable visibility. It appeared repeatedly in some of the most popular titles on the market at a time when illustrated novels were uncommon. It featured first in Constable's 1821 *Novels and Tales*, again on the title page for the 1822 octavo edition of the same title (volume 2), and later in the opening pages of *The Waverley Album* (1832). The reuse of this image benefitted from and fanned the renown of Nasmyth as an established name in Scottish landscape painting and, of course, the fame of the "great unknown" (Hill 100).<sup>16</sup> The illustrations in *Novels and Tales* focus on topography, sites, and architecture associated with the locations in the novels, and in a few cases, recreations of locations as Scott's text depicts them rather than a more realistic representation (Hill 171). Paul Westover's study in *Necromanticism* reveals that illustrated books of Scotland and sites in the Waverley novels became popular, together, in these years due to Scott's success (144). Scottish illustration books, along with illustrated editions of the Waverley novels, synergized both book sales and tourism to the sites depicted in print. In this way, these books are similar to panoramas and dioramas that fulfill desires to travel to Scottish scenery (144). A letter from Constable (the publisher) to Nasmyth (illustrator) on 1 June 1820, regarding the production of this edition states that Scott, referred to in the letter as "the great unknown" (emphasis in original), "admires Holyrood house greatly" – referring to the illustration of Holyrood by Nasmyth and engraved by W. H. Lizars, the only illustration highlighted for special

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<sup>16</sup> According to Richard Hill, illustrated novels were in circulation in the 1790s and early 1800s, however they were usually commissioned for novels and novelists who were already well established in the British canon: "There were no contemporary novels written by women in the 1820s that were illustrated. Illustration seems to have been the privilege of the established, predominantly (though not exclusively) male authors, from Defoe to Sterne, and Rowlandson's comic style of illustration in particular suited a certain type of novel, the picaresque novel. Scott's contemporaries – Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen, Lady Morgan – were not illustrated." (Hill 55)

praise in this letter that lists all of the illustrations in the 1821 edition (201).<sup>17</sup> This illustration received particular attention, charming audiences to imagine themselves encamped on the plains near Holyrood, as the Highland army did in *Waverley* and in Barker's *Edinburgh* panorama booklet. Daguerre's Holyrood Chapel diorama would ask its viewers, just a few years later, to again imagine themselves as part of this landscape, army, and heritage, though in their seats the audience would appear in the graves within the Abbey ruin.

### **Turning toward the Diorama: The Moving Panorama, The Mail Coach, and Holyrood Chapel**

Thus far I have discussed three important facets of Walter Scott's writing that I argue influenced Daguerre's early dioramas of Scottish scenes. These facets include *Waverley*'s textual panorama that paints, with prose, the 1745 battle of Prestonpans, and the effulgent spectacle in *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, a versified "light show" emanating from Roslyn Chapel that reads as dramatically performed for an audience. These textual performances are similar, in many ways, to Daguerre's famous and enthralling dioramas and their precursor, the diaphanorama. Two more types of spectacle assist in contextual analyses of Daguerre's Holyrood Chapel Diorama; they include the flash of the Royal Mail Coaches as they depart or arrive at night, and second, moving panoramas. (The "flash" of the mail-coach refers to the carriages' glow at night when departing from the London depot as well as the increased speed at which information could be delivered from the south-most point to the north-most point of the Great North Road.) Both of these

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<sup>17</sup> In total, an image of Holyrood is featured 5 times in illustrated editions of the *Waverley* novels published between 1821 and 1894, including *Waverley* (3 of the 5), *The Abbot*, and *The Fortunes of Nigel* (*Illustrating Scott*). Three of those five use the Nasmyth image from Constable's 1821 edition of the illustrated *Waverley* novels.

technologies invite viewers to be moved, figuratively, by images or vehicles that make the landscape roll by, and they also attract authors to distill them onto the page.

One particular kind of moving panorama, called a peristrepthic panorama, captured the attention of early nineteenth-century artists, inventors, spectators, and writers. Like Barker's panorama, the peristrepthic version of this show was also invented in Edinburgh. Huhtamo cites 1809 as the earliest known date of an exhibition by Peter Marshall, the founder of this medium, representing a hundred-mile stretch of the banks of the river Clyde in a 300-foot painting, drawn to scale (66). Marshall and his son, William, showed their peristrepthic panoramas chiefly in Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, and Dublin through the 1820s, the formative years of the diorama (Huhtamo 68). According to Hermann Pückler-Muskau's first-hand account of a peristrepthic panorama that showed in Dublin in 1828, viewers entered and seated themselves in a small theater. When the curtain would rise for a show, a spectator would see that the canvas for the peristrepthic follows the curve of a rotunda wall and creates a long concave screen, stretched between sets of rollers in the wings on each side of the stage, hidden from view. As the rollers turn, the canvas unwinds and shows successive pictures with near seamless transitions. The paintings glide across the stage and collect, spooled, behind the wing on the receiving side. Optical illusions make the images on the screen appear realistic in quality/definition and dimension, as they traverse the proscenium. Huhtamo suspects that the artists produced *trompe l'oeil* effects by using painting and illumination techniques similar to those in the diorama. Further, behind the canvas, magic lanterns on rollers and mounted on actors produced images that appeared to move, even to approach the audience and then retreat. In addition to numerous visual effects that moved, chiefly due to the use of rollers, peristrepthic panorama shows were

noisy. They featured music and booming sound effects, the sources of which were also concealed from the audience.<sup>18</sup> (Huhtamo 70-71)

The peristrepthic panorama had a peculiar way of infiltrating text: it convinced audience members, who wrote about the show, to want to include themselves *within* the spectacle. So, when authors addressed the show in writing, they described the show as a part of it, rather than from a critical distance. In general, authors alluded to the peristrepthic in their pieces to describe a witness' position during an event, the hold that such a spectacle has on a viewer, but also the parts of the contraption that move and how they work. They often did so by comparing the mobile parts, which were the spectacle, to the immobile parts, comprised, fascinatingly, of both things *and the people watching*. For example, in *Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolk* (1819), the narrator describes his position watching the proceedings in Parliament as one that "resembled that of a person visiting a peristrepthic panorama, who, himself immoveable in a darksome corner, beholds the whole dust and glare of some fiery battle pass, cloud upon cloud, and flash upon flash, before his eyes" (Lockhart 26). But more importantly, I want to show how reviewers pinpointed still spectators *within the panorama itself*. After being lured into a theater by sound effects he heard on the street, a passerby desires to occupy the best seat in the house for *The Battle of Waterloo*—that belonging to a character depicted within the panorama painting:

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<sup>18</sup> In the *London Magazine* (1824), a reviewer writes an essay that compares his experience of visiting all of the "oramas" in London. He claims that the peristrepthic panorama "pleased [him] best" (274). Part of his fascination with the genre aroused from its enticing noise levels, that could be heard from the street, and lured him to the show like a Siren's call: "As I strolled one evening through the mazes of Spring Gardens, I heard the Peristrepthic music shaking the tiles off the neighbouring houses; (there is a trumpeter in the band, by the bye, who would blow the cupola off St. Pauls' if he exerted himself beneath it, -he almost blew the roof off my skull with a single blast of his *buccina*.) The uproar proceeding from this curiosity-shop induced me to enter." (*London Magazine* 274-75)

I longed to attack the peristrephic people sword in hand, and kill a few dozen Frenchmen on canvas. What would I now give to be the old woman who remained the whole time in the farm-house which stood in the very midst of the field of battle! What a sublime situation for an old woman to be in! How I should have felt had I been there! When heaven and earth were coming together to sit smoking (as she did perhaps) amidst the war of elements, or to “stand secure amidst a falling world” with my hands in my pockets as the drowned Dutchman was found after shipwreck! Only conceive her (blind of one eye possibly) looking out through a cranny with the other, and beholding two hundred thousand men engaged in mutual massacre, and two hundred pieces of cannon bellowing, bursting, and ball playing around her! blood streaming, smoke wreathing, dust flying, the scream of agony, the cry of fear, the groan of death, and the shout of victory!—O if *poeta nascitur non fit* be not a true maxim, that old woman ought to write a far better epic poem than blind Homer, blind Milton, or Bob Southey himself! (273)

Here, the reviewer illustrates his desire to enter the panorama’s scene and take sides: first, as a British soldier armed with a sword who slays “peristrephic people” fighting for the French, and second, as an elderly woman, who appears seated, motionless, in a small house on the field of battle and watches the slaughter from within. Crucially, the writer interprets the old woman’s perspective as that of a poet superior to the contemporary Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, who published *The Poet’s Pilgrimage to Waterloo* in 1816, a year later than most contemporary Waterloo poems, such as Walter Scott’s *The Field of Waterloo* (1815). In other words, the spectator, by so closely identifying with the old woman peering at the battlefield—unseen by

those fighting, protected witness to the melee and standing behind the partition with his hands in his pockets—imagines himself as a poet merely by virtue of his privileged view of the tumultuous battlefield.

Some authors also wrote the peristrepthic panorama into the fabric of their texts from the approach of motion rather than stillness, as when they describe movement turns or “wheels” in the context of a textual panorama, such as the Battle of Prestonpans in *Waverley*. In these pivotal moments, readers become less subsumed by the story and, instead, gain awareness that a story is being told with the use of the rhetoric and the technologies of the mobile panorama translated into text.<sup>19</sup> William Wordsworth, for example, asks a reader to visualize a wheel and its spokes to create a dynamic mental image of the many valleys one can see when panning the landscape below the peaks of Great Gavel or Scawfell Pike (2).<sup>20</sup> While navigating the seas, Andrew Archibald Paton uses imagery of the peristrepthic panorama to describe a turning ship: “the vine-

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<sup>19</sup> John Lurz explores the phenomenon of Walter Scott’s writing as revealing how printed letters read on the page as images. He suggests that at times, while reading Scott, the act of reading is not immersive, but instead, lifts the reader away from the story that the words generate. Instead, the reader’s sight rests uncomfortably on the surface of the printed page and sees the letters as “mere shapes to be looked at” (261); Scott teaches his reader how to turn the collection of typographic images on the page into a story. Lurz’s claim leans heavily on Celeste Langan’s argument in “Understanding Media in 1805: Audiovisual Hallucination in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*” that “subsequent to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, all literature will implicitly operate according to the unacknowledged principles that Scott’s poem articulates . . . [namely, that] the medium of print becomes recognizable *as a medium*” (49).

<sup>20</sup> Wordsworth also takes care to warn a traveler that carriage wheels may not find the approach into these valleys passable at all (52). Jonathan Bate discusses the imagery of the wheel in the first section of the *Guide* in the context of inaccessibility. He believes the “imaginary station” in the clouds and the view of the valleys below as spokes in a wheel provides a unifying mechanism for depicting nature, but it was not meant to assist actual tourists touring the district (46). What use is a guidebook with the landscape, often impassible by carriage, pictured from the stratosphere? Perhaps such an artificially constructed superhuman view relates to the fantasy of natural views as vast and yet possible to see as a whole that the panorama and diorama provided. For more on Wordsworth and panoramas, see Ross King’s “Wordsworth, Panoramas, and the Prospect of London.”

clad hill that produces the fiery Ofener wine, and the long and graceful quay, form, as it were, a fine peristrepthic panorama, as the vessel wheels round, and, prow downwards, commences her voyage for the vast and curious East” (66). Though it is moving, the watercraft represents the spectator’s position, from which Paton watches the shoreline, a scrolling panorama screen that seems perhaps to curve a bit as the boat tacks “downwards,” which I take to mean down-wind or downstream. The moving panorama is, then, always that which *appears* to be moving relative to the viewer; it is possible that the travel of the viewer creates a peristrepthic panorama out of a stationary landscape. Furthermore, applying the compound verb “to wheel round” to a boat is a bit unnatural, since boats do not turn on their wheels, the way that carriages do, though they may have a wheel at the helm that connects to the rudder. In this case, then, “to wheel round” indicates that the craft is turning, but also points to the panorama’s scrolling mechanism that, like the boat, creates the illusion that the shoreline slips away past stationary observers on deck.

In the long panorama of the Battle of Prestonpans, Scott leaves a clue that his panorama can be read not just as a generic panorama; rather, it can be read in the context of the technologies and special effects of peristrepthic panoramas. The peristrepthic panorama in this novel destabilizes the reader’s view of both armies at a key plot moment that puts Waverley’s fidelity to the Highlander army to the test. By destabilize, I mean that the description of the Highlander army pulls a spectator into the scene, but also reminds her that a painted, moving scroll—or a novel with an embedded periphrastic panorama—does the pulling. An iron cannon signaled the lines of Highland soldiers to begin their march into battle. Bagpipes, shouts, and the sound of troops plodding accompanied this awesome vision.

The banners glittered and shook as they moved forward, and the horse hastened to occupy their station as the advanced guard, and to push on reconnoitering parties

to ascertain and report the motions of the enemy. They vanished from Waverley's eye as they wheeled round the base of Arthur's Seat, under the remarkable ridge of basaltic rocks which fronts the little lake of Duddingston. (215)

The section of the Highlander army ahead of Waverley “wheel[s]” around the base of Arthur's Seat, a picturesque and politically charged Scottish landmark. Though Waverley is the spectator watching the soldiers turn the corner, he is also part of the peristrepthic panorama—the army or the illustration of the army about to be spooled just around the bend. When the English army appears to the Highlanders and marches toward the plain, they, too, become part of a scrolling panorama, but opposite the Highlanders. This time, Waverley is solely a spectator of the rolling panorama, along with the reader. From his place with the Highlander army, he observes English soldiers just across field as “their fixed bayonets shewing the like successive hedges of steel, and their arms glancing like lightning, as, at a signal given, they at once wheeled into line, and were placed in direct opposition to the Highlanders” (219). The verb “wheeled” here is extremely awkward, as the soldiers paraded on foot, not in a vehicle, and they did not round a major landmark, like Arthur's Seat, but approached on a plain. The verb stands out as the same action used to describe the Highlander army in motion and, again, as the mechanism that turns the periphrastic panorama embedded in the language.

Scott's use of the verb “wheeled” to call attention to the magnitude and astonishment of these mustering armies, but also to point out the rolling, painted tableau that deploys this scene, constructs, in this first Waverley novel, a viewpoint relative to a historical yet fictive text that Daguerre would copy to execute his Scottish panoramas in the 1820s. His Holyrood Chapel Diorama, in particular, effectively buried his audience members alive within the graveyard of this ruined abbey, but also made them aware of the theatrical construct that framed their

experience. The theater of the abbey is a protected space that venerates the history of fallen Scots. One important mechanism of the Diorama building brings audience members to the abbey view: its “wheeled” auditorium. As I have just shown, the wheels of the peristrepthic panorama also make it to the page. But next I will enumerate how the wheels on which the diorama stage spins relate to these early panoramas and authors who, so innovatively, expressed spectacular turns on the page.

### **Delivering Texts within the Diorama: The Spinning Auditorium as Royal Mail Coach**



Fig. 2. “The Departure of the Night Mail” (Samuel John Egbert Jones, oil on canvas, n.d., courtesy of *The British Postal Museum & Archive*)

Previously in this chapter, I have shown how Walter Scott incorporates textual renditions of the panorama in his fiction. To review, textual panoramas are long, descriptive narrative sections of a work in which words illustrate a panorama painting view. Additionally, textual panoramas and related textual renditions of entertainments, like the diaphanorama, reveal hints of the scene’s mechanical artistic influences, such as the wheel that unfurls and spools the periphrastic panorama. I now wish to turn to the wheel itself and examine how the mechanism that rotates viewers in Daguerre and Bouton’s Diorama theater alludes to advances in transportation in the

early nineteenth century, which sped the delivery of texts, both printed and handwritten. The revolving stage, a bit like a theme park vehicle, is a figure for textual transmission expressed in the architecture of the Diorama.

Diorama scholars, including Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, Richard Altick, Sophie Thomas, Stephen Pinson, and most recently, Erkki Huhtamo, have all pondered the origin of one especially enigmatic aspect of the Diorama that differentiates it from panoramas: its rotating auditorium that moves the viewers in a circle from one painting to the next.<sup>21</sup> While Huhtamo examines the spinning Diorama auditorium in its historical context among moving panoramas, Thomas considers it as a vehicle that transports a viewer from one picturesque view to the next, and further, she argues that the Diorama aimed to transform its space into an aesthetic experience that was both temporal and transient (116-17). Here, I build on Thomas' analysis and offer a geographically and temporally specific reading of the Diorama's rotating auditorium in the context of Daguerre's Holyrood Chapel diorama, one of a series of three Edinburgh diorama paintings that he displayed in Paris and London in the 1820s during the Diorama's debut years.

I suggest that the Royal Mail coaches that carried correspondence and news, and also passengers, on the Great North Road between London and Edinburgh as a turn-of-the-century artistic inspiration for the "people mover" in the Diorama. This analysis of the dark, wheeling auditorium as a mail coach and the Holyrood Chapel diorama painting as a view or depot on the mail coach's route paints a far more complex image of Scotland than Holyrood Abbey does on its own. By itself, the ruined abbey is a Scottish patriotic emblem, an homage to its deceased

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<sup>21</sup> For Arrowsmith, it seems the main component that differentiates the Diorama from the panorama, when he writes about his patent, is the rotating auditorium. It is almost the first technical detail about the Diorama theater that he mentions in his article, "Specification of the Patent Granted to John Arrowsmith."

leaders, many of whom are buried in the abbey.<sup>22</sup> Alternatively, driving the audience to the Scottish abbey ruin with the Royal Mail stages the contested intersection at which Scotland's sacred and revered independent past meets Great Britain's modern 1820s Parliamentary highways, road improvement projects, and regular mail delivery and transportation service to and from the metropole. Furthermore, this analysis reiterates the importance of analyzing all of the parts of media technologies, like the diorama, in specific historical contexts. Just as Barker, in his booklet's conclusion, interprets the Edinburgh panorama specifically in the context of the 1745 rebellion, Daguerre fashions his Holyrood Chapel diorama as a historical and geographical destination. In other words, the paintings and the wheels, lenses, pulleys, and other bits of machinery used to project the diorama painting need to be analyzed in relation to art, history, and each other.

While the general mechanics of the original Diorama have already been described in the introductory chapter, its spinning auditorium deserves special attention in this chapter, as it is a trait that links it to dioramic precursors and peristrepthic panoramas. This turntable platform adopts the rolling apparatus that draws peristrepthic panorama paintings across the stage and incorporates it into the diorama's architecture as well as the spectators' physical viewing experience. At the start of a Diorama show, a worker under the stage turns a crank, which slowly wheels the audience around (Gernsheim 19). The mechanics of the Diorama's rotating gallery were not complicated: the platform "rested on struts with rollers" that moved along a "circular rail" (Gernsheim 19). When the stage stops moving, the audience peers through an aperture the

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed history of Holyrood and its environs, see Elizabeth Patricia Dennison's *Holyrood and Canongate: A Thousand Years of History* (2005). There are also nineteenth-century accounts, in several editions with varying titles, by Charles Mackie, such as *Historical Description of the Monastery and Chapel Royal of Holyroodhouse: with an Account of the Palace and Environs, Embellished with Eight Engravings* (1819, 1821).

size of a large circular window and gazes down a 42-foot-long hallway at a painting that is nearly the size of a contemporary movie screen (Gernsheim 19).<sup>23</sup> After ten to fifteen minutes, the worker below begins to turn the crank again, and the audience wheels slowly away from the first aperture, 70 degrees around the theater, toward a second identical aperture and another animated painting. After ten to fifteen minutes fixed at this scene, the worker below begins to turn the crank again, and the audience wheels slowly away from the first aperture 70 degrees around the theater toward a second identical aperture and another animated painting.

In their accounts and reviews, spectators commented on these transitions as part of the sensory experience of the show. They were not silent or smooth. Those at *Mechanics Magazine* (1826) found the transitions to be “nothing extraordinary,” not worth the expense, and clunky: “The rotary motion, though slow, is still sensibly felt, and the transitions from one picture to another is little less abruptly marked than it would be if you were to pass from one gallery into another, to view them” (291). But perhaps the point was not to propel the audience insensibly from site to site, as if by magic or with the speed of Hermes. Perhaps Daguerre wanted the audience to feel their rolling journey between landmarks, as passengers of the mail coach did, as a relatively slow and turbulent journey. The rolling transitions from one painting to the next were “nothing extraordinary” because by the 1820s mail coach travel was common.

I associate Daguerre’s rotating auditorium for the Holyrood diorama with the royal mail-coach chiefly for its extensive connections to empire, spectacle, and the physical sensations of stage-coach travel that so many experienced in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the

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<sup>23</sup> The dimensions of the Diorama paintings were 71.5 x 45.5 feet (Gernsheim 19), and they are taller than they are wide, unlike our conventional movie screens that are oriented in a “landscape” view.

early nineteenth century, during the panorama's heyday.<sup>24</sup> In 1784, British Post Master John Palmer replaced single "post-boys" on horseback with Royal Mail coaches that were specially designed to be faster and more maneuverable than passenger stage coaches to deliver the mail as well as paying passengers to depots throughout England, Scotland, and Wales (Campbell-Smith 91). Palmer's coaches were also exempt from paying tolls on any of Great Britain's numerous turnpike roads and so lost no transit time at the pikes (91). In sum, these roads created faster delivery to tourists' picturesque views—just like a panorama painting—but also delivered texts, print and handwritten post. Mail coach transportation and delivery services boomed throughout the 1790s and early 1800s, triggering a concurrent obsession with road improvement and decreasing the travel time between London and Scottish commercial centers in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Royal Mail, meant to join the farthest points of the kingdom with punctuality and ever increasing speeds, grew to be a metonym for the splendor and organization of the Empire as a whole. It was infectious; as Thomas De Quincey writes of the mail-coach spectators on Lombard Street, "One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendent bond of his English blood" (202). It was also a mode of travel whose comforts, discomforts, speed, sounds, and dangers were known round the kingdom by accident reports and the newer phenomenon of traffic noise. Scott, for example, muses, "mail-coaches not only roll their

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<sup>24</sup> Daguerre is not the only large-scale exhibition artist in the nineteenth century to use the Royal Mail as a vehicle for his artwork, but his Diorama is one of the earlier examples of this trope. There are additional examples of mid-nineteenth-century panoramas and dioramas that allude to or directly invoke the Royal Mail. These include: *The Diorama of the Ocean Mail to India and Australia* (Gallery of Illustration, 1853); *Route of the Overland Mail to India, from Southampton to Calcutta* (Gallery of Illustration, 1850); and *The Overland Mail* (Albert Smith, 1850). I was able to find these in Huhtamo's *Illusions in Motion* and also a pamphlet description of the *Diorama of the Ocean Mail* in the British Library's collection. It is likely that there are more out there, given the tendency for panoramas and dioramas to use the motif of travel to establish a narrative.

thunders round the base of Penman-Maur and Cader-Edris, but ‘Frighted Skiddaw hears afar /  
The rattling of the unscythed car’” (45).<sup>25</sup>

De Quincey’s romp of an essay, called *The English Mail-Coach*, demonstrates grandiloquently not only the imperial aspects, but also the spectacle of the royal mail, especially in the dark. De Quincey notes the special luminous theatricality of the mail coaches’ routine evening departure from the Lombard Street Depot in London. He writes, “From eight P.M. to fifteen or twenty minutes later imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street[. . .] In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful” (202, emphases in original). Furthermore, on holidays, such as the reigning sovereign’s birthday or after an important British military victory, the “procession of the mails” would dazzle large crowds with flamboyant pomp, including newly painted and buffed coaches, handsomely coiffed horses bedecked with accessories, and coachmen in decadent dress uniform (Harris 67-71). Thus, in daylight or by moonlight, stationary or in motion, the Royal Mail—the transportation of texts as well as people—was a live visual spectacle. Numerous paintings of the mail coach by artists corroborate this, including artwork by Samuel Henry Alken, James Pollard, and Samuel John Egbert Jones held at the British Postal Museum. Jones’ “The Departure of the Night Mail” (British Postal Museum) provides the most luminous, dioramic image of the routine light show produced by the night mail on a daily basis.

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<sup>25</sup> Penman-Maur (Penmanmawr) and Cader-Edris are cliffs in northern Wales, and Skiddaw is a mountain in the Lake District of England. In the next line, Scott refers to Ben Nevis, a mountain landmark in the Highlands, being awakened by the horn of mail coaches, which would mean that their noise travels throughout the kingdom from England, to Wales, to the Highlands of Scotland.

The mail coach is a moving panorama that literally, as opposed to virtually in a theater, hits the road. In both cases, part of the appeal of the mail coach as mechanical spectacle is that it can crash, and often did. Given Scott's incorporation of the Edinburgh panorama and theatrical lighting into *Waverley* and *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, one might expect that he feature the spectacle of the Royal Mail in his fiction, show-like as it was. Indeed, the mail coach is the vehicle that ushers the reader into the plot of *The Heart of Midlothian* with exhilarating speed and a great wreck:

I had seen the vehicle thunder down the hill that leads to the bridge with more than its usual impetuosity, glittering all the while by flashes from a cloudy tabernacle of the dust which it had raised, and leaving a train behind it on the road resembling a wreath of summer mist. But it did not appear on the top of the nearer bank within the usual space of three minutes[. . .] As I came in sight of the bridge, the cause of delay was too manifest, for the Somerset had made a summerset in good earnest, and overturned so completely, that it was literally resting upon the ground, with the roof undermost, and the four wheels in the air. The "exertions of the guard and coachman," both of whom were gratefully commemorated in the newspapers, having succeeded in disentangling the horses by cutting the harness, were now proceeding to extricate the insides by a sort of summary and Caesarean process of delivery, forcing the hinges from one of the doors which they could not open otherwise. In this manner were two disconsolate damsels set at liberty from the womb of the leathern conveniency. (15-16)

Using the language of high sensation and the sublime, not without satire, the narrator describes the luminous image of the coach by the disruption it causes to the landscape, such as the dust it

kicks up that catches the sunlight: the dust forms a “cloudy tabernacle” that “glitters” and the dusty wake resembled “a wreath of summer mist.” The coach itself only becomes a spectacle after its crash: the inversion of this representative of the majestic, imperial Royal Mail coach fleet turned a symbol of the patriarchy into a “leather” feminine object that births by caesarean. Mail-coach accidents, severe and minor, frequently made headlines and generated spectacles-in-text of this mode of transportation that also delivered information throughout Great Britain. For example, one of the most exotic incidents took place in 1816, in which a lioness attacked a mail coach traveling from Salisbury to London (Bond 49).<sup>26</sup> The anecdote reads as nearly fabular: the lion attacks the mail coach horse, and when a group of men unleash a mastiff to drive the lion away, the lion easily kills the dog, too. It drags the dog’s carcass into a nearby barn, where the lion is captured (Bond 49-50).

I conclude this chapter with a representation of Edinburgh—the same city represented in Barker’s first panorama, as we arrive at the Holyrood Chapel view in Daguerre’s Diorama theater. Like the mail-coach wreck that draws readers into Scott’s novel, Daguerre’s theatrical Royal mail coach delivers viewers to the inner courtyard of Holyrood Chapel, in Edinburgh, to view the ruin of an ancient abbey. While the abbey ruin appears to be a contained Scottish safe-haven, it was also readily accessible by a Parliamentary mail-coach road at the time the Diorama opened. From their seats in the dark, the audience sees the abbey ruin from just within the west door entrance, looking up as if at grave-level. There are multiple fractured columns, a beautiful broken window, and a roofless view of the night sky. The moon glides across the view with “barely perceptible motion,” like nature’s second hand (“Diorama” 196). On the right side of the abbey, viewers see a woman kneeling before a flickering candle atop a stone monument. Behind

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<sup>26</sup> In 1984, the Royal Mail issued a commemorated stamp with an image of the lioness versus mail-coach encounter, bringing the story back into popular knowledge.

her, in shadow, is the entrance to the Roxburgh Royal Vault, a domicile of dead Scottish royalty and nobility whose names appear in Scotland's chronicles and, more presently, in the show's programs that helped viewers interpret the scene.<sup>27</sup>

The mail coach opens up the ruined chapel to travelers, commerce, and correspondence between Scotland and London, but in the Diorama, it also connects these travelers to Scotland's more recent past. The fractured window mullions at the east end of the chapel are the key to recognizing the recent past in this painting—much like the Royal Mail coach provides a clue to Scott's readers to imagine the plot in a previous time, before trains delivered the mail, before the Diorama. While the chapel has a long history of iconoclastic abuse, it owes the missing mullions not to human malice but, instead, to the forces of erosion and a violent storm in 1795 that knocked down the lattice. The window was repaired in 1816 and was still intact in 1823-25, when the Holyrood Chapel diorama debuted. Diorama programs distributed to viewers contained

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<sup>27</sup> Here is an excerpt from the program/pamphlet for the Holyrood Chapel Diorama that showed in London in 1825. It lists several names of the dead memorialized in this abbey, very few of which one can read in the view itself. This excerpt shows where the booklet offers content to the diorama display that a viewer could not fully glean from the visual part of the show alone.

Several tombstones and monuments are laying in the part which is lighted by the moon: the most apparent are, the white stone nearest to the spectators, and which is in the middle of the picture; it covers the burial place of Lord and Lady Reay; the dates 1768 and 1800 are cut on the tombstone. At the foot of the first broken pillar lies Lady Saltoun, and a little to the right a member of the family of the Stuarts. Following the colonnade on the same side, are the tombs of Lord Selkirk, Bishop Wishart, Lord Sutherland, and the Countess of Eglinton. In the middle, and under the large window, is the tombstone of Thomas Lowes, who died in 1812. To the right, and at the distant end of the Chapel, is the Royal Vault: here are seen the tombs of David II, King of Scotland, who died before he could execute his project of joining the crusaders in the Holy-Land; Prince Arthur, third son of James IV, who was killed at the battle of Floddenfield; James V and his Queen Magdalen, daughter of Francis I, King of France; Jane, Countess of Archibald, natural daughter of James V, etc. etc. (*Two Views*)

For an in-depth analysis of the Holyrood Chapel diorama see the chapter 2.

a detailed history of the chapel, with dates of the window's destruction and restoration.

Therefore, viewers, too, knew that the vehicle of the rotating auditorium carried them northward to an image of Scotland's past sometime between the storm in 1795 and the window's repair in 1816. In addition, between 1795 and 1816 mail-coach travel was at its peak; it began to decline in the 1820s, and, by the 1830s, trains started to replace mail-coaches. Furthermore, these dates also signal the years between the Reign of Terror and Napoleon's defeat—a time in which the Scottish people struggled to adapt to massive urban population and commercial growth, the Highland clearances, suppression of Scottish radicals, and transportation improvements that widened the arterial avenues between Scotland and the English (McCaffrey 2-11).

Reading the past in the fractured East window, then, further reinforces the idea that Daguerre's rotating auditorium delivered not a singular and fixed image of the glories of Scotland's independent past, but a complex, shifting image. Juxtaposing Scotland's present with its recent past as well as its older traditions, represented by the ruin, shows the nation negotiating its unique heritage as well as its place in the British empire and on a British map flush with mail roads, turnpikes, and in just a few years, trains that greatly reduce the time it takes to travel from London to Edinburgh. Driving its audience back chronologically just a few years to those of the broken east window (1795-1816), the mail coach reminds the audience of an image of Scotland that is pre-Diorama, just off the cutting edge of technology, a little bit behind the times. It suggests the age of the panorama, instead, along with Barker's invention of the medium in Holyrood Palace, a few rooms away from the abbey in his Guard's Room studio (Grau 57). In fact, simultaneous to the showing of the Holyrood Diorama at Regent's Park, a panorama of Edinburgh, called "Description of a View of the City of Edinburgh and Surrounding Country," displayed just down the road in Leicester Square. The booklet for this panorama claims that "of

the early history of Edinburgh little is known” and “the few records which might have rescued it from total oblivion have been destroyed, [. . .] lost in fabulous obscurity” (4). However, the panorama booklet and its accompanying painting do tell Edinburgh’s history, adding to the work that the Holyrood diorama does. It points out, for example, the location of the toll-booth, “so celebrated in the tales of the ‘Great Unknown,’ on High Street, before it was removed in 1817 (5). I venture that this is one message of Daguerre’s diorama’s mail-coach auditorium and its turning back to eighteenth-century Scotland: it suggests that Scottish histories and its tradition have been and are still being preserved and retold by mixed-media spectacular art, in the theater and on the page.

