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Brief Notice

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Brief Notice

Selected Essays on Scottish Language and Literature: A Festschrift in Honor of Allan H. MacLaine. Ed. Steven R. McKenna. Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen. 1992. iii + 271 pp.

This collection contains a preface, fifteen essays, a list of contributors, and, surprising for a festschrift, an index. Allan MacLaine is known primarily for his books on Robert Fergusson and Allan Ramsay and for his important study of the *Christis Kirk* tradition before Burns (*SSL*, 1964-65). Thus it is fitting that the essays in this volume cover what is chronologically a wide range of Scottish literature, beginning with Matthew P. McDiarmid's "Brett and Pict, Taliesin and Aneirin in Early Scotland," and ending with J. Derrick McClure's "Alastair Mackie's Translations from Leopardi." Perhaps the essay of greatest significance is Carol Mcguirk's "James Currie and the Making of the Burns Myth," in which she argues that "virtually every moralizing posture and mythic obliquity in the critical heritage originated in the earliest edition of the poet's complete works, compiled by Dr. James Currie between 1796 and 1800" (p. 150). However, many of the other essays make important contributions as well.

For example, although we might not be willing to go so far as Matthew McDiarmid in praising the *Gododdin* as superior in several particulars to *Beowulf*, *Roland*, and *El Cid* (p. 5), his argument that Aneirin was a Pict is provocative and his comments on the *Gododdin* itself are enlightening.

Among other useful essays, we may cite those by Rosemary Greentree and Steven McKenna on the audience of Henryson's *Fables*, Joanne Norman on Dunbar as a Scottish Goliard, and A. M. Kinghorn on William Walker and *The Bards of Bon-Accord*. Greentree and McKenna argue that Henryson often deliberately shocks his audience so that he can better teach them; the reversals which are an inevitable consequence of this practice are best understood then as a pedagogical technique as well as an aesthetic one. Norman points out several parallels between the twelfth century and the fifteenth as they affect the poetry of the Goliard-persona and Dunbar. And Kinghorn continues his study of nineteenth-century historians of Scottish literature, well begun with his paper on David Irving and John Merry Ross in the 1990 Scottish Conference volume of *SSL*, in his informative essay on Walker's literary history. Some of the other essays deal with lesser known works and authors (e.g., Edna Steeves' study of Catherine Trotter's *Olinda's Adventures* and Marilyn Molina's account of love and marriage in poems by Ebenezer and Joanna B. Picken), others with major figures (e.g., James McGoldrick on Dunbar and Skelton and Jules Siegel on Carlyle). This is a useful volume indeed and an appropriate tribute to Allan MacLaine.

WALTER SCHEPS

James Hogg. *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd 1831*. Oxford: Woodstock Books. 1989. [iv]+ vii+ 311 pp. Facsimile edn. with Intro. by Jonathan Wordsworth.

Near the end of his life Hogg felt impelled to collect up his scattered shorter works into more accessible and durable volume form: the 1831 *Songs* is undoubtedly part of a process which also generated *The Shepherd's Calendar*, *A Queer Book*, and the abortive multi-volume project of his collected tales. On the other hand, Hogg was a prolific song-writer for over thirty years who rarely kept copies of even his more popular work, so that he was thus faced with the task of unearthing what he could from scattered periodicals, song collections, sheets, and manuscripts, and then making a selection to fit the limits of a pocket-sized gift volume. The 113 items given reflect this situation, in comprising only a part of Hogg's songs, in covering the entire period of his career to date, and as Hogg suggests in his characteristic notes, in focusing on items which he considered popular either with his rural or urban audience. "Donald Macdonald" (1801), for example, was chosen "because it was my first song, and exceedingly popular when it first appeared" (p. 1); "I hae naebody now" (1830) "was published lately in

Fraser's Magazine, and received with higher encomiums than it deserved" (p. 215), while the inclusion of "Love is like a dizziness" is justified on the grounds that it has been "so long a favourite with the country lads and lasses" (p. 114). Naturally this limited choice does not include all Hogg's best songs (I miss the delightful "The Cutting o' my hair," for example), and favors some of Hogg's song-collections over others (for instance, all the songs from *Select and Rare Scottish Melodies* are included but none from *A Selection of German Hebrew Melodies*), but the author's own selection with his entertaining notes have a unique importance.

