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Book Reviews



Bards & Makars. Scottish Language and Literature: Medieval and Renaissance. Edited by Adam J. Aitken, Matthew P. McDiarmid, and Derick S. Thomson. Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1977, 250 pp. £15.

Contents: Adam J. Aitken, "How to Pronounce Older Scots," pp. 1-21; Thomas W. Craik, "The Substance and Structure of *The Testament of Cresseid*," pp. 22-6; Matthew P. McDiarmid, "Robert Henryson in His Poems," pp. 27-40; John McNamara, "Language as Action in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*," pp. 41-51; Carol Mills, "Romance Convention and Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*," pp. 52-60; Wilhelm F. H. Nicholaisen, "Line and Sentence in Dunbar's Poetry," pp. 61-71; Jean-Jacques Blanchot, "William Dunbar and François Villon: the Literary *Personae*," pp. 72-87; Ian Ross, "Dunbar's Vision of 'The Four Last Things,'" pp. 88-106; Priscilla Bawcutt, "The 'Library' of Gavin Douglas," pp. 107-26; Robert L. Thomson, "The Emergence of Scottish Gaelic," pp. 127-35; Anna J. Mill, "The Records of Scots Medieval Plays: Interpretations and Misinterpretations," pp. 136-42; Claude Graf, "Theatre and Politics: Lindsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*," pp. 143-55; Denton Fox, "Manuscripts and Prints of Scots Poetry in the Sixteenth Century," pp. 156-71; William Ramson, "On Bannatyne's Editing," pp. 172-83; John Wall, "The Latin Elegiacs of George Buchanan (1506-1582)," pp. 184-93; Edwin Morgan, "Gavin Douglas and William Drummond as Translators," pp. 194-200; Hans H. Meier, "Scots is Not Alone: The Swiss and Low German Analogues," pp. 201-13; Kenneth Buthlay, "Habbie Simson," pp. 214-20; Derick S. Thomson, "Three Seven-

teenth [sic] Century Bardic Poets: Niall Mór, Cathal and Niall MacMhuirich," pp. 221-46.

This volume presents 19 of the 42 papers read at the first International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance, held in Edinburgh, September 10-16, 1975. A second International Conference was held in Strassbourg in 1978, and a third is scheduled for Stirling in 1981. Conferences of this sort, especially in a field with relatively few workers, are useful for several reasons. Most obviously, they promote a sense of intellectual community and provide a forum for the exchange of information and points of view. They provide also a preview of scholarship for several years to come, since many of the papers present preliminary findings. Finally, they suggest those areas and critical problems which scholars in the field believe to be of greatest importance. The current volume is significant from several perspectives, and I shall therefore consider each essay in some detail.

The two essays on the Scottish language sharpen the focus (Adam Aitken) on this subject and broaden the context (Hans Meier) within which it is usually treated. Aitken's essay includes several tables which show clearly, if somewhat tentatively, the development of the Scots vowels from approximately the time of Barbour to the present and which by implication separate this development from the English. Aitken also provides specimen transcriptions from Barbour, Holland, Dunbar, *et al.* in order to demonstrate, at the segmental level, the pronunciations "of many speakers of the dialects in question at the dates specified" (p. 10). The transcriptions also enable us to determine how phonological changes are represented, or not represented, orthographically. The question of how to pronounce Older Scots is one for which Aitken provides several possible answers. Those who are not native Scots but who have occasion to read Older Scots aloud often employ the "Chaucerian or Middle English" model. Native Scots, on the other hand, especially professional performers, tend to use the "Modern Recitation Scots" model in which Older Scots is read as though it were no different from Modern Scots. As Aitken says, "In this respect at least Hugh McDiarmaid [sic] and William Dunbar are given the same language" (p. 15). A third possibility is the "Modern Standard English" model in which one provides modern cognates for older forms as one reads. When a word appears for which no modern equivalent exists, one pronounces it in accordance with Modern English rules of pronunciation. Finally, there is the model which Aitken himself proposes, the "Rough Outline" model in which one would use what is known generally about the pronunciation of Older Scots (i.e., the information in Aitken's Table One) as that information can be

utilized within the boundaries of one's own linguistic competence. Given Aitken's impressive credentials and the nature of the material presented in his essay, its importance is obvious.

Meier's essay is equally important but for very different reasons. His primary purpose "is to show that Older Scots... has two Continental cousins in precisely the same posture [i.e., Middle Low German and Older Swiss German] flourishing during the same period, like Scots failing to reach the grade of modern standard, being displaced by a competing neighbour, and like Scots reappearing in modern literary use" (p. 201). As opposed to Aitken's internal study of Older Scots, Meier shows its affinities with MLG and OSwG, among the most significant of which are parallels in the cultural and historical settings for each language and in the relationship of each to the dominant, standard language of the area. The association of each language with the frustrated national hopes of its speakers accounts at least in part for its vitality and tenacity, a point which can obviously be made for all of the Celtic languages in the British Isles as well. Meier's contribution to our understanding of Scots places the language in a broad European, rather than a narrow English, perspective and thus complements those literary studies, especially the work of Janet M. Smith and R. D. S. Jack, which have documented continental influences upon the literature.

In "The Emergence of Scottish Gaelic," Robert L. Thomson, like Meier, is concerned with the context, linguistic, political, and cultural, within which this phenomenon occurs. Thomson points out that Scottish Gaelic establishes its independence from Irish during exactly the same period in which lowland Scots progressively loses its identity to English. The basic problem, Thomson says, is that "from the thirteenth or fourteenth century onwards differences between [Scottish Gaelic] and the Gaelic dialects of most of Ireland...were increasing, but we have virtually nothing written in Gaelic Scotland during this period in its original form, and when works composed in Scotland do begin to appear in the form which their authors gave them, from the mid-sixteenth century and in the seventeenth, those authors are still much under the influence of Common Literary Gaelic, the standard language of the preceding four hundred years" (pp. 128-9). Using several largely seventeenth-century texts, Thomson illustrates selected vernacular developments in phonology and morphology which help to identify Scottish Gaelic, as opposed to Common Gaelic, forms.

Derick Thomson examines "the last century of Gaelic bardic verse as practiced by successive members of an ancient hereditary line of poets, the MacMhuirichs" (p. 221). The corpus examined by Thomson reflects the usual concerns of bardic poet-

ry, eulogy and elegy with heavy emphasis upon religious themes and, as is frequently the case elsewhere, the professional rights and responsibilities of bard and patron within the structure of the clan. Thomson's essay examines closely the poets in question and quotes liberally from their poems. Repeatedly one is struck by the sense of anomaly, of a sort of temporal stasis, in the attitudes which Cathal especially expresses in his poetry. The following passages, for example, seem to thrust one back into the worlds of Beowulf and Njál respectively:

Dob é a cheart coimhghe a chinnidh,
a ndíon éigne is aindligheadh,
a ccabhuir fhíre ré a n-uchd,
a ttíre ar fhalaídh d'fhurtachd.

[It was his right to protect his clan, to give them protection against violence and injustice, upholding justice face to face with them, succouring their land from feuds.]

Ní bhíodh cúis 'na cúis fhrithir
ná diongnadh í d'fhóirithin
le breith gceirt sheinreachta a shen
de sheirc eighreachta d'innremh.

[No cause proved vexatious but he could remedy it, by just pronouncements of his forbears' ancient law, from love of guiding/serving his patrimony.] (pp. 240-1)

Thomson points out that Cathal depicts "the mid-seventeenth century MacLeod chief...as playing a role remarkably similar to the seventh-century petty king of Ireland" (p. 240). Survivals in oral, i.e., bardic, culture could hardly be more persuasively illustrated.¹

In addition to Lallans and Gaelic, Scots poets, especially those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, frequently wrote in Latin. G. Gregory Smith's explanation for this phenomenon, "The weakness of Scots was the opportunity of Latin,"² even though largely true, has tended to discourage serious examination of both *corpora*. Thus, John Wall's examination of George Buchanan's Latin elegiacs, paraphrases of Psalms 88, 114, and 137, is a welcome addition to our understanding of the ways in which classical forms and conventions were utilized in neo-Latin verse. Wall's analyses suggest the importance of autobiographical elements in the paraphrases and demonstrate Buchanan's effortless control of elegiac meter as well as his ability to expand upon the themes of each psalm without diluting its effect. If there is a basic difference,

Wall maintains, between Buchanan's paraphrases and their originals it is that the Scottish poet's primary focus is upon man rather than God, the particular suffering of an individual rather than suffering in general.

Perhaps the best known of sixteenth-century Scottish Latinists is Gavin Douglas who chose to translate Virgil into Scots rather than write Latin verse himself. In his essay on Douglas and Drummond, Edwin Morgan suggests that in one respect at least it is Douglas who is of the Middle Ages and Drummond of the Renaissance rather than the reverse as is usually argued. Douglas's expansion of his original is entirely in keeping with the emphasis on *amplificatio* which medieval rhetorical guides devote far more space to than *abbreviatio*.³ Often Douglas's expansions are based upon the commentators, especially Ascensius,⁴ but just as frequently they are attributable to his desire to make the *Aeneid* intelligible to as large an audience as possible. Drummond, better known for his conversations with Ben Jonson than for his poetry, is the first Scots poet of whom we have record who writes exclusively in the literary dialect of London. In his translations of Tasso, Marino, and Ronsard, Drummond, as Morgan points out, is less a translator than an imitator, and his amplifications of and departures from his originals derive from his absorption of his source into his own sensibility; as Morgan says, it is often difficult to know, on the basis of internal evidence, which of Drummond's poems are original and which translations (p. 200). Although Drummond did not create a literary language for posterity, he nevertheless "showed that English [as well as Scots and Gaelic] could be used and that others would use it after him" (p. 200).

Priscilla Bawcutt's essay on the "library" of Gavin Douglas is both a *jeu d'esprit* and an important contribution to our knowledge of Douglas's reading. Although we have no catalogue of Douglas's library, we have numerous references in his poetry to other works, we have the *Eneados* marginalia, and we have the testimony of John Major and Polydore Vergil. The range of Douglas's reading, insofar as that reading manifests itself in his poetry, far surpasses that of any other early Scottish poet; the long list in the *Palice of Honour*, for example, is suggestive rather than exhaustive. But Douglas, as Bawcutt points out, does not merely assimilate his reading, but tells us on several occasions both his preferences and the reasons for them, as in his treatment of Caxton's *Aeneid*.⁵ Bawcutt's discussion of the ways in which Douglas was influenced by specific authors, Greek (i.e., Homer, probably in Valla's translation), Latin, Italian, French, English, and Scots, is filled with shrewd observations and illuminating examples. Perhaps the most significant influence, in terms of both future scholarship and past neglect, is the popular poetry of the fifteenth

century, anonymous tales, romances, and ballads. Bawcutt notes Douglas's use of alliterative meter in *Eneados* Prologue VIII, *inter alia*, and suggests his acquaintance with both English and Scots alliterative verse. Douglas is a "learned" poet then in the best sense, one who is sufficiently aware of tradition to employ it without being in any way constrained by it. Altogether, this essay is a splendid piece of work.⁶

Of the early Scots poets, Henryson and Dunbar remain the most popular, a fact reflected by the presence in this volume of four essays on the first and three on the second. The essays by Craik and McNamara both deal with the *Testament of Cresseid*, but their respective approaches and conclusions are radically different from one another. Craik is concerned with the psychological genesis of the poem and with Cresseid's testament as the foundation of the poetic process. McNamara, on the other hand, is primarily interested in the poetic product and uses some of the relatively recent developments in critical theory, especially those in French structuralism, in order to demonstrate the *Testament's* "prevailing concern with the problematic nature of language [which] emerges through the structuring of language itself" (p. 42). Craik quite rightly points out that Henryson provides an alternative ending to the story of Troilus and Cresseid: "Chaucer having written Troilus's tragedy, Henryson is writing Cresseid's" (p. 24). Further, and this point is crucial to his argument, Craik maintains that Cresseid reacts to her leprosy not with repentance but merely with grief. "It is her encounter with Troilus which opens her eyes to her own fault" (p. 24). If Craik is correct, the *Testament* is, as he says, "more profitably approached as a tragic poem than as a didactic one" (p. 26). The distinction is, of course, one of degree rather than of kind, since didactic works are always something else as well. Like McNamara in an earlier essay,⁷ Craik attempts to find a *via media* between the position of Tillyard, who sees divine justice operating in the poem, and Spearing, who sees the actions of the parliament of gods as capricious and unjustifiable.⁸ Part of the difficulty one has with Craik's argument is that he insufficiently distinguishes between Cresseid's didacticism and Henryson's. Because he maintains that Henryson wishes "to create pity for Cresseid's plight, no matter how deserving she may be of punishment" (p. 26), Craik passes over the obvious objection that it is Henryson after all who is responsible for inflicting Cresseid's punishment upon her in the first place. Unlike Chaucer, who excuses Criseyde for "routhe," Henryson is not bound by the intractable particulars of a source; his "uth-er quair" (l. 61) permits him total freedom in providing an alternative ending to the Troilus-Criseyde story. Furthermore, both Cresseid and Henryson (or his persona) *are* didactic;

each explicitly refers to an audience of women (Cresseid, ll. 452-68; Henryson, ll. 610-6) who are to learn from both Cresseid's behavior and her punishment. Although Cresseid's testament may well be Henryson's point of departure for the poem, we must place it within a larger moral context, as Henryson himself does, and we must not mistake pathos for tragedy. Craik's essay then, while sensitive and perceptive, attempts to deal with large issues in a compass which is much too circumscribed.

But if Craik's compass is too narrow, McNamara's may well be too broad. To say that the *Testament* "is everywhere concerned with the problematic nature of poetic language" (p. 45) is almost certainly true, but is such a statement really significant? Of course, as McNamara notes, Cresseid's sin against the gods, blasphemy, is itself innately linguistic; equally important is his observation that "the narrative episodes function to motivate commentary" on them (p. 45). But Chaucer's *Criseyde* also blasphemes (IV 1534 ff.), and *Troilus and Criseyde*, even more than the *Testament*, is a poem in which there is very little overt action and in which the overt action that does take place seems clearly subordinate to the characters' comments about it. McNamara argues that Henryson's narrative essentially consists of Cresseid's words: her blasphemy, her complaint, her confession and testament (p. 46), an astute observation, but one which ignores the procedural similarities with Chaucer's poem. McNamara's statement that "the *Testament* becomes a kind of metalanguage about the literary tradition even as it generates its own language about the actions of the heroine" (p. 49) illustrates plainly the problems of his approach. Every literary work, insofar as it is not solipsistic, "becomes a kind of metalanguage about the literary tradition" within which it is written. What is important is the degree to which this is the case in any given work and the peculiar nature of the commentary which it makes. Because McNamara does not take into account either the similarities between *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Testament of Cresseid* in their attitudes towards language as a surrogate for action, or the extent to which every literary work is simultaneously unique and derivative, his examination of the *Testament* is somewhat less effective than it should be. However, the perspicacity of his local observations and his emphasis upon the importance of language in the *Testament* make his essay on balance a significant contribution to our understanding of the poem.

