Opponent Report

General Remarks

The overall impression this BA Thesis creates is one of uneveness, with notable contrasts evident in terms of its ambitious scope versus its achievements, its application of theoretical principles contra its tendency to become enmired in narrative racont, and its sometimes incisive analysis but clumsy expressions and inexplicable lack of attention to detail. Accepting that Bakhtin's dialogics are very much favoured as an interpretative theory for Scottish Literature, the employment herein of a rather cursory and inadequate section referencing Burns verse and its use of heteroglossia left more questions than it answered. Burns and Scott have very different sensibilities and attitudes towards Scotland, its peoples, dialects and tongues and their relative deployment of textual representation of these speech patterns is a complex topic. While the student is to be commended for engaging with this, I am of the view that it has not been done so in a coherent, comprehensive or satisfactory manner or degree.

Specific Observations

The use of Lukacs' *The Historical Novel* on Pg.14 is laudable but is something of a reductio ad absurdum of Lukacs' defence of Scott as a historical novelist *par excellence* as opposed to being the limited parochialist or mannerist that critics like E.M. Forster attempted to paint him as. Some more detailed consideration of Lukacs' views would be welcome, as would evaluation of their validity and specific relevance here in terms of what Scott achieved as a historical agent rather than a mere recorder or 'Amanuensis of Truth and History' (as Hazlitt puts it in *The Spirit of the Age*, a text the author of this thesis may have benefited from looking into). Beyond this, there is the temptation to argue that the student's agreement with Lukacs' views of the use of dialogue as being superficial are quite at odds with Scott's encyclopedic and curatorial approach to the many tongues and voices of Scotland. Additionally, Lukacs ignores the importance of anticipating the role of restoration and rebirth, with which the novel concludes.

Would there not have been an argument for bringing in more of Scott's work, perhaps including some reference to all of the Waverley novels, for the sake of balance, bearing in mind that Scott has an overall premise for these works, by no means monolithic, Waverely simply being the first and most successful of them?

Simple observations are omitted concerning the structural devices of the novels: the various narrative arcs and geographical picaresques, the North-South border crossings and indeed secretive versus public travelogues ie Smuggling.

While the Abstract of the thesis claims that the heteroglossia „allows the author to show a historically important event from many perspectives and it enables to bridge(sic) the differences between regions, cultures, languages and different time periods. Such an approach also helps to overcome stereotypes and prejudices”, there is inadequate acknowledgement that Scott, like Burns and others is preserving, inventing and recovering the speech patterns of his nation at a point of seismic cultural change—see the Amber Passage in Chapter 4: Castle-Building— and there is no explanation of the stereotypes and prejudices which Scott requires to confront. The assertions...
concerning Baron Bradwardine in the conclusion of this piece do not go far enough in considering
the complexity of the state of restoration it implies, nor of the role of Tullyvealan as a unique site, a
nexus of historical narratives and a location of profound generative and restorative cultural
significance. This would bear much more analysis and assist the student in better parsing
Bradwardine’s linguistic exceptionalism.

Scott is proleptically self subverting and the polyphony of Waverley and HofM both demonstrate
how he expresses a „romance of real/life” through complex chronotopes and it is a source of some
concern that the author of this paper has perhaps assumed a conflation of speech and
characterisation with authorial intention which is extremely dangerous with an author like Scott who
gives us in characters like Waverely a historically fluid debate rather than an ideologically stable
statement, a process rather than a result. Scott does not identify with either the unionist nor the
Jacobite and there is a powerful multiple mimesis that requires identification and exploration. In this
regard it may be intriguing for the author, should she choose to persue this theme further, to
consider the resonances between the heteroglossia employed by Scott and that of Austen and other
linked contemporaries of Scott.

Additionally, it seems important to point out that some of the slipperiness of Scotts dialogue is in
part due to the fact that it is part of a simulacrum of the past which conceals the violence that has
brought it about, somewhat like a battle reenactment. It is also relevant to note Scotts own
metahistorical actions and his rather sly ideological proteanism which is revealed through subversive
comedic strategies, something not engaged with in this Thesis, and which is always lurking in Scott
who is not often acknowledged as a comic author and whose „dialogic laughter” is profound.

The section on Burns omits a serious consideration of personae, and falls prey to highly contentious
claims such as that „Burns does not yet consider Scots to be an appropriate language for expressing
noble sentiments and universal truths”-this ignores the fact that Burns, like Scott, was fully
cognisant of the demands of his audience, his cynical marketing psychology and further assumes an
uncritical employment of Popean poetic style while assuming a comic or low-cultural deployment of
the vernacular or standard Habbie. The general thrust of this section is understandable, but is a little
unsophisticated and cliched.

It is something of an oddity to find biblical quotes employed by the author from an American New
International Version of the text as opposed to the King James VI version employed by Burns (there
are 4 bibles preserved which are associated with Burns and all are the KJ version). It is hard to see the
rationale behind this choice.

The Bibliography, while understandably not exhaustive as a BA study, omits a huge range of excellent
critical materials on Scott, Bakhtin, Burns and Scottish Romanticism and seems rather cursory and
inconsistent: a case in point being the diverse and rather superannuated editions of Waverley and
Heart of Midlothian from 1912 and 1928 respectively why not refer to the excellent and critically
augmented Penguin Classics with Clare Lamont et al or indeed consult some of Fiona Robertson’s
excellent monographs on Scott. In reality there exists a plethora of critical material which it does not
appear the author of this work is aware of nor has she consulted it.
Notwithstanding the foregoing criticisms, the student has embarked on a rather brave project here which must be credited for what it is: largely engaging and quite readable with clear nodes suggestive of questions facilitating extended study. The conclusions reached by the author are reasonably consistent and within the scope of the thesis, well executed.

I recommend that this thesis be presented for defence of the foregoing and anticipate a classification of 2(Velme Dobre).

Prague, 31 August 2014

Colin S Clark MA