Unfortunately this is a song-collection without music, though as well as providing interesting biographical material Hogg's notes often name a known tune or indicate where one can be found—information less accessible to the singers of 1990 than of 1830 naturally. Jonathan Wordsworth gives the salient features of Hogg's career and personality capably in an attractive and well-written introduction, but the odd factual error or mistaken emphasis reveals that he is no Hogg specialist. There is a real need for a modern scholarly edition of the 1831 *Songs*, but in the meantime this well-produced facsimile of a rare volume is extremely welcome, and Woodstock Books are to be congratulated on publishing it.

G. H. HUGHES

Erik Linklater, *The Goose Girl and Other Stories*. Ed. Andro Linklater. Edinburgh: Canongate. 1991. xi + 306 pp.

Eighteen of Eric Linklater's short stories are here collected by the author's son Andro, who also contributed a short Introduction. Linklater was born in Wales to an Orkney sea captain, and himself moved back to the islands of his ancestors in his thirties, calling the Orkneys home until his death at seventy-five. Although he wrote journalism, history, biography, short stories and drama, Linklater is best known as a novelist. *Poet's Pub* (1929) and *Juan in America* (1931) came in his early thirties, making him famous, although Andro feels that these novels, with the 1946 *Private Angelo*, distracted readers from what he calls "the persistently Norse edge—savage, fabulist and intoxicated—which marked [Linklater's] fiction." Seen in this light, most of the stories selected here are true to the Norse heritage.

Running through them is a muted eroticism. "Sealskin Trousers" explores the awakening of desire, love and surrender in a young woman courted by a seal/man, but the reader remains on shore with the abandoned suitor who sees "two seals swimming together" while he is left with "the ter-

ror of life alone, life among human beings. . . ." Linklater also draws upon Greek mythology, as when he sets the Leda legend in post-World War II Scotland with chilling effect in the title story.

Not all of his use of legend ends on a note of tragedy. "The Dancers" is the story of people who willingly disappear with the Wee Folk to spend the rest of time dancing and drinking Heather Ale—"the last man who tasted it was Thomas of Ercildoune." A young man falls in with the group and learns their dances. When we meet him again some time later he is telling the story to some travellers on an inter-island ship. Asked why he has left the idyllic locale he has been describing, he says that he was sent off to make a purchase. When pressed as to what it was, he replies, "gramophone needles," and disappears.

"Kind Kitty," on the other hand, captures the essence of everyday Scotland, as she prepares for and carries out plans for the best bash she and down-and-out friends have ever enjoyed, a party continued by Kitty outside the gates of Heaven, where St. Peter has no intention of letting her in—but she outwits him.

The Goose Girl and Other Stories is a handsomely produced volume, with large clear type and generous margins. The frontispiece by Joan Hassall depicts a scene from "Sealskin Trousers" evocatively and elegantly, although I cannot understand why the publishers nowhere give her credit for the drawing, which originally appeared in another collection. This selection gives ample proof of Linklater's reputation as one of Scotland's finest story tellers.

ALEXANDER FRASER

William Soutar. *Diaries of a Dying Man*. Ed. Alexander Scott. Edinburgh: Canongate Press. 1992. xxi + 184 pp. Canongate Classics.

This attractive reprint of the original selection from Soutar's diaries and notebooks edited by Alexander Scott, first published in 1954 and reissued in 1988, is a valuable addition to the vastly impressive and expanding Canongate list of Scottish classics. With the fiftieth anniversary of William Soutar's death in 1993, and the centenary of his birth five years later, there will undoubtedly be a refocusing of interest on this neglected member of the Scottish Renaissance group of poets. This rediscovery, with a possible reevaluation, seems to be overdue and necessary, judging by the cursory and inadequate treatment that Soutar receives in the *Aberdeen History of Scottish Literature*. *Diaries of a Dying Man*, while revealing in itself about Soutar's

attitudes to his own life and art, needs to be supplemented by a critical biography and an annotated edition of his poems.