## CHAPTER 2

### “THIS SPLENDID RUIN”: THE HOLYROOD CHAPEL DIORAMA AND THE “TRADITIONARY” IN JAMES HOGG’S *CONFESSIONS OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER*<sup>1</sup>

*Considering that the pyramids, pillars, and statues of all kinds of material become damaged with time or destroyed by violence or simply decay . . . that indeed whole cities have sunk, disappeared, and are covered over by water, that in contrast writings and books are immune from such destruction, for if any should disappear or be destroyed in one country or place, one can easily find them again in countless other places, then to speak of human experience, nothing is more enduring and immortal than books.*

-Preface to the dramas of Jakob Ayryer, quoted in Benjamin’s *Trauerspiel* study

Hogg’s novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), published anonymously, stages a multimedia textual production that attempts to forge a place for Hogg and his novel in late Romantic-era Scottish literary tradition. As readers have long noted, the text comprises several genres: in it, we find an Editor’s narrative of events learned from local knowledge and public records; an excerpt from Hogg’s 1823 article “A Scots Mummy” published in *Blackwood’s*; and the suicide’s diary. What has not been noticed, however—and what I add to this collection—is that Hogg also includes a prose version of Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre’s diorama “Interior of the Chapel of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, effect of moonlight” in his novel (1823-26). I will argue here that by incorporating Daguerre’s Holyrood Chapel

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<sup>1</sup> I take the word “traditionary” from the full title of Hogg’s novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written By Himself: With a Detail of Curious Traditionary Facts, and Other Evidence, By the Editor*—.

diorama into *Confessions* Hogg attempts to write himself into Scottish literary history as part of its tradition.<sup>2</sup>

Scholars to date have most often studied Hogg as a rustic farmer and semi-successful, though prolific author, relegated to the margins of Edinburgh's artistic scene. My chapter adds to Hogg's profile the image of one who is connected with patrons and artists of the fashionable and popular diorama shows in Paris as well as the reviews of those shows in British periodicals. Hogg's use of the Holyrood Chapel diorama in his novel constitutes a vital example of what I trace throughout my dissertation: how, during the late Romantic era, the medium of the book incorporates and re-expresses the new technology of the diorama in experiments in codex form and content. Tracing the conversation between Scott's novels, the diorama, and Hogg's novel showcases the ways that innovative, large-scale art exhibitions influenced novelists and inspired them to play with form and content in ways that changed the course of book history.

In *Confessions*, Hogg reproduces diorama effects remediated in text. Remediation, as defined by J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin, generates realism by melding one medium into another, such that the presence of media and the act of mediation are minimalized and, ideally, fully hidden (11). In other words, the lack of obvious references to the Holyrood diorama in Hogg's novel is proof of the novel's successful remediation and incorporation of this technology into its narrative and bibliographical technologies. In this, Hogg's novel is certainly experimental and innovative, but, as I showed in the previous chapter, his is not the first to incorporate a large-scale art exhibition into a novel, given that Scott writes Barker's *Edinburgh* panorama into *Waverley* ten years before *Confessions* went to press. However, he differentiates himself by

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<sup>2</sup> Ian Duncan notices that the novel obsesses with the mechanics of its own production, and Daniel Stout extends this line of thought to argue that, for Hogg, reception then becomes authorship, as the book explores how tradition generates tradition (Stout 545).

including spectacles in text in a far more subtle fashion than Walter Scott did in his representations of panoramas and other spectacles in text. In other words, there are fewer traces of the diorama in Hogg's novel than there are traces of the panorama, peristrepthic panorama, and diaphanorama in Scott's works.

Many scholars have discussed how Hogg includes several versions of himself in *Confessions*, chiefly as a *Blackwood's* contributor and farmer.<sup>3</sup> These two personas also frequently appear in *Blackwood's*, for which Hogg provided content—over one hundred articles—as well as a saleable, popular character of the Ettrick Shepherd who often appeared in the lively series “Noctes Ambrosinae” (Richardson 186). Hogg sought the approval of Edinburgh's literati, especially in William Blackwood's circle, wanting inclusion in their movement, which pushed the boundaries of fiction beyond the “Waverley” model, which at the time, represented the establishment (Garside, Introduction xlii). Hogg was a prolific and passionate fiction writer and claims in his memoir (1821) that he “had the honour of being the beginner, and almost sole instigator” of *Blackwood's*, a claim that would seem to earn him a place in this group with no questions asked (“Memoir” lxiii). Yet, William Blackwood would not publish Hogg's novels serialized or in single-volume form, though he did do this beginning in the 1820s for a number of authors, including John Galt, John Wilson, John Gibson Lockhart, and for his own fiction.<sup>4</sup> This forced Hogg to turn reluctantly to the London firm Longmans to publish his novels *The Three Perils of Man* (1822), *The Three Perils of Woman* (1823), and *Confessions* (1824). Being thus “exiled,” Hogg turned to literature for revenge, as he casts

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<sup>3</sup> Hogg published *Confessions* anonymously, but readers suspected and determined his authorship easily based on his contributions to *Blackwood's*.

<sup>4</sup> Hogg's publishers at this time included Oliver and Boyd for *Winter Evening Tales* (1819) and Longmans for *The Three Perils of Man* (1822), *The Three Perils of Women* (1823), and *Confessions* (1824). Constable published his four-volume *Poetical Works* in 1822.

himself in *Confessions* as writer, farmer, and dioramist, and therefore as an elite producer of Scottish cultural memory and connoisseur of fashionable, French large-scale art performances that had the allure of “coming attractions” soon to show closer to home, in London. Furthermore, he creates an image of himself as a part of the tradition of Scottish memory making, even while publishing anonymously but with his unique style that demarcated the work as his, just as Walter Scott was the indisputable author of the Waverley novels despite the fact that he also published them anonymously. Finally, to add insult to injury, Hogg publishes *Blackwood’s* content in his own work, or under his own label, if you will, and makes it a vital piece of evidence in the reader’s search for the “authentic” story of the Justified Sinner.

I want to carefully define the idea of the Scottish literary tradition that Hogg writes in *Confessions* as one that depends upon an author building a space for himself as an anonymous author or editor outside the text as well as within it, such that its reproduction includes him in a series of transmissions within an established community and book culture. The *OED* defines tradition primarily as “*the action of handing over (something material) to another; delivery; transfer, [...] transmitting*” (my emphasis). In other words, Scottish literary tradition has no singular, essential, authentic bit, identity, or story at its center that must pass from one text to the next. Rather, it is the act and the mechanisms of repeatedly passing Scottish texts on that form its tradition. To be part of Scottish literary tradition, you must be a passer-on of stories *and* be within that which gets passed on. Additionally, the Scottish tradition of literary representation, according to Ian Duncan, often destabilizes the relationship between history and fiction and creates an indeterminate, immaterial “author” outside the frame of the text, who sometimes inserts a cameo of himself within the plot, as Tobias Smollett does in *Humphry Clinker* (1771) and as Hogg does in *Confessions* (“Authenticity” 101). This extra-textual “author,” like an

editor, gathers and frames the pieces of the text. The author, then, is at least doubled, and the romantic Scottish tradition is a process that naturally generates authors who, like editors, collect stories together and then transmit them through publication, oral tales, or other means. Duncan cites Clifford Siskin's argument that "the Romantic emergence of 'Literature' marks the historical point at which the modern technology of writing is at once industrialized (turned into machinery) and naturalized (phantasmatically reattached to the body)" ("Authenticity" 103). In other words, the advent of mechanized writing produced the desire to imagine writing as still a fully embodied act, not one mediated by technologies. Further, Siskin argues that in the early nineteenth century, writing proliferated not just because of the growth of the literate population, but because so much writing was being printed, published, and circulated, that writing tended to generate more writing about writing (2-3).<sup>5</sup> *Confessions* certainly addresses itself as a novel about writing, print technologies, circulation, and the connection between the text and the body, since the Editor's narrative concludes the book as he sends the text of the Suicide's manuscript, found in his breast pocket, to the printer. The process of discovering, comparing, and reproducing versions of stories in print is *Confessions*' idea of Scottish tradition, and it is a process that injures the body that produces the text.

Another measure of belonging to the Scottish literary tradition, or being a vehicle of transmission, is the repeated inclusion of a copy of one's work in another author's or editor's published volume, or better yet, a periodical or a series.<sup>6</sup> By playing the role of the "anonymous"

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the Romantic-era's self-consciousness about the abundance of books produced see Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age*.

<sup>6</sup> It is now easy to see Hogg's attraction to *Blackwood's* as a potential engine of literary tradition, since it repeatedly provided opportunities to publish, it nurtured a group of committed writers and editors, and it even functioned as a publisher for single- and multivolume novels. *Blackwood's*, however, rejected Hogg's longer fiction and sometimes lambasted it in reviews.

but identifiable author outside of the frame of the novel and quoting from his own essay in *Blackwood's* within his novel, Hogg turns himself into a Walter Scott-type figure who values the author as a *Blackwood's* contributor and gives his already printed article yet another life in print *and* as a tradition, since the article spurs the Editor's journey to the grave and his publication of the memoir. The title page and order of the book's contents announce the double, cross-inclusion of Hogg's writing and authorial identity in both personal narratives and tradition. The full title of the novel—*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written By Himself: With a Detail of Curious Traditionary Facts, and Other Evidence, By the Editor*—includes the mechanism of tradition in its subtitle.<sup>7</sup> The Editor places the part of the book described in the subtitle—"A Detail of Curious Traditionary Facts, and Other Evidence, By the Editor"—in the book's first section and even its first line: "It appears from tradition [ . . . ]" (3). The title claims that the first four words of the novel originate from memoir, though in actuality, they invoke the transmission action of tradition and characterize it as producing content that "appears" or has a visual component. In an analysis of Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* (1818), Andrew Piper connects the idea of transmitting an oft-told story, or tradition, as knowing a story "by heart," such that its familiarity by a collective also means that it comes "from the heart," or is extremely meaningful personally and a measure of story and author's "singularity" (120). The title's structure and its parts in the book form a zeugma that emphasizes the memoirs and confessions as already belonging to a tradition of retelling them and even reciting tradition within them, as the Editor's concluding narrative cites Hogg's article, which recapitulates "the little traditionary history that remains of this unfortunate youth" and calls it "a singular one" (166). Hogg is within

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<sup>7</sup> It is, however, in smaller font, probably because Romantic readers would more likely want to buy "Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, Written by Himself," given the popularity of secret histories and gothic novels that featured the discovery of manuscripts.

the tradition his book recites, and he is also the traditionary, or external authorial transmitter, who passes this story on to other readers by publishing it in 1824.<sup>8</sup>

This particular diorama was an agent of Scottish tradition as well as historical fiction par excellence, and it was well-suited to helping Hogg achieve recognition as an established Scottish author. Though the Diorama was only in Paris while Hogg wrote *Confessions*, it showcased a popular Scottish tourism landmark and nationalist symbol of Scottish pride, which also happened to have a tortured picturesque edifice and a long history of abuse at the hands of the English. The French audience raved about it, possibly associating it with their own recent wartimes. Holyrood's architectural history recalls Scottish histories dating back to the twelfth century, but the view Daguerre offers of the ruin shows the crumbling chapel and its graves in ethereal, moonlit gothic splendor, as it appeared in 1814. Its recent façade tied it to the singular while its deep relationship to seven centuries of Scottish history made it the very image of tradition given that it remained persistently relevant to national identity.

The Holyrood Chapel diorama image combined gothic and picturesque traits, touristic allure, and an emblem of Scottish history while, simultaneously, gesturing toward conventions of Scottish gothic novels and historical fiction, which were in high demand. It strove to be fictional and historical, visual and textual, gothic and picturesque. Amidst a recognizable ruin with historical significance, the diorama featured a fictional character that one often finds in gothic novels—a woman dressed in a white dress with a mourning stripe, kneeling before a stone

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<sup>8</sup> For analyses of *Confessions* regarding materiality, authenticity, tradition, and authorship see Ian Duncan, "Authenticity Effects: The Work of Fiction in Romantic Scotland"; Victor Sage, "The Author, the Editor, and the Fissured Text: Scott, Maturin and Hogg" in *Authorship in Context: From the Theoretical to the Material*, eds. Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Polina Mackay; Susan Manning, "That Exhumation Scene Again: Transatlantic Hogg"; and Karen Fang, "A Printing Devil, a Scottish Mummy, and an Edinburgh Book of the Dead: James Hogg's Napoleonic Complex."

monument or tomb, praying or contemplating a memory. Spectators received a pamphlet that described the ruin's architecture and history and listed those buried there. The booklet's narrative is nothing if not "traditionary." Like *Confessions*, the booklet is seemingly authorless and cites its dioramist, Daguerre, within it. The diorama was an internationally reviewed work of art, a hybrid of text and image that drew on the same technique as texts which blurred the line between fiction and fact in illustrated history textbooks as well as illustrated historical novels in early nineteenth-century Britain.<sup>9</sup> For example, in the illustrated Waverley novels, Scott routinely uses picturesque illustrations as well as descriptions of places to create enthralling impressions of a character's political and natural environment before revealing the barbarous truths behind the façade, made poignant by the historical and geographical accuracies that enliven the tale.

I would like now to offer a detailed description of the Holyrood Chapel diorama, including its architecture, the history of the chapel (including injuries and repairs to the structure), the nature of its illusions and how they involve the audience, the particular importance of the broken east window, and, finally, the contents of its accompanying program. I will then show how certain aspects of the diorama reappear in Hogg's novel, and how it provides Hogg with a theatrical, non-linear, contemporary and high-tech multimedia artistic model of Scottish historical fiction, which contrasts with Scott's Waverley novels. Though he labored to write experimental fiction that stretched the genre of the novel beyond what Walter Scott established as the standard for high literature, Hogg also desired Scott's prestige—the reputation that lionized Scott as a "great." The diorama in *Confessions* advances the novel toward his twin goals

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<sup>9</sup> For a detailed case study of the development of an illustrated history, see Rosemary Mitchell's "The History of *The History of England*: The Evolution of a Standard Text and its Illustrations" in *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image, 1830-1870*.

of a “traditionary” as well as an experimental Scottish novel that furthers himself as tradition maker and part of tradition’s content.

### The Holyrood Chapel Diorama

*It is time who chisels a groove  
In an indigent arch-stone;  
Who rubs his knowing thumb  
On the corner of a barren marble slab;  
It is he who, in correcting the work,  
Introduces a living snake  
Midst the knots of a granite hydra.  
I think I see a Gothic roof start laughing  
When, from its ancient frieze,  
Time removes a stone and puts in a nest.*  
-Victor Hugo

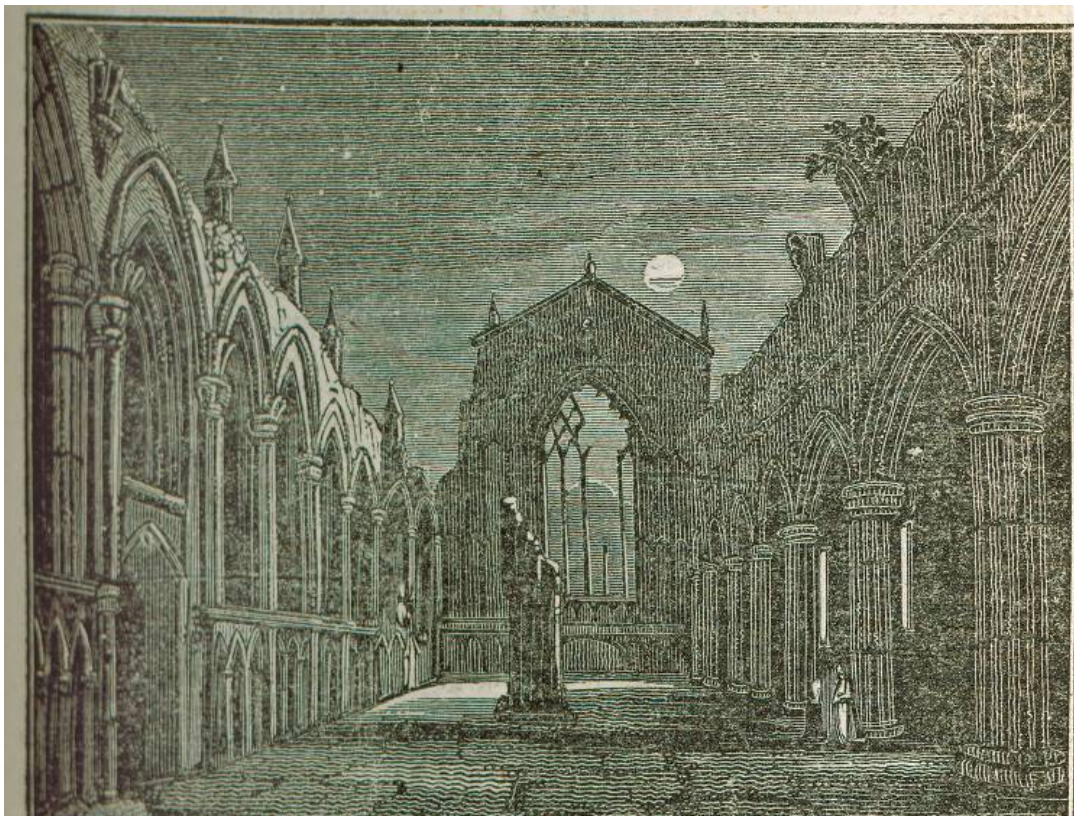


Fig. 1. Woodcut of the scene of the Holyrood Chapel diorama, in *The Mirror of Amusement, Literature, and Instruction* (March 26, 1825)

The Holyrood Diorama opened in Paris in on October 20, 1823, and ran until September 23, 1824, at which point it was shipped to London's Regent's Park, where it showed for approximately a year, beginning on March 15, 1825. This diorama, one of Daguerre's earliest, generates a historical fiction that challenges the idea of Scottish histories as events belonging to times long past. The realistic Scottish ruin and the pamphlet that describes its depiction of recent history (as well as more remote histories) debunk hackneyed associations between ruin and ancient times by locating the chapel, by traits of its architecture, in the audience's very recent past, within a few years of their present in 1823-26. Daguerre's Holyrood Chapel tells its story of history in images, relics, and reconstructed ruins, as well as in a pamphlet that describes a work of art but that could also double as a travel guidebook to Holyrood Chapel.<sup>10</sup> Daguerre's picture locates Scottish history's turbulent and emotional events just beneath the skin of the present, in recent memory, where the still-painful losses felt by the Highland Clearances also released emotions associated with much earlier eighteenth-century events, such as Culloden, the 1745 and 1715 failed Jacobite rebellions, the 1707 Act of Union, and the 1688 revolution, after which Scotland never recovered its independence. In this picture, recent historical strife serves as a metonym for Scotland's prior struggles and losses, visualized metaphorically and literally in the chapel ruin. The present scars and losses, therefore, are signs of tradition: Scots fighting for their independence and telling stories or writing songs to preserve their heritage, an activity that Hogg documents, and contributes original material to, in his multi-volume collection of *Jacobite Relics of Scotland*, published in 1819 and 1821.

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<sup>10</sup> Mitchell's idea of picturesque history calls for an emotional depiction of a historical scene: a dramatic narrative retelling full of surface-level historical details that embellish the story, and that gather reader empathy. See *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image 1830-1870* (2000).

The diorama's system of nested interior frames pulls the audience into its graveyard, where they meet recent Scottish history in an urban, cutting-edge theatrical art exhibition. An array of scenographic technologies create these frames, from architecture to lighting and sound, all of which pull the viewer inside the painting so that she sees the chapel from the perspective of those buried in its graveyard, the innermost frame. Daguerre was keen to toy with an audience's perspective of the diorama's proscenium. The theater itself hid the painting's outer boundaries from the audience. Additionally, optical illusions made it difficult for attendees to discern the painted surface's precise distance from their seats, which effectively erased the gap between them and the place depicted, though it was positioned down a long corridor ("Making Visible" Thomas 8). Painted details located at the scene's outer edges also drew the audience into the image and blurred the proscenium. For example, one of Bouton's shows placed a cobweb in the corner of the Chartre cathedral painting that viewers could not definitively identify as within or outside the illustrated scene ("Diorama" 193). Of the view of Canterbury Cathedral, *The Times* reporter remarked that even "after a man has gazed to his heart's content, his eyes still half refuse to believe but that the picture begins at the top of the steps, and that the steps themselves, and the planks, and other debris [ . . . ] are part of the house in which he stands, and not of the show which he has paid to see" (qtd. in Gernsheim: 17). Daguerre also, occasionally, provided the audience with opera glasses so that they could "zoom in" on details in the painting as if exploring nooks and crannies of the scene up close and from within (Pinson 68).

Entombed in Holyrood with former rulers of Scotland, the audience watched the Holyrood scene unfold, a version of which appears in figure 1, a mesmerizing woodcut based on the diorama, and which was published on the front page of the March 25, 1825, *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*. On October 20, 1823, for the first time, an audience of

approximately 200 people sat down in the Paris Diorama's rotating auditorium—a faux mail-coach, as I argue in the prior chapter—which delivered them to the Holyrood chapel and interred them there, within a complex image of Scotland's past on the cusp of modernity.<sup>11</sup> Seated in a darkened viewing area, the audience peered into the roofless three-dimensional chapel toward fractured columns and the broken, picturesque east-facing window façade. On the picture's south side, a woman, robed in white, kneels beside a tombstone with a candle resting on top. More graves poke up out of the ground in the foreground, the west end of the chapel, just inside the doorway. Viewers could barely make out or imagine the entrance to the royal vaults, visible in the shadows of the back-right corner, behind the kneeling woman and through the colonnade. The aspects of the image that changed while viewers beheld the scene included several lighting elements: the stars above the chapel twinkled, the candle on the tombstone flickered, and the moon travelled continuously across the night sky such that it illuminated different parts of the architecture and courtyard and threw other parts into deeper shadow. After a prolonged silence, a flute, playing an old Scottish air, broke the tension that accompanied the changes in illumination (Gernsheim 26). After about 15 minutes, a bell rang, the auditorium started turning spectators toward another view, and Holyrood Chapel by moonlight faded out.

The success of Daguerre's Holyrood diorama illusion was, in part, attributable to how it mirrored a ruined version of the Diorama building itself, which made its patrons feel doubly contained. This *trompe l'oeil* underscores the poignant similarity and contemporariness between the city theater and the ruin's historical depiction. Siskin, as I mention above, theorizes that early

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<sup>11</sup> I analyze the experience of visiting the Paris Diorama, rather than the London Diorama in Regent's Park, because the Paris Diorama showing of Holyrood took place before Hogg published *Confessions*. However, the two theaters were very similar and the painting of the Holyrood chapel that showed in London was the same painting—not a copy—that showed first in Paris. At times in their scholarship, R. Derek Wood and Stephen Pinson generalize about the 1820s diorama showings in Paris and London because the experiences were nearly identical.

nineteenth-century writing produced writing about writing; similarly, the Diorama theater seems to produce a diorama double of itself. (In *Confessions*, this doubling highlights how difficult it is to separate the real world from the fictional, which is the crux of the book. Hogg makes this particularly cerebral by juxtaposing a diary that reports a devil manipulating a person to suicide, an excerpt from a published *Blackwood's* article that reports the discovery of a suicide's grave, and a search party that includes a cast of real authors and editors uncovering the diary. Though the reader knows she has selected a novel and a viewer understands that she views a painting in a theater, both the readers of *Confessions* and viewers of Holyrood are invited to search for the authenticity of the text or the view.) The full title of the scene, "Interior of the Chapel of Holyroodhouse, effect of moonlight" advertises its own frames, the ones that mimic the theater's architectural and environmental scaffolding: "interior" within the "Chapel" within "Holyroodhouse," which is part of the magnificent Holyrood Palace and its surrounding hills, vales, and crags in Holyrood Palace Park. From her seat, an audience member is enclosed most tightly, at the center of the nested frames, by her fellow spectators, which the diorama casts as grave-mates in the dark rotunda. The graves lie within the frame of the chapel courtyard, which is circumscribed by the chapel's dilapidated walls, columns, and window mullions. The broken east window at the center of the view attracts the viewer's gaze to the night sky, which also encloses the scene above the abbey, as it lacks a roof due to architectural failure in 1768. Behind or through the illusions, one finds at the Diorama theater's outermost frame pulleys, cords, optical technologies, screens, paintings, and skylight—the same large roof transparency and lantern feature one can see from the Diorama's streetside entrance (Pinson 42). The Diorama's roof lets in natural light from above, echoing, though less dramatically, the roofless ruin depicted on the screen. Its depths extend below ground to a pit below the auditorium, where a worker

turns a crank that rotates the stage from one view to the next. Viewers watch a large and round moon that seems to gaze back at them through a rotating aperture that one critic described as “an eye in its socket” (Weale 722).

Although the descriptions of the diorama’s moon and aperture personify them, it is ironic that critics were rarely satisfied with the realism of the human characters in diorama paintings. In the Holyrood scene, the motionless kneeling woman, off to the side, provided a tangential detail. Instead, the broken east window in the center of the painting commanded viewers’ attention, both aesthetically and historically. It represents the recent past as a monad of tradition, which bridges older histories to the present. The booklet describes the broken window as the epicenter of the scene, the landmark that viewers use to identify the shaded and illuminated parts of the diorama view, including the tombs one can see, and the royal vaults, which one cannot. For example, “in the middle, and under the large window, is the tombstone of Thomas Lowes, who died in 1812. To the right, and at the distant end of the Chapel, is the Royal Vault” (“Two Views” 1825). Unlike the graves and wrecked caskets it points to that suffered iconoclastic damages, the window’s injuries have natural causes. A “violent storm” in 1795 scattered its original mullions across the chapel yard, which were used in its repair in 1816. By the diorama showing in the 1820s, the window had been repaired for less than a decade. Using the latest headstone date mentioned in the booklet, we can date the image of Holyrood chapel in the diorama to sometime between 1812, at Thomas Lowes’ burial, and the window’s restoration in 1816. In the diorama’s foreground, according to the *Mirror*’s review of the diorama, the audience could make out the graves of several Scots, lit for emphasis (“Diorama” 195). Three especially conspicuous headstones include a white grave in the picture’s very center that marks the burial place of “Lord and Lady Reay” with the dates 1768 and 1800, a headstone for Lady

Saltoun at the foot of the first broken column, and another to the right for a Stuart family member. The diorama booklet instructs us that in the umbrous recesses of the chapel picture, the royal vaults contain the tombs and bodies of several Scottish Kings, including David II, James II, and James V, as well as other royalty from the sixteenth century and earlier.<sup>12</sup> During the 1688 revolution, antagonists burned down Holyrood Chapel, carried off its ornaments and marble pavement stones, and opened the vault to the fire, which desecrated the remains therein (Mackie 30).<sup>13</sup> Almost a century later, during the French Revolution, Hanoverian iconoclasts once more targeted the lead coffins in the royal vault, especially those of King James V and his first wife, Queen Magdalene. This time, they stole the coffins and further mutilated the bodies therein: Queen Magdalene's head was removed and the vandals absconded with all but James V's massive thighbones (Mackie 31). The vast range of historical references in the diorama's legible headstones—those alluded to in the shadows of the vaults and listed in the diorama pamphlet—dates back to the fourteenth century. However, all of the bodies entombed here, whole or mostly

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<sup>12</sup> Importantly, the Holyrood diorama also creates spectacle out of its shadowed regions in the theater and in the painting. In parts of exhibit, the spectacle was so cloaked in shadow that it could not be beheld, but only imagined, with the help of the diorama's program booklet. This aspect of the diorama relates to my chapter on Rodolphe Töpffer's comics, in which I discuss how Töpffer borrows Herschel's theory of sight in his early comic strips. For Herschel, where we see nothing, as in some "blank" views of outer space or perhaps a dark corner of the diorama, there lies an opportunity for a scientist and an artist to discover what exists in that region that has not yet been uncovered. In other words, blankness does not indicate absence of content but an opportunity to discover or create. Töpffer put this blankness on the page as white space, intentionally deployed to encourage readers to imagine the characters or objects that the space implies. The Holyrood diorama, likewise, features a near opaque darkness that occludes vision in places, and yet, generates a shared performance experience among the spectators in the unlit theater and also asks spectators to discover hidden visual and historical content in the dark, both in the painting and outside of it.

<sup>13</sup> King James V and his queen ruled from 1513-1542. He married Mary of Guise and fathered Mary Queen of Scots (among many other legitimate and illegitimate children.) He is known for spending much of his royal wealth on embellishing the architecture of Holyrood.

stolen, ancient or recent, King or not, are synchronically grouped under the sign of Scottish tradition.

Because of its broken east window, Daguerre's Holyrood Abbey diorama is a cross between a painted picturesque ruin, a sham ruin, and a history painting, since the derelict state of the window was a past condition that had been recently fixed.<sup>14</sup> This ruin thus doesn't allow viewers to see it as it was during their time, but to see it as it was—in a fragmented state. Thus, it celebrates its lacunae—the broken window, the graves one can see, and the vaults, emptied even of the bodies it was supposed to protect. In sum, it is a picturesque history and, because it remediates the diorama, so is Hogg's *Confessions*. Mitchell defines picturesque history as a picturesque nationalist image, composed of historical and geographical accuracies, which remembers what, or who, has been lost by generating a popular mixed-media history (Mitchell 16). Rather than invoking a vague sense of the sublime, as ruins did for Hazlitt, the broken east window in the aged ruin of Holyrood Chapel carries the viewer back to a specific, recent time in history (see figure 4).<sup>15</sup> This is a unique move that reverses the logic of how buildings decay into ruins. Usually, when nineteenth-century artists set an actual ruin in the past, they depicted a structure in a less fragmented, or rather, more whole and functional state than it was in reality. Inversely, to comment on time's erosion and the structure's inevitable deterioration, the artist would sometimes paint buildings as they imagined they would look in their future state. For example, Arthur Ashpitel studied the archaeological remains of Rome and, in 1858, painted

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<sup>14</sup> Sham ruins were buildings or edifices constructed artificially as ruins, for entertainment and decoration. For more on sham ruins in the Romantic era, see Sophie Thomas *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle*.

<sup>15</sup> In *Lectures on the English Poets*, Hazlitt claims that ruins produce a general, and therefore vague, emotion, impression of power, and sense of the sublime that “com[es] over the mind” (52).

*Rome as it was*, which imagines how late Imperial Rome might have looked with its impressive classical architecture both intact and functional (Fig. 2). In 1859, painted *Rome as it is* to show how the passage of time crumbled Rome's architecture (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Arthur Ashpitel, "Rome as it was, restored after existing remains," 1858, courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 3. Arthur Ashpitel, "Rome as it is, from the Palatine Hill," 1859, courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 4. Louis Daguerre, selection from "The Ruins of Holyrood Chapel," 1824, oil painting, close-up of the broken east window, Wikimedia Commons.

Daguerre's Holyrood Chapel window, as seen in the oil painting in figure 4, reverses the logic of time's decay that Ashpitel demonstrates in his paintings of Rome's buildings standing majestically intact in the past, but moldered and crumbling in his present. Daguerre, instead, represents the chapel before its restoration in the 1820s.

The kneeling woman's links the painting's imaginative construct to recent and older histories of Scotland's losses to England in two media: in the 3-D diorama picture and in its accompanying program. The booklet tells us that she is "in contemplation, with the lamp burning on the monument," and that she is included as an "episodical" element "placed by the artist in order to give more interest to the picture and to shew [*sic.*] the effect of light" ("Two Views").<sup>16</sup> The woman's dress is as white as the moon (though it has a black strip to indicate mourning), the stars, and the moonlight that touches gravestones in the courtyard and beams through windows by the royal vault.<sup>17</sup> The candle flitting atop her small altar monument replicates in miniature the moon above the ruin, which spotlights the graves and produces shadows. Because she contemplates a scene in recent history, she connects the audience emotionally and personally to these years. Many audience members in the Parisian Diorama would have likely recalled events between 1812 and 1816 relating to the war with France, but Hogg, upon learning of this show, would also associate these years with the maelstrom of Highland Clearances' second phase,

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<sup>16</sup> The *Mirror* review claims that the broken window is the source of light, despite the fact that the ruined abbey has no roof, and therefore, no obstruction to moonlight entering the courtyard from above (195).

<sup>17</sup> The *Mirror* reviewer interprets the woman in white, with a zone of black, as an ekphrastic literary allusion to the nun in John Milton's *Il Penseroso* who, "Held in holy passions still, / Forgets herself to marble!" (196).

which disfigured Scotland's landscape and drove many communities of Highland tenants from their homes.<sup>18</sup>

Hogg knew these stories well; he collected and published Jacobite songs that archived some of these traumatic events. The Clearances originated in the early eighteenth century as "improvements," during which wealthy landowners encouraged their tenants, local farmers, to give their land to the British to manage and, particularly in the earlier decades, to be cheap labor for the new "factor" or property manager. A host of reasons motivated wealthy Brits to cruelly evict Scottish peasants and farmers, including their devotion to Roman Catholicism; the impression of clans as militaristic and a threat to British rule; the desire for cheap labor; perceptions of Highlanders as uncivilized or idle and in need of moral reform; and the prevention of future organized efforts, like the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, to unseat Hanoverian rule of Great Britain in favor of a Stuart king or an independent Scottish state.<sup>19</sup> The most barbaric Clearances took place during the second wave of evictions in the early nineteenth century. In Sutherland, for example, Clearances began in 1807 in Farr and Lairg parishes and lasted through 1821 (Ferguson 276). One vivid example of these events is the Clearance of factor Patrick Sellar's lands on the Sutherland estate. To ensure that families would leave the estate in May 1814, Sellar started burning their pastures in March. With no pastures to feed their cattle, and therefore, no cattle to sell, tenants starved and could not support their families. In addition,

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<sup>18</sup> I conjecture that the Clearances were on Hogg's mind when he structured each of the seventeenth century narratives in the novel to end with one of the brothers being driven, persistently and brutally, from his home to his death in unfamiliar country. Jacobite tradition associates the Clearances to their rebellions in 1715 and 1745, which manifests in the songs they compose about their heritage (Newman 22).