The essay by Carol Mills on *Orpheus and Eurydice* is an attempt to provide additional information in order to sharpen the distinction between the learned and popular Orpheus traditions in the Middle Ages insofar as both affect Henryson's poem.⁹ Mills proposes to "examine the evidence of romance

influence in three parts: firstly, from courtly romance of the Chaucerian type, secondly from the tradition of the putative *lai d'orfee*, generally accepted as the source of the popular romance of Orpheus, and thirdly, from extant versions" (p. 53). She cites various points of contact between Henryson's poem and each of the two traditions and concludes, as others have before her, that the narrative is basically classical and its characters "while wearing the costumes of romance...are post-romance in outlook and sensibility" (p. 59). Several of Mills' specific points are of interest, but her essay as a whole suffers from a lack of precision in both conception and execution. Her three categories of romance influence, cited above, are hardly distinct. What, one wonders, is a "courtly romance of the Chaucerian type"? The example Mills cites comes from *Troilus and Criseyde*, but surely this poem is almost impossible to classify generically, as the criticism bears witness, and the fact that it and *Orpheus and Eurydice* both include Complaints is hardly significant, Friedman notwithstanding. Mills later says that Orpheus "invokes the aid of the gods...like a Chaucerian knight" (p. 53) as though all of Chaucer's knights are identical or as though Dorigen and Aurelius, neither a knight, do not invoke divine assistance. Further, and perhaps most seriously, Mills's attempt to separate a "putative *lai d'orfee*" tradition from "extant versions" of the romance tradition is unsuccessful, as almost all such attempts must be. To assume the existence of an oral tradition in this instance is certainly justifiable, but to reconstruct it on the basis of a late, and corrupt, ballad and a single Middle English "lay" is not. The value of this essay resides in its local perceptions then rather than in its critical principles.

Matthew McDiarmid's essay is an attempt at an internal biography of Henryson, about whose life we know little, based upon a reading of the "most emotive poems, the *Orpheus*, *The Preiching of the Swallow*, *Ane Prayer for the Pest*, *The Testament of Cresseid*..." (p. 27). McDiarmid maintains that the "theme that haunts and oppresses the imagination of Robert Henryson is the tragedy of sin" and goes on to say: "Henryson may believe in the grace of God but he does not seem to feel that man's sins and follies...leave it much room to operate" (p. 27). Given his assumptions and the conclusions to which they lead, one is not surprised to find that McDiarmid briefly dismisses "the avowedly religious poems" as being characterized by "morbid piety" (p. 31) and that he has nothing whatever to say about *Robene and Makyne*, *The Annunciation* ("morbid piety"?), and several of the *Fabillis*. Space does not permit a detailed account of the analyses of the four poems which McDiarmid does consider, but his remarks on *The Preiching of the Swallow* are

typical: "Its very carefully considered art is directed to making an overwhelming contrast between the power and wisdom manifested in nature's order and the human weakness and fallibility exemplified in the desperate birds that fall such ready victims to the flax-grower's lime and nets. It points only to incapacity for learning, incapacity of salvation, the recommended prayers in the end of the 'Moralitas' doing little to lighten this sombre lesson" (p. 29). The Swallow is associated with Christ and the landscape inhabited by the birds with Hell (p. 30). It is true, of course, that Henryson himself identifies the Fowler with "the Feind" (*Fabillis*, ll. 1895-7)¹⁰ and says that the Swallow "The halie Preichour weill may signifie,/Exhortand folk to walk and ay be wair/Fra nettis of our wickitemie" (1925-7). It seems, however, unaccountably to have escaped notice that the "Preichour" is most likely the Biblical Preacher, Ecclesiastes, in whose book one finds numerous references to birds, nets, wisemen and fools (see esp. 1:15, 17, 2:12-16, 8:12, and 12:4), and the other significant elements of Henryson's fable. The Boethian references, for example, are perfectly in keeping with the substance and tone of *Ecclesiastes*, the debate between the Swallow and Lark is a dramatization of the Biblical Preacher's distinctions between wise men and fools, the description of the change of seasons recalls the familiar verses on the same subject in *Ecclesiastes* (i.e., 3:1-9), and the reference to "this worldis vane plesance" (1917) recalls the famous "Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas" (1:2). This is hardly the occasion for an extended discussion of Henryson's fable, but even this brief account should indicate some of the deficiencies in McDiarmid's reading. His revisionist view of Henryson ultimately fails to be convincing not only because he ignores several of the poems altogether, but because his treatment of the four poems upon which that view is based is open to serious objection.

The three essays on Dunbar all utilize approaches that might be considered relatively unusual, for this poet at least, although the linguistic approach of Wilhelm Nicolaisen and the pictorial approach of Ian Ross are fairly common in the criticism of other medieval authors. In "Line and Sentence in Dunbar's Poetry" Nicolaisen presents a preliminary and highly selective examination of the relationship between these two elements. As one might suppose, the limits within which this relationship varies are, in Nicolaisen's sample, rather broad, ranging from the identity of line and sentence, as in stanza two of *Lament for the Makaris*, to seven lines for one sentence, as in stanza eight of *The Thrissil and the Rois* (p. 64). Nicolaisen's syntactic study is, although tentative, indicative of a fundamental conservatism in Dunbar's handling of the combination of syntactic and metrical elements. Given the fact

that most earlier commentators emphasize Dunbar's technical virtuosity, Nicolaisen's findings may signal something of a new direction in subsequent stylistic criticism.¹¹

Ian Ross examines Dunbar's treatment of death, judgment, hell, and heaven, the "four last things," in such poems as *The Tabill of Confessioun*, the *Testament of Maister Andro Kennedy*, *The Dance of the Sevin Deidly Synnis*, the *Fenyeit Freir of Tungland*, and especially the *Lament for the Makaris*. Ross attempts to provide a kind of aesthetic and intellectual context for Dunbar's presentation by examining "painting, engravings and woodcuts of Dunbar's time, particularly those of the Early Netherlandish school, where a similar sensibility seems to be at work, and which, like the poetry, spring from what the church taught in sermons and commentaries and sang in the liturgy concerning the mysteries of our existence" (p. 88). Ross quotes Gregory the Great to the effect that paintings in churches are the books of the illiterate (p. 89) and goes on to point out several striking correspondences, especially in the treatment of eschatological themes, between Dunbar's poetry on the one hand and late fifteenth-century theology and art on the other. Although the practice of using art to explain literature has suffered from the exaggerated claims made on behalf of its validity, Ross's account is judicious and, if one can use the term in this context, illuminating. Since almost all commentators upon Dunbar praise him for the brilliance of his imagery, it is remarkable that more has not been done with its obvious iconographical connections. Ross's essay represents an excellent beginning in this direction.

Perhaps the most methodologically original essay in this collection is Jean-Jacques Blanchot's comparison of Dunbar and Villon, two poets who, one can hope, will be compared less frequently in the future. The basis for Blanchot's comparison is the series of literary personae used by each author. Blanchot considers nine different personae for Dunbar (the Dreamer is most frequently employed) and eight for Villon (the Pamphleteer appears most frequently); he also takes into account the topics addressed by each author (Dunbar is most concerned with himself and with the "satire of persons," Villon with the "satire of persons" and with "intimate feelings" (pp. 82-84). Despite several similarities, especially in topics, Blanchot concludes that "the only common denominator enabling us to consider [Dunbar and Villon] simultaneously--and reasonably--is that of their literary period" (p. 81). Blanchot's content analysis, though somewhat mechanical and arbitrary as all statistical analyses must be, is nevertheless revealing, especially in terms of the position which each poet occupies in literary history. As a preliminary study, this essay suggests some substantial benefits to be derived from future examina-

tions along the same lines.

Of the remaining five essays, two deal with the drama, one with Robert Sempill's *Habbie Simson*, and two with sixteenth-century Scottish MSS, especially the Bannatyne MS.

Anna Mill, whose *Mediaeval Plays in Scotland* has long been the standard authority on this subject, addresses herself in her essay to some specific errors of fact and interpretation in such books as Hardin Craig's *English Religious Drama* and Alan Nelson's *The Medieval English Stage*. In passing, Mill has illuminating comments to make upon Scottish plays in general and *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* in particular. Considering the seriousness of several of the errors Mills points out, one can only admire the kindness and the grace with which she does so. Claude Graf's essay on Lindsay is a re-examination of the two versions of *Ane Satyre* from the political point of view. Although Graf concerns himself with several matters of stagecraft, he is primarily interested in investigating the possibility that some, at least, of the differences in the two versions result from the changes in Scottish political conditions between 1540 and 1552. He suggests that the earlier play is "more topical and occasional" (p. 145) and that the later version presents both "an assesement of the political situation and a proposed model of action" (p. 147). Graf sees the 1552 *Satyre* as sympathetic to both the Reformation and the Parliament as a group in which all three estates are fairly represented. Graf's analysis of the political orientation of the later version, while interesting, cannot be entirely convincing. Too many elements common to the morality tradition in general (the ideal king and his devious advisors, for example) are given undue weight in the course of the argument for topicality. And although Graf recognizes the problem (p. 148), he does not address it systematically.

Kenneth Buthlay's brief essay on *Habbie Simson* takes issue with those readers, e.g., David Daiches and Matthew McDiarmid, who view the poem as a burlesque largely on the basis of the author's having been, as Buthlay says, "a laird with a university education" (p. 216). Buthlay argues that nothing in the poem itself suggests anything other than genuine "regard for Habbie's prowess" (p. 216). The influence and popularity of *Habbie Simson* have long been recognized and Buthlay is persuasive when he suggests "that the concept of the piper as a presiding spirit over the old, profane festivities of the people" provided a symbol, fleshed out with realistic detail, of those popular traditions which were "threatened with extinction" (p. 220).

William Ramson's essay on the Bannatyne MS, along with Denton Fox's study of MSS and prints, represents a much neglected aspect of medieval literary scholarship. In an era when there

are no books the manuscript in general and the comprehensive manuscript, or anthology, in particular is an excellent, if not unerring, guide to literary taste.¹² Because of the enormous expense of books, many individual readers could afford to own only one volume, or a very few; thus, surviving MSS often include many works, or excerpts, of diverse kinds because they may represent most or all of their owner's library. The popularity of such works as the *Gesta Romanorum*, *Seven Sages*, the *Decameron*, the *Confessio Amantis* and the *Canterbury Tales* is at least in part attributable to the fact that each is sufficiently various to constitute a substantial library of fiction in and of itself. The idea that the elements in the MS should be thematically and structurally related is, of course, what separates the first of these from the other four and from the medieval comprehensive MS generally. The Bannatyne MS is certainly notable for its comprehensiveness, more than 400 poems in almost 800 pages. It is notable, too, Ramson argues, in "the deliberateness of its editorial practice" (p. 173). Rather than representing merely the idiosyncratic taste of its compiler, the Bannatyne in each of its "fyve pairtis" is coherently ordered. It "establishes a sequence which makes a coherent and extended statement on the relationship between God and man ('Ballatis of Theologie'), the relationship between man and his fellows ('Ballatis full of Wisdome and Moralitie'), the nature of the consolation accessible to man ('Ballettis Merry and Uther Solatius Consaittis'), the relation between earthly and divine life ('Ballatis of Luve'), and the nature of human wisdom ('Fabillis Wyiss and Sapient')" (pp. 175-6). Ramson's argument, as he himself suggests, requires greater amplification than he can give it here, but even this preliminary study is sufficient to warrant tentative approval.

Denton Fox's examination of the relationship between MSS and prints in sixteenth-century Scotland is perhaps the most important essay in a volume which contains several first-rate additions to scholarship. Fox argues with great persuasiveness that there is significant evidence to indicate that MSS were frequently copied from prints, rather than the reverse, and thus were "further from what the author actually wrote. MSS seem to survive, where whole editions of printed books vanish completely. And MSS seem to be preferred by at least some readers over printed books" (p. 157). The arguments for each of these points are complex and thus resistant to summary, but most are supported by references to the Asloan and Bannatyne MSS as well as the prints of Charteris, Copland, and Chepman and Myllar. One instance among many of the new information Fox presents is his comparison of the nine incorrect ascriptions to Chaucer made by the Bannatyne scribe and the 1532

Thynne edition of Chaucer which includes all nine (pp. 158-9). There is perhaps no more difficult kind of criticism than the sort of influence study Fox undertakes here in which priority is at issue. This essay could well serve as a model for future investigations of the same sort.

Ordinarily, one does not, in reviewing a collection of essays, get much beyond the sort of judgment the Wife of Bath makes about her five husbands, and, since space is limited, with good reason. However, this collection seems to me sufficiently important to justify the length at which I have considered it. All of us who work in the field of medieval and renaissance Scottish language and literature must be grateful to the sponsors of the first international conference, the Council of the Association for Scottish Literary Studies and the Scottish universities and to the University of Glasgow Press for publishing a representative portion of the proceedings. The essays in this volume constitute a sampling of current (or at least recent) scholarship at its best. The interest generated by the first conference has led and will continue to lead to additional meetings. The present volume is an appropriate record of that interest.

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NOTES

¹ Indicative of Cathal's versatility is Kurt Wittig's comment on another passage: "This is almost the technique of the Imagists as practiced in Ezra Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro'." *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), p. 191.

² *Scottish Literature: Character & Influence* (London: Macmillan, 1919), p. 94.

³ Morgan essentially ignores the weight of his own evidence and takes the traditional view: "But it was the near-medieval Douglas who was in some ways in advance of his time, writing long before the great Elizabethan translators; and it was Drummond, the first Scottish poet to write continuously and well in English, who was the real conservative..." (pp. 197-8). This view is unexceptionable, but it does obscure the literary-historical complexities attendant upon the work of each author.

⁴ For a detailed account of Douglas's use of Ascensius, see Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), pp. 74-6, 108-9, 111-26 and *passim*.

⁵ "Whereas William Dunbar makes poetry out of a headache, Douglas makes it out of a book review" (p. 109).

⁶ Bawcutt mentions in passing the possibility that some of Douglas's literary allusions are second-hand (p. 124). The ways in which medieval authors utilize sources and allusions are notoriously confusing to the modern reader as Chaucer's "Lollius" and his failure to mention Boccaccio attest. The difference in sensibilities seems to be such that Douglas would almost surely have been as perplexed by our reactions to his citation of Homer, whom, it seems certain, he could not have read in Greek, as we are by his having made the reference in the first place.

⁷ "Divine Justice in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*," *SSL*, 11 (1973), 99-107.

⁸ E. M. W. Tillyard, "Henryson: *The Testament of Cresseid*," *Five Poems: 1470-1870* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1948), pp. 5-29; A. C. Spearing, "Conciseness and *The Testament of Cresseid*," *Criticism and Medieval Poetry* (London: Arnold, 1964), pp. 118-44.

⁹ See the seminal article by Kenneth R. Gros Louis, "Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the Orpheus Tradition of the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 643-55; see also John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 195-210; and John MacQueen, *Robert Henryson: A Study of the Major Narrative Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 24-44.

¹⁰ *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson*, ed. H. Harvey Wood (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, second ed. rev. 1958). All references are to this edition.

¹¹ Nicolaisen refers *passim* to Dunbar's use of catalogues. A comprehensive study is Julianna Allt, "Satiric Catalogues in the Poetry of William Dunbar," *DAI*, 35 (1974), 2928A (Case Western Reserve).