Scott's selection from Soutar's yearly diaries of 1930 to 1943, his "Common Day Book" of 1939-40 and "The Diary of a Dying Man" of July to October 1943, has the great virtue of reading as a coherent and harmonious unity, a mark of the editor's skill in both selecting and weaving the most significant entries into an apparently seamless web. Clearly a lot of material from these documents has had to be omitted; Scott reports that Soutar made entries almost daily, and we tend to have only about 20 to 60 of these from each year in the present volume. Thus it might be thought necessary, after nearly forty years, to ask how much this book is the real William Soutar and how much it is the editor's view of how Soutar should be presented to posterity. Knowing the integrity of Alex Scott both as a man and a writer, we should be in no doubt that in the main what we have in these Diaries is the essential Soutar. Yet it is possible, perhaps even probable, that there are aspects of the bedridden Soutar that are not fully revealed here, given that the selection was made within only a few years of Soutar's death and with Soutar's parents and friends looking on. The idealizing tendency is clear in the tone of Scott's Introduction, and there is very little qualification of the respect and admiration.

The overriding impression that comes over from the diary entries is of a highly sensitive, thoughtful and widely-read man displaying both his courage in personal adversity and his intense artistic commitment. Yet this is not a view that leaps out from the first pages of the diary; one senses that, for the first two years or so, the diary is not being taken entirely seriously, as if it is something that may be given up or relegated to the sidelines of life should the physical circumstances change and the bed be vacated. It is not until about 1933 that it becomes that personal confidant and vehicle for honest intellectual and emotional expression which the best diaries always are. By then Soutar knew beyond all doubt that he had attained his final resting-place in life; this thought, skimming like a moth "around the flame of complete consciousness," had become "illuminated by acceptance" (Friday 16 September, 1932). So the entries become less the fragmentary and sometimes flip-pant records of daily events and visits received and more the meditative essays and commentaries upon his condition and his art that we would expect from a poet looking out on his garden and the wider world. As we share Soutar's calm and considered literary and philosophical perceptions in his diaries, we are never able to forget the circumstances of discomfort and growing pain and humiliating dependence on others out of which they have come.

Perhaps we are wrong to try to look for more. The testament of a strong and enduring spirit that we find in these pages ought to be enough for us. Yet such is our curiosity in this age of debunking, and our wish to know the

truth, warts and all, about the personalities of those who become the subjects of public biography and journalistic investigation, that we look keenly for any clues and try to read between the lines. It does not take much close reading to discover from the pages of *Diaries of a Dying Man* that Soutar was capable of cruelty in his writing (Scott calls it "an occasional pettiness") about some of his visitors and well-wishers, anatomizing their defects of appearance and behavior in sharp, even vindictive, little character studies reminiscent of the seventeenth or eighteenth century satirists. More significantly, and understandably, there comes through in a significant number of Soutar's entries a deep sense of sexual frustration, even a resentment that he was cut off by his illness from the relationships with women that he undoubtedly desired. It was only in his last year of life, with increasing weakness, that Soutar realized that the attractiveness of women no longer disturbed him and that he had ceased to be "fretted by images of passion" (Wednesday 6 October, 1943). It is legitimate to wonder if unrevealed writings by Soutar make more of these two aspects of his nature than his editor has revealed to us. At the very least we could do with a more informative commentary on the diaries than is provided by the very brief and sketchy notes to this and earlier editions.

ALAN MACGILLIVRAY

Grant F. Wilson, comp. *A Bibliography of Iain Crichton Smith*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1990. xii + 228 pp.

