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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews



Margery McCulloch. *The Novels of Neil M. Gunn*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. 1987. 192 pp.

It is very difficult not to fall somewhat in love with Neil Gunn. It matters little that he is dead; a writer goes on, is still there, clearly watching you behind the words, but a little hesitant, a little on his guard if you happen to be a woman. I am sure Margery McCulloch has experienced just that, in writing this book which is both appreciation and criticism of Neil Gunn's novels. She is sometimes annoyed, as I used to be, at Neil dodging a straight look at a real love affair between two adults. As she shows, he tried to be more understanding in his later stories, but perhaps the thing made him feel shy. His upbringing was in the Highland world where men's work and lives and women's work and lives were kept firmly separate, not to be talked about except in jokes and not for serious writing. Yet it is this early upbringing, these sharp and beautiful memories which he gets down on paper and folds into the fabric of his best stories. Note that it is always a little boy who is watching and hearing and smelling.

As for him and me, we went on arguing, affectionately, but sometimes firmly, often on the same lines as the criticism here. Each of us talked the other's head off, meeting as we did or writing long letters, in the forties and early fifties, when the wind seemed to be blowing the right way. But we expected too much, both of the Labour Government and of our own

political work in the Highlands. In the excitement of peace, the men coming back and the first time when it seemed that Scotland and above all the Highlands, would at last get their chance, both of us felt what luck to be a writer now. Yet by that time Neil had, I think, already written his best books.

It is amazing how much he did manage to write. There was a book a year and constant short stories. Perhaps too many, they couldn't all be good. Only a few could stand re-printing. He had walked off his job, though using all the materials he had collected in it, a mass of beginnings of stories waiting to be written and added to his own clear memories of boyhood. He just never stopped his story telling and one sufficient reason was that this was his income. No doubt there was a small pension, but not enough for a man to live freely and happily, enjoying the world. He told me once of a story he had sold to the *New Yorker* which had "kept him going for a year." I was so excited at this that I tried them myself with several stories, but never made it. I think it was only a one-off for Neil. Often I wondered whether his novels would get across to America, that so different culture using the same words. Would they understand or was their past too far back, and, for so many of them, in other countries?

My copy of *The Silver Darlings* was borrowed by half the fishing village where I lived. They asked me, how at all would this man know? Sure it was just as the man writes, and then would come a story of a grandfather or even great-grandfather and his doings at the fishing, or maybe a story of an uncle drowned in this same sea that the man Gunn writes about—and who is he anyway to know so much? For most it was astonishing to find a big book with a hard cover which told the truth about something real: the fishing. Now the boats were bigger and safer, but they went out in all weathers. The old ones remembered gales that had them scared out of their skins, there could be a dragging anchor, worst of all you could catch your net on the bottom and lose net and catch—ah, this fellow knew it right!

Dr. McCulloch—and where in the Highlands is she from, for she has a right feeling?—did well to skip over the first books that Neil wrote, most of which were sad enough, but with sudden beauty of phrase. But he did not see any way out of the slow dying of the Highlands and the shame of not doing better. Here the actual story is not complicated: someone goes away, he comes back changed. The cities destroy people, but the countryside is dying. Yet he has some splendid passages about the weather: this thing you can never get away from in the Highlands!

These early books all mirror the dying away of the Highland culture, the replacement of an early self-help society by the dark shadow of capitalism and a different set of morals. It was not that Neil was soft about

this: he needed to express a harsh truth, just as his contemporary, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, did for the east of Scotland. Dr. McCulloch knows her history and sees how it affected all the relations of love and hate in these early novels. Yet his background cannot help being beautiful.

These books are political. He wanted to show people what had been done to the Highlands. How capitalism had struck them. There is an element of politics in all his novels, as there was in all his life and as there must be in anyone writing truly about Scotland. But it is the reader who must interpret it. He became more skilled and perhaps more hopeful since the only thing that kept us going during the war was hope. He took his big step. Even the women in *The Silver Darlings* are more alive and, to my mind at least, real. Look at the first sentence: "As Tormod tried to flick a limpet out of the boiling pot..." It jumps at you. And the women stand out splendidly in the story, which, also, has a much more elaborate plot but is always kept in hand. During the war years he came closer to an understanding of people, and how memory works. And his people become more real.

*Young Art and Old Hector* has less destroying storms and less sadness and frustration. Instead there is a marvelous entrance into the feelings of a little boy eating a gooseberry for the first time, or winning a race. But there is a river, as there always is in the Highlands of Scotland. The river takes over and lands Art and Hector on the Green Isle and into the heart of politics, not "real" but so much an essence of it that anyone working in politics, as most of us were by 1944, felt ourselves swept into the argument, which by then involved not only Scotland, but the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. Curious that those innocent letters painted themselves onto the history of that period.

But don't think that *The Green Isle of the Great Deep* is all politics. No, for Neil Gunn has us totally involved in the adventures, Art's flight from the Hunt, paralleled by the human mind's flight from all the sweet advertisements which try so successfully to grab and take over. Who will win? The Green Isle has a fair share of Christian symbolism, but beware. Twist it too much and it hits back. For me, this is his best book, the most important for political and moral argument and above all the most excitingly readable.

I think Margery McCulloch would be in agreement that this was the peak of Neil's books, though there were some good ones to come. But he had by this time made a shift into cities and the general problem of human freedom. Like many another he was worried—and correctly worried—about what was going on in Stalin's Russia. But he was also moving from the Highlands to a more wide Scottish loyalty. I don't think he would have called himself a Scottish Nationalist, but some of his characters

would certainly have done so and the political talk in Glasgow and Edinburgh during the forties and early fifties witnesses what was going on in his mind and those of many of his fellow Scots. But again, the women characters are never as real as the men. He wrote to me once that he took turns to write one good book and one bad one. But perhaps all authors feel this—it is only the one they are actually writing which they can be certain is—this time!—a good one.

I think Dr. Margery McCulloch is nearer the truth than some others who have written praises that are partly loving excuses for some of Neil's later books. He might well be smiling at her from wherever he is hiding. I used to see him from time to time in the years when I was one of the Highland Advisory Council and drove up from Kintyre to Inverness, and got him to come over in the ferry. But Daisy was dead and he was often—though not always—sad and wondering whether Scotland was truly going to come alive.

I believe he would have thought Margery McCulloch's summing up was very fair. I can't think he would have wanted praise for everything he wrote and she shows that in *Blood Hunt*, his last, the old fire was kindled, partly at least. Above all she has drawn a plausible portrait of Neil Gunn as a writer who understood the Highlands so deeply that nobody else can pretend to come near him. And also if you want to come near not only to the past, but the present condition of that living part of the Scottish nation, you have to read the books of Neil Gunn.

NAOMI MITCHISON  
*Carradale*

James Aitchison. *The Golden Harvester: The Vision of Edwin Muir*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1988. 215 pp.

*(Over this island the wind sweeps continuously: seen in the ruffling of grasses or of human hair or of animal fur, or in its own impressions on the sky, silky or pebbly, ragged or clean. Sometimes it passes angrily and with noise; sometimes it crawls almost imperceptibly; sometimes it seems to disappear altogether. But always it is passing over.*

*At the moment the wind is soft and leisurely. The daylight is fading from the levels at which people live. Up a pass from one house-studded bay to another, two figures are walking a man and a woman, like ants on a knuckle-bone. In the western entrance to the pass the sun sets: in the eastern entrance the moon rises.)*

This observation by another Scot, "Adam Drinan" (Joseph Gordon Macleod) represents one aspect, an important one, of the life lived on islands, surrounded by immensities stretching underfoot and overhead, the sun and moon of crucial importance, the weather sensitive and capricious as a human being, wind always a part of existence, felt even when not noticed. The state of mind is what Baudelaire calls "angelism," referring to islands: a *condition* of life where all the elements of existence are gathered together in one place, *undergone* in all their realities and mysteries, their objects and people, without reference to other beings or locations: everything is *here*; the evident and at-hand deepen rather than widen. One lives among them knowing that the whole of things is surrounding one; one is a part of it. A man and a woman walking from one house to the other as the sun sets in the "*the western entrance to the pass*," and "*in the eastern entrance the moon rises*," take on an archetypal quality. Their being where they are is mythical; a story, a fable, a myth could rise from them: a myth they themselves would not know, but continue to act out without knowing it, or needing to know.

This power of legendry, of the heraldic significance of the ordinary in Edwin Muir's poetry, is not only part of his work, no matter what the subject, but is I think the very foundation of it. His immersion in the literary part of the mythical is only secondary, a result of his reading, though this is wide and deep; the psychology which appropriates the ancient Islands of his childhood is primary, and with it the folk tradition he inherited from ancestors both known and unknown.

When a reader first comes to Muir's poetry he is likely to notice that, though many fabulous and historic events are the subjects entertained, the language is not "magic-making," or seeded with memorable phrases, or moving with currents of compelling rhythm. It is in fact very low-key, depending heavily on statement. In addition, one cannot help noting a certain stiffness, even woodenness, about the versification, which might seem to justify the word "plodding," if the plodding were not on such curious ground.

One is *drawn* into Muir, and not forced. The sense of imaginative sincerity about the ancient myths, for example, ends by constituting a kind of spell, and the longer the reader remains under this the more he is persuaded of Muir's remarkable, though unemphatic, gifts. To give one instance: Prometheus has been dealt with as much as any character in mythology, but it has been left to Muir to bring to the figure a strange inventive sincerity, a commitment to a highly personal visualization of the god's *grave*, that makes it impossible, once one has come full up against Muir's version, to think of Prometheus in any other way, or as being ex-

emplified by anything other than a fire-blackened stone standing for a hand, and a circle of flowers.

Yet there you still may see a tongue of stone,  
 Shaped like a calloused hand where no hand should be,  
 Extended from the sward as if for alms,  
 Its palm all licked and blackened as with fire.  
 A mineral change made cool his fiery bed,  
 And made his burning body a quiet mound,  
 And his great face a vacant ring of daisies.

The striking *physical* details of the landscape, which includes not only the god but his meaning, are characteristic of the way Muir's mind works. The particulars are imagined so vividly that one would find it disappointing not to find the fire-blackened hand actually existing in Greece, or in the Caucasus, or somewhere; somewhere surely.

Muir is a positive force on several fronts, though his poetry is the farthest forward of these. The natural route to take into his work is from the poems to the life, and it would be unfortunate if this were not followed, for his autobiography, particularly the first part, published originally as *The Story and the Fable*, is one of the most poignant and unforgettable human documents that our century has given us.

Sincerity and integrity are very great virtues in a writer, but it is not always easy to project a sense of these into the words on the page. Muir is able to do this, not only because he was a man of the utmost integrity, but because he is an uncommon craftsman, and the fidelity which causes him to commit himself with a total projection of self into the scenes and characters he envisions, the events of his life, are the same qualities that guided his conduct: his dealing with the people he has known, his reactions to the places he has lived.

Most of us would like to believe that the vents of our lives possibly constitute some kind of search that the random associations we have had with other human beings and the places where we encountered them will all, in the end, add up to something: that the quest itself will eventually reveal what it was about all the time, and that there may even be some kind of reward or illumination involved. Muir's life, beginning in the Orkneys and his catastrophic removal to Glasgow, is imbued with a sense of fatality and promise to an extent very nearly unprecedented. Bearing his island sensibility with him everywhere, he transfigured his own existence, so that no matter where he went—to London, to Glasgow, to Fairport with its grisly scenes of seagulls devouring mounds of writhing maggots, to Germany, to Austria, to Czechoslovakia, to Rome: wherever chance—or perhaps not chance: something else—caused him to live—be-

came part of "the great non-stop heraldic show": all transformation, or, as in Rome, all Incarnation.

Muir's example cannot but be heartening to anyone who encounters it. The best of his poetry is inimitable and unforgettable. His *Autobiography* is not only one of the best "soul-voyages" in the language but is an outstanding ideal of the effectiveness that prose can sometimes, rarely, attain. His literary criticism, mainly in the form of book reviews, is eminently responsible, intelligent, and *usable*; even when one disagrees with him, one must grant his point, and ends up glad to have it.

And I, for one, would like more attention paid to his three novels than seems to have been tendered. I have read only *Poor Tom*, and can find no reason for its neglect; surely it is one of the better studies in fraternal relations to appear in the last seventy-five years.

All in all, Muir's place seems secure. But that is not enough to say, surely. What should be noted is the quiet radiance about him, and the fact that everything he touches has it. To change the metaphor, he is the best example I know of the virtue indwelling in one's sense of self and in the inevitable search that comes with it. Muir's is one of the most profound kinds of morality, and indicates as no other life and work of our time is able to do, the value of quiet steadfast strength, the undercurrent that bears the surface, and moves things onward toward their inevitable end, or revelation.

JAMES DICKEY  
*University of South Carolina*

Tobias Smollett. *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*. Ed. Jerry C. Beasley. Athens, GA, & London: University of Georgia Press. 1988. xliii + 479 pp.

After a long, eventful and not altogether happy history, the standard and definitive edition of the works of Smollett has finally come unstuck from the presses. It started about 1966, if memory serves, at the University of Iowa, then in the mid-seventies the project was taken over by the University of Delaware, and finally in the early eighties by the University of Georgia Press, under the remarkably efficient and dynamic general editorship of Jerry C. Beasley, who is largely responsible for salvaging the edition.

It is fit that the first individual volume to come out should be Beasley's excellent edition of *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753), Smollett's third and somewhat neglected novel, as it sets a high standard for the



forthcoming volumes—*Humphry Clinker* (ed. Tom Preston) and *The History and Adventures of an Atom* (ed. R. A. Day). Beasley's *Fathom* is on all accounts worthy of being compared with Martin C. Battestin's fine achievement in editing *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, and *Amelia* for the Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Fielding. The factual Introduction placing *Fathom* in its biographical and socio-historical contexts, the very full annotations, not to mention the meticulous textual notes of O. M. Brack, Jr., will certainly make the edition the standard reference one for many years to come.