¹² Thus Derek Pearsall in his *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) treats the history of English medieval poetry largely as the history of English medieval manuscripts.

The Works of Allan Ramsay. Ed. Burns Martin & John W. Oliver. Edinburgh. Scottish Text Society. Vol. I. 3rd Series, Vol. 19. [1950]. Vol. II. 3rd Series, Vol. 20. 1953. Ed. Alexander M. Kinghorn & Alexander Law. Vol. III. 3rd Series, Vol. 29. 1961. Vol. IV. 4th Series, Vol. 6. 1970. Vol. V. 4th Series, Vol. 7. 1972. Vol. VI. 4th Series, Vol. 8. 1974.

Poems by Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson. Ed. Alexander Manson Kinghorn & Alexander Law. Edinburgh & London. Scottish Academic Press, for the Association for Scottish Literary Studies. 1974. xxxiv, 225 pp. £3.75.

Considering that Allan Ramsay was one of the dozen or so most popular poets and editors of the eighteenth century in Great Britain it is something of a shock to be told by the editors that their edition is "the first complete one ever to be published" (Introduction to Vol. VI). Ramsay edited *The Tea-Table Miscellany* which was published in over thirty editions during the eighteenth century and he wrote and published *The Gentle Shepherd* which appeared in over one hundred separate editions in the century and a half following its first appearance in 1725. While this number does not approach the well over five hundred editions of Thomson's *Seasons* during the same period, it puts Ramsay comfortably ahead of other eighteenth-century Scottish best sellers such as William Falconer's *Shipwreck*, John Armstrong's *Oeconomy of Love*, Blair's *Grave* or Ralph Erskine's *Gospel Sonnets*.

When the Scottish Text Society decided to publish an edition of Ramsay it was natural that one of the editors chosen should be Burns Martin. In 1931 he had published *Allan Ramsay: A Study of his Life and Works* and the same year his "Bibliography of the Writings of Allan Ramsay" appeared in *Records of the Glasgow Bibliographical Society*, a work which remains to this day a model descriptive bibliography. His co-editor, John W. Oliver, was Lecturer at Moray House Training College, Edinburgh, and a member of the Council of the Scottish Text Society. Initially the works were to consist of four volumes. The first volume (Third Series, #19, 1944-5) appeared in 1950, the second volume (#20) in 1953. In 1957 the two editors died without ever having met and in 1961 the third volume (#29, 1954-5) appeared under the joint editorship of Alexander M. Kinghorn and Alexander Law. The fourth volume (Fourth Series, #6, 1961-2) was published in 1970, followed by the fifth volume (#7) in 1972 and the sixth (#8) in 1974, giving the edition a time-span which constituted something of a record even for the Society.

The first two volumes of the set consist of Volumes I and II of the so-called subscribers' edition, sumptuous quarto volumes

printed by Thomas Ruddiman for the author in 1721 and 1728. The first of these was advertised in August 1720 but not published until July of the following year. Meanwhile, however, Ramsay issued a much more modest *Poems* in 1720 which exists in at least seven states, a description of which is too complicated to go into here--suffice to say that it is a nonce volume made up of separately issued pamphlets. It is interesting that one of the pamphlets, *The Rise and Fall of Stocks*, appears to have been first published on or after March 25, 1721, which suggests that Ramsay did not know when he issued his prospectus for the subscribers' edition what the makeup of the volume would be.

There is every indication, nonetheless, that the poet did want his subscribers' edition to be a handsome and unified piece of book production, in part perhaps to overcome the impression of hurried makeup given by *Poems* of 1720 which in its early issues exhibits no attempt by Ramsay to make the collection anything but what it was--a random selection of separately issued pamphlets--and in its later states exhibits a "grotesque" (the word is Martin's) attempt at unity. Martin carefully described the seven states of this work issued from 1720 to 1722. In 1723 Ramsay issued *Poems* in two known states with the same contents as the 1720 volume and in 1727 the collection came out again. Martin's bibliography lists two states of this latter, neither apparently genuinely of 1727. Of the two differing copies in my collection, neither agrees with those examined by Martin. What this clearly indicates is that from 1720 to at least 1728 Ramsay was issuing his poems in two formats--a formal, well-printed edition, the subscribers' edition, and an inexpensive edition, like a nonce volume, for which he reprinted and redated portions as they ran out. This suggests that he was selling to two classes of readers. To those who purchased the 1720 volume or one of its progeny, he had no need to apologize for the large number of poems in Scots, but to the presumably middle- and upper-class readers of the 1721 volume he was obviously somewhat on the defensive. Thus we find him writing in the Preface, "That I have express my Thought in my native Dialect, was not only Inclination, but the Desire of my best and Wisest Friends..." and he went on to claim for Scots a more "liquid and sonorous" pronunciation than English as well as a larger vocabulary. Quoting Dr. George Sewell's Preface to the London, 1720, edition of *Patie and Roger* he added: "The *Scotticisms*, which perhaps may offend some over-nice Ear, give new Life and Grace to the Poetry..." (vi-vii). Of course James Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems Both Ancient and Modern* (1706-11) had pioneered the eighteenth-century interest in vernacular poetry, but Ramsay was responsible for widespread interest

in Scots literature in England particularly with *The Gentle Shepherd* and *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, an interest which, enhanced by the ballad collections of Percy and others, was to pave the way for the profound English admiration of Burns at the end of the century.

Since Ramsay was directly involved in the production of all these variant issues, which text can the scholar accept? Is the 1721 text a more accurate one, given the care Ramsay lavished on it, or could it be that he quietly altered his texts as he went along? Had Ramsay been an author dealing with a publisher or printer we might have hoped for variant MSS or letters indicating alterations he wished to make, but in his case there was no need for such. True, MSS exist and variants from the printed text are noted, as are some printed variants, but any text of his which Ramsay published might contain significant alterations which we should be obliged to consider as probably authorial.

The task of compiling a variorum text would be a gigantic one. Every available issue of the editions of 1720, 1723 and 1727 would have to be collated and a tentative sequence of issue established. I do not mean to criticize the editors that they did not so do, I wish merely to point out the possibility of unrecorded textual variants. Martin and Oliver wrote in the Introduction to Vol. 1 that earlier editions of the poem had been collated without discovery of variants "of any importance" (ix). Such a statement is always open to dispute; they fail to indicate if *all* the early variant issues were collated, and the editors did not collate later issues, which, since Ramsay did not claim the 1721 edition to be definitive (although the editors do so by implication), might yield interesting results upon collation.

The second STS volume contains the material which was published as Vol. II of the subscribers' edition while at the same time the 1721 volume was reissued with a 1728 title-page. Since what was written about the problems posed by the earlier volume applies also to this, no more need be said about it except to note that there may well have been changes silently introduced into the re-set first volume. The major work included in the 1728 volume is, of course, *The Gentle Shepherd*, first published in 1725. It was reissued in 1726 with textual variants; further variants occur in the 1728 *Poems*. The final collation made in the STS set is with the 1734 edition which is called the 6th edition. Collation was also made with the only complete MS, from which the first edition was printed, in the Cowie Bequest now in the National Library of Scotland, and with *Patie and Roger* (1720) which grew into *The Gentle Shepherd* and also *Jenny and Meggy* (1723) which became Act I scene 2. It is referred to throughout the collation as *Meggy*

and *Jenny* although correctly entered elsewhere in the set. *Patie and Roger* appeared in the 1721 subscribers' edition true enough, and it is with this text that collation was made. It was, however, separately published three times in 1720, twice in Edinburgh and once in London with "an imitation of the Scotch" in English by Josiah Burchett to whom Ramsay sent the MS with a rhymed epistle. It also appears in all but the earliest state of *Poems* 1720 and apparently in the editions of 1723 and most of the states of 1727 although it is not present in at least one state, a fact which is not noted in Martin.

There are three MSS of portions of *The Gentle Shepherd* in the Laing Collection at the University of Edinburgh which the editors wisely chose to publish entire (Vol. V). It is known that the play was performed by the students of Haddington Grammar School in 1729, but internal evidence in one of the MSS suggests that the play may have been performed there as early as 1724 according to the editors. Since all of these early drafts and the Cowie MS pre-date the first publication of the entire play, but not the 1720 and 1723 portions, no MS collation is possible after 1725. Although Ramsay presented the original MS to Susanna, Countess of Eglintoun, in 1737 no indication as to where the songs should appear was added by the poet. A major complaint which I have with the STS edition is that the songs which were added in the 1730 edition are not included in the text as printed nor is there any indication elsewhere than in the notes that songs were ever inserted. Thus the uninformed reader who had not read the notes in Vol. VI would never know that Ramsay had, by 1729, made of the play a ballad opera. Even if the reader did know this, he would be obliged to juggle three STS volumes simultaneously to read the work as Ramsay intended it to be read! There is every reason, I feel, to consider the 1725, 1726 and 1728 versions as Ur-texts. An intermediate text is that of 1729 where the poet indicated "The proper Places of the Songs printed in the Second Volume of the Tea-Table Miscellany, made for the Pastoral when acted by some young Gentleman, are all noted at the Foot of the Page." He refers here to the 1729 edition of Vol. II of *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, which was expanded from its earliest state (1726) which did not contain the songs. The following year a new edition of *The Gentle Shepherd* appeared with the songs in the text.

Vol. III of the set contains poems other than those in the 1721 and 1728 volumes which were published during the poet's life followed by poems in MS or posthumously published; these are sub-divided into those for which a date can be assigned and those for which no date has been established. What strikes the reader is the large number of poems which were written in a relatively short period. Of 160 dated poems five are pre-

1720, 113 are of the decade 1720-9, 25 from 1730-9 and only 17 from the nearly two decades until Ramsay's death in 1758. Of the nearly seventy undated poems, several of them mere fragments, most probably also belong to the earlier period.

Among the dated works in the STS volume are the songs from *The Gentle Shepherd* mentioned above. As this volume was the first to be edited by Kinghorn and Law they cannot, it must be pointed out, be held responsible for the unfortunate decision to follow the text of 1728 thus excluding the songs from where they rightfully belong. Publishing the songs in the next volume made the best that was in the new editors' power of a bad situation. After all 1728 represents only an intermediate state with no more textual authority than any other intermediate edition: Martin and Oliver should have used the 1725 edition as copytext with all subsequent variants noted, or the sixth edition of 1734 because it was the first known edition issued under Ramsay's supervision to incorporate the songs. (There is probably at least one unrecorded edition before this since one of the previous editions was published in Dublin in 1727 and publishers rarely took into account pirated editions, just as the pirates if they bothered to number an edition merely added one to the edition number of the copied work.)

In Vol. IV we find previously uncollected poems, numbering thirty-nine, and five poems attributed to the poet. *Hardyknute*, one of those attributed to Ramsay, was first published by Ramsay in *The Ever Green* in 1724 in 42 stanzas. It was first published c. 1710 in 26 stanzas followed by a 1719 edition of 29 stanzas which the editors identify as the first edition. Thus we see that the poem was not complete at its first printing, and there is an account in Percy's *Reliques* of Lady Wardlaw producing an additional stanza when challenged to prove her authorship. As the poetess lived until 1727, I see no reason not to consider the claim that she wrote all 42 stanzas of the poem at least as valid as the claim of double authorship put forward by the editors. The entire poem as Ramsay published it in 1724 had been "antiqued"--a textual tampering which Ramsay practiced on other poems in the collection. One may speculate whether Lady Wardlaw objected to this because when the poem reappeared in *The Tea-Table Miscellany* in 1726 much of the antiquing had been dropped. Perhaps it was Ramsay's addition of two cantos to *Christ's Kirk on the Green* which has led critics to accept part of *Hardyknute* as his, but in view of the fact that he claimed the *Christ's Kirk* cantos as his but never did so with Lady Wardlaw's poem it could be argued that he did no more than publish the poem after first antiquing it.

Considering how long he was in the book trade as author, editor and publisher we must conclude that the 77 letters from

Ramsay published in Vol. IV which survive represent only a small portion of those he wrote. The 35 to Sir John Clerk as well as a few to other members of the family make up over half the total and are the only collection considerable enough that the reader may follow the friendship, with communications extending over twenty-three years. I found the lists of books for which Ramsay billed Sir John particularly interesting for the information they give us of the reading taste of a cultured Scot of that period. I assume that letters to Ramsay have survived also, and I think it a pity that the editors did not fill in the record as much as possible by including these.

As would be expected Ramsay joined in the controversy over the propriety, and legality, of theater that was still going on at the time of his death. A pamphlet entitled *Some Few Hints in Defence of Dramatical Entertainments* [1728] is accepted by the editors as Ramsay's and published in Vol. IV. And well might Ramsay inveigh against those who condemned the theater as sinful because according to Dibdin the first public performance of *The Gentle Shepherd* in Edinburgh took place in the Concert Hall in 1747; it was twice performed in 1751 and not again in Edinburgh until after the poet's death.

The *Journal of the Easy Club* appears in Vol. V together with a note by the editors on the disappearance of the original MS. Consequently the text has been printed from Andrew Gibson's transcript (he purchased it in 1907). This is a serious loss not only for its own sake but because the MS also contained printed versions of early poems by Ramsay including the only known copy of his first poem.¹

The same volume contains *A Collection of Scots Proverbs* of 1737 consisting of 2522 proverbs divided into 46 chapters. Most of the proverbs were borrowed from a collection by James Kelly published in 1721 but given a "Scots colouration" as the editors call it. Not a best seller in Ramsay's lifetime, it was republished twenty-eight times between 1781 and 1888. The poet's decision to compile and publish the collection is another example of his lifelong enthusiasm for the Scots vernacular as evidenced in his own poetry and in the works which he edited.

The editorial decision to include the *Proverbs*, of which the editors point out almost apologetically there has been no new edition since 1888, raises an important question. Since no claim is made that Ramsay was anything but editor of this collection, why was not *The Tea-Table Miscellany* included in the STS set also? The last time it was published was ten years before the most recent *Proverbs* and I should think that the contents of the *Miscellany* would be of greater interest than the *Proverbs* to modern readers not only in its own right but because both Percy and Burns mined it for their collections.

The Ever Green too was last published in 1878 although many of the poems in this collection are available in other STS volumes as well as elsewhere. I have no doubt that the Editorial Committee of the Society had a say in the decision to exclude the *Miscellany*, probably because of consideration of space, but the STS edition of an author is expected to be the standard one which precludes the need for a further edition in the foreseeable future.

In his 170-page "Biographical and Critical Introduction" Alexander Kinghorn supplies the first monograph on Ramsay to appear since Burns Martin's *Allan Ramsay: A Study of his Life and Works* of 1931. Kinghorn's study consists of seven chapters, the major one a biographical account of the poet, setting him in his Edinburgh environment. As a poet, Kinghorn rightly states, Ramsay's reputation stands on the material he published in the two volumes of the subscribers' edition; his following at the time of publication was considerable as we see from the 474 names in the list of subscribers in 1721 and 413 in 1728. The list reads like a roll of the important people in Scotland at the time and includes readers from further afield such as Alexander Pope and Sir Richard Steele. The predominance of noble and upper middle class names reflects, no doubt, the substantial price of one guinea for each volume. (Ramsay the businessman provided for his less affluent readers with the *Poems* of 1720, 1723 and 1727.) In deference to the sensibilities of his subscribers, who included several women, he wrote in his Dedication to the 1728 volume: "I have taken Care to evite every Thought tending either to Debauchery or Irreligion, while I endeavour to be serviceable to Morality, even in those Verses of the merriest Turn..." This sort of disclaimer was almost *de rigueur* in Ramsay's day although it had not prevented him from publishing "Lucky Spence's Last Advice."