<sup>19</sup> For studies of the Highland Clearances see Eric Richards' *The Highland Clearances, Debating the Highland Clearances*, and *Patrick Sellar and the Highland Clearances*; Laurence Gouriévidis *The Dynamics of Heritage*; John Prebble *The Highland Clearances*; Alexander Mackenzie's 1883 history of the clearances; and T. M. Devine *Clearance and Improvement*.

new herdsman prevented Highland tenants from tending what crops they had left after the pasture burnings. In May 1814, the appointed month of eviction, Sellars' men burned down tenants' homes without care for those who remained inside of them. Tenants who escaped the fires and the rubble left their lands destitute, with no possessions or funds to rebuild their lives. In the meantime, Sellar restructured these lands for sheep farming while those he evicted died of burnings, cold, fatigue, and lack of food and shelter. Though Sellar was brought to trial before Lord Pitmilley in 1816 for mass homicide, he was acquitted, allowing his company of privileged assailants to continue savage oppression and eviction of Highland residents (Mackenzie 13-17). Alexander MacKenzie reports that more removals, similar to Sellar's, followed in the years 1819-20, just before the Diorama opens in 1822, and he leaves his chronicle's reader with an image of Sellar as a "leviathan tenant, who individually supplanted scores of worthy small farmers of the parish of Farr" (21). These events were fresh in the memories of diorama audiences and authors, like Hogg, in the 1820s.

### **Traditionary Evidence: The Holyrood Diorama Program**

Daguerre and Bouton felt that no diorama could stand on its own, text-free. They printed a program for each set of paintings at the Paris and London dioramas. The short booklet spans approximately 7-8 pages per painting, on average. Though the booklet at first seems to articulate architectural and historical facts of Holyrood chapel with an unbiased tone, its scrupulous enumeration of the damage inflicted and the dead commemorated in the chapel uncovers a Scottish nationalist message, or at least a desire to record the nation's suffering. In essence, the booklet teaches a history of the chapel, from its foundation in the twelfth century to its repairs in the early nineteenth century. Though it is unlikely that Hogg read a program booklet, since he

did not attend the Paris Holyrood diorama, he would have been familiar with the information found in the booklet, as it sounds like an excerpt from a standard Scottish history chronicle or textbook.

The booklet's description of the abbey works like a textual illustration, or an extended caption, that feeds a viewer with details that explain the gravity of the view and the chapel's importance for Scottish history. It narrates, in pointillist detail, key past events concerning the abbey—such as the birth, marriage, and burial of King James II—which are central to Scottish history. Because it avoids naming an author and assumes such a general tone, it offers itself up to be quoted in various sources. It is a traditionary work that passes on Scottish history and seems to establish enough authority to convince others to pass it on, as well. The text from diorama booklets made its way into diorama reviews, provides source material about the abbey for travel guidebooks, and could provide content for textbooks relaying Scottish history.<sup>20</sup> For example, the *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Entertainment* copied most of the booklet verbatim in its review of the Regent's Park Holyrood diorama. The booklet also makes it possible for those who don't know the abbey's history to learn it, and to remember, along with the kneeling woman, those buried there and the causes they espoused.

The booklet begins with the diorama's title, "Ruins of Holyrood Chapel, A Moonlight Scene." After the title page, it precisely describes the architectural elements of the actual chapel in Edinburgh. It uses this "moonlight scene" as a key for telling the long history of the chapel, with almost no mention of the artist, his method, his partner, explanations of the Diorama building (it was patented, so this was public information), or other art-related discussions. The author describes the chapel's dimensions, how its roof collapsed in 1768, and the remaining

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Charles Mackie's *The history of the abbey, palace, and chapel-royal of Holyroodhouse* (1819).

arches, pillars, trefoil and quatrefoil heads, and the graining of the south aisle. In a standalone single-sentence paragraph, the program links the moon, the window, and the Royal Vaults to begin the discussion of those buried in the ruin. It lists the graves that the audience should be able to recognize in the courtyard, with dates. The easiest graves to see were those of the Reays, but the text also tells the audience about others: in the Royal Vault “are seen the tombs of David II, King of Scotland, who died before he could execute his project of joining the crusaders in the Holy-Land; Prince Arthur, third son of James IV, who was killed at the battle of Floddenfield; James V and his Queen Magdalen, daughter of Francis I, King of France; Jane, Countess of Archibald, natural daughter of James V, etc.” (“Two Views”). Though the pamphlet indicates that the listed tombs “are seen” in the Royal Vault, audience members could *not* see them at all from their seats. They required the booklet to imagine them there. After the list of the dead in the royal vault, the booklet doubles back and tells the abbey’s history from its founding by David I in 1128. Until this point, the program treats its readers like tourists at the abbey, and the booklet serves as the docent’s lecture.

The second half of the diorama’s description ceases to mask its impartiality and emphasizes the damage the chapel endured at English hands during the Reformation and the 1688 revolution. The text lists the abbey’s abundant revenues during the Reformation—which, of course, are not visible in the painting—followed by numerous iconoclastic attacks that robbed and decimated the abbey. The author details the abbey’s annual assets in the sixteenth century, including “442 bolls of wheat, 640 bolls of beer, 560 bolls of oats, 500 capons, 24 hens, as many salmon, 12 loads of salt, besides a great number of swine, and about 250 pounds sterling in money” (“Two Views”). Following the tabulated revenues, ironically, it catalogues injuries the English inflicted on the chapel, as if listing expenses to subtract from the former:

This stately Abbey, with the choir and cross of its church, were destroyed by the English about the middle of the fifteenth century, and nothing left standing but the body of the church. A large brazen font was carried away at this time by Sir Richard Lea, Captain of the English Pioneers, who presented it to the Church of St. Alban's, in Herfordshire. Along with the other religious houses, the buildings of the Abbey suffered much at the Reformation, the ornaments were despoiled by the populace, and nothing was left but the bare walls. ("Two Views")

This passage makes plain that the booklet has left behind the empirical tone of its first page. In this paragraph, we hear of the many instances of damage the "stately" abbey—a pun on its regal profile as well as its association with the Scottish state—has suffered. The passage collapses the century between these iconoclastic events and explains how its parts were "destroyed," "carried away," and "despoiled": twice the author exclaims, "nothing was left." After noting repairs and additions made during the Restoration, the booklet ends with a tale of the English ripping the abbey apart and stealing its marble as a sign of protest against the Catholic rule of King James. With no segue discussing the painting, its materials, or artistic merits, the text moves from the image of the ruin in the distant past, well before the 1812-1816 timeframe, into the title of the next diorama picture, Charles Bouton's "Cathedral of Chartre." The reader closes the booklet imagining the diorama view to signify eight centuries of Scottish national pride, but primarily the suffering and forces, political and natural, that erode that pride and its symbol—this edifice—into patriotic rubble that is, thanks to the picturesque, more attractive in pieces.<sup>21</sup> The pamphlet

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<sup>21</sup> The author of the diorama booklet interprets the Holyrood diorama's view in a similar fashion as Robert Barker's panorama patent interprets his seemingly benign Scottish landscape. In the painting, Barker's landscape appears empty, but his text interprets it as scenery for the battle of Prestonpans, in which the Scottish defeated the English not far from Holyrood Palace Park. For an analysis of the Barker panorama and pamphlet, see Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas*.

description seems to revolve around itself, reciting cycles of damage and restoration that rhythmically perform the writing and rewriting of Scottish history in its architecture and the texts about its architecture. Fragmentation of the Scottish historical icon implies transmission and tradition, especially in print.

Together, the Holyrood diorama painting and its booklet form a mixed-media spectacle that wowed and educated, but not at the same time. Since Diorama patrons experienced performances in a dark arena, they could not easily admire the 3-D animated painting and read the booklet to better understand the painting during the show. (Panorama viewers, on the other hand, spectated in a lit arena and could easily refer to the booklet while browsing the painting.) Being around twenty pages in length, the booklet was too long to read leisurely before the Diorama show, I posit. Reviews of these shows did not report a narrator reading the booklet aloud to the viewers while they were watching dioramas in the dark rotunda (some later shows did have a general narrator who described each view).

Attendees only had 10-15 minutes to look at the Holyrood painting during their time in the Diorama theater before the performance ended. Therefore, I posit that the print booklets enabled one to take the diorama home with him or her, recall the image, and read or learn the history that goes with it as a way to reproduce the show beyond the theater. A reviewer for *The Mirror* did just this while trying to recreate the show for his readers to experience through the periodical's page. Being unable to describe the show on his own, the author defaults to using the vague rhetoric of magic: "[I]f this be painting, however exquisite, it still is something more," and "it is actually impossible to convey by words any adequate idea of the fascination and perfect illusion of this magical picture" ("Diorama" 196, 195). The conditional statement "if this be painting, however exquisite, it still is something more," imparts several ideas: first, the show

smudges the boundary between art and reality, and second, it does more than paintings usually do: parts of it move, scintillate, or show transparency. However, the production is also literally more than a painting: it has a print component that provides a lasting historical narrative of iconoclasm and desecrated Scottish graves to spectators who sometimes, like the *Mirror* reviewer, struggled to put the show into words. In fact, when faced with a blank page to fill below the enchanting woodcut of the Holyrood chapel, the *Mirror* reviewer simply quoted vast portions of the booklet that recite the chapel's history of being broken by time as well as British rage. This review contains proof of the traditionary at work in the diorama: it actuated its own replication in print, which represents and circulates anew the image of Scottish history deployed by the Holyrood Chapel view.

The Holyrood diorama was the first of Daguerre's series of Scottish dioramas and its success probably encouraged James Hogg to incorporate this very diorama into *Confessions*. While Hogg most likely did so in order to use the diorama's popularity and illusions to enhance his experimental fiction in a new way and to increase sales of his novel, he also succeeds in casting himself as a dioramist of text, a generator of Scottish literary tradition as well as part of that tradition. Scholars have not yet studied the diorama allusions in Hogg's writing. Studies on *Confessions*, however, have not noticed the diorama's presence in Hogg's novel, though Valentina Bold comes the closest when she recounts his familiarity with magic lantern shows and describes George Colwan's "epiphany" atop Arthur's Seat as a magic lantern or phantasmagoria image (5-17). I posit that scholars have not identified Hogg's incorporation of this technology because he remediates the Holyrood chapel very subtly. Further, Hogg's popular split identity as struggling writer and farmer, as common today as it was in the nineteenth

century, makes it challenging to see him as a textual dioramist, so plugged into fashionable Parisian entertainments in the early 1820s.

Hogg's contemporaries thought of him as a hybrid writer who was both a rustic, laboring farmer and a prolific, though financially plagued, Scottish writer and poet, associated with the legacy of Robert Burns.<sup>22</sup> This interpretation persists today. He came from a lineage of shepherds and farmers who worked the land in Ettrick Forest and, in adulthood, he rented and purchased farmland to tend even while attempting to make a living as a writer. While he was not wholly unsuccessful, he struggled at both vocations and earned a reputation for being stretched between these two worlds, rather than firmly in one or the other. In keeping with his heritage, Hogg often wrote under the pseudonym of The Ettrick Shepherd, a character also appearing in "Noctes Ambrosianae," a series of playful dialogues published in *Blackwood's* between 1822 and 1835, mostly by Christopher North (John Wilson). In his introduction to *The Shepherd's Calendar*, Douglas Mack describes the character of the Shepherd as a "rural philosopher-clown" fashioned after Shakespeare's fools and with a sagacious source of humor ("John Wilson" xiii-xiv). At the same time, Hogg tried desperately to establish the by-line "James Hogg" as a serious fixture in the Edinburgh literary marketplace as the author of epic poetry, collections of poems and songs, novels, short fiction, essays, and contributions to literary annuals.

The image of Hogg as interested in Daguerre's diorama illusions, paintings, and mechanics complicates the clear hybrid perception of him as local farmer and man of Scottish literature that Hogg, his colleagues, and scholars have curated. Recognizing his knowledge of the diorama and his inclusion of it in *Confessions*, however, allows us to see Hogg as an artistic

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<sup>22</sup> For more on Hogg's dual identity as writer and the Ettrick Shepherd, see Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life*; Ian Duncan and Douglas Mack, eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to James Hogg*; Karl Miller, *Electric Shepherd: A Likeness of James Hogg*; James Hogg, "Memoir of the Author's Life"; and Valentina Bold, *James Hogg: A Bard of Nature's Making*.

entrepreneur in the Scottish literary tradition, in the company of celebrated French inventors and artists like Daguerre and Bouton, who produced innovative master works that are part of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century explosion of “oramic” experimentation. They used their knowledge of scene painting, architecture, engineering, optics, the picturesque, and the gothic to tell stories, usually histories, in large-scale animated picturesque paintings accompanied by booklets. The gothic illusions produced in the diorama, which Hogg remediates in *Confessions*, have clear technological and rational explanations. However, the magic and fantasy that Hogg produces in his literature are commonly associated with Scottish mythologies of the supernatural, not engineering and optics. In fact, Hogg and his *Blackwood's* colleagues emphasize his aptitude for writing about the supernatural, but pair that with his poetry. For example, Hogg differentiates himself from Walter Scott, when he boasts in *Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, “Ye are the king o’ [the school of chivalry] but I’m the king o’ the mountain an’ fairy school which is a far higher ane nor yours” (61). Christopher North also constructs an image of Hogg as poet of the supernatural. He opines “I wish, my dear Shepherd, you would follow Mr Wordsworth’s example, and confine yourself to poetry. Oh! For another Queen’s Wake!” and, in another essay, North baits him to write about the supernatural, or as he calls it, “the boundless phenomena of nature” (“Scots Mummy” 188). Perhaps the King’s visit in 1822 produced the most stereotypical image of Hogg as a famous but humble Scottish poet, disciple of Burns, and author of supernatural curiosities in verse such as those in the poem he wrote for the King, *The Royal Jubilee, or A Scottish Mask* (1822).

However, as a textual dioramist, Hogg depicts himself as a “man of science,” as he says in *Confessions*, rather than an author of the miraculous or the fantastic. Such a profile adds to his identity as a bucolic farmer in the border country by linking him closely to his authorial

colleagues in Edinburgh, who proclaim their city to be an international hub for authors and inventive artistic culture, even above London (Hughes, “Edinburgh” 179).

### **The Diorama Remediated in *Confessions***

This section will show how Hogg uses the elements of the diorama described in the first section of this chapter to re-express or remediate the diorama in a novel. The deconstructed Holyrood diorama in the text endows the novel with some of its realistic but strange attraction. Hogg appropriates and adapts technical and thematic elements, including the Diorama’s manipulation of light and shadow, historical narratives of persecuted Highlanders and rural Scots in the recent and more distant pasts, partially living and buried corpses, and the “gothic intimacy” of three-dimensional illusions that involve the audience in the ruin and blur the line between reality and art. Furthermore, Hogg trumps the weakest element of the diorama—its failure to convincingly animate the kneeling woman in white—by personifying and animating dioramic elements. In sum, Hogg brings the Holyrood Chapel diorama to life, in bits and pieces, scattered throughout this enigmatic novel to animate a plotline framed in the seventeenth century with present technologies and spectacles that a nineteenth-century reader would have seen in the diorama theater or read about in diorama reviews. These effects position the novel squarely within Scottish contemporary artists’ corpus of experimental Scottish fiction that re-presents or rewrites Scottish history tradition as an intermedial narrative.

In remediating Daguerre’s Holyrood Chapel diorama from spectacle into language, he deconstructs the diorama, scattering its remains, like relics of a contemporary technology, across his novel. As in the diorama itself, the fragments encourage transmission. Perhaps the remediation of the diorama and textual treatment of its parts crumbled like ruins predict its death

as an art form in the 1850s but, as my dissertation argues, urges its transmission through and absorption into the book. One goal of this chapter is to emphasize that Hogg's textual Holyrood diorama expands the experimental possibilities for mixed-media narratives, such as the novel in the late Romantic era. In this period, the novel was a highly malleable form that was well suited to remediation and Hogg's proclivity for experimentations with form. In *Recognizing the Romantic Novel* (2008), Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Charlotte Sussman analyze the genre's political and formal qualities to show how it "re-imagin[ed] community," at a time when people became more urban, modern, and mobile (1). The novel, they argue, processes diverse scenarios of the Romantic-era present and "remake[s] 'things as they are'" (*Recognizing* 10).<sup>23</sup> By the end of the Romantic era, after the publication of Scott's Waverley novels, the genre became particularly elastic as it grew to incorporate historical fiction, national tales, and a new conception of the gothic that engaged overtly with political concerns as well as bibliographical matters, such as secret histories (Heydt-Stevenson, *Recognizing* 9).<sup>24</sup> The genre of the secret history was particularly apt for advancing Hogg's vision of a dioramic novel due to its promise to deliver both history and the gothic. Ina Ferris defines the secret history genre as one that "publishes secrets" or that which is not common knowledge or part of public histories. Part of its attraction lies in its association with the archive, where one can uncover buried truths and artifacts. Ferris emphasizes that secret histories "opened out spaces for alternative histories or

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<sup>23</sup> For studies on the British novel during the Romantic period, see *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles* (2 vols., edited by Peter Garside et al.); "The Romantic-Era Novel: A Special Issue" in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 34.2 (Spring 2001); Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: literature and Social Change in Britain 1700-1830*; and Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning*.

<sup>24</sup> Ina Ferris studies the beginnings of the secret-history subgenre of the gothic and uses Hogg's *Confessions* as her primary focus, in "Scholarly Revivals: Gothic Fiction, Secret History, and Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*."

counter-histories” (Ferris, “Scholarly Revivals” 271). Such stories were particularly meaningful after Waterloo, when those buried and their stories—human as well as textual remains—needed to be uncovered, retold, and preserved.

Late Romantic novelists also had new mixed-media art forms, like dioramas and periphrastic panoramas, at their disposal to help them reconceptualize how fiction can illustrate social and historical relationships in an animated, accessible, and modern landscape. There is no doubt that Hogg knew about the dioramas in London and Paris, their mechanics, spectacles, and the realistic illusions that this new art form produced. In an essay on Hogg’s scientific allusions, Valentina Bold remarks that the diorama’s older sibling—the magic lantern or phantasmagoria—appears conspicuously in several of Hogg’s other works, published both before and after *Confessions*. Hogg’s use of the phantasmagoria in *The Three Perils of Man* (1822), “The Bogle o’ the Brae” (1831), and “Nature’s Magic Lantern” (1833) shows his undeniable interest in diorama-like entertainment, the power of realistic illusions, and the effects of bringing visual artistic media into print. Though Hogg’s near-destitute financial situation in the 1820s most likely kept him from seeing a diorama in Paris or London before he published *Confessions*, his continued relationships with the Edinburgh *Blackwood’s* and London publishing circles kept him well informed of the current arts scene in Great Britain and France (Hughes, *Letters* xx).<sup>25</sup> Hogg published *Confessions* in July 1824, just two years after the Paris diorama first opened in July 1822 and only one year after the London diorama made its splash in September 1823 (Gernsheim 182-84). Scotland also benefitted from the new brand of multimedia public entertainment made in Paris and London in the early 1820s. Though the Lothian Road Edinburgh diorama did not

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<sup>25</sup> Hogg leased the Mount Bengar farm from 1821 to 1830 and endured serious financial troubles for the duration of the lease. His letters reveal that at times he was unable to stock his farm adequately and that he relied heavily on his patron publishers for funds to survive on. (Hughes 93, 181)

open until late 1827, efforts were made to bring these shows to Edinburgh as early as March 1825—just eight months after *Confessions*’ printing and during the second (London) exhibition of the Holyrood Chapel diorama (R. D. Wood 285).

Hogg certainly knew Holyrood Palace’s abbey well enough to imaginatively reconstruct the abbey bathed in moonlight and shadow in the diorama view. Though he spent much of his early life in the countryside, he records his first visits to Edinburgh in the summers of 1802 and 1803, to begin his Highland journeys, and afterward began visiting the city more frequently to make contact with its authors and publishers. He moved to Edinburgh in 1810 to establish himself in the literary marketplace as a professional author, rather than as a Dumfriesshire farmer who published for sport (Hughes, *James Hogg* 82). Hughes suggests that Hogg, who loved strolling Princes Street for exercise and to gather news, also took long walks in Holyrood Park, atop Arthur’s Seat and around Salisbury Crags, perhaps to escape the city and recover the serenity of bucolic farmland that he once called home (*James Hogg* 85). In his circuits, he would certainly have visited Holyrood abbey, which, during these years, was missing its roof and east window mullion, as Daguerre depicts it in the diorama.

Hogg would also have received descriptions of Daguerre’s diorama in Paris from the news as well as his contacts in publishing and theater. English papers and magazines—like the *Times* and the *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*—frequently delivered reviews and accounts throughout Great Britain of spectators’ experiences at Daguerre’s and Charles Bouton’s early diorama shows in Paris and London. The literary magazine to which Hogg regularly contributed under the pseudonym “the Ettrick Shepherd”—*Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*—contained at least one extended piece on the diorama, which Hogg almost certainly read, in autumn 1823, when Hogg probably started writing *Confessions* (Garside, Introduction

lv).<sup>26</sup> It appeared in *Blackwood's* October 1823 issue in "Letter from a Contributor in Love" authored anonymously by "T." Hogg would have been familiar with this letter since it was published in the same issue as the notoriously scathing review of his latest novel, *The Three Perils of Women*, printed just two months prior to his letter "A Scots Mummy" also published in *Blackwood's* that he included in *Confessions*.<sup>27</sup> The love letter covers the very first pair of dioramas to show in either Paris or London: "The Valley of Sarnen in Switzerland" by Daguerre and "The Chapel of the Trinity in Canterbury Cathedral" by Bouton. T.'s commentary highlights optical illusions and questions of authenticity in these two dioramas: The double reality that places a realistic Swiss house within a London Diorama building confounds her, and her reaction is characteristic of most confronted with the perplexing constructed realism of the diorama ("Letter" 473).

Though general discussion of the innovative diorama was common, British writers also published specifically on Daguerre's Holyrood Diorama, in reviews and announcements in 1823-24, when Hogg was writing *Confessions* and before that particular picture opened in London in 1825. These reviews were published widely throughout Great Britain. In "Letter from a Contributor in Love," T. asks, first, "Did you see it in Paris? ---No. Well, but you have read in the newspapers (if ever by accident you take them up)" implying that Anglophone periodicals in

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<sup>26</sup> In the introduction to the second volume of Hogg's collected letters, Gillian Hughes reports that "the sheer number and importance of his letters to the Blackwood firm is immediately and glaringly obvious, and it seems odd at first sight to have more information provided about the genesis of some of Hogg's contributions to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* than about *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*" (xviii).

<sup>27</sup> Douglas Mack describes Wilson's review of *The Three Perils of Women* in *Blackwood's* (October 1823) as a "ferociously unfavourable review" and a "veritable cornucopia of pig puns on Hogg's name" (6). It also depicts Hogg as "a writer whose occasional flashes or high-souled and naïve genius coexist with the deplorably low-souled boorishness of an uncultivated peasant" (Mack 6).

Edinburgh have been steadily reporting on the current shows in Paris (“Letter” 472). For example, early in 1824, *La Belle assemblée: or, Bell’s court and fashionable magazine* tells us that the Holyrood chapel picture “is now exhibiting with great éclat in the Diorama at Paris” (183). The digest of the Holyrood show is short, but includes a descriptor of each important area of the painting: the moonlight, ruins, a praying woman near a tomb, lamplight, silence, Scottish music, and a tip-off that the painting will be sent to London in the near future (183-84). In this way, descriptions of the Holyrood view and related views in Paris, such as the interior view of Chartre Cathedral, reached Edinburgh literati, including Hogg’s circle, Walter Scott, and Hogg’s publishers. Though I find no mention of the diorama in Hogg’s letters, I believe strongly that he not only knew about the diorama as a general improvement upon the panorama, but that he read descriptions of the Holyrood diorama and was easily able to mentally generate that image using reviews and his own familiarity with the abbey from his time spent in Edinburgh as a resident, adventurer, author, and participant in King George IV’s royal visit in 1822.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Just before he began writing *Confessions*, Hogg read and heard excessive discussion related to Holyrood Palace, which contains the abbey, in 1822 while Walter Scott and company planned King George IV’s August visit to Edinburgh. Thus, Holyrood was not only a relic of the past, but a symbol of Scotland and its status in the present British Empire. Hogg attended the multi-day event in Edinburgh and even published a Scottish masque entitled *The Royal Jubilee*, based on the celebration, which depicts fairy spirits meeting to plan the Royal Visit in Holyrood Park, in honor of the King’s visit (Hughes, *James Hogg* 187). This was the first time since 1650 that the sitting British monarch visited Edinburgh, and city celebrities and planners sought to make the event memorable with a series of theatricalities, spectacles, and pageants. As in the diorama, artists designed large-scale artistic performances as well as textual accompaniments to their tableaux in honor of the event. An example of a print accompaniment includes Walter Scott’s script for the King’s visit, called *Hints Addressed to the Inhabitants of Edinburgh, and others, in Prospect of His Majesty’s visit* (1822). Importantly, Scott orchestrated plans for an enormous nighttime bonfire to be held on Arthur’s Seat—an important setting for a dioramic scene in Hogg’s novel—above Holyrood Palace and chapel, on August 16—the day before the King held the levee at Holyrood attended by two thousand nobles and gentlemen (Gilbert 73).<sup>28</sup> The visit occasioned staging and designing the city of Edinburgh, especially Holyrood Palace and Chapel, as if they were a theater for choreographed, dioramic regal spectacles.

### **Shadows of the Dead and “A blown-up dilated frame” in *Confessions***

Hogg uses the Holyrood Chapel diorama, deconstructed and animated, to portray characters George Colwan and Robert Wringhim as if they inhabit a world that is, like Edinburgh during the King’s visit, more like a diorama performance than reality. Though the primary plot of *Confessions* takes place in the seventeenth century, around the time of the Glorious Revolution, it is brought to life with technological artistic elements of the present that belong to the diorama. In this section, I first show that the novel incorporates the diorama’s use of light and shadow that define its parts. Bright illuminations, deep shadows, and changes from luminescence to umbrous hues and back again are traits of many dioramas. However, the chiaroscuro in the Holyrood diorama is unique: it locates the audience within the ruin’s graves. In particular, the shadows in the back right of the chapel also signify its Royal Vaults and the desecrated coffins within, and these shadows mark that which is missing, which cannot be seen, as the tangible essence of this Scottish memorial. The emotionally and physically battered or dead in *Confessions*, as in the Holyrood exhibit, are also demarked by an embodied and shadowy absence. I will discuss the scene atop Arthur’s Seat as one in which Hogg uses the diorama’s particular kind of animation to draw forth embodied shadows of the oppressed. These diorama parts and effects in the novel produce gothic illusions that create a fictional history that reads as Daguerre’s contemporary spectacle in language.

The Holyrood diorama’s lighting and shading are crucial to understanding and locating within the ruin the people associated with the chapel’s history. Likewise, Robert and his doubles—George Colwan in the Editor’s narrative and Gil-Martin in the memoirs—are consistently described in terms of illumination or darkness throughout the entire novel. Hogg starkly contrasts the half-brothers with one another from their first meeting, as white differs from

black. George's good humor, athleticism, and popularity distinguish him as a lively gentleman. Conversely, his step-brother—dressed entirely in black—"attend[s] him as constantly as his shadow" and always plays the villain (Hogg 64). In addition to their opposing demeanors, the brothers' eyes receive contrary dark and light descriptions in this early scene. In a rare display of cross temperament when his brother disrupts a tennis match, George, with "a flush of anger glow[ing] in his handsome face, and flash[ing] from his sparkling blue eye," warns Robert to watch his step (Hogg 65). George's emotional response lights up his face in four different ways: his cheeks flush, the flushing "glow[s]," anger "flashe[s]" from his eye, and his eye also "sparkl[es]." The fiendish shadow answers George's bright glare with a darkened glower of his own: "[t]he black coated youth set up his cap" and "brought his heavy brows over his deep dark eyes" (Hogg 65). The brothers' first meeting pits them against one another in an obvious good versus evil scenario: a duel of bright and dark gazes that associates them with descriptors of luminosity and shadow, the main ingredients of Daguerre's Holyrood scene.

The light and shadow that connect the brothers and Gil-Martin are physical qualities and part of their embodied identities. They imbue them with the diorama's lighting effects and materials that produce or capture optical effects, like the apertures, lenses, curtains, windows, and screens that were central to the diorama's functionality. Indeed, the Editor compares the way Robert constantly follows George to optical phenomena as unfailing as "the shadow ... cast from the substance, or the ray of light from the opposing denser medium" (Hogg 75). The comparison refers to the material object that obstructs or reflects light to cast shadow or illuminate, respectively. Importantly, a single diorama screen created both illuminations and shadow for spectators to see: the pictures were painted in oil mixed with turpentine on thin cotton canvases. Backlighting sections generated both shadows and luminosity, depending on whether the section

was painted opaque or left transparent. If Robert functions as the “shadow cast from the substance” and George as “the ray of light” reflected from the medium—as their early associations with dark and light imagery indicate—then, in a diorama, the two brothers belong to the same fabric and screen on which Daguerre manipulated shadows and light. Their identities are mobile and changeable; they are, at first, brightly lit, but become doused in shadow as the novel progresses to its conclusion. At the very end of Robert’s memoirs, for example, he describes Gil-Martin, the character double who haunts him, as a “stern face blackened with horrid despair” (165). The novel’s characters, so steeped in shimmering lights and deep shadows intricately woven, share the same allure and fabric as the diorama painting whose luminosity and shadow also project on the same woven canvas.

The diorama employs animated lighting effects to draw out the embodied shadows of the tortured Scots who are buried in the ruin, and Hogg invents a key scene on Arthur’s Seat to do the same work in the novel, where dioramic lighting effects highlight fraternal Scottish suffering. Animation sets the diorama apart from other Romantic-era and early nineteenth-century art forms that relied on light and shadow for effect. Views of Holyrood Palace below Arthur’s Seat, with the abbey on the left and the palace on the right, were common views for tourists and artists to seek out. Later, they became a popular postcard view in the Victorian era. For example, in figure 5, the postcard of Holyrood Palace and Arthur’s Seat has cut out windows and a moon that, when held up to a light, create an illuminated night scene. However, nothing in the postcard moves.



Fig. 5. Postcard of Holyrood Palace and Abbey and Arthur's Seat, with cutout moon and windows. The top-most peak is Arthur's Seat.

The diorama's animations were quite different from our current idea of what animation looks like. Instead of making inert objects or people move around on the screen, the diorama's animations were more rudimentary. They approximated meteorological transformations and changed the lighting and weather of a scene over the course of the painting's 10-15-minute show. For example, the diorama of the Valley of Sarnen changes the weather from sunny to a snowstorm and back to sunny, the view of Roslyn Chapel features different effects of streaming sunlight, "Ruins in a Fog" shows crumbling architecture enveloped in a dense mist that clears away over time, and the Swiss Village of Unterseen picture was praised for its gradually deepening shadows (*A Picturesque Guide* 40-41). In the Holyrood scene, Daguerre moves the moonlight to create shifting luminous puddles and shadows in the ruin as the moon traverses the night sky and the stars twinkle. These effects were sophisticated innovations in the 1820s. The flickering candle on the unmarked grave and the changing light of the moon gave the living

audience just enough light to recognize those buried in the shadows, whose names appear in the booklet.

In the most obviously dioramic scene in *Confessions*, which takes place on Arthur's Seat, a diorama-inspired light show also conveys embodied shadows of victims remembered by texts. In this poignant episode early in the novel, Hogg subtly turns Arthur's Seat into the Diorama's seating arena, and the scenery around these hillsides—from which one can spy Holyrood Chapel, as seen in figure 5—becomes the screen for a luminous 3D painting with transforming images. To be clear, this dioramic moment in the novel does not perfectly reproduce the Holyrood diorama in text. Rather, it uses Daguerrian effects of lighting, animation, and gothic imagery to produce a new textual diorama in the novel in a setting very near Holyrood—one that also alludes to *Waverley*'s textual panorama of the Battle of Prestonpans, as I detail in chapter 1. Together, the effect of this scene, combined with the novel's use of lighting and shade comprise a scattered or deconstructed Holyrood diorama in *Confessions*. The remediated diorama helps Hogg produce a new kind of experimental novel and position him as part of the Scottish literary tradition.