Although Beasley's Introduction was in no way intended to give a critical reading of *Fathom*, since it deals, and quite pertinently so, with Smollett's handling of the novelistic uses of history (with which he took many fictive liberties), it might also have stressed, more than it actually does, two major generic points. First, that Smollett's cosmopolitan anti-hero is generically close to the archetypal picaresque, although, as I have shown in my *Novels of Tobias Smollett* (1976), he does not quite make the grade, and remains a picaresque *manqué*. Secondly, if *Fathom* has any claim to (modest) literary fame, it is not only because of the near-picaresque roguery of the eponymous hero, but also because of the famous robbers-in-the-forest scenes of chapters XX and XXI, which herald in the first tremors of the Gothic upheaval soon to break out with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). At least two points made by Beasley in the Introduction are questionable, or should be qualified. On p. xxvii, Beasley notes that *Fathom* "bears strong resemblances to many of the travel books so widely enjoyed in its day." True enough, except that the resemblance is purely superficial, since the cosmopolitan anti-hero's peregrinations from Bohemia to France and Britain are completely devoid of any graphic descriptions, or of any sense of local color. Vienna, Paris, London are hardly distinguishable. On p. xxxvi, Beasley writes in his concluding paragraph that Smollett "employed an anachronistic method in all of his novels, which strive for wholeness and simultaneity of effect through the accumulation of assorted imaginary and historical episodes, or 'moments,' reflecting the timeless variety of life." Although Beasley's definition of Smollett's fictive aims is quite acceptable, his critical premise is most questionable. Neither *Roderick Random* (1748) nor *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) can be labelled "anachronistic," both being fairly straightforward narratives, moving from the hero's birth to his departure from home, subsequent initiatory adventures, and finally more or less triumphant return to the paternal estate. The diegetic chronotopos is unbroken, save for the interpolated tales in both novels, which function as structural "mises en abyme" of Smollett's fictive discourse. The same is largely true of *Launcelot Greaves* (1760-61) and *Humphry Clinker* (1771), except that in

Smollett's last novel the overall peripatetic pattern, which serves as the fictive substratum, is engrafted with the fecund fragmented mode of quintuple vision established by Smollett's kaleidoscopic epistolary technique. Each incident, accident, sight or scene is viewed through the more or less distorting prism of the five letter-writers' personalities. Although this hardly makes for a rectilinear, chronological narrative, even *Humphry Clinker* can hardly be said to come under "an anachronistic method," even if Smollett, through his deft use of the epistolary technique, does manage to compress a fair amount of time (and space) into his characters' letters.

Although the volume bears testimony to the high printing standards of the University of Georgia Press, and to the editorial team's excellent proofreading, some quasi-inevitable errors have perversely managed to creep in: p. xxiii: *Habbakuk* for *Habbakkuk*; p. xxxix, n. 23, *Gräfinn* for *Gräfin*, repeated on p. 424, n. 12; p. 379, n. 1 to chapter 18, *Stanlislaus* for *Stanislaus*; p. 400, n. 7, the date of La Calprenède's lengthy romance, *Casandre*, should be corrected to 1642-45.

As the editor myself of a forthcoming Penguin Classics edition of *Fathom* (early '90), and having battled with the same difficulties posed by the annotation of an extremely topical text, with due respect for Beasley's impeccable scholarship, I beg to differ with him about some of his solutions. This does not mean I contend I am automatically right, as some points are matters of interpretation. All the same, I am satisfied Beasley is definitely wrong about the following points: p. 381, n. 7, to chapter XIX, p. 78: *prévot*—which should be spelled *prévôt* anyhow—does not mean "a provincial officer appointed by the king to collect taxes and administer justice," but, in view of the context, an officer of the French military police in a garrison or camp; p. 386, n. 19 to chapter XXIII, p. 97: "the whole ban of the empire" does not refer to the whole range of the empire, but again, in view of the context, and in accordance with the act of summoning the vassals in armed array in feudal times, the *ban* in more recent times consisted of the younger generations liable to be drafted into active service, while the *arrière-ban* was made up of the reserve of older citizens (hence, the now often misunderstood French phrase: "battre le ban et l'arrière-ban"); p. 394, n. 12 to chapter XXVIII, p. 130: "Bear key" did exist and stood near the Custom House. There were two streets of that name, Great and Little Bear Key (or *quay*) which led from Thames Street to the waterside. On the quay opposite to them, vast quantities of corn, and formerly of *bear*—a kind of small barley brewed into ale and beer, especially in Dublin—were landed, hence the name "Bear key"; p. 434, n. 3 to chapter LVII, p. 279, "a partizan during the whole course of the late war": both Damian Grant in his OEN edition of *Fathom* (1971) and Beasley get this allusion completely wrong, partly because they fail to understand what

a *partizan* was during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48), and partly because, once more, they should have paid more attention to the context. Far from having fought *against* the Hapsburgs, the wicked and fiery-tempered Count Trebasi had responded to Maria Theresa's *levées en masse*, otherwise and misleadingly known in Hungary as *insurrections* of *partizans* (1741/42 and 1744), i.e., irregular light troops, or rather lawless plundering bands, who inflicted severe reverses on the Prussians. They were also known then as "Insurgents." On p. 435, n. 5 to chapter LVIII, p. 282, "conductor to madam Catherina": Renaldo and his Irish friend, Farrel, have assumed the guise of traveling Savoyards to gain access to Trebasi's otherwise inaccessible castle. It is most doubtful that the allusion should be to Empress Catherine I of Russia (1684-1727). The Savoyards were then known all over Europe as strolling musicians, playing the hurdy-gurdy and staging little shows with magic lanterns (exactly what Renaldo and Farrel do), or with tame marmots, monkeys, and even bears. They were such popular figures that in the 1740s and 1750s many entertainments, comic dances and pantomimes were named after them. On Friday 15 April 1763, *The Savoyards, or Madam Catherina* was performed at Covent Garden. I rather incline to think that madam Catherina, Farrel's "Princess" (p. 282), was a marmot of the Alps. There had been two articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 19 (Sept. 1749), 417-8, and (Oct. 1749), 447-8, on "Alpine mice," which could be taught to dance, hold a stick or gesticulate. As is made clear *a posteriori* by the *Gentleman's Magazine* 31 (Nov. 1761), 522, the English were used to seeing the Savoyards carrying about a marmot in a box, and displaying its talents for a consideration.

Finally, a few points are matters of divergent interpretations, both Beasley's and mine being acceptable, I suppose, but actually not one hundred percent guaranteed. Thus, on p. 418, n. 13 to chapter XLI, p. 194, "to box like an English carman," which I would interpret as a carter or carrier, rather than a chairman, or sedan-chair bearer; p. 425, n. 4 to chapter XLIX, p. 235, "England...where a stranger is not made welcome to the house of God": again, in view of the context, i.e., the kindly Madame Clement offering Monimia to sit in her pew at church, instead of letting her stand "in a common passage, during the whole service" (p. 235), I do not think, unlike Beasley, that this is a matter of other denominations being debarred from worshipping in Anglican churches since the Test Act of 1673, but more simply and very materially, this is an allusion to the letting of pews to families, a practice which became common in the sixteenth century; p. 430, n. 4 to chapter LII, p. 254, about coach accidents involving apothecaries, surgeons, physicians in mid-eighteenth century London and Britain: I think that my good friend and colleague Jerry Beasley possibly misses Smollett's ironical considerations in that paragraph, because he re-

acts too much like an American nurtured on the quasi-mythical misdeeds of gangsters seeking to eliminate each other by means mostly foul, including the sabotaging of their vehicles. Mid-eighteenth century London was no doubt a tough city, a kind of jungle where Smollett's heroes must learn how to survive, but it was hardly Al Capone's Chicago. I simply cannot share Beasley's view that "the accidents befalling medical practitioners were not always accidents at all, but the deliberate results of vicious competition" (p. 430). My reading of the passage is far simpler, and I think, more in tune with the fine irony Smollett displays in it. Those upstart practitioners, soon finding themselves unable to pay their coachmaker, must return the vehicle. But, in order to cover up their failure, they pretend they have had accidents of various kinds. Hence, they feel so terrified that they renounce (!) coach-riding for the rest of their lives and resolve to be pedestrians forever. This is part and parcel of the cruel, and at times acidly ironical, dialectics of appearance and reality, which lies at the thematic core of *Fathom*.

Even though *Fathom* cannot be regarded as one of the masterpieces of eighteenth-century fiction, it remains a fascinating, if partly failed, attempt at fusing the picaresque with the sentimental, and also at manipulating chronology and history into fictive ellipses. As Beasley aptly concludes his Introduction: "*Ferdinand Count Fathom* is Smollett's most adventurous experiment with the novelistic uses of history, and indeed in no other work did he take so many liberties with the circumstantial facts of real life" (p. xxxvi). But in it Smollett displays remarkable gifts for minutely describing mid-eighteenth century life in its everyday routine, dealing with such diverse topics as medical quarrels, scientific and theological polemics, the vexed issue of the Jews in Britain, the craze for fabricated antiques, quackery, etc. One of the major benefits of Beasley's excellent edition of *Fathom* will be to make Smollett's most experimental novel better known to eighteenth-century scholars, but also, thanks to its wealth of annotations, to convey to a wider public an intuitive sense of what it felt like to be living in mid-eighteenth century Britain.

PAUL-GABRIEL BOUCÉ  
*Sorbonne Nouvelle*

Mary Jane W. Scott. *James Thomson, Anglo-Scot*. Athens, GA and London: University of Georgia Press. 1988. xiv + 373 pp.

The "Anglo-Scot" of Dr. Scott's title is defined as 'a Scot by birth and upbringing who has chosen to settle in England and to write in literary English rather than Scots vernacular' (p. 3), and the purpose of her useful

biographical and literary-critical study is to assess the extent of Scottishness in James Thomson's work.

Thomson spent the first half of his life in Scotland: this is the period examined in this book's first two chapters, which, though they do not materially alter the familiar sketchy biographical outline, add a certain amount of speculative but convincing detail on such matters as the poet's relationship with his father, his youthful reading, and even the possible effects of having several gardeners in the family; an examination of later-published philosophical works by Robert Riccaltoun suggests what notions Thomson might have acquired in their seminal form from his earliest tutor outside the family; a clear account of the various literary cultures available when Thomson was an undergraduate in post-Union Edinburgh leads into a third chapter, devoted to what is likely to remain for a long time the most detailed and fully-informed discussion of Thomson's juvenile poems. Dr. Scott does not overpraise, but she brings out well the complex and distinctively Scottish intellectual background to these generally derivative and all-too-often incompetent poems. The slight portents of the mature Thomson in those early poems dealing with external nature have often been noted by others; more valuable is Dr. Scott's account of the religious *juvenilia*, for which she provides a context in contemporary Scottish theological writings.

The meat of the book, in the middle four chapters is a full discussion of the Scottish subjects, themes, ideas, language, and style of *The Seasons*, the work in which Thomson is most fully the poet of the Anglo-Scottish Union. Now and again, examples of Scottishness are a little forced: for instance, though it is interesting to learn that there was a devastating sandstorm on the Morayshire coast in 1694, Thomson's sandstorm in *Summer* is surely drawn from North Africa, not Scotland. More to the point, Dr. Scott uses apt parallels in the work of Scottish theologians to show us a somewhat more Calvinistic Thomson than we have become accustomed to; she demonstrates that he was trilingual (in Scots, Latin, and English) and she offers a spirited defense of Thomson's aureation of language: in this, as in other respects, Thomson has some kinship with the fifteenth-century makars.

Rather less Scottishness can be found in the plays, though Dr. Scott is able to insert them into the patchy history of Scottish drama, rather than the more familiar tradition of English heroic and sentimental tragedy; also, she extends to *Agamemnon* and *Coriolanus* those conjectures concerning possible Jacobite references that John Loftis made in respect of *Tancred and Sigismunda*. *Liberty*, not for the first critic, yields little of interest, but Dr. Scott finds new and worth-while things to say about *The Castle of Indolence*. As in the case of other poems, Scottish preachers and

theologians, notably Thomas Boston of Ettrick, are pressed into service to illuminate the poem's content, and earlier Scottish poets, notably Gavin Douglas, to illuminate its form (though important references to Douglas in this chapter are unaccountably missing from the, generally reliable, index). Again there are suggestive new interpretations of details: that 'Deva's Vale' is a Scottish, not Welsh River Dee; that 'the Man of special grave Remark' in *The Castle* is a portrait of the philosopher George Turnbull, not William Paterson, as is generally accepted; and that the poem contains oblique references to Jacobitism.

Not everyone will accept Dr. Scott's speculations, but her discussions are fully and honestly documented, so that readers are given ample material to decide for themselves what weight to give, say, Hutcheson and Boston alongside Shaftsbury and Locke, or Gavin Douglas and David Lindsay alongside Milton and Spenser. Plain errors of fact are few and far between: however Dr. Scott claims (p. 332, note 9) that the *Defence of the New Sophonisba* is a defense of Thomson's play when in fact it is an attack upon it; also, she gets into an erroneous tangle on pp. 212, 214 over Charles Talbot's titles, offices, and dates. The list of 'Primary Sources and Editions' is an arbitrary miscellany of the authoritative and the valueless, but the other sections of the Bibliography are sound enough.

This book provides a deliberately one-sided view of Thomson's poetry: a view from the Scottish side of the border, the side that has often been undervalued, ignored, or misrepresented in the past. It most usefully complements existing biographical and critical studies by drawing together far more comprehensively than ever before the evidence of Scottishness in the poetry of the first notable celebrant of the Union, and, in that sense, the first 'Anglo-Scot' among poets.

JAMES SAMBROOK  
*University of Southampton*

John Ashmead and John Davison, eds. *The Songs of Robert Burns*. New York: Garland Publishing. 1988. iv + 288 pp.

The authors here present forty-two songs of Robert Burns in twelve categories with what they consider to be Burns's choice of words and his choice of music set in harmonizations for the pianoforte; they also offer an "introduction," an up-to-date "Bibliography," and several "Appendices" including a "Vowel Frequency Index"; in so doing, they have turned to computers for aid.