Iain Crichton Smith has enjoyed several careers, any one of which would satisfy most people. Substantial poet in Gaelic, equally substantial poet in English, translator of his Gaelic poetry into English, translator of other writers into English or Gaelic, novelist, short story writer, critic, the list goes on. A Lewis man, Smith attended the University of Aberdeen where his earliest poetry (written in English) was published in *Alma Mater* and the *Aberdeen University Review*, the first in 1946 when he was barely eighteen. University publications were not the place to publish poems in Gaelic, though, and it was not until 1953 that his first Gaelic poem appeared in *Gairm*. Two years later *The Long River*, consisting of poetry in English, was published, and in 1960 his first Gaelic collection of poetry and short stories, *Burn is Aran (Bread and Water)*, appeared. Smith built up a considerable reputation as a poet before he published his first novel, *Consider the Lillies* (1968). The book received favorable reviews and, market forces

being what they are, it is not surprising that Smith has written mostly fiction in English since then.

The arrangement of the bibliography lists collected poetry, then fiction, followed by uncollected poetry and fiction. A useful feature of Wilson's compilation is that he lists reviews of books by Smith immediately after the main entry for each title, making it easy for the user to track down critical response to individual works. The listing of these reviews appears to be quite comprehensive for British journals, but there are occasionally reviews which appeared in American (Canadian? New Zealand?) journals which have eluded the compiler. Of poems which have not been published in any collection, we find an unexpected 419; of prose fiction, including plays, 77. When we consider that Iain Crichton Smith has spent the greater part of his adult life as a teacher in a high school, this output seems quite remarkable.

Smith is well known also as a translator of Gaelic poetry; principal among these works is a translation of Duncan Ban MacIntyre (1724-1812), which first appeared in *Akros* in 1969, and has since gone through four editions in book form. He has also translated poems by Sorley MacLean into English. I was not prepared to discover how many poets Smith has translated into Gaelic, however. No less than twenty-seven names appear in Wilson's list, in addition to translations of traditional poems. Among the better known poets whose work has been translated into Gaelic we find Auden, Spender, Robert Lowell, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams among British and American writers; there are also names such as Rimbaud, Garcia Lorca, Cavafy and Brecht. Iain Crichton Smith has truly cast his net wide.

Grant F. Wilson's *Bibliography of Iain Crichton Smith* is an excellent, reliable tool for anyone who is interested in the many areas in which this talented writer has left his mark on Scottish literature. It will, of course, have to be updated in due course because Iain Crichton Smith is still hard at work adding to his very considerable output.

ANNIE McEWAN

Thomas Campbell. *Gertrude of Wyoming 1809*. Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books. 1991. [6] + [4] + [4]-134 pp. Facsimile edn. with Intro. by Jonathan Wordsworth.

With this facsimile of the original edition of *Gertrude of Wyoming; A Pennsylvanian Tale. And Other Poems* Woodstock Books continues its useful series entitled *Revolution and Romanticism, 1789-1834*. Jonathan Wordsworth, the series Editor, has supplied a short Introduction in which he

points out that Hazlitt (in *The Spirit of the Age*) defended Campbell's work against the resistance there was at the time to "poetic diction and affected conceits. . . ." Thus Hazlitt takes issue with the too-strict interpretation of William Wordsworth's call for poetry to use "the real language of men." Ironically the language of *Gertrude* breaks with Wordsworth's directions for the writing of poetry, while at the same time drawing inspiration (as the editor points out) from Wordsworth's *Female Vagrant* of 1798.

Unfortunately *Gertrude* did not enjoy anything like the success of Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope* (1799), a work which had gone through at least eighteen editions by the time the later collection appeared. By 1809 Britain was much more concerned with Napoleon than with America, so that the earlier poem, with its focus on Europe, retained its readers who may have felt that *The Pleasures* had remained more timely. The Noble Savage concept of the eighteenth century, too, had mostly spent its force with works such as Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801). The idea had remarkable resiliency, though, as witness late-blooming variants of the theme in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* (1855). It is a simplification to reduce to a phrase Campbell's poem, but nevertheless we are made aware of the changed behavior of Indians who move "with lust of murd'rous deeds" upon the settlers.