At this moment in the plot, George hikes away from downtown Edinburgh and up into the hills to escape being haunted by his half-brother, who has been persistently following and bullying him, always appearing just an arm's length away, eerily and from out of nowhere. As he walks toward a perch on Arthur's Seat, a prominent hilltop and one of the highest points in the area, he skirts the Holyrood abbey ruin in Daguerre's diorama painting. At the summit, feeling free, he watches a "sublunary rainbow" expand in grandeur and dioramic effect to take over the visible horizon and his imagination. Its gradual growth before his eyes performs a Daguerrian

sublime landscape being revealed as the curtain opens in a Diorama theater. This is the first part of the scene's remediated diorama image:

[T]o his utter amazement and supreme delight, he found, on reaching the top of Arthur's Seat, that this sublunary rainbow, this terrestrial glory, was spread in its most vivid hues beneath his feet. Still he could not perceive the body of the sun, although the light behind him was dazzling; but the cloud of haze lying dense in that deep dell that separates the hill from the rocks of Salisbury, and the dull shadow of the hill mingling with that cloud, made the dell a pit of darkness. On that shadowy cloud was the lovely rainbow formed, spreading itself on a horizontal plain, and having a slight and brilliant shade of all the colours of the heavenly bow, but all of them paler and less defined. (29)

George bows to the rainbow's enchantment and sits down on the hilltop to take in more of the show (30). His position mimics that of a Diorama spectator in an arena propped above a dark pit containing scenographic technologies and stage mechanics. In order for this view to be dioramic, the sky must change and darken, and it does.

The second part of the dioramic scene begins when George turns to his right, to look at the place by his side where his diabolical brother has been constantly haunting him. He rotates instinctually and automatically, as if shifted clockwise by Daguerre's turning stage, and discovers a transformed image as large as a diorama screen where he usually finds his brother's ghost:

Gracious Heaven! What an apparition was there presented to his view! He saw, delineated in the cloud, the shoulders, arms, and features of a human being of the most dreadful aspect. The face was the face of his brother, but dilated to twenty

times the natural size. Its dark eyes gleamed on him through the mist, while every furrow of its hideous brow frowned deep as the ravines on the brow of the hill. George started, and his hair stood up in bristles as he gazed on this horrible monster. (Hogg 30)

Robert appears as a monstrous and enormous wraith whose body is delineated in a cloud, with eyes of light rays that puncture through the mist—a typical early Diorama lighting effect. The apparition finally “present[s] itself thus to him in *a blown-up, dilated frame of embodied air*, exhaled from the caverns of death or the regions of devouring fire” (Hogg 30, my emphases). The screen for the Holyrood painting was quite large at 70 x 45 feet, a real “dilated frame” with effects that embodied the air, or gave substance to that which appeared to have none. As Sophie Thomas argues, the diorama’s shadows are not just dark places in a picture, but often signify the physical presence of the dead, as dioramists tended to create eerie still-life gothic scenes that brought art, the gothic, and death into a realistic show (122, 128). This was especially true of Daguerre’s portrayal of the chapel, since it housed so many graves, and Daguerre’s two other early Scottish chapel dioramas did not feature Scottish burial grounds of the same magnitude.

In George’s hilltop haunting, the enlarged grimacing face delineated in the cloud belongs to Robert Wringhim, and the expression terrifies George but can also be read to reveal Robert’s own severe pain and trauma. We learn in the second half of the novel that Gil-Martin is an agent of the devil, or a product of his mental illness, that torments Robert Wringhim and commits murders on his behalf, for which Robert suffers the social consequences. When George perceives that Robert haunts and bullies him, he does not know that Robert is as much of a victim as he is—whether of mental illness or the manipulation of an actual devil. Readers can identify the pained expression in the cloud grimace, as it “seemed sometimes to be cowering down as in

terror” and “approached with great caution” (30). George fled from the jaws-cloud and immediately ran into his half-brother, where on impact he became “confounded between the shadow and the substance,” a reaction he shares with many a diorama viewer (31). While this scene can be read as George finally having an opportunity to bully back his relentlessly evil brother, it also shows two related Scottish men, persecuted, and in terror for their lives. We learn that Robert, like George, felt certain that he was going to be murdered on that hilltop. The huge ghost face that scares George is an enlarged reflection of his own fear and pain as well as his brother’s. That it was expelled from a “cavern of death or region of devouring fire” situates a hell within the view—one within each of the suffering brothers. Importantly, the hellish setting relates closely to the Scottish brotherhood buried in Holyrood, whose caskets and graves were scorched by those who set fire to the chapel in opposition of King James VII (Mackie 30).<sup>29</sup>

*Confessions* is through-and-through a Scottish story about suffering and proving, with different kinds of evidence, that one has been tortured to death by one’s demonic other half, whether that half is a person, a real demon, or a psychological manifestation. Even after death, bodies continue to be tortured. Many hands, including the Editor’s, explored and exhumed Robert’s corpse multiple times from his private hillside grave. After finding and reading his journal, the Editor fully disregard’s Robert’s recorded, dying wish that his diary not be altered or amended by bookending his printed memoir with narratives that color his story, and by planning to send the journal to the printer with his own modifications (Hogg 165). The history of the Scottish memorialized in the Holyrood chapel is no different, we learn from the diorama’s booklet. Scottish nobles’ bodies suffered being stolen or strewn about, broken limbs, ransacked

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<sup>29</sup> The “the regions of devouring fire” also, somewhat tangentially, recall the more recent Highland Clearances in the early nineteenth century, during which British landowners forced Highland farmer tenants to leave their longtime hearthstones by burning down their homes and arable fields.

coffins, and conflagration. Behind every stitch of darkness or shadow in *Confessions*, as in the diorama, lies an abused Scottish corpse with a story to print, reframe, and reprint.

### **James Hogg: Textual Dioramist**

With this new reading of the novel based on its historical and thematic relationship to the diorama, I argue that the Holyrood diorama remediated into text helps redefine Hogg's dual identity of farmer/writer. Instead, the diorama in *Confessions* splits the implied author, Hogg, into three constructed identities, two of which are exaggerated stereotypes that he includes in his novel: the *Blackwood's* essay author and the farmer wholly absorbed in his livestock and crops. These two personas—urban writer and laboring bucolic farmer—seem as opposed to one another as the unhappy half-brothers in the novel. For his third identity, he establishes himself as the “anonymous” author of the novel and textual dioramist, attributes that align him more closely with “The Great Anonymous,” Scott, and European cosmopolitan artistic society. The triple identity of Hogg that I emphasize here is built into the character development and structure of his novel. The novel's doubles do not divide its objects into dualisms only; each pair of opposites—like George and Robert—together create a third entity that binds them and offers a new perspective on the double. Robert Wringhim and his demonic doppelganger, Gil-Martin, provide the clearest example of a double in the novel that then generates a trio. With the split, Robert's identity splinters, but produces a level of complex self-perception that his other two identities lack.

An analysis of Robert's trio shows that the third party in his character trio, like Hogg's, is an authorial identity that writes in order to transmit a personal history and a particular image of him that records his identity struggles. Robert records in his diary an awareness of being split

into a double—a person he sees as Robert and another, who is Gil-Martin. In his diary, he writes of Gil-Martin as the substance, and portrays the other part of himself, the more human of the two, as the “shadow cast from the substance,” or produced when Gil-Martin metaphorically blocks his light by threatening his life (Hogg 27). Gil-Martin takes on Robert’s aspect as well as his place in society in a way that is so lifelike that he seems less like a “second self” than just another part of Robert, which takes over his identity from time to time (125). However, Robert understands himself to be *neither* of the two subjects that comprise his identity:

I generally conceived myself to be two people. When I lay in bed, I deemed there were two of us in it; when I sat up, I always beheld another person, and always in the same position from the place where I sat or stood, which was about three paces off me toward my left side. [. . .] *The most perverse part of it was, that I rarely conceived myself to be any of the two persons.* I thought for the most part that my companion was one of them, and my brother the other; and I found, that to be obliged to speak and answer in the character of another man, was a most awkward business at the long run. (106, my emphasis)

When Robert exclaims that to “answer in the character of another man” was challenging and “awkward,” he says, in effect, that his own body is missing. This is the body of the writer who produces the text of his diary; the memoir that reaches us comprises the trace of Robert’s missing body.

In his final entry, on his last day, he writes, “still am I living, though liker to a vision than a human being” (165). If you think of Robert’s remains as his memoir, the vision of him that still lives for a reader is the printed page. In fact, Robert’s rapid decline into a corpse doesn’t guarantee him a place in the local lore of Dalcastle. Rather, his story enters the record because of

the writing, exhumation, and printing of his memoirs—despite their misrepresentations on the page—alongside the Editor’s narrative that add his story to local tradition in Dalcastle, and farther, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London, the metropolitan publishing centers associated with British book production.<sup>30</sup> In print, his memoirs become entangled with editorial agendas of the “traditionary,” such that they might become unrecognizable to him, but they can live on as visions or texts to be reproduced. The “traditionary” in Hogg’s novel’s full title—*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, Written by Himself, With a Detail of Curious Traditionary Facts and Other Evidence by the Editor*—refers to content as well as the act of passing it on. The title announces that by including “traditionary” content the Editor disobeys Robert’s wish to faithfully publish his memoirs as he wrote them, without modifying them. His final written words “cursed [ . . . ] he who trieth to alter or amend!” (165). The Editor mutilates Robert’s corpse and his corpus, or memoir, with his publication methods, but these same methods enable a story to live on in print through tradition.

### **Making Hogg Stock**

In a brilliant move at the end of his novel, Hogg makes it appear that the Editor includes the two primary versions of his persona, *Blackwood’s* contributor and farmer, in his postscript. This is the part of the novel meant to provide textual evidence corroborating Robert Wringhim’s story with the exhumed memoir, such that Gil-Martin appears to be guilty of George’s murder. Hogg wrote his two dominant personas into the Editor’s postscript in order to circumscribe the novel with his third identity—that of the Scott-like anonymous author, textual dioramist, and inventor

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<sup>30</sup> The Editor dedicates the book “To The Hon. William Smith, Lord Provost of Glasgow,” the publishing house of Longmans is located in London, and Hogg and the other *Blackwood’s* characters in the Editor’s final account belong to the Edinburgh book market.

of this realistic psychological thriller.<sup>31</sup> When the Editor and his company meet Hogg's character at the sheep market and invite him to accompany them to dig up the suicide's grave, the shepherd Hogg offers a comment in Scots dialect that blasts through the cameo he created for himself in his novel:

Od bless yet, lad! I hae ither matters to mind. I hae a' thae paulies to sell, an' a' yon Highland stotts down on the green every ane; an' then I hae ten scores o' yowes to buy after, an' if I canna first sell my ain stock, I canna buy nae ither body's. I hae mair ado than I can manage the day, foreby ganging to houk up hunder-year-auld banes. (170)

I agree with Richardson's interpretation of this moment as Hogg indulging in the fantasy of snubbing his literary colleagues to "retreat into the primacy of farming" (199), but see more at stake—rather, in stock—here than this. In this dismissal, Hogg returns not just to his character's work in the livestock market, but to his own career in the book market, as well.

The admission that if he cannot first sell his own "stock" he cannot buy any other "body's" can be interpreted in a few important ways. On the surface, it shows Hogg's eyes on his dwindling bank account: he can't afford to support himself if he doesn't sell his writing—his "stock" or pages—for profit. But this statement also suggests that he wants to "sell" or convince others to buy into his legacy so that he can attain the position that Walter Scott and Blackwood occupy in the Edinburgh artistic intellectual center. Coincidentally, "Miss Edgeworth"

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<sup>31</sup> We see the template of the double turned triple in the structure of the novel. The Editor presents two major conflicting stories that the reader corroborates against one another. At first, this doubling appears to construct the novel in two parts; however, there is also a third: the Editor's inclusion of Hogg's *Blackwood's* article "A Scots Mummy," the anecdote of his group expedition to unearth the suicide's corpse so as to match it to the corpse described in Hogg's article and the Editor's discovery of the manuscript in the tobacco spleuchan. The trio of tales also mimics the shape of the Paris and London diorama theaters, with its two screens and its auditorium.

(presumably Maria) wrote to Scott in 1824 that her neighborhood theorized that the anonymous author of *Waverley* was a “joint-stock business” with two partners: Sir Walter as well as “an unfortunate lunatic” whose papers wound up in Scott’s possession (Lockhart, *Memoirs* 164). At the top of the establishment, Scott and Blackwood figuratively and literally buy and control other writers’ “stock”: their writing, their labor, and more broadly, their “body of work” or corpus. In *Confessions*, with the help of the remediation of the Holyrood diorama, Hogg exaggerates his double identity throughout the British print industry in order to re-emerge from behind his own duality with a third identity: a vision of an author, somewhat worse-for-the-wear from having to juggle his heritage as a farmer and his connection to the land, as well as his desire to write and be a part of Scottish print tradition. After all, his contemporaries included authors such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose connections to nature and to their pens seemed to encourage successes with each. As part of the printed and reprinted page, Hogg’s identity might splinter even more, and he might lose control of his writing as well as perceptions of himself, but at least in print stock he can be the traditionary agent as well as its content. With *Confessions* and its remediation of the Holyrood diorama, Hogg attempted to make his own stock in authorial value as well as print publications of his work. This was, perhaps, a trick that he learned not from Daguerre’s show, but from periodicals like *The Mirror* and *Blackwood’s* that replay the painting exhibition on the page.

## CHAPTER 3

### RODOLPHE TÖPFFER'S EARLIEST COMIC STRIPS AND THE TOOLS OF THE PICTURESQUE: TEACHING THE ART OF PERCEPTION

Genevan author, teacher, and artist Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846) completed *Histoire de Mr. Vieux Bois*, a picture story that many consider to be the first comic strip or graphic novel, in 1827. From that time until his death, Töpffer sketched pictorial narratives that he called “romans en estampes” or novels in engraved pictures, completing seven long albums, as well as unpublished fragments. At the same time that he was experimenting with comics, Töpffer was composing a large corpus of published prose: travel writing and essays exploring aesthetic theory and describing the genre he invented, much of it influenced by picturesque treks in the Alps that he led for his students, the mixed text-and-image travelogues *Voyages en Zigzags* in which he recorded those trips, and the mixed media art and literature prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Specifically, I will argue that he drew his primary inspiration for his first two comic strips from William Gilpin’s picturesque landscape viewing and drawing techniques and that with his early comics he entered into a joust, so to speak, with Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, who made the aesthetics of high-tech theatrical narrative art popular, such as we see in Daguerre’s Diorama.<sup>1</sup>

So popular and influential was the diorama that artists and writers debated its artistic merits by responding to it in their fiction, poetry, or in reviews published in periodicals. In their responses, they measured its verisimilitude to the places it depicts, or, to say it another way, by the difference between its representations and the experience of visiting the referent. In this

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to the diorama as it relates to Romanticism and the Romantic era, see Richard Altick, Stephen Pinson, Gillen D’Arcy Wood, Sophie Thomas, Erkki Huhtamo, R. Derek Wood, and Helmut and Alison Gernsheim.

chapter, I focus on how Töpffer's first two comics—*Vieux Bois* and *Voyages et Aventures de Docteur Festus* (1829)—resist the diorama's deployment of spellbinding artistic tools, those that create the illusion for spectators that they are literally, not virtually, visiting picturesque scenes or monuments. Instead of hiding the media miscellany that creates its illusions, like the diorama does, Töpffer's two earliest albums call attention to their media by representing in squiggly lines the technologies that make traditional picturesque drawing possible: curved mirrors, pen or pencil, and paper bound in codex form.<sup>2</sup> Stephen Pinson coined the term "optical naturalism" to define the specific type of realism that Daguerre's Diorama creates. This realism, with roots in late eighteenth-century landscape theory, popular science, theater, and artistic spectacles, occurs when a viewer looks at an artistic image with her naked eyes and also through optical instruments that augment and alter the image. In both cases the viewer assesses whether or not an image creates a convincing illusion insofar as it successfully replicates nature (Pinson 56). For example, one periodical, the *Mirror of Literature*, describes the Roslyn Chapel diorama as producing a multimodal experience characteristic of optical naturalism: its realism thus reminds a viewer of being in and looking at an actual picturesque place, but it also hints that the image is an enhanced painting. The Diorama, the reviewer says, offers "the most strikingly correct representation of the beauties of nature and the wonders of art" ("View of Roslyn" 129).

Furthermore,

We can scarcely expect our readers to believe that persons who have seen this chapel and observed it well, on viewing the Diorama might think themselves

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<sup>2</sup> During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Claude mirror was a hand-crafted apparatus and each mirror produced unique and irregular reflections that varied with its individual cut, cast, silver pour, and polish (Maillet 15). The dark color of a Claude mirror could be a product of its tain as much as shading or hue, such as the very dark green mirror in London's Science Museum holdings (Maillet 17).

transported by some magic spell to the scene itself—so perfect is the illusion; indeed we know an artist though eminent not in one branch, but in a general knowledge of the arts, who declared that had he not clearly ascertained that the view of Roslyn Chapel was a painting on a flat surface, he would not have believed but the effect was produced by more than one position of the scene, or rather by many scenes placed in different positions, yet such is not the case; the illusion, however, is so extraordinary that connoisseurs and even artists may be excused for skepticism on the subject. [. . .] [N]o person would believe that the variety of light and shade—the management of the rays of the sun reflected through a half open door, the cobweb tinge of the window—the beam of timber and the loose cord, together with the mixture of light and shade which it displays are the mere effect of art; yet such is the case. (“View of Roslyn” 132)

The diorama delivers the effect a tourist experiences as she moves around, perceiving the view from different vantages and noticing details in many distinct loci. Therefore, the painting’s illusion activates a model of perception as moving and multiple and, additionally, that veils the tools creating the “magic” of a realistic experience. The dioramic view is like the continuous ever-scrolling vision that William Gilpin describes as he glides past rocks and ruins down the Wye river or explores the grounds of a ruined abbey. (This more exploratory, roving mode of viewing while sightseeing, as the diorama replicates, contrasts with the way Gilpin views a landscape when he stops to sketch a scene in his notebook, focusing on just one slice of the landscape, methodically composing the most pleasing view with framing, alignment, and line-work.) That is, Daguerre enhances the picturesque sketch into a theatrical event in which the spectator seems to visit a picturesque replica of a place. Daguerre’s picturesque replica borrows

the iconic subject matter of Gilpin's picturesque sketches—ruined abbeys, curvaceous rivers, trees with reaching and articulated branches, mountains—but leaves the characteristic “roughness” of his drawing style behind. This is the very roughness that Töpffer rescues and introduces in his drawing style via raw, unpolished shapes and pen strokes in order to dispel the chimera of illusion. Like Gilpin, he asks of the reader: how do you imagine the details?

One of the primary ways that Töpffer's comics offer a critical counterpoint to the optical naturalism of the diorama's wall-sized enchanting illusions is through the advocacy of “older” technologies and genres: he reasserts the power of writing, drawing, and bound pages to display narrative and the sketch's ability to create awareness of the processes of perceiving and representing the world.<sup>3</sup> Töpffer turns away from the Romantic subject as sole experiencer and recorder of the picturesque and refocuses the reader on the optical instruments and technologies that make experiencing and recording the picturesque possible. This move toward recognizing picturesque artists' use of technologies reiterates Ron Broglio's argument that “networks of people and tools suggest that no one person can hold the value of the landscape within himself” (26). Instead of inviting his audience to a theater to view a 3-D, trompe l'oeil scene painting, Töpffer sends them a book of line drawings accompanied by cursive text. Rather than animating illusions with lighting, lenses, and curtains, or moving his audience on a turning platform, Töpffer conveys motion in his stories by sketching in irregular, wavy hand-drawn lines and by sectioning his narrative into a sequence of frames akin to a storyboard. Furthermore, dioramas and panoramas (resembling large murals) usually portrayed serious military or geopolitical subjects, for example, Charles Bouton and Daguerre's “The port and town of Sta. Maria in Spain (Meeting of the Duc d'Angouleme and the King of Spain)” (1825) and “Edinburgh during the

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<sup>3</sup> See Richard C. Sha's *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism* for an analysis of the sketch as it relates to rhetoric and aesthetics in romanticism.

fire of 15 November 1824 (by moonlight)’’ (1826). Instead, Töpffer’s comics level earnest social commentary through Horatian satire—a genre that he wields like a mirror.

Töpffer emphasizes aspects of picturesque viewing and drawing in his earliest comics because they call attention to the way that we look at our surroundings and then alter that image as we depict it on a page—an artistic praxis as old as the invention of paper. The Genevan artist, like Gilpin, makes the genre of the sketch the centerpiece of his new craft of drawing picture stories. The smallest doodle, Töpffer claims, has more “jouissance poétique” and artistic merit than the most beautiful trompe-l’oeil (*Réflexions* 123). The line is, in Töpffer’s view, the best place to identify a trace, on the page, of the artist’s methods of observation; here, the adventure-loving Genevan schoolteacher waves to his audience to inspect his own lines and to see within them his method of perceiving the world around him as well as the spontaneity, rapidity, clarity, and freedom with which he represents what he sees (Kaenel 34). In the sketch, he values the line’s medial transparency: its ability to reveal the instruments and methods that an artist uses to show that image on paper, including a particular style (Kaenel 30-35). Thus, Töpffer is also influenced by Gilpin’s emphasis on the analytical and cerebral gymnastics of representing the picturesque as well as how the process of seeing is inscribed in a sketch. For Gilpin, picturesque drawing is a multi-step process artists use to observe and then draw a landscape by taking a single, carefully constructed and framed viewpoint; in contrast, diorama artists create the effect of spectators moving through an illusion, a process we observe in the Roslyn Chapel Diorama. Gilpin instructs a traveler to find the best vantage point and then stay there, framing the view, reducing it to the size of his paper, highlighting a few key elements in the scene, smudging the remainder, quickly sketching the general shapes in black lead pencil, noting the relative distance of certain main objects, and, finally, beginning a second “adorned” version of the sketch, using

notes on the first sketch (*Three Essays* 63-67). Throughout these steps, the artist should carefully preserve a “rough” general outline of the landscape (*Three Essays* 70), not create a “smooth” or meticulously detailed realism one would find in Daguerre’s paintings. Gilpin also advocates using a Claude mirror to turn one’s surroundings into a picturesque composition. Many of his sketches and paintings have a distinct oval frame, dark tint, distorted shapes, and altered perspectives that indicate that he used this technology to form the scene, and also, that he wanted his art to allude to the tools and hand that created it. Even his prose alludes to his optical tools: he denotes rocks and inlets as “convex” and “concave” shapes (Gilpin, *Observations* 34) and describes the amusement of watching the passing countryside reflected in a Claude mirror while traveling in a carriage, the challenge in spying a good picturesque composition among rapidly changing images, and the delight of possibly capturing that image on the page (Gilpin, *Remarks* 225). What better way to oppose an elaborate diorama illusion engineered by a team of artists with an expensive cache of supplies and produced in a theater, than a single artist penning a series of black line drawings on white pages bound in the most diminutive, common form of visual entertainment in the Romantic era: the book?

*Vieux Bois* and *Festus* feature repeated imagery of two optical tools picturesque travelers used—Claude mirrors and telescopes—as well as allusions to picturesque elements and practices to teach the reader that perception is always mediated, fallible, distorted, and also an act of individual artistic production accomplished with technologies, including the eyes of the beholder—ideas that the Diorama suppresses. That is, Daguerre hopes to simulate the experience of realistic perception using artwork, while Töpffer strives to make his audience think about how we perceive the world and represent what we see. Thus, he highlights technologies like the Claude mirror and the telescope, which both use curved mirrors to artificially frame and distort

the appearance of objects they purportedly help the naked eye to apprehend. Often, Romantic-era viewers used a scope or curved mirror to usher the image from the aperture onto the page. As a sketch—as in the panels in Töpffer’s albums—the image formerly seen through a telescope or in a Claude mirror becomes another visual technology and a lens through which to observe galactic, terrestrial, social, and artistic landscapes.

### **Töpffer’s Value for Romanticism Studies: An Introduction**

In addition to arguing that Töpffer’s comics show the diorama’s re-expression in bibliographical innovations in the nineteenth century, a second goal of this chapter is to (re)introduce Töpffer as a romantic author who deserves more scholarly attention and to begin new work on his corpus. Töpffer’s sizeable corpus, especially his comic strips, extends the limits and enriches the complexity of romanticism with his inventive uses of the book; playful experimentation with text and images; sharp humor; and extensive commentary on politics, communication, and technologies. He is an author who contemporary romanticism scholars, especially Anglophone scholars, have overlooked, and this is to our detriment, as his travel writing, fiction, letters, journals, and comic strips engage vigorously with a panoply of canonical works and Romantic-era literary traditions and forms.<sup>4</sup> His corpus also lends itself to new intermedial investigations

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<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, the analysis I offer in of Töpffer’s two earliest comic strips supplements a growing body of work on Töpffer and the comic strip and it adds to the scant scholarship on Töpffer and Romanticism. Philippe Willems is the most recent scholar to publish on Töpffer’s relationship to Romanticism and in his article he describes how the Genevan’s prose fiction embraces Romantic themes, but his comics—especially his late works—unapologetically deconstruct Romantic ideas about art and literature to expose their artifice (227-233). Willems is careful to point out that Töpffer believed in tradition and the necessity of literature following rules with clear intent, rather than creating art for art’s sake—a practice that had the potential to entirely negate the value of art (240). Willems’ 2009 study was published during the same year as David Kunzle’s most recent essay on Töpffer in *European Comic Art*; “The Gourary Töpffer Manuscript of Monsieur Jabot” makes a claim for the authenticity of the Gourary manuscript of *Monsieur Jabot*, an album that Kunzle boldly calls “the first modern comic strip, or better yet,

similar to the one I undertake in this dissertation, as his writing and drawing often refers to the use, misuse, shape, and function of books and other media.

Töpffer may have been slow to publish his comics to an audience beyond his boarding school in Geneva in the 1820s, but in the 1830s and 40s he published essays, fiction, travel writing, and comics that circulated throughout Francophone Europe and that were translated into English and read in America.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Töpffer's albums have received more critical attention since the publication of a collection of his comic strips, edited and translated in English by David Kunzle, but they have not historically received careful literary analysis of each full, individual work by either Francophone or Anglophone scholars of romanticism. This chapter

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graphic novel." Kunzle, perhaps the most prolific career-long Töpffer scholar is the author of an extensive two-volume study *The History of the Comic Strip*, the second volume (1990) of which contained the most substantial study on Töpffer at that time. In 2007, Kunzle published a full monograph on Töpffer, *Father of the Comic Strip: Rodolphe Töpffer*, which was released concurrently with *The Complete Comic Strips*—a resource that includes each published album, unpublished fragments, and notes on the publication history of each album. Thierry Groensteen has also published widely on Töpffer, notably his 1994 monograph co-authored with Benoît Peeters called *Töpffer, l'invention de la bande dessinée*. In honor of the 150th anniversary of Töpffer's death, La Société d'études Töpffériennes produced a significant, both in size and scholarship, collection of essays that represent the foremost Francophone scholars on Töpffer's corpus, including Daniel Maggetti, Lucien Boissonnas, Philippe Kaenel, Marie Alamir-Paillard, Jérôme Meizoz, Jean-Daniel Candaux, Annie Renonciat, and also Groensteen. This collection, not yet translated from French to English, is essential for Töpffer scholars and provides historical family context for Töpffer, analysis of Töpffer's aesthetics and political stances vis-à-vis art, details of his literary schooling and career as professor and author, investigations and overviews of his travel writing, and analysis of his theory of the new mixed image-text genre that he invented. All in all, most scholarship on Töpffer provides a broad historical view of the author's vast corpus, perhaps divided by genre, but essays and monograph chapters rarely provide extensive analysis of single albums, especially his early albums, and the literary and formal components that comprise them.

<sup>5</sup> Although Kunzle's chronology of Töpffer's corpus in *The Complete Comic Strips* situates his sketching and lithography of the albums within the broader context of his writing for magazines and publishing his other prose works, focuses primarily on the author's comics. I pair Kunzle's chronology with another more detailed version in Boissonnas et al. *Töpffer*, arranged by Jacques Droin, that provides a view of the author's production that does not revolve around his comics albums.

offers such a literary analysis, one that quite specifically interprets his characters, themes, and line work, while also analyzing historical and contextual evidence to demonstrate how his two earliest comics use the picturesque to invent a new literary art form, to teach readers about perception, and to oppose to the Diorama's interpretation of the picturesque tradition.

Töpffer produced his early comic strips in the late-Romantic era, beginning in the mid-1820s, and they accomplish what Sonia Hofkosh suggests that works of late Romanticism tend to do: they reflect on their own lateness and "latestness" in relation to other works in the period while simultaneously addressing "the potential of [their] new and emergent media to create new audiences and new modes of reading as aesthetic experience," such as the illustrated 1831 *Frankenstein*, gift books and literary annuals, and Henry Fox Talbot's *Pencil of Nature* do (297). I add Töpffer's comic strips to Hofkosh's list. Töpffer's early comic strips declare themselves as part of the late Romantic era by alluding to literary genres and traits that populate the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries and precede the comic strip, such as the gothic novel, picturesque travel narratives, and the domestic novel and the marriage plot, to name just a few. Furthermore, in his comic strips he satirizes influential romantic works, as in the manuscript of the novel version of *Festus*, published after the comic strip version of *Festus* in 1840, where he explains that the story alludes to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* (29). They also trumpet their own formal originality.

Many traits differentiate Töpffer's work from his contemporaries and predecessors, like Gillray and Hogarth, and characterize his unique style. He began sketching his first comic strip *L'Histoire de Monsieur Vieux Bois* (later retitled *Les Amours de M. Vieux Bois*) in 1827, toward the end of the Romantic literary period. While he was practiced at caricature—as we see in his penchant for doodling faces in a variety of expressions and in his theoretical treatise "Essai de

Physiognomonie” (1845)—he did not use caricature as the primary element of his narrative stories. Théophile Gautier describes that Töpffer’s unique style: “He has neither the elegant subtlety of Gavarni, nor the brutal power of Daumier, nor the comic exaggeration of Cham, nor the sad burlesque of Traviès. His manner is more like that of Cruikshank; but with the Genevese there is less wit and more naïveté” (qtd in Kunzle, *Father*: 4). Length-wise, Töpffer’s picture stories were far longer than most narrative strips; they regularly ran for around 100 panels with 4-6 panels per page (though he experimented with single-panel pages and pages that seemed crowded with panels and slices of panels). His composition style strayed far away from realism toward a raw, hand-drawn line that was more characteristic of picturesque drawing than Hogarth’s minutely detailed paintings—a style point that was crucial for Töpffer’s critique of Daguerre’s Diorama and that I elaborate on further in this chapter. Notably, while earlier artists composed narrative art for a public adult audience, especially those who would understand the political and social satire depicted, Töpffer created his picture stories for a new audience: the extended family of his school, circulating them first within the familiar and private community of students and teachers at his all-boys private school in Geneva. Approximately ten years after he first started sketching albums, he tentatively released his first album to the public.<sup>6</sup> Kunzle argues that an additional unique trait of early Töpfferian comic strips is that, like a story read aloud at the dinner table, they aimed at achieving an intimacy with readers that other contemporary narrative texts alone could not achieve when read silently to oneself (*Nineteenth Century* 3). Töpffer’s fidelity to the sketch is one method he used to create this relationship with a reader. His sketches and doodles create the feeling that they were drawn impulsively and left

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<sup>6</sup> While *L’Histoire de M. Vieux Bois* was the first album that Töpffer sketched, *Jabot* was the first album that he published and circulated beyond his school to the public.

behind for a reader to discover, as when one finds a doodle on an abandoned paper napkin or piece of scrap paper.<sup>7</sup>

Contemporary comics theorists, artists, and scholars, including Art Spiegelman, Scott McCloud, David Kunzle, Thierry Groensteen, Benoit Peeters, and others, consider Töpffer to be the inventor of the modern comic strip.<sup>8</sup> The argument that Kunzle makes in his two-volume study *The History of the Comic Strip* puts Töpffer at the turning point of the history of Western narrative visual story telling.<sup>9</sup> As the first volume of *The History* shows, the earliest graphic

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<sup>7</sup> Boissonnas recounts an event where Töpffer left behind an elaborate doodle in the classroom so that it would give the next professor to use the classroom a chuckle. There would be no mystery about who did the drawing.