Whatever the merits of this study may be, they lie heavily hidden under yards of incompetencies, both those of the two authors and those of the series editor. Some of the inadequacy arises from the need for photo-offset which reproduces the music with the words of the first verse and chorus between the staves as manuscript (sometimes illegible) and reproduces the rest of the text as typescript. A host of irregularities arises from the offsetting. For example, spacing is so erratic that at times no space is given as in "To Rev. John Skinner" (p. 23, l. 23) whereas at other times a page resembles the "gat-tothed" Wife of Bath. Again, a single parenthetical mark can close a line with the parenthetical remarks itself and the closing parenthetical mark beginning the following line. The reader will not appreciate, moreover, the fact that the authors opt for using the underline for *both* song title *and* song tune. Such an oddity compounds trouble where there can be no italics but where there can be a song tune which itself is the title of an earlier song.

For the authors to state the source of their song text is no assurance that that is precisely what the reader will get. Try comparing the text of "Tam Glen" to its source or count the twelve changes in the "A" text of "The Banks o' Doon" or the nine changes from the "B" version. Tune directions such as the "Lively" for *Corn Rigs* (p. 80) are omitted; a "tho" in the song "For A' That" becomes a "though," a "though" becomes a "Tho" (p. 266); last lines are omitted (e.g. stanza IV, p. 49); words like "loe" (p. 125) are set in the margin to take a gloss which is never supplied. Carelessly, quotations from the *Letters* are copied out with as many as nine differences in thirteen lines of text (p. 63). The reader will be referred to a source by the last name of the author only so that he can but lose his way among four or five books by the same author; or he may be surprisingly informed that the "rye" of "Comin' through the rye" may refer to a field of that grain or to "the River Rye." Nothing further!

These authors are full of surprises. They write of "the first Kilmarnock edition"; they refer to Edinburgh as "the Athens of Europe"; they have trouble with Past Tenses; with Agreement; with "between" and "among"; with the puerility of beginning sentence after sentence with an "And" or a "But." They can compose a sentence that will cause their reader to lift himself by the hair, much as Jane Austen's Mr. Bennet does (e.g. "For several months, Burns was then staying in Edinburgh at the house of William Cruikshank, master of the High School" [pp. 10 f.]).

The pagination is itself erratic; proofreading appears to have been an unknown, thus "The the rough material" (p. 26, l. 3) or the "is is from *SMM*" (p. 161, l. 2) or the "Later he later described himself" (p. 3, l. 24). Ideas are repeated until worn (e.g. that it was in the '90s that Burns "began to show confidence in his work on songs"). Quite another form of

repetition is to give an extended quotation like the one from Daiches (p. 47) and then offer the whole shebang all over again as an endnote (p. 50).

Slipshod, too, is the authors' approach to Capitalization. What to do with "Devil"/"devil"? Answer: don't choose one, use both (p. 71). Spelling is as carelessly treated: "feire" for "fiere," "bawdy" for "bawdry," "habbie stanza," here spell out the word and there abbreviate it without rhyme or reason. Punctuation comes off no better. Here inconsistencies abound: quotation marks are misplaced, periods are omitted, idiosyncratic offerings like "Burns however," are everywhere; but no common practice is more objectionable than to separate two objects of a preposition with a comma or two elements of a compound subject or direct object.

Endnotes (the footnotes) go their own merry ways. Sometimes the authors give a number to an endnote in the text but later on forget to give the endnote itself; sometimes they do the reverse by offering an endnote for which there is no number in the text; sometimes they jump the numeration of their endnotes in the text; other times they use the same number in the text for two different endnotes.

With respect to the music, these authors know to whom they should give ear of those who have gone before: Dick, Kinsley, Crawford, Bronson, Hovey/Redpath, Ericson-Roos. One must commend Ashmead and Davison for their conviction that "one must always sing and not merely read, the songs of Burns." They are sensitive to the fact that words or vowel sounds work with patterns of music. They are likely to transpose a tune so as to lower its register by a third or more and, thus, accommodate the average singer. Their settings can be difficult (*e.g. The Caledonian Hunt's Delight*); they do change the tune they have chosen (*e.g. Corn rigs*); they can introduce unpleasant discords (*e.g. the second measure of "Tam Glen [A]" or the second measure of the chorus of "Corn Rigs"*). The setting of "A Red, Red Rose" (p. 163) is especially good. Finally, with respect to the music, one would wish that the volume could stand open at a piano rack; it can't.

Ashmead and Davison promise "a future edition" of Burns's songs. One hopes that it will be different from their first in every major respect.

ROBERT D. THORNTON  
SUNY—*Emeritus*



Kenneth Simpson. *The Protean Scot: The Crisis of Identity in Eighteenth Century Scottish Literature*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1988. x + 287 pp.

Kenneth Simpson's *The Protean Scot* is a set of critical essays, all exploring the theme of role-playing in mid-eighteenth century Scottish literature. Scottish writers of the period, says Simpson, were particularly prone to play roles, to project a variety of self-images. He further claims that while these Scots could write in an impressive range of voices, they typically failed to find that one, true voice which would reflect a whole, integrated "self." Simpson identifies the achievement of such a single, pure voice with High Romanticism in England and Europe, and contends that Scottish authors, for all their contributions to the literature of sentiment and nature, fell short of that Romantic ideal of strong individual selfhood. He shows how these writers re-directed their split personalities, their talent for doing voices, into fiction, poetry and letters, rather than into dramatic tragedy, and this represented yet another Scottish "failure." Simpson concludes that the extreme fragmentation these Scottish writers suffered links them especially closely with alienated modern man.

This is largely true. Indeed, much of what Simpson says has been said before, and much goes without saying. He acknowledges his debt to the important work of David Daiches and Thomas Crawford. He also relies heavily on the standard critical commonplaces about Scottish culture and character to prove his case. For the Scottish identity crisis, he partly blames that old villain, Scottish Calvinism (its anti-Romantic emphasis on man's flawed, broken nature; its suppression of drama; its fatalism, frustrating the artist's "redemptive" function). Also to blame are the Enlightenment *literati*, who imposed their conservative criteria of "taste"; the Union and loss of Scottish nationhood; the corresponding linguistic split; "Caledonian Antisyzygy," that Scottish tendency to wild extremes; and, not least, the peculiarities of the individual writers' personalities.

These last assumptions about character—individual and national—to which Simpson applies rather amateur but occasionally intriguing psychology, raise several questions. How exclusively "Scottish" is this "protean" compulsion to play roles? Don't we all project different images in different circumstances? Is this a "modern" condition, or is it part of human nature? Aren't literary artists especially likely to experiment with a variety of voices? And indeed, how healthy and "well-integrated" *were* the successful Romantics who are Simpson's models? (The "egotistical sublime" had its distinctly unattractive side.)

Still, Simpson makes a strong case for the extraordinary intensity of the divided self in certain susceptible Scottish writers, painfully reinforced

by very real cultural factors in the mid-eighteenth century, and leading to a divided literature, in which the voices of feeling and reason, idealism and pragmatism, comedy and seriousness, came apart. In his study of individual authors—Smollett, Macpherson, Home, Boswell, and especially Mackenzie and Burns—Simpson offers another perspective on an old problem.

Tobias Smollett, "The Scot as English Novelist" (as Chapt. 1 is provocatively titled) was really rather well-integrated; this, says Simpson, is because he came before the major shift in Scottish values, the mid-eighteenth century "dissociation of sensibility" which severed the head from the heart in Scottish literature. Smollett revealed genuine dramatic talent, as he projected various voices through his caricatures and clever use of the epistolary mode. Such skillful portrayal of "multiple voices," says Simpson, "ought to have produced fine drama." But instead Simpson is disappointed by Smollett's failure, limited as he was by the Scottish tendency to reductive humor and by his own "emotional extremes," to be a more balanced, sensible and sensitive (English?) novelist. Simpson does, however, credit Smollett with considerable comic achievement in "finding the verbal equivalent to the pictorial." He also points out how Smollett's ironic voice would be echoed in Burns and Galt, and how his caricatures would influence Scott, Galt and Dickens.

Simpson finds no such diversity of voices in James Macpherson as Smollett had commanded; yet in Macpherson (Chapt. 2, "The Joy of Grief"), "The Scottish talent for role-playing, given greater scope by the crisis of cultural identity which the Union exacerbated, reached both its zenith and its nadir." Macpherson, driven equally by self-dramatizing and by entrepreneurship, created and capitalized on a particular "voice"—that which he conceived to be the voice of the Highlander hero. In selling his Celtic world-view, Macpherson established the role of "sentimentalist," and along with it that of the literary opportunist, as particularly "Scottish" personae. Simpson recognizes Macpherson's important contribution to the "age of sensibility" and the European-wide Romantic movement, but ultimately concludes that Macpherson's influence in Scotland was negative, working against "that cultural wholeness upon which Romanticism was to thrive."

Simpson next focuses on the inhibiting influence those "People of Taste, the *Literati*" exerted on Scottish poetry (Chapt. 3). The *literati*, a small professional elite who proclaimed themselves the voices of taste and sensibility, set the post-Union agenda for Scottish literature. Their critical standards were cautious and conformist, encouraging rhetoric rather than substance and dividing polite from popular culture. Simpson demonstrates the ill effects of this rhetorical emphasis by contrasting the poetry

of Wilkie and Blacklock, two "polite" Anglo-Scots whose true voices were distorted by awkward and outmoded neoclassicism, with that of "popular" poet Robert Fergusson. Ironically, the arbiters of taste ignored Fergusson, the one truly innovative poetic talent of the period; they failed to appreciate his original language and forms, his truth to emotion and experience, his "balancing of voices."

Another victim of the *literati's* reactionary "taste" was John Home (Chapt. 4). His drama *Douglas* and other plays showed a spark of dramatic ability and even "psychological realism" yet Home never quite transcended the voices of declamatory rhetoric and pathos the *literati* seemed to approve of, to attain true Scottish tragedy. Simpson further attributes Home's failure to the dramatist's own divided self, his vacillation between reason and romanticism, and especially his crippling "self-conscious awareness" of his national identity, typical of so many Scottish writers after the Union. So despite the sentiments of that patriotic Scottish playgoer who hailed *Douglas* with the cry, "'Whaur's your Willie Shakespeare noo?'" Simpson clearly maintains that the voice of nationalism—especially an ambivalent and nostalgic sort such as Home's—was detrimental to dramatic art in Scotland.

Perhaps the most public and pathetic spectacle of the search for the elusive Scottish self was that of James Boswell, "The Chameleon Scot" (Chapt. 5). Here, Simpson attempts an interesting psychobiography of the paradoxical Boswell, who had both innate dramatic talent and profound personality problems; Boswell's very "life becomes masquerade, with virtually unlimited potential for role-playing." Simpson looks at the early *Journals*, essays for the *London Magazine*, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, letters, and the *Life of Johnson*, to reveal not only the roles Boswell played, but also his real genius for characterization and dialogue, brought to "perfection" in the *Life*. Although Boswell could not create for himself an integrated personality such as he admired in his father-figure Johnson, his multiple voices are perennially fascinating. Boswell, who in his ongoing identity crisis was at once "both actor and audience," has especially close affinities with twentieth-century man.

Henry Mackenzie knew "The Limits of Sentiment" (Chapt. 6). He gained fame in the role of the "Man of Feeling," but never accomplished psychological "reintegration," that wholeness of personality and unity of vision which, for Simpson, represents the Romantic ideal. In a lengthy and probing survey of Mackenzie's novels, fictionalized correspondence for the *Mirror* and the *Lounger*, and literary critical essays, Simpson analyzes Mackenzie's methods—his use of the epistolary mode, conscious and unconscious irony, and the "affecting episode"—for projecting various voices. He demonstrates how "the two sides of Mackenzie appear and reappear

throughout his writing—that which proclaims the merits of sentimentalism, and a realistic sense of the limits, and at times the questionable virtues, of sensibility. They correspond to a sentimental idealism and a practical realism." Thus, "It is a wonder that the [critic] Mackenzie did not burn the other Mackenzie's books"!

This chapter offers some insights into the vogue for "sentiment" in Scotland: its links with "benevolence" (itself a reaction against the Presbyterian view of fallen man); its value as a literary commodity; its shortcomings, limited by the *literati's* taste; and its slide into "stagnant sentimentalism" and eventually, the Kailyard. Simpson also explores the relationship between nationalism and "High Romanticism." Romanticism, he holds, required a solid foundation of national identity such as Scotland, by mid-eighteenth century, had lost. In Mackenzie's literary voices, Simpson detects a persistent note of "longing" for that lost selfhood, both individual and national, which would have allowed the full expression of Romantic feelings.

It was Mackenzie who cast Robert Burns in his most memorable role, that of "heaven-taught ploughman" (though Mackenzie himself was ambivalent about this image of Scotland's poet as Scots-speaking peasant). This was but one of many personae Burns projected in his poetry, letters and life. Among others were man of feeling, melancholic, teary-eyed sentimental lover, devil's advocate, libertarian, libertine, and misconceived "national bard" (and along with these, that of Scottish literary entrepreneur, marketing his self-images to various audiences). In Chapt. 7, Simpson reveals "The Many Voices of Robert Burns" in such poems as "Holy Fair," "Tam O'Shanter," "The Jolly Beggars" and "Address to Edinburgh."

Simpson explains Burns's "acute" fragmentation as a "combination of personal, psychological and national characteristics." Burns, like the other protean Scots, had natural dramatic ability, coupled with a bad case of "Caledonian Antisyzygy." His volatile temperament frequently set him at odds with his community and culture, as Thomas Crawford has pointed out. Burns represents, for Simpson, perhaps the most poignant and painful example of Scotland's failure to achieve that essential Romantic "sustaining of a single voice in the articulation of an ideal." Simpson's psychoanalysis shows how Burns's most effective voice, that of irony, was for the poet a form of "psychic therapy." Yet too often one voice undermined another, one language (Scots) undermined another (English), until the poet, verging on the "schizoid" and "paranoia," risked total psychological disintegration. Who, then, was the real Robert Burns? Simpson suggests that he was the complex and disturbed "projector of personae" himself,

rather than any one of his voices. It is this Burns who has such special appeal for the modern reader.

Simpson's final chapter, "The Shandean Voice," compares Burns's many roles projected in the letters, with the roles Sterne created, particularly in *Tristram Shandy*. Burns and Sterne voiced many of the same themes, among them the "shared cry for freedom, the defence of the individual's right to be...himself." But Simpson implicitly faults Burns (like Smollett) for *not* being a well-integrated English author. Sterne, he rather surprisingly argues, was a whole man, capable of balancing comic and tragic, head and heart, and ultimately of shedding his masks. In Burns, unfortunately, "the balance is disturbed," and the masks become the man.