Kinghorn has an interesting passage on Ramsay and the theater he founded in 1736 and which should have closed upon the passage of the Licensing Act of 1737 which forbade theatrical performances *for gain* in any city outside London unless the sovereign was in residence. Four days after the act came into effect, Kinghorn tells us, Ramsay wrote to a friend in London asking for a copy of the act and information about ways of getting around it. He was obviously successful in this for a while because, contrary to what earlier writers have assumed, Kinghorn shows, the theater was not closed until January 1739. Although we do not have records of all the plays performed at the theater it is safe to assume that *The Gentle Shepherd* was among them.

Later, as Kinghorn notes in his chapter on *The Gentle Shepherd*, the Licensing Act was circumvented by "the combination

of a performance with a musical concert, together with the frequent introduction of songs and dances...". It must have amused Ramsay when, just before his death, the loophole used to circumvent the "for gain" clause when John Home's *Douglas* was played in Edinburgh was that the play was free to those who had paid to hear a lecture! In his attempt to be scrupulously fair in the assessment of the play I think that Kinghorn has been a bit too hard on Ramsay. True enough, Gay's *Beggar's Opera* is a far more substantial work, but what of all the other ballad operas of the period? I can only judge the work as literature, not having seen it performed, but surely a work which remained "quite successful as a ballad-opera until the early nineteenth-century, in London as well as in Scotland" and which was reissued in printed form "practically every year from 1725 to the last quarter of the nineteenth century" cannot be dismissed as "slight" or "superficial and lacking in emotional force" as Kinghorn does. Something deeper than chauvinistic pride prompted Burns to call it "the noblest Pastoral in the world," and of the editions mentioned by Kinghorn not a few were published in London, Ireland and the United States, where the play was performed in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1796.

It is a pity, I feel, that the editors relegate to a note which precedes the text of the early draft of *The Gentle Shepherd* in Vol. III the suggestion that the play may have been performed as early as 1724, not 1729, as was noted already. A major editing project such as this one always suggests further areas of investigation into which the editors cannot permit themselves to be sidetracked if the work is ever to be brought to term, but I wish Kinghorn had at least included a reference to this note in the Introduction because as it now stands the more casual user of the set may miss an important suggestion.

The chapter "Ramsay as 'Translator'" concerns itself with the poet's Scottish renditions of, particularly, Latin works in which he follows the tradition established in 1553 when Gavin Douglas published his *Eneados*. The succeeding chapter considers Ramsay the "Antiquary." Like all who succeeded him, Ramsay owed a debt to James Watson's *Choice Collection*, mentioned earlier, but the two-volume collection which Ramsay published in 1724 entitled *The Ever Green, Being a Collection of Scots Poems, Wrote by the Ingenious Before 1600* (a deliberately misleading title considering that he included two poems of his own and added a Postscript to Dunbar's *Lament for the Makaris*), is a work which, Kinghorn points out, superceded Watson's. (Fortunately upon the completion of the STS edition of the *Choice Collection* scholars will have a well-edited edition which will allow the earlier editor's work to be assessed.)

As an editor Ramsay fell short by today's standards in transcribing some of the poems in his collection due to his ignorance of Middle Scots. Kinghorn gives an excellent succinct survey of subsequent editors of the eighteenth century (Lord Hailes, John Pinkerton and Alexander Fraser Tytler), although no mention is made of Sir John Dalrymple whose editing of *Scottish Poems, of the Sixteenth Century* (1801) might have been commented upon. A full study of eighteenth-, and perhaps early nineteenth-, century editing is something much to be desired.

Ramsay's other edited collection of poems and songs, *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, enjoyed far greater success both during and after the editor's lifetime. Kinghorn devotes several pages to this work, its strengths and weaknesses, and its eventual shift in anticipated readership from Scotland to Scotland and England as we see in the change in subtitle in the three-volume London, 1733 edition (*A Collection of Scots Sangs*) and that of the first edition of Vol. IV (*A Collection of Choice Songs, Scots and English*) published in Edinburgh in 1737, an alteration which was retained in the first complete edition, published in London in 1740. This was designed in part to counteract the advantage in patronage William Thomson's London-published *Orpheus Caledonius* must have enjoyed since the first volume (1725) was dedicated to the Queen and the second (1733) to the Duchess of Hamilton, a situation surely made particularly galling to Ramsay who pointed out in his Preface to the *Miscellany* "most of the songs [in Thomson] were mine." Perhaps the Edinburgh Scotsman derived some satisfaction when his collection became a best seller where his London-based rival's did not.

In his summing up, Kinghorn is exactly right in his assessment of the situation in eighteenth-century Scotland:

Compromise with English standards was inevitable for any Scot trying to write seriously at any time in the eighteenth century, for though it was vigorously spoken by the very members of the *litterati* who sought to purge it from their writing, Ramsay, born and brought up over twenty years before the Union, was stimulated by a naïve patriotism to regard his own natural speech with considerable pride; the pundits of the 'Athens of the North' lacked this strong confidence and revealed language tensions, not so much in their written English, which was generally of a high order, as in their studied rejection of Scots as a medium for poetry. Privately, many of them were willing to admit a fondness for the native dialect which they would not have revealed in public,

or at least in print.

Despite its modest title, the Kinghorn "Introduction" is a major work in its own right. The author has indicated printed sources for material which has not been included, has touched on major points of scholarly difference and scrupulously documented these, and has written a judicious assessment of Ramsay.

We know that eighteenth-century Scots were conscious, often self-conscious, of the difficulty non-Scots experienced with the language. Watson did not, it is true, compile a glossary for his *Choice Collection*, but he called the three parts Volume I, thus indicating, one may assume, his intention of adding to the collection. Ramsay appended glossaries to editions of his poems, *The Ever Green* and *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, but not to any separate edition of *The Gentle Shepherd*. Why? one wonders. Both volumes of the subscribers' edition contain glossaries as well as a section headed "Some general Rules, shewing wherein many Southern and Northern Words are originally the same..." This explanation is also present in the glossary to the *Poems* of 1727--the edition of 1720 does not contain a glossary and I have been unable to ascertain if the glossary in the 1723 edition contains this prefatory material; it probably does since the number of pages of glossary is identical. The glossaries in the two volumes of the subscribers' edition are not identical; that of 1728 is two pages longer, although some definitions were shortened--in 1721, a "bodle" was defined: "Two Pennies Scots, or 1/6 of a Penny English" whereas in 1728 only the English equivalent was given. A more substantial difference is to be found in the definition of the word "barlikhood." In 1721 it was: "A Fit of Passion or ill Humor"; in 1728: "A Fit of drunken angry Passion."

The glossary in *The Ever Green* was more succinct, usually limiting definitions to one or two words. Thus "bannock" in the subscribers' edition: "A Sort of Bread thicker than Cakes, and round" became simply "Bread." I have not been able to consult early Edinburgh copies of *The Tea-Table Miscellany* but the 1730 London edition has a glossary quite similar to that of *The Ever Green* (where our "bannocks" became "Oat-bread"). *Scots Proverbs* also carried a rather abbreviated glossary. An interesting study could be made of Ramsay's glossaries: is his language regional, is there a class bias to it (for instance the glossary in *Scots Proverbs* carries this heading: "Explanation of the Words less frequent among our Gentry than the Commons," suggesting such a bias), did his glossaries change both as to words glossed and definitions as he expanded his audience from Edinburgh? There are still a number of interesting research opportunities in Ramsay scholarship.

One of these it becomes clear to any user of the STS Ramsay is an edition of *The Tea-Table Miscellany*--preferably one in the STS series or at least up to its standard of editing.

We have waited a long time for this splendid edition of Allan Ramsay to reach completion--it was worth the wait.

Kinghorn and Law are responsible also for the Scottish Academic Press edition of *Poems by Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson* published under the sponsorship of the Association for Scottish Literary Studies. The text and notes for both poets are based on Scottish Text Society editions of their work. The collection contains 115 pages of text devoted to works by Ramsay (22 poems), 76 to Fergusson (28 poems), but 63 pages of Ramsay contain *The Gentle Shepherd* which is printed entire. A 28-page introduction gives little more than an outline of the life and achievement of the two poets. In the selection there are only two works, both by Fergusson, in English and no one familiar with the work of these two poets would quarrel with the editors' decision to concentrate on their poems in Scots. English to Ramsay and Fergusson, as it was to Burns and even Hugh MacDiarmid, was an alien tongue and it seems unlikely that any of these major Scottish poets could have become significant English poets.

It was not always seen that way, however. In the first edition of Fergusson's poems (1773) pride of place was given to the English poems, and the author of the Preface to the posthumous second part (1779) wrote that, had Fergusson lived, "it is probable that he would have revived our late Caledonian Poetry," little realizing that this is precisely what Fergusson had done.

In 1791 there was a debate in Edinburgh on the question "Whether have the exertions of Allan Ramsay or Robert Fergusson done most honour to Scottish poetry," and three poems on the topic were published. The debate seems quaint today when we consider the major contribution made to Scottish poetry by both writers. This handy volume will allow modern readers to assess this contribution.

GRR

NOTE

¹ Since this was written a copy of the work, *A Poem to the Memory of the Famous Archbald [sic] Pitcairn, M.D.*, has been discovered in the Edinburgh Public Library. A description of it, together with the text, appeared in Vol. 9, No. 5 (1979) of *The Bibliothek*.

R. D. S. Jack, Ed. *A Choice of Scottish Verse 1560-1660*. London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto. Hodder and Stoughton. 1978. 183 pp. £6.75 clothbound; £3.50 paperback.

Perhaps it is grudging to wish that this handy, attractively printed little anthology, available in both hard and paper covers, with its perceptive comments on certain of the selections, were at once more and less. Yet after reading through it, to paraphrase Chauce, we both "hadde thing which that we nolde, and eek ne hadde thing that we wolde."

As Jack points out in beginning his Introduction, very little attention has been paid to the work of the Scottish contemporaries of Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, and Milton. And the question he poses, "Was Scottish poetry during this time so unrelievedly mediocre that silence is its wisest tribute?" (p. 11) is the logical stalking horse for an editor of those contemporaries. But his own answer somewhat surprisingly seems to be "yes" rather than "no." He delineates the characteristic weaknesses, and their cause, of the poetry so clearly that we wonder, "Why bother to reprint any of it?" And although he assures us that, despite the "almost complete dearth of good literature from 1640-60....Much fine poetry was written by the 'Castalians,' and their successors, as the present book will demonstrate" (p. 16), he fails to give sufficient evidence of this fact in the form of either a critical demonstration of the excellence of their work or of a persuasive number of outstanding new selections.

In an "attempt to account for so much literary mediocrity," Jack first surveys the efforts of James VI to draw Scottish poetry out of its mediaeval heritage into a new renaissance, and duly notes their failure (pp. 11-15). The king's treatise, *Reulis and Cautelis*, although "an erudite trumpet call for the new movement," was "not stunningly original," tended to encourage "an unhealthy obsession with virtuoso manneristic effects even in the work of the most talented," and led lesser followers to produce high-sounding nothings. James's invitations to foreign poets, his organization of native ones into a Castalian band headed by Alexander Montgomerie, and his encouragement of translations and adaptations of European classics, all fell far short of his aspirations for a literary revival in Scotland; while with his transference to England, the king left behind a cultural gap in Edinburgh, and took with him the best of the Scottish poets, who then labored under the double handicap of writing in a medium not wholly natural to them and living in cultural isolation. The later makars "eternally ran the risk of producing poetic buildings of grotesque complexity rather than pleasing harmony." Their following of foreign models could result in intelligent imitation, but could also

lead to "pitfalls of plagiarism" and "tedious versifying." Development of the ideas of genre could produce a happy effect, as in Stewart's adaptation of the romantic epic. But for many, "Generic awareness less inventively displayed" resulted in the manipulation of content to "a form *a priori* conceived by the critical mind," with much "of the worst poetry in the period" produced when "The 'primary vision' has been received...but no advance towards a new concept...attempted." Jack then describes how events of Charles's reign merely accentuated the problems, with Scottish literature suffering an identity crisis which lasted until the early eighteenth century.

Although he accepts M. P. McDiarmid's appraisal of John Stewart's *Roland Furious* as "the most brilliant and energetic poem of the brief Scots Renaissance" (p. 21), he focuses not so much upon the poem's brilliance and energy as upon its author's strict allegiance to the critical precepts of James VI, precepts which constricted Stewart's vivid imagination, led him "to pursue obsessively" themes "unobtrusively worked into the Italian original," to strive always "to arrange his material in orderly fashion," preferring, as he did, "the balance of symbolic instances to the light and shadows of narrative, and a rigid scheme to the more natural one of the Italian poem." Jack finds in Stewart's suiting of rhetorical and metrical devices to content only "the self-consciousness of the makar" (p. 23), and praises his overall effect as very pleasing only with the qualification, "although the modern reader does have to take into account the critical background against which the poet was writing and modify his tastes accordingly" (p. 24). The reasons he assigns James VI for valuing *Roland Furious* do not attest to high quality in the poem itself. The manuscript is outstandingly beautiful and contains verse composed in obedience to James's own precepts, so that "The monarch's insatiable ego could scarcely fail to be boosted by such a gift" (p. 25). If this is the best he can say of the most brilliant accomplishment of the Scots Renaissance, what can be Jack's opinion of the other poems in his anthology? And why did he want to publish them?

To make clear developments in the lyric and sonnet, he highlights the leaders of the three most successful Scots lyric movements in the Jacobean and Caroline eras (p. 25), beginning with Montgomerie, and here makes some very helpful, original suggestions. Clearly Jack considers Montgomerie's work to be the best of the period, for better than one-third of both his Introduction and selections are devoted to this particular poet.¹ His analysis of "The Cherrie and the Slae," Montgomerie's most frequently anthologized poem, follows Helena Shire's study of the difference between earlier and later versions, and her belief that the work can be interpreted on different

levels (p. 20). However, Jack goes farther than Shire to suggest that it is not merely a political statement, but a theological one which "mirrors the theological truth that impossible quests are rendered easy by turning to God and accepting the gift of His grace" (p. 20). In view of the poet's context and recognized proclivities, the interpretation is entirely plausible. Yet Jack somewhat weakens his case for it by adding that Montgomerie consciously left herein an associative openness to tempt the reader to "indulge in a personal psychomody" and redefine "the symbolic values of cherry and sloe as the poem progresses." If the poet had intended to convey a specific theological message, it seems unlikely that he would have left its conveyance to the "personal psychomody" of the individual readers.

Jack's brief analysis of the reasons for the excellence of Montgomerie's lyrical verse is more successful (pp. 25-7). He points out that this poetry is a mixture, influenced by the traditions of classical writing, of music, and of the French rhetoricians, its elements synthesized by the simple, democratic vision and non-courtly mind of the poet. This is interesting, persuasive commentary, and the anthology's value would be greatly increased if it contained more such, directed at a larger selection of less well-known poems.