<sup>8</sup> For Spiegelman and McCloud's arguments on Töpffer as the inventor of the modern comic strip, see Joseph Witek's (editor) *Art Spiegelman: Conversations* and McCloud's often taught *Understanding Comics*. Kunzle and Groensteen extensively argue for Töpffer's inventing the comic strip; by 2009, Willems says that it is fairly accepted that Töpffer was the first to create narrative in the genre of the comic strip. Despite these claims, others argue instead that the inventor of the comic strip was the American Richard Outcault, who published *The Yellow Kid and his New Phonograph* in 1896 in the *New York Journal* and subsequent newspaper strips. As Ann Miller notes, the choice between Töpffer and Outcault as the progenitor of the modern comic strip has implications for the kind of readership and culture that birthed this genre. If Outcault is the "father of the comic strip," then it originated in popular culture with newspaper strips – the most common way that comics or "the funnies" are read today. If Töpffer is the creator of the genre, then the comic strip originated in an elite intellectual bubble with private circulation among students in Töpffer's school as well as the patronage of Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe. With Töpffer as creator, his comic strips can also be said to have influenced notable European successors to this art form, including Félix Nadar, Gustave Doré, Wilhelm Busch, Théophile Steinlen, and Caran d'Ache (Miller 16).

<sup>9</sup> Kunzle is the most prolific published scholar on Töpffer's work. While his contributions are enormously important, and his scholarship on the history of Western pictorial narratives and the early comic strip is useful and detailed, he doesn't adequately recognize women's contributions to these genres. One angle to recognizing women's contributions to literature with vital pictorial elements is to gift books and literary annuals, such as those found in *The Poetess Archive* (ed. Laura Mandell). The poetess tradition included male writers as well as female writers, but celebrated a decidedly feminine collection of writing that was often elaborately illustrated. Another genre that contributes to this discussion is that of the flower book. Like women authors of flower books, there are also many authors, such as Sarah Hoare, who published books on conchology that also depend heavily on their illustrations for content. Admittedly, these

narratives were not at all comic in tone: they conveyed religious, moral, and political propaganda on broadsheets with a sober and didactic tone. For example, Hannah More's stern and didactic *Cheap Repository Tracts*, published between 1795 and 1797, are illustrated religious and moralistic poems that descend from the tradition of un-funny early pictorial narratives, though the text on the broadsheet does most of the narrative work. Picture narratives did not become comic in nature until the eighteenth century, and we chiefly associate this change with Hogarth's use of satire to convey moral and political messages in his paintings and engravings. After Hogarth, early and mid-Romantic-era artists like Henry Bunbury, George Moutard Woodward, Richard Newton, and Charles Williams, and to a smaller extent, James Gillray continued to develop the potential of caricature and picture stories to deliver satiric impressions of political and social events (Kunzle, *Early Comic Strip* 357-88). Gillray's work, such as his narrative print, ironically titled *Democracy—or—a Sketch of the Life of Buonaparte [sic]* (1800) (Kunzle, *Early Comic Strip* 380), exemplifies a huge body of vitriolic caricature sketches in the early nineteenth century that targeted the career of Napoleon.<sup>10</sup>

Though drawn at first for an insular Genevan private school audience of students, colleagues, and immediate family, Töpffer's comic albums address a broad array of literary traits and genres from the Romantic era that were common in British literature and that prove the relevance of his work to literary studies during this era. Furthermore, his comic strips respond to British literature in a medium that the British failed to actuate consistently. According to Kunzle,

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suggestions do not constitute pictorial narratives, per se, but provide insight into how women authors manipulated and published mixed text-and-image content.

<sup>10</sup> Though Gillray's strip *Democracy* (1800) was successful artistically and garnered a lot of attention from fellow artists and critics, it was his last narrative strip project because the artist struggled with the scale of the medium. He preferred to compose single-panel political satires and also drafted two unfinished strip pieces in addition to *Democracy*. (Kunzle, *Early Comic Strip* 380)

“England lacked a figure with that peculiar balance of literary and pictorial, comic and narrative gifts that we find in Töpffer, Busch, and to a lesser degree in several French artists” (*Nineteenth Century* 5).<sup>11</sup> Töpffer’s strips collectively satirize Romantic-era poetry, the domestic novel, travel writing, the gothic novel, picturesque drawing and travel writing, and the pastoral, but also rub a pinch of salt in British artists’ failure to produce a Töpffer of their own. His works also satirize eighteenth-century narrative strips that depict the crimes and corporeal punishments of famous criminals, like the famous Frenchman known as “Cartouche,” executed in 1721, as well as gossip-worthy and horrifying public events and suicides (*Early Comic Strip* 172). In addition, they allude to a crowd of British, French, and Swiss authors, illustrators, scientists, political organizations, and social groups, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Combe, Thomas Rowlandson, Victor Hugo, William Herschel, inventors of the hot air balloon, the National Guard, Parliament, the bourgeoisie, and the Royal Academy. The question of where to place Töpffer in relation to romanticism has been answered recently by both Willems and Kunzle. The latter avers that Töpffer would chafe at the idea of calling himself a romanticist due to his conservative politics, but, conversely, Willems concludes that Töpffer is not anti-romantic, but rather, just anti-post-1830 liberalism (Kunzle, *Father* 6; Willems 239). To be certain, the importance of education by experience, an interest in the question of origins and authenticity, the imagination, nature, travel and flânerie, responses to the post-Napoleonic Europe, and authorial experimentation as expressed throughout his oeuvre suggest strongly that Töpffer participates in romantic cultural paradigms. He is also a prolific ironist of social and political events and manners that took place during the Romantic era, much like Jane Austen or Lord Byron, and he gained a sincere and well-connected patron in Goethe.

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<sup>11</sup> Wilhelm Busch was the only artist in the nineteenth century to compose in no other genre than the comic strip (except for a small corpus of his juvenilia) (*Nineteenth Century* 5).

Goethe's relationship with Töpffer anchors him to the canon, but, more importantly for this chapter, links Töpffer to others, like Goethe, working on the intersections of literature and science in the era. In a later section of this chapter I will show how we can use Goethe's theory of optics and perception to think about Töpffer's lessons in how to look at one's surroundings: this is in fact a new literary genre, "roman en estampes," or novels in pictures. Goethe learned about Töpffer's comic strips by way of Johann Peter Eckermann, his literary administrative assistant, and Frédéric Soret, Töpffer's former schoolmate and translator of Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants*. On their way home to Weimar, Eckerman and Goethe's son stopped in Geneva, where they met Töpffer and looked at his works (Soret later brought back samples for Goethe to read). In 1830-32, Goethe read at least three of Töpffer's comic albums, including *Cryptogame*, *Festus*, *Jabot*, and two *Voyages en Zigzag* accounts of adventures with his students in the Alps. Goethe was amused by Töpffer's work and he delivered sincere praise to the author for his accomplishments in this new form. Soret reports Goethe's evaluation of *Festus* in a letter dated December 27:

We looked at Töpffer's drawings together, his *Adventures of Dr. Festus*, which gave his Excellency extraordinary pleasure. "That is really too crazy," he kept repeating, "but he really sparkles with talent and wit; much of it is quite perfect; it shows just how much the artist could yet achieve, if he dealt with modern [less frivolous] material and went to work with less haste, and more reflection. If Töpffer did not have such an insignificant text [i.e. scenario] before him, he would invent things which would surpass all our expectations. (qtd. in *Father*:

52)<sup>12</sup>

Here Goethe focuses on Töpffer's experimentation and invention of this mixed-media literary form in his more formal assessment of the Genevan author, praising him as "the most fertile inventor of combinations," for being able to "draw multiple motifs out of a few figures" and for his "innate, gay and ever-ready talent" (Blondel 110). Though he quips that the subject matter of Töpffer's comics is perhaps "insignificant" and not serious enough, Goethe inspired Töpffer to do what he had been so loathe to do until this moment: publish his work—both prose and mixed-genre works—and circulate it beyond the confines of his private boarding school and immediate friends. As I will explain in the next section, however, if Goethe had read any of the volumes of *Voyage en Zigzag*, the travel narratives that Töpffer wrote and published about annual excursions with his students in the Alps, he would have better understood the origin of Töpffer's affinity for experimentations and combinations of text and image. He would also have discovered Töpffer's interest in the study of how we perceive the world around us.

### ***Les Voyages en Zigzag*: Töpffer's Travel Writing as the Picturesque Route to the Comic Strip**

As I will argue, the picturesque journeys and the travel journals he kept en route were a formal incubator for Töpffer, who began to experiment on the page with telling stories in pictorial strips, annotated with a line or two of text in each panel (Kunzle, *Father* 130). As this chapter demonstrates, the *Voyages* exhibits his foundation in writing and drawing according to Gilpin's recipe for seeing, drawing, and writing about the picturesque—the principles that he later uses to invent the comic strip. These travel narratives also show Töpffer's commitment to using the

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<sup>12</sup> As Kunzle notes, "less frivolous" were words substituted for the word "modern" by Eckerman in his report of this conversation (*Father* 192n5). The chasm in meaning between "frivolous" and "modern" shows Eckerman's clear bias against what I see as Töpffer's treatment of subjects in recent history through the "backward glance" of satire.

technologies of the mirror and the book to frame and record experiences such that they become intellectual projects. In other words, he uses these older technologies to convey, in images explained with a few lines of text, stories to readers, rather than story telling in a large-scale theatrical painting that attempts to replace an actual voyage, as the Diorama did. The comic strip is a product of an intermedial exchange with the diorama, and my dissertation highlights the diorama's connections to the picturesque as well as the nineteenth-century book's elasticity to accommodate new narrative forms.

Töpffer did not just draw according to picturesque rules, he practiced the picturesque in all aspects: writing, drawing, and teaching, as Gilpin did in his *Three Essays*. In the fall of 1825, Töpffer began the annual tradition of taking a group of his students on a trip beyond the comforts of the school where they lived for the academic year and into the Swiss countryside and Alpine high country (Candaux, *Chrono* 253). These were picturesque excursions in the sense that they were designed for a group of travelers to explore mountainous terrain safely but not without excitement, to find stunning views of the Alpine high country, and to record the events and sights in a book in text and drawings that roughly follow William Gilpin's recipe for such adventures. On these treks, Töpffer carried a journal with him in which he carefully documented adventures in prose and detailed drawings, and in which he also doodled, tallied accounts, and kept track of supplies. His travel journals burgeon with marks that associate them with the hand of their author/artist—Töpffer—and that relay to any reader turning the pages that these books combine the tradition of the educational picturesque trek in the Alps with Töpffer's unique perceptions and experiences.

Töpffer made efforts to organize his pocket travel journal in two contradictory ways: he follows the conventions of polished and published books, but he also allows the bungles and

gaffes of the trip to show on its covers as well as the pages within them. I use his pocket journal, held at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire (MAH), from his June and September trips in 1828 to show how Töpffer's pocket travel journals, like his comic strips, value the picturesque quality of roughness. I want to emphasize that roughness—and ruggedness—are essential and Gilpinian values that Töpffer transmits in his corpus and that he uses in crafting his earliest comic manuscripts or sketches in order to resist contemporary media, like the diorama, that attempt to replace Gilpinian picturesque artistic roughness with realistic illusion.

The travel journal held at the MAH is a rare Töpffer manuscript in that it not only bears the marks of the author's invention of comics, but it also shows evidence of the author's trips with his students, where one of his primary goals was to introduce them to the grandeur of wildly dramatic cliffs and to teach them to think about how they perceive the changing landscape around them. To understand how Töpffer used the book as a space for invention, I studied the manuscript of this pocket travel journal that is housed at the Musée d'Arts et d'Histoire (Geneva, Switzerland). The most readily available circulating versions of Töpffer's *Voyages en Zigzag* weed out the author's experimentations with form and simply gather his prose travel writing interspersed with illustrations created by other artists and engravers "in the style" of Töpffer's. These editions include *Premiers voyages en zigzag ou excursions d'un pensionnat en vacances dans les cantons suisses et sur le revers italien des Alpes* (edited by Jean-Jacques Dubochet) and *Nouveaux voyages en zigzag à la Grande-Chartreuse: autour du Mont Blanc, dans les vallées d'Hérens, de Zermatt, au Grimsel, à Gênes et à la Corniche* (edited by Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve). Instead of a creative travel journal, readers receive an edited work with a polished version of events and illustrations that omits the lists, marginalia, doodles, caricatures, or traces of comic form that give so much personality to his manuscript pages. It was common practice

among travelers to keep a pocket journal and use that to turn scribbled travel memoirs in to a “normalized” and cleaned-up document comprised chiefly of prose with illustrations of a few key moments. However, the editorial process that readied Töpffer’s travel journals for publication came at a higher price: the extent of experiments with form fail to fully make the leap from pocket journal to saleable travel writing. As a consequence, the formal connections between Töpffer’s picturesque travel writing and his comics albums remain largely hidden in library manuscript archives.

Töpffer’s pocket sketchbook, entitled *Voyage à Chamonix avec accompagnement d’orgue*, 1828 (June, July), measures 16.5 cm tall by 21.5 cm wide. It is bound in paper boards with a mottled green paper cover and a black, grooved headband to reinforce the spine. In the MAH, the sketchbook is shelved in a protective box, but the journal’s cover shows that Töpffer did not keep it in such a box when he traveled with it; its corners bend inward and the outer edges of the cover, as well as the hinge, show considerable wear, but are still intact. Inside the cover there are pastedowns that Töpffer used as an additional page for frontmatter and backmatter sketching and doodling and for making notes in pencil. All in all, the cover of the book, as well as its front matter and back matter, tell a story of Töpffer’s commitment to Gilpin’s school of the picturesque, his love of adventure and recording experiences off the beaten path, and how dearly he valued the sketch. For example, the first page after the paste board, before the message to the reader and the title page, contains a page with a title “CROQUIS. À, par, pour, et [tournant] R. Töpffer. Voyage 1828.”<sup>13</sup> *Croquis* is French for “sketch” and on this page is written in large capital letters that immediately draw a reader’s attention to it. The first three letters “CRO” are outlined in ink, and the last four letters “QUIS” remain in pencil. Thus, even his

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<sup>13</sup> It is unclear to me what the word before Töpffer’s signature is.

treatment of the title of this front-matter page is rough and unfinished, not fully inked-in. The end of the word, written in pencil, is fading a bit, but perhaps that is something that Töpffer desired: to endow the word “sketch” with its property of impermanence and evanescence.

Though his travelogues are clearly the product of his unique style and voice, they belong to a particular strain of picturesque travel writing produced by students and teachers who lived and traveled in the Alps in the eighteenth century. It was tradition in European schools with reasonable access to the Alps for schoolmasters to take students on treks in or around the Swiss mountains as part of their curriculum to learn about natural history from experience. As a young teacher apprenticed to pastor Jean Heyer’s school in 1823, Töpffer undertook his first long, serious hike with his students and climbed Dent-de-Vaulion, a peak in the Jura Mountains (Candaux, “Rodolphe Töpffer” 189). However, it was not at the Pension Heyer that Töpffer learned to document the trip with illustrations the way that he did from 1825 through 1842, for nearly twenty years, and in which he first experimented with comic strip form. Jean-Daniel Candaux traces the eighteenth-century production of published, illustrated travel journal records of school-sponsored adventures—those that would have influenced Töpffer—to curricula at select schools in both France and Switzerland, where students and teachers—who were sometimes celebrated naturalists or scientists—collaborated to record and publish didactic but diary-like narratives of their trips (Candaux, “Rodolphe Töpffer” 189-92).<sup>14</sup> In addition to

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<sup>14</sup> At l’Ecole centrale de l’Eure (France), boys studying science were required to go on a pedestrian trek with their teachers. They collaborated in taking notes and illustrating their trip journal and eventually published their collection in 1800 (Candaux, “Rodolphe Töpffer” 192). For a Swiss precursor to Töpffer’s *Voyages*, Candaux cites the excursions led by Zurich-based naturalist and schoolmaster Friedrich Meisner and the didactic illustrated book that he created collaboratively with his students, called *Friedrich Meisners Alpenreise mit seinen Zöglingen, für die Jugend beschrieben*, published in 1801. There were also a series of summer-long education tours or perhaps camps—reminiscent of today’s Outward Bound—in the first two decades of the

suggesting that the tradition of pedestrian pedagogy and travel writing about these adventures in the Alps influence Töpffer, Candaux also points out that the Genevan author possessed a unique combination of skills and qualifications—as an accomplished writer, practiced sketch artist and caricaturist, outdoor enthusiast, and schoolteacher—that lent themselves to illustrated travel journal keeping while chaperoning students in the mountains (Candaux, “Rodolphe Töpffer” 192).

Töpffer’s drawing style in *Voyages* can be read as a series of window views, which relates his depictions to the many kinds of painting spectacles showing throughout Europe in the early nineteenth century, like the Diorama and its precedents that framed each view in a rectangular aperture. Early reviewers of diorama shows often describe the viewing experience as looking through a window at a picturesque landscape. After all, the Greek etymology of “diorama” is “to see through” (*OED*). Consider, for example, an early review of the first Paris diorama show, which depicts Trinity Chapel followed by a view of the Valley of Sarnen, a scenic lakeside village in Switzerland that Töpffer wrote about one of his later *Voyages*:

In the Diorama, the spectator ascends a staircase lighted by one solitary lamp, and enters a round space handsomely decorated, and divided into a pit and boxes. This space or hall receives the daylight from the top, moderated by a beautiful blind. The spectator then looks through a window, and the view is the interior of Trinity Chapel in the Cathedral of Canterbury; the hall in which the spectator is placed then changes of itself, and the spectator finds himself opposite another window, from which he beholds the valley of Sarnen, in the canton of Underweld. (“Intelligence” 247-48)

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nineteenth century for children of privileged and respected wealthy Swiss families led by renowned naturalists and scientists (Candaux, “Rodolphe Töpffer” 195).

The reviewer, here, demonstrates that the experience of viewing this production is that of watching through a window while the sunshine on snowy peaks and on water sparkles and fades. The intriguing aspect of the view centers on reflections—an effect of light produced when rays hit a reflective surface and attract a viewer by the dazzle and the shimmer. There are no main characters outside the window pane; the audience plays the protagonist looking through the window. Töpffer's comics, by contrast, contain over 100 small windows for each story into the pursuits of his protagonists, all drawn with the same thin black lines and on small rectangular pages. The invention of the comics form in his picturesque trek pocket journal, and as a response to the Diorama, shows the primacy and value that Töpffer places on experience and drawing while in nature and thinking about it, rather than visiting Swiss nature while in a building in the center of London and pretending to look through a window at reflections in the mountains and a “mechanical” cascade.

David Kunzle cites 1829 as the year in which Töpffer began to integrate narrative strips into his *Voyages* (*Father* 130), but I will show that Töpffer began this particular experiment as early as 1826, before he completed the sketch of his first comic strip, *M. Vieux Bois*, in 1827. Showing the earliest comics panels in the 1826 *Voyages*, before the publication of *Vieux Bois*, links the invention of the comic strip even more tightly to the picturesque, and by association then to the Diorama. The panel format of comics was invented on a picturesque trek in the Alps while composing picturesque drawings—not, say, while experimenting with narrative form from a desk in Geneva. My investigation into Töpffer's *Voyages* to locate the development of comics form before his earliest comic strip supports my chief claim in this chapter: Töpffer's picturesque travel writing inspired him to use its tools and techniques to create a new, more personal kind of narrative that privileges the experience of the journey, the intellectualization of seeing, and

representing that process in sketched frames. His travel experiences and writing led him to vehemently disagree with the technologies of Daguerre and Bouton's dioramas and Daguerre's desire to create copies of reality in daguerreotypes. It was important to Töpffer that his new genre, line drawings complemented with a bit of text, demonstrate the primary aspects of Gilpin's aesthetics and processes as well as the essential roughness that, for him, characterized the picturesque, in order to counter emerging trends in visual narrative arts, like diorama images and early photography, that exchange roughness for lifelikeness and experience for realism.

1826 was just the second year that Töpffer organized a summer Alpine tour for the students of his school, and he and his wife, Kitty, led thirteen students on a six-day trek from Geneva to Chamonix and back (Candaux, "Rodolphe Töpffer" 253). An excerpt from his 1826 pocket journal shows a strip with a succession of sketches in a short narrative, and above the strip there are three thin lines of text along with a speech bubble.

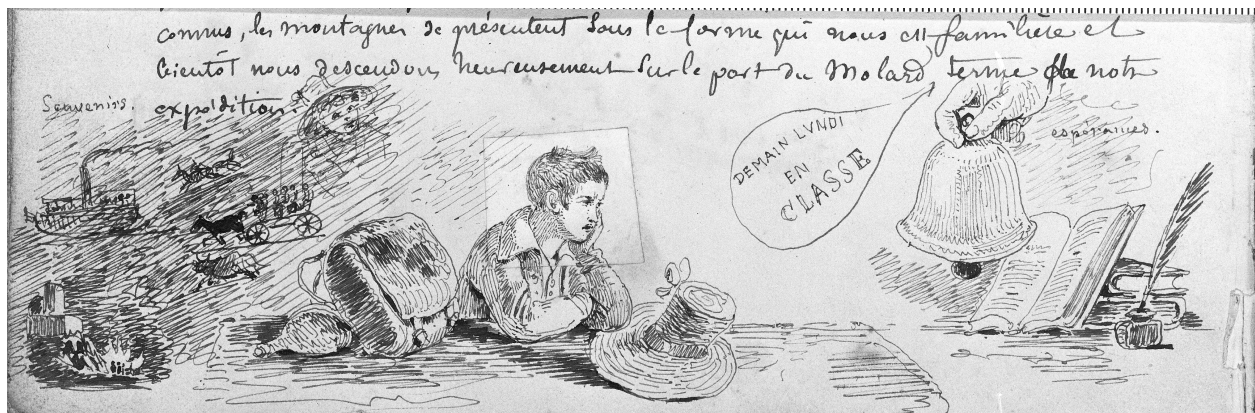


Fig. 1. "L'écolier de retour en classe," in *Voyage pittoresque*, 1826. © Cabinet d'arts graphiques des Musées d'art et d'histoire, Genève, 1910-0197. Photo: MAH.

There are three main sections of the strip or groups of images and they clearly form a narrative that moves from left to right across the page. The grouping of these images into three sections

anticipates the comic strip form that Töpffer shows in his first album, *L'Histoire de M Vieux Bois* (1827), one that often has two horizontal strips per page and each strip divided into three individual frames that also read from left to right. In the 1826 strip, the first section starts at the far-left edge of the page, with a group of shaded images labeled “souvenirs” (memories) that includes a campfire in the mountains with boys gathered around it, above which is a steamship. To the right of the steamship, there is a horse-drawn carriage and a few other horses, as well as an image of a boy with a hat on. Moving to the right, the second group or frame (without vertical lines to demarcate it) of images includes the same boy sitting sullenly at a table with his hat, backpack, and water bottle strewn across the tabletop. The boy has just arrived home—by boat and by carriage transport—after a summer excursion with his schoolmaster, Töpffer, and his classmates. This middle panel displays the present moment. The boy’s face is within a tipped-in square – an indicator that Töpffer did not like the first sketch of the boy’s face and, perhaps, wanted to paste in a better version. The third group of images on the far right side of the page imagines the future and the dreaded first day back to school after the trip. The artist represents the return to school with a large hand ringing a bell, an open book leaning on a pile of closed books, and a pen in an inkpot. A speech balloon coming from the hand says, “Demain Lundi en Classe” (“Tomorrow Monday in Class”) and next to the hand the text reads “espérances” (expectations). Across the top of the entire strip, two lines of cursive text read: “Connus, les montagnes se présentent sous le forme qui nous en familière et bientôt nous descendons heureusement sur le port de Molard, ferme de notre expedition” (the mountains show themselves in their familiar form and soon we descend happily to the port of Molard, the end of our expedition). The caption suggests that while the boy daydreams, he is traveling by sea and about to arrive back at the port of departure to disembark. He is still on his picturesque tour, and, while

traveling, processes his trip. Importantly, three of the four symbols for what await the student at home are pen, ink, and a book: the tools that he will be able to use to write and draw his experiences that have taught him about the full experience of the picturesque, which, for Töpffer, includes travel, a return home, reflection about how one sees one's surroundings, and the attempt to relay that in images and pictures on pages. Pen, ink, and paper are the tools and technologies that Töpffer wants, most of all, to demonstrate the importance of in his earliest comic strips. He drew them even in his earliest inklings of comics forms.

As opposed to the portrait-oriented book that we see the student imagining in the 1826 drawing, Töpffer uses landscape-oriented books for his work that contains many pictures and drawings—a decision that asks his readers to think carefully about the form of the codex and its ability to convey narrative in pictures horizontally across the page. This is one important way that Töpffer's reaction in opposition to the Diorama created a new narrative form that changes the usual orientation of a narrative and requires readers to use a book differently. A sketchbook or journal that is longer than it is tall gives Töpffer the space to draw a storyline in consecutive images across the page in strips: we see this configuration in the pages of the pocket journal that he wrote and sketched in during his 1828 trek with his students (measuring 16 x 21 centimeters) in his 1826 *Voyage pittoresque*, and in the manuscripts of his early comics albums (measuring 18.5 x 30 centimeters). (Of course, he also depicts characters writing or drawing on a pad, page, or book that is not wider than it is tall, but has a more conventional portrait-oriented page shape,<sup>15</sup> and he wrote his lectures and prose works on pages oriented vertically—a trend that I

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<sup>15</sup> The following examples contain illustrations of Töpffer's comics characters writing or drawing on conventional pages that are taller than they are long—the opposite length-to-width ratio of Töpffer's sketchbooks and albums – all are in the *Complete Comic Strips* (edited by Kunzle): Mr. Jabot writes to Milord (32, panel 27), the exchange of letters between Marquise Caroline Thérèse de la Franchipane (54-56, panels 49, 50, 51), Cranoise in *Mr. Crépin*

uncovered while reading the collection of his manuscripts at the Bibliothèque de Genève.) In fact, J. Southward's *Practical printing* (1892) lists fifteen of the most common paper sizes used in the nineteenth-century, and of those fifteen, none are wider than they are tall (qtd. in Gaskell: 224).<sup>16</sup> From these examples, I deduce that Töpffer's choice of a wide book and wide page with which to draw his *bandes dessinées* was a deliberate and unconventional choice. Here, the medium of Töpffer's *Voyages* – his sketchbooks, which predated his earliest comic strips – influences the medium he selects for his comics. The unconventional paper size would have called attention to itself as a slightly more expensive codex form and also, perhaps, more difficult to procure than notebooks of standard size and shape.

In fact, to select a bound manuscript that is wider than it is tall for *Voyages* and subsequently for his comics albums suggests that Töpffer followed the convention of those who illustrate the picturesque using landscape-oriented books to emphasize how seeing and drawing an expanse of land with a picturesque point-of-view is a pictorial narrative of its own—no mere embellishment for the text of the book. This is a design orientation that characterized panorama painting, in which Daguerre had training, and that influenced the way that shadows and lighting often moved horizontally across his Diorama scenes, as in the way the moon traverses the night sky in the Holyrood diorama. For example, Humphry Repton produced a sizable collection of

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announcing his new model society (116, panel 59), the page within the preface panel of the 1839 edition of *Vieux Bois* (148), the books Vieux Bois reads in panels 3 (150) and 23 (170), the letter he writes in panel 4 (151), the letter Vieux Bois receives from the Beloved Object (176, panel 29), the page within the frontispiece of *Monsieur Pencil* (242), the sheet on which Pencil sketches in the first four panels of the 1840 edition (243, 248), the Professor's notes on his astronomical studies in *Pencil* (250, 251), the book in which Festus reflects, and then notes, "that he has seen nothing" (319), the mayor's report in *Festus* (321), the stack of books in the mayor's dream (*Festus* 337), and Albert writing in school in *Histoire d'Albert* (407), among others.

<sup>16</sup> While Töpffer was, of course, writing in Switzerland and not England, the paper making machines that made the blank journals in which he recorded his albums and *Voyages* were most likely of British design (Gaskell 229).

landscape-oriented books in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Töpffer was likely familiar with Repton both through social connections to his students' families in England and contemporary publications and debates about the picturesque—a topic he treats extensively in his travel writing, fiction, albums, and essays.<sup>17</sup> Repton, a landscape architect in the picturesque style and student of Lancelot “Capability” Brown, produced approximately sixty books demonstrating his theory of the picturesque, many of which are flush with full-page detailed before-and-after images of landscapes and have a spine that is shorter than the width of the book's pages. In *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1794), for example, 30 of its 60 pages (after the front-matter) contain images that function best with a “landscape” orientation; these detailed images are half the content of the book and, due to their importance and prevalence, were, I speculate, one factor determining the length of the book's spine in relationship to the width of its leaves.<sup>18</sup> Repton advertises in his introduction that *Sketches and Hints* will be a “book of pictures” (xv, emphasis in original) and his goal is to use pictures to show how tasteful landscape design owes to an innate sense of pleasure experienced when we

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<sup>17</sup> Töpffer was socially connected to Repton by way of students at his boarding school in Geneva. John Thomas Baumgartner, Swiss aristocrat and inheritor of the Island Hall estate in 1816, located in Godmanchester, England, sent several of his thirteen children to Töpffer's boarding school in Geneva. A 2012 article about the Island Hall mansion identifies copies of Töpffer's *Voyages* held at the Hall. Humphry Repton was a close friend of the Baumgartner family while they lived at Island Hall. (Lambert 30-31)

<sup>18</sup> For comparison, consider Repton's 1816 book *Fragments on the theory and practice of landscape gardening*, which is oriented for a more conventional “portrait” position and has 237 pages of text, with 60 pages of illustrations, 19 of which are portrait and 41 landscape, such that a reader must turn the book to inspect them. In *Fragments*, only 25% of the book is comprised of images, and not all them require landscape orientation. Those that are landscape-oriented share the same technologies of having strips overlaid and that are painted on such that, when a reader lifts them, the horizontal expanse of the landscape and architecture looks more picturesque according to Repton's taste. Those pages that feature Repton's illustrations with flaps are all landscape oriented. It is therefore no surprise that he would orient his earlier work, that he calls a “picture book” and that has paintings with horizontal flaps on almost every other page, differently to showcase those images and the narratives they reveal about picturesque taste.

behold certain views of nature and architecture (xvi). To demonstrate how certain kinds of views are more pleasurable than others, Repton utilizes comparative tactics that display one image and then, after removing a painted flap, reveal another image beneath that is purportedly more tasteful and attractive than the first, according to his picturesque aesthetic theory. This is a technique that he used widely in his “Red Books”: books of images, bound in red leather, that he created for his clients and that simulate in paintings what the property will look like before and after his suggested remodels. For example, in *Sketches and Hints* the first illustration depicts Brandsbury estate’s lawns and pastures enclosed behind an opaque fence with three curious children, who, like the reader, are attempting to peer over the top and see the landscape beyond (Plate I, Slate A). The fence stretches the full width of the illustration. The fence and those climbing it are painted on a flap of paper that a reader can lift, like a veil, and disclose an image of the pasture, with grazing animals, no longer hidden or sequestered by enclosure (Plate I, Slate B). With the lift of the flap, the long fence hiding the view (and the children peeking over the top) comes down. The dimensions of the page, being wider than tall, augment the dramatic change in visibility that results from the removal of the fence—a blindfold that spans the entire page. Like this first example, nearly all of Repton’s illustrations in this book possess long, horizontal flaps that, when lifted, reveal a new stretch of landscape or architecture that reaches across the width of the page.<sup>19</sup> The orientation of the pages lends itself to displaying a collection of these wide landscapes and the strips that uncover their potential for picturesque renovations.

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<sup>19</sup> Another example is Charlotte Campbell Bury’s *The Three Great Sanctuaries of Tuscany, Valembrosa, Camaldoni, Laverna: A Poem* (1833). This heavy book measures 18 x 33.5 cm and in weight and contents is a monument to the late Reverend Edward Bury, the author’s husband. While the book details the sanctuaries in Tuscany, it also contains 6 mesmerizing mezzotint prints. These prints display stunning picturesque images that show a clear picturesque style and a striking range in shading that includes bright whites and extremely dark shades.

Töpffer, like Repton, used his pictorial narratives in books to show the processes of picturesque viewing, how turning a page or lifting a paper flap peels back the layers of what we see *on the page* and how to represent the movement between the actual and a picturesque representation. In his 1828 *Voyage* manuscript, he depicts the movement of his students along a mountain path in two consecutive panels, read left to right. These panels provide evidence that in the year after he completed his first comic strip he used that form, again as he did in 1826, to relay the non-fiction story of his own expedition in the context of his picturesque travel writing. It is, in one way, closer to Töpffer's comic strip form than the pictorial series in the 1826 edition since, in the 1828 travelogue, Töpffer separates the two images with a gutter to emphasize the passage of time as well as terrain covered between the two images. The frames mimic the shape of the page, as if they are pages of a smaller book torn out and tipped in to the larger book page, or windowpanes. They also demonstrate that Töpffer's comic strips and his travel writing influenced one another in form and link them both, indisputably, to the Outward Bound-type lessons in the picturesque that he taught his students by walking in the high country. The frames report their synecdoche on the page – their imitation of its landscape-oriented form but, also, their belonging within it and to it. They do not attempt to trick the reader into thinking she is walking on a trail in the mountains. Instead, they remind her that she is turning the pages of a travel journal, and with each successive page, the students depicted therein move farther along their path, toward the end of the journey, and back to school, where they will continue to read and write about the journey with pen, ink, and paper.