*The Protean Scot* offers much provocative speculation, as well as useful and illuminating close criticism, in its treatment of these Scottish writers of the mid-eighteenth century. Since Simpson focuses on the period as a "pre-Romantic" one, and holds Scotland up to the Romantic model so frequently, the reader might wish that he had extended his considerable range farther, to include essays on Scott, and perhaps Galt and Byron. Also, and especially since the subjects treated in this book are so closely interrelated, it is inconvenient that the index is inaccurate (one page forward).

The most disturbing thing about *The Protean Scot*, however, is its overwhelmingly negative message: its critical and psychological diagnosis of the peculiarly Scottish role-playing sickness, and its bleak prognosis for subsequent Scottish literature. The Scottish literary tradition is seen in terms of "flawed" Romanticism and "failed" dramatic tragedy, Scottish writers as inadequate and somehow false for adopting multiple roles.

But Kenneth Simpson, too, writes with more than one voice. He well appreciates paradox and irony in his subjects, and although the predominant voice of his book is negative, the positive irony is not lost on the reader that despite deep, destructive personal and national divisions, these Scottish authors developed unique and significant literary strengths. Fortunately, Simpson shows the reader many of the achievements of these chameleon Scots: their energy and versatility, their valuable contributions to Romanticism, their often creative rechanneling of dramatic ability, and their self-revelation of doubts, insecurities and chronic identity crises which strike a sympathetic chord with readers today. Surely this voice is just as authentic as any other.

MARY JANE SCOTT  
*University of South Carolina*

*The Hugh MacDiarmid-George Ogilvie Letters.* Ed. Catherine Kerrigan. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1988. 156 pp.

This is the second time around for the letters of Christopher Murray Grieve ('Hugh MacDiarmid') to his former teacher George Ogilvie, most of them having been included in Alan Bold's *Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid* in 1984. The correspondence itself, from a developing poet to his mentor (a role MacDiarmid assigned to Ogilvie) illustrates the considerable degree to which the artist as a young man first plotted the course of his life and of his life's work and then tenaciously followed it.

Confronted with a chaotic modern world of conflicting values and beliefs, and a limitless flow of seemingly unrelated facts, observations, opinions and perspectives, MacDiarmid determined to use language as a means of divining the one in the many. The letters primarily express his sense of, and indeed reflect, the disorderly and complex modern environment in which he found himself. They detail his omnivorous reading, and outline his grandiose writing plans; but, as he admits, "I can think out novels and plays in odd half-hours, visualize every detail...write prefaces to new editions...and as promptly forget all about them: although they all stick in my consciousness and my thoughts are thus forever like a man moving through the ever-increasing and various confusion of an enormous higgledy-piggledy lumber-room...." (p. 1).

This sensibility is constant throughout the correspondence (and in fact permeates his prose and poetry as a whole). In letter after letter, MacDiarmid can be observed struggling on all fronts, cultural, social and political, in order to jettison outmoded forms and world-views incapable of encompassing and explaining the age in which he lived, and to replace them with some new unifying vision. His correspondence gives the flavor of the time, in essence; for MacDiarmid loved to be in the thick of controversy, "whaur extremes meet," and could always be found where the contemporary intellectual battles were raging, even if he was a somewhat eccentric participant.

Kerrigan's collection includes a few incidental letters omitted by Bold, and four letters from Ogilvie to MacDiarmid, as well as some attached mss. of poems and an essay on the author's experiences of World War One ("Casualties"). Her objective, as she puts it, is to "give as full a picture as possible of MacDiarmid's early development...to help dissolve some of the myths which have accumulated around MacDiarmid's early life, [and] also to help illuminate the arena within which these events—and his writing—took place." Hence she provides a substantial bibliographical and biographical context for the letters, in contrast to Bold's relatively sparse annotations. In addition, she promises an editorially faithful tran-

scription of the correspondence, rather than adopting Bold's policy of 'silent corrections'.

The results, unfortunately, fall somewhat short of Kerrigan's announced aims. To begin with, the text of the letters is marred by numerous apparent typographical errors and/or editorial inconsistencies. Her use of "(sic)" to signal errors by the author seems to be haphazard: for example, "systemmatically" is flagged (p. 98), but "systemmatize" is left alone (p. 100). The solecisms "materpiece," "remendous" and "complments" appear within a few lines of each other (p. 123), and indeed similar lapses pepper the entire book: but how is one to tell whether the lapses are MacDiarmid's or Kerrigan's?

This becomes more serious when foreign words are used, given the doubts about MacDiarmid's linguistic competence which critics have expressed. Thus we have "covenances" for "convenances" (p. 85), and "caress" for "caresse" (p. 63). Then there are obvious transcription errors: "meritical" for "uncritical" (p. 95) and "sympeance" for "significance" (p. 132). Neither of these two wild guesses are even words: Bold's transcription would appear to be accurate, judging by context. One is tempted to give MacDiarmid the benefit of the doubt overall, for a number of typographical errors can be found in Kerrigan's critical apparatus, e.g., Virgil's *Aeniad* (p. 97), the Scots word "Ooutside" (p. 133), and the word "civies" (p. xx), correctly transcribed as "civvies" in the text (p. 12).

Kerrigan never explains what "myths" her presentation is helping to dissolve, but she does succeed in setting the context within which MacDiarmid lived and wrote. She has tracked down innumerable references in the letters to authors, periodicals, titles, organizations and so on, and in fact her annotations are evidence of a considerable amount of thorough, painstaking research on her part. On the other hand, there are some questionable assertions, such as her claim that Edward II raised an army of "1,000,000 men" to fight Bruce at Bannockburn (p. 15)—who on earth was minding the store? And referring to a statement by MacDiarmid about "ultra-modern experiments in English for which I cannot find a publisher" (p. 113), she agilely leaps to the conclusion that this is a "clear" reference to experiments in "synthetic English" published many years later.

In general, Kerrigan's powers of analysis are not on the same level as her ability to unearth information. Editorial interventions such as "War is inglorious death, apocalyptic destruction, the severing of the links between the human and the natural worlds" (p. xxiv) mean little and add less to our understanding of MacDiarmid. And what are we to make of statements such as "Of the fact that MacDiarmid had an intense inner life, there can be little doubt. He could never have produced poetry of such poignancy without that essential element" (p. xxxii), or "MacDiarmid's literary repu-

tation is secure, it will not rest on his letters alone" (p. xxxiii), or "...MacDiarmid was also capable of an ironic detachment, something which saved him from the excesses of discipleship" (p. 27)? Regrettably, Kerrigan rarely offers more profound critical insight than this.

In conclusion, then, for those who wish to examine an interesting and illuminating series of correspondence by a major modern Scottish poet and cultural figure, there is now a choice of two unsatisfactory transcriptions: Bold's, which omits some letters, offers relatively scanty annotations, and is "silently corrected"; and Kerrigan's, which provides all the letters and a wealth of background information, but is substantially flawed as indicated. The way remains clear for the production of a carefully edited, well-documented critical edition of MacDiarmid's letters. In the meantime, though, the poet's accounts of his passions, interests and struggles, however imperfectly reproduced, still manage to speak for themselves.

JOHN BAGLOW  
*Ottawa*

*Longer Scottish Poems: Volume One 1375-1650.* Eds. Priscilla Bawcutt and Felicity Riddy. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. 1987. xxiii + 423 pp.

Contents: Barbour, *Bruce*, I 477-II 194; XII 1-334; James I, *Kingis Quair*, 127-518; Holland, *Buke of the Howlat*; Haye, *Alexander Buik*, 16101-16310; Rauf Coilyear; Henryson, *Fables* selections (*The Two Mice*, *The Lion and the Mouse*, *The Fox, the Wolf and the Cadger*), *Testament of Cresseid*; Dunbar, *The Thrissill and the Rois*, *The Goldyn Targe*, *The Tretis of the Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*; Douglas, *Eneados* Prologues VII, XIII; Lindsay, *Squyer Meldrum*, 849-1516; Scott, *The Justing and Debait up at the Drum*; Montgomerie, *Flyting Betwixt Montgomerie and Polwart* selection (*Answer to Polwart*); Hume, *Of the Day Estivall*; Drummond of Hawthornden, *Tearis on the Death of Moeliades*; General Introduction, Introductions to individual authors, selective list of further readings, notes, glosses at foot of page.

Surely there is no more thankless task than the compilation of an anthology. Everyone has his own ideas about what should, and should not, be included so that the editor's selections will always be objected to, and the editing, annotating, and glossing of texts comprises an extremely long and arduous process whose difficulty is rarely appreciated by the anthology's readers. In addition to mastering textual and linguistic complexities



for many different works, anthologizers must also steep themselves in these works' bibliographies and criticism. Finally, because anthologies are usually directed at the widest possible audience, compilers frequently find themselves in the unenviable position of either simplifying, and thus misrepresenting, complex issues or providing explanations *per ignotum ignotius*. Unfortunately, even with all extenuating circumstances considered, this anthology is unsatisfactory.

First, and most obviously, the concept of an anthology of longer poems, whether Scottish or not, would seem to be inherently unworkable. Long poems cannot be anthologized precisely because they are long. Thus, what this anthology provides us with are complete texts for poems of moderate length, e.g., *Testament of Cresseid*, *Buke of the Howlat*, *Rauf Coilyear*, and fragmentary excerpts from some longer poems, e.g., under 700 lines from the *Bruce*, under 400 lines from *The Kingis Quair*; inexplicably, the editors fail to provide any but the sketchiest description of the context from which the excerpts are taken. As the editors themselves recognize ("any selection from so varied and episodic a work [as the *Kingis Quair*] is likely to give a false impression of the whole," p. 26), long works cannot be adequately represented by relatively brief selections, and the caveat concerning the *Kingis Quair* applies with even greater force to the more episodic, if less varied, *Bruce* and *Alexander Buik*.

Second, there is a disturbing absence of any sense of audience for this anthology. Any book which is "designed to be as accessible as possible to new readers" and is also "designed for scholars," is not likely to satisfy either, and this volume is replete with material which one group or the other will find simplistic, unintelligible, or both. For example, it is difficult to imagine a reader who would benefit from the note which informs him that "Cupid, the god of love, was traditionally represented as an archer," (p. 379), or the gloss that renders *plesance* as *happiness*.

The absence of any serious consideration of audience is typical of the anthology generally. For example, nowhere are we given a clear statement as to the principles the editors have utilized in making their selections. The editors tell us that "longer poems" are poems of more than 200 lines in length, but they immediately add that there are two exceptions, Dunbar's *Thrissill and the Rois* and Drummond's *Moeliades*. They say that they "wished to display both the chronological range and the variety of styles and genres in Scottish poetry at this time" (p. xvi), yet we have no religious material, no Arthurian romance, no saint's life, and no framed narrative. Among the most glaring omissions are Hary's *Wallace*, *Lancelot of the Laik*, *Golagros and Gawain*, *Colkelbie's Sow*, *King Hart*, *The Thre Preistis of Peblis*, and the *Sevin Sages*, to mention only a few. The editors' regret at having to exclude several of these works would be more under-

standable were it not for their inclusion of three of Henryson's *Fables* as well as Dunbar's *Thrissill and the Rois*, *Goldyn Targe*, and *Tretis of the Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* (but not the *Flying*). Perhaps the most peculiar choice of all is the inclusion of *Eneados* Prologues VII and XIII as the sole representatives of Gavin Douglas, ignoring both the text of *Eneados* and the *Palice of Honour*. Clearly, accessibility is not a primary consideration, since the poems by Henryson and Dunbar, for example, are readily available elsewhere; nor, as we have seen, do the editors seem to wish to illustrate the variety of extant longer Scottish poems. Thus, one can only wonder what principles of selection the editors have employed.

Finally, we are informed that the texts are "freshly edited," but a comparison of several passages from the *Kingis Quair* selection with the John Norton-Smith edition and the *Testament of Cresseid* with the Denton Fox edition revealed no textual differences of any significance. Why then were these texts at least reedited? As for the apparatus, the thicket of glosses at the foot of each page makes finding a particular gloss an unnecessarily tedious process, the notes vary in both utility and sophistication, and although the introductory material might be useful to the neophyte, the large number of brief references to works not included in the anthology can only be confusing. Uncertain in conception and inadequate in execution, this anthology is a grave disappointment.

WALTER SCHEPS  
SUNY Stony Brook

*Longer Scottish Poems: Volume Two 1650-1830.* Eds. Thomas Crawford, David Hewitt, and Alexander Law. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. 1987. xi + 402 pp.

Contents: Selections from William Cleland, Elizabeth Wardlaw, Allan Ramsay, James Thomson, David Mallet, William Hamilton of Bangour, Alexander Ross, Adam Skirving, John Skinner, James Beattie, Robert Fergusson, John Mayne, Charles Keith, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, James Hogg, William Tennant; General Introduction, Introductions to individual authors, selective lists of further readings, notes, glosses at foot of page.

This carefully chosen anthology performs two major services to eighteenth-century scholars. Such widely acknowledged classics as Robert Fergusson's "Auld Reikie" are routinely excluded from less specialized eighteenth-century anthologies on grounds of length as well as dialect. So

the editorial focus on long narrative poems (excluding the shorter Scots lyrics often given token space in general eighteenth-century anthologies) allows several neglected classics to be made newly available—not only in the sense of being brought back into "guid black" paperback print, but in being made newly accessible by the editors' informative headnotes and glosses.

The second service is the context this volume provides for making a judgment about the width and depth of Scots poetry during the "long" century. While some of the texts included (Thomson's "Winter"; Beattie's "The Minstrel"; excerpts from Scott's "Marmion") are to be found in many literary anthologies, they greatly benefit by being read in terms of each other and in terms specifically "Scottish." By reading in these terms and by putting together the vernacular and "English" (i.e., anglo-Scots) writers often kept rigidly apart in discussion of eighteenth-century Scottish poetry, it becomes clear how attentively Scots poets read each other's works. The intertextual references multiply as the volume progresses, as when an image from a midcentury "brawl" poem by John Skinner ("Like bumbees bizzing frae a bike") turns up as a mock-epic digression in Burns's "Tam o'Shanter." And while Burns's tendency to operate as a veritable literary echo-chamber is already well known, the many intertextual moments in Ramsay, Thomson, Fergusson, Ross, Beattie and Scott will surprise readers used to considering vernacular and anglo-Scottish poets as antagonistic groups.