As the two major lyricists of the post-1603 period Jack discusses William Drummond and Robert Ayton, although what he says about Ayton raises doubts as to whether that poet should be considered "major" in any sense, consisting as it does of a detailed demonstration of failure to match the effects of John Donne (pp. 28-9). Unlike Donne, Ayton does not "create a new concept by powerful imaginative synthesis," but "plays cleverly with parallels;" "does not wholly transmute" time-worn conceits, "but confines himself to adding a clever final quirk;" creates complex logical patterns, but "refuses to give the argument free rein," to break "down the neat formal structure with the energy of imaginative thought." His "somewhat clinical, though highly polished lyrics" lack "more daring imaginative leaps." On the whole, while acknowledging that Ayton's verse is "technically...among the finest produced by Scotsmen in this period," Jack says little to make its technical fineness clear, merely presents an all-too-convincing case for its mediocrity, and equates the causes with basic characteristics of the Scots' poetry in general.

Thus viewing evidence produced by a comparison of Ayton to Donne, he concludes: "one might...argue that many recognisably Castalian traits can be detected in Ayton's work. There is this very interest in formal perfection, the clever adaptation of the sonnet form in particular to the development of logical argument....the love of orderliness on all levels and

the unswerving critical obedience to the rules of decorum... Also, there is the sense of apartness...The Scots poet seems to be working from outside rather than being part of the mainstream of creative metaphysical verse. He starts from a critical awareness of genre and the demands of rhetoric rather than redefining these by completely immersing himself in the requirement of his own art" (p. 29). And again we wonder, then why deal with this particular poet? Or this particular poetry?

Drummond does fare better at the editor's hands, for here Jack educes specific evidence of originality in the poet's treatment of themes such as death, loneliness, and mutability, combated by the promises of the Christian religion (p. 29), in his adaptation of foreign sources and of the characteristics of early Castalian writing--Latin style, parenthetical moralizations, etc.--and in his more subtle use of metaphor, alliteration, and assonance (pp. 29-30).

The concluding reference to the Scottish sonnets, assembled to permit "the student to trace development of that genre throughout the period of its greatest popularity" (p. 31), is also interesting, and might well have been expanded to provide better understanding of the movement and greater appreciation of the relatively few selections in this anthology which have been neglected up until now. Yet as it is, while Jack's comments do give a provocative flash of insight into certain works, they are too brief to provide sufficient guidance for tracing the genre's development or appraising its overall quality.

The selections are accompanied by glossings of obscure words and expressions, and notes primarily on sources and classical or contemporary references. Certainly they are faithful to the original texts, well chosen to represent "types of poetry popular at this time" (p. 16), and can, as the editor hopes, provide students "with enough concentrated material to begin a deeper examination" (p. 16). The difficulty is that the same ends have already been well served by other small anthologies. More than three-fourths of Jack's selections have been reprinted in recent years and are readily available not only in the excerpts from Montgomerie printed by Shire and the edition of Drummond by MacDonald, but in collections such as those of Mackie, Scott, MacDiarmid, Oliver and Smith, and the MacQueens.² It is difficult to see how any significant purpose has been served by publishing the same material again.

During the last ten years or so interest in the great markers of Scotland's golden age has been on the increase, as witness sessions devoted to Henryson, Douglas, Dunbar, and James I at meetings of the Modern Language Association, book-length studies of Henryson, Douglas, and Dunbar, selections from and editions of their work, and the ever-increasing number

of articles and dissertations upon it.³

But if gold remains to be mined in the work of their Jacobean-Caroline successors, what is needed is less reprinting of the major work of Montgomerie, Drummond, and Stewart (better than two-thirds of Jack's selections are from their poems), more of the relatively unknown work; less description, no matter how compelling, of the inadequacy of the poetry in general, more detailed demonstration of its excellence--if it has any.

Are not some of Maitland's other poems, perhaps "O hie Eternal god of nicht," "Quhair is the blyithnes that hes bein," or "Sumtyme to court I did repair," worth examining? Or of Mure's, particularly of his holy sonnets and graceful Miscellaneous Poems? Or of the work of other minor poets? Or of other anonymous lyrics and sonnets, still hidden away in the Bannatyne and Maitland manuscripts? If not, perhaps now the period should be left in merciful silence. But if so, the fresh material should be published and studied.

Judging from his original analyses of Montgomerie and Drummond, and his comments on the Scots sonneteers, Jack is the scholar-critic to undertake such a task. He could then, as he had wished to do in the present volume, provide "the general reader with a varied introduction to the period" (p. 16), but an introduction which would be truly balanced, comprehensive, and productive of appreciation of a significant poetic achievement which has, indeed, for too long been paid too little attention.

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NOTES

¹ Of the 21 pages of the Introduction, 8½ are given to Montgomerie; of the 125 pages of poetry, 54.

² Alexander Montgomerie, *A Selection from his Songs and Poems*, ed. with an introduction by Helena M. Shire (London, 1960). William Drummond of Hawthornden, *Poems and Prose*, ed. Robert H. MacDonald (Edinburgh, 1976). See also French Rowe Fogle, *A Critical Study of William Drummond of Hawthornden* (New York, 1952), for thorough discussion of the verse included by Jack. R. L. Mackie, *A Book of Scottish Verse*, 2nd edn. revised with new introduction by Maurice Lindsay (London, Glasgow, New York, 1976), which contains Maitland's "Aganis the Theivis of Liddisdail," Montgomerie's "Hay, now the Day Dawis," "Sweit Hairt rejoyss in Mynd," Drummond's "Sleepe, silence child, sweet father of soft rest," "I know that all beneath

the moone decayes," and "Like the Idalian Queene," Boyd's "Fra banc to banc, fra wod to wod, I rin," Hume's "Of the Day Estivall," and an excerpt from Stewart's *Roland Furious*. Tom Scott, ed., *Late Medieval Scots Poetry, a Selection from the Makars and their Heirs down to 1610* (London, 1967), which contains 6 stanzas of Montgomerie's "The Cherrie and the Slae," his "Hay, now the Day Dawis," "Lyk as the Dum Solsequium," and "So swete a kis yistrene fra thee I reft," Boyd's "Fra banc to banc, fra wod to wod, I rin," and Hume's "Of the Day Estivall." Scott, ed., *The Penguin Book of Scottish Verse* (Harmonsworth, Middlesex, 1970), which contains Ayton's "Forsaken of all comforts but these two," Boyd's "Fra banc to banc, fra wod to wod, I rin," Sempill's "The Life and Death of Habbie Simson the Piper of Kilbarchan," Montgomerie's "Hay, now the Day Dawis," "Lyk as the Dum Solsequium," "So swete a kis yistrene fra thee I reft," and Maitland's "Satire on the Age." John W. Oliver and J. C. Smith, eds., *A Scots Anthology, Poems in Scots, Thirteenth to Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh and London, 1949), which contains Montgomerie's "Sweit Hairt rejos in Mynd," "Hay, now the Day Dawis," an excerpt from "The Cherrie and the Slae," another from Hume's "Of the Day Estivall," Stewart's "Of Ane Symmer Hous," Fowler's "The day is done, the sunn dothe ells declyne," Boyd's "Fra banc to banc, fra wod to wod, I rin," an excerpt from Stewart's *Roland Furious*, and Sempill's "The Life and Death of Habbie Simson the Piper of Kilbarchan." John MacQueen and Tom Scott, eds., *The Oxford Book of Scottish Verse* (Oxford, 1966), which contains Ayton's "Forsaken of all comforts but these two," Boyd's "Fra banc to banc, fra wod to wod, I rin," Montgomerie's "Hay, now the Day Dawis," "Lyk as the Dum Solsequium," "A Description of Tyme," "So swete a kis yistrene fra thee I reft," Fowler's "Upon the utmost corners of the world," Maitland's "Solace in Age," Drummond's "Sleep, silence child, sweet father of soft rest," Hume's "Of the Day Estivall," and Sempill's "The Life and Death of Habbie Simson the Piper of Kilbarchan." John and Winifred MacQueen, eds., *A Choice of Scottish Verse, 1147-1570* (London, 1972), which contains "Hay Trix."

³ See for example the volumes of the Saltire Classics, Nelson's Medieval and Renaissance Library, and the Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series, as well as other editions, studies, and editions of selections listed in Florence H. Ridley, "Middle Scots Writers," fascicle X, Vol. 4, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*, ed. Albert Hartung (New Haven, 1973); and in Ridley, "A Check List, 1956-1968, for Study of *The Kingis Quair*, The Poetry of Robert Henryson, Gawin Douglas, and William Dunbar," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 8 (July 1970), 30-51; as well as the studies by Priscilla Baw-

cutt, *Gavin Douglas, a Critical Study* (Edinburgh, 1976); Robert Kindrick, *Robert Henryson* (Boston, 1979); Edmund Reiss, *William Dunbar* (Boston, 1979); and the new edition of Dunbar's work, edited by James Kinsley (Oxford, 1979). The annual *MLA International Bibliography* and the *Abstracts International*, *Xerox University Microfilms* provide quick evidence of the steady rise of interest in the Middle Scots poets with their annual listings of books, articles, and doctoral dissertations devoted to them.

Tobias Smollett. *The Adventures of Roderick Random*. Ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 1979. xlviii. + 481 pp. \$43.50.

With the publication of *Roderick Random*, the Oxford English Novels series for Smollett is complete, and, one hears, the whole series regrettably comes to an end. Readers are fortunate to have Paul-Gabriel Boucé as editor of this novel, ranking in importance alongside *Humphry Clinker*. Boucé, like Lewis Knapp before him, has immersed himself in Smollett's fiction, and his *Les Romans de Smollett* (1971), which appeared in English five years later, slightly abridged and revised, is surely the most complete and satisfactory study of Smollett's fiction to date.

An obvious benefit of Boucé's experience for this edition is his introduction, providing the necessary background and treating the critical problems incisively. Of course there are those who would say that *Roderick Random* poses no critical problems at all; it is a casually (even carelessly) episodic story lacking thematic depth or artistic control, whose principal merit is its broad comedy, energy, and lively prose. Boucé is at pains to argue away this characterization so inimical to long critical studies and to discount the suggestion that Smollett was simply a reporter covertly writing autobiography. As to the relationship between the novel and Smollett's life, Boucé is undoubtedly right in warning against facile autobiographical readings, even though his reliance on Smollett's disavowals of personal satire and autobiography seems rather naive: such denials are satirical stock-in-trade, not to mention a customary defense against charges of libel. Moreover, the explanatory notes tend to be at odds with Boucé's downplaying of autobiography, because they again and again identify real persons, places, and events in Smollett's life. The other problem Boucé faces is to square the coarseness, hedonism, selfishness, even cynical nihilism, so often char-

acteristic of Rory's experiences, with the elements of sentimental generosity, providential order, and moral purpose which are also present. Boucé's answer is to adopt the label of Cedric Watts and call the novel "unintentionally Janiform"--that is, two-faced, apparently enjoying some sort of negative capability regarding good and evil. Janiformity allows both Smollett and Boucé to have their cake and eat it too. Smollett, rioting in good earthy fun while holding out for the ideal, "unintentionally" becomes an artist and philosopher; Boucé, recognizing but reconciling these disparate elements, becomes a modern critic. Such critical legerdemain is not especially satisfying, any more than is giving the eponymous hero the prolix epithet of "a true archetypal figure of the Ulysses-type" (p. xxvii). Boucé is better off finally admitting that *Roderick Random* "remains, first and foremost, a most enjoyable and laughable book, very much an anti-splenetic novel" (p. xxxiii). With such a judgment the most splenetic reader is not likely to quarrel.

While the introduction is basically satisfactory for what it says, it is no model of clear and graceful writing. Metaphors and modifiers run amok, as when Smollett "ran a losing unSternian race with consumptive death, reaching its eschatological close with the tranquil fortitude of a genuine adventurer who knows that the game is up" (p. xxii). Samuel Johnson, no professed admirer of Scotland, might be taken aback to learn of his Scottish origin: "Smollett, like Johnson in 1737 with his *Irene*, left Scotland with his much cherished tragedy in his pocket" (p. xxi). Or "nearly in every chapter, money--usually the dire lack of it--will rear its ugly head..." (pp. xxviiiiff). Surely the ugly head belongs to poverty, not to money. More examples might be offered, including an abundance of clichés and sentences lacking necessary commas; the point is that Boucé should have been assisted by someone, certainly by his general editor, Professor James Kinsley.

The explanatory notes are generally excellent. To be sure, any individual may wonder why certain terms need to be glossed at all while others are neglected. Do we need to be told that the tag-name "Gobble" suggests "voracious greed" (p. 56n.)? The mild oath "Ods Bobs!" is glossed while on the same page the more obscure epithet "Sawney," derogatory for a Scot, is overlooked (p. 36). Thus later of "Is it oat-meal or brimstone, Sawney?" Boucé tells us that "a double swipe at the Scots" (p. 63n.) is intended, when in fact the swipe is triple. Boucé shows a fondness for glossing almost all place-names at length, often when these locations are not essential. Such attention can be pedantically excessive. Take the nineteen-line gloss on "Mounchdenny" in Morgan's colorful oath: "The devil and his dam blow me from the top of Mounchdenny, if I go to him before there is something in my belly..." (p. 145). Surely it is not

much to the purpose to know that this mountain cannot be precisely located. Although Boucé usually points helpfully to ironical implications in many of the Latin quotations, he misses one when an examiner in surgery exclaims to his colleague, "Sir, excuse me, I despise authority.--*Nullius in verba*.--I stand upon my own bottom.'--'But Sir, Sir, (replied his antagonist) the reason of the thing shews'--'A fig for reason (cried this sufficient member) I laugh at reason, give me ocular demonstration'" (p. 87). Boucé quotes and translates the whole sentence in Horace but fails to note that "*nullius in verba*" was the motto of the Royal Society; hence the passage is undoubtedly a bit a satire against empirical extremism. Yet by and large Boucé's annotations are impressive and useful. I am happy to see that the maidenly reserve of the OEN *Humphry Clinker* has been overcome. Now we do not have to go to Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* to find out to what superlative the toast "to the best in Christendom" refers (p. 348n.).

As with the other Oxford English Novels, this volume represents a textually sound, attractively printed and cased edition of an important work, but the cost is quadruple that of comparable volumes in the 1960's. At such a price one might expect a virtually flawless book. Though the printing is accurate in the main, a cursory reading revealed the following: lines are sometimes carelessly justified (such as the last line of p. 354); misprints were not common but were noted (those in the text itself were verified against a first edition): (p. 208. 30) "pretented" for "pretended," which incidentally in this sense ought to have been glossed; (p. 302.12) curiously, the same mistake; (p. 416.33) "my" for "may;" (p. 473.28) "fraves-tied" for "travestied."

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Douglas Young. *A clear voice: Douglas Young, poet and polymath. A selection of his writings.* [Ed. by Clara Young and David Murison.] Loanhead. Macdonald Publishers. [1977]. 160 pp. £3.50.