### ***Vieux Bois* and the Claude Mirror**

Töpffer's picture stories trumpet their formal originality by moving—to the center of the page—

the illustrations and illuminations that usually embellish textual narratives. No longer the embellishment, the framed images, such as those in his 1826 pocket journal, drive the story with the help of just a few lines of text. For example, *Vieux Bois* formally inverts the long, illustrated satire *The Adventures of Doctor Syntax: In Search of the Picturesque* (1809-11), revising it such that a series of Rowlandson-esque illustrations, not the poetic verse, convey the plot, accompanied by short bursts of text to irradiate each panel.



Fig. 2. The preface and opening panels of *Vieux Bois* (1827). © Cabinet d'arts graphiques des Musées d'art et d'histoire, Genève, BA 2003-0005-D. Photo: Flora Bevilacqua.

In figure 2, we see the first two panels of Töpffer's *Vieux Bois* (1827): the preface to the album, they are the first comics panels in Töpffer's corpus and, perhaps, the first panels of any comic

strip in literary history. Importantly, these panels nearly mirror each other: in each frame, a single male character on the outside faces inward and addresses an androgynous trio of characters, who face outward looking back at the man. The left-most character, a helmeted warrior holding a spear, demands, “Shades of my ancestors, what do you want of me!!” The three ancestors, who appear to be a crude drawing of a family, reply to their descendant, “We want to say hello.” In the subsequent frame, the ancestral trio becomes the interrogator, questioning a character on the right edge of the frame—one who looks similar to the warrior figure but more like a traveler with a backpack and walking stick rather than a spear. This figure is a hybrid of the iconic, rustic romantic traveler and an autobiographical image of the author, who depicts himself similarly in his travel narratives, *Voyages en Zigzag*, trekking with a walking stick and backpack. In the second panel, the family of ancestors marches in step and asks the traveler: “What do you want, vile descendant of ours?” The traveler replies: “I come to see your funny expressions” (“Je viens voir votre drôle de mine”).

The traveler’s goal to “see” his ancestors’ “funny expressions” is a punning phrase that reminds us to question the elements in the frames of the preface that do not perfectly mirror one another, as a picturesque drawing does not perfectly replicate the landscape it represents. In French, *drôle* or “funny” is a synonym for “bizarre” or “aberrant” – the real conveyed with a distortion or slant, perhaps an ironic bent. Furthermore, *mine* is not only part of the idiom *drôle de mine* (“funny expressions”), but as a noun, *mine* can refer to pencil lead, and as a verb, *miner* means “to undermine,” as Töpffer’s satirical picture stories often do. The “drôle de mine” that the traveler in the right-hand panel comes to see are expressions of the ancestral trio that are “funny”—amusing, but also peculiar and puzzling, perhaps absurd, and are not literal interpretations, much like picturesque drawings produced by using a Claude mirror. Furthermore,

the characters on the outside of the panels that almost mirror each other—the soldier and the traveler—draw attention to their inequality, as in the way two words in an off-rhyme pronounce their differences. In the left panel, the soldier aggressively approaches his ancestors, who do not bear arms and simply greet him. In the facing panel, the trio takes on the role of the defensive party while the romantic traveler seeks knowledge and acknowledgement from them, in addition to a good laugh. He treats the ancestors like a curved mirror that produces a warped image, but one that has the power to entertain as well as defamiliarize and, thus, to provide a new perspective on the subject in the reflection.



Fig. 3. Preface of *Vieux Bois* (1839)

Töpffer's later editions of *Vieux Bois* use curved mirror images in the preface in a more literal manner, but they continue to promote the capacity of imperfect, “low-tech” reflections and sketches to educate a viewer, as opposed to the complex and illusory scenographics of dioramas that produced primarily emotional reactions. In the 1839 edition, the author replaces the two mirroring preface panels in the first manuscript edition with a single panel framed like another

kind of mirror: a Claude mirror reflecting a doodle of Töpffer and his students crowded around a page with a message (see figure 3). The text scrawled within the preface invokes the referential nature of a Claude mirror sketch and beckons:

Behind here begins the true story of the loves of Mr. Vieux Bois, and how after many challenges, he marries the Beloved Object.

Go, little book, and choose your world, for at crazy things, those who do not laugh, yawn; those who do not yield, resist; those who reason, are mistaken, and those who keep a straight face, can please themselves. (*Complete* 148)

The cue to look or read “behind here” refers to the next page, as well as self-reflexively to this page. It announces to the reader that the author is a teacher and student of perception—like his pupils who appear around him—looking into a mirror, as well as a traveler who uses the tools of the trade: a Claude mirror in front of him, as well as his sketchbook, so as to see and record his anterior surroundings. Perhaps Töpffer even sketched this view of himself with his class on one of their annual pedagogical Alpine adventures. Likewise, the Claude mirror in the preface indicates that the story of Vieux Bois takes place behind the author’s back, where the objects reflected in a Claude mirror usually originate. The envoi sends the book, personified as a traveler, on its journey to circulate and “choose its world”: to select readers who laugh and yield to the joyful folly of its unpredictable plot. Importantly, the envoi implies that the reader has little control of the textual object that is seemingly in his hands, since the book chooses the reader—a role reversal that anticipates the story’s plot about the circulation of a “beloved object” that cannot be kept.

The preface dispatches the book, and its reader, on a ramble following a plot that is driven by accident as well as the failures of reason and foresight. It is a story about a man, named

Vieux Bois, chasing a woman whom he has fallen in love with on first sight. Her name is “Beloved Object,” and like a reflection, she is silent and recedes from her suitor’s sight and grasp again and again. She personifies the kind of image a Claude mirror produces and performs the difficulty of illustrating a representation of what one sees. When a traveler turns his back to a view, holds a Claude mirror up in front of him, and points the reflective surface at the landscape behind him, the reflection displays a “virtual image”: an upright and diminished likeness. The reflected landscape thus reduced in a Claude mirror also appears to be located at a focal point behind the mirror’s surface, as if the mirror were transparent. In effect, then, a virtual image offers the illusion that a tinted, altered, picturesque landscape lies in front of a viewer—a scene that one could walk toward and reach for, except that his hand would only touch glass. Vieux Bois fails to learn that even if he can see the Beloved Object, and catch her, and perhaps even marry her, he cannot be certain of her constancy. Vieux Bois is the picturesque traveler not so much “in search of” the picturesque, like *Doctor Syntax* is, but rather, in search of a way to detain her. At base, the Beloved Object is a representation of a representation, or a satirical interpretation of a virtual image, one that is reduced to a line drawing that Vieux Bois, like Gilpin, would pay “any price” to “fix and appropriate” (*Remarks* 225).

Goethe’s studies of perception are useful for understanding how, for Töpffer, the absence of the Beloved Object on the page, and that which a picturesque sketch leaves out, demarcate the potential of art to teach us how to see more. According to Goethe, we can make objects distinguishable and visible by manipulating sets of optical apparatuses, including the eye—a body part that he treats in *Theory of Colors* (1810) as a living convex lens (*Conversations* 169). That is, where we as yet see nothing, or perhaps a blank page, there is the potential for a lens or mirror to turn absence into art. This is important for an interpretation of Vieux Bois: if we look

closely at his “second abduction” of the Beloved—she is hidden in the coach box (figure 4)—we see how her implied presence within the carriage prompts us to reevaluate the blank page. Perhaps it is not an opaque carriage, but rather a frame and an aperture to help us imagine a Beloved Object where there appears to be none inside. After a series of accidents, the box winds up floating in a body of water with the Beloved still enclosed. During these events across 12 panels and 4 pages, the reader cannot see her but knows, based on the text that accompanies the images, that she is still inside the box. In figure 4, the text reads “second abduction in a locked coach to escape all suspicion and danger.” Though you cannot see the Beloved and though the text omits her name, it announces that Vieux Bois has, again, taken extreme measures to keep this woman by his side.



Fig. 4. “Second abduction” of the Beloved Object (1827). © Cabinet d’arts graphiques des Musées d’art et d’histoire, Genève, BA 2003-0005-D. Photo: Flora Bevilacqua.

While the Beloved is contained, her body is hidden from the reader's view; all that a reader sees is the outside of her cage. The panels in which she is trapped in a cell, but hidden from view, instantiate a visual pun. From one point of view, the Beloved's absence on the page demarks her presence within the chamber, though you cannot see her inside; from another, her absence within the frame indicates that she is not drawn on the page—a more literal reading that emphasizes her materiality as pastiche, a sketch of a picturesque virtual mirror image, with her body comprised of paper fibers outlined by black ink. Both readings suggest that Beloved's identity is within the frame that surrounds her, and consequently, the frame enables a reader to look for her in its "scope," but not finding her, we turn to the frames themselves: the coach box, the panel in which it is drawn, the page, and even the covers of the rectangular book. The absence of the Beloved also turns a viewer's attention to the optical technologies that delineate her as a virtual image: the Claude mirror and even the eye—a shape referred to in the 1839 preface to *Vieux Bois*. Töpffer demonstrates that these technologies transmit the best version of a picturesque view because they also impart an awareness of the ideological and physical apertures through which a tourist sees his environs—an analytical and personal engagement with a representation that he believes the diorama occludes.

### **The Essential Roughness of Töpfferian Freehand Lines and How They Convey Movement**

In his seminal prose work and artistic statement "Essai de Physiognomonie" (1845), Töpffer theorizes that sketching is advantageous for its ability to produce rough images quickly and allows the artist to profit from spontaneity. The rough quality of these lines was so important to him that he reproduced his images without engraving them or tracing other outlines to ensure that they retain their rawness. In fact, Töpffer invented his own printing process called

“autographie” that enabled him to print his drawings and text with the same inconsistent, sketch-like human touch that characterizes his writing and drawing on paper—a style point that he insisted on (Kunzle, *Father* 77; “Essai” 8). Töpffer describes his process as follows:

The lithographer gives you a stick of ink, and a piece of paper spread with a layer of glue starch. You dilute the ink, dip your pen in it, you scribble on the paper [. . .] [and] send the page to the lithographer. He wets it on the reverse side, lays it on the stone and subjects it to pressure, and here is your design transferred from paper to stone. It then has only to be fixed by means of the usual preparation, inked and printed it in as many copies as you want. (qtd. in *Father*: 78)<sup>20</sup>

Töpffer’s procedure is one that uses a double reversal to enable the artist to print copies as he wrote and drew: with freehand, irregular lines. According to Andrew Piper, in Romantic-era published works the increased frequency of the free-drawn line—a line that is not ruled and that tends to be “wavy”—in signals the fact that at this time illustrated books were becoming more and more common (188). The wavy line also represents a place where the separation between text and image, and therefore between genres, disappears (189). For Töpffer, this means that lines that are “vif, croqué, et rapide” (lively, sketched, and drawn quickly) express not just a confusion of genres, or perhaps no particular genre, but a multitude of forms (11). Even Töpffer’s long-winded, meandering, and stream-of-consciousness syntax in this essay supports his faith in free, unedited expressions to convey energy at the same time as clarity. The picturesque drawing methods that Töpffer used in the unpublished 1827 edition of *L’Histoire* – his first complete edition of a picture narrative – can be traced throughout his entire sketching career, through all eight of the graphic novels he published, as well as the eight that he started and abandoned, until

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<sup>20</sup> Kunzle translates this passage from its original source, “Essai sur la physiognomonie,” and quotes it in *Father of the Comic Strip* (78).

he stopped drawing in 1845 due to illness and degenerated eyesight. We continue to see comic artists use these drawing techniques today, for example, in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.

Freehand, unembellished line drawings, jagged frames, caricatures, cursive text, and panels that privilege negative space enable Töpffer to create and sustain a narrative tempo and motion for almost 100 pages. To represent the movement of the chase in *Vieux Bois*, Töpffer created narrative motion between frames or panels in part by putting distinct images next to one another and creating a chronological sequence between them. They also share the same frame boundary. Though they are only separated by a thinly sketched vertical line, and not by a conventional gutter space, the vertical line marks the end of one scene and the beginning of another that logically, and often humorously, follows the first.

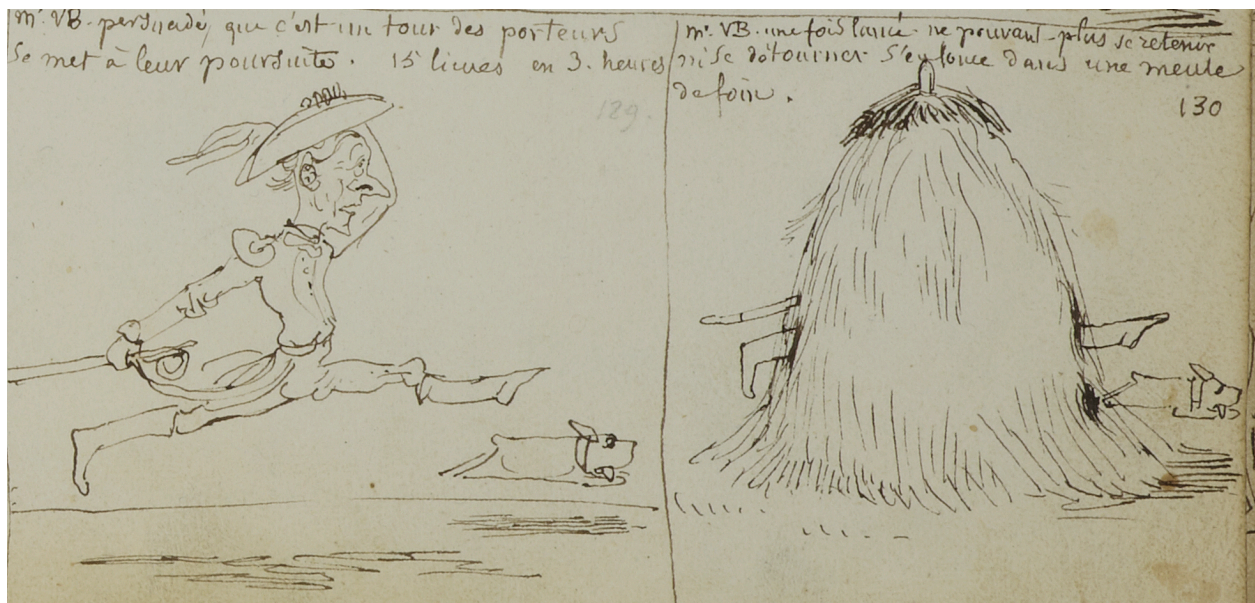


Fig. 5. From *Vieux Bois* (1827) © Cabinet d'arts graphiques des Musées d'art et d'histoire, Genève, BA 2003-0005-D. Photo: Flora Bevilacqua.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Left: "Convinced that it is the carrier's fault (for stealing his beloved object), he pursues them. 15 leagues in 3 hours." (panel 129); Right: "Once having started on his course, M. V. B. cannot stop or turn, and plunges into a haystack" (panel 130).

For example, in figure 5, frames 129 and 130 of the 1827 manuscript edition show Vieux Bois running after the Beloved Object and into a haystack, where he hides and spies on the Rival and his Object. The single vertical line between the two panels creates an ellipsis between running and being buried in the hay and contracts time and space. The ellipsis makes the process of entering into the hayrick look easy—as if no hay needs to be displaced or disrupted by a body colliding with it. The narrow, irregular vertical line between the two panels is a punch-line: it enables the improbable leap into the stack and the suspension of the body in mid-hay. The right-hand limit of the left panel—its line-gutter—belongs to two frames at once: frames that are juxtaposed both for their sequential relationship and their difference. The line encourages the artist to play *fort-da* with the reader, saying “here is the body in this frame,” and “where did the body go?” in the next. The thin, black, vertical boundary simultaneously contains two panels’ endpoints, and present and past. It signifies both “here” and “there,” and presence and absence.

Additionally, the vertical lines that separate panels in both the 1827 and the more refined 1837 published edition of *Vieux Bois* share the same sketched, irregular quality with which the contents of the panels are drawn. In other words, the panel margins, the haystack, and Vieux Bois within the haystack are all comprised of the same materials: a black freehand line on white paper. The line is even the root of the cursive text that accompanies each image. The “bold, free” line is a key ingredient of Gilpin’s picturesque, that which Töpffer mocks with the plot of his graphic story. But it is also the structural framework that organizes *L’Histoire* as a pictorial narrative, and the grapheme or atomic unit of the sketched characters, objects, and settings that animate the narrative. It is both part of the content being mocked, and the agent of the satire. The sketched line synthesizes romantic picturesque form and content in *L’Histoire*; they become one

organism in narrative motion, in tune with the recursive pursuits of Vieux Bois and the escapes of his Object. Vieux Bois would be consoled if he knew that by Töpffer's ink, he and his Beloved Object are already wed.

### ***Festus and the Telescope***

In *Festus*, Töpffer's second comics manuscript, sketched in 1829, he uses the same raw, sketchy black lines to draw telescopes, instead of the Claude mirror, as a medium for reinterpreting what seems like emptiness or a blank page. Tourists, explorers, amateur stargazers, and professional astronomers employed these instruments in the early nineteenth century to admire or study objects too far away to see without aid.<sup>22</sup> The telescope transforms vague, empty prospects into captivating and detailed views. On the surface, the album lampoons the craze for viewing landscapes and the night sky with a telescope, as well as astronomers' egocentric competition to out-discover and out-invent one another. I contend, however, that this album, like *Vieux Bois*, exhibits how the older technologies of the curved mirror, the sketch, and the book create art that resists the Diorama's trompe-l'oeil, which hides complex mechanics in an effort to bring realistic picturesque scenes to life. The plot follows the title character as he embarks on an "educational journey" astride his valiant mule. Rather than seeing the countryside and learning, Festus spends most of his tour hiding from thieves or blinded by accidents that prevent him from observing his surroundings, as when in the second panel he slips out of his saddle and winds up riding the mule upside down.

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<sup>22</sup> Gilpin describes the telescope as useful for entertainment, but not for painting (*Remarks* 2, 170). However, Captain Godfrey Charles Mundy brought his telescope to the deck for "sketching and spying" the Ganges bank (158). Töpffer's *Voyages en Zigzags* contains a self-portrait sketch of him and his students using a telescope to observe the Matterhorn—a site that tourists flocked to for climbing and viewing climbers. It was common for mid-century artists depicting telescope images to adopt a circular frame that emulates the aperture (Colley 60-61).

A telescope is like a Claude mirror in that it produces an altered picture of nature that a viewer cannot reach out and touch, one that is also usually preserved and then sometimes circulated by transferring it to a page or a canvas. Furthermore, it resembles a Claude mirror insofar as one of its crucial parts is the curved mirror inside of it. *Festus* contains multiple illustrations shaped like the famous telescope that Sir William Herschel completed in 1789, the largest model built at that time (“Description” 486-87). Crafting a concave mirror of 48 inches in diameter (when polished), 3.5 inches thick, and that weighed 2118 pounds when it came off the cast took Herschel one year and many expensive and time-consuming tries and heartbreaking shatters to achieve the required durability (“Description” 486-87, 524). Furthermore, the giant mirror tarnished rapidly and needed to be tenderly cared for and frequently re-polished by a team of 24 men—a choreographed feat of manual labor that Herschel invented a special machine to replace (King 129). In a profoundly Töpfferian moment, a speculum nearly killed Herschel in 1807 when it slipped out of its harness while being removed for polishing (Holmes 191). Significantly, the extreme friability and inconsistent quality of these mirrors made viewing the night sky through this telescope more about observing the temperamental and often lackluster performance of the astronomer’s medium than about the classification of stars.

Despite the mirror’s shortcomings, Herschel’s 40-foot telescope is, Töpffer might say, “the Diorama of telescopes.” Due to the magnitude of the Great Telescope project, and the sizeable loans he received from the Crown for this effort, Herschel publicized his endeavor and no doubt reached Töpffer’s scientific and intellectual circles in Geneva, where astronomy was, after botany, “the most Genevan of sciences” and where Herschel’s discoveries and inventions were closely followed (Kunzle, *Father* 44-45). The Great Telescope’s not-so-great mirror was fastened within the scope’s body—a detail that Töpffer plays upon throughout *Festus* to debunk

the telescope's grandeur and to suggest that its mechanical failings are useful for learning to see. One crucial episode begins when a windmill launches Festus into the sky (panels 57-60). During a meeting of the Royal Society regarding the discovery of a new opaque comet, which is Festus, he plummets from the sky and swan dives into the shaft of Herschel's legendary telescope, a parody of the astronomer's well-documented first view of the stars, which he obtained by crawling down the dark tube headfirst (Dreyer xlvii).<sup>23</sup> Holding an eyeglass in his hand, Herschel looked straight down the shaft at his mirror, where he saw nebulae reflected. Töpffer provides a telling interpretation of this moment, focusing not on what the mirror revealed about the stars, but instead, on what it offered Herschel as an opportunity for self-reflection: a lesson for all who use technology to perceive the world. With Festus still in the telescope shaft, a boat accident launches the massive telescope into the sky along with three scientists, who argue with each other while riding atop the large tube (panel 104). High in the atmosphere, Festus should be perched in the optimum aerie for viewing the heavens; instead, he rescues the arguing scientists by pulling them into the telescope body, where they continue to quarrel. As a consequence, all passengers miss a front-row view of the cosmos as experienced in the ultimate dioramic theater: the rotunda of the Great Telescope. The reader misses that view, as well, and instead traces the rough shapes of telescopes and apertures that frame the album's action through nearly one hundred fifty panels that, together, suggest that everything in this Töpfferian world is a frame, with nothing in the center but another line drawing, another frame.

Töpffer satirizes Herschel's Great Telescope in *Festus*, but he also highlights that its

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<sup>23</sup> In his journal, Herschel writes: "I went into the tube, and laying down near the mouth of it I held the eye-glass in my hand and soon found the place of focus. The object I viewed was the nebula in the belt of Orion, and I found the figure of the mirror, though far from perfect, better than I had expected. It showed the four small stars in the Nebula and many more. The nebula was extremely bright." (qtd. in Dreyer: xlvii)

inventor and chief astronomer was, like himself, an inventor and a student of perception.

Herschel's pursuits led him to theorize how human faculties of vision are learned and to marvel at how the eye constantly interprets and adapts to what it sees (Lubbock 105). Herschel claims that the astronomer has to be trained to see: that until one "tunes his eyes" to observe magnified slices of deep space, he is essentially blind to what could be visible in the seemingly opaque cosmos (105).<sup>24</sup> Using his own inventions and lessons in finding matter where there appears to be empty space, Herschel boldly hypothesized that clusters of nebulae—far from indistinct gaseous clouds peppering the heavens—may be "the *Laboratories of the universe*," active beds where continuously condensing gasses birthed new stars ("Construction" 223). In other words, nebulae constituted cosmic sites that previously had been considered relatively empty or too faint to study. However, after Herschel's important discoveries, the amorphous, indistinct regions of nebulae came to be recognized as sites of stellar creation—the *tabula rasa* of the night sky.

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<sup>24</sup> "When you want to practice seeing (for believe me Sir, -- to use a musical phrase -- you must not expect to *see at sight or a livre ouvert*) apply a power something higher than what you can see well with, and go on increasing it after you have used it for some time. . . . I can now see with powers that I used to reject for a long time." (Lubbock 104-5)



Fig. 6. Left: (panel 143, *Festus* 1829) © Cabinet d'arts graphiques des Musées d'art et d'histoire, Genève, 1910-0172. Photo: Flora Bevilacqua. Right: (panel 4, *Festus* 1840)<sup>25</sup>

The earliest *Festus* manuscript (1829) as well as the much-revised edition published in 1840 demonstrate Töpffer's continued engagement with the study of perception and his commitment to conveying those ideas in satirical, book-bound picture stories. The final panel of the 1829 manuscript, in figure 6, depicts Festus making the transition from a full day of sightseeing on his educational tour to the dream-visions of sleep, facing away from the readers in his nightshirt, standing next to his bed. The caption reads, "Reflecting that he saw nothing, the doctor goes to bed." The 1840 edition contains nearly the same text, but moves this panel from the end of the book up to the fourth panel, the very beginning of the journey—a move that signals its importance. Furthermore, Töpffer changes Festus' activity dramatically: in the later

<sup>25</sup> Left: "Reflecting that he has seen nothing, the doctor puts himself to bed, the family also" (*Festus* 1829). Right: "Before going to bed, the doctor wants to revisit what he saw, but he reflects that he saw nothing" (*Festus* 1840).

edition he is sitting in a chair intently writing about or perhaps drawing the “nothing” he has seen, just as William Herschel kept a record of what he could not identify in the night sky. Even Töpffer recorded what he was unable to see and what visual impairments he experienced in his vision diary, which he kept in 1843-44 in order to better understand and seek treatment for his degenerative eyesight condition (Kunzle, “Eyesight” 65-80). It is no coincidence that Festus “reflects” and “sees nothing,” as he spends most of this album in the guts of Herschel’s Giant Telescope along with the massive, imperfect concave Newtonian reflecting mirror that yielded disappointing results to the Herschels and their benefactors. The panel may seem to be merely poking fun at Festus for seeing nothing and recording nothing in his journal despite being on an educational tour of Europe and visiting the stars in the telescope Herschel built to study them from the ground. However, I argue that it suggests something more: an imperfect reflection or reflector that reveals “nothing” is not an empty image, but instead one that refocuses the audience’s attention on the frame of the representation and the tools that reflect and record the absence.

Both the Claude mirror and Herschel’s 40-foot telescope require the user to look behind him: a traveler holding such a mirror sketches the landscape over his shoulder and the astronomer peering through a telescope sees geographically deep into the cosmos, but also chronologically back into the past. In 1837, the middle of his career and about ten years after completing his first full comics album as a sketch, Töpffer takes a backward glance of his own at his picture stories and describes them as a new “mixed” genre that is related to the novel but also to travel writing:

This little book is of a mixed nature. It is composed of a series of autographed line drawings. Each of these drawings is accompanied by one or two lines of text. The

drawings, without this text, would only be obscure in meaning; the text, without the drawings would mean nothing. The whole constitutes a sort of novel, all the more original in that it does not resemble a novel more than anything else. The author of this little oblong volume has not made his name known. If he is an artist, his drawing is feeble, but he has a certain practice in writing; if he is a literary type, his writing is mediocre, but he does have, on the other hand, in the matter of drawing, a pretty amateur talent. If he is a grave man, he has some singularly funny ideas; if he is a funny man, he is not lacking on the serious side. (qtd. in Kunzle: 60)

The excerpt comes from a review that Töpffer wrote of his own work, partly serious and partly tongue-in-cheek. Despite the acerbic self-deprecating humor later in this passage, it demonstrates that Töpffer had been theorizing the identity of his new genre as well as the identity of its creator by comparisons. His description is a self-portrait or reflection and defines the work by its qualities of irregularity and originality compared to other literary forms – a comparison that, perhaps, works best when examining a new art form against past literary traditions and forms. In *Vieux Bois* and *Festus*, Töpffer invokes the two visual technologies of the Claude mirror and the telescope to help us rethink optical naturalism, which we experience in a diorama's spectacular production, but also to pay tribute to the literary traditions and technologies, such as the book and the mirror, that preceded and inspired his new mixed mode of storytelling. The name of his first comic strip protagonist, Vieux Bois, means “old wood” and he is the perfect character to pioneer this genre since his name invokes the wood blocks on which early prints were cut and inked. Vieux Bois' pursuit of the Beloved Object—herself an illusion—can be read as a caricature of Daguerre chasing the perfect phantasmagoria as much as an autobiographical self-

reflection of the author. Perhaps Vieux Bois serves as Töpffer's own reminder: as he follows his wavy lines that lead him toward energetic and spontaneous innovations in literary form, he must also heed the voices of his predecessors whose inventions have inspired so many and, by using traditional paper-based story telling techniques, lasted so long.

## CHAPTER 4

### DIORAMIC RE-VISIONS OF MISCELLANIES AND LIBRARIES

In this chapter, I build upon my discussion of the diorama as a medium comprised of a broad collection of other media and with roots in the practices of picturesque visualizing and painting landscapes. I use what we know of the diorama as a collection in order to look anew at other kinds of Romantic-era media collections—such as book collections and libraries—that share similarities with diorama shows. This chapter demonstrates that a study of the diorama in dialogue with book culture offers a new approach for understanding book collections and libraries in the Romantic era as having anticipated certain properties of the diorama, even before its debut. This provides some insight into the zeitgeist of visual culture in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that led to Daguerre and Bouton's inventions. Scholars usually associate the rage for collecting with the nineteenth century and Victorian era. However, here I show that the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries accepted and developed the notion of authorship as an act that reused and recombined earlier texts. In doing so, they also advanced the culture of media collections, those that set the foundation for the diorama's combinations of its subjects, mechanisms, and effects.<sup>1</sup>

Libraries and dioramas have a surprising number of traits in common. Romantic-era book collections and libraries usually contained a great deal of travel writing, due to the former

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<sup>1</sup> This view of the diorama and the dioramic calls into question, or at least complicates Jonathan Crary's argument that nineteenth-century realism produced by the diorama is more of an abstraction, when compared with the eighteenth-century technology of the camera obscura, for example, and artists use of it for tracings. Rather, I focus here on how the diorama appears to produce a grand abstraction but, on the contrary, was an art form that operated by gathering and reusing media and technologies that artists and other kinds of collectors were, for the most part, already using elsewhere.

popularity of the Grand Tour, the vogue for picturesque journeys, and the abundant published writing that both of these activities produced. Therefore, libraries provide a space for gathering information about a place or an event, just as dioramas do. Book collections, like dioramas, also provide their audience or user with the pleasure of enjoying representations in pictures as well as text that describe locations or certain historical circumstances. Additionally, the diorama, much like a book or a library, delivers its message to the audience but also folds them into its space. If the message captivates the audience, they feel as though they inhabit the work or the collection and it consumes them. Libraries also occasionally appeared as subjects in diorama paintings, such as Thomas Grieve and William Telbin's *The Ocean Mail to India and Australia* (1853), displayed in London. *The Ocean Mail* dedicates part of its diorama show to a representation of the steamer's saloon, and, as one of its tricks of animation, changes the saloon into a library, and then into a dining room as well as a drawing room.

Among the similarities between dioramas and libraries, I want to forefront that the illusion that the diorama produces is one that comes from a collection of media, and collections often project the chimera of stability. The diorama works as a collection in several ways: first, it always presents multiple views in a single show. Daguerre and Bouton conceived each show at the Diorama to present at least two paintings, and for each show the artists published a booklet with discrete descriptions of these two relatively unrelated scenes. The artists did not link the pair of paintings by geography, theme, or other obvious organizing principle, and viewers tried but could not ascertain how the two or three paintings in the show were connected, besides their both being diorama paintings.<sup>2</sup> For example, the following paintings showed together and did not

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<sup>2</sup> For a useful table of dioramas and the order in which they appeared see the appendix in Helmut and Alison Gernsheim's *L. J. M. Daguerre*.

have any intentional link to one another by geography or event: The Valley of Sarnen (Switzerland) and Canterbury Cathedral (Paris, France); Port of Brest (France) and Interior of Chartre Cathedral (Paris); Holyrood Chapel (Edinburgh, Scotland) and Interior of Chartre Cathedral (Paris); and Meeting of the duc d'Angouleme and the King of Spain (Santa Maria, Spain) and Roslyn Chapel (Edinburgh, Scotland). Occasionally, two views of scenes in Paris showed, but this was largely by chance. Diorama paintings were introduced in a staggered format so that the artists sent one painting in the pair to the London Diorama while the other in the pair stayed on in Paris for a spell. Sometimes the dioramists did pair scenes to show an interior view with a landscape view, but this was not a consistent schema. For a single painting, the diorama produces several kinds of views for the audience, including close-ups, long-range views, details, illusions, and animations. Finally, its effects originate from media gathered from a panoply of disciplines, including picturesque painting, theater, travel writing, panorama painting, magic lantern shows, sculpture, architecture, and picturesque travel and landscape viewing. The diorama also tried to pack a single show with a number of artistic effects which seem contradictory, such as displaying a mural-size painting exhibit that is also a *trompe l'oeil* experience, a theater spectacle as well as a book, an animated image that is also deathly still in parts, a social space as well as a unique experience for each viewer alone, and a cheap amusement-park-like ride as well as a serious travel guide published in print. The shows could be described as an artistic catch-all.