The selections include seven long poems by Fergusson, seven by Burns, and four by Ramsay (which do not show Ramsay at his best: i.e., the shorter epistolary and mock-elegiac forms that are excluded by the editors). From the earliest texts (William Cleland's "Hallow my Fancie" and Elizabeth Wardlaw's "Hardyknute") to the final entries by Hogg, Scott and Tennant (represented by the First Canto of "Anster Fair"), the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scots poets repeatedly strike the visionary poses we associate with Romanticism, though they themselves seem to have associated such poses with their "Scottishness." The visionary element is strong in "Winter," in Ross's "Helenore," in Burns's (and Ramsay's) "The Vision," and in Beattie's "The Minstrel" (whose nature-seeking hero—a "stripling, wrapped in wonder"—offers a faint intimation of Wordsworth). Scott's "Marmion" is not a break with but a continuation of the traditional tendency among Scots poets to link topography and feelings, receptivity to landscape with moral "education":

From me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask  
The classic poet's well-conned task?  
Nay, Erskine, nay—on the wild hill  
Let the wild heathbell flourish still;

Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,  
But freely let the woodbine twine.

Indeed, while Scott looks back to a native "Scots" tradition and to Burns (the woodbine image recalls Burns's "The Vision") he also—in such works as "Eve of St. John"—looks forward to Keats's eroticized neo-medievalism and beyond the purely local.

Finally, the chief value of this well-focused and clearly annotated collection may be how clearly it shows Scots writing (both vernacular and English) as raising issues central not only to literary history but to what we post-Romantic literary consumers expect of poets and their poems. This collection is far from parochial, either in the texts it gathers or the issues it raises.

CAROL MCGUIRK  
*Florida Atlantic University*

Caroline Macafee and Iseabail MacLeod, eds. *The Nuttis Schell: Essays on the Scots Language Presented to A J Aitken*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1986. xviii + 247 pp.

This volume of nineteen essays honoring the distinguished historical lexicographer and linguist Adam Jack Aitken offers a very rich measure of recent work in Scots language study and demonstrates the Olympian contributions of Aitken to this field. One would search long to find a comparable figure whose footsteps are so ever present and whose work is so synonymous with the development of a field of study. The study of Scots today is well nigh inconceivable without him. Readers most familiar with his work as Sir William Craigie's successor as Editor of the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (DOST)*, a position he held for thirty years, may find it surprising that he is esteemed almost equally as highly in linguistics for his ground-breaking work in stylistic analysis, computer applications, and historical phonology; in fact, in this last field he has the honor of a vowel pronunciation rule that he analyzed becoming designated "Aitken's Law".

The fundamental result of assembling these essays (and surely a central goal of the editors) is to show how very wide a range of scholarship relies on Aitken's publications, ideas, and inspiration. Macafee, whose introductory essay (pp. 1-13) surveys Aitken's career and contributions with a delightful blend of anecdote and adept insight, summarizes his influence well: "[Aitken] has turned the first sod in many areas of Scots studies, not only in the [Older Scots] period; and over a remarkable range of topics he has established an orthodoxy or at least a starting point for subsequent

work" (1). To show this, Macafee examines Aitken's influential work in phonology, lexicology, syntax, stylistics, the discussion of the sociology and identity of Scots as a minority language and its status and role in the schools, and in several other areas as well before turning to how Aitken carried forth and broadened Craigie's vision of a comprehensive dictionary that we know today as *DOST*.

The great value of *DOST*, according to Macafee, has been in "the securing of the past [which] is especially important in a country like Scotland, a nation without being a state, whose unity exists mainly in a shared historical identity and through the institutions of civil society" (11). This view is abundantly confirmed throughout the present volume, in the essays on Modern Scots as well as, more predictably, those on lexicography and Older Scots. This is as it should be, given the encyclopedic nature of *DOST*. It is the complete record of Scots until 1600 (not just of what differed from the English of the period or the record of Scots once the English element is subtracted from it), and the most extensive record of Scots as it differed from English between 1600 and 1700.

The section on Lexicography has three essays: "Scottish lexicography" by David Murison, "A re-editing of GIF" by the current staff of *DOST*, and "CSD as a tool for linguistic research" by Mairi Robinson. Murison, Aitken's counterpart as editor of the *Scottish National Dictionary (SND)*, provides a historiographical survey of the precursors to the modern-day *SND/DOST* projects, a survey that begins with Andrew Duncan's Latin-Scots glossary of 1595, focuses particularly on Jamieson, Murray, and Warrack, and emphasizes the prominence of Scotsmen in the development of British lexicography.

Readers need not accept the commendations of Aitken's work on *DOST* offered by this reviewer and this volume's editors only. The present *DOST* editors provide in their entry on *gif* [give] a sample entry that is based on the Craigie-collected material but swells to 27 pages by incorporating additional material collected under Aitken's watch, particularly under the second reading program he initiated in 1952. The reworked, expanded entry also exemplifies the improvements in editorial practice introduced during the Aitken years.

Robinson's essay may be the most exciting in the book, not because of her appealing, detailed suggestions for using the *Concise Scots Dictionary* (1985, edited by her) for semantic, orthographic, dialectal, and other research, but because she announces that this magnificent one-volume dictionary (which incorporates unpublished *DOST* material through the end of the alphabet) is now available in computer-readable format, "the only complete Scots dictionary available at the moment in electronic form"

(50). One hopes that students at Scottish universities, if not elsewhere as well, have already begun to mine this resource.

The Older Scots section of papers best displays the many directions of Scots language research in the late 1980s, with essays on orthography (Alex Agutter), etymology (Priscilla Bawcutt), authorship study (Denton Fox), dialect geography (Angus McIntosh), literary representation outside Scotland (Hans H. Meier), and computer teaching of Scots (Arne Zettersten).

Agutter's chapter, "A taxonomy of Older Scots orthography," one of the volume's more technical ones, is a search for spelling regularities in OSc (which "seems to have had a more or less standardized orthography"), a search undertaken by the author's proposing a taxonomy that "classif[ies] spellings in terms of their relationship to sound changes" (76). Bawcutt's "Dunbar: New light on some old words" seeks to vindicate the fifteenth-century poet as a "precise and discriminating user of words" (94) through illuminating "some dark passages" in his work by weaving together material from *DOST*, the *OED*, and other lexicographical sources. Fox's "*DOST* and evidence for authorship: Some poems connected with *Ratis Raving*," an eager effort to discover who the author of the fifteenth-century moral poem may have been, concludes that *DOST* "throws light readily enough" for the question to be "answered with a wary and guarded affirmative" (103). McIntosh's "The Middle English and Scots equivalents of 'hence,' 'thence' and 'whence'" is a study primarily of methodological interest, articulating principles for establishing as precisely as possible the geographical domain of a given linguistic form and the place of origin of Middle English texts, while Meier's "Past presences of Older Scots abroad" surveys seven representations of Scots from Chaucer's *The Reeve's Tale* to Percy's *Reliques*, pointing out that Shakespeare in *Henry V* has "the fatal restriction of what is now considered [Scots] dialect to low characters" (119) while having a serious Scottish figure like Macbeth speak no Scots at all. Meier credits Percy, who knew no Scots, with acquainting many readers, especially Scott and the German Romantics, with genuine Scots words and enhancing the image of Scots speakers. Zettersten's "Teaching Middle Scots by computer" is a brief exemplification of six types of exercises that he has devised for instructing students of the language through a microcomputer.

The nine essays in the Modern Scots section present a very different mix of topics but an equal feast to readers. These include a study of attitudes toward Scots in the schools (Richard W. Bailey), personal reminiscences of childhood language play (David Daiches), traditional ethnolinguistic analyses (of harvesting and cultivation in the Northeast by Alexander Fenton, of community life by Margaret A. MacKay), computer-based

grammatical analyses (John Kirk), lexical studies (of 18th-century food terminology by Iseabail Macleod, of Scandinavian loanwords for hand measurements by Karl Inge Sandred), a literary study of three of Douglas Young's translations by J. Derrick McClure, and a sociolinguistic study of Glasgow vocabulary by Caroline Macafee. Only three of these will space allow us to discuss further.

Bailey's "Teaching in the vernacular: Scotland, schools, and linguistic diversity" and Macafee's "Language and modern life: Notes from Glasgow" are the most provocative chapters in the section. Both deal with significant public issues. Bailey documents how 18th-century middle and professional classes acquiesced in and promoted the extinction of Scots in public life and in the schoolroom, creating attitudes that have closed rather than opened doors for vernacular-speaking children and have thus finally demonstrated their bankruptcy in the late twentieth century. Bailey believes this means that now Scottish "schools can prepare today's children in a way that will contribute to the economic and cultural future of the nation" (140). Macafee's study appears at first to be an analysis of vocabulary differences between generations in Glasgow, based on a sociolinguistic survey of 65 speakers covering five age groups, but it turns out to be much more—a study of how older Glaswegians have gradually lost much of their Scots vocabulary as the status of Scots items has declined under the forces of Modernism, which, Macafee says, has given us a "culture of innovation" that "devalues the past" (191).

John Kirk's "The heteronomy of Scots with Standard English" is a quantitative and comparative study of the distributions and semantics of modal verbs (*have got, must, may, etc.*) in Scots and English, utilizing computer-based corpora for his analysis (the London-Lund and Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen corpora for English, his own corpus of Scots consisting of six dramatic texts, one in "Traditional Scots," the others in "Glasgow Scots"). Richly illustrative in citations and impressively thorough in exposition, Kirk exemplifies the type of basic comparative research necessary before questions of the degree of autonomy Scots has from English can be responsibly addressed.

One must compliment Aberdeen University Press for a superb job of producing this volume, which includes the attractive reproduction of photographs, phonetic transcription, and musical notation. Special praise is due to the editors for assembling a collection that evinces Aitken's work as well as any volume short of one by Aitken himself could (and one devoutly hopes that more than one of the latter will be forthcoming soon). The copyediting is capably done, except for a clustering of typographical errors in Bailey's essay (e.g., *linguistic* is spelled *lingusitic* on pages 132 and 137,

*imminent* as *immanent* on 142, and *vernacular* as *venacular* in the running heads for the chapter).

The papers gathered in this volume thus run a gamut from fairly technical linguistic studies to essays on Scottish folklife, all of which are accessible to general readers and show in particular how richly the work of lexicographers, those "harmless drudges," illuminates a nation's understanding of its present and past. No volume on Scots can escape touching on political issues concerning the status of the language. The present essays are by no means uniformly optimistic about its future livelihood, but the overall effect of this volume is to substantiate the strength of the Scots language, not by the type of polemics that confronts these issues head-on—the type so often found in discussions of Scots—but through the quiet, indeed stealthy, revelation of the resources and resourcefulness of the language. Anyone who knows Jack Aitken realizes how faithfully this achievement mirrors the man. In sum, these essays show that a full range of scholarly and popular issues confronts contemporary students of Scots, of whom Aitken is most assuredly the paragon; furthermore, they demonstrate the maturity of the field and the promise that many of these issues will continue to warrant discussion, thanks in good measure to the course set by Jack Aitken.

MICHAEL B. MONTGOMERY  
*University of South Carolina*

Alasdair MacIntyre. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 1988. 410 pp.

From Hobbes to Rawls, Enlightenment liberalism employs a concept of reason which presumes that custom, prejudice, and tradition are without authority unless proven otherwise, and where to prove otherwise is to show that custom conforms to a principle which is framed in a vacuum untainted by custom. In *After Virtue* MacIntyre argued that this modern liberal conception of reason is incoherent and deeply self-deceptive. Principles purged of all custom are entirely empty and, logically, may appear to confirm or disconfirm any act or institution. What acts or institutions are in fact confirmed will be determined entirely by the unacknowledged operation of custom and prejudice (though it will be displayed as the work of reason operating independent of custom). Hence, the massive self-deception and incoherence of liberal moral thought. This would not be so bad if liberalism issued in conclusions that in fact guided action. But it does not. Our condition, according to MacIntyre, is that we have inherited frag-



ments of conflicting traditions: the cultural debris left over from three centuries of attack on tradition by modernity. It is this fragmentary character of moral thinking that explains the inconclusiveness and antinomic character of contemporary liberal moral and political debate, policy, and education.

MacIntyre concludes that rationality itself must be viewed as tradition-laden and that the liberal attempt to frame a tradition-neutral position is incoherent and self-deceptive. If so, what can it mean to say that one tradition is rationally superior to another? For it would appear that if reason is tradition-laden, rational criticism between traditions would be impossible. The main problem of MacIntyre's new book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* is to show how criticism between traditions is possible. MacIntyre grants that relativism does hold among traditions that have not developed the self-consciousness which turns a tradition into a form of dialectical inquiry. This occurs when a tradition begins to test its founding texts and dogmas against its ongoing experience. When this level of development has been achieved, a tradition may experience what MacIntyre calls an "epistemological crisis" in which the fundamental standards of rationality which constitute the tradition are thrown into question.

To overcome such a crisis a tradition must develop within itself new concepts which can (1) solve the problems to which the crisis gave rise; (2) explain why the crisis occurred; and (3) show how the new concepts and understanding are continuous with the fundamental principal texts and founders of the tradition. Failure to satisfy these conditions can result in a loss of confidence in the tradition. At this point the tradition may view an alien tradition in a new light and may see that it has resources for handling (1) and (2). In that case, the partisans of the tradition will be forced to acknowledge the superiority of the alien tradition. A tradition can be said to be rationally superior to another if it has defeated the other in an epistemological crisis.