Douglas Young, who died in 1973 at the age of sixty, is remembered with affection by all who knew him, and has left behind a golden reputation as a wit and man of letters, and a sizeable shelfful of books--poetry, translation, autobiography, literary criticism, classical scholarship, Scottish affairs--

carefully listed in this memorial volume in a bibliography by Miss E. B. S. Robertson of St Andrews University Library. (The sad news of her sudden death has just reached me as I write this review.) If you seek Douglas Young's monument, you need only look around in any library--whether at *Auntran Blads*, his first "outwale o verses," with Hugh MacDiarmid's characteristically enthusiastic foreword, or at *Chasing an Ancient Greek*, his "discursive reminiscences" of a European journey in search of Theognis, or at his anthology, *Scottish Verse, 1851-1951*, so attractive to the general reader for whom it is intended, or at his verse plays in Scots "frae the auld Greek o Aristophanes," *The Puddocks* and *The Burdies--The Burdies*, indeed, is more explicitly described on its title-page as "a comedy in Scots verse by Aristophanes and Douglas Young"--or at his books on Edinburgh or St Andrews or Scotland.

Why, one may wonder, with these riches readily at hand in the pages of the books he wrote and edited, is it still fitting and appropriate to welcome this tribute of filial piety from his daughter Clara and his former colleague in the Greek department of Aberdeen University, David Murison, the editor of the Scottish National Dictionary? The book can offer barely 120 pages from ten or so of Douglas Young's books, including some three dozen poems, and a token representation of his miscellaneous journalism, letters to the press, and so on.

With Douglas Young we are dealing with a not untypical Scot, though excelling most in his range and achievement, an "admirable Crichton" of our day, encyclopedic in his knowledge and infinite in his variety. He was a Protean character who may have dissipated his energies in too many different directions, and it is arguable that only a selection of this kind from his varied output can indicate both his versatility and his excellence. It will serve to whet readers' appetites for the books from which the excerpts are taken. One cannot imagine there will be many who will be content with the eighteen pages from *St Andrews* (1968); fewer who will rest with two pages from *Scotland* (1971), with their portrait of the typical Scot:

a schizophrenic creature at once realistic and recklessly sentimental, scientific and soldierly, bibulous and kilted, teetotal and trousered, diligent, religious, liberal, warm-hearted, poetry-loving, devoted to law, learning, and mercantile enterprise, friendly, unassuming, living graciously, supine, dirty, fond of closing public houses unseasonably, violent and drunken, and addicted to casual homicide, too careful with money, generous, rash, disputatious, shy, loquacious, aggressive, refined, humane, zealous, hypocritical, adaptable, democratic, equalitarian,

and peculiarly related to the Almighty.

The book contains moreover an excellent memoir which goes some way to explaining the man's charm and attraction, his gifts and their relevance.

On their title-page the editors print as epigraph three words from the Greek New Testament which the New English Bible translates as, "he continued to speak after his death." In this memorial volume Douglas Young continues to speak in a clear voice.

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Sorley MacLean. *Spring Tide and Neap Tide, Selected Poems 1932-72/Somhairle MacGill-Eain. Reothairt is Contraigh Taghadh de Dhàin 1932-72.* Edinburgh. Canongate. 1977. 181 pp. £5.00. [Bilingual edition.]

The view of a Gaelic speaker
and a non-Gaelic speaker

Sorley MacLean has been credited with doing for Gaelic poetry what Hugh MacDiarmid has done for Braid/Broad Scots poetry¹ or what Eliot, Pound, Yeats and Hardy did for English language poetry. He brought it into the Twentieth Century.²

He is probably the most ignored major poet alive. Only "a few thousand Scots"³ can read his poems and most of them don't. To get an idea of the size of MacLean's audience (which is abysmally small and ecstatically enthusiastic), you might imagine how many readers Eliot and Pound would have had if after they had been writing over forty years only 80,000 people spoke English and less than half of them were equipped to read poetry. Then you should allow for those not inclined to read poetry and, of those who did read poetry, the numbers who would not pursue the reading of poetry that "different" and original. You might pad a bit to allow for the traditional role poetry plays in the life of the Gael. Still, what do you come out with? Maybe a thousand readers with any deep appreciation of MacLean's work.

MacLean's reputation comes mainly from the enthusiasm of his contemporaries, both Gael and non-Gael, most of them beyond question as authorities. Norman MacCaig, a non-Gael with some knowledge of Gaelic and quite possibly the best Scottish poet writing in English, has written of MacLean's work:

He has performed the extraordinary feat of restoring and advancing a tradition that had been... defunct for two centuries and has produced from it a poetry that is completely of our time...a poetry so passionate one'd think the poems would burst, if the writing were not so tough as to contain it.⁴

MacLean has been compared with Yeats and Catullus⁵ and the authority making this comparison--Iain Crichton Smith, himself a leading Gaelic poet--credits MacLean with creating new forms in Gaelic verse. He ends his tribute:

Where are we to place Sorley MacLean? One must briefly answer, "On the heights." If a major poet is one who, while assimilating a tradition, invigorates it with fresh themes and fresh forms; if he is one whose poetry leaves in that part of us (which we cannot simply call the mind) echoes and resonances; if he is one who has lived with the highest and retained his humility; and, finally, if he is one who, knowing himself, can reveal us to ourselves, then Sorley MacLean is a major poet. As long as we have any respect for poetry, poetry of this stature should be continually read.⁶

Perhaps the broadest view of MacLean's achievement is provided by John MacInnes of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh University:

The modern post-Renaissance world, particularly the Romantic revival, impinges at various points on the Gaelic consciousness from the eighteenth century onwards. No writer before Sorley MacLean, however, had a strategy capable of assimilating these influences and subduing them to his own ends.

It may well be, too, that no-one was in sensibility vulnerable enough to absorb them fully in the first place, or combined with that vulnerability a temperament that was passionate enough, and an intellect that was sceptical enough, to withstand the emotional shock. Now, for the first time, the Renaissance mind, the classical values and the sceptical modern temper are compounded with the medieval humours and virtues and Gaelic poetry in one step moves triumphantly into the contemporary world.⁷

Until this volume of MacLean's work appeared, he had published only one book *Poems to Eimhir (Dain do Eimhir)* in 1943.

However, he appeared in several anthologies and one issue of *Lines Review* was devoted exclusively to his work.

Gaelic bardic poets knew that they had to master the use of forms and rhymes. Not only did one need the gift, one needed rigid training. Martin Martin observed in 1695:

I must not omit to relate their way of Study, which is very singular: They shut their Doors and Windows for a day's time, and lie on their backs, with a Stone upon their belly, and Plads about their Heads, and their Eyes being cover'd, they pump their Brains for Rhetorical Encomium or Panegyrick; and indeed they furnish such a Stile from this dark Cell, as is understood by very few.⁸

Sorley MacLean, because he writes much passionate love poetry, has been compared to William Ross (1762-1790 or 1791) of Skye, the "Burns of the Highlands," a skillful vocal and instrumental musician and an enthusiastic student of Gaelic.

Though Ross wrote "humorous, witty and bawdy verse...",⁹ he became a legend as a poet who died from the agony of frustrated love (actually it was TB). Central to our purpose is his love for a Marion Ross (no relation) of Stornoway, Lewis, who didn't return that love. She married a ship's captain and moved to Liverpool. Just how deep William Ross's love went is conjecture but he seems to have blown it up into an obsession of considerable dimension, one that would provide the basis for several poems. He may have been on to what he was doing, being somewhat dualistic in nature.¹⁰ I suspect he was one of those poets who suffered some pain and who could amplify that pain through replay and, at the same time, could sit back and use that suffering to poetic advantage.

That's not uncommon among poets. Derick Thomson points out that Ross's poems are tightly controlled. But here I think Thomson assumes that if the emotion were as wild as Ross suggests, the control would not be possible. In my experience, the wilder the emotion the more eagerly it seeks control in the poem. Thomson says that a poem of Ross's "...does not in fact give the impression of uncontrollable emotion. It is carefully ordered, rather formal in its images and progression..."¹¹ Thomson may be missing the point. Words can never give the impression of uncontrollable emotion, even if the language shows a disordered mind, at least not in print. Print is a form of control. The more agitated the verbal imagination, the more formality the poem tries to find for its expression. Thus we get a "wild man" like Dylan Thomas often working in strict syllabic counts, while poets of less passion and energy find writing away from controls relatively easy.

Also, Thomson assumes a temporal correlation of feeling to poetic composition that is rarely experienced.

In Sorley MacLean's poem "William Ross and I," MacLean admits he "pretended" their cases were alike because he is jealous of Ross's technique, "the musical chiselling of words." MacLean, like Ross, lost a would-be love who, according to his poem, is now married to someone in Ireland. But, while Ross may have overestimated the size of the crack in his heart and, as a result, turned Marion Ross into a muse in effect, MacLean's loss "is not now my desolation." His desolation turns out to be not from a love denied but from a love received:

It is that I got it that destroyed me.
 Since no more is to be had,
 and my fair love's body ruined,
 and useless--without a use in the world--
 it's that that put my love to seed
 with the vain brushwood of poetry
 manured with her mutilated body.

The image of a woman's ruined or mutilated body appears several times in MacLean's work and, like Marion Ross in the work of William Ross, it takes on obsessive dimensions. Whoever she may be, she seems to be MacLean's muse and certainly a unique and personal one. There may, or may not, be a real woman with a mutilated body in MacLean's personal background, but it seems he can't write without her and since he has to write, she has to live, somewhere.

One of the problems an English speaker has with this book is that the translations, MacLean's own, are often prosy and some are not clear in places. A few poems show that MacLean, when he wants to, can produce a lovely lyrical translation in English. I believe he doesn't have the patience with English to provide excellent translations throughout the book. This problem will become apparent in some quotations later.

Another problem lies with some metaphors and images that, no matter how well they may function in Gaelic, in English seem arbitrary, forced and poetically archaic. The following would hardly do even as Country Western song lyrics:

and the brain has no foothold
 to lower a rope to my heart. (*Creag Dallai*g)

MacLean is a poet of passion and passion often does not translate well. It depends on more than just vocabulary and when the poetics are not reproduced, as often they can't be, we are left with the vocabulary and with phrases that sound phony in English. What woman would fall for:

to us there is no miracle but in love,
lighting of a universe in the kindling of your face.
(*Multitude*)

Sometimes the result in English is close to absurd:

The love begotten by the heart
is the love that is in free chains
when it takes, in its spirit,
a brain love of its love. (The Knife)

Many of these problems are inherent in the differences in the two languages and who or what is controlling the usage of each. English has been controlled by the middle class for a long time and the sentinels of "taste" stand guard against impermissible brands of sentimentality built into certain phrases and words. The middle class control of English is so advanced that millions of people, both in Great Britain and the United States, who live outside the mainstream of middle class life, have developed their own dialects. To show how strong the tyranny of social usage of English is, imagine trying to utter seriously a simple statement like, "My heart is breaking." Unless you had a foreign accent, you'd be doomed to censure. I doubt that the social control of Gaelic vocabulary is as militant and insidious as it is of English.

Once we move beyond these problems, some of which could be serious impediments, we may begin to sense the magnitude and depth of MacLean's work. His passion seems to be at work all the time and, like the passion of William Ross, it seems capable not only of finding its way into every poem but also of creating a base on which the poem can be written. This brings us to consider the title: spring tide is that tide that has the biggest difference between high and low. The neap tide is the tide with the least. It's a way of saying the emotional range of some poems is greater than others but, just as there are always tides, there are always emotions...sometimes extreme, sometimes not so extreme.

An example of MacLean's passion creating a base for the poem is evident in his poem *Prayer*. He assumes and, I'm sure, feels regret and anguish because he did not participate in the Spanish Civil War. According to *Prayer* he should have made war not love, as he was in fact doing:

I preferred a woman to crescent history.
(*Prayer*)

Prayer involves itself with a conflict between the love of justice that pulls him toward the battlefields of Spain and

sexual love that keeps him home safe in a warm bed. He feels that the bed won because he had not been spiritually purified. He had not loved justice enough, had not suffered enough to enter the pure realm of sacrifice as exemplified by Christ and by the poets who lost their lives fighting in Spain:

I did not get such a spirit
since my heart is only half flayed.

He bases other poems on this stable polarity, this rigid set of choices, notably *Cornford* (pp. 80-3), which has the refrain:

Cornford and Julian Bell
and Garcia Lorca

poets who sometimes haunt him to despair:

always going round in my head
and sky black without an opening.

However deep contemporary cynicism runs counter to MacLean's assumption of guilt, and mine runs pretty deep (whether to shack up at home or risk my life in a war in a foreign land is not a problem that tears me apart), I believe MacLean's torment is real, even though to some extent self-created. It is a necessary torment out of which he can write poems. One critic has pointed out that MacLean's choice was not all that dramatic and clear cut. MacLean had a lot of family to support at that economically difficult time and far more than just sexual love was probably involved in his decision to stay home.¹² Like most poets, MacLean has to ignore some realities and amplify the importance of others to write, just as most people must do to live.

Creating a stable base for a poem out of personal conditions and feelings is common to poets of high passion. Like the bardic poets of old, MacLean stabilizes the base by creating polarities of emotion that, for the bardic poets, had been provided, and like the bardic poets of centuries back, MacLean will not take any easy way. He may put a different stone on his belly from poem to poem, but it is seldom a small stone and he sings at times in some terrible self-imposed dark.

The two poems most frequently cited by critics as MacLean's finest are *The Woods of Raasay* and *Hallaig*. One critic, like myself a non-Gael and with little knowledge of Gaelic (though certainly more than I have), calls *The Woods of Raasay*, "MacLean's most outstanding single work."¹³ To me it is one of the most fascinating poems in the collection.

In some ways *The Woods of Raasay* (pp. 88-103) falls into

that old chestnut of a category, spiritual autobiography. It is a poetic exploration of the poet's inner self, of his relations to experience. It is the history of the development of his feelings about himself and about his relation to the world. It is the story of the loss of attitudinal stability, the loss of a way the world was once received and felt, the change in a man's relations with a place special to him.

The poem begins with the wood mysterious and restless but the man in it, actually more boy than man, integrated and harmonized. It ends with the wood more composed and understood through intellectual process but the poet in it, more man than boy, in a state of restlessness.

Though there are no sections indicated, for purposes of discussion I'll indicate what I consider sectional changes, based on style and thematic changes. The first part of the poem consists of eleven eight-line stanzas. I'm assured by Gaels who should know that in Gaelic the writing is based on a musical theme and variation motif. In English the pace seems very slow and the progress minimal. Of course it parallels childhood when time seems nearly eternal, but in English that would be an aesthetic fallacy, as they say in criticism, like writing a boring poem to illustrate the problem of boredom. I think MacLean is going back to a tradition, still alive among Gaels in songs sung today, when the audience came to hear what they loved sung over and over and came armed not with aesthetic theory or critical principles but with a capacity to respond and an eagerness to listen. Progression was of little value to them, but tribute deeply felt and beautifully expressed was always welcome, no matter how repetitive.

The wood contains paradoxes and conflicts, but they are bland and delightful:

strong, light

or:

the giddy, great wood

The wood and presumably the poet have no ulterior motives, no ambition:

untoiling, unseeking

And the wood supports the inner life of the boy. It caters to his emotional and imaginative needs. It even offers him the stability of a home, an inviting one:

in the high green room,
the roof and the floor
heavily coloured, serene;

Whatever role the boy wants to play, the wood is there to support that role. It provides him "helmets" of various colours, "victorious," "ecstatic," "proud" helmets. It provides banners in which he can clothe "pampered volatile thoughts."