The acts of breaking up a collection of images or objects and rearranging the pieces to form a new view are crucial to the picturesque tradition, which, as I have argued, profoundly informs Daguerre's work, including his dioramas. Daguerre worked as a picturesque artist for illustrated travel book projects and the theater before launching the Diorama with Bouton. I

explain in the introduction how William Gilpin conceptualizes picturesque painting as the art of collecting and recombining that which one sees in nature (“On Landscape Painting” 241-47). Here, I emphasize that part of the collecting process for picturesque visualizations and representations that splits up a whole image in order to identify its elements: only then can the artist recombine these. For example, Gilpin recommends dividing up a view into multiple sketches if the scene is vast, and to divide that scape further into just two to three main points within the scene itself that the painting will focus on (*Three Essays* 63). The rest gets left out. In a poem on picturesque painting, he instructs “Then deem not Art defective, which divides, / Rejects, or recombines: but rather say, / ‘Tis her chief excellence” (“On Landscape Painting” 245-47). The division and fracture of a landscape into picturesque parts is an important aspect of the diorama’s composition process, especially for Daguerre. This is so much the case that he depicts this splintering and rebuilding process within his paintings. We find this in his many paintings, drawings, and dioramas of ruins, in which erosion and the rubble it produces form the work’s chief interest. For example, the timbers on the bridge tower in *Pont de Thiers* dangle from the rooftop, about to fall. He also often includes depictions of instruments for structure demolition and renovation in his artwork. Loose bricks and planks, for instance, are strewn on a partially pulled-up floor in the foreground as well as leaning on the wall in *Château de Tournœl, Gallery Leading to the Chapel* (Pinson 164). With this in mind, we can return to the collection of media that comprise the Diorama—its technologies, its group of pictures, its texts—and, considering the Diorama’s short life span, see the impermanence and instability of Daguerre and Bouton’s picturesque invention. Large, expensive, and highly complex, the Diorama’s pastiche of technologies and effects lacked simplicity and “glue” to hold it all together for more than a

decade. It does not help that diorama shows were performances, and so, their medium does not capture them as well as print can.

The Romantic-era bibliomania made it difficult for bookmen and bookwomen to see similar impermanence in their collections and libraries. However, we can use these traits of the diorama's gatherings to think critically about book collections and libraries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, at a time when amassing books and creating reading spaces gained popularity. Book collections and reading spaces are often sought as a safe haven from society, but they are far more open, vulnerable, and manipulable than they appear. They are also spaces that, because of each collector's idiosyncrasies, become curious miscellanies, or perhaps places offering unwelcome surprises when they do not function as predictably as one hopes. The critical discussion of Romantic-era archives and libraries has focused, in general, on how bibliomania generated an unstable and anxiety-producing image of the book as a commodity and an object that did not blend well with traditional understandings of books as containers for writing and literature. In her essay "Wedded to Books," Deidre Lynch describes bibliomania as a disease that causes the afflicted to "snuggle up" with their books. Romantic essayists, she continues, express their desire to own and collect books in a way that parallels physical intimacy, thus creating muddy reading spaces where public and private mingle. Ina Ferris also recounts how this familial view of books as objects destabilized them. Their admirers' toddled on the edge of abjectifying as well as newly appreciating them as objects of admiration. Philip Connell considers how bibliomania helped build the aura of a national literary heritage through the commodification of old books, even as the print industry grew and advanced with the inventions of the steam press and stereotype printing (25). In this chapter, I build on this rich conversation by reconsidering the dynamics of book collections as archives of literature, objects, and mutable

spaces. Here, I draw a parallel between the seeming stability and singular organization of a collection and the dioramic illusion: both can create access to social spaces and places that seem more remote than they are, but likewise, they can also project a false sense of access to disparate locations represented by bibliographical artifacts.

### **Miscellany Practices: Authorship by Pulling Apart, Collecting, and Remixing**

In this section I introduce the genre of the miscellany to establish how a diorama can be a miscellany of media. I then discuss how libraries in the Romantic era share traits with miscellanies, for whose authors the dissolution and reorganization of texts is as authentically authorial a practice as writing. To be a Romantic-era author, a person did not have to pen a single word.<sup>3</sup> Just as rap artists today, like *Girl Talk*, remix original songs into new compositions of their own, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century authors combined selections of others' writing and artwork to compose their own "original" collections. Andrew Piper and Jonathan Sachs reflect that the history of romantic cultures of print emerged as a dialectical engagement with the medium: print evolved by meditating on its conditions *in print*. Mediation and distribution of print serve as preconditions for print immediacy and community building through a dispersed readership (Piper and Sachs 19). Distribution of texts did not only occur by

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<sup>3</sup> Though I focus on the practice of collecting specifically for the miscellany in this chapter, I want to acknowledge the body of scholarship on Romanticism and authoring as collecting and anthologizing, more generally. Jeffrey N. Cox's *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School* studies the culture of collaboration and mutual quoting among writers in the Cockney School, and Margaret Ezell's *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* considers the difference between "publication" and "public" in early modern writing and suggests a more social model of writers and readers in manuscript circulation. Michael Gamer's essay "A Select Collection: Barbauld, Scott, and the Rise of the (Reprinted) Novel" explores the genre of the "select collection" that responds to anthologies and previous collections after the end of perpetual copyright in Britain in 1774. Jack Stillinger's *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of the Solitary Genius* (1991) provides an early critical foundation for these later scholarly discussions of collective, social, or collaborative authorship.

circulating entire volumes; authors also published and circulated work by pulling others' books apart and dissecting excerpts from their printed or handwritten pages. Deidre Lynch lists a pair of scissors among an author's composition tools ("Readers with Scissors"). Scottish author Ann MacVicar Grant, for example, writes to her sister and explains how she cut all the leaves out of a "great old goose of a book" and, in their stead, inserted her own collection of favorite letters, portraits, and verses:

There I have placed those pretty pictures in regular succession; with Miss Ourry's, and Mrs. Sprot's; cousin Jean's letters, which I value much for the vein of original humour that runs through them, are there too: so are some of Beattie's poems. You can't think how diligently I peruse this good book. Watts on the Passions is not dearer to you; for, as warm as he is in your workbag, do you think your paper bag of epistles can ever lift its head in competition with my great book? (204)

Grant discusses her homemade collection as if it rivals scripture. She describes her sister's favorite book's spine as a "paper bag"—flimsy and empty—in comparison with her "good book," which has become "great," perhaps hefty, by the end of the passage. She plucked all the former leaves out of the "old goose" and replaced them with texts and images of her own choosing and in her preferred order. The destruction that enables reuse of a spine, illustrations, and select leaves belongs to the collection process and in many circumstances, like this one, even makes it possible.

Perhaps miscellanies contain the most striking proof that romantic authorship sometimes meant the act of curating the space of the book with texts already published, rather than composing and printing new material. Between 1700 and 1800, most readers encountered

popular poetry and songs in the approximately one thousand poetic miscellanies that circulated in Britain (Williams). These bind together short contemporary pieces, removed from the context of their original volumes, with others grouped by a theme suited to popular tastes. Unlike anthologies, miscellanies do not attempt to describe an entire range or history of literature. Instead, they merely collect a set of works that fit together in one way or another. Examples of this genre include *The historical and poetical medley or muses library* (1738), *A museum for young gentlemen and ladies* (1760), and *Poems by the most eminent ladies of Great-Britain and Ireland* (1773). Even their titles call media collections to mind, especially those that mention libraries and museums. According to Abigail Williams, miscellanies grew out of the commonplace book genre, which was part of the manuscript tradition, in which readers collected their favorite poems and selections from various texts by copying them or pasting a clipping into a book of blank pages (Williams). The topics covered in miscellanies ranged from children's education to bawdy humor. The texts that comprise miscellanies might be collected together for a variety of reasons, including a common theme, audience (for children or women, e.g.), author, or geography, for example. Though the editor groups them by theme, he or she organizes them in a seeming hodge-podge that might place a song between a poem and a play.<sup>4</sup> Reading miscellanies involved curiosity and discovery—a reader did not know what poem or play she would find on the next page. Scholarship on miscellanies sometimes casts them in a political light, as they inform the canon in a more democratic way than anthologies traditionally have,

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<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, this is the same way that Daguerre and Bouton grouped the views in their dioramas – not by any geographical relationship that would place them enroute to one another, but in pairings that many viewers reported as illogical and surprising, like the groupings of texts in a miscellany. For example, Daguerre did not situate the Roslyn Chapel view with Holyrood Abbey, but instead it showed with Rouen, France, and also with Santa Maria, Spain.

especially with regard to the inclusion of women writers (Mandell, *Misogynous* 110).<sup>5</sup> However, miscellanies also receive mixed reviews from writers like Leigh Hunt, who believed that the authors of these books “would not have been authors, but for authors before them” (54).

Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century collections of books, like miscellanies and anthologies, had “lifecycles” insofar as when owners separated the volumes and regathered them anew, they gained a new “life.” The cohesion of the works in a miscellany is a construct, one that dioramas also produce in order to unite their paintings of different geographies as well as the disciplines of optics, theater, scene painting, the picturesque, music, and architecture to produce its short painting exhibits. These processes help us see that behind most multivolume collections, which appear consistent and synchronous on the shelf, is a complicated and unadvertised narrative of inconsistencies, corrections, lags, and separate journeys that these books endured to meet their siblings in a bookcase. For example, Robert Darnton tells the fascinating publishing history of Voltaire’s *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie* (1770) as experienced from the perspective of bookseller Isaac-Pierre Rigaud of Montpellier (65-83). Rigaud ordered 45 nine-volume sets of *Questions* over three years and sold all of the books in these sets that he acquired. To save money, he ordered some volumes from Voltaire’s regular printer and others from an outfit that printed pirated editions, and these arrived at his bookstore at varying times. Additionally, because the pirated versions did not at first match the original, booksellers like Rigaud coerced the printer into reproducing and sending another shipment of copies that more closely resembled the original so, if paired with originals purchased elsewhere, the set would sell together. Darnton

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on the miscellany in the Romantic era, see Ina Ferris “Antiquarian Authorship: D’Israeli’s miscellany of Literary Curiosity and the Question of Secondary Genres”; David Duff’s *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre*; Laura Mandell’s *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain*; Andrew Piper’s “The Art of Sharing: Reading in the Romantic Miscellany” in *Bookish Histories*; and Angela Esterhammer’s “John Thelwall’s *Panoramic Miscellany*: The Lecturer as Journalist” in *Romantic Circles Praxis*.

also relates that the nine volumes in this set survived perilous expeditions to the seller's shop: they were "lug[ged] over the Alps and pass[ed] through a whole army of middlemen—shipping agents, bargemen, wagoners, entrepôt keepers, ship captains, and dockers—before they arrived in Rigaud's store room" (Darnton 72). Each step of the journey and each set of hands ferrying this merchandise increased the likelihood of losing a volume or more along the way.

I have been discussing how we can use an analysis of a diorama as a miscellany of media and picturesque paintings to think about Romantic-era book collections and how the process of pulling these book collections apart was an integral process of creating them. Bibliophiles considered library auctions as sometimes exciting and sometimes anxiety producing events in a book or collection's lifecycle during which an executor or owner scatters his library to other archives, where they enhance other collections. Book collectors ravenously sought after auctions and the chance to acquire rare, valuable bibliographical items. However, library owners with no successors usually dreaded this event that would de-collect an archive that took years, or a lifetime, to build. The Roxburghe library sale of 1812 has become the most legendary Romantic-era event of this nature, during which a first edition of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, printed in Venice in 1471, sold for an astronomical sum of £2,260, the first time in history that a book changed hands for more than £1,000 (Connell 24-25). The most notable bibliophiles of the day gathered at this London auction to observe the bidding wars or to take pieces of this library home (Pottens 1). Loquacious author and bookman Thomas Frognall Dibdin documented the 42-day, 9,000+ lot auction in great pomp and detail in his appropriately named volume *The Bibliographical Decameron* (1817). Dibdin's word choice in this report emphasizes the death of the library as an army to be dismembered and defeated. He describes bids as "shots" and sales as "killings," perhaps since the auction began in June of 1812, nearly simultaneous with Napoleon's

retreat from Moscow. Indeed, the bidders united as a pack around Mr. Nornaville's purchase of Caxton's *Mirror of the World*, once someone whispered "he is bidding for a BONAPARTE!" (Dibdin, *Decameron* 54-55). As sales "killed off" books of increasing value, the collection dispersed and, by implication, died in a "battle" in which "more blood was spilt, and more ferocity exhibited, than had ever been previously witnessed" (Dibdin, *Decameron* 62). However, not all auctions were as "bloody" or as celebrated as the Duke of Roxburghe's. The Reverend John Francis Stainforth, for example, collected over 6,000 books by women poets and playwrights, some very rare, dating from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Upon his death in 1866, Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge, sold his library at auction in 3,076 lots, including the manuscript catalog that detailed all of this holdings as well as his portrait collection. Despite the uniqueness of the collection and Stainforth's role in the founding of the Royal Philatelist Society, the auction received little press until the Women's Library Building in the Chicago World's Fair brought attention to women writers at the end of the nineteenth century (Wadsworth and Wiegand 7).

Library sales disperse the collection to be re-collected by new owners in new combinations, until their collections change hands again. Given the vulturous nature of bookmen, who circled stalls, libraries, and bookshops for choice acquisitions, library curators took steps to inventory and protect their treasures. Library catalogs, like Stainforth's and Roxburghe's, documented the extent of a collection and how it fit together thematically and on the shelf. These catalogs also attest to collectors' anxieties surrounding keeping accurate records of their libraries' contents by author, title, publication year, and importantly, shelf location.

Previously, I showed how thinking about the diorama as a media miscellany illumines aspects of book culture that require collections to separate in order to curate or author anew.

Here I look more broadly at the diorama to enumerate six traits that early nineteenth-century libraries share with the diorama, and these traits inform analyses later in this chapter of fictional and real Romantic-era libraries. First, both libraries and diorama shows invited audiences to view them as a spectacle as well as read them. The latter featured, as I explained previously, both large-scale paintings and booklets that, as in the view of the interior of Chartre Cathedral, explained the architectural and historical significance of the environs as if to a group of tourists visiting the attraction and narrated by History itself. Second, book lovers found that libraries and reading rooms created nested interior spaces, intellectually and physically, that enticed readers with an intimacy similar to that generated by diorama paintings of the interiors of chapels or ruins.<sup>6</sup> Views of libraries like these do not call to mind an image such as the one the Joe Wright production of *Pride and Prejudice* offers of Elizabeth Bennett strolling the grounds of Longbourn with her nose in a volume. Rather, and as a third characteristic, these libraries conjure indoor readers who appreciate their interior environment for content as well as stunning décor, often created just by arranging books and their bindings in pleasing ways. Hunt, for example, admits “that in common with Mr. Dibdin, we have a penchant for good and suitable, and even rich and splendid bindings; and would fain have the scorching sun strike upon a whole room full of them, with all the colours of a flower-garden or a cathedral window” (“Pocket-Books” 11-12). Libraries at the end of the Romantic era offered the period’s bookmen and essayists opportunities to reflect on, and to admire the reflections of collections of books.

In a previous chapter, I showed how the diorama that is remediated in a single volume—James Hogg’s novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824)—can wheel a reader (who could be anywhere in Anglophone Europe) to Edinburgh’s Holyrood

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<sup>6</sup> For a longer discussion of the technologies of diorama interiors and its effect on audiences, see my previous chapter’s analysis of Daguerre’s Holyrood Chapel diorama.

Chapel. The fourth characteristic of the dioramic library is its facility for bringing the experiences of travel to the reader such that reading and viewing landscapes and rooms—built of books and also, perhaps, of sprawling gardens—simulate sightseeing. Andrew Piper’s *Dreaming in Books* has been a central influence for my study, as he describes the “romantic bibliocosmos” as one that imagines and innovates new kinds of book forms as a result of the overproduction of books and the saturation of the market. Interestingly, the language that Piper uses to introduce some of his ideas directs us to think about collections in terms of place and travel: “romantic literature in books repeatedly drew attention to the problem of the ‘*where*’ that surrounded the romantic *bibliocosmos* more generally” and that novel writing, in particular, “required attention to the elaborate *bibliographic horizon*” in which those works were produced, copied, and circulated (14, my emphases). The “bibliographic horizon” was elaborate, in part, because it included multimedia works, such as diorama exhibits, which combined technically complex paintings paired with booklets describing historical events and tourist sites with political significance.

The fifth characteristic of a dioramic library relates to the nineteenth-century library’s transformative mechanisms. Michel Foucault describes the library and the museum as “heterotopias”: they constantly gather time within them but try to buttress themselves against the effects of time lapping at them from outside of the archive; further, they juxtapose several seemingly contradictory places (such as the library and the diorama) in one spot, and they appear private but are open and penetrable. The heterotopic helps us consider the dioramic library as a space that appears to belong to a specific owner and piece of property and that has an established order—when, in fact, all of these claims are vulnerable to change. In the theater, double-sided dioramas transformed a painting of an empty Swiss valley into one burgeoning with community

and daily hubbub and a dark, quiet cathedral into one bursting with song and aglow with candlelight. In other words, scenes transformed from vacant to populous. Though generally the temporal framework was slower than that during a dioramic show, library spaces, too, often progressed from partially full to overflowing, at which point they required reorganization or expansion. In domestic libraries, readers and visitors could not avoid feeling the effects of the changeable space of the library—that its parts often shifted, and thus, changed the relationship between the user and the space. Partly, this was because real domestic spaces had limited square footage, unlike the endlessly capacious abandoned halls, towers, and chambers of Radcliffean gothic castles. Thomas Carlyle, for example, needed a new library space in his home once a pianist moved in on the other side of his former library wall. He jockeyed with his wife for square footage that would turn their current drawing room into his study, and his wife's dressing room into the new drawing room, among other combinations, to relocate his study. Thomas finally won a space upstairs that enabled Jane to dictate the uses of the drawing room, providing just one example of how social forces—in this scenario, allocation of shared domestic space—can threaten and reorganize libraries (Tange 123).

In the next section, I provide examples of representations of dioramic early nineteenth-century libraries—fictional and historical—that existed just before the invention of the diorama and that offer examples of the traits that contributed to the diorama's enormous popularity and propagation later in the nineteenth century. These examples forefront popular discourses of making and representing collections that enable the diorama to function like a collection: authors and artists can pick them apart and recombine them, simultaneously destroying their original form, but also expanding and dispersing the boundaries of art exhibition and book form.

### Staging Sir Thomas Bertram's Dioramic Library in *Mansfield Park*

The arrangement of the library as part of a makeshift theater in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) frames the library as a medium, like the diorama, that communicates representations by its employment of other media within it. Here, the library magnifies lessons about social identity and financial risk. Sir Thomas Bertram's library serves as a dioramic setting for one of the most controversial episodes of the novel: the staging of Elizabeth Inchbald's *Lovers' Vows* play in Sir Thomas' estate. Mansfield, like most aristocratic estates, does not have a room or hall designed specifically as a theater. Tom Bertram solves this problem by designating the billiard room for the stage end of the theater, and its connected suite, his father's library, as the greenroom (Austen 89). Before Tom's appropriation of the room, a bookcase in Sir Thomas' library blocks the doorway to the billiard room. To make these rooms "communicate," Tom shifts the bookcase to another location, a move that frees the door within the study to open up to the stage and that turns the library into part of the medium of the stage apparatus for the acted play. These interior transformations take place with Sir Thomas away, managing his plantation in Antigua, but they have not been corrected before his homecoming. He notices the changes in his house and to "his own dear room," the library, immediately upon his return to Mansfield:

Sir Thomas had been a good deal surprised to find candles burning in his room; and on casting his eye round it, to see other symptoms of recent habitation, and a general air of confusion in the furniture. The removal of the book-case from before the billiard room door struck him especially, but he had scarcely more than time to feel astonished at all this, before there were sounds from the billiard room to astonish him still further. . . . He stept [*sic.*] to the door, rejoicing at that moment in having the means of immediate communication, and opening it, found

himself on the stage of a theatre, and opposed to a ranting young man, who appeared likely to knock him down backwards. (Austen 126)

Sir Richard enters the stage from the library—“his room”—newly converted into a greenroom or dressing room, from which the actors in *Lovers' Vows* access the stage. Austen's narration makes it clear from the repeated possessive pronouns that the library is associated with Sir Thomas and that it is his safe haven or retreat, one that he had decorated in a manner to close it off from more social rooms, such as the parlor with its billiard table.

Despite Sir Thomas' best efforts to curate it for privacy, reading, and intellectual withdrawal from family commotions, his son changes the library's shape, rendering it a transformative and dioramic space. In fact, Sir Thomas' library is one of two personal rooms in the house that undergo this kind of metamorphosis. As I argue in my essay “‘The end of all the privacy and propriety’: Fanny's Dressing Room in *Mansfield Park*,” the estate's residents alter personal libraries, which also receive new inhabitants, who connect these spaces in new ways to the greater social network of Mansfield society. Fanny Price appropriates the East room in the estate, an old school room that had been abandoned when the Bertram daughters grew up, for her dressing room, which also contains her personal library as well as jewelry and other gifts from the Bertrams, her brother, and their friends. For young women in the eighteenth century, a dressing room provides a feminine and sexualized space to begin to create their connections to society and the marriage market. Women could forge these connections by inviting select visitors to their dressing rooms for private conversations, but also by keeping possessions in the room that beautified their bodies and that educated them in the practices of adult female society. Often, those possessions included a small library of books. Fanny's work in transforming the East room into a dressing room pays dividends: it links her to the Mansfield marriage market and yields

access to suitors like Henry Crawford and Edmund Bertram, her future husband, who would otherwise be of a social standing too removed to consider Fanny as a favorable spouse.

In *Mansfield Park*, Sir Thomas' and Fanny's libraries do not actually produce a diorama, but we can read them as dioramic: they both form stages, narratologically they frame the nested interior of the play within the novel, and they share with the diorama its heterotopic ability to transform spaces such that they uncover hidden identities and histories.<sup>7</sup> Recognizing the powerful turn that Fanny's dressing room helps her take to realign her place within Mansfield's society provides an analogy for understanding why Sir Thomas would be so severely agitated by changes to his own library, especially those that implicate it in a scandalous home theatrical. Such a small shift in furniture—the shuffling of a bookshelf five feet to the left or right—literally opens his library door to uninvited society and, potentially, printed gossip, such as the newspaper report of his daughter's affair with Henry Crawford does later in the novel. The conversion of his room into a greenroom causes even greater alarm. In *Designing Women*, Tita Chico traces the origins of the eighteenth-century ladies' dressing rooms to the theater. In the Renaissance, public theaters in England contained a backstage room called a “tiring room” or a “green room,” where actors changed clothes, prepared to go on-stage, and reposed together after performing. Patrons could pay an additional fee to talk to male actors while they were in the tiring room, out of character and possibly not fully dressed. In the eighteenth century, when women joined men on the stage, backstage access to the dressing room took on an even more sexualized tone, as the green room became the site of a second show, a “peep-show,” in which actors and actresses changed into and out of costumes in a room where actresses' privacy was thinly veiled, or their

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<sup>7</sup> Fanny's dressing room in the East room stages a crucial scene in which Mary Crawford and Edmund rehearse their scene from *Lovers' Vows*. For more on *Mansfield Park* and the theater see Penny Gay's *Jane Austen and the Theater* and Anna Lott's “Staging a Lesson: The Theatricals and Proper Conduct in *Mansfield Park*” in *Studies in the Novel*.

bodies altogether exposed. As a greenroom, then, Sir Thomas' library not only now leads to the billiard-room stage, but serves as a second stage of its own, where his children, the Crawfords, Fanny, and the socially questionable Mr. Yates would disrobe and, doubtless, spectate as they tried on the roles of lovers in the play, and potentially, in real life as well.

Fanny's dioramic dressing room library and the other objects she keeps in her dressing room also demonstrate how the decorated, dioramic reading space in the early nineteenth century appears to deliver texts and artifacts from remote locations to the collector/reader. Dioramic libraries organized items that united the local and the domestic with the exotic, political, and extraordinary just as many of Daguerre's and Bouton's dioramas, as well as those produced by their competitors in the 1830s and 1840s, imaginatively delivered audiences from their Diorama theater in Paris, London, or another major metropolis to multiple popular tourist sites throughout Europe that also had historical appeal. Dioramas of fictional geographies were rare, and each show featured at least two distinct real destinations. For example, Daguerre and Bouton's early dioramas in the 1820s enticed travel-addicted viewers in London and Paris theaters featuring views of the Swiss Alps; England's Canterbury Cathedral; France's port of Brest, Chartres Cathedral, Rouen, and Normandy's ruined cloisters; Scotland's Holyrood and Roslyn Chapels; Spain's Port of Santa Maria; Italy's St. Peter's Basilica and Venice's canals, and, of course, more. Fanny's collection in Mansfield's East room also contains objects that signify travel, such as her brother's gift of the Sicilian amber cross, which he bought for her on his naval tour. The archive itself changes shape as its collector expands the collection with souvenirs of a recent voyage, rearranges the room, or uses the contents. Barbara Benedict discusses how even the idea of the library was in flux in the Romantic era, as it came to be "an ambiguous symbol of social change" marking a shift in the perception of libraries from spaces associated with the classics

and with religion to seeing them as miscellanies of personal, historical, institutional, commercial, and artistic collections and curiosity cabinets (171-72). The tradition of the Grand Tour and more recent practices of picturesque travel associated the act of collecting with gathering textual and non-textual souvenirs from various places on a journey—tokens which could, without doubt, live in a library like the one in Fanny’s dressing room or Sir Thomas’ study.

Libraries stocked with travel literature provided the opportunity for imaginative mobility, and because of the nature of their contents and the quality of their displays, they were often highly dioramic heterotopias. Mixed-media works that portray a journey in images and text have multiple identities as a volume: they function both as texts and places that a reader inhabits. In *Frankenstein* (1818), for example, Captain Robert Walton recounts that his uncle Thomas’ considerably large library was comprised entirely of expedition tales, “*all* the voyages made for purposes of discovery,” and Walton adds, “these volumes were my study day and night” (Shelley 50, my emphasis). The pun on “study” indicates that, for Walton, these volumes were a source of continuous reading pleasure or scholarship, but they were also his *study*—a closet or library chamber in which to collect adventure stories and curl up with them. As “his study” these volumes materialize the act of attentive reading as well as the sanctuary or vessel in which that reading happens.

A nonfiction example of such a study—books with adventure-writing content that also create a nested space for imagined adventures—is the splendidly illustrated set of John Hawkesworth’s *Account of the voyages undertaken by the order of His present Majesty for making discoveries in the Southern hemisphere and successively performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook, in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour drawn up from the journals which were kept by the several commanders, and*

*from the papers of Joseph Banks, Esq.* Sets like this one, and often their titles, were nearly large enough to imagine Walton curling up within them, surrounded by the printed regalia that details spectacular voyages and expeditions, or having carved himself a reading nest within these soft tomes. The first and second editions of this three-volume set, both published in 1773, contained engravings and maps, some so large that their leaves had to be folded to fit within the quarto binding. The gilt spine, unusually large paper size for books published in England in the 1770s, engraving quality and size, and price of three guineas (approximately \$225) indicate that, at the time, this set comprised a luxurious book purchase for owners to enjoy for its exhilarating content and its lavish display. While it was a pricey purchase, it was also a best-seller: the first two editions of this book sold quickly—4,500 copies in about six months in London and Dublin—and by 1785 it was available in at least four languages and more than ten different versions (Beddie 121-28).<sup>8</sup> The popularity of so many editions and versions of this book between 1770 and 1785 indicate that many collectors, bibliophiles, and adventure lovers added beautiful sets such as these to their shelves, seeking the thrill of reliving voyages from *within* their studies.

### **Dibdin's Picturesque Travel and Libraries as Tourist Sites**

Romantic-era libraries do more than host dioramic elegant volumes and travel narratives within their bookshelves. Libraries and vast collections were also tourist attractions: visual spectacles formed by a specific group and arrangement of texts and reading spaces that catered to the vogue for bibliomania and book collecting. Thomas Frognall Dibdin ventured further than his nearest Diorama for library sightseeing. He was a bibliotourist who sought breathtaking picturesque

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<sup>8</sup> I am grateful for the bibliographical research of James P. Ascher and his caption for the copy of the Hawkesworth held in Norlin Library's Special Collections that led me to *Bibliography of Captain James Cook* (1970), which contains useful data on the Hawkesworth set.

scenery within book collections that he visited on his travels through Europe. For example, his first view of the volumes in the Royal Library of Paris read like an account from a picturesque traveler viewing a breathtaking landscape:

To an *experienced* eye, the first view of the contents of this second room is absolutely magical; Such copies of such rare, precious, magnificent, and long-sought after impressions!... It is fairy-land throughout. There stands the *first Homer*, unshorn by the binder; a little above, is the first *Roman edition of Eustathius's* Commentary upon that poet, in gorgeous red morocco, but printed UPON VELLUM! A Budæus *Greek Lexicon* (Francis I.'s own copy) also UPON VELLUM! The *Virgils, Ovids, Plinies* ... and, above all, the *Bibles*—But I check myself; in order to conduct you regularly through the apartments, ere you sit down with me before each volume which I may open. In this second-room are two small tables, rarely occupied, but at one or the other of which I was stationed (by the kind offices of M. Van Praet) for fourteen days—with almost every thing that was exquisite and rare, in the old book-way, behind and before me. (Letter II, emphases and ellipses in original)

This excerpt demonstrates that bibliotourism, like picturesque tourism, requires a foundational knowledge base and vocabulary. For example, if, like Catherine Moreland, you are unschooled in the art or the rhetoric of the picturesque, you will not be able to “read” the landscape in that fashion, as Henry Tilney does. Likewise, Dibdin flaunts his “experienced eye” that recognizes the value of these rare books that, to a novice, would go unnoticed. The parallel between bibliographical and picturesque knowledge and sightseeing continues throughout his *A Bibliographical Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany* (1821).

In addition to Dibdin's brand of bibliotourism, which savors off-the-beaten-path booksellers as well as magnificent national libraries, Romantic-era tourists sought out famed authors' homes and book collections, such as Scott's library in Abbotsford, which continues to draw tourists and even has its own website. I want to conclude this chapter by using the idea of dioramic collections to better understand Walter Scott's curatorial methods, his own library, and how his writing and collecting influence one another. Scott uses the library's potential for mutability to his advantage and intentionally curates his home such that it blurs the line between library and museum, fiction and nonfiction, which impresses his contributions to Scottish literature and culture in a space befitted to convey tradition.

An account of a dioramic library, Sir Walter Scott's *Reliquiae Trotcosiences* (1830) describes the contents of his estate as if the entire property constitutes a museum that transports viewers into the chronicles of Scottish history, in which Scott includes himself. We learn from the *Reliquiae* and from considering the library as a dioramic book collection that its pieces appear to establish Scott as a successful book collector and author whose home speaks of his established place in Scottish literary history. However, the *Reliquiae* contains clues of Scott's anxieties about securing his books and their organization, and they therefore reveal the vulnerability of his carefully crafted persona and archive.

According to the *Reliquiae*, the estate-museum of Abbotsford includes a broad collection of artifacts such as rare books in numerous presses; a large bronze pot on the hearth from Riddell in Roxburghshire, and which was the topic of debate at the auction where it was procured; the ceiling scutcheons with a Scottish inscription for each clan; full suits of armor; and "spoils" from the field at Waterloo that Scott collected himself (33-34). When describing his library and study, however, he begins not with its contents and the stories attached to them but, instead, with the

elaborate system he uses of “locking up bookpresses,” five or six special bookcases that can secure valuable books as well as those that are “unfit to be exposed to the general class of readers” (Scott, *Reliquiae* 36). Furthermore, the author tells us that he also uses cataloging as a method of safekeeping. He keeps not one but two catalogs: one that lists his library’s contents by bookshelf and another that lists volumes by author and title. The several catalogs and locking presses, though, do not suffice on their own for safety—a worry that Scott feels every collector can relate to:

I need not add that the proprietor must make himself intimately acquainted with the individual appearance of every book in his collection and with the shelf which it occupies. This is a species of knowledge which is very frequently acquired and to a surprising extent by individuals who are otherwise not properly speaking men of literary habits, and could not in common phrase be said to read books for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of their contents. (*Reliquiae* 37)

If we count the *Reliquiae* as a catalog in itself, as many scholars do, Scott admits that he has four cataloging methods, including his visual memory catalog, for his personal collection of bibliographical and Scottish artifacts. These books can never be too secure: in protecting them, Scott proclaims ownership over the contents of his estate and instantiates them as part of his identity and legacy in Scottish literary tradition. Can Scott stamp himself equally in Scottish literary tradition without Abbotsford, its legends, and its collections? His mental and manuscript catalogs, including the *Reliquiae*, and locking bookcases tell us that he does not think so.



Fig. 1. Gabion detail by Pastorius, Wikimedia Commons.