It is not possible here to do justice to the range and depth of MacIntyre's account of how traditions themselves can be forms of rational inquiry without there being standards of rationality independent of all tradition. It is an account that comes to terms with contemporary philosophical debate about rationality, the nature of conceptual schemes, foundationalism, and the possibility of translation from one conceptual scheme to another. MacIntyre's account of these things, however, is quite different from the form such discussion usually takes, which is that of a debate between latter-day partisans of liberal Enlightenment who argue for a tradition-independent, neutral notion of rationality and "post-modern" thinkers who deny a tradition-independent notion of rationality but are incapable of being at home in any actual tradition. Post-modern thinkers from Niet-

zsche to Derrida, though they argue against the Enlightenment conception of reason, are really the inverted mirror image of it. In contrast to the rootlessness of modern and post-modern thought, MacIntyre argues that reason must have a home in an actual tradition, and it is clear as the book develops that his own thinking is rooted in the Thomistic tradition.

To show how tradition-laden inquiry operates, MacIntyre tells the story of three traditions of inquiry: one which runs from Homer to Aristotle and later passes through Arab and Jewish writers to Albertus Magnus and Aquinas; one which is transmitted from the Bible through Augustine to Aquinas; and one which carries the Scottish moral tradition from Calvinistic Aristotelianism to its encounter with Hume. This narrative which takes up three-fourths of the book shows how epistemological crises arise in traditions; how new concepts are invented or borrowed from alien traditions to resolve them; how some traditions were without resources to handle these crises; and how they perished or were absorbed by superior traditions.

Readers of this journal will be especially interested in the five chapters on the Scottish moral and theological tradition with its Calvinist and Aristotelian roots; how it confronted modernity through the moral philosophy of Hutcheson; how Hume lost confidence in his Scottish theological and moral roots; how he worked to subvert that tradition and to find a place for himself in the emerging order of English liberalism. The Scottish tradition ends with the tradition-neutral "common sense" philosophy of Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart (a position foreshadowed by Hutcheson and Hume) which brought the Scottish tradition finally in line with modernity and a form of liberalism more rigorously expressed by Bentham and Kant. Students of Scottish culture will find much to think about in this account. For one thing MacIntyre enables us to view the Scottish evangelical tradition in a new light (a central achievement of which is the jurisprudence of Lord Stair). This tradition has been largely eclipsed by emphasis on the "Scottish Enlightenment" and the "moderate clergy." The latter are viewed as a source of light in the Church in opposition to the evangelical clergy of the "popular party." This exercise in Enlightenment ideology loses much of its force, however, against the background of MacIntyre's criticism of Enlightenment liberalism.

Where is one to find resources for a criticism of liberalism and a defense of a tradition-laden conception of reason? MacIntyre acknowledges a great debt to Cardinal Newman, although he does not discuss Newman's contribution. Beyond that he finds nothing in modern thought that is helpful. The reason is that Enlightenment liberalism is so firmly entrenched in modern society as to make serious criticism virtually impossible: "the contemporary debates within modern political systems are al-

most exclusively between conservative liberals, liberal liberals, and radical liberals. There is little place in such political systems for the criticism of the system itself, that is, for putting liberalism in question" (392). But here MacIntyre exaggerates. The problem of tradition is, after all, a modern problem, and so we must look primarily to modern critics of modernity for its solution. MacIntyre sees no value in Hume's and Burke's criticism of the Enlightenment and their defense of the autonomy of custom. There is no mention of T. S. Eliot who was influenced by Newman and was engaged in a project similar to MacIntyre's. Missing also is any reference to Eric Voegelin or his monumental *Order and History*. Voegelin was a philosopher who, like MacIntyre, conceived of tradition as a form of rational inquiry and of political order itself as symbolic of reality.

Failure to recognize the modernity of his own critique and to locate it in a tradition of modern critiques of modernity gives the book a solitary and eccentric air which may turn many away. Except for Newman, there are no modern comrades in the book. This is unfortunate because, for those with an eye to see it, MacIntyre has presented us with the deepest criticism of Enlightenment liberalism yet written by a contemporary philosopher.

DONALD LIVINGSTON  
Emory University

Robert Burns. *Liebe und Freiheit: Lieder und Gedichte*, zweisprachig. [*Love and Liberty: Songs and Poems*, bilingual edition.] Ed. Rudi Camerer, with Rosemary Selle, Horst Meller and Joachim Utz. Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1988. 359 pp., with 153 illustrations and music. [Sammlung Weltliteratur. Series: Lyrik der englischsprachigen Welt, 1.]

German translations of Burns outnumber the translations into any other language; most of them, however, belong to the nineteenth century and are no longer accessible or readable. Rudi Camerer's handsome new bilingual edition comes fourteen years after a major East German translation (*Robert Burns: Gedichte und Lieder*, tr. Helmut T. Heinrich, ed. John B. Mitchell [Berlin/Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1974]) and must be measured against it. Both editions try to go back beyond the Biedermeier snugness of the earlier German image of Burns; both stress Burns's achievement as a writer of songs and an advocate of man's liberty and equality. Mitchell sees in Burns "a direct forerunner of an important development in revolutionary-democratic and socialist literature, a development that reaches from Walt Whitman to Sean O'Casey" (p. 32), while

the West German editors draw a parallel between Burns's days of pre-industrialism and the French Revolution on the one hand, and the close of our own war-torn century and the present third industrial revolution on the other, and conclude that Burns's ideal of "liberal humanity" has lost neither its urgency nor its attraction (p. 9).

In contrast to former generations of Germans to whom a knowledge of Burns was an obvious cultural asset, contemporary German readers—including students of English literature—often need to be fundamentally initiated into his work and its context. Camerer is aware of this and not only presents us with a selection of the original texts and their translation but also furnishes a basic introduction to Burns's life and time and the relevant literary traditions; moreover, the book offers an ample choice of engravings of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Like the East German edition, *Liebe und Freiheit* also includes the tunes to the songs, and even adds the chords for guitar accompaniment in the appendix. The bibliography has sections on Burns in German music and on German sound recordings of Burns's songs (one record is by the main editor himself). Furthermore, there is a selection of the poet's letters, and an essay on the German reputation of Burns (by Rosemary Selle, author of "The Parritch and the Partridge: The Reception of Robert Burns in Germany: A History," phil. diss., University of Heidelberg, 1981). Camerer's edition is thus much more richly documented than the East German edition by Mitchell and Heinrich, which, in turn, contains three times as many poems (albeit without the original texts).

In his informative and balanced introduction Camerer does not consider the most recent research but largely depends on established studies, James Currie and Hans Hecht for Burns's life, David Daiches, Thomas Crawford and David Craig for criticism, H. G. Graham, R. H. Campbell and H. W. Meikle for the historical and social context. There are very few factual errors or misprints (such as Sterling for Stirling, the city, p. 32), but occasionally the conciseness of the presentation leads to distortions. A notable case in point is the survey of the older Scottish literary tradition. Thus, while it is certainly true that the song has always occupied a prominent position in Scottish poetry, it is somewhat misleading to quote Henryson and Dunbar as major exponents of this genre (p. 34); equally beside the point is the description of Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd* as a pastoral comedy that "makes occasional use of 'Scotticisms'" (p. 34). On the other hand, Camerer aptly defines Burns's place in the contemporary literary and social context; he gives an unprejudiced examination of both the Scottish and English roots of Burns's poetry and illuminatingly characterizes the poet's varied linguistic registers and their aesthetic functions.

The blurb states the editors' intention to present the essential Burns, to consider all the major facets of his poetry, and to show that "Burns has remained so modern that even today we can recognize in him our contemporary." As the number of songs and poems in this book amounts to just one tenth of the complete works, particular interest falls on the selection of texts. Only a few poems are included that one would easily dispense with: given the scarcity of space at the editors' disposal it is arguable whether "A Penitential Thought, in the Hour of Remorse" (p. 66), "To Alexander Findlater" (p. 176) or "The Gardener wi' His Paidle" (p. 184) are really among Burns's best and most representative works. The omissions, on the other hand, are more serious. Any Burns selection, particularly one that emphasizes the importance of the songs, must be considered deficient when it leaves out "The Banks o' Doon," "Ca' the Yowes," "The Lea Rig" or "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut"; the absence of some of the longer poems, "Death and Dr. Hornbook," "The Holy Fair" or "Halloween," also raises the question of just how much of the essential Burns has found its way between the covers of this book. The cantata "Love and Liberty," which serves as the title for Camerer's selection, is not included in its entirety but only represented by two songs (pp. 140, 144). Obviously some of the omissions are the result of commercial considerations, although in a book of this scale the number of pages should not be the only criterion of its marketability. In the case of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," a poem much cherished by nineteenth-century readers both in Britain and Germany, the allegedly limited modern appeal has barred its entry into this selection; the poem is described as "rather artificial and less convincing from a poetical point of view" (p. 311), although its treatment by Daiches, Keith, Crawford and other modern critics of Burns shows that the poem is once more coming into favor. (Incidentally, "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is not included in the East German edition by Mitchell and Heinrich, either.)

Having scanned *what* the reader is offered (or denied) in Camerer's edition, the crucial question is *how* Burns is presented to the German reader. One particularity of *Liebe und Freiheit* is that it is not a completely new rendering of Burns's works into German by one hand; the editors have winnowed the mass of earlier translations, keeping felicitous passages from various sources and replacing less successful ones, so that many poems acknowledge two or three translators, whose individual shares, however, are not documented. On the whole, no attempt has been made to find a German dialect equivalent for Scots, although there is one piece in nineteenth-century Low German ("Tibbie Dunbar," translated by Klaus Groth as "O wullt mi ni mit hebbn?," p. 181) and one in an Upper German dialect ("Song" ["The Mauchline Belles"], translated by Gustav

Legerlotz and Uli Zähringer as "Die Scheene vo Mauchline," p. 81). These two songs strike the reader as oddities in a volume of otherwise High German translations, and it is left unexplained why they were chosen rather than samples from the much superior Swiss German translation by August Corrodi or from any of the other German dialect versions the volume mentions in its appendix (p. 318). A different matter is the translations and adaptations by nineteenth-century German poets, notably Ferdinand Freiligrath and Theodor Fontane, that claim our attention as poems in their own right. Where their German versions differ too much from the original texts, as in Freiligrath's two adaptations of "Is there for honest poverty" (pp. 243-45), these are presented in facsimile along with new translations; otherwise their verses are reprinted integrally without any attempt at modernization (e.g., Freiligrath's translation of "To a Mouse," pp. 109-11, or Fontane's translation of "The Lively Lass o' Inverness," p. 255).

This mixture of old and new versions, High German translations and occasional adaptations into widely different dialects suggests a stylistic variety that Burns does not have in the original, whereas the differences between the major linguistic levels in Burns, those of Scots, Scots-English and conventional English poetic diction, are only rendered imperfectly. The folksiness of the Scots "Address to the Deil," for example, gets completely lost in Ruete's High German translation of 1890, which the editors reprint unmodified (pp. 127-33). "Herr Belial" for "auld Hangie" (*l.* 7), "Tückebold" (wily goblin) for "ye auld, snick-drawing dog" (*l.* 91), "Schwarzer" (black man) for "auld Cloots" (*l.* 115) or "alter Feind" (old Enemy) for "auld Nickie-ben" (*l.* 121) simply will not do; nor is "Durch deine Schuld" (by your guilt) an adequate translation of "by cantraip wit" (*l.* 64). The rhythmical quality of the verses

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,  
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain (*ll.* 55-56)

has no equivalent in the German lines:

Oft, müht die Bäu'rin sich auch schwer,  
Giebt's Butterfass nicht Butter her

which, retranslated, read: "Often, even if the farmer's wife toils heavily, / the butter churn doesn't / yield any butter"; "dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie" (*l.* 59) is far richer in connotation than the "Lieblingskuh" (pet cow) of the German version; and the formal (and slightly ungrammatical) lines:

Vor Gottes Thron du in den Scharen  
Der Engel kommen

retain nothing of the colloquial style of the original:

Ye did present your smoutie phiz  
'Mang better folk (*ll.* 99-100).

"Tam o'Shanter" is probably one of the most difficult of Burns's poems to translate; Camerer and Selle have tried a new version in which they make use of the older translations by Fiedler and Ruete. The result is, in places, quite satisfactory, but there are blemishes that mar the overall effect. The irony produced by the change of voices in the original poem, the shifts from the racy Scots of the narrator to the sententious Scots-English of the commentator, is absent from the translation, which wavers between the style of Fontane's ballad translations and modern colloquial German, though not in an attempt at getting close to Burns's stylistic variety but rather for want of inspiration: to translate "ae winsome wench and wawlie" (*l.* 168) by "ein knackiges Mädchen," "a souple jade" (*l.* 186) by "ein drahtiges Weibsbild" or, for that matter, "thy reverend grannie" (*l.* 179) by "deine Oma" and "she coft" (*l.* 180) by "sie kaufte...in bar" (cash!) is a sign of deplorable stylistic uncertainty; the clumsiness of the unidiomatic phrase "Kein Teufel kümmert ihn ein Rappen," with its unexpected Swiss connotation, for "Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle" (*l.* 110) is even surpassed by the bumpy couplet:

Särge standen wie Schränke herum  
Und zeigten Leichen in Totenkleidung

for

Coffins stood round, like open presses,  
That shawed the dead in their last dresses (*ll.* 125-26).

Several times the translators have experienced difficulties finding suitable rhymes (e.g. *ll.* 161-62: Hintern/Kinder, *ll.* 163/64: Krücken/trocken, *ll.* 205/06: Lohn/Höllenhuhn [whatever a "hell's chicken" may be!]; and occasionally wooden expletives are added to get around this difficulty:

In solcher Nacht, und das ist wahr [and that's the truth],  
Kein armer Sünder je draussen war.

And sic a night he taks the road in,  
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in. (*ll.* 71-72)

The above example points to the rhythmical problems of this translation, too: the steady iambic flow of the narrative, which Burns maintains even

in the passage of the witches' dance and chase of Tam, is interrupted again and again by the intrusion of extra syllables, so that there are dozens of anapests that create an effect of nervousness alien to the original. Heinrich's translation in the East German edition is far better in this respect and also avoids many of the other pitfalls of Camerer's version, so that it should be given preference.