And the wood assumes his emotions. If he is giddy, it is giddy. There's no distinction between inner and outer landscapes. Boy and wood are an integrated totality. The poem is somewhat suggestive of the work of Roethke, except that the process is the reverse of what we find in Roethke's poems. Roethke usually ended where MacLean starts and started where MacLean ends. Their idealisms are practically identical.

Given the stability provided by his firm relation with the wood, the boy is free to travel "over the new land of dream... with my desire, proud spirited" (Though I don't want to labour the point, the last phrase shows that some better way might be found to say some of these things in English).

It is only at the very end of the first section that the relationship with the wood begins to fragment and the totality of self is threatened:

new helmets
hurting me with temptation
helmets of pride
maiming me with unrest.

Aside from the obvious problem of maturation, the "proud helmets" have now been replaced by "helmets of pride," suggesting that inner and outer landscapes are no longer one and the support of the wood is less essential. The pride is now in the man and the helmets can only represent, not be a part of, the same feeling, no longer invested with the emotions of the speaker. (The distinction, I'm assured by Gaels, holds in the Gaelic and the word "pride," I'm told, might be better translated as "arrogance.")

The second section of the poem consists of nineteen quatrains. Much is changing. He is no longer innocently receptive and no longer received by the wood. In this unrest, he tries to understand and to know:

When the moon poured the bright crown pieces
on the dark blue board of the sea at night
and I rowed to meet them,
I tried to work out its genesis.

He is no longer receiving but now aggressively going out to meet the world. He is not travelling the new land of dream but deliberately setting out into the real world (still a beautiful one) with intellectual curiosity.

The paradoxes and dichotomies, once harmless and delightful, become forced and melodramatic, no longer an organic one with their sources but aggressively superimposed and sometimes alien:

Sgurr nan Gillean is the fire-dragon,
warlike, terrible with its four
rugged headlong pinnacles in a row;
but it is of another sky.

Sgurr nan Gillean is the reposeful
beautiful unicorn in its whiteness

The line "but it is of another sky" suggests now that the intellect is alive and the moral will active, one half of the paradox, the half that might seem unattractive, must be discarded as a part of the self.

The "Sgurr nan Gillean" in these passages also represents the harshness of suffering experienced at close range and the way that suffering is softened by time and distance.

One line in MacLean's description of the beautiful Sgurr nan Gillean reads:

peak of my longing and full love.

Throughout MacLean's work, I find two things he believes are central to existence: an unattainable goal and an ideal love. Throughout the second section of the poem, the poet is trying to return to the wood, the scene of his former ideal state of composure. But, with sexual awakenings, the loss of innocence, with receptivity replaced by intellectual curiosity, the scene can no longer support his ideal. We get "the venom of cry in the love-making" and "the tender softness--stung by a monster." By the end of the second section, his relation with the wood is complicated and conflicting. The wood is gentle and joyful. It is also the source and cause of his unrest and he may be guilty here of transference. The wood is in "a sleepless slumber."

We then get an eight-line stanza central to the poem:

To believe with flesh,
with brain and heart,
that one thing was complete,
beautiful, accessible:

a thing that would avoid the travail
of the flesh and hardship,
that would not be spoiled by the bedrugglement
of time and temptation.

So, on one level, MacLean is dealing with a problem very old and long known to poets, the love of permanence and the frustration of that love. To bring a spoiled eye back to the wood is to see a "spoiled" wood. Now that he recognizes that "the centre cannot hold," he questions the purpose of even the most basic acts of nature:

What is the meaning of giving a woman
love like the growing blue of the skies
rising from the morning twilight
naked in the sun?

And he runs amuck into the poetic problem of idealism:

though the unspeakable love were given
it would only be as if one were to say
that the thing could not happen
because it was unspeakable.

He is a poet. Can anything be true if it cannot be said? Are words too mundane for the soul's grand purpose?

And he questions our intellectual pursuits, the ways we elevate the particular world that once received and supported the total self, into abstraction:

What is the meaning of worshipping Nature
because the wood is part of it?

So, while he has been borrowing from the Romantics, he is not writing a Romantic poem.

The Cuillin, once symbolic of the goal one needs to strive for and must never realize, is now just a mountain range and the poet is "mature" enough to know it. The Cuillin can be known. It can be climbed. Consequently, as an ideal it can be destroyed. The unscalable wall is gone and the freedom to travel the wide open world is a bitter one. Ideals have broken down:

One has seen the Cuillin wall knocked down,
brittle, broken, in a loathsome pit

And, when the unattainable goal can be attained, when mysteries are no longer mysteries, his chance for the ideal love is

doomed:

and one has seen the single-minded love
unattainable, lost unspoiled

These are the results built into the ambition for self
elevation:

It is that they rise
from the miserable torn depths
that puts their burdens on mountains.

The "miserable torn depths" are of course his, though the mountain assumes them for the sake of metaphorical development in the poem. As a result of ambition and sophistication, once the basis for existence and survival (the impossible goal and the ideal love) are of questionable value, it also becomes questionable whether one should try to write poems:

Poor, uncertain the base
on which the heroic Cuillin is based
just as the reason is torn
to put beauty on poem or melody.

The wood is a scene of emotional shambles:

O the wood, O the wood,
How much there is in her dark depths!
Thousands of adders in her rich growth:
joy broken and bruised,
and the pain that was ever in anguish,
that cannot get over its anguish.

The poem ends with four quatrains. The wood is accepted on its own new terms. It is still lovely, but now the poet is willing to grant recognition to the biological and physical processes that once seemed to threaten that loveliness. The wood is complete, dynamic and composed. Restlessness continues in the man. He ends musing on life's processes, on a sophisticated note of acceptance of the unsophisticated creatures we become, faced with those processes. The poem does not end so much as it slides into silence:

There is no knowledge, no knowledge,
of the final end of each pursuit,
nor of the subtlety of the bends
with which it loses its course.

On a superficial level the poem exemplifies the experience of the contemporary Gaelic poet and, for non-Gaels, the following description of that experience by Donald MacAulay can help us to understand in a general way what *The Woods of Raasay* is about:

One dimension of modern verse is a reaction against this decay in culture and poetry. There had, of course, been traditional reactions to change. Those generally took forms such as looking at the past as a golden age in which objects and motives were unsullied and the weather was good (heroes and milkmaids in a sunny pastoral landscape); suspicion of the new (comic poems about monster trains and esoteric indulgences like tea-drinking); and, probably the most telling of all, a rhetorical self-acclimation. The reaction in modern verse is very different. It looks at the process with a much colder eye and, at the same time, uses less generalized, more personal, more concrete and more passionate language.

Most of this poetry has been written by people who have been transplanted out of their native communities into the ubiquitous outside world. Certainly, it is true of the contributors to this anthology; they were all processed out in the course of their education, there being no secondary school in their community and certainly no university. Their move into the outside world and their contact with their contemporaries, especially at their Universities, has given them a broader vision of life and a greater experience of exotic literary tastes--a new context in which to see their community and its art. At the same time, it has created in them a conviction that they have lost a great deal in exchange for what they have gained.¹⁴

And, in its way, MacLean's poem exemplifies the history of Gaelic poetry, the long road from theme and variation of traditional metrical patterns to various stanzaic and rhythmic structures, from a world of integrated and unquestioned values to the unstable, fragmented modern consciousness; from a time of celebration of people's relationship with nature to a time when nature exists as a specimen, as an object of clinical study. But, more than either an example of the history of the modern Gaelic poet or the history of Gaelic poetry, it is a personal, at times hermetic treatment of the history of Maclean's consciousness.

Themes of loss of innocence, loss of paradise and poems of spiritual autobiography seem relatively usual to people who

read English language poetry. In English the poem does not seem as original as it is, in fact, in Gaelic.

Hallaig may not be the *tour de force* *The Woods of Raasay* is, but it strikes me as a more contemporary poem. It is less ambitious than the *Raasay* poem and it reads more clearly in translation, partly because it is more direct in dealing with MacLean's attitudes.

Hallaig starts at a different point than did *The Woods of Raasay*. *The Woods of Raasay* is a history of damage. When *Hallaig* begins, the damage is now history and what remains is reclamation, repair and the taking of a firm moral and psychic stance to prevent further deterioration and to preserve the ruin in tribute to human life. It is a poem concerned with transience and permanence.

Hallaig is an area on the east side of Raasay that was completely depopulated by the Clearances. It is still unpopulated. The poem, in fourteen quatrains, has an epigram in quotes, but not credited:

"Time, the deer, is in the wood of Hallaig." The poem is, among other things, an accounting of how the deer (time) got there. The poet put him there. Furthermore, he means to keep him there.

The poem starts with the image of an abandoned building:

a window is nailed and boarded
through which I saw the west.

The people are still there but they are trees. The poet's affectionate imagination is populating the landscape. A girl he loves is still there:

...a birch, a hazel,
a straight, slender young rowan

The descendants of heroes of personal and, perhaps, private, mythical proportions are also trees and while the poet is aware of the "proud" "pine cocks," his love is for the "birch wood" that he feels promises to grow "by the cairn," where the real dead are stored or commemorated (cairns may serve either purpose) and, eventually, to throw a protective shade over "the whole ridge."

The pines are "establishment" trees. They were planted by the authorities in the nineteenth century and so represent the same social force that depopulated this area. The birches are native to the area and represent the native peoples who were forcibly emigrated. So trees become an ambivalent symbol, representing both the modern desolation and the former inhabitants who have vanished, except in MacLean's mind.

The poet is too alive to his options to be silenced by broken expectations. If the birch wood fails to grow he:

...will go down to Hallaig,
.
where the people are frequenting
every generation gone.

The poet is in firm control of his ghosts. Hallaig is where

the dead have been seen alive.

And they are still there--the heroes, the girls who go out "to Clachan" and return, provocative as ever from "the land of the living." They are as real as any girls living today in Portree or Broadford and his response to them is just as real as his response to girls he sees today:

Their laughter a mist in my ears,
and their beauty a film on my heart.

Let me cheat a little and mention that I have the pleasure of knowing MacLean slightly and I assure you he is just as capable of responding to people who aren't actually there as he is of responding to those who are. If any of this seems phony, it is only because the English translation cannot convey the honesty of the Gaelic. When you speak with MacLean you must share him with a lot of others you can't see. He is not mad. He simply has as strong an interior life as anyone I've met. He is quite capable of describing the Battle of the Braes with such graphic and personal immediacy, you would be convinced he had been there, even though the dates tell you it would be decades before he would be born. He personally knows the people who fought there.

As for the deer (time) who comes

Sniffing at the grass-grown ruined homes

acting as if time's reality--the decay, the ruin, the abandonment--is the true reality, he will get shot by

a vehement bullet . . . from the gun of Love;

The poem ends:

his eye will freeze in the wood,
his blood will not be traced while I live.

It is the poet's resolution to respond to the reality of his internalized Hallaig that makes the poem a brave one, I think. He is not afraid of our sneers. While MacLean lives, the blood of others--trees and people who are trees, dead or alive--will be traced with the affectionate memory of one who did not know them personally and who has never stopped knowing them all his life. It is not just mnemonic imagination. They really live in MacLean. Again we see some similarity to Roethke. Both Roethke and MacLean are poets who risk looking silly by putting their inner selves on the line. If this seems hard for an American to swallow, let me assure you I'm not trying to be flashy or tricky. I'm trying to account for something in the character of the Gael that is rarely found among Americans. An old saying goes, "It is the fate of the Gael to lose everything." Nothing could be less true. In my experience, seven months of it on Skye, the Gael loses nothing, neither the thing "lost" nor the sense of that loss. The fate of the Gael is to carry it around forever. The Gael not only doesn't lose it, you'll have a hell of a time getting it from him.

If that makes Gaels sound ungenerous, I'm sorry. They are not ungenerous. By comparison a lot of other people look like misers. But memory, which seems as tribal as it is personal, is one thing they hoard. If you are patient they may dole out a mnemonic crust of bread, or offer the thin gruel of suggestion about something that happened both two hundred years ago and last week. It is understandable. Memory is a source of life. It is not something to be thrown about carelessly, like food and booze.

Given the character of the Gael, one can understand a poet like MacLean issuing a serious challenge to time and refusing to surrender. It is as natural to MacLean as it is to many Americans to ignore time as something unnatural and if reminded of it, to assume it is a lie, probably invented by the Russians.

In trying to introduce MacLean's work to a wider American audience than he now has, I've had to make some guesses, none of them too wild, I hope. His work needs a better translator than himself for Americans to appreciate the unusual poet he is.

By all responsible accounts, MacLean is a major poet. My instincts tell me that's true. But he is writing in a minor language, at least quantitatively speaking. What's impressive is that given the lonely position he works from, writing poems in a language few people read and writing poems that few people

who do read would want to read, he is clearly the real thing-- a poet who writes out of the love and necessity of doing it and who writes the poems he must.

Furthermore, at the risk of offending my Gaelic friends, I think he may be writing in a language whose years are numbered. The Gaels may hate to admit it, but clearly it is English that is the language essential to their survival. The young Gaels must go to the mainland, mostly to the Lowlands or to England, to make a living and the Gaelic is of no use to them. American oil explorations have started in the Islands, one in the Sound of Raasay itself, and more can be expected. The English-speaking "outside" world encroaches more and more, as Lowlanders, English and American workers move in. True, there are enormous efforts being made to keep the Gaelic alive and I hope they succeed. But social and economic conditions weigh against it. The fact that much effort is being made to preserve the Gaelic as a viable language is ominous in itself. In a few generations, the Gaelic may live only in the minds of a few scholars and a handful of stubborn and isolated Gaels.

Sorley MacLean, who should remain someone for future Gaelic poets to build on, may well turn out to be one of the last stars of Gaelic poetry. I hope the Gaelic goes on for a long time and that there will be Gaelic poets for generations to come who can admire and build on MacLean's poems but even if the use of the Gaelic language diminishes, MacLean's poems, with good translations, should survive.

These selections from *Spring Tide and Neap Tide* are not meant to be a representative sampling of MacLean's work. They do not show his range or power. I've chosen a few poems that appeal to me in translation, hoping they stimulate interest to explore further the work of this unusual and rightfully acclaimed poet.

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NOTES

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¹ *Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 27, 1973.

² *The Guardian*, Apr. 18, 1977.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *New Statesman*, Apr. 27, 1966.

⁵ See Iain Crichton Smith, "Homage to Sorley MacLean," *Saltire Review*, Vol. 5, No. 15 (Summer 1958), pp. 38-9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁷ *The Scotsman*, Apr. 23, 1977.

⁸ Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 116.

⁹ Derick Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry* (London, 1974), p. 210.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹² Brendan P. Devlin, "On Sorley MacLean," *Lines Review*, No. 61 (June 1977), p. 12.

¹³ John Herdman, "The Poetry of Sorley MacLean: A Non-Gael's View," *Lines Review*, No. 61 (June 1977), p. 33.

¹⁴ Donald MacAulay, *Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems/Nua-bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig* (New York, 1977), pp. 47-8.