The *Other Poems* of the original full title make up almost one third of the book, and consist of six pieces, half of them Highland in theme. They make an unexpected collection. The first poem, and one of the best-loved of the nineteenth century, is "Ye Mariners of England," which remains a rousing work. But the reader is surprised to read Campbell extolling Nelson quite so warmly given his lifelong support of the French Revolution and his devotion to republicanism at home. Also in this collection we find "Lochiel's Warning," a poem in which (as in *Macbeth*) a wizard warns the chief of the Camerons that "a merciless sword on Culloden shall wave." But few strong men can be swayed by omens, and Lochiel moved on to his place in history.

This well-produced, attractive book is a welcome addition to the series.

GRR

C. J. L. Stokoe. *A Bibliography of Neil M. Gunn*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1987. x + 245 pp.

Neil Gunn was, like so many Scottish writers, slow to achieve recognition. He was thirty-five before his first book was published and forty before

he produced a best-seller. That novel was *Morning Tide* (1931) published by the Porpoise Press of Edinburgh, and shortly after issued in London by Faber & Faber. In due course the Porpoise Press was absorbed by Faber, and by 1946 *Morning Tide* had gone into its tenth impression. Stokoe notes that there was an English language edition published by Tauchnitz of Berlin in 1938, but does not mention a translation published as *Frühflut*, in Munich that same year. A year earlier the same publisher brought out *Butcher's Broom* (1934) as *Das Verlorene Leben*, a translation which was also missed by Stokoe. It was probably because of these translations that Gunn visited Munich in 1938.

With *Highland River* (1937), which won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, Gunn was well enough established to leave his position with the Customs and Excise Service and to devote full time to his writing. The result was that his production shot up; for several years he produced a book almost every year, some of which sold very well. *The Green Isle of the Great Deep*, for instance, had four impressions during the years 1943-4. And yet Neil Gunn, because he was a retiring man who refused to be drawn into controversy, did not achieve anything like the fame and notoriety that his counterpart in poetry, Hugh MacDiarmid, hammered out for himself. They were both members of the Scottish Nationalist Party, but Gunn preferred to work for the good of Scotland without being confrontational about it, and even when MacDiarmid attacked him he did not engage in what he would have thought of as unseemly polemics.

Although there have been checklists of the works of Gunn, Stokoe's is the first attempt at a comprehensive bibliography of the writer's work. It is divided into six sections: A) Books and Short Stories; B) Plays, Dramatisations and Film Scripts; C) Verse; D) Articles; E) Broadcast Material; F) Miscellaneous. Material is entered chronologically, with reprints listed under the initial date. Unfortunately reprintings have been entered rather casually, there is no attempt to note reimpressions of works. This, it appears to me, is a serious omission, for it is the number of times that a book has been reprinted which gives the scholar a clue as to the popularity of the work in question. Doesn't it tell us something about Gunn's popularity to know that there were two impressions of *The Serpent* in 1943 and another two in 1944?

The most serious reservation which I have about Stokoe's *Bibliography of Neil M. Gunn* is the layout. In recent years American bibliographers have taken to demanding "user-friendly" editions. Given that very few users of bibliographies read them page after page, the important thing is for it to be easy to skim through, looking for a particular entry. In this respect the layout of Stokoe's work makes it very difficult to use. The book has been photocopied from a typescript, but in these days of computer-formatted printouts

there is no excuse for a bibliography to be as difficult to work through as is this one.

On the positive side, this bibliography of Gunn is certainly the most comprehensive yet available, and will be a useful tool for the scholar who is interested in one of Scotland's major novelists.

ARTHUR DAVIDSON

Robert Burns. *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect 1786*. Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books. 1991. [xi] + viii + [9]-240 pp. Facsimile edn. with Intro. by Jonathan Wordsworth.

No one can have been more surprised than the author when his first book, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, catapulted Burns into fame throughout Scotland. Most of the 612 copies were sold locally and they were all gone within less than four months. In 1787 his Edinburgh edition sold over 3,000 copies, and there were also editions published that year in London, Belfast and Dublin, the last two being piracies. The reading public had been readied for Burns's work by novels such as Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* and Goethe's *Werther*, and one might in fact (as Jonathan Wordsworth points out) date the beginnings of English Romanticism from Burns's *Poems* rather than from Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* of a dozen years later. During the decade which followed *Poems* Burns gave himself over mostly to the writing of songs, producing a body of work which is unequalled by any other song-writer in the English language.