Fortunately, not all the translations in *Liebe und Freiheit* are as unsatisfactory as the examples mentioned above. "Mary Morison," for example, in an amalgamated translation by Kaufmann, Bartsch and Camerer (p. 79), catches the tone of the original quite well; it echoes the "sprinkling" of Scots by the use of slightly antiquated expressions. "A Red, Red Rose," too, reads well in Camerer's revised version of the translation by Bartsch (p. 237), although "mein hübsches Kind" (my pretty child) for "my bonie lass" sounds somewhat condescending, and the other terms of endearment have been reduced in number (three instead of five). There are several items from *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*, all of which retain the raciness of the originals. Peter Pausch's version of "Is there for honest poverty" is excellent, and so is Fiedler's translation of "See the Smoking Bowl Before Us," revised by Rosemary Selle (pp. 145-47). "Holy Willie's Prayer," "The Tree of Liberty" and several other poems have been taken from Heinrich's translation, which, in all, is more homogenous and is by far the better choice if Burns is to be read in German without referring to the original. However, since the prospective reader of Burns's poetry in West Germany can be expected to have at least a working knowledge of English, Camerer's bilingual edition, which glosses the Scots words in the footnotes, will no doubt serve its purpose. The translations may be used as study aids for the original poems (although an exact prose paraphrase would have been better in this case). Some of the earlier translations have gained the status of classics and are therefore worth making available again. And the pleasant presentation of the poems and songs along with the tunes and background material may induce occasional readers to turn to Burns who would not perhaps have done so otherwise.

PETER ZENZINGER  
*Technische Universität Berlin*



The *Third Statistical Account of Scotland* is published by The Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, EH7 5JX, from whom full details of the volumes now available can be obtained.

In May 1790 Sir John Sinclair attended the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as a lay member and had the original idea of getting the parish ministers of Scotland to write detailed accounts of their parishes and the lives of the inhabitants. His aim was to produce a picture of what life was like for the people. He called the scheme a "Statistical Account," but by that he did not mean mere figures; what he was after was defined as "the quantum of happiness" of the people, and what he produced by 1797 was, as Professor Rosalind Mitchison, his biographer, has described as "the first detailed picture of a nation, parish by parish."

Sir John strove incessantly in these seven years, bombarding the ministers with hundreds of letters (he was lucky here, since as an M.P. he had the privilege of franking, or free postage), and even threatening the most recalcitrant with the military. The first volume appeared in 1791: the twentieth and last in 1797, the whole being in Sir John's words "to the credit of Scotland in general and of its clergy in particular." The result is not a tidy work: some parishes were scrappily done, and in others the parish minister let himself go on a favorite topic—the morals of his parishioners, the antiquities, ancient customs, conditions of farming or fishing. Odd details can be found in these volumes: "the people of Colmonell [in Ayrshire] are in general mild and docile, punctual in their observance of religious ordinances, and regular in their lives. At a distance from the public road and from strangers, clothes, when washing, are exposed at night without being watched." In the parish of Spynie, in Moray, the minister notes that neither turnips nor potatoes were known in the parish thirty years before "except a few in gardens." The account of Methven, in Perthshire, tells as if true the old story celebrated in a ballad of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray—"they were twa bonnie lassies." In Penicuik, Midlothian, the minister records that the church (of 1771 and still there) has a portico with the word "Bethel" well cut in Hebrew characters. In Kelso, Roxburgh, though "the mechanics in town generally eat meat for dinner, the labourers in town and country seldom do so; but one and all of them live much upon hasty pudding, and boiled potatoes with milk; without deviation they all breakfast or sup upon the one or the other." Higgledy-piggledy as the arrangement is—the accounts were gathered in volumes as they came in, and there is no index before the last volume—the feeling is one of life. This is how they lived, and how the parish ministers thought they thought at the end of the eighteenth century. The result is a storehouse of information for the historian, especially those

involved in local history or social and economic history, and a delight for the ordinary man or woman of today, who can in these pages get a glimpse of their ancestors' way of life.<sup>1</sup>

In 1832 the General Assembly of the Church took time off from its current problems of evangelicalism and theology and state interference, and decided to produce a *Second Statistical Account*, on lines roughly similar to the first one. Like its predecessor, it was carried out principally by the parish ministers—they enlisted help from knowledgeable locals when necessary—and the complete fifteen volumes appeared between 1834 and 1845. This *Second Statistical* is better organized than the earlier one, sticks fairly closely to answering a questionnaire, is full of all sorts of detailed information, but compared with Sir John Sinclair's volumes it tends occasionally to be rather dull. Of course, the best local stories may have been told in the Sinclair account. But still, a glance through the Ross and Cromarty volume, for example, throws up fascinating odds and ends of information—the wishing-well near Avoch, the superstitions of the fisherfolk of the Black Isle, the remarkable section on the zoology of Loch Broom with its foxes and badgers, salmon, grilse, and trout, and, off the coast, "prodigious shoals of herring." Another minister writes of those who have emigrated from Glenelg, who, "amidst the plenty which they enjoy in America...dwell there in a barren wilderness as to provision for their souls...and the Songs of Zion cease to be heard by the streams of the foreign land." Many nowadays have commented on the purity of speech to be found in Inverness itself: the ministers in the 1840s had no doubt about its origin: "the purity and correctness of their language, in particular, having been remarked since the residence of Cromwell's troops in Inverness, as superior, and but little affected by the broad common dialect of Scotland." All in all, the *Second Statistical* provides a good general picture of the industrial, agricultural and transport developments in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

The *Third Statistical Account of Scotland* was the brain-child of Mr. J. G. Kyd, then Registrar-General for Scotland, who suggested in 1944 that it would be valuable from the social point of view that there should be a parish by parish survey of post-war Scotland. Planning for the brave new world was then in the air, and a factual statement of conditions as they were could, in his opinion, be useful. A committee was set up in the following year, with Mr. (later Sir George) Laidlaw as chairman, with repre-

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<sup>1</sup>The First Statistical Account has recently been issued conveniently arranged according to counties and parishes. *The Statistical Account of Scotland. 1791-1799*. Ed. by Sir John Sinclair. A re-issue in 20 volumes. General editors D. J. Withrington and Ian R. Grant (1975-83).

sentatives from the Scottish universities and other interested bodies. The secretary was Mr. A. M. Struthers, Director of the Scottish Council of Social Service. This committee decided early that the gathering and editing of parish accounts by ministers and others should be done by members of the four universities, and the first volumes of the *Third Statistical* dealt with Fife, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and East Lothian, all by members of the universities associated with these areas. The work progressed fairly steadily until the early 1970s, by which time sixteen volumes had been published, but then a series of unexpected and unfortunate events hit the enterprise—the deaths of most of the original committee members, including the secretary, and the deaths or resignations of editors. All this came at a time when printing costs were rising, and it looked at one time that the series would remain incomplete. Thanks, however, to initiative from Dundee University and most enthusiastic local support, the three volumes of Angus, Dundee, and Perth and Kinross were published between 1977 and 1979, and, encouraged by the success of these volumes, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations undertook the task of publishing the remainder. (The Scottish Council of Social Service had changed its name by this time.)

Since most of the original texts of these parish accounts were written in the 1950s, they have had to be up-dated to take account of recent developments. The description of Shetland, for example, has to mention the enormous changes brought about by North Sea oil, and in other areas the spread of new methods in farming and the rise and fall of industrial enterprises and transport systems have to be recorded. The advent of television has affected the way of life.

What can the reader expect to find in the volumes of the *Third Statistical Account*? The earlier volumes contained, in addition to the parish accounts, general statements, complete with statistics for each county, but since the re-organization of local government in Scotland in 1975 such county statements have become irrelevant, and all the important information is now available for students from the large new regional authorities. The editor of each volume, however, is able in his introduction to provide a general picture of the development of his county area in recent years. The main emphasis, however, remains, as it did to old Sir John Sinclair in the 1790s, in the parish accounts, and these continue to reflect, in his words, the "quantum of happiness" of the Scottish people. Most of the contributions are by parish ministers, but some are by schoolmasters or other knowledgeable local persons who can be relied on to provide a well-balanced picture of their areas, and sometimes also indulge their private enthusiasms.

They follow a fairly generally accepted outline—physical basis, flora and fauna, historical background, population, agriculture and industries, churches, schools, public and social services, voluntary organizations, and way of life. Headings like these—and particularly the last—give the writers considerable freedom, and recent volumes have contained much that is fascinating and unusual.

Here are a few examples from these volumes. The writer from Temple (Midlothian), like those from South Uist and Kilmorack (Inverness), has gone to some length to list the birds seen at particular times in the neighborhood: some other accounts, obviously by keen fishers, speak of the occurrence and variety of fish. The writer from Forfar (Angus) relishes the local dialect, and gleefully says "To those who have the good luck to belong to 'tee Toonie,' the 'f' instead of the 'wh' at the beginning of a word comes naturally," and gives samples of local speech like "Fatten hoose is yours?" Notes on antiquities abound, some of them correcting statements given in the *First* and *Second Accounts*. There are, for example, descriptions of the Pictish stones at Aberlemno (Angus) and the relatively recently excavated Roman Camp at Inchtuthill (Perthshire). The Inverness volume contains such diverse items as the ceremony, observed until recent times, of the washing of blankets at Beauly, and the very important "Battle of the Braes," when the crofters of Skye stood up to the government in 1882. In the same book you can find a full description of the "guisers" at Hallowe'en in Kingussie, and a pretty complete history of Clan Cameron in the Kilmallie section. Details of churches and of church habits abound, and are most striking in those areas, mainly in the Highlands, where churches exist that have at one time or another split from the Church of Scotland. The Shetland volume illustrates not only the ancient links of the county with Norway, but also the great new oil terminal at Sullom Voe. In fact, pick up any of the published accounts and you will find in it some of the customs, history, oddities and habits of ordinary people, of plain folk as well as the great and good, and of a distinctly Scottish character.

The *Third Statistical Account* gives a unique picture of life in Scotland as it appeared to natives writing in the years after the Second World War. To students of social history, folklore and customs its value is obvious and must increase with the passing of the years. But it must also be vividly attractive to many who trace their roots to Scotland. The very place-names, and the lists of family names associated with the various districts, the illustrations of Highland and Lowland scenes, and the descriptions of a way of life may seem unusual to some readers, but to others may recall the manners and ideals of other places and other days. Its pages, too, are an indication to those unaware of the fact that Scotland remains a part of the

United Kingdom with its own peculiar traditions of manners, customs, interests, and achievements.

ALEXANDER LAW  
Edinburgh

William Donaldson. *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction and the Press*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1986. xii + 186 pp.

This is a very important book, based on wide-ranging research, and it gives a significantly different perspective on late-nineteenth century Scottish literary culture. The book is full of fresh and interesting material, even if its literary judgments are not above debate. For anyone interested in Scotland since 1850, it should be required reading.

Dr. Donaldson sets out to examine the institutions through which popular literature got into print, and the freshness of his approach lies in his focus on the burgeoning Scottish weekly newspaper press. The practical difficulties posed by such research are enormous; as he points out, the last decade or so has seen a quickening of interest in English newspapers, but "on the whole the Scottish Victorian press exists in a bibliographical wilderness" (p. x). By 1900, there were more than two hundred local newspapers appearing in Scotland, and few research sources can be dirtier to handle, more difficult to get hold of, more liable to disintegrate in the hand, or physically harder on the eyes; virtually none are adequately indexed. Dr. Donaldson considers a spread of some thirty-six papers from mainland Scotland and the northern isles, with particular emphasis on the Aberdeen *Free Press* (founded 1853) and the Leng group in Dundee, especially the *People's Journal* (founded 1858).

Dr. Donaldson characterizes these publications, not as newspapers in the modern sense—most were weeklies, and most had quite small news-gathering staffs—but as "an intriguing hybrid form...with many of the attributes of a popular literary miscellany" (p. ix). Against the now-traditional view of a London-dominated booktrade destroying or marginalizing Scottish fiction, Donaldson argues that the "major vehicle" of Scottish popular culture lay in a Scottish newspaper press, "owned, written and distributed within the country," becoming "the major locus of the imaginative life of the nation" (p. 148), and fostering "a vernacular prose revival of unprecedented proportions" (p. xii).

This argument, of course, differs greatly from the major previous study of popular culture, David Craig's *Scottish Literature and the Scottish*

*People 1680-1830* (1961), where Craig pictured the whole nineteenth century as a "draining-away" of Scottish culture caused by "the centralisation of journalism" in London (Craig, p. 280). Donaldson's study stands in contrast, also, to the rather self-serving dismissal of late-Victorian vernacularism by the proponents of the twentieth-century Scottish Renaissance. And Donaldson goes beyond the more recent rehabilitative studies of mid- and late nineteenth-century Scottish book-form fiction (notably the collections edited by Campbell and by Drescher and Schwend) in his new focus on newspapers and on material written for a wholly Scottish readership.

Dr. Donaldson fully establishes his case for the importance and extent of popular Scottish newspaper culture, and the book is especially good in sketching out the technical and economic developments in the newspaper industry that first enabled, and then constrained, late Victorian regional identity. Donaldson's revisionary perspective is of wide historical significance, for many of the major Scottish writers of the early twentieth century had their roots within this newspaper culture—George Douglas Brown's first publication, for instance, was in the *Ayrshire Post*, and writings of his also appeared in the *Ayr Advertiser* and the *Kilmarnock Standard*; as Dr. Donaldson notes, Lewis Grassie Gibbon began his career with the *Aberdeen Journal* and Hugh MacDiarmid worked for the *Montrose Review*.

The book is divided into four major chapters, with a short introduction and conclusion. The first, and most satisfactory, is institutional—a survey of the weekly newspaper phenomenon, with brief sketches of newspaper developments and editorial careers in Aberdeen and Dundee. The second examines the use of vernacular in the mid- and late-nineteenth century Scottish press, especially William Latto's Jock Clodpole and Tammas Bodkin papers for the *People's Journal*, and the socialist James Leatham's Archie Tait columns from the *Peterhead Sentinel*; Donaldson usefully points out that book-form reprints of such material often simplify the denser speech-patterns of the newspaper texts. The third chapter, about moral didacticism in mid-Victorian serial fiction, centers on David Pae, who produced for the Leng group some forty full-length novels which were widely syndicated in other newspapers. Donaldson uses extended summaries of Pae's *Jessie Melville* and *The Factory Girl, or the Dark Places of Glasgow* to argue that popular fiction explored the new urban Scotland. The fourth chapter is devoted to William Alexander, known to more conventional surveys for *Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk*, and here identified as the author of several other substantial works (one of which, *The Laird of Drammochdyle*, Donaldson has recently edited for its first separate publication). The brief conclusion discusses how the growth of syndication and the centralization of newspapers in the nineties undermined the weekly

press, and made way for the London-based Kailyard. In all four major chapters, Donaldson gives long and copious quotations, to give the flavor of material few other scholars will ever have read; even the best-informed reader will learn much from Donaldson's surveys.