* * * * *

It's a simple enough matter for a Gael to say--of all known Gaelic poets, this is the greatest. The significance of Donnachadh Bàn (Duncan Macintyre) and Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (Alexander Macdonald) was profound in their time, and for a long time after, but Sorley MacLean has projected Gaelic literature into a new dimension entirely.

What has to be argued, though, is that MacLean is a major poet whatever the terms of reference. He is the man who broke the debilitating pattern of two hundred years, who took a dying language and moribund culture and with the fuel of his genius launched them into an unquestionable new vitality. Beyond Gaeldom he has to be considered one of the two great poets of the twentieth-century Scottish Renaissance. With the passing of MacDiarmid, who was the other, he remains the only figure of truly world stature among mainstream British poets.

Anyone who doubts such assertions need only turn to *Reo-thairt is Contraigh* (*Spring Tide and Neap Tide*) which offers a representative selection of his work from 1932 to 1972. The full impassioned range of his lyrical genius is there from the magnificent 223 lines of *Coilltean Ratharsair* (*The Woods of Raasay*) to the crystalline quatrain *Dùn-éideann* (*Edinburgh*); from the early poem *A' Chorra-Ghrìdheach* (*The Heron*), a meta-physical exploration of photographic clarity, to the dignified celebration that is his elegy for Calum Iain MacLean, his brother and a noted folklorist.

One is continually struck on reading, or hearing, his work, by the intensity of feeling with which MacLean suffuses each poem. He is not one to reassemble his emotional responses only after having attained a state of tranquility. Rather there is a sense in all his work of emotion shepherded by intellect, of a man working on the extreme edges of his reason, who yet never loses control.

In MacLean's work that most private theme of love constantly intertwines with the public theme of politics. When they do harmonise, it is usually in the wounding harmony of war, as in *Gaoir na h-Eòrpa* (*The Cry of Europe*). In *An Tathaich* (*The Haunting*), the struggle between an affair of the heart and public concerns presents a dilemma which cannot be resolved--except through poetry.

MacLean grew to maturity as a poet at the time the poisonous fruit of Fascism was ripening throughout Europe. That noxious creed and its implications for humanity were not a matter to be dealt with by the smooth urbanity of subtle allusion, as a distant shadow to be hinted at. He saw them as a deadly danger, to be confronted openly and directly. Of course there is subtlety in these poems, but it lies in a mastery of language and forceful use of imagery rather than in genteel evasiveness.

MacLean's vision is always clear, not tentative. He is a great poet who took an ancient, largely hermetic, tradition and when it had all but expired triggered a regeneration by applying to its near-shade the full rigours of contemporary learning. Out of the corpse came a corpus recognizably descendant from Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, Donnachadh Bàn and all the other great names of Gaelic literature yet radically different. Eliot and Pound led him to an awareness of European literature, particularly the French Symbolists; the presence of Surrealism is frequently felt in an unexpected juxtapositioning of images.

What has resulted is a poetry rooted in its prime sources, geographical and historical, with a cosmic vision. MacDiarmid had the same scope. Pablo Neruda can be numbered among the few other twentieth-century figures for whom the production of

poetry meant the same commitment of all the human faculties. For such poets intellect, instinct and the physical senses must be involved at all times in the process. Out of such a ferment, philosophic meditation and pure lyric can, and do, spring fused into a harmonious unity.

The fruitful conflict which dominated the thirties and war-time poems is less prominent in MacLean's later work. The torments which love brought in its wake are resolved with exquisite tenderness in *Soluis (Lights)*, a previously unpublished poem, which opens the post-1945 section of the book. A new richness appears, more ruminative, more consciously experimental. The creative imagination is self-aware as ever while the interrogative eye can still fix public events in a poetic context which once considered seems wholly proper.

Old positions are reexamined in fresh circumstances. The self-immolation of *Palach* prompts him to reconsider his earlier emotional involvement with Bolshevism. The movement itself may have failed him, but the ideal which engendered his hopes lives on. In *Aig Vaigh Yeats (At Yeats's Grave)* the contradictions which can mar the essential quality of the work, are explored. The committed anti-fascist sees the brown shirt as aberration, and the poetry as essence.

Intimations of mortality seep in, most directly in *Creag Dalltaig*. Then there is the haunting otherworldly *Hallaig*: the location is specific, a deserted township on his native island of Raasay. MacLean people the village with spirits. This is no archetypal "ghostly visitation." The people are his own forefathers, former neighbors, a lover. These spirits do not flit among the trees, they *become* the trees, and the trees become living breathing beings. The tree, the one that matters, is the birch, a potent symbol, of great significance in the old religion of the Celts. The poem sits in time and beyond time.

As does so much of the poetry of Sorley MacLean.

AONGHAS MacNEACAIL (ANGUS NICOLSON)

An Comunn Gaidhealach (The Highland Association)

Oban

Kurt Gamerschlag. *Sir Walter Scott und die Waverley Novels: Eine Übersicht über den Gang der Scottforschung von den Anfängen bis heute.* [Erträge der Forschung, 94.] Darmstadt. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. 1978. x + 183 pp. DM 36.

The subtitle of this book gives the exact scope of the author's intention: a survey of Scott studies from the beginnings to the present day, with the qualification from the main title, "the Waverley novels;" so Gamerschlag does not deal with Scott's poems nor his short stories--which is a pity, since the latter are often interlocked indissolubly with the novels. In this vast field, Gamerschlag had to find a compromise: though the Scott renaissance of the last few decades might demand greater emphasis on recent studies, a historical survey or introduction recommends itself, since only in this way can the many tendencies, developments, or aberrations be treated adequately. This compromise has the advantage of showing that recent research is only a latest and transitional stage in Scott studies.

To deal with this complex material the author had to impose strict limits. He discusses four fields of research: editions, textual criticism, biography, and criticism of the Waverley novels, concentrating on those aspects that proved most fertile in the course of time. A last chapter deals in detail with the reception of the two prototypes of the Waverley novels, *Waverley* and *Ivanhoe*. Consequently Gamerschlag finds no space for source studies or influences on Scott, nor for Scott's influence on his time and on other writers, or adaptations (plays, operas) of his novels.

Chapters II, "Editions," and III, "Textual Criticism," show up the unreliability of the text of most of the novels, the Journal and the Letters. Lockhart had taken great liberties with both the latter, and even since H. J. C. Grierson's standard edition of *The Letters* (12 vols., 1932-7) thousands of new ones have come to light. The various editions of the novels follow each other too closely, until the Dryburgh Edition (1892-4) brought substantial improvements. But even so, modern critical requirements are unfulfilled (MSS., proof sheets, alterations, variants), and only for a handful of novels have serious efforts been made or are being made to fulfill them. We must get rid of the legend, assiduously propagated by Scott himself and Lockhart, that Scott wrote quickly and carelessly sending the MS. to the printing press with the ink still fresh and hardly ever revising. Recent research has shown that Scott and his printer and proof-reader James Ballantyne undertook a great number of revisions (140 corrections for "Wandering Willie's Tale"):

The *Magnum Opus* of 1832 represents the most complete text available within Scott's lifetime, but it is a reprint, itself based on an inaccurate version, so that some of the changes representing the author's last intentions were made merely to cover up the inaccuracies of a first edition which never fully printed its author's original text.¹

Gamerschlag is well qualified to judge here, since he is working on a critical edition of *Count Robert of Paris* and on a study of the proof-sheets of Scott's novels in order to analyse Scott's and Ballantyne's correcting.

The main stepping-stones in Chapter IV, "Biographies," are of course Lockhart with his aim of idolization, H. J. C. Grierson's *Sir Walter Scott: A New Life, Supplementary to, and Corrective of, Lockhart's Biography* (1938), and Edgar Johnson's *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* (1970), a scholarly biography with which every student of Scott has to come to terms.

Chapter V, on the criticism of the novels, falls into three parts: contemporary (starting with Scott's prefaces, etc.), Victorian, and recent criticism. While the first two parts hardly add to what we know from many other works, the third part gives a valuable survey of critics like Edwin Muir, Georg Lukács, David Daiches, Alexander Welsh, Francis R. Hart, Marian Cusac, and others--scholars who introduced criteria of aesthetics, literary criticism, philosophy. Gamerschlag judiciously analyses the viewpoints of each study and makes us recognize the frequently diverging lines that modern criticism of Scott is taking. The whole chapter presents a scintillating array of topics like Scott's dualism, romanticism, anti-romanticism, realism, plot and structure, elements of composition, principles of contrast, hero, character, dialect, picturesqueness, moral, message, intellectual depth, common sense, progress and tradition, conception of history, Hume's influence, historical transition, compromise, formal function, individual righteousness vs. social lawfulness, fanaticism vs. humanity, etc., etc.--but Gamerschlag marshals these keywords well and wisely and allows us to follow certain developments, partly by relegating some critics to the notes so as not to interrupt the flow of an idea, partly by chronological juggling: F. R. Hart before Alexander Welsh (p. 67), Lars Hartveig before Hart (ch. VI, pp. 107-12), though Hart is "für die späteren Interpretationen...bis Hartveig...richtungweisend."

The passages on language and style in this chapter come a little abruptly and are, to my mind at least, the weakest part of the book. Perhaps here a survey of the progress of criticism is harder to delineate, but we hear little or nothing of

dramatic reincarnation and speaking in character, the delightful arguing of his characters, their comparisons--elements that make his Scots dialogue the highlight of Scott's style. I miss reference to the echoes of historic sayings that Scott puts in the mouths of his characters ("the end of an auld sang"), which for Scott was a way of drawing attention to constantly recurrent historic patterns. Too little is made of the dramatic and tragic elements and the idea of fate, of the lyrics in the novels and the "chorus" (e.g., the town gossips in *The Antiquary*, the three cummers at the funeral), the minute sensuous details that make his landscapes formative agents, the ballad-like character of some of his dialogue (repetitions), and many more features. Most of these elements point to oral tradition of the folk, and it is here that we find Scott's idea of history. By leaving out these points the author deprives Scott of many of his essentially Scottish characteristics--but on a dissecting table a man is bound to lose a lot of his vitality.

I am not quite happy with chapter VI, a detailed analysis of the criticism of *Waverley* and *Ivanhoe*, which involves some repetition. Of course, *Ivanhoe* is the prototype of Scott's non-Scottish novels, immensely popular with the public from the very beginning, but harshly criticised by the experts until quite recently, when a certain rehabilitation has taken place. But is *Waverley* really the prototype of the Scottish novels? Too many characteristics set it apart: the question of the first seven chapters, is *Waverley* Scott?, dream and reality, to mention only some of them. I would much rather have seen *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* or *The Antiquary* here.

The usefulness of the book is to some extent marred by the organisation of the notes: 136 pp. of text followed by a lump of 310 notes filling 26 pages! When you finally find your note you are irritated by just reading "A.A.O." or "p. 36" or the title of a book which could just as well have been given in the text. Mostly this title is given without the author, and with the welter of names you have to fish again for the author in the text. Furthermore, you have to go on to the bibliography for full details of the work (date, publisher). Even the editor of a collection is not given in the notes, so if the book is unknown to you, just quickly look through the 13 pages of the bibliography. The fingers of your right hand are really being kept busy marking pages. Why not number the titles in the bibliography and then give their number and/or page reference in brackets in the text? This way the remaining notes would be really worth looking up.

The Bibliography contains 247 titles up to 1974 (with two or three later). Of course a complete list would be out of the question, and the author had to make a limited selection.

I do not want to carp, but just want to add a few items that perhaps merited inclusion:²

- Moray McLaren. *Sir Walter Scott: The Man and the Patriot* (1970).
- Robin Mayhead. Walter Scott (1973) especially because of his analyses.
- A. L. Fraser. Scott and Stephenson (1929).
- Boris Reizov. "Scott's Historic Fiction and Relative Truth," *Scottish Literary News*, 3 (1973). Gamerschlag has another article of Reizov's from 1974; I fully understand that Reizov's Russian book is not included.
- James Anderson. "Sir Walter Scott as Historical Novelist," *SSL*, 4-5 (1966-8).
- Frank Jordan. "Walter Scott as Dramatic Novelist," *SSL*, 5 (1968).
- David J. Burt. "*The Heart of Midlothian*: Madge Wildfire's Rational Irrationality," *SSL*, 8 (1971).
- Frances M. Clements. "'Queens Love Revenge as Well as Their Subjects': Thematic Unity in *The Heart of Midlothian*," *SSL*, 10 (1972).

The Index is unfortunately not very reliable: many references in the notes, and often essential ones, are not included in the index. I have, for instance, found this with Kiely (n. 251), Johnson (n. 307), Fleishman (n. 308), Stephen (n. 280), Senior, Fisher, Fiske, Devlin, Tippkötter, Iser, Geppert. If you use the book as a work of reference, this is a serious flaw that should be corrected, perhaps in an English version, for I can hardly imagine a great market for the book in Germany, and it would be a pity if this diligent work should not find its public.

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NOTES

¹ G. A. M. Wood, "The Great Reviser: Or the Unknown Scott," *Ariel* 2 (1971), p. 13.

² A. W. Verrall's article "The Prose of Sir Walter Scott" (*Collected Literary Essays...*) appeared in 1913 (as in note 121), not in 1931 as in the Bibliography.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCOTTISH LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS

It is not the policy of *SSL* to review journals and periodicals, but Vol. 9, No. 4 (1979) of *The Bibliothek* is a worthy exception. The entire issue is given over to "A Checklist of Modern Scottish Literary Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland," which forms an invaluable guide for scholars.

There is a five-page introduction by Dr. E. F. D. Roberts, the National's Librarian, in which he points out that the NLS has recently been making a special effort to gather "a large and representative selection of the archives of writers working in Scotland," and goes on to say that the twentieth century will be better served by the NLS than any previous century. This is in part due to the fact that as the Advocates' Library (until 1925) it was not its mandate to build a comprehensive MS. collection. Systematic gathering has been brought to the NLS under Dr. Roberts and his immediate predecessor Professor William Beattie, to both of whom we owe our gratitude.

Like any similar institution the NLS must compete for these holdings; it is tempting for a local library to convince an author to gift his material to it, and a good case can be made for such collections. For the scholar interested in one author a locally-housed collection may have distinct advantages, but for those working in a larger field centralization is the only practical answer. Important holdings of MSS. of major authors should, if possible, be photocopied by the NLS as was material by John Buchan, Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Neil Gunn.

No definitive statement can be made about living authors here listed since the NLS may obtain more MSS. of their work. Of those recently dead Hugh MacDiarmid is the most important, and the NLS is to divide with Edinburgh University material in his possession at his death. It is improbable that there are many copies of the poet's poems or letters in the collection, so an effort to xerox these would be meritorious.

Naturally the material varies greatly in importance: fair copies are display material, whereas the working drafts of an author show us the creative process in action (see the drafts of Muir's "Orpheus' Dream"). There is significant material of George Douglas Brown, George Mackay Brown, George Bruce, Buchan, Cunninghame-Grahame, Gunn, Naomi Mitchison, Edwin and Willa Muir, Goodsir Smith, a splendid collection of Soutar, Douglas Young, and more. There are also important archives such as those of *Akros*, *Scotia Review* and the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh. This checklist should be widely disseminated.