Like every poet, Burns served his apprenticeship, in his case before coming to print for the first time in 1786, and the volume which he produced then evidenced nothing of the beginner. It is a fully mature work, showing him to have mastered all of the modes which he was to add to in later years. Even the songs, which were later to be his principal concern, are presaged here with "It was upon a Lammas Night." We find tender love of nature in such poems as "To a Mouse" and "To a Mountain-Daisy" with the same stanza form turned to social satire in "To a Louse." Romantic melancholia is to be found here in "Despondency, An Ode," reinforcing the claim made in another poem that "Man was Made to Mourn." The supernatural, which the poet was to exploit with such mastery in "Tam o'Shanter," makes its debut in this edition of *Poems* in "Address to the Deil."

Burns was no stranger to English, although he much preferred to work in Scots, as he made plain to George Thomson when he wrote that while he would be delighted to supply him with *Scots* songs, he was not interested in

writing them in English. And yet one of his best-known and loved poems, "The Cotter's Saturday Night," is written primarily in English, with an epigraph taken from Gray's "Elegy."

Jonathan Wordsworth, Editor of the series *Revolution and Romanticism* in which this facsimile appears, has contributed a thoughtful seven-page Introduction placing Burns firmly in the English Romantic Movement, not as other critics have done in seeing the Scottish poet as a minority figure writing in a quaint dialect in a far-off corner of the British Isles. Only by placing Burns within the English tradition, in addition to seeing in him the major voice for over three centuries in Scottish poetry, can this extraordinary writer's accomplishment be adequately measured.

GRR

Allan B. Wolter. *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*. Ed. Marilyn McCord Adams. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 1990. ix + 356 pp.

This book is a collection of essays on individual texts and themes from Scotus, all previously published but now first made available in volume form. The result is a valuable introduction to the range of Scotus's work by one of the very best of his modern interpreters. When Allan Wolter's career as a philosophical interpreter of Scotus began some fifty years ago, readers lacked texts, introductions and interpretations. As the editor puts it, "Duns Scotus is not called 'the Subtile Doctor' for nothing, however. Diving into his highly technical philosophical corpus without benefit of an interpretative guide is heroic at best." Wolter met this need, not only with a brilliant first book on the Transcendentals in Scotist metaphysics, but with an indispensable series of *en face* translations of re-edited Scotus texts. Wolter's interpretative studies, however, though known to specialists, have not been accessible to the broader philosophical community.

The editor, Marilyn McCord Adams, a first-rate interpreter of Scotus and Ockham, presents a diverse selection of Wolter's work. The first five essays deal with topics in metaphysics and epistemology. The themes covered include "The formal distinction," the realism of Scotus, individuation theory, and Scotus on intuition, memory and our knowledge of individuals. These finely crafted pieces introduce some very difficult terrain. But the modern philosophical reader will be able to climb the heights because the guide knows the territory.

The doctrine of the Will formed a central reference point in Scotus' action theory. Here again, the reader is given a good clear introduction. Upon reading these essays, it will no longer be possible for polemicists to shrug off Scotus as having little or nothing to say about Ethics, and Wolter's exposition also gives a coherent account of "freedom of the will." The last section deals with the central concern of John Duns Scotus, his philosophical theology. For Scotus, by profession, was a theologian. This is theology for the tough-minded. Feeble spirits had better be wary.

One can see why the editor chose the title "The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus." But the subject matter is much wider than "philosophical theology;" there is also much in this book of value to philosophers who are interested in metaphysics, epistemology, and action theory. One hopes this splendid volume will allow philosophers to see the real philosophical merit in Scotus, who was, according to C. S. Pierce, the greatest of metaphysicians and the most worthy of Medieval Philosophers.

JEREMIAH HACKETT