Where the book is less satisfactory is in its literary analyses. Donaldson wants to argue that the material he has uncovered is not only of historical, but literary, significance, yet the extracts and plot summaries he provides hardly sustain the very positive thesis he presents. To the conventional literary judgment, such work as Pae's *Factory Girl*—episodic, improbable, melodramatic, moralistic—are simply bad, while the sketches by Latto and Alexander are pleasant, rather than compelling. Donaldson hasn't really refuted Craig's literary verdict against mid-Victorian Scotland simply by multiplying examples for the weekly press of the kind of thing Craig didn't like in book form.

It would require a different kind of critical analysis, a more modern kind, to demonstrate the imaginative centrality or cultural significance of such writing. The book's preoccupation with upsetting the traditional Scottish view of its period has blinkered it from reference to recent work on non-Scottish Victorian popular fiction; certainly the texts Donaldson describes, especially Chapter 3, would be susceptible to much more sophisticated readings, which could uncover the psychological structures and ideological contradictions that attracted the weekly newspapers' readership. One of the difficulties of the study is that there is no parallel book on the English weekly provincial press, so it is hard to know just how distinctive in technique or structure or ideology, rather than speech or setting, this Scottish newspaper fiction really was.

Even in the language chapter, Donaldson wins his case too easily. The Scottish Renaissance generation, if not their later academic followers, knew how extensive was late-Victorian writing in the vernacular, but they saw it as essentially non-serious—often a sentimental or clowning acceptance of current powerlessness, at best a linguistic freemasonry of the politically-dispossessed, in contrast with the linguistic and political reassertion of their own generation. Donaldson ignores, too, the analogous work done on class and regional dialect in English Victorian fiction (for instance, by Peter Keating or Martha Vicinus). Donaldson's catena of extracts and his appreciative comments on vividness or honesty cannot in themselves meet the searching questions raised both by the Renaissance critics and in the English context about the potentially marginalizing or evasive, as well as positive and liberating, effects of clothing ideological statement in distinctive speech-patterns rather than in the standardized grapholect.

So this book should be regarded as a pioneering survey, rather than a definitive account. The critical debate over interpreting this material is really only about to begin, and the reshaping of the wider literary-historical picture will depend on how that debate develops—what Donaldson presents as a Victorian cultural resurgence may in time appear to others simply as more widespread evidence of Scottish nineteenth-century cultural self-deception.

Whatever the eddies of critical judgment, Donaldson has provided the essential introduction by exploring the weekly press as a distinctive literary institution. This is an exciting book, which has opened up for scrutiny a whole new body of nineteenth-century Scottish writing, and it deserves the widest readership.

PATRICK SCOTT  
*University of South Carolina*

Alistair McCleery. *The Porpoise Press 1922-39*. Edinburgh: Murchison. 1988. vii + 102 pp.

Usually one thinks of the small press in this century as an enterprise devoted to producing finely printed books, or more usually pamphlets, with most or all of the production accomplished at the press itself. It is these presses which have done the most to keep alive the interest in hand-set printing, the use of elegant older fonts, printed on superior paper, and with particular attention to design. The print run is usually small, and the printing of subsequent editions of a given work highly unusual. Alistair McCleery points out in his study of the Porpoise Press that the owners of this publishing venture followed none of these "rules"—the closest they came was in the small number of copies produced of their poetry pamphlets, but this was caused by a lack of subscribers. The press did occasionally simultaneously publish limited signed editions on fine paper; of the total of 78 separate works published by the Porpoise Press, eleven were also published in numbered editions. McCleery does not say how it was determined which pamphlets were to be issued thus.

The Porpoise Press was conceived by Roderick Watson Kerr and George Malcolm Thomson while they were students at the University of Edinburgh. The press was set up as a partnership on November 1, 1922, between these two and John Gould, although Gould withdrew in December 1924. The idea behind the Porpoise Press was to make available to the Scottish public work by new authors—the press's announcement speaks of giving Scotland "an outlet on her own soil for imaginative liter-



ary work of every description" (p. 20), and to preclude Scots having to make a reputation through publication in London. Oddly enough, though, of the first four "broadsheets" published, three were not by Scots. The fledgling publishers had little knowledge of the world of book production; the title "broadsheets" applied to pamphlets of eight or more pages illustrates this.

These broadsheets, consisting of poetry and plays, ran through four series, with a total of thirty-four titles issued between 1922 and 1928. Printing was jobbed out—in the early days to William Hodge, then to the Riverside Press of Edinburgh, and finally, after the merger with Faber, to Robert Maclehose. Getting subscribers to the broadsheets was a problem, although McCleery mentions (p. 21) 250 as the number in the early days. There was trouble, too, in getting suitable manuscripts. The result was that of the five broadsheets issued in 1924, one was a translation of Ronsard, another a "space-filler" by Kerr himself.

With the departure of Kerr from Edinburgh, Lewis Spence (himself author of a Porpoise Press broadsheet in 1923) took over the running of the press temporarily in 1926, to be succeeded the following year by George Graves. By early 1929, with forty titles to its credit, it became evident that the Porpoise Press would have to join forces with a London publishing house if it was to survive. The English agents of the press had been Elkin Mathews and Marrot, but a deal was struck whereby Faber took over control of the Porpoise Press on April 1, 1930, and a Scot, George Blake (who had also produced a broadsheet in 1923), was placed in charge of it. Theoretically editorial control was to remain with the editors of the Porpoise Press, but, from the time that it moved to London, *de facto* control was in the hands of Faber, although McCleery does not report any unpleasant situations. The big change which came about, probably instigated by Faber, was a switch from poetry to prose.

In 1929 Neil Gunn had published *Hidden Doors* with Porpoise, and although disappointed by the move to London, he remained with them as publishers. In 1931 they brought out two books by Gunn: *The Grey Coast* and *Morning Tide*. The latter was an immediate success—it was published in January and reprinted that month, with a third impression called for in March; by 1946 it was in its tenth impression. The first two impressions bear only the Porpoise Press name, but in the third impression, although the title-page still reads Porpoise Press, the verso of the title-page lists both the Porpoise and Faber and Faber as publishers. The dust jacket of *Morning Tide* had a long life under Faber, the same one was in use in 1946 as in 1931 except for the text of the blurbs and the substitution of "Faber" for "The Porpoise Press."

Bibliographically the works of the Porpoise Press need study, although it is not the purpose of McCleery to do so. His book is a running history of the personalities involved in the founding of the Press and running it in Edinburgh and London until Faber finally dropped the imprint in 1928. In an Appendix McCleery lists the publications of the Press in chronological order, but he does not indicate when reprints were made. The earliest of these which I have seen is Marion Angus's *Sun and Candlelight* which was issued in October 1927, with a second impression in December of that year. Furthermore the impression was produced in two bindings.

When Faber took over publication of the imprint, things became a good deal more complicated for the scholar. In 1925 the editors decided to issue Scottish classics in fine editions, to be printed by Kynock Press—unfortunately the presswork did not live up to expectations, as McCleery points out (p. 37), and only two titles were produced—Robert Fergusson's *Scots Poems* and Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, both edited by Bruce Dickins. The 1925 *Testament* is from the period when the Porpoise Press was on its own, and so poses no problem. In 1931, the work was reprinted. This time the title-page was identical to the 1925 volume except for a two-line addition of the Faber imprint at the bottom of the page, but the cover (boards) gives only the Porpoise Press, and the dust jacket lists both firms. In 1943 Faber "revised and reset" the work and issued it again. Reset the book certainly had been, but I find no evidence of revision—the 1925 title-page reads "Edited Anew by Bruce Dickins," but to suggest that the 1943 state (it was actually a new edition) is a revision of either the 1925 or the 1931 state is misleading. The 1943 edition was reissued in 1947 without, as far as I can see, any further revision. But Faber were inconsistent in an inexplicable way. In 1937 they issued, with no mention of the Porpoise Press anywhere in the book, Alexander Montgomerie's *The Cherrie and the Slae*, edited by H. Harvey Wood who was at the University of Edinburgh, and who probably knew some of the Porpoise Press people. What is unexpected is the dust jacket which has "Porpoise Press" on the front and advertisements for Porpoise Press publications elsewhere. Nowhere on the entire dust jacket does the word "Faber" appear. One wonders how this book (which McCleery does not mention) should be treated.

A much more substantial book was the edition of William Dunbar's *Poems* edited by W. Mackay Mackenzie and published in 1931. Since this book came out a year *after* the Faber merger, one is surprised to find only the Porpoise Press imprint on the title-page, particularly when we recall that Faber had added its name to the Porpoise Henryson of 1931. However, when Faber reissued the Dunbar in 1950, they claimed, on the verso of the title-page, to have been publishers of the 1932 volume, without

mention of the Porpoise Press at all. Only on the dust jacket blurb do we find a quotation from W. H. Auden's review of the earlier volume which mentions the Porpoise Press. Unfortunately the evidence from dust jackets is most frequently not available because they have been removed from most library books.

Books other than those mentioned present problems too, begging a close study of Faber's relationship with the Porpoise Press. This would require close examination of all the states of all the books published, and, even more interesting, the personalities involved as the smaller imprint was slowly put to rest. Even after this had happened, Faber continued to publish works which could well have been marketed under the Porpoise Press imprint: works by Edwin Muir, for example, as well as Maurice Lindsay's *Modern Scottish Poetry: An Anthology of the Scottish Renaissance 1920-1945* (1946).

Alistair McCleery's book does not address the points I have raised, nor was it his intention to do so. His history of the Porpoise Press is a work of publishing history, concentrating on the Edinburgh part of the story. Its appearance adds to our knowledge of a very significant small Scottish press which played an important role in the Scottish Literary Renaissance. We should be grateful to Alistair McCleery for giving us a well-documented and pleasantly readable book on the subject.

GRR

James A. Mackay. *Burns-Lore of Dumfries and Galloway*. Ayr: Alloway Publishing. 1988. 168 pp.

James A. Mackay. *Burnsiana*. Ayr: Alloway Publishing. 1988. 168 pp.

One of the phenomena of the abiding popularity of Robert Burns is the number of books, pamphlets and articles which are devoted to the man rather than to the works. Much as Joyce's Dublin, every village Burns visited, every pub in the neighborhood (even those built long after the poet's death), every farmhouse he set foot in, has its anecdote. Of course embellishment is the hallmark of anecdote. In *Burns-Lore of Dumfries and Galloway*, James A. Mackay admits that the word "Lore" in the title is deliberate, "for it is difficult at this remove in time to distinguish between hard fact and the myths and legends which have developed." Where the truth is not to be decided, he does not make exaggerated claims, but he is also obviously a believer in the observation that for a belief to continue over many years there must be an element of truth to it.

Certainly Mackay has packed a great deal of information into this book—his Burns credentials are formidable: Editor of complete annotated editions of both the poetry and the correspondence of Burns, author of *The Burns Federation 1885-1985* and Editor for the past several years of the *Burns Chronicle*. According to the blurb, "The book is arranged as an A to Z guide....," but the user will not find it quite as easy to look things up as he might expect, because while there is an overall alphabetical arrangement, there is an unannounced alphabetical sub-section. Thus the entries go along in the letter D until "Dumfries" is reached, whereupon a whole new alphabet is begun from "Assembly Rooms" to "Miss Woods," when the entries return to "Dunkitterick." Unfortunately the Index does not contain entries for poems and songs which Burns wrote, and which are frequently quoted or referred to throughout the text. The really unfortunate aspect of the Index is that through computer error the pagination is incorrect; in fact several names do not appear at all.

In *Burnsiana* Mackay is both on more solid and less solid ground. Here the author turns to everything that has to do with the poet: portraits, pictures from scenes in the life or from the works of the poet, sculpture, relics, printed ephemera, and so on. Where the ground is shakiest, and Mackay of course admits this, is in the field of relics. The first large collection of these was displayed at the great Centennial Exhibition in Glasgow in 1896, at which time, Mackay writes, the organizers did not feel that they should inquire into the authenticity of works offered on loan. Thus *Burnsiana* lists without comment a clock "believed to have been owned by Robert Burns" and even a Bible "read by Burns at Brow"! No wonder Hugh MacDiarmid felt the need to satirize relic collectors in his piece on the discovery of the "last" Burns relic—the seat of his privy!

For the student of the folk tradition the book is instructive in illustrating how firmly Burns has captured the imagination of Scots and non-Scots: monuments have been erected throughout Scotland, as well as in Australia, Canada, England (there is a plaque to Burns in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey as well as a large statue on the Thames Embankment), Ireland, New Zealand and the United States. Postage stamps, too, come in for a chapter in Mackay. He tells the story known to most philatelist Burns lovers of the British government's refusal to issue a commemorative stamp for 1959, but then issuing a series for Shakespeare in 1964—finally issuing two stamps (Shakespeare got five) for Burns in 1966, a year meaningless in the Burns calendar. The Russians, on the other hand, issued a stamp in 1956, another in 1957, and reissued the first of these with the addition of the dates 1759-1959 for the bicentenary. Each country was, of course, playing its own politics.

To the scholar of Burns as poet rather than Burns as folk hero, Mackay's chapter "Printed Ephemera" will prove the most rewarding. There is a full-page illustration of the only known copy of "Proposals, for Publishing by Subscription, Scotch Poems, by Robert Burns" dated April 14, 1786, with the signatures of subscribers below. A purist would perhaps quarrel with Mackay for including chapbooks in his "ephemera" although several early Burns chapbooks are known in but one or two copies and are at least ephemeral. As a measure of Burns's appeal the reader can look at the concerts given over to his works as well as (omitted in Mackay) settings of Burns works to music, plays and operettas based on events in his life. Even the non-specialist will enjoy looking through this handsomely-produced book which contains a host of illustrations, many of them in color.

GRR