The document of the *Reliquiae*, even its full title, makes plain the unstable, shifting, and vulnerable status of collections like this. Although the unpublished manuscript ostensibly catalogs Abbotsford, it never mentions Abbotsford by name and intentionally calls to mind Scott's novels *The Antiquary* (1816) as well as *Waverley* (1814). In doing so, this text asks to be considered as a mix of autobiography, fiction, and library catalog. Its mixture of genres and unclear status as fiction or nonfiction make this work tricky to use as a reliable guide or record. The manuscript's full cryptic title, *Reliquiae Troscosiences or the Gabions of the Late Jonathan Oldbuck Esq. of Monkbarns*, calls its contents further into question. The narrator announces in the proem that "the meaning of the word *Gabion*, as it is used in the proem, is not to be sought for in any dictionary," and thus in the proem as well as the body of the *Reliquiae* he defines the word as "curiosities of small intrinsic value, whether rare books, antiquities, or small articles of the fine or of the useful arts" (6). Why redefine this word to stray from its conventional meaning? By choosing to redefine this entity, the author rejects the *OED* definition of a gabion, which calls it "a wicker basket, of cylindrical form, usually open at both ends, intended to be filled with earth, for use in fortification and engineering." I suggest that Scott's rejection of the

traditional definition of “gabion” is a playful and tongue-in-cheek dismissal. By specifically rejecting the common usage of “gabion,” and by displaying his paranoia—in a text called a gabion—about maintaining the order and contents of his collection, Scott lets on that the artifacts in Abbotsford are indeed gabions in the traditional dictionary sense, as well. His collection of books and artifacts most certainly are sand or rocks loosely held together by a mesh container with no bottom or lid. Engineers use gabions for erosion control *because* of their porosity as well as their ability to shift under pressure. Scott seems to understand, especially so close to his death and after a debilitating stroke, that even if he generated a fifth catalog for his archive, the collection would only live at Abbotsford for a spell, until the forces of nature release the gabions and recollect them elsewhere. This was certainly the case with the Diorama, whose artists splintered a scenic view to pieces in order to paint it as a collection of picturesque elements, and who represented that view in a grand *mélange* of technological effects.

### **The Gabions of a Dioramic Library**

Scott’s library in Abbotsford, as the *Reliquiae* represents it, provides an example of a dioramic library. It generates the illusion of delivering a visitor to many places of historical and political significance, like Melrose Abbey and the field at Waterloo, with an accompanying description of the artifact or place’s importance, as a diorama booklet would provide. It is also a mobile space that pulls the reader between fiction and reality and between stories and bibliographical artifacts on shelves, such that we ask of this unpublished fragment, how realistic is this representation? The narrator of the *Reliquiae*, much like the author of the diorama booklets, cannot be identified as a real person, though the report’s contents seem authentic. The “gabions” he describes that make up the estate share with the diorama’s illusions as well as its parts the quality of

impermanence: they will be reshelfed and redistributed over time to curate another art form, collector's library, the auction block, or a bookseller's stall. Ironically, Scott's Abbotsford collection, in the *Reliquiae*, seems to exist most firmly in print; contrastingly, in the imagination, or in person, the mirage of liminality between the states of fiction and actuality dissolves. However, as Scott's great-grand-daughter could testify, the curious, including relatives, found a way to excerpt, interpret, and publish the bits of text they most cared about, whether or not their intentions matched the author's.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the *Reliquiae* was not published in its entirety in a critical edition faithful to Scott's manuscript until 1996. The example of Scott's *Reliquiae* suggests that the library collections created an attractive façade of security and beauty that thinly veiled their vulnerabilities—qualities that the era's bibliomaniacs recognized and felt deeply.

As a prolific author invested in promoting his legacy, Walter Scott worked to install objects in his home that called his corpus and his career—not just his stories—to mind. For example, in *Necromanticism*, Paul Westover notices how the 1829 publication of James Skene's *A Series of Sketches of the Existing Localities Alluded to in the Waverley Novels* memorialized Walter Scott as if he were already deceased and canonized with the “classical” authors, though at the time he was alive in his late 50s (154-155). The 1832 publication of *Landscape Illustrations of the Novels of the Author of Waverley* documents Scott's passing from living author into the elite company of “lists of immortals” with its engraving of the “Room at Abbotsford” (Westover 155). Westover attributes this image, which supposedly contains a hidden Waverley manuscript,

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<sup>9</sup> Scott's great-granddaughter, Mary Monica Maxwell Scott, excerpted generously from *Reliquiae* three times in publications that established that *Reliquiae* catalogued the holdings of Abbotsford. The publications include *Abbotsford: the Personal Relics and Antiquarian Treasures of Sir Walter Scott* (1893), a piece in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (1898), and another piece in *The Nineteenth Century* (1905). She did not account for the ambiguity that Scott carefully establishes that poses *Reliquiae* as at least partially fiction, as it relates to *The Antiquary* as well as *Waverley*. (Hewitt xi)

to the artist's (David Roberts's) imagination (157). It builds on the mystique associated with Scott, in his dying days, and the room in which he used to write and archive his books. The engraving imagines what furniture might have been in the imaginary study in Abbotsford. His writing desk and chair took on lives of their own in the public's imagination both in print and in the Abbotsford estate, a high-traffic tourist site to this day. Photographs and engravings of Scott's empty chair and writing table circulated widely in the 1830s, and Westover quotes one tourist's reaction to these relics upon visiting them the year after Scott's death: "I have seen it! The study—the desk at which he wrote! In the very chair, the throne of power from which he stretched out a scepter over all the world, and over all the ages, I sat down—it was enough!" (qtd. in Westover: 193n26). Scott's furniture, as if possessed by the author's spirit, continued to yield hidden manuscripts into the twentieth century, when curators of the museum found two secret desk drawers, one of which held over fifty letters Scott wrote to his wife before their marriage in 1797 ("Scott's Study").

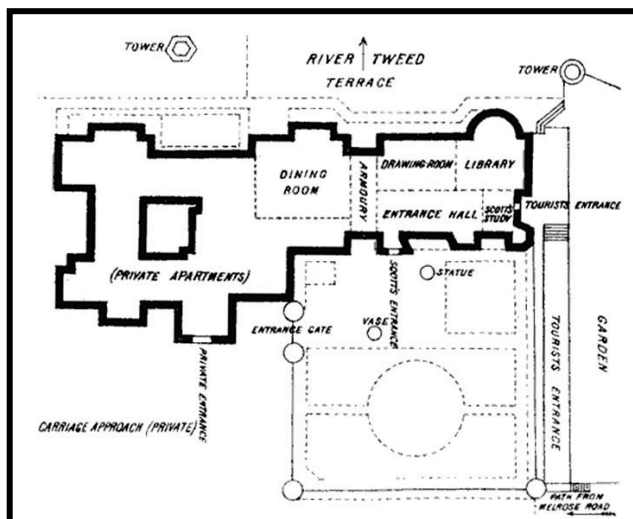


Fig. 2. Plan of Abbotsford 1897. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

It seems that his furniture continues to do the bidding of “The Great Anonymous,” and that, whether he meant to or not, Scott curated his study and library at Abbotsford to carry his legacy—even the traces of his body—into the future as a spectacular archive for his own ghost. More to the point, the two chambers may, from the grounds plan in figure 2, seem to be confined to their respective architectural zones. I would argue, however, that they constitute the nucleus of an archive that spans the estate’s entire interior. Further, the greater, expansive library creates a dioramic space between the real and the realistic that seduces audiences into its imaginative recesses where they test its actuality: there they will fail to find certain boundaries between interior, fiction, exterior, and reality. His letters as well as *Reliquiae* confirm this scheme that confounds interiors and exteriors, representations of libraries and actual archives and reading rooms.

In correspondence with Lady Louisa Stuart in 1825, Scott treats his library as if it were boundless, finding value in having duplicates of books and even assigning special worth to those that critics deem poor works of literature. His specific strain of romantic bibliomania expresses all of the usual “symptoms,” such as those embodied by fellow bookman, Dibdin, but Scott adds his personal cadence in a letter to Lady Stuart that certain books should be saved because they have the potential to be meaningful at a future date.

[T]here are so many reasons for not parting with duplicates for they may have a value in being tall or a value in being short or perhaps in having the leaves uncut or some peculiar and interesting misprint in a particular passage that there is no end to the risque of selection. So much for Bibliomania--But besides the whims of the book collectors there are real and serious reasons why books should not be discarded but with the utmost caution. *Many useless in themselves are curious as*

*ma[r]king manners*. Many neglected and run down when they appeared and ill spoken of by contemporary critics contain much nevertheless that is worthy of notice and preservation. These fall asleep like the chrysalis and awaken to glitter in the sun of popularity like the Butter Fly. I firmly believe I could bring myself to send nothing to the bookstalls excepting school books and ordinary editions of English classics and that should be done with great caution. I do not condemn banishment to the garret or your ladyships more honourable species of relegation as the civilians call it by placing them on the upper shelves which will have this additional advantage that there may be some chance of getting an old antiquary's neck broken in clambering up to examine them. But actually parting with them is very hazardous. ("To Lady Louisa Stuart" 12, my emphasis)

Here Scott claims that books that are "useless" for their content or their form, as a work of antiquity, rarity, or beauty, are still "curious as *ma[r]king manners*," thereby rendering it nearly impossible for any book to be truly useless. The transcriber's bracket markup of the "[r]" textually conveys how Scott values so-called useless books: as objects that "make manners" or "mark manners." But which is it?

I find both possible readings of the transcription useful for thinking about Scott's curatorial theory. If the duplicate or "useless" book on the shelf makes manners it does so by persisting there and germinating meaning over time as it grows older, and therefore more valuable or interesting. Scott explicates this scenario in the quotation by comparing such a book to a sleeping chrysalis transforming into a butterfly whose new form attracts attention to it. The manners made refer to the book's popularity, and its preservation enables it to attract attention over time, even while nothing artificial has been done to make it more appealing. In time, it

“glitters,” a veneer of the past, and joins the mountains of antique books and manuscripts in vogue.

Yet, if we consider that archived books “*mark* manners” we can understand Scott’s thoughts about bibliographical value as a curatorial theory that overlaps with his practice as a fiction writer. In his introduction to *Waverley*, Scott announces his novel as “more a description of men than manners” that depicts “passions common to men in all stages of society” (4). The author goes on to explain that manners define a certain era and patterns of local habit. He uses clothing and furniture styles for examples: his characters might wear medieval armor or the court dress of George II, and a room might be furnished like a gothic castle or a fanciful ballroom. On one hand, then, manners are simply garnish that do not effect what is essential about a person’s or a room’s identity. On the other hand, manners attract the imagination like markings on the butterfly’s wings that “glitter” in the sun, and like the volumes on the top shelf that gather attention over time. Scott built his career marking pages with manners that drew readers into diverse plots, such as *Heart of Midlothian*’s setting in eighteenth-century Britain or *Quentin Durward*’s setting in fifteenth-century France. He even begins the development of *Waverley*’s protagonist with details of bibliographic manners: a description of an extensive 200-year-old library at Waverley-Honour that contains “a miscellaneous and extensive collection of volumes as had been assembled together [. . .] *as a mark of splendor*, to furnish their shelves with the current literature of the day, without much scrutiny or nicety of discrimination” (13, my emphasis). While these bibliographical “marks of splendor” furnished the protagonist with an indulgent and impractical education, they also fueled his reverence for books and his desire to consume them and live within their several alternate realities.

Scott's real and imaginative libraries, including the book collections he produced, were dioramic as well as formative for the nineteenth-century bibliographic imagination. They reproduce the marking or writing of manners that make iridescent textual "butterflies," potentially, of any old book on the shelf. His libraries reproduce the desire to consume and to be consumed by books and their shelving apparatuses, desires that characterized this era's book market in general. In 1820, a writer for the *Retrospective Review* wrote that the "enormous increase in the number of books" created a dangerous "appetite" to acquire books and to read for breadth and not depth so much so that readers' attention turns to the surfaces of individual volumes and, more expansively, to the dioramic screen that a collection of books generates ("Introduction" iii). Namely, the reviewer finds that "the alluring catalogue of attractive title-pages unfixes the attention, and causes *the eye to wander over a large surface*, when it ought to be intently turned upon a small though fertile spot" (iii, my emphasis). The "large surface" and "alluring catalogue" invokes the imagery of a diorama screen projecting an image of a collection of shelved books.

## CHAPTER 5: POSTSCRIPT

### THE VIRAL “DIORAMA” IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

While Rodolphe Töpffer’s early comic strips and James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* react to the diorama and, therefore, use it as inspiration for inventions in Romantic era literary form and content, they do not mention the diorama directly in the comics or the novel. In this chapter, I trace the usage of the term “diorama” from Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre and Charles Bouton’s invention through its metamorphoses in the later nineteenth century. In doing so, I suggest one answer to the question of why mid-to-late nineteenth-century artists and authors were so drawn to use the word “diorama” as an omnibus term for nearly any type of art show that used optics, and why authors, too, coopted “the diorama” and “the dioramic” in book form and content.

The diorama’s post-Daguerrian legacy in the early- and mid-nineteenth century reveals it as a media medley, with roots in the miscellany genre as well as the very popular and emerging practice of pastiche or, as we know it, remixing: authorship by cutting, pasting, and rearranging pre-produced content. The miscellany, an eighteenth-century genre, entices authors to reuse content that had already been published, perhaps already read. It also seduced authors to invent new works by collecting and recombining the overflow of print materials available in the Romantic-era book market. Here, I document how the impulse to recombine numerous pre-existing media and produce illusions inspired throngs of artists to imitate Daguerre and Bouton’s methods and create their own version of the diorama that they also called “the diorama.”

I speculate that Daguerre and Bouton’s Diorama enterprise fell on its own sword by attempting to do too much artistically, perhaps trying to be too miscellaneous or library-like in its

use of media, so much so that the Diorama's inventors could not financially sustain their efforts. They essayed to create the sense of the endless horizons of the panorama but also the sense of being enclosed and nested in layers of interiority, which perhaps mimic the embedded frameworks of gothic novels and of gothic architecture, itself. Diorama exhibitions strove to produce animation as well as deathly stillness and brilliant illuminations as well as impenetrable shadows. It also sought to be a hi-tech theatrical experience as well as a painting exhibit. Further, in a single urban salon the dioramists depicted remote tourist destinations that bore no geographical relationship to one another, as if they were enroute to each other. The Diorama brought crowds of up to 300 viewers together, and groups used it as a social gathering place. Yet, it also made isolated viewers "virtual travelers" during the show, each feeling as though he were alone in his dark seat. It employed silence, music, optical illusions, props, painting, architecture, lighting technologies, and even print. Though Daguerre and Bouton's considerable investments of time and money in their Dioramas only kept them open for a little over a decade, their methods invited artists to pick up where they left off: recombining media and effects in a staggering variety of eclectic performances that continued to bear the name of "diorama."

### **"Now what is a *diorama*?" Second-Generation Dioramas in Shows and Print<sup>1</sup>**

In the early 1820s, Daguerre and Bouton created a genre that directly engaged nineteenth-century bibliophiles', artists', collectors', and authors' desires to innovate, animate, collect books and other media, recombine them, and publish/exhibit a product that transforms for an audience. As a result, not only the form, but also the idea of the diorama expanded far beyond shows in

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<sup>1</sup> By "second-generation" dioramas I mean those that respond to the "first-generation," Daguerre and Bouton's original dioramas that they showed in the Diorama theaters in Paris and London. Many second-generation dioramas entertained audiences before the first-generation went out of fashion or business entirely.

Regent's Park and Paris. Consistently, theater-goers, reviewers, authors, and educators strove to write definitions and descriptions that answered the question "What is a diorama?" as the idea of the diorama continued to change with each new form. Their answers continued to change as the art form permutated throughout the nineteenth century, and the diorama's effects and media miscellanies came to inhabit texts, print collections, and art exhibitions.

Though Daguerre and Bouton celebrated the debut of their iconic invention in 1822-23, by mid-century, their diorama shows grew nearly extinct due to competition, costs, and the time-consuming process of producing the paintings.<sup>2</sup> Daguerre did not hide his losses, but as early as the 1830s sought help to maintain his business. Newspapers broadcast his debt, at times as high as 20,000 francs (£800) per year, in hopes that the government would supplement the support that did not come from shareholders who watched the business quickly liquidate (Gernsheim 37-38). For example, *L'Artiste* asked in 1833,

Is it true that the [Paris] Diorama, that establishment without rival, is close to escaping us? Is it true that M. Daguerre is forced to carry his talent to a more generous country? At present, he offers us at the same time the Black Forest, the Tomb of Napoleon, the Valley of Chamonix, and Venice, all taken on the spot, and true with an unbelievable truthfulness. Alas, M. Daguerre receives as the fruit of his work 20,000 francs per year loss! [. . .] This is a great calamity. [. . .] If we lose the Diorama, it is a misfortune for art, and a veritable shame for the capital. ("The Diorama" 207)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>For details on the Diorama's financial struggles and competition in the 1820s and 30s, see Gernsheim and, especially, Pinson (107-20).

<sup>3</sup> This excerpt is translated by Pinson.

The news also revealed that Daguerre considerably lowered the Diorama's price of admission from 3 francs in 1830 to 2 in 1832. Daguerre adamantly refused to reduce the tariff further, fearing that it would cheapen the experience of this theater (Gernsheim 38). On March 27, 1832, he declared bankruptcy (Wood).

Despite these setbacks, Daguerre continued to innovate; he and his pupil Hippolyte Victor Valentin Sébron created the "double-effect" diorama, so called because they applied turpentine to the calico canvas and painted on both sides of the screen with colors ground in oil (Gernsheim 33). They used brighter colors on the front and shades of gray, from light to dark, on the back of the canvas. In the resulting painting, daylight scenes occupied the front of the canvas, and the shades to create a complementary evening scene were on the back, and when lit, they dampened the daytime colors to those of early evening or deep night. Daguerre then used colored lenses to create "the decomposition of form," which made elements of the painting disappear. For example, by shining red light on the red components, one hides these elements while illuminating the other colors of the painting (Gernsheim 34).

While continuing to innovate in this complicated high-tech art form, or perhaps because of its technologies and their expenses, Daguerre's diorama business began to crumble. His new "double-effect" dioramic productions enhanced what was previously the weakest aspect of the diorama—its ability to animate people and landscapes—but this technique also required months more time to complete and, therefore, limited the corpus of dioramas available for revenue-earning exhibits. Finally, a fire burned down Daguerre's Paris Diorama on March 3, 1839, destroying the paintings on display there. According to some reports, the fire also wrecked parts

of his studio and laboratory (Pinson 151).<sup>4</sup> A little over one year later, Daguerre announced his invention of the daguerreotype, and he and his wife retired from Paris to Bry-sur-Marne, a small village in France (Pinson 120). In the 1830s, his original Diorama partner, Charles Bouton, managed the London Diorama in Regent's Park. Optimistic for the future of this genre of entertainment, Bouton opened two more Dioramas: one on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle in 1843, which burned down like its elder sibling in Paris, and a third on the Champs-Élysées (Huhtamo 141). Following Bouton, Charles Caius Rénoux and Joseph Diosse continued to produce diorama exhibits in London, but in competition with more panoramas as well as the Crystal Palace Exhibition, the first of the World's Fair extravaganzas, which opened in 1851 after much exciting buildup (Huhtamo 141). Artistic entrepreneurs copied Daguerre and Bouton and opened similar diorama theaters throughout Europe, in Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Dublin, Edinburgh, Berlin, Breslau, Cologne, Vienna, Stockholm, Madrid, and Havana, but these establishments did not last long due to the "vast expense and inconvenience of erecting buildings of such immense size" (Huhtamo 141, Wood Part 3).<sup>5</sup> By the mid-1850s, viewers had replaced the Diorama with other kinds of spectacles comprised of collections of mixed media, and these, too, were called "dioramas," though they did not replicate Daguerre and Bouton's model.

The post-Daguerre-and-Bouton generation of diorama shows resembled their parents in that they created miscellanies of media, different than the collection of the original dioramas, they were often smaller in scale and more mobile, and they hid the mechanics of the apparatus behind an illusion that formed the show's main attraction. (Whether or not the audience found it

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<sup>4</sup> Wood reports that Daguerre's Diorama was insured, making his losses during the fire less of a financial loss than an artistic loss. (Wood)

<sup>5</sup> Huhtamo tells us that this quote originates from the only remaining copy of the pamphlet that accompanied the Manchester Diorama shows, quoted in Wood, "The Diorama in Great Britain in the 1820s, Part 3" (161).

believable was frequently up for debate.) Examples of second-generation dioramas include exhibitions that riff on the original dioramas, but also employ effects found in magic lantern shows, moving panoramas, cosmoramas, projected daguerreotypes, and double-sided paintings illuminated with lighting effects. In other words, second-generation dioramists used pre-existing diorama-like performance media in new combinations to generate new kinds of shows called dioramas. I provide a few very different examples of second-generation “dioramas” to highlight that the diorama did not “progress” in any one direction after Daguerre/Bouton. Yet, artists sought to impart the original diorama’s aura of illusion and invention; impressive scale (whether the new production is very large or portable and very small); and, to increase profits, its association with Daguerre.

Some second-generation dioramas claimed to reuse Daguerre and Bouton’s paintings of their diorama subjects to substitute for the actual giant diorama paintings, which showmen would have found extremely difficult and expensive to transport and display, let alone design lighting effects for. Daguerre and Bouton often created smaller versions of their diorama paintings and displayed them for purchase in the salon at the Diorama. M. Maffey & M. Lonati, for example, claimed to have three of Daguerre’s paintings around which they designed a smaller-scale diorama show (Huhtamo 154).<sup>6</sup> These paintings depicted the Church of St. Etienne du Mont in Paris, the avalanche at Goldau in Switzerland, and a Venice night festival (154). Daguerre’s oil painting of the Holyrood diorama scene is another example of a small-scale artistic replica of the popular diorama that Sébron displayed last in Edinburgh in 1835 (Huhtamo 166n90).

Instead of reusing paintings, dioramists remixing Daguerre and Bouton’s art form painted their own and, like Daguerre, did what they could to enhance the sensory

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<sup>6</sup> With Erkki Huhtamo, I am unable to find the first names of M. Maffey & M. Lonati.

accompaniments, like music, that can transfix an audience. While we can see the use of the term “diorama” as a way to take advantage of Daguerre’s fame for profit, these dioramas were, undeniably, new kinds of shows that offered a twist on the original diorama form. For example, in the 1840s Robert Robert and George Winter produced “chemical dioramas,” which consisted of “three undermentioned CHEMICAL PAINTINGS, in the style of Daguerre”:

Each painting covers a surface of nearly two hundred square feet of canvass, and represents two distinct pictures, which, from the peculiar style of execution, the varied nature and combination of the illuminating powers employed, produces changes the most astonishing, and at the same time the most natural, in the power of the artist, machinist, or optician, to effect.

Appropriate music, selected and arranged expressly for the occasion, will accompany each change. (qtd. in Wray: 10)

Without the addition of the term “chemical,” this exhibition might sound a lot like the description of a Daguerrian diorama show.<sup>7</sup> In addition, “undermentioned [. . .] in the style of Daguerre” suggests that these three paintings were done by Daguerre, forgotten, recovered for dioramic display by the Winters. However, I want to emphasize that the Winters’ shows were not just subpar copies of those at the original Diorama. They were a family of artists that often produced dioramas together, and the brothers Robert Jr. and Charles played the violin to accompany the painting display. Not only the size of the painting made the show unique, but also the use of music. Their paintings measured “about 12 feet square,” which was considerably

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<sup>7</sup> Both Wray and Huhtamo speculate that the use of the adjective “chemical” to describe the diorama referred to the gas used for lighting effects or to the paint applied to the canvas, both of which Daguerre had used as well but probably not in the exact same way as the Winters. For more on the “chemical” aspect of the Winters’ show, see Wray.

smaller than Diorama screens. However, professional violin and piano playing formed a main part of attraction; these instruments were not just used to create sound effects to augment the painting. (Wray 9-10)

In another version of the diorama, showmen Clarkson Stanfield and David Roberts produced four large “diorama” paintings for a bazaar, including “*The Burning of York Minster*,” that they animated with planned as well as unplanned pyrotechnics that represented another change to the traditional diorama recipe. According to Richard Altick, Daguerre and Bouton’s Diorama would not have been able to produce the special effects in “*The Burning of York Minster*,” which included the slow red simmering of the church’s interior until a fire, according to the May 9, 1829 *Literary Gazette*, “bursts fiercely forth, illuminating the adjacent towers, and mingled volumes of smoke, and masses of brilliant sparks, now rapidly ascend to the skies; a great portion of the roof of the building falls in” (qtd. in Altick: 167). Ironically, these realistic incendiary special effects caused this exhibit to actually burn the faux diorama down (Altick 167).

Another team of brothers, Americans Henry and William J. Hanington, produced another version of the “diorama” in the 1850s that related to mechanical theaters, like the Eidophusikon from the late eighteenth century, an influential precedent of the Diorama (Huhtamo 155). The Haningtons’ attractions, like Daguerre and Bouton’s shows, polarized audiences to either praise their ingenuity and realism or critique the effects as plastic and not believable. The advertisement describes a “Fairy Grotto” as one of the “moving dioramas” among eight attractions that included a moving panorama as well as drop scenes. The “Fairy Grotto” animations include gliding fairies drawn by swans in a fairy palace setting made of multicolored glass, most likely with colors changing by using the same methods Daguerre used

in his double-effect dioramas (Huhtamo 156). The mechanics that moved the swans and fairies in this scene received a poor review by author Enoch Cobb Wines who called them “stiff and brawny figures”—less like fairies and more like a robotic “Nick Bottom” than perhaps the artists hoped (qtd in Huhtamo: 157).

The range of kinds of dioramas continually led artists and intellectuals to redefine it, and its definitions bred a new, more expansive conception of this term in its life in text. In fact, many discussions in print regarding the nature of the diorama also mention the debate and seek to set public opinion straight as to what a diorama is, what its shows are like, and how it works. Richard Altick writes in *The Shows of London* that only six years after Daguerre and Bouton introduced the term “diorama” to London, as applied to their work, a brochure proclaimed that “the term Diorama has . . . been strangely corrupted since its successful adoption in the Regent’s Park—it being now almost indefinitely applied to any number or description of paintings” (174). Further, “in the exhibition business, just as ‘panorama’ was meant to connote magnitude, so ‘diorama’ implied lighting tricks, transparency in particular”—where “lighting tricks” and “transparency” go undefined (qtd. in Altick: 174). In the 1839 *London and Paris Observer*, Daguerre’s process of dioramic painting produces “*an infinity* of other effects similar to those which nature presents in her transitions from morning to night and the reverse” (“Dioramic Painting” 638, my emphasis). The hyperbole signifies the new dioramic: it could be anything, even everything, as long as it was a combination. Much later, Walter William Skeat’s *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* defines a diorama in 1881 as “a scene seen through a small opening” and “a term applied to various optical exhibitions and to the building in which they are shewn” (168). This general definition casts off the diorama’s roots, sixty years

earlier, in Daguerre and Bouton's practices and, instead, embraces *all* scenes watched through a narrow aperture that also have *any* optical effects.

New uses of the terms "diorama" and "dioramic" reveal that they came to represent any diorama- or panorama-like event or entity that uses a variety of media and effects to represent something. The identity of the "diorama," which was once a very specific and patented art form, even becomes "dioramic," or like a collection of meanings that vary depending on what new combination of materials, machinery, optics, paints, and text the artist combines, including those that were technically panoramas. A Google Ngram analysis of the frequency of the word "diorama" in the corpus of Google's scanned books shows that the word was first used in 1822, when Daguerre and Bouton's Diorama opened in Paris, and the adjective "dioramic" was born shortly thereafter in 1824. The frequency of the word "diorama" spikes in 1853, long after Daguerre and Bouton retired from the diorama business. Usage then dips until 1863, but then rises steadily again until 1872, before declining until the end of the century (Google Ngram).<sup>8</sup> Though frequency of the word in general multiplied as the century progressed, the trend does not signal an increased understanding of the word; it perhaps meant that its uncertain meaning became a hot topic. For example, in Madeline Leslie's *A Behaviour Book: A Manual for Ladies* (1853), the didactic narrator admits that the definition of the diorama has been debated lately even among dioramists and panoramists:

It is difficult to imagine whence originated the mistake of calling a diorama a panorama, which it is not. A diorama is one of those numerous flat surface

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<sup>8</sup> I hesitate to use the exact figures reported by Google Ngram and instead report the general trend because I take into consideration the relative "fuzziness" of Google's data as well as the possibility that the word "diorama" was used more simply because it was possible to print more copies of the same publications – they may not represent unique instances of the word. However, I find the trend to be consistent with my analysis of numerous texts as well as analysis of the term reported by other scholars, including Richard Altick and Erkki Huhtamo.

paintings of which we have had so many, (and some few of them very good,) and which, moving on unseen rollers, glide or slide along, displaying every few minutes a new portion of the scenery.

The error has grown so common that persons fall habitually into it, though knowing all the time that it *is* an error. To correct it, let the exhibitors of dioramas cease to call them *panoramas*, and give them their proper name both in their advertisements and in their verbal descriptions. Sebron's magnificent representation of the departure of the Israelites, that looked so amazingly real, was not a diorama for it did not move, and not a panorama, for it was not circular. . . . At the first glance it seemed to be no picture at all, but the real scene, with the real people. (241-42, emphasis in original)

Leslie's definition does not correct misunderstandings but, instead, propagates them. Her description of the diorama is dead wrong if we measure correctness by Daguerre and Bouton's designs. However, if the measure were against mid-century practices, many definitions would be correct. Leslie defines it as a "flat" painting that moves on "unseen rollers," which amounts to calling a diorama a panorama. Leslie's instructional work of fiction, *Play and Study*, also aims to correct misunderstandings of the differences between a diorama and a panorama. It does so through the eyes of schoolboys who attend the diorama for the first time. The show, however, does not provide a standard model. First, instead of the pair of scenes featured in the original Diorama, *Play and Study* features six: a buffalo hunt, a view of a family living in the country, a lion attacking a panther, the fight between Christian and Giant Despair from *A Pilgrim's Progress*, a convent in the mountains at vesper, and, for a thrilling conclusion, a scene from the story of Jonah and the whale (Leslie 61-75). The scenes described sound far more successfully

animated than the 1820s dioramas, including pouncing animals, humans diving, and a whale surfacing, yet the boys echo a familiar refrain heard in diorama theaters since its debut: “How is it done? I wish I could look in behind the curtain and see what they are doing” (Leslie 67).

Authors, too, co-opted the term “diorama” and produced a new set of meanings and associations that further extend Daguerre and Bouton’s invention. When not describing or reviewing diorama shows in their various permutations, authors used the term to illuminate literary moments that contain a sense of an infinite range or the sublime in relation to history, the imagination, and art. However, they also contain transformations or animations—a trait that dioramas do not share with panoramas and that I believe separates that vernacularization of the term “diorama” from “panorama.” For example, in Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man* (1826), Lionel Verney describes the way he imagines historical scenes in Rome as “the Diorama of ages” but also calls forth the dioramic in the transformative image that follows in which he replaces a solemn historical scene by “dipping our pencils in the rainbow hues of the sky and transcendent nature” (193). Just as in a diorama show, Shelley’s imagery changes from stony to kaleidoscopic. Laman Blanchard uses dioramic imagery in an 1843 gothic short story to illustrate shifting perspectives and eerie transformations of people:

The printer’s devil seemed to have become prime minister; the curate had acquired an imp-like shape; the schoolmaster was much less than human; and the barrister worse than a brute. In short, as the ground shifted, like a diorama view, I felt myself sliding into a scene Underground. (300)

The transformations alluded to here refer to the spinning auditorium in the Diorama theater—where the ground literally moved beneath viewers’ feet—as well as to the animations in Daguerre and Bouton’s scenes. They sound as mystifying as Gil-Martin’s shapeshifting in James

Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). George Meredith describes his character Wilfred's churning thought pattern as "a diorama of impossible schemes revolving before [his] eyes" in the novel *Vittoria* (1867) (291). In 1889, H. A. Taine describes poetic language in the Old English chronicle poem *The Battle of Brunanburh* as dioramic in a series of related and unfiltered transitions between the senses: "One colour induces another; from sound he passes to sound; his imagination is like a diorama of unexplained pictures. His phrases recur and change: he emits the word that comes to his lips without hesitation; he leaps over wide intervals from idea to idea" (70).

My final example is from an 1890 description of Cherubini's opera *Il Portador d'Acqua*, in which the author likens a diorama to the unveiling of a work of art: "of all the richness of its magnificent instrumentation, its brilliant orchestration, of its wealth of scientific form and detail, it would be impossible to speak too highly. Such a diorama of tone may well be likened to the unveiling of a glorious Paul Veronese" (Crowest 20-21). This is a surprisingly complicated simile as the "diorama of tone" described in the previous sentence—a full compass of effects of instrumentation, orchestration, and scientific form—is not just a range but also an act of revealing a large history painting by the famed Renaissance painter. The unveiling act calls to mind the idea of the turn, a change that calls new attention to a composition by introducing a difference, and perhaps also the turning of the rotunda that delivers the audience from the dark to the illumined work of art. The diorama, at the turn of the century, reveals itself as the unveiling of its own multiplicity and synesthesia, as well as the potential to uncover "combinations of new forms" that refer back to their own components and intermedial histories.

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