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Elgin W. Mellown. Bibliography of the Writings of Edwin Muir. University, Ala. University of Alabama Press. 1964. 139 pp. \$5.95. Rev. ed. London. Nicholas Vane, 1966. 144 pp. 50 shillings.

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Reviews

Elgin W. Mellow. *Bibliography of the Writings of Edwin Muir*. University, Ala. University of Alabama Press. 1964. 139 pp. \$5.95. Rev. ed. London. Nicholas Vane. 1966. 144 pp. 50 shillings.

It is understandable that Edwin Muir should be the first writer of the modern Scottish literary movement (if he can be claimed in some way for the Renaissance) to be awarded the distinction of a full-scale, separately-published bibliography. His poetry, linguistically at least, is less formidable than (say) Hugh MacDiarmid's; his achievement and reputation are international; and with his death in 1962 his work stands complete. Elgin Mellow's bibliography is a careful record of an important and impressive body of work in poetry, fiction, autobiography, criticism and translation. Muir's contributions to periodicals, in so far as they were signed or can be readily identified, are listed to a total of 1,282 over 47 years.

In a bibliography of this standard, accuracy in the transcription of titles and detail in the description are to be assumed. Inevitably comment must turn on the presentation of the information and the complementary information and alternative approaches provided in the index. Here a closer adherence to the patterns mentioned in the preface—Donald Gallup's *T. S. Eliot* and the "Soho Bibliographies," particularly B. J. Kirkpatrick's *Virginia Woolf*—would have helped.

The only index provided is an index of poems and essays. The books and pamphlets and the translations are not indexed by title, nor are the translations indexed by author: so that one has to search in the chronological sequence in section D, for example, to find the Muir translations of Broch, or Feuchtwanger, or Kafka, and in the chronological sequence in section A to find *Poor Tom* at A11, where there is no cross reference to the fact that two chapters from this novel had previously appeared in *The Modern Scot*, although it is noted at C 403 and C 404 that these contributions to the periodical are chapters from *Poor Tom*.

Further, the index fails to provide, as Donald Gallup's bibliography

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provides for Eliot, references to Muir's contributions to periodicals under the titles of the periodicals concerned. We are told that "Muir wrote regularly for the *Athenaeum*, the *Nation*, the *Spectator*, the *Listener*, the *Scotsman*, the *Observer*, and other journals" and the bibliography includes in section C "all signed work and many unsigned pieces identified from editors' MSS books," but in a chronological sequence: one cannot ascertain quickly from the index the periodicals to which Muir has contributed, his contributions to each, or the period over which the contributions to a particular periodical were made. These questions can be answered only by a laborious search in the main sequence.

While one appreciates and understands the reasons behind the compiler's decision to exclude later impressions or reprints of the books and pamphlets listed here, it is perhaps a pity that there is no mention of the reissue of Muir's *John Knox* as no. 12 in Cape's "Life and Letters" series—surely evidence of some relevance in assessing Muir's importance and influence.

Finally, one regrets that there is no cross reference to indicate the connexion between Muir's *Autobiography* (1954) and the earlier *The story and the fable: an autobiography* (1940). Even the brief bibliography appended to P. H. Butter's *Edwin Muir* in the "Writers and Critics" series states that the later work is a "reprint" of the earlier "with some revisions and seven new chapters" and one might have hoped for a more exact analysis of the relationship in this more detailed bibliography, particularly since the brief annotation is in itself slightly misleading.

In the second (revised) edition of 1966 the compiler has "added entries for works not included in the first edition and for those published after 1964," and some other entries, including some in the index, have been "corrected and emended." The most notable addition, however, is a seven-page appendix, a select list of critical studies and reviews of Edwin Muir and his work.

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